

## April 2022 News Update

### In this edition...

- Upcoming Programs in Spring 2022 (Forward Garden Tour and Pope Farm Elementary Tour)
- News from The Friends (New Signage Proposal, Farm Day, 1000-Year Garden)
- Volunteer Spotlight: Robby Sonzogni
- Upcoming FOPFC Meetings
- Springtime at the Conservancy (Scavenger Hunt, Bluebird Trail, Earth Day 2022)
- Reminders

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## Upcoming Programs

### Forward Garden Tour

**Saturday, April 9th, 2022 at 1:00PM**

Speaker: Matt Lechmaier, Farm Manager



In 2021, Forward Garden contributed more than 28,000 pounds of produce to the Madison area emergency food system. Thanks to increased involvement from community members, local area groups and business work teams, the garden was able to grow and harvest 54 different crops across 4 acres last year.

What's in store for 2022? Join us on Saturday, April 9th at 1:00 p.m. for a tour of Forward Garden with farm manager, Matt Lechmaier. Matt will provide a brief overview of the garden's first two growing seasons, and also share plans for the upcoming year, including volunteer opportunities, production plans, and new outlets they are planning to serve. Come along and see how you can get involved!

The tour is free and open to the public, but space is limited to 30 attendees.

Sign up Now to reserve your spot on the tour!

**Register Here:** <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/forward-garden-tour/>

## Pope Farm Elementary School Tour

Thursday, May 26th, 2022 (7:00 - 7:45p.m.)

Speakers: Jessica Taylor (Principal) and Alex Schutz (Science Specialist Teacher)



Join us on Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 7PM for an inside look at Pope Farm Elementary School. This is the newest school in the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District and serves Kindergarten through fourth grade. The school officially opened in Fall 2020, then welcomed its first students for in-person learning in February 2021. The tour will be led by Principal Jessica Taylor and Science Specialist Teacher Alex Schutz.

You will be delighted by the unique and beautiful interior design. Each grade level has its own designated icon and color scheme. "The graphics on the walls bring in natural elements from the surrounding Pope Farm Conservancy to create a visual identity for the architectural and interior design theme," says designer Lauren McClone.

In addition to the tour, Alex Schutz will talk about how he uses Pope Farm Conservancy to teach elementary school-aged students about earth science, geology, botany, biology, conservation, ecology, and more!

This tour is FREE and OPEN to the public. No registration needed. We will meet at the front entry on the east side of the school building. Parking is available at the school.

Address: 816 Schewe Rd, Verona, WI 53593.

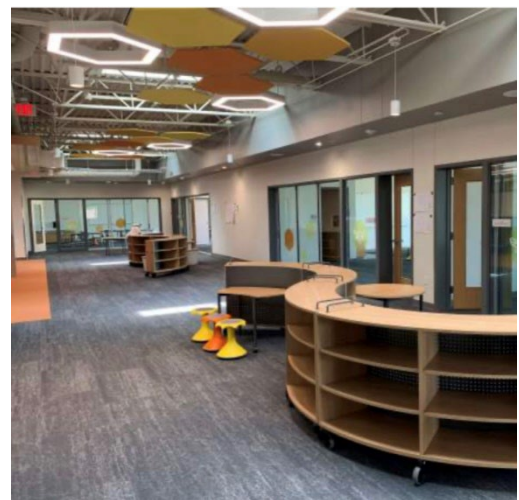


Photo credit: Findorff

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## More Events to Come in 2022

Additional talks and tours have been scheduled at Pope Farm Conservancy later this year. Topics will include archeology, birding, nature photography, prairie seed collection, monarch tagging, history of the land, and more! There's even a Members Picnic planned for September 1st at Lakeview Park. Mark your calendars! Details about all our programs can be found on the FOPFC website:

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/> and in our next News Magazine (coming in May)!

## News from the Friends

### Friends to Propose New Signage to Help Protect the Blackhawk Prairie

The Blackhawk prairie has had increasing damage each fall due to visitors walking out into the prairie for photo shoots. This results in large areas of trampled grasses in the Blackhawk prairie which is causing damage to the vegetation and disrupting the nesting activities for the birds.

The Friends group is offering to pay for and install 4 signs at the Blackhawk Prairie that will read “NESTING AREAS - KEEP ON MOWED TRAILS.”

This offer will be presented to the Town of Middleton. We sincerely hope that the signage will create an awareness that shooting photos of these beautiful natural areas is wonderful, but we need to respect the vegetation and the wildlife that create that beauty.

Pictured right: Trampled areas in the Blackhawk prairie.



