

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

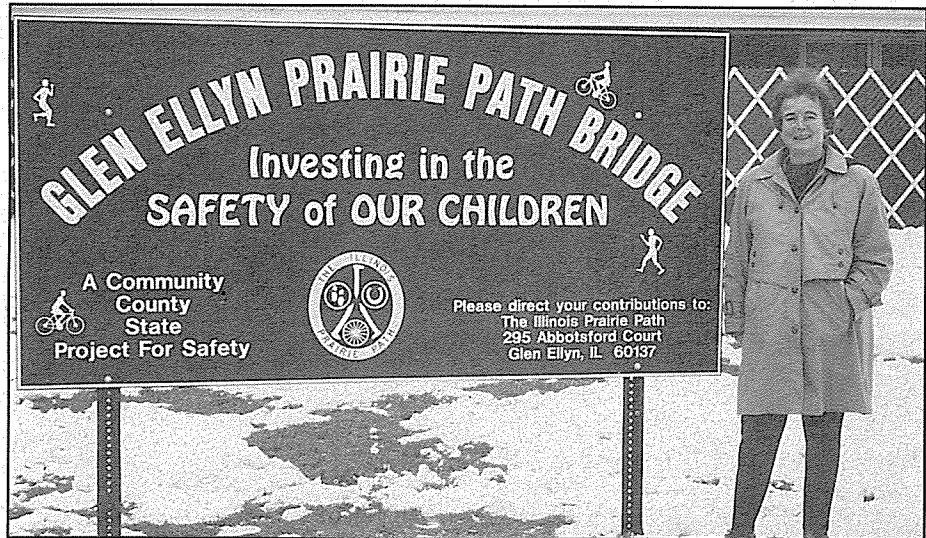
Winter/Spring 1998

Fundraising Underway for Taylor Avenue Bridge

By Jean Mooring

"Investing in the Safety of Our Children" is the message on the new sign in Glen Ellyn at the corner of Taylor and Walnut. The importance of a bridge to promote the safety of children, all Illinois Prairie Path users, and passing motorists was stressed in a letter sent to village residents and businesses just before Christmas by the Glen Ellyn Prairie Path Bridge Task Force.

The letter explains that the DuPage County Board, which owns the



This new sign is located at Taylor and Walnut in Glen Ellyn. "We hope all our trail users and friends will help build this bridge," said Jean Mooring.

Prairie Path right-of-way, has hired an engineering firm to design the bridge and will seek a grant to fund a portion of the project. Matching funds will have to be raised in the community. The letter states that a volunteer architect will assist with the plans to make sure that "as little damage as possible is done to the prairie restoration planted at the site by Glenbard West students over many years."

The Taylor Avenue intersection has

long been considered one of the most dangerous on the Prairie Path because of the path's 13 percent slope on each side of the crossing and because any motorist's view is impaired by the narrow, one-lane Taylor Avenue underpass at the adjacent Union Pacific Railroad.

Members of the committee were appointed by the Village Board and include former Village Trustee Ron Rennard, James Bourke, Pi Irwin, David Kennedy, Jean Mooring, Paul Mooring, Warren Senneke, and Tom Waters.

Contributions to The Illinois Prairie Path/Glen Ellyn Bridge Fund are tax-deductible. Donations made payable to the fund may be sent in care of:

**Paul Mooring, IPP Treasurer,
295 Abbotsford Court,
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-4803.**

A donation form is available on the special insert included with this newsletter.

