



# The Illinois Prairie Path Newsletter

## March / Spring 2018



## ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH EARTH DAY Trail Cleanup

**Saturday, April 28, 2018**

**9:00AM – Rain or Shine**



“In observance of Earth Day”,  
The Illinois Prairie Path, not-for-profit corporation  
has scheduled its  
**Annual Earth Day Trail Cleanup for  
Saturday, April 28, 2018.**

Our goal each year is to clean up as much trash and debris on the  
Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail as possible.

If you or your club/organization is interested in taking part, please contact one of the cleanup coordinators listed below. We look forward to another successful year of stewardship shared by all who are users of the IPP (Path) and GWT (Trail).

**Aurora Branch/Naperville** - Ken McClurg  
[McClurg@wideopenwest.com](mailto:McClurg@wideopenwest.com) or 630-209-2969

**Elgin Branch/Oliver Square, West Chicago** -  
Sabrina Lau [sabrina.Marie.Lau@gmail.com](mailto:sabrina.Marie.Lau@gmail.com)  
630-345-2359

**Elmhurst** - Doc Jevitz [docjev@sbcglobal.net](mailto:docjev@sbcglobal.net) or  
630-918-6588

**Glen Ellyn** - Christiana Cabrera [ccabrera@glenellyn.org](mailto:ccabrera@glenellyn.org)  
or 630-469-5203

**Lombard** - David Gorman [gorman@villageoflombard.org](mailto:gorman@villageoflombard.org)  
or 630-620-5765

**Website at:** [IPP.org](http://IPP.org)

**Maywood/Bellwood** - Marcius Scaggs  
[marcius32000@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marcius32000@sbcglobal.net) or 773-615-3925

**Villa Park Pride Commission** - Theresa Bauer  
[tchan.bauer@gmail.com](mailto:tchan.bauer@gmail.com) or 847-207-9788

**Warrenville** - Susan Degnan [suelite97@yahoo.com](mailto:suelite97@yahoo.com) or  
630-940-4255

**Wheaton** - Christine Richardson [cesber@gmail.com](mailto:cesber@gmail.com) or  
603-930-2200

**Winfield** - Erik Spande [erik.spande@comcast.net](mailto:erik.spande@comcast.net)  
or 630-871-6640

**The Great Western Trail** - Don Kirchenberg  
[FmndsGrWstnTrl@aol.com](mailto:FmndsGrWstnTrl@aol.com) or 630-853-7650

## North Central College shares Path research and archives with guests



*Will and Rebecca engaged with guests.*

On the evening of Tuesday, February 13, Illinois Prairie Path board members and guests traveled to North Central College to learn more about the history of the Path.

**Dr. William Barnett**, Chair of the History Department, provided a well-researched and insightful presentation about naturalist and Path founder, May Theilgaard Watts. Following his presentation, **Dr. Rebecca Skirvin**, Archivist, welcomed guests to view some of the Path's archives.

Barnett looked back in time to analyze why the campaign to turn an abandoned railroad into a "footpath" was so successful. He explained, **"There are four noteworthy aspects of the Prairie**

**Path campaign that helped it succeed and that reveal environmentalism to be a national movement with deep local roots":**

1) May Watts...lived in the Chicago/Naperville Midwest region her entire life. She studied with Dr. Henry Cowles, University of Chicago, a founder of the field of ecology. She worked with landscape architect Jens Jensen. **"May Watts provided a distinctly Midwestern strand of environmentalism."**

2) **"Her efforts were bottom-up, not top-down, with a local community emphasis.** The volunteers Watts organized prized open space - they were private citizens protecting Midwest landscapes. **The campaign was local, not national. The path would be visited by neighbors, not vacationers."**

3) **"Watts opposed the rapid landscape change in the 1950s and 1960s Chicago, and mourned the replacement of farms and prairies with highways and suburbs. Watts and her allies named their project the Illinois Prairie Path to highlight the state's disappearing prairie ecosystems and appeal to an interest in preserving open spaces."**

4) **"The campaign focused on nature education and ecology.** Excursions into nature were her core teaching method, as she brought adults and children to prairies, wetlands, and forests to build ecological awareness. Her 1963 proposal laid out who would use and maintain the path, ...to show **the Path was a classroom for citizens to encounter native species."**



*Rebecca answered questions about the archives.*

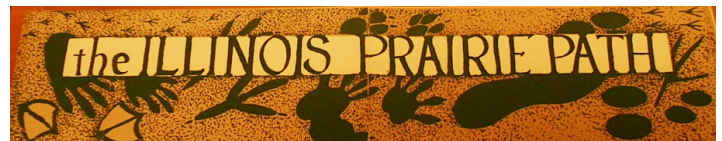
### NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ARCHIVES

In 2014, the Illinois Prairie Path archives became part of the Suburban Studies Collection at North Central College. **More information is available at: [ipp.org/history](http://ipp.org/history)** (IPP Archives Now Online); **[archives@noctrl.edu](mailto:archives@noctrl.edu)**; or phone **630-637-5714**.  
*Contact: Rebecca Skirvin, Archivist*

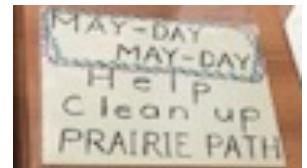
WITH SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROGERS MORTON  
AT 1971 CEREMONY FOR THE NATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM



*(Presentation slide) In 1971 May Watts (3rd from the right) spoke at the opening of the National Recreational Trail system in Washington, D.C.*



*Bumper stickers (1960s) helped promote the Path.*



*Without any funding, handmade signs were common.*



## Volunteer your time and talents with the Elmhurst Great Western Prairie



*Beautiful informative signs border the*

Of the 285 species identified in 2016: 152 species are native to the site; 71 native species have been introduced, and 62 non- native species have been identified.

