THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH
NEWSLETTER
Summer 1998

Thanks to IPP Cleanup Volunteers

The annual Earth Day cleanup along the Illinois Prairie Path was a great success, thanks to the help of many volunteers. Here is a report on the Earth Day activities from the IPP Board Members and volunteers.

Bellwood (Susan Wisniewski)
The Bellwood Earth Day Cleanup, held on May 2, was very successful. The Bellwood Library generously donated its display case for the month of May for a retrospective exhibit of previous Earth Day cleanups in Bellwood. The cleanup participants met at the Boys & Girls Club at 9 a.m. and munched on donuts and orange juice donated by Mayor Donald P. Lemm, while I gave a short introduction on the IPP and its history. There was an enthusiastic turnout of over 40 kids, Kiwanis, Prairie View Senior Apartments directors, and neighborhood participants, along with Bellwood trustees Arthur Grapenthien and Frank Hasman, and Boys & Girls Club directors, including Pat Gartland and Ed Sheehan, who make the cleanup happen every year with their energetic support.

The Village of Bellwood Street Department was there, cleaning up large trash and picking up garbage bags, doing a fantastic job helping out all along the way, as they always do. Many comments were made about how clean the path seemed this year compared to other years, and I can only hope that our yearly Earth Day cleanups have helped make a difference. After the three hours of cleanup, we held a raffle and had a pizza party, donated by Mayor Lemm and the Village of Bellwood. I think it was a very positive neighborhood experience for all involved.

Bellwood: Frank Hasman and Arthur Grapenthien, Bellwood Trustees; Jeff Prueter with Prairie View Apartments; and the kids with the Boys & Girls Club; all worked together to make the IPP and Bellwood a great neighborhood.

Glen Ellyn (Jean Mooring)
Glen Ellyn held its annual Illinois Prairie Path cleanup on April 18 to kick off Earth Week in the village. The cleanup was sponsored, as it has been for many years, by the Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission with major assistance from Illinois Prairie Path board members Paul and Jean Mooring, Bob Bernero, and Dick (and Nancy) Wilson.

Tom Jamrok, new chairman of the environmental commission, organized the event and recruited most of the 72 volunteers, who picked up two six-wheeler truckloads of debris including the usual cans, bottles, paper and plastic packaging plus huge logs, railroad tie sections, and one flattened former village trash

Glen Ellyn: Margaret Mooring adds a heavy log to the cleanup pile.

(Continued on page 2)

Thanks to IPP Cleanup Volunteers

(Continued from page 1)
basket. Discovered on the right-of-way by Paul Mooring (but left for a future cleanup) were two ugly and extremely heavy metal pieces of wreckage from the 1976 North-Western Railroad derailment.

Among the volunteers were many longtime Prairie Path supporters including Village President Joe Wark, Joe Carlton, Ken Merrill, Mark Newell, who operated Jean Mooring's chainsaw to cut up the biggest logs, and Margaret Mooring, who came the longest distance (from Madison, Wisconsin) to help out. The village provided a front end loader, a dump truck, and two employees (Joe Rein and Eric Hendrickson) for this very successful effort. The volunteers who stayed until noon gathered at beautiful Prairie Path Park for the drawing (by Bobby Schmidt of Boy Scout Troop 46) of certificates donated by the village to be redeemed at several local businesses including Starbucks Coffee, Blue Sky Coffee House, Einstein Bagels, and the Glen Theatre. A good time was had by all!

Maywood (Paul Aeschleman)
The Village of Maywood hosted the annual cleanup along the Illinois Prairie Path on Saturday, May 23. The cleanup was attended by over 20 members of the Maywood Boys & Girls Club, members of The Illinois Prairie Path, local citizens and Village employees. The Village's sponsorship included snacks, t-shirts and hot dogs for all volunteers. The cleanup resulted in the removal of approximately 50 bags of litter and debris from the trail. Special thanks to Sheila Adkins of the Village of Maywood and Joel White of the Maywood Boys & Girls Club for all their efforts in organizing this very successful event.

West Chicago: IPP Board Members Birt Hurlbert (left) and Dick Wilson worked on the cleanup in West Chicago.

Naperville (Mike Cross)
Earl Miller of Bloomingdale and John Ryan of Naperville helped pick up six garbage bags of trash and about 40 pounds of recyclables. We picked up trash along the one mile stretch of trail between the railroad tracks in Aurora and Diehl Road. It looked like trash hadn't been picked up here in a long time — and we even avoided the construction materials from the ComEd power lines.

