



## March 2018 News Update

### The Spillway Runs

#### A rare sight at the Conservancy...

This spillway was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1938 and it still works perfectly today. On February 20th, the rain water had nowhere to go because of the frozen ground. Barbara Esser saw water coming down through the ravine and going under the culvert under Blackhawk Road. She braved the ice-covered hike up to the spillway and captured this rare photo. Frozen ground, heavy snow cover, rain and temperature have to align for this to happen. The spillway runs like this every 4–5 years, and thanks to Barbara, we have this photo.

We would also like thank the boys from the CCC who built the spillway in 1938. They were called the "Soil Soldiers."



Soil Soldiers at the current Pope Farm Conservancy Spillway in 1938

## NEW Paddock Oak Savanna Interpretive Sign

### Coming Soon!

This spring, a new interpretive sign will mark the site of the restored Paddock Oak Savanna at the Pope Farm Conservancy. Thanks to Friends volunteers and student interns who worked over five years to restore this rare historic landscape, visitors can now experience a plant community that once covered 5.5 million acres. Today, only 1% of oak savannas remain, making them one of the most threatened plant communities in the Midwest.



The area that is home to the Paddock Oak Savanna was never tilled for agriculture and served different functions over the years. The land was used as pasture for beef cattle and sheep starting in the early 1960s, and later planted to no-mow fescue grass.

From 2000 until 2009, the savanna was the site of an enclosed holding area, or paddock, for sheep.

In 2013, the Friends began their restoration work.



Volunteers created an understory in the oak savanna filled with native prairie and savanna plants (pictured above). The Conservancy's 185-year-old oaks are "open-grown," allowing sunlight to reach the ground, which is key to the formation of an oak savanna plant community. Sun-loving prairie plants, such as spiderwort, pale purple coneflower and rough blazing star, now grow in the savanna. And shade-tolerant plants, for example, poke milkweed, purple milkweed and yellow pimpernel, can be found under tree branches. Oak savannas also provide unique habitat for animals, including nesting sites for birds and wildlife food in the form of acorns.

Stop by to check out our new interpretive sign this spring and learn more about why our Paddock Oak Savanna is so special.

## 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:** March 29th, 2018, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** 751 Cricket Lane, Madison, WI (just down the road 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:** Tuesday, March 20th, 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:** Working with MATC to help bring our stories alive, researching the history of the land, including ownership, crops, buildings, and other interesting features.

## Comment on pending drone legislation before March 20

We recently sent our members information about legislation that would permit drones in the 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 over 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.



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 wildlife, and affect the tranquil nature of the conservancy.

There's still time to contact your state senator to tell them you oppose Senate Bill 701/Assembly Bill 855. Phone, write or e-mail them **before March 20**.

If you do not know who your State Senator is, go to <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

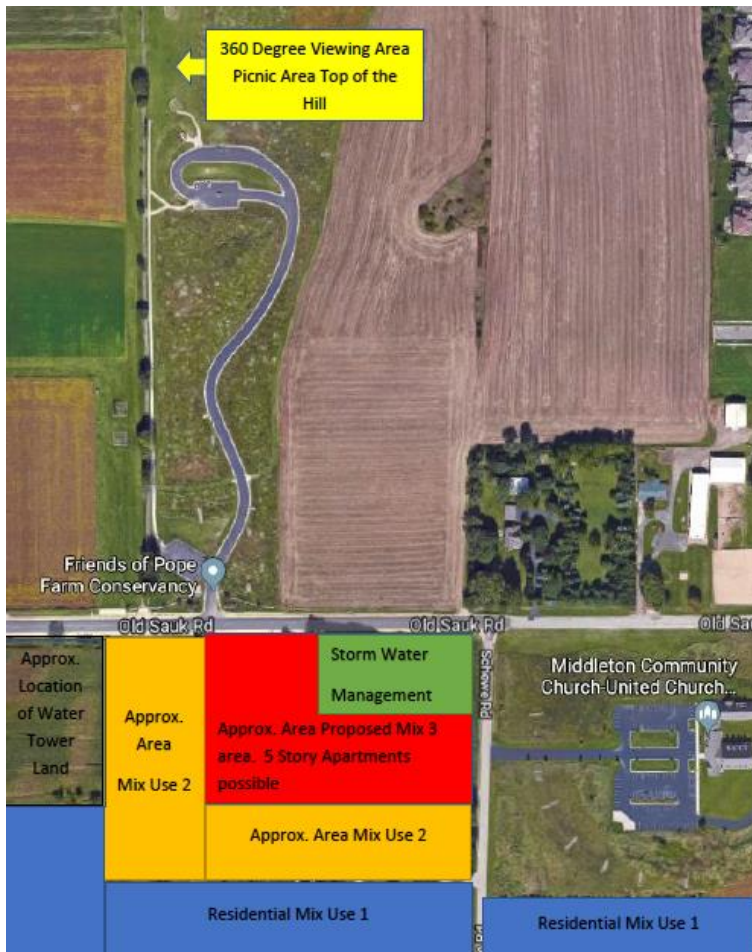
Find contact information here:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/legislators/senate>

Thank you for your support!

## Question of the Month

Question: What type of development is being proposed across the street from PFC?



**Answer:** Apartment buildings and other multi-family units could soon dominate the view north from PFC, and produce a huge influx of abutting housing if the new "Elderberry Neighborhood Plan" passes. The land use proposal, just released by the Madison Planning Office, would allow for units up to five stories high to be built on Old Sauk Road, directly across from PFC (see map).

The red area on the map shows where the densest housing would be built. Labelled "Housing Mix 3," it would allow structures of 2–5 stories. These could include townhouses, duplexes, and apartments. The gold area, less dense, is designated "Housing Mix 2." It allows multi-family units up to 3 stories tall, in addition to single family units on small lots. The blue areas are single family housing. **Note:** Only the blue areas match the density of other nearby parcels.

The plan will be presented to the City Plan Commission on March 19 for a first look. Adoption of the final plan may occur in mid-summer. Comments can be emailed to Heather Stouder, staff representative to the Plan Commission, at [hstouder@cityofmadison.com](mailto:hstouder@cityofmadison.com) or you can speak at the Commission meeting (usually 5:30 p.m. in Rm 201, City Hall 210 MLK Blvd.). You may also contact Sharon Goss, President of Elderberry NA at [elderberry.northcentral@gmail.com](mailto:elderberry.northcentral@gmail.com).

If you have a question for us, please send it to [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org) and we will try to answer it.

## Friend of the Month

### Claire Wyhuske

Claire Wyhuske has helped with the Events Team for a number of years. Claire actually started with the Education Team, and later moved to be part of the Events Team. Claire is a huge help during Sunflower Days and is instrumental in working the main tent and the donation tables. Claire has gained much knowledge about PFC and her input to the Events Team has been invaluable. One of the things that Claire likes to volunteer for during Sunflower days is driving the Toro (UTV), taking volunteers out to their stations. Claire's volunteer efforts have truly made a difference to the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. Claire, we appreciate your efforts!



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Claire!

## Photos of the Month

By Barbara Esser



Water running off field towards the spillway



### 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!**

