

## June 2019 News Update

### Upcoming Events

#### **Creating and Maintaining Rain Gardens**



**WHEN:** Saturday, June 15th, 2019 (2:00 – 3:00 p.m.)

**WHERE:** Pope Farm Conservancy - Meet in the lower parking lot

**WHO:** 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. Free and open to the public. No registration necessary.

[More Events to Come in July!](#)

Check out our full line-up of talks & tours on our website:

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

### Past Events

#### **Bluebirds at the Conservancy - April 28 / May 19**

The Bluebird Talk with Patrick Ready was rained out...twice! As you know, it's been a wet and cool spring. As a result, the bluebird talk that was originally planned for April 28th had to be reschedule for May 19th due to inclement weather. But unfortunately, both dates were rained out. The Events Team is hoping to reschedule this talk for a future date. Please check our Facebook page for the most up-to-date information.

## Starting Your Own Prairie Garden Talk on May 18th

Story by Sharon Goss, Photos by Janie Starzewski



The rain held off just long enough that the Prairie Garden talk could take place on the chilly morning of May 18. Twenty attendees heard speakers Jeff Steele and Barb Glassel from the Madison Chapter of Wild Ones explain why using native plants is not only a relatively easy way to garden, but also a great help for the environment. The two provided tips on how to prepare soil — a critical first step; how to choose plants and where to buy them; and how to maintain the gardens. They helped us identify some of the flowering plants coming up in the PFC and offered useful information on places to find other prairie gardens, including some virgin prairies still left in the Madison area. As a special bonus they brought along a selection of native plants (pictured above right) for people to take home. Now all we need is some warm weather!

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## Migrating Birds Tour on June 1st

Story by Jane Ilgen

It was a great morning for a birding tour on June 1st. We lucked out with the weather, as a storm passed just to our north at the start of the tour. We had 25 participants and saw about 40 different birds (see list below). We even witnessed a bald eagle diving for prey in the field. Amazing!

Photo Janie Starzewski



## Migrating Birds Tour... continued

Tour guide Mike McDowell added an incredible educational element to the bird walk, which is always fascinating. One participant shared that Mike inspired her love for birding three years ago and has come back each year and now has taken groups from Oakwood Village on birding trips. He inspires us all!

### Birds seen or heard at Pope Farm Conservancy on Saturday:

Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sandhill Crane, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting



Thanks again to Mike McDowell for this fun and educational experience!

## What's New at PFC?

### Springtime Blooms Emerge

The prairie plants that typically bloom in the spring have been delayed a bit this year due to the cool, rainy weather. But we are finally starting to see more color popping up in the prairies every day. FOPFC member, Barbara Esser, shared with us this photo (right) of the dodecatheon meadii (Shooting Star) in the north prairie.

We are also seeing blooms of Baptisia (Wild Indigo), Geranium maculatum (Wild Geranium), Lupinus perennis (Wild Lupine), Aquilegia canadensis (Columbine), Zizia aurea (Golden Alexanders) and more!



## Construction to Start on Pope Farm Elementary



The Middleton - Cross Plains Area School District is expected to break ground on the new Pope Farm Elementary School later this month. The school will be located adjacent to the conservancy, in the field east of the property. The school is scheduled to open for the start of the 2020-21 school year. We hope to share photos of the groundbreaking ceremony in the July News Update.

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## Two FOPFC members win Friend of the Town Award

Two FOPFC members received the 2019 Friend of the Town award for their efforts as part of the work they have done for the FOPFC in the past. The awards were presented by the Town of Middleton in both March and April of this year.

