

French fleur-de-lis flag

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1986

WHAT TO LOOK FOR - **Blue flag iris**

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The Iris Family (*Iridaceae*) features plants with creeping stems shallowly buried in soil, bearing swordlike leaves set edge to edge and a few short-lived showy flowers ranging through all shades and colors. The parts of the flower come in threes: three sepals which hang down; three petals which curve upwards; and three curved style-branches covering the three stamens in the center.

The Prairie Path has its own regal fleur-de-lis, the violet-colored large blue flag or *Iris versicolor*. This beautiful flower's special habitat is pond margins, marshes and meadows in neutral or slightly acid soil. Its range is Manitoba and southern Labrador south to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio and Virginia; and it blooms in late spring and early summer (May - July). Good places to see the blue flag iris along the Path are in marshy areas just west of the West Branch of the DuPage River near Prince Crossing Road and on both sides of the EJ&E Railroad in Wayne.



Wheaton Beautifies Path

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Mayor Robert Martin read the City Council proclamation to an appreciative crowd of city officials, members of the Wheaton Environmental Commission, Prairie Path board members and local residents. The resolution urges "all citizens to plant trees to gladden the hearts and promote the well-being of present and future generations." Other speakers were Gordon Chambliss of the Environmental Commission and Path President Paul Mooring. Mooring thanked Wheaton for all the encouragement and help given to the Path during the last twenty years and said, "Without the support that communities like Wheaton have given us, the Illinois Prairie Path could not have become such a great recreational asset."



Joe Bremer, Wheaton Public Works Department, paints pier of Volunteer Bridge. The job required more than 15 gallons of paint.

Mayor Robert Martin (right) and Paul Mooring turn over first shovelfuls of dirt at Arbor Day ceremony near Volunteer Bridge.



City Horticulturist Larry Steele, who has designed much of the new landscaping which makes the Wheaton central business district so attractive, supervised the planting of the six trees: two white oaks, one bur oak, and three white pines. Coming soon, he said, will be colorful annuals and perennial plants for the small raised garden at the west corner of the park.

Other improvements noted were the grading of the park area last year and the recent painting of the Volunteer Bridge piers in an attractive natural concrete color by the Wheaton Public Works Department. As the crowd dispersed, some were heard to say that this little park on the Prairie Path is too pretty not to have a name and that perhaps there should be a "Name the Park" contest. Sounds like a good idea to us. How about it, Wheaton?

DuPage County Plans Bright Future for Prairie Path

In the wake of the Path's January insurance crisis and with the full cooperation and encouragement of Chairman Jack Knuepfer, the DuPage County Board through its Highway Committee has authorized the following actions:

1. Assistant State's Attorney Patrick Jaeger has drawn up a consulting and service contract between DuPage County and The Illinois Prairie Path, under the terms of which the Path would be required to provide consulting services to the County and to obtain from the County Superintendent of Highways permits for its volunteer activities and projects. The County in turn would defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Corporation and/or its officers from liability arising from the Corporation's performance of its permitted duties and responsibilities when carried out in a lawful manner. This protection is a great benefit to the Prairie Path, which has been able to obtain only one insurance quote offering the required coverage but costing \$12,800 for the first year, almost half of our anticipated annual income. The IPP board believes this would be unacceptably costly to our membership and will, therefore, probably sign the consulting contract when it is modified in accordance with the recommendations of our IPP attorney, Walter P. Maksym.
2. Mr. Jaeger has also drawn up a "DuPage Parkway Special Use Permit" for municipalities, charitable organizations and other groups seeking to use the Path for special events. It states that they must obtain additional permits as required by units of local government to protect the County during the event, provide proper signage and traffic control, remove all litter, not block the trail, not damage trees or other appurtenances, and not permit the use of alcoholic beverages on the DuPage Parkway (Illinois Prairie Path).

