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Village of Glen Ellyn Reforests Prairie Path with Native Species

Glen Ellyn – Starting this spring, native shrubs and small trees will be planted to replace taller species along the Illinois Prairie Path between Prospect Avenue and Main Street in Glen Ellyn. The trees along the path that grow near ComEd power lines have traditionally been “topped” as part of a vegetation management program that is designed to provide reliable electric service by minimizing plant and tree-related outages. While topping can help mitigate electric outages, the Village is interested in developing a more sustainable vegetative plan for the Illinois Prairie Path to incorporate vegetation options that would not require this level of maintenance.

Recently, the Village of Glen Ellyn’s Environmental Commission and Public Works Department developed a plan of action with ComEd, the DuPage County Trails Management Task Force, and a local landscape designer to create a plan that eliminates this need, and still provides a vegetative buffer between the Prairie Path and the Union Pacific railroad tracks. By removing large species that are hazardous to power lines and replacing them with smaller trees and shrubs, the buffer is achieved in a way that will not affect reliable electric service in the Village.

“Native trees and shrubs like Serviceberry, Dogwood, Witchhazel, and Viburnum were included in the design because of their ecological value,” said Tina Koral, a certified landscape designer and owner of Tina Koral Gardens. “These species are native to our area, drought-tolerant, and attractive to birds, butterflies...and people. The trees and shrubs selected will never reach a size that will interfere with power lines.” Tina Koral, also a commissioner on Glen Ellyn’s Environmental Commission, provided the landscape design to the Village at no charge.

The reforestation project will extend into 2014, with completion anticipated next spring. The Village would like to thank the Environmental Commission, Tina Koral Gardens, and the Public Works Department for their efforts and commitment to beautify and naturalize the Illinois Prairie Path in Glen Ellyn. For more information, contact Public Works at 630-469-6756.

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