



# WINTER 2019-20 NEWSLETTER



## 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION (1995-2020) “THEN AND NOW... AND NOW WHAT”

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

The Friends will launch a year-long 25th anniversary celebration at the annual meeting on Saturday, January 11, 2020 at Holy Wisdom Monastery, 4200 County Road M, Middleton. Doors will open at 8 AM and a hearty lumberjack breakfast will be served at 8:30. Keynote speaker Dane County Executive Joe Parisi will speak about the Acker addition to the Conservancy. City of Middleton staff will update members on progress of the creek restoration.

A committee has been meeting since August 2019 to plan a number

of seasonal program events and activities in celebration of this anniversary. At the first meeting, the



committee identified a theme that celebrates the past accomplishments, acknowledges current challenges and successes and recognizes the need for future strategic planning. The theme for this celebration is “Then and Now... and Now What”. The committee is extending an open invitation to all users of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy for this year-long celebration. Committee chairperson John Daly will share the plans and provided members with promotional materials at the annual meeting.

The committee has two overarching goals.

*Continued on page 6...*

## CREEK CORRIDOR UPDATE

*By Lloyd Eagan, FOPBC Board Co-President*

As of this writing, the City of Middleton is still waiting to receive a draft master plan for the Pheasant Branch Creek corridor restoration. Cardno, the consulting firm hired to prepare plans for a restored creek corridor has not submitted a draft. The city and Cardno conducted at least 3 public input sessions and 100 people

provided them input via a computer survey. Cardno presented interesting design options for a rehabilitated stream corridor. Cardno needed to receive input on stream volume predictions from another consultant the city has engaged to model stream flows in the creek corridor. Once that information is received, Cardno will complete its draft master plan.

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# FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,

We want to welcome our Friends in celebrating our 25th year as an entity devoted to restoring, protecting and promoting the Pheasant Branch Conservancy for today and into the future. Twenty-five years of stewardship is significant and much of what we have accomplished is due to the steadfast support and involvement of our Friends' members and for that we are very grateful. It is an honor to serve such a long-standing organization that continues to bring wonderful educational programs to young and old while expanding our restoration and management efforts. And, speaking of expanding, we are looking forward to working closely with Dane County and other stakeholders as the newly-acquired Acker property is restored to prairie and incorporated into the Conservancy. (See article page 3.) This year we will take some time to reflect on our accomplishments, review our current work and plan for the future. Our theme for the year is: "Then, Now and Now What?" Please watch for announcements on our website and Facebook page for four special events, one for each season. We encourage you to join us as we explore our theme and celebrate our first quarter-century.

## 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 Byers - GreenSparrowArts.com, Clean Lakes Alliance, Andrea Gargas, Herb Garn, Annette Knapstein, Michael Knapstein, Gary Sater, Deborah Turski*

### Newsletter Editors

*Stefanie Brouwer, Joleen Stinson*

Because we don't want to rest on our laurels, we will be undertaking an extensive strategic planning effort this year. In May 2020, the board will hold a day-long retreat to delve into a number of focus areas we have identified to guide our discussions. We will explore how our members use the Conservancy and what their interests are. We will learn from other conservation organizations about how they are organized, staffed and funded. We will evaluate how to strike a good balance between appropriate land management and public use. Finally, we will look at our financial situation and our endowments and consider how to grow and diversify support over time. We believe that this effort will help us ensure that the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy will be on firm footing to start our next twenty-five years!

Sincerely,

Lloyd Eagan and Pam Shannon

## CREEK CORRIDOR

*continued from page 1*



Once the city receives the draft master plan, we will work with city staff and volunteers from the Friends (we have 5 members with professional water management backgrounds) to review the draft and comment on the draft plan before the Conservancy Lands Committee and the Water Resources Commission review it. We hope the city has something to review soon. Once a plan is accepted and approved by the city, the next step will be to create design documents. We hope that restoration of the creek corridor will happen in 2020. Unfortunately, we cannot provide a specific schedule at this time.

Mark Wegner is the staff member from the city heading up this project. We have worked closely with him on the creek restoration to date and will continue to do so as the project moves into design and implementation phases.

# ACKER PROPERTY UPDATE

By Pam Shannon, FOPBC Board Co-President

When Dane County purchased the Acker property last summer, they set a deadline of December 31, 2019 for the Acker family to conduct a number of cleanup activities and move off the property.