### Curt Caslavka, Friend of the Town 2019

Curt Caslavka is the Chair of the Prairie Restoration Team at Pope Farm Conservancy. He has spent hundreds of hours of volunteer time directing the activities of the Prairie Team and overseeing the four Prairies that are currently managed by the FOPFC. This includes working with the Prairie team, the Prairie Partners (interns), and volunteers who help weeding and participating in seed collection. He has purchased plants on his own, processed seeds in his garage, and has done countless things to make the prairies what they are today. Curt and his wife Arlys also started the Bluebird Trail in 2008, and built 20 bluebird boxes. They maintain the trail to this day. In 2018 after 11 breeding seasons, slightly more than 1,000 birds have fledged from the Conservancy's nesting boxes. Thanks Curt, you are a wonderful Friend to Pope Farm Conservancy, and deserve the Friend of the Town award!



## Jim Bolitho, Friend of the Town 2019

Jim Bolitho is a retired engineer and has helped the Friends and the Town on many different projects. Jim was responsible for designing the circular parking lane located off Old Sauk Rd. He also laid out the parking scheme for Sunflower Days in the past, which took hundreds of volunteer hours for the required survey work. Jim also was instrumental in coming up with a solution to the erosion problem on the screened trail along the stone wall. He interviewed many experts and engineers, completed many hours of survey work, and helped find a solution to this problem. He has helped with other parking proposals in the past, and most recently tried to get information about a possible solution to the damage to the Ravines caused by the epic rainfall last August. He also has volunteered to mow grass on part of the ice age trail close to his home. Jim Bolitho has made a difference to both Pope Farm Conservancy and the Town of Middleton. He is a great choice to receive this award.



**Sincere congratulations to both Curt and Jim for their tremendous volunteer efforts to make both the Town and Pope Farm Conservancy a better place.**

## Other News

### **Town of Middleton Announces Sunflower Days July 26 – August 4**

The Town of Middleton announced that it will hold Sunflower Days at Pope Farm Conservancy from July 26 – August 4. The Conservancy will have restricted access during Sunflower Days and any person entering the property will need to pay an admission charge of \$4 per adult. No parking for the public will be available at the Conservancy except for limited handicap parking and no parking will be allowed on the surrounding streets. A shuttle bus service will be provided to bring people to the event. More details will be announced in the FOPFC July news update as more information becomes available.

### **Friends oppose restricting access to PFC during Sunflower Days.**

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy are concentrating on education, preservation and restoration in 2019, and are not involved with Sunflower Days. The Friends have no opinion on Town of Middleton sponsored Sunflower Days; however, the Friends are opposed to the Town restricting access for 10 days to those who want to visit the Conservancy and are not interested in the Sunflowers.

## **Question of the Month**

**Question:** What was the result of the letter the Zoerb/Pope family sent to the Town of Middleton that was in last month's news update?

**Answer:** The letter from the family to the Town supported Sunflower Days, but requested that the event be free and open to the public. The letter recited the restrictive covenants that were part of the original land contract that the family believes supports that request. According to the family, the Town of Middleton has not responded to that letter at the time this article was written. The family believes there are other options that could generate revenue to the Town, that do not restrict access to the Conservancy or require an admission fee. So far, the Town will not listen.

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## **Friend of the Month**

### **Thank you, Janie Starzewski!**

Janie is the PR Chair for the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. She created the beautiful FOPFC website and Facebook page, and monitors both to ensure the good deeds of the Friends are promoted on social media. Janie also does the layout for the news updates, adds graphics and photos. Without her, these publications would look very different. She is also a photographer and spends time at the Conservancy with her twin girls shooting so many of the outstanding photos that you see every month. And, as if that is not enough, Janie does all the posters for upcoming talks at the Conservancy, and sends information out to appropriate media outlets. Janie is an incredible talent, and we are so lucky to have her share her talents and her passion for Pope Farm Conservancy.



Happy Trails to you, Janie.

## **Photo of the Month**

The Oak Savanna is beginning to pop with color! It's definitely worth a trip to the conservancy to see.



Photo by Jane Ilgen

We'd love to see photos from your visit to PFC. Send us your "springtime" photos, and we'll share them here with our membership. Please email photos to [janie@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:janie@popefarmconservancy.org).

### **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!**

