

Dear Senator Breske,

I am a volunteer and member of the Superior Lobe Chapter (SLC) of the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation (IAPTF). The chapter builds and maintains the Ice Age Trail in Barron, Washburn and part of Rusk Counties. You may recall that I testified at the Committee's meeting held in Merrill, on November 10, 2006.

The meeting minutes shows my testimony indicated the IAPTF has been denied recreational easements because landowners fear that a pedestrian trail would attract illegal ATV traffic. Although I mentioned this fact, this problem is not the primary reason for my concern or why I made the trip to Merrill. Consequently I am restating my concern as follows:

I fully concur with the Committee's quest for expanding ATV riding opportunities in Wisconsin. As a member of the IAPTF ad hoc ATV committee I participated in drafting the Memorandum of Understanding between the Wisconsin ATV Association and the IAPTF that agrees to mutual cooperation and support of each other's legitimate activities.

Although I agree with developing more ATV riding opportunities, the dedicated trail building and maintenance volunteers in our chapter do not want to continue paying for this expansion. We are paying for ATV expansion in the following ways:

- ◆· Illegal ATV traffic is chewing up the Ice Age Trail. Wisconsin's tiny ATV registration numbers provide little opportunity to apprehend violators as is the case in many states and Canadian provinces where large license plates are used.

- ◆· Hikers are discouraged from using trails intended for their use because of disagreeable dusty and hazardous conditions created by illegal ATV traffic. In three separate incidents on the Tuscobia Segment of the Ice Age Trail, five hikers found themselves in harms way of speeding and illegal ATV traffic. All five hikers were subject to near misses and in at least one instance an ATV skidded out of control.

- ◆· **Three times sections of the Ice Age Trail on state owned land have been taken over by ATVs** forcing hikers to walk along the shoulders of a busy state and moderately busy county highway. The ATV takeovers have jeopardized two

tourism promotional programs where a number of innkeepers and businesses made a monetary investment.

- ◆ Even when one of our members made a specified financial contributions for hikers, the funds were utilized for the benefit of ATV users. A donation of \$2000 was given to the State of Wisconsin by a SLC IAPTF member with the specific written proviso that the money be used for the benefit of hikers in Barron County. Instead the contribution was used for the benefit of ATV riders in Washburn County.

Our local volunteer trail builders and maintainers have no gas tax transfer funds to build and maintain the Ice Age Trail. Over five years ago when the Superior Lobe Chapter was founded, the members raised money for some tools by holding a silent auction where members bought each others rutabagas and zucchinis. Although gas tax transfer revenue has funded resurfacing on much of the 64-miles of the motorized portion of the Tuscobia State Trail, our chapter has had to make personal contributions and raise funds from private sources to start resurfacing the non-motorized portion of The Tuscumbia State Trail.

Our Chapter is not asking for any ongoing gas tax transfer or special funding for expansion. However we do ask that State regulations, policies and practices be revised to make our Chapter whole for the destruction and confiscation of Ice Age Trail. We respectfully request the following:

1. Require all ATVs to display license plates with legible registration numbers and/or letters.
2. Establish an effective ATV enforcement program with meaningful penalties.
3. **Allocate a portion of ATV funding to compensate the IAPTF for the cost of developing an alternate trail for the approximate 5-miles of Ice Age Trail that was turned over to ATVs.**
4. Establish a restitution fund to pay to rehabilitate portions of the Ice Age Trail that has been damaged by illegal ATV use.

If the Ice Age Trail continues to be to be jeopardized by the present policies, practices and conditions, there is no way that we can build the Ice Age Trail through Barron, Rusk and Washburn Counties to the standard of a national and state trail.

I fervently hope that the Committee will recommend actions that will make it possible for SLC volunteers to work toward realizing the vision and mission statements of the IAPTF which are as follows:

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 Glaciations;
- Provides a natural corridor that protects habitat and enables the movement of wildlife;
- Serves as a lifelong educational resources;
- 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;
- Links the history and diverse human cultures of the land that we call Wisconsin.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation is to create, support and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail as a thousand -mile foot trail tracing Ice Age formations across Wisconsin.

Thank you for considering the needs and values of hikers and those working toward preserving Wisconsin's Ice Age Legacy. I very much appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee. You, Elizabeth Piliouras and your committee have certainly given all stakeholders a wonderful opportunity to air problems with the State Trail System and make suggestions on how Wisconsin can continue to lead the nation in conservation and recreational trails.

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