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### FOPFC to Participate in Pope Farm Elementary School Farm Day



Photo credit: Pope Farm Elementary School

In May 2022, all Pope Farm Elementary students will participate in the school’s annual “Farm Day” event, which will take place at Pope Farm Conservancy, Forward Garden, and on site at Pope Farm Elementary. Classes will rotate to different stations throughout the day, learning about all aspects of agriculture and farming, from growing food to raising animals. Last year, students got to plant pumpkins at Forward Garden, hike the conservancy, participate in farm-themed relay races, read to farm animals, and do some arts and crafts inside the school.

This year, the FOPFC’s Education Team will be assisting with the learning stations at Pope Farm Conservancy during the Farm Day festivities. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Doug Piper at [dlpiper0413@gmail.com](mailto:dlpiper0413@gmail.com)

## A New Start for a 1000-Year Garden



Visitors to Pope Farm might have noticed a few new things at the 1000-Year Garden at Pope Farm last summer—taller and lusher corn, perches for the pair of red-tailed hawks that kept it rodent-free, different varieties of squash, and so on. The most exciting ‘new’ thing about the 2021 garden, however, was something familiar to long-time visitors. The 1000-Year Garden was the first of the two Heritage gardens established at Pope Farm. It showcases the crops and field technologies used by Native American populations in Wisconsin 1000 years ago. From the very beginning, the garden was meant to be a teaching tool for 4th-grade teachers. Each spring, visiting students planted corn, sunflowers, and squash in the garden; and every fall, students came to learn about how the garden’s bounty would have been preserved through the winter.

Changes in how the Middleton/Cross Plains school district interacted with Pope Farm eventually led to the end of student involvement in the garden. Volunteers with the Friends Group stepped in to take their place. Happily, with the opening of Pope Farm Elementary, the garden has returned to its roots. In 2021, 4th graders once again entered the garden. They planted sunflowers, squash, and corn.

The 2021 class planted each of the three ridges in the small, ridged field in the garden with a different mix of corn. One ridge was planted with ‘Pope Farm Purple’, a variety developed over the last 10 years by carefully selecting seed corn over multiple generations, choosing only the most purple ears. Another was planted with a variety called ‘Glass Gem’, which has translucent, pastel kernels and tall, vigorous stalks. The third ridge was planted with a mix of the two.



Photo credit: Pope Farm Elementary School

As the garden grew, the differences in each ridge became apparent, and the resulting crop contained ears mixing the best of both breeds.

This new experiment will continue in 2022, as students return once again to get their hands dirty. Perhaps when they are grown, they will bring their own children to the gardens to proudly point at the Pope Farm Gem corn they had a hand in creating.

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## Volunteer Spotlight: Robby Sonzogni

This month, we would like to recognize one of our Program Committee members and long-time volunteer: Robby Sonzogni.

Robby and her family have lived near what is now Pope Farm Conservancy since the early 1980s. They have watched it develop over the years, walking the area before it was officially the conservancy. When Pope Farm became a park/conservancy, Robby and her husband, Bill, joined the focus sessions regarding what uses people wanted to see on the land.

Robby now visits the conservancy about once a week and occasionally shares photos of neat things she sees on her hikes. She enjoys watching the changing of the seasons, the birds and prairies, and the serenity. In winter, she heads out to the conservancy to snowshoe or cross-country ski. "I love the peaceful beauty!" she remarks. In March, when she sees the first bluebirds at PFC, she knows that spring is coming! "This year that was March 21st," she says.



Robby joined the Friends group in 2013 and first started volunteering during Sunflower Days. She continues to be a member of the Program Committee which plans public talks and tours at the conservancy throughout the year. During the winter season, Robby volunteers to lead the Winter Walks at PFC, as well.

When asked about her favorite memory at Pope Farm Conservancy, she replied, "My favorite memory was having our 50th anniversary family photos taken using the last Sunflowers as a backdrop. The setting was spectacular at the top of the hill."

We are so grateful for Robby's contributions to the Friends group and the Program Committee. Thank you, Robby, for your hard work in planning and participating in events at the conservancy. You have truly made a difference at Pope Farm!

## Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

### Education Team Meeting – VIRTUAL

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 19th, 2022 (6:00 – 7:30 p.m.)**

Zoom Link: Email Doug Piper ([dlpiper0413@gmail.com](mailto:dlpiper0413@gmail.com)) for the meeting link.

Discussion topics: We will be discussing upcoming Farm Day activities, and future possibilities for a program for students and families. We will also be looking at possibilities to begin work on a video featuring Native American stories.

