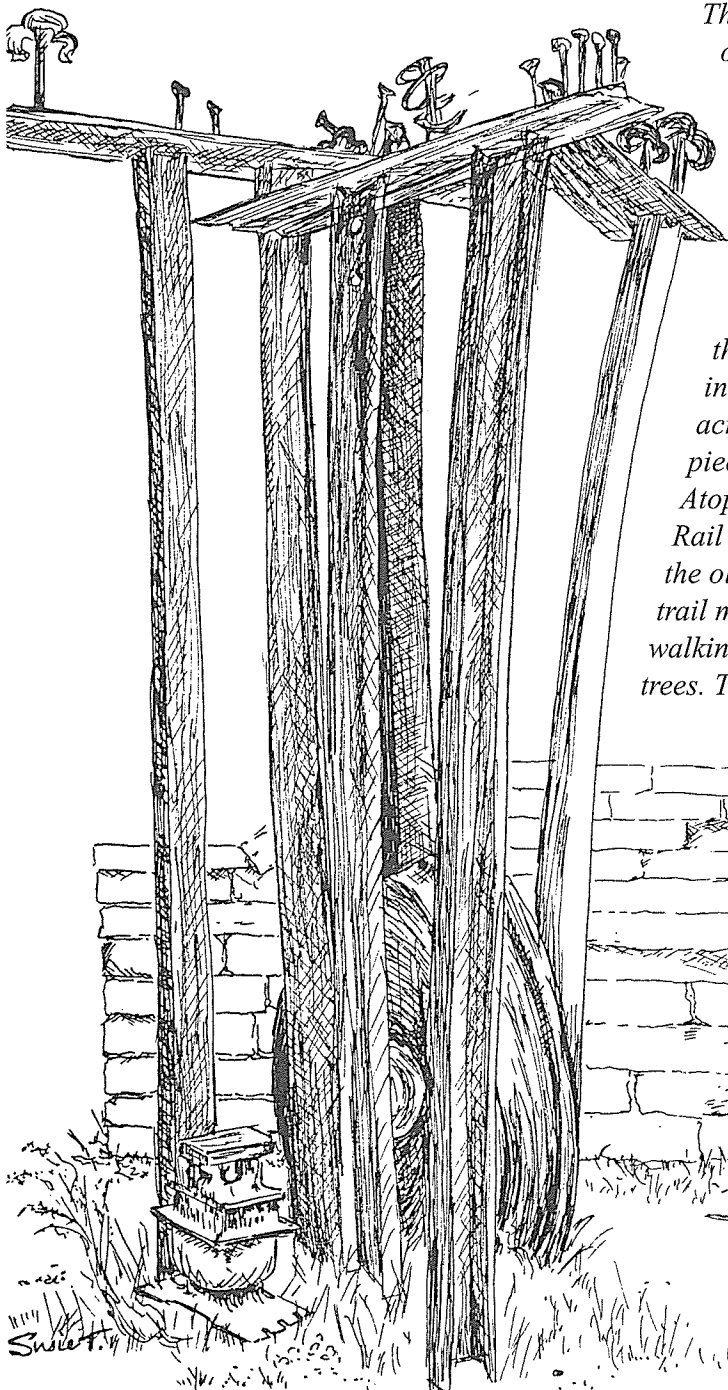


THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Winter, 1995

What To Look For and Enjoy: Our Sculpture at Volunteer Park, Wheaton



The name is apt: Rails to Trails. The sculpture stands at the center of the old Chicago, Aurora and Elgin electric railroad where the maintenance shops used to be, now the junction of the three main branches of the Illinois Prairie Path. Designed and executed by sculptor Erika Bajuk, the work symbolizes a recreational trail built on a railroad right-of-way through the dedicated efforts of thousands of volunteers and governmental agencies at all levels.

