



The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter March/Spring 2019



Illinois Prairie Path's **2019 ANNUAL EARTH DAY TRAIL CLEANUP** Saturday, April 27th @ 9am (rain or shine)

Every year our goal is to collect as much trash and debris on the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail as possible.

We look forward to another successful year of stewardship shared by all who are users of the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail.

If you or your club/organization is interested in participating, please contact one of our cleanup coordinators listed below:



Aurora Branch | Naperville

Ken McClurg
mcclurg@wideopenwest.com
(630) 209.2969

Warrenville

John Marconnet
seejohnrun916@yahoo.com
(269) 414.9311

Villa Park

Theresa Bauer
tchan.bauer@gmail.com
(847) 207.9788

Elmhurst

Doc Jevitz
docjev@sbcglobal.net
(630) 918.6588

Wheaton

Christine Richardson
cesber@gmail.com
(603) 930.2200

Elgin Branch | Oliver Square – West Chicago

Sabrina Lau
sabrina.marie.lau@gmail.com
(630) 345.2359

Lombard

David Gorman
gormanand@villageoflombard.org
(630) 620.5765

Winfield

Erik Spande
erik.spande@comcast.net
(630) 871.6640

Interested in becoming a 2019 Coordinator? The following locations are available!

Maywood | Bellwood

Marcus Scaggs
marcius32000@sbcglobal.net
(773) 615.3925



Great Western Trail

OPEN

Glen Ellyn

OPEN

Please visit www.IPP.org for updates or contact John Marconnet @ (269) 414.9311 for additional information



A New IPP Connection: The East Branch DuPage River Trail

By Ginger Wheeler, one of the community organizers of Supporters of the East Branch DuPage River Trail



Poster of the EBDRT flyer

As a supporter of the IPP, the thrill of venturing down a beckoning path to explore the woods is most likely something you relish. Paths help us get outside to walk, run and bicycle. If so, then the IPP is perfect for you but it could be so much better with the construction of the East Branch DuPage River Trail

The East Branch DuPage River Trail (EBDRT) would help those living in Central DuPage County (up to six miles south of the IPP and 3 miles north of the IPP) to access the IPP via a trail, as opposed to a street. Also, because the Prairie Path and Great Western Trail are parallel through DuPage County, one must travel miles west to Winfield or miles east to Villa Park to go from one to the other as there is currently no thru access between the two in the central part of the county. And, to access the miles of beautiful trails in the Morton Arboretum, you must travel by highway—no trail access. The EBDRT would make all this accessible to non-motorized traffic from the Illinois Prairie Path.

The history of the idea for the EBDRT is long. In the late 1970s the idea for a north-south trail connecting the Morton Arboretum and the Illinois Prairie Path through Glen Ellyn was developed. Engineering plans for this new trail, dubbed the East Branch DuPage River Greenway/Trail (EBDRT), were organized in the late 1990s by DuPage County, the DuPage County Forest Preserve and the villages of Glen Ellyn and Lombard, but the trail was never funded or constructed.



Plans have resurfaced to make this long-planned new trail a reality. Just like the development of the Prairie Path back in 1963—a group of volunteer citizens have taken up the cause. The County and the Forest Preserve have each dedicated about \$75,000 in their respective 2019 budgets to review engineering plans, but they may have become stalled yet again, as a grant opportunity was not approved. We will keep trying, though! **You can help make the dream of the new East Branch DuPage River Trail come true by visiting EastBranchTrail.org and signing a petition.** Every signature demonstrates community support to elected officials who are now working to start a new process to fund and build the EBDRT.

The EBDRT will connect County residents

north and south of Roosevelt Road. It will allow people to easily connect between the two famous east/west trails in central DuPage County as well as connect to the many amenities south of Roosevelt Road such as the Morton Arboretum and the College of DuPage. The result: more connections, reduced carbon emissions for those who prefer active transportation to automobiles, and the opportunity for everyone to more easily experience nature while exploring and enjoying a new path.

Find more information on Facebook and visit EastBranchTrail.org to sign the petition.