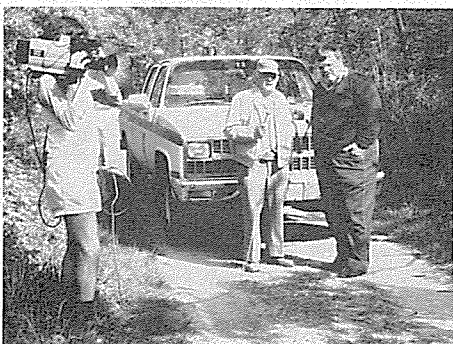
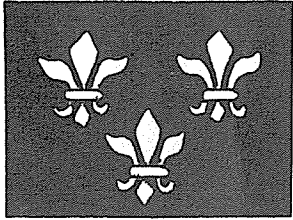


Photo by Jean Mooring

Board member James Mackay records comments of Paul Mooring during inventory inspection of Path with Tom Merriion of County Highway Department. (See page 3, objective C.)



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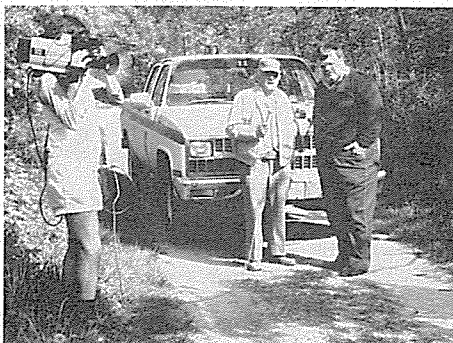
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SPECIAL REPORT ON SPRING CLEANUPS

Although the Prairie Path organization did not manage any cleanups this year, various board members volunteered on an individual basis to help in their respective communities.

In **Wheaton** Ray Triplett, Superintendent of Streets, said that the city provided a truck and two men who worked six hours and hauled away about 9 cubic yards of trash. Bob Hargis counted 49 bags plus miscellaneous junk. Scouts did their usual good job. Participating troops were: Cub Scout Troop #369 Den 3 (Hill to Washington); Girl Scout Troop #595 (Washington to West); Boy Scout Troop #382 (Roosevelt to Orchard); Cub Scout Troop #369 Den 4 (Liberty to Lincoln); Boy Scout Troop #365 (Orchard to Wiesbrook); Boy Scout Troop #23 (Wiesbrook to Blackwell Forest Preserve). Especially prompt and diligent, according to Clark Wood of the Wheaton Environmental Commission, were four young people from the Milton Township Working Alternatives Program who put in three hours on this project. A total of fifty people participated in Wheaton.

In **Glen Ellyn** Ken Merrill, who supervised the cleanup on behalf of the Glen Ellyn Environmental Protection Commission, reported that 45 adults and children participated. Mark Henry of the Public Works Department said the village provided a six-wheeler truck and two men plus plastic bags for the volunteers. The village crew hauled away one large truckload of debris, all of which had to be laboriously hoisted up by hand without the aid of a front-end loader, which had always been provided in the past. Luckily for the village crew, another truckload of heavy railroad tie ends was removed by a helpful Lombard resident. Jean Mooring said one family made an outstanding contribution to the success of the cleanup. Pete Borger brought six dads and eight boys from the YMCA Indian Guide Teton Tribe and Marguerite Borger brought four girls, members of the Campfire Rainbow Bluebird Troop. Daughter Alina Borger and her friend Barbara Jeffries had fun making up a song as they worked. To the tune of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" the words are:

We're picking up trash and singing a song.
It's not very hard so join a-long.
Trash can day is coming to town!



Bluebirds Barbara Jeffries and Alina Borger pick up refuse behind Glen Ellyn Mayflower Storage.

In **Lombard** Public Works Assistant Administrator Joe Breinig said that the village is not responsible for cleaning the Prairie Path "because we can't afford to hire anyone to do it." No volunteers were assigned to the Path during the Lombard Pride Week cleanup either. However, at least one public-spirited citizen, Glenn Foster, who is a member of the Lombard Fire Department and lives near the Path, made a determined effort to do the job himself. He spent seven hours on May 3, picked up three truckloads of junk between Lombard Avenue and Stewart Avenue, and hauled it all in his pickup to the dumpster at the Public Works Department garage. Thanks to Mr. Foster and other concerned but unknown local residents who placed debris in piles along the trail (later hauled away by the Lombard Public Works Department), the Path in Lombard is looking better.

