



October 2020 News Update

Nature Watch within the Conservancy

Autumn Has Arrived!

For many, fall is a favorite time of year. With its crisp cool air, rich backdrop of lush and muted colors, and pronounced silhouettes of trees reaching for the sky, autumn brings to the natural landscape a different but wonderful kind of solitude. It is a perfect time to visit the Conservancy!

The fall colors have not yet reached their peak at Pope Farm, but in the few short weeks, the maple trees in the ravine are sure to put on a good show! That, combined with the beautiful brown and orange tones of the Blackhawk prairie, is a sight sure to delight hikers and nature photographers alike.



By mid-October, most of the flowering plants growing in the prairies at Pope Farm have closed shop for the year. The last to bloom are the asters and gentians. As you walk the trails through November, you will observe flocks of resident and migrating birds feeding on the bounty of seed produced by prairie plants, particularly native sunflower species such as compass plant, sawtooth sunflower and prairie dock.

Flocks of American goldfinch and various kinds of sparrows should be easily to find in the prairies and harvested agricultural fields. Get out those sweaters and get into the great outdoors.

Photos by Janie Starzewski (above), Mike McDowell (right)



Seed Collection - CANCELLED

Unfortunately, we have decided to cancel the Friends' annual seed collection efforts for 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. In case you are unfamiliar with the seed collection project, for the past several years Prairie Restoration has been a big part of the work done by the FOPFC. The collective efforts of many have resulted in a significant increase the diversity of prairie plant species at the Conservancy and as well as improving their overall quality. We look forward to getting back out there next season!

Upcoming Events & Meetings

Virtual Talk: Native American Spirituality & Care for the Earth

Sunday, October 4th @ 1:00pm, Zoom Presentation

Speaker: Katherine Heskin, Theologian and Adjunct Professor, Edgewood College

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.



Our guest speaker, 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.

Event website and registration info:

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

** This talk will be recorded so you can watch it later. **

FOPFC Team Meetings

We welcome all FOPFC members to participate in our committee meetings from the comfort of your home.

Education Team Meeting – ONLINE

When: October 22, 2020 at 6:00 pm

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

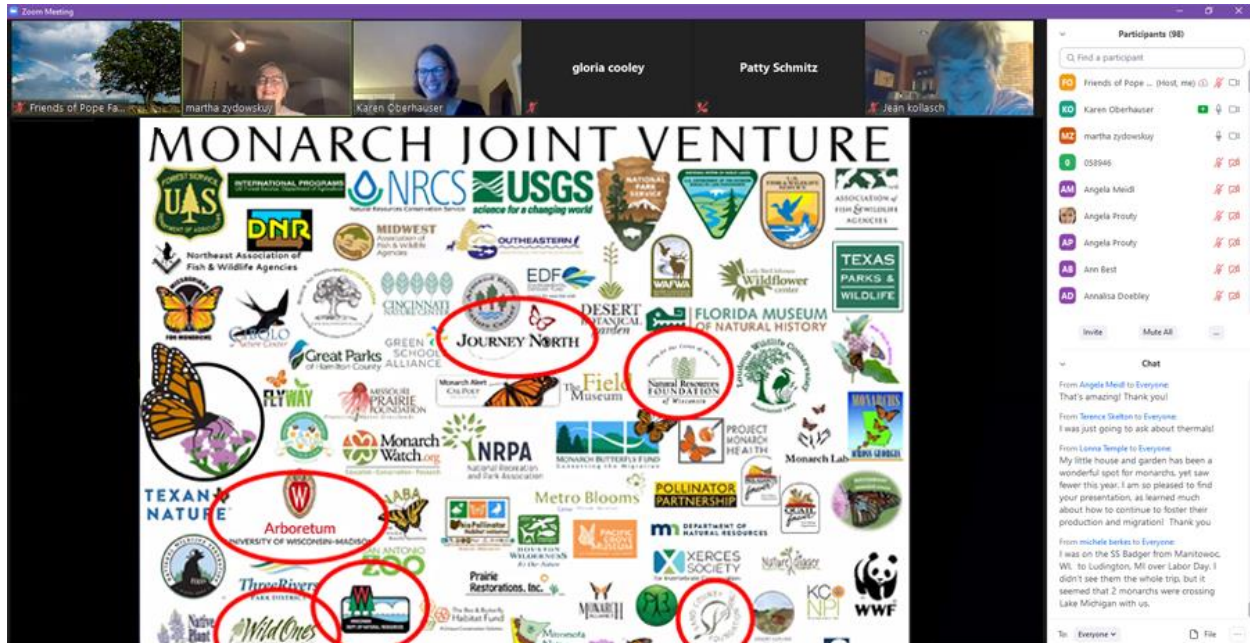
Discussion topics: Continuation on the "History of Land" project, and opportunities to get involved with Pope Farm Elementary School.

