

February 2021 News Update

Into the New Year We Go

*I'm a little groundhog, it's my day.
Wake and stretch, go out and play.
Down in my burrow, down so deep,
Time to wake, from my long winter's sleep.*

*Grumble, grumble, scratch, scratch,
Grunt, grunt, yawn.
I'll eat my breakfast in your front lawn.
I'm a little groundhog, it's my day.
Wake up and stretch, go out and play.
- Author Unknown*



Events Team Update

Mark Your Calendars! The FOPFC Events Team is excited to announce the following virtual presentations in early 2021. These online talks are free and open to the public. Registration is required but you do not need a zoom account to participate. Click on the links below or visit our website (<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events>) to sign-up. Instructions on how to access the Zoom meeting will be provided through email confirmation.

Pope Farm Conservancy: A Learning Lab for Elementary School Kids

Date: Monday, March 29, 2021 @ 7:00 PM

Presenter: Alex Schutz, Science Specialist at Pope Farm Elementary School

Location: Online – Visit our website to register in advance.

Learn about the school district's partnership with the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy to teach kids about science. Earth science, geology, botany, biology, conservation, ecology...the conservancy offers lessons on all these topics and more! Alex Schutz will explain how the school district is using the conservancy to create a fresh-air, hands-on and socially distanced learning environment. The goal is to create science learning experiences for kids that they will remember and enjoy.



Planting, Growing and Feeding: Forward Garden in 2021

Date: Saturday, April 10, 2021 @ 2:00 pm

Presenter: Matt Lechmaier, Forward Garden Farm Manager

Location: Online – Visit our website to register in advance.

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.

Photo credit: Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens



Attracting Eastern Bluebirds to Your Yard

Date: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 @ 7:00 pm

Presenter: Pat Ready, Director of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

Location: Online – Visit our website to register in advance.

Pat Ready is the Director of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) and manages several bluebird trails in Dane County, every year members of the BRAW maintain 8,000 bluebird nest boxes throughout the state and share their experiences with others.

In this Zoom presentation, Pat will tell us how to attract bluebirds to our yards. He will talk about nest box requirements, habitat types and will share 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. Photo credit: Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin

Stay tuned for more events coming in 2021!

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: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 @ 6:30pm

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

Discussion topics: Continuation on the 'Stories of the Land' project updates

Property & Operations Update and Reminders

In recent conversations with the Town of Middleton (TOM), initial talk has begun about potential spring and summer restoration activities at the Conservancy. These projects typically involve FOPFC volunteers. We'll be discussing this in more detail at the Parks Commission meeting on February 10. Stay tuned for the details which should be available by mid-March or early April.

Speaking of the TOM, here is a win-win worth sharing. Several months ago, the Town was considering adding another prairie at the Pope Farm Conservancy, specifically in the area that was once the ten-acre sunflower field. At that time, the FOPFC Board outlined and advocated for a viable, cost effective alternative for the TOM's consideration that focused on maintaining this area as an agricultural field. Several key benefits and pluses were offered including;

- The opportunity for school lesson planning on agricultural production now that the Elementary School is open and the Conservancy is being built into the curriculum.
- Maintaining the originally intended balance of agriculture and prairie per the 2004 Master Plan for the property.
- Preserving the amazing viewing shed of this area.
- Preserving the lessons of the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) spillway which was built in 1938 and has been used as a teaching tool by the UW for over 50 years.
- Responsibly manage costs since prairie restoration costs are going up annually.

As part of our communication with the TOM, we suggested **alfalfa** be planted in this area instead and that it be harvested in late summer. Likewise, several advantages to an alfalfa crop were cited such as;

- Increasing the birding population and species as well as enhance the protection and completion of their life cycles.
- Alfalfa crops require little chemical usage.
- Mitigation of erosion.

We are pleased to report that TOM recently agreed with the Friends proposal of having the field planted into alfalfa for a period of several years. They have also agreed delaying harvesting of this crop until after August 1st to allow birds nesting there the opportunity to do so successfully.

Winter Information Reminder. Pope Farm Conservancy is open from sunrise to sunset year-round. The Blackhawk Parking lot off Blackhawk Road is typically closed through the winter months, so we recommend parking in the lower parking area off Old Sauk Road. *NOTE: If this lot is full, it is permissible to part in the Pope Farm Elementary School parking lot when school is not in session.*

Like the groundhog says, wake up, stretch! Come out and play! Winter activities in the Conservancy include snow shoeing, cross country skiing, hiking, and sledding. If the trails are groomed, please walk off to the side of them trail so they remain intact for the cross-country skiers.

Education Team Update; Stories of the Pope Farm Conservancy Land

Continued forward progress is being made on the many projects under the purview of the FOPFC Education Team. Here's a snapshot of where things are at now.

The **Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) & Erosion** stories have gone into production. There will be six videos total. Three have been completed so far with a couple closer to being finished. The CCC played a big role within the Conservancy in the 1930s by building the spillway that has been the long-lasting solution to erosion affecting this area of the Conservancy. The CCC was a forerunner to the environmental movement we enjoy today.

Take sneak peek at the first video on the Spillway:

<https://vimeo.com/491400571/3e67661aef>

Pictured right: Construction of the CCC Spillway at Pope Farm Conservancy, 1938.



The **History of the Pope Farm Conservancy Land** narrative is now complete and posted on our website. This is a compilation of research, stories, photos, maps, remembrances, and other tidbits that has been organized by the three farms that once made up the land that is now the Conservancy. The next step will be to identify several stand-alone topics from this material for the creation of more videos.

We hope you'll check it out! This narrative is full of fascinating stories about the families who owned and farmed the land that is now Pope Farm Conservancy.

This photo (right), taken in 1912, shows the Charles Brumm children riding horses in front of the barn. Charles and Lena Brumm purchased the Central farm in 1908 and built their home which still stands today, as the Pope Farm Homestead. In the photo, the silos had not been constructed, and the lean-to that is later attached to the front of the lower barn had not been built yet.



Read More Here:

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/stories-of-the-land/history-of-the-pope-farm-conservancy-land/>

The content for the **Geology and Land Formation** story is complete. The next step is the creation of storyboards.

Photos of the Month

It was a picturesque start to 2021, as a natural phenomenon turned southern Wisconsin into a winter wonderland. Visitors to Pope Farm Conservancy witnessed the beautiful weather phenomenon called rime frost. Freezing fog combined with below freezing temperatures cause delicate, white ice to form on trees, plants and other objects, and the result is absolutely stunning!

"Rime Frost at Its Best" by Dan Thoftne - January 4, 2021



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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!**