Every part of the imaginative sculpture enhances the rail-trail theme. Made of artifacts mainly from the CA&E, the work incorporates rail sections salvaged from the former Wheaton Yards across the street, a rusty railroad wheel, and an original three-piece insulator assembly welded to the bottom of one of the rails. Atop the insulator is a small section of the fearsome Great Third Rail complete with electrical fittings. These components represent the old railroad. Welded to the top of the rails is a multiple-branched trail made of tie plates. Railroad spikes and bolts are the users joyfully walking, running or riding on the trail. There are even some fanciful trees. The crowning touch is the spike holes in the tie plates along

the sides of the path; these "thousand points of light" honor the volunteers who conceived and first built the trail and are best viewed by looking up at the bright sky shining through them.

The national rails-to-trails movement started right here in DuPage County more than thirty years ago, and today brings pleasure to millions of people

throughout the country. Great things can happen when government and citizens work together.

RAILBANKING THREATENED IN CONGRESS

The National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is alerting trail users and friends to a bill just approved by Congress, the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995 or as it is commonly known, "The ICC Sunset Bill". This bill originally contained an amendment abolishing the famous railbanking statute, Section 8 (d) of the National Trails Act. The ill-considered amendment has been, at least temporarily, removed from the bill for a full hearing promised for next spring by Congressman Bud Shuster, (R-Pennsylvania), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Shuster states in his press release, "Given the complexity of the rails-to-trails issue and interplay of other statutes, specifically the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (also known as ISTEA) and the National Trails System Act of 1968, I've decided to defer the matter until next spring when the Committee can have hearings and a full airing of the issues."

The trails community needs to keep a wary eye on the railbanking amendment because, if passed, it would devastate the rail-trail movement nationwide. For the current status of the legislation call the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Washington, either President David Burwell or Marianne Fowler, RTC's government affairs manager, at (202)797-5400. For background information we reprint the following article from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy newsletter of July-September, 1995:

Railbanking—a cornerstone of the rail-trail movement—is under attack in the 104th Congress.

Proposed federal legislation will not only jeopardize the security of currently railbanked corridors (including those already developed as rail-trails), but will also prevent the acquisition of recently abandoned corridors and those that will be abandoned in the future.*

"Some of the most extraordinary rail-trails in the country are railbanked corridors," said Marianne Fowler. "The Katy Trail in Missouri, the Minuteman Bikeway outside Boston, and the Capital Crescent Trail in Washington, D.C. —it's almost impossible to comprehend the loss of these fantastic trails."

In 1983, Congress recognized that railroad abandonments were causing the loss of a valuable national asset—railroad corridors. To head off these losses, Congress passed legislation to keep the corridors open for future transportation use while allowing them to be used as public trails in the interim. This law, Section 8 (d) of the National Trails Act, is known as the railbanking statute.

Since the law's implementation, a small group of disgruntled landowners has tried to stop railbanking and, therefore, rail-trails. These individuals believe the unused corridors should revert to private ownership, closing the door forever to continued public use...

[The amendment under consideration] would effectively redefine railbanking as a "taking" of private property and would require that adjacent landowners be compensated before a corridor could be railbanked and converted to a trail.

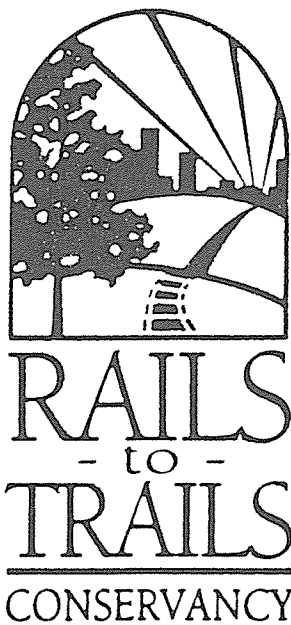
"Nothing is being taken from anyone when a rail corridor is railbanked, yet this proposed legislation will cripple railbanking," said Hal Hiemstra, RTC's vice president for national policy...

"RTC is dedicated to keeping the railbanking statute intact. In recent

weeks, RTC has encouraged hundreds of affected citizens across the country to contact their Senators and Representatives."

"We need the help of all RTC members [and all trail users]" said Fowler. "The best thing you can do is pick up the phone and call your Congressional Representative. The general number for the House of Representatives is (202) 224-3121." Fowler suggests telling your Representative that you strongly oppose any weakening of the railbanking statute and explaining how railbanking and/or the rail-trail movement have enhanced your community.

