



ACQUISITION OF THE ACKER FARM ADDS 160 ACRES TO THE CONSERVANCY

By Stefanie Brouwer, FOPBC member

In June 2019, a long-awaited dream of the Friends was finally realized when Dane County purchased the 160-acre Acker Farm north of the Conservancy. Protection and restoration of the property will mitigate flooding and improve water quality within the Pheasant Branch Watershed and Lake Mendota by reducing sediment and phosphorus runoff. It is estimated that restoring the property to permanent vegetation (prairie) will reduce annual phosphorus amounts by 550 pounds and will prevent the runoff of 354,000 cubic feet (or over 2.6 million gallons) of water each year. Roughly one pound of phosphorus can produce

up to 500 pounds of algae. "Prairie plants have deeper roots than common crops, making prairies more capable of retaining rainwater where it falls instead of draining into the Pheasant Branch Creek and into Lake Mendota," says Friends co-president Lloyd Eagan.

"We are proud to make this historic

Continued on page 6...



County Executive Joe Parisi speaking at the Acker press conference flanked by FOPBC co-president Lloyd Eagan and County Board Chair Sharon Corrigan. Members of the Acker family stand behind on the left and members of the county Park Commission stand behind on the right.

CREEK CORRIDOR UPDATE

By Lloyd Eagan and Pam Shannon,
FOPBC Board Co-Presidents

Five members of the Friends with professional water management backgrounds assisted the City of Middleton in reviewing the proposals submitted by consulting firms in response to the City of Middleton's Request for Proposal for Master Planning Work in the Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor. They were unanimous

in their recommendation that the Cardno proposal be accepted.

At our June meeting, The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Board voted to support recommending that the Cardno proposal be taken to the Middleton City Council for approval. Board members had a robust discussion about

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FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,

The past few months have been full of good news and exciting events for the Friends. In June a long-awaited dream of the Friends came true with purchase of the Acker property by Dane County. Protection and restoration of this 160-acre farm just north of the Conservancy has been a goal for the Friends for many years and finally the time was right! See front page article.

Restoration of the property will mitigate flooding and improve water quality within the Pheasant Branch Watershed and Lake Mendota by reducing sediment and phosphorus runoff. The Friends will work with Dane County and other partner groups to plan and implement restoration projects (prairie development and habitat improvements) as well as expanded opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, running and viewing wildlife.

The Friends have also partnered with the Clean Lakes Alliance on a study to assess the feasibility of installing a carp barrier at the mouth of Pheasant Branch Creek to deter carp from entering the creek and wetlands and degrading water quality. See article page 4.

On June 15, a full field of 325 participants (families, runners, walkers and friends) converged on the Conservancy for a successful 5th annual Prairie Chase Walk/Run. Events including competitive runs, nature walks, kid's events, post-race refreshment, and live bluegrass music. We added new members and raised \$4,000 for conservation, restoration, and education efforts.

If you missed this event we have two planned for the fall: "Bikes, Birds and Brews" on September 29 in the Conservancy and at the Capital Brewery and "A Celebration" on October 4 at the Prairie Café, to include updates on creek restoration, the Acker acquisition, and plans for our 25th anniversary in 2020. See pages 6 and 9 for more details.

The Friends are working closely with the City of Middleton on plans to restore the creek corridor damaged in August 2018. Several members with water resources backgrounds have assisted the city in selecting a consulting firm to write a master plan for the corridor and the board recently approved a financial contribution to this effort from the generous donations of our members and the greater community. See front page article.

The Friends will celebrate their 25th anniversary in 2020! A yearlong celebration will kick off at the annual meeting on January 11, 2020. See page 7 in this newsletter and watch our website for details.

