

Protect Your Heritage

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Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance Sponsors Memorial to Downers Grove Public Works Director Naneil Newlon

On May 22, 2022, PDHA and Downers Grove village officials dedicated a memorial plaque and planting to former Downers Grove Public Works Director Nan Newlon. During Nan's tenure as Public Works Director, she emphasized environmental sustainability in the Village's public works, pioneering many green initiatives such as solar panels in village facilities, a green fleet of hybrid and Compressed-Natural-Gas vehicles, rain gardens and pollinator gardens, recycling events, and sales events for rain barrels and native trees.

Through her efforts, the Village received numerous awards for good planning and environmentally friendly practices, including "Excellence in Stormwater Management" by the Illinois Association for Floodplain & Stormwater Management; Top 50 Green Fleet Award for seven years running; Tree City USA designation each year of her tenure; and a Leadership Award from the Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition in 2019. Nan herself was named a Top Ten Public Works Leader by the American Public Works Association in 2018.

Most of her innovations combined the virtues of greenness and thrift: the village actually saves money as a result of them. Thanks to her we are doing well by doing good.

The memorial tree and plaque are located adjacent to the playground and naturalized stormwater management area at 2nd Street & Cumnor Avenue. This area was one of Nan's projects and exemplifies the combination of practicality, respect for nature, and dedication to enhancing the community that Nan displayed throughout her career. The Village planted the tree (a Shingle Oak) and PDHA provided the plaque.



*Village Manager David Fieldman paid
tribute to Naneil Newlon.*



Naneil Newlon's Plaque

The dedication ceremony was attended by about 30 friends and family members, including Nan's mother and step-father, Nancy and William Ford of Urbana, and numerous friends and co-workers. Ken Lerner spoke on behalf of PDHA and Dave Fieldman, Downers Grove Village Manager, spoke on behalf of the village. Attendees included PDHA Directors Chris Saricks and John Schofield, and Village Commissioner Leslie Sadowski-Fugitt. - Ken Lerner

Protect Your Heritage

PDHA Directors

Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance is a 26-year old, Illinois not-for-profit corporation with charitable group status from the Internal Revenue Service. PDHA's Board of Directors manages its activities.

The following people are PDHA Officers:

Chair Ken Lerner,

Chair Pro-Tem
Chris Saricks,

Secretary
Mark Bragen,

Treasurer
Gordon Goodman,
and

PDHA Directors:

Marge Earl,
Rich Kulovany,
John Schofield,
& Mark Thoman

We thank
Sue Farley for
her outstanding service
as a director.

Newsletter

Editing by
G. Goodman

Logo designed by
Kate Earl

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Gordon Goodman &
Ken Lerner

PDHA Sponsors Memorial to Betty Cheever

PDHA worked with the Downers Grove Public Library to create a memorial to former mayor Betty Cheever. Betty Cheever was honored for her lifetime of civic leadership. Betty was active in the League of Women Voters, serving as President of the Downers-Grove-Woodridge-Lisle Chapter during 1969-1973, as well as serving as a judge of elections for many years. Betty chaired the Downers Grove Plan Commission before being elected as Downers Grove's Mayor, 1983-1999. As Mayor, Betty Cheever played a key role in achieving public ownership of the Lyman Woods Preserve. A PDHA donation to the Library helped offset the cost of a bronze plaque, which will be placed in the memorial garden area by the Library's southwest corner. PDHA also sponsored a memorial planting featuring a Buttonbush, which will provide multi-season interest and support pollinators. A dedication ceremony took place on Saturday, September 10th, which would have been Betty's 94th birthday. The ceremony was attended by Betty's husband Lyle Cheever, representatives of the Library board and staff, and friends and family. Ken Lerner spoke on behalf of PDHA, and Dave Humphreys and Hilary Denk spoke on behalf of the Library and the League of Women Voters, respectively. A reception was held after the ceremony in a Library conference room.



PDHA Director Sue Farley, Library Board Member Dave Humphreys, Board President Swapna Gigani & Library Director Julie Milavec

Betty Cheever played a key role in the negotiations that led to preservation of Lyman Woods. Her work behind the scenes both with other commissioners and with the Village staff was particularly important as well as her role in negotiating with the Park District officials and Forest Preserve District officials to hammer out the Tripartite Agreement for management of the Lyman Woods Preserve.

Thanks to these efforts, Lyman Woods was saved from development and preserved as a resource for the community. It is home to more than 320 species of native plants including six that are classified as rare in the Chicago area. Its unique features include three separate oak savannas, extensive marsh wetlands and portions of two native prairie kames. A study in 1988 indicated it is one of the best remaining examples of tall grass savanna.



Ken Lerner paid tribute to Betty Cheever.

PDHA Sponsors Memorial to Betty Cheever (CONTINUED)

Today the Preserve serves as a wonderful recreational and educational resource. The Park District hosts educational programs throughout the year at the Interpretive Center and in the woods themselves, covering a range of interests and ages including kids, families, and adults. In cooperation with School District 58, the Park District hosts the Wonder Woods program, in which 1st through 3rd graders visit Lyman Woods for a full day and learn about woodland plants and animals. And there are many more programs ranging from beekeeping to forest hikes, campfire programs, and summer camps.

