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# The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

Summer / Fall 2011

## Stearns Road Bridge Corridor Nearly Complete

By Mike Sullivan, regional planning liaison, Kane/Kendall Council of Mayors

The new 4.6-mile Stearns Road Bridge Corridor, with bicycle and pedestrian components, has been touted as a Fox River bridge at the center of an environmental corridor. It extends from Randall Road in Kane County to Stearns Road in DuPage County, opens up a new transportation system to the Fox Valley region and is at the center of the Kane County trail system.

The area of trail improvement along the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) runs on the Elgin Branch from Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve, north, past Stearns Road, Illinois Route 25, and to Middle Street. Most noticeably,

the old Dunham Road Bridge became a new bike path bridge over the railroad, the Stearns Road crossing became an underpass, and the Route 25 crossing became an underpass with a new trail connection nearby. These underpasses



A bicyclist approaches the new Stearns Road underpass on the IPP Elgin Branch.

are works of art, the best along the Path, with a beautiful, patterned stone exterior, an engraved entryway, and decorative lighting.

The new multi-use trail, unofficially called the Stearns Road Trail, starts at the IPP Elgin Branch by Route 25. It picks up and parallels Stearns Road, crosses the Fox River and the Fox River Trail in South Elgin and ends three miles later at the Mid-County Trail at Randall Road, making this area a true hub for regional trail net-



Creation of lettering, "Illinois Rte 25," for the IPP Elgin Branch underpass. Letters appear backwards since you are looking at back side of sign.

works. Along this trail is another engineering marvel, a sturdy, mildly-arched bicycle and pedestrian bridge across the Fox River. It has wood-plank decking, metal railings painted green, and sits well below busy Stearns Road, making traffic noise much quieter

*Continued on page 14*



Beautiful multi-colored stone work with decorative lighting gives the new underpass a modern, comfortable feel.

### In This Issue

Earth Day Cleanup	2
New Web Site	4
New Board Member	4
Volunteer Park Upgrades	5
Bike to Work Day	6
New Board Member	7
Deborah Jan Fagan Retires	8
New DuPage Trail Coordinator	9
WestBranchDuPageRiverTrail	10
Prairie Restoration	10
Winfield Riverwalk Update	11
Chicago Magazine Award	13



# *The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter*

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

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**Meetings:** The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors meetings are held in Wheaton at 7:30 PM on the first Tuesday of each month except August and November. Members are always welcome to attend. Contact Bob Sobie at [president@ipp.org](mailto:president@ipp.org) or (630) 858-1730 for the location.

## *The Illinois Prairie Path 2011 Board of Directors*

Bob Sobie, President  
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Erik Spande, Vice President  
Winfield

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## **2011 Earth Day Cleanup**

### **Winfield**

*By Erik Spande, IPPc vice president*

The Winfield Earth Day Cleanup on the Illinois Prairie Path just keeps getting better and better. This year The IPPc partnered again with the Village of Winfield, the Winfield Environmental Concerns Commission, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, and Central DuPage Hospital (CDH). At the corner of Geneva and County Farm roads, a huge banner with the Winfield Earth Day Cleanup logo, supplied by CDH, welcomed our intrepid volunteers. Many from the community showed up to pitch in. Even a few young students came, in part, to fulfill their school's public service requirements. Under a canopy

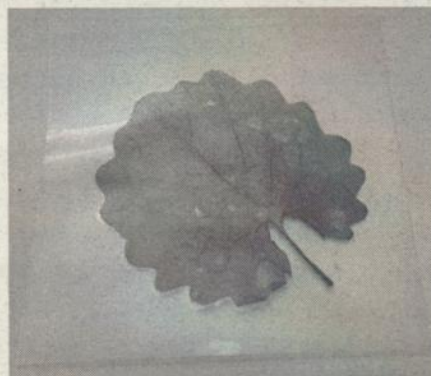
### **Glen Ellyn**



*The Village of Glen Ellyn posted signs like this announcing the cleanup.*



*IPPc Board Member Susan Terwedow (on right) looks on as volunteers sign up to work.*



*Bonnie Gahrns picked garlic mustard leaves and pressed them between wax paper in preparation for the Earth Day Cleanup in Glen Ellyn, where she handed them out to help people identify this invasive weed along the IPP and eradicate it.*



*From left to right: Bonnie Gahrns, IPPc Board Member Jean Mooring, IPPc Honorary Chair and Board Member Paul Mooring, and former IPPc President Ray Bartels man Earth Day Cleanup table in Glen Ellyn.*





*Winfield Earth Day Cleanup group photo*

staging area, CDH provided the volunteers with healthy snacks and drinks, garden gloves, and plastic bags.

