



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

UW's Patty Loew to speak at Annual Meeting

By Stefanie Brouwer, FOPBC Secretary

Join the Friends on Saturday, January 28 from 9:00-11:00 to celebrate our efforts

to protect, restore and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed. The theme is "Legacy - Call to Action" and the keynote speaker is Dr. Patty Loew, UW-Madison professor in the Department of Life Sciences Communication. Loew is also a documentary producer and former broadcast journalist in public and commercial



television. The meeting will also include a Bock Forest video presentation introduced by FOPBC member and

wetland specialist Tom Bernthal. Available for purchase will be the 2017 phenology calendar, greeting cards by artist Sharifa Merchant and FOPBC t-shirts.

The event will take place at Asbury Church Fellowship Hall, 6101 University Ave. Madison (just east of the junction of University and Century avenues) with registration starting at 8:30. Breakfast will be catered by Blue Plate and will consist of scrambled eggs, bacon, cast iron skillet potatoes,

sliced fruit, assorted pastries and coffee. The cost is \$18.00 per person.

Dr. Loew, a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, is the author of *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*, now in its second edition, which won the Wisconsin Library Association's 2002 Outstanding Book Award. She wrote *Native People of Wisconsin*, also newly revised and expanded, which is used by 18,000 Wisconsin school children as a social studies text. Her newest book, *Seventh Generation Earth Ethics* won the 2014 Midwest Book Award for Culture. Loew has produced many documentaries for public and commercial television, including the award-winning *Way of the Warrior*, which aired nationally on PBS in 2007. Dr. Loew has written extensively about Ojibwe treaty rights, sovereignty, and the role of Native media in communicating indigenous worldviews.

Through Nature, FOPBC to Assist Seniors and Cognitively-Challenged

By John Daly, Education Committee

"Walking is man's best medicine"

Hippocrates

Taking a walk in nature is good for us. It is like a "recess" from the hectic activities of our daily lives. Think of it as a prescription for your health with no negative side effects and it is . . . free!

being in a natural setting. Research is now showing that visiting a forest, prairie or conservancy has real, quantifiable health benefits, both mental and physical. Even five minutes around trees or in an open green space may improve one's health. Walking (and sitting) in nature can relieve tension, decrease frustration and increase calm feelings.

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We all enjoy the beauty and peace of

WINTER 2017

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Protect. Restore. Promote.



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends,

This is the end of my second and final term as President of the Friends. I am very proud of our hard-working Board. Some highlights of this year include: developing an innovative outdoor education curriculum for 4-year-olds; securing a two-year grant to improve accessibility for seniors and individuals with cognitive challenges; working with the city and county on a "Leaf Free Streets Campaign" to improve water quality in Pheasant Branch Creek and Lake Mendota; educating students from local schools; organizing work parties to remove invasive species and to harvest and sow prairie seeds; monitoring water quality in the creek; sponsoring the Prairie Chase walk/run; and bringing people into the Conservancy to enjoy live music on summer evenings.

We are rewarded through the support of YOU, our members. Many of you donate money above and beyond your membership, including a recent anonymous donation of \$5000. We feel

honored by your recognition and will be working just as hard in 2017.

Sometimes the most meaningful thanks come from the most unexpected places. Last September I received a donation and accompanying note (see page 9) from Jack, a young user of the Conservancy. Instead of asking for gifts for his birthday, he asked for donations to the Friends! How inspiring to think that the next generation of Conservancy users is already aware of and concerned about protecting, promoting and restoring this unique resource.

Thank you Jack, for your donation and the spirit in which you gave it.

Sincerely,

Dagny Myrah

OUR BOARD

President *Dagny Myrah* Vice President *John Daly*

Treasurer *Holly Sledge* Secretary *Stefanie Brouwer*

Board Members
Jim Bachhuber, Ron Biendzel, Tom Crozier, Lloyd Eagan, Bruce Froehlke, Herb Garn, Janet Kane, Margaret Lewis, Pam Shannon, Deb Weitzel, Lyman Wible

Editors
Stefanie Brouwer and Joleen Stinson

Illustrations/Photos
Craig Annen, Dale Klubertanz, Lucas Kostecki, Courtesy of Patty Loen, WI Salt Wise/Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission, www.allaboutbirds.org

Send Newsletter Ideas to
office@pheasantbranch.org

Is your Membership Current?
The mailing name block on this newsletter includes your membership expiration date

Please Visit our Website
www.pheasantbranch.org

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: DONATE TODAY!

YES! I want to help protect, restore and promote Pheasant Branch Conservancy!

