



The Illinois Prairie Path Winter 2001 **NEWSLETTER**

Glenbard West Prairie Crossing Construction Begins in Glen Ellyn

*By Paul Mooring
IPP Board Member*

An official groundbreaking ceremony for the bridge over Taylor Avenue in Glen Ellyn was held on Tuesday, November 28. The bridge will be known as the Glenbard West Prairie Crossing (see "Name" sidebar on page 2).

The ceremony was attended by dignitaries from the State of Illinois, DuPage County, the Village of Glen Ellyn and The Illinois Prairie Path. Chairman Robert Schillerstrom of the DuPage County Board, Chairman Pam Rion of the DuPage County Transportation Committee, President Joe Wark of the Village of Glen Ellyn, and Chairman Ron Rennard of the Taylor Avenue Bridge Task Force gave brief speeches. It was also a photo opportunity for many local newspapers.

The current construction schedule calls for the bridge to be finished in spring 2001. A dedication ceremony is being planned for Saturday, June 2, which is National Trails Day.

Construction of the new bridge is part of a contract being managed by DuPage County under an intergovernmental agreement between the Village of Glen Ellyn and the county. The bridge is being paid for by funds provided by DuPage County,

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The groundbreaking for the Glenbard West Prairie Crossing was attended by a number of dignitaries including: DuPage County Board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom (center – speaking) who is flanked by Glen Ellyn President Joe Wark and Bridge Committee Chairman Ron Rennard, as well as the IPP's Paul and Jean Mooring (far right).

Bellwood Centennial Prairie Dedicated



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Glenbard West Prairie Crossing

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the Village of Glen Ellyn, and the State of Illinois. The Illinois Prairie Path raised \$50,000 and Representative Vince Persico arranged for the State of Illinois to provide another \$50,000 for Glen Ellyn's portion of the cost of the bridge. As part of the contract, the storm sewer system under Taylor Avenue through the underpass north of the Prairie Path to Willis Street and under Walnut Street east from Taylor Avenue will also be replaced and the two streets repaved with concrete. During construction path users are being re-



IPP users must detour south on Longfellow west along Duane and back north on Montclair during bridge construction.

routed along village streets. A hitch interrupted the early construction schedule. When the contractor started to excavate the foundation for the bridge abutments, he found that a fiber optic cable had been installed under that exact location, though the records said it was several yards to the north. Construction was halted until the line was moved.



The Conservation Land Stewardship Company, contracted by the county, transplanted large plugs of prairie grasses and forbs from Taylor Avenue prairie to a site south of Crescent Blvd. in August 2000.

Bridge Receives Official Name: Glenbard West Prairie Crossing

The DuPage County Board, at the suggestion of Ron Rennard, has officially named the new bridge Glenbard West Prairie Crossing in recognition of the Glenbard West High School students of teachers George Zahrob-sky and Rick Billings who planted and maintained a prairie on the site for 25 years.

This past summer a subcontractor for the county transplanted many of the prairie plants to a new site on recently acquired high school property across from the high school south of Crescent Boulevard.

- Paul Mooring



Bellwood Centennial Prairie volunteers worked to install over 1,000 prairie plants in May 2000.

Bellwood Centennial Prairie Dedicated

***By Paul Aeschleman
IPP Board Member***

The Bellwood Centennial Prairie was dedicated by representatives from the Village of Bellwood, Borg Warner Inc., The Illinois Prairie Path and local community residents on Sunday, August 6, 2000. The Centennial Prairie Project is a cooperative 5-year effort of these groups to restore the grassy, rubble strewn, teasel infested area west of 25th Avenue and south of Borg Warner's Bellwood facility into a tall grass prairie ecosystem.

At the dedication, Bellwood Village Clerk Booker Brown described the project as an effort to restore the area to the environment that may have existed in the area when the village was incorporated 100 years ago. The Bellwood location was identified several years ago as an ideal location for a prairie because it was one of the largest non-prairie grasslands along the Cook County section of the IPP. In addition, preliminary investigations revealed the presence of a small number of native prairie forbs and grasses.

unteers helped move the project from a vision to a reality. Additional funding was supplied by The IPP. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources contributed consulting services and prairie plants.