Before heading out, Forest Preserve Ranger Christina Chianelli gave us a safety briefing. She also handed out safety equipment such as grabbers and brightly colored safety vests for those working near streets. We made sure those with smaller children got to stay on the trails that were away from traffic, while our adults tackled some of our more messy areas beside County Farm and Winfield roads. At about 9:20 AM, we

divided up into teams; picked up our new work gloves, tools, and a few snacks and were off.

Working diligently through the morning, we pulled out quite a haul from the forest preserve, from the Illinois Prairie Path, and from near public roads. One of the more unusual items a volunteer found was an antique computer-monitor combination unit, and one creative volunteer dragged in some construction material using the cord from a hair dryer. As with previous years, our volunteers segregated recyclable items from trash, and staged the garbage bags



*Families clean up Winfield.*



*A small part of the cleanup haul*

along the trail. Ranger Chianelli was kind enough to pick up both the trash and recyclable materials, which easily filled up the back of her pickup truck.

In the end, the Winfield Earth Day Cleanup was a rousing success. Our volunteers shared a beautiful spring day together, and we gave the IPP, forest preserve, and the Winfield area roads a good spring cleaning. All in all, the cleanup showed Winfield at its best.

## Thank you, volunteers!

### Wheaton



*Milton Township Republicans tidy up the Path in Wheaton.*

### Warrenville



*Above, Warrenville volunteers pose at gazebo.*

*On left, Warrenville's Mayor David Brummel gives us a helping hand.*



## Phase I of New Illinois Prairie Path Web Site Completed

*By Bob Sobie, IPPc president*

I never had the opportunity to ride the Chicago, Aurora, Elgin Railroad; I guess I'm too young. However, often when I'm riding my bicycle on the Prairie Path, I try to imagine what it was like when the "Roarin' Elgin" trains flew by. I try to imagine how the speed of train travel may have caused society in general to speed up. How does this compare to today? Was the change from horse-driven carriage to commuter train similar to the change from telephone to internet communication?

The Illinois Prairie Path web site, [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org), has served The IPPc well for many years. A debt of thanks goes out to volunteer Board Directors David Watts and Michael Cross, who most recently overhauled the site and then maintained it. However, like any technology these days, a year or two passes and what you have is outdated. When I was elected president of The IPPc, my highest priority was to update the site so it would bring a wealth of information about the IPP to trail users whether the user is a novice to the Path or an everyday user.

As my first order of business I began a search for a professional web designer. After interviewing a number of local web professionals, I called Matt Cira. When I introduced myself as The IPPc president, Matt's first words were, "I love the Prairie Path!" That did it for me—I knew I'd found the right person.

It took longer than I first thought to design and build a web site. Many hours of researching similar sites, of looking at design elements, of writing and photographing content, and of testing went into the new site. We also opened PayPal, Flickr, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.

Around the time of the web site rollout, NICOR temporarily closed the IPP Batavia Spur for pipeline repair and replacement. For the first time, we used Facebook and Twitter to get the word out to trail users and it worked marvelously. We are discovering that the more Facebook and Twitter followers we have, the more useful social media become in our ability to inform others.

At last our new web site has another component of what our members have been asking for: the ability to accept payments online to renew a membership, to give a gift membership, to make a donation, or to become a new member. A member-driven organization, our only income comes from memberships, donations, and merchandise sales. The money we collect is used to install new amenities, like benches and drinking fountains, to maintain existing amenities, like display case repair or trash pick-up service, and to perform trail maintenance and beautification along the Path.

Please visit [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org) and take a look at the site. We are not done

*Continued on page 13*

## New Board Member Mary Jo Malach

Late last year, Mary Jo Malach moved from Green Bay, Wisconsin to Naperville because she wanted to live closer to her daughter and grandson—to be with them, not only on holidays and birthdays, but on ordinary days.

New to this area, Mary Jo had to revise some legal documents and asked Itasca attorney John Pan-kau if he knew of any volunteer



*New IPPc Board Member  
Mary Jo Malach*

opportunities in programs that promoted wellness. He recommended that she contact someone from The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation. John and his family are IPPc members and enjoy biking on the trails. Mary Jo is so glad that she followed his recommendation and feels honored to serve on the board of directors.

