



Winter 2024

# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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## Prairie Path Cleanup 2024

### SAVE THE DATE



In honor of Earth Day, the Illinois Prairie Path corporation, in cooperation with the Friends of the Great Western Trail, DuPage County and other partner organizations, has scheduled its annual cleanup for Saturday, April 27 at 9 a.m.

At this time, we are seeking additional site coordinators. This role is not demanding or time consuming but critical to obtaining maximum path coverage. Volunteers are assigned to a particular site coordinator based on desired work location. Site coordinators set the meeting location(s) and time, and on the day of the event, meet volunteers, hand out trash bags (supplied by the IPPc), take a few photos, and thank the volunteers. Please contact us by March 1 if you are interested in serving as a site coordinator.

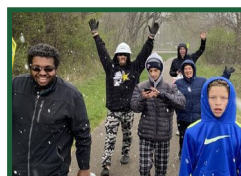
#### Prairie Path

- Ken McClurg 630-209-2969 [info@ipp.org](mailto:info@ipp.org)
- Dennis Terdy 630-309-7837 [dennis.terdy@gmail.com](mailto:dennis.terdy@gmail.com)

#### Great Western

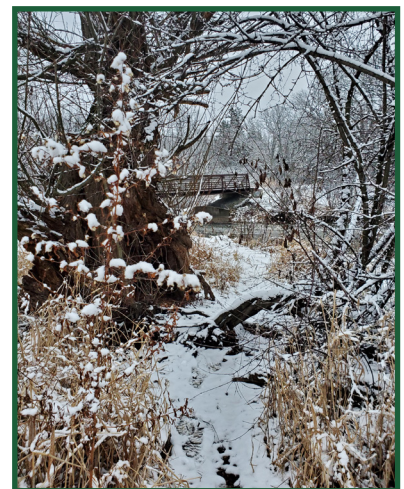
- Don Kirchenberg 630-853-7650 [frndsgrtwstntrl@aol.com](mailto:frndsgrtwstntrl@aol.com)

Please join us! Volunteer sign-up begins March 1 at [ipp.org/cleanup](http://ipp.org/cleanup).



Photos above are from the 2023 Clean Up

## Geneva Spur Winfield



Geneva Spur Winfield at the Dupage River  
Photos: Ken McClurg 2024

If you have additional ideas to further improve the IPP, please send them to [info@ipp.org](mailto:info@ipp.org). We would love to hear from you!

## Illinois Prairie Path Annual Meeting 2023

### DuPage County Trails Plan Update

The following are summary comments presented by Sid Kenyon at our Annual Meeting:

Thank you again to the IPPc for hosting me at the Annual Meeting to discuss the DuPage County Trails Plan. I appreciated everyone's questions, comments, and concerns, and I look forward to working with the Not-for-Profit as we move forward in the synthesis of the final Plan. Following 30 days of availability, the public comment period concluded on Friday, November 17th. Thanks to the promotional efforts of IPPc, as well as many of our other trail partners, the Plan was received by a wide audience. In addition, staff engaged in trail conversations with partner agencies across DuPage. After incorporating the public's comments, staff are seeking County Board adoption in early 2024.



Sid Kenyon, DuDOT Senior Transportation Planner presenting at the Annual Meeting

### East Branch DuPage River Trail Update

Recently, DuPage County hosted Congressman Sean Casten for a ceremonial delivery of \$1.2 million in federal funds in support of Phase I engineering for the long-planned, but never fully developed or funded, East Branch DuPage River Trail. The EBDRT is envisioned to bisect all of DuPage County becoming a regional north/south connector trail, allowing hikers and bikers to get safely to and from various parks and forest preserves, including the Morton Arboretum. DuPage County will provide a 20% match to the funds, per federal guidelines for projects of this sort, to engineer the EBDRT from the Illinois Prairie Path south to Butterfield Road. Phase I engineering will involve public input and environmental studies as the County develops a route and a preliminary construction budget, and more, and is expected to take up to three years, concluding in 2027. DuPage County's long range transportation plan envisions the trail being completed by 2030, assuming funding is secured.

Thank you so much for your help and all your kinds words at the IPP Annual Meeting. Together we can make it happen!

Sincerely,

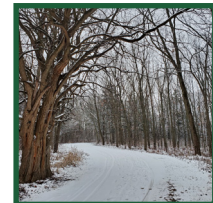
Ginger Wheeler  
President  
Friends of the East Branch DuPage River Trail  
630-835-6959  
[eastbranchtrail.org](http://eastbranchtrail.org)



Ginger Wheeler, Friends of EBDRT president, and Steve Miller, vice president, providing progress on the Trail at the Annual Meeting



Congressman Sean Casten Delivers \$1.2 Million for EBDRT to DuPage County



Geneva Spur at the DuPage River in Winfield



## Illinois Prairie Path Annual Meeting IPP Eastern Extension Update

At the IPPc recent Annual Membership Meeting, Ralph DiFebo & Vito Ippolito, both board members, highlighted the activities in the eastern Cook County portion of the Illinois Prairie Path. The presenters began with underscoring two fundamental aspects of the Prairie Path:

- Everyone LOVES the IPP.
- It is a unique treasure as it connects people, communities and the environment.