Warrenville (Bob and Maureen Rawls)
We regret that the annual IPP Spring Cleanup on May 2 was cancelled in Warrenville due to ComEd's temporary closing of the Illinois Prairie Path.

West Chicago (Dick Wilson)
On Saturday, April 25, Birt Hurlbert, Dick and Nancy Wilson cleaned from North Avenue working our way north for three hours along the section that runs behind the former K-Mart store. We stayed along the IPP trail, not attempting to cover the whole railroad right-of-way because of the mounds of trash thrown and blown from the shopping center. This section is a major trash problem that needs to be addressed.

The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

This quarterly newsletter is published by the Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors. Address correspondence in care of: Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189
Phone: (630) 752-0120
New 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, IL 60189

Special Thanks!
The Illinois Prairie Path wishes to thank the Chicago Area Bicycle Dealers Association (CABDA) for their generous contribution to the IPP's free trail map and information program. CABDA's financial support will be used to offset a portion of the printing and distribution costs associated with this program.

In Memoriam
Remembering Liz & Louise

By Jean Mooring

Elizabeth R. Holmes
July 12, 1908 – March 3, 1998

Liz Holmes was one of the founders of the Illinois Prairie Path. In 1963, she joined with May Theilgaard Watts, Helen Turner and Jane Sindt of Naperville, Phoebe Ryerson of Wayne and Lillian Lasch of Morton Grove to form a core group of six women who would promote Mrs. Watts' idea. It was a truly revolutionary idea then to convert an abandoned railroad right-of-way (the old Chicago, Aurora and Elgin) into a nature trail, but it mushroomed into the rail-trail movement that is sweeping the country today. We believe that the Illinois Prairie Path is the nation's first *great* rail-trail.

Liz played a crucial role during the years when the Path was getting started. She loved to be at the center of the action and to know what was going on so she could keep everyone informed. As corresponding secretary for many years, she wrote letters – hundreds of them. Her typewriter was always busy and her dining room table was covered with correspondence and newspaper clippings. She knew everybody who had an interest in trails or who should have an interest — from government officials at all levels to potential volunteers who might be persuaded to take on some of the myriad tasks required to promote the dream. She was a truly splendid communicator and almost to the last was regularly sending me newspaper clippings from the *Chicago Tribune* with the latest trail news. She would sign the accompanying note, "Hastily, Liz", because she always had more letters to write.

Everyone who knew Liz loved her enthusiastic, spunky spirit which lives on in the brief history of the Path's early days, written by Liz and her husband Sam (our first Prairie Path attorney who passed away in 1991). Titled "The Illinois Prairie Path – Trials and Triumphs," it was presented originally as a lecture at the Mill Race Inn in Geneva on April 12, 1979, before they retired to Mineral Point, Wisconsin. The trail community owes much to Liz and Sam and we miss them both.

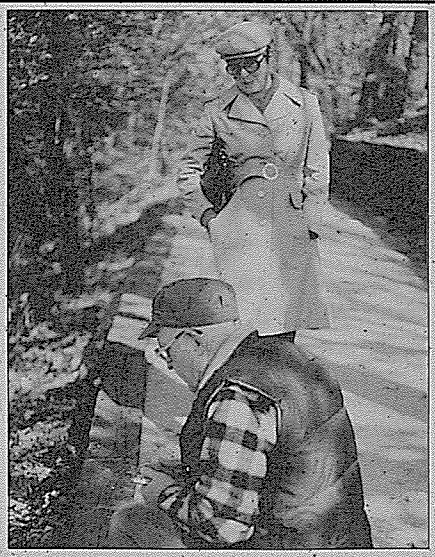
Liz and Sam Holmes of Wayne, IL

Louise S. Headen
October 26, 1911 – July 31, 1997

The Illinois Prairie Path has lost another enthusiastic leader, longtime board member, and former *The IPP Newsletter* editor/ newspaper columnist – Louise S. Headen of Wheaton.

