



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

Enjoy Live Video of PBC's Sandhill Cranes

By Kaya Freiman, American Transmission Company Corporate Communications and FOPBC member

It all started with an idea and an email in late 2015. Now retired board member Tom Crozier had long enjoyed the view of the Sandhill Cranes gathering at a bend in Pheasant Branch Creek from spring through late fall. "It's a shame that most people who visit the Conservancy don't have the opportunity to behold the spectacle or hear the cacophony of over 100 Sandhill Crane bugling over each other," notes Crozier. Given the area's limited access, he had the idea of installing a video camera that would capture the scene and be shared online for all to enjoy.

"When we were approached with the idea of installing a streaming video camera in

the Conservancy, we were interested," says Kaya Freiman, an American Transmission Company (ATC) employee and resident of Middleton. "We have a transmission line in the Conservancy and are always looking to partner with organizations and municipalities on



environmental stewardship projects."

Ultimately, a plan to install the camera much closer to the bend in the creek on the edge of the marsh fell into place. Crozier worked hard on planning and eventually developed a proposal to the City of Middleton to install the pole and camera on their property. Crozier and Freiman presented the idea to the Conservancy Lands Committee, which gave provisional approval for the project.

After that, city staff became engaged in the project and ultimately a Memorandum of Understanding between ATC and the city was signed in early 2017. With this approval in place, a small group of ATC volunteers worked

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Prairie Chase Run/Walk on June 23

Check Out What's New

By Jenny Sauer, Prairie Chase Committee and FOPBC member

Our 4th Annual Prairie Chase Run/Walk FUNdraiser will take place Saturday, June 23, in Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The event offers a 5K run, NEW all-terrain 10K course, NEW 2.4-mile walk and the popular kids' run. All routes will start and finish in Middleton's Orchid Heights Park, located at 3960 Valley Ridge Road, Middleton. After the race,

we encourage participants to soak in the prairie sun with friends and family, enjoy refreshments, live music from Bluegrass Tea & Company and an excellent raffle. Plus, awards will be given to the top male and female finishers for the 5K and 10K run events.

5K Run Course

When you have a loop that's exactly

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Protect. Restore. Promote.



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends,

Even though snow is falling steadily while I write this, spring has already come to the Conservancy. Mosses began to green up in late January and Sandhill Crane and Horned Lark arrived the last week of February. Red-winged blackbirds, Robins, Meadowlarks and Eastern Phoebe followed a few weeks later. Volunteers worked through the winter months to clear brush, burn old brush piles, and over-seed recently cleared areas in preparation for the new season. Did you see the spring burn of the wetland area that occurred April 2?

Soon you'll be able to enjoy the wildlife of the Conservancy in a new way. A solar-powered wireless streaming video camera was recently installed at a bend in Pheasant Branch Creek. It will provide live video of cranes and other birds in the wetland and will be accessible through both the Friends and the City of Middleton websites. Watch for baby cranes and goslings to appear in May. A dedication event will be held in late April. Watch our website for details.

Dogs off leash in the Conservancy have

been a concern in recent years because of the threat they pose to ground nesting birds. In fact, bird counts at the Conservancy have shown declines in ground nesting species since 2013. Prompted by this concern, I appointed an action team in January to study the issue and make policy recommendations.

This spring and summer will have much to offer all ages and abilities. In May we're partnering with other groups to host an evening talk by renowned author and botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer. The Prairie Chase Run/Walk is scheduled for June 23 at Orchid Heights Park with a new all-terrain 10K run and a new 2.4-mile walk. "Tunes on Tuesday" returns in June with acoustic music performed live at several locations in the Conservancy on Tuesday evenings. For seniors and those with limited mobility, we'll offer Trail Days, Senior Days, Grandparent Day (June 2) and several other events to open up the experience of the Conservancy to all (watch for dates on our website.)

Sincerely,

Lloyd Eagan
Lloyd Eagan

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Additional Giving Opportunities:

- \$100 Friend
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- \$500 Steward
- \$1,000 Hero

Volunteer Opportunities:

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

Success Stories at the WI Master Naturalist Summit

By Deb Weitzel, FOPBC Education Committee Chair and Colleen Robinson, WI Master Naturalist Instructor

Want to learn about citizen based monitoring projects in Wisconsin? How about our native freshwater mussels, or one man's efforts to save Jordan Park Nature Center? "Ribbit, ribbit" and other frog calls enlightened part of the crowd while SPARK! an interactive nature-based program for memory challenged adults at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, sparked empathy for this segment of our society. This and much more was explored during the recent, three-day WI Master Naturalist Summit in Eau Claire.

Last summer FOPBC offered WI Master Naturalist (WIMN) training. Our next course begins June 21, 2018. The training is part of a statewide effort to promote awareness, understanding and stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources. Graduates become part of a network of informed citizens dedicated to conservation education and service within Wisconsin's communities. The

\$250 course involves 40 hours of training in natural history, interpretation and conservation stewardship and requires 40 hours of service with eight hours of advanced training per year to maintain certification. A capstone project is a course requirement.



