

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Ice Age National Scenic Trail

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: IATR

Year: 2007

**Vision Statement**

The National Parks Centennial provides an opportunity to look beyond the day-to-day work of establishing and managing the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. It gives us the opportunity to review the long-range goals of preserving nationally-significant glacial landscapes and providing superlative recreational and educational experiences to the many visitors of the Trail and Reserve.

The Centennial Vision for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail is to substantially complete the permanent protection of a Trailway (corridor of lands) for the Trail and to establish educational/interpretive facilities on the lands secured for this purpose at the interpretive site in Dane County, Wisconsin. Approximately 750 miles of the 1200-mile trail route lack the permanent protection that would ensure the public's right to use and enjoy the trail for generations to come. Land for a major interpretive site have been acquired, but funds have not been available to establish interpretive facilities.

The Centennial Vision for the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve is to design, construct, and open to public use an educational/interpretive center in the Devil's Lake State Park unit of the Reserve and rehabilitate interpretive exhibits and media at the Interstate and North Kettle Moraine units. Devil's Lake is the most visited unit of the Reserve (approximately 2 million visits annually), yet it lacks interpretive facilities present in three other Reserve units. A huge opportunity to tell the story of continental glaciation and its effects upon the land and our use of the land is being missed. Obsolete and dilapidated exhibits at Interstate and North Kettle Moraine do not communicate the story in ways that are meaningful to today's visitors.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Thomas L. Gilbert, Superintendent

Site: IATR

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By permanently protecting a corridor of lands for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the National Park Service and its partners will help to ensure that premier outdoor recreation opportunities--exploring the glacial landscapes of Wisconsin by day hiking or long-distance backpacking--will be available for present and future generations. The trail established within these lands will be built and maintained to the highest levels of sustainability.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: IATR

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail volunteers, organized and directed by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, will remove invasive species from Trail lands and promote the re-establishment of prairie and oak savanna communities through prescribed burning and other practices.

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Site: IATR

STEWARDSHIP

**Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The National Park Service will assist its partners in designing and constructing an educational interpretive center to tell the story of continental glaciation at the Devil's Lake State Park Unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. State-of-the-art interpretive exhibits and audio-visual programs would be developed and installed in the new interpretive center

Devil's Lake State Park is Wisconsin's most heavily visited state park, receiving nearly 2 million visitors annually. It has some of the most spectacular glacial geology features in the entire state. Presently the park only has a "Nature Center" which is a converted former golf course club house. It is extremely small, not properly heated, and must be closed November through April. It does not meet accessibility standards. Exhibits are make-shift and out dated. There is no auditorium or classroom space.

A new interpretive center will greatly improve and increase opportunities to tell the Devil's Lake Ice Age story. It will incorporate geological, natural history and human history exhibits, but the main feature will be the view to the magnificent bluffs surrounding the lake.

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STEWARDSHIP

**Encourage children to be future conservationists.**

**Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Protecting and completing the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and establishing a major interpretive facility in the Devil's Lake State Park unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve will bring children in closer contact with the natural world around them, providing them with understanding and appreciation for the environment and the natural processes that operate within it. Through hiking and interpretive experiences, children will gain an understanding that they are part of this environment and therefore have a stake in its sustainability and preservation.

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Site: IATR

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level--federal, regional, state, local--to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

By permanently protecting a corridor of lands for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the National Park Service and its partners will help to ensure that premier outdoor recreation opportunities--exploring the glacial landscapes of Wisconsin by day hiking or long-distance backpacking--will be available for present and future generations. The trail established within these lands will be built and maintained to the highest levels of sustainability. Trails will be built to meet current accessibility standards.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The National Park Service will assist its partners in designing and constructing an educational interpretive center to tell the story of continental glaciation at the Devil's Lake State Park Unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. State-of-the-art interpretive exhibits and audio-visual programs would be developed and installed in the new interpretive center

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RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is built and maintained by an extensive network of volunteers who are members of the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation. In Fiscal year 2006, they provided more than 50,000 hours of volunteer service to the Ice Age Trail. The National Park Service encourages and supports the efforts of the Foundation volunteers through the Challenge Cost Share program and other forms of assistance.

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Site: IATR

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Design and construction of an educational interpretive center at the Devil's Lake State Park unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve will significantly increase the opportunities for visitors and school groups to learn about the forces of continental glaciation that shaped the landscape of Wisconsin and North America, and that continue to shape our lives today through those landscapes.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail and Ice Age National Scientific Reserve are two national park areas that are lesser known than the more prominently promoted National Park System units, yet they provide important opportunities for recreational and educational experiences that connect people to the land. Working with partners to complete protection of lands and construction of the Ice Age Trail, and establish major educational facilities in the Ice Age Reserve will make these areas and the opportunities they provide more visible to citizens of and visitors to our country.

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Site: IATR

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By assisting its partners in designing and constructing an educational interpretive center to tell the story of continental glaciation at the Devil's Lake State Park Unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve, the National Park Service will provide educators with state-of-the-art interpretive exhibits and audio-visual programs to which they can bring school groups. The interpretive centers already established in other units of the Reserve are heavily used by school groups for environmental education programs year-round. Over 630,000 people live within 50 miles of Devil's Lake State Park.

The current "Nature Center" is a converted former golf course club house. It is extremely small, not properly heated, and must be closed November through April. It does not meet accessibility standards. Exhibits are make-shift and out dated. There is no auditorium or classroom space. A new interpretive center will greatly improve and increase opportunities to tell the Devil's Lake Ice Age story. It will incorporate geological, natural history and human history exhibits, but the main feature will be the view to the magnificent bluffs surrounding the lake.

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EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Protecting and completing the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and establishing a major interpretive facility in the Devil's Lake State Park unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve will bring children and adults into closer contact with the natural world around them, providing them with life-long learning experiences that expand their understanding and appreciation for the environment and the natural processes that operate within it. Through hiking and interpretive experiences, children and adults will gain an understanding that they are part of this environment and therefore have a stake in its sustainability and preservation.

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Site: IATR

**EDUCATION**

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

One of the outstanding characteristics of America's long-distance National Scenic Trails is the way they bring the National Park Service--its mission, its values, its resources--closer to so many people as they thread their way through our rural landscapes and our communities. Many more people have a connection with the National Park System on a "local" basis because of this characteristic and their sense of ownership is thereby enhanced. Thus, for many people exploring the Ice Age National Scenic Trail is exploring their local areas, thereby increasing their appreciation of the trail and its resources and fostering a connection with our national system of parks and trails. The goal of significantly completing the protection of lands for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail will make this local connection a "reality" for those who live near it.

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