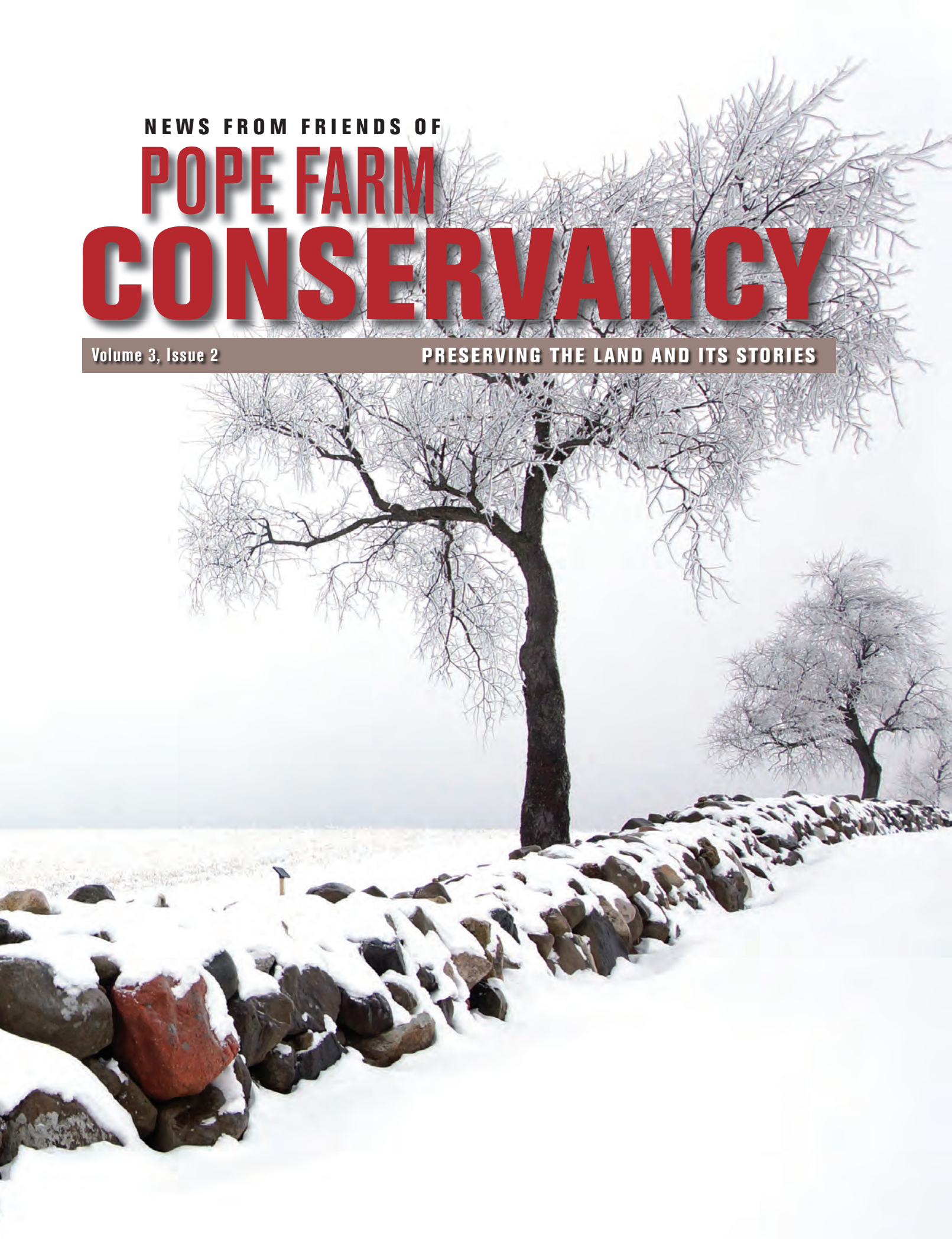


NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF
**POPE FARM
CONSERVANCY**

Volume 3, Issue 2

PRESERVING THE LAND AND ITS STORIES



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sharing the Fun

BY MEL POPE

Four-and-a-half years ago a small group of people decided to start the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. We wanted to enhance PFC, and were concerned with preserving its tranquility. Today the Friends have grown to approximately 600 members. The Events, Education, Homestead, PR, and Prairie Restoration teams are doing remarkable work. Sunflower Days has gone viral, and has grown to over 92,000 annual visitors. The FOPFC board has increased from 5 members to 11. It has been an incredible ride thus far, and we are looking forward to many exciting challenges in the future.



