

Protect Your Heritage

PDHA next
Meeting
Wednesday
June 11
7 PM
Lincoln Center
Room 307

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www.PDHA.org

Pierce Downer's
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P.O. Box 422
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PDHA Takes Stand on Threat of Global Warming

Directors of the Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance adopted on January 18, 2008 a resolution encouraging our legislators to act on the threat of global warming. After observing years of inaction at a federal level to meet goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 level by 2020 and to below 80% of 1990 levels by 2050, PDHA is now urging action on the state level to meet these targets. They will not be easy goals to reach, but they recognize the urgency of reversing the harmful impact human actions have had on our global environment.

Several state governments - notably California, New Jersey, and Hawaii - have adopted caps on the emissions that contribute significantly to global warming. These states have realized that clean energy solutions benefit not only the environment, but also our economy. Coal-fired power plants and automobiles are significant sources of the anthropogenic emissions believed to exacerbate global warming. The PDHA resolution asks our legislators to support policies that will:

1. Set a mandatory limit on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and industrial facilities, gradually declining to 1990 levels by 2020.
2. Adopt clean car standards to cut pollution from automobiles by 30 percent.
3. Maximize statewide energy savings through energy efficiency programs, codes and standards.
4. Support the development of a robust renewable energy industry.

By advocating for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the PDHA joins a growing number of environmental and religious organizations in Downers Grove and around Illinois. For instance, the First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove is hosting an information seminar on global warming. This seminar will be held on Saturday April 19th between 8:30 and 1PM in the Church at 1032 Maple Avenue in Downers Grove.

1846 Blodgett House

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance helped last year with formation of a new group, the Downers Grove Heritage Preservation Corporation (DGHPC) that is now leading efforts to preserve and renovate the 1846 Blodgett House. This House, built by Israel and Avis Blodgett, is one of the oldest homes in Downers Grove. The Blodgetts were important early settlers of Downers Grove. Moreover, they used their home as a stopover point on the Underground Railroad, providing shelter to escaping slaves who sought freedom in Canada.

In February this year Christopher Salman donated the Blodgett House to DGHPC, sometimes called "**1846 Blodgett House ... on the Move**". In March, the Downers Grove Park Board gave permission to have the Blodgett House moved onto the Historical Museum Campus at 831 Maple Avenue. Working with its restoration architect and project manager, the Blodgett House group has developed plans to make the building suitable for eventual donation to the Park District to operate as a museum of early Downers Grove history with emphasis on the community's role in the Underground Railroad.

In April, the Village permits needed to move the House were approved. Construction fences have now been installed around the current location of the House at 812 Randall Street and the relocation site just west of the existing Historical Museum. In the next few weeks a new foundation for the Blodgett House will be poured in Wandschneider Park and the Blodgett House will be moved through the adjoining backyards into this new location. You can visit the website www.1846BlodgettHouse.org for information about the timeline of the move and other project activities.

The Heritage Preservation Corporation is partnering with the Village of Downers Grove again this year to put on a community-wide block party at this year's Heritage Festival Thursday Opening Night Concert. We expect that **Vertical Horizon** will be this year's featured musical group. Tickets for this June 26th event will cost \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door again this year. Watch for the announcement of ticket sales locations sometime in May.

Please consider supporting the Blodgett House project by attending this year's Heritage Concert and in other ways that are outlined at the website www.1846BlodgettHouse.org.



Protect Your Heritage

"Trees enhance and preserve the air quality... reduce noise... reduce topsoil erosion... reduce energy consumption... provide nesting areas for birds... which in turn assist in the control of insects... reduce storm water runoff... replenish ground water supplies... and... protect property values," according to Downers Grove Ordinance # 4673, adopted 5/17/2005.

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Little Sprouts Educational Program

In 2003, the Downers Grove Park District and the Downers Grove Elementary School District 58 formed a partnership to meet environmental education needs of first grade classes. The partnership created the Little Sprouts Program for the first graders in Downers Grove. After evaluation and modification, a half-day, minds-on, hands-dirty field trip was scheduled for each school at Lyman Woods. Little Sprouts was developed not only to meet curricular needs but also to foster the important values of conservation and stewardship in the participants. Since 2003, every first grade student in Downers Grove has participated in this award-winning program.

Each teacher receives a comprehensive pre-trip packet that includes a plants and soil vocabulary list to help students learn the terms that instructors use during the field trip. The packet also includes pre-visit and post-visit activities that review soil components, plant parts, and the importance of plants to people and animals. Prior to the field trip, teachers that are new to the program attend an informational workshop to introduce them to the program, review the activities, and answer any questions regarding their visit.

During the field trip, students are divided into four groups, with an average student to instructor ratio of 13 to 1. In the 2006-2007 school year, 485 first-grade students participated in Little Sprouts. Groups rotated through four stations: Sprout Cycles, Flower Fashion Show, Chef Soil-ar-dee, and Coats and Cotyledons. Students role-played the life cycle of a seed, dressed a teacher as a flower, followed a recipe for soil during a cooking show, and compared a seed and its parts to a hiker preparing for a walk.

In 2007, the program received funding through small grants from the Pierce Downers Heritage Alliance, The Grove Foundation, The Education Foundation, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This funding was used to pay for instructor and coordinator salaries, student transportation, and materials and supplies. At their March 2008 meeting PDHA Directors voted to provide matching funds to help finance the Little Sprouts Educational Program again this year.

No More New Downers Grove Flag Lots

The Downers Grove Village Council unanimously decided on March 18th to eliminate flag lots as a zoning option in our community. PDHA Director Mark Thoman explained to Council members our organization's opposition to creation of any more flag lots.