With that process complete, the county will take steps over the winter to stabilize the site, including the removal of a number of buildings on the property. County staff provided a summary of activities they expect will occur at the site through February or March 2020. These include:

- Fire training by the Middleton Fire Department, which began in mid-December with a barn burn and will be followed by a second fire training to burn additional buildings at a later date.
- Parks staff will clean up, remove and recycle all remaining building material after the fire training is done. It is anticipated that concrete removal and final grading will be contracted out and be done in late summer/early fall 2020. Concrete will be crushed and used for a temporary access/



maintenance/storage area located by the driveway entrance.

- Construction of temporary stormwater diversion and containment berms for protecting water quality until the buildings/concrete are fully removed and the final grading and site restoration is complete.

The county has prepared a draft concept plan for the property and additional planning and design work is underway for the wetland restoration and other components identified in the plan. County staff indicate they intend to bring all of the partners and stakeholders together for a meeting later this winter to discuss the restoration plans for the property. Several of our board members will

participate in these discussions and the board anticipates working closely with county staff as restoration planning and implementation proceeds.

One anticipated benefit of restoring the Acker property to natural prairie is to reduce the nutrients flowing downstream into Lake Mendota.

Former longtime Friends board member Herb Garn has an article on page 5 about an ongoing water quality monitoring initiative on the Acker property that will, over time, document the water quality response of conversion of agricultural land to perennial prairie vegetation. Our new board member Michael Niebauer is also involved in this monitoring effort.

## 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 Dale Klubertanz

## The Telling of Winter in Pheasant Branch Conservancy

In wintertime, there is a quiet, nuanced beckoning along the snowy Bock woodland. A hushed roar begins with a far-off wind, building from somewhere in the northwest sky above the swaying tops of trees. It can be heard first in the distance, then deep inside the soul of the forest and crescendoing in the overhead branches. Standing still, boots firmly grounded in new snow along the wood's edge, with ears open wide, one can hear this voice of the wind through the trees - full-throated, filling everywhere with the sound of infinite space. It is for an instant to be in the moment, alone and not alone at once, inseparable from the trees, each intoning the song of the hibernal season.

A person would be happy to be back at home in front of the wood stove, feeling an affinity with the fire and warmth of the surrendering timber. But this place in the windy woods is, for the time being, more deeply soulful and articulate, wisely plain-spoken.

The snow has come early this year,

on the very last day of October. This early yielding to winter arrived long before the coming of the solstice and the last, dwindling rays of a far off sun. An early snow like this can confuse one's sense of the seasons changing from fall into winter. The first snow melted and hardly came again for most of the remaining year, as questions arose concerning the role of a changing climate and what can be considered as customary.

Somewhere within our tribal hearts

***In traditional cultures, the cycle of the seasons was - and often still is - recognized and celebrated with ceremonies. These ceremonies are a way of obtaining and maintaining harmony with the natural world. For humans to live in health, happiness, and harmony, they must be in tune with the continually changing world around them.***

***- Native American Religions: The Cycle of Seasons - Ojibwe Community Publication***

we yearn to feel the constancy and connection of a known, rhythmic natural world. We listen to hear and commemorate long-held ancestral stories of the coming of the solstice and of what winter can tell and teach us about our place in the fading wilderness. To make time for winter experiences and celebrate the stories and symbols within their voices would be perhaps a return to our more traditional ways of experiencing nature. It would be to listen to the wind on a snowy night when there is so much wild heritage to be told.

The following is the from the Ojibwe Community:

*Like many events in American Indian culture there is a proper time and place for all activities. Traditional storytelling is reserved for the winter months for many tribes. This was a practical choice given the fact that during the other season's, people were busy growing, gathering, and hunting food. It was in the winter, with the long dark evenings, the snow and wind blowing outside, that telling stories was a way to entertain and teach the children. Another reason is that many traditional stories contain animal characters. To be respectful, people waited until the winter when animals hibernate or become less active so they cannot hear themselves being talked about.*

*To have a storyteller tell you a story is like receiving a gift. To be respectful, a gift of tobacco is offered to the storyteller before the story begins. The storyteller will often take the tobacco outside and place it on the earth as an offering to the spirits of the story.*

This description of winter in many Native communities prepared by the Ojibwe Indian Land Foundation/ Lesson of Our Land (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe).

