



# The Illinois Prairie Path

Fall 2001

# NEWSLETTER

## New Campaign to Save the Special 8

**T**he Illinois Prairie Path has launched an effort to "Save the Special 8" in unincorporated Glen Ellyn. The IPP opposes development of these 8.3 acres because of the land's environmental importance and to prevent a new street crossing on the Illinois Prairie Path, according to Don Kirchenberg, IPP president.

### Environmental Impact

According to Kirchenberg, these special 8 acres have many valuable plants including one threatened species, as identified by two naturalist experts. The land is also adjacent to the Illinois Prairie Path, a 61-mile-long multi-purpose trail for hikers, joggers, bicyclists, equestrians, nature lovers and picnickers. The IPP trail is the first successful rail-to-trail conversion in North America. Along the trail and part of the 8.3 acres is a unique geological formation. This formation is a **glacial kame deposited 10-15,000 years ago** when the last glacier moved through the area.

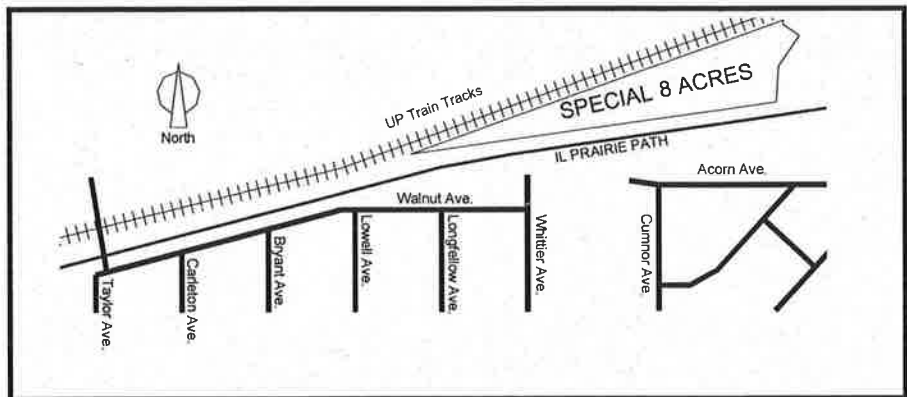
### Prevent a New Street Crossing

If the 8.3 acres were developed, a new street crossing at Whittier Ave on the IPP Main Stem would have to be built just east of the new Taylor Avenue bridge. The new Taylor Avenue bridge was built at a cost of over \$800,000 to protect trail users by eliminating an unsafe street crossing. "We need to prevent any new street crossings and protect the thousands of trail users on this very busy section of the IPP," Kirchenberg said.

### Importance of Open Space

As growth pressures increase in Chicagoland -- especially in DuPage

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**You are invited to  
The Illinois Prairie Path  
2001 Annual Meeting  
Sunday, November 4 at 2 p.m.**

### Where

The Abbey Leisure Center, 407 West St. Charles Road, Elmhurst, IL

### Reports

2001 President's Report  
2001 Treasurer's Report  
2001 Membership Report  
Nomination of Directors

Don Kirchenberg  
Paul Mooring  
Nancy Wasielewski  
Don Kirchenberg

### Featured Presentations

#### **DuPage Forest Preserves and Related County Trail Improvements**

Roger Kotecki, DuPage County Board Member and  
Forest Preserve Commissioner

#### **2001 Illinois Prairie Path Slide Show**

Paul and Jean Mooring,  
Directors, The Illinois Prairie Path

### Refreshments

Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

## *The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter*

This newsletter is published by  
The Illinois Prairie Path Board of  
Directors.

**Editor:** Nancy Wasielewski  
**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*

# **New Campaign To Save the Special 8**

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County -- and development occurs around the country, open space, farmland and natural habitat are being swallowed up at an unprecedented rate. In Illinois, the need to protect open space is an especially crucial one. Illinois has been ranked 48th among the 50 states in the amount of open space per capita. Less than three percent of the land in Illinois is held in public ownership for resource protection and public recreation.

