



# *The Illinois Prairie Path* **NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2003

## **Join our Earth Day Cleanup April 26th**

**T**he Illinois Prairie Path's annual Earth Day Trail Cleanup will be held on Saturday, April 26, starting at 9:00 a.m. in most communities.

There are over 61 miles of trail in DuPage, Kane and Cook Counties watched over by The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation.

We are asking for your help. Just roll up your sleeves (but wear work gloves) and pick up litter along the Prairie Path or the Great Western Trail. Bring

friends and family (garbage bags will be furnished by some municipalities) on Saturday, April 26.

To be a participant in the Earth Day 2003 Trail Cleanup, we invite you to join in at any time or contact one of the

coordinators on page 5 for specific cleanup needs or instructions.

The trails are cleaned year around by volunteers. Your help in keeping the  
*(Continued on page 5)*



## **Our 40th Anniversary**

***Read the letter from May Watts  
that started it all ...see page 5.***



## ***Controversial Tree Trimming and Removal Program Suspended in DuPage***

In response to complaints expressed by The Illinois Prairie Path Board, DuPage residents and other environmental groups, DuPage County Board Chairman Robert Schillerstrom announced the first week in March that the county has indefinitely suspended its controversial tree trimming program along the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail.

The IPP heard from numerous trail users concerned about the county's overly aggressive policy of unnecessarily removing vegetation along wide shoulders and removing the trail's woody canopy, according to IPP President Don Kirchenberg,

"The tree trimming suspension is a step in the right direction," commented Kirchenberg. "It was clearly a departure from past practice. Never have we seen this amount of destruction of the trails' natural character in the 36 years the Illinois Prairie Path has been open."



***See pages 2-3 for more photos and details...***

# Excessive Tree Trimming Causes Concern

## Open Letter to the DuPage County Board

(Sent prior to the county's suspension of tree trimming program.)

February 24, 2003



Dear DuPage County Board Members:

The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPC) is concerned about the new and excessive removal and trimming of trees and natural plants on the trails of DuPage County. The new and excessive tree and bush removals started Christmas week 2002. In early January, we asked for a meeting to discuss our concerns with Mr. Chuck Tokarski. He said no.

Since the new and excessive tree and bush removals have started we have seen old growth live trees removed over 15' away from the trails shoulders. In addition, many bushes that have provided a natural screen from neighboring homes, businesses and streets have been removed well in excess of the traditional 5- 6' shoulder.

The attached photos and comments from Jean Mooring (Board and Charter member of the IPPC) outline our many concerns. Note in our many conversations the past two months with DuPage officials (elected and staff) we have been told, "this is not a new policy." Long time IPPC Board members neighbors and users all along the trails will disagree. They have not seen this amount of destruction of the trail's natural character in the 36 years the Illinois Prairie Path has been open. Trail users and neighbors along the Great Western Trail share the same concerns along the few wooded sections of the trail.

We are asking you to look at the attached photos and comments. As we have been asking since early January, we would like the current effort to remove trees and bushes to stop. We would like the County to clarify the maintenance policy and directions to its work crews performing the removals. In conversations I (as recent as 2/19) and others have had with the DuPage DOT crews on the trails they do not have a work plan detailing type of plants and distance from the trails shoulders to remove them.

As we have done in the past, we believe that the County, established trail groups and neighbors to the trails can come to a workable agreement to the mutual benefit of all.

Sincerely,  
Don Kirchenberg,  
President, IPPC



### Don't Miss Annual IPP Bird Walk!

Pack your binoculars and a picnic lunch and join IPP members to look for spring arrivals at the annual IPP Bird Walk along the Elgin Branch in Pratt's Wayne Woods on Saturday, May 17! 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 Forest Preserve entrance. The group will have a picnic after the walk. For more information, call Dick Wilson between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. at 847-299-7882.