EBDRT Pop-Up Group promoting the trail project

Recent Examples of Your Memberships and Donations at Work



December, January, February

NEW MEMBERS

Chris Cane
David Diersen
Timothy O'Brien
Shannon Peters
Kamiah Phillips
James Robinson
Richard Tonielli

DONORS/GIFTS/GRANT

James Bramsen
Elizabeth Corwith Bramsen
Stan Diddams
Joan Dyer
Frederick Fedewa
Fidelity Charitable
Hamill Family Foundation
Fox Valley Bicycle & Ski Club
Robert & Lisa Honig
Richard Horton
Thad and Colleen Kielch
Mary & Dirk Landis
John Lorentsen
Randall A. Miller
Marlene Musnicki & Cheryl Schaad
Network for Good
Eric Peterson
Marilyn Schweitzer
William Steciak
Leslie Sulla
David & Joan Trushin
Bonnie Wheaton
Paul F. Witt
John & Barbara Yep
Your Cause

Thanks Fox Valley Bicycle and Ski Club!

"...each year we organize the Swedish Days Ride on the third Saturday in June. This event is held to provide area cyclists with a fully-supported opportunity to ride the beautiful country roads of Kane County. But more importantly, we put on the event to raise money to support organizations like yours."...Beth Stevens, President



Volunteer Park - Wheaton

Photo and plantings by Larry Sheaffer

Legacy Volunteers: Determined to improve the I-290 Path Underpass



Path Volunteers: Keith Olson, Sophia and James Abenante

Three volunteers - **Sophia and James Abenante and Keith Olson** - have been Path volunteer for 40 years. They all reside in Elmhurst. Early last year, they teamed up to address Path conditions at the I-290 underpass. Here is their report.

Over the years, when a crew of people parked their cars all day long, under the I-290 or I-294 highway where Elmhurst and Berkeley meet at the Illinois Prairie Path, they were in plain view, working on the highway structure itself or its grounds. They brought in their supplies and equipment that often stayed in place during their brief (maybe a few weeks) project. Then, they cleared it all up and returned the area to its previous condition.

In the spring of 2018, things changed. Up to ten vehicles parked all day long with no obvious work being done directly on the highway and no sign of workers at the same site. From April/May through late August we observed: 1) Parked vehicles all day long Monday through Friday and even Saturday; 2) Construction supplies (gravel, sand, hosing, etc.)

stored within feet of the paved IPP trail; 3) Land moving equipment and trailers stored within feet of the paved IPP trail; and 4) Litter was widespread.

Everything described above was on the property between the highway abutments where the Illinois Prairie Path intersects. Also, water from the highway, channeled through downspouts along the cement walls, and vehicles driving in and out of the area, damaged the surface of the entire area. Concerns are for both safety and aesthetic reasons:

- ❖ This is a shaded, isolated area where people young and old (in small groups or alone) pass. Parked vehicles, supplies or equipment placed close to the trail itself may make it unsafe for Path users.
- ❖ The Illinois Prairie Path is a jewel in our community. It is a **natural** environment enjoyed by many from near and far. It is no place for parked vehicles or ongoing storage.
- ❖ In addition, this winter, sizeable snow amounts have been dumped adjacent to the actual path for almost the length of the underpass area.

We are actively working to improve the Path at this location. To date, we've:





At a December 1979 - Signing Ceremony, The Illinois Department of Conservation purchased a 4.5 mile section of land in Cook County that extended the Path to First Avenue in Maywood. Sophia and Keith helped secure this Path extension.

- ✓ Met on-site with several influential people including Sarah Wilson of IDOT (Illinois Department of Transportation) and Dan Payne of Elmhurst Park District about improving lighting and drainage and making surface upgrades.
- ✓ Apprised local interested parties including the IPP Board (several of whom have made a visit to the site) and Sid Kenyon, Senior Transportation Planner, DuPage County.
- ✓ Reached out to several Berkeley Government Officials.
- ✓ Came up with solutions when parking or storage is needed by crews working in nearby communities.

This is an opportune time to get basic guidelines established because a huge expansion project will begin soon on the I-290 bridge. The Illinois Prairie Path is a nationally recognized trail. IDOT, DuPage County, Elmhurst Park District, and the IPP (its board, members, and community volunteers) can help steer others away from inappropriate uses of the Path and maintain what the Path should be - a safe, pleasant and natural way to move through our communities.

Please report other Path issues/concerns at ipp.org.