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Pay Securely Using This Form or Go Online to www.pheasantbranch.org/membershipForm.html

Pay securely with Visa or Mastercard:

Name: _____

Card Number: _____

Security Code: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Membership Level:

memberships purchased after 9/1 apply to following calendar year

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

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

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

New Board Members for 2017

By Lyman Wible, Governance Committee Chair

Bob Hoot

Bob Hoot owns Hoot Communications in Middleton. He has more 40 years of varied experience in designing, writing and producing for advertising, publishing, and production, in all media — print and electronic. His background includes work as Graphics Editor at the Wisconsin State Journal, and as Art Director and Creative Director at several top Madison agencies. This has given him in-depth knowledge of graphics, video and film production, print media, press relations, public information and education, and editorial design both in print and online. He is a 1975 University of Michigan Graduate and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Art History and Fine Art. Bob is

a board member in Middleton Hills Neighborhood Association and has lived there with his wife Marjorie since December 2002.

Bret Newcomb

Bret Newcomb is President of the Newcomb Construction Company in Madison. Bret is an active outdoor athlete and enjoys running, swimming, biking, sailing, and family activities. He has served as the Vice President and Chair of the Development Committee for the Board of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. He and his wife Rachel have been strong supporters of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Bret holds BA Degree in Economics from Gustavus Adolphus College, where he played hockey and was captain, MVP, and an NCAA All-

American. He has lived in Middleton for 9 years with his Rachel and their three children.

Lois Sater

Lois Sater is a retired health care administrator with a great deal of practical experience to bring to the Friends, as well experience on boards of other non-profits. She has lived in Middleton for over forty years, raised her family here and enjoyed almost daily use of the public lands in Middleton, especially the Pheasant Branch Conservancy trails. She is committed to finding ways to preserve public lands in Middleton for future generations. She holds M.A. degrees in Business and Health Services Administration from

continued on page 5...

Wetland Restoration in Winter

By Janet Kane, Restoration and Management Co-Chair

During the winter, you may notice workers out in the marsh, cutting brush. Winter is a great time to get into the marsh because the ground is frozen. This work is an important piece of the Friends' 3-year Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Grant that started in July 2015 and runs through June 2018.

AIS Grants require a ¼ match from the sponsoring organization. For this grant, the Friends' match is primarily volunteer work in the wetland. Every time you help to collect seeds in the wetland or remove watercress from the springs and streams, know that you're doing more than the immediate task. Your efforts result in 3 times more resources to hire professionals as part of the grant.

Craig Annen and the Integrated Restorations crew provide the restoration expertise. The overall goals are to restore the high quality remnant sedge meadow and associated wetland communities to enhance their biological composition and



Wetland after shrub clearing, note all of the cut stumps

ecological functioning and to minimize the spread of invasive species through the lower Pheasant Branch Watershed and Lake Mendota System. Whew!

One evident result of the work is clearing willow, honeysuckle, buckthorn, red osier dogwood and grey dogwood in the wetland. As the brush grew, it shaded out smaller native plants and prevented their growth. Now, as areas are cleared of brush and sunlight reaches the soil, seeds that were long dormant are sprouting. The diversity of emerging

species is surprising!

The contractors are also addressing populations of high-impact aquatic invasives that threaten the integrity of the wetland communities, including purple loosestrife, watercress, Phragmites, reed canary grass, and non-native cattail. They scout for pioneer populations of additional aquatic invasives and eradicate any that are detected.

Removing invasives is followed up with establishing native species to complement existing species and resist future invasives. Special effort is made to increase native species of concern and to add species that will benefit wildlife. If you're interested in these species, check out the flora guide in the Prairies and Savanna section of the Friends' website. Choose "order by C value" to list plants by Conservation value.

Thanks to Tom Bernthal for initiating this grant, and to everyone who helped with grant activities during the first 18 months. Watch for new developments in the future.



NATURALIST NOTEBOOK:

News of Nature in the Conservancy

By Dale Klubertanz,

Healing the Lands inside the Conservancy after the Buffalo

As winter nears, there is a rare presence of browsing deer and the parched remains of recently planted Big Blue Stem and Indiangrass in the Bock Community Forest Prairie. It is evidence of the sacred efforts of those who have come to restore the aboriginal health of this once abandoned farm field and the receptivity of the wilderness to become whole again.

Once the all-encompassing ecology of these original prairies and savannas depended upon an abundance of mammals, particularly the buffalo. They were a dynamic part of creating and caring for these native plant communities through millennia. In 1832 the last buffalo living east of the Mississippi River were killed in Wisconsin. In their absence, restored prairies have come to depend more upon human intervention to ensure for the diversity and welfare of these ecosystems.

Now as another December unfolds, the prairie grasses and forbs have turned to russet and various shades of gold. The dry, dark orange leaves cling to the sleeping savanna oak trees, long after other trees have been laid bare in the nearby woodlands and have offered their leafy lot to the fertile soil and next year's progeny. For these native communities, the growing seasons are over as the prairie and savanna's year-end cycle is independent of what the whimsical weather will bring.