Sincerely,

Lloyd L. Eagan

Pam Shannon

Lloyd Eagan and Pam Shannon

OUR BOARD

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Pam Shannon

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Illustrations/Photos

Anne Boucher, City of Middleton Drone Footage, Dennis Connor, John Daly, Steve Elbow of the WI State Journal, Naomi Hanada, Annette Knapstein, Michael Knapstein, Colleen Robinson, Gary Sater, Pete Witucki, Lyman Wible

Newsletter Editors

Stefanie Brouwer, Joleen Stinson



PRAIRIE CHASE A HUGE SUCCESS

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

In its fifth year, the Prairie Chase Run/Walk has become an early-summer tradition for families in Middleton, Madison, and beyond. Families, runners, and friends of the Conservancy converged on June 15th for a full schedule of events including competitive runs, nature walks, kid's events, post-race refreshment, and live bluegrass music. We had a full field of 325 participants, growing the membership of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy and raising \$4000 for conservation, restoration, and education efforts.

The competitive 5K Race looped runners through the Conservancy on the flat-and-fast limestone path and spectators were treated to several sprints at the finish! Congrats to winners Ryan Schollmeyer (17:14) and Brittany Allen (22:03)!

The second running of the All-Terrain 10K yielded new course records with two dominant performances. James Lickel (36:47) and Emily Royston (39:22) didn't stop to enjoy the view while tackling the single track trails



and gratuitous hill climbs on this challenging 10K course.

To celebrate our active families (and parents who couldn't find childcare), we were thrilled to feature a competitive stroller division in the 5K race. We hope to grow the field next year, but PBC neighbor, Vikash Malik has set a high bar with his 19:53 mark - good enough for 11th overall in the 5K while pushing a stroller!

Thank you to all of our participants for supporting the Prairie Chase and the work of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Thanks to timing

sponsor, American Transmission Company, for professional timing and race results and to in-kind supporters: Bagels Forever, Berkeley Running Company, Capital Brewery, Colectivo Coffee, Helbach's Coffee Roasters, Movin Shoes, Race Day Events, and Willy Street Co-op. We are so grateful for the support of our local businesses! Finally, sincere thanks to our volunteers for the dedication of their time and their enthusiasm.

Join us in June 2020 for the sixth annual Prairie Chase. Visit prairiechase.com for more information and keep in touch at facebook.com/prairiechase.

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



NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

By Alice D'Alessio, FOPBC member and author of 4 published books of poetry

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glories

We're ambling the hot gravel path
late September day
still, clear light, cricket shrill
singing the glories.
A tiny snake zig-zags into the grass.
and then another – no bigger than
the charge-cord for my phone. "Hurry
little guy," I say, "a biker's coming."

A heron lifts off from the marsh,
wings, like gray-blue sails slice the sky.
Sumac stripes the slope
of Frederick Hill
blood-red. Asters in purple abundance-
pale to cerulean to heliotrope.

Milkweed pods are bursting everywhere.
Small children-
and even some big ones
who never quite grew up-
blow silk in the air.
It floats in a sudden breeze
glows in the sun
catches in our hair.

Originally published in *Walking the Tracks, poems by Alice D'Alessio*.
Fireweed Press. Madison WI. 2016.
Use here by permission of the author.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

We are looking for a volunteer to pick-up our mail weekly at the post office, sort it and deliver to three different locations.

Please email office@pheasantbranch.org if you are interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity.

FRIENDS COMPLETE CARP BARRIER FEASIBILITY GRANT

By Stefanie Brouwer, FOPBC member

The Watershed Committee of the Friends recently completed a project funded by the Clean Lakes Alliance to evaluate the feasibility of installing a bubble barrier curtain to deter common carp from migrating into Pheasant Branch Marsh from Lake Mendota. Bubble barrier technology is simple but effective: perforated pipes are laid on the bottom of a stream and a compressor on land forces air through the holes to produce a wall of bubbles that deter carp. In springtime carp migrate in large numbers into the creek and marsh to spawn, increasing phosphorus and sediment load to the lake, disrupting habitat, uprooting vegetation and impeding recreational use of the

creek and wetland. As aggressive bottom feeders they create problems throughout the Yahara Watershed. One of the benefits of the study is that the issues and questions identified at Pheasant Branch Creek and marsh can be applied to locations throughout the Yahara Watershed, where carp are abundant and detrimental to water quality and recreation.

