

Friends of Hartland Marsh
July 15, 2000
First Meeting
Cottonwood Wayside

Introduce myself: Live in Waterville, retired, active in the IAT for 20 years, coordinator of this project

July 15, 2000 is going to be a historic day: It will go down in local history as the first meeting of the Friends of Hartland Marsh AND you will be known as a charter member!

Start with History:

Owned by Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation and the Village of Hartland. IAT owns 140 acres and the village owns 25 acres of marsh and 30 acres of upland including this park. 20 acres of the marsh are privately so total marsh area is 185 Acres.

Also 2.3 miles of the Bark River runs through the marsh between Cotton Ave and Hwy 83.

The Hartland Marsh Project was the brain child of former Congressman Henry Reuss who was one of the founders of the Ice Age Trail.

Henry decided that something should be done with the marsh. It is a valuable resource and needs protection. His goals were:

- to protect and improve habitat for native plants and animals
- encourage educational and passive recreational use of the site (not a park)
- provide community support

that is why you are here today to provide that support. We are asking you to long term community support to this project.

What has been done so far:

This site: Cottonwood Wayside and Ice Age Wetland

Village of Hartland has made the marsh accessible by building this wayside and providing a trail head to the marsh (we will walk the trail later today). They have done a wonderful job.

IAT- Butterfly garden, and put up a side with map and a dedication to John Muir, one of Wisconsin's early conservationist and founder of the Wilderness Society.

IAT also built a 1300' boardwalk over the marsh to an island. Boardwalk is part of a 1.25 mile loop trail from this parking lot.

I personally am taking on a project on the island. Restoring it to its former condition at time of settlement; Oak Opening or Oak Savanna. Large oak trees still exist on the island but brush has invaded and shaded out the prairie grasses and wildflowers. I want to restore the oak savanna by removing the brush and planting prairie seeds. 375 volunteer hours have already gone into cutting and piling brush. Still work to be done. Work done by members of the local chapter of the IAT, local citizens, Mitra company, and students from Arrowhead High School and Kettle Moraine High School.

A second project area is Maple Av. Wayside owned by the IAT. It consists of a steep sided hill that overlooks two ponds in the marsh. We named it the Aldo Leopold Overlook in honor of Wisconsin most prominent conservationist.

Just completed a asphalt parking lot and 600 foot handicap trail. (which will also have a observation deck extending into the marsh.) A trail has been cut along the crest of the hill and leads to a opening that overlooks the ponds. Two Leopold designed benches are being put up. Work done by Paul Meyer, as an Eagle Scout project.

Also the IAT itself will cross a small portion of the marsh on a boardwalk linking the existing IAT along Maple Ave. with the trail along Cottonwood Av. Across the road from where we are now. The trail continues to the south across HWY KE into Hawksnest Subdivision.

Other things: several wood duck houses and bluebird houses have been put up by Arrowhead High School (John Rhude)

Several local schools have raised and released special beetles to control Purple Loosestrife a wetland weed
A bird inventory is in progress and I am working a plant inventory.

Funding: Henry Reuss contributed \$25,000 toward the project. Handled through the IAP&TF in Milwaukee Office. Will run out. Need to raise funds.

FUTURE this is where you come in.

We still have lots of work to do to complete some projects and we need to be sure the trails and boardwalks are maintained. Birdhouses and benches will need to be replaced

Village of Hartland cannot take on this added work along with everything else they are doing.
Nor can the IAT take on the added burden/ They already have 40 miles of trail to maintain in the County.
Can't spend much time on this special project. Arrowhead High School will do what it can but you know how busy students and teachers are already.

That leaves the future of this project in your hands. This group will be essential to the long term survival of the project.

This is your backyard. You are the people who benefit from the marsh. Your lives are richer because the marsh is here.. Asking you to get involved by joining this friends group and contributing your time.

Handout; sign up sheet and a checklist of projects. Check the ones you are interested in. (read through the list)

Next step: Some one to clear trails and to weed the butterfly garden

We are planning a Dedication Ceremony for the Marsh on Sept. 9th in the AM.

May need help for that.

I will be setting up a series of workdays on every other weekend in the Fall I will mail it to you

Also need to schedule another meeting of this group. How often should we meet? Maybe once

A month for a while. Meet in the Village hall?