



The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

March 2014

North Central College acquires Illinois Prairie Path archives

For 23 years (1963-1986) **volunteers** were responsible for establishing, building, maintaining and expanding the 62-mile Illinois Prairie Path. Their work and their "paper trails" have possibly created one of the most well-documented rail-to-trail conversions in the United States. The original 14 founders and numerous legacy volunteers *knew* their work was *historic*, and many kept very detailed records, documents, letters, notes, journals, maps, drawings, artifacts and photos.

Over the years, the founders stored their archives in the attic at the Rathje Park Building in Wheaton. Legacy volunteers forwarded their items to Paul and Jean Mooring for safe-keeping. Last year, the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPC) archive project began.

Special THANKS to:

- **Brian Allen** (former IPPC board member) who submitted and secured a **community grant from Amica Mutual Insurance Company for \$800** to help pay for archival materials and photo restorations.
- **The DuKane Corporation** for restoring a projector the company donated in 1964 in order to view (and confirm that it was) the original film strip used by the founders and shown over 400 times from 1964-1966.
- **Dick and Florence Nogaj** for making it possible for the IPPC to lease their lower-level conference room in their non-profit office building .
- The **archive project** volunteers who sorted, filed and boxed the archives including **Paul Mooring, Dick and Nancy Wilson, Eugene Pomerance, Nancy Becker, Bill Kovacs, Sam Pyne, Mary Jo Malach, Olivia Lemberger, Evan Lemberger** and graduate students **Anne Keller** (Antioch University New England) and **Andrew Dribin** (University of Illinois).
- **Kim Butler**, Archivist, North Central College for her interest in acquiring the archives and for attending IPPC board meetings to explain and answer questions about archive donation policies and procedures.
- **Rita Hassert**, Morton Arboretum for providing information and support; **Carol Doty**, retired historian who developed the May Watts archives at the Morton Arboretum and current board chair of the Morrison-Shearer Foundation and **Corinne Pierog**, trail user and interim executive director of the Morrison-Shearer Foundation, for talking with board members about the importance of preserving archives.
- **IPPC board members** who voted unanimously to donate 50 years of IPPC archives to North Central College.
- **Paul Mooring** for donating thousands of Prairie Path slides (photos) that he and his wife Jean and other volunteers took over 50 years.

Over the next few months, the IPP archives are being catalogued and re-housed into archival folders and boxes at North Central College, Oesterle Library, Archives (on the lower level). As part of processing the IPP archives, an easy reference tool will be created to help those interested in the archives find the information they are looking for. More information about IPP topics and "archive gems" will be provided in the summer newsletter.



Legacy volunteers (L to R) sorting the archives are Eugene Pomerance, Nancy Wilson and Dick Wilson.



Kim Butler, NCC Archivist and Erik Spande, President of the IPPC board sign the Deed of Gift agreement on January 14, 2014.



Moving Day! NCC students (L to R) Julianna Stevenson, Edward Neibur and Matthew Havey along with Kim Butler get ready to move the boxes to NCC.



Annual Earth Day Trail Cleanup



The Illinois Prairie Path



Saturday, April 26th, 2014

9:00 AM – Rain or Shine



In observance of Earth Day 2014, The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit Corporation, has scheduled their **Annual Earth Day Trail Clean Up** for **Saturday, April 26th, Rain or Shine!**

Volunteers are needed! Our goal each year is to clean up as much of the 62 miles of the Illinois Prairie Path as possible. Hopefully, we will continue to duplicate the same effective and extraordinary clean up that is done each year for Earth Day. We would like you to help us by rolling up your sleeves (but wear work gloves), and pick up litter along the trail. Please dress according to weather conditions, and join us on Saturday, April 26th.

If you, your family, co-workers and club organizations are interested in helping out, please contact one of the team coordinators listed below for more details and locations. However, any area along the IPP is subject to trash removal.

Elgin Branch/Oliver Square -

Dick and Nancy Wilson 847-299-7882 or

Email: nancy60018@yahoo.com

Elmhurst - Bob Hoel 630-240-0219 or

Email: bob.hoel@comcast.net

Geneva (Fox River going East) - David Peterson

630-232-2153 or Email: [dw-peterson-](mailto:dw-peterson-pe@ieee.org)

[pe@ieee.org](mailto:dw-peterson-pe@ieee.org)

Glen Ellyn - Justin Keenan 630-547-5203 or

Email: jkeen@glenellyn.org

Lombard - Sam Pyne 630 469-0134 or Email:

ibsam@yahoo.com

Aurora Branch/Naperville - Ed Barsotti

630-978-0583 or Email: lib@bikelib.org

Maywood/Bellwood - Lennel Grace 708-244-1673
or Email: lennelgracejr@gmail.com

Villa Park - Theresa Bauer, VP Pride Commission
630-592-6052 Email: tchan.bauer@gmail.com

Warrenville - Jennifer McMahan 630-514-3040 or
Email: McMahan2635@comcast.net

West Chicago/Geneva Spur - Scott Hensey
630-231-8261 or Email: scott.hensey@gmail.com

Wheaton - Tracy Vought 630-260-2870 or
Email: tgasiel_vought@yahoo.com

Winfield - Erik Spande 630-871-6640 or
Email : erik.spande@comcast.net

For additional information:

Susan Degnan: Suelite97@yahoo.com 630-940-4255

**** The path is cleaned year around by volunteers. Your help in keeping the path clean is appreciated. Please remove all drink containers and snack wrappers you take with you on the path. For more information or to become a member of the Illinois Prairie Path, please visit www.ipp.org and “Like” us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisPrairiePath>. Thank you. ****

IPP website...new and improved

We are in the process of updating and modernizing the IPP website. This process is taking several steps. The first step was to convert the content to a management system that will allow updates and changes to be made quickly and easily. The content has now been converted to WordPress. Past events have been removed from the website, and a large banner has been added to the home page publicizing the upcoming spring trail clean up.