Recently, through a series of engagements with local Cook County municipalities, progress has been made to further enhance the eastern portion of our trail. Those activities include:

- Discussion on improving the crossing of the IPP and 25th ave & Mannheim Road. With an eye clearly on cost, and perhaps more importantly, safety for trail users, the IPPc has put forward concepts to improve these crossings.
- Engaging Bellwood on a “Miyawaki Forest”, (a resilient restoration plan which develops a thriving forest ecosystem with species that complement each other) to be potentially located at the IPP and 25th Avenue.
- A mural depicting the entire IPP trail system “painted” on a viaduct near Salt Creek in Bellwood.
- Replacing of park benches, planting trees and other plant life.

Finally, a core focus of our efforts in Cook County is to extend the IPP to the Forest Park CTA Blue Line. Currently, Engineering plans are funded and in motion, and the hope is to provide a newly enhanced trail system from the Blue Line to the current IPP trail head at First Avenue in Maywood.

While there is a lot of work ahead, the enthusiasm by both the local communities and the local residents has been nothing short of fantastic. Stay tuned for more news as our work continues!



IPPc Board Members, Vito Ippolito (left) and Ralph DiFebo (right), presenting Eastern Extension Prairie Path Update

## County Board Members Receive Special IPPc Recognition

The Illinois Prairie Path Board recently recognized two DuPage County Board Members, Sheila Rutledge (6th District) and Mary Ozog (4th District) for their services to the IPPc. The resolution states:

*WHEREAS, the DuPage County Board adopted their agreement with the Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPc) regarding the Illinois Prairie Path (IPP) on July 20, 2023; and WHEREAS, the DuPage County agreement is the fourth agreement with the IPPc, the first of which was in 1986; and WHEREAS, the IPPc is one of the largest trail advocacy organizations in the Chicagoland area; and WHEREAS, DuPage County is the controlling entity for majority of the IPP in DuPage County; and WHEREAS, the ongoing collaboration between DuPage County and the IPPc is critical to the ongoing vitality of the IPP in DuPage County.*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The Illinois Prairie Path not-for-profit corporation (IPPc) wishes to acknowledge the significant contributions **Sheila Rutledge** and **Mary Ozog** have made in assisting in achieving the most recent DuPage County and IPPc agreement dated July 20, 2023. This is a significant milestone for the Illinois Prairie Path, and highlights their commitment to the IPP and our membership.

Erik Spande, President



County Board Member, Mary Ozog (4th District) receiving Special Recognition Award from Dennis Terdy, IPPc Board



County Board Member Sheila Rutledge (6th District) receiving Special Recognition Award from Eric Spande, IPPc Board President

## Illinois Prairie Path Memorial Bench Program

A memorial bench is a wonderful way to honor a special person while also providing a beautiful & welcome amenity for all Prairie Path users to enjoy. The bench is 6 feet long. It's made of cast steel coated with a zinc epoxy then finished with polyester powder coating. It is designed to hold up to years of use/weathering. Benches are installed on concrete pads. Each bench has a built-in plaque displaying a message chosen by the donor. The total cost is \$2500 including the bench, concrete pad, installation, and a lifetime IPP membership. This pricing only pertains to DuPage County installations; the (installation) cost will be higher in Kane or Cook Counties.

Please email [info@ipp.org](mailto:info@ipp.org) for more information. We already know there will be several 2024 installations!

<https://www.dumor.com/products/bench-58>



*Built-in plaque displays a message chosen by the donor*



*Prairie Path memorial bench*

## IPP and Tree Plantings in Bellwood

Here at the IPPc, our focus is on being an advocate for the Prairie Path in the local communities it intersects with. To accomplish this, we engage local communities, understand their priorities, and when their priorities involve the IPP, we jump in to assist!

A recent example of this IPPc/local community partnerships is when Ralph DiFebo, board member of the IPPc, worked with the Village of Bellwood to secure funding that resulted in the plantings of over 18 trees just west of 25th Ave. in Bellwood. This is actually the first of many initiatives we are working on with the Village of Bellwood!

For now, we encourage you to come visit these new tree plantings which include include oaks, maples and more as we can assure you just the sight of new trees will further your enjoyment of the path!



*IPP Board members working with Bellwood community members with tree planting*

October | November  
December

*Thank you*

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

### Donations

Diane & Steve B.

Bright Funds

Donald B.

Daisy Garden Club of

Glen Ellyn

Mary D.

Matthew J.

Ken L.

Tom P.

Carri P.

Erik P.

Bonnie W.

### New Members:

John A.

James B.

John C.

Christopher C.

Bo D.

Robert L.

Craig P.



Please send Prairie Path photos you would like us to consider for future newsletters to [info@ipp.org](mailto:info@ipp.org).