



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

Trail Users Unite to Oppose Paving *Broad support shown by bikers, conservationists & community*

By Jim O'Brien

The initial draft of Middleton's most recent bike and pedestrian plan envisioned an asphalt trail running through the Pheasant Branch Conservancy from Parmenter Street to Orchid Heights Park. The trail, part of a regional system connecting Governor Nelson State Park and the Black Earth Creek valley, would allow for a variety of uses. These include biking and in-line skating as well as hiking and observing nature.

From the beginning, the proposal to pave a trail through the conservancy met resistance. With its reference to in-line skating, the plan came to be regarded as promoting active recreation in an area reserved for more "passive" activities as bird-watching and plant identification. A com-



plication not specified in the plan, but manifested in the voting on the paving issue arose from a common misperception that the real conservancy lies north of Century and does not therefore include the creek corridor from Parmenter to Century.

Word got out that the State Department of Transportation would fund the building of bridges over three of the five creek crossings in the corridor, but only if the city paved the current limestone trail through the area. With that, the asphalt paving seemed to the public like a done

deal against which any protest would be futile. With the only protest being one against the paving north of Century Ave.,

... See *Paving Trails*, page 4

Get Your 2010 Phenology Calendar

By Andrea Gargas

FOPB is once again sponsoring a Phenology Calendar, updated for 2010. Phenology is the study of timing of plant and animal cycles. Plants, animals, and other organisms respond



to the seasons, coordinating their life stages with light levels or temperature. Changes that depend on light levels come on roughly the same date every year; changes that depend on temperature or moisture levels will vary based on the weather each year. Each month of the

calendar has a list of phenological events expected for that period.

As with last year's calendar, the 2010 Phenology Calendar features full-color and photographs by local photographers. It

also includes natural history notes, and sunrise and sunset data for each month. The 2010 calendar is \$12 plus \$2.50 shipping. Use the membership/donation form on page 8 to order your calendar, or download order forms at www.pheasantbranch.org.

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Protect. Restore. Enjoy.



FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

The Friends have recently been involved in two highly public issues —the clearing of the Highland Way land in preparation for the Bock Forest restoration and the proposal to pave a trail in the conservancy. Both are treated elsewhere in this newsletter. However, they deserve comment here as well.

When major clearing took place at Highland Way, people living nearby raised questions about notification and timing. The Friends and the City did publish notices of planning meetings in the newsletter and in the Times-Tribune. It's apparent, however, that many affected people never learned of these meetings. As the work goes forward, we will do our best to keep residents near the land up to date.

The main concern this autumn is two cottonwood groves that screen the cleared land from nearby residents. We are committed to seeing the management plan for the Bock Forest implemented as soon as possible; but we are aware of how changed the cleared land will look for a time and will do our best to assure that the replacement screening called for in the plan is put in place as expeditiously as possible. Dr. Paul Goldschmidt, who lives on Highland Way and can be contacted at goldschp@tds.net or at 827-6891, has proposed a campaign to supplement regular funding sources for this effort.

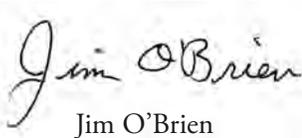
During late July and early August, the paving proposal in the Bike-Ped Plan gave rise to opposition throughout the region. As of this writing the paving proposal has been eliminated from the plan by a 3-2 vote of the Plan Commission. The Commission could seek additional public input on the revised plan at a subsequent meeting. Still, the paving proposal should not survive as an option, and the plan ought to reach the Common Council for final action without it.

We will keep close tabs on the plan and take whatever steps might be necessary to assure the conservancy's integrity.

In this as in other major endeavors, the board has benefited from the counsel and commitment of a unique member who resigned this fall. She is Janet Kane, the founder of our Kids for the Earth program and an indefatigable activist on many fronts. Two other board members recently resigned, Paul Helgeson and Rick Kurz. Paul Helgeson brought the board a perspective on city government, and Rick Kurz served as our treasurer. Read more about the accomplishments of these individuals on page 9. All have agreed to advise the board when asked. We will keep them to that pledge.

Elsewhere in the newsletter is description of our new board nomination process. We welcome your nominations of individuals who are willing to serve as a steward of this beautiful land and waters we call the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. And for those who have bookkeeping or accounting skills – please see the job announcement below!

Sincerely,


Jim O'Brien

OUR BOARD

President *Jim O'Brien* Vice President *Lou Reilly*

Treasurer *Vacant* Secretary *Rod Miller*

Board Members
Brian Butler, Martin David, Bruce Froehлке, Ben Grawe, Susan Gruber, Hagen Hedfield, Dawn Meyer, Henry Niebauer, Bill Reis, Julia Riley

Springs Editor
Julia Riley

Springs Layout & Design
Jeffrey Potter

Illustrations/Photos
NFWS, WI DNR, UW Extension, FOPB.

Send Newsletter Ideas to:
office@pheasantbranch.org

Please Visit Our Website!
www.pheasantbranch.org

HELP WANTED!

JOB TITLE: Treasurer for the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc.

JOB DESCRIPTION: Update accounts in Quick-Books, pay bills, create financial statements from software.

PAY: None

BENEFITS: Great people to work with, satisfaction that you are contributing to a noble cause.