The Friends hired the consulting firm MARS-EOR to evaluate DNR fisheries data, conduct fish surveys by dip netting and seining, review aerial photography of the creek and wetlands, consult experts in the field, analyze state and local permitting requirements and engineering considerations pertinent to the site, and review available literature. As

a match to the grant of \$8,800, the Friends were required to contribute \$1,000 on either cash or in-kind services. Watershed Committee members contributed in-kind services by surveying water depth and stream bottom materials at several creek cross sections by paddle craft. This provided geometry data for sizing a barrier and identifying suitable locations.

Overall the study concludes that bubble barrier effectiveness is mixed. In the right location and with the right design they can be effective in varying degrees and doable for a reasonable price. However, location, design, permitting and engineering

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FOUNDATION FOR DANE COUNTY PARK TO CELEBRATE BILL LUNNEY'S 50 YEARS OF CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

By Stefanie Brouwer, FOPBC member

The Foundation for Dane County Parks invites all members of the Friends to help celebrate the conservation legacy of Bill Lunney. Bill is retiring after 30 years of service as Park Commission Chair and over 50 years of service in county government.

Bill spoke at the first Earth Day in 1970 on the importance of wetland protection and has never stopped advocating for land conservation. As Park Commission Chair, he has guided and helped to build one of the best park systems in the Midwest. The system has grown from 3,500 acres to over 15,000, trails have been expanded, and cultural sites preserved. Dane County has established one of the most vibrant parks volunteer bases in the region with over 3,000 volunteers. He co-founded the Foundation for Dane County Parks. Bill's leadership extends to numerous statewide conservation organizations as well.

To celebrate Bill's work, the Foundation for Dane County Parks and over fifty organizations and supporters are sponsoring this celebration. Please join us:



Bill Lunney and his wife Judie Pfeifer

Wednesday, September 18
5:00 - 7:30 PM
Lussier Family Heritage Center
(event catered by Liliانا's; music by Sugar Maple Music Festival)
3101 Lake Farm Road, Madison
Purchase tickets online at:
www.danecountyparks.com/lunneycelebration

This is a fundraiser for the Foundation and its related programs, especially the Friends of Dane County Parks Endowment, with a donation of \$50

per person (one dollar for each of Bill's 50 years of service). Giving back to the community is a rich part of Bill's dedication and legacy, and here is an opportunity for you to join us in thanking him.

For more information or to become a sponsor, contact: Judie Pfeifer (Foundation for Dane County Parks Secretary); imjude1109@aol.com; or Darren Marsh, Dane County Parks Director, marsh@countyofdane.com; 224-3766.

The Friends will receive a grant this year from the Foundation for the purchase of prairie seeds for the Prairie Plant Propagation Garden and the "Make a Memory" education program. This comes from an endowment established to support education, interpretation, and volunteerism within the county parks. The fund is permanent and interest from it is used annually to support these 3 focus areas. This is the first year of the grant program.

MARCHING IN THE GOOD NEIGHBOR FESTIVAL PARADE



Pam Shannon, Lois Sater, Emil and Wava Haney



Hans Hilbert

MILESTONES AND COMING ATTRACTIONS - A CELEBRATION



Friday, October 4, 6 - 8:30 PM
The Prairie Café and Bakery
3109 Pheasant Branch Rd, Middleton

Entertainment by Paul Stiegler
Cash bar and food
Free event - donations welcome at the door

Learn about:

- The Pheasant Branch Conservancy Restoration Plan
- The acquisition of the Acker Farm
- Plans for the 25th Anniversary of the Friends in 2020



ACKER FARM ACQUISITION

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investment to expand Pheasant Branch Conservancy and do our part to ensure this outdoor recreation destination can be enjoyed for generations to come," says Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "This acquisition will further our efforts to improve water quality, mitigate flooding, and preserve outdoor spaces as Dane County continues to grow."

