

Chapter 8

Public Involvement, Consultation, and Coordination; and Definition of Terms

A. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

There has been considerable emphasis on public involvement during this trail planning effort. As a part of this planning process, the IATA, NPS, and WDNR made numerous contacts with the public, Marathon County and the affected towns. Outlined below are the results of our contacts:

Core Team Meetings:

The Corridor Planning Process formally began on October 23, 2001 with the initial meeting of the Core Team. The purpose of the first meeting was to explain the Corridor Planning Process, discuss past efforts to establish the Ice Age NST in Marathon County, and gain an overview of the county's glacial landscape and other significant natural and cultural features. Since that time, the Core Team has met over forty times to coordinate public involvement, conduct fieldwork, and undertake other activities involved with refining the corridor, identifying potential trail routes, and assessing landowner interest.

Town and County Board Meetings:

During 2003 a series of presentations were made to the Marathon County Board and communities located within the planning area including the towns of Bevent, Harrison, Plover, Ringle, Easton, Norrie, Elderon, Franzen, Reid, and the Village of Hatley. These presentations focused on providing an overview of the Ice Age NST, discussing the Corridor Planning Process, the significant geologic features of Marathon County, and responding to questions and concerns about the project.

Public Open House Meetings—Series I:

After providing further definition to the corridor, the Core Team hosted an initial round of three Open Houses meetings. These meetings focused on obtaining input from landowners within the proposed corridor. They were held on January 24, 25, and 31, 2005, in the towns of Bevent, Plover, and Reid, respectively. Information on the meetings was distributed to all government officials potentially affected by the trail (town and county boards), and the media. Individual letters were sent to all of the landowners within the proposed corridor. About 100 people attended the three meetings. These meetings provided area landowners with an opportunity to learn about the project, gain insight on how it would impact them, and share their level of interest as potential participants. The meetings also featured presentations regarding the geologic and natural history of the area. Both written and verbal comments were collected and noted.

Post open house meetings, after reviewing both the positive and negative comments received, the Core Team determined it necessary to expand the proposed corridor to accommodate additional possible route options at its southern terminus to provide for a continuous link between Marathon and Portage Counties. This expansion area involved Sections 3, 10, 33 and 34 in the town of Franzen in Marathon County and portions of Sections 2, 3 and 4 in the town of Alban in Portage County. In addition, after noting that the corridor immediately south of Hatley was effectively

limited to the west by the Plover River, it was determined that the proposed corridor be expanded to the east near its mid-point to provide for additional area to accommodate possible route options and provide for a more scenic hiking experience (views of tunnel channel and ice walled lake plains). This second expansion included Sections 29 and 32 in the town of Norrie and Section 5 in the town of Elderon. Throughout 2006 and early 2007, landowners within the expansion areas were contacted individually by phone and/or in writing to advise them of their inclusion in the proposed corridor and to provide them with materials including background information and the status of the planning process to date.

Public Open House Meetings—Series II

A final series of open house meetings was held in August of 2007 to present the preferred corridor alternative to the public with possible route options for the trail. Some time had lapsed between the first and second series of Open House meetings. The reason for this was to identify possible route options for the trail within the preferred alternative, and individually contact some of the landowners to determine the feasibility of the route options. The second series of Open Houses was held on August 22, 25, and 29, 2007, in the town of Plover, the Village of Hatley, and the town of Franzen, respectively. Again, public officials and landowners within the proposed corridor were all invited, and the media was notified. Approximately 100 people attended. These meetings provided information about the Ice Age NST project, specific information about the possible route options, and answered questions and concerns regarding the implementation and management of the trail. Presentations were made by long-distance hikers at the Plover and Franzen meetings, and a guided geology hike offered during the Hatley meeting.

Both written and verbal comments were collected and noted. Some comments stated support for the trail, expressed interest in selling land or easements for the trail, and offered to help build some of the trail. Negative comments received were generally from landowners who did not want the trail on their property. Because of the wide nature of the “corridor of opportunity,” landowners opposed to the trail can be avoided as trail alignments are developed. After reviewing all comments, it has been determined that no additional changes are needed to the preferred corridor alternative for further development of the Ice Age NST.

Local Comprehensive Planning Efforts

Throughout the planning for Marathon County, our consultant on this project from North Central Region Planning Commission was also developing comprehensive local plans for individual towns in the county. During committee meetings, he would regularly provide them with updates on the status of our planning process.

B. CONSULTATION FOR PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Agencies and individuals contacted

Chip Brown, State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Jean Potter, Ice Age Trail Alliance
Kevin Thusius, Ice Age Trail Alliance
Randy Myren, Ice Age Trail Alliance
Joel Trick, United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Patricia Leavenworth, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Kenneth Westlake, Chief, NEPA Implementation Section US. Environmental Protection Agency
Cameron Bump, Park and Recreation Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Pete Wolter, Real Estate Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Biodiversity: Biodiversity is the variety and variability among living organisms and the ecological system in which they occur on the local and regional landscape.

