

September 2020 News Update

Nature Watch within the Conservancy

What's going on within the Conservancy as we move into fall? The Bluebird nesting season has officially finished for this year. For the 2020 breeding season, the number of fledged birds included 59 bluebirds, 39 tree swallows, and 5 wrens from twenty nesting boxes.

During September, look for migrating warblers and several other bird species as you enjoy the Conservancy. Top viewing locations include the Ravine and the Oak Savanna. For the best results, bring your binoculars and silence your phone. Photo by Mike McDowell.



The prairies are sure to dazzle visitors this time of year. The goldenrods and native sunflowers are now in bloom and radiate a golden hue in the early morning and evening hours. As the month goes on, the delicate purple blooms of the asters will start to fill in. If you take a closer look, there should be several types of insects making a living off the nectar these plants produce.



The most noticeable insect species this time of year are monarch butterflies and large predatory dragonflies. Both of these insects are migratory, and the prairies provide an ample source of food for them as they head south. If monarchs fascinate you, be sure to sign up for the Monarchs Habitat and Migration Talk on Monday, September 14 via Zoom. Get more information about this presentation in the Events section below.

Remaining 2020 Events Calendar

The remaining 2020 events calendar will feature two fantastic presentations that you won't want to miss. Since these presentations lead themselves to a virtual venue, they'll be done online via Zoom. Be sure to register in advance!

Virtual Talk: Monarch Butterfly Habitat and Migration **Monday, September 14th @ 6:30pm, Zoom Presentation**



Monarch butterfly populations have been declining over the last 20 years. Because insect numbers are notoriously difficult to assess, and because they often show large annual fluctuations, simply documenting this decline has been a challenge. It is now important to move beyond simple documentation, and toward responding to the challenge posed by monarch conservation, and insect conservation in general.

Our speaker, Karen Oberhauser, is a monarch expert and will describe the amazing biology of migratory monarch populations, how citizens and scientists are documenting monarch numbers across their migratory cycle, and then discuss what all of us can do to help preserve this charismatic insect for generations to come.

This talk is free and open to the public, but we are limited to 100 participants.

Register today to reserve your spot!! **Register Here:**

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/monarch-talk/>

About the Speaker: Karen Oberhauser is the Director of the UW-Madison Arboretum. She has an undergraduate degree from Harvard University, a degree in science education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a PhD from the University of Minnesota.

Karen is passionate about the conservation of the world's biodiversity, and believes that the connections her projects and the Arboretum promote between humans and the natural world promote meaningful conservation action. She is the chair of the Monarch Joint Venture, and a founding officer of the Monarch Butterfly Fund. In 2013, Karen received a White House Champion of Change award for her work with Citizen Science.

Virtual Talk: Native American Spirituality & Care for the Earth **Sunday, October 4th @ 1:00pm, Zoom Presentation**



Native Americans once roamed the land we call Pope Conservancy, but they didn't regard themselves as its owners. Native Americans once hunted and gathered plants here, but they didn't feel entitled to take all it possessed. That's because 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. Out of that belief came respectful, reverential treatment of the land and all of creation — including the air we breathe, water that gives life, all plants and animals, and each us.

Katherine Heskin who is part Native American herself, will help 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.

This talk is free and open to the public, but we are limited to 100 participants. Register today to reserve your spot!!

Register Here:

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/native-american-spirituality-and-care-for-the-earth/>

Forward Garden Tour Recap, Updated Wish List

The Pope Farm Homestead is a bustling place now that it's home to the Forward Garden. On a beautiful summer night in mid-August, Farm Manager, Matt Lechmaier led a small group on a tour (pictured below) to get an up-close look at its operations. Matt discussed the mission of the Forward Garden and how it augments the produce of nine other gardens within the Food Pantry network. This means they can get the food to where it's needed the most within Dane County.



Twenty-five people attended the Forward Garden Tour on August 19th. Photo by Janie Starzewski.

The group ventured into the three very active acres just east of the barn. Peppers, cabbage, and cauliflower had just been planted while beets, leeks and onions had just been harvested. Bush beans have germinated and a few beautiful pumpkins made an appearance, hinting of fall and promising a productive patch for October.



