

Ice Age National and State Scenic Trail
Vision Statement and Attributes
Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
National Park Service

I. Vision Statement:

The Ice Age Trail is a continuous footpath through diverse landscapes that:

- Provides superlative outdoor recreation experiences;
- Preserves and commemorates world renowned geological features formed during the Wisconsin Glaciation;
- Provides a natural corridor that protects habitat and enables the movement of wildlife;
- Serves as a lifelong educational resource;
- Provides quiet places for people to form and nurture a spiritual connection with the landscape;
- Promotes the health and vigor of users of all ages and abilities, and
- Links the history and diverse human cultures of the land that we call Wisconsin.

II. Attributes of the Ice Age Trail:

- A. **General Route**—The trail extends approximately 1,200 miles across the State of Wisconsin between Interstate State Park on the St. Croix River in Polk County and Potawatomi State Park in Door County.
- B. **Glacial Features**—The trail generally follows the terminal moraine, which provides the means for a continuous trail linking many other diverse glacial landscapes. A continuous, meandering trail maximizes the number and quality of diverse glacial landscapes incorporated into the Ice Age Trail, while minimizing the additional trail length required to include such landscapes. The trail will thus deviate from the terminal moraine to connect other geological, scenic and cultural resources into the Ice Age Trail.
- C. **Design of Corridor and Trail Route**—The trail and trailway are designed elements within an overall planned and approved corridor of opportunity. The design of the preferred trail route and trailway within the corridor is tailored to highlight regional landscape features and is intended to preserve or afford views of geologic, natural, cultural, scenic and/or biotic resources and provide a variety of educational experiences for visitors in regard to these resources.
- D. **Trail Development Philosophy**—The trail lies lightly on the land. It generally follows natural contours, is constructed of local natural materials, and is a maintained pathway.
- E. **Management Objectives**—The trail and the trailway are managed and maintained in order to enhance users' experiences. Trail quality, aesthetics, and vegetative management should be incorporated into the design and management of the trail and trailway. Areas with outstanding geologic or biotic features will be managed to preserve or restore those resources. Management plans and maintenance standards to achieve these objectives will be mutually agreed upon by the trail partners.
- F. **Trail Use**—The long-term goal is an off-road trail for public use on foot, providing scenic, aesthetic, educational and sensory experiences for users. The trail provides opportunity for non-consumptive recreation and a variety of challenge levels, including fully accessible

- segments. To provide essential connections for long-distance users, the Ice Age Trail might temporarily or permanently utilize portions of other trails that permit uses other than hiking.
- G. **Trailway Width**—The width of the acquired or protected trailway varies according to the character of the landscape through which it passes, and the need to either insulate visitors from a view or expose them to it. In urban areas, the trailway may be a sidewalk or other narrow trailway. In non-urban areas, it generally will average 200-1,000 feet, with occasional wider areas to protect a significant natural/cultural feature or viewscape.
 - H. **Signs and Marking**—The trail is marked with a system that identifies the trail, regulates usage, provides directions and information, and interprets significant features.
 - I. **User Support Facilities**—The Ice Age Trail will rely to a large extent on existing parks and forests, communities, and private sector enterprises to provide many of the basic user needs, such as parking, lodging, restaurants, etc. The trail will in many instances be deliberately routed to take advantage of these amenities. In other instances, connecting trails may be developed or utilized to provide access to these amenities.
 - J. **Interpretation**—Major interpretation of the Ice Age and Wisconsin's glacial landscape will occur at Units of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve, the companion project of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. However, there are many outstanding glacial landforms and other natural and cultural resources along the trail that are deserving of and need high quality wayside exhibits or other appropriate interpretive media and programs to help trail users understand and appreciate them.
 - K. **Use of Roads as Connectors**—The trail may also utilize road rights of way where necessary for continuous linkage. This utilization is temporary except where roadways provide the optimum trail experience or only possible long-term connection.
 - L. **Intersection with Other Trails**—The Ice Age Trail will intersect or link with many other trails as it meanders across Wisconsin. New intersecting trails that allow uses other than hiking should be minimized. While such trails may allow uses other than hiking, their connections to the Ice Age Trail must be designed to prevent access of other uses onto the Ice Age Trail.

More specific guidance is found in *Ice Age National Scenic Trail: A Handbook for Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance*.

Agreement:

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10/28/02
Date

Darrell Buzzell
Secretary, Department of Natural Resources

11/8/02
Date

Thomas L. Gilbert
Superintendent, National Park Service

10/23/02
Date