Louise was an energetic and charming defender of the Path, who used her many talents to best advantage in the cause. Liz and Sam Holmes in their history "The Illinois Prairie Path – Trials and Triumphs" describe some of her contributions to the Path's early success as follows:

"We'd also been gaining believers through an informative and entertaining weekly column written by Louise Headen. Called "Along the Prairie Path," it appeared in one of the Wheaton newspapers. Louise soon joined the board, thank goodness – and continues to be a real pro at press releases. She's a speedy troubleshooter, too, whizzing out on her bike to inspect a problem area; once stopping an eager gardener from fencing off a plot square in the middle of the Path in which she was planting her tomato and zucchini crop! Louise has been our vice president, too; and when Helen Turner moved to North Carolina in 1974, Louise took on the responsibility for the Newsletter (until 1980 - Editor's Note). *Most of the credit for the development of Founders Park after Mrs. Watts' death belongs to this same gal."*



Louise Headen watches Paul Mooring work on the Volunteer Bridge project in Wheaton in '83.

Louise and her husband Bob, who passed away on February 12, 1998, are survived by two daughters and a host of friends and Prairie Path users who can enjoy for years to come the wonderful trail Louise worked so hard for.

Sights Along The Trail . . .

A Pioneer Cemetery and Prairie in Suburbia

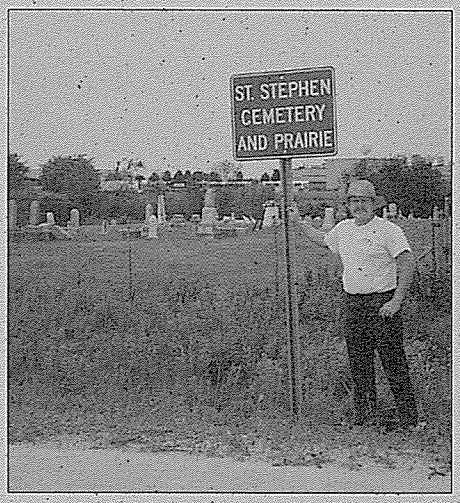
By Bill Gunderson

As bicyclists, walkers, and joggers travel along the Great Western Trail in Carol Stream, they pass through an industrial park filled with modern business campuses, building supply yards, and cement plants. They then come upon a startling anachronistic remnant of the past — St. Stephen Cemetery.

Although the headstones have been much vandalized and heavily weathered, inscriptions from the 1860's can still be found. Those with a botanic eye can also see another historical marker — prairie. Here in the midst of suburban industrial development remains a portion of the wild landscape which greeted the pioneers.

Daniel Kelley settled near what became St. Stephen in 1843. He wanted to continue raising Merino sheep as he had done in Vermont, but Illinois was still wild and wolves roamed the prairie. Nine years later the land was tamer and he began his sheep herd. Also in 1852 he sold two acres of land for the founding of St. Stephen Mission to minister to the local German Catholics. The parishioners hoped that their church would become the center of a thriving town on the coming railroad. Unfortunately, Wheaton got the railroad first, and St. Stephen was never more than a rural mission parish. The bishop transferred the parishioners to Wheaton in 1882, and the vacant church burned down in 1981. People continued to be buried in the cemetery until 1910 when the bishop closed it to new burials.

By this time most of the surrounding wild land had been tamed, plowed and settled. However, the above events which meant the demise of St. Stephen Parish, helped preserve a remnant of the wild prairie. Because St. Stephen was established near the time of settlement, its land was never plowed thereby preserving the deep rooted perennial prairie plants. Few burials meant more undisturbed prairie. As it is hallowed ground, it was treated with care and not allowed to turn into thicket.



Bill Gunderson at St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Bob Betz, "Mr. Prairie," came upon St. Stephen in 1961 and saw many prairie plants there. He saw shooting stars, prairie dropseed grass, culvers root, and prairie gentian. The descendents of those buried there still maintained the cemetery, but old age, and the coming of suburbanization soon changed that. By the 1970's trees had begun encroaching and vandals destroying. Without a fence, and isolated out of sight of a road, it became the site of 4-wheel drive pickup trucks, beer parties and wholesale theft of headstones.

In 1980 Bob Betz recruited Henrietta Tweedie and Richard Claus of Wheaton to work on protecting and preserving the prairie and cemetery. They, with the DuPage Audubon Society, raised funds for a chainlink fence which was installed in 1981. They returned fire to the prairie for the first time in decades, and tried to remove the invading brush. Years and age intervened again as Henrietta and Richard could not keep up the battle against the weeds and brush.

I grew up one mile from the cemetery and visited it occasionally in the 1970's. I became reacquainted with

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)
the cemetery in 1992 when the county converted the old Great Western Railroad bed to a bike trail. As I saw the weeds taking over, I became concerned and contacted Richard Claus. Upon finding out that he needed help, I volunteered to see what I could do.

