



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN THE GRABER POND WATERSHED POSES THREAT TO PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY

By Herb Garn Watershed Committee Member

A proposed development near Graber Pond named Belle Farm is raising concerns about the downstream environment and potential adverse affects on the Conservancy.

Graber Pond is located east of Parmenter Street and west of the Misty Valley subdivision on the northern edge of the City of Middleton. It is a closed depression (called a kettle pond or prairie pothole) created by

large ice blocks left by the melting



glaciers over 10,000 years ago. The pond's surface area is normally about 15 acres; however the water area varies greatly depending on season and rain conditions. Graber Pond has a watershed of about 380 acres. A large portion (82%) is undeveloped agricultural or woodland cover. A kettle pond has no direct surface water outlet under normal conditions; surface runoff either evaporates or infiltrates into the ground. Graber Pond and surrounding land (23.4 acres

Continued on page 7...

A STORY OF COLLABORATION

By Lois Sater, Board Member and Development and Marketing Committee Chair

In late 2020 a conversation occurred between representatives of the Friends, City of Middleton staff and Dane County Parks staff about how the Friends could collaborate on cleaning up and refurbishing the five

informational kiosks in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. A team coordinated by board members John Daly, Gary Sater, Lois Sater, and Pam Shannon developed a plan to replace the keyed bolts with more accessible new bolts, and to clean, sand and paint the kiosks located on both city

Continued on page 9...

Co-Presidents Message	2
County Trail Planning	3
Naturalist Notebook	4
All-In Outing	5
Master Naturalist	5
Remembering Joan Pulver	6
25th Anniversary Celebration	6
Frog and Toad Survey	7
Prairie Chase Recap	8
Salt Wise Paddle	9
Education Corner	10
Restoration Workdays	11
Calendar of Events	12



FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,

August 1st marked a very special day for us when we gathered at Capital Brewery to celebrate 25 (+1) years of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy and honor the founding members of our organization. These original members reignited the work begun over 50 years by the Middleton Conservation Committee. Collectively, these individuals had the foresight to understand the importance and fragility of the natural resources surrounding their community.

Twenty-six years following the organization of the Friends, over 100 individuals have served on our board of directors and board committees. With the support of our members, we've helped secure over 200 acres of additional Conservancy land and we continue our advocacy and mission to protect, restore, and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed.

Even as we enjoy celebrating and reflecting, we remain eager to continue on. As the Conservancy expands, so do our efforts to restore newly acquired lands and maintain what we have already re-established. We discover new and innovative ways to educate, and find more flora and fauna to study. Our recently revised strategic plan will move us forward over the next 5 years to forge new partnerships, connect with new members, and financially sustain our operations.

As we move into autumn we look forward to the changing colors of the prairies. We continue to increase our capacity for Conservancy volunteer opportunities, such as invasive species removal and seed collection.

By continuing to follow local health guidelines, we hope that you will be able to join us (please check the website for event dates) and that you'll find the time to get out and enjoy the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Pam Shannon and Hans Hilbert

OUR BOARD

Co-Presidents Vice President
Pam Shannon John Daly
Hans Hilbert

Treasurer Secretary
Jim Moe Peter Witucki

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FRIENDS ASSIST COUNTY WITH TRAIL PLANNING FOR NEW ADDITION

By Hans Hilbert and Pam Shannon Co-Presidents

In early July 2021, representatives of several Friend's committees met in the Conservancy with Dane County Parks staff to review and discuss the county's proposed "Platinum Prairie" trail plan. The trails will provide additional access to the former 160-acre Acker farm being restored to native prairie. As a result of the meeting, we provided comments for county staff to consider as they revise the draft plan.

Our input centered around maintaining contiguous wildlife habitat, preventing unnecessary trail erosion, and providing access and breaks for prairie maintenance, all the while promoting the Conservancy as a place for passive recreational uses. Learning from experience on the south side of Fredericks Hill, we know that trails must be well planned and properly placed to achieve these goals.

We are supportive of the trail layout that will align trails along the

perimeter of the parcel to provide minimum habitat fragmentation—a key component to bird habitat. The east-west trail segments will take advantage of existing berms to provide for drier conditions and better vantage points. A key north-south portion of the trail will be located directly under the overhead utility easement to help eliminate encroachment of invasive species. There will also be a trail connection between the springs and prairie parking lots.