My role in all of this has been to work in a number of areas behind the scenes to help ensure the success of the FOPFC. FOPFC has grown exponentially, and at the same time I hate to admit that age is catching me, but that is reality. I realize that in order to continue the remarkable growth of FOPFC, it is important to train others in various areas of responsibility. I call it “sharing the fun.” I have analyzed all that I do, categorized these tasks into different areas, and defined specifically where help is needed.

The first effort I have looked at is Sunflower Days. What has grown from a simple crop display has become one of the largest events in Dane County. The volunteer effort to put on a free 9-day event like Sunflower Days has become too big for one person to organize. We are forming a Sunflower Team that includes the following areas of responsibility: Set-Up, Parking, Procurement, Volunteer Recruitment from FOPFC, Volunteer Recruitment from Social Media, PR/Facebook, Town of Middleton Support, and Events Management. I will chair the team, and my role will be working with, training, and supporting each member. Thankfully people have stepped forward to fill each of these roles.

The second effort that I have worked on is Publications and Printing. The Newsletters, and News Updates have taken a considerable amount of time identifying and writing stories. Posters and write ups for events and tours need to be done. I can say that my writing skills are not the best, and my photography skills are even worse. The printing piece requires layouts by the graphic artist, ordering, sorting, storing, and distributing the finished product. Invoices need to be checked to ensure correct pricing. One of the Friends has volunteered to step up and take on the responsibility of Publications and Printing. I will continue to be involved in training and helping whenever needed.

I am looking forward to “sharing the fun” in 2018. I realize that training will actually take more of my time, but in the long term it is necessary and will be rewarding for all involved. Thankfully, we have great volunteers who are willing to step up and offer their time. The FOPFC will continue its growth, and PFC will benefit from those efforts.

Mel Pope, Chairman
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.

Purposes

- Advance and facilitate educational opportunities and interpretive programming in the Pope Farm Conservancy for students and the general public.
- Preserve the balance of wildlife habitat, historic, geologic, agricultural, environmental, and scenic features of the Pope Farm Conservancy.
- Protect natural landscapes and grass trails, wildlife and their habitat, and the general public's tranquil enjoyment of the Pope Farm Conservancy as a passive conservancy free from commercial activity; motorized vehicles and bicycles; dogs; and organized sports that require athletic fields or open space.
- Through volunteer activities, support the Town of Middleton in the maintenance, improvement and general enrichment of the Pope Farm Conservancy as an educational and community asset.
- Solicit gifts, funds, endowments, and bequests to support these purposes.

Contact Us

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THE GRIGNON FAMILY

The land that would become Pope Farm Conservancy was part of an early and little-documented reserve, known to incorporate portions of the Town of Middleton and areas near Mt. Horeb. Pope Farm itself was claimed by or allotted to a woman named Genevieve Grignon.



THE PADDOCK OAK SAVANNA

A flock of sheep grazing among the ancient oaks once greeted visitors to the Pope Farm Conservancy. Today, instead of a sheep pasture, people can enjoy one of the rarest types of plant communities—an oak savanna—thanks to the hard work of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy.



THE HISTORY OF POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

It's quite remarkable how much has been accomplished at Pope Farm Conservancy in the past two decades, considering Pope Farm's rich geological, agricultural and human history. You might be surprised to learn that the Pope Farm only became a park/conservancy as recently as the year 2000.



THE NORTHERN SHRIKE

Sometimes called "The Butcher Bird," the Northern Shrike will catch and consume smaller birds, rodents, and even large insects when they're available. Even its Latin name, *Lanius excubitor*, means "Butcher watchman."

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

THE GRIGNON FAMILY

BY DR. AMY L. ROSEBROUGH

AND THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY— A WINNEBAGO INDIAN RESERVE?