In January, she attended and observed a board meeting. While members took turns asking ques-



tions, sharing ideas, making recommendations and seconding various motions, she felt their commitment, heard their concerns and listened to their wisdom. She quickly realized that most of The IPPc Board knows just about every inch of the Path—where it zigs and zags, where a display case needs repair, where a water fountain needs activation, and where an area needs a bench. The Path has inspired them, and decades of volunteer work on behalf of the IPP has enhanced their lives. At that first meeting, Mary Jo realized she was witnessing the same passion and inspiration that May Theilgaard Watts must have felt when she proposed a rails-to-trails public path in her letter to the editor of the Chicago Tribune in 1963. She would be so proud! Today, almost fifty years later, the Path is longer and has more bridges, amenities, and prairies than during its initial years.

Mary Jo says, “Volunteering to work on the Illinois Prairie Path will be a great way to learn about and explore Illinois trail systems.” Walking on trails fills her with energy, joy, and ideas; the rhythmic movement restores her inner balance and peace. As an author of *Walking Minnesota*, she learned that public trail systems, like the Illinois Prairie Path, provide an opportunity for all of us to improve our health and wellness, to learn more about nature, and to bike to work.

We welcome Mary Jo to the board.

*Right: New sign in the middle of Volunteer Park hill warning of stop ahead at trail and road crossing.*

## Volunteer Park Upgrades

*By Erik Spande, IPPc vice president*

The IPPc’s purpose has been education, beautification, improvement, and stewardship of the Illinois Prairie Path, a purpose we have followed through on since the 1960s. Our pride and joy is our trailhead at Volunteer Park in Wheaton, Illinois. This park sits at milepost zero, where the Elgin Branch, the Aurora Branch, and the Main Stem begin, and ramps up to an old steel railroad bridge, one of the Path’s signature features. The trailhead has IPP-sponsored amenities: a water fountain, a Port-O-Let, and a display case with free maps. A railroad-themed sculpture reminds users of the previous usage of the land, and a limestone IPP-themed wall sets off the trailhead from the street.

Volunteer Park has had some major upgrades in the last year. The County replaced the smaller Bridge Street bridge over the railroad as part of the renovation of the streets. During this work they upgraded the bridge abutments and piers, raised the bridge deck and grade, and slightly reconfigured the Path. They also paved the trail to improve the running and biking surface and to better handle erosion. These efforts were long-planned and much appreciated.

Because of this work, the higher



*Former Board Members Dick and Nancy Wilson planting a prairie at Volunteer Park.*



trail and smoother surface makes it easier for a bicycle to pick up speed coming into the trailhead and up to the crossroad, so brake early. The County also installed a new sign mid-hill to warn bicyclists to stop ahead.

Now it is The IPPc’s turn to do our part to upgrade the Volunteer Park trailhead. The construction severely disturbed the natural prairie at the park. Although some

*Continued on page 6*



# Biking to Work with DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin

*By Bob Sobie, IPPc president*

June 13, 2011, Bike to Work Day, was one of those wonderful weather days for a bike ride. You know the type: cool but not cold, the sun shining bright, hardly a wisp of wind. Perfect. In Elmhurst where the IPP crosses Spring Road, approximately eighteen bicyclists joined DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin to participate in a ride in harmony with the spirit of the day. The crowd posed for a few photos before wheeling their bicycles west on the IPP Main Stem. The starting group

included IPPc Officers Bob Sobie (president) and Rob Sperl (treasurer), as well as county workers, Cantigny Park staff, and bike club members from the Elmhurst Bicycle Club, the Naperville Bicycle Club, and perhaps other clubs. At various points along the ride, people peeled off while others, including IPPc Office Manager and Newsletter Editor Diana Lund and DuPage County Trails Coordinator Dan Thomas, joined the group. At mile marker zero in Wheaton, the bicyclists took the IPP Elgin Branch, and at Lincoln Marsh, they turned onto a side path. Then they proceeded over the Lori Most Memorial Bridge, onto the DuPage County Fairgrounds, and then to the chairman's office building.

During the bike ride, Chairman Cronin, more than happy to talk with anyone who rode up along

side him, graciously received a little friendly lobbying from yours truly about the importance of the bike trail system in DuPage County, especially the IPP.

Please join me in giving credit to Chairman Cronin for both initiating and leading this Bike to Work event through personal action. He chose the IPP for this effort, which showcases that this path system is not just for recreational use, but is also an important transportation corridor.

