

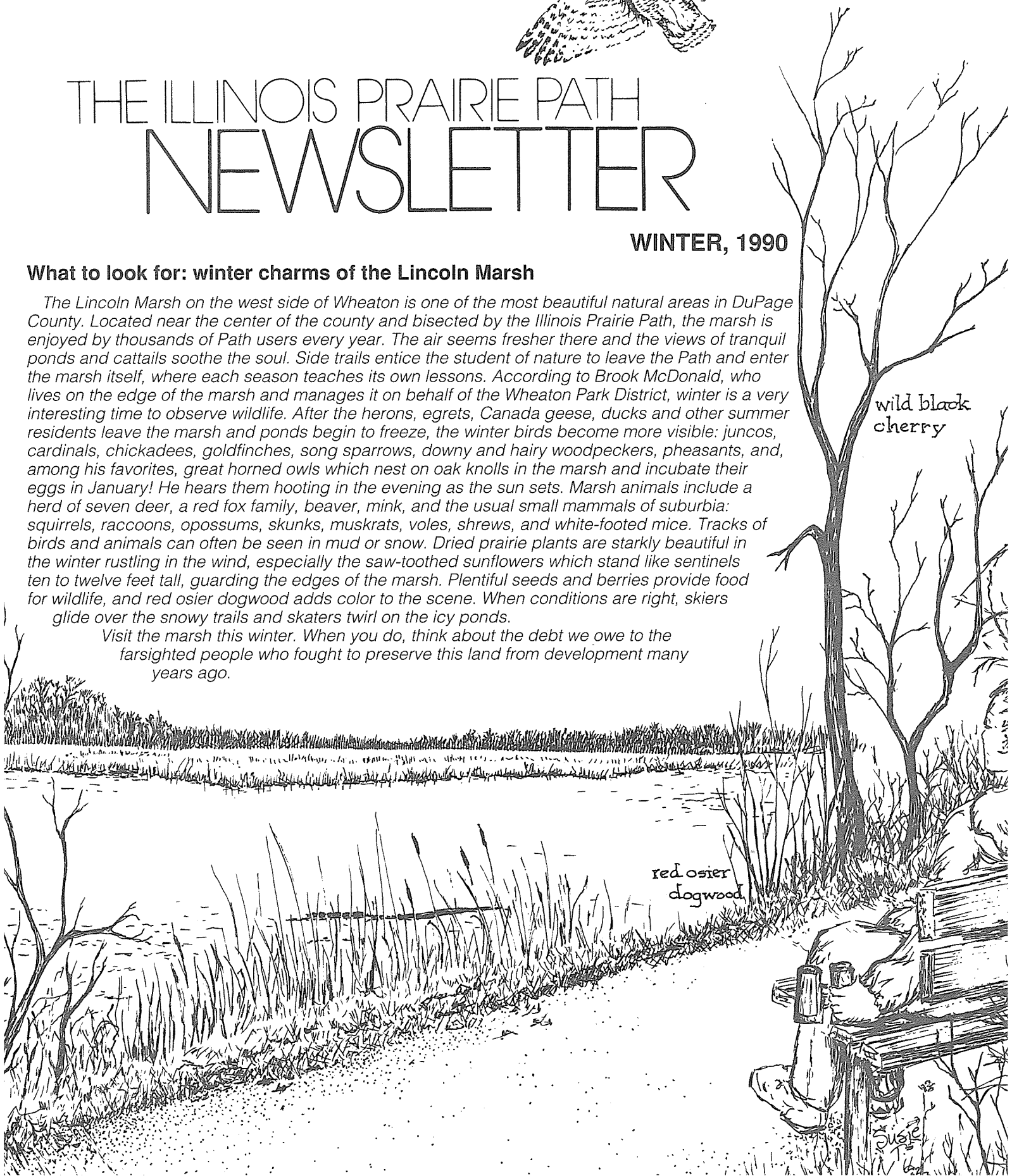
# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 1990

## What to look for: winter charms of the Lincoln Marsh

The Lincoln Marsh on the west side of Wheaton is one of the most beautiful natural areas in DuPage County. Located near the center of the county and bisected by the Illinois Prairie Path, the marsh is enjoyed by thousands of Path users every year. The air seems fresher there and the views of tranquil ponds and cattails soothe the soul. Side trails entice the student of nature to leave the Path and enter the marsh itself, where each season teaches its own lessons. According to Brook McDonald, who lives on the edge of the marsh and manages it on behalf of the Wheaton Park District, winter is a very interesting time to observe wildlife. After the herons, egrets, Canada geese, ducks and other summer residents leave the marsh and ponds begin to freeze, the winter birds become more visible: juncos, cardinals, chickadees, goldfinches, song sparrows, downy and hairy woodpeckers, pheasants, and, among his favorites, great horned owls which nest on oak knolls in the marsh and incubate their eggs in January! He hears them hooting in the evening as the sun sets. Marsh animals include a herd of seven deer, a red fox family, beaver, mink, and the usual small mammals of suburbia: squirrels, raccoons, opossums, skunks, muskrats, voles, shrews, and white-footed mice. Tracks of birds and animals can often be seen in mud or snow. Dried prairie plants are starkly beautiful in the winter rustling in the wind, especially the saw-toothed sunflowers which stand like sentinels ten to twelve feet tall, guarding the edges of the marsh. Plentiful seeds and berries provide food for wildlife, and red osier dogwood adds color to the scene. When conditions are right, skiers glide over the snowy trails and skaters twirl on the icy ponds.