The main part of the flag lot is in back of the other homes in the neighborhood that have normal yards fronting on the roadway. Flag lots have a narrow corridor of land containing the driveway that connects the main part of the flag lot to a public roadway. Creation of flag lots substantially reduces a neighborhood's open space, reducing wildlife habitat, often requiring major tree removal and causing new stormwater drainage problems.

Directors of PDHA decided it would be appropriate to voice our opposition to flag lots because of their adverse impact on our natural heritage.



Students peel back the seed coat on their bean seed to reveal the baby plant embryo inside.

Natural Area Workdays

You can help to manage our community's natural areas as a volunteer during one of the Park District's workdays this spring! Projects include wood-chipping trails, cutting brush, hand-pulling non-native plants, and sowing seed. Most workdays begin at 9 am and end at 11:30 am on the following Saturdays at **Lyman Woods**.

April 19

10 am to 12 noon May 3 – Great Garlic Mustard Pull

May 17

You must pre-register at least one week in advance of the scheduled workday. The number of volunteers may be limited for some workdays due to the sensitivity of the Natural Areas. Volunteers under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Contact Pat Semple, Volunteer Coordinator, at psemple@dgparks.org to register for a workday.

Lyman Woods Restoration & Streambank Stabilization Project

Major threats to the health of the Lyman Woods Natural Area include streambank erosion and growths of invasive, non-native plants. Currently, the Downers Grove Park District is working in the last of three project areas for its major streambank stabilization project at Lyman Woods. The Village of Downers Grove and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, co-owners with the Park District of Lyman Woods, have recently agreed to provide substantial financial support for this multiyear project designed to improve water quality, reduce erosion and restore habitats throughout the Woods.

Three distinct phases of work are required in each project area. Phase 1 consists of selective clearing and brush removal. Clearing the dense cover of buckthorn and other invasive species allows sunlight to reach the soil and trigger the growth of native plants like bottlebrush grass, wild hyacinth, Joe-Pye weed and Dutchman's breeches. These plants play a vital role in the local ecosystem, as they reduce erosion by holding soil in place.

Phase 2 includes the actual restoration of the streambank. Hand digging, as well as mechanized equipment, is used to reduce the angle and depth of the stream banks. Natural additions, such as rock riffles and brush bundles, are installed to slow and direct the flow of water in order to reduce erosion and promote plant growth. This phase of work also creates new habitats for fish and aquatic bugs such as caddisflies and dragonfly nymphs.



Lyman Woods streambank stabilization, second project site area

Phases 1 and 2 in the project areas can usually be completed within one year each. Phase 3 continues for 10 years or more as the restoration and streambank stabilization is monitored and maintained to make sure that the desired natural area improvements have been achieved.

Streambank stabilization projects allow for the creation of healthy, vigorous ecosystems over a period of time. There was approximately one mile of Lacey Creek tributaries in Lyman Woods that were in need of stabilization. Each tributary required a different method of stabilization based on the sensitivity of the area and the severity of the erosion.

The first project area was approximately 20 acres in the northwest corner of the

preserve and the second project area was approximately 30 acres in the northeast part of the preserve. Work in these first two areas has now advanced to Phase 3 involving monitoring and maintenance. Work in the third project area on the south part of the preserve is now in Phase 2, restoration of streambanks. Most of this current restoration work needs to be done carefully by hand because of the sensitivity of this high quality natural area.

Two wetlands have been created in the northwest corner of the preserve where stormwater outlets already existed. The wetlands hold and slowly release the flow of water after rains and provide areas that draw road salt and other pollutants from the stream. Native plant seed and woody vegetation will also be planted at the end of the project.

Streambank stabilization projects like this are not new. Restorations similar to the one at Lyman Woods have created healthy, vigorous ecosystems over a relatively short period of time. Shannon Forsythe, the Park District's Manager of Natural Resources and Interpretive Services, points out that a nearby example can be found across Highland Avenue in the Orchard Brook area.

*Please Join Us
on our
Highland Ave
2008 Adopt-A-
Highway
CLEAN-UP DAYS*

*April 12
June 21
August 23
October 25*

*Saturdays
8:30-10:30 am*

*Check our
website for
updates and to
signup to
participate!*

*Have you
renewed your
membership in
the Heritage
Alliance?*

*See the back page
of this newsletter
for more info and
how YOU can
make a
difference!*

*Did You Know
that our website
features links to
other
environmental
websites that
you may find of
interest?*

*Check us out
at*

www.PDHA.org

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
P.O. Box 422
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515



Pierce Downer
1782-1863

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance Spring 2008 Newsletter

You are invited to join us at our next 2008 Meeting
Wednesday, June 11, 7:00 pm
Room 307, Lincoln Center, 935 Maple Ave., Downers Grove.
Check our website www.PDHA.org for more details.

Your membership in the Alliance helps in our efforts to petition local government officials to preserve our heritage resources. Your participation in our programs demonstrates to our community the strength of our alliance to protect Downers Grove's natural and cultural heritage.

Please join Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance or renew your membership now as we work for protection of the natural and cultural heritage of Downers Grove.

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance
P.O. Box 422, Downers Grove, IL 60515

Yes, I want to begin/renew my membership in Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance.

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____ Telephone: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Contribution: \$ _____ (Employer matching contribution?) _____ I/We can also volunteer some time.

A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION of \$10 or more will help the Alliance defray expenses, but is **not** required for membership. Your email address will allow us to keep you informed of future events.