## WAYFINDING MAP DEVELOPMENT

By Peter Witucki, FOPBC board member

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, the City of Middleton, and Dane County Parks are developing a new wayfinding map of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Navigating PBC might be an afterthought for frequent users, but with our informal trail names and landmarks, getting

around can be daunting for first time visitors.

The draft maps and layout are still under review, but we anticipate base map to be installed at 10-12 trailheads and key intersections throughout the Conservancy. The physical base maps will include wayfinding information such as landmarks, trail types, and distances between trail intersections.

These may be complemented with online maps depicting specialized information including the location of benches (and distances between) or indicating popular routes.

The project is on track to be finalized in February 2020 and to have maps installed in Spring 2020.

# WATER QUALITY MONITORING OF ACKER ADDITION

By Herb Garn, FOPBC Watershed Committee member

“What would be the effect on runoff and water quality by converting the Acker property back to natural prairie?” is the question Dane County and the Friends are trying to answer in this study. The recent acquisition and planned restoration of the Acker Farm by Dane County provides an opportunity to monitor the water quality response of conversion of agricultural land to perennial prairie vegetation.

The study started in August 2019 to document baseline conditions prior to any restoration activities and will continue for at least 2 years after the completion of restoration

(total of possibly 5 - 6 years). This new study uses monitoring methods similar to those employed by the



**Matt Diebel, Dane County, downloading data from recording rain gauge at Acker farm study**

Friends in their 2003-06 and 2010-12 studies. These studies documented extremely high nutrient and sediment concentrations in the ephemeral tributary to Pheasant Branch Creek. Current study leaders are Matt Diebel, Dane County Watershed Coordinator, and Herb Garn, Friends Watershed and Restoration Committees, who coordinate a sampling team of volunteers (Jim Bachhuber, Michael Niebauer, Janice and Chris Kehler). Dane County has provided the funding, equipment, and technical support to make this study possible.

Samples will be collected at 2-4 sites (see map) during runoff events in all seasons. Sites 3 and 4, which

*Continued on page 7...*

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM DAYS GONE PAST

By Deb Weitzel, Education Committee Chair

This time of year has always been about remembering the past and looking to the future. 2020 will be a banner year for the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy (FOPBC) as it marks our 25th anniversary. And that event also sparks memories from the past 25 years for all the Friends, past and present, to piece together our narrative much like a well loved quilt made from a myriad of fabrics each with its own story.

For me, my collection of memories with the Friends must commingle with environmental studies students from Middleton High School. In 1994 my teaching partner, Mike Duren took me to the recently purchased Fredericks Farm. He was very excited for the opportunities the land afforded for teaching students about the environment. He wanted to show me the springs but the vegetation overgrowth was so thick I couldn't see much. I wondered if Mike had temporarily lost his mind.

Throughout the next couple of years,

the County's plans were being shaped to restore the new acquisition to prairie and to provide trails for public access. This effort tied in well with the urban planning unit of our curriculum. Mr. Duren tasked students with trail design and habitat planning. We referred to the purchased land as "Fred's Farm." The landscape designs that the students prepared for Fred's Farm were shared with the FOPBC board.

Guerdon Coombs, FOPBC restoration chair at the time, contacted us and wanted to take things a step further. He proposed eight work sessions, 9:00-12:00 on Saturdays, during the fall and spring for students to remove invasive species on the hill. The students loved ripping and tearing out the honeysuckle and buckthorn that covered everything. Their favorite activity, however, was burning the huge piles of brush left after work days. Fredericks' hill was uncovered ahead of schedule much to the chagrin of the coyote who lost her denning site.

The MHS Ecology Club donated \$1000 to the Friends to build an observation

deck on the top of Frederick's hill. Retired MHS teachers, Carl Thedens and Ken Haack tackled this major project. Dave Hunzicker (class of 1998) remembers being on that building crew as he reflected on his memories of continuing volunteer work with the Friends after graduation.

In 2002, an Environmental Studies student, Hans Hilbert (class of 2002), set up the first website for the Friends. He was a senior at MHS at the time. Now he is a member of the board. Think how technology has changed since then! And see how student involvement has led to stewardship as an adult. Another student, Joleen (Henneman) Stinson (class of 2003) started volunteering in high school in the Conservancy for restoration Saturdays. She joined the Friends board after moving back to the area (2010-11). She has edited the newsletter since then and is now the Administrative Assistant.