The property is bordered by Pheasant Branch Road to the west, Balzer Road to the north, and the 550-acre Pheasant Branch Conservancy to the south. A farmhouse, barns and outbuildings can be found on the property, along with farmland and pasture. The parcel sits within the Pheasant Branch and Yahara River Watersheds and contains the headwaters of an intermittent stream. This stream flows into Pheasant Branch Creek, and ultimately Lake Mendota. The property is also located within the recharge area of Frederick's Springs, which pump millions of gallons of fresh water daily into Lake Mendota. Restoration of the land to prairie will reduce the amount of nutrients and pesticides entering the groundwater recharge area directly adjacent to the springs.

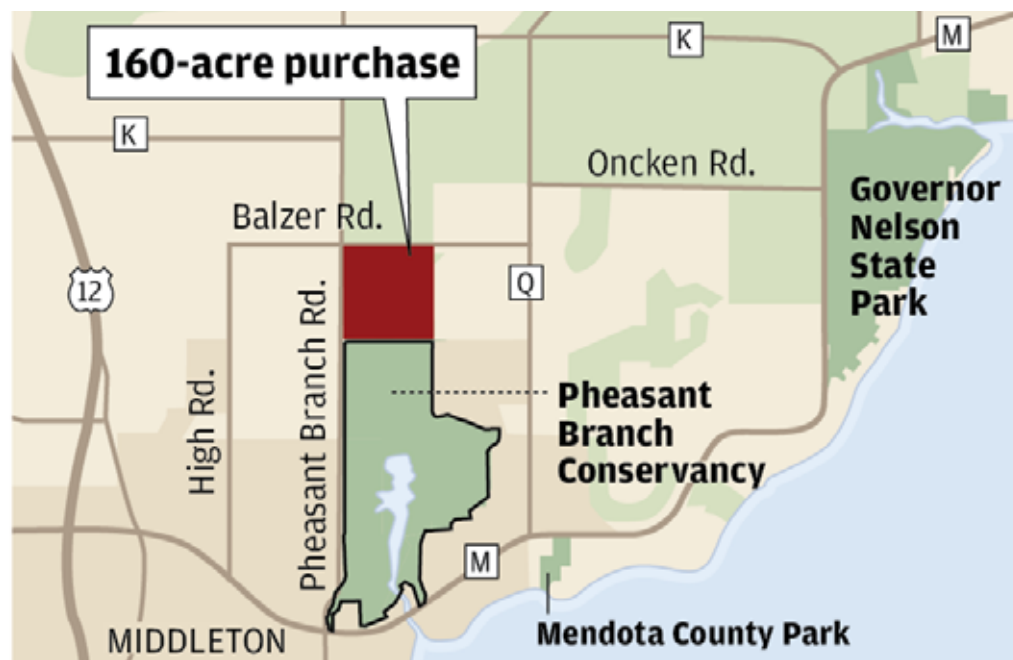
The farm has been in the Acker family for more than 100 years and three generations, says Peggy Acker-Farber. When her ancestors bought the land, it was prairie so selling it to become prairie again is part of the "circle

of life." Her father Clarence Acker farmed the land and worked with the county in the 1970's to develop more effective ways of storing manure over the winter months. Judy Acker Maly says that she and her 11 siblings voted to sell the land to the county. "We decided that if we were going to sell, this would be a good way to have it happen."

"Not only does this acquisition provide unparalleled recreational and conservation opportunities, but it is also exactly the type of action we need to take to be resilient to flooding," says Dane County Board Chair Sharon Corrigan. "Protection of this property will buffer Pheasant

Branch Creek from storm flashes and erosion during big and small rain storms."

This acquisition will add to the outdoor recreation activities visitors of Pheasant Branch Conservancy participate in, whether it be walking, hiking, biking, or viewing wildlife. One future use of the property could also be as a regional bicycle trail connector to Governor Nelson State Park. The county is working with the Friends, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and City of Middleton to develop a restoration and property management plan that is consistent with the existing master plan.