Our suggested changes to the draft plan include the elimination of a hard-surface, shared-use trail bisecting the property. Instead, we suggest utilizing road right-of-way for this purpose as identified in the most recent City of Middleton Comprehensive Plan. We also suggest some alignment modifications to

further reduce fragmentation, limit erosion, and reuse or shift existing maintenance access areas to also provide fire breaks during controlled burns.

Our comments and suggestions have been well received by county parks staff, and we will continue to work together on a final draft and implementation schedule. The draft plan as well as future updates can be viewed on the Dane County Parks website at: <https://www.danecountyparks.com/parksproject/detail/Pheasant-Branch-Restoration-Project>.

THE FALL EQUINOX SENIOR SOCIAL, SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 22, 2021, HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO COVID UNCERTAINTIES.

WE HOPE TO RESCHEDULE IN THE SPRING.

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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

Volunteer Opportunities:

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



Additional Giving Opportunities:

- \$_____ Unrestricted - use where needed most
- \$_____ Glen C Pulver Education Endowment
- \$_____ Restoration Endowment
- \$_____ Seed the Need

Send this membership form and payment to:

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562

For charitable IRA donations or legacy giving, please use our legal name, PO Box address and Tax ID# 39-1838491

EDITOR'S NOTE

As we say goodbye to summer and reflect on all the Friends have accomplished together this season, I am amazed by the dedication and commitment of our board members and volunteers. Your contributions, large and small, improve the Conservancy in so many ways from quality of habitat for native plants, birds, and wildlife to new and innovative educational programs for all ages, to protection of water quality in the watershed. And there is always more to do! Fall is a glorious season with opportunities to connect, learn and give back to nature. See you in the Conservancy!

Stefanie Brouwer



NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

By Gary Sater, Board Member and R & M Co-Chair

I've long been fascinated with the natural world's hold on my attention. It has obviously held me in mindful states of attention and even, if you will, rapture from as early as I my memory can recall. The earliest recollections include fragments of experiences when going out into my maternal grandparent's pasture to collect the thirty herd of dairy cattle for morning milking. I was young, maybe 9 or 10 years old, and visiting their northwestern Wisconsin farm for a weekend or possibly a week or two in the summer from my "big city" home in the Twin Cities. Even now as I write, I can smell that morning dew, laying heavy upon the tall grasses and marsh vegetation. Their pasture was a delightful combination of elevated grasslands with a multitude of prairie plants, as well as woodlands, wetlands, marshes and even a small 50- acre kettle pond. The cows liked to graze near the wetlands, enjoying those moisture filled rushes and sedges. I recall hoping they could be found there, as I loved the smells surrounding that wetland wonder. The sounds of the insects and amphibians beckoned me as much as the rich smells of simultaneous growth and decay of vegetation. Getting wet from foot to hips was not problematic, but expected and possibly desired. When I found the cows, they would naturally follow me back home to the warm barn to relieve their swollen bags of rich milk. As I write now the memories are stored so richly, I am vividly transported back to the sights, smells and sounds. What are your earliest memories of nature's capture and hold over your

sensory awareness?

I now know, some 60 or more years down the line, that those were naturally-occurring mindful moments in nature. Now, as I experience through restoration work, exercise or leisure the natural surrounds of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, I am continually brought back to a mindful state amidst nature. As a retired

Mindful by Mary Oliver
Every day something
that more or less
kills me
with delight,
that leaves me like a needle
in the haystack of light.
It is what I was born for- to look, to listen,
to lose myself
inside this soft world-
to instruct myself over and over
in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful, the very extravagant-
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,
the daily presentations, Oh, good scholar,
I say to myself, how can you help
but grow wise
with such teachings
as these-
the untrimmable light
of the world,
the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made out of grass?

clinical and sport psychologist, I spent my last decade literally prescribing "time in nature" as a "lifestyle activity" to promote reductions in anxiety and depression, as well as increasing happiness, cognitive functioning and mindful experiences. The empirical research is replete with these findings and to my knowledge there are no co-pays or unwanted dose effects! Well, there may be an insect bite or damp clothing on occasion.

This mindful engagement while experiencing nature is likely due to our tendency to "get out of our busy

and stressful minds" while we become actively engaged with an external focus onto the sights, sounds, smells, movements, tastes and feel of this wondrous natural environment. It has the power to capture us for awhile and bring us into the world of nature, as well as out of our busy brains and often stressful experience.

