



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

Celebrating Archeology in the Conservatory *Wisconsin Historical Society Tour Provides Perspective*

By Amy L. Rosebrough

Members of the Friends of Pheasant Branch and a group of hardy visitors helped to celebrate Wisconsin Archaeology Month in May. Dr. Amy L. Rosebrough, an archaeologist with the Historic Preservation Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), led a guided tour of the Native American archaeological sites in the Conservancy.

Despite unseasonably cold and blustery conditions, almost fifty brave souls made the trek west from Orchard Heights Park. The presentation began with background on the humans that first came to Wisconsin as the glaciers melted 12,000 years ago, and contin-



Amy Rosebrough demonstrates Native American tools during May's archaeology tour in the Conservancy.

ued through history to the mound builders of 800 to 2,000 years ago. The group's first stop was at the big spring, where Native Americans camped thousands of years ago. From there, the tour headed upward past the site of several effigy mounds, plowed away by farmers in the decades prior to the establishment of the Conservancy.

Dr. Rosebrough also demonstrated ancient Native American hunting technology and discussed the complex relationships between mound builders and the natural world. Program participant (and Friends Naturalist) Stephanie Williams, enjoyed learning

Continued on page 5 . . .

New Grants Now Featured Online

Did you know that we have been awarded seven grants this year? Three education grants, from the Natural Resources Foundation's Besadny Grant Program, Middleton Community Endowment, and, once again, the Middleton High School student Ecology Club, totaling \$4,500 will keep our Kids for the Earth program going strong!

Our restoration efforts have also been blessed with grants totaling \$26,855! The largest grant is from the Bock Foundation to implement the Bock Forest Restoration

Plan. The WDNR grant will pay for a wetland plant survey and development of a wetland management plan. A grant from REI will be spent on interpretive signs, volunteer recruitment materials, and additional restoration tools. The fourth restoration grant came from the Dane County Environmental Council to purchase a chain saw for our summer interns and year-round volunteers.

To read more about these grants, please visit our website: www.pheasantbranch.org

Read more about these grants on our website.

FALL 2011

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Protect. Restore. Enjoy.



FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

Dear Friends,

Summer was a busy time for the Friends and Conservancy lovers. Restoration volunteers worked furiously in the heat to clear invasives. A record number of participants enjoyed Conservancy Days programs. We did our part to address "nature deficit disorder" through a summer field trip with 70 Sauk Trail Elementary students.

In addition to our restoration and education activities, we advocated preservation of the Conservancy by providing input into the 2012-2017 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan, and by contributing almost \$15,000 for the construction of a boardwalk on a flood-prone trail along Pheasant Branch Road. Both of these efforts support maintaining the natural crushed limestone trail that Conservancy users overwhelmingly prefer.

To help fund and expand our programs, the board placed an increased emphasis on grant writing for 2011. Our efforts have paid off, with almost \$30,000 in grants awarded to date. The majority of

the grants go toward unbudgeted critical restoration projects.

With summer winding down, the Friends are preparing for fall, when we set priorities and budget for next year. As we begin this process, we are reminded that our members make all of our "everyday" activities possible. It is you who educate future environmentalists by funding the Kids for the Earth Program. It is you who restore and maintain the beautiful prairie by Frederick's Hill. It is you who make possible the popular Conservancy Days programs.

With our fall membership drive, we will once again be asking for your participation in our education, restoration and preservation activities. This includes not only financial support, but volunteering or partnering with other public or private organizations. We invite you to be a Friend!

Sincerely,
Dawn Meyer, President

OUR BOARD

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Send Newsletter Ideas to:
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Please Visit Our Website!
www.pheasantbranch.org

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: DONATE TODAY!

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

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Memberships:

- \$10 Student
 \$25 Individual
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Please send your membership and payment to:

FOPB
P.O. Box 628242
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Fall 2011

Congrats to Our 2011 Photo Contest Winners!

Celebrate at our Winners' Reception, December 2nd

We received many wonderful photographic entries taken in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy! Congratulations to Nancy Korn, the 2011 adult grand prize winner, with her image Tree Swallows, and to our youth grand prize winner, Katie Hunt with her sunset image! Both will receive \$100 and one of their images will be featured on the 2012 phenology calendar cover. The Board Choice award goes to Diane Hammer. All first place images will be in this year's calendar.

Join us for a winner's reception at Middleton Art and Framing on Friday, December 2nd at 6:00 PM. If you can't make the opening, stop by Middleton Art and Framing another time, where winning photographs will be on exhibit for the entire month of December. Mingle with the winners and the Friends board over light refreshments.

The grand prize images will be raffled at our annual dinner in January, so be sure to get your raffle tickets. All other winning images will be for sale, proceeds will be split between the winner and the Friends.



