



The Illinois Prairie Path Summer 2001 NEWSLETTER

Taylor Avenue Bridge is Now Open!

The new "Glenbard West Prairie Crossing" was officially opened July 10 with a ribbon cutting ceremony on the Prairie Path bridge over Taylor Avenue in Glen Ellyn. The bridge was constructed by DuPage County to provide users of the Illinois Prairie Path with a safe method of crossing Taylor Avenue. Before the project, a steep downgrade on either side of the road was used.

"The Taylor Avenue bridge is a much needed safety improvement to the Prairie Path," said Tom Bennington, DuPage County Board Member and Chairman of the Environmental Committee. "Bicyclists can now use the bridge instead of the dangerously steep downgrade. Fortunately, this bridge was completed before any serious accidents took place from crossing Taylor Avenue on the slope."

Earlier this year, the DuPage County Board officially announced the new bridge would be called "Glenbard West Prairie Crossing" in honor of the school's 25-year dedication to main-

(Continued on page 4)



Robert Schillerstrom, DuPage County Board Chairman, cut the ribbon for the official opening of the Glenbard West Prairie Crossing on the Illinois Prairie Path over Taylor Avenue in Glen Ellyn. Photo by Dave Watts.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Helen Turner Fountain</i>	3
<i>Ralph Franzen Bench</i>	4
<i>Prairie Burn Report</i>	5
<i>National Trails Day</i>	6-7
<i>Earth Day Cleanup Report</i>	8-12
<i>Friends of Great Western</i>	14
<i>Grand Illinois Trail</i>	15

Don Kirchenberg is the New IPP President; IPP Board Welcomes New Members



Don Kirchenberg was elected President of The Illinois Prairie Path, a not-for-profit corporation. The 13-year resident of DuPage County, lifelong Chicago area resident and activist with many environmental causes, joined The IPP's Board of Directors in 2000. In addition to serving on The IPP Board of Directors, he most recently helped organize the Friends of the Great Western Trail. He will remain active with the Friends of the Great Western Trail and continue to serve as the Voluntary Chairperson.

"I am honored to accept this position and follow in the footsteps of David Tate and many other hard working volunteers. I wish to thank David Tate for

(Continued on page 2)

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: 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 Avenue, Wheaton. Members
are always welcome to attend!

The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors 2001

*Don Kirchenberg, President
Glendale Heights*

*Dick Wilson, Vice President
DesPlaines*

*F. Paul Mooring, Treasurer
Glen Ellyn*

*Nancy Becker, Secretary
Willowbrook*

*Nancy Wasielewski, Office
Manager and Newsletter Editor
Glenview*

*Paul Aeschleman, Oak Park
Bob Bernero, Glen Ellyn
Mike Cross, Naperville
Charles Johnson, Lisle
Eric Keeley, Oakbrook Terrace
Jean Mooring, Glen Ellyn
Erik Spande, Winfield
Rob Sperl, Warrenville
David Tate, Winfield
David Watts, Glen Ellyn
Tom Yule, West Chicago*

IPP Announces Board Changes

(Continued from page 1)

his nearly six years of service as
President of The Illinois Prairie Path. I
am pleased he will continue to serve
the organization as a member of the
Board of Directors," Kirchenberg said.

David Watts

David Watts of Glen Ellyn recently
joined The IPP Board of Directors. He
was in the retail bicycle business from
1973 to 2001 and formerly operated
Naperville Cycling & Fitness. "I've
been riding intensely since I was 12,
after getting the bike racing bug from
watching a series of races at Lake Ellyn
in the late 60's," Dave said. "My other
hobbies are programming and photog-
raphy."

Dave rides the IPP a few times a week,
which comes easily, since he lives 200
feet away. "I used to ride my road bike
more, but the convenience of living
next door to the IPP means I'm always
wiping the limestone dust off my cross
bike instead." Diana, his fiancée, also
rides quite frequently. They are both
members of the Naperville Bicycle
Club. The club holds regular rides on
the IPP on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Rob Sperl

Rob Sperl of Warrenville recently
joined The IPP Board of Directors.
Rob and his wife Katie live near the
Fermi Lab Trail and are avid bike
riders, spending most of their time on
the Aurora Branch and Batavia Spur.
During the summer, Rob says he will
average about 50 miles a week. He also
enjoys sailing and skiing in the winter.

Rob is the Assistant Superintendent of
Planning for the Wheaton Park District.
"I consider myself fortunate that my
job allows me to participate in many
trail related activities," Rob said.
"Last summer I supervised the
resurfacing of pathways adjacent to the
Illinois Prairie Path at Hoffman and
Atten Parks in Wheaton. This was
partially funded by an Illinois Bike
Path Grant. I also spend time
expanding the trail network within
Wheaton and in general advocating
pedestrian consideration in various
projects," he added.