**Editor's Note: The Illinois Prairie Path was acquired long before the railbanking statute was enacted. However, many other rail-trails in Illinois, now in use or proposed, could be endangered. When you contact your Congressperson, describe the ways a beautiful rail-trail like the IPP enhances your life.*



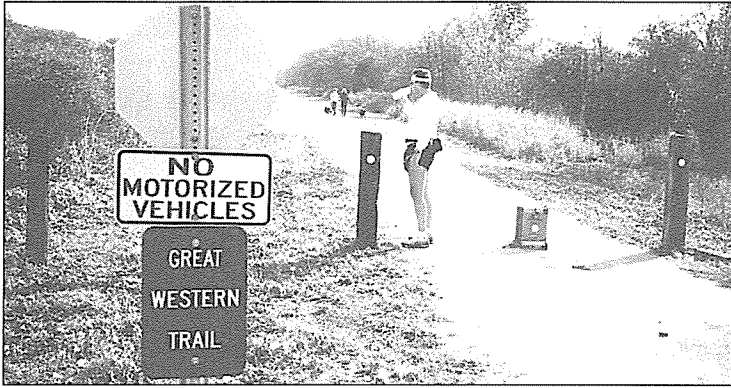
— Jean C. Mooring, Editor —

MEMBERSHIP RATES:	Individual \$10
	Family \$15
	Organization/Supporting \$20
	Contributing \$25
	Sustaining \$50
	Patron \$100
	Lifetime \$500



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NEW SIGNS ON GREAT WESTERN TRAIL



Great Western Trail sign east of Prince Crossing.

Early this year Jean and Paul Mooring reported to DuPage County DOT officials that many trail users, some village staff members, and a few newspaper feature writers were confusing the Great Western Trail and the Illinois Prairie Path. Even JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) sometimes didn't know exactly which railroad right-of-way it was granting permits to dig on. This confusion was understandable because the two corridors run roughly parallel and the identifying signage on the Great Western was inadequate to nonexistent. Responding to the need, this summer the DuPage County DOT made and installed brown-and-white signs at each street crossing along the Great Western Trail. Now each trail is clearly marked and the problem has been solved.

OUR NEW LIAISON AT DPCDOT

Chuck Tokarski, former Chief of Traffic Plans and Programs and liaison for the trails community at the DuPage County Division of Transportation, has won a well-deserved promotion to County Engineer. We thank Chuck for the conscientious and effective job he has done for trails over the years and wish him great success in his new position.

Assisting Chuck as the new trails liaison is Ruth Krupensky, a principal planner who has been with DOT for eight years. She is a bicyclist although she hasn't done much

bicycling lately because she now lives too far from the Prairie Path. When she lived in Pinellas County, Florida, she did the Pinellas Trail preliminary study and also the bike plan for Pinellas County. She remains a fan of the IPP and can be reached at 665-1155 for trail information.



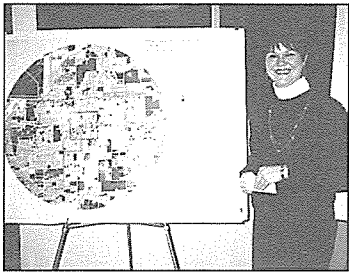
Trails liaison Ruth Krupensky at her desk at DPCDOT, 130 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton.

DUPAGE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION BUDGET: LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES FOR IPP?

There are many competing demands for DuPage County transportation funds: construction of new highways, operation and maintenance of the existing highway system, and construction, operation and maintenance of the county-owned trails, the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail. The DuPage County Division of Transportation has produced a comprehensive ten-year development plan, which includes an estimated \$320 million for new construction; additional funding will also be necessary for reconstruction and maintenance of existing roadways. Sources of funding include the motor fuel tax collected statewide; the gas tax collected only in the collar counties of DuPage, Lake and Kane; a portion of the real estate property tax; and the transportation impact fee, paid by developers. This impact fee eases the burden on taxpayers in paying for road improvements made necessary by increased traffic resulting from new developments; it generates approximately \$2.2 million per year, none of it from ordinary taxpayers.

