

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1986

What one trail lover looks for on the Path —
a poetic tribute by Donald G. Westlake, Wheaton:

THE PRAIRIE PATH

West from Chicago the C.A. & E. had been
carting commuters away from their labors
To Lombard, Aurora, and Elgin and Wheaton—
to homes and to spouses and families and neighbors.

Gone are the traces of ties and steel rails; ah, yes,
gone are the trains that were powered by spark.
All the rattle and clang are but memories now
on the Path—May Watts' dream of a linear park.

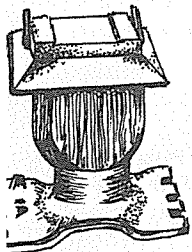
Riders on horseback pass walkers and joggers,
while cyclists and runners—they also abound.
There are botany students in search of their samples;
sly birdwatchers spy, and they hark to the sound.

Year-round we see bluejays, so brash and aggressive,
and black caps of chickadees flashing about,
While the cardinal pairs of a color so brilliant
are flirting in treetops by lyrical shout.

The views are as varied as varied can be,
as the woodlands and meadows give way to deep fens
With their cattails, marsh grasses, and muskrats and frogs,
and with vigilant woodchucks who peek from their dens.

The Path makes a statement of Nature's raw beauty
and humankind's action when given good cause.
It's a place to find peace in the midst of confusion,
an orderly haven in which to take pause.

Still is found
sometimes along
the path.



C.A. & E. electric insulator assembly



ANNUAL MEETING

At the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton President Paul Mooring opened the meeting by introducing all current and former board members in attendance. After the treasurer's report was presented by Joan Hamill (see insert), membership chair Dee Tevonian announced that as of the meeting date, November 2, the Path had 1,599 dues-paying members who had contributed a total of \$18,013. Donations were \$7,587, making a combined total of \$25,600.

Jon Duerr, chairman of the nominating committee, announced the names of the board members whose terms were expiring and all of whom had agreed to accept renomination: Susan Aisenbrey, Nancy Becker, Brent Coulter, Robert Hargis, Nancy Hesler, and Larry Sheaffer. Brent had been elected to the board in August to complete the remaining term of Lynn Dostal, who had resigned for personal reasons. Lynn will be long remembered as one of the most highly-skilled and enthusiastic workers on the Volunteer Bridge project and we wish the best for him and his family. Brent holds a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from Vanderbilt University in Nashville and a Master's in Urban Planning and Transportation from the University of Iowa. An avid cyclist and longtime friend of the Path, he has cheered our progress through 6½ years as a planner with the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission and 1½ years with the county division of transportation where he rose to become superintendent. He is currently employed at Cemcon Ltd., Wheaton. All the nominees were unanimously reelected.

Mooring then presented the president's report listing the ups and downs of the year just past. Two major setbacks were the loss of our insurance in January and the subsequent termination of our twenty-year lease with DuPage County. On the brighter side Mooring cited the signing of a consultation agreement with DuPage County, under the terms of which the county would provide liability coverage for volunteers working on Path projects with permits from the county. He also reported that the county division of transportation has assumed responsibility for major trail maintenance and development and has already made significant improvements this year.

The principal focus of the president's report was on the implications of the summer/fall issue of the **News of DuPage**, the county's official newsletter. This publication carried a two-page story about the county's plans for preserving and enhancing a "45-mile linear park" called the "DuPage Parkway". The accompanying map showed the Illinois Prairie Path all right but with each of the three branches plainly labelled "DuPage Parkway". Mooring told the 60 persons in attendance at the meeting that at this point the IPP board had become very concerned about this apparent change of the Path's name, and he then gave a chronology of the name of the trail.

