



THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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Mile Marker Refresh



Jeff Friedman and Erik Spande installed the prototype at Mile Marker Zero

One of the missions of the IPPc is to find ways to improve the IPP and the path experience. IPPc board member, Jeff Friedman, noticed that the signs on the IPP mile markers were looking tired and weathered. Path users use the mile markers

all the time, so updating the mile marker signs was a worthy project.

Jeff put together a team to refresh the signs with his employer, Nameplate & Panel Technology, which specializes in sign making.

In late September, Jeff Friedman and Erik Spande installed the prototype at Volunteer Park located at Mile Marker Zero in Wheaton. The new prototype mile marker signs look good!

2021 funding is in place to update signs on all DuPage County milemarker posts as well as installation of a few missing posts.

Chippewa District Activities Committee's "Hike & Bike"



The Chippewa District in Three Fires Council, Boy Scouts of America organized an Illinois Prairie Path "Hike and Bike" event on Sunday, October 25, 2020. The event was designed for Chippewa District Scouts and their families to hike or bike the IPP with an event-planning guide. Knowledgeable volunteers were present at the zero-mile marker in Wheaton to provide on-site advice and consultation. Over 100 people participated in the event from Scout groups located in Roselle, Naperville and Woodridge.



IPP Aurora branch west of Church Road at Mile 11.3



Dave & Miles Evans riding e-tandem trike in Wheaton

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Trail Project Update

The Forest Preserve District maintains over 166 miles of trails throughout DuPage County, including several miles of regional trails, part of a network of trails that connect communities and destinations throughout DuPage County. The following is a summary of current and upcoming trail projects that demonstrate the Forest Preserve District's efforts to build on the incredible network of trails that we have in DuPage County.

Dunham Forest Preserve Parking Lot and Trail

In the northwest corner of the county, construction was recently completed on a new trail segment and parking lot at Dunham Forest Preserve in Wayne. If IPP users head west one half mile on Army Trail road, the trail is on the south side of the road.

dupageforest.org/news/news-releases/dunham-new-trail-parking-lot



Dunham Forest Preserve parking lot and trail



Dunham Forest Preserve Trail

St. James Farm Mack Road Trail

At St. James Farm Forest Preserve in Warrenville, a new trail connection has been completed along the south side of Mack Road, connecting existing trails in the preserve to the intersection of Mack Road and Winfield Road. The new trail is planned to connect with future trail connections to Cantigny. dupageforest.org/news/news-releases/mack-road-trail



Mack Road Trail plan



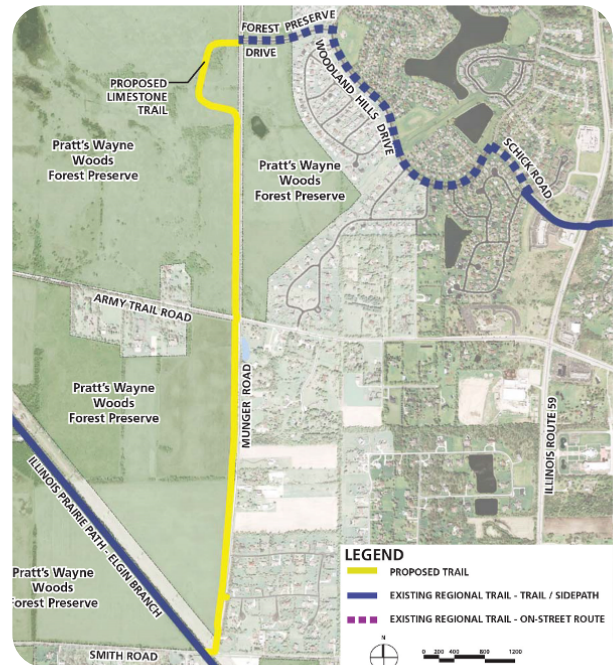
Blackwell Forest Preserve near the IPP at Silver Lake in Warrenville

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Trail Project Update (continued)