## Got a Question?



**Just call us at  
630-752-0120  
(Voice Mail)**



*Bike to Work Day participants surround DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin (in dark jacket in center) Bicycles are scattered throughout the area while they pose for photo.*

## Volunteer Park

*Continued from page 5*

prairie plants survived—big blue-stem, butterfly weed, wild petunia, golden Alexander, culvers root, fall aster, bee-balm, prairie dock, and compass plant, invasive plants moved in—reed canary grass, Canada goldenrod, bindweed, garlic mustard, burdock, thistles, Indian hemp, black locust, and buckthorn. So, we had our Prairie Plant Expert Larry Sheaffer draw up a landscape design, which we

*Continued on page 7*



## New Board Member Susan Degnan

Since 1960, Susan Degnan has been a DuPage County resident. She grew up in Carol Stream, where she also raised her family, and currently resides in unincorporated West Chicago. The Illinois Prairie Path stretches within a mile of her home, which is where Susan, an avid runner, spends a lot of time. She states, "Having the IPP so close by makes it easy to access and to navigate to a nearby town. I enjoy the beauty of the Path and its minimization of highway crossings." Most recently Susan took up biking and comments, "Riding my bike on the IPP frees me from the hustle and bustle of otherwise traveling on busy streets, and I also get to appreciate nature." She describes the Path as "my haven and sanctuary," a place that brings "peace and happiness." Susan has many friends who use the Path for the same reasons, and they meet on the IPP a few times a week.

For ten years, Susan has continually used and enjoyed the IPP. She was one of the original members of a local running club and filled the role of membership chairperson. As chair, she helped to coordinate club growth. Susan adds, "Certain mile markers of the IPP are usual meeting places for running clubs. Mile markers are also essential for keeping track of mileage run during training."

Currently, Susan is taking part in the Acorn Runners' Nike Marathon Training Program, affiliated



*New IPPc Board Member  
Susan Degnan*

with the Naperville Running Company store. They meet on Saturday mornings in Warrenville at mile marker five of the Aurora Branch, which is by the Warrenville library. She notes, "We are one of many clubs that meet weekly for training runs along particular sections of the 62-mile-long Path."

During the winter, Susan read in the IPP newsletter about the call for new board members. Giving back, along with her enjoyment and usage of the IPP, came to mind. She felt a need to lend a hand by using her experience to help increase membership and facilitate growth. She projects, "As I begin my new post as a board member of The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation, I hope that my contributions will help to create a new twist on expansion and preservation while we continue to solidify the scope of The IPPc's vision." She has already started in that direction by joining the IPP Membership Committee and by doing her part in a collective way to create a tri-fold IPP brochure. We welcome Susan to the board.

## Volunteer Park *Continued from page 6*

approved; and then he oversaw the project and eradicated the invasive species, had the City of Wheaton deliver top soil, and then replanted the prairie. The plants are in and thriving, helped by some favorable rains, some mulch, some root stimulation, and some TLC by IPPc volunteers.

Some of you may have noticed that the benches under the shade trees are gone. They were showing their age, and as part of the trailhead upgrade we decided to replace them. We have purchased three six-foot long black steel benches for Volunteer Park and are in the process of hiring a concrete contractor to pour cement to secure the legs of the benches in approximately the same place as the old benches.

So, Volunteer Park is now better than ever, and it is a fitting trailhead for one of the best trail systems in the United States.



*This is the basic look of the new Victor Stanley, Inc. benches for Volunteer Park.*



# Deborah Jan Fagan Retirement Party and Trees for Trails Fund-Raiser

By Bob Sobie, IPPc president

Every person and pet who has used the Illinois Prairie Path in the last two decades owes a big thank you to Deborah Jan Fagan. Deborah was the chief planner and county trail system coordinator for DuPage County. She is also a very good friend.

After serving the community for twenty three years, she decided that it was time to retire. What a great excuse to throw a party! So, on Sunday March 27, 2011, The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation gathered ap-

proximately 120 of our friends and IPPc members at Arrowhead Golf Course in Wheaton to say thanks to Deborah for all of the hard work she provided to make the DuPage County trail system one of the best in the country.

At the event people enjoyed music, food, drink, an auction, and great discussions. I personally enjoyed hearing favorite Prairie Path memories from many at-



Deborah Jan Fagan, wearing a fabulous hat, embraces founding IPPc Board Members Jean and Paul Mooring.