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IPP News from Cook County

Des Plaines River Bridge to Extend Illinois Prairie Path to CTA Station

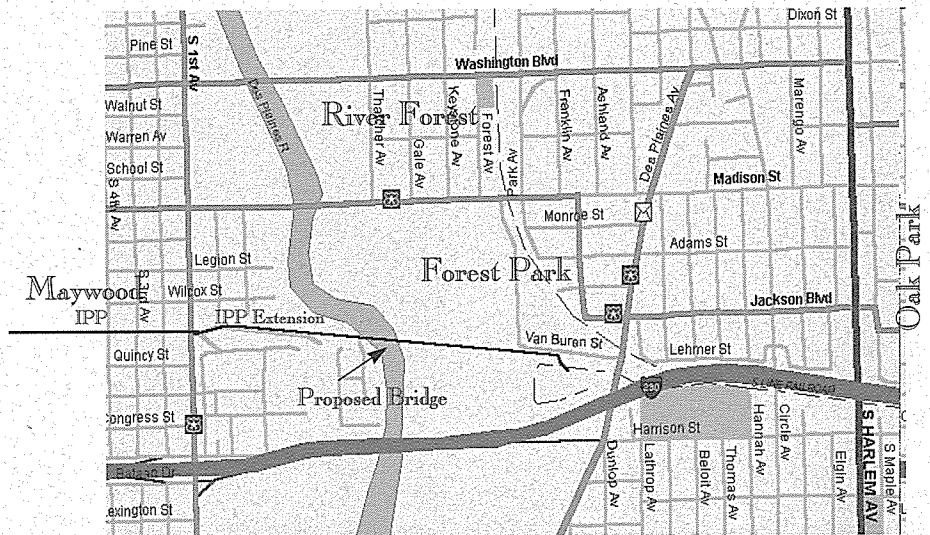
By Paul Aeschleman

Another exciting Cook County project is the resurrection of plans to build a bridge across the Des Plaines River from Maywood to Forest Park. This project would extend the length of the IPP by approximately one mile.

The Villages of Forest Park and Maywood, the Park Districts of Forest Park and River Forest, the Illinois Prairie Path, and the Open Lands Project have joined forces to promote the construction of a bridge over the Des Plaines River. When completed, this vital link will connect the CTA Congress Line terminal in Forest Park to the Cook County Maybrook Court facilities, the Illinois Prairie Path, and the proposed Des Plaines River Trail in Maywood. The bridge will be built on the long abandoned Chicago Great Western Railroad right-of-way.

This project is being coordinated by the Village of Maywood. Recent discussions with Maywood's Village Manager have indicated that the CTA is supportive of this project and that the engineering component of the project may begin as early as the first quarter of 1998. The engineering work is being funded by the Villages of Maywood, Forest Park, River Forest and the Illinois Prairie Path. Funding for the construction and maintenance of the bridge has been requested from the Illinois Department of Transportation's Operation Greenlight Grant Program.

For additional information on IPP events in Cook County, contact Paul Aeschleman at (708) 848-6023, or e-mail: paeschle@aol.com.



The Des Plaines River Bridge will be built on the long abandoned Chicago Great Western Railroad right-of-way.

The Bids Are Out for IPP Cook County Section

By Paul Aeschleman

After numerous delays and reviews, the Illinois Prairie Path is excited to announce that the bid package for the construction of the Cook County Section of the Illinois Prairie Path was finally released to prospective bidders on January 11, 1998.

Numerous competitive bids for this project were received by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the IDNR has recommended that the contract be awarded to the low bidder. The cost for this upgrade is expected to be approximately \$660,000.

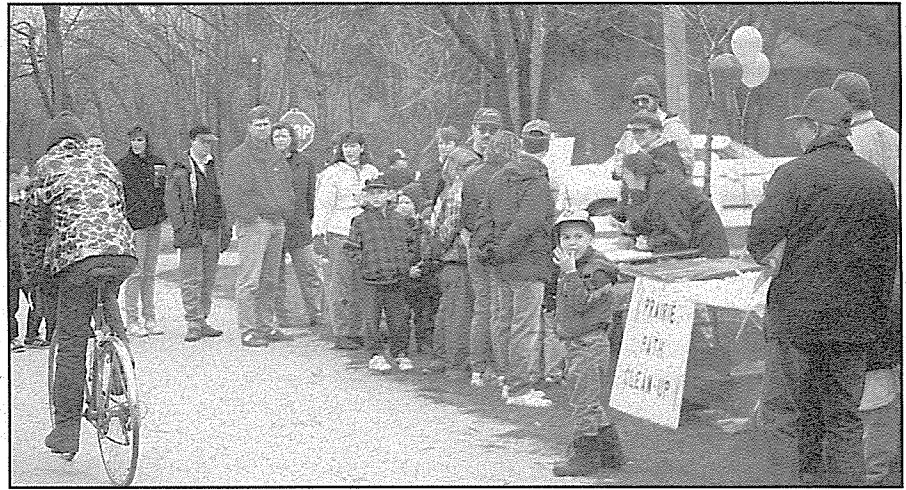
George Bellovics (DNR - Grand IL Trail Coordinator), informed the IPP that construction could begin as early as this spring if the terms of the contract can be finalized and the weather cooperates. This project is being funded by an ISTEAG grant and matching contributions from local communities.

