

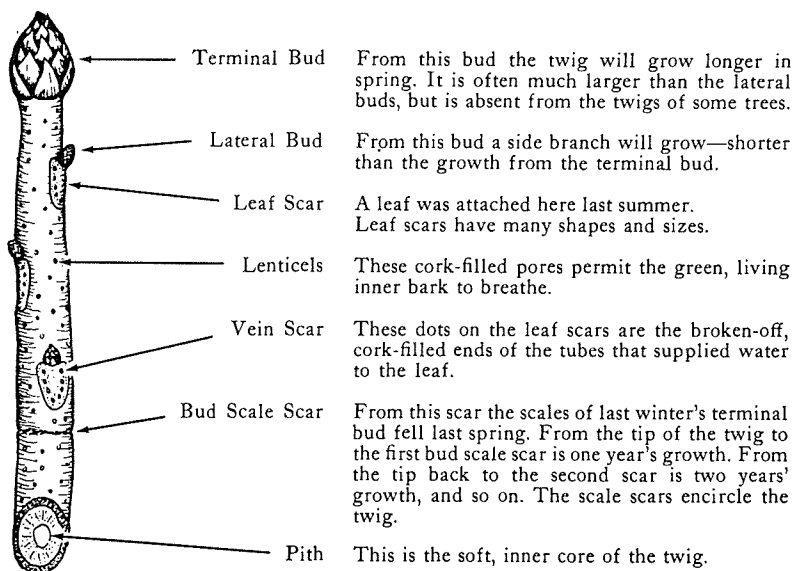
# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

WINTER, 1988

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR: Trees in Winter

It is often hard to identify a leafless, deciduous tree in the winter. Many of us can recognize a stately oak, maple or walnut when clothed in summer green or in the red, gold or brown of autumn; but few can name a tree by looking at its snow-covered skeleton in the winter. Naturalist May Theilgaard Watts, who founded the Illinois Prairie Path, recognized this problem and, good teacher that she was, resolved to help the amateur botanist. In 1970, in collaboration with her son, Tom Watts, she published a very useful little book, Winter Tree Finder. Page one is reproduced below.

### THE PARTS OF A TWIG



(Twig illustrations in this book are about  $\frac{2}{3}$  life-size.)

*Buds, scars, lenticels and pith are all clues to the identity of the tree. Others are the shape of the tree, the habitat where it is found, and the appearance of bark and fruit. The authors use the process of elimination to lead the student unerringly to the right answer.*

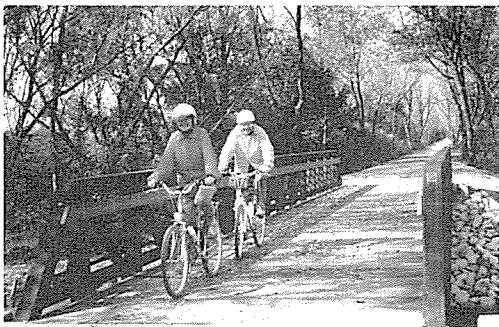
*Winter Tree Finder is available from the Nature Study Guild, Box 972, Berkeley, California 94701. It is also sold at the Morton Arboretum gift shop. Take a copy with you on your next winter hike along the Illinois Prairie Path. See how many trees you can identify.*

## Report on Annual Meeting: 1988 Was A Good Year!

The twenty-fourth annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation was held on Sunday, November 6, at the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton. Approximately sixty members and friends attended. President Paul Mooring conducted the brief business meeting, which included a summary of major events involving the Path during 1988, a report from Path Treasurer Joan Hamill (see page 4), and a report from Membership Chair Bonnie Hargis, who said that current membership is 1508 and 108 new members joined this year. After introducing board members present, Mooring announced that the board had accepted with regret the resignations of two valued members, Susan Aisenbrey and Jon Duerr. He then asked Bonnie, wearing her other hat as nominating committee chair, to present the 1988 board nominees. Bonnie announced that Joan Hamill, John Kacich, Jean Mooring and Dick Wilson, whose terms were expiring, had all agreed to serve again. New nominees replacing Susan and Jon are Ken Moss and Bob Kohlert. There were no nominations from the floor and the slate was elected unanimously.