Back to my grandparent's farm and my youthful experiences in nature; there is one more thing I wish to share with you. Do you know that smell of earth after it rains, or possibly when in or near wetlands, marshes and lake beds? Well, there is sometimes ozone from lightening or ionized gases in the atmosphere; however, there is also petrichor (Greek from petros or stone and ichor or "from the fluids of the Gods"). Petrichor essentially comes from the molecule geosmin (meaning "earth smell" in Greek). Geosmin is produced by Streptomyces, a Gram- positive type of Actinobacteria released when bacteria die. It turns out that humans are highly sensitive to this odor, as in levels as low as 5 parts per trillion. We are hard-wired to be exceptionally aware

in nature, as it is the natural world within which we are meant to be. So, if you like the smell of rain, wetlands or marshes, feel freed when not in a cubicle or behind an artificially lit screen, or more truly alive when out in nature alone or with others, there are many reasons for this. Not the least of these reasons might be that you are truly more alive with sensory awareness and experiencing the relaxing and refreshing healing power of our natural world. Our very own Pheasant Branch Conservancy awaits you in your next "out-of-office" visit. Be well and be in nature my friends.

ALL-IN INAUGURAL OUTING

By Anne Boucher, Friends's Education Coordinator

On a beautiful summer morning in mid-July, a group of active seniors met to learn about the Pheasant Branch Watershed. We have made a tradition of offering an outing in the summer to this group of visitors for the past several years. This year we adopted a formal name for the program series - Active Lifelong Learners in Nature (ALL-IN) programs. We are excited to offer ALL-IN programs periodically in the coming years.

Eighteen people joined us on a walk from the county parking lot heading north and then east to the base of Fredericks Hill. During the walk, guest speakers provided us with excellent information on the ancient and current story of the watershed, why it is important to the quality of water that flows into our lakes, and how we can work together to improve and preserve it. We were fortunate to have three great speakers. Stephanie Williams, Middleton-based master naturalist and geologist, discussed the geology of the Conservancy and

its watershed plus the formation mechanics of current landforms we see today. Herb Garn, retired USGS hydrogeologist and contributor to the Friends watershed work for many years, discussed the flow of water through the watershed, the history of contamination, the current conditions found in the Conservancy and how to get involved in the work of the Friends' Watershed Committee. Joleen Stinson, Interim Parks Director for Dane County, discussed how the Acker addition to the Conservancy will benefit the watershed.

It was an enjoyable and informational hour and a half long program. Some attendees continued the walk around the base of Fredericks Hill to see the prairie in its July splendor. Everyone came away with a much deeper understanding of the importance of the Pheasant Branch Watershed and some resources to use if they want to learn more. We thank our speakers for sharing their expertise with the ALL-IN group. They did a great job! We also thank master naturalist Molly Griffin, a volunteer with our Education program, for her hard work



Joleen Stinson, Dane County Park Interim Director, talked about how the 2019 aquisition improves water quality

in organizing this successful program.

Our next ALL-IN program is planned for next summer and possibly at other times during the year. We would like to address topics that our membership and the general public find interesting. If you are wondering about something or would like to learn more about a particular topic, please email our education coordinator (education@pheasantbranch.org) with your ideas.

SUCCESS OF WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST 2021

By Deb Weitzel, Board Member and Education Committee Chair and Colleen Robinson, Friend's Wisconsin Master Naturalist Course Coordinator

Did you know yellow perch were the focal point of Lake Mendota's fishery until 1987 when pike and walleye were stocked into the lake to maximize water clarity by changing the food web? Is it news to you that Illinois has 11 species of native bumblebees and Wisconsin beats that with 20? Or that the cliffs around Devils Lake are



over 1 billion years old? These and many other topics were discussed in the recently completed Friend's Wisconsin Master Naturalist (WIMN) course.

The teaching team of Tom Bernthal, Janet Kane, Colleen Robinson, and Deb Weitzel hosted the forty-hour course that included focus on the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and its watershed, emphasizing the problem

Continued on page 10...