Claudia Lewis doing capstone presentation

At the recent WIMN Summit, Colleen Robinson and Claudia Lewis shared highlights of capstone projects that were developed for the FOPBC course last June. Lewis is a graduate of the 2017 course and Robinson is an instructor. Lewis's capstone was a walking tour (self-guided) of the water features in Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Stops

at the springs, sedge meadow, Pheasant Branch Creek and wetlands, with educational highlights, are included in the "Walking Tour Brochure." These will be available in Orchid Heights Park where the walking tour commences. Lewis also reported on the project's extension occurring after the Friends were awarded a Bader Philanthropies grant to provide greater access to the Conservancy for mentally and physically challenged community members. Lewis led her water hike using all terrain wheelchairs at the Friends' Bader funded event. The ages of the participants ranged from 80-101. One participant told Lewis, "A big thanks to you. You have restored a part of my life that I thought was lost."

Robinson related two more capstone stories from 2017. Student Mark Warshauer worked with the City of Middleton to add anti-slip features to the Marina Drive boardwalk. This sloped entrance to the Pheasant

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Crane Cam...

to identify the technology that would be used and a volunteer engineering contractor designed the pole installation. As installation time approached, the city also cleared a path for access to the site.

The Friends board voted to formally endorse the project in February 2018. "Thanks to Tom and ATC for this wonderful addition to the Conservancy. It's something everyone can enjoy." says FOPBC president Lloyd Eagan.

The solar-powered, wireless streaming video camera was installed while the ground was still frozen in February. ATC contractors configured the camera setup and installed the pole over the course of a few hours while two environmental

monitors, one from ATC and one from volunteer pole installation contractor



Solar panels power crane cam

Henkels & McCoy, were on site to oversee the installation.

There are plans in the works for a community celebration to be held in April (watch the Friends website and Constant Contact messages for details.) The video stream will be publicly available for the Friends, the city and ATC to share on their websites. The FOPBC education committee plans to apply for a grant to develop a curriculum for 4K students around the use with the crane cam technology.

"Sit back and enjoy nature's wonder thanks to ATC," said District 5 Alder Howard Teal, who also serves on the Conservancy Lands Committee.



NATURALIST NOTEBOOK:

News of Nature in the Conservancy

By Dale Klubertanz,

Prelude to Spring in the Conservancy

In March, there is a stillness in the thawing Conservancy's native plant communities that is revealed as the snow melts and the extremes of winter move on. Yet, there is an occasional swirl and gust of frigid wind punctuating a season in withdrawal, visible in the numbing of rosy cheeks. At this almost imperceptible point between the changing of the guard, spring has yet to burst forth with its signs of hope and new life. There are reminders in the air that lingering traces of January could still raise a bit of frosty havoc, even as the sun emerges higher on the horizon with each passing day.

The yellow-white and brown of dry, weathered grasses is set against the russet of oak leaves and shoots of red-barked dogwood in the distance wetlands. The grey-black, leafless trees branch out like silhouettes against the bright background of sky. The bur oaks of Frederick's Hill stand like long enduring icons along the rugged hillside savannas. The icy stream at the head of Pheasant Branch Creek cracks and opens along the thicket

of cattails following its meandering shoreline, a watery thread wedding prairie to wetland and woodland to lake.

By mid-April, spring is in ascendance, making good on promises fashioned faithfully over time, when the native landscape was whole and aligned with

*"Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues."
~ Confucius*

the earth's wishes. Humans from surrounding communities, born of these natural forces, will feel the power of its renewal as an invitation to wander again in the awakening Conservancy.

As billows of smoke rising from prairie grass fires begin to fill the open sky, there is a deep-rooted, sensory response to an affirmation carried on the vernal wind. Returning migratory sandhill cranes with their otherworldly clamor, incite inner stirrings otherwise quiet in the sleepy Conservancy. Their ruckus in the far-off Pheasant Branch wetland is reassuring in its sense of constancy as it is one of coming home. It is, in essence, life returning to participate in one of its most central and sacred themes. Canada

Geese break formation in a joyous hubbub of arrival at a trusty holdover watering hole in their journey northward. Their knowledge of warming northern habitats is reassuring in itself.

With the surrender and reawakening of seasons comes a prelude to spring. For even the brazen winter knows its place, while yielding itself to a more far-reaching sensibility than just having its own day in the sun. In this space between winter's bluster and spring's emergence where seasons meet and none prevail, it is possible there is a whisper of humility in the wind.

It may be humility that heals a sense of loneliness when the essence of the human spirit is separated from its native origins and communities. Somehow, this humility may serve to bridge a deep sense of belonging and knowing one's truer place in the natural world. Perhaps in the course of human endeavors, it is possible to be still and humble enough to know what it is to belong to a wilderness still present in our lifeblood. Our visits to the Conservancy will be better for it, when recognizing our own renewal in the budding of the trees and the bloom of woodland violets.