Following shortly will be several new additions. These include links to new videos done by the College of DuPage for the Illinois Prairie Path, and an interactive map that will show the IPP and connecting paths. This map will also show nearby parking and other points of interest. By viewing the map on your smart phones, path users will be able to expand their horizons of what's available as you bike or run along the path.

Take a look at the website at the same address: www.ipp.org. As this new material gets added, the website will be a better place to keep up with new activities on the path.

Spring and Summer Trail Updates

From Dan Thomas, DuPage County Principle Planner/Trail Coordinator

Questions? Contact Dan at daniel.thomas@dupageco.org

- **The 2014 DuPage County Bike Map** should be out in time for the summer. A Salt Creek Trail Map will also be available.
- **Potholes** – Crews will begin filling potholes in the month ahead. Use caution when using the paths.
- **Adopt-A-Trail program** will be promoted this spring. Any interested groups should contact Dan Thomas.
- **Re-aligning the IPP crossing of the CN railroad in Elmhurst** – This project is scheduled for summer. The engineers have completed the design and it goes out to bid this month.
- **Gary Avenue Trail (Great Western Trail to Army Trail Road)** – This is a bikeway project located in Carol Stream and Bloomingdale. The County is currently working with the ICC and the railroads to review a pedestrian crossing and pedestrian gate placement component.
- **31st Street Trail (From Highland to Meyers Road)** – This is a bikeway project located in Downers Grove and Oak Brook. A revised Project Development Report is ready to be submitted to IDOT and Phase II engineering will begin over the summer. However, construction on the project has been delayed until 2015.
- **Illinois Prairie Path @ EJ&E Railroad** – This trail project is located in Aurora. This project involves building an underpass crossing at the railroad tracks where no crossing currently exists. Currently the trail diverts north to Diehl Road where a proper crossing is located and then backtracks south. Trail users have been avoiding the diversion and crossing the tracks unsafely, sometimes going underneath parked trains. Structure design and utility relocations have made this project difficult. IDOT has reviewed the project development report and has asked for an amended agreement between the County and ComEd for right-of-way.
- **Woodridge Trail Segment of the East Branch DuPage River Trail** – This project is located in Lisle and will connect the East Branch DuPage River Trail with other trail segments to the south. This project is currently on hold due to right-of-way complications.
- **Pedestrian Countdown Signals** – This project will install countdown signals at 25 trail crossings throughout the County. The project kickoff meeting has occurred so the project is officially moving forward. We are working with IDOT to determine the exact engineering needs for their installation.
- **Great Western Trail Extension** – The County is working on a feasibility study to explore safety improvements at the County Farm Road Intersection in West Chicago. They will also look at extending the trail from its terminus west of Prince Crossing Road to Sassafras Avenue.



Members share memories at the Annual Board Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPC) was held on Sunday, November 3 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Memorial Leisure Center in Wheaton. Approximately 50 people attended.

President Erik Spande facilitated the business portion of the meeting that included the 2013 President's Report (Erik Spande) and both Treasurer's Report and Membership Report (Rob Sperl).

Members who were present approved the nomination of the following Directors to serve additional terms that will expire in 2015: Erik Spande, Don Beacom, Mary Jo Malach, Rob Sperl and Erik Andersen.

President Spande thanked two retiring board members **Nancy Becker and Bob Sobie**.



IPPC Director Susan Degnan (L) presented flowers to Doris Blickle who has been a member for 46 years.



Thanks to Nancy Becker for being a member and serving on the board of directors for 30 years. Nancy served as Secretary of the board for many years.



Thanks to Bob Sobie for being a member for 6 years and serving on the board of directors as President for 3 years.



Legacy Volunteer Bernie Hurley (L) has been a member for 44 years and Paul Mooring (R) has been a member for 43 years, and served as President of the board for 22 years.

Two videos created during the 50th Anniversary Year Celebrations were presented: a one minute public service announcement and a 7-minute video featuring the history of the Path and trail users. The featured speaker was **Dan Thomas, Principal Planner and Trail Coordinator, DuPage County** who reviewed trail developments on the horizon.



Legacy Volunteer Don Westlake has been a member over 30 years.



Legacy Volunteers Larry Sheaffer (L) and Connie and Mike Schmidt have all been members for over 30 years.



Legacy Volunteer Eugene Pomerance has been a member for 46 years

Thanks for being an IPPC member! Invite your friends and family to become members and/or volunteers. More information is available at www.ipp.org and Facebook. Contact the IPPC at president@ipp.org or call **630-752-0120**, or write The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60187.