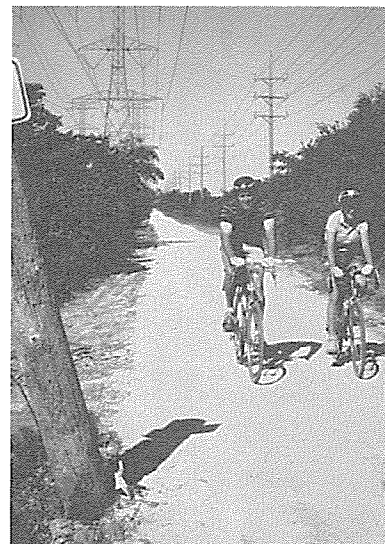
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2. In 1965 The Illinois Prairie Path was chartered as a not-for-profit corporation by the State of Illinois.
3. On May 10, 1966 the newly-formed not-for-profit corporation signed a lease with DuPage County to establish a "prairie path" on the property that the county had just acquired from the CA&E Railway.
4. In 1967 the first Illinois Prairie Path signs were installed on the trail.
5. Not until October 7, 1969 did the DuPage County Board pass a resolution naming those parts of the old railroad right-of-way that it owned the DuPage Parkway "for the sake of convenience". It should be noted that there are parts of the Prairie Path in DuPage County that are not on the county-owned former railroad right-of-way called the DuPage Parkway. A good example is the half-mile stretch on Brooks McCormick's property at Saint James Farm. Obviously, by definition, the Kane County and Cook County sections of the Illinois Prairie Path can not possibly be on the DuPage Parkway either.
6. On August 26, 1986 the DuPage County Board passed a second resolution relating to the name of the trail, which reads in part. . . "The Illinois Prairie Path has worked tirelessly for many years to enhance all aspects of the **DuPage Parkway**" . . . and has been "actively involved in the promotion of this valuable natural resource known as the **DuPage Parkway** . . ." (Italics ours). Immediately after this an article naming the entire three-county trail the DuPage Parkway appeared in the official DuPage County newsletter.

Mooring concluded, "I recently appeared before the Highway Committee and asked it to introduce a resolution to be considered by the county board to officially name the Prairie Path in DuPage County, ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH (DUPAGE COUNTY SECTION). That the committee would not agree to do. . . This has been a great personal disappointment to members of our board. . . I might add that both the State of Illinois and the Department of the Interior of the United States have officially recognized the Path's name as the Illinois Prairie Path."

Next to speak was Jean Mooring, board member, Glen Ellyn, who said: "I believe the whole controversy over the Prairie Path name is caused by a failure of communication. The members of the DuPage County Board do not know how deeply hurt the members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path are by the county board's failure to recognize our work in creating and developing the trail for more than twenty years. The only way this recognition can be shown is by officially naming the trail Illinois Prairie Path (DuPage County Section). The reason the county board members do not know how we feel is because we have never told them, and we never told them because we didn't know it was a problem until the county newsletter came out.

"The fact is that there is no legal reason for the county board not to name the trail Illinois Prairie Path.

"Therefore, I believe that the members and friends of The Illinois Prairie Path can be confident that the DuPage County Board will be glad to recognize our work by approving our resolution to name the trail. I move that the members of The Illinois Prairie Path instruct their Board of Directors to submit to the DuPage County Board for its approval the following resolution officially naming the trail within the boundaries of DuPage County ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH (DUPAGE COUNTY SECTION)."



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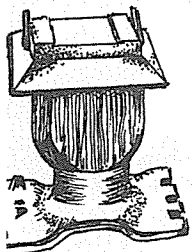
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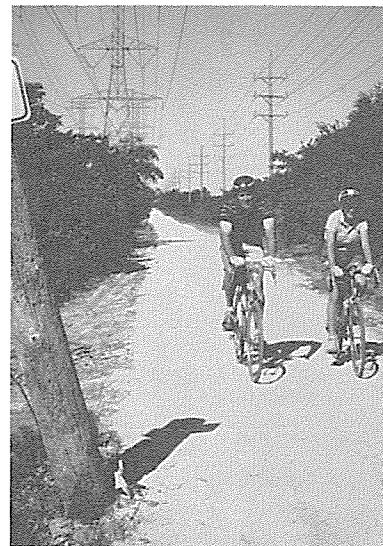
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RESOLUTION

(proposed by The Illinois Prairie Path corporation for adoption by the DuPage County Board)

WHEREAS, The County of DuPage has acquired most but not all of the former CA&E right-of-way running through the County, and

WHEREAS, in a resolution dated October 7, 1969, the DuPage County Board of Supervisors named this property the DuPage Parkway, and