The carefully considered transportation plan depends on all four sources for funding. If the transportation impact fee is eliminated, as has been proposed, plus a significant portion of the property tax money, as has also been proposed, the motor fuel tax, gas tax and diminished property tax will not cover the costs of the ten-year plan. In the long run something will have to give and it might be trails, unless the county board thinks ahead and provides adequate funding for ALL county transportation needs.

Report on annual meeting continued



Deborah Fagan with map of DuPage County priority travel zone, downtown Downers Grove.

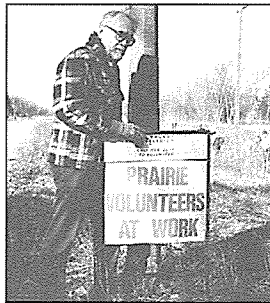
board member Nancy Hesler had decided to retire from the board because of health reasons and that a replacement would be needed very soon.

The featured speaker was Deborah Fagan, Principal Planner, Development

Department, for the

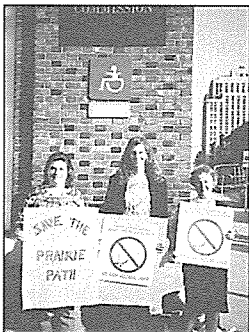
DuPage County Regional Planning Commission. Her topic was the new DuPage County Bikeway Plan, which is primarily designed to promote non-motorized alternative transportation (bicycling and walking). She and her staff have done an outstanding job mapping existing and proposed off-road trails, bike lanes and bike routes based on a system of ten "priority travel zones". The goal is to divert as many drivers as possible out of their cars and onto the energy-saving, pollution-free, healthful bikeways. To illustrate her talk she brought MAPS, lots of them, real fields of dreams, inspiring her listeners to think, "If you get them built, Debbie, we will come."

Four speakers provided quick updates: Paul Aeschleman on the IPP in Cook County, "The Phase 1 environmental impact study is finished and construction



Keith Olson led Work Day at Great Western Prairie, Elmhurst, February 18, 1995.

should start in 1996 if ISTEA funding is not cut"; Steve Plumb re the Salt Creek Greenway, "On schedule, \$739,000 received for engineering to start soon, need \$5 1/2 million to complete"; Keith Olson on prairie remnant restoration, "A Work Day is coming up at the North Avenue prairie, third Saturday in March"; Connie Schmidt on the Com Ed power lines, "Since February, 1991 an ad hoc group, the Wheaton/Warrenville Friends of the Prairie Path, has opposed Com Ed's plan to install 90-foot steel poles carrying 138-thousand-volt



Friends of the Prairie Path Debra Ranieri, Connie Schmidt and Jean Mooring in Springfield await decision by Illinois Commerce Commission. Photo by Patrick Macroy.

transmission lines along several miles of the Illinois Prairie Path Aurora Branch through Warrenville. This would effectively destroy the trees and the natural beauty of the trail and expose nearby homeowners to electromagnetic fields generated by the lines. In October, 1995 the Illinois Commerce Commission rubber-stamped the proposal even though there are better and no more expensive possible routes along Ferry Road, Diehl Road or I-88, the Friends contend. Now they will take the case to the appellate court in cooperation with the City of Warrenville, DuPage County, and the Citizens Utility Board. They need donations from all of us who love the Prairie Path." Call Connie at (708) 393-6276.

The last speaker was Jean Mooring, who narrated the annual slide show, written by Paul Mooring. The show highlighted the work

of our volunteers during the year and the outstanding contributions of various governmental agencies, especially the DuPage County Division of Transportation, the City of West Chicago, and the Kane County Forest Preserve district.

DuPage County DOT has almost finished construction of the bridge over Eola Road on the Aurora Branch and the underpass under Eola Road on the Batavia Spur; work has just started on the long-awaited completion of the Geneva Spur in Winfield.

