

The Illinois Prairie Path

Fall/Winter 1998



NEWSLETTER

IPP Celebrates Opening Of Cook County Section

By Paul Aeschleman, IPP Board Member



Smiles All Around!

Top Photo: Maywood Mayor Joe Freelon cuts the ribbon at the IPP 1st Avenue trailhead. Assisting are other Maywood officials, Ed Hoffman (right) and Paul Aeschleman, IPP Board Member (lower center).

Bottom right photo: Bellwood Mayor Donald Lemm (center) with Bellwood and Maywood officials are ready to cut the ribbon at the new bridge over Addison Creek. IPP Board Members pictured are Dick Wilson (left) and David Tate (right).

To celebrate the opening of the four-mile Cook County section of the Illinois Prairie Path, three ribbon cutting ceremonies were held by the Villages of Maywood, Bellwood, Hillside, and Berkeley on September 20.

The ribbon cuttings were attended by: the mayors of Maywood, Bellwood, Hillside, and Berkeley; village managers and trustees; various local politicians and candidates; members of The Illinois Prairie Path's Board of Directors; Beth Matkovich, representing the North Central Council of Mayors; Ed Hoffman and Bob Thornberry from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Mike Ulm, representing the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; members of the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation; and numerous residents and trail enthusiasts.

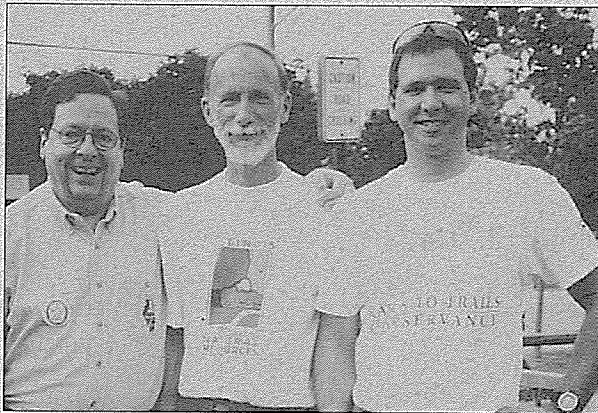
The completion of this \$660,000 project improves four miles of the 61-mile Illinois Prairie Path trail network and simultaneously completes another four miles of the 465-mile Grand Illinois Trail. The IPP Cook County project

(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Sheriff's Department Update	3
Commercial Encroachment	4
Taylor Bridge Project Update	5
IPP Treasurer's Report	5





(Left Photo) Two of the key people who helped make the Cook County section of the IPP a reality are (left to right): Ed Hoffman and Bob Thornberry, longtime Illinois Department of Natural Resources staff members, pictured with Mike Ulm of the Illinois Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

(Right Photo) The first Grand Illinois Trail sign on the IPP was installed at 1st Avenue in Maywood. The entire 465-mile Grand Illinois Trail is expected to be completed in the year 2000.



IPP Celebrates Opening of Cook County Section

(Continued from page 1)

included the installation of new landscaping, traffic control barriers, signage, curb cuts, asphalt pavement, and the improvement or replacement of two bridges. Although the engineering for this project began in 1997, final construction did not start until the spring of 1998 and was finished in August 1998. This project was funded with a Federal ISTEA grant, and the matching funds were provided by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the local villages.

The Illinois Prairie Path NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published by The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors. Address correspondence to: The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189

Phone: 630-752-0120

Web Site Address:
<http://www.ipp.org>

Meetings: The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in Rathje Park, 616 Delles Ave., Wheaton.

"The completion of the \$660,000 project improves another 4 miles of the 61-mile Illinois Prairie Path and the 465-mile Grand Illinois Trail."

Accessing the IPP Cook County Section

With the completion of the IPP's Cook County section, it is now possible to ride the IPP from 1st Avenue in Maywood all the way to Elgin, Aurora, Geneva, or Batavia.