North Central DuPage Regional Trail

The North Central DuPage Regional Trail is an approximately 16-mile long regional trail alignment through the northern part of the county, extending from Wayne to Medinah with further connections into Cook County. Over 14 miles of the trail alignment is complete in DuPage County, with one incomplete segment remaining, connecting Woodland Hills Subdivision in Bartlett to the Illinois Prairie Path at Smith Road in Wayne. This 1.7 mile segment will be located along the west side of Munger Road.

dupageforest.org/news/upcoming-projects/pratts-wayne-woods-north-central-regional-trail



*North Central DuPage Regional Trail -
Pratt's Wayne Woods*

West Branch DuPage River Trail

The 26 mile alignment in DuPage County extends from the North Central DuPage Regional Trail in Bartlett, continuing south following the West Branch DuPage River to Naperville, where it enters Will County and continues to the confluence, where it meets the EBDRT and continues south as the DuPage River Trail.

A single incomplete segment in the WBDRT alignment remains between West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve in West Chicago and Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville. This last segment will involve construction of an extensive bridge structure to cross the river and Roosevelt Road to be completed in 2023.

dupageforest.org/news/upcoming-projects/west-dupage-river-trail-blackwell-west-dupage-woods



West Branch DuPage River Trail at Winfield



*West Branch DuPage River Trail Blackwell to West Dupage Woods
computer model of Roosevelt Road Bridge*



Pictured Left: Colorful fall trees on the Illinois Prairie Path

Elmhurst Boy Scout Troop 417 Bellwood Clean-Up

On Saturday, December 5th, working by their own initiative, Elmhurst Boy Scout troop 417 cleaned-up a large area of the Bellwood portion of the IPP. They collected over 20 bags of garbage, plus tires, hoses, and other debris that was buried behind trees, shrubs and other vegetation. Thank you, Elmhurst Boy Scout Troop 417! We appreciate all your hard work and efforts to bring beauty to the path!



Debris collected
by Troop 417

Thank you, SCARCE!

*Pictured Right:
Receptacles
being dropped
off at the Village
of Bellwood from
SCARCE*



SCARCE is located in Addison, IL. "Inspiring people through environmental education. We preserve & care for the Earth's natural resources, while working to build sustainable communities." - scarce.org

SCARCE learned that a local municipality was planning to discard seven gently used concrete trash containers. SCARCE asked the Illinois Prairie Path for ideas on where the containers could be used. After a few inquiries, the IPP learned that the Village of Bellwood would love to have them. The receptacles were installed in early August. The IPP is pleased to report that the containers are filling up as intended. As a result the Bellwood section of the IPP will be more enjoyable to all Path users.

The IPP Featured in The Click

Late summer, the IPP was contacted by Jennifer Taylor, a local freelance writer and a reporter for The Click, a national online magazine run by New York University graduate students. Jennifer, a local Wheaton resident of 20 years, was interested in writing a feature story about how the pandemic has impacted outdoor spaces for citizens with focus on Wheaton area forest preserves and trails.

IPP President Erik Spande met with Jennifer to share how the path has been instrumental in maintaining mental health and has allowed path users a place to find peace during the state's "stay at home" order. Also interviewed were Jay Johnson, Manager of Site Operations for the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and Sid Kenyon, Senior Transportation Planner at the DuPage County Department of Transportation.

You can read the full article on The Click's website at <https://theclick.news/how-covid-19-transformed-an-illinois-trail-into-a-pathway-to-mental-health/>



Holiday lights
on the Illinois Prairie Path
Main Stem in Villa Park

Elmhurst Great Western Prairie – 2020 Summary

Article by Eric Keeley - keeley.eric@gmail.com - (630) 336-1852

2020 has been a challenging year for many including the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie. Volunteer work days are generally the third Saturday of each month from March through November. In the interest of keeping everyone safe, healthy and intact as a community, work days were only held July through October in 2020.

Our September volunteer work day was the best attended we have ever experienced! With volunteers coming from Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, Aurora, Buffalo Grove and beyond, we certainly have gained regional attention as a must-do volunteer opportunity for prairie enthusiasts, scout groups and all people who take joy in improving the environment through productive volunteer work. We cleared enough brush during those three hours to make up for the three lost work days cancelled in the spring due to COVID-19.

