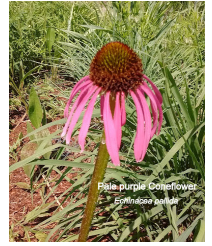




# The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

## September / Fall 2018



### You're Invited!



Illinois Prairie Path Photo by Chuck Hunnicutt

#### TOPIC: Trail Connect Chicagoland Campaign

**SPEAKER: Matt Gomez, Trail Advocacy Director,  
Active Transportation Alliance**

A recent headline in the *Daily Herald*:

**"100 Miles of trails in suburbs;  
but 200 miles of gaps"**



Come to the Illinois Prairie Path's Annual Meeting and meet **Matt Gomez** who is bringing together elected officials, local and federal government entities, regional planning bodies, and **engaged community members** to identify and fill gaps in the regional trail network.

Matt believes that, while this process will take time to accomplish, it is essential to establish an engaged coalition to drive-forward this long-term objective. Attend the Annual Meeting and discover how you can help secure 200 miles of new trails.

Click: <http://activetrans.org/our-work/bicycling/trail-connect-chicagoland>

### Remembering Betty Nemec, Path Historian

Betty Nemec, one of the Path Founders, passed away on Monday, April 2, 2018 in Madison, Wisconsin. Her husband Bill Nemec passed away in 2001. Both were extraordinary Path volunteers!



Her family wrote "She found the outdoors would bring peace by taking long walks, and canoeing lakes and rivers."

Betty was active in a program to reintroduce natural prairie grass in the region and she taught Nature Classes at the Morton Arboretum. The Nemecs attended the Path's National Recreation Trail induction in Washington, D.C. with their friend, Path Founder May Watts. Bill proudly posted the very first Illinois Prairie Path sign.

In the early years, when the Path was still an "idea," Betty realized that it was important to document everything. As the Path Historian, Betty collected and preserved all of the original documents (newsletters, maps, flyers, board minutes, correspondence, newspaper and magazine clippings, legal documents, awards and files from special projects). These early documents capture the historic struggles, conflicts, and the Founders' achievements as they attempted to secure miles of abandoned railroad land for a public path. The documents are preserved in the Path's Archives at North Central College.

Read Betty's note to the Path on its 50th Anniversary:

[http://ipp.org/pdf/newsletter/September October 2013.pdf](http://ipp.org/pdf/newsletter/September%20October%202013.pdf)



## Winfield Mounds Regional Trail Opening

*The West Branch DuPage River Regional Trail*

*Connects with the Illinois Prairie Path's Geneva Spur*

On July 11, **Erik Spande**, Winfield Village President and IPPc President, and

DuPage County officials, presided over the opening of the 3-mile Winfield Mounds trail, which is one of the last critical connections in the 25-plus mile West DuPage River Regional Trail system. During his remarks, Mr. Spande stated that "This regional trail is a testament to **citizen activism, partnerships, and perseverance.**"

### Citizen Activism

In 2007, nine volunteers were appointed to a **Winfield Riverwalk Committee**. Originally, the trail was planned on the west side of the river. This local group pushed to have the trail on the east side of the river and through downtown Winfield. Forest preserve planners agreed, so what began as a citizen aspiration resulted in a segment of a regional trail in Winfield. An early history is at <http://www.winfieldriverwalk.com/>.

### Partnerships

There were many partners that worked to complete the new trail. Spande continued, "The **Forest Preserve District of DuPage County** has been the lead on this project and their dedication, expertise and resources have shown us how they *truly* are guided by their mission for *beneficial use of the forest preserve.*" **Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital** granted the village a long-term easement on the land where the trail was planned by the Ronald McDonald House and Town Center. Other partners included the **Winfield Park District** and our **Illinois Prairie Path (c)**.

### Perseverance

The new trail was a 10-year effort. Spande explained, "Finding funding for a \$3 million dollar trail from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) was no small task. We learned by doing. Partners submitted the first grant. We made a great case. We met all the metrics, but we were turned down. We submitted a second grant, and lost again. So we did some more work, some preliminary engineering, and submitted a grant for the third time. And we won a \$2M grant for the \$3M project!"

### The Winfield Riverwalk:

- Improves connectivity throughout the region
- Has improved our community spirit through successful partnerships and grass roots volunteer support
- Is 10 feet wide, made mostly of crushed limestone
- Features an 80-by-14-foot prefabricated bridge and a 640-foot boardwalk
- Enhances ecological revitalization of existing but degraded woodlands
- Improves health and wellness opportunities in a natural environment for citizens and schools

The trail will be the backbone for a future Riverwalk Park in downtown Winfield. The Winfield Riverwalk non-profit is an advocate and the park is in the planning stages. Spande concluded by saying, "As the old cliché goes, many hands make for light work, and there were truly many hands that helped make the Path a reality."