An early first snow has blown in from the arctic in late autumn that has, until December, been marked by warm, summery days. This has incited both pleasure and apprehension in those who

summertime refugees in November. At the same instance, they were joined by the distant sound of fall migratory birds excitedly calling from their wetland respite stopovers.

"When the Earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear, when that happens, The Warriors of the Rainbow will come to save them."

~ Chief Seattle

Perhaps the deer have come to the browning Bock Community Forest prairie to feed on what is still green nearer the ground and living beneath the snow. On the menu are the shallow-rooted interlopers,

the maladapted invasive plants that have flourished in the unusually mild days of October and November. They remain notoriously opportunistic and almost oblivious to seasonal cycles.

The natural rhythm of the prairie has long since transferred its stores for safekeeping deep below the frost line in preparation for the coming winter. It is rooted in place and time-honored cyclical adaptation. Somewhere in this genetic heritage, the prairie has remembered the buffalo for having been there, long ago. Presently, it owes its diversity and makeup to these majestic creatures that were once considered "lords of the prairie."

Over time, how humankind and its treatment of the land are remembered will be told by future generations of prairies and people to come. The "Warriors of the Rainbow" of Bock Community Forest lands will live in the heart and soul of these restored native plant communities as they grow in wellness and diversity. Thus then, they will deliver the contributions of the buffalo along with the blessings of Chief Seattle.



have extended their late season strolls through the Conservancy. Hopping grasshoppers jumped from under the soles of hiking shoes and crickets trilled from unseen perches, both being

Pheasant Branch Conservancy is Home to River Otters and Arctic Shrews-and Maybe Prairie Voles Too

By Dreux J. Watermolen, FOPBC Member, Ecologist and Biodiversity Expert

A few years ago I published a small guidebook to the mammals found at Pheasant Branch Conservancy. In the guide I suggested additional species likely occur in and around Pheasant Branch. Among those mentioned were the river otter and Arctic shrew. Although historical records for these species were available, neither had been observed in the immediate area in the recent past. It didn't take long, however, for reports of them to turn up.

About a month after publishing the guidebook, Middleton resident Kay Kurz emailed me reporting observations of a pair of river otters along the edge of Pheasant Branch Creek. She and her son saw them while kayaking in August 2010. About a month later, another kayak enthusiast, Erik Peyrot, photographed the pair and posted his pictures to a Flickr site. FOPB members Susan Gruber and Deb Weitzel passed along similar reports that had been shared with them in the spring of 2011. One fellow indicated seeing otters for at least the previous five years. In March 2014, avid birder Mike McDowell photographed an otter in the conservancy and posted some spectacular images on his "The Digiscoper" blog. According to Mike's post, the otter "swam, caught and ate fish, rubbed its back and neck on logs and rocks, and eventually found a comfy spot to take a snooze in the sunlight." To these reports, I can add my own observations of otters along the creek in

2010, 2012, and 2015. This species occurs throughout Wisconsin and should now be considered a regular part of Pheasant Branch's fauna.

Dane County lies at the southern edge of the Arctic shrew's range. This northern species most often occupies grassy marshes and wet prairies, habitats well established at Pheasant Branch. Conservation biologists Rich Staffen and Heather Kaarakka recently rediscovered Arctic shrews in the western part of the Conservancy while surveying for



small mammals. In sharing their 2016 inventory results, Rich reports "Sorex arcticus is now confirmed and in seemingly good numbers too." Although not considered particularly common in most places where it occurs, Arctic shrew populations can reach densities of up to 5 individuals per acre in suitable habitats. Unlike river otters, however, getting photos of this species will be somewhat more challenging. These

secretive critters measure only 3 to 4 inches in body length and weigh a mere quarter ounce. As such, they are difficult to observe as they move quietly through dense, intermingled shoots, stems, and roots near the soil surface. Nonetheless, with the recent survey work, we can now add this insectivore to the checklist of mammals occurring at Pheasant Branch.

Yet another mammal species might be found in the conservancy. When I published the guidebook, I was unaware that the DNR's Natural Heritage Inventory database contains historical records for the prairie vole, a species of special concern, from Pheasant Branch. Rich Staffen and I both believe the remnant hillside prairie should provide ideal habitat for this species, but this fall's survey work did not find any. Perhaps future efforts will confirm the historical records and show this species also calls Pheasant Branch home.

Knowledge of Pheasant Branch Conservancy's fauna constantly evolves. As work continues to document species found here, your observations can help fill gaps in what we know. New discoveries are one of the things that make exploring the Conservancy so exciting and enjoyable. Please share what you encounter.