FRIENDS TO CELEBRATE 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2020

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

What were you doing in 1995? Here in Middleton, a small group of concerned citizens were busy forming the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. These individuals, your neighbors, had the foresight to organize and become advocates for this unique natural area. Their meaningful work and legacy are represented in the current mission statement.

"To restore, protect and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed for today and tomorrow."

Members from the current board

of directors have been meeting this summer to plan a year-long celebration. "Then and Now and... Now What" is the theme for the 25th anniversary celebration. The intent is to have a series of seasonal events and a variety of activities. These plans include extending an invitation to you as members of the Friends and to all age groups of the community to join us at the Friends Annual Meeting on January 11, 2020.

As a pre-celebration activity, we encourage you to enjoy the wonderful videos on the Friends' website. "The Story of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy – 20 Years of Advocacy" is an excellent history lesson. Click on "News" and then "Video Archives."

SAVE THE DATE
Annual Membership Meeting
"THEN AND NOW... AND NOW WHAT"

Saturday, January 11, 2020

Join us to kick off a year of celebrating the Friends' 25th Anniversary!

- Intergenerational Reflections on the Conservancy
- Updates on Creek Corridor Restoration and the Acker Property Acquisition
- Looking Ahead to the Future
 - Board Elections

Location and other details to follow by postcard

CARP BARRIER

issues for each site bring considerable complexity to the question of feasibility. The bottom line is whether the benefits of diminished carp activity are worth the price.

A barrier for Pheasant Branch Creek could be placed in the channel upstream or downstream of the Century Avenue bridge, or along the shoreline of Lake Mendota at the mouth of the creek. The downstream side of the Century Avenue bridge appears most feasible for the following reasons:

1. For all locations except at the Century Avenue bridge, there appears to be a risk that regular high-water periods could provide carp with a route to swim around a barrier.
2. Obtaining an easement to install a barrier and mechanical equipment on the Century Avenue right-of-way would probably be easier than obtaining easements from private residential property owners for a lakeshore barrier.
3. Noise from a compressor is most likely to be an issue for the lakeshore location.
4. Environmental permitting would likely be slightly simpler due to a lack of mapped floodway

downstream of Century Avenue.

The cost to construct a bubble curtain barrier is likely in the range of \$25,000 - \$50,000. There would also be modest ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

The study recommends that more information be obtained before pursuing installation of a carp barrier at Pheasant Branch Creek:

1. Collect more data on carp activity and impacts (little exists other than observations by canoeists and kayakers).

2. Evaluate timing of carp and northern pike migration to avoid preventing pike from migrating into the spawning area.
3. Determine who would operate and maintain a barrier and decide when to turn it on and off depending on site conditions.
4. Evaluate whether a simple mechanical grate barrier would be a viable alternative to a bubble barrier. A relatively simple barrier could be installed for approximately \$10,000; however, it would block watercraft passage during the months it is in-place.

Watershed members Lloyd Eagan, Herb Garn and Jim Bachhuber (on shore) survey Pheasant Branch Creek at several cross sections for depth and bottom sediment



ACCESSIBILITY AND USE COMMITTEE SUMMER PROGRAMS

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

The Accessibility and Use Committee has once again hosted program events in August and September 2019 at the Conservancy. This is the third year for these outreach programs to previously underserved adult populations.

The list below identifies these program events, a brief description and the participant groups we have reached out to for each event.

Memory Care August 8
Program: Focus on Music and the Human Senses

Activities: Songs of Nature with sing alongs. Naturalist led mini- lessons like Pond Critters, a Scavenger Hunt, "Forest Bathing" and/or chair yoga. Nature photograph display.

Participants: Memory Care residential communities in the area

DFC/Memory Cafes August 22
Program: Focus on Forest Bathing and Slow Walks

Activities: Naturalist led small groups with 6-8 on "Forest Bathing/Slow Walks" in the Conservancy. Each group visits 2-3 locations and naturalists focus on the senses (sound, scent, vision, touch).

