

The Grove Continues to Grow

The Grove is set to receive eight more acres of historic and environmentally significant lands through collaboration with the Village of Glenview, David Weekley Homes, The Redemptorist Fathers of Glenview and the Glenview Park District.

Editorializing in 1853 on the pages of the ***Prairie Farmer***, Dr. Kennicott urged Chicago and other towns to establish public parks and gardens:

“...our desire is, to ask the “City Fathers” of the new Illinois towns—and especially Chicago—if the subject of providing grounds for public parks and gardens has ever been seriously considered among them. Is there anything deserving the name of Park or Public Garden in Illinois? Not that we know of.... What then will Chicago, with her coming half million of inhabitants, do for some place of outdoor recreation and enjoyment?”

“...But to the point; what can be done now, to remedy the oversight in not providing sufficient public grounds in the original place of our Western cities? The authorities must secure the nearest, that remain unoccupied, and are suited to the purpose. Near most Western towns this is still an easy matter—worse for Chicago than most others; and yet the Garden City has still opportunity to secure grounds for parks and gardens somewhat worthy of her heroic appellation and prospective population.”

SECURE THE NEAREST, THAT REMAIN UNOCCUPIED:

The Village of Glenview Board of Commissioners voted on January 6, 2015 in regards to The Preserve at Glenview, a project of 48 new single-family cluster homes at 1111 Milwaukee Avenue, on the nearly 14-acre site of the former Villa Redeemer property: on second consideration, authorized execution of an annexation agreement and gave final approval to annexation, comprehensive plan and official map

amendments, rezoning to PD/R-5 Planned Development, final site plan review, environmental plan review and preliminary subdivision. Passage of the development agreement secures an additional 8 acres of land for The Grove.



The eight-acre parcel added to the 12.5 acre district acquisition in 2012, bringing a total of 20.5 acres of the Redemptorist property into The Grove’s holdings. The Grove site now comprises 143.5 acres of the original 868-acre Kennicott property. (Photo, left: *One Square Mile*, Donald Culross Peattie.)

PROPOSAL:

The applicant, David Weekley Homes, is requesting annexation to the Village of Glenview and consideration of an Annexation Agreement, an Environmental Plan Review, a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Rezoning, PD/R-5 Planned Development with necessary departures, Final Site Plan Review, and a Preliminary Subdivision to permit a 48 unit single-family cluster residential development.

Approval of the plan by the Village of Glenview will include the addition of 8 acres of historic and ecologically significant land being deeded to The Grove, a facility of the Glenview Park District. The 8-acre addition was a collaborative effort between The Village of Glenview, David Weekley Homes and The Glenview Park District. Through various means, 8 acres of open space would be preserved on the north side of the property to create an improved buffer between the residential development and The Grove. The Glenview Park District would hold title to the land. Transfer of the land is scheduled to take place by March 2015.

The Village of Glenview's Environmentally Significant Areas ordinance laid the ground work for the collaborative agreement. The agreement and resulting development represents the best example of why the Environmentally Significant Areas ordinance was enacted.

The plan passed unanimously on second reading.
(Photo, right: 1930s aerial photograph of The Grove.)



HISTORIC AND ECOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT LAND:

- Original intact ecological Grove land.
- Contiguous to the Grove's 50-acre Illinois Nature Preserve.
- Wetland and hydrology intact and connected to district's Illinois Nature Preserve.
- Upland forest complex tied to the wetlands hydrology.
- Contains shared wetlands.
- Intact soils.
- Natural history studies conducted 1836-2009.
- Eligible for Illinois Nature Preserve status.
- Larger site preserves biodiversity.
- Land Grant purchase by Dr. John and Dr. William Kennicott- 886 acres @ \$1.25 per acre in 1835.
- Land purchased from Kennicott Estate by Henry Flentye – 200 acres in 1870.
- Order of Redemptorist Fathers purchases 50 acres for \$65,000 in 1932.
- Original intact landscape of The Grove present.
- Potawatomi lands and village site.
- Setting for the novels *A Prairie Grove* (Peattie) and *American Acres* (Redfield).
- Natural history study area for "Catalogue of Spontaneous Flowering Plants at The Kennicott Grove" and "The Natural History of Kennicott's Grove" by Donald Culross Peattie.