Note: The guidebook **Mammals of Pheasant Branch Conservancy** remains available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/ss/SS1072.pdf>. For a print copy, contact the author at Dreux. Watermolen@Wisconsin.gov.

Board Members...

University of Wisconsin-Madison and a B.A. in Biology (Medical Technology) from Gustavus Adolphus College.

Forrest Weesner

Forrest Weesner is a self-employed consultant building on his career in

developing, marketing and selling scientific instruments. He has extensive experience in problem solving, marketing, customer surveys, environmental monitoring, QA, auditing, and high-tech analytic hardware. He has held positions in a number of nationally known companies as a scientist, manager, and consultant.

Continued from page 3

He has served on the Restoration and Management Committee of the Friends for two years. He has a BS in Chemistry from Nebraska Wesleyan, and both an MS and PhD from UW-Madison. He is married and has lived in Middleton Hills Neighborhood since 2015.

Great Horned Owls Breed in the Conservancy

By *Stefanie Brouwer*

Come into the Conservancy after sunset, or just before dawn, and listen for the series of “Hoo H’hoos” from the Great Horned Owl. It is at home in the Conservancy as well as in woods and farmlands and residential areas. And it is easily recognizable because of the feather tufts on its head. These “plumicorns” resemble horns or, to some, catlike ears.



In the winter, monogamous pairs have one to five eggs, both the male and female incubate, and the male also hunts for food. Owls are powerful birds and fiercely protective parents. They have even been known to attack humans who wander too close to their young. Breeding seasons are always geared so that rearing chicks coincides with the peak availability of food. This is not always when prey

is most numerous but when it is most available. Late winter and early spring are times when mice and other small mammals are particularly vulnerable to owls. Great Horned Owls are the earliest nesters, but they don’t build their own nests. They use the abandoned nests of hawks, eagles, herons, and squirrels; tree dens and cavities may also be used.

By late January or February, the female is sitting on the eggs, motionless as the winter winds and snows blow her feathers. She usually remains on the nest, keeping the eggs warm, waiting for her mate to bring her food. Incubation lasts about a month, so that chicks emerge one at a time several days apart as early as late February through March. After the young hatch, the adults must spend several months or more bringing food to the young at the nest and teaching them to fly and catch prey. This timing allows the young to hatch and mature just in time for the emergence of easy prey — baby rabbits and other young mammals. This also gives the relatively slow growing young more time to learn how to hunt more efficiently before the upcoming winter.

Annual Meeting Registration Form & Order Form for Pick-Up

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Annual Meeting *includes a full breakfast

Number of attendees: _____

Amount enclosed: (\$18 per person) _____

Phenology Calendars *makes a great gift

Number of calendars: _____

Amount enclosed: (\$12.95 each) _____



Unisex Sport
Gray



Woman’s Style Sport
Gray



Organic Cotton
Natural

Order your t-shirts or calendars now and pick them up at the annual meeting to avoid shipping costs!

T-shirts *show your support for the Friends

Size and style: _____

Size and style: _____

Size and style: _____

Amount enclosed: (\$15-\$24 per shirt) _____

*see details on prices, styles and colors on our website www.pheasantbranch.org/t-shirtform.html

Please send this form and payment to:
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562-8242

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

2017 Phenology Calendar: a Guide for Year-long Learning

By Dale Klubertanz

This time of year a very unique and special calendar is published here in Middleton, ready for the holidays and the New Year. It is much anticipated by some, while others are still discovering it for the first time each year on the Friends website or at the various local retailers who make it available in their stores.

The calendar is published by the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy and this year is filled exclusively with the work of the Middleton High School students. It is a creative process that brings together an intergenerational team of individuals, blending the knowledge and skills of Middleton youth and adults alike, through art, writing and science.

Making up the heart of the calendar are pages full of phenology and fun. Phenology is defined as “the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life.” It is filled with color and illustrations tailored to open up a world of exploration with the wilderness. Each month comes with a list of what plant and wildlife species are emerging in the Conservancy. There is space to mark day-to-day observations, changes and discoveries while walking along the paths. From January to December, the pages are packed with information “dedicated to understanding the natural world, especially the small stuff...from the farthest reaches of the universe to the microbes under our feet” (A. Gargas).

