



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

FOPBC-UW Collaboration: Exploring Health Ties to the Conservancy

By Lyman Wible

Evidence shows that personal movement behaviors have a major role in the health of an individual. This fall, the UW-Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning, through the graduate-level course “Making Health Matter in Planning,” will be considering this issue as it relates to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Starting in September a group of 10 graduate students will work with the support of Dr. Jeffrey Sledge to explore, inventory, map and quantify assets of the Conservancy as they may relate to this topic.

The course is based on the idea that many modern chronic diseases are

predominately “diseases of place” and reflect the decisions about how places are arranged and lives are lived. Communities can serve as places of wellness - - with specific places employed to mitigate and cure disease, and to support wellness and

health. Planning theory and practice can also be applied with other mechanisms and “big data” analytics to re-craft built environments so as to achieve specific health outcomes.

Relevant questions about the Conservancy will become apparent as the class gathers and understands new information about the uses and properties of the site. Does the Conservancy offer benefits in this matter? Are benefits identifiable? Can they be quantified? Are they significant to the community? What kinds of programs and activities might be most closely related?

Student efforts may involve such activities as map-making,

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THE UNIVERSITY
of
WISCONSIN
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“Tunes on Tuesdays” Reflections

By John Daly

“Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

The current research on the healing powers of nature is fascinating. A combination of nature and other elements that stimulate the senses are reported to have very positive effects on our physical and mental health.

When we go into a natural setting we hear the sounds of nature. The fauna

and the flora have their own rhythm and song. This combination stimulates our senses and contributes to a closer relationship with the outdoor world. Institutions of higher education and various organizations are studying how the combination of music and the environment benefit people of all ages.

In July and early August 2016, the FOPBC Education Committee invited the community to take a stroll through

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Protect. Restore. Promote.



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends,

By now many of you may have noticed the latest addition to Pheasant Branch Conservancy: a new boardwalk that extends 305 feet north from the existing PBC south loop boardwalk and ends on the west bank of Pheasant Branch Creek with a spectacular view looking all the way to Frederick's Hill.

Many years ago a bird blind was constructed at this location. Unfortunately the path leading to the blind was wet, even mucky and often inaccessible. In 2014 someone had a dream to make an improvement and proposed a donation to make it possible. The process wasn't easy and the Friends of Pheasant Branch offered to help. There were many, many meetings with the City of Middleton. The length and location for a new boardwalk were studied. The costs increased. Even though the donor doubled her pledge, it was not enough to cover the estimate. Last spring with support from the FOPBC and the Conservation Lands Commission, the Common Council gave both their approval and financial support. The new boardwalk was completed by the city crews working

with contractor, Modular Trail Structures LLC. of Madison on the July 1st date as requested by the donor. I especially want to acknowledge the help from City Forester, Mark Wegner.

Now, I hope that you will turn off the busy boardwalk and visit what is one of the most exquisite views of Pheasant Branch Creek looking all the way north to Frederick's Hill. The two simple benches encourage you to stop, sit and use your eyes and your ears to enjoy the sounds of nature and serenity of this secluded site. We all thank the family of Saban Merchant for their recognition and vision for what is already becoming another special place to visit in PBC.

The plaque reads "In honor of Saban Merchant, with cherished memories of many walks in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy."

Sincerely,

Dagny Myrah

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Is your Membership Current?
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Membership Level:

memberships purchased after 9/1 apply to following calendar year

- \$10 Student
- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family

Please send your membership and payment to:
FOPBC
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562-8242

Additional Giving Opportunities:

- \$25 \$250
- \$50 \$500
- \$100 \$1,000
- Other: _____

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Restoration
- Education
- Watershed
- Development & Marketing
- Special Events (such as "Prairie Chase" Run/Walk)
- Board Member

FOPBC Member Bernthal Receives National Award

By Stefanie Brouwer

Tom Bernthal, FOPBC member and long-time volunteer, recently received a prestigious 2016 National Wetlands Award at a ceremony in Washington DC. The award recognizes those who have truly made a difference in protecting and improving these vital natural resources that filter pollutants from our waterways, recharge our aquifers, provide essential habitat to wildlife, buffer coastal storms, reduce the threat of floods, and protect biodiversity. Their dedication and innovation inspire new generations and ensure that wetlands receive the attention and care that they deserve.

