



SPRING-SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER



PRAIRIE CHASE RUN/WALK IS JUNE 15, 2019 - REGISTER NOW FOR BEST RATES

By Peter Witucki, FOPBC Board Member and Prairie Chase Planning Team

On Saturday June 15, 2019 hundreds of runners, walkers and stroller-pushers will line up for the 5th annual Prairie Chase Run/Walk to support the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Starting and ending in Orchid Heights Park, race participants will make their way through Pheasant Branch Conservancy choosing either the flat 5K crushed limestone path, the arduous all-terrain 10K, or the 2.4-mile non-competitive hike up and over Frederick's Hill.

This year we are adding new event

to celebrate active families – a 5K Stroller Championship Race on the 3.1-mile flat crushed limestone loop. Whether you're challenging another parent, racing against the clock, or just sprinting to the finish before the kids finish their goldfish crackers



- this one's for you! Then get those kids out of the stroller and running on their own in the Kids' Run while enjoying post-race refreshments, live bluegrass music and a raffle.

Fees are \$40 for a family, \$20 for an individual and \$15 for a student. Fees will increase after May 1 and June 1 so register now. On race day, registration/pick-up opens at 7 AM and the event begins at 8 AM. The kids race will start around 9:15 AM. Parking and rest rooms are available at the park.

To register for the race (as well as sign up for volunteer and sponsorship opportunities) go to prairiechase.com

NATURAL LAND MANAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE DINNER PROGRAM WITH FRIENDS OF WISDOM PRAIRIE

By Pam Shannon, FOPBC Board Co-President

Late last year Greg Armstrong, Director of Land Management and Environmental Education at Holy Wisdom Monastery, invited the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy to jointly sponsor a

dinner program with the Friends of Wisdom Prairie this spring. The Friends of Wisdom Prairie work to maintain and restore native prairie, woodland, oak savanna and wetland communities on the monastery

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FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,

Despite significant challenges in the wake of last summer's devastating storm event, we remain optimistic about new beginnings in 2019. The Friends membership elected three new board members: Hans Hilbert, Jim Loving, and Peter Witucki. While new to the board, all have had previous experience working with us. Hans interacted with the board frequently as a Middleton alderperson. Jim has been active with and now chairs the Restoration & Management Committee. Peter led the Prairie Chase Run planning team in 2018 after participating in previous years. We are fortunate to have their expertise and enthusiasm on the Board.

OUR BOARD

Co-Presidents **Vice President**
Lloyd Eagan *John Daly*
Pam Shannon

Treasurer **Secretary**
Holly Sledge *Janet Staker Woerner*

Board Members

Jim Bachhuber, Ron Biendseil, John Daly, Lloyd Eagan, Hans Hilbert, Jim Loving, Lois Sater, Ann Schwartz, Pam Shannon, Holly Sledge, Janet Staker Woerner, Mark Warshauer, Deb Weitzel, Lyman Wible, Peter Witucki

Illustrations/Photos

Carolyn McGinley, City of Middleton flood drone footage, Kaya Freiman, Annette Knapstein, Michael Knapstein, Rob Schubert, Thomas Stringfellow

Newsletter Editors

Stefanie Brouwer, Joleen Stinson

We are grateful to the 95 new members that joined the Friends in the last year. We appreciate that our members care deeply about the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. We need the support of our membership more than ever as we work with the City of Middleton to develop plans to stabilize the Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor and, in time, repair and replant damaged areas.

We are also pleased that 20 new businesses have donated to the Friends. They provide key funding for our programming and operations in larger amounts than most of our individual members can afford.

And finally, we are thrilled by the generous financial support our "Give More to Restore" flood restoration fundraising yielded. We raised more than \$90,000 which will be kept secure until we can determine the best use for it in restoring a sustainable creek corridor.

The board has established a permanent Committee on Accessibility and Use, chaired by board Vice-President John Daly, expanding on the work of our former ad hoc accessibility committee. The committee will continue to address issues of access to the Conservancy for various underserved populations and work with Dane County and the City of Middleton on developing slow walks trails, improved mapping and signage, revised kiosk content, and other accessibility improvements. The committee will also address issues relating to "use", including the dog policy, extension of bike paths, multiple-use trails, and increased user impact on the Conservancy.