The IPPc Board of Directors surrounded guest Deborah Jan Fagan (in bottom row on left).

of Deborah Jan Fagan. This will buy one tree and one bush, for which the new DuPage County chief planner and county trail system coordinator will be in charge of coordinating the planting.

In retirement, Deborah is spending her time walking and riding her bike on the Path. She

*Continued on page 11*



Party planner Rose Fitzpatrick enjoying the live music played by organist Jim McCormick.

tendees. Former DuPage County Chairman Bob Schillerstrom addressed the gathered crowd with stories of his earliest recollections of working with Deborah.

Through donations, purchases of IPP merchandise, and the silent auction, we raised \$500 for the Trees for Trails Program that Deborah started with former IPPc President Ray Bartels. The Board of Directors of The IPPc matched that amount for a total donation to the program of \$1,000 in the name



The two DuPage County retirees, Bob Schillerstrom (county board chairman) and Deborah Jan Fagan (chief planner and county trail system coordinator).



# Meet the New DuPage County Chief Planner and Trail System Coordinator Daniel Thomas

*By Daniel Thomas, chief planner and county trail system coordinator*

I have just completed three months working for DuPage County as the new trails coordinator and planner. This position has allowed me to meet The IPPC Board and collaborate on some minor projects to improve the Illinois Prairie Path. My background includes roles as the bike and ride program manager for the Chicago Transit Authority, a transportation planner at Jacobs Engineer, and a volunteer in the U.S. Peace Corps in Honduras. I enjoy bicycling and look forward to sharing the trails with my children when they become more experienced riders.

I have some very large shoes to fill considering all that past County Trail System Coordinator Deborah Jan Fagan has done. I feel a great obligation to be the steward of the County's trail system, a system that Deborah, in large part, developed to supplement the spine of the network—the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail. She championed the creation of regional trails by forging relationships with government agencies and the public, brokering cooperative agreements and obtaining funding to develop, arguably, one

of the most extensive county trail networks in the country.

One of my first tasks has been to revise the County's trail information on the internet at [www.dupageco.org/bikeways](http://www.dupageco.org/bikeways). I have made the following changes: revised the list of current trail projects and added location maps, improved trail detour and maintenance information, and made Trail Quest, the on-line bike equivalent of a GPS unit, easier to find. If you wish to receive trail detour and maintenance alerts or provide feedback to me about the web pages, please send me an e-mail at [TrailPathCoordinator@dupageco.org](mailto:TrailPathCoordinator@dupageco.org).

On a consistent basis, there are a number of on-going trail projects from the DuPage County Regional Bikeway Plan's vision that the County is cooperating with the Forest Preserve District, park districts, and municipalities to complete. The development of new trails is time consuming; it can take numerous years to coordinate trail planning, engineering,

funding, and construction. Current projects impacting the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail include:

- Chase Street Underpass, IPP Main Stem, Wheaton. The Union Pacific Railroad is permanently closing the at-grade crossing and constructing a pedestrian-only underpass. The new underpass will be a foot and a half west of Chase Street and provide a safe pedestrian passageway.
- Grace Street Bridge, GWT, Lombard. The bidding for construction contracts for this new bridge over St.

*Continued on page 12*

Please pass this  
extra membership card  
on to a friend.



## The Illinois Prairie Path

P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton IL 60187

630-752-0120 [www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org)

Membership:

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☐ This is a gift membership from \_\_\_\_\_



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- |                                   |            |                                       |          |                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Society  | \$1,000.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron       | \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime | \$500.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining   | \$75.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family     | \$30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor    | \$250.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | \$50.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20.00 |

*All contributions are tax deductible*



## IPP Connections: The Southern Portion of the West Branch DuPage River Trail

*By Charlie Johnson, IPPc board member*

As part of a regional trail system, the Illinois Prairie Path provides access to a host of other trails in Kane, Will, Cook, and DuPage counties. In certain places the IPP, an east-to-west trail, merges with these other trails for a short distance before parting again. One such regional north-to-south trail, the West Branch DuPage River Trail (WBDRT), connects to, merges, then disconnects from the IPP in two places. The most southern intersection occurs as the WBDRT exits Blackwell Forest Preserve at the intersection of Winfield and Butterfield roads, merges with the IPP through the Warrenville Grove Forest Preserve for a short stint, and then veers off southwest to parallel the West Branch of the DuPage River.

