



## February 2019 News Update

### Upcoming Events

#### **Winter Photography Basics at Pope Farm Conservancy with PhotoMidwest**

**Saturday, Feb. 23rd @ 1:00 p.m. | Meet in the lower parking lot**



Grab your camera and join us at Pope Farm Conservancy on **Saturday, February 23rd at 1pm** for an (outdoor) educational session on winter photography! Please dress for the weather (cold!) and bring your own camera. We will be walking in the snow. No registration necessary, but you may RSVP on our Facebook Event page and invite your friends and family, too.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2295425184009718/>

We'll meet in the lower parking lot off Old Sauk Road where volunteers from PhotoMidwest will guide us through common winter hazards, an equipment demonstration, and an overview of how to capture great outdoor photos when the weather turns cold. We will then walk through the conservancy and learn how to properly take photos of various winter subjects including icicles, snow drifts, falling snow, frost on plants, etc. This should be an excellent photo shoot and a great learning experience! Free and open to the public.

A huge thank you to PhotoMidwest for volunteering for this event!

## **Recent Events**

### **Winter Walk Was Cold and Fun on Sunday, January 27th!**

Story and Photos by Martha Zydowsky



It was sunny and 6 degrees... perfect weather for a winter walk at Pope Farm Conservancy! We walked and snowshoed and x-country skied on Sunday, January 27. Hawks were flying and there were beautiful clouds in the sky. Thank you to the hearty folks who came out for the walk.

We'll schedule another walk in a few weeks so watch our [Facebook page](#) and the Friends of Pope Farm [website](#). If you dress for the weather, it will be a great opportunity to get some exercise and enjoy the beautiful winter scenery.

Hope to see you next time!

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## **FOPFC 2019 Prairie Restoration Proposal to the Town of Middleton**

### **Town to save an estimated \$40,000**

Currently, the FOPFC successfully manages four of the seven prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy for the Town of Middleton. The FOPFC Prairie Team is in the process of presenting its 2019 plan to the Town in order to continue managing and improving these prairies.

#### **1. Blackhawk Prairie**

Much improvement has been made in the Blackhawk Prairie since the Friends took over its management for the Town in 2016.



**Blackhawk Prairie managed the last 3 years by FOPFC**



**Weeds in Blackhawk Prairie 2015**



**Same Photo 2018 under FOPFC Mgmt**

Plans for Blackhawk for 2019 include burning, and to continue weeding areas that have been replanted.

### **2. Hillside Prairie**

The main management focus in this prairie for 2019 will be to continue removing Canada goldenrod, bird's foot trefoil, pale Indian plantain, and other species. Over time, this prairie has greatly benefited from the extensive efforts the Friends have put into removing these invasive weeds.

### **3. Paddock Savanna**

This area continues to improve yearly as the native vegetation fills in the site. Prairie group members over-seeded portions of this restoration again (December 2018) with seed of selected species collected this past year. Also, we transplanted a couple dozen purple milkweed plants (Wisconsin endangered species) into this restoration. The Friends contracted with Agrecol Nursery to grow the plants from seed we had collected. Our 2019 interns will be working again in this restoration targeting the same weeds that grow in the Hillside. We will also focus on removal of numerous small mulberry trees and other woodies starting to grow here.

#### **4. Wheat Field Prairie**

The western half of the Wheat Field Prairie was burned three years ago, and the eastern half was burned four years ago. It's time to burn the entire prairie again, and we intend to hire Adaptive Restoration to accomplish this in 2019 at a cost to be determined.

#### **Proposed add on projects for 2019 to benefit the Town of Middleton and PFC**

- Manage and remove weeds in the Sugar Maple Stand in the center of the Conservancy. (Currently the Town manages) this area.
- Manage and remove weeds on wooded portion of the hillside recessional moraine. (Currently the Town Manages.) this area.
- Purchase and plant several burr oaks along the lower portion of the stone fence.

#### **Summary**

2018 was another productive year for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. We improved the health and diversity of the prairies and savannas we manage. We engaged and excited citizen volunteers, Master Gardeners and students who helped control invasive species, collect and plant seeds and interact with monarch butterflies. The **Friends spent approximately \$9,000** for prairie restoration activities this past year. Perhaps more importantly, Prairie Team members, summer interns, volunteers, and our private contractor spent **565 hours of time managing the prairies** at PFC, to the benefit of the Town, and to the improvement of quality of those prairies.

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## **Volunteer Opportunities**

**We are always grateful to members who would like to “give back” to the Conservancy and to the community. We have many volunteer opportunities for folks both summer and winter. Here are some opportunities that take little time and have a big impact on Pope Farm Conservancy. Thanks for your consideration!**

#### **Education Team**

We are looking for a few folks to round out our education team. We currently have eight members who meet once a month in the evening to discuss and implement educational activities designed for upper elementary students. We are currently focused on two educational programs:

1. In the fall we conduct field trips for all of the 4<sup>th</sup> grader classes in the Middleton-Cross Plains schools. These sessions generally focus on what Native American life was like 1,000 years ago in Dane County, and on the Pope Farm Conservancy, specifically.
2. For the past three years, we have developed videos of German immigrants to our area and have created short videos of various aspects of their lives in the mid-1800s. A second set of videos is under development which will show how the land was used by different ethnic groups at different times.

