

FRIENDS OF
POPE FARM
CONSERVANCY



Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy
10333 Blackhawk Road
Middleton, WI 53562

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF
POPE FARM
CONSERVANCY

Volume 4, Issue 2

PRESERVING THE LAND AND ITS STORIES

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Future Possibilities...

BY MEL POPE



The arrival of Pope Farm Elementary School is an important piece in the long-term vision of the Pope Farm educational community. Over the last several years various organizations and landowners have expressed interest in expanding the educational possibilities at and surrounding Pope Farm. There are no formal agreements, no board approval has been acquired, and no commitments have been made. However, an interest has been expressed.

So, let's dream a bit—because if some or all of these interests come together an incredible picture could come into focus. It would result in an extraordinary opportunity for learning, sometimes benefiting students, and sometimes the public.

All of the land shown here was at one time part of the original Pope farm. Some of these planned areas already exist while others are slated for further into the future. If all these concepts came together, here is what the Pope Farm Educational Community could look like down the road:



School District Property—approximately 25 acres—Pope Farm Elementary School will open in 2020 with an enrollment of 525 students. Pope Farm Middle School is contemplated for the future and will house approximately 875 students. This yields approximately 1,400 students within walking distances from all the potential sites in the Pope Farm Educational Community.

Pope Farm Conservancy—105 acres—Pope Farm Conservancy consists of 105 acres and is built as an educational conservancy. It has 40 interpretive signs, 20 vegetative learning plots, and had a large variety of lesson plans. It is owned by the Town of Middleton.

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy— A 501 C (3) whose purpose is Education, Preservation, Restoration, and Protection of the tranquil nature of Pope Farm Conservancy. The FOPFC has approximately 550 members.

Blackhawk Ski Club—65 acres—Like the FOPFC, Blackhawk Ski Club is a 501 C (3) that with a focus on Education. Blackhawk has 65 acres of land that stretches down to the Black Earth Creek. The club is private, but is excited about having the prospect of students on field trips study wetlands and other prominent features of the property.

Aldo Leopold Nature Center—The Aldo Leopold Nature Center has expressed an interest in the Pope Farm Homestead. Currently, Aldo Leopold operates out of Blackhawk Ski Club's new chalet during their summer camps, and the students explore and study both the Blackhawk Ski Area and Pope Farm Conservancy.

Pope Farm Homestead—15 acres—Owned by Betty Pope. Betty has expressed her desire for two things: that the FOPFC help direct the Sale to a compatible non-profit organization that will preserve the barn and the land, while maintaining the current viewing shed from the conservancy. Secondly, the non-profit organization would provide synergy to the conservancy through education. Although the property is not currently for sale, the Homestead Committee of the FOPFC has been working on possibilities for several years and there are several parties who have expressed interest.

Pope Farm Forest—approximately 30 acres—The property owners have expressed interest in the long-term preservation of these properties. This hardwood forest has beautiful stands of oak and maple trees. Inside the forest is a string of three glacial kettles that ultimately could be an addition to the Geology Story.

Total Potential Acres (approximate) for Educational Outreach = 240 Acres
Potential Partners in this educational endeavor:

- Aldo Leopold Nature Center
- Blackhawk Ski Club
- Groundswell Conservancy
- Middleton - Cross Plains Area School District
- Pope Farm Elementary School
- Pope Farm Middle School
- Pope Farm Conservancy - Town of Middleton
- Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy
- Property Owners of Pope Farm Forest

Conclusion—Someday these various partners may begin working together on lesson plans, field trips, fund raising, administration and development. The potential for providing knowledge to students and the public is amazing, and the variety of lesson plans would be unparalleled. We are continuing to work on this vision, and will be making announcements in the future as the pieces continue to fall in place. Meantime, thanks for dreaming with me.

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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

Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy
10333 Blackhawk Road
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THE YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

As a bird group, most New World wood warblers are insectivores—they love to eat bugs!



