



October 2019 News Update

Upcoming Events

Native American Spirituality and Care for the Earth Talk

WHEN: Saturday, October 5, 2019 (1–2 pm)

WHERE: Pope Farm Conservancy

SPEAKER: Katherine Heskin, Edgewood College professor

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.



Katherine is a theologian and adjunct professor at Edgewood College who has taught Native American spirituality for more than 20 years. She previously taught a native spirituality class at her alma mater, Dominican University.

This presentation is free and open to the public – no registration is necessary.

Prairie Restoration—One More Session

All are welcome to join us on Wednesday, October 9, 2019 (9:30 – 11:30 am) for our final Prairie Restoration Work Party of the season. Volunteers will help collect prairie plant seeds and remove invasive species in efforts to increase the diversity of prairie plant species and improve the overall quality of our Pope Farm Conservancy prairies. Seed collection is easy, and an enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours in nature.



Please join us — it's fun, and an investment in the future! This volunteer opportunity is open to the public. Groups are welcome, too. We will meet in the lower parking lot by the Old Sauk Road entrance. Hope to see you there!

If interested, please RSVP to Curt Caslavka at curt@popefarmconservancy.org.

Past Month

Archaeology at Pope Farm Conservancy with Dr. Amy Rosebrough

Photos and story by Martha Zydowsky

On September 19th, Dr. Amy Rosebrough led the Archaeology Talk at Pope Farm Conservancy. Attendees braved mosquitoes and the setting sun to hear an interesting talk about the history of the land, from glaciers and woolly mammoths to native people and their gardens to German immigrants. A beautiful sunset, monarchs and even a hawk added to the beauty of the conservancy!



Monarch Migration - An Incredible Sight!



Photo: Mike McDowell

No one had seen anything like it—thousands of monarchs feasting on the pollinator plants in the prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy! Monarchs have been known to migrate through this area in late summer/early fall, but naturalists who have tagged monarchs for years have never seen numbers like this in Wisconsin. Mike McDowell photographed this incredible sight (above) of the Burr Oak trees where the monarchs were gathering by the thousands. The tagging sessions did not last long, and there were reports of as many as four monarchs in a net at one time. Two hundred monarch tags were used this year, showing how Pope Farm Conservancy is growing in environmental sensitivity.

Monarch Tagging 2019 - A Huge Success!

Photo by Barbara Esser

The Monarch Tagging project was a huge success this year! For two weeks in September, we had over 50 volunteers help with the tagging. The tagging sessions did not last long, as there was an abundance of monarchs available to tag. There were even reports of as many as seven monarchs in a net at one time! Two hundred monarch tags were used this year, showing how Pope Farm Conservancy is growing in environmental sensitivity.



Volunteers of all ages were welcome to participate in this fun activity. It was a great learning opportunity for everyone! As the butterflies were tagged, the tag code, tag date, gender of the butterfly and geographic location were recorded and then entered into the Monarch Watch database. If any of the monarchs that we tagged at Pope Farm are recovered and reported, we can see the location of the recovery on the MonarchWatch.org website.



The overall goal of this project is to assist scientists in studying and monitoring monarch populations and the fall migration. The tagging program helps answer questions about the geographic origins of monarchs that reach Mexico, the timing and pace of the migration, mortality during migration, and changes in geographic distribution. More information about monarch tagging can be found at: <https://monarchwatch.org/tagging>. Madison is at Latitude 43.07.

Special thanks to Curt Caslavka for organizing this project and to our supervisors: Valerie Hoch, Kim Patullo, Beth Rahko, Mike Anderson, and Janie Starzewski

MCPASD 4th Grade September Field Trip



Imagine it's 1000 years ago. Could *you* survive a cold Wisconsin winter?

That's the question 4th graders from the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District were asked in late September as they spent three beautiful fall days at Pope Farm Conservancy. Members of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy assisted the school district in hosting field trips at the Conservancy and taught the students how Native Americans weathered thousands of harsh Wisconsin winters. Students learned how to gather the food and resources that nature provides, how to plant, harvest and store food, and how tools would have been made to accomplish daily living tasks. Each day ended with a Survival game that allowed the students to test how well they would be able to survive using what they had learned. We are happy to report that everyone survived!

Special thanks to Doug Piper for coordinating with the schools. And thank you to ALL the FOPFC volunteers, teachers, and chaperones who made these field trips possible!

What's New at PFC?

Pope Farm Elementary School Ahead of Schedule

According to the team at J.H. Findorff and Son, Inc., school construction is about 2 weeks ahead of schedule. They are currently concentrating on putting up the walls of the gymnasium. The goal is planned to enclose the facility by December 1. Pope Farm Elementary is scheduled to open in the fall of 2020.



Other News

Future Efforts of the FOPFC

In an August 15 letter from the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy to the Town of Middleton board, the Friends informed the Town that they will be discontinuing their maintenance efforts at the conservancy and instead concentrating their efforts on “Education” going forward. You can read that letter here: <https://tinyurl.com/y56b7332>

The Friends plan on developing more documentaries on the stories of the land, including its history, Native American contributions, geology and land formation, erosion and the CCC. Friends members are also looking to add additional self-guided tour pamphlets, and plan to continue and possibly add to educational talks for the public. The Friends would like to help the school district learn about the lessons at PFC and the surrounding area, using the conservancy for its original intended purpose.

On Sept. 12, 2019, the Middleton Times Tribune ran an article titled *Fallout Continues Between Friends & Town*. Read the article here: <https://tinyurl.com/yybpy9f7> The Friends group issued a response to that article in a Letter to the Editor, written by FOPFC Chair Mel Pope.

Letter to the Editor

I was dismayed by many of the quotations that were made in the article that appeared in the Middleton Times Tribune last Thursday (September 12th, 2019). As I read the article, it became clear that many corrections and clarifications were needed in order for your readership to be accurately informed.