Earth Day Cleanup Planned for April 18 - 19

By David Tate

In observance of Earth Day 1998, the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) has scheduled cleanups the weekend of April 18-19. Our goal is to clean all 61 miles of the IPP.

Litter on the IPP is picked up solely by volunteers. Your help on Earth Day is both needed and appreciated. However, it is also important to remember that since all litter on the path is picked up by volunteers that any litter spotted along the path at anytime throughout the year should also be picked up.



The Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission managed Wheaton's 1997 Earth Day cleanup from a table at Lincoln Avenue.

The Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission will again this year manage Wheaton's Earth Day cleanup on Saturday, April 18, from a table at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and the path in Stevens Park. The Commission will coordinate trail cleanup sections and also provide free refreshments, trash bags and an IPP map (a \$3 value). Funding for the table will be provided by the Illinois Prairie Path, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation.

Volunteers will want to wear work gloves and clothing appropriate for the weather.

Here's how you can be a participant in the Path's Earth Day 1998 cleanup. You can simply take a trash bag to the Illinois Prairie Path and join in at anytime **or** call one of the following IPP Earth Day coordinators. It is recommended that volunteer groups contact one of the following coordinators. The coordinators will recommend to some groups that they clean specific sections of the Path. Our goal is to assign at least one cleanup group to each section of the 61-mile trail.

Location	IPP Coordinator	Phone Number
Maywood	Paul Aeschleman	(708) 848-6023
Bellwood	Susan Wisniewski	(708) 493-1316
Hillside	Nancy Becker	(630) 654-1019
Berkeley	John Kacich	(708) 544-7524
Elmhurst	Eric Keeley	(630) 691-1426
Lombard	Joelyn Kott	(630) 620-5718
Glen Ellyn	Tom Jamrok	(630) 858-3898
Wheaton	Ted Witte	(630) 510-9344
"	Paul Zanke	(630) 871-0801
Winfield	David Tate	(630) 682-1449
W. Chicago/Geneva Spur	Tom Yule	(630) 293-1726
W. Chicago/Elgin Branch	Birt Hurlbert	(630) 293-1062
Wayne	Gladys Johnston	(630) 584-2491
Warrenville	Bob Rawls	(630) 393-6720
Aurora	Vivian Dunten	(630) 896-6609
"	Mike Cross	(630) 416-1415
Batavia Spur	Ed Barsotti	(630) 820-8759
Unincorporated areas	David Tate	(630) 682-1449
General information	Dick Wilson	(847) 299-7882

IPP Annual Meeting Update

By Jean Mooring

The 33rd annual meeting of the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation was held November 2, 1997, at The Abbey in Elmhurst, courtesy of the Elmhurst Park District. An audience of 55 people attended, of which almost half were enthusiastic trail supporters from Cook County.

Path President David Tate reported on the year's achievements of our volunteers including:

- completion of a \$5,000 mile marker project in DuPage County coordinated by Paul Aeschleman in cooperation with the DuPage County Division of Transportation;
- purchase of five aluminum/lexan display cases at a cost of \$3,707 to replace weathered or vandalized cases at various locations;
- distribution of 31,000 trail map leaflets free to trail users from boxes attached to the display case stands as a membership-building method at a cost of \$1,932;
- increase of trash barrels from 7 to 16 in the unincorporated areas for a total cost of \$3,700;
- help with prairie restoration at various sites along the Path, such as the Great Western Prairie in Elmhurst, the Hoffman Park, President Street and Volunteer Park prairies in Wheaton; the North Avenue prairie on the Elgin Branch; and the West Chicago prairie on the Geneva Spur,
- supplemental help of \$4,800 in prairie landscape services provided by Larry Sheaffer;
- donation of \$1,000 to The Con-

- servation Foundation Trails Project;
- coordination of the annual Earth Day cleanup along the Prairie Path, including a financial contribution to the Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission, which always does an outstanding job;
- sponsorship of a Prairie Path booth at the annual Chicago Bicycle Show in Rosemont; and
- active participation of the IPP Board Members Paul and Jean Mooring in the Glen Ellyn Taylor Bridge Task Force, headed by Ron Rennard, former Glen Ellyn Village Board Member.

