

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1974

WHAT TO SEE . . . A POND

There is something beguiling in the term *wilderness*, and in summer many of us make vacation plans to experience one. But need a wilderness be vast and far away? It is defined by Webster as "a tract or region uncultivated . . .".

Walk northwest along the Path from Lincoln Street in Wheaton and round the curve. From the bridge over a little stream you can look south over extensive lawns and north over a tiny wilderness in "our own back yard". Some call it *Goose Island* and some *Lincoln Marsh*. Geologists might call it a glacial swale, a depression due to irregular deposition by the melting ice. Naturalists call it a filling lake, and the neighborhood children call it a fish-pond.

The area on the other side of the Path, to the north-east, is quite different. It is a wide, peaty marsh and it is probable that the pond we are considering is due, at least in part, to the fill laid for the C.A.&E. railway.

This pond has much to offer.

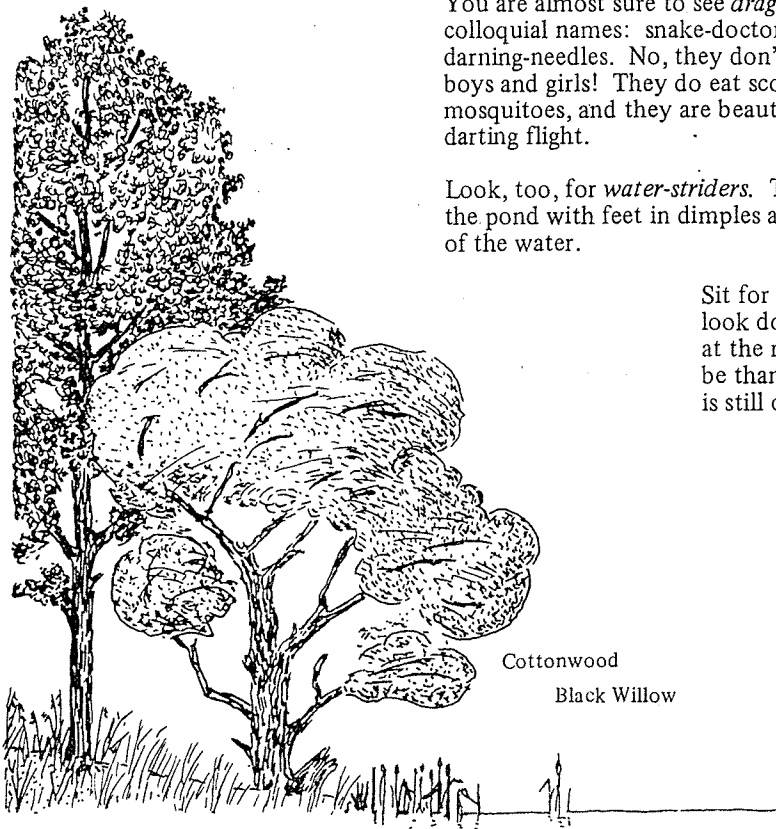
For the naturalist it is a picture of plant succession, outward from the submerged and floating vegetation, through *cattails*, *iris*, and *marsh grass* to *willows* and finally to *trees* that are at home on drier land.

There is full measure here for the bird-watcher. On a day last May it was teeming with birds: many *song-sparrows* and *cardinals*, *robins* and an *oriole* singing, a *mallard duck* splashing, *red-winged blackbirds* in abundance, probably nesting, and *goldfinches* "waving" their way down the Path.

