**Some ideas for enjoying a winter hike safely;**

The Heins Farm Land trails are in good shape and with the large expanse of field, this area is great for now enjoying the outdoors in snow shoes and cross country skis, or lacking any snow, a good old hike. For a special treat, try a full moon night hike! Dress warm, bring a flashlight but try not to use it! Let your eyes get accustom to the moon light and with a full moon and some snow cover the well marked trails and open field will make a great evening out! Just make sure when you return home plan to have the hot chocolate handy. Also try to plan ahead and do web searches for the night sky, then try to find the constellations and planets. Just because it is cold and (hopefully) snowy, doesn’t meant you can’t get outdoors. The Heins Farm Parking lot is located at 197 Leadmine Rd.

Another great local trail is the Westville lake Community trail that encircles Westville Lake. This 1.8 mile trail includes a section of the Grand Trunk Trail and the Corps of Engineers keeps the trail head parking lot plowed in the winter. The parking lot is located at 125 Wallace Rd. In addition to the trails, there is a small hill that is good for sledding and with good cold temperatures; the Corps maintains an ice skating pond, located adjacent to the parking lot.

Remember that winter hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing are great exercise, and just like in the summer, bring some bottled water and stay hydrated. Your body will continue to lose water, and having some replacement is a must. Dress in layers, so as you “warm up” you can remove a layer, you will be more comfortable, and as you end the day, re layering will keep you warm, and finally, remember the phrase that when it comes to winter clothing “cotton kills”. Wearing cotton clothing in the winter, like jeans, or layers of cotton T shirts, is not dressing properly for winter time outdoor activities, cotton holds the moisture and does not evaporate off well, wet, damp clothing will require more of your body heat to keep warm, using up more of your bodies reserves.

Signs of shivering can be early stage indicators of possible hypothermia, a serious cold weather condition that can, if not treated, result in death very easily. Being a mile or more out on the trail, cold and wet, will surely discourage you from going out again and enjoying that winter trail. Trek safely, even in the winter!