

March 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

** Upstairs Meeting Room **

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

We invite you to join us on Wednesday, March 4th @ 6:30pm at Common Ground - Middleton for a fascinating talk about ways to restore ecological health to our landscapes by eradicating invasive species and reestablishing native plants. Our guest speaker will be Frank Hassler, Ecologist and CEO of Good Oak Ecological Services. Frank will also 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.

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", the "History of Agriculture and the Environment at Pope Farm Conservancy", and 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?

Old Photo discovered of one of the original Pope Farms



Courtesy of the Middleton Historical Society

Charles T Schwenn Farm about 1916 - the home still stands today

Do you recognize where this photo was taken? Whether in car or with a horse and buggy, if you were traveling west on what is now Old Sauk Road, you'd see a large Victorian house near the intersection of Old Sauk and Schewe Roads. At one time this home and farmstead belonged to Charles T. Schwenn and the house still stands there today. Now over a hundred years later, on the other side of Old Sauk Rd. from this home, stands the Middleton Community Church. The farmland from the original homestead now makes up a part of the Pope Farm Conservancy today. It includes the lower parking lot, the East side of the stone fence, the picnic area, and the Eastern Prairies. In addition, the new Pope Farm Elementary School is currently being built on the other side of the house. If you look very carefully on the left-hand side of the photo in the distance is the barn and the house that is the Pope homestead today. And yes, Old Sauk Rd. was once indeed dirt and gravel!

The discovery of this photo is part of a project that's currently underway by the Education Team of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. The purpose of the project is to establish the history of the land, including the people who owned it, and how the land was used. As we go through old photos and census data, we're unearthing a fascinating story that we intend to share with the public. If you are interested in history, you would enjoy working with the FOPFC Education Team. For more info, please email Doug Piper (dlpiper0413@gmail.com).

Youth Summer Camps Return to PFC in 2020

Hosted by Aldo Leopold Nature Center



ALNC is excited to continue two weeks of camp on the west side this summer!

We are thankful for our friends at Pope Farm Conservancy and Blackhawk Ski Club for helping facilitate this partnership. These camps will meet at the chalet at Blackhawk Ski Club (10222 Blackhawk Road in Middleton) and use this site as a base of operations as we explore and learn on the 105 acres of Pope Farm Conservancy as well as the 60 acres that encompass the Blackhawk Ski Club property.

FULL DAY CAMP FOR AGES 7 TO 10
CAMPERS SHOULD BRING A BAG LUNCH
Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm: \$350

7W. TALES FROM THE TRAILS	July 27-31	9am-4pm
Nature tells a story with every landform, footprint, feather or chewed plant. We'll traverse the trails finding curiosities and experiences worth talking about and different ways in which we can share them! From nature journaling to stories around a campfire there are so many ways to share these exciting tales of discovery. <i>Please wear sturdy shoes and bring a change of clothes.</i>		
8W. ECOSYSTEM EXPLORATIONS	Aug 3-7	9am-4pm
From stream to savanna and field to forest, let's explore all across Pope Farm and down to Black Earth Creek! We'll dip our nets in the creek to study a stream ecosystem, explore the short and tall grass prairie ecology, investigate the oak savanna and have fun in the forest while we learn about trees. <i>Please wear sturdy shoes and bring a change of clothes.</i>		



Aldo Leopold Nature Center (ALNC) is excited to continue two weeks of summer camps at Pope Farm this summer for children ages 7-10! These camps meet at the chalet at Blackhawk Ski Club and use this site as a base of operations to explore and learn on the 105 acres of Pope Farm Conservancy as well as the 60 acres that encompass the Blackhawk Ski Club property.

Campers learn how all curiosities and experiences in nature can tell a story. They spend time nature journaling and telling tales around a campfire. They also study a stream ecosystem in the Black Earth Creek, explore the short and tall grass prairie ecology, investigate the oak savanna and have fun in the forest while learning about trees.

Early registration is now open to all ALNC Members. Registration will open to the public on March 13th. For more information, visit:

<https://aldoleopoldnaturecenter.org/program-overview/summer-camps/pope-farm-explorers/>

Question of the Month

Question: How was the Stone Fence at Pope Farm Conservancy Built?



Eastern side of the fence built by George Siebert and family 1853-1865

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being on the Education Team project is discovering the many interesting stories that make up the history of Pope Farm land. For example, have you ever wondered who settled the land first or how the stone fence came to be? Recently we learned that the first settler to live on the land was a man by the name of George Siebert (AKA Sibert). He lived on the property that represents the eastern portion of Pope Farm Conservancy today. He purchased the property (80 acres) in 1853, and owned it until 1865. The 1855 Wisconsin Census shows that George Siebert, his wife and 3 teenage sons lived at this location; the north side of Old Sauk Rd, by the Old Sauk Rd. and Schewe Rd. intersection.