IN MEMORIAM: JOAN PULVER (1931-2021)

By Martha Frey, Membership Volunteer

We are blessed with elders who love and care for the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. One of these conservation leaders passed away in August - Joan Pulver. You may know her as the guiding force behind the Glen and Joan Pulver Education Endowment for Pheasant Branch Conservancy. "Joan was an amazing and generous woman. She and her husband Glen were immersed in lifelong education efforts, so Joan established the Glen and Joan Pulver

Education Endowment," said Deb Weitzel, Education Committee Chair.

Joan made donations to support environmental education at the Conservancy year after year. Her friends and family also made crucial contributions to the fund. Joan was an impact donor. "With excellent investment returns for the past two years, the Pulver Endowment, held at Madison Community Foundation, now stands at \$123,000. We received a distribution of \$2,865 for 2021, but given the growth in the fund value

I would expect the annual grant to exceed \$3,000 in 2022," said Jim Moe, Friend's Treasurer.

For many years Joan and Glen lived at Woodcreek Village, on the east side of the Conservancy. The Pulvers, along side many of their Woodcreek neighbors, helped lay the foundation for the conservation organization we now know as the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy. Joan Pulver leaves behind her two daughters Julie (Kevin) Prestegard and Jodi (Alan) Martinson, and their families.

FROG AND TOAD SURVEY

By Chris Kubiak, Board Member and R & M Committee Member

From March to late August 2021, the Restoration and Management Committee conducted an official frog and toad survey. Six sites were monitored by volunteers in both the existing Conservancy and new 160-acre parcel. Most sites were dry or nearly dry from May onward due to the lack of rain.

Six different calls were observed from our survey sites: Boreal Chorus Frog, Northern Leopard Frog,

Pickerel Frog, American Toad, Gray Tree Frog and Cope's Gray Tree Frog. Additional species were also noted in



Pickerel Frog

nearby areas. Almost all official calls were noted from March through May, though calls in nearby areas were heard throughout June and July.

Thanks to all the participants, especially Susan Gruber who attended nearly every survey!

We plan to continue in 2022, and hope to enlist additional volunteers outside of the R&M team.

FRIENDS CELEBRATE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

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

The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy celebrated their 25th anniversary on Sunday August 1st at the Capital Brewery in Middleton. The community turned out in record numbers. The management of the Capital Brewery states that it was the "best fund raiser event we have ever had." This event brought together members of the Friends and included special honorees – the founders of the Friends and the early visionaries.

Local musicians and the popular

gypsy jazz group Harmonious Wail provided live entertainment. The weather cooperated with a beautiful evening, but the sound system did not. It is unfortunate that many in the large crowd of supporters could not hear the announcements and recognition statements. The board of directors wants to thank all of our members for their continued support and commitment to the mission of the Friends – to restore, protect and promote the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and watershed for today and tomorrow."

The August 2021 issue of the Middleton Review community



newspaper is devoted to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and the Friend's 25th anniversary. It is a wonderful historical review and tribute to the Friends. Publisher George Zen's refers to the Conservancy as "the crown jewel among all of Middleton's assets. . . it is not only of material, but also of symbolic value. . . and like all crown jewels, it needs to be simultaneously protected and accessible to the public, lest the public lose interest in its value and in protecting it."



GRABER POND WATERSHED UPDATE

...continued from page 1

total) are designated conservancy land, which is owned by the city and not available for development. Graber Pond is one of four kettle ponds in Middleton (Stricker, Tiedeman, and Esser are the other three). The other three ponds are surrounded by urban development and have constructed outlets, and function primarily as stormwater treatment ponds.

The hydrologic characteristics of kettle ponds make them especially sensitive to the effects of urbanization. A 1993 study by the U.S. Geological Survey ("Simulation of the Effects of Hypothetical Residential Development on Water Levels in Graber Pond, Middleton, Wisconsin") evaluated water-level conditions of the pond under 1989 conditions, and under future fully-developed watershed conditions. The watershed at that time was less than 10% developed. The study concluded that water from the pond spills over the natural basin divide into the Pheasant Branch Watershed to the east when the water reaches an elevation above 904 feet. The volume of pond overflow from a 100-

yr 24-hr storm (about 6 inches of rain) increased 150 % under the developed condition compared to the existing (1989) condition.

The Graber Pond Master Plan, approved in 2006 by the City of Middleton, outlined the goal to manage Graber Pond as a natural prairie pothole. The plan describes its many ecological, habitat and



recreational opportunities and provides recommendations for management, including stormwater controls and water quality protection.