Because IPP Board Treasurer Steve Plumb and Office Manager/ Membership Coordinator Linda Plumb were unable to attend the meeting, David Tate reported:

- members' dues totaled \$36,183;
- donations totaled \$50,285, thanks largely to a bequest from longtime IPP member Gladys Ripley (see related article on this page). *Editor's Note: The IPP to date has received only a partial payment on the full Ripley bequest.*
- the cash balance on hand totaled \$93,949; and
- paid membership of 1,578 declined slightly from last year's

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Bequest to Benefit IPP

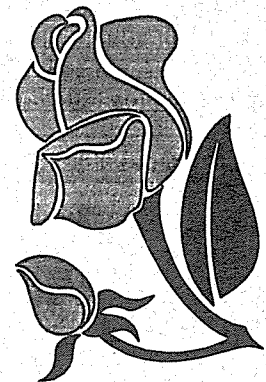
By Susan Wisniewski

The Illinois Prairie Path would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous bequest of approximately \$64,000 from the estate of Ms. Gladys Ripley, a retired school teacher from Downers Grove, who passed away on October 1, 1996.

Gladys was born on August 23, 1910, and during her long life was a devout nature advocate. She came to many annual IPP meetings, was a member of the Illinois Audubon Society, and participated in nature classes at the Morton Arboretum.

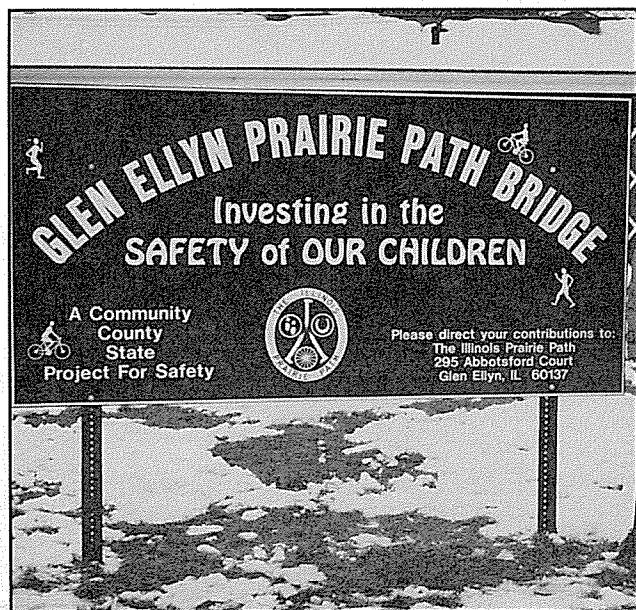
Due to her interest in education and nature, Gladys left her estate of over \$1 million dollars to more than 20 different charities, including a girls' school in Kentucky, several churches, and many nature-related organizations.

Gladys Ripley is fondly remembered by her many IPP friends. The Illinois Prairie Path Board appreciates her generous contribution and is currently considering a number of beneficial uses for these needed funds.





Donations Needed for Glen Ellyn Bridge



The Taylor Avenue Bridge fundraising is now underway. The importance of the bridge is to promote the safety of children, Illinois Prairie Path users and motorists. The Taylor Avenue intersection has long been considered one of the most dangerous on the Prairie Path because of the path's 13 percent slope on each side of the crossing and because any motorist's view is impaired by the narrow, one-lane Taylor Avenue underpass at the adjacent Union Pacific Railroad.

See the article on page 1 of this newsletter for additional information. If you agree that this bridge is needed, send your donation and the form below to:

The Illinois Prairie Path
Attention: Paul Mooring, Treasurer
295 Abbotsford Ct.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-4803

Yes, I want to support my community by making a pledge to the Illinois Prairie Path/Glen Ellyn Bridge Fund!

