



THE DU PAGE COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM

Within DuPage County, residents and visitors enjoy year-round use of a 52-mile recreational trail system managed by the DuPage County Division of Transportation. Approximately 40 miles of trails comprise the **Illinois Prairie Path**, which is located in the right-of-way of the former Chicago, Aurora, and Elgin, Railway. Almost 12 miles long, the **Great Western Trail** is located within the right-of-way of the former Chicago and Great Western Railroad. The trails are surfaced with limestone screenings and average 10 feet in width.

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and horseback riders are all welcome on the Illinois Prairie Path and the Great Western Trail. County ordinances prohibit the use of motorized vehicles, alcoholic beverages, and controlled substances on the trails. Pet owners are required by local ordinances to keep their animals leashed at all times and to clean up after them.

Spanning DuPage County, the Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail link county forest preserves, municipal parks, and recreational trails in Cook and Kane Counties. From the Cook/DuPage County Line, the Illinois Prairie Path extends 4.5 miles eastward to 1st Avenue in Maywood. At the DuPage/Kane County Line, branches of the Illinois Prairie Path continue westward to Elgin, Geneva, Batavia, and Aurora, connecting to the Fox River Trail.

For more information about the **Illinois Prairie Path** or the **Great Western Trail** contact:

The DuPage County Division of Transportation
(630) 682-7318

For more information about the Fox River Trail contact:

The Kane County Forest Preserve
(630) 232-1242

POINTS OF INTEREST

- ★1 Wild Meadows Trace Park, Elmhurst (drinking fountain and picnic area)
- ★2 Great Western Prairie, Elmhurst Park District
- ★3 Villa Park Historical Society Museum—

room, water, and information)
- ★4 Churchill Woods Forest Preserve, Churchill Prairie (picnic tables, drinking water, latrines, and parking lots)
- ★5 Prairie Path Park, Glen Ellyn (drinking fountain)
- ★6 Elmer J. Hoffman Park (Wheaton Park District Trail and drinking fountain)
- ★7 DuPage County Historical Museum (free admission)
- ★8 Illinois Prairie Path Volunteer Park (historic CA&E bridge over Union Pacific Railroad, latrine)
- ★9 Lincoln Marsh (Wheaton Park District Trail)
- ★10 Kline Creek Farm (A 1890’s living history farm. The Timber Ridge Trail along west side of County Farm Rd. connects the Illinois Prairie Path to the Great Western Trail and to Kline Creek Farm.)
- ★11 Pratts Wayne Woods Forest Preserve (equestrian trails, picnic tables, drinking water, latrines, and parking lots)
- ★12 Winfield Mounds Forest Preserve (restored archeological site)
- ★13 Jack T. Knuepfer Bridge at Reed-Keppler Park, West Chicago (swimming pool, concession stand, drinking fountain, picnic tables, pavilions, rest rooms, and parking lot)

- ★14 West Chicago Prairie (picnic tables, latrines, and parking lot)
- ★15 Atten Park, Wheaton (rest rooms)
- ★16 Herrick Lake Forest Preserve (bicycle trail, equestrian trails, picnic tables, drinking water, latrines, parking lots, and concessions)
- ★17 Roy C. Blackwell Forest Preserve (bicycle trail, equestrian trails, picnic tables, drinking water, latrines, parking lots, and concessions)
- ★18 Warrenville Grove Forest Preserve (picnic tables, drinking water, latrines, and parking lot)
- ★19 St. Stephen Cemetery (1852-1887)

★ Herrick Lake and Blackwell Forest Preserves offer concessions that are open daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and on some weekends during spring and fall, weather permitting. Camping facilities are also available at several county forest preserves. For more information contact the DuPage County Forest Preserve District at (630) 933-7200.

PARKING LOCATIONS

MAIN STEM

There is public parking near the path in all of the municipalities along the Main Stem. Most of it is metered parking or leased parking for train commuters. Commuter parking is free on weekends (except in Wheaton). Additional free parking is available at the following sites:

Elmhurst: **P1** Parking lot east of York Rd. between Vallette St. and the path. Enter from Vallette St. **P2** Pioneer Park at the east end of Prairie Path Lane where the path crosses the CC&P Railroad. **P3** Parking lot west of Spring Rd. north of the path. **P4** Prairie Path Lane south of the path and west of Berkley. **P24** Seminole Av. north of the path. **P25** Randolph St. north of the path.

Villa Park: **P5** Parking lot west of Villa Av. on Central Blvd. **P6** West of Ardmore Av. on Central and Park Blvds.

Lombard: **P7** Parking lot west of Westmore Av. **P8** Along Broadway on both sides of the path.

Glen Ellyn: **P10** Along Walnut St. from Lowell to Taylor. **P11** The western end of Duane St. Enter the path from Danby Park. **P27** Park Montclair Commuter Lot, 1 block north of Montclair and Duane north of the path.