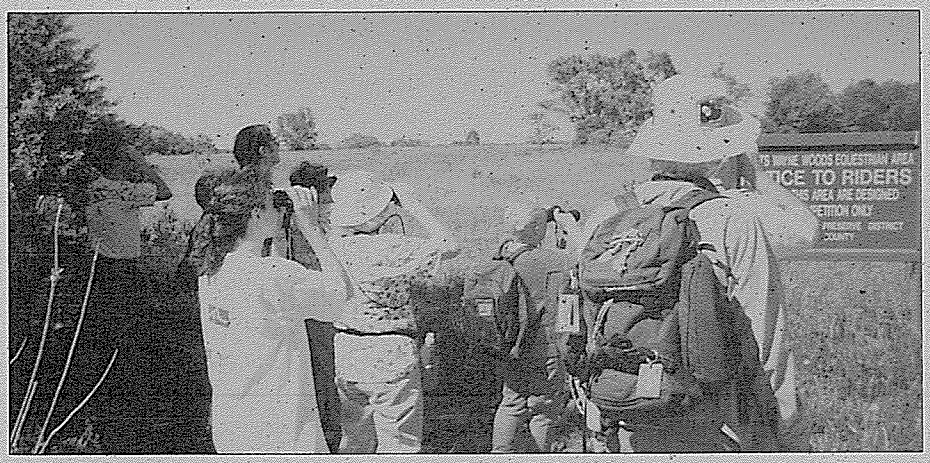
With the help of other lovers of the prairie, I have been able to remove most of the non-native buckthorn and black locust brush and trees. Now the prairie has its sunlight, and the cemetery has much greater visibility which will hopefully discourage vandals from visiting. In March, I convinced the county to place the first sign naming the cemetery along the bike trail. Now people have a name by which to know it. In April the prairie had its first burn in six years. The fire cleared away the accumulated dead growth and allowed sunlight to reach the early growing plants.

On the whole it has been a good start. The prairie was alive this spring with shooting stars, violet wood sorrel, and alum root. In May, the spiderwort and wild quinine were blooming away. There still remain problems, however. Teasel crowds into the cemetery from the bike trail embankment. Asiatic day lilies have taken over large sections thanks to their strong root systems. Shade from the brush killed off sections of the prairie making it necessary to replant. In 1993 a retention pond was built adjacent to the cemetery changing the prairie's hydrology. Will the more marshy species survive?

Even with these problems, St. Stephen's prairie remains a valuable asset to DuPage County. Very few sites are left in the county with populations of rattlesnake master or prairie gentian. Through seed collection and propagation at other sites, these rare species can reclaim their ancestral homes. Hopefully with caring and dedicated people, St. Stephen's prairie can continue to produce healthy seed harvests for years to come while it yearly re-enacts the pageant of Illinois wildflowers among the graves of the pioneers.

Volunteers are always welcome. Contact Bill Gunderson at 630-665-5183.

Spring Bird Watchers At Pratt's Wayne Woods



The IPP Spring Bird Walk in Pratt's Wayne Woods was held on May 16.

"Even though we missed most of the migrating birds we had hoped to see," commented Dick Wilson, "the 15 people who participated in the event enjoyed a nice hike and a picnic lunch."

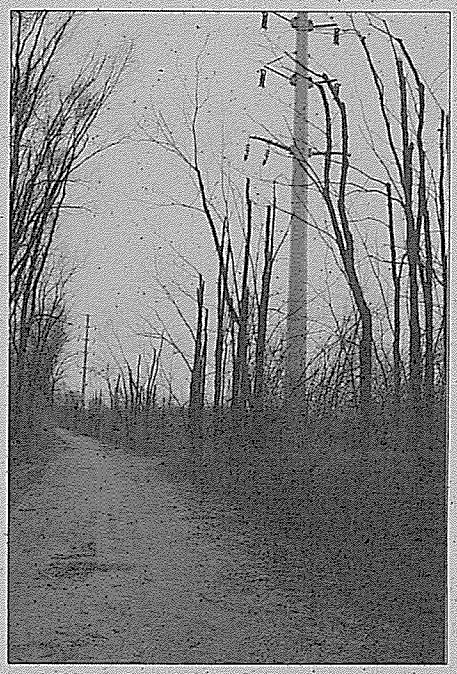
The IPP Mailbag

THE LOSS OF TREES ON THE IPP IN WARRENVILLE

Many people in Warrenville were saddened this Arbor Day as our city has lost approximately 48 acres of trees due to ComEd's destruction on the IPP over the past several months. Many trees that are left are only stumps. ComEd states they use the Morton Arboretum method of tree-trimming. It is hard to believe that stumping a tree at 10 feet is a method used by the Arboretum. We have watched with tremendous sorrow as ComEd crews have butchered this beautiful path and indeed turned it into a "utility alleyway."

