

Summer 2009 Newsletter

Protect Your Heritage

PDHA next
Meeting
Wednesday
September 16
7 PM
Lincoln Center
Room TBA

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on the world
wide web
at

www.PDHA.org

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

Native Plants & Rain Gardens Produce Conservation@Home

On Saturday, May 9th, the Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance joined with the Downers Grove Organic Gardeners to sponsor a public workshop entitled "Conservation@Home" at the Downers Grove Public Library. The workshop featured presentations by Jim Kleinwachter and Erin Tuttle of the Naperville based Conservation Foundation.



Workshop Coordinator Ken Lerner, Jim Kleinwachter,
Erin Tuttle & PDHA Chair Jim Cavallo with a Rain Barrel

The theme of the workshop was landscaping with native plants. Using native plants and other locally adapted species can reduce the need for water, fertilizer and pesticides, beautify your yard and reduce stormwater runoff. Since they are naturally adapted to our climate, these species tend to be self-sufficient and do not need to be "coddled" with extra water, nutrients and pest control. Their deep roots promote soil health and absorb water more readily than a conventional lawn.

Mr. Kleinwachter illustrated these principles with several examples of parks, subdivisions and institutional and home landscape projects where the Conservation Foundation has assisted with introduction of native plants.

Ms. Tuttle introduced a host of native grasses, wildflowers and other species that are well adapted for landscaping in our area, illustrated with a series of beautiful slides. The Conservation Foundation can recommend many different plants for particular areas – wet, dry, sunny or shady – or for particular goals such as attracting butterflies or year-round color.

The Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, headquartered at the 60-acre McDonald farm in Naperville, dedicated to preserving and restoring open space and promoting stewardship of the environment. More information about the Foundation can be found at their website, www.TheConservationFoundation.org, or by calling 630-428-4500. The workshop was videotaped for later rebroadcast on DGTv. – *By Ken Lerner*

In Memoriam of Bill Runyon

We remember William M. Runyon, who passed away at the end of April this year, expressing our sympathy to his wife, Lillian and their family. A devoted father and grandfather, Bill was a long time resident on Franklin Street, Downers Grove.

Bill served as a founding director of Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance and a dedicated volunteer worker for the Downers Grove Park District. Park District volunteer records go back to 1991, indicating that Bill volunteered many hours over the years helping with natural resource management at Lyman Woods and Belmont Prairie. He devoted much of his work to cutting down invasive plants, such as honeysuckle and buckthorn. He also spent many hours collecting seed at those locations. Bill was repeatedly recognized with land management volunteer awards.

Bill participated in various campaigns in Downers Grove for land acquisition causes and for protection of natural areas such as Lyman Woods.

PDHA and the Park District will dearly miss Bill, a gentle person, remembering his many years of dedication to conservation and environmental causes. PDHA will plant a suitable living tribute in memory of Bill Runyon. – *By Jerry Yoksoulian*

Activities of Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance is in its fifteenth year as an environmental and historic preservation advocate in Downers Grove. We support educational activities such as the Park District's Little Sprouts program for grade school children to learn about the natural world using Lyman Woods as their classroom. We also sponsor preservation and environmental opportunities like the recent Saturday morning library workshop on native plants, rain gardens and stormwater management that we held in conjunction with the Downers Grove Organic Gardeners.

Construction of new sidewalks and new stormwater management facilities in Downers Grove has the potential for substantial environmental damage especially to mature trees. PDHA members have been working for several years to reduce the environmental impacts of these Village projects. PDHA Director Mark Thoman has played a leading role in these efforts.

In the case of sidewalk projects, including the latest new sidewalk project just approved by the Village for the area north of 55th Street and east of Fairview Avenue, we started working two and a half years ago to reduce the environmental impact of these projects. Mark Thoman and many others did succeed in convincing former Public Works Director Robin Weaver and her team of the necessity of saving every possible tree in any given project area. The stormwater management benefits of these trees are particularly important because, in some areas like 55th and Fairview, there are no suitable storm sewers in most of the neighborhood. The Village's current sidewalk projects can be viewed as a direct outcome of Total Community Development II study done in the 1990's, based on resident feedback that Downers Grove needs at least one sidewalk on one side of every street. We believe that ongoing sidewalk projects are now going to have substantially lower environmental impacts on their immediate neighborhoods and our community as a whole than they would have had without our active involvement.