At the center of the calendar’s design, theme and material is creator Andrea Gargas, a biologist (mycologist) and former UW-Madison professor. She has been the creator and designer of the Friends’ phenology calendar since its first edition in 2007. Each year, Andrea

turns her talents as both artist and scientist, working from summer through early fall to fashion a new edition of the phenology calendar. She draws from a diversity of subject areas that include

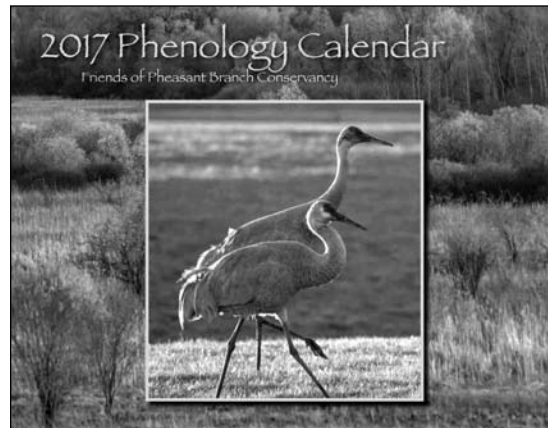
art and writing. The student’s creations become a central hallmark to each year’s calendar.

As a part of this opportunity, the students’ works are entered in photo and writing contests. Award recipients are celebrated during a spring reception. With each round of seasons, participating youth are afforded new ways to engage with the Conservancy and the chance to join an intergenerational effort to protect the land for future generations.

The Friends’ 2017 Phenology Calendar is now ready for purchase and makes a great gift. They are available for purchase through the Friends’ webpage and at local businesses including Willy St. Coop, Wild Birds Unlimited, UW-Arboretum, Prairie Café, UW-Bookstore, Fontana Sports, Eagle Optics, Orange Tree Imports, The Regal Find, Momentum, Wolff-Kubly, and the Wisconsin State Historical Society Bookstore. The calendars are \$15 online and include shipping. The retail cost at our local outlets is \$12.95 per calendar.

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy’s yearly phenology calendar will always be more than just a calendar. Beyond photos, dates and holidays, it reaches to “Consider natural history with the touchstone of the Conservancy, beginning with the bedrock, water table and soil through the plant layer and extending to our atmosphere, out to our location in the solar system” (A. Gargas). Moreover, it is an effort that represents cross-generational investment in a fragile and changing environment and opportunities to know and support the Pheasant Branch Conservancy, both for the present day and the future.

The Friends Phenology Calendar is available on www.pheasantbranch.org. or order using the form on page 6.



Look For:

- Water striders on still waters
- Spittle bugs on plant stems
- First mosquito bite!
- Bald eagle nesting
- Mallard hens nesting
- Sandhill Cranes laying eggs
- Cowbirds hatching
- Coyote pups born
- Mink kits born
- Eastern Cottontail rabbits born
- White-tailed deer bucks growing antlers

Spring Arrivals & Migrations:

- Red-tailed Kingfisher
- Tree swallow
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Cowbirds
- Sandpipers
- House Wrens
- Barn Swallows
- Big Brown Bat
- Little Brown Bat
- Purple Martins
- Common Green Darter

Emerging:

- Painted turtles
- Hopnose snakes
- Bumknots, queens, paper wasps, yellow jackets
- search for nesting sites

Songs Call:

- Gray Treefrog
- Cope's Gray Treefrog
- American Toad
- Pickered Frog

Blooms!

- Paque Flower
- Dutchman's Breches
- Travis Snake
- Marsh Marigold
- Serviceberry

Spring Flowers

Date of Last Expected Frost

Nov 15 - Nov 16	1971
Nov 24 - 26	1972
Nov 17 - 23	1973
Nov 10 - 16	1974
Nov 3 - 9	1975
April 20 - May 2	1976

mammals, birds, fungi, reptiles, insects, geology, astronomy, photography, weather, history, restoration ecology - even mathematics and physics. Betsy True, a local scientific illustrator and graphic designer, extends her expertise in a final tweaking of the colors, text, photos and illustrations.

Alongside the pages of phenology are photos illustrating the essence of each season taken by Middleton students. Board member Deb Weitzel, a former Middleton High School science teacher, has worked closely each year with teachers and students to inspire young photographers and writers to capture the Conservancy through their personal

Be Salt Wise this Year

By Susan Sandford, Strategic Engagement Coordinator, Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds

The WI Salt Wise Partnership is urging homeowners, municipalities, and private contractors to make a commitment to reduce salt use this winter. Using excess salt doesn't make your sidewalks safer — it harms plants and animals, pollutes our water, damages buildings and corrodes vehicles, roads and bridges. Once you put salt down, it doesn't go away. Instead, it travels into our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands, putting our aquatic life at risk and endangering our freshwater resources. Salt also alters the composition of soil, slows plant growth and weakens the concrete, brick and stone that make up our homes, garages, bridges, and roads.

According to a recent report, nearly 30,000 tons of salt were spread on Madison and Dane County roads during the winter of 2014-15, and that doesn't include what was spread on parking lots, sidewalks and driveways. That is enough to pollute over 23 billion gallons of water. There is a way to cut down on salt use and keep our roads, parking lots and driveways safe: Use only what you need — and that's less than you might think!

