



Winter 2025

THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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An IPPc Neighbor – The Fox River Trolley Museum

While enjoying the Illinois Prairie Path, have you ever wondered what was there before? Can you imagine electric passenger trains running by at speeds up to 70 mph? Well, that is exactly what was happening up until 1957 when the path was known as the Chicago Aurora & Elgin Railroad.

If your curiosity ever leads you down a path of nostalgia, one can actually see and ride the authentic train cars on a stretch of the original train line that still exists to this day! Located at 365 S. La Fox Street in South Elgin, the **Fox River Trolley Museum** offers a family friendly activity that will have you step back in time to enjoy a peaceful ride along the scenic Fox River and into the Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve. The museum is less than two miles from the IPP. Take the Stearns Road trail west, then north on the Fox River Trail; or take the FRT south from the IPP near Raymond Street. Our main campus has many antique trolleys on display that provide a unique opportunity to view transportation modes of yesteryear as well. This includes 5 trolleys that ran on what is today's Prairie Path. When the museum is not open, visitors are free to explore the yard!

The organization is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is funded by the train rides and donations from folks like you. Visit them at <https://foxtrolley.org> or look them up on Facebook for the latest updates and information.



The Fox River Trolley Museum

Annual Trail Clean-Up: April 26

SAVE THE DATE



In honor of “Celebrate Trails Day” (railstrails.org/celebrate-trails) and Earth Day, the Illinois Prairie Path corporation, in cooperation with DuPage County and other partner organizations, has scheduled its annual cleanup for Saturday, April 26 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 15 if you are interested in serving as a site coordinator.

- Ken McClurg / 630-209-2969 / info@ipp.org
- Dennis Terdy / 630-309-7837 / dennis.terdy@gmail.com

Please join us! Volunteer sign-up begins March 1 at ipp.org/cleanup.



Bellwood Clean Up in 2024



Glen Ellyn East Clean Up in 2024

DuPage County, Division of Transportation Update

Thank you to all our members for your passion and support of our path. We appreciate all that you do! The DuPage County Division of Transportation is made up of four departments which work together to create and maintain the transportation infrastructure seen around the County. The departments include:

- **Planning:** Works on identifying funding sources, goes to public engagement events, enforces trail policy and aids in directing maintenance activities.
- **Permitting:** Permits events and installations along the trails, enforces trail policies and coordinates with utility companies.
- **Maintenance:** In charge of the physical upkeep of the trail, which includes vegetation maintenance, path maintenance, and identifying enforcement issues.
- **Engineering:** In charge of contracts, infrastructure design and conducting improvement studies.

The County has been hard at work to keep the trail system safe and clean. Maintenance spent almost 9,000 hours on trail maintenance in 2024 which includes mowing, graffiti removal, storm clean up, invasive species removal and responding to resident concerns. The County in partnership with the Illinois Prairie Path Corporation (IPPC) and donors installed 5 new benches along the trail in West Chicago (1), Glen Ellyn (3) and Elmhurst (1). In addition to physical trail maintenance, the County has been working on multiple projects during the 2024 season which include:

- **Oak Ecosystem Project:** Project was in partnership with Nicor Gas, Morton Arboretum and the IPPC. The project removed invasive species along ¼ mile of the Illinois Prairie Path and planted a total of 12 oak trees and 18 shrubs in their place.

- **DuPage County Trails Plan:** Was completed in February 2024 and developed a framework for trail policy, identified opportunities of improvement, evaluate options to preserve the trail and serves as a collaboratively developed resource.
- **East Branch DuPage River Trail:** Phase 1 for the EBDRT project has begun for this 28-mile regional trail in Central DuPage County. Phase 1 will adjust the planned alignment, identify key barriers, assess constructable alternatives and generate consensus among stakeholders. More information on the project can be found at ebdrt.com.



Melisa Ribikawskis, Senior Transportation Planner, DuPage County Division of Transportation presenting at the Nov 2024 Illinois Prairie Path Annual Meeting

DuPage County is constantly looking ahead at projects that will help improve the trail system for users and residents alike. In the upcoming years, the County is looking at developing:

- **Vegetation Management Plan:** Update to the Trail Maintenance Policy of DuPage County, identify a schedule on addressing invasive plants along the trail as well as an inventory of common plants found on the trail.
- **Wayfinding and Signage Plan:** Create a plan for specific signage along the trails and modernize trail signage to provide better information dissemination.
- **Active Transportation Plan:** Phase 1 which will focus on public outreach and collecting information on existing conditions which will lead to a broader Active Transportation Plan for the entire County.

Late Fall Reseeding

During mid-November, three members of the DuPage Forest Preserve District were collecting seeds along the Illinois Prairie Path just east of Glen Ellyn and near the Glacial Ridge. The collected native seeds will be redistributed across the DuPage Forest Preserve District.

