ICORE

Iron County Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts

Annual Meeting - Notes

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at **5:00 p.m.**

Mercer Community Center

2648W Margaret Street, Mercer, Wisconsin

In attendance: ICORE Board Members, Ian Shackleford (Vice President), Brenda Nelson (Secretary) Diane O'Krongly, and Gail Ondesky. Other ICORE members listed in attached sign-in sheet.

1. Call to order
   Ian Shackleford called the meeting to order at 5:02PM. Ian asked for round table introductions.
2. Approval of minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting
   Hedda Patzke motioned to approve the notes and Bethany Thomas seconded. Motion passed.
3. Treasurer's report
   Treasurer Mark Fedora could not attend and emailed a report to the Board. Ian Shackleford reviewed current financials as of early September. The current total ICORE balance is $204,280: Mercer Bike Trail fund is $150,000, Hurley Bike Fund is $46,831, and the general fund is $7449. Total expenses were $15,137. Gail Ondresky motioned to accept the treasurers report and Diane O'Krongly seconded. Motion passed
4. Membership update
   Gail Ondresky provided an update on the membership drive that new membership and renewals were at 39. Letters were sent out to all previously active members with their renewal date. We currently have 87 active ICORE memberships.
5. Election of board members
   All Board members and officers agree to a two-year alternating term. President Karen Hagemann, Vice-President Ian Shakelford, Secretary Brenda Nelson,

Board Member Bob Traczyk, and Board Member Gail Ondresky were elected in 2023. Board Members Mark Fedora, Bill Wagener, and Diane O'Krongly were elected in 2024 and not up for re-election. The board terms that were up in 2025 were as follows:

a. Board President
   Karen Hagemann is nominated for re-election
b. Board Vice President
   Ian Shackleford is nominated for re-election
c. Secretary
   Brenda Nelson was nominated for re-election
d. Board Member
   Gail Ondresky was nominated for re-election
e. Board Member
   Bob Traczyk declined re-nomination

Brenda Nelson motioned to accepted this slate of officers. Janet Dowdall seconded.

Motion passed.

6. 2024/20245Activity Reports:
   a. Hurley Nonmotorized Trail
      Ian Shackleford's report on the Hurley Montreal Trail is attached.
   b. Update on Mercer bike trail to WinMan
      Brenda Nelson's report on the Mercer Bike Trail is attached.

   c. 2025 ICORE Events
      Gail Ondresky reported that ICORE's goal is to have 4 prominent events each year – once per quarter. The next event will be a hike on Uhler trail with a pancake breakfast. Winter 2026 event will be another snowshoe to the Island campsite for a fire and hotdogs. Monday evening kayaks were held each week during the summer. We also have trail work bees and fall hikes and snowshoes (2 different levels of activity-level)).
      Other Iron County updates
      Bethany Thomas gave an update on the Heritage Chapter of the North Country Trail. Bethany shared a new glossy brochure. For 3 years we have been working on the section up to Gurney. This year we hired the WisCorp youth group to support this work. The new footbridge was built that connects Ashland County to Iron County. We now have 30 miles of finished trail that we are also responsible to maintain – including 4

campsites and footpaths to 2 newly named waterfalls. We are currently working on a land acquisition with the Park Service along the Montreal River and along Lake Superior.

Mike Shouldice talked about the SISU grant to MECCA and ICORE to do ski lessons for kids. The first year was a success and the activity will continue to this winter. We will be looking for volunteers to help. MECCA's Winterfest will be January 17th, 2026. This will be the first year with a 10K classic and Skate route (Skiatholon). These events will also be held virtually.

Dick Theide represented the Northwoods Health Foundation in Mercer. The clinic has hired its own Dr. The opening date will be December 15th, 2025. We are just awaiting the federal and state approvals.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15PM by Ian Shackleford. The meeting was followed by the potluck and the featured presentation on the Flambeau Scenic Wilderness Waters Area by historian Michael Huttle and the Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area Superintendent, Casey Baye.