Kudos to PDHA director Sue Farley, who played a key role in coordinating with Library staff and in selecting and planting the memorial bush. Sue manages the Library's native species landscaping on a volunteer basis. Thanks to the Downers Grove Public Library board and library staff, for hosting the memorial and arranging for the plantings, the plaque, and the wonderful display, in particular Director Julie Milavec and staff Grace Goodwyn and Cindy Khatri. Thanks also to Gordon Goodman, PDHA treasurer, who was the driving force behind this initiative, and last but not least thanks to Lyle Cheever, Betty's husband, for his support for Betty's career and many achievements. - Ken Lerner



Betty is survived by her husband Lyle Cheever.

The Alliance works to promote appreciation, protection and enhancement of our community's natural and cultural heritage through education, advocacy, stewardship and community outreach.

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!

PDHA Supports Environmental Education at Lyman Woods

This year the Park District and Downers Grove School District 58 expanded both the scope and the reach of educational field trips to Lyman Woods. The program, now renamed "Wonder Woods," was extended to a full-day format, and the District sent 34 groups of students from first, second, and third grades, a total of more than 600 students.

With the longer format, students were able to really take a walk in the woods and see some of the different environments there – the hills, woods and wetlands – and the early spring wildflowers, along with the new displays and other educational resources at the Interpretive Center.



Wetland Animals: Duck Investigation

With the expansion of the program, PDHA expanded its support. We donated \$1,500 to School District 58 to partially offset expenses associated with the field trips, along with \$1,080 to the Park District to help offset expenses for additional staff and supplies. In addition to these monetary donations, PDHA supplied two taxidermy ducks – male and female mallards – to the Park District to supplement displays at the Interpretive Center. They attracted considerable attention from the kids! We are very pleased to see the Park District and School District expand this program, taking advantage of

the wonderful ecological resource we have in Lyman Woods. - Ken Lerner

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

Characteristics of the Regional Forest 2020

Forest Structure

The structure of the Chicago region forest is dominated by smaller trees .

MORE CANOPY, MORE BENEFITS

Long-lived large trees with large canopies are essential elements in a healthy, vigorous urban forest, given their especially high potential to sequester carbon, remove air pollution, and moderate high summer temperatures through shading and evapotranspiration cooling .

Removing Air Pollution

Trees and shrubs in the Chicago region remove an estimated 18,600 tons of pollution per year: ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter below 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂), with an associated value of \$192 million.

Chicago Region Trees Initiative Releases Tree Census for Downers Grove Trees

The United States conducts a population census every 10 years. For the last couple cycles, the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) has conducted a parallel census of our tree population.

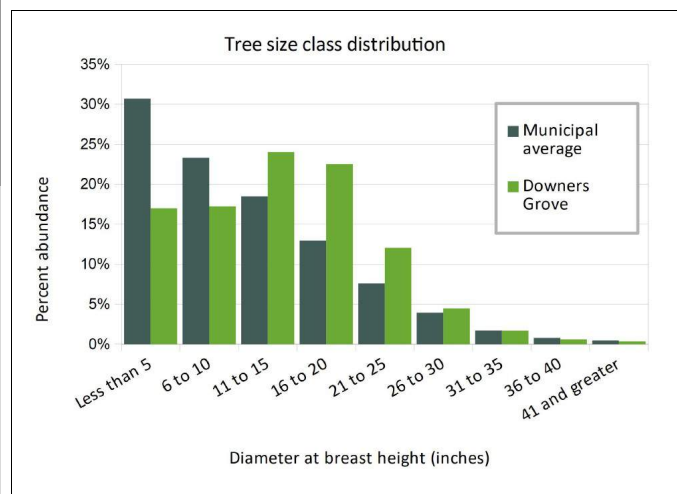
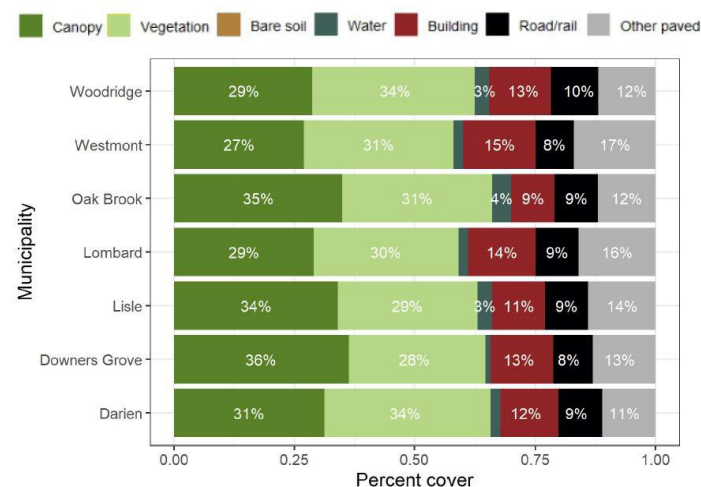
CRTI studied tree cover in the Chicago area in 2010, and then again in 2020 to identify trends in tree coverage, size, and species of trees. Distribution of tree cover and other land uses was studied using a combination of aerial surveys and on-the-ground surveys of selected small plots. An areawide report was released in April 2021, and town-specific reports including Downers Grove were released in August of this year.

