



The Illinois Prairie Path Spring 2001 NEWSLETTER

Join our Earth Day 2001 Cleanup

*By David Tate,
IPP President*

In observance of Earth Day 2001, The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation has scheduled its annual cleanup for Saturday, April 28. In Villa Park the cleanup will be on Saturday, April 21.

Our goal this year is to clean all 61 miles of the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) and all 12 miles of the Great Western Trail (GWT). Hopefully, we can duplicate the excellent cleanup that was done last year for Earth Day. Last year we documented that 568 people participated in the trail cleanup.

To be a participant in the Earth Day 2001 trail cleanup, you can either take a trash bag to one of the two trails and join in at anytime or contact one of the Earth Day coordinators listed on page 2.

In both DuPage County and Kane County full trash bags may be left at each road intersection along the IPP and the GWT and the bags will be picked up on Monday, April 30.

It is recommended that volunteer groups contact one of the coordinators. The coordinators may recommend to some groups that they clean specific sections of a trail.

Sign-up and Refreshment Tables

Villa Park, Glen Ellyn, and Wheaton will have Earth Day registration and refreshment tables set up on the Illinois Prairie Path from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, rain or



Cleanup volunteers did a great job last year in clearing debris from all 61 miles of the Illinois Prairie Path! Over 500 volunteers participated in April 2000. Your help is needed to make this year's cleanup a success. Photo by Nancy Wasielewski.

shine. Volunteer leaders at these registration and refreshment tables will coordinate trail cleanup sections and also provide free refreshments and trash bags. In addition, a multi-colored Illinois Prairie Path trail map will be provided to each cleanup volunteer. The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation funds these Earth Day registration and refreshment tables.

Wheaton: The Wheaton Environmental Improvement Commission will manage Wheaton's Earth Day cleanup of the Illinois Prairie Path on Saturday, April 28 between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table in Stevens Park at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and the IPP's Elgin Branch.

Glen Ellyn: The Glen Ellyn Environ-

mental Commission will manage Glen Ellyn's Earth Day cleanup of the Illinois Prairie Path on Saturday, April 28, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table at Prairie Path Park (across from the Glen Ellyn train station).

Villa Park: The Villa Park Pride Commission will manage Villa Park's Earth Day cleanup of the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail on Saturday, April 21, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table next to the Villa Park Historical Society Museum on Villa Avenue.

Two Areas of Concern

Currently there are two primary areas along the 61-mile IPP with serious lit-

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Earth Day 2001 Cleanup

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ter problems that need special attention:

1. Batavia Spur at Butterfield Road: To volunteer, please call Charles Johnson at (630) 852-2933.
2. Elgin Branch behind the Oliver Square Shopping Center (between North Avenue and Highway 59): To volunteer, please call David Tate at (630) 682-1449.

Cleanup Recommendations

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

The entire right-of-way of the two trails, which varies in width from about 20 feet to 100 feet, should be cleaned. In addition, small paths and walkways that feed into the main trails and also the trail parking lots should be cleaned.

In both DuPage County and Kane County full trash bags may be left at each road intersection along the IPP and the GWT and they will be picked up on Monday, April 30.

In Cook County trash bags should not be left along the IPP, but rather all trash bags should be disposed of by either placing them in or near one of the Illinois Prairie Path's trash receptacles or by taking the bags home and disposing of them with your own recyclables and trash.



IPP Coordinators For Earth Day Cleanup

*You can make a difference!
To volunteer for the
cleanup, call one of our
coordinators today!*

Illinois Prairie Path	IPP Coordinator	Phone Number
Maywood & Bellwood	Paul Aeschleman	(708) 848-6023
Hillside	Nancy Becker	(630) 654-1019
Berkeley	John Kacich	(708) 544-7524
Elmhurst	Eric Keeley	(630) 691-1413
Villa Park (April 21 st)	Nadia Gawron	(630) 941-8781
Lombard	Joelyn Kott	(630) 620-5718
Glen Ellyn	Tom Barriball	(630) 790-3171
Wheaton	Helen Bartlett	(630) 668-1759
Winfield	Erik Spande	(630) 871-6640
W. Chicago/Geneva Spur	Tom Yule	(630) 293-1726
W. Chicago/Elgin Branch	Birt Hurlbert	(630) 293-1062
Wayne	Gladys Johnston	(630) 584-2491
Elgin and South Elgin	Jeanne Bereza	(847) 742-1294
Warrenville	Bob Rawls	(630) 393-6720
Naperville	Mike Cross	(630) 416-1415
Aurora	Phil Landrum	(630) 653-4588
Batavia Spur (Butterfield Rd.)	Charles Johnson	(630) 852-2933
Batavia Spur	Ed Barsotti	(630) 820-8759
Unincorporated areas	David Tate	(630) 682-1449
General information	Dick Wilson	(847) 299-7882

Great Western Trail	GWT Coordinator	Phone Number
GWT – east of Schmale Rd.	Don Kirchenberg	(630) 682-9297
GWT – west of Schmale Rd.	David Tate	(630) 682-1449



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. Thanks for your help!



