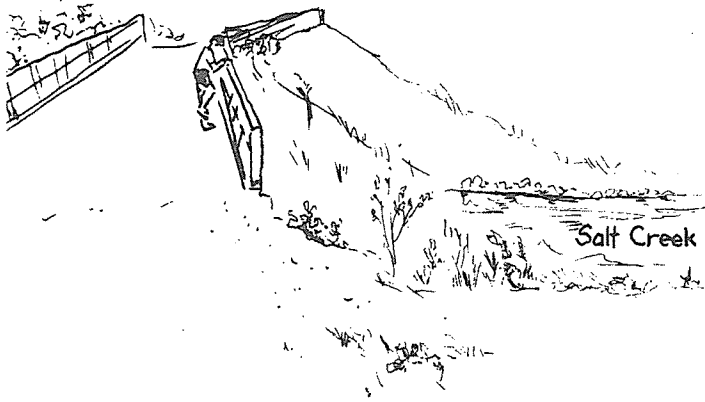


# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER



## What to look for: a railroad prairie remnant in Elmhurst.

Question: "What is the oldest living thing in Elmhurst?"

Answer: "It's a patch of prairie running between Salt Creek and Spring Road, known as the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie."

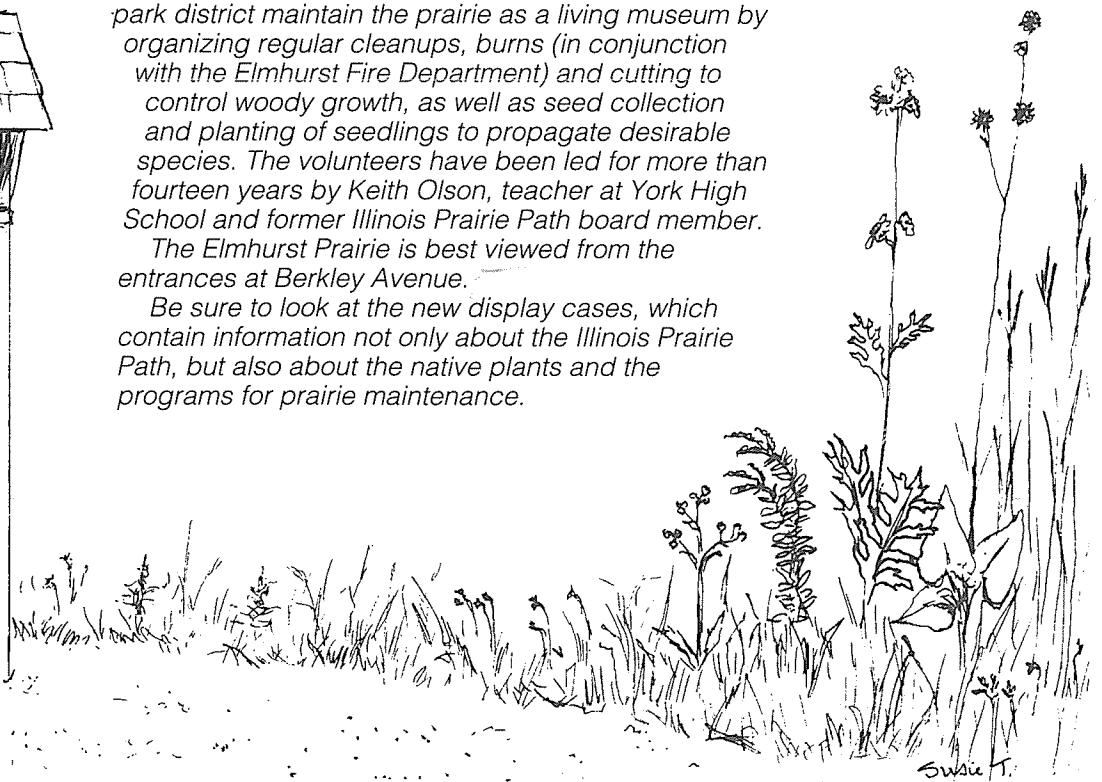
*This enticing bit of information, which may surprise some local residents, appears in a brochure recently published by the Elmhurst Park District. The park district owns and manages the Great Western Prairie and also manages the adjoining DuPage County-owned Elmhurst section of the Illinois Prairie Path. The brochure explains that the native grassland ecosystem with its complex mixture of plants, insects, birds and mammals, all well-adapted to withstand harsh extremes of temperature and moisture, covered the northern two-thirds of Illinois more than 5000 years ago.*

*Now less than one percent remains in its natural state. This particular remnant survived only because it lay between two railroads and could not be used by incoming settlers for any other purpose.*

*A Prairie Management Advisory Commission helps the park district maintain the prairie as a living museum by organizing regular cleanups, burns (in conjunction with the Elmhurst Fire Department) and cutting to control woody growth, as well as seed collection and planting of seedlings to propagate desirable species. The volunteers have been led for more than fourteen years by Keith Olson, teacher at York High School and former Illinois Prairie Path board member.*

*The Elmhurst Prairie is best viewed from the entrances at Berkley Avenue.*

*Be sure to look at the new display cases, which contain information not only about the Illinois Prairie Path, but also about the native plants and the programs for prairie maintenance.*



Swan T.