The Elmhurst Great Western Prairie is a small, long and narrow **remnant** of the black soil eastern tall grass prairie that once was the dominant ecosystem throughout the state of Illinois.

### Volunteer Guidelines:

- **MEET at the BENCH** on the east side of Berkley Avenue and Prairie Path Lane (see Google Maps).
- **Wear durable work clothes:** Long sleeved shirt, long jeans, closed-toed shoes (boots are best), a hat and work gloves (we have extra work gloves).
- **Sunscreen and mosquito repellent are advised.**
- **Bring drinking water.** Donate a case of water if you can.
- Neighboring **Grace Bible Church** has kindly offered us use of their **restrooms**.
- Most of our work involves cutting brush, so **if you have loppers, bring them along. No power tools are permitted.**
- **Hazards** include: **Thorns** and **sharp-edged plants**, **trip hazards**, **sun exposure**. There are currently no known poison ivy or ticks in the EGWP, but the possibility of exposure cannot be ruled out.
- **Children over 12 years old require direct supervision** by their sponsoring organization. **Children under 12 require one-on-one supervision during work days.**
- **Groups of more than four new volunteers are encourage to contact Eric Keeley (see below).**
- Our regular volunteers can happily arrange **special volunteer work days** and educational walks on days other than our usual monthly dates for corporate, school and community groups.

For more information visit: <https://www.epd.org/elmhurst-great-western-prairie>

David Price (Elmhurst Park District Horticulturalist) at [dprice@epd.org](mailto:dprice@epd.org) or 630-993-8909

**CONTACT: Eric Keeley (EGWP Steward Volunteer) at [keeley.eric@gmail.com](mailto:keeley.eric@gmail.com) or 630-336-1852**

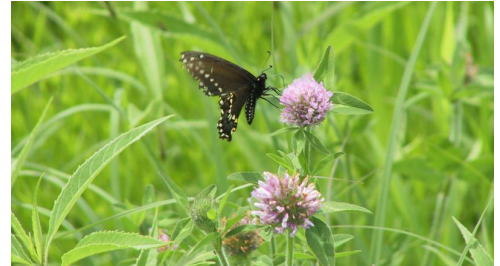
Keith Olson (EGWP Steward Volunteer) at [keitholson@usa.net](mailto:keitholson@usa.net) or 630-834-7357

On the **third Saturday of each month** March through November from **9 a.m. to noon**, volunteers gather to work on the historic prairie remnant in Elmhurst.

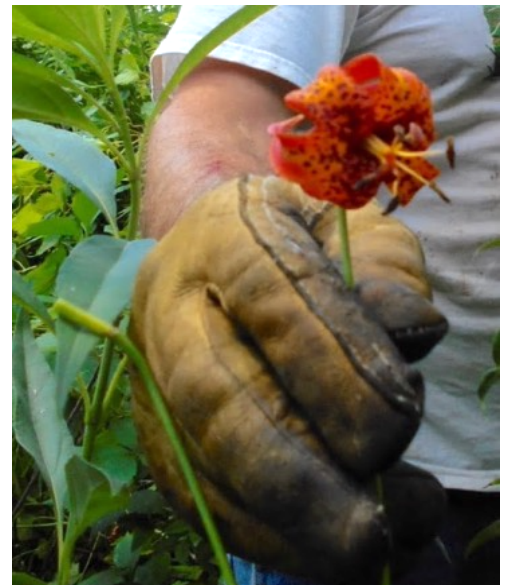
Saturday work dates for 2018 are: **March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16 and 23, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17.**

The Prairie is owned and operated by the Elmhurst Park District. It has been mostly maintained by volunteers since the 1970s.

This 6 acre prairie is 100 feet wide and 3/4 miles long.



*The prairie is a Monarch Way Station.*



*A Michigan Lily was found in the prairie!*

## Welcome New Members and Donors!



*Chuck Hunnicutt, Elgin Branch near Mile Marker 14*

Welcome to the Illinois Prairie Path - a unique "green ribbon" that winds through over 60 miles of rural and urban landscape. The Path was established, built and maintained by decades of volunteers who helped inspire America's Rails-to-Trails Movement. Thanks to the following people in Illinois and elsewhere who have invested in the future of the Path by contributing in the past three months:

### NEW MEMBERS

Gary Bernard  
Thomas and Ann Cahill  
Jeffrey Daub  
Tracy Daujotas  
Chad DeGroot  
Larry Hansler  
Erin Kuhl  
Brian Kura  
John and Deb Lorentsen  
Arthur Miehle

Gail Smith  
Mark and Amy Thompson  
Bruce Van Cleave

### DONORS

Paul Aeschleman  
James Bramsen  
Gary and Donna Busching  
Robert Camp  
Robert and Janet Cornell  
Tracy Daujotas  
Julia Davies  
Thad and Colleen Kielch  
Dick and Mary Landis  
Trish May  
Randall Miller  
"Network of Good"  
James Robinson  
Dr. Mark and Mrs. Amy Thompson

### The Path's first board of directors was established in 1965

If you are willing to contribute your insight and talents to help "preserve, enhance, and advocate on behalf of the Illinois Prairie Path for current and future generations" please give us a call and learn more about the work of the Path's Board of Directors. We meet once a month. **Contact us at 630-752-0120.**