A land acquisition in 2008 gave me another set of memories. Land owned by the school district on Highland Way

*Continued on page 10...*

# DONATE TO THE FRIENDS THROUGH YOUR IRA AND SAVE ON INCOME TAX

By Holly Sledge, FOPBC Treasurer

The IRS allows anyone aged 70.5 or older to donate money from their IRA account directly to a charitable organization (known as a QCD or Qualified Charitable Deduction) without that gift counting as taxable income.

If you or your spouse meet this age requirement, you can transfer up to \$100,000 a year without paying any tax on that transaction. Even better, any money you transfer via one of these distributions reduces

the amount you must take in RMD's (required minimum distributions). For example, if you have an RMD of \$25,000, you could directly contribute \$5,000 to the Friends of Pheasant Branch resulting in only \$20,000 of your RMD being taxable to you.

Most brokerage firms will assist you with these transactions - you provide the name, address, and other pertinent information for the charity. From there they will either disburse the check directly or send the checks to you to pass along. There are no

IRS limitations on how many or how small the distributions may be to your favorite charities, so it only depends on your brokerage firm and any limitations they may have.

To make a Qualified Charitable Donation to the Friends:

1. Contact your plan administrator to make a gift to the Friends.
2. Provide Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy name, address (PO Box 628242 Middleton WI 53562) and Federal Tax ID# (EIN: 39-1838491)

## 25TH ANNIVERSARY

*continued from page 1*

Goal #1: To have a sustained 25th anniversary celebration throughout 2020 with special seasonal program events and activities.

Goal #2: Engage the community in reflection, planning and commitment to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy based on the theme - "Then and Now... and Now What"

Goal #1: Seasonal Program Events  
**Spring 2020 Program**

**Date:** Thursday evening, April 23rd  
**Location:** Middleton High School  
**Program:** In partnership with Middleton High School Students' Ecology Club/Green Team, the Friends will co-host the annual Organic Dinner. This will be the Conservancy Day Program for April and include a nature conversation and a legacy panel tied to the theme and facilitated by students.

### Summer 2020 Program

**Date:** August (Date and time to be determined)  
**Location:** Capital Brewery  
**Program:** Music with an emphasis on nature and recruitment of local musicians including individuals from the "Tunes on Tuesdays" annual program and students from Middleton High School

### Fall 2020 Program

**Date:** Wednesday evening, October 14th

**Location:** Holy Wisdom Monastery  
**Program:** The Friends will jointly host a dinner and guest presentation with the Friends of Wisdom Prairie. The focus of this event is to celebrate successful partnerships in conservation and discuss the importance of volunteers and future collaboration.

Goal #2: Engagement of the Community

A special activity will focus on individuals' reflective stories about the meaning of nature; the health benefits of being outdoors; and, the individual visions for restoring, protecting and promoting the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed for today and tomorrow. These intergenerational stories will be collected through a variety of strategies including:

- Writing classes in the community and in the school district(s) k-12 classrooms;
- A book discussion of *The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams hosted by the Middleton Public Library;
- Conservancy Day program events;
- Interactions at area senior centers and senior living communities;

- On-line focus groups; and,
- Collaboration with the Dementia Friendly Communities Coalition.

The theme of "Then and Now... and Now What" is more than an invitation to a celebration. It is an acknowledgement, reflection and recommitment to the Friends' Mission Statement: **To restore, protect and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed for today and tomorrow.**

Please join us in this celebration and help us engage the community by inviting your family, friends, neighbors and all-you-know to the 25th anniversary celebration in 2020.

Members of the 25th Anniversary Celebration Committee include: John Daly, Lloyd Eagen, Hans Hilbert, Janet Kane, Dale Klubertanz, Janet Staker Woerner and Daphne Wu (student representative).

Acknowledgement: The 25th Anniversary Celebration plans are supported by the Friends' Board of Directors and by a grant from the Pleasant Rowland Foundation.

Additional information and updates will be provided during the year on the Friends' Facebook page, website and through local media.

# 2020 PHENOLOGY CALENDAR

By Deb Weitzel, Education Committee Chair

Imagine the rhythmic bugling of a unison call between two Sandhill Cranes. When did you first hear the cranes? Did you know that October has the first hard frost that kills mosquitoes? These events, marking changes in the life cycles of organisms is the stuff of phenology.