WHEREAS, a nationally renowned recreational nature trail called the Illinois Prairie Path has been created, built, and maintained for more than twenty years in large part on this right-of-way, mainly by volunteers under the leadership of a not-for-profit corporation called The Illinois Prairie Path, and

WHEREAS, these volunteers were, and still are, inspired by the dream of a courageous and farsighted woman from Naperville, May Theilgaard Watts, and

WHEREAS, because of the work of this corporation, this trail is the only continuous common connection among all the parcels of property owned by DuPage County, other governments, utilities, railroads, and private individuals along the potential fifty-mile length of this prime recreational resource, and

WHEREAS, this trail is a regional trail extending across DuPage County into Cook County on the east and Kane County on the west, and

WHEREAS, this trail has been designated a National Recreational Trail, the first such trail in Illinois, and has thereby brought great honor to the people of DuPage County, and

WHEREAS, the said railroad right-of-way within the boundaries of DuPage County belongs to the people of DuPage County who bought it with their tax money and since 1964 have called the trail built on it the Illinois Prairie Path, its true and historic name, and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to distinguish the long and continuous trail known as the Illinois Prairie Path, which is located on land having various ownerships, from the County-owned portions of the CA&E right-of-way named by the County Board the DuPage Parkway,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the DuPage County Board, in memory of May Theilgaard Watts and in recognition of the vital and indispensable work of The Illinois Prairie Path corporation and its members and friends, who created the trail and maintained its continuity for more than twenty years, that the trail within the boundaries of DuPage County shall henceforth be called ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH (DUPAGE COUNTY SECTION) and that all trail signs, maps and plats, County documents and publicity pertaining to the trail shall carry this name.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all future maps and plats and County documents pertaining to the County-owned portions of the former CA&E right-of-way shall carry both names, DuPage Parkway and Illinois Prairie Path.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk transmit certified copies of this resolution to the Highway Department, the Map Division of the Building and Zoning Department, the DuPage County Public Information Office and three copies to the DuPage County Board.

TREASURER'S REPORT, November 1, 1985 - October 31, 1986
(UNAUDITED)

Balance on hand, November 1, 1985		
State Bank of St. Charles		\$ 3,288.74
SteinRoe Cash Reserves		<u>11,957.29</u>
	Total	\$15,246.03
Income		
Donations		\$ 7,587.00
Dues		18,013.00
Sales (Maps, T-shirts, patches, "Guides")		1,289.67
Interest		1,530.42
Miscellaneous (Bridge Fund)		<u>75.00</u>
	Total	\$28,495.09
Expenses		
Capital Improvements		\$ 1,836.66
Maintenance		1,768.41
Newsletter		3,380.23
Membership mailings		425.61
Printing		275.00
Office Rent and telephone		640.53
Office supplies		315.80
Merchandise (T-shirts, etc.)		1,766.90
Legal		387.90
Miscellaneous		<u>212.70</u>
	Total	\$11,009.74
Balance on hand, October 31, 1986		
State Bank of St. Charles		\$ 1,417.45
SteinRoe Cash Reserves		<u>31,313.93</u>
	Total	\$32,731.38

Paul Mooring then read the resolution to the members (see insert for text). Donna Albue, Path secretary, Lombard, seconded. Five current or former members made statements in support of the motion; no one spoke against. The board members' statements are summarized below:

Bob Hargis, vice president, Wheaton: The Illinois Prairie Path was a novel idea when it began in 1963. Volunteers kept it going for more than twenty years, building three bridges and numerous other projects, until now it is a major recreational resource. The American spirit of volunteerism is embodied in the name Illinois Prairie Path and it should be recognized.

Len Chabala, chairman, Cook County Committee, Maywood: It would be difficult to solicit funds from persons living outside of DuPage County to support the 'DuPage Parkway'. We could not expect Path members in other counties to pay dues for this; and it would promote factionalism and divisiveness among the trail community because no matter what DuPage County does, the trail will remain the Illinois Prairie Path in Cook County and probably also in Kane County.

Dick Wilson, chairman, Projects and Maintenance Committee, Des Plaines: I've been driving to DuPage County from my home in Cook County to lead Prairie Path field trips and work on Path maintenance projects for a lot of years and I think this 'DuPage Parkway' name would cripple us. I wouldn't do all that travelling for anything but the Prairie Path. I would resign and I know many others would too.

