



February 2017 News Update

FOPFC Applies for Grant

During these long winter months, some of the Friends are busy preparing for the 2017 season. Nancy McGill and Curt Caslavka are putting material together for a grant from the **Dane County Environmental Council**. This grant for \$1,878 is to supplement \$11,263 that the group has budgeted for land stewardship. Funding would be used to enhance the restoration of native landscapes for which the Friends have taken lead responsibility. These funds would specifically be used to help pay for burning the prairies (pictured below), and for additional professional help in controlling invasive species. A huge thanks to Nancy McGill and Curt Caslavka!



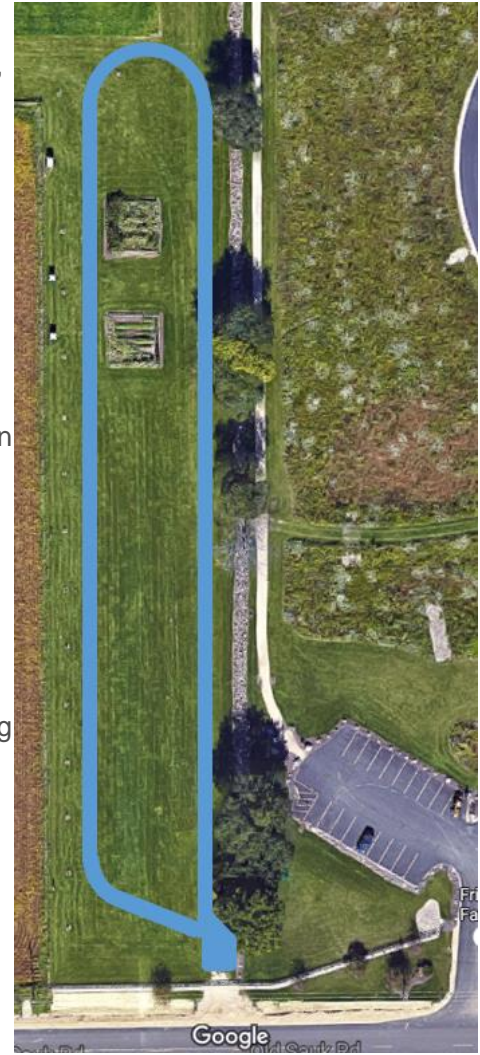
Controlled prairie burn at PFC. Photo by Mike Anderson

FOPFC Proposes Parking Lane

For overflow parking at PFC and Sunflower Days

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy are proposing a parking lane (pictured right) to the Town of Middleton. The parking lane would be 9' wide and be composed of reground asphalt. The primary reason for this lane is to provide parking access to 70% of the overflow parking stalls during Sunflower Days. Last year, if Sunflower Days had been held in August–October, the parking area would have been so wet (due to rain) that there would have been no access to about 70% of the current overflow parking areas. This, in turn, would have meant that as many as 1,100 people per hour would have needed to find parking outside the Conservancy. Given the mass of people with strollers and small children crossing and walking along Old Sauk Rd, the FOPFC board is concerned about the safety of these visitors. Putting in the parking lane would reduce the probability of that situation occurring and would continue to make Sunflower Days viable. However, if weather becomes severe, we would still have to close Sunflower Days until the weather improved.

Pope Farm Conservancy is growing in popularity, and at some point, additional parking will be necessary for other special events or overflow situations. The parking lane would make overflow parking accessible, and eliminate the need for additional asphalt parking lots for the foreseeable future. The FOPFC board believes that the parking lane as described will be more aesthetically pleasing than additional asphalt parking lots. The cost of the project would be shared by Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy, and the Town of Middleton.

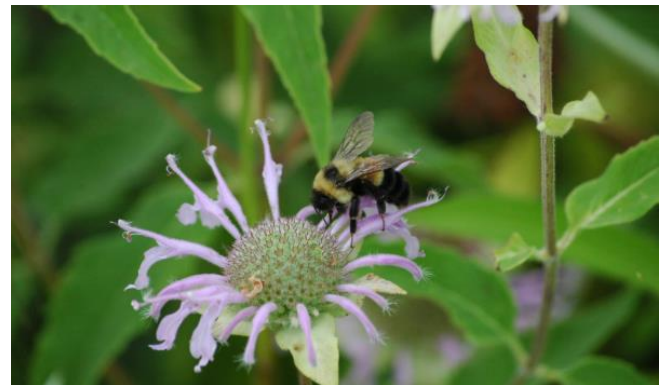


Rusty patched bumble bee listed as endangered species

The Rusty Patched Bumble Bee was spotted at Pope Farm Conservancy in 2014. If you see one this summer, please let us know at info@popefarmconservancy.org. We continue to work on building the diversity in our prairies to provide habitat for all wildlife.

This story is from United Press International:
 PORTLAND, Ore., Jan. 10 (UPI) -- The rusty patched bumble bee has been granted a spot on the endangered species list by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the first bumble bee species in the continental U.S. to be protected by the Endangered Species Act. Currently that designation is on hold.

The rusty patched bumble bee is native to the East and Upper Midwest, but its numbers have declined precipitously over the last 20 years. The bee's historical range is 10 percent of what it was -- 90 percent gone in just two decades.



Upcoming Events

The Urban Canid Project of UW-Madison

When: Thursday, February 16 (6:30 - 7:30 p.m.)

Where: Middleton Public Library, Hubbard Street, Archer Room (downstairs)

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy have invited David Drake and his colleagues from the University of Wisconsin's Urban Canid Project to present their research on canids, such as the coyotes and foxes, that share the urban and suburban landscapes of the greater Madison area with us. The Project researches and records canid activity and sightings. Project staff will talk about their findings and how humans and canids are coexisting in suburban landscapes. This project and the science behind it will help us better understand interactions that occur every day with urban canids. There will be plenty of time for questions.

