

February 2020 News Update

Upcoming Events

Public Talk: Managing Invasive Plant Species and Jumping Worms

WHEN: Wednesday, March 4, 2020 (6:30-7:30pm)

WHERE: Common Ground, 2644 Branch Street, Middleton, Wisconsin 53562

SPEAKER: Frank Hassler, Ecologist and CEO of Good Oak Ecological Services

Join Frank Hassler, Ecologist and CEO of Good Oak Ecological Services, for a fascinating talk about ways to restore ecological health to our landscapes by eradicating invasive species and reestablishing native plants. Early spring is the best time to start removing invasive species such as buckthorn. In addition, Frank will share his experience working with the UW Arboretum on new products and techniques to use to reduce the invasion of jumping worms from our landscapes.



Free and open to the public. No registration necessary.

Recent Events

Winter Walk January 18th

A small group of hardy souls participated in our Winter Hike on January 18th. Equipped with snowshoes and winter hiking boots, the group traveled roughly 2 miles from the lower parking lot to the west end of the conservancy and back. A fresh layer of snow made for a beautiful winter scene, and the weather conditions were just right: not too cold or windy. Along the hike, we also encountered children sledding and some cross-country skiers blazing their own trails through the newly-fallen snow.



It was great to see some familiar faces, and we introduced one person to PFC for the first time! A few others who had only been to the conservancy during summer were delighted to experience the conservancy in the winter, as well. PFC was indeed beautiful in all its winter glory.

A huge thanks to Robby Sonzogni for being our fearless leader and tour guide!



Winter Walk on Jan 18th - Photo by Bill Sonzogni

Reminder: Winter Activities & Parking

Just a reminder... Pope Farm Conservancy is open from sunrise to sunset all year-round. It's a great place to enjoy hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing and sledding (weather permitting). Please be advised that the Blackhawk Parking lot off Blackhawk Road is closed during winter months. Please park in the lower parking area off Old Sauk Road.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Now is a great time of year to get involved in the FOPFC! We invite you to attend one of our team meetings to observe, to offer your viewpoints, or to join one of our committees.

Education Team Meeting

When: Thursday, March 5th, 2020 at 6:30pm

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

Discussion topics: The "History of the Land" and the "History of Agriculture and the Environment" at Pope Farm Conservancy, lesson plan ideas for the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District. For more info, please email Doug Piper (dlpiper0413@gmail.com).

Events Team Meeting

When: Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Where: Robby Sonzogni's Home, 3731 Pioneer Rd, Verona, WI 53593

Discussion topics: The Events Team will be finalizing arrangements for the 2020 season. If you can't make the meeting but have suggestions for additional events, please send your ideas via email to Martha Zydowsky (mzydowsky@charter.net) prior to the meeting.

What's New?

Pope Farm Elementary Progress



Picture above: Southeast corner of the building fully enclosed. Photo courtesy of Findorff.

Crews have been hard at work on the new Pope Farm Elementary School, both inside and out. As of January 17th, the building was almost fully enclosed and the interior walls are nearly all framed out. Staircases are being completed and many of the door frames have been set. Drywall installation has already begun, and many of the large panel windows have been installed to allow lots of natural light into the building. The school is slated to open in the fall of 2020.



Pictured above: Progress in the LMC area. The future computer lab and makerspace will be on the right with a desk and work room on the left. Photo courtesy of Findorff.

"Forward Garden" Coming to Pope Farm Homestead

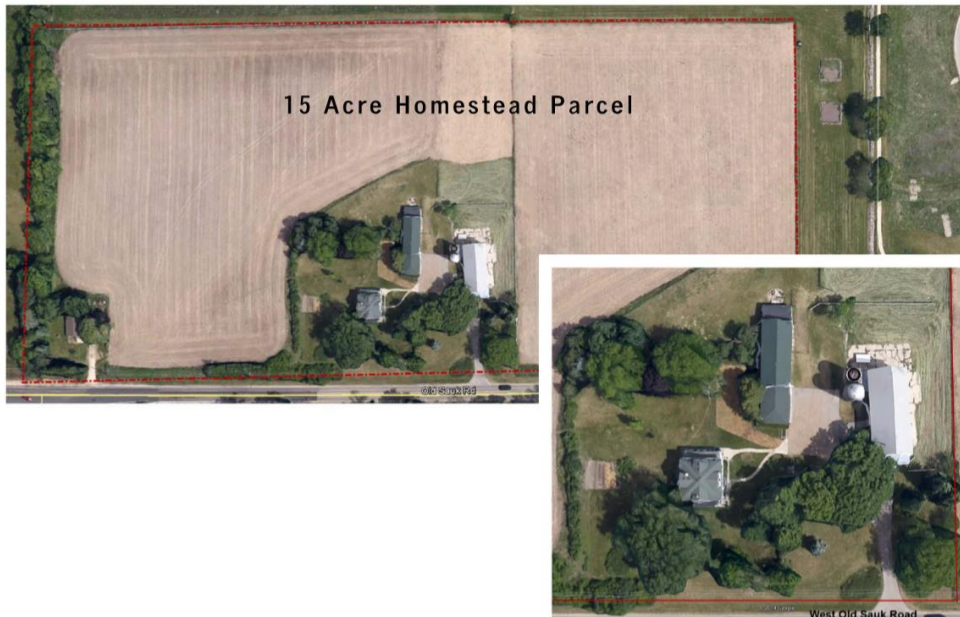
On January 20th, the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) announced plans for the creation of Forward Garden, its newest 12-acre garden plot, located at the Pope Farm Homestead on Old Sauk Road. Forward Garden joins the existing network of nine gardens organized by or affiliated with the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens.



