

April 2020 News Update



Greetings Members & Friends,

It seems like only yesterday we were planning for an exceptional, fun-filled season at the Pope Farm Conservancy. Literally, we were! But our best laid plans didn't take into account a global pandemic that in the blink of an eye has turned the world upside down. We don't know about you but it feels like we're in a really bad movie; a minute by minute unfolding storyline, a huge cast and no apparent ending in sight, at least for now. But despite all the uncertainty and anxiety swirling around, we thought it might help to take a deep collective breath and approach our April newsletter a little differently. Here's what we mean.

Over this past week, you probably received a lot of messages in your inbox with messages from your favorite organizations, vendors and other services. All of them explained how they were working to best navigate the uncharted waters of COVID-19. It's in that same spirit that we are approaching this monthly update. We now find ourselves in that very same boat. As a result, we took the immediate first step of meeting virtually and will continue to do so for as long as necessary. From there it has become immediately clear that COVID-19 is weighing heavily on each of us and how it will affect our work with the Conservancy. After discussion, our bottom line is this: We are fully committed to moving forward, carefully and cautiously and this includes monitoring the latest information from the CDC and other relevant sources to make sure we error on the side of safety and health for everyone in all aspects of the activities associated with the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. That is paramount to us. So, what does this mean exactly given our upcoming activities?

The 2020 Events Calendar

This is the arena where the need for safety and public health is nowhere more acute. The dedicated Pope Farm Events Team has been hard at work planning a full and diverse roster of events for 2020. It truly offers something for everyone. However, and you knew this was coming, given the current concerns with the congregating of larger groups coupled with the need for social distancing, we believe it's best to cancel our May events, to be on the safe side.



- ~~**Monarch Butterfly Presentation - CANCELLED**~~
Monday, May 18, 6:30pm
- ~~**Bluebird Trail Walk - CANCELLED**~~
Saturday, May 23, 1-3pm

Further, it may become necessary to cancel more of our upcoming spring events:

- **Hike the Trails at the Conservancy**
Saturday, June 6, 1:00-2:30pm, Pope Farm Conservancy
- **Migrating Birds Walk**
Saturday, June 13, 7:30am, Pope Farm Conservancy

But for now, we've decided to be prudent yet stay as flexible as we can be given how fluid the situation is at the moment. We plan to share the full 2020 events schedule as usual within the Spring issue of the Pope Farm Conservancy magazine *with the caveat that these offerings are subject to change*. We'll send out emails and update our website regarding any and all cancellations and changes in the programming.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Our Education and Events Teams will now be hosting their monthly meetings online via Zoom.

Education Team Meeting

When: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Where: Online via Zoom - Email Doug Piper (dlpiper0413@gmail.com) for the meeting link.

Discussion topics: "History of the Land" research project, fall field trips, lesson plan ideas for the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District, and more!

Events Team Meeting

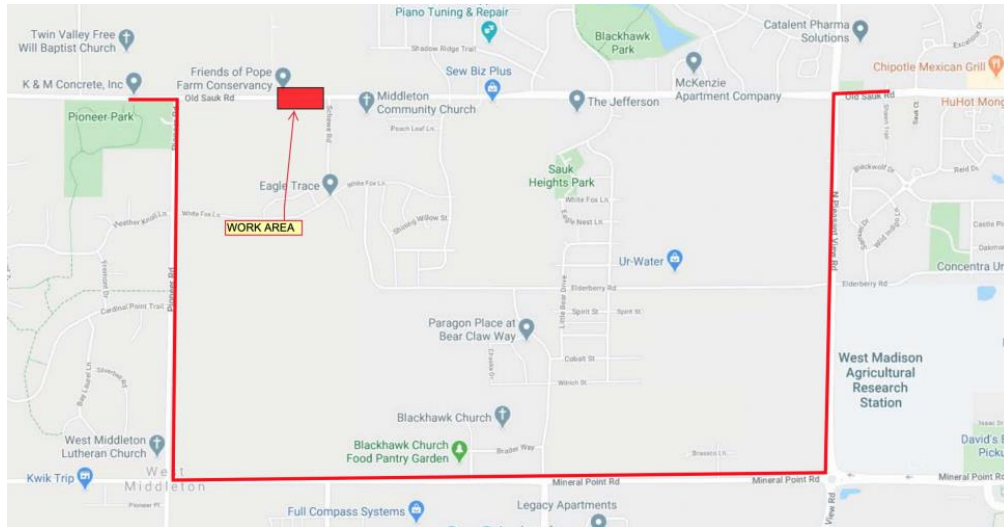
When: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Where: Online via Zoom - Email Martha Zydowsky (mzydowsky@charter.net) for meeting link.

