



ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

A Cooperative Partnership

July 10, 2014

Dear Chippewa County Landowner:

The National Park Service (NPS), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA), partners in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (NST), invite you to attend open house public meetings to review the proposed *preferred corridor alternative* and possible route options for the trail in Chippewa County.

The Open Houses are scheduled as follows:

Saturday, August 2, 2014

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Cornell High School
708 Bridge Street
Cornell, WI

Thursday, August 7, 2014

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Stanley-Boyd High School
507 East 1st Avenue
Stanley, WI

During the meetings, maps and aerial photos will be on display for your review and comment. Representatives from the NPS, WDNR, and IATA, will be available to answer questions. Presentations to explain the location of *the preferred alternative*, the local volunteer effort to create the trail, and the economic benefits of trails will be given at each meeting. On Saturday, there will be a hike on an established section of the Ice Age NST near the City of Cornell. **Please see enclosed notice (yellow) for more details.**

The Ice Age Trail was authorized as a National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1980 and a State Scenic Trail in 1987. When complete, the Ice Age NST will meander over 1,200 miles through some of the finest glacial scenery in Wisconsin providing day walkers, backpackers, school children, and general outdoor enthusiasts with a premier hiking and educational experience. Today, approximately half of the trail is built. To complete the trail, the NPS, WDNR, and IATA are working with county and local units of government, interested organizations and citizens, and landowners to establish a permanent route throughout the state, including Chippewa County.

In 2004, the partners initiated the Corridor Planning Process for the Ice Age NST in Chippewa County. In 2005, scoping meetings were held for local officials and the public. The purpose of the process is to: identify a general area or corridor where the trail may be located, involve the public in this decision making process, and fulfill federal and state environmental compliance laws. Last summer, the partners held two open house meetings to provide the opportunity for the public to comment on two possible *alternative corridors* for the Ice Age NST in Chippewa County. Based on the input received at these meetings and criteria for placing the trail— significant geological and biological resources, scenic views, and linkages to communities and public lands— a *preferred corridor* with possible route options has been identified. The route options are just possibilities, since **all participation in the Ice Age NST is voluntary.**

The *preferred alternative* crosses the central portion of Chippewa County in a northwest to southeast direction, from the City of Cornell to the Town of Colburn adjacent to the Taylor County line. It generally follows the Perkinstown Moraine revealing kettle ponds, collections of ice walled lake plains, meltwater channels, drumlins and an esker formed during the late Wisconsin Glaciation. The proposed corridor was carefully designed to link potential support facilities for hikers such as trailheads, water, parking, camping, groceries, and phones at such places as the City of Cornell, Otter Lake County Park, and Pike Lake. Today, approximately 23 miles of the Ice Age Trail has been constructed in Chippewa County and are located west of the City of Cornell through the

Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area. The *preferred alternative* would allow an additional 22-25 miles of Ice Age Trail to be constructed from the City of Cornell to the Taylor County line.

Averaging 3-5 miles wide, the proposed corridor is a “zone of opportunity” which defines the area where the trail may be located. For landowners who are interested in allowing the Ice Age NST passage across their lands, the partners can work with them either by direct purchase (fee simple or conservation easement) or through handshake agreements. Lands purchased for the Ice Age NST by public agencies or non-profit organizations may be eligible for funding assistance under the Wisconsin State Stewardship Program and Federal grant programs. The partners do not want to acquire all of the land within the corridor. The intention is to acquire an approximate 50-1,000 foot wide trailway for the Ice Age NST. In some areas, more land may be desired to preserve outstanding resource features or to accommodate the wishes of the landowner. This width of trailway provides for a high quality hiking experience for the public while maintaining a buffer for neighboring landowners. **All land transactions are made on a willing-seller basis only.**

Your land is within the proposed trail corridor either because of the glacial features on your property or to provide the possibility of a continuous trailway. Including your land in the proposed corridor does not necessarily mean there is an interest in acquiring it. If you should choose to sell your land to one of the public or private partners involved in the Ice Age NST project, they will be able to enter into negotiations. You are under no obligation to participate in the Ice Age NST project.

After the open house meetings, a *Draft Ice Age NST Corridor Plan and Environmental Assessment* will be completed, which discusses the environmental and sociological effects of the trail’s development. This document will be available for a 30-day public review on-line and at city and town halls, and local libraries.

Enclosed for your information are the following:

- Maps showing the location of the proposed Ice Age NST corridor in Chippewa County and possible route options within it
- Comment sheet to return to the National Park Service office. (You also may go online to review maps and provide comments at <http://www.nps.gov/iatr>)
- Yellow notice describing presentations and hike at open house meetings
- Ice Age NST brochure

We encourage you to attend the open house meetings and learn more about the Ice Age NST Corridor Planning Process for Chippewa County. If you have any comments or questions, please contact the National Park Service office at 608-441-5610 or the Ice Age Trail Alliance in Cross Plains at 608-798-4453.

Sincerely,



Pamela Schuler
Manager, Ice Age NST
National Park Service



Mike Wollmer
Executive Director
Ice Age Trail Alliance



Brigit Brown
State Trails Coordinator
Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources

