

December 2021 News Update



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Thank You Volunteers for a Great Year!

As the 2021 FOPFC activities at Pope Farm Conservancy come to a close, we would like to thank our amazing volunteers for their time, dedication, and commitment to our mission and goals.

Thank you to our Programs Committee for organizing the educational programs and arranging for guest speakers to present both in person and on Zoom. Did you know? You can still watch the recorded virtual presentations on our website here.

Thanks to the Restoration Team volunteers who helped with seed collection and monarch butterfly tagging. A special shout out to the trail stewards, as well, for their efforts to make Pope Farm Conservancy a better place by monitoring the Conservancy's trails and property.

We also have a dedicated group of volunteers who help behind the scenes with data entry, bookkeeping, photography, writing, graphic arts, thank-you cards, the website and social media, maintaining the rain garden and the heritage gardens, supervising work projects and more! We are very grateful to those who do many other special projects that help with our overall effort.

Thank you so very much for ALL you do!



Upcoming Programs – Jan/Feb 2022

➤ **Winter Wonderland Adventures at PFC**

The FOPFC Programs Committee is gearing up for some fun winter outings in 2022.

We invite you to join us for one (or both) of these winter adventures:

- **Monday, January 17, 2022, 1-2 p.m.**
- **Sunday, February 13, 2022, 1-2 p.m.**

Bring your own snowshoes, cross-country skis, or hiking boots and come along on a one-hour journey through the conservancy.

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. Hope to see you there! Visit our program webpage for more information:

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



➤ **Virtual Presentation: "History of the Civilian Conservation Corp at Pope Farm"**

Wednesday, January 26th, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Guest speakers: Bob Moore and Jim Bolitho

Join us on Zoom for a virtual presentation about past and present infrastructure projects at Pope Farm Conservancy. Historian Bob Moore will be joining us to talk about the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) soil erosion dam site that was built on the Pope Farm property in the 1930s. We'll learn about the men and boys (pictured right) who were housed at the CCC camp in Mt. Horeb. Bob will also talk about the importance of the CCC, especially in terms of its immediate impact to this area during the Depression years. We invite you to watch our 6-part video series on the legacy of the CCC at Pope Farm prior to Bob's talk.



Later on, we'll hear more about the Erosion Mitigation Project at the Ravine in the fall of 2021. Jim Bolitho will be available to answer questions about the changed topography and a relocated trail on the east side of the ravine.

This talk is free and open to the public. You must register online to receive the Zoom link. Go to the link below to sign up online:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcpc--gqD4rH9Zg7KlBk3hN6W21XxBKO_Gq

Late Fall Happenings

Students Learn about German Immigration at PFC

Fourth graders from the Pope Farm Elementary spent two hours at the Conservancy on a cold November 3rd morning, learning at three different stations. A Friends member presented a session on German immigration at the Goth cabin site. The PFE teachers presented two other activities: one was playing games that children would have played in the 1860s, and the other dealt with American Indian groups moving through their area gathering resources available in nature and trading with other groups if they believed they did not have enough resources to last through the winter.



Photo courtesy: Pope Farm Elementary School

Meet Our Newest Trail Stewards: Dick and Mary Weeks

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of our Trail Steward Program: Dick and Mary Weeks. The Trail Stewards serve as additional "eyes" to oversee the conservancy and help protect the scenic landscapes and tranquility of PFC for the enjoyment of the public. While walking the trails, they look out for things that may be safety issues, such as fallen tree branches, footing obstacles (recently many big holes) in the paths, etc. They also report maintenance issues, like high weeds in the walkways or amphitheaters, damage to fences, trees/shrubs in need of pruning, vandalism, overflowing garbage, and things like that.



Dick and Mary (pictured right) visit Pope Farm Conservancy once a week now that they are retired. They enjoy watching where new birds show up, what prairie flowers are blooming, and which trees are getting colorful. "Each season has something very nice to observe," says Dick. "We love the hills, the views, and glimpses of Lake Mendota and the Capitol." Some of their favorite things to see at Pope Farm are the Sandhill cranes and butterflies.

When asked what inspired them to volunteer as trail stewards, they replied, "We have time on our hands and volunteering is a good cause. We like to be outside so why not pay attention in the environment and address things in need of attention?" The Weeks are also stewards at the UW Arboretum. They feel it's important to be concerned about our world, our environment, and what can we do to make a difference. "Pope Farm Conservancy is a treasure to us. We are lucky to live nearby," they add.

A big thanks to Dick and Mary for helping to make Pope Farm Conservancy a safe and beautiful place for all to enjoy!

From Our Partners at Forward Garden



Forward Garden Ends Successful Season

Summary and photos by Matt Lechmaier

We have reached the end of our second successful growing season at Forward Garden thanks to increased involvement from community members, local area groups and business work teams. Total acreage in production increased from 2.6 acres planted in 2020 to about 4 acres this year, which allowed us to contribute more than 28,000 pounds of produce from 54 different crops to the local emergency food system.

This included approximately:

- 1,100 pounds of tomatillos
- 1,800 pounds of butternut squash
- 2,100 pounds of sweet corn
- 2,600 pounds of melon and watermelon
- 5,400 pounds of peppers
- 3,800 pounds of tomatoes

Forward Garden also featured a very friendly flock of laying hens this season as well as a pumpkin patch that students from Pope Farm Elementary School planted during a field trip in June. The pumpkins were provided to the school for their first annual Trunk-or-Treat fundraiser in October.

We look forward to seeing what new community engagement opportunities present themselves in 2022!



Winter at the Conservancy

Hours, Activities, and Reminders

Pope Farm Conservancy is open year-round from sunrise to sunset. It's a great place for trekking through snow, winter birding, and even photography. You can also enjoy a variety of winter activities, such as snowshoeing, sledding, cross-country skiing, and hiking. Come enjoy the stark beauty of winter at PFC!