A review of microfilm at the Wisconsin Historical Society provides us a detailed glimpse of the Siebert family's day to day life on the land. This information was provided by the 1860 Dane County Agricultural Census.

- Line 24: George Sibert
- Improved Land: 40 acres
- Unimproved Land: 40 acres
- Cash Value of Farm: \$2,000
- Value of Farm Implements: \$20
- Livestock: Horse - 4
- Cows – 2
- Working Oxen – 2
- Swine – 4
- Value of Livestock - \$325
- Bushels of:
 - Wheat – 128
 - Corn – 60
 - Oats – 100
 - Irish Potatoes – 20
- Pounds of Butter – 100
- Hay in Tons – 1
- Value of animals slaughtered - \$25

This snapshot from the census is both rich and very revealing. For example, it tells us that in 1860, after five to six years of working the land, the Sieberts have cleared off and improved 40 of the 80 acres; this is, 40 acres of tillable land. This was likely facilitated by the fact that the family had three able bodied men to work and produce a variety of crops. The Siebert family will have five more years of farming this land until 1865 when it is then sold to Charles Schenck. There is reason to believe that the remaining 40 acres of unimproved land had been mostly improved by the time that Siebert sold it in 1865. The reason comes back to that Stone Fence.

The stone fence that you see in the Conservancy today was built by these settlers. The fence actually sits on a boundary line between the two farms (Eastern and Central Farms). The farmers were clearing their fields of glacial debris (stones) with stone boats, horses and oxen. In doing so, they were bringing the stones to the property line from two different farms, constructing the stone fence as they cleared the land for planting. It would have been impossible for the Sieberts to have grown the volume of crops listed in the 1860 census without clearing some of the land of stones first. In fact, it probably took them at least ten years to clear the 80-acre parcel of the stones we see as part of the stone wall today.



Ox Pulling competition at an agricultural fair 1889 using a stone boat

How'd they do it? You probably noticed from the 1860 Dane County Agricultural census that the Siebert family owned 2 working oxen. This is significant to understanding the history of the land and how it evolved because oxen are stronger than horses. In this case, we know that they were used to plow ground that had not previously been tilled and they were instrumental to pulling stones out of the fields. When you consider the size of some of the stones in the stone fence, it makes perfect sense that oxen would have been superior to horses in pulling the stone boats to the boundary line.

The next time you are out in the Conservancy, walk along the stone fence and imagine the years of toil it took using both oxen and horses to build it. Then say hats off and give many thanks to George Siebert, his family, and his hard-working herd of animal friends, as some of the primary builders of the iconic stone fence that we so enjoy and cherish today.

Friend of the Month

Thank you, Karen Prochaska

Karen Prochaska is the treasurer of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. She has a remarkable talent for accounting and is a CPA at Porter and Sack CPA's S.C. We are so lucky that Karen has volunteered to head up our book keeping and provide needed financial advice. Karen reviews the documentation on membership, donations, deposits, and expenditures for the FOPFC. In addition to doing the taxes, she puts together financial statements so that the FOPFC board always understands our current position. Her financial projections and advice have been excellent, and have guided us in our decision-making process. Karen has been so very important to the FOPFC and has truly made a difference to Pope Farm Conservancy.

Happy Trails to you Karen!



Order Your FOPFC Logo Wear Today!

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.

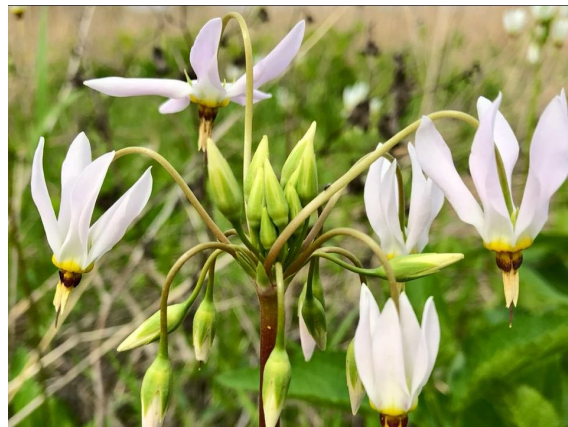
A portion of every sale will go directly to the FOPFC to help us preserve and protect the Conservancy and provide educational opportunities for all ages. Visit our online store today at <https://www.bonfire.com/store/fopfc/>



If you have any questions or suggestions for additional items, please contact janie@popefarmconservancy.org.

Photos of the Month

There is still plenty of snow at Pope Farm Conservancy. But it won't be long until we're seeing Springtime photos like these...



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!**