Visit the marsh this winter. When you do, think about the debt we owe to the farsighted people who fought to preserve this land from development many years ago.



wild black  
cherry

red osier  
dogwood

Jusie  
1990

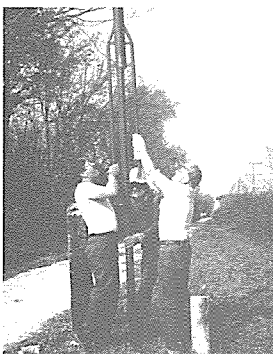
## Annual Meeting

Illinois Prairie Path President Paul Mooring convened the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the corporation at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, November 4, at the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton. An estimated eighty trail enthusiasts attended, filling the hall. The members voted to receive the treasurer's report as presented by Treasurer Joan Hamill (see page 4). Membership Chair Bonnie Hargis reported 1,234 paid members, 117 VIPs, who are sent our mailings as a courtesy, and 15 Life Members. Nominating Committee Chair Ken Moss announced that five board members' terms were expiring and that four, Len Chabala, Steve Hagar, Bonnie Hargis, and Paul Mooring, had agreed to serve again. Esther Cryderman was retiring from the board and Jim Stewart of West Chicago had been nominated to take her place. There being no additional nominations from the floor, the slate was elected by acclamation.

Jim Stewart has long been a good friend of the Path as a scout leader with Boy Scout Troop 54 of Naperville and Varsity Group 6005, Geneva. Many Eagle candidates under his direction have completed projects benefitting the trail. As a resident of West Chicago, he will also be our board's liaison with the city council as work proceeds on the completion of the Geneva Spur.

Esther Cryderman has enlivened our board meetings with her cheerful, helpful spirit and good counsel and we will miss her; but we hope to continue utilizing her artistic talents in the future. She has accepted the position of assistant curator of the Billy Graham Center Museum and Archives in Wheaton.

Path Vice President Bob Hargis, who had arranged the program, summarized various projects benefitting the Path during the year, many of which had been initiated and carried out by Boy Scouts, such as tree-planting in several areas and the installation of interpretive signs. He then introduced *Newsletter* Editor Jean Mooring who presented the annual slide program, illustrating many good and a few not-so-good events occurring on the trail this year. The good included our own Illinois Prairie Path projects: the Earth Day cleanup and IPP Earth Day booth at the DuPage County Center; installation by our volunteers of many IPP logo signs at street intersections and of display case stands at Eola Road (Batavia Junction) and at Bilter Road; landscaping by Larry Sheaffer's new firm, Prairie Partners, at the Path entrance west of County Farm Road (paid for by IPP); plus several slides showing Larry's "baby," the colorful and ever-changing prairie restoration at Volunteer Park, which was more beautiful than ever this summer, thanks to plentiful rainfall. Kudos also went to the DuPage County Division of Transportation which completed the wonderful bridge on the Geneva Spur in West Chicago this year, cured some erosion problems with short stretches of asphalt in Glen Ellyn and elsewhere, and surfaced with limestone a new 300-foot trail segment on the west side of Winfield Road south of Butterfield to eliminate a dangerous discontinuity at St. James Farm. The Illinois Department of Transportation completed a major Path improvement when it opened the new IPP bridge over Rte. 83 in Villa Park and finished landscaping the approaches to this bridge and to its other new bridge over nearby Salt Creek. Various civic groups participated by installing antique lamp posts along the Path in Elmhurst and a gazebo next to the Ardmore Avenue station in Villa Park. In Glen Ellyn the park district, village, and local Rotary Club collaborated



Steve Hagar, Bob Hargis, and Dick Wilson drive sign post into ground at Bilter Road on Batavia Spur.

on a complete reconstruction of Prairie Path Park with a gazebo, brick walks, trees, shrubs, and flowers, benches and picnic tables, a new fountain, new park sign, bike racks, and our own Prairie Path display case stand, which was moved from its previous location west of Main Street.



Larry Sheaffer and Wheaton firefighters control burn at Volunteer Prairie. Cyclists look on.



Cyclists pose beside new sign at Prairie Path Park, Glen Ellyn.

Relocation of the nearby gun club, expansion of the West Chicago Airport, and the bike route through West Chicago are all still pending.

3. The future of the Cook County section is in doubt. The DuPage Water Commission has defaulted on its promise to build a well-surfaced, continuous trail from First Avenue, Maywood, to Taft Avenue, Berkeley. The Illinois Department of Conservation will not and cannot manage the property and wants to turn it over to local authorities. No one knows who will be in charge.

The invited speaker for the day was Evan Kurrasch, director of the Springfield office of the Illinois Rails-To-Trails Conservancy. She complimented The Illinois Prairie Path volunteers for their trailblazing efforts which have become famous throughout the country. She said she likes the *Newsletter* and frequently makes copies of it to send out to other groups. Her talk covered some of the history of railroads and trails in Illinois from buffalo, Indian and pioneer paths to our present-day rail-trails. She discussed the recent Supreme Court decision



View of Prairie Path Park showing new gazebo and relocated IPP display case.