Unless we act now to provide for open space preservation, more valuable natural areas will be lost forever. The loss of open space also leads to the destruction of wildlife habitats. More than 2,000 species of fish and wildlife in the United States are listed as threatened or endangered.

"In addition to saving these 8.3 pristine acres, we need to prevent any new street crossing and protect the thousands of trail users on this very busy section of the IPP. We are asking all trail users and everyone interested in preserving the Special 8 to contact the following local and county officials," Kirchenberg said.

### **Write a Letter!**



Please send a letter to the following officials and ask them to **Save the Special 8** acres in Glen Ellyn and **prevent a new street crossing on the Illinois Prairie Path** at Whittier Ave:

- DuPage County Board, Chairman Robert Schillerstrom
- DuPage County Forest Preserve, President Dewey Pierotti Jr.
- DuPage County Division of Transportation, County Engineer Chuck Tokarski



- DuPage County Trail Coordinator Deborah Fagan  
*Send the DuPage letters to 421 N. County Farm Rd, Wheaton, IL 60187, General Office—630-682-7000*
- Village of Glen Ellyn, President Greg Matthews, 535 Duane St, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
- Glen Ellyn Park District, President Sandra Minogue, 185 Spring Ave, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
- **Contact your state legislators**  
Call 312-814-6440 to get their names and contact information.

Let us know what responses you receive so we can help coordinate the campaign effectively.

Send your ideas, comments and contact information (preferably e-mail addresses) so we may keep you advised of future events related to this parcel to:

- The IPP, PO Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189

*or*

- E-mail Don Kirchenberg, President, IPP at FrndsGrT WstnTrl@aol.com

# Remembering Joan Birnie Hamill

## Equestrian and Longtime IPP Board Member

By Jean Mooring  
IPP Board Member

Next to her family Joan Hamill loved horses best, and trails like the Illinois Prairie Path where she could ride horses. Her equestrian passion developed early as she was growing up in Chicago, where she learned to ride a pony in Lincoln Park. It continued through her school days at the Masters School at Dobbs Ferry, New York, and college years at Vassar and the University of Chicago. In 1937 she married Corwith Hamill who understood her fascination with horses.

When the Hamills moved to Wayne, Joan's interest in children, environmental causes and horses deepened. She volunteered as a member of the Wayne School Board, as a Girl Scout leader and as a director of the former Ridge Farm Preventorium, now the Chapin Hall for Children. She was also a founding member of the women's boards of the Field Museum and the Chicago Zoological Society



Summer 2000: Joan Hamill and Paul Mooring sit in the Hamills' back yard in Wayne after a Conservation Foundation tour of the property, which will be preserved from development under a conservation easement. Photo by Jean Mooring.

and a world traveler with her husband Corky to interesting nature preserves around the globe. She helped found the first units of the United States Pony Club in the Midwest and served as an instructor and coordinator at the Wayne DuPage Hunt Pony Club. She also served on the boards of the U. S.

Equestrian Team and the U. S. Pony Clubs. She liked training and caring for horses, and riding in competitions and long-distance events, as well as fox hunting in the United States, England, Ireland and France.

Although Joan was also one of the founders of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation and made sure that the trail was open to horses, she modestly did not want her name listed as a member of the first board of directors. It should have been. She was our longest serving treasurer, from 1968 until she resigned in 1991, when she was named honorary chairman of the board. She was renowned for her skill in generating grants and contributions to the fledgling corporation and then stretching those dollars to pay for trail building.

Joan, 84, died of Alzheimer's disease on July 22 at her home in Wayne. She is survived by her husband Corky, son Jonathan, daughters Nancy Hamill Winter, and Elizabeth Bramsen, seven grandchildren and

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At an IPP workday in April 1981, Joan brought her garden cart and shovel to the Path just west of Hill Avenue in unincorporated Glen Ellyn to spread limestone screenings while Paul Mooring raked. Photo by Jean Mooring.

# IPP Cook County Update

By Paul Aeschleman,  
IPP Board Member

## Cook County Cleanup

On April 28, volunteers from the Boys & Girls Club of Maywood/Bellwood/Hillside, Borg Warner, The Illinois Prairie Path and 15 students from Morton South High School in Cicero joined together to tackle the cleanup of the Bellwood and Maywood sections of the Illinois Prairie Path.