A more recent (2010) detailed hydrologic study report ("Graber Pond Hydrologic Study and Management Plan") was completed by a consultant for Middleton. This study further investigated potential stormwater

runoff impacts to Graber Pond from potential land development in the watershed.

During the flood of August 2018, Graber Pond overtopped and flowed through the Misty Valley subdivision stormwater facilities. The recreational boardwalk along the eastern edge of the pond was inundated for more than a year.

In late 2020, the Friends' Watershed Committee became aware that the City planned to construct an outlet structure on Graber Pond that could lower water levels to an elevation of 902 feet, which would allow for more frequent discharge from the pond into the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The Friends expressed concerns about the proposed change because the pond is within the groundwater recharge area of Frederick Springs and because more frequent discharge from Graber Pond could adversely affect water flows, water quality, and transport invasive species into the Conservancy. As a result, the Friends were successful in

Continued on page 9...

PRAIRIE CHASE 2021 SUCCESS

By Pete Witucki, Board Secretary and Prairie Chase Coordinator

On June 26th, gratefully spared from the forecasted hours of thunderstorms, we welcomed back 200 in-person participants to the 7th annual Prairie Chase Run/Walk! Our reduced capacity and wave start reduced crowding at the start line and out on the course, but still gave us the sense of community that we have been missing for over



Prairie Chaser Janet Hagen

GRABER POND

having the City recognize managing Graber Pond as a natural prairie pothole and maintaining the historical basin overflow divide at 904 feet.

In June, 2021, the City's Plan Commission received and approved a conceptual plan for a 44-acre land development project within the Graber Pond watershed. The development, "Belle Farm," is very preliminary and would include residential and commercial components. Rezoning of the property from agricultural to

a year. Congratulations to all our finishers, including 5K winners Jeffery Butterworth (17:12) and Megan Varnum (26:16), and 10K winners Joe Kurian (40:09) and Megan Fitzpatrick/Christine Myers (46:28)!

New this year, Prairie Chase has joined the Savanna Series - six grassroots trail runs, committed to the stewardship and protection of the public lands we all enjoy. Upcoming races at Donald County Park (9/11), Indian Lake County Park (10/2), and the Department of Natural Resources Black Hawk Ridge (10/24) are all great events and worthy causes. Learn more at: friendsofindianlake.org/savanna-series/

This year's event raised over \$4,500 for the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, and more than 20% of Prairie Chasers joined the Friends as new members or made an additional contribution. Prairie Chase is a community celebration of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy as a vital ecosystem and as a special place to recreate and experience the

...continued from page 7

planned development district (PDD) will be required. The concept plan was referred to other city committees for further review.

The Friend's Watershed Committee strongly feels that extraordinary stormwater management measures are needed to preserve the qualities of this last relatively natural kettle pond in the City of Middleton. We will continue to advocate for its protection and restoration as part of our mission.



Prairie Chasers Brittany Allen and Rory Witucki cross the finish line

natural world in our own backyard. Full results and join us next year at: www.prairiechase.com



We are making good progress toward the 2021 Seed the Need goal of raising \$25,000, but we'll need an additional push to reach it.

Please consider a donation to this very worthy effort to turn farmland into prairie in the Conservancy.

COLLABORATION UPDATE

continued from page 1

and county properties. In return the Friends would have one side of each three-sided kiosk to post information about the Friends and their activities.

In the early summer of 2021, volunteers were recruited to clean and paint each kiosk and replace the plexiglass and plywood backing, supplied by the city and county, in each face of the kiosks. Gary Sater and Herb Garn from the Friend's Restoration and Management Committee along with community volunteers David Ays and Marti Allen completed four of the kiosks. One of the kiosks was taken on by the employees of the Spencer Real Estate Group. These volunteers worked on this messy project in the hot summer sun and the results were




Restored kiosk at Pheasant Branch Conservancy

spectacular! Information in the kiosks is more colorful and readable than it has been in years.

A separate team of board representatives went to work on planning the content that will be displayed in the Friends side of each kiosk. There will be information about the Friends organization and how to join, educational programs offered, and activities that volunteers can participate in such as restoration and seed collection in the prairie, fund raising activities such as "Seed the Need", and special events like the 25th anniversary of the Friends celebration.