Above: A bumper crop of peppers

Matt showed the group the rain barrels that provide the garden with a much-needed water source. There's a solar powered fence that keeps the deer at bay. And then there's his pride and joy, the just completed walk-in cooler for vegetable storage that makes life on the farm a lot easier. Having a cooler on-site allows them to store the produce for a day or two rather than rush it to the local pantries the same day. Check out this video tour of the new cooler here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CErJ2kYD7XA/>

Matt is clearly a resourceful guy who loves what he does, and we're grateful he's part of the Pope Farm experience. He greatly appreciates how the community has stepped up to embrace the mission of the Food Pantry Gardens and in particular, supporting the Forward Garden in its first year. If there's enough interest, he's happy to give another tour.

If you'd like to help with harvesting activities or are itching to get out and get your hands dirty, fall is a wonderful time to volunteer. **The Forward Garden volunteer work schedule is Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday mornings from 9-11 a.m.** All are welcome to participate - no registration necessary.

Visit MAFPG's website to stay up on the latest with the gardens at www.foodpantrygardens.org or contact Matt@foodpantrygardens.org or call 530-650-5301.

Updated Wish List

Forward Garden is still in need of a few items. If you have any of these items to donate to the cause, send Matt a note or give him a call.

- Rain barrels
- Latching storage bins
- Shovels
- Metal fence posts
- Folding tables
- Lumber - used, treated or untreated
- Garage shelving
- Weeding tools (hoes, cultivators...)
- Garden hose(s)

Property Updates in and around the Conservancy

Attention All Bikers!

Check out the new road that runs from Blackhawk Road to Old Sauk Road. It serves as the entrance to the new Pope Farm Elementary School which was completed a couple months ago. From time to time, bikers have been seen within the Conservancy. Bikes can cause damage to the property and, as such, are prohibited. Now that the road to the school is complete, bikers are reminded to use this new road and the adjacent bike path as their thoroughfare. Thanks for your cooperation!



Above: Entrance to Pope Farm Elementary School from Blackhawk Road

Eastern Trail Now Open

During development of Pope Farm School, the southern portion of the east trail/bridle path was closed to accommodate site grading and construction of a boundary fence. Part of the trail was on school district property and required relocation. The school district completed construction of the boundary fence in July. In August, the Town of Middleton mowed vegetation to re-establish the trail, part of which is now on new location. The trail is now open to the public. It had its first equestrian use on August 21.



Above: Eastern trail between PFC and the School is now open

Erosion near the Stone Fence

Finally, here's a quick word on the Stone Fence erosion. It's at the point where it's a matter of coordinating the opportune timing between the contractor, TOM town crews and favorable weather. In other words, once the stars align, the project will be completed.

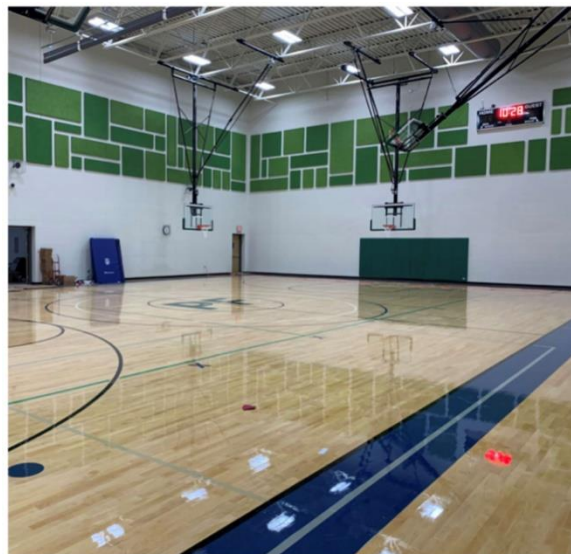
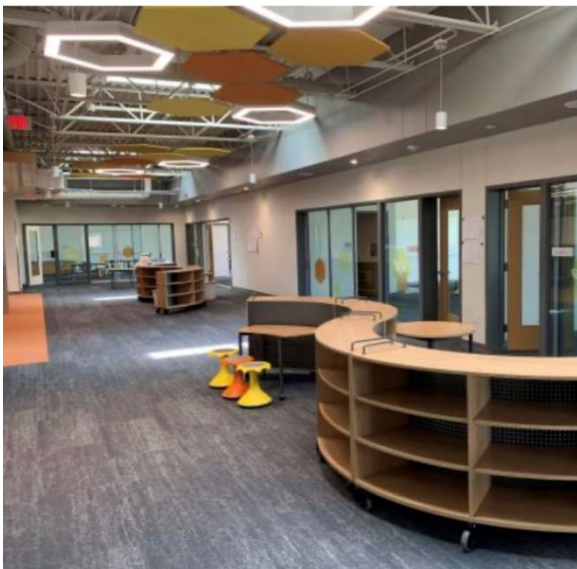
Kudos to Jim Bolitho for his time and oversight in managing this and the Eastern Trail project! Thanks, Jim!