Robin Wall Kimmerer to Speak in Middleton

By Stefanie Brouwer, FOPBC Watershed Committee Chair

The Friends are partnering with the Friends of Wisdom Prairie at Holy Wisdom Monastery and the Indigenous Arts and Science, Earth Partnership Program from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to host a talk by Robin Wall Kimmerer on May 16. Kimmerer is a renowned author, botanist and member

of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She is the Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York and founding Director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment. She will share her wisdom on the human relationship to the environment in her talk titled "What Does the Earth Ask of Us?"

The event will be held at Holy Wisdom Monastery beginning at 5:30 pm with wine, beer, hors d'oeuvres and conversation. This will be followed by the lecture at 6:30 in the 300-seat Assembly Room. The cost of the event is \$35.

We will post registration information on our website and through Constant Contact messages to members. Stay tuned!

Next Steps for Accessibility at PBC

By John Daly, FOPBC Vice-President and Chair, Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee

"I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles."

~Anne Frank

Formula for Success 2017... Establishing Community Partnerships

The topic of accessibility to nature and the health benefits (mental and physical) it provides has always been a building block for the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. We share in the belief that being outside brings peace, reflection and satisfaction.

When the members of the board

opened a dialogue about reaching out to underserved populations in the community and surrounding areas, one of the first suggestions was to form partnerships with various organizations. The second important piece of advice from the board was to establish an Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee, one with representation from the community itself. The intent was to make sure that the "voice" of all citizens was heard including seniors, individuals with memory challenges and those with limited mobility.

The committee's success the past few years has been linked to the establishment

of collaborative partnerships. These partners have provided advice, guidance and volunteer hours to support the mission of the Friends and the goals of the Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee.

The following is list of the current partners who are working with the FOPBC Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee.

- Access Ability Wisconsin
- Alzheimer and Dementia Alliance
- Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Attic Angels Place
- Brookdale Middleton

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Wisconsin Master Naturalist...

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Branch Conservancy is frequently very slippery when wet. Algae growth is the culprit and can be difficult to eradicate or prevent. Mark presented various solutions such as textured paint, abrasive tape, abrasive screw-down strips, overlay mats and abrasive decking boards. He outlined the pros and cons of each including cost considerations. The city decided to test DinoGrip strips at a cost of \$800 on the sloped portion of the boardwalk and reduce the shade that encourages the growth of algae. Final decisions on complete installation of DinoGrip strips will be based on the success of fall prevention at the test site.

The second capstone project Robinson highlighted was "This Bus is for the Birds!" Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District bus driver Marti Allen developed curriculum for use during the time students are on her bus before the school doors open each day. September is all about fun facts and analogies about hummingbirds:

*The average hummer weighs 4 grams, about the weight of a US nickel. Each student receives a nickel to feel the

weight!

*Hummers have tiny feet making them unable to walk or hop. Hollow bones and fewer bones than other birds allow them to be super-light for flight.

*Females build the nests and raise the



young. Marti gives students 1-2 Tic-Tacs to represent the size of the 1 or 2 eggs the female lays.

*The nest is made of lichen, moss, plant fluff and spider webs and positioned on the thinnest of branches making it difficult for predation. One Tostito Scoop is about the size of the nest that only fits mom and her egg(s). Each student receives a "nest".

*As the chick grows, the spider webs

allow for nest expansion to accommodate mom and her growing youngster.

*Other birds, squirrels, and chipmunks eat the eggs and babies. Adults are sweet, tasty treats because of the nectar they eat. They are dessert for preying mantis, snakes, owls, hawks, cats, and even large frogs.

*When migration time comes, hummingbirds embark on their journey to Mexico or Panama in gender and age specific groups. When it is time for students to leave the bus, the boys go first. Then the girls disembark, and finally the youngest students are off, following the hummingbirds'

strategy. The students also "hum" along their travel to the school doors, to mimic the sound generated by hummingbird wings.

Environmental education on the bus!! Almost makes me want to go back to school....

Sign up for the 2018 FOPBC Wisconsin Master Naturalist course today, at <https://wimasternaturalist.org/volunteer-course/PheasantBranch2018>

Dog Policy Update

By Janet Kane, FOPBC Restoration and Management Co-Chair

Great efforts have been taken to restore prairie within the Conservancy. The prairie provides important habitat for many animal species including ground-nesting birds. This habitat can be threatened by overuse and by unsanctioned uses like off trail bicycling or off leash dogs. Sightings of dogs off leash have increased in recent years, despite signs, personal requests, and enforcement efforts.

Bird counts show declines in ground nesting bird species at Pheasant Branch since 2013. Species most affected include: Clay-colored Sparrow, Dickcissel, Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat, Willow Flycatcher, Sora, Vesper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Field Sparrow.

Dane County Parks requested input from FOPBC on the dog policy. In December, the Board created a Dog Policy Action Team. Lloyd Eagan, Board President,

was the Team's Sponsor. Janet Kane, R&M Co-chair, was appointed Team Chair, and members were Jim Bachhuber, John Daly, Herb Garn, Lois Sater, Janet Staker Woerner, Deb Weitzel, and Lyman Wible.