As the August 20-21, 2018 flood rushed through the creek corridor, it changed the size and shape of the stream and banks and moved the bridges off their footings. While the bridges remain structurally intact, the stream area is now wider and the bridges won't span the distance. This year, we look forward to working closely with the City of Middleton as it develops designs for the new creek corridor and plans for stabilizing, planting and rebuilding throughout the corridor. We will make sure there are opportunities for public input and education along the way. We want to ensure that the new plans will support a sustainable future along the creek. If you have thoughts and ideas about what you would like to see, please share them with us.

We are trying a new leadership model this year, with the two of us serving as Co-Presidents. We feel this is the best way to serve our members. With the

Continued on page 9...



CREEK CORRIDOR

RESTORATION UPDATE

By Matt Amundson, City of Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry Director

The Pheasant Branch Creek corridor was significantly impacted during the August 2018 flooding.

The city contracted with the firm Cardno (a infrastructure, environmental and social development company) to complete flood damage and assessment of the Pheasant Branch Creek corridor. The study was completed in February and is available at www.ci.middleton.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/6167/Pheasant-Branch-2018-Flood-Damage-Assessment-and-Five-Year-Plan.

The plan identifies the damages to the streambank and identifies a 5 year plan for improvements to the streambank.

The City is developing an RFP to hire a consultant to build off the Cardno study and look at design aspects including width of the creek, increasing flood storage, vegetation, trail and bridge design, and public input on those designs.



The City wants to ensure that these improvements are sustainable and able to withstand the next flood event. One of the important design considerations for the trail network is how to accommodate a variety of user groups.

It is the City's intention to complete the design work in 2019 with construction of improvements in 2020.

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy will play a critical role in the design and public input process.

Please stay tuned for additional information as it becomes available.

BECOME A FRIEND

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Membership Level:
memberships purchased after 9/1 apply to following calendar year

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

Additional Giving Opportunities:

- \$100 Friend
- \$250 Benefactor
- \$500 Steward
- \$1,000 Hero

Volunteer Opportunities:

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

Please send this membership form and payment to:

FOPBC
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562

We hope you like the new look of our newsletter!
If you haven't been to our website recently, it got
a major redesign too. Check it out!
pheasantbranch.org

NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

By Dale Klubertanz, reprinted with permission from the author

A Sense of Timelessness in the Conservancy

As the grey-black billows of smoke rise from Pheasant Branch and fill the open spaces of sky, it signals that a new cycle of life has come to the Conservancy. Drifting over Frederick's Hill and all the communities of plants inside its panoramic view, the fire's arrival has become a foretoken of springtime, even as the pasque flower blooms beneath the breezy April hillside. It burns below the last clinging leaves of the thick-barked burr oak, still hanging brown and like parchment, not yet offered to the wind. Burning has been an ancient relationship forged over 10,000 years through the workings of lightning and tribal hunting and agricultural practices, now renewed by restoration as a part of our abiding heritage. It has been reclaimed as an annual spring ritual, marking the opening of a yearlong, ever-changing seasonal experience

throughout the Conservancy lands.

For those who have come to this recovering wilderness to find refuge and to seek solace from the oft-proclaimed rat race, one of second hands and morning alarms, there is a Conservancy filled with deeply rooted rhythms, cycles, tempos, heartbeats, patterns and paces. In good measure, there is room to reset one's innermost clock, embracing these timeless features of the natural environment. But to fully experience and know all the varied faces and facets of these native plant communities, one is asked to visit throughout the year during each of the seasons.

Within days of the prescribed burns, green shoots appear everywhere up from the blackened earth. They have been summoned by the warm, flame-heated soil, stimulated by the burnt, powdery recycled nutrients of last year's prairie and encouraged by April rains. Again and for another spring, it is the

burgeoning of inspired life in the Conservancy.

Soon, the native plant communities will be covered by a wind-swept promise of summer, giving way to a bursting forth of blooms by mid-June. Woodland trees will have extended their leaves for the sake of shady habitats, busily giving breath to all living things through the help of long sunny days. At the far reaches of autumn, tall grasses will prevail over prairies of yellow-gold. The fall colors accompany hiker's musings as their seasons-long journey approaches winter.

But in spring, as visitors open their wandering souls to the greening of Conservancy lands, winter is surely a far off concern. The smoky air and perky shoots peaking through the dark soil, signal that the newest of seasons is well on its way. With it brings a "sense of ever-ness".

