

October 2022 News Update

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“I’m so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers.”
— L. M. Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables

Fall Programs

Fall Nature Photography Workshop at Pope Farm Conservancy

Saturday, October 22, 2022 (8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.)

Presenters: PhotoMidwest



Capture the beauty of Fall on a “photo walk” at Pope Farm Conservancy. This is a great opportunity to practice your photography skills, talk about nature, learn, and socialize with other camera enthusiasts. The walk will be led by photographers from PhotoMidwest who can answer your questions about composition, framing your shot, landscape vs. macro, choosing a lens, and more!

No registration required. Free and open to the public!

We will meet in the lower parking lot by the conservancy's main entrance off Old Sauk Road. Don't forget to bring your camera and good walking shoes.

PhotoMidwest is a volunteer organization providing a rich mix of photography educational programs, including formal classes and workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and regularly scheduled meetings. Be sure to check out their website: <https://www.photomidwest.org/>

Volunteer Opportunities

Writers Wanted: Volunteers are needed to help write content and stories for these wonderful publications. There are so many interesting stories at the Conservancy, and if you like to write, there is much to write about! We currently rely on the same people month after month, and we need your help. Even if it is contributing an article once or twice a year. If interested, please contact us at info@popefarmconservancy.org.

News from the Friends

Friends Add New Q/R Attachments to the Interpretive Signage at PFC



Pictured Above: The new attachment contains a QR code that allows visitors to easily access videos related to the content on that sign.

Over the past two years, the Friends have produced 35 short educational videos about the stories of the land. Last month, we installed new QR code attachments on the interpretive signage that will give visitors the ability to access corresponding videos on site. The Friends have installed 18 attachments to the current signage at PFC. This will provide access to an enormous amount of information to the public and to students.



Recap of August Programs

FOPFC Membership Picnic, September 1st, 2022

Story by Diane Smidt

It was a lovely evening at Lakeview Park in Middleton where the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy gathered to greet one another and share conversations, which often included stories centered around our dedication, interest, and love for this treasured piece of land and its special history.



Around 30 of us enjoyed some good food and featured highlights of the past year presented by Mel Pope. We were happily joined by a few new faces who shared much enthusiasm for volunteer opportunities at PFC. Of course, it was quite pleasant to meet and share conversations with those we knew, but with whom we hadn't had much opportunity to spend time together these last years. It's amazing how much we find we have in common and how much we learn from one another!

Always, the membership picnic is a nice wrap-up to the summer and past events yet keeps an eye (and chats) on future events, questions, and celebrations of/for Pope Farm Conservancy. If you missed this year's picnic, please join us next year!

Fall Migration Birding Tour with Mike McDowell, Sept. 10th

Story by Diane Smidt, Photos by Joe Gadbois

The morning was bright, sunny, and welcoming for an early Birding Walk, and Mike McDowell always knows how to pitch it! With his versatile wealth of information from fauna to fossils to photography and birds, there wasn't much to be missed!

Our hour and a half walk, with nearly 40 participants, began with a singing Tennessee Warbler, followed a bit later by its cousin, the Palm Warbler that was catching insects. We learned that some birds bang their insect prey on something to kill it. Actually, most birds we see are insectivores, and those most common to Pope Farm Conservancy are the Tennessee Warbler, the Palm Warbler, and the Common Yellow-Throated Warbler.



There were SO many interesting facts to be learned on this walk. Here are a few:

- Birds molt a couple of times a year to regenerate their feathers.
- Most paired (male & female) birds have slightly different songs, the female often not singing the full song as does the male counterpart. This is not true, however, of the cardinals nor the robins.
- Palm Warblers and Phoebes both bob their tails.
- Identification of birds relies on size, color, vocalization, and behaviors.
- Grassland birds are steadily declining because of loss of habitat (Example: Meadowlarks have diminished from around 25 million to 5 million.)
- The lack of mosquitoes is the cause of a decline in migration.
- Blue jays are great “deceptors” or liars, as they can do a good job of imitating a variety of hawk species, as well as other birds, such as the Gray Catbird.
- Chickadees are like police officers: they send out alarm-calls that carry information about size and threat of predators.

The event was summed up with discussions of ways to help keep our bird friends in the area, such as planting a lot of flowers and/or native prairies. For instance, any red flower will attract hummingbirds.

Mike’s intellect and wit are always a treat when birding with him. Watch for a possible authoring of a book in his future. Now that he has located and made notes of the Six-Spotted Tiger Beetle, it’s merely a matter of time!

