



July 2020 News Update

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Mission Possible: Addressing the Trail Erosion Along Stone Fence FOPFC Authorizes \$2500.00 for Improvements

If you've visited the Conservancy in the last year, you likely noticed the orange cones along the trail that connects the lower parking lot to the picnic area at the top of the hill. No, it's not a drivers ed class gone awry! This particular stretch has been hard hit by erosion for quite some time, causing concern for the Friends.

This trail, known as the 'Stone Fence Trail', runs up and down the hill next to the stone fence. It was originally designed to visually highlight the stone fence from Old Sauk Road so that Conservancy visitors may experience history as they walk alongside its path. The iconic stone fence was built roughly between 1855 and 1870 by the land's first settlers who used oxen to pull stones to their present location when they built it. Addressing the erosion occurring here is critical because the structural integrity of the beloved stone fence could be in jeopardy.



Above: The Stone Fence Trail on 7/1/2020 - Photo by Barbara Esser

The Stone Fence Trail is perhaps the most traveled path in the Conservancy. It was built in 2005 and initially there weren't any erosion problems. Eventually, however, erosion resulted due to a combination of factors: how the trail was maintained over the years, weather events, and simply the passage of time. As grass grew along the sides of the trail, water could not sheet off of it and began going down the trail instead. Over time, the occurrences of erosion became more frequent and severe.

In 2018, it became necessary to repair the upper portion of the trail adjacent to the upper parking lot. So far, it's holding up well. However, the trail on the steepest part of hillside (pictured on next page)



has remained a problem. Water has been running down it and right along the stone fence eroding soil under it.

Fortunately, FOPFC member Jim Bolitho, who also just happens to have been an engineer in another life, has long been interested in the Conservancy's trails. He's been particularly concerned about erosion problems along the Stone Fence trail for a while now. Recently he approached the Friends Board with ideas he has to mitigate the erosion for the longer term.

After some discussion, the Friends agreed to fund an erosion mitigation project for up to \$2,500.00 with Jim overseeing the remedial work. This includes putting in some of his own sweat equity on the trail, working with a contractor on some of the more complex physical aspects of mitigation, and he is receiving assistance from the Town maintenance crew on preventing further erosion in the future. Jim presented the plan to the Town of Middleton in June and it has been approved.

As you can imagine, the pandemic has created many challenges to the Conservancy's operations. Rethinking events, activities and expenditures has been necessary for the FOPFC and will continue into the foreseeable future. Further, the FOPFC recognizes that maintenance of the many parks, conservancies, and trails is a formidable task for the Town and even more so now. Because of our new reality, it has been possible for the FOPFC to offer funding, originally earmarked for other uses in 2020, to put towards the erosion mitigation project at this time. We are so pleased that we can create a win-win with Jim Bolitho and the Town of Middleton to address this problem to ensure the Stone Fence is well taken care of.



Above: Jim Bolitho - Erosion Tamer in Action! Photo by Barbara Esser

Kudos to Jim Bolitho for his concern, expertise, and effort in making a difference to Pope Farm Conservancy! A huge thank you to Jim is in order. If you see Jim out there working on fixing this problem, stop by, maintain your six feet and give him a big 'Thank You!'

Fences Make Good Neighbors: White Boundary Fence & The New School

The MCPASD School district has put up a boundary fence (pictured above) between the school property and the Conservancy. The fence runs along the eastern half of the property and will protect the limited parking at Pope Farm Conservancy during school events and outdoor programs. Pope Farm Elementary School is now ready to open! We eagerly await word from the District on the plans for the fall.

Photo by Barbara Esser



Harvesting Begins at Forward Garden



Forward Garden in Late June - Photo by Janie Starzewski

What’s all that activity going on at the Pope Farm Homestead? It’s the Forward Garden! This garden is part of a network of gardens in Dane County run by the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens, a 501c3 non-profit organization. All the produce from 3.5 acres currently planted will be donated to local food pantries and food banks over the next several months.

New Forward Garden Farm Manager, Matt Lechmaier has jumped into his new position with both feet and is looking forward to working with FOPFC members in making the first year of the garden a big success. Matt reports that more than 60 community members have been involved in planting, weeding and garden maintenance since early May and the need for additional help is ongoing with more than 20 different crops planted or approaching maturity. In fact, harvesting has begun. Broccoli, kale, and collard greens have been harvested so far. Cabbage, cilantro, and basil will be coming up soon. Mmmmm! Sounds like a feast in waiting!

So far, a number of the Friends have volunteered to help in the gardens and their efforts are greatly appreciated. If you've been helping out, a big thanks! If you have been thinking about it, there's plenty to do!

The Forward Garden schedule is Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday mornings from 9-11 a.m.

Visit MAFPG's website (<http://www.foodpantrygardens.org>), Facebook Page, and Instagram to stay up on what's happening with the gardens at www.foodpantrygardens.org or contact the Forward Garden's lead, Matt at Matt@foodpantrygardens.org or call 530-650-5301.

