



Pierce Downer's
Heritage Alliance

Preserving our Natural and Cultural Heritage

July 15, 2019

Governor J.B. Pritzker
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: OAKtober - Illinois Oak Awareness Month

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We respectfully request your assistance in an official proclamation for October of every year to be recognized as OAKtober- Oak Awareness Month in Illinois.

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance is dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Downers Grove. We have a 25+ year history of supporting and promoting our tree canopy, natural open spaces, and education on the benefits of natural areas and wildlife. We are pleased to join with like-minded organizations in calling for an Oaktober proclamation.

Oaks provide significant benefits that support our quality of life. They clean our water and air by filtering out pollution, reduce flooding by intercepting and absorbing stormwater, improve our physical and mental health, reduce energy usage, reduce heat island impacts, increase community interaction, improve property values, and provide crucial habitat and food for native wildlife. The white oak is our state tree and, like other oak species, populations are declining due to increased urbanization, pollution, pests and diseases, invasive species, and other environmental challenges.

An oak awareness month is crucial to educating Illinois residents about oak trees and their ecosystems, and the benefits trees provide for our overall quality of life. Raising awareness about these benefits will unite landowners, land managers, youth, land stewards, communities, park districts, forest preserve districts, and all residents of Illinois.

Our native oak forest is a heritage owed to all of Illinois, regardless of who they are or where they live, now and in the future -- including all native wildlife and plant species. Drawing attention to our natural heritage will promote the significance of oaks in our landscapes and our lives. And as landowners and land managers recognize their importance, they will work to preserve and protect our native oak trees, so that future generations will experience the majesty of a mature oak.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Lerner, Chairman
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