From mid-January to mid-March, the Team gathered the following information and related considerations:

- Dog owners currently use the entire Pheasant Branch Conservancy (PBC) for outdoor recreation. Current city and county ordinances require dogs to be licensed, permitted, and controlled by a 6-foot long leash when walked in public areas including parks and the PBC. Violations of these rules occur daily in the PBC where dogs are brought in on long or extendable leashes, or allowed to roam off leash.
- Research has shown that the presence of dogs has a negative impact on resident bird and animal populations in natural areas (Portland, Oregon¹, Boulder, Colorado², and North

American Bird Conservation Initiative³).

- Along with safety reasons, these concerns are the reason why dogs are not allowed in other nearby natural resource conservancy areas (such as Madison Parks, the UW Arboretum, Pope Farm and Holy Wisdom Prairie) in order to focus on ecologically restoring natural systems (plants and animals.)
- Dog-use policies and rules, education, and signage for the PBC has been unclear or limited, and poorly communicated.
- Compliance is difficult to enforce because of limited staff time available to police the issue properly.
- Safety of users and dogs, and management of dog waste are of concern to many users.
- Other public areas are available nearby to exercise dogs off-leash.
- The FOPBC member survey found that a majority of members are

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Schubert Looks Ahead to 2018 Restoration Season

By Rob Schubert, Restoration and Management Coordinator

I attended college to become a naturalist and share with others my love and knowledge of nature. After graduating I became interested in ecological restoration and have since worked throughout the Great Lakes Region and Upper Midwest working to preserve rare species and habitats.

One of my favorite memories from the Pheasant Branch Conservancy is watching a young boy picking at a milkweed pod as he walked down the trail with the seeds drifting off on the wind. I couldn't help but think how important and necessary natural areas such as the Conservancy are, not just for the rare species but also our own.



I'm excited about the upcoming year at the Conservancy. There are a lot of opportunities to improve the habitat quality and I'm looking forward to building stronger partnerships with the City of Middleton, Dane County Parks, and even some neighboring farmers. We are expanding our management capacity

through new equipment acquired through a Dane County Capital Equipment Grant, new volunteer partnerships, our new trailer and hopefully a truck. We are expanding our area of influence by working with the city to improve sedge meadow habitat and continuing to work with the Acker family to restore the remnant oak savanna on the north side of Frederick's Hill. Also, through a more integrated prescribed fire regime, we will work to improve grassland bird habitat.

This coming year will bring new surprises and challenges, but I am looking forward to continuing on as the Restoration and Management Coordinator and to making Pheasant Branch Conservancy an even greater place in Wisconsin.

2017 Annual Report



The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy works through 6 active committees consisting of board and non-board members - Education, Watershed, Restoration and Management, Finance, Governance, and Development and Marketing. We depend on the generosity of our members, for which we are very grateful. Here is a brief report on the committee work of 2017.

Education Committee

- Hosted four “Make a Memory Days” with 98 participants including physically and mentally challenged adults (supported by a Bader Grant)
- Held new Wisconsin Master Naturalist training and had fifteen graduates
- Sponsored naturalist-led field trips for over 530 elementary students, 600 high school students and led (with Kromrey sixth grade teachers) rain garden education for 275 middle school students
- Set up “Tunes on Tuesday” - walking and music in the Conservancy in June - with over 90 participants
- Sponsored photo contest with MHS photography students with student photos published in the FOPBC Phenology Calendar
- Presented monthly “Conservancy Day” presentations attended by over 300 participants at multiple locations

Restoration and Management Committee

- Rob Schubert provided leadership for R&M activities in 2017. We're pleased he will be continuing as Dane County Park Coordinator in 2018.
- Logged over 3,000 volunteer hours (thanks to all R&M volunteers)
- Partnered with the City of Middleton to contract for the first ever wetland burn
- Co-sponsored the Friends' first Wisconsin Master Naturalist Course
- Completed 3-phase sumac clearing in the priority area on the southeast hillside
- Harvested seeds for future prairie improvements with Middleton High School, R&M Volunteers, and Dane County Parks
- Hosted 5 Prairie Partners' interns for 12 weeks in the summer
- Acquired and outfitted a new tool trailer for 2018
- Installed metal mesh to reduce trail erosion

Watershed Committee

- Produced “Protecting a Regional Resource” brochure about the Pheasant Branch Watershed
- Sampled Pheasant Branch Creek at 3 sites monthly for nutrient analysis
- Conducted “Leaf Free Streets Campaign” by leaving door hangers at over 300 homes in Middleton
- Participated in Yahara Watershed Network monthly meetings and Wisconsin Master Naturalist training

Development and Marketing Committee

- Prairie Chase Fun Run- 300 participants with first Kid's Run for those under 12
- First fall fundraiser at Prairie Café - raised \$9,000.00 and recruited 7 new sponsors with 100% board participation
- Legacy Giving insert included in fall membership renewal package

Governance Committee

- Followed up on Strategic Plan to implement our goals and priorities
- Recruited volunteers to enable us to achieve our objectives and serve on action teams
- Recruited new board and committee members

