



April 2021 News Update



Spring Nature News

“Snow in April is abominable,” said Anne. Like a slap in the face when you expected a kiss.”
— **L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Ingleside**

If ever a month could be called a fickle flirt, it would have to be April. She beckons us outdoors with her vivid bright sunshine. Then, in a childish temper tantrum, she sends us back in the house dripping wet from her infamous showers. Like her colleague, March, she’s mercurial yet somehow prettier although not necessarily more genteel. April is the start of Tornado season, after all. Her pleasures include All Fools’ Day (April Fool’s Day), and delicate crocuses and daffodils playing peekaboo here and there. There’s more greenery to be seen and it’s such a welcome change from all those muted earthy tones, dirty snow and endless mud. And, of course, the celebration of Earth Day which falls on April 22 this year.

At the Conservancy, April is the time of year when we more fully take notice of the chatter that fills the air as returning birds regale each other with their latest adventures and melodious calls. The Conservancy’s Bluebird Trail, established in 2008, has since been a long-time labor of love for FOPFC members Curt and Arlys Caslavka. They are the ones who lovingly built the twenty plus birdhouses that now dot the Conservancy’s trails. In your April strolls, watch for bluebirds, tree swallows and perhaps a few house wrens as they begin to take up residence in these shelters to start their families. It’s not unusual for these simple cedar homes to be occupied until early August. Think of yourself as a visitor to one of nature’s glorious subdivisions.

Brought to You by the FOPFC “Programs Committee”

Recently the Events Committee changed its name. Yes, it’s true. They had a brief but highly successful identity crisis that resulted in their seizing upon the word “Programs.” “Programs” is a more fitting, “nice generic name” that’s all-inclusive to the work that they do on behalf of the Conservancy.

But no matter what you call them, they have been their busy, resourceful selves. At press time, a robust Spring program lineup is being planned to take place in person at the Conservancy. Have no fear! The latest Covid protocols will be followed. The Spring magazine will have all the details so do stay tuned with your calendars in hand. You’ll actually put them to good use. Finally.

In the meantime, we won’t be doing April in Paris after all. We’ll still be Zooming and the opening slate of programs promise to be fun and fabulous. These three virtual presentations are now open for registration. Registration is required but you do not need a zoom account to participate.

Please visit our website: www.popefarmconservancy.org for the sign-up links.

Planting, Growing and Feeding: Forward Garden in 2021

Presenter: Matt Lechmaier, Farm Manager, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens

Date/Time: Sunday, April 10, 2021 @ 2:00 pm

Register Online: <https://bit.ly/3mdVvBw>

About: In 2020, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens launched Forward Garden at the Pope Farm Homestead and hired Matt Lechmaier to manage the garden. Forward Garden is one of ten Madison area food pantry gardens. The first year at Forward Garden was a huge success! Matt will join us on Zoom to talk about Forward Garden’s plans for the 2021 season including plans for planting, schedules for volunteers and the distribution system of the fresh produce.



Attracting Eastern Bluebirds to Your Yard

Presenter: Pat Ready, the Bluebird Guy

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 @ 7:00 pm **** NOTE: DATE CHANGE ****

Register: <https://bit.ly/3flqx Ae>

About: Pat Ready, Director of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, will join us on Zoom for a fun and informative presentation all about bluebirds. Pat will talk about nest box requirements, habitat types and other tips to attract bluebirds into our environments. Pope Farm Conservancy is home to a bluebird trail and nest boxes that fledge hundreds of bluebirds every year. As a follow-up to Pat’s presentation, take a walk at the conservancy in May to see and hear the bluebirds.



TOM & Property Updates

In a recent meeting with the Town of Middleton Parks Commission, approval was granted for the Friends to be engaged in several activities during 2021. These include monitoring of the Bluebird Trail; seed collection; Monarch tagging; and maintenance of the Rain Garden as well as the Native Garden. More details will follow on these activities as we see how covid protocols will impact community involvement later in the year.

In 2018 a DR brush mower was purchased with money awarded to the Friends from a Dane County Environmental grant. Past usage of the mower included cutting weedy areas and brush growing adjacent to the prairies and savannas at Pope Farm. It enables us to control specific weeds without using chemical sprays and therefore lessen the number of pesticides and their unwanted impacts on other living organisms.

As part of the Friends Activities Proposal this year an agreement was reached with the Town to share use of this equipment. The mower is now available for use by the Town. In addition, it will also be made available to Forward Gardens. This nonprofit organization grows vegetables on the Pope Farm Homestead which are distributed to needy people by the Food Pantry. Having use of the mower available to all three groups is a win-win-win situation to the benefit of all.

Parking reminder:

At the time of preparing this newsletter, the Conservancy's upper parking lot off Old Sauk Road is still closed for winter. This means about half of the designated parking is available. Occasionally, folks have parked on the roadside when the lower lot is full, particularly on weekends as the weather gets nicer. *Please feel free to park in the Pope Farm Elementary School parking lot anytime school is not in session. It's a safer choice and access to the Eastern trail is immediate.*



Event Recap

In case you missed it....



On March 29th, the Friends hosted a Zoom presentation with guest speaker Alex Schutz, Science Specialist at Pope Farm Elementary (PFE) School. Alex gave a wonderful talk about the many ways he uses Pope Farm Conservancy to teach elementary school aged students about science, with topics ranging from earth science and history to biology and conservation.

At the beginning of the school year, all classes were all being taught virtually due to the pandemic, and the lessons needed to be pre-recorded. So, Alex got creative and filmed many of his lessons right out in the conservancy. He took his students on virtual tours of the prairies, the agricultural fields, the CCC spillway, the recessional moraine, the stone fence and more! And the kids loved it! Alex really has a knack for teaching science in a way that kids will remember and enjoy.

We invite you to watch a recording of Alex's presentation here: <https://bit.ly/2Ok5eKi>

Education Team Update

As for the Education Team, no name changes there. Instead, they're still up to their collective kneecaps in video production.

As reported early this year, the **History of the Pope Farm Conservancy Land** narrative is now complete and posted on the website. Eight videos will be produced based on this body of work. The topics include;

- Pioneer Farmers
- Clearing the Land and Building the Stone Fence
- Early Farming
- The Era of Mechanization and Formal Farming Practices
- Modern Era; Living on the Farm
- How the Land was Used over Time
- The Pope Family
- How the Pope Farm became a Conservancy

The Geology Interactive Tour Video Project is in progress. Six videos are in production with filming to begin in June. Draft scripts are being edited.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Our Education and Programs Teams host their monthly meetings online via Zoom. We welcome you to participate in their meetings from the comfort of your home.

Education Team Meeting – ONLINE

When: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Discussion topics: Continuation on the history of the Pope Farm Land project updates

Shop the FOPFC Store

Show your support for the FOPFC and order a t-shirt from our online store! A portion of every sale goes directly to the Friends.

Visit our Online Store here:

<https://www.bonfire.com/store/fopfc>

QUICK NOTE: Orders typically arrive within 10-14 business days. However, COVID-19 has caused production and shipping delays, and some orders may take longer. If you have any questions regarding your order, please email the Friends at info@popefarmconservancy.org.



Connect with FOPFC Online

Photo by Chris Conohan



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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!**