Return of the Trail Steward Program 2020

The FOPFC is reinstating the Trail Steward Program. The purpose of the program is to partner with the Town of Middleton to help stay on top of needs within the property that may warrant attention. As a steward, you'd serve as a 'set of eyes' to monitor the property. If you see something amiss that you think the Town should be made aware of, you'd take a picture and send it to them.

If this sounds like something you'd like to do, please contact Barbara Esser at barbara@popefarmconservancy.org.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Our Education and Events Teams are now hosting their monthly meetings online via Zoom. We welcome you to participate in these meetings from the comfort of your home.

Events Team Meeting – ONLINE

When: Tuesday, July 14th 2020 at 6:30

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

Discussion topics: We will talk about the remaining events and how to proceed.

Education Team Meeting - ONLINE

When: Tuesday, July 21st, 2020 at 6:00 pm

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

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

Update 2020 Events Calendar

The Pope Farm Events Team continues to monitor the feasibility of hosting events at the Conservancy due to the Covid 19 pandemic. We'll keep you posted through emails and update our website regarding cancellations and changes in the programming.

For now, here's the line-up on future events:

- **Prairie Plants in the Conservancy**
Saturday, August 22, 10am

- **Monarch Butterfly Habitat and Migration**
Monday, September 14, Time TBD
Pope Farm Elementary School or online via ZOOM

- **Plein Air Painting and Photography in the Conservancy**
Saturday, September 19, Time TBD

- **Forest Bathing in the Conservancy**
Sunday, September 20, 10am

- **Migrating Birds Walk in the Conservancy**
Saturday, September 26, 7:30am

- **Native American Spirituality and Care for the Earth**
Sunday, September 27, 1:00pm

- **Fungi and Mushroom Logs**
Sunday, October 4, 10:30am
Pope Farm Elementary School

Be sure to check out the Events Page on our website for the latest event info. For questions/concerns, please email us at info@popefarmconservancy.org.

Volunteer Opportunity

CCC Researcher for the Pope Farm Conservancy History Project

The FOPFC are looking for someone to research the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and the work they performed to slow down erosion in what is now Pope Farm Conservancy. If you enjoy history and your social calendar is a bit empty these days, this project could provide a great deal of enjoyment for you.

The Friends are putting together interactive videos featuring stories about the land that now makes up Pope Farm Conservancy. Eventually these stories will be made accessible with hand held devices. One of the topics is erosion and the role that the CCC played in the history of Pope Farms. It's a fascinating story that combines the hardships of the Depression, the herculean efforts of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the cataclysmic Dust Bowl, and the creation of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and that's just for starters.

We know that during the 1930's, the CCC boys (pictured below), often called “Soil Soldiers”, worked for the SCS. They were the forerunners of conservation practices that we use today. In 1938 they worked on what is now the spillway at Pope Farms. We have videos, pictures, books and more but the project is in need someone to research and organize these materials into a narrative that can eventually be used as the basis of an interactive video.



If you or a team would like to take this on, it would be a wonderful way to “give back” and help others learn about the CCC and SCS, and how they fought erosion for years to come. Don't be intimidated, it's FUN! You would be working with Mel Pope on this project. If you are interested in more information, please email Mel at mel@popefarmconservancy.org

Photo Courtesy: Mary Dauck Nelson

Photos of the Month:

A Scavenger Hunt!

Scavenger hunts are great for all ages, and besides, who doesn't need a diversion right about now? Check out this scavenger hunt we recently posted on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy/posts/1913330402144954>

Have fun exploring!

Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy
about 2 weeks ago

Scavenger hunts are great for all ages! Hope you enjoy finding where all these images are in the Conservancy. Some things stay the same but the flowers are always changing. Have fun exploring!
Photos by Barbara Esser

You visit us in summer when flowers are in bloom,
Upon the rays of sunshine, a star-lit night in June.

In the early hush of morning you come without a sound,
Upon the blaze of sunset your memory is still found.

We spot you in spring's garden, your scent still fills the air,
Just like a treasured flower, a sunflower, so ever fair.

When winds are softly blowing across the brilliant sky,
Within the rolling prairie, where bees and nature lie.

We see you in the treetops as fall's harvest comes to be
In shadows, you do linger, a soul renewed and free.

But often, we will see you upon the winter glens,
We long to walk beside you, and miss you even so.

More than Food
Pope Farm has been a part of the conservation movement for over 100 years. During that time, we've preserved and enhanced our diverse land and water resources. We want to share our story with you through this scavenger hunt. Find the items in the photos and see how much you know about the conservancy. The items are hidden in the conservancy and are not always easy to find. The items are hidden in the conservancy and are not always easy to find. The items are hidden in the conservancy and are not always easy to find.

Self-Guided Walking Tours
Now Available Online!
Scan the QR code with your smartphone to download a copy of our walking tour.

13 likes, 1 comment

Our Bad...

In the June news update, we featured an article on the “Black Earth Creek Rd.” that ran through the Conservancy until 1858. Unfortunately, we did not give credit to members Larry Goss and Mel Pope for writing the story. Our apologies and please keep those stories coming!!

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!