The Friends calendar is unique in giving you monthly, expectant phenological events and providing space for you to keep your own observations. Aldo Leopold and later his daughter, Nina, kept a phenology at their weekend getaway, the "Shack" in Baraboo, over a 70 year time span. Just like them, you can make notes from year to year to see when your favorite birds arrive or plants go to seed or anything else that catches your eye.

You might start to see trends like the observation that one noteworthy



botanical, the Compass Plant, has advanced its first bloom by nearly three weeks. You can speculate on causes if you are making other notes about the weather or light conditions. Could this be due to climate change? Check out the prairies in the Conservancy for this native plant and more!

The co-themes of the 2020 calendar are climate change and celebrating 25 years with the Friends. Interesting facts and stories unfold each month.

Ms. Mathison-Ohly's Creative Writing class from Middleton High School (MHS) contributed poems to express their feelings about a world that is warming. Ms. Stoenner's MHS photography classes provided nature-themed photos taken in the Conservancy. Our editor, Andrea Gargas skillfully wrote articles and pieced together all components to provide a unique and useful product for you, our members. Thanks also to our graphic designer, Betsy True, whose expertise finalized the calendar.

The 2021 calendar is already in the works with a theme of nature's healing effects. Take a walk in the woods or prairies and feel the endorphins kicking in!

Purchase your FOPBC 2020 Phenology Calendar at Wild Birds Unlimited, Willy Street Coop West, and REI - or online at pheasantbranch.org - and they make great gifts!

## WATER QUALITY MONITORING

are downstream from the Acker Farm, will be sampled during every runoff event and sites 1 and 2, which monitor sources upstream from the Acker farm, will be sampled when there is significant flow at those sites.

Water quality samples are collected by the "grab" method, dipping sample bottles near the center of flow. Stream discharge is estimated at time of sample collection by measuring cross sectional area of flow and by estimating velocity in a measured length of channel. The county has also installed a recording rain gauge and automatic recording water-level sensors at the two main monitoring sites downstream from the farm. Volunteers deliver water samples to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene for analysis as soon as possible after collection. Water samples are analyzed for total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN), NO<sub>3</sub>+NO<sub>2</sub> nitrogen, total phosphorus (TP), dissolved orthophosphate (DOP), and total suspended solids (TSS). Water quality



**Location of sampling sites, Pheasant Branch Conservancy and Acker Addition**

data will be stored in the WDNR Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS) data base and a final report will be prepared by Dane County.

Because of the very wet fall so far in 2019, 8 samples from events in September -November have been collected to date. Preliminary results

from these samples, for example for TP, averaged 4.5 mg/L at site 3 and 3.78 mg/L at site 4, indicating that TP concentrations have decreased at both sites relative to samples collected in 2010-12, although these results are only for a partial year (the majority of annual runoff and nutrient loads usually occur during January-April). However, TP is still very high relative to concentrations in other agricultural streams of Wisconsin and the state water quality standard of 0.075 mg/L TP for Pheasant Branch Creek. DOP, as a part of TP, averaged more than 70% of TP at both sites, which is a high proportion of TP.

Our objective is to document changes in the amount and quality of runoff over time as the Acker property is restored to prairie. We expect to see a reduction in nutrients flowing downstream to Lake Mendota, which is a key reason that Dane County acquired this property.

*continued from page 5*

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR GRASSLAND BIRD MONITORING PROJECT

By Julie Peterson, Wisconsin Master Naturalist

The *New York Times* reported in September 2019 that bird populations throughout North America have declined over the last 50 years, citing habitat loss as a major factor. At Pheasant Branch, birders were increasingly concerned about declines in grassland birds, despite the maturing prairie to provide quality habitat.

"After intensive study and recommendations from FOPBC, Dane County Parks closed some paths in the prairie to reduce habitat fragmentation, posted signs about ground nesting birds, and increased enforcement of dog leash regulations within the prairie," says Janet Kane, Restoration and Management Committee member.

FOPBC also came up with an idea to monitor bird populations, which was presented during the 2019 Wisconsin Master Naturalist class. Class participants Sherry Caves and

Deb Turski heard this information and created their capstone project to encompass the bird monitoring effort.