Finance Committee

- Improved online registration for Prairie Chase
- Monitored Friends endowment funds at Madison Community Foundation
- Met state and federal reporting requirements

Budget Summary

(Budgetted Net Expenses by Committee)

	2016	2017	2018
Admin/General Expense	\$ 7,360	\$ 7,407	\$ 16,271 *
Development & Marketing	5,201	10,471	8,771
Education	17,896	17,986	24,966
Governance	650	650	650
Restoration & Management	23,125	24,290	30,540
Watershed	365	365	365
	<u>\$ 54,597</u>	<u>\$ 61,169</u>	<u>\$ 81,563</u>

*Admin budget for 2018 includes \$9,600 for administrative assistant

Operating Summary

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Prelim. 2017	Proj. 2018
Membership Income	\$ 21,490	\$ 16,694	\$ 18,177	\$ 20,855	\$ 16,322	\$ 21,000
Contributions	60,908	32,949	68,118	82,037	67,558	70,000
Grants Received	38,650	34,051	41,040	29,422	60,237	25,000
Other Income	11,937	10,883	14,847	16,567	20,495	18,000
Total Income	<u>\$ 132,985</u>	<u>\$ 94,577</u>	<u>\$ 142,182</u>	<u>\$ 148,881</u>	<u>\$ 164,612</u>	<u>\$ 134,000</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 106,121</u>	<u>\$ 100,289</u>	<u>\$ 104,795</u>	<u>\$ 122,504</u>	<u>\$ 123,016</u>	<u>\$ 130,000</u>
# of Memberships (Oct 1 to Sept 30)	506	494	532	478	505	510

Endowments

(Administered by Madison Community Foundation)

Investment Position as of Dec. 31, 2017

Pulver Education Fund	\$ 64,163
Restoration Fund (est. Dec. 2014)	\$ 44,332

Reserve Summary

Cash Position as of Dec. 31, 2017	\$ 169,529
Receivable for Grant Expenditures	8,007
	Less:
2018 Budgets (& 2017 Residuals)	\$ 93,867
Committed Grant Expenditures	11,400
Dedicated funds	8,000
Donated Funds for Endowments	5,000
Subtotal	<u>\$ 118,267</u>
Excess Position	<u>\$ 59,269</u>

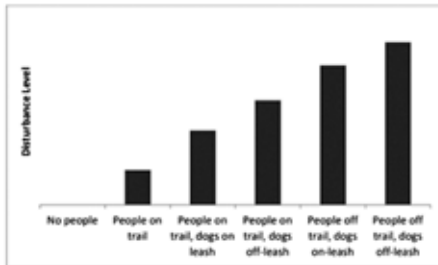
Dog Policy Update...

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concerned about the impact of dogs on wildlife populations.

The Team especially noted this graph from page 7 of the Portland Metro article:

Figure 1. Conceptual illustration of the relative impacts on wildlife due to people without and with dogs.



At its March 19 meeting, the FOPBC Board considered the findings of the Dog Policy Action Team and unanimously approved this recommendation to Dane County Parks:

“Based on our research, the Dog Policy Team believes there is a basis to the concern regarding current dog access and negative impacts on ground nesting bird populations. We further believe that there is support from the FOPBC

membership for a revision to the current dog access policy.

The FOPBC Board requests a change in the dog access policy in the county portion of the Conservancy to: **No dog access allowed north of the main limestone trail. Dogs on static, 6’ leashes would still be allowed on all other trails (except as restricted by the city) with enhanced signage, informational campaigns and enforcement efforts.**

Time is of the essence. The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Board recommends that Dane County Parks Commission implement the policy in spring 2018. Further, the Board feels the following actions are essential in implementing a change to the dog access policy:

1. The new rules only apply to the county-owned section of the Conservancy.
2. To be effective, the policy change will need a substantial public education campaign by the county. The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy is

willing to support the county in this effort as appropriate.

3. Enforcement of the policy is the responsibility of the county.
4. A follow-up multi-year monitoring effort should be conducted to measure the impact of the policy on ground nesting bird populations.”

The Board’s recommendation to Dane County Parks is advisory only. The County Parks Commission has the responsibility and authority to implement policies regarding the county portion of the Conservancy (about 100 acres at the north end). In early April, representatives from the Friends will meet with staff from Dane County Parks to discuss this recommendation and to plan the next steps.

¹ The impacts of dogs on wildlife and water quality: A literature review, compiled by Lori Hennings, Metro Parks and Nature, April 2016, [impacts-of-dogs-on-wildlife-water-quality-science-review.pdf](http://www.dogs-ball-beil.pdf)

² <http://www.dogs-ball-beil.pdf>

³ Understanding Humans to Conserve Birds, North American Bird Conservation Initiative, August, 2017. <http://nabci-us.org/how-we-work/human-dimensions/>

Education Corner...

Continued from page 12

schools in our school district can use the backpack, too. Troops from outside our district can borrow another copy of this backpack from the Badgerland Girl Scout Council.