*Photo taken in January by Jean Mooring. Paul Mooring, IPP Treasurer, is shown along the Illinois Prairie Path in rural Glen Ellyn west of Hill Avenue with the 4-mile marker in the background (near Special 8 area). The DuPage County Division of Transportation crew has cut shrubs and small trees at least 18 feet from the edge of the trail and piled them by the path for chipping later. As yet untouched is the area shown in the middle of the photo. Path users and nearby residents, as well as birds and animals, prefer the vegetative screen which provides food and shelter for wildlife and privacy for people.*

## **DuPage County Suspends Tree Trimming & Removal**

**Memo from  
Robert J. Schillerstrom  
County Board Chairman  
Re: Maintenance of DuPage Trails**

March 3, 2003

In light of concerns that have been raised regarding the county's current maintenance program, I am suspending all trimming/cutting activities on both the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail until further notice.

I would like to refer this issue to the Environmental Committee for review, and would ask that the committee consult with both the DuPage Forest Preserve staff and Brook McDonald of the Conservation Foundation, as to how we may develop a more environmentally friendly maintenance policy.

The county has been, and will continue to be, good stewards of these trails. I believe we need to work to assure our constituents of our continued commitment to the protection of our trail system.



*Photo taken in December 2002 by Jean Mooring. The Illinois Prairie Path is shown north of Glen Oak Country Club and east of Hill Avenue. The DuPage County DOT crew has cut many small trees and shrubs almost to the edge of the right-of-way so that the chain link fence by the industrial area is visible. Note many clear cut stumps.*



THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH

# Rails-to-Trails

1963 - 40TH ANNIVERSARY - 2003



*It all started with this letter written in 1963...*

## IPP To Celebrate 40th Anniversary

Plans are underway to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Illinois Prairie Path in September 2003. It all began with this letter that May Theilgaard Watts, a Naperville naturalist, wrote to the **Chicago Tribune** on September 25, 1963.

The Illinois Prairie Path is the first major rails-to-trails project built in the United States. May Theilgaard Watts is credited with initiating the movement of transforming abandoned railroad rights-of-way into nature trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

The Illinois Prairie Path Board is currently working on plans for a special event to commemorate the anniversary— more details will be provided in upcoming newsletters.



### FUTURE FOOTPATH?

*Naperville, Sept. 25—We are human beings. We are able to walk upright on two feet. We need a footpath. Right now there is a chance for Chicago and its suburbs to have a footpath, a long one.*

*The right-of-way of the Aurora electric road lies waiting. If we have the courage and foresight, such as made possible the Long Trail in Vermont, and The Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia, and the network of public footpaths in Britain, then we can create from this strip a proud resource.*

*Look ahead some years into the future. Imagine yourself going for a walk on an autumn day. Choose some part of the famed Illinois footpath. Where the highway crosses it, you enter over a stile. The path lies ahead, curving around a hawthorn tree, then proceeding under the shade of a forest of sugar maple trees, dipping into a hollow with ferns, then skirting a thicket of wild plum, to straighten out for a long stretch of prairie, tall grass prairie, with big blue stem and blazing star and silphium and goldenrod.*

*You must go over a stile again, to cross a highway to another stile. This section is different. The grass is cut and garden flowers bloom in great beds. This part you may learn, is maintained by the Chicago Horticultural Society. Beyond the garden you enter a forest again, maintained by the Morton Arboretum. At its edge begins a long stretch of water with mud banks, maintained for water birds and waders, by the Chicago Ornithological Society. You notice an abundance of red-fruited shrubs. The birds have the Audubon Societies to thank for those. You rest on one of the stout benches provided by the Prairie Club, beside a thicket of wild crab apple trees planted by the Garden Club of Illinois.*

*Then you walk through prairie again. Four Boy Scouts pass. They are hiking the entire length of the trail. This fulfills a requirement for some merit badge. A troop of Scouts is planting acorns in a grove of cottonwood trees. Most of the time you find yourself in prairie or woodland of native Illinois plants. These stretches of the trail need little or no upkeep. You come to one stretch, a long stretch, where nothing at all has been done. But university students are identifying and listing plants. The University of Chicago ecology department is in charge of this strip. They are watching to see what time and nature will do.*

*You catch occasional glimpses of bicycles flying past, along one side. The bicycles entered thru a special stile admitting them to the bicycle strip. They cannot enter the path where you walk, but can ride far and fast without being endangered by cars, and without endangering those who walk.*

*That is all in the future, the possible future. Right now the right of way lies waiting, and many hands are itching for it. Many bulldozers are drooling.*

*May Theilgaard Watts*



# Join our Earth Day Cleanup April 26

(Continued from page 1)

trails clean is appreciated. Please remove all drink containers and snack wrappers you take with you on the trails. In unincorporated areas of 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 later by the county.