ICORE Hurley Montreal Trail Update

10/19/2025

ICORE has been working to build a walking & biking trail between Hurley and Montreal since 2016. The trail would connect to the existing Iron Belle Trail, making a 13-mile trail linking five communities: Montreal, Hurley, Ironwood, Bessemer, and Ramsay. Working with Iron County Forestry & Parls and representatives from the motorized trails, we identified a route in 2019, largely using the former Soo Line railroad grade, now owned by CN (Canadian National). ICORE, the City of Hurley, and the City of Montreal have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the Trail. The City of Hurley would purchase the land, using funds

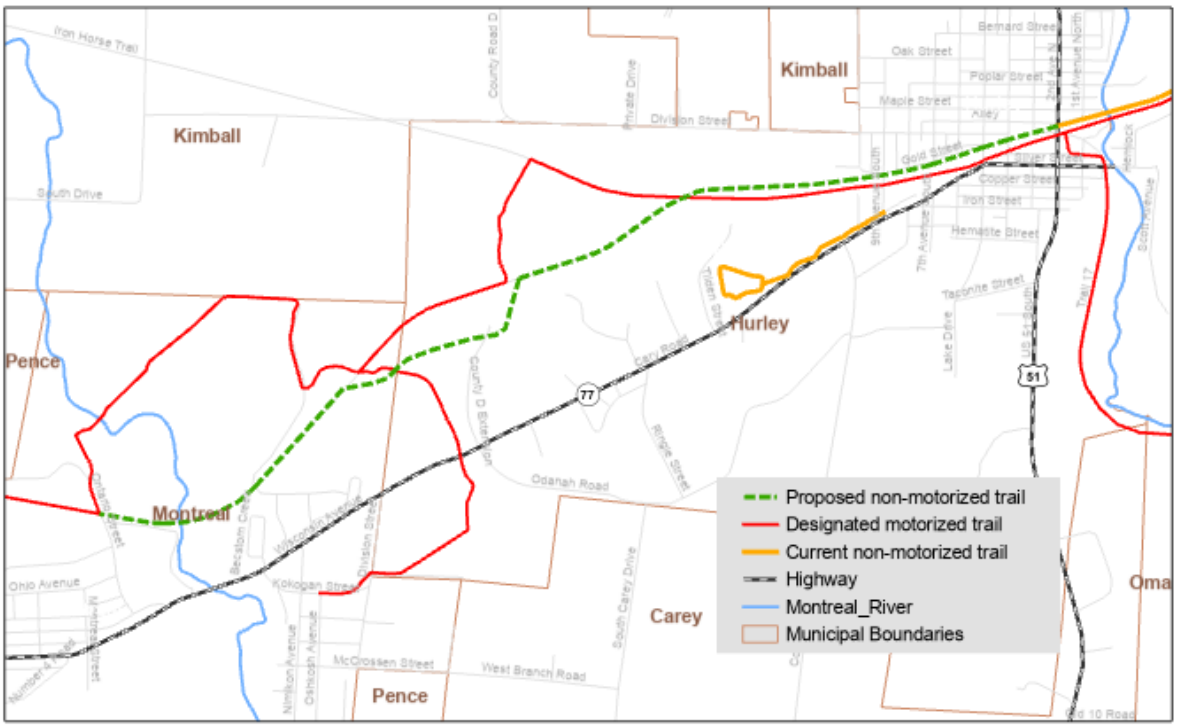
provided by ICORE. Hurley will give land in Montreal to the City of Montreal. In 2024 CN made their "final and best offer" to sell the land we need to the City of Hurley for $175,000. If the City of Hurley accepts the offer, we would have until 11/15/2026 to close the deal.

Accomplishments in 2025:

- $35,000 grant to ICORE from Enbridge for the Trail (12/8/2024).
- $82,655 grant (approximate) to the City of Hurley from the Wisconsin DNR for the Trail.
- Scott Williams Appraisal Inc. completed a new appraisal of the property.