We are grateful for this collaborative effort that resulted in much greater visibility for the Friends and all we have to offer.



CITIZEN SCIENCE OPPORTUNITY



SALT PADDLE

ON PHEASANT BRANCH

Tuesday, Sept. 14
6 - 8 pm
Raindate Sept 16

Join in some citizen science fun on the water! All ages welcome at this hands-on events.

State and local experts will guide inquiry-based investigations into salt concentrations in freshwater.

Participants will go home with the tools to support local monitoring efforts.

BYOB (bring your own boat)

Location: Marshall Park

Register here: www.wisaltwise.com/Event/Home/SignUp/1051

CONSERVANCY DAYS

The 3rd Thursday of every month
January - November
6:30 - 7:30 PM
See our website for registration

September 16
Working Together Toward a Cleaner
Energy Future
Leah Samson, MG&E
Location: Zoom

October 21
Eagle-Eyed Citizen Science: Bald Eagle
Nest Watch
*Drew Cashman, volunteer with Madison
Audubon*
Location: Zoom

November 18
Are You Salt Wise? Pheasant Branch Creek
Needs You to BE!
Allison Madison, Salt Wise Wisconsin
Location: Zoom

FRIENDS OF URBAN NATURE "FUN" EVENT

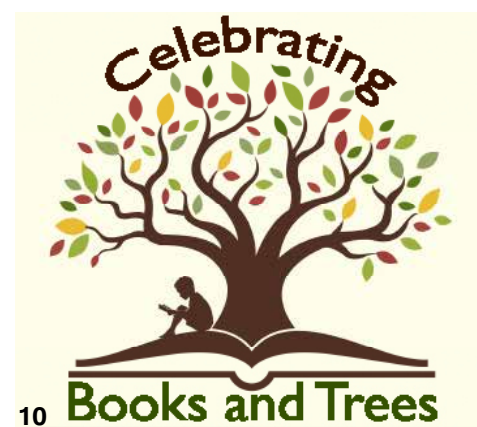
The 4th Saturday of every month
1:30 - 3:00 PM

September 25
Collecting Prairie Seed
Alex Singer

October 23
Preparing for Winter
Alex Singer

November 27
Walk with a NOLS
Filip Sanna

BIG RED BUS IN THE CONSERVANCY



MASTER NATURALIST *continued from page 5*

of nutrients in the Madison lakes and remediation efforts centered on prairies. This formally glaciated area has distinctive soils and geologic features different from the driftless area to our west. Field trips to Black Earth Creek (BEC) and Devils Lake were a good comparison to Middleton's topography. We learned about the invasion of New Zealand Mud Snails, first discovered in BEC, and their unique ability to survive. One critical piece of instruction involved ways to decontaminate equipment to ensure the group would not transfer the invaders to other waterways. Dick Lathrop related the story of Devils Lake nutrient loading during a century prior to becoming a state park. After studying the biology, chemistry, and physics of this soft water seepage lake, we explored two problems that were tackled with great results: the occurrence of swimmer's itch was lowered by reducing the phosphorus, and lake levels are lowered when flooding is caused by increased precipitation due to climate change. We practiced plant ID, mindful time in nature, water quality monitoring, and were empowered by many examples of actions to take thanks to the



2021 Master Naturalist graduates and instructors

Salt Wise Program, citizen science apps, introductions to Dane County restoration projects, and community-wide renewable energy solutions.

The course ended with student capstone project presentations. These ranged from a Paddler's Guide to Cherokee Marsh, to a Crestwood woodland restoration plan, to interpretation of microorganisms in Pheasant Branch, to name a few. Every project was amazing and well done.

And those yellow perch? They may once again be the focal point of Lake Mendota's fishery to rebalance the food web to regain lost clarity.

Here are a few quotes from participants:

- "The course greatly exceeded expectations and was so valuable in many ways. Thank you!"
- "I'm excited in so many ways to volunteer and help out. The only trouble is choosing where to put my energy. It's all so fascinating."

By Anne Boucher, Friend's Education Coordinator

The Friends in collaboration with the Madison Reading Project are bringing the Big Red Reading Bus to the Conservancy.

We are inviting pre-K through 5th grade children to bring the adults in their lives to come out to celebrate trees and forests.

