

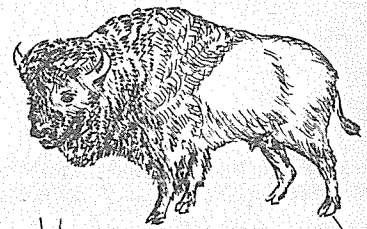
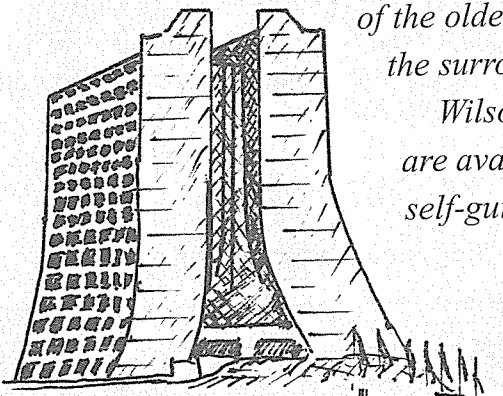
# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

## *What to look for and enjoy: the Fermilab Trail.*

A major goal of The Illinois Prairie Path board of directors is to cooperate with governmental agencies at all levels in developing a network of multiple-purpose trails connecting with the Prairie Path. One such trail was completed last year, including 2.5 miles of the IPP Aurora Branch, 5 miles of the IPP Batavia Spur, and 4 miles of the scenic trail through Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. These sections are connected by paved paths along Kirk Road (.8 mile) and along Batavia Road (1.9 miles) to make a 14.2-mile round trip.

Points of interest along the way include the Warrenville city hall (a former Chicago, Aurora & Elgin railroad station), the Warrenville library, two city parks, and two attractive fishing ponds at Bilter Road. The Fermilab Trail winds past the Leon Lederman Science Education Center, prairies, savannas, marshes and meadows, home to a variety of native plants, waterfowl, and a herd of American bison. The main building, Robert Rathbun Wilson Hall, houses a world-famous high energy physics research facility for the study of sub-atomic particles; the center atrium displays a giant Foucault pendulum; and the top floor boasts a collection of some of the oldest Indian artifacts found in DuPage County and also spectacular views of the surrounding countryside.

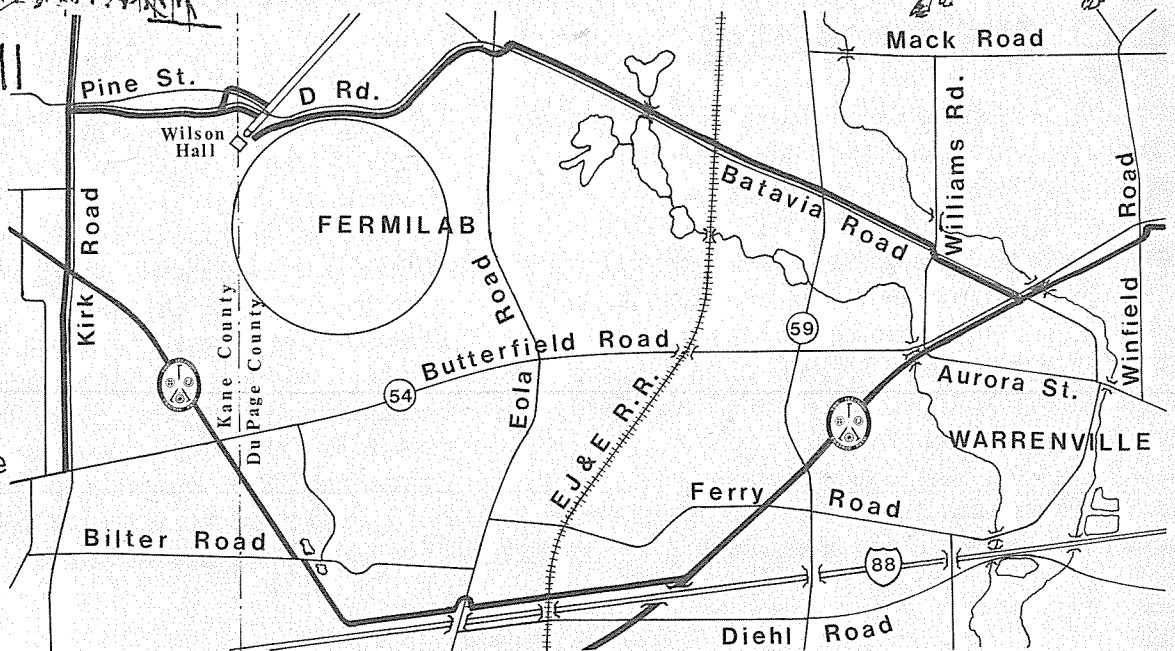
Wilson Hall is generally open for visitors. Food, beverages and toilet facilities are available there, and also in Warrenville. Come on out for a fascinating self-guided tour!



