



THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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Forget Those Dating Apps!! Spend More Time on the Prairie Path!!



Photos above and below provided by
Roni Rose Photography

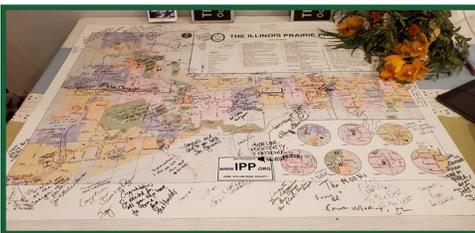
Deanna and David MacDonald believe the Illinois Prairie Path brought them together and led to falling in love. The IPP connected their communities and common childhood memories. These shared connections fostered their love and led their families in becoming one.

Deanna grew up in Elmhurst. Her family owns a hair salon on Spring Road only a few steps from the IPP. She has fond memories of family bike rides on the path. David grew up in Glen Ellyn a few blocks south of the IPP. He remembers countless bike rides with family and friends. In addition, he recounts many summer days, from morning to dusk, spent discovering new things about the Prairie Path. Their common childhood memories and experiences forged a lasting bond.

On October 10th 2021, Deanna and David were married. Their wedding photos and reception reflected their love for each other while paying tribute to the connection that brought them together. An Illinois Prairie Path map served as the guestbook next to custom IPP mile marker signs commemorating the event. Guests were given IPP patches as keepsakes. Their first look wedding photos were taken on the Path in Elmhurst near Spring Road. The couple described their wedding as amazing and a day that everyone will never forget.

The MacDonalds now live in Lombard just two blocks from the Path. The proximity to the IPP was one of the main reasons for choosing the house. They look forward to morning walks with their pup, Jordan, long bike rides, and many more adventures to come.

Best wishes to the Deanna and David!



IPP Hosts Meet & Greet at REI Oakbrook Terrace

The Illinois Prairie Path was pleased to participate in a Meet & Greet at the REI Oakbrook Terrace store on Saturday, December 4th. Board members shared stories and information about the Illinois Prairie Path. The partnership between REI and the IPPc has resulted in several Prairie Path enhancements. Thank you, REI!

When a Pebble Starts an Avalanche

On Tuesday, October 19th IPPc President, Erik Spande, gave a presentation “When a Pebble Starts an Avalanche” for the Winfield Public Library. This presentation explored the history, May Watts, its founders, and the value of the Illinois Prairie Path. This was a virtual presentation due to COVID restrictions. Enjoy for yourself at this link! <https://youtu.be/9IRcZ7nXRyE>.

Earth Day Trail Cleanup – Saturday, April 23rd

Mark your calendars! The Illinois Prairie Path & Great Western Trail are excited to announce the return of the annual Earth Day Cleanup! After a 2-year COVID hiatus, this year’s event will take place on **Saturday, April 23rd**. The rain date will be Saturday, April 30th. If you are interested in helping with this event or would like to bring a team of friends or colleagues, please click [here](#) to connect with a site coordinator. The flyer can also be found on ipp.org, friendsofthegreatwesterntrails.com or the [IPP Facebook page](#). If you have any questions, please contact:

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IPPc - Dennis Terdy 630-309-7837 dennis.terdy@gmail.com

Great Western - Don Kirchenberg 630-853-7650

frndsgrtwstntrl@aol.com



After two years, we are sure this cleanup will be especially beneficial to all path users. Please join us!

Diebold Memorial

On November 20th 2021, a memorial was held for Richard “Dick” Diebold. Dick was an avid cyclist and his association with the Elmhurst Bicycle Club brought him to the Illinois Prairie Path in the late 1970’s.

Some may recall that the path was not always the nice 10’ wide, level limestone path that it is today. After the Chicago Aurora and Elgin rail line stopped in 1958, it was abandoned and neglected. Our founders began in 1963 and had the significant task of clearing it of debris, up to and including junked cars, that had accumulated. Their blood sweat and tears went into the Path, putting down the base and limestone, as well as many other improvements we now enjoy. These included simple things such as benches and trash cans to actual bridges built by volunteers.

After more than 50 years, many of the founders of the Path have passed away, including Jean and Paul Mooring, who led the organization for much of that time. Several years ago, Dick was interviewed about his memories of the path in which he spoke of many of the projects they were involved in together.

Dick brought a cyclist’s perspective to improvements, such as leveling out the path near Hill Avenue in Glen Ellyn, constructing the bridge at Volunteer Park west of downtown Wheaton at mile marker zero, and the path extension near Winfield and Butterfield Roads. His background as a cabinetmaker was instrumental when he led the restoration of the old CA&E railroad station on Ardmore Avenue in Villa Park, which currently serves as the Villa Park Historical Museum.

Without the hard work and dedication of early volunteers like Dick, we would not have the Illinois Prairie Path that is enjoyed by tens of thousands of people every year. The next time you are on the Path, please think of people, such as Richard, and their legacy that will last for generations to come.

Thank you to his wife, Freda, and the Elmhurst Bicycle Club for inviting us to be a part of this memorial and their continued support and generosity of the Illinois Prairie Path.