ICORE is working with Associated Title on title insurance and Coleman Engineering on a survey of the property. Unfortunately, CN may not have as clear title to all the land as we thought. The DNR grant may only be used for acquiring land with clear title and title insurance.

We estimate we would need raise another **$55,000** to complete the CN land purchase by 11/15/2016. This would cover the remaining purchase plus costs for the survey, title insurance, closing costs, and revisions to the appraisal (subtracting land without clear title).



Mercer Bike Trail Expansion Update – October 2025

Overview:

- ICORE initiated the Mercer bike trail expansion committee in June of 2022. This committee investigated expanding the current bike trail an additional 9 miles from Carow Park to WinMan Trails creating a 24-mile loop through Mercer, adding to the current 52 miles of bike trail already established in Iron and Vilas counties called the "Heart of Vilas" trail system which has been designated as a National Recreational Trail.
- We applied for a DOT TAP grant feasibility study grant in 2023 which was awarded to us. Work began with Becher-Hoppe (chose engineering firm) in 2024 and was completed earlier this year.
- We were very pleased with the results from the feasibility study which was very comprehensive and included real estate analysis, Safe Routes to School, jurisdictional reports, public outreach, utility analysis, environmental impacts/permitting, funding analysis, surveys, trail plans, and structure plans.
    - We worked through some issues with the DNR concerning routing through wetlands areas in the Northern Highlands State Forest, some snowmobiling and ATV route potential conflicts, and an issue on right-away usage for a few of the private properties that required approval by the IRON County Board. I am happy to say that we now have all of these stakeholders on board with the proposed route.
- The resulting map and engineering report are available on the table to take a look at if you are interested.
    - The final trail route recommended was broken into 3 phases for cost, complexity, and jurisdictional control reasons.
    - Phase 1 is a stand-alone urban loop of Mercer, connecting the current trail through town to Carow Park, East on Cty Hwy J and around via Martha Lake Rd and Thompson Trail. This phase includes building the multi-use paved trail along Cty Hwy J as well as pavement marking and signage for the town roads and streets.
    - Phase 1 connects the current trail to Mercer businesses, the school, and the school forest and makes a 6.8-mile loop of Mercer.
- Mercer Town Board unanimously supported a town resolution to sponsor the Phase 1 TAP grant application for $1.4 Million which is due by Oct. 31st
    - If awarded, the grant will cover 80% of the cost and we must raise the remaining 20% ($280,000)
    - Target construction to begin in 2028

Fundraising:

- We held our 1st annual Mercer Bike Fest on August 2nd 2025
- It was a huge success
    - 233 registered riders (plus kids)
    - Over 300 in attendance
    - 26 volunteers
    - 32 local business who sponsored/donated
    - $50,000 raised from event and associated donations
- We also received a large $100,000 donation from an anonymous doner who donated after a review of the feasibility work
- Current capital campaign underway to raise the final $130,000 for Phase 1 construction
- The 2nd annual Bike Fest is planned for August 1, 2026. Registration begins January 1st 2026.

ICORE 10/21/25 Attendance

1. Gerry Westphal - Phillips Wi
2. Laura Bethany Thomas Iron Co.
3. Scott Samuels Viki Co.
4. RITA KARY IRON CO
5. ROBERT KARY IRON CO
6. Joe Kravetz Iwd Mich
7. Kris + John Bitner
8. Patt Christie + Mike Shouldice
9. Irvin + Sharon Leiterman
10. Tom SOUNTAG - IRON Co.
11. Gary + Linda Paffe
12. [illegible] + Jamie Dwdall - Iron Co.
13. Bernie Langreck & Peggy Bronsberg Mercer
14. EVERETT Sammie
15. RICHARD + WENDY THIEDE
16. Jon Olsen
17. Casey Baye
18. Ian Shackleford Gile WI
19.
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