DuPage Completes Bike Path Improvements

***By Charles Johnson
IPP Board Member***

This spring DuPage County crews
completed a new bicycle parking
facility along the Prairie Path at
Lincoln Marsh in Wheaton. Now
visitors to the nature preserve can lock
their bicycles off the trail right-of-way
while they use the footpaths. This
improvement was one of those
requested in last year's trail user survey.

Another improvement completed this

spring is the resurfacing and widening
of the Batavia Spur limestone paved
right-of-way to 14 feet from Bilter
Road northwesterly to the Kane County
line. The Elgin Branch segment from
Route 59 to Smith Road was also
resurfaced.

In progress but not yet completed is a
new washable surface on the interior of
the Elgin Branch tunnel under Route
64. This tunnel has been a chronic
battleground between graffiti artists
and County paint-over crews.

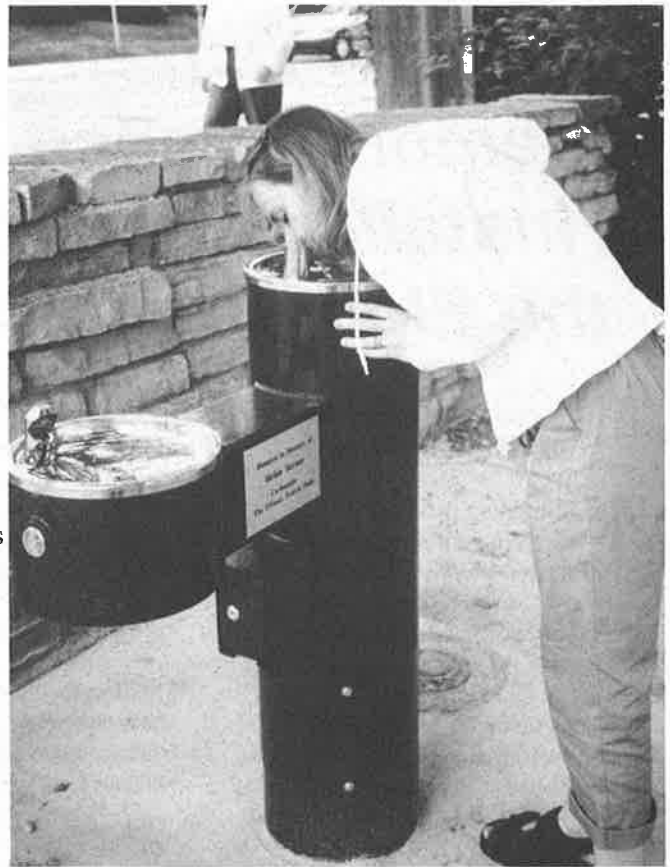
Enjoy the New Helen Turner Memorial Fountain!

By Jean Mooring
IPP Board Member

Illinois Prairie Path users can now enjoy a cool drink of water from the new Helen Turner Memorial Fountain in Wheaton's Volunteer Park. On May 7, the City of Wheaton Water Department replaced the original memorial fountain with a new modern fountain donated by The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation. The old fountain had developed leaks that could not be repaired. The new bubbler, purchased from Most Dependable Fountains, Inc. of Arlington, VA, cost \$2,625. The Illinois Prairie Path also reimbursed the City \$1,275.63 for installation expenses.

Helen Turner, who died on November 19, 1986, is remembered as the co-founder of The Illinois Prairie Path. It is appropriate to place her memorial fountain at Volunteer Park because she was the organizer of the first group of Prairie Path volunteers in the late '60s. She was the next-door neighbor in Naperville of Path founder May Theilgaard Watts and the quieter half of an invincible team of two bright, courageous women.

Helen and May were kindred spirits,



Betsy Hamm (the Moorings' granddaughter) of Waukesha, Wisconsin, enjoys a cool drink from the new Helen Turner Memorial Fountain in Wheaton's Volunteer Park. Photo by Jean Mooring.



college friends at the University of Chicago, both naturalists, writers, teachers and lovers of the outdoors. Approaching their seventies, these two embarked on their greatest adventure that was to change the course of conservation history in the United States.

(Continued on page 5)

(Left photo) In spring 1971 on an inspection tour of the Illinois Prairie Path to see if it qualifies for designation as a National Recreation Trail, Helen Turner (far right) confers with Bill Nemec, IPP President at that time. John Cherry (far left) of the U. S. Department of the Interior answers a question from IPP board member and reporter Louise Headen for her newspaper column.