The Downers Grove report showed 36% of total land area is covered by trees, with an additional 28% of green space (lawns, ball fields etc.), leaving 36% of land area devoted to buildings, roads, parking lots, etc. We are slightly above average in DuPage County, which as a whole has 31% of forested area. We are also the leader among nearby municipalities in tree cover.

The study found that tree cover in Downers Grove increased from the 33% estimated in 2010.

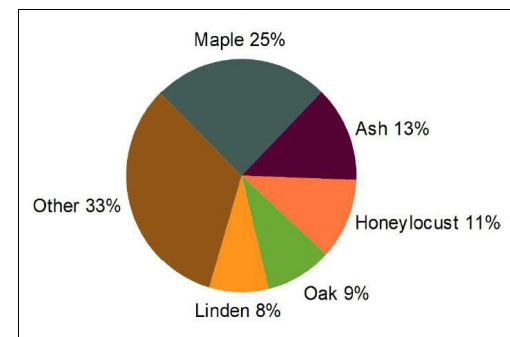
The study also looked at tree species and sizes, shown in the figures below. This includes both public trees in parkways and parks, and trees on private property.

Land Cover in Surrounding Communities



These charts show that most Downers Grove trees are modest in size, with about 58% being 15 inches or less in diameter; only about 8% are large trees (26 inches or more in diameter).

In terms of species, we have a lot of maples, ash, honey locust, oaks, and



lindens, reflecting current and past planting trends. The largest group shown in the chart is “other” which is mostly invasive species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. The study reports that “Downers Grove is overly reliant on maples and honeylocust, and should try to increase diversity by introducing under-represented species.”

Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CONTINUED)

Lastly, the study identified the benefits of our trees in terms of energy savings, stormwater retention, carbon storage, property values and overall health. Using the i-Tree suite of tools developed by the USDA Forest Service, the study calculated that each year, Downers Grove's trees provide the municipality with \$1,912,000 worth of benefits. The trees also provide carbon storage (reducing climate change), which is valued at an additional \$10,231,000.

The Chicagoland area-wide report can be found at

https://mortonarb.org/app/uploads/2021/05/2020-Chicago-Region-Tree-Census-Report__FIN.pdf.

DuPage County and Downers Grove-specific reports can be found on at

<https://chicagorti.org/maps/municipal-canopy-summaries/> - Ken Lerner

Reception for Formal Opening of 1846 Blodgett House



On July 14, 2022, the Downers Grove Museum hosted a donor reception to celebrate the completed renovation of the 1846 Blodgett House. The renovation of the house has been years in the making through a partnership between the Downers Grove Park District and the Downers Grove Heritage Preservation Corporation.

The vision for the restoration was to create a cultural center focusing on the Blodgett family, their lifestyle in mid-1800's Downers Grove, and their involvement in the Underground Railroad to help escaped enslaved persons to freedom.

The reception was hosted by Bill McAdam, Park District Executive Director, and featured talks by Park District Board President Cathy Mahoney, Recreation Supervisor for Historical Programming Felicia Camacho, and Charley Smart of the Downers Grove Heritage Preservation Corporation (DGHPC).

Mr. Smart spoke about the history of the Blodgetts in Downers Grove and the history of the house, which was moved twice – once in about 1890, to make room for the “new” (1892) house, and then again in May of 2008 to preserve it for public use. He described the process by which the house was saved due to the efforts and cooperation of Chris Salman, the house's owner; the DGHPC, a community group formed for the purpose, the Park District, and many donors large and small. About \$330,000 was raised through grants, donations, event ticket sales, and other fundraising efforts. The house is not fancy, but reflects the lifestyle and culture of the times. Mr. Smart also described some of the house's unique features, such as pieces of an abolitionist newspaper, the Western Citizen, found in the wall, where it was apparently put for insulation.



*Blodgett House On The Move
2008 photo provided by
Chicago Project Management*

Felicia Camacho noted that the Park District is excited to be able to offer school tours and public tours of the house. - Ken Lerner



Standing ash trees decreased by 46% to 7 million, with approximately 4 million either dead or in decline, leaving only 3 million healthy ash trees in the region.



The first opportunity to visit inside the newly renovated 1846 Blodgett House was on Saturday, December 14, 2019 when the Merry and Bright event of the Downers Grove Museum featured public tours inside the pioneer home [as described on the Park District's website](#).

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Pierce Downer's Heritage Alliance Fall 2022 Newsletter

**"We do not inherit the earth
from our ancestors;
we borrow it
from our children."**

— Chief Seattle

Check our website www.PDHA.org for more information.

**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.

**[Email us at info@pdha.org](mailto:info@pdha.org) to receive your PDHA Newsletter in its full color
digital version with live action links to additional online information!**