Once again, Borg Warner Corporation graciously supported the IPP cleanup with donuts, coffee, orange juice, bags and gloves. The 2001 cleanup was completed at three locations with one group from the Boys and Girls Clubs starting in Maywood at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue heading west; another group starting in Bellwood at Mannheim Road and heading east; and the Borg Warner, IPP, and Morton South volunteers tackling the middle section around 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The students worked in a section of the IPP that had never before been cleaned



**Bellwood Prairie: IPP and Borg Warner volunteers nearly doubled the size of the Bellwood Centennial Prairie on May 13.**

up and over the next two hours removed a small mountain of recyclables and litter. The cleanup removed several loads of trash and recyclables.

## Bellwood Prairie 2001

At the Bellwood Prairie on May 13, 15-20 volunteers from The Illinois Prairie Path and Borg Warner under the direction of Prairie Partners, The IPP's prairie consultant, nearly doubled the size of the Bellwood Centennial Prairie.

This is the second year that the Borg Warner Corporation has supported the Bellwood Centennial Project with staff, refreshments and financial contributions. The hard work of the volunteers, a couple of good prairie burns, several cleanups, and the selective use of herbicides to control a thistle problem have helped transform a previously litter strewn, thistle infested area into the IPP's newest demonstration prairie.

In 2002 we hope to continue the success of the past two years and once again double the size of the Centennial Prairie.

## Borg Warner's Executive Workday

In yet another demonstration of Borg

*(Continued on page 5)*



**Earth Day Cleanup: Borg Warner employees helped with the IPP Earth Day cleanup in Cook County on April 28.**



*August Work Day: Borg Warner's Executive Work Day on August 13 demonstrated its commitment to the Illinois Prairie Path and the Bellwood Centennial Prairie.*

*(Continued from page 4)*

Warner's Bellwood Facility commitment to the IPP and the Bellwood Centennial Prairie, numerous members of the Facilities Management team spent the evening of August 13 helping to restore sections of the Centennial Prairie. Within the first hour of the workday, this focused group of volunteers planted, watered, and mulched over 500 new prairie plants into areas where previous plantings had died. In fact the team was so efficient that they finished the project in about half the time that we had set aside for this project.

Once again, The IPP wishes to extend its sincerest thanks to the Borg Warner Corporation for ongoing support of The IPP, and our sincerest congratulations to Plant Manager Dan Paterra and his wife, who celebrated their anniversary on August 13.



*Cook County Cleanup: Morton High School students were among the Earth Day volunteers working on the Cook County sections of the Illinois Prairie Path. Volunteers included: Karen Friedman, Henry Dutan, Johnathan Vargas, Graecala Euf franco, Maria Barajas, Carlos Arevalo, Jose Spezzia, Viridiana Perez, Allison Baxter, Semiramis Rios, Bellwood Public Works staff.*

## *Remembering Joan Birnie Hamill*

*(Continued from page 3)*

one great-granddaughter. A beautiful memorial service was held at the Little Home Church on Army Trail Road in Wayne. As the church bells

tolled and the hundreds of mourners filed out after the service, they watched members of the Wayne DuPage Hunt in their red and black coats ride by followed by a symbolic

riderless horse with boots reversed in the stirrups. A tribute to a rare and courageous woman who always said what she thought and fought for what she believed in.

# News from League of Illinois Bicyclists



By Ed Barsotti, Executive Director-  
League of Illinois Bicyclists

## 10 Years of Bicycle Facility Funding – “TEA” for Trails

Have you noticed that it’s been a pretty good decade for trails and bicycling?

Since 1991, federal transportation money spent for bicycling has gone from essentially nothing to \$15-20 million each year in Illinois. Projects on the Illinois Prairie Path have included the Batavia Spur Kirk Road bridge and the eastward extension to Maywood. Grand Illinois Trail segments have been built, such as the Old Plank Road Trail, the Burnham Greenway, the I&M Canal Trail between Rockdale and Channahon, and this year’s 61-mile addition, the Hennepin Canal Trail. Illinois now has a full-time state bicycle coordinator (and an assistant). Bicycling planning has become a required part of long-range transportation plans in urban areas throughout the country.