Ralph Franzen Memorial Bench Installed along the Elgin Branch

By Jean Mooring
IPP Board Member

While riding the Elgin Branch, take time out to try out the new Ralph Franzen Memorial Bench. It was installed in May approximately 100 feet beyond the 3-mile marker northwest of the intersection of County Farm Road and Geneva Road. Contractor John Wilkinson of Glen Ellyn delivered the 300-lb. bench to the site and bolted it in place. A crew from

Elliot Construction of Glen Ellyn had poured the concrete pad on April 18. Owner Rob Elliot also had generously stored the bench in his maintenance yard over the winter.

The Illinois Prairie Path purchased the handsome, eight-foot long, DuMor black powder-coated steel bench from NuToys Leisure Products of La Grange



Jan Franzen likes the new bench and its beautiful location on the IPP!

for \$1,456. The bench carries a bronze plaque that reads "In Memory of Ralph O. Franzen, 1919-1999, Illinois Prairie Path Volunteer." The legend on a second bronze plaque set in the concrete pad in front of the bench is "Site of the first bench on the Illinois Prairie Path built in 1968 by Ralph O. Franzen."

Path users report that the bench is very comfortable as well as good looking. Janice "Jan" Franzen visited the site with the Moorings on June 16 and said the bench was "wonderful" and that she knew Ralph would have approved because he loved the Prairie Path and was always trying to help his Prairie Path friends.

*John Wilkinson and Paul Moor-
ing prepare to
place heavy
bench on pad.
The bench is
located on the
Elgin Branch
near County
Farm Road and
Geneva Road.
Photos by Jean
Mooring*



Taylor Avenue Bridge Is Open!

(Continued from page 1)

taining a prairie on the site. "The decision to name the crossing after Glenbard West came out of appreciation for a school and a community that are dedicated to improving the path," said Pam Rion, Chairman of the Transportation Committee.

The project was a joint effort by the DuPage County Division of Transportation and the Village of Glen Ellyn. The Illinois Prairie Path raised \$50,000 for the project. TransSystems Corporation of Schaumburg designed the bridge and it was constructed under the direction of Kustom Construction of Lombard. The program is estimated to have cost \$1.2 million including \$400,000 for the installation of a village storm sewer under the bridge and reconstruction of that section of Taylor Avenue and part of Walnut Street.

Volunteers Help with IPP Prairie Burns



(Top photo) IPP crew pose in front of the blackened prairie at Hoffman Park. Volunteers included: Don Kirchenberg, Jennifer Keeley, Eric Keeley, Larry Sheaffer, Benna Tate, David Tate and Jean Mooring.

(Right photo) IPP board member Eric Keeley and family control the prairie burn at President Street.

By Jean Mooring, IPP Board Member

Volunteers burned the three prairies on March 24 along the Illinois Prairie Path in Wheaton (Hoffman Park, President Street, and Volunteer Park) plus the prairie near North Avenue at Nagel Court. The weather was cool and dry, not windy but perfect for the task, and the plant material was tinder dry.

The list of volunteers working under the supervision of prairie consultant Larry Sheaffer included Eric Keeley and family, Don Kirchenberg, Jean Mooring, and Benna and David Tate. A very satisfying project and as always a lot of fun for everyone.



Enjoy the New Helen Turner Fountain!

(Continued from page 3)

When May Watts had the novel idea of creating a nature trail out of an abandoned railroad in 1963, practical Helen Turner was right there at her side to make the dream come true.

While May captured most of the headlines, Helen worked cheerfully and tirelessly behind the scenes recruiting volunteers, studying the natural qualities of the land, walking every mile of its 45-mile length in DuPage County, and poring over old deeds and railroad strip maps to find who owned each parcel so that the trail's continuity could be established.

Helen also drew the first trail map, wrote *The Illinois Prairie Path*, a

Helen Turner's

The Illinois Prairie Path, A Guide

Available from The IPP



This 32-page guidebook contains information about the history, geology, trees, flowers, birds and animals of the Illinois Prairie Path. To order a copy send a check or money order for \$4.75 to The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189

Guide, and edited the Newsletter during the Path's early, struggling

years. She was for many who knew and loved her the strong, devoted heart of the Prairie Path.

Bikers, Equestrians & Hikers Enjoy National Trails Day

*By Jean Mooring,
IPP Board Member*



The Illinois Prairie Path participated in two National Trails Day 2001 events. The first on Saturday, June 2, brought several board members plus Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trails Coordinator, to man two booths at Volunteer Park in Wheaton. The Prairie Path volunteers were Charlie Johnson, Don Kirchenberg, Jean and Paul Mooring, Erik Spande, David Tate, and Dick and Nancy Wilson.