(National Trails Day 2000 photos – left): Jean and Paul Mooring enjoy some watermelon while manning The IPP booth at Blackwell Forest Preserve at last year's event. (Below) Ed Barsotti, Executive Director League of Illinois Bicyclists, and Jim Wear of The Conservation Foundation. Photo by Jean Mooring.



The other National Trails Day event will again take place at Blackwell Forest Preserve on Sunday, June 3, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. See page 6 for more details. The Illinois Prairie Path is a sponsor and will have a booth. Volunteers will be welcome to help at our booth.

Celebrate National Trails Day At Events On June 2-3

By Jean Mooring, IPP Board Member

This year's National Trails Day will be a weekend celebration with activities on June 2 and 3. The Illinois Prairie Path will be participating in two events. On Saturday, June 2, an information booth will be staffed by Prairie Path board members from 8 a.m. to 12 noon at Volunteer Park in Wheaton next to the Rails-to-Trails sculpture. Multi-color Illinois Prairie Path maps and Helen Turner's booklet, *The Illinois Prairie Path, A Guide*, will be for sale. Other free materials will also be available.

The IPP is expecting that the installation of our new Helen Turner memorial drinking fountain will be completed by National Trails Day. It replaces the original fountain that developed a severe and uncorrectable leak. The Illinois Prairie Path has already ordered the new fountain from Most Dependable Fountains,

Inc. of Arlington, Tennessee. The City of Wheaton Public Works Department has agreed to install it and maintain it, and The IPP will pay all costs of its installation. The new fountain will be handicapped accessible and will have a spigot for water bottles and a hose faucet with a lockable cover. We hope our users will be pleased.



At last year's event, equestrians from TROD (Trail Riders of DuPage) rode the Blackwell Forest Preserve trails. Photo by Jean Mooring.

REMEMBERING BILL NEMEC AND MEL HOFF

Two Great Friends of the Illinois Prairie Path

By Jean Mooring, IPP Board Member

William Stewart Nemec



William Stewart "Bill" Nemec, 80, formerly of Wayne, died on January 31, 2001, in Stoughton, Wisconsin after a long battle with Alzheimer's. Bill was the third president of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation, 1968 to 1972, following May Theilgaard Watts and August "Gus" Sindt, both of Naperville, and preceding Paul Mooring of Glen Ellyn.

Bill's exciting life of achievement began with childhood years in northern Wisconsin where he developed a love of the out-of-doors and sports including sailing, canoeing and hunting, followed by a move to Madison where he graduated from West High School. After graduating from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri he took up flying and went to work with United Air Lines as a DC-3 co-pilot and later as a captain piloting Boeing 747s between Chicago and Honolulu. He retired in 1980.

His love for nature and natural history attracted Bill to leadership roles in many organizations including The Illinois Prairie Path, the National Trails Council, The Morton Arboretum, the Cable (Wisconsin) Natural History Museum, and the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute of Northland College, Ashland, Wisconsin.

IPP board members Jean and Paul Mooring and Dick Wilson remember Bill Nemec as Mrs. Watts' right-hand man with a keen mind and ready smile that could conquer all obstacles. Bill took the lead in winning designation by the United States Department of the Interior of the Illinois Prairie Path as a National Recreation Trail in 1971, overcoming determined opposition by some members of the DuPage County Board. This was a major triumph for the corporation. Bill and his wife Betty went to Washington with Mrs. Watts, Helen Turner and Open Lands Project Director Gunnar Peterson to accept the award.

Betty Nemec, longtime historian for The Illinois Prairie Path, suggests that memorial contributions may be made to The Illinois Prairie Path, Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189; the Cable Natural History Museum, Cable, WI 54821; the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Northland College, 1411 Ellis Avenue, Ashland, WI 54806; or the Alzheimer's Association, 4709 Gold Road, Suite # 1015, Skokie, IL 60076.

Melvorn C. Hoff

Melvorn C. "Mel" Hoff, 79, of Warrenville, formerly of Naperville, passed away on January 23, 2001, at Central DuPage Hospital after suffering a heart attack while cross-country skiing at Herrick Lake Forest Preserve.



Mel Hoff was a chemist with a Ph.D. from Ohio State University and worked for Amoco Chemicals for 36 years, retiring in 1984. He was awarded twenty-five patents for chemical processes that he invented during his career. In 1982 he and his family moved to Warrenville and he started a second career as president of the newly formed West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group. Inspired by his grandfather and his father who shared their passion for wild places with him, he continued in that labor of love until his death.