Believe it or not, just a coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20-foot driveway or 60-70 feet of sidewalk. The scatter pattern should look like the image on the right.

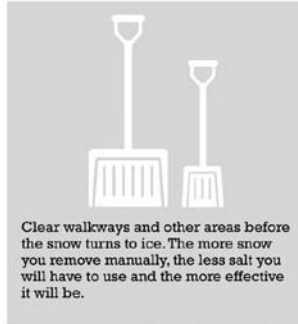
Other things you can do to reduce salt and protect water include:

- Shovel: Clear walkways and other

areas before the snow turns to ice. The more snow you remove manually, the less salt you will have to use and the more effective it will be.

practices that reduce environmental impacts. Ask potential contractors if they've been trained and use practices that reduce salt use such as pretreating with brine or pre-wetting salt.

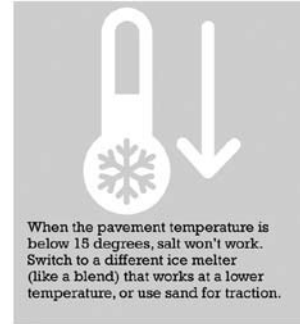
1. Shovel



2. Scatter



3. Switch

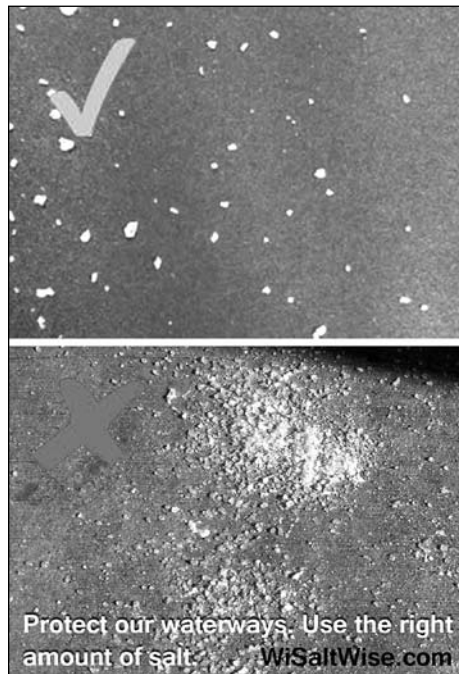


Look for proper salt use at the stores & businesses you visit. If they're using the right amount of salt, thank them! If not, let them know about WI Salt Wise.

- Switch: When pavement temps drop below 15, salt won't work. Switch to sand for traction or a different ice melter that works in lower temperatures.
- Hire a salt wise applicator: If you hire a contractor to remove snow and ice, let them know you are WI Salt Wise! Some local applicators have been trained in winter maintenance

- Love the lines: The stripes on the roadway before a storm are anti-icing, they show that your professional maintenance crew is concerned about your safety and is saving money, time and protecting our environment!

- Be Salt Wise all year! The salt you put in your water softener ends up in local freshwater streams. New, efficient softeners use less than one bag per month. If you're using more — have a professional tune yours up — or, replace it with a high-efficiency model.



FOPBC is a WI Salt Wise partner organization! We use our website and newsletters to educate members about salt impacts on water resources and to teach them salt reduction techniques. We are also asking local area businesses to post the "Shovel, Scatter, Switch" message in their stores. Email Stefanie Brouwer, Watershed Committee Chair at stefanie.brouwer@gmail.com if you would like to help us with this effort.


Do your part to help out our community and local water resources. Be Wisconsin Salt Wise! Find out more at www.wisaltwise.com.

Pheasant Branch
Conservancy

I had a birthday
and instead of presents
I asked for donations.
So that's why I'm
giving you this check.
Hope you enjoy
it!

from Jack

Left:
A recent
donation note
from a young
Conservancy
user, thank
you Jack!



Resolution #1: Renew Friends Membership
(Finally – A New Year’s resolution I can keep!)

As we celebrate the New Year,
we are thankful for so many good Friends!

Senior Walks...

Continued from page 1

In last year’s issue of this newsletter, the Education Committee shared that the members were considering various ways the Pheasant Branch Conservancy could play a role in reaching out to seniors and those with cognitive challenges. The article ended with a promise that the committee would keep you posted.

Education Committee members have immersed themselves in some fascinating research about physical and mental health and the merits of interactions with nature. Various research studies point to the strong relationship between positive well-being and the natural environment.



The committee decided to extend its focus to two underserved populations – senior citizens and individuals with cognitive challenges (Alzheimer’s and Dementia). From late 2015 through early 2016, dialogues were established with several retirement-living communities, memory care facilities, senior centers and Dementia Friendly Coalitions. These discussions continue today and have been extended to include other area communities. In addition, separate meetings have been scheduled with the staff of the Dane County Parks Department and the Middleton Public Lands Recreation & Forestry Department.