The meeting concluded with the traditional cider, cakes and cookies provided by board members and spouses. Benna Tate's

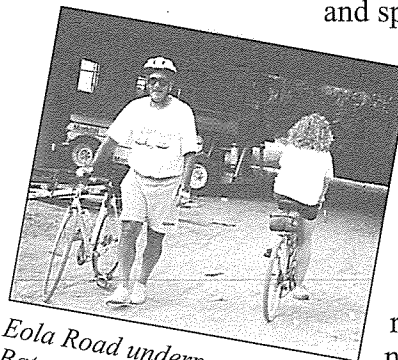
delicious chocolate cake in the shape of our many-branched trail had everybody laughing over its tiny pretzel mile markers, its candy cornfield (on the Batavia Spur), its dainty chocolate railroad crossings, its blue nonpareil marshes, and especially its tasty riverboat casinos at the ends of the trail in Elgin and Aurora.



David Tate, one-man cleanup crew, regularly picks up trash along five-mile section of Elgin Branch.



Bridge over Eola Road on Aurora Branch should be completed by end of 1995.



Eola Road underpass on Batavia Spur will soon have smooth limestone surface.

REPORT ON ANNUAL MEETING

The 31st annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation was called to order at 2:00 p.m., November 5, 1995 by President Paul Aeschleman. Some sixty-five IPP members and friends attended the festive event at The Abbey on St. Charles Road, donated for our use and decorated with masses of mums by the Elmhurst Park District.

President Aeschleman reported on some of the Path activities during the year: the annual Earth Day cleanup, the booth at the Chicago Area Bicycle Dealers show at



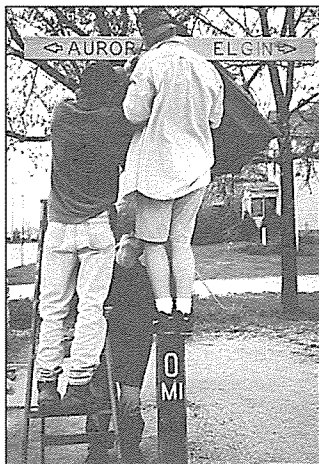
Paul Mooring, Nancy Wilson, and Dick Wilson repair bench at Geneva Junction.

Rosemont, prairie replanting at Volunteer Park, repairs to benches and display cases, the slide show presented by the Moorings to various civic groups, and support for a Boy Scout directional sign project, for the Salt Creek Trail project, and for the Rails-to-Trails

Conservancy, both national and state. He outlined goals for 1996, including expansion of our prairie restoration and port-o-let and trash barrel maintenance programs as well as of our role as a trail advocacy group. A major goal will be our assistance with landscaping of a 1000-foot section of the IPP north of National-Louis University (the former county courthouse) in Wheaton. This section is proposed for relocation from the right-of-way of the Union Pacific Railroad (formerly the Chicago and NorthWestern) to adjacent county-owned land.

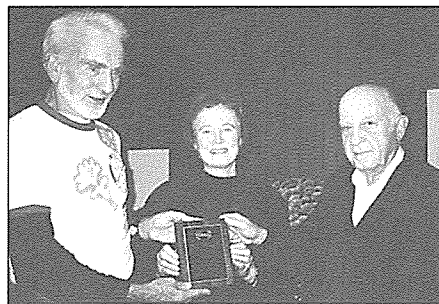
DuPage County DOT will begin the relocation next year. We also need to repaint the bridge over the East Branch of the DuPage River.

Treasurer Steve Plumb reported the good news that we finished the year without dipping into savings, \$1,207 better than a year ago. Based on anticipated income of \$39,000, our 1996 budget will allow us to



Boy Scouts, led by Eagle candidate Mike Shenuk of Glen Ellyn, put up directional signs at Volunteer Park in Wheaton, April 29.

expand our port-o-let and trash barrel program as planned. We will probably need to raise some additional funds for the long-awaited landscaping project at National-Louis University.



Dick Wilson presents American Hiking Society plaque to Jean and Paul Mooring.

On behalf of the American Hiking Society, Projects and Maintenance Chairman Dick Wilson presented the National Trails Day 1995 Illinois Volunteers of the Year Award to Paul and Jean Mooring. The message on the handsome wood plaque donated by the Vibram Company reads: "...the story of trails in the United States has been written by volunteers."

Membership Chair David Tate stated that 732 new members had been enrolled in 1995 (more than 1000 since he began the drive in 1994), bringing the total of paid memberships to 1492. Membership dues brought in \$30,187 this year, almost double the amount collected as recently as



Mel Hoff (left) distributes seeds to volunteers at West Chicago Prairie, March 18, 1995.