Centennial prairie restoration work began on a blustery May 13 with over 40 volunteers from Borg Warner, The IPP and the local community. Fortified with coffee and donuts supplied by Borg Warner, the volunteers and Bellwood's Public Works Department removed over 10 truckloads of debris and woody growth and planted approximately 1,000 native prairie plants. The cool wet summer contributed to the survival of nearly 100 percent of the plants and by the dedication ceremony on August 2 the newest IPP prairie was in full bloom.

Planning for the Centennial began in January 2000 when IPP board members learned that Bellwood was planning a series of events to celebrate the village's 100th birthday. Plans were made with Bellwood officials to include this prairie restoration project as part of the village's centennial celebration.

With the support of the village, The IPP worked with its prairie consultant Larry Sheaffer of Prairie Partners to develop a comprehensive 5-year plan and a list of recommended plants, as well as identify supplies, funding and volunteers. After reviewing the plan and meeting with IPP board members, Borg Warner's \$5,000 donation and the commitment of 30 employee vol-

The IPP Board of Directors would like to thank Borg Warner Inc. and the Village of Bellwood for their support and enthusiasm during the project. The IPP feels that this is an excellent example of the benefits that can be realized when public agencies, corporations and non-profit groups work together for a common cause.



The IPP's Paul Aeschleman (left), Borg Warner's Paula Brown and Bellwood Village Clerk Booker Brown congratulated each other on a job well done.



Illinois Prairie Path Corporation 2000 Annual Meeting Report

*By Jean Mooring
IPP Board Member*

Illinois Prairie Path President David Tate called the 36th annual meeting to order on Sunday, November 5. The Elmhurst Park District again made The Abbey on St. Charles Road available for our members and guests. This facility has proven to be the most comfortable and convenient venue we have found for the annual meeting and we heartily thank the Park District for its generosity.

IPP Board Members

After the introduction of the board members and the approval of the minutes of the 1999 annual meeting, the nominating committee presented a slate of candidates for the

board of directors which was elected by acclamation. It included three incumbents, Mike Cross, Jean Mooring and Dick Wilson, whose terms were expiring; and two new candidates, Don Kirchenberg of Glendale Heights and Erik Spande of Winfield, to replace retiring longtime board members Birt Hurlbert of West Chicago and Bob Rawls of Warrenville. President Tate also sadly reported the untimely death of another longtime board member, Ken Moss of Elmhurst, who leaves another vacancy to be filled. (See obituary on page 11.)

President's Report

In his annual president's report, Tate noted a number of accomplishments by the corporation and its volunteers in 2000. Highlights included:

- **Benches:** The Illinois Prairie Path purchased eight new plastic lumber and steel benches for \$4,000 to be installed on the IPP Elgin Branch by Doug Tittman and his Boy Scout Troop 2258 as part of an Eagle project. The IPP also purchased an all-steel memorial bench for Ralph Franzen that will be installed on the IPP Elgin Branch in the Timber Ridge Forest Preserve.
- **Prairie restoration:** The IPP spent \$9,200 on prairie restoration in 2000. Volunteers are the foundation of the prairie restoration work that is done along the Prairie Path. The IPP supplements the work of the volunteers by contracting with Larry Sheaffer, a landscape architect. We maintain the prairies at Volunteer Park, President Street, Hoffman Park (all in Wheaton), Nagle Street (near North Avenue), First Avenue in Maywood, and the new Bellwood Centennial Prairie west of 25th Avenue, Bellwood. The Prairie Path donated \$2,000 and the Borg Warner Corporation, \$5,000 for the Bellwood Centennial Prairie. The site was burned in April, planted in May and dedicated in August. Board member Paul Aeschleman coordinated this project, enthusiastically supported by Borg Warner employees and the Village of Bellwood. The Prairie

This group of volunteers in Bellwood celebrated the success of prairie restoration work for the Bellwood Centennial Prairie at a dedication on August 6. The Illinois Prairie Path donated \$2,000 for the project.





