

What an amazing adventure the last 3 years has been! I live a half mile from a segment of the Ice Age Trail, and had no idea how important and fun it would become. Little did I know what was in store when a friend and I challenged each other to stay in shape walking, and it naturally led to the Ice Age Trail. My trek began on September 27, 2021 at the Indian Lake segment and ended on December 5, 2024 at the New Wood segment. I hiked in heat, wind, rain, a thunderstorm (very scary indeed!), snow and through meadows, forests, swamps, and rivers. And along connecting routes – don't forget the connecting routes.

With each and every hike, I was continually amazed and awed by the beauty and majesty of God's creation. From the sunrise along Lake Michigan on the Point Beach segment to the brilliant colors of fall, from the towering pines on New Wood segment to the tiniest of flora hidden under and behind other plants, from the roar of the falls at the Dells of Eau Claire segment to the hush of the forests, I was always blessed to see God's artistry and revel in the joy it brought me.

It was an eye-opening experience to see up close and personal the power and beauty of how the glaciers formed our current landscape. The erratics that came from thousands of miles away, the depth of the kettles formed by the sheer weight of the glacier, and the eskers that gave me a feeling of walking close to the top of the world are just 3 examples of that power and beauty.

It didn't take long before hiking the Ice Age Trail became a passion for me, anxiously waiting to see what was in store with each hike. And the trail didn't disappoint. A black bear running across the trail behind us and away from us, industrious beavers taking a moment to check us out as we quietly ate our lunch, eagles soaring overhead, the startle we got each time we came across ruffed grouse, and the absolute cacophony of blue herons in their rookery are just a few examples of the many surprises throughout this adventure.

And the connecting routes. I looked forward to them, too, as we completed our journey. Where else can you relive the past art of waving to people sitting on their front porch, or experience the wonder of a one-day foal still finding its footing?

There were both physical and mental challenges that I encountered on the trail. Climbing that extremely high hill, keeping from going through a beaver dam, keeping my balance on logs over creeks and rivers and the mental challenge of making it to the end of very long hike - every one of them taught me that I can meet and embrace future challenges with much less fear.

I have to say, what the Ice Age Trail took out of me, by God's grace it gave back infinitely more. And I will be forever grateful that I had this wonderful experience, with my husband and wonderful friends.

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12.11.24