EVENTS CALENDAR 2019

All FOPFC tours are free and open to the public. No registration is necessary. More info: www.popefarmconservancy.org
Contact: info@popefarmconservancy.org

Donate to Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy

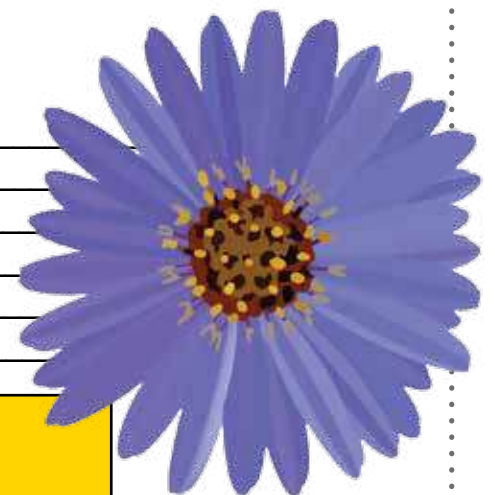
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- Bluebird Trail..... \$50
- Rock Wall\$100
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- Other

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Please mail this form and your check (payable to FOPFC) to:
FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Rd., Middleton, WI 53526



We also accept donations securely online at www.popefarmconservancy.org/donate

FRIENDS WELCOME POPE FARM ELEMENTARY

AT THE POPE FARM
CONSERVANCY

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy are giving a warm welcome to the new Pope Farm Elementary School, scheduled to open in the fall of 2020.

The school will house 525 students and will be part of the MiddletonCross Plains Area School District (MCPASD). Construction

is slated to begin this summer (2019).

The exterior of the school will highlight the local landscape by featuring green rectangles representing farm fields that dot the landscape of southern Wisconsin. Long-term plans include a possible middle school on the site that would be named Pope Farm Middle School.



Front of Pope Farm Elementary School from east to west.

Renderings by Eppstein Uhen Architects



**Jessica Taylor, Principal,
Pope Farm Elementary
School**

MEET THE NEW PRINCIPAL

Jessica comes to her new position from the Madison Metropolitan School District where she has served as the principal of Hamilton Middle School for the last five years. “I have high expectations for myself and everyone around me,” she says.

Jessica will start as principal on July 1, 2019. Her first year will be spent on planning, hiring staff, and learning all that Pope Farm Conservancy has to offer students. Jessica has visited the conservancy in the past and is excited to know more about the stories of the land. Tours of Pope Farm Conservancy, Pope Farm Homestead, and the Blackhawk Ski lands are on the planning horizon.



THE PERFECT MATCH

Fifteen years ago, the Town of Middleton adopted a master plan for the conservancy. It was to be known as an educational conservancy, targeted toward grade school students. After taking an inventory of the land, it was apparent that the conservancy would be educational “gold mine,” providing potential lessons in Land formation, Native American History, Immigration, Prairies, Crops, Erosion and the CCC for the grade school curriculum. Today the conservancy features 40 interpretive signs, self-guided tour pamphlets, 20 vegetative plots, a driveway that can accommodate school buses, and six different amphitheaters that each accommodate

30 grade school students. A tremendous effort has been made by the Town of Middleton and the Friends to provide this educational facility to the public.

Pope Farm Elementary students will have access to these wonderful lessons every nice day of the school year. The Friends Education Team is also developing more in-depth lesson plans that the school system can use. Members are looking forward to helping staff at Pope Farm Elementary understand those stories and the lessons that are available right outside their door. The very presence of Pope Farm Elementary School helps fulfill the educational mission of the conservancy.



West side of school (closest to the Conservancy)

Renderings by Eppstein Uhen Architects

Pope Farm Elementary is a two-story building. Because it is built into the hillside, the west side of the school, closest to the conservancy, appears as one story. On the east side of the school (main entrance), the school appears as a two-story building. School buses will use the west side of the building as their student drop-off point. A community room on the west side of the school will be available for public use, and the Friends are very excited about that possibility.

