

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF

POPE FARM



# CONSERVANCY

Volume 1, Issue 2

PROTECTING THE LAND AND IT'S STORIES

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

## Preserve the Balance of the Conservancy

BY MEL POPE

One of the purposes for the existence of Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy is to *“Preserve the balance of wildlife habitat, historic, geologic, agricultural, environmental, and scenic features of the Pope Farm Conservancy”*. Balance in the Conservancy is critical and it is one of the pillars upon which the Conservancy is built.

Many people have asked, “Why do you have crops here?” or “Why so many different prairies?” and, “Why do you raise Sunflowers?” The answers to these questions lie in the plan that was put together for the Town of Middleton in 2005. As part of that plan, two studies were done. The first included over 40 experts’ inventorying the land to determine its relevant and unique features. The second study analyzed all 109 passive parks in Dane Co. to determine ground cover and pertinent features.

The results of these studies were remarkable. We all knew about the spectacular view sheds at PFC, but the features of the land itself included: Three watersheds, three recessional moraines, a stone fence built in the 1800’s out of glacial debris, agricultural crops, a CCC spillway built in the 1930’s, evidence of Native Americans, and the recently discovered log cabin site. The land was full of unique features that had a tremendous educational value. This was confirmed by many school teachers who also toured the land and commented on the features we discovered in these studies. At the time, all of these features (Geology, land formation, Wisconsin History, Native American history, and Agriculture) were taught as part of the 4th grade curriculum in the MCPSD. It was as though the land was leading us to our conclusion: That Pope Farm Conservancy would be an Educational Conservancy and be targeted to 4th graders and grade school students. We would focus on this audience with subjects that would also interest their parents and the community at large. The plan was unanimously approved by the Town of Middleton in 2005.

PFC, as an Educational Conservancy, is interpretive, which is different than Natural. A major component of interpretation is variety. PFC offers 40 different interpretive signs that teach visitors about the vegetation display, history of the land from the glaciers to the present, and a Native American garden that replicates a garden from 1,000 years ago. Pope Farm Conservancy has become an educational destination for thousands of school children—and the rest of us that like to learn a thing or two.

The features identified in the original studies are anchored by crops and prairies. PFC has six different prairie restoration projects: grass prairies, forbs prairies, savannahs, and a shrub display. Instead of limiting the crops to the typical corn and soybeans grown locally, the town works with the farmer to grow seven different crops (including Sunflowers). Each of these crops and prairies present a teachable moment for thousands of visitors who see them each year. The combination of crops and prairie restoration provides the balance that is necessary to maximize the lessons available about the land itself. The Friends strongly support preserving the current balance of wildlife habitat, historic, geologic, agricultural, environmental, and scenic features at PFC.

The land lead us to the strategy of leveraging its features to become an educational experience for everyone who visits, and by preserving the balance, we insure that all of its stories can be told.

Mel Pope, Chairman  
Friends of Pope Farm Park Conservancy



FRIENDS OF  
**POPE FARM  
CONSERVANCY** 

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### FOPFC Mission

Our mission is to contribute to the enrichment of Pope Farm Conservancy as a community and educational asset. We strive to protect and preserve the balance of the conservancy’s unique natural, agricultural and historical features and volunteer as stewards to promote our passive conservancy.

### Contact Us

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# 4

### THE CABIN SITE

Settlers came from Mecklenburg Germany near the Baltic Sea to the Town of Middleton in 1857.



# 5

### THE GARDENS

The gardens fascinate and engage visitors of all ages: school children, parents, photographers, bird-watchers, and even the Conservancy's wildlife.

### EVENTS SCHEDULE



# 6

This fall a new event called "Heritage Days" will feature the history of the Pope Farm Conservancy land.



# 7

### THE BLUEBIRD TRAIL

The town provided funding for materials for twenty one nesting boxes along the Conservancy walking trails.