Since 1989, the National Wetlands Awards program has honored individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to our nation's wetlands. The recipients provide wonderful examples of how individual citizens across the country can—and do—make

a difference in wetlands conservation and restoration efforts.



National wetland award presentation

Tom Bernthal has been the wetland monitoring and assessment coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources since 2003, but his dedication to wetlands conservation has been unwavering throughout his career. Through collaboration and

innovation, he has been a prominent figure in wetlands research, restoration, and education in Wisconsin. His ability to coordinate efforts and advance innovative wetland monitoring and assessment methods have resulted in numerous valuable resources for the state and region. He was instrumental in the development of the statewide Floristic Quality Assessment and in drafting *Reversing the Loss: A Strategy for Protecting and Restoring Wetlands in Wisconsin*. He has additionally volunteered for more than two decades as an advisor and board member for several nonprofit organizations, including the Wisconsin Wetlands Association and the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

According to Tom, "Wetland conservation starts when you fall in love with a place, and it's most satisfying when you can inspire others to work together and do what's right for the health of the land."

Summer Interns and Scouts: Making a Difference

By Herb Garn

Eight years! That's how long FOPBC has been in Prairie Partners - five organizations that jointly hire 5 interns for 12 weeks. Besides FOPBC, this year's group included Madison Audubon's Goose Pond Sanctuary, the Natural Heritage Land Trust, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, and Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy.

Rob Baller, Parks Coordinator, directed the crew at Pheasant Branch every Wednesday. Susan Gruber, County Liaison, regularly participated, providing inspiration, dedication, enthusiasm, historical perspective, and treats! Tom Klein, former Coordinator, helped with maps and flagging. Allison Ban-Herr, Kurt Bennett, Allison Earl, Adelyn Hanchette, and Gina Lehner made up the crew. At Pheasant Branch, they were joined by volunteer Emily Jorgenson



Intern chainsaw use and safety day

a UW-Madison junior majoring in Environmental Studies (previously at Middleton High School).

Interns get broad experience in land management practices. At each site, local specialists provide enrichment experiences. Thanks to all who shared their expertise at Pheasant Branch:

- Herb Garn – Erosion Control

- Mike Healy – Bock Community Forest
- Amy Rosebrough – Indian Mounds
- Wayne Pauly – Chainsaw Use and Safety
- Mike McDowell – Birds and Bird Habitat
- Lloyd Eagan and Herb Garn – Water Quality Monitoring

Controlling invasives is a priority, especially those that could take over prairie areas. The interns targeted garlic mustard, white sweet clover, honeysuckle, bird's foot trefoil, more white sweet clover, burdock, watercress, buckthorn, narrow leaf cattails, and even more white sweet clover. They developed skills with loppers, parsnip predators, brush cutters, chainsaws, a variety of herbicides, and pitch forks. Summer field notes often reported high

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NATURALIST NOTEBOOK:

News of Nature in the Conservancy

By Dale Klubertanz, an excerpt reprinted with permission of the author

As a conservancy walker, I am always amazed with each passing summer by the increasing number of flowering plants and native grasses in the reverently restored prairies of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. In the face of constant competition by invasive and exotic plants and the absence of many of the aspects and processes that made and sustained prairie communities over thousands of years, it is good to experience this community busy, in just a short time, forming its intricate and interdependent web of relationships within reach of our

own human communities, living side by side.

In the season when we are closest to the summer sun, the months of June and July have brought forth the full blossoming of the prairie just as the woodlands around them have finished filling their canopies over early spring forest blossoms. This has provided us with a small but glorious glimpse of how these communities might have appeared to American Indian and European settler alike.

By mid-July, the big blue stem grass has already begun to loom over the heads of strollers as they look up and over the prairie landscape. Arriving 19-century

Europeans called this dominant feature of the prairie a “Sea of Grass”, having no language or experience to describe what they were seeing for the first time as they crossed the Native American prairie lands. Late in the season, the big blue stem will finally reach a height of up to 8 feet and display its signature “turkey foot”, its seed heads revealing three spike-like projections. These tall grasses signal the maturing summer season.

