



# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

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## Family Bike Ride



Here the Donaldson family is having fun on the IPP on a family bike ride in Wheaton on Sunday, May 2nd.



## Earth Day 2021 – Postponed

As many of you likely noticed, we did not host our annual Earth Day Clean-Up event again this year. We expect to hold a late summer or early fall event. Until then, we're so thankful for the local families and groups who took it upon themselves to conduct their own path clean-up! Thank you!

## FIRST Robotics Team 2451 PWNAGE

FIRST Robotics Team 2451 PWNAGE celebrated Earth Day by collecting trash on the Illinois Prairie Path on April 23rd. This high-school competitive robotics team made an impact by collecting over 5 bags of trash along a one-mile stretch in Wheaton. PWNAGE team members came from all over DuPage County and enjoyed a sunny afternoon while having fun serving our community. As an Eco-FIRST Ambassador, PWNAGE is passionate about making our Earth a better, cleaner place through community projects, raising awareness of ecological issues, and monthly eco-challenges.

PWNAGE is a community team whose members come from over 10 high schools in the western suburbs. Each year the team works to design, machine, assemble, and program a robot to compete in a global game challenge. To learn more about FIRST Robotics & PWNAGE, visit: <https://www.pwnagerobotics.org/>.



*First Robotics Team 2451 PWNAGE cleaning up the Illinois Prairie Path on April 23rd*

## Valley Model Railroad Club at Clintonville Substation

Written and Submitted by Joe Montilla

Located a couple of miles before the end of the Elgin Branch of the IPP and approximately 15 feet off the path is the Clintonville power substation. It is a substantial brick building constructed in 1903, which once operated as a passenger train station of the Chicago, Aurora & Elgin Railroad (CA&E). The Valley Model Railroad Club (Valley) has operated an extensive HO scale train layout inside the substation since 1953. The building and property are currently owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve (KCFP) while everything on the property is maintained by the train club. Talk about a best kept secret! This lone building surrounded by farm fields and cows has been in continuous public use for 118 years and the first thing visitors always say is "I never knew what was there!"

The parking lot and grounds are always open to the public and visitors are welcome to stop in the building during club hours. They are in the process of re-grading the parking lot with hopes to pave it in the future. The club is also working on enhanced external amenities to attract more visitors to the site. Currently it has power, water, internet and security and we are actively partnering with the KCFP and IPP to make these amenities more available to the public. Suggested improvements include additional picnic tables or benches, public porta-potties, additional lights and security cameras, and possibly a covered shelter.

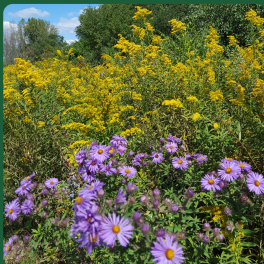


*Photo of the Clintonville Substation courtesy of Joe Montilla - VMRC Club President*

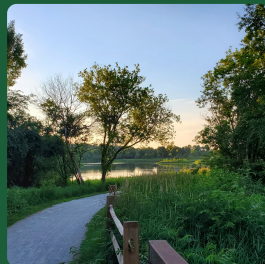
The Valley Model Railroad Club invites everyone to stop and visit our upcoming Open House and Swap Meet on **Saturday, August 28th from 10am - 5pm.**

Vendors (train enthusiasts) will have tables set-up outside to buy and trade train related items. Visitors of all ages will have the opportunity to run trains set-up inside (club members will be there to assist). Additional information can be found on our website at [vmrr.org](http://vmrr.org) or by visiting our Facebook page under Valley Model Railroad Club.

**Do you have an Illinois Prairie Path story to tell? We would love to hear from you! Email us at [info@ipp.org](mailto:info@ipp.org) or through Facebook Messenger and your submission could be featured in an upcoming newsletter!**



*Beautiful flowers on the Great Western Trail in Carol Stream*



*The bridge leading to Timber Lake in Winfield, Northwest of County Farm and Geneva Roads near the IPP*



*The winding Timber Ridge trail in Winfield between Kline Creek Farm and Timber Lake*



*Blackwell Forest Preserve and Silver Lake in Warrenville near the IPP*



## Enjoy the Ferry Forest Garden!



*Volunteers working on the Ferry Forest Garden*



### The Resiliency Institute

Transforming the suburbs into resilient communities using permaculture design

Illinois Prairie Path users are encouraged to visit the Ferry Forest Garden located along the path off Ferry Road at 30W060 Ferry Rd, Naperville, IL 60563.

The garden, which was started in the Fall of 2014, is a joint project of The Resiliency Institute, The Illinois Prairie Path, and property owner, DuPage County.

Earth Day 2021 welcomed the latest amenity, a living willow (eventual) shade structure. Willow cuttings were planted and will be allowed to take root this year. Once securely rooted, they will be woven together to form the structure that will provide shade, and provisioning (stay tuned for future basket weaving classes) for people, as well as food, habitat, and ecosystem support for pollinators and wildlife.