Did you know that the Kromrey Middle School parking lots are surrounded by rain gardens? A new rain garden curriculum was initiated with the 6th grade science teachers at Kromrey Middle School last fall. Our efforts continue in partnership with the teachers to add a spring component to this experience. Students will continue their restoration efforts with the assistance of our naturalists, honing math skills and learning more about the biology of native plants. Their

efforts to restore the gardens will greatly improve the ability of the gardens to protect Pheasant Branch Creek behind the school from runoff.

[2018 phenology calendars are still available.](https://pheasantbranch.org) Get your calendar from <https://pheasantbranch.org>. Photos are from Middleton High School students in our photography service-learning program.

Naturalists, volunteers, and committee members

All this incredible work is accomplished through the talents of people in our community and in 2018 we need volunteers for the education committee,

field trips and project development. We also seek contract naturalists to support our efforts. Together, we create innovative, one-of-a-kind programs that make a real difference in the lives of our students and citizens of all ages. If you want to work with children, we train you so that you are comfortable with the material and ready to teach. If you wish to keep the education program moving forward we welcome your creative thinking at our education committee meetings. Join the Friends’ education program as a naturalist, committee member, or specific project lead. Please contact Anne Boucher, Education Coordinator if you wish to help. Thank you!

Prairie Chase...

Continued from page 1

five kilometers, you don't mess with a good thing! The 2018 5K Run will again follow the familiar flat, fast loop on the main crushed limestone path through the Conservancy.

NEW! ALL-TERRAIN 10K Run Course

We're excited to announce a new route for this year's long race! Racers will still run the main, crushed limestone loop (1x), but with diversions over Frederick's Hill and onto some of the grass paths, dirt trails, and hill climbs tucked away in the Conservancy. While it's not the most grueling course in the area, those tackling the tougher trail will be rewarded with some spectacular views!

NEW! 2.4-mile Walk Course

We're also offering an updated walk route for 2018 that highlights the northern section of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Walkers will see the fruits of the Friends' work over the past 23 years to restore the precious prairie and oak savannah. The walk course features a mix of crushed limestone and mowed prairie paths.



What:	4th Annual Prairie Chase Run/Walk
When:	Saturday, June 23, 8:00 am
Where:	Orchid Heights Park, 3960 Valley Ridge Road
Cost:	Through 5/1 – \$35 family, \$20 individual, \$10 student 5/2 - 6/1 – \$45 family, \$30 individual, \$20 student 6/2 – 6/23 – \$55 family, \$40 individual, \$25 student <i>*Online registration closes midnight 6/21; race-day registration available onsite 7-8 am.</i>
Register:	www.prairiechase.com

Kids' Run

The popular Kids Run is back in 2018! The little ones will line up just after the main event, with junior runners trekking around the soccer field at the Orchid Heights Park shelters. Children 12 years old and younger are welcome and encouraged to participate.

See detailed 5K Run, ALL-TERRAIN 10K and Walk course maps at prairiechase.com!

Register by May 1 to get the early bird rate! Entry fee includes a t-shirt, refreshments and entertainment post-race. Plus, your registration supports the Friends' important conservation work! Did we mention the prairie flower?

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy would like to thank American Transmission Company (ATC), Orange Shoe Personal Fitness & Training and Nelson Schmidt, Inc. for sponsoring the 2018 Prairie Chase. Sponsorship opportunities are still available – please email office@pheasantbranch.org.

We're also grateful to the City of Middleton and Dane County for allowing us to hold this fun event in the Conservancy.

We look forward to seeing you on the trail in 2018!



Save the Dates!

The Friends are again hosting the popular Tunes on Tuesdays events, each Tuesday in June this year. Stay "tuned" for more information. Interested in being one of our musicians? See page 12 for more details.

Accessibility Next Steps...

Continued from page 5

- City of Middleton - Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry
- Colonial Club – Sun Prairie
- Common Ground Coffee Shop and Restaurant
- Dane County Parks
- Dementia Friendly Communities of Middleton
- Heritage Senior Living
- Middleton Glen Retirement Community
- Middleton Senior Center/Forget-Me-Not's
- Middleton Cross Plains Area School District
- UW-Madison Alzheimer's Institute
- UW-Madison School of Nursing
- UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning
- Waunakee Memory Café and Senior Center

Formula for Success 2018... Listening to Participant Suggestions

In the past several newsletters, articles have been written about program activities and events as well as potential infrastructure modifications and enhancements that would make the Pheasant Branch Conservancy more of an accessible destination. These articles have provided readers with a summation of the planning, implementation and evaluation of various programs supported by our Bader Philanthropies Grant.

“Make a Memory” has been the title for each of the program events during 2017, the first year of the two-year grant the Friends received from Bader Philanthropies. These events were planned to recall past memories and to create new memories when outside and in nature. These summer events included Senior Days, Dementia Friendly Days and a Limited Mobility Day.