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

It is recommended that volunteer groups contact one of the coordinators listed in the next column on this page. The coordinators may recommend to some groups that they clean specific sections of a trail.

**Sign-up and Refreshment Tables**  
Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, and Villa Park will have Earth Day registration and refreshment tables set up on the Illinois Prairie Path from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, rain or 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 26, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table in Stevens Park at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and the IPP Elgin Branch.

**Glen Ellyn:** The Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission will manage Glen

Ellyn's Earth Day cleanup of the Illinois Prairie Path on Saturday, April 26, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table at Prairie Path Park (across the tracks from the 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 26, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon from a table next to the Villa Park Historical Society Museum on Villa Avenue.

## Earth Day Coordinators

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

<b>Cook County:</b>	Paul Aeschleman, 708-848-6023
<b>Hillside:</b>	Nancy Becker, 630-654-1019
<b>Elmhurst:</b>	Eric Keeley, 630-691-1413
<b>Villa Park:</b>	Hosana Korynecky, 630-530-0386
<b>Lombard:</b>	Joelyn Kott, 630-620-5718
<b>Glen Ellyn:</b>	Sue Bateman, 630-858-5228
<b>Naperville:</b>	Mike Cross, 630-416-1415
<b>Wayne:</b>	Gladys Johnston, 630-584-2491
<b>Wheaton:</b>	Helen Bartlett, 630-668-1759
<b>Batavia Spur:</b>	Ed Barsotti, 630-820-8759
<b>Geneva Spur/Winfield:</b>	Tom Pedrick, 630-988-9437
<b>Elgin Branch in S. Elgin:</b>	Jeanne Bereza, 847-742-1294
<b>Great Western Trail:</b>	Don Kirchenberg, 630-682-9297
<b>*Elgin Branch at Route 59:</b>	Birt Hirlbert, 630-293-1062

(\*This section will be cleaned 4/19)

**For additional locations or questions:**

**Email:** FrndsGrtWstnTrl@aol.com

**Call home office 630-682-9297, Don Kirchenberg, President, IPPc**



### Help keep IPP and Great Western clean!

Litter on the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail is picked up solely by volunteers throughout the year. Please pitch in to keep the trail clean! Thanks for your help!



### New Illinois Prairie Path maps coming in 2003!

A new Illinois Prairie Path trail map is in the final production stages. The new maps will be printed and mailed to all members later this year.





The Illinois Prairie Path

# 2002 ANNUAL MEETING

By Jean Mooring, IPP Board Member

**T**he thirty-seventh annual meeting of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation was held on Sunday, November 3, at 2:00 p.m. at The Abbey Leisure Center, 407 West St. Charles Road, Elmhurst. The Elmhurst Park District again generously donated the use of this well equipped building for our event.

President Don Kirchenberg welcomed the more than seventy trail fans, members and friends in attendance including candidates for election to the now independent DuPage County Forest Preserve Commission: Roger Kotecki, District 6 and Gwen Henry and Sandy Kaczmarek, District 4. He also introduced Tom Bennington, DuPage County Board incumbent, running for re-election in District 3.

President Kirchenberg gave a brief summary of the year's major Prairie Path events including the successful fight to save the "Special 8" natural area in rural Glen Ellyn and prevent the construction of a new road across the trail at that location, and the Boy Scout Eagle Project to build safety fences on a bridge across Winfield Creek in the Lincoln Marsh on the Elgin Branch north of Lincoln Avenue in Wheaton. Hundreds of volunteers also worked on the Spring prairie burns and the Earth



(Photo top left) The "Special 8" crisis drew political support from Kaaren Oldfield, candidate for the Illinois legislature (second right), standing with several IPP board members and neighbors. Photos by Jean Mooring.