The Cook County Section can be found between 0.25 and 0.5 miles north of I-290 (Eisenhower Expressway). The path can be accessed from a number of locations in the Villages of Maywood, Bellwood, Hillside, and Berkeley. For residents of Chicago, we recommend starting at 1st Avenue in Maywood and riding west towards DuPage and Kane Counties. The IPP's eastern trailhead is located approximately one quarter of a mile north of I-290 on the west side of 1st Avenue. The best local landmark is the Duke of Oil which is located on the north side of the IPP. Note: if you cross Madison Avenue, you've gone too far. Parking is available on 2nd Avenue or in the ComEd parking lot on the east side of 1st Avenue.

Areas of Possible Confusion

Although the new path is very well marked, many people have commented that they thought the path ended at Mannheim Road when they were headed west from 1st Avenue and at Butterfield Road when they were heading east from DuPage County. At these locations the IPP takes a slight detour onto Warren Avenue because the right-of-way between Butterfield and Mannheim Roads is unavailable. Warren Avenue is a small east-west street that is south of and runs parallel to the path. If you're traveling eastbound, head south across Butterfield Road and make a left on to Warren Avenue (approximately 100 yards). If you're traveling westbound, cross Mannheim at the first street light to the north and go south to Warren Avenue and follow the IPP signs.

We hope that you have an opportunity to use this latest improvement to the Cook County trail network. Should you have any questions or need directions, please contact Paul Aeschleman at 708-848-6023.

Sheriff's Department Offers Assistance to Prairie Path Users

By Sheriff John Zaruba

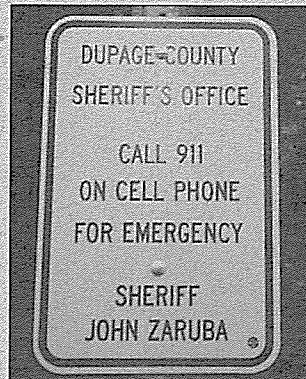
I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you about some exciting new services that the Sheriff's Office will be providing to users of the DuPage County Trail System (the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail).

Over the past year, I've been working with local cellular companies to provide 9-1-1 service to customers in DuPage County. As you may know, many cell phone users must dial *999 or another number in an emergency. I am a firm believer that 9-1-1 should be the universal number for all emergencies. We teach our kids to dial 9-1-1 and we cannot expect young children to know that the emergency number on a cellular phone is any different.

I am pleased to tell you that five cellular providers are now providing 9-1-1 services through the Sheriff's Office to customers traveling within DuPage County. These providers are: Ameritech, Cellular One, Prime Co, Sprint and Nextel.

A cellular phone is one of the most important items you can carry while enjoying the Prairie Path. In case of an emergency, a cell phone will allow you to quickly communicate with us about your exact location and your needs.

As a reminder to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency, our office will be putting up signs at various points near entrances to the Prairie Path. I assure you that these signs will be small and unobtrusive so that they will not detract from the Path's scenery. Look for these signs to be up sometime in the next few months.



The Wheaton Police Department has been patrolling the Prairie Path on bicycles within the city limits for years. The Sheriff's program would cover unincorporated areas. In the photo above, two Wheaton officers are pictured with Deborah Fagan, principal planner with the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission. (Left) New signs remind users to call 9-1-1.

In addition, we are expanding our citizen volunteer unit and Police Explorer Post duties to include bicycle patrol along the Path. These volunteers will be uniformed and will carry first aid equipment and police radios in case someone is in need of assistance. If you or someone you know would be interested in being part of this volunteer bike patrol, I encourage you to contact our office at 630-682-2756.

Last, but not least, you many occasionally notice a group of people wearing orange vests working along

the Illinois Prairie Path or the Great Western Trail. These are participants of our S.W.A.P. program (Sheriff's Work Alternative Program). Non-violent offenders are sentenced to this program and perform community service throughout the county under the supervision of uniformed deputies. The program has already saved taxpayers over \$1 million in labor costs. S.W.A.P. will be out along the Prairie Path at various times throughout the year picking up trash, weeding, painting out graffiti and doing other work to keep the Path looking beautiful.