The IPP's folding screen display featured pictures of many historic Prairie Path events that have taken place since the Path began in 1963, as well as some pictures of Path users enjoying the trail and a few pretty scenes. Free literature about the Path and the trail systems in DuPage County was passed out and Prairie Path maps and memberships were sold. Volunteers answered many questions posed by Path users.

Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator, set up an easel with a map showing existing and proposed trails in DuPage County. She also provided refreshments to both the passers-by and the volunteers manning the booths. Unfortunately the weather was chilly and blustery and an occasional cold mist made things unpleasant, so the number of Path users was much smaller than we had anticipated.

The second National Trails Day event of that weekend was held at Blackwell Forest Preserve on Sunday morning. The organizers were the Trails Project of The Conservation Foundation, the Elmhurst Bicycle Club, Trail Riders of DuPage, and the DuPage County Forest Preserve District. Sponsors

(Continued on page 7)



Photos by Jean Mooring. (Top photo) Celebrating National Trails Day and enjoying conversation in front of the Rails-to-Trails sculpture at Volunteer Park were: Dick Wilson, Charlie Johnson, Deborah Fagan, David Tate, Erik Spande, Don Kirchenberg and Paul Mooring.

(Center photo) Paul Mooring manned the Illinois Prairie Path booth. To the right in the photo is the trail planning map brought by Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator.

(Bottom right photo): Helmeted bicyclists are ready to ride the Illinois Prairie Path.





(Top left photo) An equestrian and her horse get ready to celebrate National Trails Day with a ride at Blackwell. (Top right photo) Don Kirchenberg (right) shows a trail fan a map of the Great Western Trail at Volunteer Park..



(Above photo) Longtime IPP member and ardent cyclist Joe Carlton (right) stops for a chat with Paul Mooring at Volunteer Park.

(Bottom photo) New IPP board member Rob Sperl, Assistant Superintendent of Planning for the Wheaton Park District, manned the Wheaton Park District booth at Blackwell.

(Continued from page 6)

were The Illinois Prairie Path, Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs, the Wheaton Park District, Waste Management, Cliff Bars, Hinckley Springs Water, Spokes Bicycle Shop and Midwest Cyclery.

Activities included three bike rides of varying distances, 50 miles, 25 miles, and 10 miles, mostly on the Prairie Path; an equestrian ride of 6 miles through the forest preserve; a raffle and prizes. Refreshments donated by the sponsors were also provided. The organizers and sponsors maintained supporting and informational booths during the day. The weather was cool and pleasant and everyone had a great time.

An estimated 200 persons attended the event. However some said the location in the forest preserve was off the beaten track and a bit hard to find. Forest Preserve rules precluded The Illinois Prairie Path from selling any of its merchandise. Forest Preserve Commissioner Roger Kotecki dropped by and agreed that The Illinois Prairie Path should have been allowed to sell memberships and maps because these promote trails, also a mission of the Forest Preserve District.



2001 Earth Day Cleanup Report:

Thanks to our 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.

Batavia Spur

By Ed Barsotti

Over the past few years, new residential subdivisions and industrial warehouses have sprouted up along the Batavia Spur. Unfortunately, where there's construction, there's lots of garbage. The new neighbors of the Savannah subdivision, just north of Butterfield Road, showed their appreciation of the Prairie Path in a big way. In early April, they picked up over 25 bags of garbage on their own - without even knowing about The IPP's Earth Day cleanup. The continuation of their work was headed on Earth Day by board member Charlie Johnson.

Eight members of the Barsotti and Blokland families cleaned up the stretch from Butterfield to Bilter, where new subdivisions are being built on both sides of the trail.

Only a small amount of garbage was seen between the Batavia Spur's eastern point (near I-88 and IL59) and Bilter Road. Other volunteers started at the Fox River Trail, and worked east. Much work was done, and hopefully, as the area builds out, the garbage will continue to decrease.

Elmhurst

By Keith Olson

The cleanup for Spring Road to Salt Creek in Elmhurst was held on March

23. We needed to get it done before the Spring burn, originally scheduled for March 25. A total of 43 volunteers including 10 adults, 9 high school students and 24 scouts from two groups worked for 50 hours.

We did do a small follow-up cleanup on April 7, with 4 adults working about 4 hours.

Glen Ellyn

*By Michelle Thorsell,
Glen Ellyn Environmental
Commissioner*

The 2001 Prairie Path cleanup on April 28 was a success with 145 volunteers registering. Weather was overcast and the temperatures were in the 60's. Many families, mostly with young children came out as well as the following groups: Boy Scout Troops 44, 45, and 46; Cub Scout Packs 51, 141, 158 and 381; and First Congregational youth group the TF2 Club.

