

Indiana During the Great Ice Age

During the last million years, Indiana was covered by extensive continental ice sheets at least six different times, as evidenced by the sediments they left behind. Only portions of south-central Indiana escaped the effects of these massive ice invasions. Each glaciation, or glacial period, was followed by an interglacial period when the climate abruptly returned to warmer conditions similar to the present-day climate of Indiana.

Large mammals—mammoth, mastodons, giant beavers, and ground sloths, all now extinct—lived in Indiana dur-

ing the Ice Age. Skeletal remains of these and other extinct mammals have been found in lake sediments and bogs that formed after the glaciers receded about 19,000 to 12,000 years ago.

Glaciers and their deposits are studied closely by Indiana Geological Survey geologists because they provide insight into the past, but also because the sand and gravel left behind by the glaciers are a valuable resource. These deposits also are the source of drinking water for the northern part of the state.



This photo of a modern-day glacier gives us an idea of what Indiana looked like during the Pleistocene Epoch.