Caves and Turski selected eight target species and analyzed eBird data from 2009 to 2019 in order to understand population histories. They then mapped out standard birding routes through the prairie to conduct monitoring.

Asenath LaRue and Hannah Larson, also 2019 Master Naturalist class members, volunteered to regularly assist with monitoring after hearing the capstone presentation. Group members took turns to accomplish two walks per week, following the same paths around the northwest prairie. They slowly traversed the one-mile route, taking about an hour to listen and look for the birds.

"I appreciated being part of this because I realized that, as much as we like to go different places to see nature, there is such a value to going repeatedly to one place where you can get a sense of seasonality and get to know that environment," says LaRue.

The target species being monitored include the Dickcissel, Eastern Meadowlark, Willow Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Clay-colored Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow. Two of these species, the Meadowlark and Grasshopper Sparrow, were reported in the *New York Times* article to have declined 70 percent since 1970.

One hope for the project is to determine whether or not anything can be done to improve the habitat in the prairie enough to sustain grassland birds, or if the maturing habitat, reduction in habitat



*Clay-colored sparrow nest*

fragmentation, and elimination of off-leash dogs will have a positive effect. Project findings will also inform restoration plans for the new 160-acre addition to the Conservancy and possibly other Dane County parks.

As the project continues, volunteers are needed to assist with bird monitoring from mid-May through mid-September. With more volunteers, more of the prairie can be monitored. There is no minimum time requirement for volunteering and experienced birders along with beginners are encouraged to give it a try. Educational materials can be provided to learn to identify the target species.

"To see if this opportunity is of interest, prospective monitors can join someone on the team in the field for a trial run," says Caves.

Interested volunteers can contact Sherry Caves (cavessherry@gmail.com) or Deb Turski (dlturski@gmail.com) for more information.

*Willow flycatcher at Pheasant Branch Conservancy*



## 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](mailto:office@pheasantbranch.org) if you are interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity.





*Stefanie Brouwer*



*Jim Moe, CPA*



*Michael Niebauer, P.G.*

## NEW BOARD MEMBER FOR 2020-21

*By Lois Sater, Development and Marketing Chair*

FOPBC is fortunate to have three highly qualified and committed individuals joining the board in 2020. They will be elected at the annual meeting. Leaving the board are Jim Bachhuber, Ron Biendseil and Lyman Wible. Each has contributed significantly to the Friends and the Conservancy with dedication, knowledge and hard work. We will miss them.

### **Stefanie Brouwer**

Stefanie Brouwer retired from the WI Dept. of Natural Resources after 30 years. She began as the technical editor for the Bureau of Research and later became manager of the Stewardship grant program. Prior to that time she worked as an editor and cartographer for UW-Madison Graduate School, Wisconsin Geological Survey, State Dept. of Emergency Management, and UW Press.

She joined the FOPBC board in 2010 and served until 2018. During that time she served as secretary, newsletter editor and chair of the Watershed

Committee. She is a member of the Dane County Parks Commission and the fundraising committee of the Foundation for Dane County Parks. She lives in the Town of Berry with her husband Onno.

### **Jim Moe, CPA**

Jim is a Wisconsin native, born and raised in Black River Falls. After graduating from Luther College, he became a CPA and worked in public accounting primarily in Northern Wisconsin. During that time he was a founding board member of the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation and served on the Wisconsin Accounting Examining Board. In 1994 he moved to North Carolina and was Chief Financial Officer for a multi-surgical clinic.

Upon retirement, Jim and his wife Iris felt a strong urge to return to Wisconsin to be close to family and the many outdoor recreational opportunities they enjoy. The Pheasant Branch Conservatory was a major factor in their decision to choose Middleton as a new home. They have been active volunteers

and have enjoyed their involvement with the annual Prairie Chase event and other fund-raising activities. Jim reports he is "committed to continuing the remarkable efforts of those who have led the FOPBC in the past." Jim and Iris live in the Community of Bishop's Bay, except when visiting their children or grandchildren.

### **Michael Niebauer, P.G.**

Michael grew up in Alaska before attending school at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. He graduated in 2000 with a degree in Geology, later earning his masters from CUNY - City College in hydrogeology. Michael has worked as an environmental consultant for over 15 years, primarily doing groundwater cleanup at EPA Superfund sites.