Top: Adult Grand Prize -
Tree Swallows by Nancy Korn
Middle: Youth Grand Prize -
Conservancy Sunset by Katie Hunt
Bottom: Board Choice -
Clarity by Diane Hammer

We'd like to thank our sponsors for making this contest possible: Clicks by Colette, Middleton Art and Framing, and the Picture Salon.

The contest was such a great success that we're going to do it again next year, watch the website for details.

Youth Winners:

Heidi Bachmeier
 Katie Hunt

Adult Winners:

Michael Anderson
 Ruth Bachmeier
 Diane Hammer
 Susan Ickstadt
 Nancy Korn
 Jennifer Peters
 Dave Peterson
 Margaret Peterson
 Tim Shultz
 Kurt Westbrook
 Nick Wilkes

Middleton Environthon Team Competes in Canada

The MHS Envirothon Team traveled to Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick for the 2011 Canon Envirothon, the largest natural resources competition in the World.

During the five day event, the students were tested in the areas of wildlife, aquatics, estuaries, forestry, and soils. They were sequestered for eight hours to compose and practice their twenty minute management



(From left to right) Environthon advisor Deb Weitzel with Ryan Jansen, Jim Miazga, Colin Higgins, Alex Bauch and Brian Hunzicker

plan to safe guard local salt water estuaries from oil drilling.

The top ten teams were awarded college scholarships and advisors received Canon cameras. The Wisconsin team from Middleton High School was awarded first place in wildlife and eighth place overall. Each MHS student received a \$1200 college scholarship for their efforts.



Naturalist Notebook: News of Nature in the Conservancy

A Phenology for Pheasant Branch Conservancy

By Dale Klubertanz

Each year, throughout the seasons, the everyday visitor to the Pheasant Branch Conservancy is invited to note his or her own observations to bring about a year-to-year, season-to-season knowledge of the conservancy. It is also possible to acknowledge these experiences in a more personal sense of phenology, which often comes in the form of one's own common stirrings and intimacy with the land, while embracing our most subjective responses to the wilderness as we are informed forever within some lasting and lifelong inner almanac.

A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold's enduring work on conservation, is filled with phenological studies, observations and stories inspired by his beloved landscape near Baraboo, Wisconsin. These were informed by and founded on decades of personal development within his own odyssey and philosophy of the natural world. Written over eleven years until 1947, he caringly recorded his experiences of the land throughout the seasons in relationship with its creatures and plants as they were touched by the changes of climate, seasons and the activities of humans. All this was revealed as he sat, walked and ventured near his humble "shack" on reclaimed farmland in Sauk County.

The Aldo Leopold Foundation describes "phenology (as) a segment of ecology focusing on the study of periodic plant and animal life-cycle events that are influenced by climate and seasonal change in the environment. Skunks emerging from winter dens, sandhill cranes trumpeting their return, and seeds ripening are all examples of annual phenological events. Phenology is derived from the Greek word phaino meaning to show or appear, indicating its principal concern with the dates of first occurrence of natural events in their annual cycle".

To fully witness a wilderness area is to carry a certain measure of awareness and a way of seeing the landscape at a quiet, conversational pace, with all its plant communities and inhabitants that make it their home. It also requires that a walker is prepared with knowledge of the cycles and interrelationships of a natural place without being encumbered by this knowledge in one's responses and observations. This balance of awareness and openness to what is to be discovered coupled with the preparation of having the knowledge, tools and familiarity of the land and its occupants can bring the conservancy into a soft and connected focus by allowing us to dissolve into a sense of belonging while still standing back to see, and perhaps to record.

ORDER YOUR 2012 PHENOLOGY CALENDAR TODAY!!

Record your personal observations in the **2012 Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Phenology Calendar**. The calendar features photographs from our photo contest and includes seasonal checklists of animal and plant events, sunrise, sunset and weather data, and monthly nature notes. **Makes a great gift, too!**

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
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Email: _____

Calendar Order:

Calendars are \$15 for _____ x \$15.00 = \$15.00 +
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for each additional
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Eagle Scout Builds Trail Stairs

Volunteer effort provides valued service and leadership

By: Chris Fuerbringer

Starting back in August of 2010, I contacted Susan Gruber in hope of getting an idea for my Eagle Project, the last item on my list before I could be declared an Eagle Scout amongst the ranks of the Boy Scouts of America. The idea was to take an almost unknown trail on the north edge of the conservancy, and make it known and usable. In addition, it was made to be used as a fire break. After all the paper work and planning was completed, I set out to get my signatures, and I received them in March 2011.

With the help of many volunteers, all three phases were completed. Phase one was, on April 2nd, 2011, to clear the trail of all invasive and excess plants ten feet wide. Phase two was, the week of May 15th,



Scout Chris Fuerbringer and volunteers improved this little used trail.