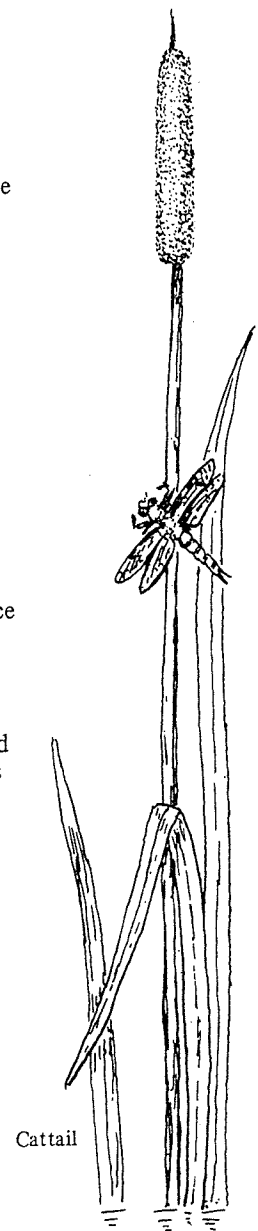
You are almost sure to see *dragon-flies*. They have many colloquial names: snake-doctor, horse-stingers, and Devil's-darning-needles. No, they don't sew up the ears of naughty boys and girls! They do eat scores of insects, including mosquitoes, and they are beautiful to watch in their rapid, darting flight.

Look, too, for *water-striders*. They skate over the surface of the pond with feet in dimples and without breaking the surface of the water.

Sit for awhile at the water's edge and look down at *goldfish* and *turtles* and at the reflection of sky and clouds and be thankful that this bit of wilderness is still ours to enjoy.



Cottonwood
Black Willow



Cattail

PROGRESS REPORT

DuPage County -- Mile by mile, in spite of unexpected problems, the Path is being surfaced with screenings. Last fall, Lombard voted money for the job, but snow came too early. Now their section is complete except for a short piece from Finley Road to the East DuPage. Cheers! Villa Park, too, has put down a beautiful strip. They had a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sunday, April 21. A drum-and-bugle corps of young folk added to the air of festivity.

The problem that has been delaying resurfacing from Orchard to Madison St. on the Aurora branch is the strike of cement truck drivers which has made it impossible to get limestone screenings. With the ending of the strike, work on the Path should start.

Kane County -- At present the north leg of the Path as a walking trail stops at Dunham Road. But not for long. Development by the Kane County Forest Preserve has begun. Men are at work surveying the Elgin branch from Dunham to Kenyon Road. Plans include a bridge over the drainage ditch south of Hwy. 25 and guard rails north of that road.

A MANPOWER crew under competent leadership will help by clearing brush and removing debris. Later our signs will be posted. At present this part of the Path is not ready for walkers or riders.

There are plans, too, to start work on the Batavia Spur, but arrangements must first be made to ensure Path continuity. Several parcels of land on that section are still privately owned.

Cook County -- We haven't given up yet!

ACTIVITIES ON THE PATH

Clean-up -- Spring clean-up is a massive job. Tons of litter are picked up, stacked, and eventually carted off. This year the work was done by hundreds of people. Taking part were: DuPage Audubon Society, Lombard Environmental Control Commission, "Holy Terrors" of St. James Lutheran Church of Western Springs, Villa Park Environmental Control Board, Wheaton-Warrenville High School students led by Barbara Johnson, Coordinating Board of the Garden Clubs of Glen Ellyn, Wheaton Friends of the Prairie Path and The Environmental Improvement Commission, 4-H Club of Oak Meadows, Pony Club and Wayne-DuPage Hunt, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of Warrenville. How's that for an impressive lot?!

Outings -- In spite of the weather (it rained on each of our Members Walks!), the Path is being used by many hundreds of people, on foot or bicycle. Mostly they come in small neighborhood or family groups, but there are planned outings, too. There must be many that we do not hear of. This is a small sampling: Lloyd Rich led the Chicago Audubon Society walk in May. Tri-City Youth Project (Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles) walked from Glen Ellyn to Jewell Road on May 26; their goal is to walk the entire 40 miles of the Path. Also on May 26, there was a bike ramble from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wheaton.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

For a long time walkers have had trouble in finding the access to Pratt's Wayne Woods from the Path. Now it has been beautifully marked by Allen Welter of Troop 26, Holy Angels Church, Aurora. His planning and cooperation with the Forest Preserve were part of an Eagle Scout project.

MEMBERSHIP

Many people, all volunteers, have worked long and hard to make the Path the beautiful recreation facility it has become. Some do the physical work, some the mailing and secretarial jobs, and some take part in public relations meetings. Thousands have helped financially through contributions and memberships. These are coming in now for the current year. Our thanks to you who have sent in your renewals, and a gentle reminder to those of you who haven't.