We believe in looking toward the future, yet something should be said about the devastation to our community caused by ComEd's power towers. Warrenville is now the only city in the state of Illinois with high-tension power towers running through its downtown. People traveling from the south on Rt. 59 and from the east on Butterfield Road are now greeted by "Welcome to Warrenville" signs and ComEd's huge power towers. The library, city hall and pretty gazebo area in Albright Park are now dwarfed by ugly towers and power lines. Also, of great concern is the electromagnetic radiation emitting from these high-tension power lines.. Serious questions about electromagnetic radiation's adverse effect on people's health, especially leukemia in children, remain unanswered. Anyone using the Prairie Path as well as the library, city hall, and Albright or Sequi Parks will now likely be exposed to the electromagnetic radiation from these lines.

What makes this so sad is *it did not have to happen.* The pieces of an alternate route were there. The Illinois Tollway Authority was willing to allow ComEd's power towers along I-88, as it has in other communities. The lines and/or substation could have been placed in Cantera where 60% of the power from these new high tension lines is needed (per ComEd's testimony at ICC hearings). And independent engineering studies showed ComEd's costs for alternate route were highly inflated, indicating that TIF funds and money from DuPage County could have paid for an alternate route. (DuPage County owns the Prairie Path and has the legal right to force ComEd off the IPP as long as they pay the cost *difference* in an alternate route.) Unfortunately, it seems power and political clout of certain companies still reign.



This photo shows the trimmed trees on the IPP between Rt. 59 and Warrenville Road.

The Friends of the Prairie Path deserve to be recognized for their incredible efforts over the last seven years in their stand for the Illinois Prairie Path and Warrenville. Bob Siebert, Art Grant, Bill and Mary Marzano and Connie Schmidt left no stone unturned in this effort. Many, many others worked so hard also. DuPage County Board Member Roger Kotecki led this fight at the DuPage County Board. Roger Kotecki truly represents the people in his district; we feel privileged to have him represent us on the County Board. We thank you all, and we look forward to the day we can have back a Prairie Path which rivaled the beauty of any other path in Wisconsin or elsewhere.

Bob and Maureen Rawls
Friends of the Prairie Path

DECREASE NOISE ON IPP FOR A PLEASING EXPERIENCE

As an Illinois Prairie Path supporter and a Wheaton resident living next to the path, I can vouch for the rousing success of the path for the many people who use it for its recreational and fitness benefits.

The IPP experience is both sight and sound. This spring's Earth Day cleanup was a way to keep the path free of eyesores, but what about the sound of our path? As the summer months bring more people onto the path, additional commotion is expected. However, what has been surprising the last couple of summers is the increased noise on the path at night and during the pre-dawn hours.

Some groups of cyclists are riding the IPP with bike lights at night. Running partners are getting up before the sun in the morning to "churn some limestone" before work while talking things over. Two summers ago, an aerobics group made it a weekly practice to call out calisthenics at five in the morning on the path in residential Wheaton. While this may not be a concern on a country road, many people seem oblivious of the back yards and homes they pass on the IPP. In the summer months, loud voices from the path can travel into homes during quiet hours.

When cyclists talk from bike to bike, discussions can occur by shouting. As riders try to use the path at night, some cyclists still shout, even if it is after midnight. Runners, cyclists and hikers may not be aware that loud noises on the IPP — at night or before dawn — can violate municipal noise and disorderly conduct ordinances. Besides, it's not respectful of the path's environment.

And what about daytime noise? On a summer weekend, thousands of people are using a space that is only 10 feet wide. Slow walkers are not pigeons who need to be yelled at in order to clear them out of the way. A firm but gentle "on your left" by a cyclist maintains the atmosphere of the path without polluting someone else's experience.

Let's all work together to make the sound of the Illinois Prairie Path a pleasing experience for everyone.

Vic Gryniewicz

IPP Cook County Update

By Paul Aeschleman

IPP Reconstruction Project
The long awaited reconstruction of the IPP from 1st Avenue in Maywood to the DuPage County line is underway. As of May 29, new landscaping and curb cuts had been installed and the initial grading had been completed. Paving began in June and the Path is expected to be completed by mid-July. We encourage all IPP members, especially those in Cook County, to try and take advantage of this trail during the summer. The IPP is planning a grand opening celebration September 22.

