



Have You Met Shannon Forsythe?

Shannon Forsythe is a new addition to the Downers Grove Park District staff. As Manager of Natural Resources and Interpretive Services, she oversees activities at Lyman Woods and Belmont Prairie, from streambank stabilization to wetlands education for 5th grade students from District 58. Although she has been on the job for only eight weeks, she has introduced herself to many in the Downers Grove community through presentations at meetings such as our recent PDHA gathering on March 22nd.

Shannon grew up nearby. She was born in Chicago Heights, but her family moved to Frankfort, IL before she started school. Even at an early age her interests included biology and ecology. She attended Lincoln Way High School, but spent all of her summers outside using microscopes and magnifiers.

College did not take her far from home. She received her undergraduate degree in biology at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. The small college environment was appreciated because it allowed her to have a great deal of hands-on experience taking measurements and using nets. During her senior year, she interned at the Ecology Action Center, where she wrote grants in a number of project areas. For graduate school Shannon crossed town to attend Illinois State University. Her MS degree is in biology, but many of her classes and her research were on topics in restoration ecology.

After graduation she moved to Louisiana and worked at the Audubon Nature Institute. This allowed her to branch out from research and work more with people. She was an education coordinator at the Institute's nature center where she developed programs, taught classes, and directed groups. More recently Shannon worked at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. She was the Museum's senior education coordinator, overseeing staff and the development of school programs and the demonstrations that occur out on the floor in front of the general public.

The park district stole Shannon away from the Museum. She is enjoying the change. It permits her to be out in the community's natural areas nearly every day. She's excited about building up the education programs with more opportunities for junior high and high school students. And she wants to help more people discover the many things Lyman Woods and Belmont Prairie have to offer, especially with people who have lost their connection with nature or who may never have explored these two wonderful natural areas here in Downers Grove.

Shannon will often be found at her office in the Lyman Woods' Interpretive Center. Perhaps you'd like to stop by wish her welcome.



Shannon Forsythe
*Manager of Natural
Resources and
Interpretive Services*

Next PDHA Meeting

The next meeting of the Heritage Alliance will be held on June 14, 2006 at 7 PM in Room 202 at Lincoln Center, 935 Maple Avenue in Downers Grove. Please plan to come and join in our work.

Current Officers and Directors Of Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance

Chair

James Cavallo

Chair Pro-tem

Jerry Yoksoulian

Secretary

Laurel Q. Bowen

Treasurer

Gordon Goodman

Other Directors of the Heritage Alliance are

Jane E. Amorosi

Aspasia Colias

Lee A. Forsythe

Ihor Hlohowskyj

Matt LeCren

Ken Lerner

William M. Runyon

Chris Saricks

David Schulz

Charley Smart

Downers Grove Coalition for Managed Redevelopment

The most recent Village Survey revealed teardowns as the #1 concern of Downers Grove residents. The Downers Grove Coalition for Managed Redevelopment (DGCMR) has sponsored a series of activities highlighting the need for control of residential teardowns and consideration of environmental, cultural and neighborhood values in Village development policy.

At present, the Village Council is considering zoning changes proposed by Village staff and approved by the Plan Commission to reduce the impact of residential redevelopment. These changes include limiting the size of new homes to a percentage of the lot they occupy, increasing setbacks to provide better stormwater drainage, and designing incentives for front porches and rear garages. Some of these reforms are actively opposed by builders and lobbyists for the real estate industry. The Council expects to take action in May.



Teardown redevelopment is changing the character of Downers Grove neighborhoods

The zoning changes currently under consideration are just a first step in addressing concerns associated with residential redevelopment. DGCMR is studying further proposals including:

- ◆ A historic preservation ordinance.
- ◆ Protection of trees during redevelopment projects.
- ◆ Better code enforcement to reduce neighborhood impacts during construction.
- ◆ Changes to the demolition permit process to ensure neighborhood protection.

Further information on DGCMR activities can be obtained at <http://www.dgcmr.org> or by contacting Ken Lerner or Gordon Goodman.

Highland Avenue Adopt-A-Highway Work

Look for the Adopt-A-Highway signs along Highland Avenue. Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance takes care of the section of the highway between 31st Street and 39th Street for all future clean-ups. You are welcome to join us in clean up efforts along Highland Avenue. Three organized workdays are scheduled this year: Saturday, May 20th; August 26th; and October 21st.

We meet at 8:30 AM in the parking lot on the east side of Highland Avenue at 33rd Street. (This normally closed parking area is open for our use on clean up days.) A couple of hours will help to combat litter along the gateway to Downers Grove. Please mark your calendars now for May 20!

What's happening in the Natural Areas?

By Shannon Forsythe

Manager of Natural Resources and Interpretive Services, Downers Grove Park District

Lyman Woods:

Spring is here! The woods are full of beautiful wildflowers, and the birds (and our visitors!) are starting to come back. We have added a bird log book to the Interpretive Center so birders can share their sightings with other visitors. We have created a "Now Showing" board with photos of wildflowers, birds, and other wildlife that our visitors are spotting out on the trails. We have also created a discovery area complete with books, magnifiers, touch boxes, puppets, and much more for families and children to explore when they visit the Interpretive Center.



The interpretive staff has been busy leading many spring-themed programs and preparing for the 5th grade wetlands program, as well as visiting schools to prepare the students for their field trip. The program begins this week. We also held our spring event, Woodsfest, on Sunday May 7th.

We have held 3 volunteer workdays this spring and we have accomplished a lot including: wood chipping trails, preparing the butterfly garden for spring, cutting and removing buckthorn and honeysuckle at many locations, removing bricks, scrap metal, and other debris from the recently cleared project site, and pulling a lot of garlic mustard. There was a controlled burn in the meadow closest to the Midwestern University trail.

We have accepted bids for the maintenance phase of Project Site Area I of the streambank stabilization project and are working to award that contract soon. The selective clearing has been finished for Project Site Area II. We held the pre-bid meeting for the streambank restoration work for Project Site Area II and will be opening the bids on May 2nd. We are also planning to award a contract for a consultant to plan for the work in Project Site Area III soon.

Belmont Prairie:

The prairie is green! A guided prairie walk is scheduled for Saturday May 27th, 9-10 am, and more are scheduled for the summer. An eagle scout is working to complete a small outdoor classroom in the daylily area of the prairie. A controlled burn took place on March 29 and approximately 2.25 acres were burned. Volunteers and staff have worked very hard to clear brush from the perimeter of the prairie this winter and early spring. We will hold our workday on Saturday, May 6, 9-11:30 am and will continue to cut brush and probably seed the recently cleared areas.

Spring Wild Flowers

For a wonderful view of spring wild flowers take a walk through Maple Grove and Lyman Woods sometime in late April or early May. Ground cover plants put on a spectacular floral display before the oaks and maples leaf out!

Visit the Lyman Woods Interpretive Center for more ideas or to start your adventure.

**Pierce Downer's
Heritage Alliance**

P.O. Box 422
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Spring 2006 Newsletter



Pierce Downer's
Heritage Alliance

Protecting our Natural and Cultural Heritage

1782-1863

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 coalition to protect Downers Grove's natural and cultural heritage.

Please Join the Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance or renew your membership now to help protect the natural and cultural heritage of Downers Grove.

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City : _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (____) _____ email: _____

Contribution \$ _____ Employer Matching Contribution _____

I/We can also volunteer some time.

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

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance, PO Box 422, Downers Grove, IL 60515