2011, to cut, pre-drill, and treat the wood to put in steps along the trail. Phase three was, on May 21st, 2011, to install the steps.

Unfortunately, the trail was not used as a fire break this year due to weather. However, the trail is much cleaner and safer compared to what it was before my project was put into action. As Susan Gruber said, "it looks wonderful," when she walked along it on Saturday, May 21st, 2011 after the work was all done.

I cannot thank Susan Gruber and Wayne Pauly enough for allowing me to do this project for them. I do hope everyone will utilize the trail when they come through on a walk.

Brewery "Fun-Raiser" was HOT!

The temperature was a sweltering 96 degrees with a heat index of 104, but the weather wasn't the only thing that was hot at the fifth annual "Fun-Raiser" on Sunday, July 17th at the Capital Brewery. Friends who attended enjoyed hours of great blues tunes from the Cash Box Kings, as well as excellent food catered by Electric Earth Café. They also took advantage of the opportunity to mingle with other Friends, including many long-term members. The event raised nearly \$1,000 to benefit our restoration and education programs!

Eleven door prizes were given away, including gift baskets, two refurbished bicycles, canoe/kayak rentals, and more. The event also included a silent auction featuring items from local artists, including photographs taken in the Conservancy by 2010 photo contest winners and hand-etched crane glasses, additional auction items were framed Owen Gromme prints!

Thank you to the event sponsors, who donated door prizes or raffle items: Dane County Title, Whole Foods, Budget Bicycle Center, Wild Birds Unlimited, Rutabaga, Michael Knapstein Photography, and of course the Capital Brewery for letting us use their facility!

The Friends wish to thank our loyal supporters who braved the heat to support our mission.

Archeology . . .

Continued from page 1

about the ancient tools and supplies, "we were shown a replica of the cloth medicine bag that the people would have used and were given a demonstration of the atl-atl, (sounds like addle-addle) a hunting spear that had great power and range."

The tour ended on the top of the big hill, where several Native American burial mounds still stand. The 'conical' (dome shaped) and 'linear' (long) mounds were built between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago. Based on parallels with the traditional beliefs of modern Native Nations, the hill-top mounds and the spring they overlooked would have formed part of a significant sacred landscape.

The path to the afterlife was thought to pass through a watery 'World Below' to an airy and light 'World Above.' By placing burial mounds on the hill overlooking the springs, the Native residents of the Conservancy helped their loved ones find and follow the path to the next world.

Stephanie Williams learned more than archaeology facts during this tour, "the Conservancy land was very important to our early inhabitants for many reasons, and made us appreciate, at a deeper level, the conservation and restoration that has been done here to protect our natural resources."



EDUCATION CORNER: Conservancy Days Program News

Summer Recap and Autumn Opportunities . . .

By Colleen Robinson Klug

This year's Conservancy Day Programs have been extremely successful! From spring bird serenades, to peeks into prairie history, into the ground for geology wonders, and through a lens for the best way to take a piece of the conservancy home with us, the gatherings were great fun. Thank you to all of our program leaders for sharing your passion and expertise so we may appreciate and understand this conservancy gem! Thanks to our 200 attendees so far this year. You are the measure of our program success and we will be asking for your feedback if you are on our email list. This list has grown by nearly 100 names in 2011! As always, Friends members and those who donate on site make these free quality programs possible.

Coming up in October:

Universe in the Park
Thursday, October 20, 2011
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Meet at the Dane County Lot, 4864 Pheasant Branch Road

The skies are waiting for you as staff from UW Madison's Space Place offer a guided tour of the universe!

They'll bring their telescopes, facts, and fun. You bring your sense of wonder. Please dress for the weather.

If you'd like to join us for this fall program, RSVP's appreciated to education@pheasantbranch.org or 608-767-2394.

Kids for the Earth School Field Trips

420 students visited the conservancy this spring for classroom field trips! They ranged in age from 5 – 12 years old and learned about soils, water, food webs, habitats, ecological restoration, development, sustainability, wildlife, weather, and much more while spending an active, healthy day in nature.

Five of our 10 new naturalists led field trip stations this spring and have already earned glowing accolades from teachers. Our naturalists are enthusiastic and always working to improve our programs. Six naturalists that have been with the Kids for the

Earth program for years now have opportunities to spend more time enhancing and passing along skills to others to further increase the quality of our programs. All of this is thanks to grant awards we've been gifted this year, to help pay for new naturalist training and stipends and transportation for students to come out to Pheasant Branch Conservancy. If you or someone you know are interested in being a paid naturalist to lead field stations, please contact Colleen. We offer full lesson plans and all of the materials plus observation and training sessions.