Groups and families spread out to the west and east. Because of the Taylor Avenue Bridge construction, some groups drove to the east side of the bridge and began there. One scout troop picked up trash along the Great Western Trail. There was no report of unusual trash found.

A raffle was held for volunteers participating in the day's events. Ten winners received a \$5 Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce gift certificate to be used at any one of the many stores in Glen Ellyn. The winners included Marc Karum, Bob Bernero, Erik Peterson, Will Moffet, Nathan Kocurek, Steve Wegner, Kevin Kuntz, Kirk & Jim Moser, Tom Porzelt and Robert Anderson.

(Continued on page 9)



Glen Ellyn: *Approximately 145 volunteers registered for the cleanup in Glen Ellyn and over 2,000 pounds of debris were picked up.*



Glen Ellyn: (Left photo) Margaret Mooring carries out a heavy section of an old utility pole found on the IPP right-of-way between Hill Avenue and the East Branch of the DuPage River (the Mooring family section). (Top photo) The Glen Ellyn cleanup registration table near the gazebo at Prairie Path Park was busy during the day. Refreshments were provided by The IPP. Photos by Jean Mooring.

(Continued from page 8)

The result of the trash collection from the Prairie Path, reported by the Village of Glen Ellyn, was one ton of trash plus a cubic yard of shredded material.

By Jean Mooring

Tom Barriball, chairman of the Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission, reports that 145 volunteers turned out for the April 28 cleanup in Glen Ellyn and picked up 2,000 pounds of debris. In addition they collected enough branches and brush to total one cubic yard when chipped. As usual the village paid a crew overtime and furnished heavy equipment to haul the bags of trash to a temporary storage site until they could be taken to a landfill on the following Monday. The weather could not have been nicer.

Jean Mooring reports that some unknown persons must have cleaned the Path between the Library and the Wheaton city limits earlier because it was already litter free on the cleanup day.

Lombard

By Don Kirchenberg

An "army of volunteers" were on hand at the Great Western Trail in Lombard to help with the annual cleanup on April 28. In just a short two block span, eight bags of trash, three tires, a sledging saucer and two big plastic sheets were picked up. The cleanup

was coordinated by Friends of the Great Western Trail, a volunteer group of hundreds of walkers, runners and bicyclists who clean the trail year-round. The Great Western Trail is a 12-mile, multiuse recreational trail from Villa Park to Elgin located just north of the IPP.

(continued on page 10)



Lombard: Trail litterbags left on the Great Western Trail in Wheaton at Gary Avenue show what a productive cleanup day it was, thanks to the "army of volunteers" who did a great job on Earth Day 2001. Photo by David Tate.

Thanks to our Earth Day Cleanup Volunteers



(Continued from page 9)

Villa Park

By Nadia Gawron

The Villa Park Community Pride Commission is pleased to report that this year's Earth Day Prairie Path Cleanup was a tremendous success. We had more volunteers this year, approximately 110, which was more than last year's count. The majority of the volunteers were from Villa Park, however, we also had people from Lombard, Elmhurst, Darien and even Oak Park. Some of the things that were found this year included a broken sign post, an old baseball, some marbles, coffee cups and, of course, the cans and bottles that are littered everywhere.

This year was the second year that the Pride Commission was put in charge of the Villa Park area cleanup. In gratitude, every volunteer received not only delicious refreshments, but also a souvenir pin, a key chain with a little globe on it and a multi-colored map of the Prairie Path supplied by David Tate of The IPP.

Our advertising of this event was increased this year. Word was spread through several local newspapers, Villa Park's newsletter and the web site. We also had a 30-foot banner made and hung on the very busy Ardmore Avenue for two weeks prior to the

Villa Park: (Top left photo): Villa Park's Community Pride Commission sign up volunteers and provide refreshments during the busy event. (Top right photo) Brownie troop members were some of the 110 volunteers in Villa Park.

West Chicago: (Bottom photo) Dick Wilson, Lynne and Ron Savinski and Birt Hurlbert along with Nancy Wilson (not pictured) worked in West Chicago.



event. Commission members went throughout neighborhoods door-to-door to deliver flyers. One of our commissioners stuffed her church's Sunday bulletin with our flyers. Bessette Chiropractic heard about the cleanup and their whole staff and many patients also helped. We can't thank all our volunteers enough for all their time, hard work and effort!

