



THE NPS • GROUNDWORK USA GREEN TEAM • PARTNERSHIP NEWS

SUMMER 2009

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

GREEN TEAMS MILWAUKEE & GARY

EXPERIENCE DUNES & KETTLES ON THE ICE AGE TRAIL

15,000 YEARS AGO, Wisconsin (and most of the United States) lay completely buried under ice. Today, though the glaciers are gone, the geological evidence of their existence remains and is the inspiration for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a 1,000 mile trail that is beginning to wind its way through Wisconsin. And of these eventual 1,000 miles of trail, 100 feet were built by the combined efforts of the Groundwork Green Teams from Gary, Indiana and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The collaboration of the Green Teams had actually begun the week before, when the Groundwork Milwaukee Green Team visited Gary. As Mary Beth Driscoll, Executive Director of GW Milwaukee explained, “One goal of the *(continued on back)*”

← →
The National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program (RTCA) and Groundwork USA have teamed up to engage teens from diverse backgrounds with their local National Parks as part of the Groundwork Green Team Program.

For more information visit: www.groundworkusa.net



Green Team Program is to engage team members from different communities with each other to learn about each other's community, share experiences, participate in joint service projects and see they are part of a broader effort." In this spirit, on the morning of their visit to Gary, the Groundwork Gary Green Team led them on a tour of the projects they had been working on in their community and at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. In the afternoon, the Green Teams participated in the Picnic at Miller Woods interpretive program at Indiana

"I really liked this trip because we were able to see what the Milwaukee Green Team was working on and we were able to join them to help. I didn't know that the Ice Age Trail existed so, I felt that this was a good choice. It was great to learn and to have the hands on work- getting down and dirty building the trail."

Green Team Gary Member

Dunes. The teams hiked and lunched with a National Park Service Ranger, who discussed ecosystems and identified plants along the trail. After lunch, the members of Green Team Gary showed off and discussed presentation boards they had made about their work. As Debbie Hammond, Program Manager at GW Gary said, "It was a day of coming together."

The next week found the two teams together again, hard at work on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. The trail is being built along the geological remains of the three glaciers that covered Wisconsin, which formed, among other things, Green Bay and Lake Michigan. "As the glaciers moved they pushed things in front of them," Driscoll explained, "like pushing your toes into sand." Some of the things they pushed up are small rolling hills called Kettle Moraine, along which the trail runs. The portion built by the Green Teams was on the Northern Kettle.

Building a sustainable trail (the one the Green Teams collaborated on should remain stable for the next 15 years,) is no easy business. As Driscoll explained, "sustainability" on a trail boils down to the amount of water that makes it onto the trail. If the water doesn't get a chance to pool on the trail, there is less erosion over time.

Trail blazing, Driscoll continued, involves a lot of clearing and leveling. First, the trail area is cleared of rocks, jutting tree roots, and leaves. Then a two foot wide swath is sliced, called "cutting the bench. And, Driscoll laughed, "you discover more rocks and

roots, and when you get rid of those, it's not smooth anymore, so you have to smooth that out. The next step is a process known as "trimming back the slope," so the slope leading down to the trail is smooth, with the idea that water won't hit the trail as hard, and will gently flow off. The down-slope side of the trail is

just as important as the upslope side. "You don't want an edge there either," explained Driscoll. A fire rake, sometimes known as a McLeod, is used to gently rake some soil off the down-slope critical edge. An interesting side note: the McLeod is exactly a foot long, so the trail should be two McLeods wide. As Hammond said, "It was hard work, but [the Green Teams] really enjoyed it."

GLOSSARY OF GLACIAL TERMS:

Moraine: a ridge formed by gravel, sand, and boulders, carried and deposited by the glacier. They range from 10 to 300 feet tall.

Erratic: A smooth, rounded boulder carried by a glacier.

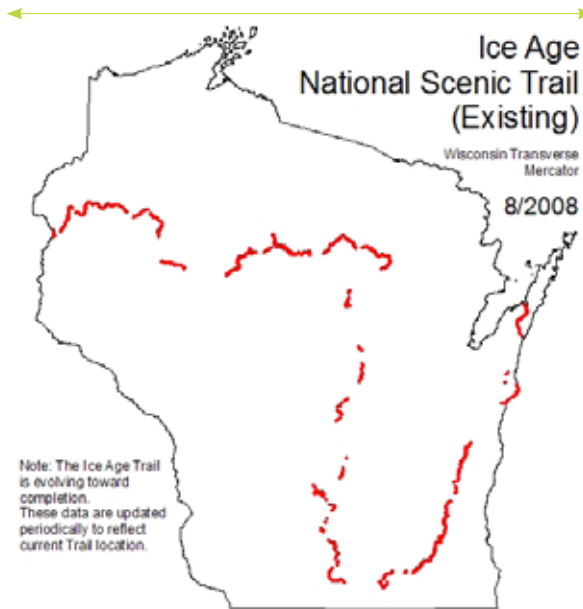
Kettle: A depression made when large blocks of ice deposited underground melted. Some are over 100 feet deep.

Kame: A conical hill, formed from sand and gravel deposited by streams of water that flowed down the sides of a glacier.

Dell/Dalle: A gorge cut by a torrent of water melting off a glacier

Outwash plains: A sandy plain formed by the water from a melting glacier

MILWAUKEE & GARY GREEN TEAMS ARE JUNIOR TRAIL BUILDERS!



The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a 1,000 plus mile long trail completely within Wisconsin. It roughly follows the terminus (or outline) of Wisconsin's last glacier, which retreated over 10,000 years ago. About 60% of Wisconsin's residents live within 20 miles of the trail.