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

I pledge: ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other: _____

☐ A check for the entire amount is enclosed. (Make payable to Illinois Prairie Path/Glen Ellyn Bridge Fund)

Signature _____ Date _____

Treasurer's Report

November 1, 1996 - November 1, 1997

(Unaudited)

Balance on Hand, November 1, 1996

First National Bank of Chicago (checking)	\$8,850
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (Money Market Fund)	40,514
TOTAL	\$49,364

Revenue

Donations	\$50,285
Dues	35,183
Sales (maps, T-shirts, Patches, "Guides", hats)	1,450
Interest	2,203
Miscellaneous	0
TOTAL	\$89,121

Expenditures

Office Manager (salary)	\$7,560
Newsletters	9,530
Membership/Flyers	2,556
Sign Replacement	3,504
Litter Removal/Toilets	4,695
Postage	4,073
Office Supplies	677
Telephone	400
Special Projects	4,202
Prairie Restoration	4,645
Other Printing	737
Donations	1,000
Membership Services	316
Travel	330
Legal and Consulting	182
Miscellaneous	129
TOTAL	\$44,536

Balance on Hand, November 1, 1997

The First National Bank of Chicago (checking)	\$51,419
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (money market fund)	42,530
TOTAL	\$93,949

Reelected were:

- John Kacich, Berkeley;
- Jean Mooring, Glen Ellyn;
- Bob Rawls, Warrenville; and
- Dick Wilson, Des Plaines.

After the business meeting, the first speaker was DuPage County Board Member Roger Kotecki, District 6, who eloquently described the need for passage of the \$75 million Forest Preserve District open space referendum at the non-partisan election the following Tuesday. The referendum provided a last-chance effort to preserve rapidly dwindling open lands in DuPage County.

(Note: The referendum passed with a very solid majority. Thanks to all members who voted for it!) Roger also discussed the Com Ed/Warrenville situation and expressed hope that the I-88 toll road might still be chosen as the site for the high-voltage power lines instead of the beautiful wooded Prairie Path.

Next on the agenda was Cook County Committee Chairman Paul Aeschleman. He introduced Chris Ganschow of LaGrange, a staff member of U.S. Congressman William Lipinski, 3rd District, who is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Ganschow discussed the future for ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) which expired on September 30 but has been extended temporarily for six months. ISTEA funded several local trail "enhancements" including the new connector trails in Blackwell and Timber Ridge Forest Preserves and the just-opened bridge over Kirk Road on the IPP Batavia Spur. Proposed successor bills are BESTEA (Building Efficient Surface Transportation and Equity Act) in the House and ISTEA 2, a six-year version in the Senate. Both bills include dedicated enhancement sections with slightly increased funding compared with the original seven-year ISTEA program. Trail users are urged to contact U.S. Repre-

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peak of 1,871. "This does not seem to be a major cause for concern," noted Tate.

Following the President's Report, two new members were elected to the IPP Board of Directors:

- Mike Cross of Naperville, is responsible for developing the ex-

cellent new Prairie Path web site – <http://www.mcs.net/~msc/IPP>.

- Birt Hurlbert of Oak Meadows, is a longtime path volunteer for various maintenance and construction projects and husband of former board member Nancy Hesler.

IPP Annual Meeting Update

(Continued from page 5)

sentatives Henry Hyde, Harris Fawell, Dennis Hastert, and William Lipinski, as well as U.S. Senators Carol Moseley-Braun and Richard Durbin to support enhancement funding to improve and extend the popular but non-traditional transportation programs.

Paul Aeschleman also reported that in January the Illinois Department of Transportation, utilizing up to \$830,000 in ISTEA grants, will go to bid on IPP improvements in Maywood, Bellwood and Hillside. This will include blacktopping, marked crosswalks, the latest safety features, landscaping and lighting. Maywood is moving forward with plans to build a trail north from the Prairie Path along the west side of the Des Plaines River connecting to the series of trails in forest preserves and conservation areas leading to the Wisconsin state line. Maywood is also planning a bridge across the Des Plaines River to connect the Prairie Path to the CTA station in Forest Park. The Illinois Prairie Path Board has promised a grant of \$3,000 to help with the engineering of the bridge.