After it crosses Warrenville Road, it travels through a section with high grasses, dips under I-88 (an easily flooded area), passes wetlands and some large ponds, then meanders through an interesting grove of densely-packed trees in McDowell Grove Forest Preserve (note that this section of the WBDRT is closed for con-

struction this fall). Beyond Ogden Avenue, the trail is currently undeveloped. However, it can be picked up again in downtown Naperville as it becomes a road route on such streets as Jefferson Ave. and Eagle Street. It then winds its way to Loomis Street and Villa Avenue, where the trail picks up again in Veteran's Park. It increasingly edges closer to Washington Street, until it crosses Washington at 75th Street and parallels 75th, through Springbrook Prairie. Until 2009, the trail ended at the Will County line at 87th Street. In 2010 the City of Naperville, the Naperville Park District, and the Will County Forest Preserve District completed new construction and extended the trail to intersect with the DuPage River Park Trail at Royce Road and Washington Street. This achievement marked a milestone toward meeting a local governmental goal of connecting existing trails. Now a trail user can travel from the Illinois Prairie Path to the West Branch DuPage River Trail to the DuPage River Park Trail, increasing the value of all of the trails in the process.



*IPPc President Bob Sobie and IPPc Member Sam Pyne (Jean Mooring's cousin) fix a broken IPP display case on a work day. This is one of many display cases that we have repaired this year.*

## ComEd Prairie Restoration Project at Whalon Lake Forest Preserve in Lisle and Naperville

*By Charlie Johnson, IPPc board member*

Last year Commonwealth Edison completed a large prairie restoration project along the IPP Geneva Spur at West Chicago Prairie and a smaller restoration along the Great Western Trail at Timber Ridge Forest Preserve. Both projects turned out beautifully, pleasing both nature lovers and electrical line maintainers. Yet, these two projects are by no means unique.

ComEd completed a very similar habitat-restoration project on a ComEd transmission-line right-of-way extending through Whalon Lake Forest Preserve in Naperville and continuing across the Will/DuPage county line past the northwest boundary of Greene Valley Forest Preserve in Lisle. Beneath both right-of-way segments are signs advertising prairie-habitat restoration projects involving the removal of non-native woody plants. If you liked the West Chicago or Timber Ridge prairie restoration, you should check out the Whalon Park restoration which is off the DuPage River Park Trail.



# WINFIELD RIVERWALK

*By Erik Spande, IPPc vice president*

For over a decade, the proposed Winfield Riverwalk has been on DuPage County's to-do list, and since 2007, the Village of Winfield and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County have been working toward making the Riverwalk a reality. The conceptual design was finished in 2009, and the drawings show a north-south extension of the trail system along the West Branch of the DuPage River from the IPP Geneva Spur to the Blackwell Forest Preserve. It identifies eight distinct sections of proposed pathways. This expanded trail system will link downtown Winfield to neighboring communities.

In August, the Riverwalk Committee accomplished a major milestone when the Winfield Village Board approved an engineering and architectural services contract for the section of the trail near the Winfield Town Center. This \$208,000 contract will provide for permitting and for engineering and architectural design related to path alignment, grades and features, as well as all the amenities in the park-like portion of the Riverwalk. This work is anticipated to take at least a year.

With the design in hand, the project will be more than just a good idea; and with the engineering plans in hand, the project will be able to proceed to the next

phase—raising money for construction.

The IPPc has been a long-term supporter of the Riverwalk Project, donating almost \$9,000 from a dues and membership drive in 2010 to assist in funding of this engineering effort. We will certainly continue to follow the events leading up to the completion of this new, connecting trail.

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## ***Fagan Retirement***

*Continued from page 8*

stops for a rest at one of the many volunteer and IPPc benches, takes pleasure in the changing character of the Path as she travels from one town or area to another and notices a variety of people who use the Path—from elderly walkers to whole families biking. She frequents her favorite IPP spots: the Elgin Branch at Brewster Creek and Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve, the Aurora Branch south of Bilter Road at Big Woods Forest Preserve, downtown Warrenville, the Geneva Spur east of Prince Crossing Road, and Wheaton's Lincoln Marsh. But most of all, she is truly enjoying her time on the Path without looking for any maintenance issues or trees growing under utility lines. Retirement is grand.



## **Save the Date**

### **THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH 47<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

Sunday, November 6 at 2 p.m.