On August 1, 1829, prominent members of the Ho-Chunk Nation met with representatives of the U.S. Government in Prairie du Chien. They placed their marks on a treaty drawn up by the Government, and at that moment lost control of the lead district of southwestern Wisconsin. Article V of the treaty (now known as the Third Treaty of Prairie du Chien) contains a short list of people granted one or two-square mile properties in exchange for the greater loss of land. Their family names are not Ho-Chunk, but French, and read like a roll-call of Wisconsin's fur trade history: Grignon, Pacquette, Brisbois, St. Cyr, Myott, Amelle, Thibault, Palen, Peyet, Gagnier, Gleason, and Lupien.

Despite their French surnames, each person named in Article V was of Ho-Chunk as well as French descent. During the early 1800s, the U.S. Government considered people who had both European and American Indian ancestors to be American Indian. At the same time, some Native Nations passed family membership along the father's line, and did not consider those whose Native heritage came from their mother's or grandmother's line to be full tribal members. As a result, people of European and American Indian descent were at risk of being denied payment when communal tribal lands were sold, and sometimes were not permitted to participate in Tribal decision-making. In recognition, U. S.

Government treaties sometimes set aside lands for the specific benefit of those of mixed heritage. In the racially-charged vernacular of the day, those lands were termed “Half-Breed Reserves”.

The land that would become Pope Farm Conservancy was part of an early and little-documented reserve, known to incorporate portions of the Town of Middleton and areas near Mt. Horeb. Pope Farm itself was claimed by or allotted to a woman named Genevieve Grignon. Who was she? Genevieve belonged to one of the largest and most powerful fur trading families in Wisconsin.

Their dynasty was founded by Pierre Grignon, Sr., a French Canadian who settled in Green Bay not long after it was founded in the late 1700s. There, he set up a fur-trading post and took a Menominee woman as his wife.

Pierre Sr.’s marriage probably was less for love than for profit. French fur traders often created trading partners by intermarrying with prominent Native families. Their children acted as cultural intermediaries, speaking the languages of both their mothers and fathers. Some remained with their Native families for most of their life, others were sent back to Quebec for formal schooling and military training, and many moved freely in both worlds. A few—like the first generation of Grignon children—became the patriarchs and matriarchs of dynasties that controlled Wisconsin’s economy, political life, and social leanings throughout the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Pierre and his Menominee wife had three sons, including Pierre Grignon L’Avoine (Pierre Grignon the Menominee), who was more commonly known as Perriche. After the death of their mother, Perriche Grignon and his two brothers were joined by seven more half-brothers

and several half-sisters following their father’s marriage to the daughter of Charles Langlade, the ‘Father of Wisconsin’. Perriche and his half-brothers—and their many children—expanded the Grignon holdings to create a business empire that stretched from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien, encompassing the fur trade, general trade, milling, and more.

Upon adulthood, Perriche married Chauwaukau (also known as Mary Dekorra), the Ho-Chunk sister of Chief Dekorra and daughter of the



Native American Tool (Replica from the State Historical Society)

famous Chief Spoon Dekorra, extending the Grignon family’s alliances to the Ho-Chunk Nation. Perriche and four of his children—Genevieve, Margaret, Mariette, and Amable—are specifically named in Article V of the 1829 treaty with the Ho-Chunk. The siblings were awarded (or perhaps claimed) lands including the square mile that encompasses Pope Farm and the square mile to its west. Genevieve specifically is listed in historic records as the first owner of Pope Farm.

It is unlikely that Genevieve ever lived at Pope Farm. By that point, her immediate family’s social and business interests were based in the young, but strategically-located community of Portage, while her uncles, aunts, and cousins held considerable lands along the Fox River between Portage and Green Bay. Genevieve’s whereabouts when the treaty was signed are unknown, but she is believed to have married husband

Louis Corbielle around that date or shortly afterwards. In or around 1830, she gave birth to her only known child—a daughter named Angel.

In 1832, following the panic of the Black Hawk war, a new treaty was signed that ceded Ho-Chunk control of lands between the Sugar and Rock Rivers, including Pope Farm. In 1837, the Ho-Chunk lost their remaining territory in Wisconsin. New reserves for those of mixed heritage were established in north-eastern Iowa. A formal policy of forced removal of the Ho-Chunk to territories west of the Mississippi River was enacted. In the turmoil, lands in and near Pope Farm Conservancy seem to have fallen into a legal limbo. Though unsurveyed and unregistered, they still belonged by treaty to the Grignon family.

