



The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

Summer Edition (June - July 2013)

Saturday, June 29 - Fox River Trolley Museum - Illinois Prairie Path Day



Be sure to mark your calendar and participate in a special day celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Illinois Prairie Path!

All new and current IPP members will get free rides and get to inspect and ride the trolleys that once ran on the Chicago, Aurora and Elgin lines, on which the Prairie Path now sits. This educational and enjoyable four-mile round trip experience travels along the Fox River to the Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve and back to the museum. The forest preserve offers a quiet picnic area with restrooms for your convenience.



WHEN: Saturday, June 29 - from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. An **11 a.m. Welcome Event** will begin this special day!

WHAT: Illinois Prairie Path Day - FREE RIDES for new and current IPP members. *When you arrive, please proceed to the IPP check-in table.* Others will pay the regular fares of \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors and \$2 for children 3-11.

WHERE: Fox River Trolley Museum - 361 S. LaFox St. (Illinois Route 31), three blocks south of the State Street traffic light in South Elgin, Illinois. For directions and map visit www.foxrolley.org or call 847-697-4676.

Last weekend of September - Use the Illinois Prairie Path Days



WHEN: Saturday, September 28 through Monday, September 30

WHERE: Use the Illinois Prairie Path on any or all of its 62 miles

WHY: Monday, September 30, 2013 is the 50th Anniversary of the beginning of Illinois Prairie Path with a letter by May Theilgaard Watts to the editor of *the Chicago Tribune*

HOW: Enjoy any or all of the Illinois Prairie Path while celebrating its 50th anniversary. Invite others to use the path with you. Make sure your family and friends know why you will be using the Path during these three days, and talk about the Path to people who haven't used it before. Some suggested activities include: take a bike ride, run or walk; set up an easel just off the path and paint or draw a picture; look for wildlife and their tracks; take pictures of wildflowers and trees; sit next to the path and read or write, or walk to your favorite restaurant or picnic spot using the Path.



DuPage County Open Space Master Plan - Now Available

Natural Treasures of DuPage County: Open Space and Natural Areas Plan - a collaborative effort between The Conservation Foundation, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, several park districts and local municipalities, and open space and trail advocates in DuPage County is available at www.theconservationfoundation.org. The plan identifies approximately 40,000 acres of existing protected or partially protected open space in DuPage County and an additional 6,000 acres of potential new open space land that, if protected, would complete the original vision of protecting 20 percent of the county. Bob Sobie, a director of the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation, participated in development of the plan.



On the Path: Trail Riders of DuPage (T.R.O.D.)

By Connie Schmidt, T.R.O.D. member and 33-year IPPc volunteer member

Who would think that in the busy ever growing land of strip malls and housing developments, in the collar counties surrounding Chicago, Illinois is an active, thriving, horseback riding organization called the Trail Riders of DuPage. And...they enjoy some of the state's most beautiful trails in their own boundaries! Yes that's right. There are horses in DuPage County, just 35 miles west of Chicago, and there is a diligent group working to try to keep it that way.

The Trail Riders of DuPage is an active advocacy organization established over 20 years ago by a core group of horseback riders who saw that urban sprawl could encroach on their use of trails in the area. The group quickly became a strong organization with by-laws and not for profit status.

The motto of the group is to "Share the Trails" which is evident in their strong policy to coordinate trail use with other user groups. They work with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, the DuPage County Planning Department, the Illinois Prairie Path, the Horse Council of Illinois, the Bikeable Roads and Trails organization and other trail interest groups.

T.R.O.D.'s major service project is the Equine Rescue Techniques course (E.R.T.). For the past 16 years, this course has been presented to firemen and police who are first to respond to emergency situations including traffic accidents, loose horse in neighborhoods or barn accidents. The Trail Riders of DuPage participate in the annual Illinois Prairie Path clean up helping to clear it of litter and debris. They have pulled barbed wire from Forest Preserve acquired farm land and helped to clear invasive species such as buckthorn. Twice they have painted the historic fence around the quarter mile track at the Danada Forest Preserve. Members of the T.R.O.D. are usually present at open house activities at either Danada or St. James Farm Forest Preserves in DuPage. They participate in six parades per year.

Members of T.R.O.D receive a monthly newsletter. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month. Many of the members don't even have a horse but find this group a great way to gather information and network with others who love this sport. Newcomers are always welcome to visit. Upcoming meetings and events are listed at their website at www.trod.us.



Invasive Species Removal Programs Begin



Forest Preserves of DuPage County have begun training volunteers to remove invasive species in Forest Preserve areas. Very soon, a similar program will be announced by and for the Illinois Prairie Path. On Saturday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., in a program sponsored by the Conservation Foundation and the Forest Preserve of DuPage County, 18 volunteers worked on the **Geneva Spur at the West Branch of the DuPage River** to remove buckthorn and

honeysuckle woody invasive growth to create a clear view. The area's view had been completely blocked by invasive growth (top photo). Forest Preserve staff provided safety and task training and all needed tools (loppers, saws, gloves). Then, the volunteers removed the invasive species and stacked the material. Later the Forest Preserve came through to chop down stumps and apply an herbicide (Garlon VI) to kill the buckthorn. The Forest Preserve will continue working the volunteers to help maintain and expand the invasive removal program in Forest Preserves.