The post-event evaluations and participant testimonials informed the planning committee of the success

of these events. These assessments provided suggestions for 2018. Since February, the planning committee has been considering the inclusion of the following initiatives and program events for 2018, the second and final year of the Bader Grant.

*** Trail Days and Grandchildren/Grandparent Day (June 2)**

This is a new “Make a Memory Day” idea that past senior participants have suggested for grandparents and their grandchildren at the Conservancy. Activity ideas include SPARK art



projects and a self-guided slow walks to the Springs and effigy mounds on Frederick's Hill. Club Cars and AAW chairs will be provided. This event is in conjunction with the City of Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry Dept.

*** Senior Day and Limited Mobility Day (tentative date of June 19)**

Topics could include history of the prairie restoration, importance of the watershed, Bock Forest, Merchant Lookout and the effigy mounds.

*** Dementia Friendly Day Camps (tentative dates of July 22 and 29)**

This will be an expansion of the 2017 experience with a focus on sensory perception with plans to integrate sensory/slow walks as an activity. Additional strategies include the use of

art, music, writing and story telling. (This concept is inspired by an international model for authentic experiences in nature for individuals with mild memory challenges).

*** Infrastructure – Considerations and Implementation**

Features include benches and/or rest areas with natural materials (boulders), railings, signage and wayfinding in collaboration with Dane County Parks and the City of Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry Dept.; includes the recommendations for city and county 5-year updates to park and open space plans.

*** Training Event for Activity Directors & Administration**

Focus will be on capacity building for program staff and administration of senior centers, residential communities, Dementia Friendly Coalition and Memory Cafes. Think of it as a staff development day.

*** Materials/Maps**

We will critically review existing print materials, including maps and current signage throughout the Conservancy and will work with the city and the county as we consider revisions (large print, bilingual, audio, QR codes). Maps will be designed with legends that identify locations of benches and rest areas and the estimated distances between these benches and the rest areas.

Everyone wants aging to be a healthy process, one that is enriched by positive experiences and connections to the natural world. The Friends Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee, along with our collaboration partners, look forward to bringing peace, reflection and satisfaction to others in 2018 and beyond.

For further information on these plans including opportunities to participate and/or volunteer, please contact John Daly by May 1 at jhdaly@charter.net.



EDUCATION CORNER:

Kids for the Earth Program News

By Anne Boucher, FOPBC Education Coordinator

Members, donors and volunteers make our efforts possible. The Friends, the community, and our students thank you for your time, donations, and grants!

Tunes on Tuesday

Did you stroll through the Conservancy during "Tunes On Tuesdays" these past two summers? The Friends are again hosting these popular Tuesday evening events during June this year. We are seeking local student and community musicians to add beauty to the Conservancy with their acoustic music. If you are interested in signing up to play for an hour please go to this website, <http://signup.com/go/XPdeNkw>. Students have sign up priority through April 26. The spots open to all musicians after that date. Please spread the word to all of the musicians you know!

Conservancy Day Programs

On the third Thursday of each month we invite all members of the community to free programs. Topics on all aspects of the Conservancy and its surrounding environment and our human interaction with nature are explored. We have had some terrific programs this winter.

Urban Canids Dr. David Drake, professor of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, and Extension Wildlife Specialist reported for the second year in a row on his Urban Canid Project, piloted in 2014. He discussed his methods and what he and his students have learned about the coyotes and foxes that we live with in Madison and Middleton.

Endangered Birds of Wisconsin Richard Staffen, a Conservation Biologist in the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, discussed Wisconsin's endangered and threatened birds. He

described the species of birds with endangered or threatened state or federal designations, where they are in the state, how habitat restoration efforts have helped some and the research being done on priority species.

Controlled Burning Dan Wallace, a trained prescribed burn leader who has led burns for the DNR, Friends of Brooklyn Wildlife Area, and private restoration companies as well as teaching burn control classes made a presentation. He discussed what prescribed burning is and why it is necessary. He provided planning background and operational logistics necessary to safely and properly complete this necessary restoration task. He opened up the presentation to the audience for questions and observations related to planning burns.

Upcoming topics include Owls of Wisconsin, a walking geology trip in the Conservancy, and the exciting field of Citizen Science. See the dates and topics in the Conservancy Day box elsewhere in this newsletter. Stay tuned at pheasantbranch.org and join in to explore the Conservancy on many levels. You can sign up to receive once-per-month email reminders of Conservancy Days by sending a message to office@pheasantbranch.org with the subject line: "CD Program subscribe." Programs are held in the Conservancy or in Room 510 at Kromrey Middle School.

K-12 School Field Trips and Service-Learning

We are busy planning and organizing for the spring field trip season. Girl Scout troops and elementary school groups have made plans to visit the Conservancy in May. Naturalists will lead them through lessons ranging from water quality to the critters we find in the soil at our feet.

A backpack with everything needed to earn a Girl Scout Brownie Hiker Badge was prepared and delivered to Northside Elementary School. Troops based from that school use the backpack to explore the Conservancy and to plan for and take hikes. Troops from other schools in our school district can use the backpack, too. Troops from outside our district can borrow another copy of this backpack from the Badgerland Girl Scout Council.

continued on page 9...

