

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

3.B.3.

**SUBJECT:** Approval of the Langlade and Marathon Counties Ice Age Trail Corridor Plans

**FOR:** December, 2014 Board meeting

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Dan Sculler, Director; and Jeff Prey, Program and Policy Analyst - Bureau of Parks and Recreation

**SUMMARY:**

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is both a federal and state designated trail. The trail is primarily intended for hiking but other recreation uses are also allowed on portions of the trail.

The corridor plans for Langlade and Marathon Counties were last approved in 1983. These revised corridor plans incorporate new information and current understanding of management needs as required by Wisconsin State Statute 28.04. The plans also call for a refinement of the project acquisition goals.

For Langlade County the recommended corridor provides a potential to link a number of public recreation and conservation properties that include white cedar dominated seepage swamps, spring ponds, deep kettle lakes and scenic overlooks of the Antigo Flats, Parrish and Summit Moraines. No state designated ice age trail land exists in Langlade County. To complete this 25 mile segment, a 600 acre project acquisition goal is recommended, with a cost estimate of approximately \$2.5 million for land acquisition and trail construction.

For Marathon County the recommended corridor may connect a number of local and state recreation and conservation areas that include extensive upland and lowland forest communities along with scenic overviews of the glacial landscape. In Marathon County, 1214.86 acres of state designated ice age trail lands exist. To complete the 30 mile segment, an additional 700 acres is recommended, for a project acquisition goal of 1914.86 acres, with a cost estimate of approximately \$3.1 million for land acquisition and trail construction.

Extensive public input was part of the planning process that included numerous local meetings along with statewide review of the plans.

**The plans are housed on the National Park Service site. Links to the plans are at:**

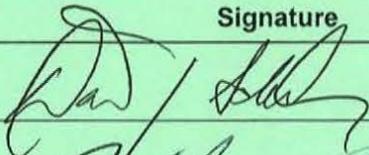
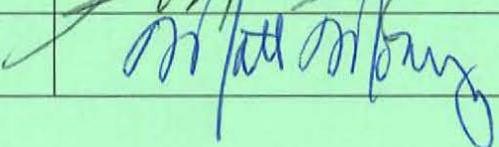
**Langlade County:** <http://www.nps.gov/iatr/parkmgmt/langladecpp.htm>

**Marathon County:** <http://www.nps.gov/iatr/parkmgmt/marathon-county.htm>

**RECOMMENDATION:** Board Approval per NR 44.04(3) Master development, adoption and public involvement. Plan Approval.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):**

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Background memo          | <input type="checkbox"/> Type name of attachment or type N/A if not applicable |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Type name of attachment or type N/A if not applicable |

Approved by	Signature	Date
Dan Schuller, Bureau Director		11-10-14
Kurt Thiede, Administrator		11-10-14
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		11/12/14

DATE: November 5, 2014

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Secretary Cathy Stepp

SUBJECT: Ice Age Trail Corridor Plans for Langlade and Marathon Counties

The Ice Age Trail is a National Scenic Trail located entirely within Wisconsin. The trail is also one of 43 designated Wisconsin state trails, and the only one specifically designated as a "State Scenic Trail."

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and its partners, the National Park Service and the Ice Age Trail Alliance cooperatively work together to develop and maintain the Ice Age Trail. Additionally the department works with many volunteers, county and local governments and private land owners to continually open new sections of the trail.

Establishment of the Ice Age Trail is done by corridor planning that inventories the significant geologic, biologic and cultural resources important to the trail. This process designs alternatives around these features, obtains public input, and recommends a preferred corridor that is typically two to five miles wide. This width is needed for acquisition and easement opportunities to establish the trail, since all landowner participation in the Ice Age Trail is voluntary. Each trail segment is developed as funding allows. The goal is a continuous completed trail.

A comprehensive Ice Age Trail Plan that defined Langlade and Marathon County corridors was approved in 1983. These updated corridor plans incorporate new information and current understanding of management needs as required by Wisconsin State Statute 28.04. The plans also call for a refinement of the project acquisition goals.

These acquisition goals are established to meet the current requirements of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship legislation which places a limit on department acquisition goals. Working with the Ice Age Trail partners, a trailway width analysis was performed. A trailway is the trail tread (typically two feet or less) plus a buffer to protect the viewshed, provide for a safe route and allow for other potential recreation opportunities. Trailways ranging from 100-660 feet were analyzed for both counties.

For Langlade County a 200 footwide trailway width is recommended within the larger corridor that provides a potential to link a number of public recreation and conservation properties that include white cedar dominated seepage swamps, spring ponds, deep kettle lakes and scenic overlooks of the Antigo Flats and Parrish and Summit Moraines. No state designated ice age trail land exists in Langlade County. To complete this 25 mile segment, a 600 acre project acquisition goal is recommended.

For Marathon County a 200 footwide trailway width is recommended within the larger corridor that can connect a number of local and state recreation and conservation areas that include extensive upland and lowland forest communities along with scenic overviews of the glacial landscape. In Marathon County, 1214.86 acres of state designated ice age trail lands exist. To complete the 30 mile segment, an additional 700 acres is recommended, for a project acquisition goal of 1914.86 acres.

Cost estimates for trail construction average \$25,000 a mile with volunteers playing a key part of this construction process. Average prices for easements or fee title acquisition range from \$2,200 - \$3,500 per acre. Using these numbers, land acquisition and trail construction for Langlade County is \$2.5 million, and for Marathon County is \$3.1 million.

By establishing Ice Age Trail county level project acquisition goals, it allows the department to establish a more accurate cost estimate, while meeting the intent of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship legislation and providing outdoor recreation for the citizens of Wisconsin.