West Chicago

By Dick Wilson

Birt Hurlbert, Dick and Nancy Wilson, and Ron and Lynne Savinski cleaned from Route 59 to Smith Road. The volunteers picked up three bags of recyclables, five bags of trash, six insulators and one cross bar.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Warrenville

By Bob Rawls

In Warrenville, this was one of the best years for volunteers. We received more calls from volunteers than in past years and for that we thank everyone. Due to scheduling conflicts, the IPP was cleaned on successive Saturdays including April 21 and 28.

On April 21, Cub Scout Pack 68's Den 13 pledged to keep the area of the Illinois Prairie Path from Batavia Road to Rockwell Street clean and litter free. The Scouts and their parents and families did an excellent job of cleaning the path.

Other volunteers who helped in Warrenville were Scott Savage and his children Kristin, Keith and Tyler; David Cart; Paul Mack; Steve Lee and Wendy; County Board member Jim Healy and his family; Martha and Charles Sikaras; Mary Ellen Nelson; and Connie Vuono. And a special "thank you" to all silent volunteers that clean and pick up trash on the IPP any day of the year.

Wheaton

By Helen Bartlett

Coordinator—Prairie Path Cleanup Committee for The Environmental Improvement Commission

April 28 was a mild, pleasant day and 280 volunteers came out to join our cleanup. Approximately 21 miles were covered. Refreshments including tasty bagels for the volunteers were provided by the Panera Bread Company. Various groups participating in the cleanup included Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, Girl Scout and Brownie Troops, schools, Big Brother and Big Sister organizations, bicycle and running clubs, a softball team, church groups, the Wheaton Junior Women's Club and many families and individuals. Special thanks to Greg McKeen for his many hours.

(Continued on page 12)



Wayne: The Wayne trail cleanup crew consisted of (left to right) Jeff Jenkins, Katie Jenkins, Gladys Johnston (the Wayne Earth Day coordinator) and Susan Jenkins. Gladys and Susan have also adopted the IPP's new raised planter in Wayne at Army Trail Road and regularly water the new plants during the hot dry summer of 2001. Photo by David Tate.



Warrenville: Scouts from Warrenville Pack 68 and Den 13 were a big help in the Warrenville cleanup on Saturdays, April 21 and 28. Photo by Bob Rawls.



Wheaton: The five most productive Earth Day coordinators in the United States include: (left to right) Bob Young, Ted Witte, Helen Bartlett, Tracy Vought and Cathy Coleman. The Wheaton Environmental Commission recruited a record 278 volunteers! Photo by D. Tate.

Thanks to our Earth Day Cleanup Volunteers



(Continued from page 11)

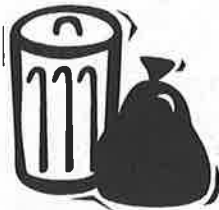
The Environmental Improvement Commission held three planning meetings prior to the cleanup. Commission members included: Helen Bartlett, Cathy Coleman, Tracy Vought, Ted Witte and Bob Young. The group's publicity efforts included letters to schools, churches, scouts and other organizations. Flyers were distributed in stores and other locations. Volunteer hours by The Prairie Path Cleanup Committee members totaled 32 hours on the day of the cleanup and 82 hours for planning and follow-up.

Wheaton: (Top left) The 5th grade class of Mrs. Virginia Jones at Wheaton's Longfellow School cleaned the Elgin Branch. Students pictured are Brittany Nelson, Elisa Stough, Sarah Ross, Ben Haist, Danny VanVoorhis and Hillary Trinty. (Top right) IPP board member Charles Johnson points out recommended trail cleanup areas. Charles was The IPP's pre-cleanup scout and bicycled 58 miles of the IPP to document trail sections that needed special cleanup attention. Photos by David Tate.



Thanks for your help!

Litter on the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail 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 these two trails is picked up by volunteers, any litter spotted along the trails at anytime throughout the year should also be picked up.



(Above photo) Volunteers dropped off trash bags in a collection area at Lincoln Avenue in Wheaton. Photo by Helen Bartlett. (Left photo) Frank, Daniel and Elinor Cyce-nas were some of the many Wheaton volunteers. Photo by David Tate.

Trail Segments Almost Complete

*By Charles Johnson
IPP Board Member*

The first segment of the DuPage County Forest Preserve West Branch Trail, about one mile between Warrenville Road and an underpass beneath I-88, is virtually complete but not yet officially opened. It makes a nice link between Warrenville and the sidewalks along Ferry Road.