Susan Aisenbrey, board member and scout leader, Elmhurst: I have seen publications from all over the country referring to the Illinois Prairie Path. Hundreds of tourists come here every year just to ride the Path. The name 'DuPage Parkway' would be too confusing for them. What we need is a good regional trail map showing the Illinois Prairie Path as the backbone clearly marked with all the interconnected trails around it.

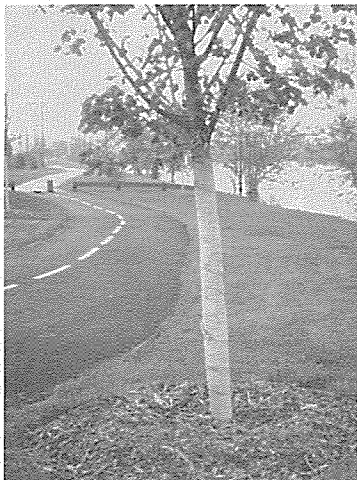
Louise Headen, former board member and public relations chair, Wheaton: The Illinois Prairie Path has been recognized as a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior and was also nationally honored in 1976 when it was chosen to be one of 200 outstanding citizen efforts around the country participating in Horizons on Display, a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. Now today it is clear that officially naming the trail the Illinois Prairie Path is the best way for our own DuPage County Board to recognize our volunteers' achievements too.

The motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

Editor's note to all IPP members: Your board of directors will now determine the best way to persuade the DuPage County Board to adopt our proposed resolution. If necessary we will send you a special mailing asking you to write letters to your county board members and to attend county board meetings until the issue is resolved. In the meantime, please keep this Newsletter for future reference.

Next on the president's agenda was the introduction of board member James Mackay, who has been generating favorable publicity for the Taylor Avenue bridge project in Glen Ellyn. He showed the famous bridge model made by Glenbard North student Dave Palazzetti and answered questions. Jean Mooring expressed concern on behalf of the Glenbard West Science Department about his proposal to shorten the bridge by filling in parts of the Taylor Avenue Prairie. Paul Mooring mentioned that the Prairie Path board wanted to show its support for the Taylor Avenue bridge, which will have to be built by DuPage County at an undetermined cost, and had therefore, set aside a special fund of \$20,000 toward construction of the bridge.

There being no further business, Path Vice President Bob Hargis took over as master of ceremonies for the program. He introduced the Illinois trail community's not-so-secret weapon and irresistible force Philip Elfstrom, president of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission, who described Kane County's outstanding and ever-growing trail network and the connections they hope to make with other county systems through the newly-formed Prairie Trail Authority. Elfstrom brought down the house when he displayed his long-range plan: a large map of the world with trails on every continent and the caption "THINK BIG!"



Elgin Sector, Fox River Trail

Following Kane County on the program was the McHenry County Conservation District represented by Glen Von Bergen, district trail superintendent, and Tom Schultz, district police officer. They showed slides of the beautiful footpaths, cross-country ski trails, and canoe trails in an essentially rural county, which are now being connected to the Kane County trails.

The third county to be represented officially was DuPage. Right-of-way Agent Tom Merriam spoke on behalf of the division of transportation, which is now in charge of Path maintenance, and mentioned many improvements made this year as well as plans for the future. Other county staff persons in attendance were Kevin Carroll, chief of operations; Jim Galto, maintenance supervisor and Patrick Jaeger, assistant state's attorney.

The program concluded with the president's slide show, depicting events on the Path and activities of our volunteers during the year just past. For many this is always the highlight of the annual meeting.



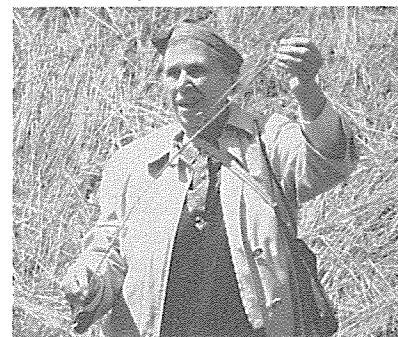
Philip Elfstrom and Elgin Mayor Richard L. Verbic unveil map of new Elgin Sector of Fox River Trail at dedication ceremony in Elgin.