Day cleanup on most sections of the Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail. Other projects included replacement of IPP logo signs and repair of various display cases. Don reported that DuPage County and Commonwealth Edison Company have decided not to proceed with their proposed vegetation management and tree-cutting program because of public opposition.

Next on the agenda was Treasurer Paul Mooring with the FY-2002 Treasurer's Report. (See page 8 for the report.)

Office Manager and Newsletter Editor Nancy Wasielewski gave the Membership Report. Most impressive fact: we have 1,948 members from 28 different states!



Paul Mooring installs IPP logo sign with arrow on relocated section of IPP at Prince Crossing Road.

## IPP: November 2001—October 2002



- 1,518 - # of membership checks received
- \$23.44 - average contribution
- 241 - # of new members

## Illinois Prairie Path Members

- Most are from Illinois - 1,873 members
- Outside of Illinois - 75 members are from 27 other states
- Membership Total - 1,948



## Suburbs/Cities with Most IPP Members



- Wheaton: 283
- Glen Ellyn: 137
- Lombard: 121
- Naperville: 121
- Elmhurst: 105
- Chicago: 79
- Villa Park: 62
- Winfield: 61

## Most Popular Membership Categories

- Individual/Family Members**  
(\$10/\$15/\$20) – 1,056
- Contributing Members**  
(\$25) – 331
- Sustaining Members**  
(\$50) – 158
- Lifetime/Society Members**  
(\$500+ one time) – 46



Next the Nominating Committee presented a slate of five persons as candidates for board membership to serve for three years. Four were incumbents who had agreed to run again: Paul Aeschleman, Oak Park; Bob Bernero, Glen Ellyn; Paul Mooring, Glen Ellyn; and Nancy Wasielewski, Glenview. The fifth candidate was Paul Didzerekis, outgoing DuPage County Board member from Wheaton and a long time Prairie Path fan whose home and law office are near the Path. No other candidates were nominated from the floor and the slate was elected by acclamation.

Forest Preserve Commission candidate Gwen Henry gave a brief summary of the status of the "Special 8" property, which is in the process of condemnation by the Forest Preserve District. The district can get a restraining order on the developer if needed, she said. Citizens should call the forest preserve district if they see any damage occurring.

County Board member and chairman of the Environmental Committee Tom

Bennington spoke about the DuPage County Trail System for recreation and non-motorized travel. Its core is the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail but other trails north, south, east and west are now being planned and developed to make an interconnected trail system accessible to persons in all sections of the county. Cooperating agencies include DuPage County, the forest preserve district, most municipalities and many park districts. Deborah Fagan, DuPage County Trail Coordinator, brought a colorful map that showed the various trails existing and under development.

The principal speaker of the day was Ed Barsotti, executive director of the League of Illinois Bicyclists. In his introductory remarks he explained that he is a lifelong bicyclist so he really likes his job of promoting bicycling throughout the State of Illinois. He mentioned funding programs available under the federal Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA-21), which we expect will be reauthorized in the 2003 Congressional session, and the state CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air



**Ed Barsotti (shown at National Trails Day IPP Booth last June) was the principal speaker at The IPP 2002 Annual Meeting.**

Quality) programs. Citizens can promote biking improvements by contacting elected officials at all levels with requests and suggestions and thanking them for their help. For action alerts on the web, contact [www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org). Ed mentioned important Illinois issues, such as the failure of the Department of Transportation to plan and build bicycle-friendly roads. He stated that the completion of the Grand Illinois Trail is being slowed by the negative impact of the Illinois Supreme Court decision in the Boub versus Wayne Township case. The court ruled that bicyclists are not intended users of roads and thus do not deserve liability protection. Illinois is the only state in the Union with such a regressive law.