PROPOSED ACCESS TO THE CONSERVANCY

Access to the conservancy from the school will be very convenient and must be approved by the Town of Middleton. Currently, there is a trail at the north end of the picnic area that runs east between the north and south prairies to the eastern boundary of the conservancy (see below). This will be less than a 10-minute walk from the school to the amphitheaters overlooking the Capitol, Lake Mendota, and the surrounding areas.

There is a possibility that some additional work might be done because of the slope of the trail. The Friends are enthusiastic about this quick and easy access to the Conservancy. A white board fence similar to that in front of the conservancy will run the entire length of the properties between the conservancy and the school district. Formal openings in the fence will provide inviting, easy access to the conservancy.

The school is located very close to the east property line of Pope Farm Conservancy and access to PFC will be provided. There will be four vehicle access points in to and out of the school property—two access points into the Blackhawk neighborhood, one to Old Sauk Rd., and one to Blackhawk Rd. The school district will be selling lots on the east side of the property and those homes will be part of “Pope Farm Estates.” The future middle school will be located between the elementary school and Old Sauk Rd. on the western portion of the school property.



WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL LOOK LIKE FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL?



This photo represents the view looking over the school towards Lake Mendota and the Capitol. The image of the school has been superimposed on the photo. Although you cannot actually see the Capitol in this photograph (too small), you can barely make out Lake Mendota. When the picture is enlarged, you can clearly see both the Lake and the Capitol. The photograph was taken 2' above the center stone on the Geology amphitheater and represents what a grade school student would see sitting there. During construction, the height of the school will be monitored and compared to this picture to ensure that the school building will not interfere with the viewing corridor to Lake Mendota, the Capitol, and surrounding areas.

THE FUTURE

The future for Pope Farm Elementary looks remarkable, with students and staff gaining access to more than 200 acres of learning opportunities. The conservancy, and the Blackhawk Ski Club will be available for field trips, as well as countless new experiences for the students of Pope Farm Elementary School.

From wetlands to land formation, from Native Americans to European Immigration, from prairie restoration to modern agriculture, it will all be there! The Friends are excited about their role in helping the staff and students at Pope Farm Elementary discover this extraordinary educational outreach project for years to come.

2019 EVENTS POPE FARM CONSERVANCY CALENDAR



Winter Walk in the Conservancy
Sunday, January 27, 2019
1:00 - 2:00 pm
Host: FOPFC Events Team

Pope Farm Conservancy is the perfect place for outdoor winter activities, such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding or walking. We invite you to join your fellow FOPFC members for an afternoon hike as we take in the most beautiful snowy views in the area.

Winter Photography Session by PhotoMidwest
Saturday, March 2, 2019
1:00 - 2:00 pm
Presenters: Volunteers from PhotoMidwest

Grab your camera and join us for an outdoor educational session on winter photography. 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 thru the conservancy and get tips on how to take photos of various winter subjects including icicles, snow drifts, falling snow, frost on plants, and more.



Coyotes and Foxes in the Suburbs
Tuesday, April 9, 2019
6:00 - 7:30 pm

Speaker: David Drake, UW-Madison Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist

Join us for a fascinating presentation about coyotes and foxes in the Madison area, and how they seem to have found a way to coexist in urban areas. David Drake is conducting a number of projects to study the behavior of these mammals, to monitor their ecology and movement. His research and extension programs primarily focus on wildlife and wildlife damage management in human-dominated landscapes.



Jeff Miller UW Madison

Bluebirds in the Conservancy Talk
Sunday, April 28, 2019
2:00 - 3:00 pm

Speaker: Patrick Ready, Director of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

We are excited to welcome Patrick Ready for an informative talk on bluebirds. His presentation will include nest box requirements, habitat types, and other tips that will help you attract bluebirds to your own yard. After Patrick's presentation, he will lead us on a tour of the bluebird nesting areas in the conservancy. We are likely to spot many bluebirds along the way, so be sure to bring your binoculars and cameras.