Last on the program were Jean and Paul Mooring with their ever-popular annual slide show depicting IPP



Funniest photo honors in the annual slide show went to this shot entitled: "Signing in the rain" featuring David Tate and Paul Aeschleman attaching a "3 Mile" sign to a post at Winfield Road during a downpour.

people and events in 1997. The funniest photo featured David Tate and Paul Aeschleman on National Trails Day squinting through the raindrops in a heavy downpour as they struggled to attach the first new mile marker signs to the post at Winfield Road on the Geneva Spur. We work rain or shine! Right, guys?

After the meeting, everyone enjoyed the traditional cider, cakes and cookies provided by board members and spouses. Jean Mooring created the centerpiece – sprigs of pachysandra sparked with orange euonymus berries in a ring of oasis around a hurricane lamp containing

an orange candle on a nostalgic base made of two parts of an old three-part Chicago, Aurora and Elgin Railway electric insulator assembly found along the trail many years ago.

Welcome to new IPP Board Member

By David Tate

West Chicago resident Birt Hurlbert joined the Illinois Prairie Path Board in November. He lives a short distance from the IPP's Elgin Branch near mile marker 7 and is a frequent path user for biking, jogging, cross country skiing and snow shoeing.

Birt began doing volunteer work for the IPP in 1977. He helped construct the IPP's Elgin Branch between Illinois Route 59 and Smith Road and the IPP's Volunteer Bridge over the Union Pacific railroad tracks in Wheaton. Birt's wife Nancy Hesler was an IPP board member for about 15 years. Birt is a computer programmer for the American General Corporation.

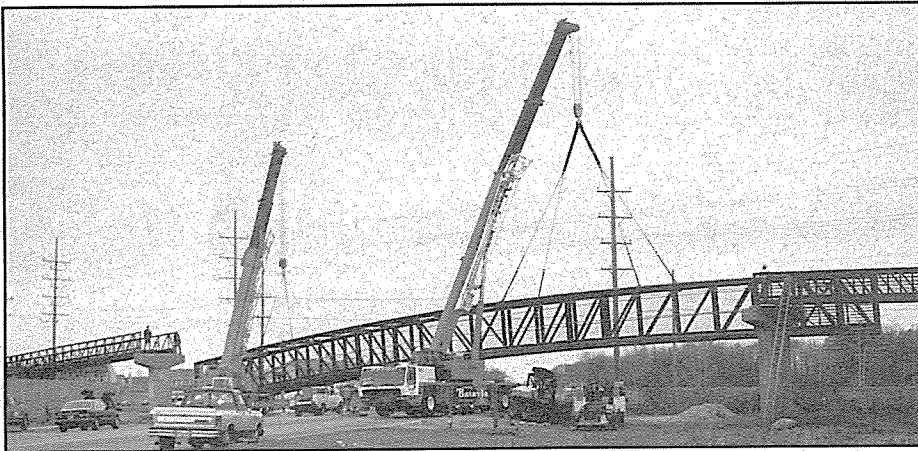
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This quarterly newsletter is published by the Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors. Address correspondence in care of: Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189

Phone: (630) 752-0120

WWW Site: <http://www.mcs.net/~msc/IPP>

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



Cranes lift final bridge section into place across Kirk Road.

Kirk Road Bridge Is Open

By Jean Mooring

Although the weather was raw and blustery on December 6, the trails community warmly welcomed the completion of a major link in the Illinois Prairie Path trail system – the bridge over Kirk Road on the Batavia Spur in Kane County.

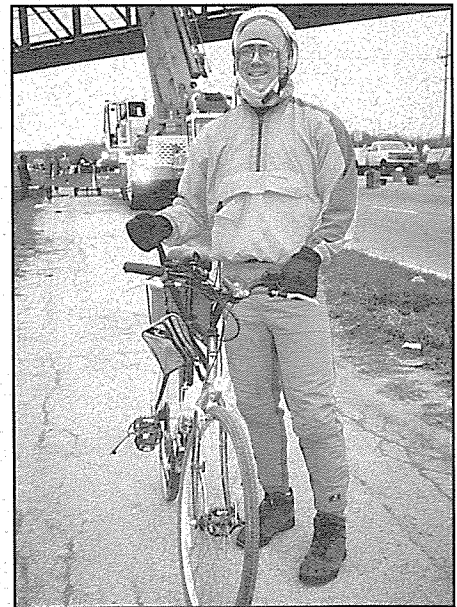
Representing the Kane County Forest Preserve District, the principal sponsor of the project, were Jon Duerr, director of field services; Dave Perfect, operations supervisor; and Tony Hernandez, trail maintenance supervisor.