## Donate to Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation at the level of:

- Sunflower ..... \$50
- Rock Wall ..... \$100
- Oak Savannah ..... \$250
- Capital View ..... \$500
- Other

### Donor Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and your check (payable to FOPFC) to:  
FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Rd., Middleton, WI 53526





*Carl and Sophia Goth in front of the log cabin that was their home in the Town of Middleton. (Photo ca.1890)*

# THE CABIN SITE

BY MEL POPE

## IN THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

**A**lthough Mae Hartwig has been a friend of the Pope family for years, I had never met Mae until 6 years ago. While growing up I always wondered about a small pit in the center of what is now Pope Farm Conservancy, and I showed the site to John Broihahn who is the State Archeologist. Standing at the site, John reached down and picked up a small piece of glass that turned out to be pre 1867 dinner ware. The next day he confirmed that a log cabin had been at this location from approximately

1867 – 1890, and had belonged to a prominent farmer by the name of Fritz Elver. Mr. Elver's farming operation was located where the new fire station now stands in the Town of Middleton.

### MAE HARTWIG

My father suggested I talk to Mae Hartwig, and when I visited her, she solved the riddle of who lived in the log cabin. Mae is in her 90's and is the sister of Royce Goth who donated the land



**The Goth Amphitheater in Pope Farm Conservancy**

for Goth Conservancy. She had an old tape recording of Royce talking about great uncle Joachim and great, great grandma, living in a log cabin in the locust trees, by the Brumm farm, and Joachim worked for Fritz Elver. Mae also had a vast collection of letters, photos, and records of settlers in the Town of Middleton.



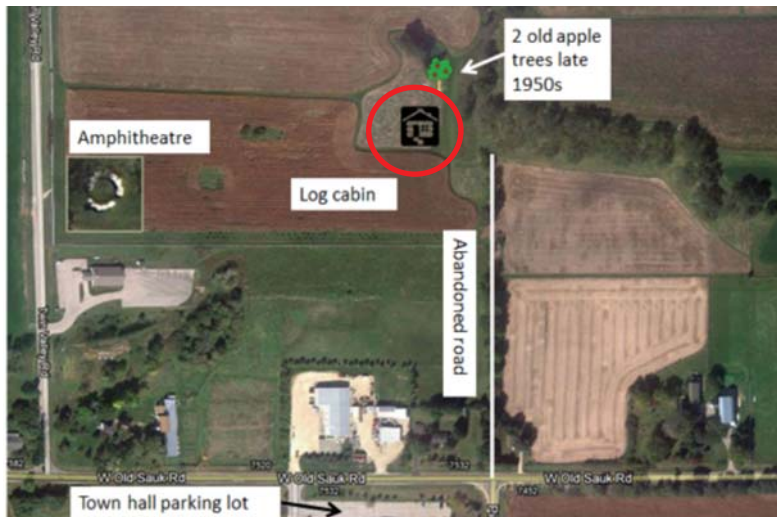
**Photo (left to right): Carl Goth with his wife Sophia (previously Stolte), his brother Joachim, and their mother Hanne Sophie Goth.**

Carl Goth emigrated from Mecklenburg Germany near the Baltic Sea to the Town of Middleton in 1857 and farmed below what is now the Black Hawk Ski area, and in 1866 he purchased land on Old Sauk Road where he commenced farming operations. In 1867, Carl's brother, Joachim, brought his mother, wife and a child from Mecklenburg and settled into the log cabin located on the above map. He worked as a hired hand for Fritz Elver and had nine more children. Imagine living with your wife and possibly all 10 kids at the same time in a very small one room log cabin in the middle of a Wisconsin winter.

## GERMAN SETTLERS

We enlisted the help of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They, along with the State Historical Society and other volunteers, put up three interpretive signs on German immigration at the cabin site in PFC. From the letters provided by Mae Hartwig, the Max Kade Institute learned that the Brumm, Elver, and Goth families most likely came from a small 15 square mile area in the State of Mecklenburg, Germany, and possibly knew each other back in the old country. According to the 1860 U.S. Census, 188 people living in Town of Middleton that year were born in Mecklenburg, Germany. We have posted the family names on the signage at the cabin site, and you would recognize some of those names today because their descendants continue to live in the township. You can view those names at <http://popfarm>

[conservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/German-Immigration-to-Wisconsin.pdf](http://conservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/German-Immigration-to-Wisconsin.pdf) the signage describes the dynamics of immigration to America. The Mecklenburger's settled in the Town of Middleton and built the white church on the corner of Old Sauk and Pleasant View Rds. Services were held in German for over 50 yrs. There is also an artist rendering of what the log cabin site would have looked like in 1880. In the corner is a photo of Joachim Goth and his mother who is Mae "Goth" Hartwig's great, great grandmother. Both lived in the log cabin. Currently, fourth grade students from the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District (MCPASD) are using the site to study immigration to America. There are plans to connect students from MCPASD with students from Mecklenburg, Germany to learn about immigration together. For more information on this story go to [http://mki.wisc.edu/Newsletter/MKI\\_Spring\\_2012.pdf](http://mki.wisc.edu/Newsletter/MKI_Spring_2012.pdf)



**Location of the cabin site in Pope Farm Conservancy**

# 2014 EVENTS CALENDAR

## THINGS TO DO AT POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

Throughout the year, Pope Farm Conservancy has a wide variety of events for members and the general public. Picnics to education events, Pope Farm Conservancy has much to offer. Keep checking the newsletter to find out more about events for members and the general public.