Discussion topics: The Events Team will be discussing the current status of our events calendar and putting procedures in place for cancelling/rescheduling future talks and tours.

What's New at Pope Farm Conservancy?

Old Sauk Road Closure Begins April 1st Pope Farm Conservancy Remains Open



Old Sauk Road between the Pope Farm Conservancy and Schewe Road will be closed due to construction from April 1 through May 1. The conservancy will remain open, and a signed detour will be in place to direct traffic to use Mineral Point Road and Pioneer Road. Visitors can still access the conservancy's Old Sauk Road entrance from the west.



Forward Garden on the Pope Farm Homestead

Our partnership with the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) continues to move forward with the Forward Garden project which will be located on the east end of the Pope Farm Homestead. Feeding the homeless is always a worthy pursuit but perhaps in the face of mitigating COVID-19, the need for providing nourishing food is even more important.

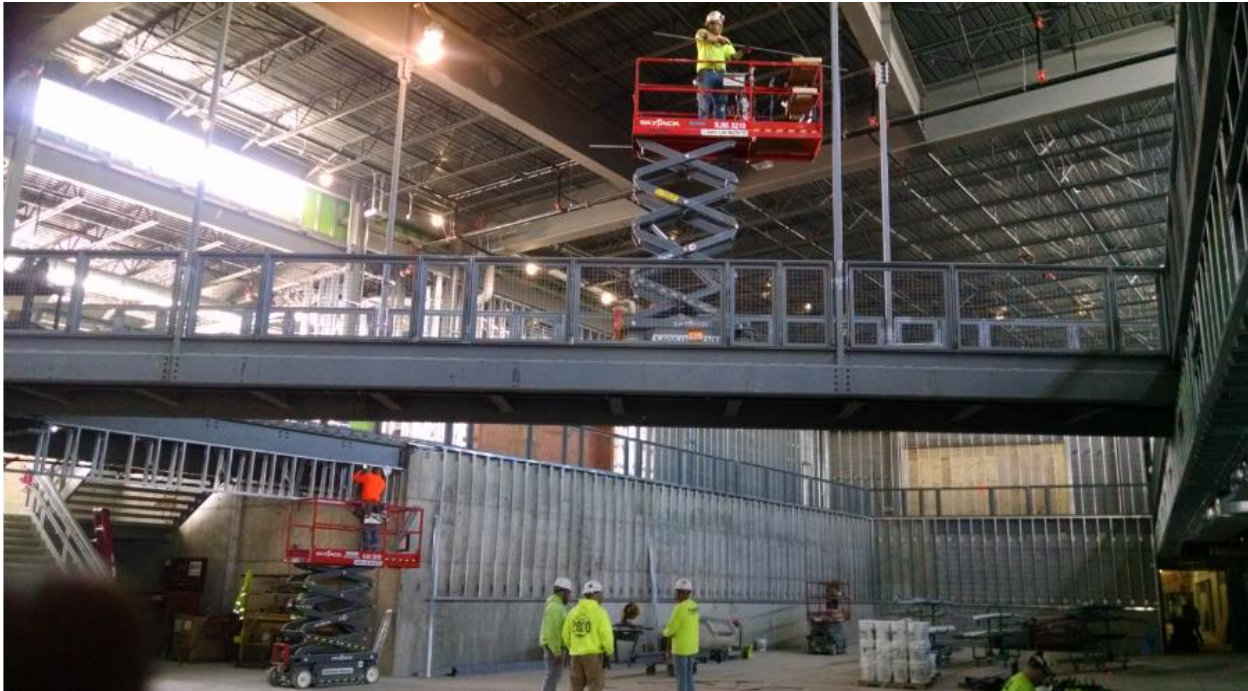
The first date of planting will occur on the east side of the farm sometime after April 24. MAFPG is considered exempt

