

# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

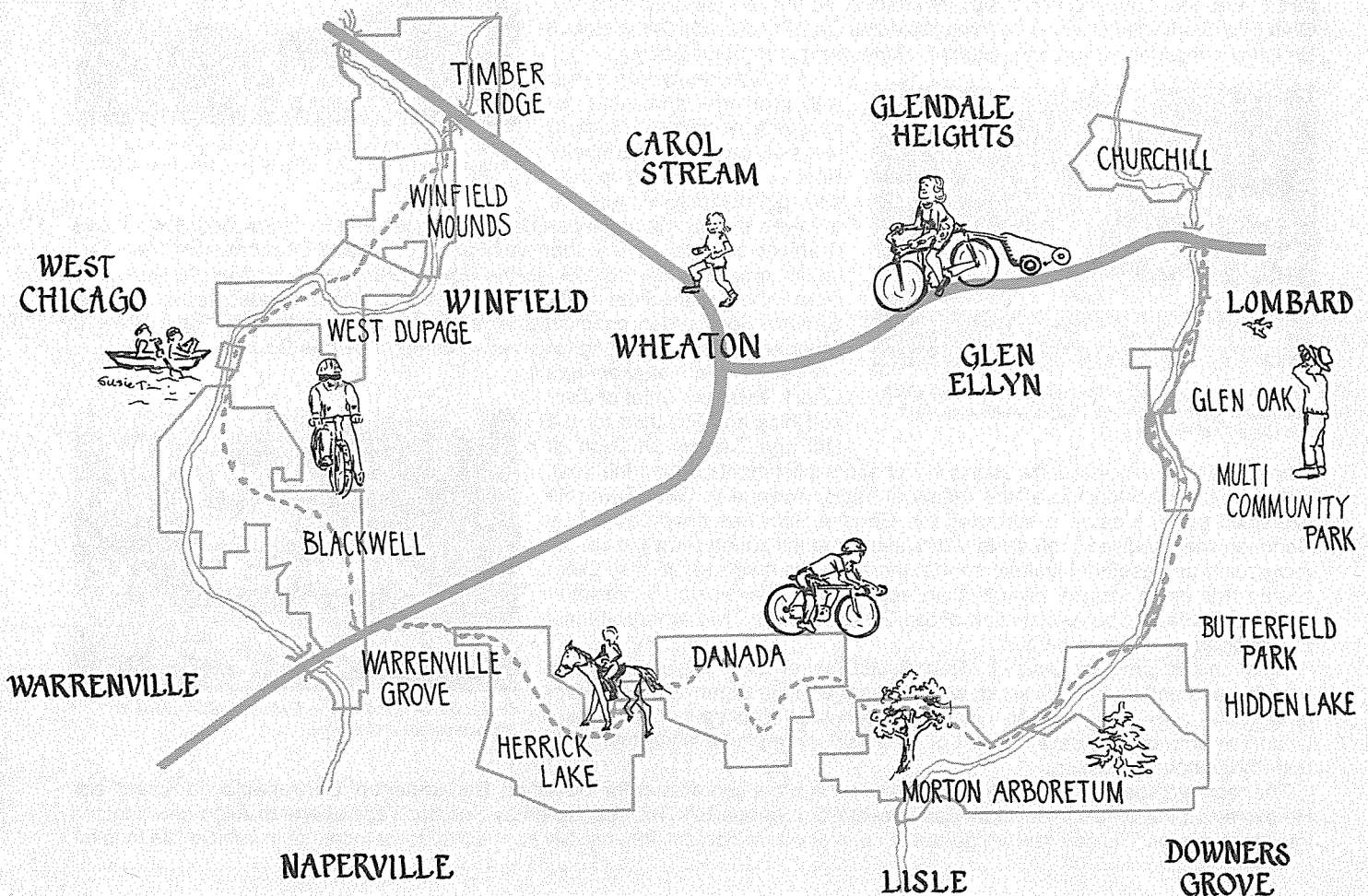
WINTER, 1989

## What to look (and work) for: a long and scenic loop trail for DuPage County

Parts of the trail are already in place. A glance at the map will show that the seven-mile-long north leg is the section of our own Illinois Prairie Path running from Kline Creek, northwest of County Farm Road in Winfield, through Wheaton and Glen Ellyn to the East Branch of the DuPage River in Lombard. Another mile or more through the new toll road wetlands along the East Branch could easily be built on the existing gravel service road. In the Butterfield Road greenbelt corridor the forest preserve district is building limestone trails through Danada and Herrick Lake Forest Preserves; these should be connected by next year. There is also a multiple-purpose path going north along the West Branch of the DuPage River through Blackwell Forest Preserve. Plans are under way to connect it to the others in the near future via the Aurora Branch of the Illinois Prairie Path.