### JUNE

**Saturday, June 21 7-8:30 am**

**The Dickcissel Bird & Savanna Tour**  
*Host: Mike McDowell*

Join Mike McDowell for this amazing bird and savanna tour of Pope Farm Conservancy. The hike will take approximately 2 hours, so wear comfortable shoes for hiking and bring binoculars if you have them. If you need binoculars for the tour, please contact Mike McDowell at (800) 289-1132 or [mmcdowell@eagleoptics.com](mailto:mmcdowell@eagleoptics.com)



**Saturday, June 21 1-3 pm**  
**Spring Members Picnic**

The theme at the Spring Members Picnic will be "Seeds – In Dreams and In Nature."

Bring your family and friends, and join us for a picnic in your favorite conservancy. Please bring a dish to pass; we will provide the beverages. The picnic will be followed by a presentation from Mel Pope about the history about Pope Farm Conservancy, and Bill Hinrichs (who farms the land) will be available to talk about the crops (like the sunflowers) and answer any questions. He may even have a piece of farm equipment for you to see!

### JULY

**Wednesday, July 9 6:30-8 pm**  
**Prairie and Savanna Tour**

*Host: Mike Healy, Adaptive Restoration, LLC*

Explore the prairies of Pope Farm Conservancy with a restoration ecologist from Adaptive Restoration LLC. Hear the story of how crop fields and bare ground were restored to one of the world's rarest and most biologically diverse ecosystems. Get professional tips on how you can establish and maintain your own prairies, savannas and native plant gardens. Join us on this beautiful scenic tour. We will meet at the Old Sauk Road parking lot, and we hope to see you there!

**Wednesday, July 23 6-7:30 pm**  
**Native American & Archaeological Tour**

*Host: Dr. Amy Rosebrough, State Historical Society*

Dr. Rosebrough will show us:

- The Native American Garden at Pope Farm Conservancy
- How the Native Americans made tools out of stones.
- How Native Americans have influenced modern day agriculture
- The Archeological tour of the conservancy. This will be an unusual and interesting tour. Hope to see you there.

### AUGUST

**August 1-8 Sunrise to Sunset**  
**Sunflower Days**

(Actual dates may vary depending on peak sunflower bloom)



**Wednesday, August 13 6-7:30 pm**  
**Annual Pope Farm Conservancy Tour**

*Host: Mel Pope, FOPFC Chair*

This free walking tour of Pope Farm Conservancy will explore the history and features of the conservancy, including six different prairie restoration projects and a field of sunflowers. Come and enjoy a 360 degree panoramic view of Lake Mendota, the Capitol, Black Earth Creek valley and the terminal moraine.



### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday, September 13 1-4 pm**  
**Pope Farm Conservancy Heritage Days**

Take a hay ride around the conservancy along the Madison area skyline in a wagon pulled by a team of draft horses. Experts will teach you; how the land was formed by the glaciers, about the Native Americans that made stone tools, spotted game at the top

of the hill, and how they grew some of their food, learn about the prairies that existed here hundreds of years ago, and hear about descendants of early German settlers at the site of a late 1800's settler's cabin, see how the CCC and the SCS controlled erosion in the 1930's and how important soil is in our lives. Put Sept 13th 2014 on your calendar today!

**Wednesday, Sept.17 5:30-7 pm**  
**Tour: Saving our Soil**

*Host: Nick Balster, UW-Madison Soil Science*

- Learn what soil is
- Learn way soil is critical in our lives
- Learn what erosion is, and how we are trying to contain it
- Learn about the how the Soil Conservation Service and the CCC worked on controlling erosion at PFC in the 1930's. Is there a connection to the famous "Dust Bowl"?