In **Villa Park** the Park Department maintains the Prairie Path on a weekly basis and handles cleanups and mowing. A formal maintenance agreement with DuPage County is under consideration. In **Elmhurst** the Park District maintains the Path in accordance with the terms of its lease with DuPage County. Park Director Mick Pope says that the districts welcomes the assistance of garden club members, prairie buffs, scout troops and residents, who have always taken a major role in keeping Elmhurst's section of the trail beautiful.

In the unincorporated areas which are mainly west of Wheaton the **County Highway Department** is responsible for cleanups and maintenance. Prairie Path board members helped here too. Bob Hargis picked up and brought back to Wheaton two bags collected at Shore, Frontenac and Ferry Roads on the Aurora Branch. Nancy Hesler and Steve Hagar and three small helpers picked up four garbage bags and one garbage can full of bottles in the area of Smith Road on the Elgin Branch. The Prairie Path pays scavengers to empty the trash cans located along the Elgin Branch.

3. DuPage County Superintendent of Highways Brent Coulter has developed an operating plan for the DuPage Parkway/-Prairie Path, whereby the DuPage County Division of Transportation would coordinate its own activities with those of the various municipalities and park districts so that planning, programming, engineering and design, general construction and signing, general heavy maintenance, mowing, trimming, removal of litter and debris, and police and fire protection can all be done most efficiently by the appropriate government agency. The Prairie Path's role would be coordination of volunteer efforts, general promotion, fund-raising, help with cleanups, special events, light maintenance, installation of some signs, benches, steps, railings, etc., and planting of trees, shrubs and prairie flowers.
4. The DuPage County Division of Transportation has identified eight objectives of a three-year (FY '85 - FY '87) program for development of the DuPage Parkway/Prairie Path/Other trails.
 - a. Provide three new links between DuPage County (Prairie Path) and Kane County (Fox River Trail) bicycle systems. Editor's Note: These are the Geneva Spur, the NI-Gas bypass of the E-W Tollway on the Batavia Spur, and the Aurora Branch beyond Eola Road.
 - b. Solve insurance problems relating to Illinois Prairie Path Association (sic) volunteer efforts.
 - c. Inventory Parkway and Prairie Path conditions (drainage, surface, trees and brush, street crossings, etc.) with Prairie Path Association (sic) volunteers. Prioritize work needs.
 - d. Bring all of the Prairie Path up to biking standards.
 - e. Enter into municipal and park district lease agreements for on-going local maintenance, policing, and control of local use of Parkway right-of-way.
 - f. Provide a permanent Path routing through downtown Wheaton.
 - g. Help develop and implement path/trail on Great Western right-of-way and within North-South Tollway corridor.
 - h. Secure DuPage Parkway right-of-way title, and obtain easements, lease, or license for short sections of Path formerly administered by The Illinois Prairie Path Association (sic).

New Artist for First Page

This year Susan Terwedow of Glen Ellyn has taken on the task of illustrating the NEWSLETTER front page, so beautifully done during all of 1985 by Mark and Jo Mayeau of Wheaton. Susan's first effort was the woodland flowers which graced the cover of the spring issue. As faithful readers will remember, this multi-talented young woman has appeared several times in the pages of the NEWSLETTER: as the calligrapher who lettered the donor signs at Volunteer Bridge; as the artist who painted the colorful posters on our Fourth of July float several years ago; and as a marathon runner who trains on the Path. She was also the cover girl for the 1985 **Happenings**, shown jogging on Volunteer Bridge. We're glad to have her with us now as an official member of our team.

Volunteers Needed for Fourth of July Parade

The Prairie Path Board of Directors invites members and friends to walk, jog, ride a bike or horse, or help with ideas for a Prairie Path entry in the Fourth of July parades in Glen Ellyn and Wheaton. Glen Ellyn's theme is "A Salute to Liberty" and Wheaton's is "An Old-Fashioned Fourth of July". For information call board member James Mackay, 668-4438