We have received much praise from the Elmhurst Park District (EPD) staff and elected officials for our hard work during this time of limited resources. Our work does matter and we should all be proud that we are helping make the world a better place through our stewardship of the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie. Thank you so much to all who came out.

The immense amount of work and unprecedented turnout of volunteers over the last few months has warmed my heart and impressed long time volunteers and the Elmhurst Park District. I am so proud, I really am!

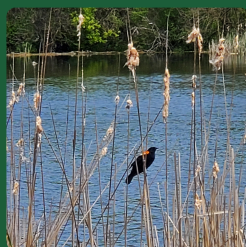
Looking forward to 2021, and assuming the COVID-19 situation improves by spring, there should be nine regular monthly events plus a few special work days, depending on the interest of our amazing volunteers. Work days for 2021 are scheduled for the third Saturday of each month, March through November.

Enjoy your winter and let's all keep doing what each of us can do to make the world a better place. For more information, visit epd.org/elmhurst-great-western-prairie or Elmhurst Great Western Prairie on Facebook.

Thank you,
Eric Keeley



Illinois Prairie Path Flowers



North side of Pratt's Wayne Woods near DuPage / Kane County Line at Mile 10.5



IPP Geneva Spur at West Branch Dupage River



Elgin Branch/Great Western Trail west of Prince Crossing Road in West Chicago

Historic Tour of the Chicago Aurora and Elgin Railway Along the Illinois Prairie Path



BeHistoric is a newly created YouTube channel focused on Chicagoland and Midwestern history and pre-history. It has been created by longtime DuPage county residents, Brian and Joyce Ostberg. They wanted to share their interests in these subjects and also to highlight how history and pre-history are much closer than we realize and often on the ground upon which we tread.



Changing leaves on the Illinois Prairie Path

The initial series deals with subjects close to home but tackle widely varying topics. The first series concluded in November, and provides a virtual tour of all of the disused stations and stops of the historic Chicago Aurora and Elgin railway. These stations once traversed the cities and towns between Chicago and the Fox Valley, and the right-of-way of which ultimately transformed into the Illinois Prairie Path and Fox River Trails. Brian and Joyce walked and rode the trails for years without appreciating their former use until finding a few artifacts along the trailway which sparked their interest. "I was only vaguely aware of the former railway," quipped Brian, "and was shocked, so to speak, when I learned that it was an entirely electric railway."

The second series focuses on the Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve, the only remaining Native American mounds in DuPage County, which is located just off the Geneva Spur of the Illinois Prairie Path. The series focuses on the site's history from the early 1900s through the present, and relates how archeologists interpret the site's findings, including an interview with archeologist, Doug Kullen, who led a study of the mounds 20 years ago.

Brian and Joyce will be publishing weekly or biweekly BeHistoric segments in 2021, some of which will be further afield. One series will detail gang warfare and brutal vigilante events on the northern Illinois prairie in the 1840s, and another series will highlight the first main street gunfight in US history – not in the wild west – but in the lead mining towns of southwest Wisconsin. Additional series closer to home are also planned.

Tune it to the BeHistoric channel by going to the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChZAJDwc4xcLYZo3fdIEyEA>



IPP Elgin Branch, West Chicago Mile 4.75

North Central College Archives Website Receives Upgrade

The Illinois Prairie Path Board of Directors was recently notified by our archivist Rebecca Skirvin, that North Central College's online archives received an overdue upgrade. Rebecca shared that as a result, all finding aids, including the one for the Illinois Prairie Path Records, are now available through their online, full text searchable finding aid database. The upgraded site is more user friendly for those who want to research the history of the Illinois Prairie Path. To view the Illinois Prairie Path Records finding aid, visit

<https://noctrl.libraryhost.com/repositories/2/resources/8> .