Participants: Dementia Friendly Communities of Middleton and area Memory Cafes

Independent Seniors September 10

Program: Natural history of the area that includes a moderate hike in the Conservancy. Lead presenter is professor emeritus, Robert Birmingham.

Activity: Presentation by Robert Birmingham at the shelter then followed by a hike, for those interested, to Fredericks Hill and the effigy mounds that are present there.

Participants: Independent senior adults and area Senior Centers

Limited Mobility September 10
Program: Emphasis is on the August 20, 2018 flood and the plans for restoration. Use of one's senses (sight, sound, smell).

Activity: Start at Common Ground Café and ride in club cars into the Conservancy along the creek corridor. Route – Enter at Century Ave and go south along the trails to the first or the second footbridge.

Participants: Individuals with limited mobility from this metropolitan area

As in the past several years, each of the program events were designed to reflect the current research and to follow the guidance of professionals who work with the targeted populations. A new program in 2019 is the one referenced in #2 above – Dementia Friendly Communities/Memory Cafés. The activity is unique in that participants (individuals with memory challenges and their care partners) were introduced to the concept of a Slow Walk.

Mary Kay Baum, a well-known

area advocate for underserved populations, advised the planning committee in the design of the August 22nd program event. The following is an excerpt from one of Mary Kay's published articles.

Why walk slowly in nature? Taking in nature awakens our senses and connects us to the land. We experience living in the moment. We enhance our mindfulness, awareness, and observation habits. Studies have shown immersion in nature improves mood, concentration, sleep, and cardio and immune system health in many age groups. Some doctors suggest spending regular quiet time in natural areas to reduce stress.

Mary Kay Baum credits the Japanese for her inspiration to write about a Slow Walk. The Japanese have devoted decades to the study of the health benefits with full immersion of oneself in nature. The Japanese call it "Forest Bathing". (Note: In a future newsletter article, the concept of "Forest Bathing" will be reviewed and discussed as to possible infrastructure trail enhancements.)

The Friends' Accessibility and Use Committee has three goals focused on helping underserved populations enjoy nature and the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. These goals include programming, infrastructure enhancements/modifications and materials. For further information and/or to get involved in this committee, contact chairperson, John Daly at jhdaly@charter.net.

Naturalists lead participants in focusing on the four senses during a Memory Cafe event



BIRDS, BIKES AND BREWS

Sunday, September 29, 12 - 5 PM

BIKE through Middleton and Pheasant Branch Conservancy (choose from 4 or 10 mile routes), BIRD as you go (there will be 4 guided birding stations), and enjoy a cold BREW after your ride at Capital Brewery (beer, wine, cider, or soda). This is a slow-roll bike ride that is perfect for nature enthusiasts of all ages, including families.

Learn more or register: www.eventbrite.com/e/birds-bikes-brews-2019-tickets-64239406795



We're partnering with Madison Audubon and Capital Brewery and Bier Garten to put on this event.

CREEK CORRIDOR UPDATE

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this and supported the Cardno proposal for the following reasons:

1. Cardno has an intimate understanding of the creek corridor due to their previous work for Middleton including the stream restoration work behind Kromrey and the detailed report on Pheasant Branch Creek restoration needs. Considering the fact that the restoration work behind Kromrey held during the August 20, 2018 flooding event, they seem to know what they are doing.
2. Cardno has a well-diversified team of six to work on the project. The team includes experts in stream restoration, landscape architecture, engineering and native plantings.
3. Cardno has a history of good work for the City of Middleton, including the Pike Spawning Habitat Project.
4. Cardno has breadth of experience with other stream restoration projects in Wisconsin.
5. The schedule Cardno proposes would have the plan completed by September 30, 2019. This supports our desire to start implementing restoration work in 2020.
6. Cardno will work with input from the Public Outreach efforts being conducted by Vandewalle and Associates and values community support.
7. Cardno proposed a very competitive price and is very affordable.