(Left Photo) Eagle Scout candidate Doug Tittman (center), his father Dane (left) and his scoutmaster Frank Maritote are proud of the bench installed near County Farm Road by Troop 2258 members on November 26. (Top Photo) Hal Weaver, IPP neighbor in Wayne, with Liesl his pet Rottweiler and a mug of coffee, enjoy the new bench at Army Trail Road in November.

Path approved spending \$3,450 for six bur oak trees and ten shrubs in Elmhurst for the Great Western Prairie in memory of Ken Moss. Keith Olson, the Great Western Prairie steward, is coordinating this project. The Elmhurst Park District will do the site preparation and the planting.

- **Display cases:** The Prairie Path maintains 11 display cases along the 62-mile trail. Currently none are vandalized.
- **Donations:** The Illinois Prairie Path donated \$10,000 to the Glen Ellyn Bridge Task Force for the construction of a bridge over Taylor Avenue in Glen Ellyn in 1998. Construction began on the \$500,000 bridge in late 2000. Annual donations of \$1,000 were given to The Conservation Foundation Trails Project in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000; and \$2,000 was approved to be donated to the

Illinois Trails Conservancy in 2000.

- **Trash containers:** The Prairie Path placed a new weatherstone trash container at First Avenue in Maywood in 2000. The IPP pays a scavenger to service 14 trash containers in DuPage and Kane Counties. The board may purchase additional containers in 2001.
- **Trail cleanups:** The IPP coordinates trail cleanups including the annual Earth Day cleanup. At least 562 volunteers participated in the Earth Day 2000 cleanup. We also fund registration and refreshment tables for the Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission, the Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission and the Villa Park Pride Commission.
- **Winfield Indian Burial Mounds:** The IPP financed the restoration of three Indian burial mounds at a

cost of \$1,550. Allied Archeology completed the restoration in November 1999. The DuPage County Forest Preserve District cleared non-native brush near the mounds and in November 2000 built a six-foot-wide walking trail that connects the Illinois Prairie Path Geneva Spur to the Indian village and mound site. In addition, the IPP board approved spending \$1,000 for two interpretive signs, one to be placed at the intersection of the Geneva Spur and the Mound Trail and the other at the mound site.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Paul Mooring reported that The Illinois Prairie Path's financial condition is excellent. For the details of his report see the Treasurer's Report on page 7.

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IPP Annual Meeting Report

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Deborah Fagan's Report

The principal speaker at the meeting was Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator and senior planner with the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission. Deborah



Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator and senior planner with the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission, was the principal speaker at the Annual Meeting.



The narrow bridge on the IPP Main Stem at the East Branch of the DuPage River is scheduled to be replaced by DuPage County.

rah is developing a trail improvement plan for the county trail system (the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail) in consultation with all types of trail support groups and trail users including bicyclists, runners, hikers, equestrians and skiers, as well as adjacent landowners.

She has had many meetings with these groups already and has received many suggestions for trail improvements. Some would be easy to do right away as phase I: better signage at major street intersections, more trash containers and replacing missing mile markers. Some are long term projects for phase II: replacement of the narrow Prairie Path bridge over the East Branch of the DuPage River, better connections to the Great Western Trail, especially in Villa Park and at Grace Street in Lombard, and a bridge over the EJ&E Railroad in Wayne.

To assist in the trail improvement planning process, the county sponsored a trail user count on Saturday, August 19. Fifty-one volunteers participated, including many from The Prairie Path. Eight thousand users passed the ten locations that

day; 70 percent were bicyclists, of whom only half were wearing helmets. This effort was very labor intensive. Perhaps in the future some mechanical counting system could be used.