Dane County land records begin the chain of title to Pope Farm Conservancy in 1848, listing Genevieve Grignon as the owner. By then, she had been dead for more than a decade. Her husband had moved back to Green Bay, taking their young daughter with him. There, she grew up and married. Title transferred from Genevieve Grignon to Angel and her husband in 1851, presumably as Wisconsin’s legal system caught up with the reality of the situation. It is unlikely that the couple had much interest in what was then a plot of wilderness west of the Four Lakes. In 1853, Angel and her husband sold Pope Farm to a man named Emanuel Boizard, and he sold it almost immediately afterwards to German and English immigrants. At that point, Pope Farm passed out of the hands of those who could claim descent from the land’s original First Nations inhabitants, and the era of German settlement began.

THE PADDOCK OAK SAVANNA

IN THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

BY MEG GORES

A flock of sheep grazing among the ancient oaks once greeted visitors to the Pope Farm Conservancy. Today, instead of a sheep pasture, people can enjoy one of the rarest types of plant communities—an oak savanna—thanks to the hard work of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy volunteers and student interns.

The area that is currently home to the restored Paddock

Oak Savanna has served different functions over the years. Never tilled or planted, the land was used as pasture for both beef cattle and sheep beginning in the early 1960s. From 1961-2008, the savanna was the site of an enclosed holding area, or paddock, for sheep.

Pope Farm became a Conservancy in 2000. The Town of Middleton asked Art Pope if the sheep could continue to graze on a portion of the conservancy, keeping the vegetation down until the Town had the resources available to develop trails.

Hikers knew sheep were on the job when they saw the sign: “Trail closed for manicure.” According to Mel Pope, the sheep sometimes managed to get away from their caretakers. “People loved it when we had to chase them,” he said.

As the Town completed more work on the Conservancy, the paddock fence was removed in 2009, and in 2013, the Friends turned their focus to planning the oak savanna’s future.

BURR OAKS ARE THE KEY

Six prairie restoration projects already existed on the conservancy. The paddock area provided an opportunity to create a different and unique type of plant community at Pope Farm Conservancy.

As with any restoration, the first step was to assess what was already growing on the land. “The presence of burr oaks was the most important thing,” said restoration volunteer Curt Caslavka. “To restore a savanna, you need mature oak trees already in place. The other parts of the community can be created, but not the trees.”

Pope Farm’s majestic oaks spread across four acres, and are about 185 years old.

Before the land was settled, savannas were probably the most common plant community growing in southern Wisconsin, but presently there is less than one percent remaining. That’s part of what makes the restoration at Pope Farm special.

The oak savanna’s steep



In 1992, Art Pope stands by the sheep paddock under one of the ancient burr oaks before Pope Farm became a Conservancy. This area of the oak savanna was planted with a variety of fescue grasses and served as a sheep pasture and enclosure from 1962-2008.



◀ **From a landscape that once served as an enclosure for sheep, the Paddock Oak Savanna today is a rare gem that provides habitat for wildlife and pollinators, preserves native vegetation, and gives people a rare opportunity to experience firsthand an important part of our natural history. Over time, the Paddock Savanna should continue to improve and provide a beautiful display for those who walk past. (Photo by: Janie Starzewski)**

decline was primarily a result of the growth of agriculture when settlers cleared the land. Another factor came into play as fires ceased when the occupying Native Americans were displaced. Savannas are not only adapted to, but require fires to thrive. Without it, over time the plant community can evolve into a closed canopy forest. Many plants found in savannas will not grow in the lower light levels found under the closed canopy of forests.

THE RESTORATION PROCESS

Since the Pope Farm oak savanna had been used as pastureland, the ground was covered with bluegrass and subsequently planted into fescue (no-mow) grasses that didn't provide many benefits for wildlife or insects. "We wanted to make the savanna much more beneficial to birds, small mammals and pollinating insects," said Caslavka. "There was nothing growing there we wanted saved—except, of course, the trees." That meant completely removing the fescue and replacing it with a new understory composed of native prairie and savanna plants. To start the process, herbicide was used on the one-acre site during the growing season in 2013.