These changes are the result of the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the first federal legislation to recognize bicycling and walking as forms of transportation. Trails and bicycle projects improving transportation have been emphasized over short recreational loops, as bicycling has been viewed as a part of a broad solution to air quality and congestion problems. The momentum of ISTEA’s policies and funding has trickled down to the counties and several towns served by the Illinois Prairie Path.

ISTEA revolutionized bicycling and other areas of transportation, including public involvement in decisions. These reforms were kept in the 1998 reauthorization of ISTEA, known as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). However, bicycle facility funding will once again be under attack during the next funding renewal in 2003. Road-building groups want to reclaim this small 1-2% of the total pie. A national coalition of bicycling and trail advocacy groups, including the League of Illinois Bicyclists, worked hard to maintain this funding in 1998 – and we’ll be at it again over the next two years. Stay tuned, we’ll be asking for your help!

## Butterfield Road Expansion to Impact Illinois Prairie Path, Other Trails

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is currently studying an expansion of Butterfield Road from Naperville Road to Route 59 to accommodate a doubling of traffic by 2020. Preliminary plans and local agency wish lists were discussed at a February 16 meeting. Impacts and opportunities for the Illinois Prairie Path and other trails were a major focus point.

Butterfield will be widened to four lanes, probably during 2004. A wide right-of-way (200’) allows a “rural” road cross section with an 18-30’ median to accommodate left-turn lanes and 10’ paved shoulders for traffic-tolerant bicyclists and pedestrians. Local agencies can request any new sidewalks or parallel trails. If they can prove a “transportation need” for these facilities, IDOT will pay 50% of the construction costs.

The League of Illinois Bicyclists is heading an effort to ask IDOT to

change their local cost-sharing policies for sidewalks (and parallel trails). Illinois towns pay much more for state highway sidewalks than their counterparts in other states, so many are not built.

The Illinois Prairie Path has requested that the trail remain open – or have a suitable bypass – during the construction. Specific IPP concerns were also mentioned. The Batavia Road crossing may be brought adjacent to Butterfield for increased safety. Improvements to the Winfield Road crossing will be examined, along with the Blackwell Trail’s crossing of Butterfield at the same intersection. The underpass at St. James Farm will be maintained. The DuPage Forest Preserve District asked IDOT for grading to facilitate their connection from that same underpass to Herrick Lake Forest Preserve. Push button (pedestrian-activated) lights were requested for each major intersection – possibly higher on the pole for equestrians.

Other trail opportunities were explored. A wider bridge over the DuPage River’s West Branch would accommodate sidewalks or trails parallel to Butterfield – and Warrenville residents going to Blackwell Forest Preserve. A longer bridge might enable a trail underpass for the West Branch trail system, if stormwater issues permit. Wheaton requested sidewalks on the north side from Cromwell to Wiesbrook. A potential trail on the south side from Orchard to Cromwell could then be connected to the Forest Preserve’s Danada Trail.

After further discussions, formal requests, and studies, the next step will be a public meeting to display the plans. This should take place later this year.

*The League of Illinois Bicyclists promotes bicycle access, education, and safety.  
The IPP is a generous supporter of LIB.  
Find out more about LIB at [www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org), under **Membership**.*



# DuPage County Trail News Highlights



*The following news items were provided by DuPage County.*

## **New State Funding to Build Regional Trails**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has announced 2002 grants under its Bicycle Path Program and a significant amount of money will come to DuPage County to support regional trails. A total of 22 grants were announced statewide with 7 grants awarded in DuPage. However, due to the expense of some of the larger projects, additional grants are being sought to fund construction.