The county also sponsored a public forum on trails in September that generated 102 responses from attendees and through e-mails. Deborah said that the county would present its plan in 2001.

In the question and comment period following Deborah's presentation County Board Member Roger Kotecki suggested a connection from the IPP Elgin Branch to Reed-Keppler Park in West Chicago. Kotecki also said he didn't think it was necessary to continue studying the encroachment problem on the trail rights-of-way. "Just go after the really serious encroachments like fences and buildings," he said.

IPP board members Eric Keeley and Jean Mooring complained about excessive (too frequent and too wide) mowing of natural areas along the Path, which prevents native plants from growing and encourages dande-

lions, ragweed, creeping charlie and other persistent weeds.

Annual Slide Show

Last on the program was the annual Prairie Path slide show written by Paul Mooring and photographed and narrated by Jean Mooring. IPP board member Paul Aeschleman added some slides showing the Cook County prairie restorations at the Bellwood Centennial Prairie and at First Avenue, Maywood.

The slide show depicted most of the activities and events mentioned in President David Tate's report and included pictures of the late Ken Moss enjoying his favorite place, the Prairie Path.

The Moorings couldn't resist including a few pictures of their twin grandsons, Paul and Morgan Hamm of Waukesha, Wisconsin, who were honored by being chosen for the U. S. Olympic Men's Gymnastic Team to participate in the year 2000 games in Sydney, Australia.

The meeting concluded with cider, cakes and cookies, provided by the board members and their families. Dick and Nancy Wilson brought a sheet cake decorated with the Prairie Path logo and the red-white-and-blue logo of a United States Millennium Trail. The official notice that the Illinois Prairie Path had been designated a Community Millennium Trail was received the week after National Trails Day.

The Moorings brought copies of the Winter 2001 issue of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's nationally distributed magazine, whose cover story, *Pride and Joy in Illinois*, is a

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THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH Treasurer's Report

Cash Balance, November 1, 1999

Bank One (checking)	\$13,086.95
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (Money Market Fund)	93,929.55
TOTAL	\$107,016.50

Revenue

Donations, Grants, Bequests	\$6,681.26
Dues	37,772.00
Sales (Maps, T-shirts, Patches, "Guides", etc.)	3,104.00
Interest	5,522.63
Miscellaneous	1.50
TOTAL	\$53,081.39

Expenditures

Office Manager (Salary)	\$8,280.00
Newsletters (Printing and Mailing)	6,861.23
Membership/Flyers	897.75
Maintenance Supplies	0.00
Litter Removal and Port-o-let	3,725.34
Postage	318.25
Office Supplies	0.00
Telephone	531.23
Special Projects	5,653.40
Special Events	533.97
Prairie Restoration	9,258.00
Other Printing	1,341.84
Merchandise for Sale	793.97
Donations	1,500.00
Travel/Board Expenses	40.00
Legal and Consulting	0.00
Petty Cash Fund	1,000.00
Miscellaneous	160.00
TOTAL	\$40,894.98

Cash Balance October 31, 2000

Bank One (checking)	\$19,950.82
Stein Roe Cash Reserves (Money Market Fund)	99,252.09
TOTAL	\$119,202.91

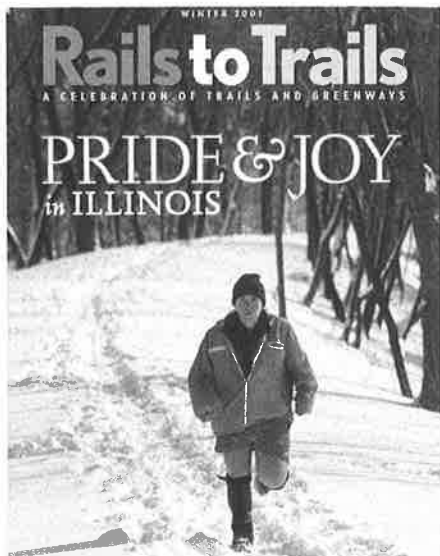
Submitted by Paul Mooring, Treasurer

IPP Annual Meeting Report

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colorful snapshot of the Illinois Prairie Path, past, present and future. Our members and friends are invited to help promote trails nationwide by joining the Conservancy.