In Kane County the Randall Road Bike Trail is passable but not yet officially opened. This trail branches from the Great Western Trail at Leroy Oakes Forest Preserve, passes northward through several acres of prairie to the northeast corner of the Preserve, crosses a long, low bridge over Ferson Creek, then parallels Randall Road northward to Silver Glen Road, where it joins the existing trail leading eastward into the Blackhawk Forest Preserve. The



distance from the Great Western branch point to Silver Glen Road is a bit less than 4 miles. A nice short loop would be to go west on Silver Glen to Crane Road, then south on Crane. You will have some nice views of Otter Creek and its wetlands, a chance to visit the Otter Creek Bend Wetland

Park, and see some splendid privately-owned oak groves.

Also in Kane County the Pottawatomie Park bridge across the Fox River in St. Charles is also nearing completion. The bridge is mounted on the existing Union Pacific spur bridge and, like the bridge in Geneva at Island Park, is roofed! See it to believe it. The new bridge enables cyclists and pedestrians from the State Street area to cross Route 31 and the river without having to clutter the Route 64 bridge.

Looking for Local Trail Maps? Check These Sources

The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation sells its multi-color map for \$6 which includes shipping and handling. Our organization does not sell or provide maps of other trail systems. To order a map, send a \$6 check to The Illinois Prairie Path, PO Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189. Maps are free with new memberships and on request with membership renewals.

For information about the availability of other trail maps, check out this online resource at <http://dot.state.il.us/mapsales2.html>

Also, see the articles on page 15 regarding detailed Grand Illinois Trail information.

Bird Watchers Enjoy Oating at Pratt's Wayne Woods

*By Dick Wilson,
IPP Vice President*



Fifteen people gathered at Pratt's Wayne Woods in May for The IPP's annual Bird Walk. Some of the birds spotted included: Bobolink, Cardinal, Catbird, Black-capped Chickadee, Great Egret, Northern Flicker, Goldfinch, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Blue Jay, Eastern Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Robin, Sandhill Crane, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Tree Swallow, Chimney Swift, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Yellow throated Warbler and Red eyed Vireo.

After the walk, the group enjoyed a picnic lunch topped off with a batch of chocolate chip cookies made by Christi Kimmel. It was a wonderful day!



The Friends of the Great Western Trail Are Asking for Your Help

*By Don Kirchenberg
IPP President*

The Great Western Trail (GWT) is a nearby resource for you and our neighboring communities. Walkers, runners, bicyclists, and equestrians are welcome to use the trail all year around. The GWT connects with the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) at the Elgin Branch on the west and in the East it starts one block north of the IPP at Villa Avenue. There are many major recreational facilities and amenities in several communities along the trail.

The Friends of the Great Western Trail is an *all-volunteer group* of trail users including walkers, joggers, bicyclists and equestrians organized to improve safety on the GWT and on the roads leading to the trail. The Friends of the Great Western Trail is providing the free trail maps along the Illinois Prairie Path for the second year. They are asking all trail users to contact the Village President of Lombard, urging Lombard to make improving safety at the trail crossing at Grace Street, St Charles Road and the Union Pacific train tracks a top priority.

Immediate steps should be taken now to ensure safe crossings with painted pedestrian crossings on the pavement of these busy streets. There are 6,000 vehicles per day on Grace St, 12,000 vehicles per day on St Charles Rd and over 100 trains a day on the UP train tracks. Send letters to the Village of Lombard, Village President Bill Mueller at 255 E. Wilson, Lombard, IL 60148. We are also asking them to consider alternatives to crossing these busy streets and train tracks by adding a bridge like the one built over Finley Rd in Lombard on the Illinois Prairie Path.

The Friends' second ongoing safety concern is the redesign and expansion of North Avenue/Route 64. The first expansion and redesign of North Avenue for several miles from Rohling Road/Route 53 to past Gary Avenue on the west did not provide any pedestrian or bicycle crossings. **There is no safe route across the new North Avenue** for any pedestrians or bicyclists on this new roadway to get to the GWT that parallels North Avenue. The intersections are now up to eight lanes across with traffic moving at all times. We need to have this problem corrected and ensure that future road expansion projects include the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. This is a **dangerous precedent set by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)**.

Ask your State Representative and State Senator to direct IDOT to correct the problem of no safe crossings on the newly expanded North Avenue. We need pedestrian crossings on North Avenue marked at the major intersections along with pedestrian actuated

Walk/Don't Walk signals. In addition, a pedestrian bridge over North Avenue like the one to be constructed on the newly expanded Lake Street/Route 20 in Bloomingdale is the best solution.

North Avenue will be expanded to the east through Lombard and Villa Park. We need to ensure that safe pedestrian crossings are provided for in the new expanded road design. Ask your state legislators and the officials from Lombard and Villa Park to include the need for safe pedestrian crossings in the new North Avenue designs.