Wheaton: **P12** Elmer J. Hoffman Park. Enter north from College Av. on Prospect St., one block east of the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad crossing.

ELGIN BRANCH

P13 In Wheaton along Lincoln and Western Aves near the path. **P14** Both sides of Jewel Rd. **P15** Northwest corner of County Farm and Geneva Rds. **P16** Along the abandoned frontage road north of North Av. and west of the path. Enter from North Av. **P17** Both sides of Army Trail Rd. in Wayne.

AURORA BRANCH

P18 Center St., Wheaton. **P19** West side of Winfield Rd. **P20** Large parking lots south of the path near Warrenville City Hall and the public library. Turn west from Batavia Rd. one block south of path, go one block and then turn right (north) to lots. **P21** West side of Eola Rd.

BATAVIA SPUR

P22 Bilter Rd.

GENEVA SPUR

West Chicago: **P23** Reed-Keppler Park, National St. **P30** West Chicago Prairie F.P. **P31** Commuter Lot and free public parking lot south of Main St. between IL 59 and Wilson Av. Also, **P15**.

GREAT WESTERN TRAIL

Villa Park: **P5, P6** and **P26** Villa Park Village Hall parking lot.

Lombard: **P9** Lombard Park District–Moran Water Park.

Glen Ellyn: **P28** West of Main St. south of the path.

Winfield: **P29** Kline Creek Farm/Timber Ridge Forest Preserve parking lot.

West Chicago: **P32** East of Prince Crossing Road north of the path.

TRAIL HISTORY

Distinguished naturalist May Theilgaard Watts first advocated the abandoned Chicago, Aurora, and Elgin Railway be converted to a recreational nature trail through the western suburbs of Chicago. In the mid 1960’s, local volunteers formed a non-profit corporation called The Illinois Prairie Path, Inc. to spearhead the conversion effort. At this same time, DuPage County

acquired the CA&E right-of-way and leased it to the corporation for development and maintenance of a trail.

Over the next 20 years, Illinois Prairie Path volunteers and DuPage County worked to lay a path, construct bridges, erect signs, and enhance the right-of-way by planting vegetation and removing debris. Several municipalities also made significant contributions to path maintenance and construction.

In 1986, the County assumed responsibility for maintenance and expansion of the Illinois Prairie Path. Construction of the Batavia and Geneva Spurs began the following year. During the mid 1980’s, the County also acquired the right-of-way of the former Chicago and Great Western Railroad. Construction of the Great Western Trail was completed in 1991. The Geneva Spur, completed in 1996, includes on-street and off-street easements through the City of West Chicago.

Ongoing maintenance activities performed by the County include resurfacing the trails, pruning vegetation, and mowing trail shoulders.

The Illinois Prairie Path, Inc. continues to work on path improvement projects, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and sponsors many trail-related activities. For further information contact:

The Illinois Prairie Path
P.O. Box 1086
Wheaton, Illinois 60189
(630) 752-0120
(web site) www.IPP.org

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Illinois Prairie Path and Great Western Trail are distinguished by outstanding construction features and have garnered numerous awards through the years.

1971: The US Department of the Interior designates the Illinois Prairie Path as part of the National Trail System. This is the first trail in Illinois to receive this designation.

1976: The Illinois Prairie Path was one of 200 projects in the United States selected to participate in Horizons on Display, a bicentennial program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

1986: The Illinois Prairie Path, Inc. mobilizes community volunteers and donated materials to construct Volunteer Bridge, spanning Wesley and Front Streets and the UP Railroad tracks in Wheaton.

1988: The Illinois Prairie Path, Inc. receives the national Take Pride in America Award, recognizing their twenty-five-year stewardship of public lands.

1988: DuPage County receives the County Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties for construction of the Batavia Spur.

1990: DuPage County constructs the Jack T. Knuepfer Bridge at a cost of \$1.2 million. This 400-foot-long arch bridge carries the Geneva Spur over 10 tracks of the UP and EJ&E Railroads in West Chicago. In 1991 DuPage County received the American Institute of Steel Construction Prize Bridge Competition Award of Merit for this structure.

1994: The Illinois Department of Transportation completes the Illinois Prairie Path Bridge over IL Rt. 59. This single span 125-foot bridge was constructed at a cost of \$700,000.

1995: DuPage County constructs a 430-foot single span bridge over Eola Rd. at a cost of \$736,000.

1996: DuPage County constructs the Great Western Trail Bridge at a cost of \$1.4 million dollars. This double span, 243-foot bridge carries the Great Western Trail over the I-355 Tollway.

2001: DuPage County constructs the 65-foot Taylor Street Bridge in Glen Ellyn, at a cost of \$760,000.