Locally many trails are in the planning  
(Continued on page 8)

**Don  
Kirchenberg  
hauls brush  
during a  
work day at  
Wiesbrook  
Road,  
Aurora  
Branch in  
October.  
Photo by  
Jean  
Mooring**





# 2002 IPP Annual Meeting Report



**Tanner Page, Eagle Scout candidate, operates a power auger to dig post holes for fence at bridge over Winfield Creek, IPP Elgin Branch in September 2002.**

*(Continued from page 7)*

stages such as the North Aurora Trail and the DuPage/ Kane County Connector Trail, which will utilize a Com Ed easement north of I-88 running west from the IPP Batavia Spur across the Fox River. The planned Eola Road interchange will seriously impact the IPP Batavia Spur and thus needs to be monitored by concerned citizens.

In response to a question by Don Kirchenberg about the recent widening of North Avenue (Rte. 64) to nine lanes and the elimination of signalized crosswalks for pedestrians and bicyclists, Ed stated that the League of Illinois Bicyclists tries to alert the public to transportation projects so citizens can make their requests known and have their needs considered. He added that increasing traffic causes islands of congestion. It is unfair for the state to require municipalities to pay 50% for sidewalks along highways and for lighted crosswalks. Most other states require locals to pay 20%, 10% or nothing. Medians should be provided so pedestrians and bicyclists can safely cross busy highways. IDOT should change its cost-sharing program to help municipalities. Also citizens should help by reviewing plans and helping spot adverse conditions before they are set in concrete.

*(Continued on page 9)*

## The Illinois Prairie Path Treasurer's Report Fiscal Year 2002

### Cash Balance, November 1, 2001

Bank One	\$27,367.83
Liberty Funds Services, Inc.	\$103,649.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$131,016.93</b>

### Revenue

Donations, Grants, Bequests	\$9,467.19
Dues	\$35,535.22
Sales (Maps, Shirts, Patches, Guides, etc.)	\$2,385.70
Interest	\$1,352.24
Miscellaneous	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$48,740.35</b>

### Expenditures

Office Manager (Contractual Stipend)	\$9,085.00
Newsletters (Producing and Mailing)	\$7,183.13
Membership/Flyers	\$273.58
Maintenance Supplies.	\$707.35
Litter removal and Port-o-let	\$5,619.23
Postage	\$707.00
Office Supplies	\$0.00
Telephone	\$493.67
Special Projects	\$12,405.50
Special Events	\$389.57
Prairie Restoration	\$5,013.00
Other Printing	\$2,987.23
Merchandise For Sale	\$663.58
Donations	\$3,250.00
Travel/ Board Expenses	\$99.58
Legal and Consulting	\$0.00
Petty Cash Fund	\$2,000.00
Dues and Subscriptions	\$155.40
Government Fees	\$25.00
Miscellaneous	\$158.43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$51,216.25</b>

### Cash Balance, October 31, 2002

Bank One	\$23,648.22
Liberty Funds Services, Inc.	\$104,892.98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$128,541.20</b>



# DuPage County — Creating A Regional Trail Network

**Editor's Note:** The following speech was given by Tom Bennington, DuPage County Board Member, at the Illinois Prairie Path Annual Meeting. Because it includes important details that we feel IPP members who missed the annual meeting would want to know, we are re-printing the informative speech.

## Speech By Tom Bennington

In late 2000, DuPage County Board Chairman, Bob Schillerstrom, created several new committees to bring renewed emphasis to issues which he felt were important for the County Board to address. I assumed the Chairmanship of one of these new committees—the Environmental Committee.

Among other things, the Environmental Committee began working to implement the countywide bikeway plan. There are over 90 organizations including municipalities, park districts and county agencies planning bikeways in DuPage. However, until the Environmental Committee was formed, the County had done little in the last decade to provide leadership on regional trail issues.

Working with our communities, the Committee is implementing its vision for the future of the County's trail network. This vision is to create a regional trail system that will link all of our communities together with each other and major bicycle destinations such as Forest Preserves and community parks. You can think of the regional trail network as a County Highway System for non-motorized travel. In other words, for bicyclists, walkers,

joggers, equestrians and a variety of other trail users. The county currently has 282 miles of bikeways. Future plans would more than double that mileage.