ACCESSIBILITY AND USE COMMITTEE: CHALLENGES AND GOALS FOR 2019

By John Daly, Chair of the Accessibility and Use Committee and Vice-President of FOPBC Board

The Challenge

We're increasingly aware of the many benefits of spending time in nature – but we also have a responsibility for preserving and protecting these areas. This is the challenge!

As of January 2019 the Accessibility Ad Hoc Committee changed its status. The Board of Directors has voted to make it a standing committee of the Friends of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Members of this committee will be responsible for advising and representing the Board on accessibility and use issues related to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Along with two board members, the committee includes the City of Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry Department; Dane County Parks Department; UW-Madison School of Nursing; activity directors at senior living communities; and representatives of senior centers and memory cafes from Middleton and Waunakee.

Goals

The goals of the committee are in three main categories: Programming, Infrastructure and Materials.

Goal Category #1: Programs for various underserved populations

"There is a paradigm shift in the way we think about parks and open space; not just as a place to recreate, but literally as a prescription, a place to improve health."

Dr. Robert Zarr
Time Magazine (November 19, 2018)

This quote reminds us to consider the value of introducing people of all ages to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Over the past two years, this newsletter has provided research-based information on the health benefits (cognitive and physical) of connecting to nature. Now there is more compelling evidence: Some doctors are writing prescriptions for

patients to spend time in nature and experience these benefits:

- Relaxation
- Physical Activity
- Social Support
- Mental Health
- Sense of Awe
- Fresh Air

Goal Category #2: Infrastructure Enhancements and Modifications

This is a goal in collaboration with the City of Middleton and Dane County. Some potential projects include:

1. Mapping – development and printing of quadrant maps with designated rest areas (existing and new benches or boulders) and the estimated distance between them;
2. Signage - modification of trail signage to include simplified and standard language; possible inclusion of QRC codes;
3. "Slow Walks" – short walking loops for those with limited mobility and/or dementia in the Conservancy and other city and county parks.

Goal Category #3: Material Development and Distribution

"All I need to make the Pheasant Branch Conservancy a frequent destination for me is a simple map; one that tells me the distance along

the trails between resting stops."

This statement is from a resident of Middleton Glen Retirement Community. Her request has informed our discussions with the city and the county as we collectively consider the materials available to the general public, frequent users of the Conservancy and special program groups.

Reflection

In the initial paragraph of this article, I shared the challenge before this committee. For the past few years, there has been a constant "inner voice" reminding us of the larger issue... as we invite more and more people to the Conservancy and expand our programs to support them, there is an impact on this natural area. We wish to promote the many health benefits (cognitive and physical) of spending time in nature – but we also have a responsibility for preserving and restoring these areas. This is the challenge, our collective responsibility and our mission.

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Mission Statement... To restore, preserve and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and Watershed for today and tomorrow.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact John Daly, the Accessibility and Use Committee Chair: jhdaly@charter.net.



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

ACCESSIBILITY & USE COMMITTEE

- Recruitment of members for the committee from our 13 community partnerships that include: Alzheimer's Association, Dementia Friendly Coalition, senior centers, senior living communities and the UW-School of Nursing.
- Drafting of goals from three main categories
 - Programming for underserved adult populations;
 - Infrastructure enhancements and modifications; and,
 - Material Development and Distribution.
- Initial collaboration with the City of Middleton Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry and the Dane County Parks on a common Mapping/Wayfinding Trail System plan.
- Planning, implementation and evaluation of three "Make a Memory" program events. These events were designed for independent seniors, individuals with limited mobility and those with dementia and Alzheimers. Specialists in these areas advised the planning committees.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- Second Master Naturalist Course
- Kromery MS rain garden project
- Glacier Creek MS 6th grade curriculum
- Partnership in Middleton HS English and Art
- Pulver Endowment Fund
- Back by popular demand
 - Field trips
 - Tunes on Tuesday
 - Conservancy Day Programs

RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- Give More to Restore Campaign
- Endowment
- Prairie Partners Intern Program
- Coordinated 3,000 volunteer hours
- Erosion Team armored trail project
- Cooperated with Dane County
 - Shared staff LTE
 - Dog Policies
 - Truck Support
 - Interns
 - Chainsaw team
- Cooperated with City of Middleton
 - Cost sharing for wetland burn
 - Sustained funding for Bock Forest Restoration through Bock Foundation grant
 - Continued collaboration with Bock Community Gardeners