### OCTOBER

**Wednesday, October 15 5-6 pm**  
**They came to America— German Immigration Tour**

*Host: Antje Petty, Max Kade Institute*

The story of German Immigration to the area in the 1850-1870's

- Learn about why they came here—"Push—Pull" dynamics that related to all immigrants
- Learn about "Chain Migration" and imagine yourself leaving your family and friends forever
- Learn about how they got here by sea and by land
- Learn about how they lived here and how they developed a new community in America
- Learn about who lived at the German cabin site at Pope Farm Conservancy. Join us for this educational adventure at Pope Farm Conservancy



**October 18th 1-3 pm**  
**Members Appreciation Party**

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU IN THE CONSERVANCY!**



Seed gathering activities.



## 2014 PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTION DATES

All are welcome to participate, but registration is required. For more information or to sign up, go to:

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/2014-prairie-seed-collection/>

**Offsite seed collection will take place at one of the following prairies:** Pleasant Valley, Swamp Lovers, or Noll Valley.

Carpooling options will be available.

Registered participants will be contacted prior to their session with additional information about where to meet.

### July

Saturday, July 12	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, July 26	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite

### August

Saturday, August 9	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, August 16	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, August 16	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Monday, August 25	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, August 30	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, August 30	11:00am-1:00pm	PFC

### September

Saturday, September 6	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, September 13	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, September 13	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Saturday, September 20	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Friday September 26	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Friday September 26	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC

### October

Friday, October 3	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday October 4	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday October 4	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Saturday, October 11	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, October 11	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Tuesday, October 14	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, October 18	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, October 18	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Friday, October 24	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Friday, October 24	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC
Saturday, October 25	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite

### November

Saturday, November 1	9:00am—11:00am	PFC
Saturday, November 1	9:00am—11:30am	Offsite
Saturday, November 1	11:00am—1:00pm	PFC

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR EVENTS

We have an ambitious calendar of events this year, and we need your help. We are looking for members to help coordinate food and beverages, help with overflow parking, and to be goodwill ambassadors at our events. Our goal is have enough volunteers where we can have people work 2 hour shifts during these events so that the volunteer effort can be spread over a large number of people. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact us at: [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE APPROACHING...

You will be notified when your annual renewal is due by e-mail or mail. Our membership is a critical part of all we do, and we thank very much for your support in advance.

# THE GARDENS

## IN THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

BY DR. AMY ROSEBROUGH

When Pope Farm Conservancy was in its infancy, Mel Pope came to the Wisconsin Historical Society with a simple question: would the Wisconsin Historical Society be interested in partnering in the educational opportunities offered in the Pope Farm Conservancy? Our answer was the first of the Conservancy's heritage gardens. That simple seed of an idea has blossomed into the twin gardens near the lower parking area. We have been blessed to witness the gardens fascinate and engage visitors of all ages: school children, parents, photographers, bird-watchers, and even the Conservancy's wildlife.

Twice each year, Fourth grade students with the Middleton-Cross

Plains school system gather at the first of the two heritage gardens. In the spring, the children help plant corn, squash, gourds, sunflowers, goosefoot, Jerusalem artichoke, and tobacco—a mixture of crops grown by Wisconsin's Native peoples ca. AD 1000. As the season passes, the squash and gourd vines cover the ground around the other plants, protecting the entire garden from hungry deer and raccoons. In the fall, students come to see the harvest and look at squash being prepared for winter on a wooden drying rack.

The second garden celebrates the diversity of Wisconsin's farming traditions. Last summer's garden was based on a model Civil-War era set-

tlar's kitchen garden. This summer's garden moves forward in time to reproduce a miniature 1919 market garden. In other years the small plot has recreated gardens planted by German, French, and African-American settlers, the Ojibwa Escanaba family, and the wealthy French-Indian Grignon family. Heirloom seed is used in both gardens. The harvest is donated to local food banks.

Each year has brought its own lessons. The drought of 2012 highlighted how well farmers in the arid grasslands of the Americas and Africa bred their crops to survive. While the vegetables in the Settler's garden required frequent watering to survive, the Native American crops

**Newly-harvested tomatoes and okra on the fence at the Settler's garden in 2009. The rotating theme that year honored African-American residents of the state.**

*Photo by: Dr. Amy Rosebrough*







*Fourth-grade students from the Cross Plains-Middleton school district examine the harvested Native American garden during the 2013 Fall Fest. Photo by: Dr. Amy Rosebrough*

and that year's patch of millet barely felt the heat. An early frost several years ago killed both gardens before they could be harvested. The Fourth graders who visited a few days later were greeted by withered and dead crops—a somber reminder of how quickly a promising season could yield to disaster and famine.