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy (FOPFC) is a 501 C (3) Corporation. We have our own by-laws and board of directors, as well as our own assets and liabilities. We are responsible to our membership and the IRS, not to the Town of Middleton (TOM). Every dollar FOPFC has spent since our inception has benefited Pope Farm Conservancy (PFC) per our by-laws. Over the years the FOPFC has put thousands of dollars into PFC to build interpretive signs, a garden shed, a parking lane, hired summer interns, burned prairies, and developed educational materials. Now we have been criticized by comments made by the chair of the TOM.

The TOM owns PFC and since its inception the FOPFC has had a “memorandum of understanding” with the TOM. It has worked well, and anything the FOPFC does on the property that would require funding from the TOM or anything the FOPFC does that changes the aesthetics at PFC, rightfully needs approval from the TOM. This agreement contains a number of other important features.

Quotations are from the 9/12/19 article:

“The relationship soured between the Friends and the town board over money, Richson said.” That is simply not true. There were many issues but the biggest issue was that the TOM wanted to control the FOPFC.

“When the Town of Middleton presented the Friends with an agreement last fall requiring adherence to the spending provisions that attach to Stewardship grants, the Friends wouldn’t sign, Richson said.” In actuality, the TOM sent a proposed operating agreement to the FOPFC via email. We asked for more information and they did not respond, we asked for clarification and they did not provide it, we asked to meet with them and they did not agree to meet. We believe that the operating agreement that the TOM proposed was designed to control the FOPFC. For instance, the agreement called for TOM approval of messages from the FOPFC to our own membership, and approving messages on our social media. One of the purposes of the FOPFC is to advocate for PFC, and the idea we would need Town approval for our messages at the same time we advocate to that very same body is ridiculous. There were many other provisions that made this agreement untenable. The Friends cannot sign an agreement that would give up our rights to operate as an independent corporation or encumber our rights of expression. The TOM Chair continues to try to involve the DNR grant with the Friends. The Town has an agreement with the DNR, not the Friends. The Friends have not raised any monies whatsoever at PFC for two years. Before that, whenever the FOPFC held an event to raise funds on the Property, it was approved by the TOM board with no restrictions.

Finally, the FOPFC informed the TOM that it was not planning on doing any fund raising on the property in the future. This made the whole question of DNR stewardship approval moot.

“... until they (FOPFC) received a \$40,000 donation last year ...” Not correct. The FOPFC has complied with all IRS regulations, and we have put our financial information on our website, even though we are not required to do so.

It is unfortunate that we have to continue to respond to articles like this. The FOPFC is a volunteer organization, and our volunteers want their efforts to be satisfying, meaningful, and to be recreational in nature. Obviously working with the TOM these last couple years has not been fun. In the end, the FOPFC board members are all emotionally connected with PFC, and the vote to discontinue our maintenance efforts with the TOM was unanimous and sad to the eight members present.

However, the biggest part of the story is that the FOPFC is working to continue its mission to enhance the educational experience at PFC. Our membership is excited about doing what we can to help the new school in any way possible. Getting students out into the natural world is exciting for all of us, and we hope we can continue to enhance the Conservancy as an educational asset. It will help the community, the students, and the TOM.

Mel Pope
Chair, FOPFC

Question of the Month

Question: What types of activities will the Friends be doing at PFC in the future?

In the foreseeable future, the Friends plan on continuing and enhancing our current work on Education. This includes the expansion and the development of new documentaries on the history of the land, adult education, interpretive signage, additional self-guided tour pamphlets, possible collaboration with neighboring land owners on field trips, continuing efforts to assist the MCPASD with their 4th grade field trips, and helping the new Pope Farm elementary school with any request we can. We believe that within the next 5 years there will be up to 1,400 students attending school next to Pope Farm Conservancy. This is a wonderful opportunity to get students out into the natural world. The Friends future is helping to make that happen. The Friends also want to continue to support the Native American gardens, seed collection, the Bluebird trail, and Monarch tagging in the Conservancy, and this will need to be discussed with the Town of Middleton. The Friends want the Town of Middleton to be successful in maintaining Pope Farm Conservancy, and we will continue to offer our advice when asked. We are hopeful that long term we can work with the Town to continue the enhancement of PFC as an educational resource.

If you have a question, please let us know at info@popefarmconservancy.org and we will try to answer it.

Introducing Valerie Hoch

At the September board meeting the FOPFC board approved a new position on the board. Valerie Hoch is the new liaison between the FOPFC and Pope Farm Elementary school. Valerie has helped the FOPFC with field trips, and has been very active with the Prairie Restoration team. She has been a team leader for monarch tagging and seed collection. Valerie is a naturalist, and was one of the “rock ladies” who has helped educate students in the past. She has volunteered with the UW Arboretum and is also a Master Gardner. We are thrilled to have Valerie on board to coordinate our efforts with Pope Farm Elementary School.

Photos of the Month

Photo by Barbara Esser



Photo by Dennis Schenborn

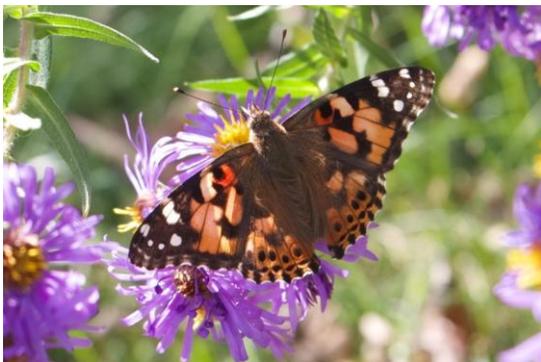


Photo by Laurie Zoreb



Photo by Janie Starzewski

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!