WATERSHED COMMITTEE

- Carp barrier feasibility study
 - Clean Lakes Alliance grant
 - Committee members field work as in-kind match
- Volunteer stream monitoring monthly April - October
- Water trail concept
- Participated in Dane County Watershed Network events
- Worked with Dane County in efforts to protect land adjacent to the Conservancy
- Supported stormwater management in the Town of Middleton

DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING COMMITTEE

- Conducted the 4th Annual Prairie Chase Run/Walk
- Website rebuild project was finished for introduction in 2019
- Outreach Efforts - enhanced GMM, Chamber of Commerce, and MTT relationships
- Developed documents and visual communications materials
 - Revised membership brochure
 - Video for before and after storm (short and long versions)
 - Poster collages for storm restoration events
- Supported R&M fundraising (for truck and increased staff hours) through "Give More to Restore"
- Increased number of memberships by 15% as of 12/31/18
- To date \$91,000 in storm damage restoration donations money was raised
- Strengthened relations with a network of business donors
- Organized, supported and staffed community events supporting the Friends and restoration of storm damaged natural resources and facilities
- Annual appeal letter and membership campaign

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- Completion of Grant Policies
- Organizational Roles and Responsibilities policy changes completed and approved
- Recruitment of new Board members for 2019
- Board and Committee Evaluation summary

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy works through 7 active committees consisting of board and non-board members: Education, Watershed, Restoration & Management, Accessibility & Use, Finance, Development & Marketing, and Governance. We depend on the generosity of our members, for which we are very grateful. Here is a brief report on the committee work of 2018.



FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

Operating Summary

	2014	2015	2016	2017	Prelim. 2018	Proj. 2019
Membership Income	\$ 16,694	\$ 18,177	\$ 20,855	\$ 16,322	\$ 20,740	\$ 21,000
Contributions	32,949	68,118	82,037	67,558	199,901	80,000
Grants Received	34,051	41,040	29,422	60,237	28,014	25,000
Other Income	10,883	14,847	16,567	23,004	19,133	20,000
Total Income	\$ 94,577	\$ 142,182	\$ 148,881	\$ 167,121	\$ 267,788	\$ 146,000
Total Expenses	\$ 100,289	\$ 104,795	\$ 122,504	\$ 95,134	\$ 117,379	\$ 130,000
# of Memberships	494	532	478	505	605	600

Budget Summary

(Budgetted Net Expenses by Committee)

	2017	2018	2019
Accessibility and Use	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500 *
Admin/General Expense	7,407	16,271	17,560
Development & Marketing	10,471	8,771	11,501
Education	17,986	24,966	24,896
Governance	650	650	3,600
Restoration & Management	24,290	30,540	42,830 **
Watershed	365	365	400
Total	\$ 61,169	\$ 81,563	\$ 100,787

* New committee for 2019

** Includes additional hours for Robert Schubert, Restoration & Management Coordinator

Reserve Summary

Cash Position as of Dec. 31, 2018	\$ 282,000
Receivable for Grant Expenditures	13,000
Less:	
2019 Budgets (& 2018 Residuals)	\$ 115,787
Committed Grant Expenditures	15,000
Dedicated funds	93,877
Donated Funds for Endowments	6,000
Subtotal	\$ 230,664
Excess Position	\$ 64,336

Endowments

(Administered by Madison Community Foundation)

Investment Position as of Dec. 31, 2018

Pulver Education Fund	\$ 71,722
Restoration Fund (est. Dec. 2014)	\$ 53,624

DOGS IN THE CONSERVANCY AND A REDEDICATION TO THE NATURAL RESOURCE AREA

By Janet Kane, Restoration and Management Committee Member and Dog Policy Action Team Chair

The restored prairies in the Dane County Unit of Pheasant Branch Conservancy provide high quality habitat for many species – especially those under stress from habitat loss. Grassland bird populations are declining everywhere, and systematic observations from area birders have documented declines in the Conservancy over the last 6 years despite our continued restoration activities.

