

July 2021 News Update

Programs at Pope Farm Conservancy

July Programs

Pope Farm Conservancy: History of the Land (Annual Tour)

Wednesday, July 21, 2021 (6:00pm - 7:30pm)

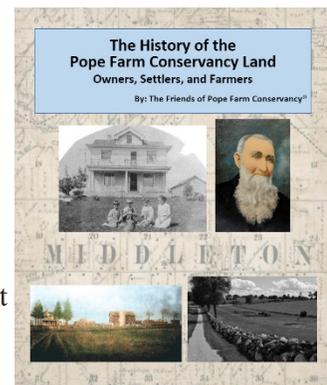
Speaker: Mel Pope, FOPFC Chair



Back by popular demand... Mel Pope's Annual Tour of Pope Farm Conservancy will take place on Wednesday, July 21st @ 6pm. The free, 90-minute talk will explore the natural and human history of the land, the conservancy's unique features, and its stunning panoramic views of Lake Mendota, the State Capitol, Black Earth Creek valley and the terminal moraine. Mel will talk about the conservancy's importance as a natural area for people to connect with the land and as a protected habitat for birds and wildlife.

During the program, you'll also hear stories and remembrances about the people who owned, farmed and settled on this land over the past 150+ years. These stories are all documented in "[The History of the Pope Farm Conservancy Land](#)," now available to read on the FOPFC website. This book 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 Pope Farm Conservancy. If you haven't read it yet, you really must check it out!

The annual tour on July 21st is free and open to the public – no registration is necessary. We will meet at the TOP of the hill in the picnic area. Additional parking is available at Pope Farm Elementary school. Don't forget your camera & bug spray.



Nature Photography Workshop
Saturday, July 24, 2021 (7:30am - 9:30am)
Presenters: Volunteers from PhotoMidwest



On Saturday, July 24th, our photography partners from PhotoMidwest will be at the conservancy to provide tips and advice on taking great nature photos. We'll learn how to capture the beauty of late summer in the early morning light. The prairies and oak savanna will be at their peak, and, if we're lucky, we'll encounter butterflies, birds, and more along the way! Bring your camera, some bug spray, good walking shoes, and water.

This event is free and open to the public – no registration is necessary. We will meet in the lower parking lot off Old Sauk Road. Share on Facebook

Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy's COVID-19 Safety Guidelines: As of June 2, 2021, masks and social distancing are no longer required at Pope Farm programs and there is no limit on group size. However, if you have recently been exposed to someone with Covid-19 or are feeling unwell on the day of a program, please do not attend to ensure the safety of other attendees. We will continue to monitor Covid-19 safety guidelines and update our website as needed.

More Upcoming Programs

Mark your August calendar for:

**“Identifying and Planting Prairie Plants”
with Jeff Steele from Wild Ones**

Saturday, August 14, 2021, at 10am.

August is a great time to experience a prairie ecosystem and see many flowers in full bloom. This pleasant walk will serve as an introduction to prairie ecology and plant identification. Those who attend can also ask restoration experts for hints and tips for starting their own “pocket prairies.” Bring your cameras and wear comfortable walking shoes.

For additional program information, visit our website:
www.popefarmconservancy.org/events



And We're Back...

Recap of June Programs

After a long Covid pause, the Programs Committee lead by Friend Martha Zydowsky, hosted its first in-person program at the conservancy on June 5 to celebrate **National Trails Day**. It was a treat to see old friends, meet new ones, and to actually visit in person rather than sitting in front of a screen on Zoom. Friend Amy Rosebrough was busy planting and watering the Native American gardens. Forward Garden volunteers were planting, harvesting and plowing. Also keeping Conservancy visitors' company were monarch butterflies, song sparrows, a pair of red-tailed hawks (pictured below), and Alvin with lots of his chipmunk friends. The prairies were in bloom with lupines, penstemon, golden Alexander and wild indigo. It was a beautiful day!



Above: Thanks to all the folks who attended our Nationals Trails Day program or stopped by to say 'Hi.'

A few weeks later, on June 19th, twenty birders join Mike McDowell for a **Late Spring Birding Tour** at the Conservancy. The weather was great but there was just one problem. Where were the birds? The sparrows of many varieties were out in full force and there were red-winged black birds aplenty. A grosbeak and an indigo bunting made an appearance. But there were no bluebirds, orioles, other songbirds or hawks. Mike concurred with what other experts have been saying; the spring storms during the migration period took a terrible toll on the birds. He said the good news is the plentiful food resources for

the birds that did make it north bodes well for the future. Mike will be back in September for a Fall Migration Birding Tour - we'll see and hear the birds getting ready to head south for the winter.



Above: Approximately 20 birders joined Mike McDowell for the birding tour June 19th.

Property & Operations Update

The Uninvited

Many thanks to those who reported the gypsy moth infestation within the Conservancy. These uninvited guests have been heavily defoliating some of the young oaks on the southwest corner of the property. The caterpillars were fully grown and apparently having quite a good time...until they were caught, that is. The drought stress we experienced a few weeks ago was a lot for the trees to handle.



Above: These young oak trees were heavily defoliated by the gypsy moth caterpillars this spring/summer.



Right: Chewed leaves (top) and cocoons (bottom) are further evidence of the gypsy moths' presence at the conservancy.

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The TOM Town Crew Chief was contacted and the affected areas have been sprayed with pesticide. It will be necessary to keep an eye on them next year and treat them again before any further damage occurs. Repeated defoliation coupled with more drought could kill these trees so monitoring them will be key. Another noted concern in this area is that there are too many trees growing too close together. Removing some of them to give space for the others to remain viable and healthy should be done prior to spraying them next year.

For more information on Gypsy Moths, check out this website, provided by Mike Hillstrom of the Forest Health Team at the Wisconsin DNR. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/gypsymothinwisconsin/>.

For The Birds

Last month, we reported on how the bird numbers at the Conservancy were adversely impacted by storms earlier this year. As of early July, Friend Curt Caslavka reports that twenty-two Bluebirds have fledged and there are currently 14 young and 6 eggs in nest boxes.



Forty-three tree swallows have fledged and there are currently five young still in a nest box. When the totals are completed there will likely be fewer birds fledged from Pope Farm than last year, however it is not nearly as bad as earlier indicators suggested. Nesting this year started off very slow due to the cool temps, probably three weeks behind a more normal year.

Bluebird Photo by: Mike McDowell

Forward Garden Update: Here Come the Veggies!

There's a bumper crop of veggies at the Forward Garden so if you're itching to get your hands dirty, check out the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens [events calendar](#) to see when volunteer opportunities are available. Please bring gardening gloves and a water bottle to each session if you have them. Bring a mask, wash your hands before and after volunteering, maintain 6-foot distance from others, and stay home if you aren't feeling 100% healthy. Extra gloves, hand sanitizer and hand-washing station will always be available at Forward Garden.



You can text or email Matt Lechmaier, Forward Garden Farm Manager at 530-650-5301 or Matt@foodpantrygardens.org to let him know you plan to participate.

Photos of the Month

Prairie flower photos by Robby Sonzogni.



“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

July is known for her sultry, steaming, sweltering ways. Imagine a cool breeze, a cold drink, a shady spot, an inviting hammock. Or how about a lovely picnic or excursion to the beach? Take your pick and just relax and rest from the rigors of the day. Summer, after all, is the time to slow down..... or stop all together.

**Thank you for supporting the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!
Our journey is ongoing, and YOU are part of it!**