The creative portion of any restoration is deciding which plant species to include, and perhaps more importantly, which to exclude. "What you end up with is where science, knowledge, hard work, weather and a lot of luck comes into play," said Caslavka.

Several species of plants can become aggressive, and over time these species may replace other more desirable ones. So considerable discussion by members of the Friends prairie committee went into selecting the species to be included.

Also, during the 2013 growing season, volunteers spent many hours gathering and cleaning seed from as many species as possible. Special thanks to Tom and Kathie Brock at "Pleasant Valley Conservancy" and also to Jerry Goth at "Swamp Lover's Conservancy" for allowing the Friends the opportunity to collect hard-to-find species at their conservancies.

By December 2013, with the fescue killed, the site was ready to plant—or at least that appeared to be the case. Prairie committee members created the desired seed mixes and combined them with sawdust ready for planting. With bare ground on the site and snow on the way, the seed/sawdust mixes were hand broadcast over the site. This job was completed in about two hours.

Friends had a surprise when the plants germinated in the spring. Within the restoration project, large amounts of Queen Anne's Lace, an aggressive, non-native plant appeared. Queen Anne's Lace is a biennial, so volunteers clipped it the first year, not letting any of it go to seed. The following year massive efforts by volunteers were needed to dig out the plants. In 2016, they repeated the process. "You need to have a lot of patience when you're doing restoration work," Caslavka said.



Mel Pope stands by the same tree in 2017. Since 2013, the Friends group has worked to restore the former paddock and pasture to its natural beginnings as an oak savanna. More than 120 native plants now flourish where fescue grass once grew.

THE PADDOCK OAK SAVANNA TODAY

Today, the Friends have completed their fifth year of restoration work on the Paddock Oak Savanna. For the most part, it is doing well, with weed issues remaining in a couple of areas. Each passing year, the desired plants have increased and with hard work the weeds have decreased significantly. That's good news!

Currently, there are about 120 species growing, including several special native plants such as yellow pimpernel, purple milkweed, poke milkweed, stiff gentian, lion's foot and Jacobs ladder. Friends volunteers take an inventory of plants each year and continue to add more. Their goal is to end up with a diverse mix of around 150 native species.

The vegetation will need continued maintenance, primarily weed removal. To that end, the Friends are thankful for their volunteers. In addition, they continue to sponsor five summer student interns hired through Madison Audubon's prairie partners program. These students work in all areas at Pope Farm under management by the Friends. And finally, this past year, the Friends hired a professional restoration ecologist who is also working extensively on weed removal.

THE HISTORY OF THE POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

BY JANIE STARZEWSKI



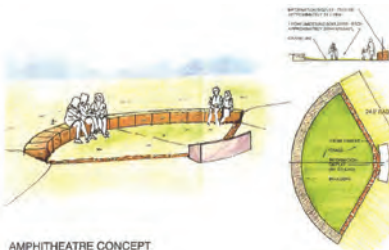
It's quite remarkable how much has been accomplished at Pope Farm Conservancy in the past two decades, considering Pope Farm's rich geological, agricultural and human history. You might be surprised to learn that the Pope Farm only became a park/conservancy as recently as the year 2000. When the master plan for the conservancy was being developed in 2004, it became apparent that the natural

features and unique attributes of the land would make for a remarkable educational opportunity. Since then, many features have been discovered or added, and the conservancy has developed into an educational destination for thousands of school-aged children and adults alike.

In this article, we celebrate the success and growth of Pope Farm Conservancy.

1999 Art and Betty Pope did not want this scenic property to be developed. An agreement was reached in which the Town would create a 105-acre park and protect it from development in the future.

2000 The Town of Middleton took possession of the land and designated 105 acres to be called Pope Farm Park.



AMPHITHEATRE CONCEPT

2004 In the spring, the Town appointed a committee to develop a master plan for the conservancy. The Master Plan is available online.

The plan leveraged all the remarkable features of the land into targeting grade school students for study and field trips. Included in the

plan were several amphitheatres, designed to seat around 30 students and serve as outdoor classrooms for grade school field trips.