In recent years, we've noticed a steady increase in the number of off-leash dogs in the Conservancy. Could off-leash dogs be the cause of the observed declines? In January 2018 the Friends studied the issue and recommended that Dane County Parks restrict dog access north of the main limestone trail. On May 8 2018 the county held a well-attended public hearing on the recommendation. Each person had an opportunity to speak. Participants expressed deep concern about the Conservancy and their access to it and many said they would accept "what is best," but there was no consensus about a policy option.

With no resolution of the dog issue,

the discussion expanded to the larger issue of the ways people impact natural areas and the responsibility we have to preserve and protect these resources. The City of Middleton manages about 500 acres of the Conservancy, and Dane County manages the northern-most 160 acres. Dane County classifies the County Unit as a Natural Resource Area, that is "land designated for the protection of a valuable natural environment, wildlife habitat, open space, and/or greenbelt corridor." After reviewing the master plan for the County Unit, the county decided to keep only designated trails to specific use areas and to maintain a firebreak and trail around the perimeter of the prairie. (See map.) This change created 80 continuous acres of high-quality habitat, about 15% of the Conservancy.

Last summer, both the City of Middleton and Dane County hired park rangers to help with monitoring and enforcement of dog rules on their respective properties. The county park ranger reported fewer off-leash dogs after the policy change.

Dogs continue to be welcome at the Conservancy, consistent with current rules:

- Dogs must be legally licensed and vaccinated and wear a municipal license and ID tag
- In the Dane County Unit, dogs also need a valid Dog Permit
- Dogs must be restrained by a 6-foot static (non-retractable) leash
- Dogs are allowed on trails and pathways only (In the City of Middleton, some sensitive trails are closed to dogs – watch for signs)
- All pet waste must be picked up and disposed of.

This community-wide conversation started with the concerns of several individuals. Everyone's involvement resulted in changes to practices that will benefit grassland birds, spring and fall migrants, and many other species. And we all have a better appreciation of ways to sustain the birds that live in and migrate through the conservancy.

For more information, see:

www.danecountyparks.com/park/PheasantBranchCreekConservancy

www.ci.middleton.wi.us/DocumentCenter/View/16/middch6?bidId (Pages 9-12)

pheasantbranch.org/?s=dogs

The Dickcissel (Spiza americana), Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) and Clay-colored Sparrow (Spizella pallida) are three examples of particular species that are less common now than previously in the Conservancy.



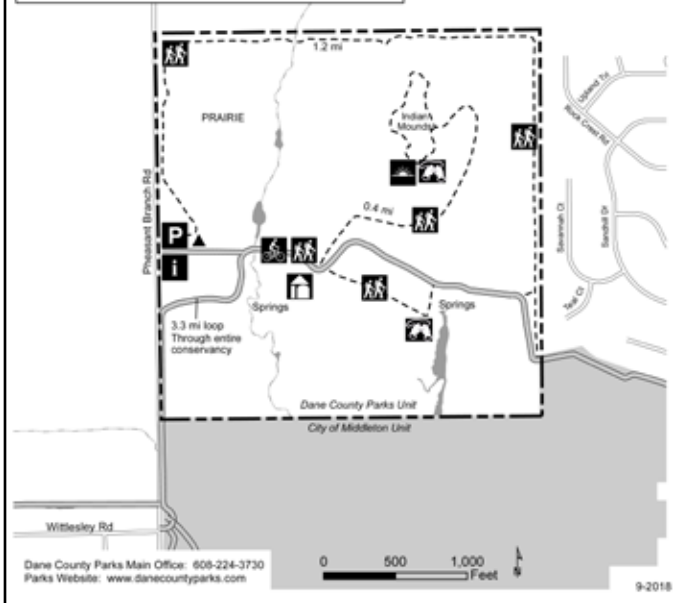
PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY

Dane County Parks Unit

4864 Pheasant Branch Rd.
Middleton, WI 53562



Conservancy Boundary	Scenic View
Parking	Wildlife Viewing
Info/Registration Kiosk	Homestead Site
Hiking	Historical Marker
Biking	Hard Surface Shared-Use Trail
	Hiking Trail



WANTED



Birders to help with monitoring grassland bird populations over the next few years. If you'd like more information, please contact restoration@pheasantbranch.org.

PRESIDENTS *continued from page 2*

damage to the creek corridor, Lloyd's background at DNR and training in water resources management is much needed even though she has already served two years as board president. Pam brings her law training and her experience as board secretary and service on multiple committees: Governance, Restoration & Management, and Development & Marketing. We work well as a team to ensure that somebody is following up on all of the issues the board is dealing with during this busy year.