Wilson Hall



Prairie Smoke



# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends of The Illinois Prairie Path:

I have been president of the board of directors of The Illinois Prairie Path since December, 1972, a little over twenty years now; and I feel that it is time for someone else to assume this responsibility. I plan to finish out my current term which expires in December of this year and do not intend to accept the nomination for another term. However, if I should be re-elected a board member by the membership at the next annual meeting, I would be pleased to continue to serve you in that capacity.

I am proud of what the members of The Illinois Prairie Path have accomplished during the past twenty years. Working together, we have built three steel bridges, two over rivers and the largest one, Volunteer Bridge in Wheaton, over a major railroad, two city streets, and a small park. We, ourselves, have rebuilt the base and surfaced more than ten miles of trail and have lobbied and persuaded local governments to surface many more miles. We have planted trees and maintained and restored prairies; organized and participated in twenty annual cleanups; built and installed display cases, benches, and steps on steep embankments; installed and replaced countless logo and warning signs; mowed and pruned.

During my tenure, your board has planned and held twenty annual meetings of the membership and some two hundred monthly board meetings. While Jean has been editor, we have expanded and improved the quarterly *Newsletter*. We have also issued several revised versions of our trail map and updated Helen Turner's booklet, *The Illinois Prairie Path — A Guide*. We have led bird walks, bike rides, long-distance hikes, and many other special activities for our members and friends. We have

conducted several usage surveys. And always we have monitored the trail and cooperated with all agencies, public and private, concerned in any way with trail management, to promote the best interests of our users and neighbors. We have actively encouraged the development of a network of trails in the Chicago area with the Illinois Prairie Path as its backbone.

Being at the center of all this has been one of the most challenging and enjoyable experiences of my life. I have met many congenial people from all over the United States who are trail enthusiasts. I have seen the trail movement grow nationally and I am proud that Jean and I were able to be a part of it. It is with regret and sadness that I feel I must now step down. It is with some trepidation, however, that I do so. The current members of the board have expressed an unwillingness to serve as president. In fact we have been operating for the last two years without a vice president. We need someone on the board who will make a good candidate. If any of you feel that you may want to serve the community in such a capacity, please let Dick Wilson, the chair of our nominating committee, know. It now seems highly likely that a vacancy will occur on our board in the next few months.

There is much to be done for the Illinois Prairie Path and trails in the Chicago area. Our mission statement (page 7) is still valid. Please write or call our office if you are interested. We have recently acquired a new telephone number. It is (708) 752-0120.

Very truly yours,

F. Paul Mooring, President

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## ICC ANNOUNCES DECISION TIMETABLE FOR COM ED POWER LINE PROPOSAL

On March 1, 1993 the Illinois Commerce Commission will receive written testimony from legal counsel representing the State of Illinois, DuPage County, and several municipalities at the State of Illinois Building, 100 West Randolph, Chicago. Counsel for the Friends of the Prairie Path will present written testimony at that time in opposition to Commonwealth Edison's proposal to erect 85-foot poles carrying 138,000-volt power lines along a three-mile section of the Illinois Prairie Path through the center of Warrenville.

On April 1, Com Ed will respond to the written testimony, and on April 27, the ICC hearing examiner will conduct a cross examination hearing to gather further

information for a recommendation to be passed along to the seven commissioners, who will make the final decision.

The Friends of the Prairie Path group is currently seeking grants for its legal fund and also planning a major FUNdraising event. On April 17, from 8:00 to 12:00 p.m., the Friends will present two musical groups, the Blooze Brothers and Frankie & the White Boys at the Courtyard Restaurant, Rte. 59, Warrenville. Tickets are \$12.50 per person. For information and/or tickets, call Connie Schmidt at 393-6276 or Bob and Maureen Rawls, 393-6720. Tickets are also available from the Warrenville Park District and the Wheaton Park District.



## *A Valentine For Our Founders*

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you in the hopes you can pass along my letter of thanks to those who started the IPP.