The garden is designed to serve as an amenity to path users as well as the local community. It serves as a demonstration for how communities can replace right-of-way lawns with public permaculture forest gardens, creating an edible park that grows food security and regenerates ecosystems. Planting began in spring 2015 with 20 trees funded by the Illinois Prairie Path. The garden serves as a community resilience building resource and now has over 30 shrubs, a hügelkultur berm, and a filling herbaceous layer. Scouts and community volunteers helped build site amenities, such as the educational signage and apiary. West Chicago High School donated almost 200 plants, and the rest were donated by community members, Forest Garden Friends, and paid for with proceeds from The Resiliency Institute's educational programming.

Depending on the time of year, visitors are welcome to relax, appreciate the hard-working pollinators and share in the bounty and enjoy a treat of pears, peaches, plums, juneberries, red and black currants, rhubarb, asparagus, strawberries, hazelnuts, sage, chives, cornelian cherries, rose hips, aronia berries, violets, nettles, lemon balm and spicebush (delicious additions to your water bottle).

Future amenities planned for the garden include a bicycle rack, picnic table, raised pollinator and herb garden, directional signage and additional interpretive signage.

The Resiliency Institute welcomes volunteers as Forest Garden Friends ([forestgardenfriends.com](http://forestgardenfriends.com)) to help manage and maintain this community forest garden. Volunteering is an opportunity to learn about permaculture, nourish yourself with fresh air and nature, perform community service, and be rewarded with foraged food!

**2021 Forest Garden Friends Volunteer Date:  
Saturday, August 7th from 12:30pm - 2:00pm**

To find out more visit:

<https://www.theresiliencyinstitute.net/grow/ferry-forest-garden/>  
or contact Jodi Trendler at [jodi@theresiliencyinstitute.net](mailto:jodi@theresiliencyinstitute.net).



*Michelle Hickey (L) and Jodi Trendler (R) are pictured above with the Ferry Forest Garden sign*

## BeHistoric – Winfield Mounds



In the early autumn of 2020, area residents Brian and Joyce Ostberg launched a new YouTube video channel dubbed "BeHistoric", intended to provide interesting and entertaining explorations of regional history and pre-history. It has been growing in viewership ever since. They started with a series close to home; and their first series of videos is a bicycle tour exploring the history of the multiple branches of the CA&E electric railway, the right-of-way, which was eventually transformed into the Illinois Prairie Path and Fox Valley Trail, after the closure of the rail line. Their second series, which is also based close to home, provides an informative tour, history, and archeological description of the Winfield Mounds, the only remaining pre-historic Native American mounds in all of DuPage County, Illinois, including an interview with archeologist Doug Kullen, as well an artifact analysis by Peter Geraci of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. In early 2021, they also published an in-depth exploration of the Clintonville electric substation, along the Elgin line of the extinct CA&E railway. Their current series investigates a time when the Illinois plains were the Wild West, with bandits and vigilantes on the Illinois prairie in the 1830's and 1840's, near Oregon in Ogle County, Illinois. They have several other informative series planned for their channel in the coming year. Erik Spande, former Winfield President, has given a strong thumbs-up to the channel, and has commented, "Brian and Joyce's videos on the IPP and Winfield Mounds are truly outstanding. You can see parts of the path you may not have visited from the comfort of your home, or be inspired to learn more about the IPP and its history."



*Brian and Joyce Ostberg, founders of BeHistoric*

You can access their channel and videos (for free) on YouTube at: [www.youtube.com/c/BeHistoric](https://www.youtube.com/c/BeHistoric).

## Illinois Tollway Receives International Recognition for Recreational Trail Investments

The Illinois Tollway is the 2020 Toll Excellence Award for Social Responsibility for its investments in recreational trails throughout Northern Illinois. The International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association presents the Toll Excellence Awards annually to highlight the very best projects, innovations, and solutions from the international tolling industry.

As part of the Tollway's commitment to sustainability, agency funds are invested in mitigation projects to offset the impacts of roadway construction on local and regional natural resources. These projects have leveraged investments and aided in approximately 1,000 miles of county forest preserve recreational trails benefitting communities surrounding the 294-mile system of five toll roads in Northern Illinois.

Currently, the Tollway is participating in the second phase of a large-scale project to restore Spring Brook Creek, which runs through the St. James Farm and Blackwell Forest Preserves in DuPage County. The first phase, completed in 2015, reconfigured the creek in St. James Farm to replicate a more natural, meandering stream. Phase Two of the project is in Blackwell and includes relocating the West Branch DuPage River Trail out of a floodplain, improving visitors' views of the surrounding prairies, wetlands, and woodlands. Restoration work on the second phase began in spring 2019 and is scheduled to be complete in 2021.

You can learn more here about the Tollway's sustainability efforts at <https://tinyurl.com/ILSustainability>.



