Chapter 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CORRIDOR PLANNING PROCESS IN SOUTHERN LANGLADE COUNTY

When Congress authorized the Ice Age NST in 1980, it directed that "[o]verall administration of the trail shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior.…" The Secretary delegated this administrative responsibility to the National Park Service.

The purpose of preparing this Corridor Plan and Environmental Assessment is to carry out the Secretary's responsibility in Section 7(a)(2) of the National Trails System Act [16 U.S.C. 1246(a)(2)] to "select the rights of way for [the Ice Age] national scenic [Trail] …" The act goes on to specify: "That in selecting the rights of way full consideration shall be given to minimizing the adverse effects upon the adjacent landowner or user and his operation. Development and management of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for the specific area in order to ensure continued maximum benefits from the land.… In selecting rights-of-way for trail purposes, the Secretary shall obtain the advice and assistance of the States, local governments, private organizations, and landowners and land users concerned."

Selection of the route for the trail is needed to facilitate the first and most critical aspect of establishing the trail—securing lands on which the trail may be constructed. This work requires contacting individual landowners either to propose acquisition of some or all of their land or to ask permission for the trail to cross their land. To determine which landowners should be contacted for this purpose, a refinement of the general route designated by Congress is needed. It is the purpose of this plan to determine that more specific route by establishing a "Corridor of Opportunity" within which lands may be acquired for the trail, and to do so through an open process involving affected agencies and landowners as well as trail users and the general public.

Therefore, the objectives of the Corridor Planning Process are to: define a boundary within which Federal and State monies may be used to acquire lands for the trail, design possible route locations for the trail within those boundaries, and fulfill Federal and State environmental requirements by taking the proposed plan through a public review and complying with the Endangered Species Act and Historic Preservation Act. Of the 30 counties the Ice Age NST passes through, Langlade County is the twelfth county to go through this process.

The Corridor Planning Process for southern Langlade County began in March 2003 with a meeting of representatives from the NPS, WDNR, IATA staff and volunteers, Langlade County, and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. This group, better known as the "Core Team" was formed to oversee the planning process. Their task is to provide input to the NPS on conceptual ideas for a corridor and possible route options for the Ice Age Trail, and shepherd these ideas through the public review process.

The *Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail* provides general guidance on where to locate the trail. It states that the trail shall follow the terminal

moraine or glacial features left by the last glacial advance. To determine a location for the trail, three important elements are identified. They are the Corridor of Opportunity, Trailway, and Trail. (Also see Definitions of Terms: *Corridor of Opportunity*, *Trailway* and *Trail* in Chapter 8.)

The Corridor of Opportunity is the largest of these elements. It is defined by locating clusters of outstanding, interpretable glacial and biological features, public lands, as well as areas of continuous scenic beauty. After these features are mapped, their patterns typically reveal a very general, natural alignment for the trail. The width of the corridor is usually on a landscape scale of 3-5 miles, although in the case of large significant features it can be wider. The corridor includes desirable features for the user to walk or gaze upon, or to be preserved. Another reason the corridor is wide is to allow flexibility in working with landowners since participation in the project is voluntary.

The Corridor of Opportunity is also the area within which WDNR may acquire lands for the Trailway, provide Stewardship grants to others to acquire lands for the trail, and accept lands for permanent dedication. It also defines the area within which federal involvement in land protection and acquisition for the Ice Age NST may occur. Lastly, the corridor provides focus and direction to the trail's land protection program and partnerships.

Two other elements, the Trailway and Trail, fit within the corridor. The Trailway is the width or area of land that is managed for the purpose of the Ice Age NST. It includes the Trail and surrounding lands that are owned, leased, or managed as part of the Ice Age NST. These management purposes may include but are not limited to: creating a buffer for the trail to separate it from adjoining land ownerships and uses, and protecting scenic or significant geologic features or plant communities.

The Trail is the actual usable tread and surrounding space that is maintained for the purpose of passage along the trail route. The trail width may vary from 24 inches to 72 inches depending on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification—urban, rural/roaded natural, or semi-primitive. (See Appendix B—Trail Development and Management Standards.) All of the remaining Langlade County Ice Age NST to be built is located in a rural/roaded natural setting and will average 24-36 inches in width. Again, the location of the Trailway and Trail are dependent on landowners who are willing to be part of the Ice Age NST project.