Grand Opening of the Cook County Section
The grand opening of the Cook County section has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 22. The proposed agenda is to host ribbon cutting ceremonies in Hillside, Bellwood, and Maywood. The grand opening will coincide with the culmination of 1998 Illinois Chapter of the Rails to Trail's Conservancy's Grand Illinois Trail adventure. Stay tuned for more details.

1st Avenue Prairie Demonstration Project
Representatives of The Illinois Prairie Path, Proviso East High School, and the Village of Maywood, have tentatively agreed to establish a prairie demonstration area at the IPP's 1st Avenue trail head. This collaborative beautification project will be used as an educational and training facility for Proviso East High School, and serve as the official trail head for the IPP. The initial planning meeting was attended by Philip Estes (Maywood), Jill Laubenstein (Proviso East High School), and Paul Aeschleman (Illinois Prairie Path). This project was unanimously approved by The IPP Board at the June 2 board meeting.

Des Plaines River Bridge
The preliminary funding for a pedestrian bridge over the Des Plaines River between Maywood and Forest Park has been approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation Green Light program. The initial grant is intended to cover the engineering and construction of a pedestrian bridge which would link the Des Plaines Avenue CTA station to the Cook County Court House complex in Maywood.

For More Information
If you would like more information or would like to help with any of these projects, please contact Paul Aeschleman at (708) 848-6023.

Transportation Enhancement Bill Benefits Many Projects

By Paul Aeschleman

President Clinton signed on June 9 the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the six-year transportation reauthorization which guarantees a record $198 billion investment, within the limits of the balanced budget agreement, to maintain and improve America's surface transportation systems for the 21st century. TEA-21 increases overall transportation spending by over 40% without altering the basic funding programs created in 1991 by the ISTEA legislation.

Bicycling, pedestrian, and transit projects fared very well in the final TEA-21 negotiations. All of the major funding sources including: Railbanking, Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) (expanded to $8.12B), and Transportation Enhancements Program. Recreational Trails Program, State and MPO plans must still address bicycling and walking. In addition, several programs were added or modified to include bicycling and pedestrian projects. These programs include: National Highway System (modified), Hazard Elimination (modified) Program, Transit Enhancement (added), High Priority Projects (112 bicycling or trail projects), Railway-Highway crossings (modified), Surface Transportation-Environment Cooperative Research Program (added), $500,000 for a national bicycling safety curriculum (added), $500,000 per annum for national clearing house for bicycling and pedestrian safety programs. All in all the next several years should be very exciting and productive for non-motorized transportation and trail development projects.

This piece of legislation clearly demonstrates that non-motorized recreational and transportation facilities such as the Illinois Prairie Path, Great Western Trail, and the Fox River Trail are important to health and vitality of our communities. The IPP wishes to thank all of you who called, wrote, or e-mailed your State and Federal Representatives and Senators requesting that they support the continued funding of these projects. The successes achieved in this legislation would not have been possible without your tremendous grassroots support.

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- ***IPP T-SHIRT $17.00*** — This 100% cotton short-sleeve T-shirt features a silk-screened IPP logo. The shirts are machine washable, and available in a variety of shirt colors with black logo. Please specify size (Small, Medium, Large & X-Large) and your first 3 choices of color (depending upon availability).
- ***IPP MAP $3.00 (While quantities last)*** — This popular full-color map shows you where you are and where you can go on the IPP, street by street, suburb by suburb.
- ***IPP GUIDE $4.75*** — This 32-page guide tells about the history and natural habitat of The Illinois Prairie Path.
- ***IPP GIFT MEMBERSHIP $10.00 Individual/$15.00 Family*** — Give a unique and environmentally-conscious gift. The recipient will be sent an announcement and a full color IPP official map. Please be sure to include the full name and address of the recipient along with your own name and address.
- ***IPP BASEBALL CAP $7.75*** — This white and green baseball cap with IPP logo will help protect you from the sun while you're on the path.
- ***IPP OFFICIAL PATCH $2.50*** — The green and white oval patch can easily be applied to hats, jackets, jeans and whatever you want to put it on. (3-inches high x 2 1/4-inches wide).

ITEM	QUANTITY	COLOR & SIZE (FOR T-SHIRTS)	$ Price

Tax, postage and handling are included in price. **$ TOTAL**_____

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