Cheering from the sidelines on behalf of the Illinois Prairie Path were IPP Board President David Tate and Benna Tate, and board members Paul and Jean Mooring.

Ready to be the first to ride his bike over the new bridge was Ed Barsotti, chairman of The Conservation Foundation Trails Project.

The impressive Cor-Ten steel bridge was built by the Illinois Department of Transportation with an ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) grant totaling \$640,000, which was matched by \$120,000 from the Kane County Forest Preserve District, plus a \$40,000 bicycle grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

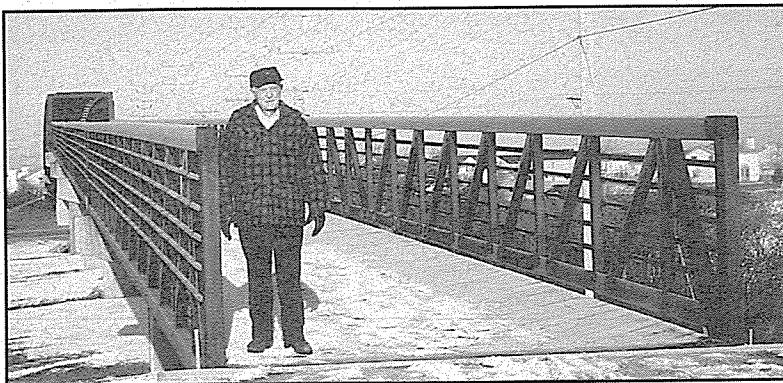
Installation was delayed because the fabricator inadvertently used Canadian steel instead of American steel, as specified in the contract, and eventually had to pay a fine.



Dressed for the cold, all-weather cyclist Ed Barsotti is the first rider across the bridge.

Facts about the Kirk Road Bridge:

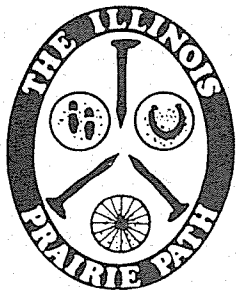
- Total cost of the bridge was \$800,000.
- Total length is approximately 800 feet, including the earthen approaches.
- Steel sections are 601 feet long.
- The final section which spans Kirk Road, 192 feet long, is the second longest single-span in Illinois, according to IDOT engineering staff.



After talking a walk across the bridge, Paul Mooring said, "It's great."



Kane County representatives attending the opening were Jon Duerr, Dave Perfect and Tony Hernandez.



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Illinois Prairie Path Events

Saturday, April 18

Prairie Burn and/or restoration. Meet at 9 a.m. in Wheaton in the commuter parking lot across the street from IPP's Volunteer Park (Liberty and Carlton Drive). We will be cutting brush so wear work gloves and bring loppers and pruners if you have them.

Eric Keeley (630) 691-1426; Larry Sheaffer (630) 790-0313; or
Dick Wilson (847) 299-7882 (8 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

Saturday, April 18

Earth Day cleanups in all communities along the 61-mile Illinois Prairie Path. See Earth Day article on page 3 for more details.

Dick Wilson (847) 299-7882 (8 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

Saturday, May 16

Bird walk in Pratts Wayne Woods Forest Preserve to look for spring arrivals. Meet at 9 a.m. in the far back parking lot of the forest preserve. Directions: From Rt. 59 go west on Army Trail Road for about 2 miles to Powis Road, then go north on Powis Road to the forest preserve entrance.

Paul Mooring (630) 469-4289
Dick Wilson (847) 299-7882 (8 a.m. - 6 p.m.)

Saturday, June 6

National Trails' Day. Visit our display table between 9 a.m. and noon. Location not yet finalized at press time.

David Tate (630) 682-1449