REMINDERS: Please stay on the designated trails and do not venture out into the prairies or crop fields. The lower parking lot off Old Sauk Road will remain open and plowed through the winter months. All other parking lots will be closed. Thank you for your cooperation.

RAVINE TRAIL UPDATE: The trail near the ravine at Pope Farm Conservancy will remain closed through the winter months due to the recent planting of vegetation as part of the repairs made to the ravine, to preserve the integrity of the matting. Although the ground is frozen in the wintertime, foot traffic, skiers and their poles will destroy the matting before the vegetation is established next spring. Your understanding is appreciated.



Snowman photo by Talia Cawrse

Winter Bird Watch: American Tree Sparrows

Content and photos by Mike McDowell

Just because the wintry weather has moved into southern Wisconsin doesn't mean all the interesting songbirds are gone. There is a durable migratory sparrow that will spend the winter months at our fields, prairies, and backyard feeders. By now, the American Tree Sparrows have already arrived at Pope Farm Conservancy from the northernmost regions of Canada.

Pope Farm Conservancy's prairies offer these sparrows exactly the type of habitat they need to survive our harsh winters. They can be found in medium-sized to large flocks feeding on the weeds and prairie plant seeds, especially goldenrod. They eat snow to obtain water, and they can endure our coldest winters, even when it's twenty below zero! About the only thing they have to be concerned about is being captured and eaten by small hawks.

American Tree Sparrows are an abundant species, but they're easily missed. If you snowshoe or hike the conservancy's trails this winter, be sure to listen for this sparrow's "teedle-eet teedle-eet" bird call.

A few other bird species to keep an eye out for this winter are Northern Cardinals, Black-capped Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, woodpeckers, nuthatches, hawks, and even owls. Happy birding!



Winter Scavenger Hunt Bingo – For All Ages!

Tracks in the snow, glistening icicles, chickadees calling “Fee Bee”... these are a few of the joys of winter exploring. If you look and listen a bit more closely, you'll also discover that the frozen world is full of wonders. We invite you to play our **Winter Scavenger Hunt Bingo** game, either on your own or with family and friends! Please share some photos and stories of your winter explorations to Facebook or Instagram and tag us @FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy, or email us at info@popefarmconservancy.org.

Winter Scavenger Hunt Bingo!



How many items can you find at Pope Farm Conservancy?

 ANIMAL TRACKS	 ICICLES	 FEATHER	 OAK LEAF	 PINECONE
 SQUIRREL DREY	 SNOWY GRASS	 HAWK	 BERRIES	 TREE STUMP
 MILKWEED SEED POD	 WOODPECKER	 SNOWFLAKES	 SNOWSHOERS	 KIDS SLEDDING
 ACORNS	 SNOWMAN	 TREE CAVITY	 PINE NEEDLES	 WILD TURKEY
 CHICKADEE	 FROST	 FOOTPRINTS	 CARDINAL	 SNOWY FENCE

Share your photos with us at info@popefarmconservancy.org.
Or tag us @FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy on Facebook and Instagram.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Programs Committee Meeting

Next Meeting: Monday, December 6th, 2021 (3:00 p.m.)

Location: At the home of Diane Smidt, 202 Saratoga Circle, Madison, WI

Discussion topics: The committee will be focused on the progress of events for the 2022 season. If interested in event planning, all are welcome to join this meeting. Otherwise, please send event ideas to Diane Smidt (diane.smidt@gmail.com).

Education Team Meeting – VIRTUAL

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 18th, 2022 (6:00 – 7:30 p.m.)

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

Discussion topics: We will be discussing current activities with the school district, and ideas on what we can do to improve the educational experience at Pope Farm Conservancy in 2022.

Winter Membership Drive

Give the Gift of Membership

When you gift a FOPFC membership, your friend or loved one will be welcomed into the Conservancy's family of dedicated individuals committed to enhancing the educational opportunities at Pope Farm Conservancy, preserving the balance of its wildlife habitat and historical features, and protecting its scenic landscapes and tranquility for the enjoyment of the public.



As a Conservancy member, the gift recipient will receive:

- A personalized card announcing your special gift, delivered via USPS
- Monthly email updates on the Conservancy
- Updates on upcoming activities, programs, and volunteer opportunities
- Our semi-annual magazine, filled with beautiful photos, as well as informative and insightful articles about PFC's history, educational programs, and its many plants and animals.

To gift a membership to a friend or loved one, complete the online membership form: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership/> and select “Gift Membership”.

Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder...you can now renew your membership online at <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership>, or you can renew by mail. Please send a check (Payable to FOPFC) 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 send an email to info@popefarmconservancy.org.

FOPFC Shirts Make Great Holiday Gifts

This holiday season, we've got the perfect gifts for the nature lovers in your life! When you purchase a FOPFC logo t-shirt, sweatshirt, tote bag, or mug, a portion of every sale goes directly to the Friends. **Visit the FOPFC Store:**

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

Place your order by Monday, December 6th and receive your items by December 24th.

Please email the Friends at info@popefarmconservancy.org if you have any questions regarding your order.



**We wish you and your loved ones a very safe and happy holiday season!
And we look forward to the many exciting programs, tours, and projects to come in 2022.**

End of Year Contributions

As the year comes to a close, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank our members, donors, and dedicated volunteers for all their support and hard work this year. We have many exciting activities and programs planned for 2022!

Please consider making an additional year-end gift today to help us provide educational opportunities for all ages and preserve an important natural resource in our community. Donate online at <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/donate/>

Or mail a check to FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Road, Middleton, WI 53562. Thank you!

Thank you for your generosity and continued support!

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!**