Pope Farm Elementary School Update



Although the Middleton Cross Plains School District has decided to begin the school year virtually, the staff are busy planning and preparing to give the students the best and safest experience possible. School officially begins on September 8th. Members of the Friends of Pope Farm Board are meeting with the school's Learning Coach Karen Murphee and new Science Specialist to begin to discuss ideas for building a curriculum that incorporates the Conservancy as well as to share and build together upon the current history project's content.

Here are a few more photos of the completed school ready to greet the students once they get the green light.



Update on the Pope Farms Conservancy History of the Land Project

As reported last month, tremendous headway has been made on developing content for the History of the Land project. At present, Erin Carlson and Kacie Stolman from the Wisconsin Geology and Natural History Survey are developing the story of the land formation at PFC. Historian Robert Moore has just completed his initial draft on the Civilian Conservation Corp. Both of these topics will eventually become interactive tours. Additionally, some fine tuning is being done on the German Immigration videos including the addition of a section on early schools in the area. Stay tuned, more to come.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Education Team Meeting – ONLINE

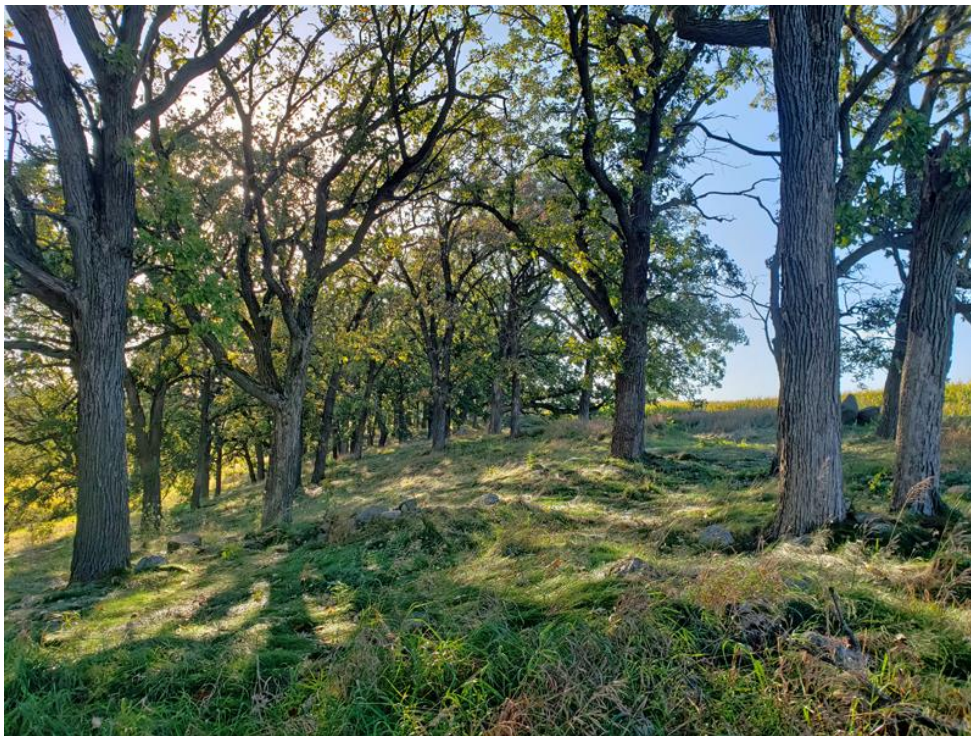
When: Monday, September 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm

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

Discussion topics: Continuation on the history project and updates on plans with the school as available.

Photo of the Month

Evening glow in the Oak Savanna – Photo by Janie Starzewski



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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!**