## Illinois Prairie Path Founders - Warrenville Trailhead

In 2017, the Illinois Prairie Path (IPPC) proposed that the City of Warrenville incorporate a Founders Memorial Display (previously referred to as the Heritage Display) amenity into an extensive Trailhead Project located at the southwest corner of Butterfield and Batavia Roads, near mile marker 5 of the Aurora branch of the path.

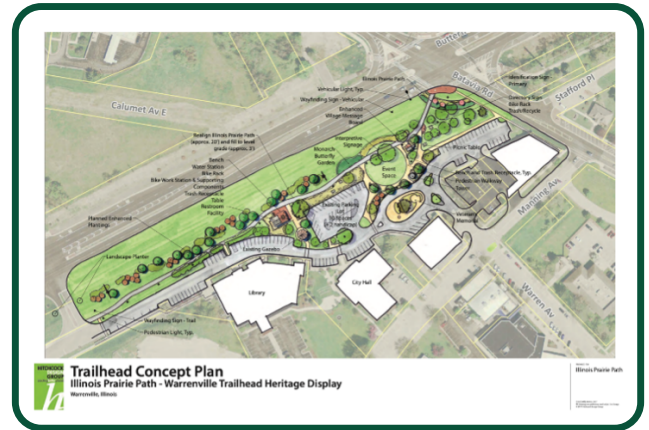
The conceptual design for this amenity was spearheaded by Board Members, Mary Jo Malach, Susan Kaley and Dennis Terdy, and prepared by the Hitchcock Design Group at the request of IPPC. This design was presented to and subsequently endorsed by the Warrenville City Council. This endorsement allowed IPPC to begin raising funds in anticipation for the final design and construction costs associated with this amenity. This past December, members of the Warrenville Trailhead Workgroup, which includes representatives from the City of Warrenville, the engineer, consulting architect, DuPage County, directors from the Warrenville library and park district, representatives from the bike commission, and the city elected officials, met to discuss further developments in this project. The City of Warrenville is expecting to have this bid by June 30th and proposed construction beginning this fall (2021).

### Key Trailhead Components

With primary project design goals of being interesting/inspiring, interactive, and sustainable, the major trailhead components include: a council ring, paving with the Illinois Prairie Path logo and May Watts' quote, memorial pavers representing founders, legacy volunteers and donors; signage kiosk based on Paul Mooring's design with Illinois Prairie Path logo, highlighting historic information, photos and QR code links; memorial I.D. signs, artistic representation of railroad tracks transforming into the Illinois Prairie Path and lastly native plantings representative of path ecology (with plant names).



*The Founders Memorial Display located on the Warrenville Trailhead*



*The Illinois Prairie Path plan for the Warrenville Trailhead Founders Memorial Display*

The original plan was slightly modified to accommodate a relocated path with additional minor modifications expected as the final plans progress based on adjustments for utilities. We will provide updates of this important Prairie Path project as they develop.



*Gorgeous Silver Lake sunset in Warrenville at the Blackwell Forest Preserve near the IPP*

# TALKING | WITH TRAILS | DUPAGE COUNTY



The Active Transportation Alliance's "Suburban Advocacy Week" was hosted mid-February and featured a series of online talks and workshops with advocates, county staff and community leaders from the region. In his presentation for Suburban Advocacy Week, Sid Kenyon (DuPage County DOT Senior Transportation Planner) walks through three DuPage County DOT project initiatives taking place: the ADA Transition Plan, the East Branch DuPage River Trail, and the upcoming DuPage Trails Plan. Completed in 2020, the Transition Plan is designed to bring all public right of way pedestrian facilities into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The East Branch DuPage River Trail (EBDRT) is a north-south regional trail through the communities of Lombard and Glen Ellyn, generally following the East Branch of the DuPage River. The section between the Great Western Trail and Roosevelt Road is currently in the planning phase and is anticipated to progress into preliminary engineering soon, pending grant funding availability. Beginning this summer, the DuPage Trails Plan will seek to update the current standards for how DuPage County's rail-trails are enhanced and maintained. A variety of enhancements such as wayfinding, vegetation management, and public engagement will be explored as a part of the planning process and the outcomes of the Plan will support DuPage's trail amenities for years to come.

Interested in viewing Sid's Presentation? Visit:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vu7RoCTvqQ4>



*The shrubbery on the Great Western Trail in Carol Stream*

## December 2020 | January | February | March | April 2021

*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 Employee Match  
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 Tom & Priscilla Jonson | In Memory of Jane Barker  
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 Randall Miller  
 Jan Paluga  
 Gunnar Peterson  
 The Blackbaud Giving Fund | W.W. Grainger  
 Robert VanValzah  
 James & Melodee  
 Walker Family Fund  
 John Woodhull

### New Members

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 Terry Basch  
 Joni Brackman  
 Michael DeLuca  
 Thomas Dolan

Lorne Enos  
 Eric Frick  
 Nicole Gombotz  
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 Mark Hadfield  
 Megan Howell  
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