The Illinois Prairie Path Treasurer's Report Fiscal Year 2020

Cash Balance, November 1, 2019

Checking - Chase	\$ 7,106.56
High Yield Savings	\$ 45,230.99
Office Manager's Account	\$ -
Petty Cash	\$ -
Community Bank	\$ 44,867.87
Pomerance Trust - Principal \$63,020.24	\$ 66,781.51
TOTAL	\$ 163,986.93

Revenue

		Budget	
Donations, Grants, Bequests	\$ 37,268.03	\$ 12,000.00	311%
Dues	\$ 25,333.09	\$ 25,000.00	101%
Sales (Maps, Shirts, Patches, Guides, etc.)	\$ 12.00	\$ -	0%
Interest	\$ 51.03	\$ 100.00	51%
Miscellaneous	\$ 250.00	\$ -	0%
TOTAL	\$ 62,914.15	\$ 37,100.00	170%

Expenditures

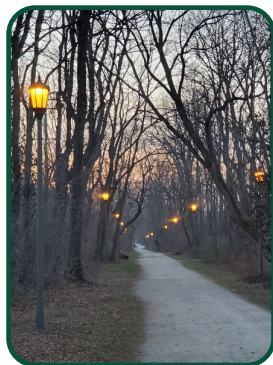
Office Management	\$ 8,510.25	\$ 9,000.00	95%
Newsletters	\$ 1,079.00	\$ 4,000.00	27%
Maintenance and Repairs	\$ 60.00	\$ 500.00	12%
Litter Removal and Port-o-let	\$ 1,621.00	\$ 1,800.00	90%
Post Office	\$ 1,078.98	\$ 900.00	120%
Telephone	\$ 111.00	\$ 120.00	93%
Special Projects	\$ 1,105.00	\$ 2,500.00	44%
Special Events	\$ -	\$ 500.00	0%
Prairie Restoration (Contract)	\$ 12,750.00	\$ 13,500.00	94%
Sign Replacement	\$ 195.00	\$ -	0%
Scout Projects	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Printing (inc. maps)	\$ 8,814.23	\$ 7,300.00	121%
Merchandise For Sale	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Donations	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Travel/ Board Expenses	\$ 326.29	\$ 150.00	218%
Legal and Consulting	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 2,500.00	128%
Office Supplies, etc.	\$ -	\$ 100.00	0%
Dues and Subscriptions	\$ -	\$ -	0%
Insurance	\$ 1,226.00	\$ 1,500.00	82%
Web Page Maintenance	\$ 1,848.00	\$ 1,000.00	185%
Government and Service Fees	\$ 25.00	\$ 30.00	83%
Miscellaneous (PayPal)	\$ 2,855.11	\$ 800.00	357%
TOTAL	\$ 44,804.86	\$ 46,200.00	97%

Cash Balance, October 31, 2020

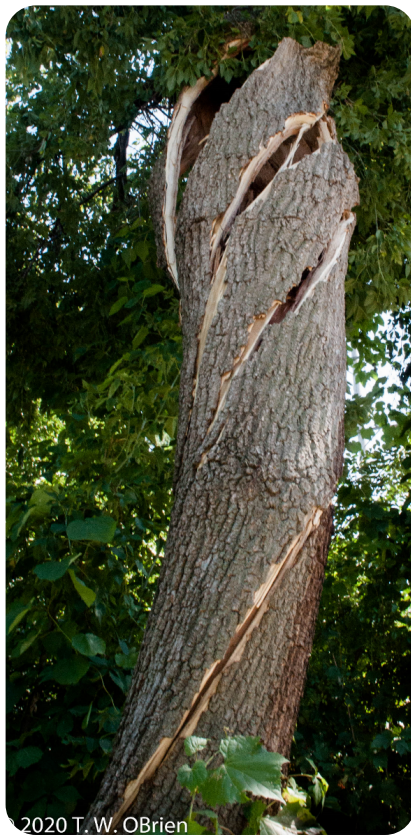
Checking - Chase	\$ 30,106.84
High Yield Savings	\$ 30,242.16
Office Manager's Account	\$ -
Petty Cash	\$ -
Community Bank	\$ 55,575.50
Pomerance Trust - Principal \$66,672.54	\$ 66,802.18
TOTAL	\$ 182,726.68