A conservancy walker who has come to these natural areas open to having a dialogue with the wild is not disappointed. It is mutual, respectful and reverent. There is much to ask about, to listen for and from which to receive answers.

The Friends Need Your Help

By Lyman Wible

“You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.” Winston Churchill

2017 will be another challenging year. The board of the Friends is asking for members and others to consider the continuing (and changing) needs for support, apart from the financial support you give.

If you have time or energy or interests or skills to share, you can make a difference and help us do a better job in several areas:

- Administrative support work
 - Membership records
 - Financial records
 - Website management

Board/Committee work

- Restoration and Management:

including work with prairies, wetlands, and forestry

- Development and Marketing
- Education
- Watershed

If you think you might have a place, please let us know by contacting any other board member or the Governance Committee Chair, Lyman Wible, lymanwible@gmail.com.

Summer Interns...

humidity (70-80%), temperatures near 90, vegetation more than head-high, and voracious mosquitoes.

The interns developed an appreciation of the many tasks involved in managing natural areas. They witnessed the wide variety of visitors to the conservancy and the challenges of balancing different uses. FOPBC is fortunate to have the resources to annually work with these future environmental leaders through the Prairie Partners.

Awesome!

On August 14th, volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 640 removed heavy, soaked, disintegrating carpet from the Indian mounds, piled it into trailers, brought it down from the hill, and piled it in a dumpster to be hauled away. The carpet remnants were placed on the mounds several years ago to kill the existing vegetation and ready the area for seeding.

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Susan Gruber worked with the Scouts on logistics, and Rob Baller, Parks Coordinator, was on hand to help as needed.

Later in fall, the Scouts will seed the mounds with a high-quality mix provided by Dane County Parks. It will take a few years for these plants to fill in, but eventually the mounds will be stunning. Until then, Friends volunteers will remove opportunistic invasives so desired plants are able to thrive.

Will Mueller Completes Eagle Scout Project

By Herb Garn

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy congratulate Will Mueller of Troop 940 for completing his community service project in the Conservancy as part of earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Will and assisting scouts constructed a series of steps in two locations where trails on steep slopes were eroding and providing difficult footing. Steps and steel mesh leading to the viewing platform were installed at the homestead site. Steps with other trail improvements also were completed at the bush trail stream crossing, where there was a slippery steep bank, southwest of

the homestead site. These improvements of the trails will help protect resources in the Conservancy and also make it



Construction of the homestead site steps

safer for people to use the trails. Will was assisted by Scoutmaster Jan Cermak, Ron Berman in charge of troop eagle projects, and Herb Garn of the Friends as technical advisor.

Eagle Scout projects coordinated by Susan Gruber are one of many volunteer activities that have provided significant improvements to the Conservancy. Other noticeable recent projects include water bars to prevent erosion of the trail up Frederick Hill, restoration of the Indian mounds on the hill, viewing decks such as at the homestead, and steps at the springs.

Tunes on Tuesdays...

Continued from page 1

the Conservancy and experience music in nature. The invitation was simple and so was the concept.

“Tunes on Tuesdays” was the outcome of a Saturday morning coffee at the Prairie Café in Middleton Hills. Members of the Education Committee met with orchestra teachers from two area high schools and a naturalist to brainstorm the ways we could integrate music into the Conservancy this summer. The ideas varied from a full concert at the Frederick’s Homestead or the Bock Forest to the recording of nature’s own music (the bubbling creek, the call of the Sandhill Cranes, the wind blowing through the prairie grasses) to recruiting student musicians for a performance in the natural amphitheatre behind Kromrey Middle School. After a fun discussion and several coffee refills, the group settled on piloting a simple idea – “Tunes on Tuesdays.”

Student musicians from Middleton and Waunakee joined local musicians to perform along the trails from 6:00 – 8:00 pm for six consecutive weeks from July 5th to August 9th. Participants enjoyed a slow walk and visited three locations where the musicians provided acoustic

music, song and frequent invitations to sing-along for the pleasure of all present.

“Tunes on Tuesdays were wonderful! It was an awesome way to meet with friends over the



Both student and local musicians played in the prairie

summerto continue our enjoyment of music. As a student, it was a great way to keep music in my life while not at school.” Hannah T.