Taylor Avenue Bridge Task Force At Work



Members of the Taylor Avenue Bridge Task Force recently inspected the handsome bridge over Eola Road on the IPP Aurora Branch. Pictured left to right are Jean Mooring, Pi Irwin, Ron Rennard and Paul Mooring.

For more details on the Taylor Avenue Bridge project, see page 5.

In Elmhurst

1st Commercial Encroachment Permitted on IPP

**By Jean C. Mooring,
IPP Board Member**

The DuPage County Division of Transportation granted a Roadway Construction Permit on the Illinois Prairie Path right-of-way (County Highway #47) at York Road and Vallette Road in Elmhurst on April 29. The petitioner, Prairie Centre Limited Partnership, needed the land for a portion of the detention area required for construction of a strip mall just south of the Prairie Path.

According to Elmhurst City Manager Tom Borchert, the City of Elmhurst had previously approved this use of county property mainly for aesthetic reasons. The developer promised to landscape the bulldozed area of the Prairie Path with evergreen and deciduous trees plus turf grass and various perennials so that it would be pleasing to local residents living south of the Path.

Other Elmhurst residents, however, believe that this decision may set a precedent for future commercial developments on public land. They also believe that The Illinois Prairie Path Board should have been consulted about planting some native prairie plants beside the trail. Where there were once trees screening the commercial area along Vallette, Prairie Path users now have to look at a parking lot and strip mall.

The Illinois Prairie Path Board understands that this is the only permitted encroachment on the DuPage County Trail System, which includes many unpermitted commercial encroachments on both trails. The county does not have the manpower to conduct a study. However the IPP Board may be able to identify these unpermitted encroachments and help develop a county ordinance regulating and, it is hoped, preventing such encroachments now and in the future.



Along the Illinois Prairie Path in Elmhurst at York and Vallette Roads, the screen of trees has been cut down and IPP users have a clear view of the strip mall.

News and Notes About Bicycling In Illinois



Editor's Note: The following article was forwarded to the IPP by the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB).

Are you the "intended" user of roads? The LIB certainly thinks so!

John Boub was bicycling in Wayne Township in DuPage County when he came upon a bridge on St. Charles Road. There were no warning signs when he approached the bridge, so he proceeded to cross it. He didn't make it, though.

He went down and was severely injured when his wheel caught in the groove between wooden planks. The bridge was being repaired and the caulking between the planks had been removed. Warning signs were up when workmen were present, but not when he attempted to cross it.

Eventually, he took Wayne Township to court, and when he lost, he appealed to the Appellate Court. It ruled for Wayne Township, saying Boub was not entitled to damages because the roadways are "intended for use by motor vehicles only and the Illinois Highway Code distinguished between a bicycle and a vehicle."

He appealed again — this time to the Illinois Supreme Court. There the League of Illinois Bicyclists, in conjunction with the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, presented an amici curiae (friends of the court) brief. The Court has not yet ruled on the appeal. (Editor's Note: This appeal was recently denied by the court.)

LIB is justifiably concerned about the ruling. It would undercut Illinois law that gives bicyclists all the rights and responsibilities of vehicle drivers. Furthermore, under the ruling municipalities might be reluctant to add bike lanes, bike sensitive signals, signed or mapped bike routes — anything that would "invite" bicyclists to use roadways.

Taylor Avenue Bridge Progress Report

In a letter dated October 2, 1998, R.O. Wulf, Regional Manager of Public Affairs for Commonwealth Edison Company, informed Chuck Tokarski, County Engineer and Director of the DuPage County Division of Transportation, that ComEd would work with the County to ensure that the pedestrian walkway over Taylor Avenue becomes a reality. ComEd's principle concern is retaining access to its substation east of the bridge. A pedestrian bridge would be half as expensive as the originally proposed vehicular bridge.