Corridor of Opportunity: A planned and mapped linear space, generally about 1 mile to 4 miles wide, but wider in some places to protect exceptional features, within which the cooperating partners are working to establish the “Trail” and a suitable “Trailway.” The “Corridor” has different implications for each primary partner:

- To the WDNR, it is an area that has been delineated through a public planning process and has met State of Wisconsin environmental compliance requirements. It also represents the area within which it may (1) accept gifts of lands for dedication for the Ice Age State Scenic Trail, and (2) acquire lands for the trailway.
- To the NPS, it represents the area within which it will exercise its authorities to establish, protect, and manage the Ice Age NST. It is an area that has been delineated through a public planning process and has met Federal environmental compliance requirements. The lines defining the corridor will be treated as the “park” boundary for the trail and the limits within which Federal land acquisition authority for the trail can be exercised to create a suitable “Trailway.” It also represents the area which will be considered in other planning documents such as resource management plans and land protection plans.
- To the IATA, it represents the area within which it will seek to protect or have protected a suitable “Trailway” for the Ice Age NST in order to preserve significant glacial features, construct, and develop the trail and its associated support facilities, provide an outstanding trail user experience, and manage on a sustainable basis the resources of the “Trailway”. Also, see Trail and Trailway.

Rarely will the partners seek to acquire or protect the entire width of the corridor for the trail, unless it contains outstanding glacial features. The reason the corridor is wider than the trailway that will be acquired is to provide the opportunity to be flexible in working with willing landowners on a voluntary basis. (see “Trailway”)

Endangered Species: A species on the Federal or Wisconsin Endangered Species list and whose continued existence as a viable component of the State’s wild animals or wild plants is determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the WDNR to be in jeopardy on the basis of scientific evidence.

Exurban: Pockets of residential development lying beyond the suburbs of a city.

Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA): The Ice Age Trail Alliance is a non-profit Wisconsin Corporation whose mission is to create, support, and protect a thousand-mile foot trail tracing Ice Age formations across Wisconsin.

Ice Walled Lake Plain: Mesa-like hills that were once lakes on a melting glacier. Streams flowing on the glacier deposited loads of sediment into these lakes. When the surrounding glacier had completely melted, the lake bottoms became the hilltops.

Kettle: A depression formed by the melting of buried glacial ice. Some kettle holes hold water.

Moraine: A ridge formed by unsorted gravel, sand, and boulders carried by the glacier and deposited at the outer edge, or front, of the glacier. Some are only 10 feet high, while others rise 250 to 300 feet. Moraines define the basic route of the Trail, and can be found in many places along it.

National Park Service (NPS): The agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior responsible for preserving, protecting, and managing the natural, cultural, and recreational areas of the National Park System. The mission of the NPS includes two primary goals: to preserve our natural and cultural resources and to provide for public use and enjoyment of these resources in ways that will leave them unimpaired for future generations. The NPS is responsible at the Federal level for carrying out the provisions of the National Trails System Act as they relate to the Ice Age NST by coordinating, guiding, and assisting the efforts of others to acquire, develop, operate, protect, and maintain the trail. The 1983 comprehensive plan prepared by the NPS identifies the DNR and the IATA as the primary cooperators in the long-term effort to develop and manage the trail.

Outwash: A sloping deposit of rounded gravel and fine sand left from the ice streams flowing away from the glaciers.

Special Concern Species: Species about which a problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not proven scientifically. This State classification focuses attention on species before they become threatened or endangered.

Stewardship Fund: A Wisconsin legislatively established fund administered by the WDNR, which provides funding for conservation and recreation programs, including matching grants to not-for-profit conservation organizations for certain projects. The Ice Age NST is one of the qualifying projects, and may receive grants for land acquisition.

Threatened Species: A species on the Federal or Wisconsin Threatened Species list is one which appears likely, within the foreseeable future, on the basis of scientific evidence, to become endangered.

Trail: The usable tread and immediate surrounding space that is maintained for the purpose of passage along the trail route. For walking only segments, this may be a 24- to 30-inch wide tread and an additional 2 feet of cleared space on either side. For segments where other activities are

also allowed, these measurements would likely be greater. Also see Corridor of Opportunity and Trailway.

Trailway: The width or area of land that is managed for the purposes of the Ice Age NST. It includes the “Trail” and surrounding lands that are owned, leased, held by easement, or in some way controlled for management as part of the Ice Age NST. Generally, its width ranges from 50-1000 feet. Where the trail passes through existing public ownership or management areas, the “Trailway” is the width or area of land that the managing agency has committed to management for the trail. Also, see Corridor of Opportunity and Trail.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR): The state agency responsible for implementing State and Federal laws that protect and enhance Wisconsin’s natural resources—its air, land, water, wildlife, fish, and plants. It coordinates the many State-administered programs that protect the environment and provides a full range of outdoor recreational opportunities for Wisconsin residents and visitors. The WDNR serves as the primary land agent for the trail utilizing monies from the State Stewardship Program and federal grants.