The park would be free and open to the public, and it would be used for passive activities, such as observing nature, walking, photography, or picnicking, as opposed to organized athletic activities and commercial use. The plan was unanimously approved by town officials in the fall.



2005 Major construction began. The parking lots, roads, front gate, picnic areas, well, electric, porta potties, 7 miles of trails, 35 interpretive signs, and 3 amphitheatres were installed by the Town.

Many volunteers, including 6 professors from UW-Madison and other prominent historians, helped to design the interpretive signage. The Rotary Club and Pope Family donated the amphitheatres and the frontage display.

2006 The first of 7 distinct prairie restoration projects was started, the farmer planted 7 different crops, and the Wisconsin Historical Society and the UW-Madison Archeology Department installed two gardens to demonstrate the contributions that the Native Americans have made in the field of Agriculture. The Historical Society hosted its first 4th grade school field trip that spring. Then in August 2006, the Grand Opening of Pope Farm Park took place.

Grand Opening 2006

Erin Janssen and Mel Pope, left, and John Nuemann, right, put the plan together for Pope Farm Park.

Also that year, the remaining 40 acres, contiguous to the east side of the conservancy, were officially sold to the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District (MCPASD) for two future schools.



2007 4th graders from 3 different MCPASD Schools attend field trips for 2 days in the spring and fall.



Photo by Amy Rosebrough

New lesson plans were added to include geology and land formation. The Wisconsin Geology Museum staff, local naturalists, the Historical Society, and the UW-Madison Archeology and Anthropology Departments all participate in presenting the new lesson plans. Meanwhile, two more prairie restoration projects were started, for a total of three projects. Sunflowers are planted, for the first time, as part of the crop display. The sunflower field was not promoted, and few people noticed.

2008 4th grade classes from 4 different schools were now attending field trips in the spring and fall, and a Waunakee school began individual study classes at Pope Farm Park, as well. During the summer months, adult education talks/tours were offered to the public, free of charge. Topics included archeology, gardening, birding watching and prairie restoration. Mel Pope also led the 1st Annual Tour of Pope Farm Park that summer.

Elsewhere in the conservancy, one more prairie restoration project was added for a total of four projects. Twenty-one blue bird nesting boxes were added by Curt and Arlys Caslavka along along the walking trails, and a new amphitheater near the upper parking lot was donated by the Rotary Club. There were now a total of four amphitheatres.



TIMELINE



2009 Crews removed countless black locust trees from the ravine, despite the snow cover.

Two new prairies were planted, bringing the total number of restoration projects to five. And visitors to Pope Farm Park could still watch sheep grazing in the adjacent fields.

2010 The Wheatfield prairie was started, for a total of 6 restoration projects at Pope Farm Park. An additional adult educational tour was offered that summer, now a total of 5 tours. The Brumm Family donated the amphitheater on top of the recessional moraine, now a total of 5 amphitheaters. And the Max Kade Institute developed three new interpretive signs plus lesson plans for the newly discovered German Immigration cabin site.

2011 Additional field trips are added from Waunakee and Middleton school districts. Stevens Elementary School in Madison also began field trips with independent lesson plans. In the winter months, the Town of Middleton began grooming the trails for cross country skiing. The Blackhawk Ski Club would later take over the grooming of the trails.

2012 Sauk-Prairie Schools joined the field trips at Pope Farm Park, and an additional free educational tour was offered to the public, now a total of 6 tours. Perhaps the biggest modification that year was the name change from "Pope Farm Park" to "Pope Farm Conservancy." This was done to better reflect the mission of the Conservancy. Signage and promotional pieces all had to be updated to reflect the name change.

2013 More 4th grade classes from the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District were added to both the spring and fall sessions. There was now a total of 5 schools attending field trips at Pope Farm Conservancy. In the spring, a group of volunteers formed the "Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy" (FOPFC) organization. The FOPFC was officially recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. The Friends group began recruiting members and grew to 127 memberships (206 members) by year end.



FOPFC volunteers installed a rain garden near the lower parking lot on Old Sauk Road. The Friends also began promoting Sunflower Days to its membership and on social media, and an estimated 10,000 came to see the sunflowers that year.

