



February 2018 News Update

Sunflower Days 2018

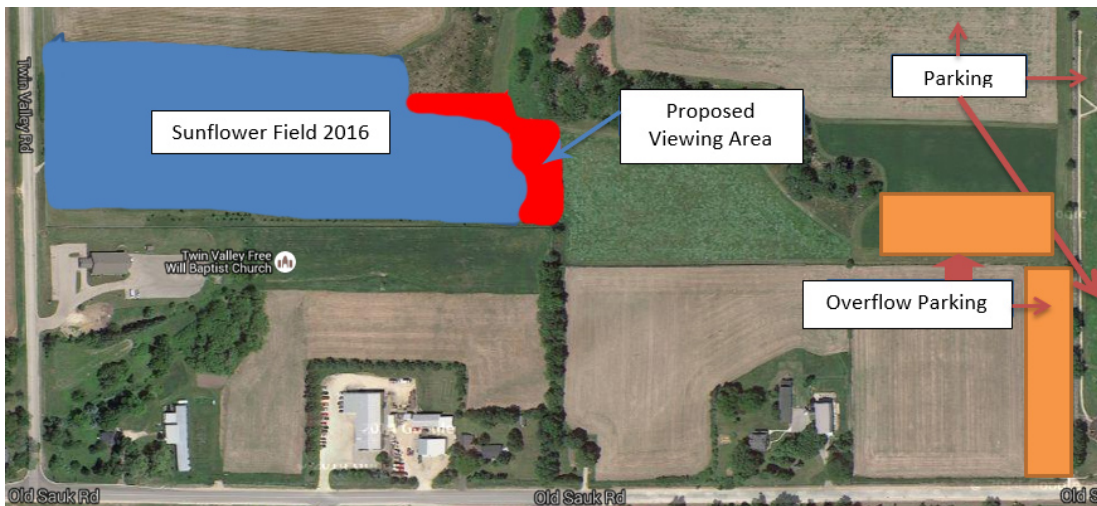
Scheduled for July 28 – August 5, 2018

Mark your calendar for this year's Sunflower Days, scheduled for Saturday, July 28th through Sunday, August 5th, 2018!

More than 92,000 people viewed the sunflowers over a nine-day period in 2017, making it one of the largest family-oriented events in southern Wisconsin. For many families, Sunflower Days is now an annual tradition. Over 100 Friends volunteers worked to make the event possible and the Town of Middleton provided critical support. The Friends also appreciated support from the Park Commission and the Town Board.



Each year, the sunflower crop needs to be rotated for soil health. In 2018, it will be located in the southwest corner of the conservancy, as shown below.



Sunflower Days will have a special purpose this year!

Sunflower Days is the Friends main fundraising event, and donations are used to pay the expenses involved in holding it and to support other projects, such as prairie restoration, interpretive signs and educational programs. It is the intent of the FOPFC Board that, beginning this year, donations collected during Sunflower Days will be used to help preserve the Homestead—the 15 acres that include the iconic white barn. Stay tuned for more on efforts to preserve the Homestead as we continue planning for Sunflower Days!

Legislation Permitting Drones in the Conservancy

We need your help to oppose legislation that would allow drones to fly in Pope Farm Conservancy.

The Town of Middleton Park Use Rules currently prohibits motorized/radio controlled aircraft in all Town park and recreation properties. But new proposed legislation would allow drones to fly in Pope Farm Conservancy. Assembly Bill 855 and Senate Bill 701 would not allow the Town of Middleton to restrict the use of drones in the conservancy, including during Sunflower Days.



Nearly 100,000 people visited Sunflower Days last year. It was a wonderful family event and one of the greatest photo opportunities in the state. The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy limit the height of photographic equipment so that it does not appear above the sunflower field, ruining opportunities for the perfect shot. If drones are allowed, they will undoubtedly appear in thousands of photographs. The drones also create a lot of noise, scare off birds and wildlife, and affect the tranquil nature of the conservancy. We need your help to oppose this legislation. Specifically, the Town of Middleton needs to retain its authority to regulate drone operation in the conservancy.

Please contact your representatives to indicate your opposition to AB 855 and SB 701. In the Assembly, AB 855 was introduced in the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. The Chair of that committee is Representative John Spiros. His contact information is:

Representative John Spiros
Room 15 North Capitol
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708
Phone: (608) 266-1182; Email: Rep.Spiros@legis.wisconsin.gov

In the Senate, SB 701 was introduced in the Senate Government Operations, Technology and Consumer Protection Committee. The Chair of that committee is Senator Duey Stroebel. His contact information is:

Senator Duey Stroebel
Room 18 South Capitol
P. O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882
Phone: (608) 266-7513; Email: Sen.Stroebel@legis.wisconsin.gov

Thank you for your attention and help in this important issue affecting the conservancy. Time is of the essence!

FOPFC Applies for Dane County Environmental Council Grant

The Friends are applying for a \$2,500 grant for a DR Brush Mower. This grant is through the Dane County Environmental Council, and is matched by approximately \$12,240 of FOPFC volunteer time (valued at \$13 per hour), and dollars committed to Prairie Restoration. The mower would be used to mow the west part of the ravine so it could be viewed; along the edges of prairies to control weeds; and to control weeds in peripheral areas in the Conservancy when necessary. Many thanks to Curt Caslavka, and Nancy McGill for working on this grant application!