Our network is simple—its backbone is the *Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail*. This existing trail system across the center of the County provides the starting point from which the entire network is formed. We are very fortunate in this County to have dedicated volunteers such as Paul and Jean Mooring, and others in this room, that have worked for many years constructing amenities such as display cases, benches, and water fountains, and restoring prairie areas along the trail. Most people who use the trail don't know what a debt of gratitude we owe to you, our dedicated volunteers, who have contributed so much to our enjoyment of the path. On behalf of the County Board, I thank you for all you have done to improve the trail system and for your support of our efforts to make further improvements in the future.

The regional network we are creating includes three north-south spines, if you will. On the east, the *Salt Creek Greenway Trail*. About 12 organizations, led by the DuPage County Forest



Preserve District, have been working for approximately 9 years on the detailed planning and engineering to develop this trail. The 35-mile trail will start in Cook County at Busse Woods, travel through eastern DuPage, and re-enter western Cook County linking to Brookfield Zoo and the Chicago Portage site. Construction should start on this trail in 2003 and construction of the Wood Dale component of the trail is already underway including a bridge across Irving Park Road.

On the west we have the *West Branch DuPage River Trail* which is being implemented by various entities including the City of Naperville and the Forest Preserve District. While all links are not completely defined at this time, the trail will eventually connect Bartlett and the new Tri-County State Park with Naperville and will continue southward into Will County.

## IPP 2002 Annual Meeting

(Continued from page 8)

Last on the agenda was the ever-popular Mooring slide show written by Paul and filmed and narrated by Jean. The show illustrated major Path projects and events that occurred during the year plus several gaffes that kept the crowd laughing. The meeting concluded with the usual delicious cider, cookies and cakes provided by the board members and their spouses. Everyone agreed that it had been a good year for the IPP.

In the center of the County, the Environmental Committee will be working over the next year to define a trail route that parallels the *East Branch of the DuPage River*. A \$75,000 federal grant has been awarded to us to develop this route and we hope to initiate work on that project before year's end.

(Continued on page 10)

# DuPage County Trail News



## ***DuPage County Offers Updated Bikeway Map***

An updated DuPage County Regional Bikeway Plan Map is now available. To request a copy of the map, contact the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission at 630-682-7230 or the DuPage County Division of Transportation at 630-682-7318. The map is also available online at the county website at: [www.dupageco.org/dec/bikeways](http://www.dupageco.org/dec/bikeways).

The map, prepared at the request of area bicyclists and the DuPage County Division of Transportation, is an update of the map which accompanied the countywide bikeway plan adopted in 1996. The first side of the map shows existing and proposed bikeway facilities based on information collected from DuPage municipalities, park districts, the Forest Preserve District and others. The second side identifies facilities such as trails, routes and roads that users may ride on today (roads

suitable for bicycling and existing bikeway facilities). This information is based on a Summer 2002 update by the DuPage County Regional Planning Commission.

This map is intended for use by bicyclists and citizens, and identifies some local destinations that bicyclists may want or need to access such as train stations, schools and colleges, and major shopping centers.

## ***Villa Park and County Cooperate on Trail Improvements***

The Village of Villa Park and DuPage County held a Groundbreaking Ceremony in February for the Great Western Trail Improvement Project and Illinois Prairie Path Eastern Connector in Villa Park. The project is expected to be completed this June.

This project is a cooperative effort between DuPage County and the Village of Villa Park to make improvements to the Great Western Trail by widening and resurfacing the trail and installing lighting along the entire length from Villa Avenue to Addison Road. This will be the first lighting to be installed on the Great Western Trail.

A second part of this project is to construct a connector path between the Great Western Trail eastern terminus and the Illinois Prairie Path. This new connector path will provide a safe off-road link between these two regional trails.

The Village has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and a federal grant from the Surface Transportation Project to pay for the majority of the \$433,284 cost for these improvements. The County and Villa Park are cost sharing on the local match required to receive these grants.