- **Salt Creek Greenway Trail** Village of Addison (\$180,400), Addison Park District (124,200), Elmhurst Park District (\$200,000), and Village of Oak Brook (\$200,000)
- **North Central DuPage Regional Trail** Village of Bloomingdale (\$167,500) and Village of Roselle (\$200,000)
- **Illinois Prairie Path** Village of Lombard path lighting project (\$200,000)

## **Villa Park and County Working Together on New Trail Improvements**

The Village of Villa Park and the DuPage County Division of Transportation will be working on improvements to the Great Western Trail (GWT) and installing a connector path between the Illinois Prairie Path and the GWT along Myrtle Avenue. The improvements will include widening the trail to 10 feet and resurfacing it with crushed limestone screenings. The Village will also be installing path lighting along the GWT's entire length in Villa Park.

The second component of the project is to construct the connector path between the GWT and the Illinois Prairie Path.

At the present time, knowledgeable trail users proceed through a series of parking lots and side streets to access the eastern terminus of the GWT. However, for most people, it is difficult to find the GWT without traveling on Villa which is a busy street. This new connector path will provide a safe off-road link between these two regional trails.

The total cost for these improvements is \$389,339. Villa Park has been successful in securing federal and state grants to pay for the majority of the project cost and the County and Village will be sharing the required local matching funds. Design engineering will begin immediately and construction is expected to be completed by 2003.



## **New Logo for GWT**

As part of the Trail System Improvement Plan, the DuPage County Division of Transportation has adopted a new trail logo for the Great Western Trail to improve the trail's visibility. The logo originated with a citizen suggestion and is inspired by the former Great Western Railroad logo. The County feels this new logo will be beneficial to trail users in helping them to identify which part of the County system they are using (as distinct from

the Illinois Prairie Path which already has its own logo). It is also hoped that promoting the trail through creation of this new identity and other improvements will help encourage stewardship activities by communities and citizens along the Great Western Trail.

## **Proposed Southern DuPage County Trail**

Since 1996, the countywide bikeway plan for DuPage County has shown a conceptual trail across the southern portion of DuPage which would create a link between Aurora on the west side of the county and Hinsdale and Burr Ridge on the eastern side. Late this summer, the DuPage County Division of Transportation unveiled a feasibility study.

Some of the major features of the proposed trail include:

- Development of a 46-mile regional trail utilizing and linking to existing and proposed off-road trails and bikeways in several communities and the DuPage County Forest Preserve District.
- Contains a mixture of bikeway facility types including off-road paths (similar to the Illinois Prairie Path), on-street designated bicycle lanes, and on-street signed bicycle routes (provided through roadway shoulder improvements).
- Includes a Main Stem trail running from Aurora to Woodridge which then branches into 3 spurs in Woodridge including the Main Stem traveling a northern route, the Greene Valley Spur and the Waterfall Glen Spur.

The preliminary estimated total project cost for new construction to complete this trail is \$7.6 million. Funding sources have not yet been identified.



**The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter**  
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## Gift Ideas from The Illinois Prairie Path!

- |   |  |                 |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>New! IPP Shirt</b> features logo embroidered (green thread) above the left breast pocket of this 7.26 oz. 100% cotton long sleeve denim shirt in both natural (light khaki) and light blue colors. Shirt also features wood tone buttons and double needle stitching. Sizes available include S, M, L and XL. Total price of \$51 (\$45 per shirt plus \$6 shipping)</li></ul> | Quantity/Size<br>_____                   | Amount<br>_____ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>IPP Guide:</b> This 32-page guidebook contains information about the history, geology, trees, flowers, birds and animals of the Illinois Prairie Path. \$4.75 per copy includes shipping</li></ul>   | Quantity<br>_____                        | Amount<br>_____ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Gift Memberships:</b> Available in amounts ranging from \$10 for Individual members to \$1,000 for Society Lifetime Memberships. Please include names and addresses for gift memberships on a separate piece of paper. Members receive an IPP multicolor map and IPP newsletters.</li></ul>  | Quantity/<br>Membership<br>Type<br>_____ | Amount<br>_____ |

Make checks payable to: *The Illinois Prairie Path*

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Send order form and check to: The Illinois Prairie Path, PO Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189*