Teaching Collection Gains Native American Hoe



Thanks to Jerry Goth, the teaching collection of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy has grown by one more item. Mr. Goth, a skilled flint-knapper, has kindly recreated a short-handled hoe of the type used by American Indian residents of Wisconsin around AD 1000. The chipped stone blade is made from strong but attractive white orthoquartzite from Jackson County, Wisconsin, and is hafted onto a wooden handle. This object, like others in the growing teaching collection, will be available for 4th grade students to examine during the upcoming Spring Fling event in the Conservancy.

—Dr. Amy Rosebrough

Upcoming FOPFC meetings

There is no shortage of ways to get involved with the FOPFC. We welcome everyone to attend the following meetings to observe, offer your viewpoints, or to join these committees if you are interested.

Events Team Meeting

When: February 20, 2018, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

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

Discussion Topics: The Events Team will be finalizing the Tour calendar with topics and speakers. Discussion on t-shirts and other retail items for Sunflower Days. Please stop in and share your thoughts & ideas!

Education Team Meeting

When: Thursday, February 22nd, 2018, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

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

Topics: Seeking help with the production of the German Immigration stories, researching the history of the land, including ownership, crops, buildings, and other interesting features.

Winter at Pope Farm Conservancy

Just a reminder... The Conservancy is OPEN daily from sunrise to sunset during the winter months. Visitors are welcome to come and enjoy winter activities, such as snow shoeing, cross country skiing, hiking, sledding, and photography. If there is enough snow on the ground, the trails will be groomed for cross-country skiing. The Old Sauk Road entrance will be plowed throughout the winter. Please walk off to the side of the groomed trails so they remain intact for the cross-country skiers. Thank you for your cooperation!

Snowshoeing Group

Winter at Pope Farm Conservancy is not only beautiful but quiet and peaceful. Several members of the Events Committee are interested in starting a snowshoeing group when weather permits. A six-inch snow base is necessary so as not to damage the shoe bottom or clamps. Anyone interested meet in the lower parking area at 1:00 p.m. on the designated day. Actual date(s) will be posted on Facebook as quickly as possible given snow conditions. Mother Nature thus far has not cooperated weather-wise, so any outing will be spur of the moment. After our stroll through the Conservancy, join us for coffee or hot chocolate at Barriques on Old Sauk Rd.



Watch for postings and THINK SNOW!!!

The Blackhawk Prairie in Winter



If you've visited the Conservancy lately, you might have noticed that the Blackhawk Prairie has taken on a reddish- brown hue. According to Friends volunteer Curt Caslavka, most of this color is due to the little bluestem grass that grows on the prairie. The other two grasses in this prairie are dropseed and side oats grama. Depending on the light and the time of year, this prairie can often take on a reddish-brown coloring. Check out this unique sight at the Pope Farm Conservancy this winter!

Question of the Month

Question: What are the Friends doing during these cold winter months?

Answer: Lots! We estimated that in 2017 we put in 1,200 hours of volunteer effort to *plan* for Sunflower Days. Currently we have different teams looking at Parking, Set-Up, and Procurement. The Events team is looking at t-shirts, and other retail items to be sold during Sunflower Days, and another team is looking for Corporate Donations. The Education team is researching stories of the land, and working on bringing those stories to life on the internet. A new interpretive sign has been created, and now it has moved on to the graphic artist. Approvals are being sought from the Town of Middleton for our efforts in Prairie Management, Education, and Sunflower Days. The Homestead team is working on long-term protection of the property. This is a special year because of the training that is taking place throughout the organization. Calendars for public relations and printing are being constructed for 2018. You are welcome to join in any of these efforts... lots of great people, and a great time to "give back" to your community. Please see the schedule of when these teams are meeting above.

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

Doug Piper

Doug Piper has helped the Friends in so many ways, and his volunteer efforts have been significant and diverse. Doug is on the FOPFC board and is the team leader for our Education group. As such, he has been instrumental in working on the historical stories that will be put on the FOPFC website. This multi-year project will enable people who are walking in the Conservancy to access additional information about significant features of PFC through their hand-held devices.

Doug is also one of the parking supervisors during Sunflower Days and has put in multiple shifts managing the parking process. His help was key last summer as we parked over 27,000 vehicles. Doug has also volunteered to help in the prairies. He has worked on both our weeding and seed collection efforts. Doug's volunteer effort has helped in many different ways, and he has certainly had a positive impact on the success of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy! Doug, here is a huge "thank you" from all of us!



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Doug!

Photos of the Month

By Janie Starzewski

Just when it seemed like the snow would never let up this past weekend, the skies cleared and the sun came out. I couldn't help but drive over to PFC to snap a few photos of the newly fallen snow. With temperatures right around 10 degrees and a wind chill well below zero, I only made it to the top of the hill before my camera's battery called it quits. Here are a few photos from my brief visit that day:



Connect with FOPFC online

Website: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org>

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

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/groups/fopfc-photos>

**Thank you for supporting the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!
Our journey is ongoing and you are part of it!**