Contact RTC at:
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
1100 Seventeenth Street, NW
P. O. Box 96014
Washington, DC 20077-7560
1-800-888-7747, ext. 11
www.railtrails.org



The Illinois Prairie Path has been designated
as a Community Millennium Trail
by the:



THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

June 3, 2000

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to send greetings to each of you celebrating National Trails Day.

Millennium Trails is a public/private partnership led by the White House Millennium Council, the United States Department of Transportation and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Park Service, American Hiking Society and a committed group of federal agencies, national organizations and private companies. New coalitions are being formed every day to continue the nationwide effort to connect every community in America through a network of Millennium Trails. These trails carve a path through urban and rural areas, reintroduce us to our landscape, make it possible for us to walk or bike to work and school, and help us understand and celebrate our history and culture.

In June of 1999, Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater and I designated National Millennium Trails that reflect defining aspects of American history and culture. Governors from across the country nominated fifty Millennium Legacy Trails that were recognized last fall. Today we are honoring hundreds of Community Millennium Trails across the land. Millennium Trails are tangible gifts to the future that represent a commitment and an investment in the kind of country we want to create in the 21st century. It is my hope that the energy that has sparked this growing national movement will be sustained and nurtured so that trails are a part of our nation's heritage for many generations to come.

America's trails are a product of many hands and I want to thank all of you who devote time and effort to developing these valuable resources. You have my best wishes for a wonderful National Trails Day event.

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton



DuPage County Plan Underway to Study Trail Improvements

DuPage County Division of Transportation (DCDOT) has embarked on a process to improve the Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail in DuPage. The DuPage Department of Development and Environmental Concerns, led by Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator, is providing planning services to DCDOT to help identify the improvements needed. Tylin Bascor is also assisting with consulting planning and engineering services.

This 9-month study is designed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the existing system and identify opportunities to bring the system to the next level in serving the public. Future expansion and improvement options include physical projects, programs, policy changes, and additions.

The plan includes the following major tasks:

- **Inventory Current County Trail System Conditions** (including ownership/maintenance arrangements, characteristics, existing conditions, amenities, parking, conflict areas affecting safety, analysis of current users through a trail count, and analysis of traffic accident data)
- **Public Forum and Public Agency Meetings to Obtain Input on Trail Issues**



- **Phase 1 Recommendations for Upgrading and Improving the Existing System and Facilities** (short term improvements and actions which can be implemented easily to enhance the existing system such as connectivity links, safety improvements, and amenities)
- **Phase 2 Recommendations for Further Trail System Expansion and Improvement** (longer term improvements such as bridge replacements, new connections, safety improvements, amenities, trailheads, landscaping/beautification, promotional activities, new policies and/or policy

changes, tourism promotion, economic development, etc.)

- **Preparation of Improvement Plan Cost Estimates**

Activities to Date

Meetings were completed this summer with 25 user groups and implementation agencies to learn what they feel should be done to improve the path. These meetings included municipal and park district representatives, and groups like The Illinois Prairie Path, TROD, and The Conservation Foundation Trails Project.

A one-day trail count was completed in August at 10 locations along the system with the help of more than 50 volunteers including many members of The Illinois Prairie Path and its board.

A forum was held on September 7 to allow the public an opportunity to offer suggestions for improvements and raise concerns about problem areas. A separate report summarizing this input is in preparation but approximately 54 people attended the forum, (including some county and municipal elected officials) and another 75 trail users sent in written comments.

Upcoming Activities

The Phase I report outlining initial improvement recommendations was completed in October with the full plan of all improvement recommendations completed by the end of March.



