



Topping out the shelter at Hillcrest Slough are Bill Esser and Richard Schulz.

## Mother Nature finds a refuge

Photos by Dave Tonge

**by LEA TINKIN**

The land is soggy, an open wetland area that somehow escaped the relentless push of surrounding development.

It is the Hillcrest Slough on Ill. Rte. 83, Prospect Heights. The small pocket of nature holds the promise of outdoor enjoyment and education for Northwest suburban residents. To the 10 determined members of the Prospect Chapter of the Inland Water League and their volunteer assistants, it is a center of activity as the construction of a nature shelter reaches the final stage.

"We're putting the roof on now. We're hoping for completion by the end of the month," said Richard Schulz of Prospect Heights, president of the Inland Water League chapter. The 20-foot-by-30-foot shelter has been in the works for two years, Schulz said. When it is completed, the shelter will offer two fireplaces and picnic areas to visitors. The shelter is built on property owned by the Prospect Heights Park District that extends 200 by 200 feet. Construction proceedings have begun for several surrounding acres.

"THERE IS not only a need for the center, but part of our concern is for the area," Schulz said. "Many areas are being filled in for development. This not only is a retention area but it is a refuge. It's one of the last wetlands in the area."

"You can find raccoons, fish, Canadian geese, turtles, frogs, you name it," he said of the park area. "We wish it was more desirable but it's enjoyable."

The open-air nature center will be opened to the public later in the spring, climaxing a construction program that has attracted the support of many community organizations. "We're small, and we're lacking an ambitious project," Schulz said.

The nature-shelter project, valued at more than \$11,000, has drained the Prospect chapter's funds. The group is about \$2,000 in the hole. "There are more things we'd like to do there with a couple of thousand dollars more in improvements," Schulz said. Donations and volunteer help have enabled the group to move ahead with the construction program. "But we're always looking for donations," Schulz said.

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**by TOM VON M...**

The Prospect Heights Area, will investigate what steps are needed. Wheeling Township hired a policeman to provide protection in Prospect Heights.

"The township can provide a contracted agency police," said a newly elected PHIA official that under the plan to be studied, off-duty men would be hired to protect the Prospect Heights.

"The township could tax the unincorporated area this service," Wolf said. "We first want to see if police protection is needed. If not, we would be required to pay for the service."

"We WILL HAVE a lot of trouble in the future if we don't get it done," Wolf said.

The investigation was called on by the 150 to 200 attended Thursday night PHIA annual town meeting High School. Wolf said was nearly unanimous.

"We all feel that police are one of the key items in this," Wolf said. "We want to protect ourselves now, not when we become a city," Wolf said. "We want to protect ourselves now, not when we become a city."

Once incorporated, he said, the township would be able to collect voluntary contributions to pay for the police protection of the area.

Other alternatives are being explored, he said. "We're looking at the use of existing funds, or a tax, to provide the police protection of the area."



A slough attracts such wildlife as the muskrat.



A lone angler, Chris Brown awaits a strike.

History in the making :) 1975

Clipped By:



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