As many friends of the Illinois Prairie Path know, the Geneva Spur of the Prairie Path forms much of the northern border of the West Chicago Prairie and we all consider this 300-acre prairie restoration one of the treasures of the DuPage County forest preserves as well as a principal justification for our Prairie Path name. However, it wasn't always the multi-colored tapestry of flowers and grasses waving in the wind that Prairie Path travelers can enjoy today. When Mel Hoff took over as chief steward, he recognized immediately that the prairie was a jewel in the rough and so he started the daunting task of restoration. He had vision, determination, and ability to inspire others (thousands of them over the years) to work

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Melvorn C. Hoff

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beside him and make that weedy prairie bloom again. He also had an inventive mind and dreamed up tools and gadgets that made the job easier. Anything that needed doing Mel was able to do and demonstrate to other volunteers. He cut and herbicided undesirable weeds and shrubs (buckthorn, gray dogwood, multiflora rose, burdock, box elder, to name a few). He mowed, pruned, gathered, stored and raked in seed, and burned. He also scheduled workdays, wrote the newsletter, and led field trips.

And Mel had the satisfaction of seeing all this work pay off in the most beautiful and biggest prairie restoration in DuPage County. His spirit will always be there and we think it should have his name too: the Melvorn Hoff Prairie.

Mel's wife Jean and their children suggest that contributions in his memory may be made to The Conservation Foundation, 10 S 404 Knoch Knoll Road, Naperville, IL 60565.

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!



IPP's Annual Bird Walk in Pratt's Wayne Woods

Pack your binoculars and a picnic lunch and join IPP members to look for spring arrivals at the annual IPP Bird Walk in Pratt's Wayne Woods on Saturday, May 12. Meet at 9 a.m. in the far back parking lot. From Rt. 59 go west on Army Trail Road to Powis Road in Wayne, then go north to the Forest Preserve entrance. The group will have a picnic after the walk. For more information, call Dick Wilson between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. at 847-299-7882.



DuPage County Ready for Phase One of Trail System Improvement Plan

(Editor's Note: The following information was provided by Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail System Coordinator. Watch for updates on the Trail System Improvement Plan in future issues of The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter.)

The newly formed DuPage County Environmental Committee recommended that the County move forward with the first phase of the Trail System Improvement Plan that studied the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) and the Great Western Trail (GWT) in DuPage County. Phase I includes 13 projects and activities that can be initiated immediately to improve the trail system. The cost of those projects is approximately \$541,000.

"These initial projects are small but important improvements that can immediately enhance the existing system and correct any deficiencies that we have identified," said Tom Bennington, Chairman of the Environmental Committee. "I think the trail users will be pleased to see that their concerns and suggestions have been considered and used to improve an already positive aspect of DuPage County."

The greatest number of comments regarding potential trail improvements

from all groups was a request for improved signage. These requests included signage for increased trail safety, trail usage and wayfinding. This demonstration project includes recommendations to install 12 new signs at selected cross streets along the IPP and the GWT highlighting the roadway name, directional information and trail use rules. The estimated cost for the project is \$6,000 with 4-6 months to implement. A mock-up of the signs can be viewed in the County Development and Environmental Concerns Department on the second floor of the County Administration Building in Wheaton.

Congratulations:

Congratulations to IPP board member Paul Aeschleman and his wife Tricia on the birth of their son, Matthew Feeley Aeschleman, born February 24, 2001, weighing 7.4 pounds. "Matthew is doing great and we are even getting a fair amount of sleep," Paul reports.

Correction:

A photo on page 5 in the Winter issue of *The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter* was inadvertently reversed by the printer. Eagle Scout Doug Tittman's father Dane appears to his right while his scoutmaster Frank Maritote is pictured on his left.



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

Celebrate
National Trails Day

Sunday, June 3, 2001

at

Blackwell Forest Preserve

*(on Butterfield Road, 1 mile east of Route 59
Warrenville, Illinois)*



Events Include:

Bike Rides: 50 miles starts at 8:00 A.M., 25 miles starts 9:00 A.M.,
and 10 miles (family fun ride) starts at 10:00 A.M.

Equestrian Ride: approximately 6 miles starts at 9:30 A.M.

****THE BIKE AND EQUESTRIAN RIDES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT
DESIGNATED TIMES****

Nature Walks: Various times - T.B.A.

Informational displays from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Raffle and Prizes at 12:30 P.M.



For further information, please refer to
www.elmhurstbicycling.org or call (630) 415-BIKE.

Thank You Sponsors! The Illinois Prairie Path, Wheaton Community Radio Amateurs, Wheaton Park District,
Waste Management, Cliff Bars, Hinckley Springs Water, Spokes Bicycle Shop & Midwest Cyclery