Experience with schools, teaching or youth programs is not a must to be a volunteer. You only need a willingness to cooperate with the Friends of Pope Farm and the Education Team, plus an interest in youth. If are interested in checking us out, please contact Doug Piper at [dlpiper0413@gmail.com](mailto:dlpiper0413@gmail.com).

### **Membership Support / Data Entry**

Our Membership Team is seeking an additional volunteer to help maintain and update our member information. This involves entering data into our member database and sending out email confirmations and renewal reminders. Training will be provided. Volunteer can work from home via the computer. Time commitment is 5-8 hours/month. If you can help us out, please contact Mel Pope at [mel@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:mel@popefarmconservancy.org).

### **Social Media Volunteer**

Our PR Team is seeking volunteers to help keep our members and social media followers informed about what's going on at the conservancy. This ongoing volunteer opportunity requires a technical or PR-savvy individual who can post photos, write engaging content, and promote our events throughout the year. Volunteers can work from home. Time commitment is approximately 3-5 hours/month. Must have some working knowledge of Facebook and/or Instagram. If you love connecting with others who share your passion for Pope Farm Conservancy, please consider joining our Social Media team. Contact [janie@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:janie@popefarmconservancy.org) for more info.

### **Events Team**

Would you like to help with events at Pope Farm this year? The Events Team is looking for a couple of volunteers to help plan and host events. Events include walks in the conservancy and presentations by experts on a variety of topics. Duties include suggesting ideas for events, writing blurbs for the website and Facebook page, being at events to greet attendees, and taking photos at the events. No experience required! The Events Team is a fun group. We host events throughout the year and meet every month or so. We'd love to have you join us. If interested, please call or email Martha at 608-213-690 or [mydowsky@charter.net](mailto:mydowsky@charter.net).

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## **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 our committees if you are interested.

### **Education Team Meeting**

**When:** Monday, February 4th, 2019 (6:30 – 8:00 p.m.)

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

**Discussion topics:** The Education Team will work on the “History of the Land” interactive tour project and review initial drafts of those stories. We will also work on suggestions to improve the erosion story and ideas for promotion of our German Immigration video series.

### **Events Team Meeting**

**When:** Tuesday, February 12th, 2019 (6:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

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

**Discussion topics:** The Events Team will finalize the 2019 line up of public talks/tours and begin to identify and confirm speakers/presenters. We are looking to recruit more volunteers to join the Events Team this year. If you enjoy organizing and/or promoting events, please consider attending one of our meetings to learn more.

## Question of the Month

**Question: Who are the Prairie Partners?**



Photo by Barbara Esser

**Answer:** The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy are part of the Prairie Partner Program. Other non-profit partners include: Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Groundswell Conservancy, Madison Audubon Society (Goose Pond), and UW-Madison (Lakeshore Nature Preserve).

Madison Audubon is responsible for coordinating this program and also for hiring and paying the interns. Each year environmental science students from several Wisconsin universities apply to become interns for the summer. Members of the Prairie Partners interview the top applicants and select the successful five who make up that year's cohort of interns. These students take additional training in order to become State certified to do herbicide applications. The purpose of the intern program is twofold: first, it helps maintain the prairies in the participating conservancies; second, it is a learning experience for the interns. Experts lead the intern work team, while teaching them the basics of restoration ecology.

The interns rotate to all five conservancies to work on prairie projects. Pope Farm Conservancy has them for six days throughout the summer. The hours are tracked by each conservancy, and Madison Audubon is reimbursed by those conservancies for the hours worked at each location. The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy pays Madison Audubon for the hours the interns work at PFC.

At Pope Farm Conservancy, the interns have worked in the Oak Savanna, Hillside, and Blackhawk Prairies. Their instruction includes prairie plant identification, and learning analytical techniques used to determine the number of each species growing in a particular area (vegetative analysis).

The Prairie Partner program is a critical component for FOPFC to manage four Prairies at PFC for the Town of Middleton. Last year, the interns logged 240 hours of time weeding these Prairies and the results are self-evident. Being part of the Prairie Partner program is not only prestigious, it gives the FOPFC the ability to work toward its mission of restoring the beautiful prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy.

**If you have any additional questions/concerns, please email us at [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).**

## Friend of the Month

### Thank you, Tony Praza!

Tony Praza is a super volunteer both for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy and for the Town of Middleton (TOM). Currently Tony is on the TOM Parks Commission, and he also attends the FOPFC board meetings as a liaison. However, Tony has also volunteered for the Friends in a variety of ways. In the past, he volunteered multiple times to help with parking during Sunflower Days. Recently, Tony has volunteered to help during the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District 4th grade field trips. He has taken time to be out in the Conservancy to understand trial problems created by erosion. If that were not enough, he has attended Education Team meetings and offered valuable input into some of our projects. Tony has been an important part of the FOPFC volunteer effort and has truly made a difference at Pope Farm Conservancy. Thank you, Tony!



Happy Trails to you!

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## Photo of the Month

"Ebbing Light" by Nancy Zjaba



## **Connect with FOPFC online**

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

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

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

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