These meetings helped the committee to identify several important considerations for the Pheasant Branch Conservancy including activities, enhancements, materials and programs. There have

been unexpected realizations - 1) there is a place for this initiative in the Friends Strategic Plan; 2) this initiative has implications and collaboration possibilities across the board’s standing committees; and 3) there is potential for seeking an outside grant.

Earlier this year, the Education Committee learned that a funding source was accepting applications focused on this age group and individuals experiencing cognitive change. After many months of discussion among the board members, a number of outline drafts, various subcommittee critiques and a site visit by the funding source, a grant application was submitted in September 2016. The title of the grant summarizes the grant’s primary goal, Make a Memory – the Healing Powers of Nature.

Exciting News! On November 17th, the board members of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy learned that this grant request has been funded for the next two years.

Stay tuned! In future newsletters look for information about the activities, involvement opportunities and more specific details about this important grant.

Getting enough physical activity is one of the best things you can do for your health. In a comprehensive research review, the authors identified 35 chronic health conditions that can be at least partially prevented with physical activity. Among these health conditions are diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, breast and colon cancers, depression and anxiety, and cognitive dysfunction. To gain the most benefits from physical activity, the Center for Disease Control recommends that adults perform 150 minutes of aerobic physical activity per week (like brisk walking, jogging, or cycling), along with muscle strengthening exercises 2 times per week.

Katie Mead, PhD student
UW-Madison, School of Nursing



EDUCATION CORNER:

Kids for the Earth Program News

By Colleen Robinson, FOPBC Education Coordinator

Members, donors and volunteers made everything outlined below possible. We are on our way with additional initiatives and improvements in 2017 with some grant funds and donations already gathered. The Friends, this community, and our students thank you.

Conservancy Day Programs

Join us every third Thursday of the month for free programs, open to the public. We take on topics such as composting, accessibility to nature, local and global resource impacts and enjoy treks and presentations to learn more about wildlife, birds, water resources, cultural history, the night sky and more! Stay tuned at <http://pheasantbranch.org> and join in to explore 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 and Service-Learning

- Have you ordered your 2017 phenology calendar yet? As always, the photos are from high school students in our photography service-learning program! Get yours today from <https://pheasantbranch.org>, and a few as gifts too!
- Hundreds of students in kindergarten through fifth grade visited the Conservancy this year for outdoor field trips!
- For the fourth year in a row, more than 500 high school freshman in biology visited our outdoor classrooms twice this autumn! The biology service-learning project continues to be an active, ongoing partnership between the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, the MHS biology team, the Friends,

Dane County, and Holy Wisdom Monastery and Governor Nelson State Park as partnering properties. Each year the program becomes more sustainable. Thank you to all who continue to be involved engaged and open to improvements in our already phenomenal service learning programs!!

- Did you hear the "Tunes On Tuesdays" this summer? Acoustic, local music in the Conservancy drew interest from hundreds of people over six weeks in July and August. You may not have known – this initiative started with an invitation to high school choral and strings students to perform as a service-learning project. Many students did perform, right along side local professionals. Indeed, the learning was rich. How different it is to play outdoors! Thank you to all who participated and listened. Tunes on Tuesdays will continue in 2017 so stay tuned...pun intended!

If you'd like to help lead or create education programs, we are always looking for naturalist volunteers. We get you up to speed before you start. Please contact Colleen.

New projects completed and underway

- Our new "4K Outdoor Curriculum" is launched, thanks to a generous donation by the Glen Pulver Education Fund. The Friends education committee and an enthusiastic and talented Middleton-Cross Plains Area 4K team created and launched a full year's, outdoor curriculum for our youngest school children. This is extremely exciting news because of what we know about early connections to nature and the outdoors and those benefits to health, student learning, attention, and social skills. Now,

nearly every 4K class at the ten sites in the Middleton area has started the 10-unit curriculum, complete with all the needed materials available for checkout, and students are getting outside. The focus is trees and you'd be amazed by the knowledge and inquiry these youth bring to the experience from the beginning. We will be following, reporting on and improving this project in 2017. Soon, the curriculum will be on the Friends' website. Stay tuned!

- "Self-Guided Conservancy Backpack" development is underway! American Girl funds and Friends memberships helped fund this community project.
 - Our first backpack has all the tools inside for a Girl Scout Brownie to complete a "Hiker Badge" in the Conservancy. This backpack is directly linked to the "Hiker" curriculum and available for checkout from the Girl Scouts Badgerland Council headquarters for up to a week at a time!
 - Additional backpacks have more general self-guided exploration and learning tools. These can be used by girl scouts and are also available to the community. In partnership with the Middleton Recreation Department, you can check out these backpacks for up to a week at a time and see the Conservancy in a new light. Become an expert in the field and enjoy!
 - "5 - 8 Outdoor Curriculum" enhancements for the Next Generation Science Standards were discussed this year among a small team of teachers and Friends education committee members.