If we have the courage and foresight May Theilgaard Watts called for when she first proposed creating the Illinois Prairie Path in 1963, we can make this loop trail a reality, too. It will be DuPage County's greatest recreational treasure, linking ten of our most beautiful forest preserves, several historic sites and municipal parks, the Morton Arboretum and the Prairie Path, all gems in an emerald necklace of natural beauty, twenty-five miles long.

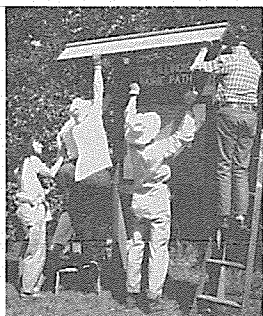
The loop trail can and should be built. NOW is the time.



## A Quarter Century of Trail-building

The twenty-fifth annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path was held on November 5, 1989, at the DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton. (The first meeting was in 1965, the year the not-for-profit corporation received its charter from the State of Illinois.) Approximately fifty members and friends attended the anniversary event.

President Paul Mooring conducted the brief business meeting after first introducing present and past board members. Treasurer and honorary Board Chairman Joan Hamill gave the treasurer's report (see page 4), which was approved; and Membership Chair Bonnie Hargis, who is also our office manager, reported that membership is now 1263, including the VIP category of persons who receive our mailings because of the offices they hold. Nominating Committee Chair Esther Cryderman presented the names of the five board members, one-third of the total, whose terms are expiring this year: Rik Alex, Nancy Becker, Bob Hargis, Nancy Hesler, and Ken Moss. Since all had agreed to serve another term and there were no nominations from the floor, they were re-elected by acclamation. The regular board meeting was adjourned until the first Tuesday in December.



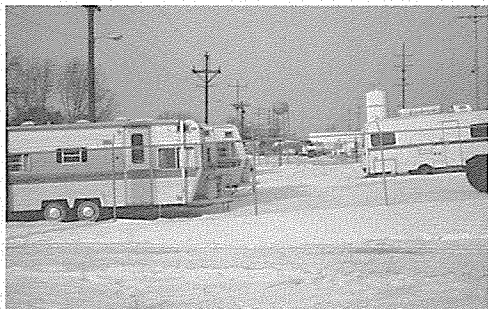
Path members install display case kiosk at Main Street, Lombard.

Vice President Bob Hargis, who had arranged the program, introduced the speakers. First was *Newsletter* Editor Jean Mooring, who narrated the slide show, which has become an Illinois Prairie Path tradition at the annual meeting. Pictures taken mostly by the Moorings illustrated the year's events in which our volunteers had taken a major part: the annual spring cleanup; a hike led by Dick Wilson in May for Trail Appreciation Month; the History Treasure Hunt celebrating DuPage County's Sesquicentennial; the fabrication and installation of the Rails To Trails sculpture at Volunteer Park, commemorating a beloved old railroad; a trail usage survey conducted for the Illinois Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; prairie maintenance and development and especially the triumphant resurgence of the demonstration prairie at Volunteer Park; the construction of a trellis screen for the Port-O-Let at Army Trail Road; and the installation and repair of kiosks and logo signs located all along the trail.



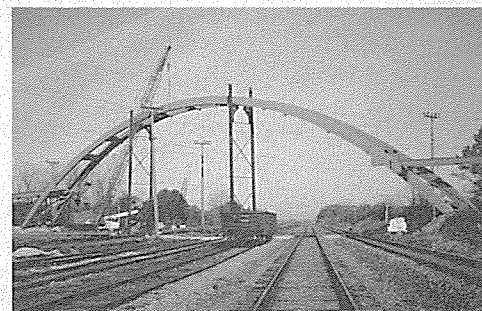
Bob Hargis, Nancy Hesler, and Paul Mooring help erect trellis to screen Port-O-Let at Army Trail Road.

Important contributions of other agencies were also highlighted: the DuPage County Division of Transportation's trail improvements at Carlton Avenue in Wheaton, at Villa Avenue in Villa Park, and at Westmore in Lombard as well as the handsome bridge now under construction in West Chicago on the Geneva Spur; the Wheaton Public Works Department's trail beautification at President Street and park improvements near the north end of Volunteer Bridge; the Wheaton Park District's hikes at Lincoln Marsh; the Warrenville Kiwanis Club gazebo at Albright Park; the Kane County Forest Preserve District's three steel bridges and major resurfacing on the IPP Elgin Branch; the Glen Ellyn Park District's step-building project at Danby Park; and the Village of Berkeley's resurfacing and tree-planting along the trail in Cook County.