This event is sponsored by the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy as part of its' monthly Conservancy Day series. This presentation is free and open to the public. All interested members of the community are invited to attend. RSVPs appreciated to: education@pheasantbranch.org



Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

You are encouraged to attend the following meetings to just observe, offer your viewpoints, or join these committees if you are interested.

Education Team Meeting

When: March 14, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Town of Middleton hall, 7555 W. Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI (across from the conservancy)

We will begin be working on the history of farming on the land where the conservancy is today, and researching the stories necessary to use for the interactive tour. We will looking at the history of the crops, ownership, buildings, non-tillable land, and the stone fence. These are great meetings! We hope you'll stop by.

Events Team Meeting

When: March 21, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Town of Middleton hall, 7555 W. Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI (across from the conservancy)

The Events Team will be discussing FOPFC events for 2017. What tours will we offer? What events will we pursue? This is a great opportunity to offer your thoughts, and to see how the team works. Consider joining this great group of people who have fun giving back to the community.

Call for Volunteers

Please consider giving back a few hours a month to make Pope Farm Conservancy the best it can be. Most of the work can be done from your home, and we will train you! Thanks for the consideration.

FOPFC Administrative Support

We need a couple volunteers to help the Board with membership and marketing communications, records, and financial information. If you can spare a couple hours a week or even a few hours a month, your help would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Mel Pope at mel@popefarmconservancy.org to learn more about this volunteer opportunity.

FOPFC Volunteer Coordinators

We are looking for two or three volunteers to help us recruit and coordinate volunteers for Sunflower Days 2017. Sunflower Days is enjoyed by thousands every year, and a strong volunteer effort is essential to the success of this event. The time commitment for this volunteer coordinator position is approximately 5-10 hour/week in the weeks leading up to Sunflower Days (mid-late July 2017). As you may recall, there are over 100 volunteer shifts to fill, so we need help calling members and past volunteers to start filling shifts. If you are interested in talking about this position, please contact Mel Pope at mel@popefarmconservancy.org.

FOPFC Newsletter and Social Media Contributor

We are looking for members who are interested in contributing an article or photo for our monthly news update, biannual newsletter or Facebook Page. If you're interested in helping out, please email info@popefarmconservancy.org.

Questions of the Month

Why are Sunflower Days Important?

Sunflower Days serve two primary purposes to the Friends and to the enhancement of the Conservancy. Sunflower Days has grown from being part of the crop display 9 years ago, (when it was little noticed) to what it is today – a phenomenon witnessed by approximately 84,000 people. It is free and open to the public, and provides a wonderful opportunity for families to come together to witness something good. The Friends provided over 100 volunteers last year to make this possible, and the Town of Middleton provided critical support. Its popularity among families is one of the reasons that this event is so important.



Photo by John B. McComb

However, there are other reasons as well...

First, it is the fundraising event for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. Although it is free and open to the public, donations not only pay for Sunflower Days' expenses (insurance, signage, etc.), it also provides funding to help the Friends pay for prairie restoration projects, educational programming and opportunities, other administrative costs, and future projects. These monies go directly to protecting and enhancing Pope Farm Conservancy.

Secondly, it creates a tremendous amount of exposure to PFC. When the Conservancy was created, the hope was that the land would be used and enjoyed by the public. Sunflower Days has been one of the major reasons that traffic has increased during non-Sunflower Days. Visitors at Sunflower Days come back to the Conservancy to investigate its educational opportunities and beauty.

Finally, Sunflower Days has not only become popular with the public, it has become critical to the FOPFC to expand its mission of making Pope Farm Conservancy the best it can be.

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

Thank you, Farmer Bill Hinrichs!

Bill Hinrichs is the farmer who farms the crops at Pope Farm Conservancy. The Hinrichs family has farmed in the area for over 100 years, and has farmed the crops at Pope Farm for about 50 years. Bill leases the land from the Town of Middleton, and through a special arrangement grows 7 different crops at PFC for our enjoyment and education. It is not an easy task to farm the crops at the conservancy. First, each of the crops requires different procedures and equipment at different times during the growing season. Wind direction, and many other factors dictate what Bill does during the summer and when he's able to do it. Farming activity is also avoided during events and busy times at the conservancy, making time sensitive farming tasks more difficult to schedule.

Bill has worked hard to be innovative in trying to put on the best crop display possible. As an example, he has had a problem with ground squirrels (gophers) eating the Sunflower seeds when they are planted. Last year he soaked the Sunflower seeds in a compound naturally produced by plants to protect their fruit from being eaten before ripening. It has low toxicity and low environmental impact and this process was developed by the International Crane Foundation. Bill did this on his own, and the Sunflower Crop last year showed a tremendous improvement. Bill also helped with the parking last year during Sunflower Days.

If you see Farmer Bill out the fields on his tractor, give him a wave, for he has truly made a difference at Pope Farm Conservancy.



And a happy field of sunflowers to you, Farmer Bill

Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder...you can now renew your membership securely online using a debit or credit card. Click on the button to the right or go to <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership/> to renew your membership today! If you have already renewed your membership, THANK YOU! As a member of FOPFC, you will continue to receive monthly updates on the Conservancy, bi-annual newsletters, notification of education tours and special events, and invitations to help us in our volunteer efforts. Memberships are good for one (1) calendar year from the last date of your previous membership. We hope you enjoy being a part of our community.



Connect with FOPFC 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!**