Among our other ongoing initiatives, both PDHA and its sister organization the Downers Grove Coalition for Managed Redevelopment continue to advocate Neighborhood Conservation Districts as a means to protect distinctive local neighborhood environmental characteristics. Although this feature has not yet been incorporated into the village municipal code, we continue to move slowly along that path. The Village did adopt its Historic Preservation Ordinance and has applied for local government certification in order to provide additional benefits to property owners who achieve historic landmark status for their properties.

PDHA projects are not always high profile nor do they always produce their full results immediately. A good example is PDHA's involvement with the Park District's recent streambank stabilization project. A long time defender of Lyman Woods, John Banaszak, told us his concerns about damage along the tracks being created by machines used in this project. PDHA members, led in this case by Chris Saricks, Dave Schulz and Mark Thoman, examined and documented damage done during the winter of 2007-2008. They then called for a meeting of Park District and Forest Preserve officials and their contractors with local residents to bring this damage to their attention, to review best management practices and to gain agreement for steps to be taken to remedy the damage. We have monitored and documented the results now, one year later. The corrective measures seem to be yielding good results. We plan to review and document the situation again next year. *– By Mark Thoman & Gordon Goodman*



Project area before remediation



Project area after remediation

**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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Learning to Love Our Mature Trees

Here in Downers Grove trees are our first line of flooding defense. Downers Grove is built on lowland prairie and marshland, complicated by ups and downs in the terrain. It's very common for a house and lot to have four, or in many cases five mature trees.

Tree Quiz!

- 1) How many gallons of water will five mature trees absorb in the first 24 hours of rainfall?
- 2) How much CO₂ greenhouse gas will those five mature trees filter out of the air every year?
- 3) How much O₂ oxygen will those five mature trees create every year?
- 4) How much cooler is it under those mature trees every summer when the thermometer hits 100?

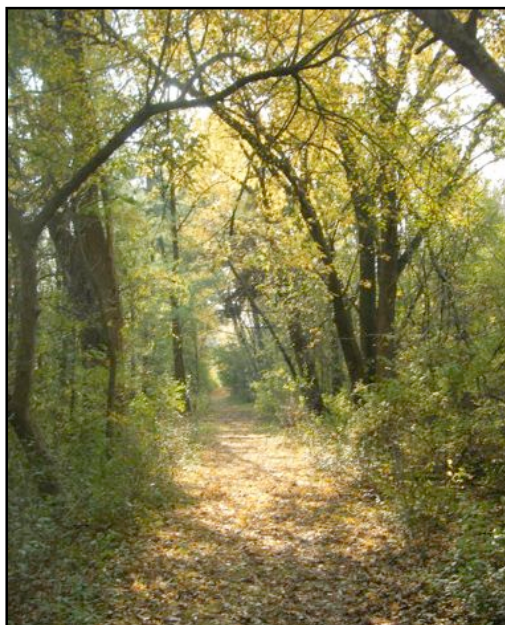
Answers!

- 1) About 3,300 gallons of water in the first 24 hours.
- 2) About 240 pounds of CO₂, making them very efficient carbon sinks.
- 3) Those five mature trees, each year create enough O₂ for ten people to breathe for the entire year.
- 4) It's usually about 3-4% cooler underneath a mature tree due to its transpiration, so that your air conditioning unit works a little less hard cooling your shaded home on a blistering hot summer day.

– By Mark Thoman



New sidewalk project alignment redesigned to preserve parkway trees



Come find your own path in Lyman Woods!

U.S. EPA Finding Concerning Greenhouse Gases

On April 17, 2009 the U.S. EPA issued a finding that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere endanger the public health and welfare of current and future generations. The effects of climate change caused by these greenhouse gas emissions were found to include, but are not limited to, more frequent and intense heat waves, more wildfires, degraded air quality, more heavy downpours and flooding, increased drought, greater sea level rise, more intense storms, harm to water resources, harm to agriculture, and harm to wildlife and ecosystems. Recently U.S. Representatives Waxman and Markey introduced The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 calling for, among other things, 25% renewable energy for electricity generation by 2025, energy efficiency standards for 15% electricity savings and 10% natural gas savings by 2020, and a greenhouse gas cap and trade program calling for reductions of 17% by 2020, 42% by 2030 and 83% by 2050. Now is your opportunity to contact your senators and representative and let them know your position on what may be the most important legislation of our lifetimes. – By Dave Schulz

*Please Join Us
on Our
Highland Ave
2009 Adopt-A-
Highway
CLEAN-UP DAYS*

*April 25
June 20
August 22
October 10*

*Saturdays
8:30-10:30 am*

*Check our
website for
updates and to
sign up 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 Summer 2009 Newsletter

You are invited to join us at our next 2009 Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 7:00 pm
Room TBA, 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.