Every child will leave with a free book and a craft project. There will be ice cream, too. Our naturalists will lead walks into the Bock Forest and tree-themed activities for everyone to take part in.

Join us on October 2nd from 10:00 to 1:00 at the Bock Forest entrance to the Conservancy on Highland Way in Middleton!

RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT

By Gary Sater, Board Member and Restoration and Management Committee Co-Chair

We have been delighted to begin anew our restoration workdays with an open invitation to those on our community volunteer list. We've conducted two seed collection workdays in the past several weeks in which we were able to follow Dane County guidelines and invite community members to participate. These have been very successful and plentiful amounts of dark-green bulrush, fox sedge, angelica, Dudley's rush and Awl-fruited sedge seeds were collected. It has been a strange year with seed collection, as the early heat and dryness contributed to early flower maturation and seed production. Some of the plants have been a few weeks ahead of the usual schedule in an average year. In addition, trail erosion work was also done on our last workday. Metal mesh was dug into new sections of the trail heading up Frederick's Hill. Thanks to Herb Garn and all who contributed on that project.

R & M members Tom Bernthal and Janet Kane, along with Colleen Robinson and Deb Weitzel from the Education Committee, coordinated the 40-hour Master Naturalist Class (see page 5.) Participants learned about plant families, keyed out prairie plants, typed soils, explored the wetlands, met Rob Schubert and heard about restoration plans and volunteer opportunities. They also identified invasive plants, learned about the bird monitoring program and visited the new addition south of Balzer Rd.

Weeding in the propagation garden continues once per week with the volunteer group and Susan Gruber. Additionally, Middleton Fire Department has filled our water cube five times and has continued to occasionally water the plants during drought conditions when possible. Many thanks to them for their kindness. It takes a village!

Herb Garn reported an upcoming plan in collaboration



R & M seed gathering crew

with Dane County to tear down and rebuild the structure accessing the springs. It has been

RESTORATION WORKDAYS

BOCK FOREST SEED COLLECTION

October 3 & 23
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy volunteers along with Bock Community Gardeners will meet to collect native seed in the Bock Forest prairie. The seed will be used to help diversify the plant community within Bock and to establish addition prairie. The event is lead by staff from Adaptive Restoration as we continue to restore and manage prairie and oak savanna in the Bock Forest.

Volunteers meet at Bock Community Garden, 5606 Highland Way

deteriorating over time and the plan is to create a more permanent boardwalk structure. This will hopefully be safer for visitors and also protect the delicate soils and plants around the springs. Demolition of the existing structure by R and M will occur in the near future.

Chris Kubiak is creating a new informational sign highlighting Tussock sedges to replace the outdated garlic mustard sign along the western edge of the wetlands bordering Pheasant Branch Rd. A photographic image from aerial drone footage will be included, along with Chris' drawings and information.

Work on wetland invasive cattails and reed canary grass in the Dane County portion of Conservancy (an extension of our existing and newly awarded AIS grants,) continues under contract with Quercus. Lastly, a dedicated and hard-working small group of volunteers working alongside Gary Sater and Herb Garn from R and M completed the the refurbishing of four kiosks (see page 1.)

Lastly, we celebrated the end of this year's Prairie Partners intern program with a lunch at Orchid Heights Park Shelter on August 8. All five interns and their mentors, Land Manager Rob Schubert and Susan Gruber of the Friends, along with six board and R & M Committee members were present. Many very positive comments were shared from all in attendance. It was a truly awesome group of interns this year. All are from UW-Madison and represent different majors in the areas of natural resource protection. Their teamwork with Rob and Susan was second to none. Thanks go out to them, as well as Rob and Susan, for making this a stellar year of learning, work and fun. This continues to be a very successful and valuable partnership for all concerned.



The Friends of
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please email office@pheasantbranch.org*



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BranchConservancy

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



SEPTEMBER

- 14 - Salt Wise Paddle
- 16 - Conservancy Day: Working Together Toward a Cleaner Energy Future
- 25 - Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) Adventure

OCTOBER

- 3 & 23 - Bock Community Garden Prairie Seed Collecting Workday
- 21 - Conservancy Day: Eagle-Eyed Citizen Science
- 23 - Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) Adventure

NOVEMBER

- 18 - Conservancy Day: Are You Salt Wise?
- 27 - Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) Adventure

JANUARY

- 8 - Friends Annual Meeting