“It was a beautiful setting to play music, a wonderful opportunity and would

be happy to do it again!” Matt K.

The committee estimates that the number of participants grew each week to a peak of 175 people for the last Tuesday evening of July. The participants included all age groups, young families, teenagers and many new visitors to the Conservancy. An invitation was also extended to several of our senior collaboration partners – area senior centers, senior living communities and members of the Dementia Friendly Coalitions of Middleton and Waunakee.



The planning committee, which includes staff from Dane County Parks and Middleton Public Lands, Recreation & Forestry, learned a great deal from this first-time experience. All great pilot projects, including this one, result in some previously unforeseen concerns and room for improvements. The overall response to “Tunes on Tuesdays” has been very positive. The planning committee will be considering the successes and the challenges of this initiative over the next few months. We welcome your input at education@pheasantbranch.org.



EDUCATION CORNER: Kids for the Earth Program News

By Colleen Robinson Klug, FOPBC Education Coordinator

This year has already ushered in a multitude of new projects, programs and partnerships for the education program. New audiences, students and volunteers have enhanced our results and we continue on a roll... all to help “protect, promote and restore the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed for today and tomorrow!” As always, thank you to members, donors and volunteers... you ARE our education program!

Conservancy Day Programs – Every 3rd Thursday of the month

Middleton Glen has hosted more Conservancy Day Programs this year than ever before. Presenters shared information about invasive species threats to the Madison lakes, the International Crane Foundation, MG&E’s Solar Energy Partnership Program, and more.

This autumn watch for some exciting Conservancy Day topics, including Universe in the Park, the world of jumping worms and other earthworms, and our feature program:

Thursday, October 20

4:15 – 5:15 pm

Clark Street Community School, Middleton

Free and open to the public

Wildlife In Need Center – wildlife rehabilitation program

Live education animals will be on hand to help tell the story of wildlife in need of rehabilitation and the hard work that goes into helping them get “back on their feet” or “back on the wing!”

Stay tuned at <http://pheasantbranch.org> and join hundreds of other people who enjoy learning and exploring in and about the Conservancy. You can sign up to receive once-per-month email reminders by sending a message to education@pheasantbranch.org with the subject line: “CD Program subscribe”.

K-12 School Field Trips

An ongoing project this year includes refreshing our field trip curriculum materials. Some improvements have been made to our already-successful outdoor lessons for Kindergarten through 4th grade, and it will only keep getting better from here!

Thanks to a grant partnership between the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District and FOPBC, teachers, naturalists and FOPBC education committee members are developing middle school curriculums that meet the new Next Generation Science Standards. Even better, they will also include plenty of outdoor learning time both on school grounds and at the Conservancy. The first of these pilot curriculums will be implemented this year!

4K Curriculum Project Update

Excitement is building as ten 4K sites in Middleton and Cross Plains begin to use a brand new curriculum unit in September that incorporates outdoor learning at the school sites. Expanded from a familiar theme “Adopt A Tree,” this 10-unit curriculum was designed by two enthusiastic 4K teachers and Friends’ education committee members. The new curriculum was briefly introduced to 4K teachers at their first Professional Development day of the year on August 29. A more detailed, hands-on, in-service on the units will be provided to them at September’s PD day. Teachers involved so far are very grateful and dedicated to implementing a new, fun, empowering way for young children to explore and learn in the outdoors... one tiny step at a time... over ten units all year. Watch for presentations about the success of this project in 2017! It is all possible thanks to our own Glen Pulver Education Fund, originating from generous donations to Conservancy education and it helps our committee fulfill the last of several education goals from our most recent strategic plan. Thank you for your support!

Join the FOPBC education program as a volunteer naturalist, committee member, intern, or specific project lead. We know you have something amazing to share! Contact Colleen to explore opportunities.

UW Collaboration...

user surveys, data analyses, and other technical methods. The faculty hope to involve FOPBC in orienting, informing, and eventually evaluating the students and their work. Board member Lyman Wible reports that the board hopes to

involve other stakeholders as well to help balance the study perspectives.