Starting Your Own Prairie Garden Talk
Saturday, May 18, 2019
9:30 AM - 10:30 am

Speakers: Sue Reindollar and Barb Glassel from Wild Ones

Join Sue Reindollar and Barb Glassel from the Madison Chapter of Wild Ones to learn how to start your own prairie garden. Sue and Barb will provide tips on how to prepare the soil, choose the plants and maintain the garden. We will walk through the conservancy and observe the spring prairie plants emerging in the six different prairies. Bring your camera and prairie garden questions to this event.



Jane Igen

Migrating Birds
Saturday, June 1, 2019
7:00 - 8:30 am

Speaker: Mike McDowell, Nature Photographer and Birding Expert

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, including bluebirds, indigo buntings, eastern wood-pewee, wild turkey, and great crested flycatchers at different times of the year. Bring binoculars if you have them, wear comfortable walking shoes, and dress for the weather. If you are in need of binoculars, please contact Mike at mmcdowell@eagleoptics.com.



Creating and Maintaining Rain Gardens
Saturday, June 15, 2019
2:00 - 3:00 pm

Speaker: Roger Bannerman, Environmental Specialist

Rain gardens are capturing the attention of homeowners nationwide as a way to improve water quality in our neighborhoods and communities. They are nature's way of controlling runoff pollution from storms and they produce substantial environmental benefits. Join us for an educational talk on the benefits of rain gardens. Learn how to design and plant a rain garden in your yard, and get tips on how to select a site, what types of plants to use, and proper maintenance.



Phil Pellitteri

Good Bugs and Bad Bugs
Saturday, July 20, 2019
8:30 - 9:30 am

Speaker: Phil Pellitteri, UW-Madison entomologist

There are well over 23,000 species of insects in Wisconsin. Mid-summer is the best time to enjoy the insect world and having diverse plant communities greatly increase the types of insects you will find. Join us for a walk and open discussion of the types of insects we can find at Pope Farm Conservancy.



Geology Fun for the Whole Family: Stories in Stone
Saturday, August 17, 2019
10:00 - 11:00 am

Speaker: Brooke Norsted, UW-Madison Geology Museum

Join us for "Stories in Stone" with Brooke Norsted, Assistant Director of the UW-Madison Geology Museum. Travel through time and discover the unexpected history of Wisconsin's geological past including volcanoes, tropical seas, and mastodons! We will look at specimens in the iconic stone fence and talk about the deep stories that our state's rocks tell. After the presentation, complete your visit with a walk through the conservancy and observe many different rock formations along the way.



Late Summer Photography Workshop
Saturday, August 24, 2019
7:30 am - 8:30 am

Presenters: Volunteers from PhotoMidwest

Our photography partners from PhotoMidwest will be at the conservancy to provide tips and advice on taking great nature photos. We'll learn how to capture the beauty of late summer in the early morning light. The prairies and oak savanna will be at their peak, and, if we're lucky, we'll encounter butterflies, birds, and more along the way. Bring your camera and bug spray.

FOPFC Prairie Restoration Work Days
Saturday, August 24, 9:30 - 11:30 am
Saturday, September 14, 9:30 - 11:30 am
Wednesday, September 25, 9:30 - 11:30 am
Wednesday, October 9, 9:30 - 11:30 am

The FOPFC Prairie Restoration Team is recruiting volunteers again this year to help collect prairie plant seeds and remove invasive species, in efforts to increase the diversity of prairie plant species at Pope Farm Conservancy and to improve the overall quality of our prairies. All sessions are open to the public and will take place at the conservancy. Groups are welcome, too! No experience is necessary, but we ask that you register in advance. If interested, please contact Curt Caslavka at curt@popefarmconservancy.org.



