

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

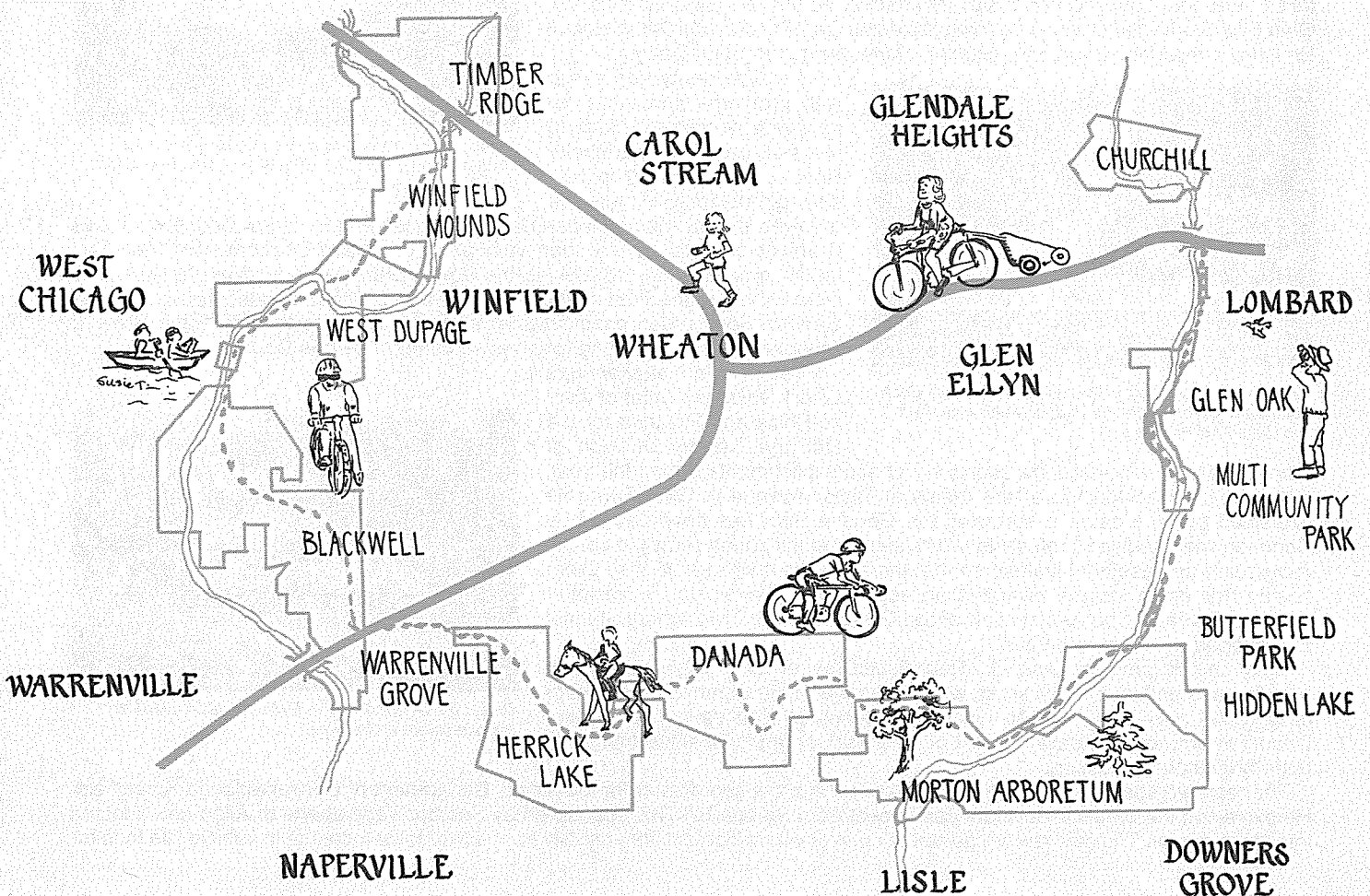
WINTER, 1989

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.

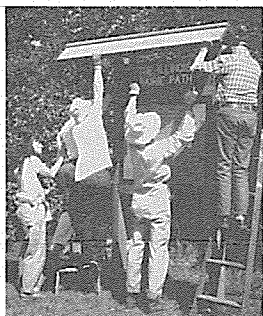
The loop trail can and should be built. NOW is the time.



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.



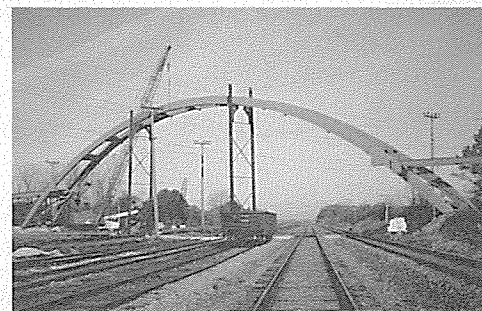
Path members install display case kiosk at Main Street, Lombard.

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.



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



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.

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.