Lombard Community Building  
433 E. St. Charles Road  
(SE corner of Grace &  
St. Charles Road)

For more information call Bob Sobie at (630) 858-1730 or send an e-mail to [president@ipp.org](mailto:president@ipp.org).



## New Trail Coordinator

Continued from page 9

Charles Road, the railroad, and Grace Street will be issued in September. Construction is anticipated in 2012.

- NICOR Detour, IPP Batavia Spur, Aurora. NICOR should be completing its work and reopen this trail segment in the fall. However, NICOR will likely close additional segments of the trail in the coming years to perform maintenance. Note that this section of the IPP right-of-way is owned by NICOR.

- Maintenance Task Force. The Maintenance Task Force will meet this fall to discuss ComEd and other maintenance issues. The task force did not meet in 2010 as many ComEd maintenance concerns have been relatively resolved.

I look forward to working with The IPPc to promote the trail, ensure maintenance

occurs, collaborate on improvement projects, and act as a liaison between the County and user groups. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me.



## Trees for Trails Donation Form

**Mail form and donation to:**  
**(payable to The Illinois Prairie Path)**

Trees for Trails  
c/o The Illinois Prairie Path  
P.O. Box 1573  
Wheaton IL 60187

630-752-0120  
[www.ipp.org](http://www.ipp.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Tree/Shrub preference (check one):

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maple       | <input type="checkbox"/> None         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hackberry   |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honeylocust | <input type="checkbox"/> Serviceberry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffeetree  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawthorn     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oak         | <input type="checkbox"/> Viburnum     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Linden      |                                       |

### Trail preference (check one):

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Illinois Prairie Path             | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Western Trail                   |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southern DuPage County Regional Trail |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other DuPage County Trail (specify):  |                               |

Community Location Preference \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ if any

Donation Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Any amount acceptable*

Full cost of one TREE: \$525  
one SHRUB: \$475





IPPc Board Member Susan Degnan accepts an award for "Best Suburban Run" from Richard Gamble, the Chicago magazine publisher and general manager, at a swanky downtown award ceremony.

## Chicago Magazine Honors the Illinois Prairie Path for Best Suburban Run

By Susan Degnan, IPPc board member

Chicago magazine's editors scoured the city and suburbs to compile this year's chart-topping collection of "who and what makes Chicago the best," which they dub as the "Best of Chicago." Their "best of" search spans many categories, such as the arts, new stores, and food, with each category further divided into subcategories. For example, the category of sports and recreation has subcategories of birding, cardio-boxing, new yoga, new workout, and suburban run. Each month's

edition of the magazine announces winners in select categories. In the August edition (which came out in July), it featured "Best of Chicago: 80 Great Finds," and the Illinois Prairie Path took the honor for "Best Suburban Run." The article cited the IPP's "soul-recharging natural scenery," its amenities, and its crushed-limestone surface as the factors contributing to the selection.



The Illinois Prairie Path got its own star for "Best Suburban Run" at the Chicago magazine award ceremony.

On July 28, *Chicago* magazine threw a party at a building on the Mag Mile to pay tribute to the recipients of the "Best of Chicago" awards. At the event, the floor was decorated with festive stars, one for each winner. For the ceremony, *Chicago* Magazine Publisher and General Manager Richard Gamble presented a plaque to each winner. IPPc Board Member Susan Degnan attended the affair and graciously accepted this prestigious nod for 2011. To read the article on the IPP, go to <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/August-2011/Best-of-Chicago-2011-Sports-and-Recreation>.

**Moving?  
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**New Web Site**

*Continued from page 4*

yet; in Phase II you will soon see a new design specifically made for hand-held devices, new and interesting articles, and a host of other changes that you will appreciate.

I have not yet decided if a fast moving society is a good thing or not. But I know that there is nothing I can do about it except to try to keep up. Enjoy the ride!



## ***Stearns Road Bridge Corridor***

*Continued from page 1*

than it seems possible. On the east river bank is a dedication to the people of the Stearns Road Bridge Corridor Project who made it happen.

Along with new pervious concrete drives and parking lots and permeable paths; Kane County installed benches, bike racks, and other facilities to make the area accessible to the public and to provide an opportunity to enjoy a part of the history of Kane County.

Another major project focus centered on providing open space opportunities along the corridor. Through extensive coordination with the Kane County Forest Preserve District and DuPage County, the team ensured that improvements were an enhancement to the area and did not impact or prohibit future plans. James "Pate" Philip State Park (formerly Tri-County State Park), Pratt's Wayne Woods



*Open space area along the Stearns Road Bridge Corridor*

Forest Preserve, and other open space acquisitions provide access to restored native wetland and prairie communities, as does a natural, undisturbed meandering section of Brewster Creek. In total, the County set aside 216 acres of new open space for environmental reasons.