Conservancy Days 2018

Where: Kromrey Middle School (KMS) Room 510 or in the Conservancy

When: 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every month. January through November.

Upcoming Topics and Locations:

- Owls of Wisconsin, April 19 at KMS
- Walking Geology, May 17 in the Conservancy
- Citizen Science, June 21 at KMS

Future dates are July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18, and November 15. Topics will be announced on the Friends website.

Calling all Musicians for "Tunes on Tuesday"

We are seeking local acoustic musicians to perform in the Conservancy on Tuesday evenings in June.

Sign up for an hour or two at this website:

<http://signup.com/go/XPdeNkw>

Students have priority until April 26. The general musical public is welcome to sign up afterward.



GET OUT THERE: Restoration Volunteer Opportunities

By Forrest Weesner, FOPBC Restoration and Management Co-Chair

There was a lot more work done over the winter months than you might guess! Rob Schubert, Park Coordinator, kept volunteers busy with brush clearing, burning of old brush piles, and over-seeding of recently cleared areas. His work with Operation Fresh Start (featured in the December newsletter) continued with very impressive results, especially noticeable on the north-west slope of Frederick’s Hill, that was cleared of weedy woody species. The heavy lifting done, our regular volunteer groups will have better results keeping it under control. Local companies and clubs often contact us for community service opportunities. We had the good fortune to have the UW-Madison women’s rugby team join in for two Saturdays. Their positive energy (and strong backs!) were much appreciated.

The R&M committee developed the 2018 plan of work and presented to the board in March. The spring burn is of the wetland was a successful cooperative



*Above: The mid-section of the burn is well underway
Right: The eastern border of the burn near the springs has begun*

project between the Friends, Dane County Parks and City of Middleton supporting the goal of managing lands by ecological boundaries, rather than of political ones. We’ll also conduct a fall burn of a second area to compare results from spring and fall burns.

We are excited to have a new, larger, work trailer for tools and equipment and to serve as “home base” for restoration activities. You may see it parked at the Homestead site, but being mobile, it can be easily moved for other needs or servicing.

We’ve shuffled R&M leadership a bit. Jim Loving, Forrest Weesner, and Paul Slota will coordinate the monthly workdays, with help from Gary Sater and Mark Warshauer. Janet Kane is providing support with volunteer communication, budget tracking, grant writing, and special workdays for community groups. Rob Schubert, Park Coordinator, continues in his leadership role directing the volunteer and contracted work on site, and our primary resource on the art and science of natural area management (see article page 6.)

First Friends Work Day:

Saturday, April 21, just before Earth Day on the 22nd. Meet at the County Parking



lot at 4864 Pheasant Branch Road. We work from 9 to 12 with a mid-morning break for refreshments. Let us know at restoration@pheasantbranch.com if you are planning on it so we have enough equipment and snacks. If you have any questions about the workdays, send them to the restoration e-mail too.



R&M trailer outfitted by Forrest Weesner and Paul Slota

Plan Ahead:

Here are the dates for the 2018 monthly workdays. Mark your calendar now to save the dates: April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, Sept. 15 and Oct. 20.

We’ll also schedule many special workdays for time-sensitive projects. These don’t get much advance notice – but join us when you can. To get notifications of upcoming workdays, send an email asking to be added to the restoration list (restoration@pheasantbranch.org).

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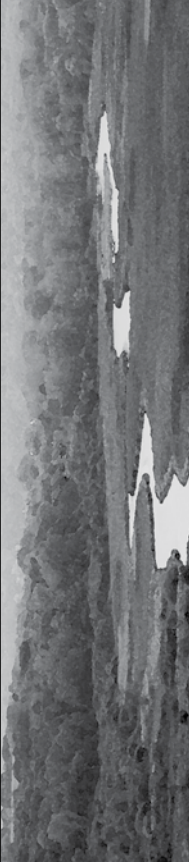


P.O. Box 628242
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*To receive a paperless newsletter or be removed
from the mailing list, please contact:
office@pheasantbranch.org. Thank you!*

Our 2017 Annual Report is included in this issue: pages 7-8

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY SPRING-SUMMER 2018 EVENTS



CONNECT WITH NATURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

APRIL

- 19 - Conservancy Day Program (page 12)
- 21 - Restoration Workday (page 13)

MAY

- 17 - Conservancy Day Program (page 12)
- 19 - Restoration Workday (page 13)

JUNE

- 2 - Trail Days & Grandchildren/Grandparent Day (page 11)
- 5, 12, 19 & 26 - Tunes on Tuesdays (page 10)
- 16 - Restoration Workday (page 13)
- 21 - Conservancy Day Program (page 12)
- 23 - Prairie Chase Run/Walk (page 1)

JULY

- 19 - Conservancy Day Program (page 12)
- 21 - Restoration Workday (page 13)

AUGUST

- 16 - Conservancy Day Program (page 12)
- 18 - Restoration Workday (page 13)

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