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GET OUT THERE: Restoration Volunteer Opportunities

By Janet Kane, Jim Loving, and Forrest Weesner,
FOPBC Restoration and Management Co-
Chairs

2016 has been Great

Volunteer hours. Through Nov. 30, Friends' volunteers contributed over 2,500 hours on restoration-related activities. That's more than a full-time position! On workdays, we controlled invasives, sowed seeds, managed for wildlife habitat, sustained springs, streams, and wetlands, and harvested seeds. Enjoy the results!

Your money at work. With funds from annual memberships and contributions, FOPBC is able to hire a quarter-time Park Coordinator and the 5-person Prairie Partner summer intern crew. These positions bring expertise and energy to the restoration efforts and add another 1,000 hours of caring for the Conservancy's landscapes and habitats. Thanks for the financial support that makes this possible.

The Restoration and Management Committee. Thanks to Tom Bernthal, Jane Cummings Carlson, Emil Haney,

Janet Kane, Tom Klein, Jim Loving, Pam Shannon, Paul Slota, and Forrest Weesner, members, and to Susan Gruber and Rob Baller, advisors, for their leadership in strategic planning, developing the annual work plan, and setting priorities. New members are welcome! If you might be interested, send an e-mail or contact one of the co-chairs.

Erosion Task Force. Forrest Weesner, Herb Garn, Jack Handley, Steve Broeckert, and Paul Slota formed this new task force. They worked with Susan Gruber, County Liaison, to install and maintain water bars on the main trail up the hill, add steps on the trail to the spring, and monitor erosion around the Conservancy. The challenge is to get vegetation established so trails don't wash out in heavy rains.

Plans for Early 2017

Special workdays. Weather and schedules permitting, we'll plan some winter workdays. Watch your e-mail for announcements. If you don't get the announcements and would like to, ask to be added to the list. E-mail: restoration@pheasantbranch.org

Help needed: We're looking for volunteers to make signs advertising the monthly workdays that start in April. We're also looking for volunteers to assist experienced volunteers to organize the monthly workdays. If you'd like more information about either opportunity, send an e-mail with your phone number and we'll give you a call.

New initiative: We are working with Dane County Parks to provide on-site storage for restoration equipment and supplies. Right now these things are spread across several different sites. Transporting what's needed for each workday takes time and effort that could be used more productively. We'll need to raise several thousand dollars for a suitable storage space – and we'll need help installing storage shelves, racks and bins. Send an e-mail if you'd like to help.

Welcome!

Middleton's new Director of Public Lands, Recreation & Forestry, Matt Amundson, started work November 28. We look forward to working together to benefit the Pheasant Branch watershed.

Education Corner...

Through a school district grant the team was able to explore ideas, materials and initial projects to incorporate more outdoor learning time into middle school curriculum as standards change and new goals are identified. This work ultimately leads to students who are confident to take the lead in projects that enhance their school or local and global communities. First comes the connection and skills building they can do, literally, on the ground. This work will continue and will involve

K – 4 and high school curriculum enhancements over the next few years too.

These projects are so exciting, and become our day-to-day and sustainable programming over time through financial support and the gift of people's time. We are so grateful!

Naturalist volunteers, committee members and education interns

All this incredible work calls forth your talent! 2017 will need volunteers for the education committee, field

trips and project development and we will continue to seek a small number of contract naturalists and interns. Together, we create innovative, one-of-a-kind programs so we can make a difference in the real lives of people in our community.

Thank you all!! Join the Friends' 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.

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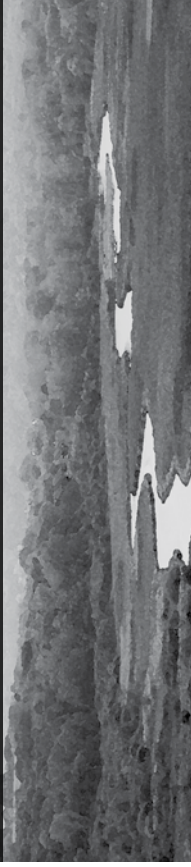


P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562-8242

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

RSPV for the annual meeting, order a phenology calendar or t-shirt... details inside on page 6!

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY WINTER 2017 EVENTS



CONNECT WITH NATURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

JANUARY

20th - Conservancy Day Program (TBA)
28th - Annual Meeting (page 1)

FEBRUARY

16th - Conservancy Day Program (TBA)

MARCH

16th - Conservancy Day Program (TBA)

APRIL

20th - Conservancy Day Program (TBA)

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.pheasantbranch.org

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