



February 2016 News Update

Adopt-a-Plant Project

Help Restore a Prairie and Bring Back Native Butterflies

In efforts to bring back native butterflies, the FOPFC Prairie Team plans to plant some of the showiest native wildflowers (shown below) in the PFC prairies this summer. The list of plants includes but is not limited to:



Showy Blazing Star
(with Monarch Butterflies)



Wild Leek (with Giant
Swallowtail butterfly)



Purple Milkweed (with
Fritillary Butterfly)



Jacob's Ladder



Red Baneberry



Doll's Eyes

Many of these native wildflowers do best when started in a greenhouse and then transplanted to the outdoor prairie. So, we are asking our supporters to "adopt" a plant by making a donation of \$5.00 or more to help cover the cost of purchasing these native plants from a local greenhouse.

Your donation will bring color and beauty to the prairies. If you like, we will call you when the plants arrive so that you can plant them into the prairie in mid-June and early October!

How to donate:

- **By Mail:** Send a check of \$5.00 or more (payable to "Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy - Adopt a Plant") to:

FOPFC – Adopt a Plant, 10333 Blackhawk Road, Middleton, WI 53562

Please provide your name, email and phone number if you would like to help us plant the prairie. We will contact you about the planting dates.

- **Donate Online:** Go to our website: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/2016/02/adopt-a-plant-project/> and click on the link to make an online donation. You can use your credit card or PayPal account. Simply enter a donation amount of \$5.00 or more.

If you would like to help us plant the prairie, please provide your name, email and phone number in the comments section.

Thank you!

Education Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 23, 2016, 6:30 PM, Town of Middleton Hall

You are invited to attend the Education Committee meeting of the FOPFC. You can just listen or be a part of this great group of people as we work on ideas on how to teach the public about the land.

Self-Guided Tours: We are working on several self-guided tours for the public as well as a platform for training FOPFC volunteers. We would like you to use these brochures and provide us with feedback when they become available. The topics that are complete are:

- European Farming and Settlement
- Archaeology
- Geology
- Prairie Restoration

We will be working on several other topics that we would like to develop into a self-guided tour. In the future we'll add the tours to our website and eventually navigate to provide mobile friendly applications.

Seeking volunteers: We are seeking volunteers who would like to:

- help develop and write up additional tours
- learn about PFC and lead community groups
- assist with technology and documenting our local stories,

And more... you can help as little or as much as you desire!

If you would like to join the Education Committee but are unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday, please contact Mel Pope at info@popefarmconservancy.org.

Field Update

From the UW Soils Department

If you are one of the hearty souls that has been enjoying the Conservancy during the winter months, you may have noticed some strange plots in the north-facing field by the spillway. These are field research plots and are part of a study being



conducted by the Soil Science Department at UW-Madison in collaboration with the Pope Farm Conservancy. We are investigating how over-winter processes affect soil structure and how this might impact both springtime soil erosion and how carbon is stored in the soil. These are both critical aspects to consider in the light of changes to the climate and our understanding of soil movement. We are in the second year of the study and are planning for one more winter season. The results of this study will help to inform computer models that estimate erosion and carbon losses and will be presented at international conferences and within journal publications. They have had a great experience working at Pope Farm Conservancy along with the Friends, Town of Middleton, and chilly passersby. Additional details of the study and some preliminary findings will be presented in a future newsletter, so please stay tuned...

Also watch for some UW-sponsored interactive trail work being done this summer to further enhance the educational experience and mission of the Pope Farm Conservancy.

If you have any questions about the project or notice any suspicious activity or vandalism of the plots, please contact Ed Boswell or Dr. Nick Balster at (608) 263-5719.

Winter Hours and Activities

The Conservancy is OPEN daily from sunrise to sunset during the winter months. There are winter activities such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and sledding. The cc-skiing trails are around the outer perimeter of Pope Farm Conservancy and are groomed courtesy of the Blackhawk Ski Club. The parking entrance on Old Sauk Rd. will be open and plowed during the winter months. Photo by Jim Stewart



Question of the Month

Are you doing anything new in the planting process for the Sunflowers this year?

Yes, the farmer is going to try to do an interesting experiment this spring...



As you may recall, a large section of the sunflower field was mowed down last year. When the sunflowers are planted, literally thousands of 13-lined ground squirrels descend on the edges of the field and promptly begin to go down the rows and eat the ungerminated sunflower seeds. This has caused a substantial part of the crop to be lost year after year.

The Conservancy has thousands of these seemingly happy little critters. The 13-lined ground squirrels are one of the Badgers favorite food sources and thus we expect Bucky to remain in the Conservancy for quite some time, but there are way too many for Bucky to control.

In 2016, the farmer is going to treat the seeds with Avipel. The active ingredient in Avipel is anthraquinone, an organic chemical that occurs naturally in at least 94 known plant species. Birds quickly learn to avoid treated seeds and forage for other seeds and insects instead. Studies done by the International Crane Foundation <https://www.savingcranes.org/sandhill-crane-crop-damage/>, USDA and others have shown efficient protection of planted corn seed. This has no effect on the seeds other than creating an unpleasant taste and it has been used successfully in preventing Sand Hill cranes from eating ungerminated corn seeds. However, we do not know if treating the Sunflower seeds will have the same effect on the 13-lined ground squirrels.

Although the Sunflower field is beautiful, it typically has been unprofitable. Hopefully this experiment will be successful which in turn will help the sunflowers continue to be a viable part of Pope Farm Conservancy.

If you have a question for us, please send it to info@popefarmconservancy.org and we will try to answer it.

Friend of the Month

Karen Prochaska

Karen Prochaska is a very talented CPA, is an FOPFC board member, and serves as the treasurer of the FOPFC. She reviews deposits, issues checks, does the bookkeeping, and does the budgeting for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. She advises the board as to the financial feasibility of pertinent issues as they evolve. Karen is a great resource and her sound advice is very much respected. In addition to her role on the board, Karen has also been involved on site at membership picnics, Sunflower Days, and Heritage Day. Karen Prochaska has put in literally hundreds of hours of volunteer effort for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy, and has truly made a difference in our overall efforts.



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Karen!

Photo of the Month

February is a month devoted to matters of the heart. Happy February! Photo by Judy Peterson



Share your photos of PFC

We welcome you to share your photos of Pope Farm Conservancy for our next "Photo of the Month." You can upload your photo(s) to our Flickr page at <https://www.flickr.com/groups/fopfc-photos/> or send them to photos@popefarmconservancy.org.

Connect with Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy on Facebook

Are you on Facebook? It's a great way to share your pictures and stories with others who "like" Pope Farm Conservancy.

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy>



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