Monarch Butterfly Tagging
Early to mid-September (Exact dates TBD)

The Monarch Tagging Project at Pope Farm Conservancy is part of a nationwide effort to better understand the dynamics of the monarch butterflies' spectacular fall migration through mark and recapture, and to perhaps give us clues as to why the populations are in decline. We welcome volunteers of all ages to join in this fun and rewarding activity. No experience is necessary but we ask that volunteers register in advance to ensure we have enough tags for everyone. For more info, email Curt Caslavka at curt@popefarmconservancy.org.



Archaeology at Pope Farm
Thursday, September 19, 2019
6:30 - 7:30 pm

Speaker: Dr. Amy Rosebrough, Archaeologist, Wisconsin State Historical Society

Join Dr. Amy Rosebrough for a spectacular archaeological walking tour of sites in Pope Farm Conservancy. Learn how the land was sculpted by the glaciers, and hear how the Pope Farm land usage has changed over time, from the early Paleo-Indians to the late 19th century European settlers and beyond.



Steve Mayeshiba

Native American Spirituality and Care for the Earth
Saturday, October 5, 2019
1:00 - 2:00 pm

Speaker: Katherine Heskin, Theologian and Adjunct Professor, Edgewood College

Indigenous peoples believed that the earth and all things on it were sacred—living expressions of the Great Spirit, the nourishing Mother we call Earth. Join us as Katherine Heskin, an Edgewood College professor who is part Native American, helps us see the land through the eyes of this area's earliest inhabitants and shares the spiritual wisdom they offer us in this time of environmental challenge.

All tours take place at Pope Farm Conservancy
7440 Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI 53593

All FOPFC tours are free and open to the public. No registration is necessary. We will meet in the lower parking at the conservancy by the Old Sauk Road entrance, unless otherwise stated.

More info:
www.popefarmconservancy.org
Contact:
info@popefarmconservancy.org

FEATURE

THE YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

OF POPE FARM CONSERVANCY

BY MIKE MCDOWELL

As a bird group, most New World wood warblers are insectivores—they love to eat bugs! Thus, when they migrate into Wisconsin during April and May, there needs to be an ample supply of gnats, flies, moths, spiders, and other small arthropods for them to eat during their northward journey. However, there are a few members of the warbler family (Parulidae) that can survive on other things like seeds and fruit. One such songbird is the Yellow-Rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*), which are moving through our neck of the woods right now, mid-April at the time of this writing.

As warblers go, the Yellow-rumped Warbler is on the large size, but still smaller than most sparrows. When donning their colorful spring suits, they have a white belly, blue and black streaks on their flanks, breast, wings, and back, a dark mask, and then bright patches of yellow on their upper flanks, crown, and rump. During fall migration their plumage is more dull gray, brown, and somewhat subdued, but still retain hints of their yellow highlights.

Yellow-rumped Warblers are usually the first warbler I find during spring migration, often during the last week of March or first week of April. They're also the last to leave during fall migration,

usually disappearing from Wisconsin by the last week of October. However, as hearty habitat and diet generalists, they've been known to occasionally overwinter in our state. In fact, I once had a backyard Yellow-rumped Warbler that endured -15 below zero temperatures during January and February when I lived in Waunakee. This particular bird survived the winter on a diet consisting of suet and safflower.

In terms of vocalizations, the Yellow-rumped Warbler has a diminutive musical whistle that's fairly high-pitched, so you

might not even notice their voices. When actively foraging in tree canopies, you're more likely to hear their metallic "chek" call notes, which are generally louder than their songs. The earliest arriving birds seldom sing, but by the end of April the male birds become very vocal in hopes of enticing a mate.

As a generalist species, they're also one of the most abundant and successful. Their geographical breeding range covers most of the northern United States—somewhat similar to the American Robin. During the winter they may travel as far south as Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama. However, the bulk of their population spends the winter months in the southern United States and Mexico. While Yellow-rumped Warblers nest in the

northern third of Wisconsin, they merely pass through Pope Farm Conservancy during their migration. You might find them foraging for flying insects along the rock wall, or from low-hanging tree branches—they need the bugs!