Event Recap

Monarch Butterfly Event: A Resounding Success!

Were you one of the lucky ones to participate in the Monarch Butterfly Habitat and Migration presented by Karen Oberhauser, Director of UW-Madison Arboretum, on September 14th? Between getting the word out on Facebook and with the wonder of ZOOM, we had one hundred participants from coast to coast log on to enjoy Dr. Oberhauser's expertise and enthusiasm for the beloved and beguiling monarch butterfly.

Throughout Karen's talk, she shared lovely photos and informative graphics. Her presentation overviewed four main areas: understanding the life of the individual butterfly, their annual life cycle, exploring the reasons the monarch population is on the decline, and identifying practical things you can do to stop this decline. Sprinkled throughout the presentation were several Q&A opportunities that allowed participant involvement. It was a fun and informative way to spend to a Monday night.



Did you miss the Monarch Talk? No worries!

The Zoom meeting was recorded and a link has been posted on our website here:

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

(click on the link in the yellow box)

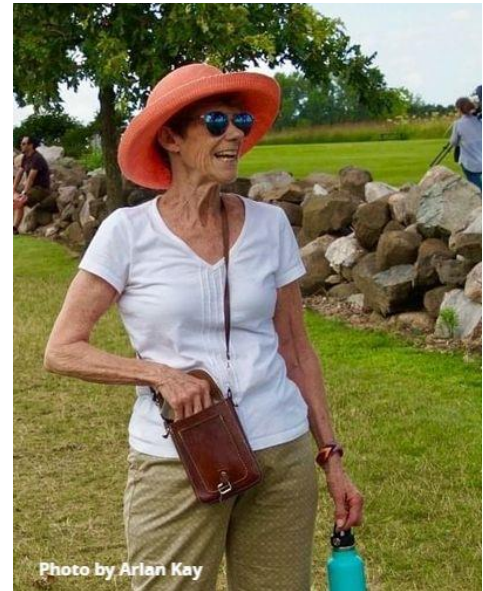
THANK YOU to everyone who attended the virtual Monarch Talk on Sept 14th! And a BIG thanks to our guest speaker Karen Oberhauser, and to FOPFC Events Committee members Martha Zydowsky, Jean Kollasch, and Janie Starzewski.

FOPFC Salute to Jane Ilgen

An Unsung Heroine and Events Team Member

Inside every noteworthy organization there are the movers and the shakers, and occasionally a few crazy makers. But mostly there are the behind-the-scenes folks making sure the engines are humming and the wheels aren't coming off. The Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy is certainly no exception and one such individual and happily notable character in our fold is Jane Ilgen.

Jane has been a member of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy and active participant of the Events Committee and the Restoration Team from the start (around 2014). If you have met Jane, you know she's someone not easily forgotten. Consider this from one of her colleagues, "I met Jane on a PFC trail. I recognized her from church but really didn't know her. Not one to be shy, Jane exchanged a few pleasantries and then jumped right in and said to me, 'How would you like to join the Events Committee for the Friends of Pope Farm?'" How's that for some bold outreach? Well, it worked!



In a similar vein, another shared, "I remember when I first became a member of the Events Committee of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy. Jane was welcoming and, frankly, also a bit intimidating. You see, she has an opinion about everything and never shies away from letting you know how she feels. She cuts through the niceties and gets to the point on whatever the topic at hand. I love that about Jane! There's no BS!"

Fellow Friends Event Committee Members say working with Jane is nothing short of a grand adventure; one that's been full of hard work, creativity and abundant laughter. Her enthusiasm, loyalty and dedication are legendary and she's a natural organizer and innovator.



Above: Jane, second from left, and members of the Restoration Team in the Oak Savanna

Below left: Sunflower Days Volunteers (Jane, far left)



Below right: Monarch Tagging Volunteers (Jane, right)



By all accounts, Sunflower Days holds special memories for the Events Committee Members. In reminiscing about it, they recalled that Jane worked long hours and took on whatever needed doing. She also volunteered to take many beautiful photos of the sunflowers and the conservancy during those events.