Parked vehicles and chain link fences again block Cook County section of the Prairie Path between Mannheim and Butterfield, Hillside.

The slide show concluded with problems and tasks for next year: fences still blocking the trail between Mannheim Road and Butterfield in Hillside (a problem which must be resolved by the Illinois Department of Conservation); a new bridge over Salt Creek, to be installed very soon we hope by the Illinois Department of Transportation; a satisfactory solution to the safety problems posed by the gun club located next to the Path east of the new West Chicago bridge; surfacing of the Geneva Spur and connection after all these years to the IPP Elgin Branch; progress on the tantalizing loop trail in central DuPage County.



Beautiful arch bridge under construction near West Chicago will carry IPP Geneva Spur over CNW and E & E Railroads.

First invited speaker was Chuck Tokarski, Chief of Traffic Plans and Program for the DuPage County Division of

Transportation, who listed the county's trail accomplishments during the year, including the blacktopping of the ramps at Taylor Avenue in Glen Ellyn. He explained that the delay in surfacing the Geneva Spur has been caused by Commonwealth Edison's refusal to sell its section to the county; now the county is pursuing an easement instead so that the state grant will not be lost. Other county trail plans include awarding an engineering contract for a feasibility study on DuPage County's section of the Great Western Trail, where at least four bridges will have to be built.

Next on the program was Dr. Robert McCray of Glen Ellyn, prominent surgeon and enthusiastic bicyclist, who chairs the Trails Committee, an advocacy group now being formed by the Conservation Foundation of DuPage County to promote the development of a network of interconnected trail corridors throughout the county.

The featured speaker was Rick Pietruszka, greenways coordinator for the Illinois Department of Conservation in Springfield. He explained the benefits bicyclists can expect from Senate Bill 787, sponsored by Senator Vadalabene of Alton and enacted into law this year. The new law will generate up to seven million dollars annually from a two dollar increase in vehicle title fees for



Bridge out at Salt Creek in Elmhurst. IDOT plans to replace before end of year.

"greenway" bicycle trail acquisition and development at both the state and the local levels, approximately half to each. This new funding will be available Feb. 1, 1990, and will benefit many trails around the state. One offshoot will be a right-of-way study to identify pending railroad abandonments and to develop a statewide trail plan. Regarding the IPP concerns about the 4½-mile Cook County section, he said the state is negotiating with the DuPage Water Commission to resolve the serious dumping encroachments and the twenty-foot easement blocked by fences in Hillside. The state would like to grant management responsibility to a consortium of municipalities and/or park districts along this section.

The meeting concluded with cider, cookies and zucchini bread provided by Nancy Becker, Esther Cryderman, Bonnie Hargis, Nancy Hesler, Jean Kacich, Jean Mooring, and June Moss. Bonnie also greeted new arrivals at the door and sold IPP T-shirts, maps, books, and the new green-and-white adjustable caps with visor and IPP logo before and after the meeting.

### Moorings Win First Paul Butler Award

The Conservation Foundation of DuPage County presented the first Paul Butler Memorial Award to Jean and Paul Mooring of Glen Ellyn at the Foundation's quarterly luncheon on September 20. The silver tray is inscribed "In recognition of their outstanding contribution in helping to make the Prairie Path a reality." A plaque bearing their names and those of future award winners will be displayed at the Conservation Foundation's offices.

Presenting the award was Brooks McCormick, who is himself a longtime benefactor of the Illinois Prairie Path and a founder of the Conservation Foundation (formerly called the Forest Foundation). Paul Butler, in whose honor the award is named, was also a founding member of the foundation and contributed large amounts of land to be preserved as open space for the benefit of DuPage County residents. The award was made possible by the Amoco Foundation and, because the criteria are quite extensive, it may not be presented annually. It was explained that the Moorings met the Conservation Foundation's standards as people of integrity and public spirit having documented involvement in the preservation of open space, in furthering the educational interests of the foundation, and in improving recreation in DuPage County.

In brief remarks thanking the foundation for the award, Paul Mooring said, "This is wonderful and a complete surprise to us. The Prairie Path is not an individual accomplishment; it has always been a team effort of many people."



Paul and Jean Mooring with Paul Butler Memorial Award.

### Earth Day 1990: A Time for Decision

April 22, 1990, has been designated the first global Earth Day, and is the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day 1970, a celebration which called national attention to the Environmental Movement, born with the publication of Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring." The principal result of that first Earth Day is the slowly-growing public awareness of the disastrous impacts uncontrolled population growth is inflicting on the life support systems of the fragile planet we call home.