Historically the land was a Potawatomi village site and then owned by the Kennicotts, Flentye family and the Redemptorist Fathers of Glenview.

RESTORATION OF NATURAL AREAS:

Restoration of the wetlands and upland forest will begin this spring after the land is transferred. The Grove's restoration manual and historic records will be used to enhance the acreage. The upland forest contains 100+ mature trees. Nonnative species will be removed, a burn protocol will be established, seeding of native species will be occurring, fences moved and debris will be removed. Restoration volunteers will accomplish much of the work.



THE REDEMPTORIST OF GLENVIEW LAND ACQUISITION:

The 1976 General Development Plan for The Grove identified a portion of the Redemptorist land for acquisition for the developing Grove facility. Although the acquisition was not successful, it laid the ground work for the district to again seek to acquire a portion of the property when it was marketed in 2008. Chuck Balling, Executive Director and Robert Quill, Superintendent of Leisure Services at The Glenview Park District, led the acquisition efforts. (Photo, left: Redemptorist property with mature trees.)

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND ANNUAL REPORT:

In 2012, the Glenview Park District completed its purchase of 12.5 acres of ecologically and historically significant land contiguous to The Grove, the park district's National Historic Landmark facility. The park district used the \$750,000 Illinois Department of Natural Resources grant from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and a match from the park district's Museum Fund to pay for the property. The money provided by this grant is earmarked by the federal government and the State of Illinois solely for public entities to purchase land for the acquisition, protection and conservation of public outdoor recreation areas. Recipients are required to match the funding they receive. The land located along the south west edge of The Grove was once part of The Grove original holdings, belonging to the pioneer family of Dr. John Kennicott and his descendants. The Kennicotts' work in the field of Natural Science, Museums, the development of agricultural institutions and higher education in early Illinois led to the designation of The Grove as a National Historic Landmark. With the new acquisition, The Grove now comprises 135.5 acres of the original 868-acre site purchased from the Federal Government by the Kennicott family in 1836. The newly acquired 12.5 acres is contiguous with The Grove 50-acre Illinois Nature Preserve. The new property's high quality upland forest and wetlands will also qualify it for Illinois Nature Preserve Status. The Grove Archives contain historic documents, maps, unpublished manuscripts and historic photographs of the acquisition site that will aid its interpretation and restoration.

“As natural areas continue to diminish due to development, this property is extremely important for the protection and conservation of wildlife and preservation of open space so rare in a metropolitan area. The Environmental and Historic features found on the site directly link this land to our National Historic Landmark site. Only a fence, now removed, broke the continuum of wetland and forest meandering through the two properties. Without the support through grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), this monumental purchase would not have been possible. We are extremely proud of this partnership and the efforts of IDNR in local initiatives that benefit all the citizens of Illinois,” said Chuck Balling, Executive Director for the Glenview Park District. (Photo, right: Shared wetlands, 1930s.)



The combined acreage acquired for The Grove through the district’s purchase and the collaborative effort will be 20 acres. In addition, The Grove will assume care for the Redemptorist Cemetery located on the newly acquired property. The cemetery contains 108 graves. Native plants will be restored in the cemetery and interpretive signage added. As the acquisition process preceded our relationship with the Redemptorist Fathers and their representatives continued to grow in a positive way. I am most grateful to count them, especially Brother Dan, as friends. I will miss them as neighbors but look forward to meeting our new neighbors in The Preserve at Glenview.

We have received a number of items from the Redemptorist Fathers to use in the new Archives addition and in the Interpretive Center. Desks, tables, work benches, cabinets and a vault door have been restored. The Village of Glenview continues in a most positive way to protect and enhance The Grove for the citizens of Glenview through their efforts and ordinances. A job well done!

In addition it is most satisfying to have a dream and goal of Dr. Kennicott, the Save The Grove - Frog and Fern Ladies, The Grove Citizen’s Advisory Committee and The Grove Heritage Association realized. Keeping dreams and goals alive for more than 40 years is what GHA does so well. The Grove site comprises 143.5 acres of the original 868 acer Kennicott property.

A most fitting tribute to Chuck Balling and Robert Quill, both set to retire in 2015, is the acquisition of the 20 acres of former Kennicott Land for The Grove. Thank you both.

Stephan Swanson, Grove Director