I grew up along the Prairie Path. My family moved to Wheaton in 1965 when I was eight and the rails were still in. I don't know how soon after that the rails and ties were removed, probably just a year.

The "tracks" became the Prairie Path, and it became a great place for a kid. I took picnics and went exploring with my friends. Sometimes we sent notes in bottles down the creek or boats made of paper and twigs that always sank. I caught a giant goldfish in the swamp (now Lincoln Swamp, not "the" swamp). I named my goldfish Freddy, and he lived for days in a washtub behind our house. The Prairie Path was a shortcut to my friend's house, and it was the long way home from school. It was a place to run away from home so I could always find my way back. In the winter, my brothers and I would get some neighbor kids together, throw our skates over one shoulder and a snow shovel over the other, and head down the Prairie Path to the swamp for a game of hockey. When I was a little older, I used to take the kids I baby-sat for a walk or a bike ride down the Prairie Path to kill some time before their parents got home. I rode my bike or ran on it most every day when I was in sports for "conditioning," I said, but really I was daydreaming, always about being on my way to somewhere exciting.

I graduated in 1975 and left Wheaton, but my parents still live next to the Prairie Path. When we are visiting, I take my children for a walk or a ride on the Prairie Path and tell them "when I was your age" stories. The Prairie Path is still a great place.

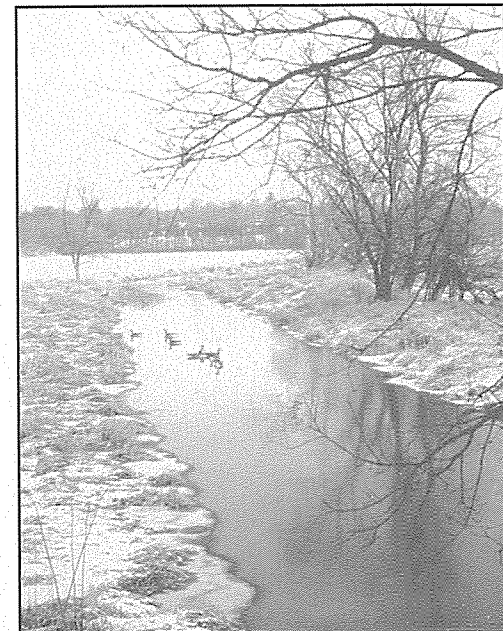
I live in Humboldt, Iowa, where five years ago a group of us, the Humboldt County Trails Council, started working to convert almost 40 miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way to a nature trail. This summer, the first 18 miles were surfaced; next year surfacing will be complete.

I want to say thank you to those who started the IPP, because I know what kind of people they are. They are people like my friends on the Humboldt County Trails Council.

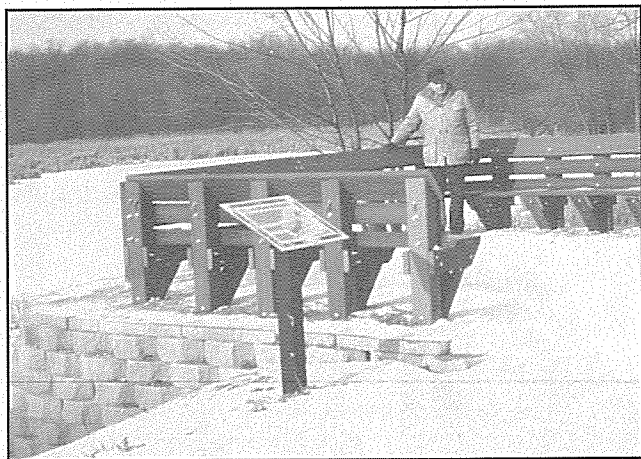
When I first heard of the possibility of our having a "Prairie Path," I wanted to be part of it, because I knew it would be great. But my friends on the Trails Council had never even seen a rail-trail. Even so, they knew or could imagine what it would be like. I am still amazed by their vision and commitment even after five years of working with them.

I know those who started the IPP must be, like my friends, some ordinary people who imagined something great, then made something great.

Thank you.



*Canada geese on Winfield Creek; Lincoln Marsh in winter, north of Illinois Prairie Path bridge.*



*New stone and wood observation deck on Illinois Prairie Path overlooking Lincoln Marsh was a Boy Scout Eagle project for Jay Hofner of Wheaton and friends.*

Sincerely,

Teresa Clarkin Loving  
2043 K Road  
Humboldt, Iowa 50548