from the currently mandated state government closures. The project leaders, Katie Schmitt and Tom Parslow, intend for the garden to be a “showplace” for visitors, students, and members alike. Please watch for a fuller feature story in the Spring newsletter.



For those who find solace in the garden, there will be ample volunteer opportunities mid- to late summer. As stated earlier, we'll monitor the COVID-19 status carefully to ensure that it's feasible to offer these opportunities and if so, to follow the necessary safety protocols.

Pope Farm Elementary Update



Pictured Above: Interior of Pope Farm Elementary School - February 20, 2020

The building of the Pope Farm Elementary (PFE) School continues to be going very well and is actually a bit ahead of schedule. The busy construction crews were spotted by neighbors all winter long, and their persistent work is paying off. At the March FOPFC Education Team meeting, the principal of the elementary school, Jessica Taylor, and the school's Learning Coach, Karen Murphree, did a meet and greet with committee members. They discussed preliminary plans for developing a comprehensive curriculum involving Pope Farm Conservancy, using its physical attributes to teach the students about the land. It was clear from the get-go that the PFE staff are excited about the myriad of possibilities in having a nature conservancy literally in their backyard. They've been thinking about how to build an effective infrastructure between the school and the Conservancy. So far, ideas include a conservation team within the school and a dedicated position of science specialist to help integrate the natural sciences into the curriculum.

As the school comes closer to reality, it's become more and more clear that in order to realize the full potential of this partnership, it will be important for the Friends to establish a liaison with the school. What might this look like? We believe the most effective liaison will be a person skilled in networking, bridging and coordinating school staff, FOPFC members and necessary resources in order to operationalize the planned activities on the Conservancy. The individual in this role won't be involved in the details of curriculum development per se but rather will have a knack for spotting opportunities and potential synergies between our respective organizations. This individual would serve as an effective ambassador and broker between the school and the FOPFC. A love of natural resources coupled with exceptional interpersonal skills would be an ideal blend of the necessary capabilities to excel in this volunteer role. If you might be interested or know of someone that might fit the bill, we'd love to hear from you! If interested, Contact Mel Pope at mel@popefarmconservancy.org.

History of the Land Project

Research is underway to explore the history of the three land parcels that now comprise the Pope Farm Conservancy. The data-gathering process associated with the first farm is nearing completion. FOPFC has hired a genealogist to find the pertinent historical records that can help shape and fill in the stories of what occurred here at the Conservancy. An overarching goal of the project is to eventually create a coherent set of narratives and photos that paint a more vivid picture of the history of the land that is now Pope Farm Conservancy.

Here is a sneak preview:

"Filling of the Silos"

Photo Courtesy of the Brumm Family

This photo (above) was taken sometime in the late 1940s to mid-1950s. It's part of the Brumm Farm (now Pope Farm) and depicts two individuals filling the silos. One person is in front of the wagon, and the other is at the top of the silo. The two silos still stand today. The photo was taken toward the north east from the farm. What eventually becomes known as the Pope Farm Conservancy is in the background, and in the center left of the photo you can see the stone fence. Also note that in the distance there's no development yet but this eventually became the Blackhawk neighborhood.