Grant Awards for Field Trips

The Kids for the Earth program has been honored with three grants this year. This money is dedicated to keeping student transportation costs low, field trip quality high, and service to our district extraordinary for the sake of our children. To learn more about these grants, check our new grants page on our website.

Professional Development Series

Our 2011 Education for Sustainability staff development series is scheduled for October 6, 13 and 20, from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., meeting at Middleton Alternative High School. Sustainability is important in our community. The City of Middleton and the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District each have sustainability committees. The Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education is moving forward with a statewide Education for Sustainability initiative.

What is sustainability? How does the conservancy fit into a vision of a sustainable community? What is the role of education in sustainability and how and where do we teach about it? We'll explore these questions and more on local field trips and through hands-on activities that will be directly transferrable to classrooms and other educational settings.



(Above and Right) July Conservancy Days participants learn about nature photography with leader Michael Knapstein, 2010 Photo Contest grand prize winner.





GET OUT THERE: Field Trips & Volunteer Opportunities

Summer Restoration Highlights

By Susan Gruber

It was another busy summer for restoration work in the Dane County section of the Conservancy. As you wander the trails you will notice the results of some of our work. Some of our highlights were:

- Daisy Scouts cutting willow and pulling garlic mustard by the homestead.
- UW furlough crew cutting invasive plants.
- American Family volunteers working next to interns cutting invasive plants.
- Workdays with local companies, including North Face, Monsanto Company-Middleton Campus, and Capitol Indemnity Corporation.
- Westside Christian School students cutting invasive plants under the big oak trees.
- Five college interns working with us for 12 weeks planting trees and flowering plants; cutting, digging, sawing, pulling, spraying a wide variety of invasive plants, big and small, smooth and prickly!
- Chainsaw safety instruction and practice for the interns; thanks to new saws provided through a Dane County Environmental Council grant.
- Our faithful regular volunteers who worked not only on Wednesdays but many other days on their own all over the Conservancy.
- United Way Day of Caring volunteers collecting seeds and clearing invasive plants.
- REI jointly sponsored workday collect-

ing seeds in the prairies.

- Receiving a \$5000 REI grant to purchase equipment, develop interpretive signs and revise our brochure to help us recruit new volunteers.

Looking forward to our fall program, we will again be working with Middleton High School students on Saturdays in September and October. We plan to meet with our boundary neighbors to in-



The MHS Soccer Team collects prairie seeds in the Dane County section of the Conservancy.

form them of what is happening in the Conservancy and to recruit new volunteers, so watch for information in your door or mailbox.

We again would like to thank our interns (Sadie Brown who replaced Melissa Flores, Trent Kuczynski, Nick LaBnte', Ashton Mieritz and Emily Ruebl) for all of the hard work they did this summer.

Working 8 hours every Wednesday in rain, wind, heat and humidity, sometimes many of those on the same day, was not always easy. It is because of their work along side Wayne Pauly and Don Ferber from Dane County, Tom Klein, Emil and Haney, and Susan Gruber from the FOPB plus many volunteers who brought snacks and beverages, that the prairies look so incredible.

Invasive plants keep showing up. We will continue to go after them for years to come. Join us when you can. Let Susan know if you want to be added to our volunteer list and receive reminders of our workdays.

Upcoming Work Parties

Join a fun group of hard-working people to care for this very special place.

**Wednesdays, 9:00 am – noon
October 5, November 2,
December 7**

Invasive plant control, seed collecting & spreading, etc.

**Saturdays, 9:00 am – noon
October 1, 15, November 19,
December 17**

Invasive plant control, seed collecting, etc.

Meet at the Pheasant Branch Dane County Parking lot (fire number 4864) 1.2 miles north of Century Avenue on Pheasant Branch Road unless instructed otherwise. Additional work days are periodically scheduled. Contact Susan Gruber at office@pheasant-branch.org or sgruber42@gmail.com or give her a call at 836-3848 if you would like to be added to our email list to receive a reminder of work sessions. Volunteers are notified via email and signs along the trail.

However, these workdays are always weather and project dependent, thus the importance of being on the email list.

FOUND - Walking Stick

A walking stick was left in the Dane County parking lot by a wonderful woman who had been photographing in the prairies. It would like to find its mate! If you lost it, please call 836-3848.

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office@pheasantbranch.org. Thank you!*

**Get your 2012 Phenology Calendar
Details Inside, page 4 . . .**

**PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY
Autumn Events 2011**



Connect with Nature in Your Community

October

1st, 5th, 15th, - Work Party Days (page 7)
20th - Conservancy Days (page 6)

November

2nd, 19th - Work Party Days (page 7)

December

2nd - Photo Contest Winners' Reception (page 3)
7th, 17th - Work Party Days (page 7)

**Don't forget to order your 2012
Phenology Calendar
(See Page 4)**

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www.pheasantbranch.org**

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