

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Summer 1972

Helen Turner - Editor

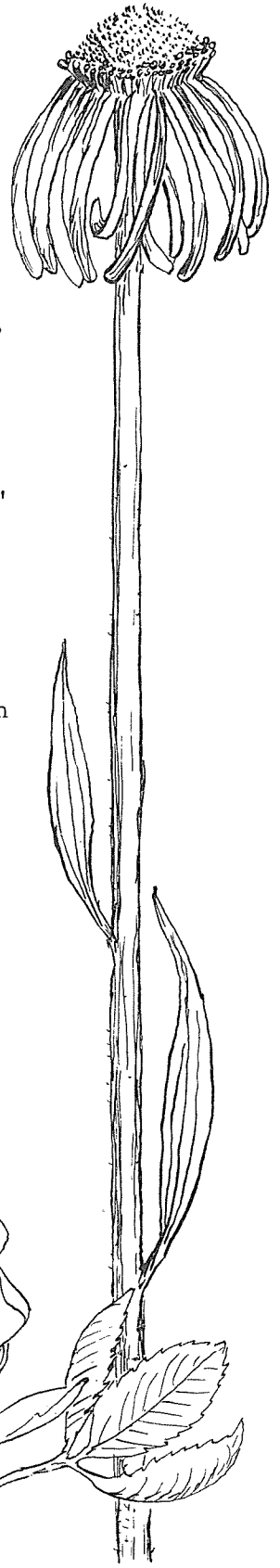
WHAT TO SEE

A prairie is a special community of plants that can thrive in our harsh climate with hot, beating sun and occasional long periods without rain. There are still some bits of prairie along the Path, if you can call a piece only 100 feet wide by that name! During the days of the C.A. & E. the prairie plants occupied a strip on either side of the tracks (except in wooded areas). Some people called them "weeds" and near intersections they planted garden flowers -- hollyhocks, day lilies, perhaps phlox and sweet rocket. Still other plants came in to fill an ecological niche, the "tramp" plants that have followed man around the world since the dawn of agriculture -- dandelions, plantains and other old-world weeds. They grew near the tracks where there was the greatest soil disturbance.

Last month I visited one of the prairie plots where I had found hollyhocks a few years ago. They are almost gone. The main garden plant I found hob-nobbing with *prairie dock*, *purple cone flower*, *wild rose*, and other native prairie flowers was *cemetery spurge* that gets its name from its persistence in old cemeteries.

The *dandelions*? They are still there but are prominent only on the edge of the hard-beaten path.

In this three way battle is the prairie going to win?



Dandelion

Cemetery spurge

Rose

Purple cone flower

WHO USES THE PATH

Summer days are here and hundreds of people are out on the Path. The four outings sponsored by the Prairie Path were great! *Bob Irwin* led 30 hikers from Wheaton to Elmhurst through the snow on April 1. April 29 was a beautiful day and 80 turned out for a nature walk led by *Dr. Leedy, Dr. Ware, Mrs. Lively* and *Mr. Mooring*. On May 20 there was a bird walk; seventy-five people came and saw 35 species of birds. On June 11 *Mr. Martellotto* led 35 on a bike ramble on the Path, through forest preserves and on country roads. If you would like a map of this 18 mile route write to us at 616 Delles Road, Wheaton, 60187.

These were our sponsored trips but there are many other groups using the Path. The boy scouts award about 100 patches each month to boys who walk the 10 mile section that is a part of *The Red Caboose Trail*. During their spring vacation a group from *Troop 16, Evanston*, led by Steve Meyers, back-packed from Elmhurst to Pratt's Wayne Woods, camping three nights in the nearby forest preserves. A biology class from *North Central College* had a field trip on the Path. These are only a few of the groups, and there are scores of individuals on the Path every nice day.

PROGRESS REPORT

Four communities have contributed importantly to the improvement or preservation of the Path this spring.

1. *Glen Ellyn*. May 15 was Prairie Path day. The people of Glen Ellyn, acting through their Board of Trustees, provided the labor and material and completed the laying of a 4 foot stone path from the village limits on the west to Hill Avenue on the east. At the same time more than 75 people helped with the annual clean-up.
2. *Wayne*. Funds raised by the citizens of Wayne paid for the spreading of limestone siftings from Smith Road to the E. J. & E. tracks. This completed the surfacing of the entire northwest branch in DuPage County!
3. *Elmhurst*. The Elmhurst Citizens for the Prairie Path worked to prevent the construction of two parking lots on the Path at York Road. They were successful!!
4. *Warrenville*. This group used the funds they had raised to buy five benches. They also planted rose bushes, a further step in the making of a little park at Batavia Road.

We do thank these communities and the many other individuals and organizations who help us care for the Path. We could use more active volunteers.

COOK COUNTY

There was a meeting on June 29 at the Hillside Village Hall to assess the possibility of the acquisition of the Cook County segment of the C. A. & E. right-of-way. It was attended by the mayors and other officials of *Bellwood, Berkeley, Hillside, and Maywood*, as well as representatives from the *Aurora Corp., Illinois Department of Conservation, Cook County Forest Preserve District, Council of Governments of Cook County, Open Lands Project, NIPC, No. Illinois Gas*, and the *Prairie Path board*. It was agreed that:

1. The mayors will make a new attempt to get cooperation from the Cook County Board of Supervisors.
2. The mayors will obtain a cost estimate for an independent appraisal of the cost of the property, and attempts will be made to secure the money for such an appraisal.

PUBLICITY

Did you see the program on CBS on June 14? This showed some of the right-of-way in *Cook County* that we are trying to get as part of the Path, and some shots of the Path in *Elmhurst*.

In addition to the talks given by our regular speaker, *Mrs. Sindt*, there have been several other presentations. *Mrs. Sobolik* spoke to the Elmhurst Garden Club. *Mr. Nemecek* represented us at the Colorado Symposium on Trails, and *Mrs. Perkins* told about our development to a group in Hendersonville, N.C.

NOTICE. The National Symposium on Trails will be held Oct. 13, 14, 15 in Colorado Springs. For further information call 655-5310.