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## DuPage County — Creating A Regional Trail Network

*(Continued from page 9)*

While the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western serve the central part of the County very well, there is a need for additional east-west links in areas not served by these trails. An intergovernmental group headed by Representative Carole Pankau is in the process of implementing a regional trail to serve the **North Central** portion of DuPage. Under construction right now is a bridge across Lake Street which is being funded by the State of Illinois, and the Villages of Roselle and Bloomingdale. The County is working with the Forest Preserve District to build two additional bridges over County roads in-

cluding one at Meacham Grove crossing Roselle Road (the engineering is underway on this bridge) and a future bridge across County Farm Road. County Board Member, Roger Jenisch, is one of our primary liaisons to this group.

Last, but not least, is the Southern part of the County (my personal favorite since I live in Downers Grove). The County is currently working on the engineering to develop the 46-mile **Southern DuPage County Regional Trail** that will connect Aurora and Naperville on the west with Hinsdale and Burr Ridge on the east. Construction

on key segments of this trail is already underway by municipalities and the Forest Preserve. The County should start construction on its portion of this trail next year.

In addition to creating this regional network in DuPage, as I am DuPage County's representative to the Illinois Prairie Trail Authority, we are also working to make sure the regional trails we create provide connections to surrounding Counties and their regional trails. This system will do that on all sides of the County providing connections to Cook, Will and Kane.

# Remembering Friends of the Illinois Prairie Path

## JOAN HAMILL MEMORIAL BENCH

"It's a wonderful memorial for Joan," said Corky Hamill after trying out the new bench on the north side of Army Trail Road in Wayne.

The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors purchased the black, six-foot-long powder coated steel bench from NuToys Leisure Products, La Grange, Illinois. John Wilkinson of Glen Ellyn installed it on June 13 on a previously poured (May 9) concrete base. Total cost of the project was \$1,825 (\$1,058 - bench plus plaque; \$92 - shipping; \$450 - concrete pad; \$225 - installation).

The bronze plaque reads, "In Memory of Joan Birnie Hamill, Equestrian and Illinois Prairie Path Treasurer, 1968-1993." The plaque is embellished with a horse's head in relief symbolizing Joan's lifelong passion for horses.



Jean and Paul Mooring report that the bench is proving very popular with Path users. "There is almost always someone sitting on it," says Jean. "Joan would be smiling."

## STEPHEN LARSEN MEMORIAL

Friends and family of Stephen Larsen have established a memorial fund with the IPPC to remember this long-time Illinois Prairie Path enthusiast and 20-year Wheaton resident who died in November 2002 as a result of a brain tumor. He was 57 years old. He was survived by his wife, Andrea, and their four children and three grandchildren.

"Stephen loved the outdoors and the Illinois Prairie Path was his favorite local place for running, hiking and enjoying nature," commented Andrea Larsen. "Our home in the Arrowhead subdivision is just 200 yards from the path. Enjoying the Prairie Path was a big part of his life and it was his wish that memorial donations go to the IPP."

Options for the type of tree memorial and its location are currently being considered. Planting is expected in the coming months.



*Stephen Larsen, 1945-2002*

## The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

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

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**Address correspondence to:** The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60189

**Phone:** 630-752-0120

**Web Site:** [www.ipp.org](http://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 except August and November at Rathje Park, 616 Delles Avenue, Wheaton. Members are always welcome to attend!

## The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors 2003

*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  
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**The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter**  
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## ***Illinois Prairie Path Store***

- **Earth Day Special! Free shipping on in-stock shirts!**

**Show your support for the IPP by wearing one of our shirts.**

IPP shirts feature 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. Men's standard sizes available including S, M, L, XL and XXL. Promotion limited to available quantities. Call 630-752-0120 for information or to check size availability in your color choice.

**Total price = \$45 (You save the \$6 shipping cost through May 15.)**

Quantity/Size      Amount

Indicate Color Choice:  
khaki or blue

- **IPP Guide:** This 32-page guidebook contains information about the history, geology, trees, flowers, birds and animals of the Illinois Prairie Path. **Cost: \$4.75 per copy includes shipping**

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*Make checks payable to: The Illinois Prairie Path*

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