IPP Mailbag

Office Manager's Note:

Thanks to all who write, call or e-mail The Illinois Prairie Path with your many questions. This column features some of the most frequently asked questions so that all members can benefit from the information. One reminder — when calling our voice mail at 630-752-0120 to ask a question, please leave your complete name and your day and evening phone numbers and the reason for your call. It is not always possible to return your calls during daytime hours.

Bicyclists are Urged To Slow Down on IPP

I am writing because of a growing concern with bicyclists who seem think that everyone should get out of their way, do not slow down when approaching people on the IPP and neither call nor ring a warning bell when they approach from behind. The number of cyclists seems to have increased considerably in recent years.

To illustrate my point, on a June 18 field trip to the West Chicago Prairie one of the participants was hit by a cyclist. She suffered a broken collar bone and additional bruising. We had to call an ambulance and she was treated at Central DuPage Hospital. We had just entered on the Illinois Prairie Path's Geneva Spur at MacQueen Drive, and I had just warned the participants to watch out for cyclists



when this woman stepped back from the group and out on the path. The accident could have been avoided if the cyclist, who was traveling at a fast rate, had slowed down (he did not) to pass the group, sounded a warning bell, or called out as he approached.

Most cyclists do at least one of these things, but there is a group, generally riding very fast, who give no warning, and assume the right-of-way is theirs. In my work on the West Chicago Prairie, I am frequently on the Prairie Path and note

this behavior quite often. Either these cyclists do not realize the potential hazard to others and themselves, or simply do not care.

Some solutions would be to: 1) Post signs at entry points reminding all users that the Prairie Path has many types of users, 2) Warn all users, particularly walkers and bikers, of the hazards, 3) Suggest that all bikers should slow down as they approach people and use warning bells or call out.

The Illinois Prairie Path is a wonderful asset. I hope it can remain enjoyable and safe for all the many users.

Melvorn C. Hoff
West Chicago Prairie
Stewardship Group

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!

Attention Friends of the Great Western Trail!

In September 2000, Don Kirchenberg started the Friends of the Great Western Trail. Don promotes trail safety and also recommends that improvements be made at the Great Western Trail's notorious intersection at Grace St., St. Charles Rd. and the Union Pacific Railroad.

For more information, contact the group at
FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com



Ken Moss (center) holds the Green Leaf environmental award presented to volunteers for the Illinois Prairie Path by State Representative Lee Daniels (right) April 25, 1992. At left are Sally Kirk, Du-Page Clean and Beautiful, and Lexi Payovich, volunteer for Daniels.

IN MEMORIAM KENNETH L. MOSS

Kenneth (Ken) Moss of Elmhurst, an Illinois Prairie Path board member since 1989, died at the age of 55, October 11, 2000, of complications resulting from treatment of a spinal cord tumor. He is survived by his wife Susan, his mother Vicki Gardner, his son Kenneth (Julie) and daughter Cara.

Ken was also an active member of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and a former Elmhurst Park District commissioner. He once owned a bike shop on Spring Road in Elmhurst near the Prairie Path, and even before joining our board he donated a bike rack to the Path. We installed it next to the prairie at Volunteer Park in Wheaton and it is still there today. Next to riding his bike with Susan on the Prairie Path, Ken was never happier than when acting as master of ceremonies at the Prairie Path annual meeting or managing and working at the Chicago Area Bicycle Dealers Association show in Rosemont every February. Everyone who knew Ken will miss his cheerful smile and friendly spirit.

A Ken Moss memorial fund has been established and, as Ken wished, money collected from his many friends is being donated to The Illinois Prairie Path. The board proposes that this fund be used to pay for trees that the Elmhurst Park District will purchase and a memorial plaque to be installed near the Great Western Prairie and the Path just east of Salt Creek.

- Jean Mooring



The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter
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Wheaton, IL 60189

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We're on the Web!
www.ipp.org

***Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 28,
and plan to join us
for our annual cleanup!***

Watch for details in next issue of the IPP Newsletter



Hundreds of volunteers are needed to clean the entire 61-mile trail and make the 2001 cleanup a success!