Michael has been active as a naturalist in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy for nearly 10 years and is currently assisting with runoff sampling from the Acker Farm acquisition. He lives with his wife and 3 children in the Baskerville neighborhood near the Bock Forest.

## SUMMER ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION INTERNSHIP

We partner with Madison Audubon, UW-Madison Arboretum, Groundswell Conservancy and the Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve to offer a paid restoration ecology fieldwork summer internship. Application deadline February 3, 2020. For more information or to apply, go to [madisonaudubon.org/employment](http://madisonaudubon.org/employment).

# CONSERVANCY DAYS

The 3rd Thursday of every month  
January - November  
6:30 - 7:30 PM  
Held at Kromrey Middle School  
(KMS) Room 510 unless noted  
otherwise

RSVPs appreciated to  
conservancyday@pheasantbranch.  
org

See our website for more  
information: pheasantbranch.org

January 16

**Managing for Wildlife in Your Yard  
and Neighborhood**

David Drake

*\*held at KMS room 600*

February 20

**International Crane Foundation:  
Crane Conservation in North  
America**

Lizzie Condon

March 19

**The Green Schools of Middleton  
and Cross Plains**

Perry Hibner

April 23

**Middleton High School Organic  
Dinner**

*\*held at Middleton High School  
Courtyard*

May 21

**Kestrel Boxes – The Difference  
They Make**  
Patrick Ready

# WI MASTER NATURALISTS

Everyone interested in learning  
more about the natural world and  
getting involved in volunteering,  
the Friends Wisconsin Master  
Naturalist course will be open for  
registration on January 6. Don't  
delay because registrations have  
closed early in the past due to  
all 20 slots filling quickly. The  
course meeting dates are June  
19, 20, 26, 27 and July 10-11. All  
other information is posted on  
wimasternaturalist.org website.  
Hope to see you there.

# RECOLLECTIONS

*continued from page 5*

was deemed unsuitable to build a  
new school. It was put up for sale.  
Ecology Club and Environmental  
Studies students wanted to help the  
Friends in their fundraising efforts  
toward acquisition. They dedicated  
the proceeds from three Organic  
Dinners held at the high school, 2003-  
2005, to help fund the purchase of  
the Bock Forest as the next addition  
to Pheasant Branch Conservancy.  
The sustainable dinners served up to  
400 diners per event. The students  
gave a total of \$10,000 to the cause.  
The institution of the Organic Dinner  
survives to this very day with new  
students and teacher, Leah Williams  
planning to host the dinner in  
conjunction with the Friends 25th  
anniversary year. Place April 23 on  
your calendar!



***Several former students are doing  
great things with the Friends and in  
Middleton. Hans Hilbert (back row  
middle) is a former Middleton Alder  
and a Friends Board Member. Joleen  
Stinson (bottom right) is the Friends'  
Admin Assistant. Gabby Hinahara  
(bottom left) is the Middleton Youth  
Center Director. Also pictured:  
Kathleen Falk, Matt Buechner, Jan  
and Guerdon Coombs and Debra  
Weitzel. Photo from a restoration  
award in November 2006.***

Along the way, the Friends joined the  
Prairie Partners restoration training  
program. It had five interns dedicated  
to restoration and management  
one day a week during summer. I  
worked with Susan Gruber to offer  
an independent study credit to my  
students. They signed up to work  
with the interns. One student, Ismat  
Bhuiyan, jumps out in my memories  
of that period because she always  
wore bright yellow rubber boots up

to her knees. She could be spotted  
among the flowers from a distance.  
During another independent study  
the next year, Ismat overcame her  
fear of bats by counting them for the  
DNR in a program to have a bat census  
taken before the onset of White Nose  
Syndrome. She and another student  
presented their findings at a Friends  
Annual Meeting during their senior  
year.

All of this great collaboration between  
the Friends and MHS students was  
documented by Janet Kane and  
submitted for an Environmental  
Excellence Award sponsored by Sea  
World, Busch Gardens, and Fuji film.  
"Surprise... we won!", exclaimed  
Janet in the fall of 2007. Four students,  
Megan McCrumb, Liz Just, Katie  
Wipfli, Natalie Reece and I flew to San  
Diego to be wowed by Sea World and  
accept the \$10,000 cash award to be  
shared with the Friends.