To get the names, addresses and phone numbers of your state legislators call the DuPage County Board of Elections 630-682-7440 or the Illinois Board of Elections from any county, 312-814-6440. For more information, send them an email at **FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com** or write to Don Kirchenberg, Voluntary Chairperson of the Friends of the Great Western Trail (and an IPP Board Member) at 247 E. Lincoln Ave., Glendale Heights, IL 60139

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Illinois
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ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org)**



Grand Illinois Trail News Notes

Complete Grand Illinois Info Posted to Web

Over the past few weeks, League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) has posted new and improved Grand Illinois Trail (GIT) information on the web. The new GIT webpages replace and expand on the first draft cue sheets we posted last year. The new trail information is broken down into 9 segment pages, each of which features:

- segment maps and inset city maps
- segment cue sheets with distances, turns, and street names
- major scenic attractions
- hotel, motel, & campground locations and phone numbers
- emergency numbers
- restaurants
- bike shop locations and phone numbers
- downloadable Adobe Acrobat pages

The total distance for the Grand Illinois Trail loop is 535 miles. To put together the cue sheets we've divided the trail into 9 segments of 38 to 75 miles each. A 10th segment offers an alternate lakeshore route from McHenry to Navy Pier. The 10 segments are:

1. Chicago: Maywood to Burnham Green - 38 miles
2. Burnham Greenway to Joliet - 39 miles
3. Joliet to Bureau Junction - 75 miles
4. Bureau Junction to East Moline - 73 miles
5. East Moline to Mississippi Palisades State Park - 57 miles
6. Mississippi Palisades State Park to Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park - 73 miles
7. Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park to Rock Cut State Park - 68 miles
8. Rock Cut State Park to McHenry - 57 miles
9. McHenry to Maywood - 55 miles
10. McHenry to Navy Pier - 64 miles (this is an alternate for all of segment 9 and 14-miles of segment 1)

The Grand Illinois Trail joins together existing and proposed state and local trails to create the state's longest continuous trail. It hugs the historic Illinois & Michigan and Hennepin canals, crosses unglaciated hills, parallels the Illinois, Rock and Fox Rivers, and includes the Illinois Prairie Path, one of America's first rail-trails.

GIT goes from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi along the northern border of Illinois and then loops back across the state along the Illinois River and the Hennepin Canal. About 200 miles of the route is on paved township and county roads while the rest is on a variety of asphalt or limestone trails or bike paths.

Staff and volunteers from the League of Illinois Bicyclists with the support of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and other trail partners have assembled the maps, cue sheets and important trail information you will need to ride this trail. It's all on the web at <http://bikeLIB.org/trails/git> along with links to additional resources. Later this year the GIT information and maps will also be available in a booklet format. In the meantime you can download them from the web in Adobe Acrobat format.

At the website you will find a GIT homepage with links to 10 separate segment pages, one for each of the 10 trail segments. Each segment page features a link to a 2 or 3-page Adobe Acrobat file with all the maps, cue sheet and contact information. Once you download the Acrobat pages they can be printed out and taken with you as you ride the trail. If that long URL is too much to remember just type in bikeGIT.org or <http://bikeGIT.org> and your web browser should also be directed to the right spot.

**- Jim Nugent, Webmaster
League of Illinois Bicyclists**

Illinois Trail Guidebook includes IPP Segments

The League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) is finishing a guidebook for the Grand Illinois Trail (GIT), an extensive system of off-road trails and on-road routes circling northern Illinois. The GIT loop brings you through Chicago, Joliet, the Quad Cities, Galena, Rockford, McHenry, and back, with over 500 miles to explore. The 250 miles of completed trails include the Illinois Prairie Path from Elgin to Maywood.

Whether you're enjoying a small segment of the GIT or tackling the entire loop, the guidebook will provide you with helpful information for your trip. Detailed cue sheets and maps keep you "on the right path."

Accommodations such as lodging, food, and bike repair are listed for towns that you pass through. Plus, interesting local highlights add some flavor to your travels. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is funding the guidebook and its publication. The guidebook will also be available on the web at <http://www.bikelib.org/>, LIB's website. LIB is a statewide bicycle advocacy organization promoting bike-friendly roads, more trails, and bicycle safety. The Illinois Prairie Path is a contributor to LIB.

IDNR and its GIT Coordinator, George Bellovics, are working hard to further develop the trail. This year's highlight will be completion of the 61-mile Hennepin Canal trail from roughly the Quad Cities to Bureau - and 19 miles from the I&M Canal Trail's end in LaSalle. Planning and construction efforts continue over many other sections of the route. The Illinois Prairie Path has been involved throughout the history of the project.

**-Ed Barsotti, Executive Director
League of Illinois Bicyclists**



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