The final product of this "History of the Land" project will be used as part of the Pope Farm Elementary school curriculum as well as an educational tool for other visitors. Having a concise, well-documented history of the land is sure to capture imaginations of students and visitors while

providing a more complete picture of past to the present day. More to come!

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Town of Middleton and FOPFC Agree on Volunteer Projects

At a recent Town of Middleton Board meeting attended by FOPFC member Curt Caslavka and Jim Bolitho, it was agreed that the Town and the Friends would work together to enhance the Conservancy this summer. This includes a number of volunteer opportunities, such as seed collection and monarch tagging, for the public to become more active at the Conservancy, and learn about the natural world. This agreement marks a small step forward in how the Friends and the Town of Middleton will work together. To turn a phrase: one small step for man, one big step for the Conservancy! We hope to be able to collect seed in the Prairies again this fall, and will follow any safety protocols that might be in place at that time.

Friend of the Month

Thank you, Doug Piper!

Doug Piper has helped the Friends in so many ways, and his volunteer efforts have been significant and diverse. Doug is on the FOPFC board and is the team leader for our Education group. In this role, he's been instrumental in working on the historical stories that will eventually be put on the FOPFC website. This multi-year project will enable people walking within the Conservancy to access additional information about significant features of PFC using their hand-held devices. He's also coordinating our efforts with MATC to have these historical stories put into a professional form to be accessed by new technology.

When not working on the history side of things, Doug has coordinated the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District field trips at Pope Farm Conservancy, and has directed the volunteer effort to make it all happen. The logistics and planning for that effort has been challenging, and through Doug's leadership, they have been very successful. Doug has also worked on the ground with the prairies, weeding seed collection. As you can see, Doug's volunteer efforts have helped in many different ways. He has certainly had a positive impact on the success of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy! Doug, here is a huge "thank you" from all of us!



Above: During last year's 4th grade field trips, students observe Doug Piper's demonstration of how to throw an atlatl dart, which was used for hunting 1000 years ago.

Volunteer Opportunities

While the stay-at-home order is in effect, there are still ways to get involved in the FOPFC!

- **Photographers Needed**
 Our PR Team is seeking a few individuals who visit the conservancy regularly who can provide seasonal photos for our publications throughout the year. High resolution images are preferred but not required. Old photographs are okay, too! Send your photos to info@popefarmconservancy.org. Be sure to include your name for a photo credit.
- **Become a Liaison with Pope Farm Elementary**
 The FOPFC is seeking an individual to serve as a liaison between the Pope Farm Elementary school and the Friends. This individual would work with school staff, FOPFC members, and other necessary resources to facilitate activities at the Conservancy geared for elementary school students. Email Mel at mel@popefarmconservancy.org for more info.
- **Share Your Experience**
 We'd love to hear from you! Send us your favorite memory or experience from a recent visit to Pope Farm Conservancy. Email your story to info@popefarmconservancy.org.
- **Join a Committee**
 Do you have a talent you'd like to share with the Friends? We are always looking for additional folks to join our Events, Education, Administration, and PR teams. Consider sitting in one of our team meetings listed above, to simply observe or offer your viewpoints.

Be Well and Stay Safe

So, there you have it: a quick snapshot of what's happening with the Conservancy in these earlier days of spring. Yes, COVID-19 has arrived like an uninvited house guest. It's annoying, will slow us down and cause plenty of inconvenience. It already has. But it's in times like these that we can solidify our mutual purpose and reinforce our dedication to the PFC's mission. If there's a silver lining here, it's that we have a bit of space and time to reconnect to the people and places that we love and to discern what really matters.

Now is a great time to get out in nature! The Conservancy is open and awaiting you. Or make time to visit your favorite outdoor spaces, wherever they maybe be. Nature is a wise teacher, great healer and wonderful strengthener. In any case, do remember to take good care of yourselves! Until next time...



Photo Credit: Jack Sherman

Connect with FOPFC online

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

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

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

Renew Your Membership: <http://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership>

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