## Springtime at the Conservancy

Pope Farm Conservancy is a great place to get out into nature and witness the beautiful renewal that the spring season brings! With warmer, longer days, we witness the natural world awaken. Here are some fun ways to celebrate spring at the conservancy:

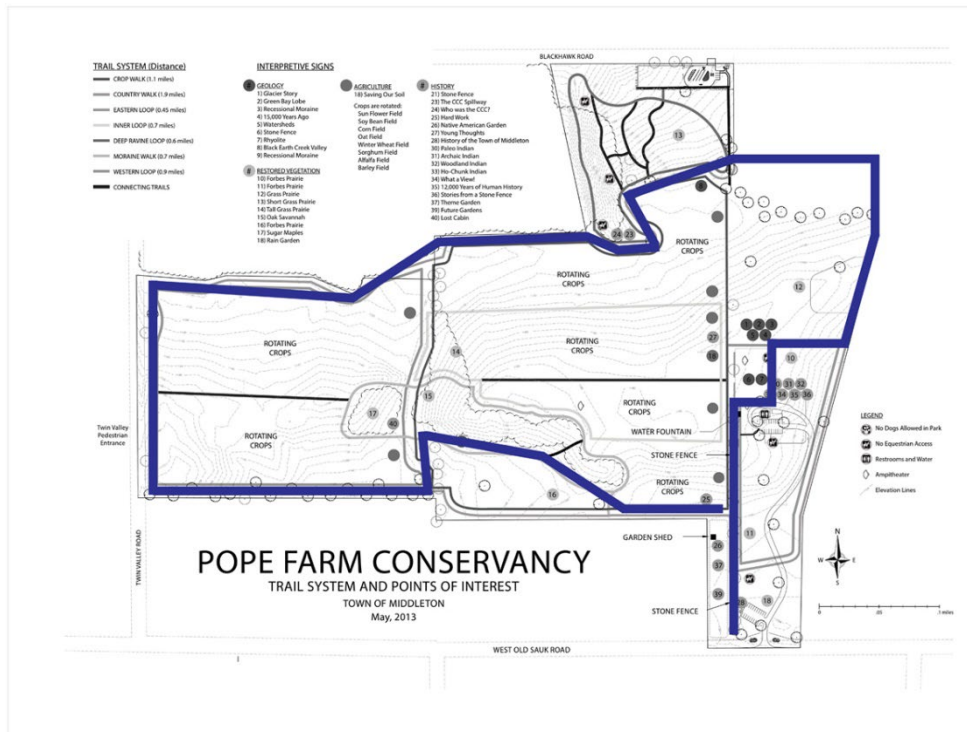
### Hike the Bluebird Trail

Bluebirds have been seen and heard at the conservancy over the past couple of weeks. The best place to observe these beautiful birds are along the bluebird trail, home to 20 nesting boxes along the walking trails at Pope Farm. Long time FOPFC members Curt and Arlys Caslavka established the bluebird trail in 2008 and have maintained it ever since.

If you're looking for a new hiking route at PFC, just follow the Bluebird Trail. See trail map below. The trail is outlined in blue.

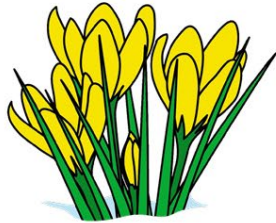


Photo credit: Mike McDowell





















## Spring Scavenger Hunt at Pope Farm Conservancy

From birds to bees, flowers to fungi, join us in exploring the conservancy's plants and wildlife by participating in our seasonal Scavenger Hunt—all ages welcome! Drawings are courtesy of Evie and Maddie Starzewski (age 7).



# Springtime Scavenger Hunt

How many items can you find at Pope Farm Conservancy?

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Tracks |    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dandelion         |    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ant           |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Feather           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Animal   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowering Tree    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bee           |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Leaves      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Nest     |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bluebird      |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nut or Seed       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly     |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Seedling / Sprout |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caterpillar   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiderweb         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clover        |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildflowers       |  |

## Celebrate Earth Day on April 22

Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22nd, and this year's Earth Day theme is 'Invest In Our Planet'. You can celebrate and protect the planet at the same time! Whether it's picking up litter, going out for a hike, exploring nature with your family, or supporting a conservation organization with a financial gift, there's something for everyone to do this Earth Day...and every day!



Make a donation to the FOPFC this Earth Day at <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/donate/>

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## Reminders

### Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder...you can now renew your membership online here:

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

Or you can renew by mail by sending 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 email us at [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).

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## Connect with FOPFC Online

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

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.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!**