Top photo with overgrown areas; bottom photo with vegetation removed

Update: *Experience the Prairie Path* - May 18, Naperville

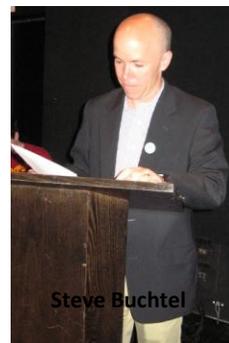


Judith Brodhead

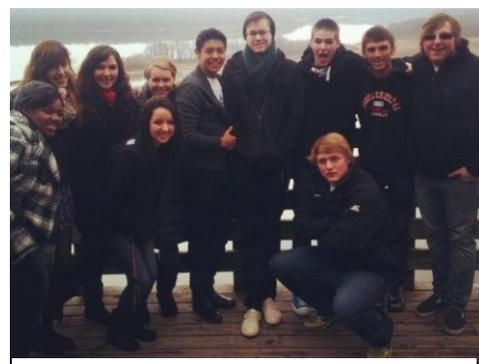


Carol Doty

Over 60 people attended the Illinois Prairie Path event in Naperville, and many people donated their time and talent to make the event a success! Photographers **Greg Blue, Christine Foley, Chuck Hunnicutt, Dulcey Lima, Mary Mehl, Tim O'Brien, and Ann Stacy** provided year-round images of the Path. **Steve Buchtel**, Trails for Illinois served as emcee. **Judith Brodhead**, Naperville City Council member, welcomed everyone to the Naperville event. **Danielle Donaldson, choir director and kindergarten students from May T. Watts Elementary School** performed "*Know, Know, Know Your Oaks*" written by May Watts. **Carol Doty**, librarian and historian, delivered the keynote address: *May Watts-Founder of the Illinois Prairie Path*. **Don Westlake** read *March Snowstorm* by May Watts and his poem *The Prairie Path*. The 14 founders of the Illinois Prairie Path were introduced in a video along with family members who attended the event on their behalf. Achievement highlights of legacy volunteers featured **Paul and Jean Mooring, Dick and Nancy Wilson, Joan Hamill, Eugene Pomerance, George Johnson, Don Westlake, George Newitt, Bernie Hurley, Susie Terwedow and Nancy Becker**. **Phil Hodge**, legacy volunteer member, described the masterful and heroic "*Let's Build the Bridge*" project. Trail users **Ray and Kathy LaHood** and family members of **Joseph Jablonsky** shared family memories on the Path. The musical finale featured an a cappella choir of sophomores from North Central College - Sonata Problem - singing *What a Wonderful World* and *The Circle of Life*.



Steve Buchtel



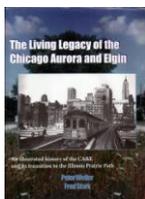
The finale was performed by *Sonata Problem* - an a cappella group from North Central College. **We are hoping someone recorded their performance. If you did, please contact maryjomalach@gmail.com.**

Meet the Founders is now available for viewing. Click the HISTORY link at www.IPP.org.

This historic 50th Anniversary photo represents the founders and legacy volunteer members of the Illinois Prairie Path (L to R): Legacy volunteers **George Johnson, Bernie Hurley, Don Westlake**; Founder family members **Marcia and John Ryerson** (son of founders George and Phoebe Ryerson); Keynote speaker **Carol Doty**; Founder family members **Marti and Allen Bjornson** (nephew of founder Lillian Lasch); Legacy volunteers **Eugene Pomerance, Paul Mooring; Dick Wilson; Susie Terwedow and Nancy Wilson**.

Update: CA&E "Third Rail" Presentation

On April 22, over 150 people (standing room only) arrived at the Wilder Mansion to enjoy the presentation by brothers **Fred and Richard Stark** and their cousin **Peter Weller**. They shared memories of growing up near the tracks in Elmhurst and showed a video of one of the last trips through the suburbs in 1957. **Thanks to Fred, Richard and Peter and singer Mike Schmidt for a wonderful presentation!**



L to R: CA&E historians Fred Stark, Richard Stark, Peter Weller

UPDATE: Annual Earth Day Spring Clean-Up



Thanks to the following 14 cleanup coordinators, and hundreds of volunteers, a significant amount of trash was removed from the Illinois Prairie Path on Saturday, April 27th: **Ed Barsotti, Dick and Nancy Wilson, Bob Hoel, David Peterson, Michael Strong, David Gorman, Lennel Grace, The Pride Commission of Villa Park, Jennifer McMahon, Scott Hensey, Tracy Vought, Erik Spande, Dawn Schubert.** Here are some photos.

GENEVA SPUR by Scott Hensey



Volunteers remove part of a car (visible down the slope)



We had 14 people come out to help clean up our section to the Prairie Path including some new to volunteering. Even though our section of the path is well maintained we found a good amount of trash to pick up. An old car, located on a steep slope, has been there for a long time, but this year enough brush was cleared out and we were able to get at it and pull the pieces up. The old engine was too heavy to pull up and is still down on the bottom. Next year we will bring some ropes to pull it up.

Also we have been pulling dame's rocket along this section of the Path for a number of years. Now dame's rocket has been just about totally eliminated, so pulling weeds will definitely help. We also continue the cutting and applying herbicide on the buckthorn, and honeysuckle along the Path. The annual Clean-Up day definitely is a good way to get people involved.

NOTE: An additional 150 youth church volunteers church worked on the Geneva cleanup. The church provided busses to the site.



MAYWOOD

Lennel Grace recruited fifteen volunteers who participated in the Maywood cleanup. The City of Maywood provided gloves for everyone. A local non-profit organization provided water.



WARRENVILLE



VILLA PARK



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](tel:630-752-0120), or write The Illinois Prairie Path, P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, IL 60187.