With optimism for a great year ahead,

Lloyd I. Eagan Pam Shannon

Lloyd Eagan and Pam Shannon

NATURAL LAND MANAGEMENT LECTURE *continued from page 1*

property, while also contributing to improved water quality in nearby Lake Mendota. We agreed this would be a good opportunity to become better acquainted with a like-minded group of environmental stewards practically in our backyard.

Lyman Wible, Deb Weitzel and I represented the Friends in helping plan the joint dinner event, which is scheduled for April 23, 2019 from 5:30-8:00 pm at Holy Wisdom Monastery, 4200 County Road M, Middleton.

FOPBC members recently received a postcard invitation to the event and we sincerely hope a number of our members will attend. Registration is \$40 per person and the registration deadline is April 9. You may register online at: holywisdommonastery.org/environment/friends-of-wisdom-prairie or send in the registration form on the postcard.

The evening will begin with wine, beer and conversation at 5:30, followed by dinner at 6:00. At 7:00, there will be a panel discussion, followed by Q&A, on the topic "Virtues of Natural Land

Management" from three different perspectives.

Jeffrey Sledge will address the health benefits of natural lands for volunteers and visitors who want to experience a diverse ecological community. He is a Research Scientist in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture and Director of the Health and Built Environment Lab at UW-Madison.

Susan Carpenter will address the benefits of restoring a whole ecological community for sustaining biological diversity and restoring ecological services to an area. She is

the Native Plant Gardener at the UW-Madison Arboretum.

Randy Hunt will address the benefits of managing natural lands for the health and functioning of a watershed and its waters. He is the Chief Science Officer and Research Hydrologist for the USGS Upper Midwest Water Science Center in Middleton.



Horse Logging is an ecologically friendly way to remove felled trees from monastery property.



TUNES ON TUESDAYS

Each Tuesday in June: 4, 11, 18 & 25
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Calling acoustic musicians!

Musician sign-up is now open:
www.signupgenius.com/go/60b054e9ab2fa64-tunes

Music can be heard at Orchid Heights Park, the base of Fredricks Hill, the Springs, and the Homestead Site.

CONSERVANCY DAYS

The 3rd Thursday of every month
January - November
6:30 - 7:30 PM
Held at Kromrey Middle School
Room 510 or in the Conservancy

April 18
Bird Migration
Abe Leno

May 16
Effigy Mounds in the Conservancy
Robert Birmingham

June 20
Flood Restoration Update
Matt Amundson

July 18
Dogs in the Conservancy - Dane County and City of Middleton Policy
Panel Discussion

August 15
Dragonflies and our Neighborhoods
Robert Bohanon

EDUCATION CORNER

By Kaya Freiman, ATC Communication Manager and FOPBC member

Crane Cam Back in Operation

A solar-powered, wireless streaming video camera known as the "Crane Cam" was installed last year to provide city residents and FOPBC members a way to observe Sandhill Cranes in their nesting habitat and to capture picturesque views of the Pheasant Branch Creek and wetlands.

The idea originated with former board member Tom Crozier who had long enjoyed the view from his home of cranes gathering at the bend in Pheasant Branch Creek from spring through fall. "It's a shame that most people who visit the Conservancy don't have the opportunity to behold this spectacle," says 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. Tom contacted me and together we developed a proposal that we presented to the City of Middleton and the Friends board for approval.



The Conservancy Camera highlights the landscape as the sun sets in Middleton.



The camera is a partnership between American Transmission Company, the City of Middleton and the Friends of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

The camera is located on City of Middleton property parallel to a multi-use trail in the Conservancy. It operates from 7 AM to 7 PM and the live stream can be viewed on the Friends website. The City of Middleton and ATC also have the live stream shared on their websites.

The camera stopped operating the evening of August 20, 2018 when heavy rains caused massive flooding in much of the area. The camera was returned to service in October 2018. Camera contractors also worked to address solar power supply issues with a long stretch of rainy, cloudy days this past winter. Thanks to the city for continually working with us to provide access for repairs and to the Friends for supporting this effort.

An interactive learning opportunity for 4K students

Two MCPASD 4K teachers, Vicki Farnsworth and Laura Mrvkicka, are developing a five-part series of lessons about cranes in an animal study unit. This unit will include parent outreach activities and materials that can be published on the Friends Conservancy Camera webpage. The curriculum will also have components that are applicable to small groups.

