

October 2021 News Update

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Upcoming Volunteer Opportunity

Prairie Restoration Workday

Our final Prairie Restoration Workday of 2021 will take place on **Wednesday, October 13th from 10am-12pm** at Pope Farm Conservancy. We will be collecting prairie plant seeds. Our goal is to use the collected seed to increase the diversity and quality of prairie plant species at the Conservancy.



Seed collection is easy to do, and it's an enjoyable way to spend a couple hours in nature. No experience needed. We will provide tools. Please bring your own gloves and wear long pants & footwear that protect your feet.

Go to the link below to sign up in advance so we can notify you of any changes. Email Curt Caslavka at curt@popefarmconservancy.org if you have questions.

Registration link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4dafaa2ca0ffc61-prairie>

Recap of September Programs

Fall Migration Bird Walk with Mike McDowell

Story by Diane Smidt; Photo by Martha Zydowsky

On Saturday, September 11, just as the red sun was rising above the trees looking east from the Pope Farm Conservancy, a small group of birders joined Mike McDowell for an informative and entertaining bird walk to view, hear, and photograph many migrating birds. Among the many we heard and spied with our binoculars were chickadees, sparrows, warblers, bluebirds, finches, indigo buntings, etc. But the more unusual and fascinating fine feathered friends were the Tennessee and Palm warblers, the Eastern Phoebes and the Chipping



sparrows. A highlight was the Red-Tailed Hawk, that welcomed us as he patiently sat upon a tree branch not so high up next to the lower parking lot observing our human group of interested folk!

The peak migration is mid-September, but we learned that some leave as early as June and some, as late as November. Note that if you feed hummingbirds, it's possible to leave your feeder out as late as December, as some will remain 'til that late date. Oh, yes, and the first bird back in the spring is the Sandhill Crane! Who knew?! Always thought it was the robin!

Mike McDowell is a very witty, knowledgeable birding leader. If you missed his fall migration walk, be sure to sign up for the one next spring. You won't be disappointed, and you'll learn a lot, even if you miss seeing the bird sightings with your binoculars!

Monarch Tagging at Pope Farm Conservancy

Over 40 volunteers participated in the Monarch Tagging Project at Pope Farm Conservancy last month. From September 5th - 15th, volunteers successfully tagged 161 butterflies! One session was cancelled due to rain and high wind, and the last few sessions had very few monarchs to tag. Overall, we saw fewer monarchs at PFC this season, but yearly variance in the monarch population is not unusual.



This program is very popular among those who participated, and it's a great experience for all ages. The FOPFC will continue this program as long as we can obtain the tags. A big Thanks to all the volunteers and our program supervisors: Curt Caslavka, Beth Rahko, and Janie Starzewski.



Seed Collection Workdays

The prairie seed collection effort at Pope Farm Conservancy has been very successful so far this year, with one more session remaining in October. The volunteers collected Culvers Root, White Baptisa, and Yellow Coneflower seeds. The seeds will be used to interseed certain areas in the Conservancy.



Education Team Update

The FOPFC Education Team has been producing short 3–5-minute educational videos about the Land and its stories. These videos can be accessed on the website online or in the Conservancy using barcode technology. We have completed the German Immigrations and CCC video series. Currently we are working on videos about the History of the Land, and Geology at Pope Farm Conservancy.

FOPFC To Produce Two New Educational Video Series

We are pleased to announce that we are now beginning work on two new video series entitled “Mammals at Pope Farm Conservancy”, and “Birds of Pope Farm Conservancy”.



Mammals at Pope Farm Conservancy will include a 7-part video series on 6 different mammals. Tentatively we will do videos on the Whitetail Deer, Coyote, Thirteen Line Ground Squirrel, Badger, Bats, and Mink. In addition, we will have a video about the importance of Pope Farm Conservancy as a haven for wildlife. Photo by Brad Bellisle.



Birds of Pope Farm Conservancy will include a 7-part series on 6 different bird species. We are currently targeting the Bluebird, Clay Colored Sparrow, Red-Tailed Hawk, Orchard Oriole, Indigo Bunting, and the Eastern Kingbird. That line up could change as we begin our work. There will also be a video about the value that is offered by Pope Farm Conservancy to grassland birds. Photo by Mike McDowell.

Property & Operations Update

Fixing the Spillway

The CCC spillway was constructed in 1938 and is currently undergoing some repairs. The spillway is the only one of its kind in the state of Wisconsin that is being preserved and maintained. The purpose of the spillway is to reduce the water velocity to help prevent erosion. The water sits in a stilling pool at the bottom of the structure and is allowed to trickle out as the water continues its journey to Black Earth Creek. For the last year, the water has not been able to drain properly. Thanks to the Town of Middleton for continuing their stewardship of this historical point of interest.



Blue Bird Trail Report



The season started off very slowly because of the cold weather in April. However, we ended up with a total of 52 Bluebird fledglings, and 48 Tree Swallows. This represented an average year. Since 2008, 1,400 birds have fledged in the Bluebird trail boxes at Pope Farm Conservancy. Approximately 50% have been Bluebirds, and 50% Tree Swallows.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Programs Committee Meeting

When: Wednesday, October 13, 2021 (7:00 - 8:30 p.m.)

Where: Home of Diane Smidt: 202 Saratoga Circle, Madison, WI 53705

Discussion topics: We will be discussing program ideas for 2022. We welcome those members interested in event planning to join us for this volunteer opportunity. Or you may simply email your ideas/thoughts to diane.smidt@gmail.com.

Education Team Meeting – ONLINE

When: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 (6:00 – 7:30 p.m.)

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

Discussion topics: The Education Team will finalize the 2022 Education Team budget, as well as continue discussions about future goals for 2022 and beyond. All members are welcome! Come, listen, and share your ideas.

Photo of the Month



Autumn is here and that means it's harvesting time! The soybeans at the top of the hill were harvested on September 20th.
Photo by Barbara Esser

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

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