# PATH NEEDS LAND NORTH OF OLD COUNTY COURTHOUSE

**N**ow that the new DuPage County Courthouse has opened at the complex on County Farm Road, the members of The Illinois Prairie Path board of directors are asking when we will receive an answer to this letter dated March 11, 1991 from President Paul Mooring to Michael Formento, Chairman of the DuPage County Board Judiciary Committee:

"The members of the board of directors of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation have asked me to write to you in response to your call for citizen input regarding the future uses of the DuPage County Courthouse property. As you know, the 1070-foot-long section of the Illinois Prairie Path between Washington Street and Cross Street in Wheaton, just north of the county courthouse, is located on the Chicago and North Western Railroad right-of-way. Although, to the best of our knowledge, no agreement has ever formalized this arrangement, the railroad management has not objected to the Prairie Path's use of its property for more than



*Parked cars (left), a row of trees, sloping ground, and a railroad (right) make for a very narrow trail at the old county courthouse.*

twenty-five years. This use has not harmed the railroad and it has greatly benefitted the Path. Our board of directors feels, however,

that the IPP should not continue forever taking advantage of the railroad's generosity, especially at this location where DuPage County owns almost the whole block south of, and adjoining, the railroad property. Therefore, we urge that DuPage County relocate the trail a few feet to the south and reestablish it on a strip of land at least ten feet wide on what is now the northern end of the county-owned courthouse parking lot. We envision a beautifully-landscaped area that both city and county can be proud of. We think it would be appropriate to include this relocation in your general plan for the courthouse."

This is our last chance to make the Illinois Prairie Path legally continuous in this section because the courthouse property may soon be sold to some outside agency with no interest in trails. We urge our members and friends to contact their county board representatives and ask them to include in the deed an easement for a trail at the north end of the parking lot.

## OUR NEW FORMAT - PROS AND CONS

**S**ome thought it was just fine; some hated it. Most of the approximately ten respondents did at least agree that the three-column layout for the news pages is more readable because one line of type can be read at a glance. They also approved the bolder headlines for the same reason. Jim Lentz of Wheaton wrote, "I like the new format. Bold heading and better spacing makes for easier reading. Keep up the good work." The new front page layout, however, provoked a relative storm of protest, mainly from present and former board members. "I just don't like it," growled Paul Mooring, Glen Ellyn. "To me it looks more ordinary, undistinguished, readily discardable," wrote Liz Holmes, Lombard. Gene Pomerance of Elmhurst complained "You have taken the elegance of the first page away from us" and "the fat black headlines overwhelm the logo at the top of the page." The editor herself thinks the old front page nature note layout, originated by Helen Turner and embellished by Susan Terwedow's hand-drawn illustrations, is indeed a mark of distinction which sets our newsletter apart from all

### BIKE TRAILS THREATENED; PLEASE WRITE THE GOVERNOR

The Chicagoland Bicycle Federation is asking Illinois trail users to write Governor Edgar *today* to request an amendatory veto of a dangerous amendment to a bill now on his desk. He must act before the end of September. The announcement follows:

A last-minute amendment to Illinois Senate Bill 1283, introduced by Rep. Larry Wennlund (R., New Lenox) of Will County will make it virtually impossible for 10 Illinois forest preserve districts (Will, Kane, Kendall, Byron, DeKalb, Champaign, Winnebago, Rock Island, Tazwell, and Piatt Counties) to build new bike trails or acquire any new land without municipal and township consent.

This bill is now sitting on Governor Edgar's desk.

If Edgar signs SB 1283, Will County's Old Plank Road Trail as well as many other proposed trails around Chicago will be dead.

#### What You Can Do:

Write to: Honorable James Edgar  
State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Urge Edgar to amendatorily veto Amendment 6 of SB 1283. This amendment ties up important trail projects with lengthy municipal and township approvals and makes it easier for individuals to oppose trails that can be used by millions.

For more information: Betsy Otto or Joyce O'Keefe, Openlands Project (312) 427-4256.

others. So it is decided: we modernize with the three-column format for the news pages, and we keep the classic front page.

Now is everybody happy?