"The lessons will tie in to the new curriculum, Creative Curriculum, that is being implemented in the 4K classrooms," says Anne Boucher, education coordinator for the Friends. "The lessons will be incorporated into the one hour of self-directed play learning that is part of this curriculum."

"ATC is pleased to support this interactive learning experience to help educate and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards in our community," says Freiman.

The curriculum will be available in time for the 2019-2020 school year.

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RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT

By Rob Schubert, Pheasant Branch Conservancy Land Manager

The frozen wetlands this past winter have allowed us the opportunity to clear invasive brush from some high quality wetland areas. We've



continued to clear brush from the southwest portion of the county-owned portion of the Conservancy, where a major brush clearing effort

began in January 2018. During the following summer, vegetation surveys conducted by wetland ecologists Tom Bernthal and Pat Trochlell revealed that the recently cleared area is one the most diverse in that part of the Conservancy. Several plant species I had not previously seen were uncovered and this winter we made some interesting discoveries including some unknown springs. I look forward to seeing what else will be discovered as we restore this important natural community.

The winter brush removal has been completed largely through volunteer effort and the Operation Fresh Start crew. Five volunteer workdays were held between January and early March. Volunteers helped clear invasive brush and in addition enjoyed brats and s'mores cooked over the open fire along with good comradery on a Saturday afternoon.

The Operation Fresh Start crew spent five weeks between January and March working on some very cold days. OFS continued efforts begun last summer to remove invasive brush from some nice sedge meadow in the southeast corner of the Conservancy adjacent to Orchid Heights Park. This work is being done in an anticipation of a prescribed burn planned for this area in the spring of 2020. This area has not been received much attention

WORKDAYS

April 6 & 20
May 4 & 18
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Work will consist of pulling invasives, cutting brush, or gathering seed. Specific work will be announced by email before the work date.

Volunteers should meet at the Pheasant Branch Dane County Parking lot, 4864 Pheasant Branch Road, unless instructed otherwise.

Workdays are weather dependent; let us know you are coming at restoration@pheasantbranch.org, we will let you know if we have to cancel.

in the past, so it's great to be out there restoring high quality remnant sedge.

A prescribed burn of the wetland is planned again this spring in cooperation with the City of Middleton. Through a diverse set of efforts including re-introduction of prescribed fire; continual over-seeding with seeds donated by Ron Endres and contributed by Dane County (collected by volunteers;) and control of invasive species - we are helping to restore a diverse and unique wetland type that is sadly decreasing across southern Wisconsin.

EDUCATION CORNER

"Into the Outdoors" promotes avian stewardship in the Conservancy

If you happened to catch the award-winning television show "Into the Outdoors" in December 2018, you may have seen footage of the Friends Education Coordinator Anne Boucher talking about the Pheasant Branch Conservancy with some eager young birders.

The intent of "Into the Outdoors" is to get kids outside to explore, discover and understand the natural world around them and to help spread the message of environmental



Into the Outdoors taped an episode on avian stewardship, which aired on TV in December.

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commitment and conservation efforts. Representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison Audubon Society and Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary were also featured in the episode.

The episode originally aired on "Into the Outdoors" syndicated network in Milwaukee, Green Bay, Madison and Upper Michigan. It is available for viewing at: <http://intotheoutdoors.org/topics/bird-sanctuaries/>.



The Friends of
Pheasant Branch
Conservancy
PO BOX 628242
MIDDLETON, WI
53562



**/FriendsOfPheasant
BranchConservancy**

pheasantbranch.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



APRIL

- 6 & 20 - Restoration Work Day
- 18 - Conservancy Day: Bird Migration
- 23 - Dinner Lecture: Natural Land Management

MAY

- 4 & 18 - Restoration Work Day
- 16 - Conservancy Day: Effigy Mounds in the Conservancy

JUNE

- 1 - National Trails Day with City of Middleton
- 4, 11, 18 & 25 - Tunes on Tuesdays
- 15 - Prairie Chase Run/Walk
- 20 - Conservancy Day: Flood Restoration Update

JULY

- 18 - Conservancy Day: Dogs in the Conservancy

AUGUST

- 15 - Conservancy Day: Dragonflies and our Neighborhoods