A **BIG THANKS** to Mike for all he shared and enlightened us with. And many thanks to all of you who came with your cameras, binoculars, and an eagerness to learn and simply enjoy our treasured feathered friends at Pope Farm Conservancy!



Monarch Tagging 2022 Recap

Approximately 30 people volunteered to help tag monarch butterflies at Pope Farm Conservancy from Sept. 6th through Sept. 15th. Unfortunately, this year saw a steep decline in the number of monarchs migrating South through Wisconsin, and that directly impacted the number of monarchs our volunteers were able to tag at Pope Farm. Madison Audubon “Goose Pond” provided 150 tags for the Friends group, and of those, we were able to use 47. That is roughly about one third of what we have done in the past.

Speculation as to why there has been such a dramatic downturn in the monarch population is probably related to drought conditions in parts of Texas and Mexico earlier this year. This would negatively impact their northerly migration in Spring and result in fewer young produced within the Northern range.



Above: Nick Kruczynski and his daughters carefully apply a small, numbered tag to this monarch's wing.

Thanks to all the volunteers who participated in this activity! Though we saw very few monarchs this year, it was a pleasure walking around the conservancy, enjoying each other's company.

If any of the monarchs we tagged at Pope Farm are recovered this winter, the data will be reported here: <https://monarchwatch.org/tagging/index.html#recoveries>
Recoveries from Mexico are typically reported to February/March and posted in April/May, as soon as everything has been verified.

Seed Collection 2022 Recap

The Friends hosted two seed collection sessions at Pope Farm Conservancy in September. Volunteers successfully collected: monarda (beebalm), prairie drop seed, coneflower, and native sunflower seeds.

Curt Caslavka, who leads the prairie restoration activities for the Friends group, will be talking to the company that manages the prairies about using some of the seed in the ravine area that we are trying to reestablish after the flood damage, and also the north end of the South Prairie where birds-foot trefoil (an invasive) needs to be taken out.



Our Prairie Restoration Team may host one more seed collection session in October. Please check our website and Facebook page for updates.

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

Education Team Meeting – VIRTUAL

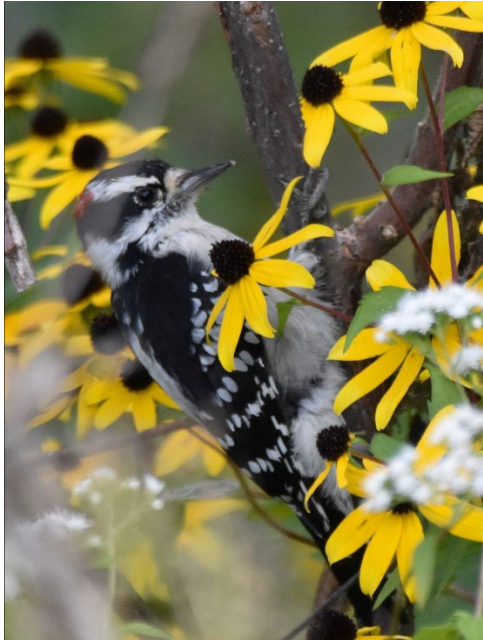
Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 25th, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Discussion topics: We will be discussing ways to support elementary school programming at the conservancy and reviewing the progress of producing the educational video series.

Photos of the Month

Thanks to Joe Gadbois for sharing these photos he took during the Migratory Birding Tour at PFC on September 10th. Pictured below are the downy woodpeckers (upper left), red-eyed vireo (upper right), and a lovely little house wren sitting on the garden fence.



Reminders

Please Stay on Mowed Paths

We're seeing several areas where the native grasses are being trampled down in the Blackhawk prairie from people walking out into the prairie for photo ops. This will not only have a negative impact on the beautiful "look" the Blackhawk prairie has had in the past, but these trampled areas are also more susceptible to invasive weeds created by this disturbance. The Blackhawk prairie is also home to various wildlife and nesting birds such as sedge wrens. The damage to the prairies has a negative impact on them, as well. **We kindly ask that ALL visitors please stay on the trails and mowed paths.** Thank you for your cooperation!

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.

Get Involved

As mentioned above, we are in need of writers to contribute stories or short articles for our publications. We currently rely on the same people month after month, and we need additional help. If interested, please contact us at info@popefarmconservancy.org. If there's another activity you'd like to help with, please fill out the Volunteer Interests Form on our website.

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!**