This project delivered on all fronts: safe passage for trail users with underpasses to avoid busy road crossings; aesthetically pleasing structures; a trail connector between three established trails, environment-friendly, permeable materials; and preservation and

addition of open space. Sections of this project are still closed, such as the Stearns Road Trail at the railroad tracks and the new open land acquisition, walking trails, and parking lot off of Stearns Road (landscaping should be done this year). Also, there is still a portion of the Fox River Trail just south of the Elgin Branch of the IPP that is closed due to a bridge being out. However, the IPP Elgin Branch is entirely open again for everyone to enjoy!

For additional information, see the Stearns Road Bridge Corridor web site at [www.stearnsroad.com](http://www.stearnsroad.com) or contact Mike Sullivan at [sullivanmike@co.kane.il.us](mailto:sullivanmike@co.kane.il.us).



*New bike rack at the Stearns Road Bridge Corridor open area so bicyclists can stop to walk the trails.*



*Construction of the Fox River Bridge. Stearns Road is on top and the start of the bicycle and pedestrian bridge is underneath Stearns Road on right.*

**Our e-mail  
address has  
changed to**



**[president@ipp.org](mailto:president@ipp.org)**



# Illinois Prairie Path Store

Show Your Support For The Illinois Prairie Path! Enjoy the IPP in style with our long sleeve, polo or t-shirt styles, all with the distinctive IPP logo. Our denim and polo shirts feature an embroidered logo with green and white thread above the left breast area. For a current shirt inventory, go to [www.ipp.org/GUI/ipp\\_store.htm](http://www.ipp.org/GUI/ipp_store.htm).

**Shipping and handling for shirt orders is:**  
\$4 + \$1 for each shirt ordered.



This 100% cotton serene green T-shirt has a deeper green logo on front & IPP map & logo on back. Sizes S, M, L, XL, 2XL, and 3XL.  
**\$15 plus S&H.**

**SALE  
SALE  
SALE**



Illinois Prairie Path Color Map 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Only **\$6** - includes postage and shipping. (Note: new members are sent one free map when they join The IPPc)

- Full color illustrations and photos
- Large 18" x 24" size (folds to 3½" x 9") on tear- and water-resistant paper
- Includes suburb/ street detail of the 62-mile trail from Cook County west to Kane County
- Discover 26 points of interest along the IPP and 14 recommended bike routes
- Details train stations, prairies, parking lots, rest rooms and drinking fountains
- Learn more about The IPPc's management, its history and its founder May Watts. Published by The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation.



This 100% cotton polo (medium brown) features an embroidered IPPc logo (green and white thread) with three wood-tone buttons. Sizes S, M, L, XL, and 2XL. **Sale price: \$25 plus S&H.**



IPP Guidebook—by Helen Turner. This 32-page guidebook contains information about the history, geology, trees, flowers, birds and animals of the Illinois Prairie Path. Cost: **\$5** per copy includes shipping.

The IPPc Patch shows you care. 3 x 2½ in. The patch can be yours for **\$1.50** each. Includes shipping.



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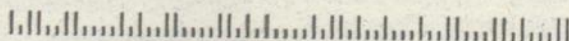
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## Prairie Path Trail Etiquette



### Regulations to Protect People, Animals and Power Lines:

- Cyclists and equestrians should give an audible warning when overtaking another user by calling out "passing on the left."
- Users should make an effort to stay to the right when traveling on the Path.
- Cyclists should not travel at excessive speeds.
- Care should be given when approaching horses to avoid "spooking" them.
- Cyclists (really all users) should stay on the surfaced portion of the path and not damage native vegetation and landscaped areas.
- Cyclists should wear helmets at all times.
- Pets must be leashed and you must clean up after them.
- No motorized vehicles, not even golf carts, are allowed (county law). Power-assisted wheelchairs *are* allowed.
- No firearms, kites, or remote controlled toys.
- No hunting.
- No alcoholic beverages or controlled substances.
- We provide trash containers at many intersections—please use them.
- Camping is not allowed on the Path. The Path is adjacent to several county forest preserves. For camping information call the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, 630-933-7200, or Kane County Forest Preserve District, 630-232-5980.