In the fall, over 50 members and volunteers participated in seed collection and seed cleaning. Then a dedicated group of volunteers braved the cold December weather to oversee the Wheatfield prairie with selected species to increase its vegetative diversity.

2014 A new amphitheater was installed, overlooking the hillside prairie. There was now a total of 6 amphitheaters. 4th graders from six MCPASD schools attended field trips that year, and additional field trip days are added, 3 days in spring and 3 days in fall. Middleton High School students also engaged in an independent study project in the Wheatfield Prairie.

The FOPFC received its first grant from the Dane County Environmental Council, and used the funds for equipment to help with the Paddock Oak Savanna restoration project. There was now a total of 7 prairies at PFC, one managed by the FOPFC. That year, FOPFC members logged over 400 hours of volunteer time in the prairies and collected seed from 125 species.

In addition to offering public adult education tours, the FOPFC hosted the first Heritage Day event, which drew over 300 visitors. This event featured 5 presenters talking about the history of the land and even offered horse-drawn carriage rides.



Elsewhere in the conservancy, the UW-Madison Soils Department received a grant from the USDA to study erosion at PFC. After collecting erosion data in the fields and prairies, they would begin work on an "erosion trail" to educate the public about natural and man-made erosion.

A "Homestead Committee" was also created in 2014 as part of FOPFC to study how the 15-area homestead (not currently part of the conservancy) could be used long term. By the end of the year, FOPFC volunteers logged over 3,600 hours of volunteer time.

2015 The FOPFC grew to 260 memberships, comprising 480 members over the age of 18. FOPFC members donated over 4,000 hours of volunteer time at the conservancy. MCPASD field trips brought over 500 students in spring and 500 students in the fall, for a total of 1,000 visits/year. Two more adult educational tours/talks were added – now a total of eight tours.

The FOPFC Education Team also developed three self-guided tours for the general public and led 4 classes from Sauk Prairie School District during the summer months.

Sunflower Days brought a record-breaking number of visitors to PFC. It was estimated that over 60,000 people came to see the sunflowers over a 9-day period in August. Fifty-six FOPFC members volunteer to help park cars, sell merchandise, greet visitors, and answer questions about PFC. In the fall, Heritage Day attracted 420 attendees and included 6 local experts presenting on 6 different topics about the Conservancy. Also that year, The Natural Heritage Land Trust (NHLT), agreed to help the FOPFC do an appraisal on the Homestead property, including an engineering study on the barn..



TIMELINE



2016 A new interpretive sign about the building of the CCC Spillway was installed, and a self-guided tour box containing 4 different tours developed by the FOPFC Education Team was added.

The Education Team hosted 9 adult educational tours/talks, began work on an interactive tour of PFC, and recruited volunteers to assist the Wisconsin Historical Society with the school field trips at PFC.

The FOPFC Prairie Team assumed management of 3 more prairies for the Town of Middleton, saving the Town \$9,000 in contracting fees. FOPFC volunteers added over 200 native wildflower plants in the savanna restoration to attract more native butterflies.

The FOPFC also joined the Prairie Partners Program and managed five summer interns who log over 250 hours of prairie restoration work at PFC. A new Trail Steward program was created by the Friends, as well, to help monitor the trails and picnic areas for the Town of Middleton.

The FOPFC took over Sunflower Days as an event to help educate the public about PFC, and as a fundraising effort. Over 84,000 people attended Sunflower Days in 2016, and over 100 volunteers logged 2,200+ hours of volunteer time leading up to and during these 9 days. An extensive plan for the overflow parking was created to maximize parking capacity during this event.



Later in the year, the Friends would sell 5,400 lbs. of Pope Farm sunflower seeds to the public in one day.

Then in the fall of 2016, a beautiful new garden shed was erected by a local Eagle Scout troop with financial assistance from the FOPFC and others.

By year end, FOPFC grew to 513 members who contributed over 4,800 hours of volunteer time throughout the year. And the Homestead Committee began approaching parties to ascertain long term ownership interest in the 15-acre parcel that includes the Pope Barn and farmhouse.