While tending the gardens, volunteers from the Wisconsin Historical society have chatted with a wide range of people. Some have questions. What is the flower that looks like fireworks? Tobacco. Did Native Americans really grow watermelon 1000 years ago? No—this past summer's faux watermelon were actually a type of squash. Young children are amazed when their parents ask to pick a sunflower seed or a leaf or two of an herb to nibble on. Some are being offered food that didn't come packaged from a grocery store for the first time in their lives.

Even the Conservancy's wild-life comes to visit. Many species of birds hang out in the gardens, perching on bean poles to sing, picking insects off of the plants, or sneaking a bit of millet or sunflower. A gourmand mouse spent one summer taking a single bite from the ripest part of each of that year's strawberries. A hawk once perched

Coming years undoubtedly will bring more challenges and even more opportunities to educate. In future years we hope to expand the selection of crops in the Native garden, including such forgotten crops as Erect Knotweed, Maygrass, and Little Barley. All we need are visitors and volunteers! So if you are walking past and see one of our

In future years we hope to expand the selection of crops in the **Native garden**, including such forgotten crops as **Erect Knotweed, Maygrass, and Little Barley.**

a few yards away on the wire fence and watched me weed, waiting for a ground squirrel to be flushed in its direction. This past summer one of the Conservancy's resident deer even respectfully toured the Settler's garden from time to time, leaving behind hoof prints and a few nibbled-upon beet tops.

volunteers weeding the gardens, please stop by and see what's new. Who knows—you may be offered a taste of the past!

## THE BLU

BY CURT AND ARLYS CASLAVKA



The combined tally of birds fledged from nesting boxes at Pope Farm Conservancy over the six previous breeding seasons is **578** birds—**345** bluebirds, **167** tree swallows, and **66** house wrens.

*Photo by: Mike McDowell*

In 2008, Mel Pope asked Madison Audubon Society for help in locating someone interested in creating a bluebird trail at the Pope Farm Conservancy. Because we are Audubon members who live in the Town of Middleton we were contacted. After walking the trails and seeing the prairie habitat at Pope, we decided this was an excellent idea and an opportunity to contribute to the Conservancy and to benefit bluebird populations. The town provided funding for materials and we built and placed twenty one nesting boxes along the Conservancy walking trails. Throughout each breeding season (April to mid-July) the boxes are monitored weekly to record nesting progress and to check for problems. We have enjoyed volunteering for this project, it's a good way to get some exercise and observe nature in a very beautiful setting.

Running a bluebird trail is not without challenges. In 2011 about half of the early nests that contained eggs and/or young birds were destroyed by raccoons. After some effort, we were able to solve that problem by making metal predator guards out of stovepipe and attaching these under the nesting boxes. These guards are available commercially, but are expensive. Other problems include English sparrows, which can, and sometimes do kill nesting bluebirds and tree swallows. Finding a dead adult bluebird or tree swallow in a box killed by a sparrow is a bad day! Insect pests such as blackflies and ants can destroy young birds. Weather related problems include late spring snowstorms, extreme summer heat, and driving rain

# EBIRD TRAIL

## IN THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

that can soak nests. Some of these problems can be dealt with if noticed early on, so monitoring frequently is very important.

The combined tally of birds fledged from nesting boxes at Pope Farm Conservancy over the six previous breeding seasons is 578 birds. This breaks down into 345 bluebirds, 167 tree swallows, and 66 house wrens. The breeding success for 2014 won't be known until sometime in August. At the end of each breeding season the data obtained from Pope Farm Conservancy is pooled with all bluebird trails throughout Wisconsin that are affiliated with BRAW (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin). This organization reports over 37,000 songbirds fledged from 8600 nesting boxes in 2013. For those interested in setting up bluebird boxes, BRAW has a wealth of information to get you started. You can find them online at [www.braw.org](http://www.braw.org)

We hope to see you on the trails at PFC and anyone interested in joining us as we monitor boxes is welcome. You can contact us (Curt or Arlys) at 836-1865.



**Bluebird box and Raccoon baffle**  
Photo by Curt Caslavka

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