



April 2014 News Update for Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy

Pope Farm Tapestry 2014

Crop Rotation creates a different kaleidoscope of colors every year

The six different prairie restoration projects change their look each year depending on the species, the maturity of the prairie, and the growing season. In addition, the rotation of 5 of the crops within these constantly changing prairies, gives Pope Farm Conservancy a different look and feel every year. When you combine this with changing site lines during the growing season, you have an ever changing kaleidoscope of colors spring, summer, and fall.

This year will be spectacular. The soybean field at the top of the hill will yield a different viewing shed. The soybeans are a shorter crop, and all summer long you will be able to see across the Black Earth Creek Valley, take in a view of Lake Mendota, and on a clear day you see the water tower in Dane, WI miles away. You will also be able to view the Sunflowers below this field, and capture the sea of yellow as it seems to float beneath you.



As you walk down the trail to the Sunflower field from the stone fence at the top of the hill, you will get closer to the Sunflowers yet you will be able to observe them below you. From this area you will see the Sunflowers in bloom with background of pine trees and woodlands. In the evening the sun will settle over the tops of the trees at the end of the Sunflower field. As you stand next to the Sunflower field, on the other side of the trail, the North Prairie will offer its own view of forbs and grasses that will create its own splendor.

At the bottom of the hill is a new crop at PFC. Timothy is being introduced here. We were unsuccessful growing sorghum (too much ragweed), and we replaced it with timothy as one of our 7 crops this year. As you walk along the field of Timothy toward the spillway, you can enjoy the view of the Black Earth Creek valley, and touch the beautiful short grass prairie along the other side of the trail.

Walking west along the trail you will approach the CCC Spillway and be standing next to the field of Sunflowers. As you walk west on the narrow trail between the Sunflower field and the woods you will be impressed. On your right will be tall, dark green pine trees, and on your left will be the beautiful gold of the Sunflowers, making green and gold, just in time for the Packer season. The west end of the conservancy will feature the corn field in the North, and the winter wheat will occupy the South. The photos below show just how beautiful this part of the conservancy can be with the corn and winter wheat planted in this configuration.

Photos Courtesy of Jack Sherman



Corn field in fall



Wheat field in late summer

This is the crop rotation, and like a very light twist of the kaleidoscope, the colors and textures of the land will change and form this beautiful tapestry at Pope Farm Conservancy in 2014.

Thank you Dane County Environmental Council

Funding for oak savanna and prairie restoration approved!

Last month, we announced that FOPFC had applied for a grant in the Community Partners Program from the Dane County Environmental Council. This month, we are pleased to announce our first-ever grant award!! The Council will be able to provide the fully requested amount of \$777 to purchase a brush cutter, blades, shoulder harness, head gear, and shears for the oak savanna and prairie restoration at the Pope Farm Conservancy. Thanks again to Dennis Schenborn and Curt Caslavka in working on this successful application!

Prairie Restoration Burn at PFC

"Sometimes a new beginning has to happen in order for new growth and beauty to appear." - Janine Schenborn

Last week, five different prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy were burned. There is a very short window to burn this year because of the late spring, and the thatch must dry in order to burn it. We

burn the prairies for two reasons. First, prairie plants thrive better after burning (burning promotes new growth). The second reason we burn is to help control weeds. Burning tends to set back some unwanted woody tree and shrub species, and burning is less expensive than if the weeding is done by hand.



Above: Hillside Oak Savannah Burn (center part of the Conservancy)

Photo Courtesy of Dennis Schenborn

We will be burning the ravine prairie on the north part of the conservancy in the next few days. If you are driving by and see smoke coming from the conservancy stop on by.....it is quite a sight. Because wind and weather conditions make this a last minute decision, we will be posting information about the burns on our Facebook page as that decision is made.

View more photos from the burn on April 6th on our [Facebook Page](#).

Question of the Month

Did the CCC Spillway run this year?

No, it has not thus far. The melt has been slow and steady, and by the time we had a couple days of warm weather, most of the snow was already gone. The ground is saturated with water now, and if we have a severe rain, it is quite possible that there would be significant runoff, and that the spillway would go into action. Keep on the lookout for water in the ravine, and running thru the culvert under Blackhawk Road (by the ski club entrance). If you see water running you will know the spillway is working.....rain or not, it is worth the trip to view "the spillway in action".

Got a question? Please send your questions to info@popefarmconservancy.org and we will try to answer it in the upcoming newsletters.

Thanks for volunteering!

We couldn't do it without you!

Dennis Schenborn - Co-Chair Prairie Restoration Committee

Elaine Schenborn - Prairie Events Coordinator

FOPFC History Projects

Do you enjoy a challenge, love history, or are somewhat of a sleuth?

If so, then we have the perfect project for you! We are looking for volunteers to help us do a little research on the following topics:

- The CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) wing along Blackhawk Road. What was it, what was its purpose, and how did it work?
- The original SCS (Soil Conservation Service) plan made with the farmer when the CCC built the spillway at this location. How did they build spillways like the one at PFC?
- Capturing the CCC Spillway in action. Can you find any old photos of the water flowing through the spillway?
- The history and stories of the three farms that comprise Pope Farm Conservancy.
- The children who lived in the log cabin. Where did they attend school?

If you are interested in researching any of these topics or would like to discuss further details about our history projects, please contact Mel Pope at mel@popefarmconsevancy.org

Improvements at Pope Farm Conservancy 2014

Here are some of the improvements that will be done by the Town of Middleton to PFC this summer:

- Resurface the two parking lots off of Old Sauk Rd., and the road that connects them
- Re-stripe the parking lots
- Add a bike rack at the Blackhawk entrance.
- Replace dead trees where necessary
- Add trees along the Southern Boundary
- Repair trails along the stone fence
- Add Timothy signage
- Replace signage where necessary

Gate to the Upper Parking Lot to Open Saturday, April 19th

The long awaited spring is here and the gate to the upper parking lot will be open for the season starting on Saturday, April 19th. The gate will be open from dawn to dusk (20 minutes before sunset) until fall. The interpretive signage has been put up for the season, including the new Timothy sign, and the new updated "you are here" trail signs.

Friend of the Month

Jerry McAdow

Thank you Jerry! Your legal counsel has been a real difference maker. Thank you for attending all of our board meetings from the beginning, and drafting the bylaws, conflict of interest policy, waivers of liability forms and a host of other documents. Your wise counsel and your attention to detail have been superb. Your volunteer effort did not stop there. You and your wife, Carol, came out to the conservancy to harvest, process and plant prairie seeds on a number of occasions. Jerry, we truly appreciate what you have done for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Jerry!

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**Thank you for joining the
Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!
Our Journey Begins and You are part of it!**