With a mission of helping neighbors in need by providing local food pantries with first-choice, fresh, nutritious vegetables, this new site expands the impact of the organization in the Madison area and its surrounding communities. “We are looking forward to our first year of growing vegetables at Forward Garden and growing not only food for those in need but also growing with our community,” remarked Tom Parslow, MAFPG President. “This new location will allow the organization to increase the amount of fresh vegetables reaching the emergency food system in Dane County.”

Question of the Month

Question: Why is the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens important to the long-term impact of the conservancy?



Answer: We welcome the announcement that the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens (MAFPG) will be leasing part of the Pope Farm Homestead. MAFPG is a non-profit organization that works to address food insecurity. In addition to their other operations, the MAFPG is hoping to grow 40,000 -50,000 lbs. of vegetables at Pope Farm in 2020.

The other reason that this is important is because this could be a long-term solution to the future ownership of the Pope Farm Homestead. Currently, the 15-acre Pope Farm Homestead is NOT part of Pope Farm Conservancy (PFC). The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy (FOPFC) homestead committee have been looking at this concern for a number of years.

The best alternative to date has been the MAFPG. They have been interested in purchasing the property for the last couple of years. They are interested in this location because of the long-term ability to grow food, and because of the need to have a high level of visibility in their efforts to connect people with their food source. The MAFPG will need a great deal of support to raise the necessary funds to purchase the property. Ultimately, the MAFPG and PFC would be a perfect fit since both highlight agriculture and education.

If MAFPG were able to purchase the property, it would benefit the community, the conservancy, and the school district, and would serve to educate the public. The unwanted alternative could be the development of the property.



The development scenario is one that no one wants to see, however it might become necessary. The Friends are very supportive of the MAFFPG in their efforts to purchase the property. We hope that both vegetables, and the interest in the MAFFPG will grow in 2020!

Friend of the Month

Thank you, Jim Bolitho!

Jim Bolitho has been involved in more places at Pope Farm Conservancy than almost anyone. Jim is a retired engineer, and he designed the asphalt parking lane at the front of the conservancy. He has assisted the Town of Middleton with the screened trail problem. He has advised on the current project involving flood damage in the ravine. In addition, he has offered support to the Friends in countless ways over the last 6 years. Jim has studied the “Ancient Trail” that ran through the Town of Middleton hundreds of years ago. His work was featured In the FOPFC newsletter last month. It took Jim hundreds of hours to research this remarkable story. Jim is always there to help, and has truly made a difference to Pope Farm Conservancy!



Happy Trails to you Jim!

Photo of the Month

Every season is full of beauty at Pope Farm Conservancy. We'd love to see more winter photos at Pope Farm Conservancy! Email your pictures to janie@popfarmconservancy.org or share on our Facebook page.



Photo by Aaron Leist

FOPFC Logo Merchandise Now Available!

The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy has a new online store with apparel and merchandise! Thanks to Bonfire.com, we are now selling a number of products with our unique logo printed on them. Products include t-shirts for all ages, sweatshirts, hats, tote bags, and mugs. When you place an order, your items will be printed and shipped directly to you or a friend.

A portion of every sale will go directly to the FOPFC to help us preserve and protect the Conservancy and provide educational opportunities for all ages. Visit our online store today at <https://www.bonfire.com/store/fopfc/>



Renew Your Membership

You can now renew your membership online at <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership>.

Or you can renew by mail. Download the membership form here:

https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/FOPFC_Membership_Volunteer_Form2019v2.pdf
and it along with a check (payable to Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy) to:
FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Road, Middleton, WI 53562.

If you have already renewed your membership, THANK YOU! We hope you enjoy being a part of our community. For questions regarding your membership, please send an email to info@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>

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