Written By: Rob Sperl



Left & Right Photos: Lincoln Marsh in Wheaton on the Elgin branch - credit to Ken McClurg



Remember When? Memories of the Path... Construction of Volunteer Bridge



If you're a regular path user, chances are you've traveled over **Volunteer Bridge**. Located just north of Volunteer Park at mile marker zero in Wheaton, Volunteer Bridge has an inspirational history. Much like the grass roots campaign to build what we now know as the **Illinois Prairie Path**, the reconstruction of the bridge demonstrates how amazing things can happen when the community gathers together to support a cause.



In the fall of 1981, a group of path supporters started gathering informally to discuss IPP improvements in the Wheaton business district with a special interest in the reconstruction of the **Chicago Aurora & Elgin Railroad** iron truss bridge over the **Chicago & North Western Railroad**. This bridge would allow path hikers, cyclists and equestrians to connect from the north branch to the other branches without having to make a long and hazardous detour.



Photos of Volunteer Bridge circa 1984

Project bids exceeded \$250,000. In the interest of reducing costs, it was decided that the project would instead be managed by volunteers and the **"Let's Build the Bridge"** campaign materialized. Fundraising efforts, paired with countless volunteer hours, brought the project total down to \$25,000. These savings were made possible thanks to significant material donations/borrowed equipment from local businesses and welding provided by high school students from **DuPage Area Vocational Education Authority** (DAVEA). The project ran through 1984 with an official dedication ceremony on Saturday, June 16th. Then IPP President **Phil Hodge**, who served as Project Director and dedicated his engineering expertise and time to the new bridge, stated at the ceremony **"The bridge proves that we can do anything if we believe in ourselves and work together."**

On behalf of current path users, **thank you** to all who advocated for and participated in the reconstruction of Volunteer Bridge! Your efforts are forever appreciated!

What a Treasure!

"We moved into our home on Glendale Avenue in 1955. At that time, the CA&E RR ran transportation near our backyard in Wheaton. We watched the railroad be disbanded and saw the development of the Prairie Path from its inception. What a treasure! It was heavily used by our family over the years. I am now 92 years old and no longer live on Glendale Avenue but am happy to support you in your valuable work."

-Barb S. of Glen Ellyn, IL



Timber Lake, Timber Ridge Forest Preserve, Winfield - credit to Ken McClurg



Lincoln Marsh - credit to Sarah Leeman



Spring Brook, St James Farm Forest Preserve, Winfield - credit to Ken McClurg



Elgin branch in Winfield near County Farm and Geneva roads - credit to Ken McClurg

TALKING WITH DUPAGE COUNTY TRAILS



- In the summer of 2021, the County initiated the DuPage Trails Plan — a collaborative effort led by the Division of Transportation to update the existing Trails Maintenance Policy. That update will represent the creation of guidelines and best practices for how our regional trail network should be managed and enhanced. Stakeholder engagement will be taking place throughout this year, and will include public agencies who manage sections of the paths as well as volunteer organizations of trail users. The Trails Plan is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2023.
- In the fall of 2021, the County publicized a survey asking trail users to provide their input on the trails network and some of the things they would like to see as part of the Plan. Some topics included aesthetics, wayfinding, safety, and volunteer participation. Look out for future engagement opportunities in the coming months as the Plan continues to progress.
- For more information, visit www.dupagetrailsplan.com and sign up for updates.

Volunteers Pull Their Weight

Volunteers at Elmhurst Great Western Prairie “pull their own weight” by pulling out invasive and unwanted plants from this 6-acre “gem” in Elmhurst. Thus, species that are natural to an Illinois prairie are better able to survive and thrive. Elmhurst Park District owns Elmhurst Great Western Prairie. Park District staff and dozens of resolute volunteers jointly maintain the Prairie.

In the photo, Eric Moskal and Eric Keeley have pulled a small sumac tree with the use of a puller tool. Moskal shows the lateral roots that the sumac



Eric Moskal (left with sumac), Eric Keeley (right with puller tool) removing invasive plants from Elmhurst Great Western Prairie (10/30/21)

uses to sprout new trees. Pulling out the roots prevents the sumac from spreading. Sumacs are fine trees, but they do not belong in our prairie because they spread so aggressively. Moskal is a York High School senior and an Eagle Scout. Keeley, a Westchester resident and former IPPc board member, is the volunteer steward who manages the efforts of the volunteers.

September | October November | December

Thank you

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

Lifetime Members

Michael Johns

Sponsor

Michael Johns

Donations

AT&T (company match)
Bonnie Wheaton
Cathy Bogolin
Clifford Sinko
Delia Diebold
Elmhurst Bicycle Club
Erik Peterson
Frederick Fedewa
Hamill Family Foundation
Joan Dyer
Kathryn Storm
Kenneth & Peggy Sinko
Marilyn Schweitzer
Patrick Henkel
S&E Bramsen Foundation
Susan Black
The Navarro Family Charitable Fund
Winfield Area Garden Club

New Members

Andrew Maggio
Barry Dredze
Claude Weaver
David & Deanna MacDonald
Deborah Cunningham
Frida Diebold
Jack Hayward
Jay Klei
John Long
John Wicks
Keegan Goss
Kenneth & Peggy Sinko
Kristina & Gary Jarosik
Mark Hope
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Michael Williams
Patricia Benjamin
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Sally Nurss
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