The Board also approved contributing \$18,200 to the city to support Cardno's preparation of a Master Plan for the Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor. We received very generous donations from our members and the greater community to put towards restoration efforts in the creek corridor. We believe having a good plan is the key to unlocking a successful restoration effort. We feel this level of financial support is in line with the wishes of our donors to support planning and implementation efforts in the creek restoration. We are grateful city staff has included us in the restoration effort from day one and we look forward to our future partnership on this

important effort. Subsequent to our meeting, the Middleton city council approved the letting of a contract with Cardno. The council expressed its sincere appreciation to the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy for their help in this restoration effort.

The City is striving to obtain public input during this planning process. They have already sponsored two public information sessions, conducted site tours and have sought public input from a survey. The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy will continue to work closely with the City of Middleton as we hone in on a plan to restore our beloved creek corridor.



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
unless noted otherwise

RSVPs appreciated to
conservancyday@pheasantbranch.org

See our website for more
information: pheasantbranch.org

September 19
Restoring the Wetlands of Pheasant Branch Conservancy - a Story of Progress and Partnership
Tom Bernthal and Rob Schubert
**held at the homestead site in the Conservancy, special time 6 - 7 PM*

October 17
Urban Raptors Through Wildlife Photography
Ruth Smith

November 21
Monarch Butterflies
Diane Dempsey

2020 Dates:
January 16, February 20, March 19,
April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16,
August 20, September 17, October 15, November 19



EDUCATION CORNER

By Deb Weitzel, Education Committee Chair

Consider the Connections... WI Master Naturalist Course June 2019

What are the threads that stitch together the connections within the Pheasant Branch - Lake Mendota ecosystem?

Phosphorous, algae, Suck the Muck, Yahara WINS, prairies and wetlands, forest bathing, citizen science, feedback loops

That's a lot of connections! And yet it doesn't even scratch the surface of the complex ecosystems we live in and near. For a forty-hour course for incoming Wisconsin Master Naturalists, however, it was the focus. The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Master Naturalist Instructors Tom Bernthal, Janet Kane, Colleen Robinson and Deb Weitzel provided the 2019 participants with a myriad of outdoor experiences with experts in the field to gain knowledge in the workings of area waterways and natural areas. What is working, what problems exist, what remediation is happening and action the participants can take.

Students are required to do a capstone project and give a synopsis to the group. A sampling of the projects are as follows:

- A backpack for adults to experience forest bathing; with a walk and reflection in a forest,
- Set up picture posts with eight sides to take panoramic photos in Lakeshore Nature Preserve,
- Monitor eight grassland bird species of concern in Pheasant Branch Conservancy for population trends in the wake



Students work out a classification system for dragonflies



Limnology 101 with DNR fisheries crew on Lake Wabesa

of a reduced number of trails for walking dogs on leash in the Dane County unit

- A book that inspires kids to go outside.

The course was well received and will be repeated next June. Look for announcements for the WIMN course listings in 2020. Here is what recent graduates had to say about the Pheasant Branch course:

- The course was very enriching, great speakers & a breadth of info that I didn't expect.
- Course materials were extensive with additional handouts for subject support. Staff was top-notch and ready to help. Love the outdoor classrooms.

The Friends Education Committee participated in Olbrich Botanical Garden's Butterfly Action Day on August 2nd, 2019. This day is a special event for children and families in the month long celebration of these colorful, charismatic pollinators, Blooming Butterflies. The Conservancy is a haven for monarchs. A local naturalist regularly finds more monarchs to tag in the Conservancy than at the UW Arboretum. With a dozen other organizations we set up an interactive exhibit about monarchs and what everyone can do to help the population. There were 919 visitors, including 395 children. It was a busy, fun, and inspiring day.

RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT

By Jim Loving, Restoration and Management Committee Chair

In addition to our “usual” activities like prescribed burns (yes, you can burn a wetland), and workdays (with mega turnouts this spring of over 30 people more than once) we have had some wonderful things happening, such as:

INTERNS – We had a great group of five student interns again this twelve-week season. They were from UW Madison and Stevens Point. Regardless of the weather they were very good workers and students absorbing the training and information supplied by a regular schedule of experts. Doing both when the temperature and dew points are “way up there” is a real challenge. Thank you to our Land Manager Rob Schubert and our super volunteer Susan Gruber for making the experience a great one.

TRUCK – We have had our truck now for about 3 months and are we happy! More correctly Rob is especially happy and anyone working on trail maintenance who doesn't have to wheelbarrow gravel up the hill anymore or drag/carry pulled invasive plants down!

We hope you saw the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy truck in the Middleton Good Neighbor Festival Parade. Many of you gave generously for the truck purchase and it clearly makes a big difference in efficiency and effectiveness. Thank you.

PLANT PROPOGATION NURSERY – Earlier this year Rob was successful

in securing a grant for us to purchase over 1,100 plants for a special project. And just as this is being written we learned another smaller grant will help us expand the variety of plants to be planted (the latest grant is from the Foundation for Dane County Parks – a big thank you to them!).

The 1,100 plants are in an area near the Homestead Site. There are signs telling what they are so when you are walking please stop and look (e.g. Sedges, Junegrass, Prairie Dropseed, Prairie Smoke, Side Oats). The plants will become a resource in the next couple years for seeds to use in the Conservancy. There is a concentration of short grass varieties. These are either not currently growing or are in short supply. Having more of these plants and adding to the diversity of the tall grass varieties will help with grassland nesting bird habitat. More varieties will be added with the new grant funds expected in September.

AGRICULTURE RUNOFF WATER QUALITY STUDY – This long title is for an important activity. With Dane County purchasing the 160-acre Acker dairy and cropland farm north of the existing Pheasant Branch Conservancy property we have a unique opportunity. For a period up to five years, starting now, Herb Garn of the Friends along with Dane County staff will lead volunteers who will capture water samples after rain/runoff events. The data generated will be compared with earlier studies of the same property. As the cropland is converted to permanent vegetation and the dairy cattle are no longer on the land the hope is to demonstrate

WORKDAYS

You can always check pheasantbranch.org or Facebook for the latest and here is the current schedule:

September 20 (Dane County Park sponsored seed collection)

September 21

October 5 & 19

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.

a significant reduction in runoff that has ended up in the wetland and the lake system.

THANKYOU, VOLUNTEERS. As this article is written we have recorded over 2000 hours of volunteer time this calendar year. That is an exceptional outpouring of generosity from all of you who have helped with seed collection; pulling garlic mustard, dames rocket and sweet clover, cutting and treating woody invasives; stacking brush into burn piles and more! Thank you very much for making the Pheasant Branch Conservancy a better place.



IN MEMORIAM GUERDON COOMBS (1932-2019)

Guerdon was one of the founders of the Friends (along with his wife Jan and others.) He was one of the first to work on invasive control and restoration in the Conservancy.

Guerdon Coombs with a “typical” honeysuckle in the Conservancy in 1998.

Our sympathy goes out to Jan and his family.



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



**/FriendsOfPheasant
BranchConservancy**

pheasantbranch.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



SEPTEMBER

- 10 - Effigy Mounds - an Event for Independent Seniors
- 10 - Celebration with Dementia Friendly Community - Middleton
- 10 - Creek Corridor Public Input Session
- 18 - Bill Lunney's Conservation Legacy Celebration
- 19 - Conservancy Day: Wetland Restoration, Progress & Partnership
- 20 - Dane County Park Sponsored Seed Collection Day
- 21 - Restoration Work Day
- 29 - Birds, Bikes and Brews

OCTOBER

- 4 - Milestones & Coming Attractions - A Celebration
- 5 & 19 - Restoration Work Day
- 17 - Conservancy Day: Urban Raptors Through Wildlife Photography

NOVEMBER

- 20 - Conservancy Day: Monarch Butterflies

JANUARY 2020

- 11 - Annual Membership Meeting
- 16 - Conservancy Day