An **ONLINE MAP** of Winfield Riverwalk is available at:

<http://www.dupageforest.org/news/upcoming-projects/west-dupage-river-trail-winfield-mounds-west-dupage-woods>

**Click:** Project Documents: Winfield Mounds to West DuPage Woods



(L to R) Cutting the Opening Day ribbon are: **Erik Spande**, President, Winfield Village; **Joe Cantore**, President, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, and **Al Murphy**, District 6 Representative.



## DuPage County Bike to Work Event



On June 26, through rainy weather, **DuPage County Chairman Daniel Cronin**, County Board members and other enthusiasts biked to work on the IPP from Elmhurst to the County campus in Wheaton.

## Repairing Path Amenities



The Path's kiosk at Milemarker 0 / Volunteer Park, originally built by Legacy Volunteer Paul Mooring, is in need of repair. IPPc Volunteer Board members **Ken McClurg** (pictured), **Erik Andersen**, **Erik Spande** and **Dennis Terdy** are upgrading the park area and structures with Path funds.

## Wheaton Bike Festival



On Saturday, August 2, IPPc Volunteer Board members **Jeff Friedman** and **Rob Sperl** hosted the Illinois Prairie Path display for all participants.

## Thanks for investing in the Path!

### MEMBERS

Boy Scout Troop 4107  
Brad Balke  
Dave Britton  
Scott Buck  
Richard & Kelly Byrnes  
Jim Dressel  
Dave Duve  
David Esposito  
Dennis Feibrandt  
Debbie & Ed Foreman  
Greg Hipp  
Steve Hyett  
Steve Langford  
William McVisk  
Zachary Nauth  
Loren H. Oury  
Cathy Petersen  
Frank Simono  
John Staerk

### DONATIONS/GIFTS/GRANTS

Robert Bahrey  
Hamill Family Foundation  
Grainger Matching Gifts Program  
Ken Krauss  
Deborah Orman  
J.A. Poole  
Wheaton Garden Club



***This Pale Purple Cornflower, can be found at Founder's Park in Wheaton. (Photo by Larry Sheaffer)***  
 May Theilgaard Watts, Path Founder, had a vision that a public path, along an old railroad line, would help many generations discover the importance and beauty of native plants.  
**Become a citizen scientist through the Budburst program sponsored by the Chicago Botanic Garden (<https://www.budburst.org/aboutus>).** If you join Budburst and collect data on native plants along the Illinois Prairie Path, please share your data with us. Thanks!

## Earliest Days of the Tinley Creek Trail (South Cook County)

### Trail Advocacy: A Family Tradition

**by Florence Terdy**

*Florence Terdy, 95, who volunteers regularly at various local agencies, resides in Carmel, CA. In the spring of 2011, the Cook County Board passed a Resolution recognizing her early bike trail efforts. She is the mother of Dennis Terdy, Illinois Prairie Path board member.*

Back in the late 1960's and 1970's my husband and I owned a small bakery in Oak Forest, Illinois, called Little Bill's Bakery and Coffee Bar. The owner of a large farm parcel, Mrs. Levowitz, was a regular customer at the bakery and a friend of mine. At the time, she was negotiating with Cook County to sell her land, which ran from 159<sup>th</sup> Street on the north between Central Avenue on the east and Oak Park Avenue on the west. The Levowitz farmland and horse farm was frequented by then current radio and television personality, Arthur Godfrey, who stabled his horses at the farm.

Through Mrs. Levowitz, I learned about the proposed sale of her land to Cook County and their plans to build a golf course. (Now Cook County's George W. Dunne Golf Course). Knowing about this pending sale, I thought it would be nice if some of this land could be set aside for a bike path. After the sale, Mrs. Levowitz moved to Pontiac, IL and the County's plans for a new golf course soon began.

In the 1960's and 1970s, the Cook County Forest Preserves had several bridle trails connected west into the Palos area. Horseback riding popularity was declining at the time, and I was struck with the idea of how natural it would be to convert some of these bridle trails into bike paths. First, I began by taking Polaroid photos of open garages in Oak Forest to demonstrate the prevalence of bikes and the need for families to enjoy biking beyond local sidewalks.

Next, since our bakery was located on highly trafficked four-lane Cicero Avenue, I decided to use our large roadside sign to initiate a petition drive to further document local community's interest in a bike path. I invited customers, others, and anyone who stopped to show their interest in a bike path by signing these petitions. At this time, a local Illinois House Member took an interest in this bike path project. He asked me to continue the petition drive over the next several months and to deliver each batch of new signatures to his office.

Finally, with strong local support from Oak Forest's Mayor Kelly, our local Illinois House Member, and local business and community members, I asked for a meeting with the media, of course, and representatives of Cook County. The meeting was held, and because of this meeting and the strong display of interest and local support for the bike path idea, Cook County began the process of integrating a bike path into their long-term plans. Although it took several more years, the idea of a bike path around the George Dunn Golf Course was realized in the late 1970s. Soon after, it was joined to a series of newly converted bridle paths in Palos to become what is now the northern section of the **Tinley Creek Trail**.

**AN ONLINE MAP of Tinley Creek Trail** is available at:

<http://fpdcc.com/preserves-and-trails/trail-descriptions/-tinley-creek>