Wayne Pauley, former Dane County  
Parks Naturalist, had an idea to get  
folks up close and personal with the  
springs. He thought a belly board  
would work well. That belly board  
became reality in 2012. It was built  
by a group of MHS students who  
needed a service project to complete  
requirements for a summer class they  
took at the UW Arboretum. Complete  
with a Leopold bench the belly board  
has afforded countless individuals  
with the rare, hands on experience  
of touching the water coming out of  
the boiling sand. The water bubbling  
from the ground provides an amazing  
2.6 million gallons of water to Lake  
Mendota every day.

As 2019 draws to a close, I have  
many fond memories of bringing  
students to the Conservancy and  
helping them make a significant,  
sustainable contribution to the  
land and the Friends organization.  
Looking forward to 2020, I anticipate  
enjoying this celebratory year for the  
Friends. It will be fun remembering  
the highlights of the past 25 years  
and looking to the future to continue  
restoring, protecting, and promoting  
Pheasant Branch Conservancy and its  
watershed for the students of today  
and tomorrow.

# RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT

By Jim Loving, Restoration and Management Committee Chair

## Volunteers Making a Difference

The year 2019 included over 25 different work days and over 3,000 total volunteer hours of service for the Conservancy. Those are amazing amounts of energy and work! Thanks to all of you for your desire to make a difference in the Conservancy.

In 2020 we plan to continue our 2019 schedule of hosting two workdays each in April, May, September and October. We will also have special workdays as we have done before. Expect more erosion control on the trails, seed collecting, maybe more planting of nursery plants and more.

We are planning on winter workdays January 18, February 15 and February 29. Please consider coming out for one or more. These are very different days than summer and have far fewer mosquitoes! We will be burning brush piles and continuing brush removal in the wetlands.

## Giving Tuesday

We participated for the first time in the national "Giving Tuesday" initiative December 3rd. Due to your kindness and generosity we exceeded our \$1,785.51 goal and raised \$2,162.95! We will now be able to purchase a gas water pump to help watering our new plant nursery, chaps for chain sawing, chain saw equipment, backpack blowers and sprayers and more! Thank you very much for your help!

## Fall Burn

Technically it was still fall when the December 11th burn was completed. We continue to target certain areas at different times of the year to try and stay ahead of the invasives, promote native plants and protect the birds and other creatures we all enjoy.



***Our October 19 workday had a group of 25. Numerous types of prairie and wetland seeds were collected. The morning was a great success as several large bags of various seeds were filled by enthusiastic volunteers, FOPBC Board members and R&M Committee members. It was a glorious day to be out in the Conservancy with Sandhill Cranes flying and communicating in their distinctive language above our heads.***

# WORKDAYS

You can always check [pheasantbranch.org](http://pheasantbranch.org) or Facebook for the latest and here is the current schedule:

January 10 & 17 (Dane County Park sponsored brush and tree removal days)

January 18

February 15 & 29

April 4 & 18

May 2 & 16

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](mailto:restoration@pheasantbranch.org), we will let you know if we have to cancel.



## IN MEMORIAM EMIL HANEY (1940-2019)

A devoted supporter of the Conservancy and the Friends, Emil served on the Board and the Restoration and Management Committee and oversaw the native plant community at the Bock Community Garden. He will be greatly missed for his knowledge, kindness and dedication. Our sympathy goes out to Wava and his family.



The Friends of  
Pheasant Branch  
Conservancy

**PO BOX 628242  
MIDDLETON, WI  
53562**



**/FriendsOfPheasant  
BranchConservancy**

**pheasantbranch.org**

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



### **JANUARY**

- 10 & 17 - Dane County Park sponsored brush and tree removal days
- 11 - Annual Membership Meeting
- 16 - Conservancy Day: Managing for Wildlife in Your Yard and Neighborhood
- 18 - Restoration Work Day

### **FEBRUARY**

- 15 & 29 - Restoration Work Day
- 20 - Conservancy Day: International Crane Foundation: Crane Conservation in North America

### **MARCH**

- 19 - Conservancy Day: The Green Schools of Middleton and Cross Plains

### **APRIL**

- 4 & 18 - Restoration Work Day
- 23 - Middleton High School Organic Dinner

### **MAY**

- 2 & 16 - Restoration Work Day
- 21 - Conservancy Day: Kestrel Boxes – The Difference They Make