1993. Illustrating his points with fact sheets, David listed our reasons for increasing the membership, including installation and maintenance of display cases, benches, signs, mile markers, trash barrels and comfort stations; publishing the *Newsletter*; prairie restoration and trail landscaping; coordinating (and working on) Path cleanups; advocacy for trails; and special projects like the proposed landscaping in Wheaton and the grand finale for the Grand Illinois Trail Adventure on June 1, 1996 to be held somewhere along the Illinois Prairie Path.

Recognized for excellent work in updating our membership list and managing our office was Linda Plumb, who received an enthusiastic round of applause.

Ken Moss, who chaired the nominating committee, reported that three board members whose terms were expiring had agreed to run again: Ken himself, Nancy Becker, and Susan Wisniewski. All were reelected by acclamation. Ken announced with regret that longtime

continued on page 4

1996 MIDWEST BICYCLE SHOW

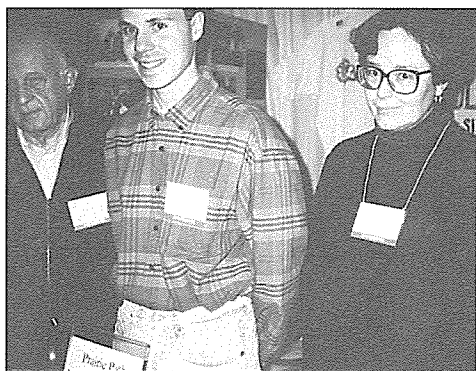
Board member David Tate sends us the following article:

"The Illinois Prairie Path will have a display table at the 1996 Midwest Bicycle Show. The show will be held at the Rosemont Convention Center from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, February 24 and 25, 1996. Last year over 15,000 people attended the show.

"The Illinois Prairie Path will have maps and pictures on display, will answer questions and provide free literature on the Path and surrounding trails. In addition, we will sell Illinois Prairie Path maps, tee shirts, hats, patches and trail guides.

"Admission to the show is \$7.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children under 12. Coupons for \$2.00 off the admission price can be picked up at bicycle stores in the Chicago metropolitan area.

"At the Midwest Bicycle Show you can view the 1996 product selection from the major bicycle and accessory manufacturers, attend seminars and clinics, view Pulp Traction cycling movies and watch bicycle stunt shows. Stunt show contracts are currently being negotiated with the Schwinn Free Style Team, the GT Free Style Team and Hans Rey."



*Paul Mooring,
Tom May and
Path Secretary
Nancy Becker
take their turn at
the IPP booth at
the CABDA bike
show Rosemont,
February, 1995.*

Treasurer's Report

November 1, 1994 - October 31, 1995

(Unaudited)

Balance on hand, November 1, 1994

State Bank of St. Charles	\$5,623
SteinRoe Cash Reserves	<u>36,666</u>
TOTAL	\$42,289

Revenue

Donations	\$1,805
Dues	30,187
Sales (maps, T-shirts, Patches, "Guides")	3,620
Interest	2,010
Miscellaneous	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	\$37,633

Expenditures

Capital Improvements	\$2,918
Maintenance	63
Office Manager (wages)	6,600
Membership Mailings and Services	4,394
Printing (including "Newsletter")	7,098
Office Rent and Telephone	409
Office Supplies	1,754
Merchandise for Sale (maps, T-shirts, etc.)	9,856
Trash and Waste Removal	2,132
Villa Park Historical Society (a)	1,000
Legal	0
Miscellaneous	<u>202</u>
TOTAL	\$36,426

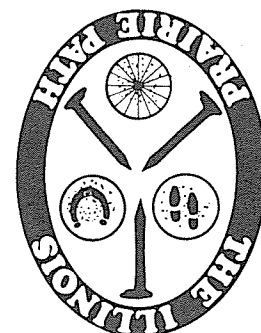
Balance on hand, October 31, 1995

State Bank of St. Charles	\$4,901
SteinRoe Cash Reserves	<u>38,595</u>
TOTAL	\$43,496

(a) Illinois Prairie Path Visitor Center

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