Sunset on the IPP
at Mile 8.5 in Elmhurst



Dusk on the IPP in Villa Park
near Meyers Road and
Westmore Avenue



2020 T. W. O'Brien

Twisted Tree – Damage from EF1 Tornado in
Lombard on August 10th, 2020
Photo Courtesy of Tim O'Brien

Illinois Tollway Underpass Project is a Success

As part of the Tollway's scheduled 2020 maintenance on the Reagan Memorial Tollway (I-88) the Illinois Tollway included the Illinois Prairie Path Corporation in planning, design and construction on the project to replace the I-88 bridge that crossed over the original railroad—now the Illinois Prairie Path—for improvement.

Tollway Senior Project Engineer Mohamad Faraj deliver the construction plan devised by the Tollway's Engineering Department to replace the old bridge with a new, modern pedestrian culvert, eliminating disruptions for motorists and reducing the impact of work for hikers and bikers.

The engineers and contractors worked with the Illinois Prairie Path corporation to determine the best times to temporarily close the Illinois Prairie Path for construction and provide a safe detour for path users.

According to Faraj, coordination with the Illinois Prairie Path Corporation also resulted in a designed arch shape favored by locals which is more aesthetically pleasing and allows in more natural lighting during the day. In addition, new LED lighting has been added to make the underpass brighter.

Pictured Right:
Tollway Senior
Project Engineer
Mohamad Faraj on
the IPP under I-88



TALKING TRAILS | WITH DUPAGE COUNTY



Year-End Message

• The County would like to thank IPPC's members and trail users everywhere for your patience and understanding during this difficult year. A special thanks to those who have engaged in responsible behavior on the trails, including social distancing and mask-wearing, while seeking opportunities for recreation in a time when few are available. Please continue to help us fight the spread of COVID-19, so we can safely flatten the curve together.

Completed Projects

- The Gary Avenue Trail, from the Great Western Trail to Army Trail Rd, is now completed. This new 2-mile segment is a vital connection for Carol Stream and beyond.
- The IPP Aurora Branch Underpass at I-88 has been completed and no further closures are anticipated at this time. Make a trip out there to visit it!

On-Deck

- North Central DuPage Regional Trail at Pratt's Wayne Woods: this trail will connect to the Prairie Path at the Smith/Munger intersection in Wayne. Some augmentations to the trail crossing may occur as a result of this project.
- East Branch DuPage River Trail: the County is continuing with a planning study for the EBDRT between St Charles Rd and Butterfield Rd (IL 56) in the Glen Ellyn area. DOT will be pursuing grant funds to carry the project into future engineering and construction phases.
- DuPage County Trails Plan: the County will be embarking on a planning and operations framework for its existing regional trails in 2021. Various topics will be covered by the Plan, including maintenance, vegetation and landscaping, and public engagement.

Talking Trails with DuPage County courtesy of
Sidney Kenyon, DuPage Senior Transportation Planner

2020 August | September | October | November

Thank you

Your membership and donations are used to provide services and fund improvements benefitting Illinois Prairie Path members and users.

Lifetime Members

Alan Hahn
Craig Ikens
Jeremy Tombisammy

Donations

AT&T
Brad Bolke
Robert Cibic
Bruce Davidson
Hamill Family Foundation
Patrick Henkel
Denise & Dan Kerns
Mary Mueller
David & Gretchen Navarro
Carol Notely
S&E Bramsen Foundation
Wheaton Garden Club

New Members

Carol Barlow
Diana & Steve Bense
Deanna Born & Dennis
Golbesky
Mike Cicero
Mike Dalton
Ralph & Andrea DiFebo
Jessica Domanko
Ted Grudzinski
Alan Hahn
Chip Hance
Michelle Hanlon
Edward Herlihy
Edward Jacob

James Kasallis
David Lentz
Lily Montenegro
Daniel Munson
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