The board is supportive and actively working to learn more detail about the effort. It could be very useful to have

some FOPBC members involved and a volunteer liaison to support and ensure communications with the University on the project. Interested members could contact Lyman Wible by email at lymanwible@gmail.com.

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GET OUT THERE: Restoration Volunteer Opportunities

By Janet Kane, FOPBC Restoration & Management Committee Co-Chair

Wayne Pauly, Dane County Parks Naturalist, is retiring at the end of September. Since the early 90's, Wayne has guided the restoration work in the county unit – clearing the hill of dense honeysuckle and buckthorn, transforming farm fields into acres of prairie, siting decks that offer magnificent views and nestle into the landscape, laying out inviting trails, addressing erosion and pollution issues, partnering with schools and volunteers to harvest hundreds of bags of seed, cleaning and storing seeds over the winter, and seeding new prairies in the spring. We're grateful for his friendship and for all we've learned from him about the treasures of the Conservancy, the importance of volunteers, the challenges of figuring out 'what works,' and the strength, resilience and beauty of diverse communities. In retirement, Wayne plans to volunteer for Dane County Parks. No doubt he'll still spend time at Pheasant Branch Conservancy.



Wayne Pauly



Penni Klein



Lars Higdon

the Madison Audubon Society and as lead steward at the University of Wisconsin's Nature Preserve. Lars has a master's degree in restoration ecology from the University of Wisconsin and a bachelor's in natural resource management. We're looking forward to working together with Lars and planning for the Conservancy's future.

Penni Klein, Middleton's Public Lands Director, has also retired this year. Penni's dedication over her 16 years has made Middleton a destination for outdoor enthusiasts and enriched the lives of area residents. She's worked together with Dane County in managing the Conservancy, constructing the loop trail that unites the county and city sections. In the creek corridor, Penni directed stormwater management, repaired eroded banks, rerouted the stream, and improved accessibility. After FOPBC deeded the Highland Way property to the City in 2006, her department implemented the restoration plan for the Bock Community Forest, extending the oak savanna,

establishing native prairie and restoring the woodland. Most recently, FOPBC worked with Penni and city staff on the new boardwalk and viewing platform upstream from Lake Mendota. All the best in your retirement Penni!

A warm welcome to Lars Higdon, the new County Parks Naturalist and Botanist. Lars started work on July 27. He moved here from California where he was a project manager for Irvine Ranch Conservancy's Science & Stewardship. Lars is familiar with Dane County's landscapes. He served as sanctuary manager and restoration ecologist with

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy

UPCOMING WORK DAYS

Add your energy, spirit and artistic touch to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy landscape. Many volunteers have contributed to this special place through the years - and volunteers are needed for continued improvement. It's fun, good exercise, satisfying, and you'll meet some interesting people!

Every Thursday in September and October, 9 am- noon.

Seed collecting in Dane County Parks. For details, see the Prairie Seed Collection Schedule at <https://parks-lwr.dane.gov/>

Wednesday, September 28 and Thursday, September 29, 9 am- noon. County seed collecting at Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Meet at the County Parking Lot, 4864 Pheasant Branch Road

Saturday, October 15, 9 am – noon. Last regular workday of 2016. Meet at the County Parking Lot, 4864 Pheasant Branch Road

Dress for the prairie: closed-toe shoes, long pants, a hat and work gloves. We'll have extra gloves and provide the needed equipment.

Workdays are weather dependent. If you let us know you're coming, we'll let you know if we have to cancel.

For regular announcements about volunteer opportunities, send an e-mail to restoration@pheasantbranch.org and ask to be added to the R&M list.

From April through October we meet on the third Saturday of the month from 9 AM - 12 PM.

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from the mailing list, please contact:
office@pheasantbranch.org. Thank you!*

What an amazing summer! "Tunes on Tuesdays," interns, scouts, Conservancy Days... details inside!

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY FALL 2016 EVENTS



CONNECT WITH NATURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

SEPTEMBER

28th & 29th - Prairie Seed Collecting (page 7)

OCTOBER

15th - Restoration Work Day (page 7)

20th - Conservancy Day Program (page 6)

NOVEMBER

17th - Conservancy Day Program (TBA)

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www.pheasantbranch.org

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