2017 The FOPFC successfully took over the portion of the fall field trips previously lead by the State Historical Society. Several hundred fourth grade students from the MCPSD participated. The FOPFC also offered 6 adult educational tours/talks that were free and open to the public. The FOPFC Homestead Team continued to make contacts and assisted in efforts to preserve the Pope Farm Homestead property.

The FOPFC also received its 4th grant from the Dane County Environmental Council and now managed 4 prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy for the Town of Middleton. Five interns from the Prairie Partner Program completed 240 hours of restoration work, and FOPFC prairie volunteers log over 300 hours removing weeds, collecting seed, and planting new species to increase plant diversity in prairies at PFC.

As part of a trial project to help increase monarch butterfly population, 50 monarchs are tagged and released at PFC.

Within the conservancy, an additional self-guided tour box was added, and a new parking lane, designed by FOPFC volunteers, was installed. The parking lane improved the ability to handle heavy traffic during special events.



Photo by Jim Stewart

The FOPFC hosted its annual Sunflower Days event in early August. An estimated 92,000 visitors attended, and over 100 dedicated volunteers log 2,200+ hours of volunteer time leading up to and during the event. The FOPFC sold the sunflower seeds from the Sunflower crop once again to help the farmer cover his costs.

Dedicated volunteers from the Events Team were present every day during Sunflower Days, from sunrise to sunset.



Photo by David Peterson



What's in store for 2018? There's lots to look forward to in 2018... more school field trips, new self-guided tours, additional prairie restoration work, plus educational programs and special events for adults and families, including but not limited to birding tours, lectures about soil science and pollination, and the highly popular Sunflower Days. The FOPFC will continue to strengthen relationships with partners interested in preserving the Pope Farm Homestead property. And for the first time ever, visitors will have access to an online interactive tour of Pope Farm Conservancy, created by the FOPFC Education Team. In addition, researchers from UW-Madison will complete the highly-anticipated, state-of-the-art educational trail called "Soil Conservation: Soil on the Move." It's likely to be the only one of its kind in the world!

In summary, the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy hope you are proud of the conservancy's development over the years and all it contributes to the community. Many hands, hearts, and minds (and countless hours) have gone into making the vision of Pope Farm Conservancy a reality. The Friends have helped to improve the quality of the prairies, fund educational programs, and in some cases, contributed to capital improvements of the conservancy itself. We are so incredibly grateful for all those who have contributed to the success and growth of this truly extraordinary place.



THE NORTHERN SHRIKE

AT POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

BY MIKE MCDOWELL

Now that cold weather has settled into southern Wisconsin, songbird migration has come to a close. By now Pope Farm Conservancy's warblers, flycatchers, vireos, orioles, and other summer birds are well to our south. We'll share the remainder of fall and winter with Snow Buntings, Black-capped Chickadees, American Tree Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos.

While these and other small winter birds can endure Wisconsin's winter chill, they'll need to be on the alert for predators like Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks. However, there's one bird that isn't a raptor that they'll also need to be wary of if they're to survive all the way to spring migration. Surprisingly, this ferocious feathered predator is also a songbird.

Sometimes called "The Butcher Bird," the Northern Shrike will catch and consume smaller birds, rodents, and even large insects when they're available. Even its Latin name, *Lanius excubitor*, means "Butcher watchman."

How did they get such a bad rap? Before it was known that shrikes cache food as an adaptation for sur-

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living periods of food scarcity, they were thought to be wanton killers. Should you find a thorny bush or barbed fence decorated with deceased

small rodents and birds, it's likely the cache (or larder) belonging to a shrike.

The Northern Shrike is a medium-sized songbird, mostly gray with black wings, tail, and a neat black mask. When they fly you can see that they have white wing patch and white outer tail feathers. They have a hooked upper mandible (bill) that they use to tear apart their prey. On either side of the hook there is a smaller falcon-like tooth (tomium) that also helps them cut and rip apart flesh.

The time to observe Northern Shrikes runs from late October until the middle of March. About the time American Robins return to our backyards, the shrikes are well on their way back to northern Canada. They breed in open country with shrubby habitat in the taiga and tundra. Northern Shrikes aren't especially common at Pope Farm Conservancy, but you can occasionally find them perched on short trees or fence lines as they hunt flocks of sparrows or finches.



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