



June 2018 News Update

Upcoming Talks/Tours

Bees and Pollinators Talk

Tuesday, June 12, 2018 (6:00 - 7:30 p.m.)

Speaker: Susan Carpenter, UW Arboretum Outreach Specialist

Pope Farm Conservancy provides a quality habitat that supports a wide range of pollinators, including butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, wasps, and...bees! Join Susan Carpenter for an eye-opening talk about the diversity, life histories, habitats, and roles of Wisconsin pollinators, and learn how you can protect and promote them in your own garden and landscapes. This tour is free and open to the public. No registration necessary. **We will meet at the TOP of the hill.**



Birding Tour at Pope Farm Conservancy

Saturday, June 16, 2018 (7:00 - 8:30 a.m.)

Speaker: Mike McDowell, Nature Photographer and Birding Expert

Birdwatchers and nature lovers, grab your binoculars and join Mike McDowell on an exciting birding excursion through Pope Farm Conservancy. Come see how the PFC prairies and restored oak savanna provide habitat for numerous bird species at different times of the year, including bluebirds, indigo buntings, eastern wood-pewee, wild turkey, and great crested flycatchers. Bring binoculars if you have them, wear comfortable walking shoes, and dress for the weather.

This tour is free and open to the public. No registration necessary. We will meet near the lower parking lot off Old Sauk Road. If you are in need of binoculars, please contact Mike at (800) 289-1132 or mmcdowell@eagleoptics.com.



Recent Events

Archaeology Tour with Dr. Amy Rosebrough



Photo and article by: Diane Smidt

On Thursday evening, May 10th, twenty-two of us at Pope Farm Conservancy were treated to an archaeological talk by Dr. Amy Rosebrough, a staff archaeologist with the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Rosebrough enlightened us on many points, first and foremost explaining that the work of archaeologists is detective work. Using and studying objects and structures that people have left behind, archaeologists learn about and better understand the past.

Our tour started at one of the first detections of the past, the 150-year-old stone fence. We walked on to the 19th-century Goth cabin, passing rock heaps left by farmers clearing the land. Artifacts found by those farmers, such as an ancient stone hoe blade, dart points, and small chips of stone, give evidence of the Native American people's presence. Dr. Rosebrough explained that Native Americans hunted and gardened in the Conservancy for thousands of years.

All in all, know that when you visit the Pope Farm Conservancy, there is plenty of archaeology, both seen and hidden!

Many thanks to Dr. Amy Rosebrough for her expressive, interesting and demonstrative talk. Always the spirited storyteller, those who hear her come away learning much and wanting to know more!

Gardens Take Shape for 2018

The gardens at Pope Farm Conservancy have been planted and are beginning to take shape. Check out the beautiful new split rail fence next time you visit.



Thanks to Jean and Dave Kollasch for helping with tilling and garden prep!



Thanks to Amy Rosebrough and Cynthia Shaw for all your tireless work in the gardens.

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: Monday, July 16th, 2018 (6:30 – 8:00 p.m.)

Where: West Middleton Lutheran Church, 3763 Pioneer Rd, Verona, WI 53593

Discussion topics: The Events Team will be discussing & planning for the Friends' Annual Picnic Brunch on August 18th. Please stop in and share your thoughts & ideas!

Question of the Month

Question: Why is the Conservancy closed at dark?

Answer: During daylight hours, the vast majority of visitors enjoy and respect the Conservancy. Other than a few “snatch and grab” incidents involving cars in the parking areas, the Conservancy has been spared from vandalism as people enjoy the Conservancy during the day.

The Conservancy hours are from Sunrise to Sunset. Those hours have worked well over the years, and people can request special permission from the Town of Middleton if they would like to go into the Conservancy after hours. During the summer months, the gate to the upper parking lot is closed 20 minutes before sunset, but people can access the parking lots off Old Sauk and Blackhawk Roads at night even when the Conservancy is closed.

Unfortunately, there have been numerous incidents of vandalism in Pope Farm Conservancy at night. It has been suggested that the town should leave the gate to the upper parking lot open, and essentially leave the Conservancy open during night time hours. We believe this would cause significant harm to the Conservancy.

The primary concern to all of us, especially the Conservancy’s neighbors, is the risk of fire. The Conservancy has 7 different prairies and small grain crops. Fire represents a real danger not only to people, but to wildlife and wooded areas. If the fields caught fire, they would burn uncontrolled up to the houses and wooded areas surrounding the Conservancy.

Here are just some examples of vandalism in the Conservancy that have presented a fire danger.

- Accelerant found in parking lots
- Flares found on shoulder next to prairies
- Molotov Cocktails found in parking lots
- Fireworks lit over the prairies
- Japanese or paper lanterns landing in the Conservancy
- Stones removed from the fence to create fire pits

The photos below were taken at PFC and represent just a sampling of these type of incidents.



Molotov Cocktails (shown above and left)

Flares by Prairies (below)



Accelerant used to burn out words in parking lots (above)

Other incidents of vandalism and theft

Over the years, rocks have been stolen from the stone fence by the lower parking lot. As you can see in the picture below, the portion of the stone fence that was built in 2005 (red arrow) is significantly lower than the height of the original stone fence (blue arrow).



In addition, several signs have been ripped out of the ground and destroyed. In 2017, 3 signs were pulled out and 2 banners were stolen.



Vandalism in March 2018 (above)



Stones were removed from the wall to make a symbol, while other stones were rolled into adjacent farm fields, potentially damaging farm machinery during harvest season.



A large stone was removed in August 2017 by vehicle in PFC

How do other parks and conservancies handle this problem?

Other suburban parks in the area have found it necessary to use security for protection from vandalism. Some have a significant law enforcement presence. Others, like Owen Park, use gates to enhance security.



Pictured Above: Signs by the entrance to Owen Park (City of Madison), stating that the park is closed during night time hours and the gate is locked until morning.

What can we do to protect PFC at night?

We are hopeful that these threats to the Conservancy are taken seriously. **Currently, there is a promising proposal that has been presented to the Town of Middleton...** The proposal is to secure the parking areas at PFC during night time hours. The proposal calls for additional gates to be installed to close access to the parking areas during the night. The FOPFC supports this proposal because we believe it will dramatically reduce the number of vandalism incidents. Secondly, if the parking areas are gated, it becomes obvious that the Conservancy is closed. Finally, with the residential development of the area, the security of the Conservancy will become even more important. It is wise to take steps now to protect the Conservancy and public safety for the future.

If you have any additional questions/concerns, please email us at info@popefarmconservancy.org.

Friend of the Month

Thank you, Ann Kale

Ann Kale, has been involved since the beginning of Pope Farm Conservancy. Ann was the president of the West Town–Middleton Rotary Club when the Pope Farm Plan was instituted in 2005. She was instrumental in working with the Conservancy at the time, and during her tenure the Rotarians donated the White Board Fence that runs between the Conservancy and Old Sauk Road. Since then she has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Friends and the Conservancy. She has volunteered to help during Sunflower Days, and currently she is the Secretary of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy Board of Directors. She is a valued member of the FOPFC board and has truly made a difference to the Conservancy!



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Ann!

Photos of the Month



Blackhawk Prairie Burn on May 17th - Photo by Barbara Esser



The lupines and columbines are creating a magnificent color show in the Oak Savanna Prairie. We hope you'll stop by to see it!

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!**