After the program everyone enjoyed the refreshments provided by Nancy Becker (table decorations and oatmeal cookies), Dee Tevonian (apple cider), and Jean Mooring (pecan slices).

HELEN TURNER DIES, CO-FOUNDER OF ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH

On November 19, 1986 the American trail community lost a gentle champion with the passing of Helen Turner at her retirement home in Hendersonville, North Carolina. Born August 27, 1897 in Chicago, she was 89 years old.

Helen had been the quieter half of an invincible team of two bright, courageous women, next-door neighbors for many years in Naperville. She and May Theilgaard Watts were kindred spirits, college friends at the University of Chicago, both naturalists, writers, teachers and lovers of the out-of-doors. Approaching their seventies, these two embarked on their greatest adventure which was to change the course of conservation history in the United States. When charismatic May Watts had the novel idea of creating a nature trail out of an abandoned railroad in 1963, practical Helen Turner was right there at her side to make the dream come true. While May captured most of the headlines, Helen worked cheerfully and tirelessly behind the scenes recruiting volunteers, studying the natural qualities of the land, walking every mile of its 45-mile length, and poring over old deeds and railroad strip maps to find out who owned each parcel so that the trail's continuity could be established. Helen also drew the first trail map, wrote **The Illinois Prairie Path — A Guide**, and edited the **Newsletter** during the Path's early, struggling years. She was for many who knew and loved her the strong, devoted heart of the Prairie Path.



Helen Turner holds up a stalk of one of her favorite prairie plants, big bluestem grass, on one of the many field trips she led along the Prairie Path.

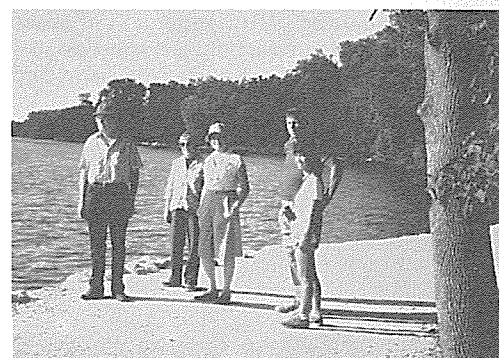
Although Helen Turner and May Watts are both gone now, their legacy lives on: an ever-growing system of recreational nature trails preserving precious open space throughout the nation. Their lives have enriched us all.

Helen's family suggests that her friends may send donations in her memory to The Illinois Prairie Path (Helen Turner Memorial Fund) in care of F. Paul Mooring, 295 Abbotsford Court, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137.

PHILIP B. ELFSTROM HONORED BY OPEN LANDS PROJECT

On November 3, 1986 Open Lands Project (a non-profit organization working to preserve public land in northeastern Illinois, which provided vital help and advice to the founders of The Illinois Prairie Path in the Path's early days) awarded to Philip B. Elfstrom, president of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission and member of the Kane County Board, the Certificate of Honor for his outstanding contribution to land preservation. Mr. Elfstrom was recognized "for his key role in promoting the establishment of the Prairie Trail Authority... to coordinate a regional trail system in DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties..." and for his "contributions to recreational trail development in Kane County, particularly the Fox River Trail."

To this the members of The Illinois Prairie Path Board would like to add our own tribute. We say congratulations, Phil, on this well-deserved honor. You are doing a great job for trails and we're with you all the way!



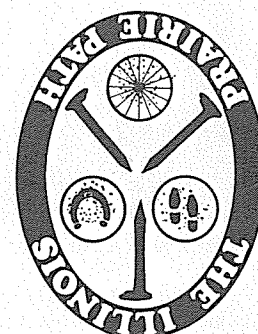
Prairie Path members admire new section of Fox River Trail near St. Charles.

—Jean C. Mooring, Editor—

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

DATED MATERIAL

P.O. Box 1086
616 Delles Road
Wheaton, Illinois
60189



MEMBERSHIP RATES: Individual \$10; Family \$15; Organization/Supporting \$20; Contributing \$25; Sustaining \$50; Patron \$100; Lifetime \$500

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