The two new board members have much to contribute. Ken Moss, Elmhurst, is a 1968 graduate of Bradley University with a B.S. in psychology, and is a former owner of Elmhurst Cyclery Ltd. He is currently an executive recruiter for Executive Appointments Ltd., Oak Brook. He is a member of the Elmhurst Bicycle Club and of the Elmhurst Striders and is out on the Path every day biking or running. Bob Kohlert, St. Charles, is a retired salesman for W.S. Tyler Co., a mining equipment company and has lived in St. Charles all his life. An ardent hiker, biker and swimmer, he too is out on the trails almost every day. He will be chairman of the Kane County Committee and will act as liaison to the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

Master of ceremonies for the program was Vice President Bob Hargis, who introduced the three invited speakers. First was Philip Elfstrom, president of the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission and of the newly-formed Prairie Trail Authority. Elfstrom said that the Prairie Trail Authority, whose members are the five Chicago collar counties, promotes intergovernmental cooperation for trail acquisition and development in northeastern Illinois and is currently seeking funding from the Illinois General Assembly. He also listed the various trail improvements on the Illinois Prairie Path and connecting trails near the Fox River made by Kane County F.P.D. during 1988 as well as several others planned for next year (see Fall *Newsletter*).



Jean and Bill Booth were among the first to try the new Kline Creek bridge.

Next to speak was Chuck Tokarski, Chief of Traffic, Planning and Program for the DuPage County Division of Transportation. He announced that the long-awaited new bridge over Kline Creek northwest of the County Farm Road-Geneva Road intersection had been installed by a contractor about October 14. The Cor-Ten steel bridge is sixty feet long and ten feet wide and has a wood deck. Total cost was \$58,000. It was prefabricated by Continental Bridge Company, Alexandria, Minnesota. Path users, tired of fording the creek or trespassing on a nearby private bridge, are delighted. Tokarski also reported that bids have been let for a much-needed separate trail section along the west side of Carlton Avenue in Wheaton from Liberty to Roosevelt and also for trail segments through parking lots at Villa Avenue in Villa Park and at Westmore in Lombard to make the Prairie Path continuous in those three areas. Future county plans include a bridge over Taylor Avenue, Glen Ellyn, on the Main Stem; a bridge over the adjoining EJ & E and North Western Railroads in West Chicago on the Geneva Spur; and development of the rest of the Geneva Spur in DuPage County to connect it through forest preserves to the Elgin Branch. This trail section may be constructed next summer. DuPage County is also

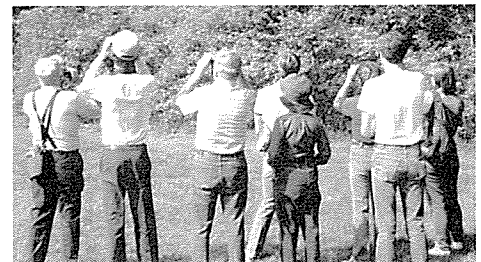
working to acquire and develop the DuPage section of the former Great Western Railroad and add it to the growing regional trail system.

The principal invited speaker was Suzan Pinsof, associate planner and trail specialist for the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. "The Illinois Prairie Path is the geographic and historic backbone of the Chicago area regional trail system," she said. She then indicated on a large map the major systems: Illinois Prairie Path-Fox River Trail; and trails along Lake Michigan, the Chicago River, the Des Plaines River, and the Illinois-Michigan Canal. Potential supplementary systems could parallel Salt Creek, Thorn Creek and the East and West Branches of the DuPage River. She expressed her disappointment that the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority was not doing much to promote a trail along the East DuPage River as requested by many public agencies and citizens during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. She said that the Green Bay Trail will be extended to the Wisconsin line by the Lake County Department of Transportation. Progress is also being made on the Old Plank Road Trail (the former Penn Central Railroad running from Park Forest to Joliet). There is an excellent potential trail on the abandoned EJ & E right-of-way along Waubonsie Creek.

Suzan echoed Phil Elfstrom's comment about the high level of intergovernmental cooperation on trail development in the last ten years and reiterated that funding is needed **now** for the Prairie Trail Authority from the Illinois legislature. She added that the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has become a national force demanding to be consulted on railroad abandonments; and, as a result, governmental agencies like the Illinois Department of Conservation are beginning to send out notices of abandonments to both local agencies and advocacy groups. Groups like the Illinois Prairie Path are needed now more than ever to prevent these "corridors of opportunity" from being lost. In closing, she said, "The Illinois Prairie Path and its founders are important because you have provided the capability of amusement in a low key, something especially needed by people today in our high pressure society. Your stewardship is appreciated nationally."

The fourth speaker was Jean Mooring, who showed slides of activities and achievements of Illinois Prairie Path volunteers this year:

- spring cleanup in April.
- participation in Illinois Trail Appreciation Day, May 7.
- bird hike at Pratt's Wayne Woods and along IPP, May 22.
- improvement of access ramp at Norris in Oak Meadows on June 18 work day.
- erection of kiosks to display maps and other information at Army Trail Road on Elgin Branch and at Industrial Drive on Geneva Spur on the June 18 and July 16 work days.



IPP spring bird hike started at Pratt's Wayne Woods. Bob and Bonnie Hargis are in center.