Kathryn, Tyler, and Tanya from the DuPage County Forest Preserve Staff



DuPage Forest Preserve District Finalizes Land Acquisition Near Danada

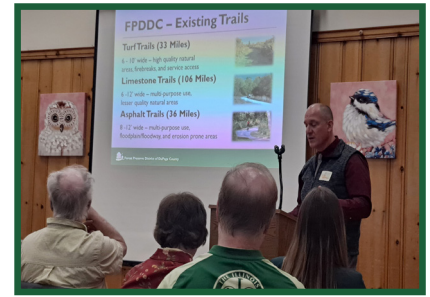
The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County recently finalized the purchase of 35 acres of land of the Gladstone Ridge horse farm on the east side of Danada Forest Preserve in Wheaton, expanding a critical natural corridor to nearly 2,500 acres of protected open space in one of the county’s most developed areas.

“This purchase reflects our community’s values and commitment to conservation,” said Forest Preserve District President Daniel Hebreard. “Thanks to the public’s trust and support, we can ensure this land stays protected and accessible for future generations while connecting two of DuPage County’s most beloved natural areas.”

Contiguous natural spaces like this between Danada and The Morton Arboretum create vital wildlife corridors that allow animals to move freely and find food, shelter, and mates. These connections also enhance ecosystem health, improve biodiversity, and provide scenic green spaces for residents to enjoy.

Over the next several years, the district will be updating several individual forest preserve master plans,

including the plan for Danada and public input will play a vital role in shaping these plans. The plans could help identify additional uses for the property, such as trails or gathering areas.”



Kevin Horsfall, Director of Planning and Development for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County while presenting at the Nov 2024 IPPC Annual Meeting

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County improves the quality of life for all DuPage County residents. Its 26,000 acres of woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and waterways contribute to cleaner air and water, help with flood control, create vital habitats for wildlife, and provide safe spaces where people can boost their physical and mental health. More than 5.5 million people visit its 60 forest preserves and scores of programs each year.

What’s Cookin’ in Cook?

There have been a great many improvements and other developments on the Cook County side of the Illinois Prairie Path. The path has been repaved from First Avenue to Mannheim Road. The prairie scape and fixtures at the Maywood trailhead have been restored and trees have been planted along the entire path in Cook County.

Plans to extend the Prairie Path to Forest Park and the CTA Blue Line station are now undergoing a design/engineering study and discussions to redesign the crossing of Mannheim Road are also continuing with the Village of Bellwood. Finally, most importantly, the IPPC has begun to cultivate relationships with the significant municipalities in Cook County including: Maywood, Bellwood, and Hillside.

We hope to continue to reach out to neighboring communities and promote the value of the Prairie Path to all those living in the area.



Updated IPP Trailhead at First Avenue, Maywood, IL



Roger Kotecki at the 2024 Annual Meeting



Silver Lake at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville



Timber Lake in Winfield

New Path Extension in Berkeley



New Path at Berkeley Park

Thanks to the Village of Berkeley, the Illinois Prairie Path extension is ready for use! While the crew still has to do some work in the park, the path is paved and ready for you to try. The new loop is 0.4 miles long. We hope you are able to get out and enjoy it soon.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/15wCbFLaGT/>



Addition to Berkeley Park

Would You Like to Help?

What makes the Illinois Prairie Path Corporation so unique is our members? We often receive requests from members and the local communities we serve, with the simple request of “How can we help?”. And help do they. Members assist with generous monetary donations, participate in IPPc social events, and donate their time to our annual path clean-up, etc.

Path clean-up efforts are one area that requires ongoing year-long support. While our annual clean-up event is well attended (note: this year planned for April 26, 2025), removing trash from our beloved path requires attention throughout the year. In this vein, we encourage all Prairie Path users to contact us at info @ ipp.org with any interest in path clean-up efforts in your local community throughout the year. The IPPc can offer assistance with materials, guidance, and overall coordination. In addition, numerous 2025 volunteer opportunities and other events are posted on the IPPc calendar. Check for updates often! <https://ipp.org/events/> Also, visit our Facebook page often for news, photos, etc. facebook.com/IllinoisPrairiePath/



St. James



September | October | November | December | January

Thank you

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

Donations

- Lester C.
- Michael C.
- Victor G.
- Jerry & Katherine J.
- Susan K.
- Ken L.
- Roger M.
- Patricia & Gerald S.
- Robert V.
- “A Group of Nature Lovers”

New Members

- Burt B.
- Jennifer H.
- Neil H.
- Elaine L.
- Joseph M.
- Chris M.
- Lorena O.
- Niall O.
- Jeffrey P.
- Jim P.

Connie & Michael S.

- Rose, Mike & Dan S.
- Wayne S.
- Tim S.
- Calvin W.
- Toby Z.