On September 28, Gary Webster, Glen Ellyn Village Manager, wrote the following to Mike Formento, Chairman of the DuPage County Board Transportation Committee:

"Please be advised that \$100,000 has been accumulated in Glen Ellyn for use by DuPage County in the construction of a pedestrian bridge over our Taylor Avenue underpass. These funds have been gathered by a citizens' group who have received donations from over 900 contributors as an inducement to DuPage to construct this Prairie Path bridge adjacent to the railroad tracks over Taylor Avenue.

"I believe these dollars could be transferred from our citizens' group to the Village for subsequent transfer to DuPage County Transportation Department with a simple intergovernmental agreement between the Village and the County. The Village and the several citizen groups involved would want the ability to review preliminary plans, particularly with an eye on the aesthetic issues. In addition, several citizen groups, including The Illinois Prairie Path, hope to maximize retention of the planted prairie area to be spanned by the new bridge, and I believe would desire the permission and responsibility to do whatever replanting is necessary after its construction.

"Please advise on whatever else we might do to encourage and facilitate construction of this bridge in order to eliminate the serious safety hazard which currently exists."

Bridge construction could begin in

the spring. In the meantime a decision must be made whether to keep the present ramps for local access to the trail or to remove them and enlarge the prairie restoration perhaps with sidewalks or even just dirt paths for access.

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH

TREASURER'S REPORT (Unaudited)

November 1, 1997 - October 31, 1998

CASH BALANCE ON HAND, November 1, 1997

First National Bank of Chicago (checking)	\$51,418.77
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (Money Market Fund)	42,688.76

TOTAL	\$94,107.53
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REVENUE

Donations	\$24,077.29
Dues	28,536.75
Sales (maps, T-shirts, patches, guide books, hats, etc)	1,616.25
Interest	4,437.28

TOTAL	\$58,667.57
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EXPENDITURES

Office Manager (salary)	\$7260.00
Newsletters	7,032.77
Memberships/Flyers	849.63
Sign Replacement	122.56
Litter Removal/Toilets	4,108.48
Postage	1,605.23
Office Supplies	1,325.09
Telephone	468.56
Special Projects	871.25
Prairie Restoration	567.96
Merchandise for Sale	1,504.83
Donations (\$10,000 to Taylor Avenue Bridge Fund)	11,600.00
Membership Services	567.18
Travel	154.75
Legal and Consulting	385.00
Miscellaneous	222.00

TOTAL	\$38,645.29
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CASH BALANCE ON HAND, October 31, 1998

The First National Bank of Chicago (checking)	\$24,296.84
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (Money Market Fund)	89,832.97

TOTAL	\$114,129.81
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THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER
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1998 Tax-deductible Contributions Can Benefit The Illinois Prairie Path!

It is now that time of the year to make any 1998 tax-deductible contributions to The Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) that would be in addition to your annual membership contribution. The Illinois Prairie Path is a not-for-profit corporation and all contributions are tax deductible.

The IPP provides trail amenities along the 61-mile trail such as display cases, mile markers, benches, free trail maps, trash barrels, and comfort stations. We also preserve, restore and re-establish prairies along the trail. In addition, The Illinois Prairie Path coordinates trail cleanups, makes donations, and works with municipalities, counties and the State of Illinois to promote trail awareness and improvements.

The IPP's all volunteer Board of Directors ask that you please remember the Illinois Prairie Path when it is time to make your 1998 contributions. Your contributions will provide local trail amenities and assure the continuation of trail improvements.

It is also possible to double/triple your gift through your company's matching gift program. The matching gift form, obtained from your company's personnel office, should be mailed along with your check.

If you would like to make a contribution, please send your check made payable to "The Illinois Prairie Path" to the following address:

The Illinois Prairie Path
PO Box 1086
Wheaton, IL 60189

Thanks for your consideration!
The IPP's all volunteer Board of Directors