Did we mention Jane's abilities as an artist and gifted photographer? Never were these gifts and skills more on display than during Sunflower Days. Jane even came up with the idea of using her photos to make notecards. Without skipping a beat, the committee set up shop in the lower level of Jane's home and their makeshift Hallmark-like assembly line cranked out hundreds of notecards which were eventually sold during the event. In fact, they were such a big hit that Jane literally ran home to make more sets as the stock quickly disappeared! (Scroll down to see some of Jane's beautiful photos, featured in our "Photos of the Month" section below.)

In planning events at the Conservancy, it's Jane who made sure the kids' interests are included as part of the Conservancy's programming. It's her love of teaching children that has helped to make Pope Farm events particularly well rounded and fun for families and kids of all ages. And if you've seen her interact with children, you know she's a kid at heart!

Jane has made a big difference at Pope Farm Conservancy and you have likely benefited from her many efforts and talents. Hats off to you, Jane! We salute you and your many contributions. We're better for knowing you and you are truly an inspiration to us.

From our hearts, we thank you! ❤️



Even in a pandemic, the Events Team knows how to have a good time!

Pictured left (clockwise from left): Sharon Goss, Robby Sonzogni, Jean Kollasch, Diane Smidt, Martha Zydowsky, Jane Ilgen (front center). Missing from the Events Team photo: Vina Yang

Forward Garden Completes Its Inaugural Harvest

As the fall harvest concludes it's clear that the first year of the Forward Garden has been lots of hard work and a labor of love. Throughout the season many volunteers, local area groups and business work teams have worked tirelessly to make the launch of the Forward Garden one to remember.



Photo courtesy of Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

As the season came to a close, the garden was host to AmeriCorps volunteers who harvested 102 pounds of broccoli. That's a lot of slaw, right? Nope, not quite. The Forward Garden broccoli went to a commercial kitchen at Promega Corporation where their culinary team cut it into florets. They were then taken to Festival Foods and placed into 115 separate 10-oz microwavable steamer bags complete with bilingual preparation instructions on each bag. The steamer bags have since been distributed to 5 different outlets throughout the Madison Area. And let's not forget the taters! Forward Garden harvested 1259 pounds of potatoes which have been distributed locally since late summer.



Pictured Left: It's a party in the pepper patch as volunteers get in a final harvest before the upcoming cold weather! Photo courtesy of the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens.

These are just the latest examples of the mission of the Madison Area Food Pantry Garden in action. It's great to know that the Pope Farm homestead was put back into such productive, worthwhile service during a most unprecedented (don't you hate that word!) time.

Sincere thanks to the many FOPFC who stepped up and got their hands dirty and for the generous and capable leadership from Farm Manager Matt Lechmaier who helped us all feel so welcome.

Visit MAFPG's Website, Facebook Page, and Instagram to stay up on what's happening with the gardens. Or contact the Forward Garden's Farm Manager, Matt at

Matt@foodpantrygardens.org or 530-650-5301.

Pope Farm Elementary School Update



Above: The 'Pope Farm Elementary School' sign was recently added to the main entrance of the school.

Recently, Doug Piper, Education Team lead, and Mel Pope, Chair of the FOPFC Board, recently met with Karen Murphree, the school's Learning Coach and Alex Schulz, the elementary Science Specialist to begin to discuss how the Conservancy can be a part of the school's learning curriculum. So far things are off to a strong start!

Says Alex, "The Science lessons I've been creating for our students' virtual learning at Pope Farm Elementary have focused on the resources at Pope Farm Conservancy and have been so popular with kids that we are making them available to use in all the Middleton Cross Plains elementary schools. Thousands of students are getting to experience Pope Farm Conservancy through virtual learning every week." He will be sharing the videos with the FOPFC to use as the Friends wish.

Right now, brief tours for the teachers are being planned for mid-October to acquaint them with the Conservancy's many resources. Alex shared that he's been taking students on hikes through the conservancy though ZOOM. "They have been loving it!" As the Science Specialist at Pope Farm Elementary School, he's looking at the material for the "Pope Farm History of the Land" initiative to find ways to integrate it into the science curriculum. His enthusiasm is contagious, and he's already proving to be a big asset to the Conservancy. Stay tuned for more to come!

Photos of the Month

This month, we want to highlight some of Jane Ilgen's beautiful photos of Pope Farm Conservancy. Perhaps you've seen some of her photos in our publications.

We are so grateful for her talents and photo contributions.



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



Thank you for supporting the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!

Our journey is ongoing, and YOU are part of it!

COVID-19 Operations Updates:

Pope Farm Conservancy remains open to the public 7 days a week, year-round, from sunrise to sunset. We encourage all visitors to practice social distancing to stay safe while enjoying the conservancy.

The FOPFC is 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. All our meetings and events will be conducted virtually until further notice.