While The Illinois Prairie Path and its friends can't do much to halt the population explosion, we can mitigate some of the harmful results. We can help preserve contiguous open space and the land and water ecosystems and wildlife that depend on it; we can advocate non-motorized close-to-home outdoor recreation which will save precious fossil fuels and promote the health and happiness of local residents; and we can teach people to live more lightly on the Earth.

Specifically, The Illinois Prairie Path board of directors is considering the following activities to take place on or about April 22: the annual spring cleanup; a hike and/or bike ride; our slide show and folding screen illustrating the history of the Illinois Prairie Path, both of which will be on display at the DuPage County Center at 421 N. County Farm Road on April 22; and possibly an entry in the "self-propelled" (walk/bicycle) parade, which will follow the Path for part of its route on that day.

We also encourage our members and friends to get involved. For information about Earth Day activities, please call the DuPage County Earth Day Committee at 629-1123.

### IPP Trail User Survey

Recreational trail users were surveyed on nineteen Illinois trails during the spring and summer of 1989 and were asked to fill out a 4-page, 26-item questionnaire. The survey was conducted by Paul Gobster of the USDA Forest Service on behalf of the Illinois Chapter of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The Illinois Prairie Path portion of the study was carried out in cooperation with volunteers from the IPP and with the DuPage County Division of Transportation.

The results confirm the findings of earlier IPP surveys: 79% of users are bicyclists, 20% are joggers or hikers, and 1% are horseback riders. Over 80% live within 10 miles of the trail and 77% visit the trail 11-25 or more times per year. Principal reasons for using the trail were recreation, health and fitness, and enjoying the beautiful scenery. Typical comments: "Great trail," "Love it," "Keep up the good work." Most frequent criticisms mentioned the many at-grade street crossings and the damage to the limestone surface done by horses in the Wayne and Warrenville areas. Recommendations for improvement were expanding the trail system by building new trails and lengthening and linking existing ones, as well as even better maintenance of existing trails. More drinking fountains and toilet facilities were also suggested.

When completed, the Illinois Statewide Trails Study will be published in summary form, and reports that detail findings for individual trails will also be made available. For more information on the survey, contact Paul Gobster, U.S. Forest Service, 5801 N. Pulaski Rd., Chicago, IL 60646. Tel.: (312) 588-7650.



Paul Gobster (left) conducts user survey for Illinois Rails-to-Trails Conservancy at Volunteer Park.

Photo by Jean Mooring

## Wheaton Park District to Sponsor Second Annual Winter Marsh Hike

Brook McDonald, Manager of Interpretive Services for the Wheaton Park District sends us the following invitation to join him for another high-spirited hike: "In cooperation with The Illinois Prairie Path, we'll meet at the Prairie Path's Volunteer Park (corner of Liberty Drive and Carlton Ave.) and walk to the Lincoln Marsh Nature Preserve. At the marsh we'll stroll through its skeletal landscapes searching for old savannas and the "forgotten prairie" and we'll be treated to hot stew, biscuits, and a warm beverage cooked over a fire. Saturday, Jan. 27, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (4-612-03). Limit 20. \$2/res.; \$3/non-res. Ages 8 and over (children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult).

### Treasurer's Report

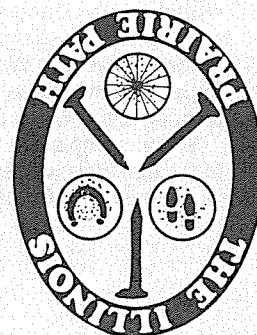
November 1, 1988 - October 31, 1989 (Unaudited)

Balance on Hand, November 1, 1988		
State Bank of St. Charles		\$ 2,710.17
SteinRoe Cash Reserves		44,506.95
	Total	\$47,217.12
Income		
Donations		2,290.50
Dues		16,864.00
Sales (Maps, T-shirts, patches, "Guides")		1,198.12
Interest		4,056.27
Miscellaneous		84.00
	Total	\$24,492.89
Expenses		
Capital Improvements		3,602.49
Rails to Trails sculpture		4,123.56
Prairie restoration		6,200.27
Trash containers		1,228.50
Maintenance		3,460.66
Newsletter		4,092.38
History Treasure Hunt Brochure		1,467.03
Membership Mailings		183.95
Printing		34.19
Office rent and telephone		765.19
Office supplies		251.58
Merchandise (T-shirts, etc.)		1,341.05
Legal		0.00
Donations		350.00
Villa Park Historical Society (a)		500.00
Miscellaneous		490.90
	Total	\$28,091.75
Balance on hand, October 31, 1989		
State Bank of St. Charles		2,192.30
SteinRoe Cash Reserves		41,425.96
	Total	\$43,618.26
(a) IPP visitor center		

— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

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Contributing \$25; Sustaining \$50; Patron \$100; Lifetime \$500

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