State Conservation Rep Inspects Cook County Section

On May 3 Kevin Sronce, Concessions and Agriculture Supervisor for the Illinois Department of Conservation and an enthusiastic trail user, came up from Springfield for a walking tour of the entire 4½-mile state-owned Prairie Path right-of-way in Cook County. Four Prairie Path board members accompanied him: Len Chabala, Chairman of the Cook County Committee, Nancy Becker, and Paul and Jean Mooring. The group noted improvements to the trail in Hillside and Bellwood, as well as several encroachments both new and old on the right-of-way. Kevin Sronce said that the Conservation Department is anxious to finalize a management agreement with the Path and that because of the insurance problem it might be similar to the proposed consulting-service contract with DuPage County. Another possibility, he said, is a sublease from the DuPage County Water Commission, which will probably lease a right-of-way along most of the Cook County section for the Lake Michigan water pipeline. Either of these alternatives would require passage of enabling legislation by the General Assembly.

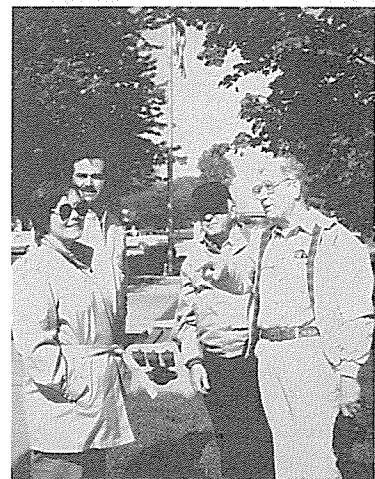


Photo by Jean Mooring

Nancy Becker, Kevin Sronce of Illinois Conservation Department, Paul Mooring and Len Chabala confer near village park on Path at Taft Avenue, Berkeley.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES, Rain or Shine

- Saturday, June 21 **Prairie Work Day.** Weed and clear at prairie remnant south of North Ave. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at end of Woodcrest Drive. Bring gloves and pruning saws. Leader: Larry Sheaffer, 790-0313.
- Saturday, June 28 **Prairie Work Day.** Weed and clear at Wheaton Prairie. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Hoffman Park. Bring gloves and pruning saws. Leader: Larry Sheaffer, 790-0313.
- Saturday, June 28
Sunday, June 29 **Two-Day Bike Trip Overnight** to Rockford. Experienced bikers only. Bring own gear. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Nancy Hesler's, Oak Meadows. Leader: Nancy Hesler, 293-1062.
- Friday, July 4 **Fourth of July parades.** IPP Leader: James Mackay, 668-4438.
- Saturday, July 12 **Bike Ride on Great Western Trail.** 34-mile round trip to Sycamore. Swim and return. Meet at 10:00 a.m. LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve (Dean Street west of St. Charles). Bring beverage and swim suit. Leader: Nancy Hesler, 293-1062.
- Saturday, July 12 **Prairie Work Day.** Weed and clear at Volunteer Prairie. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Liberty and Carlton, Wheaton. Bring gloves and pruning saws. Leader: Larry Sheaffer, 790-0313.
- Saturdays, July 19
August 16 **Work Days.** For information: Dick Wilson, 299-7882.

Prairie Path T-Shirts Now Available

—Good quality white cotton, short-sleeved, knit shirts. Green trim on neck and sleeves. Prairie Path logo on left front. Sizes: Adults - small, medium, large and extra large. Each \$8.00 - includes postage.

—Prairie Path patches \$1.50 each.

—Trail map \$.50 each.

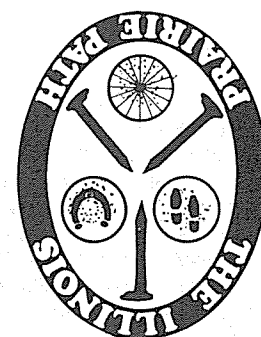
—*The Illinois Prairie Path - A Guide* by Helen Turner. Gives history, geology on Path. Many illustrations of wild flowers, trees, animal tracks seen on the Path. Each \$1.50. For quantities of 10 to 20 \$1.00 each; 20 or more \$.75 each.

—For any of the above items please send order to Illinois Prairie Path, Box 1086, Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All items also available weekends, May through October, at the Prairie Path Visitor Center in the Villa Park Historical Museum on the Path at Villa Avenue.

—Jean C. Mooring, Editor—

DATED MATERIAL
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

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