TO APPLY: Contact Jim O'Brien - *jaobrie1@wisc.edu*

The View from the Front Line

Changes in the landscape bring changes in the neighborhood

By Julia Riley

I wasn't prepared for the view from my backyard when I returned home from vacation on June 28th. The thicket of greenery that formed a 6 foot high barrier between the eastern edge of the John C. Bock Community Forest and my condo patio, hiding the blue base of the massive water tower and user activities along the conservancy trail, was almost gone. The expanse of former shrubs and plants in the conservancy acres beyond was a brown mass of shredded wood fibers. How could I be so surprised by the demise of this landscape when I'd read the land management plan and heard a presentation by the consultant who wrote it at a Friends board meeting?

In all fairness, the City of Middleton provided many opportunities for public input on the land management plan developed by Mike Anderson of BioLogic Environmental Consulting, Inc., and announced the beginning of the restoration work in a notice in the Middleton Times-Tribune. Yet, I remembered Anderson describing the restoration process at our Friends Board meeting last spring as starting in the Oak Woodlands and gradually moving towards the old field area east of the water tower. His verbal description of the project made it seem a more phased approach to be implemented over time. I'd even suggested that a buffer area be created along the property line for adjoining neigh-



This "Weed Eater" mulched invasives in Bock Forest and surprised neighbors this summer.

bors, since the restoration work was going to take a decade to complete.

Like most of my neighbors, I hadn't been prepared for the extensiveness of the vegetative clearing this summer of almost 18 acres and how we could now see the fronts of buildings on the far side of the conservancy property. Several angry neighboring property owners who generously donated money to the Friends to purchase this land contacted Friends President, Jim O'Brien, to convey that they felt somewhat betrayed.

I called Penni Klein, Director of the City of Middleton Public Lands Department, to express my concerns over the timing and extent of the work. She confirmed that in-

vasive species removal of buckthorn, honeysuckle and other small trees and shrubs with the "weed eating" machines had been speeded up in part to spend grant money the Friends had received for the project by the grant's expiration date. Once again, I seemed to have played a participatory role in accelerating the war against invasive species. How could I be so fickle and complaining regarding a project I was this intimately involved in helping finance?

Klein invited concerned neighbors to the July 1st Conservancy

. . . See The View, page 6

Fundraiser Draws Record Crowd

By Rick Kurz

The Friends of Pheasant Branch 3rd annual summer fundraiser, "Keep on Rockin", held on July 19 at the Capital Brewery Brewery was our most successful yet. A new record crowd of just over 300 enjoyed the wonderful site and beers of our Capital Brewery sponsor, complimented by the great gyros & brats served up by another return sponsor, Athens Gyros of County M and HY 113.

With the lively music of The Relics and the fine weather of the day, most of our crowd was still with us as we drew the



Supporters of the Friends enjoyed music by the classic rock group, The Relics.

winning names of the kayak donated by the Middleton Beach Road Neighborhood Association, and mountain bike donated by Budget Bicycle of Madison.

Congratulations to our two door prize winners: Ken Van Haren and Jess Kotleski. A hearty thank you to all who turned out for the event, which netted just shy of \$2,000 for our Educational Programs. Additional thanks to The Printing Place and Middleton Times-Tribune for publicity help.

Board of Director Nominations Sought

Three board positions are open for nominations

By Joe Niebauer

Each January, the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc. (FOPB), gather in an annual meeting with one of the main purposes being to elect the Board of Directors for the FOPB. According to the FOPB by-laws, we are limited to 15 board members elected for 2 year terms. Approximately half the board comes up for election each year. Typically, most board members who have completed a 2 year term volunteer for another 2 year term, but there are usually 1 or 2 vacancies to fill. This year the board, by this announcement in the newsletter, is making sure that the entire membership of the FOPB has the opportunity to participate in the nomination process.

Therefore, nominations to the Board of Directors for the FOPB will be open from August 1 to October 31, 2009. Any member of the FOPB in good standing may nominate any other member in good standing. Nominations should be emailed to office@pheasantbranch.org, or mailed to Friends of

Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc, P.O. Box 628242, Middleton, WI 53562-8242. Nomination information should include the name, address, phone number and/or email address of both the nominator and the nominee; a statement of willingness to serve if elected; and a short background statement. The election of the 2010 Board of Directors will be held at the annual meeting of the FOPB held in January 2010.

The particular skills and needs for the board are a mix, including but not limited to: scientists, lawyers, writers/editors, educators, fundraisers, those with interests in finances and restoration, and a geographical balance. It is the job of the Nominating Committee to work towards achieving a balance in board member skills. The short background statement from each nomination, along with plenty of time for follow up communication, greatly aids in getting the best possible FOPB board nominees. Any questions should be directed to Jim O'Brien at jaobrie1@wisc.edu.

Bock Forest Community Gardens Seek Gardeners



The Bock Forest Restoration Plan includes a unique feature – a community garden space that includes dedicated areas to raise native trees, shrubs and perennials for use in the restoration efforts. The native nursery and community garden space is proposed for the far southeast corner on Highland Way to minimize fragmentation

of conservancy land. A generous anonymous donor has already provided a gift of \$10,000 to be used for the community garden, the city is also pursuing additional grants.

If you are interested in a garden plot or cultivating natives at the location for use in the restoration process, or if you have questions regarding the community garden, please contact Abby Attoun, Associate Planner for the City of Middleton at 608-827-1043 or via email at aattoun@ci.middleton.wi.us.

Paving Trails . . .

the Common Council voted 6-2 on August 4 to award a contract for constructing the bridges and paving the trail.

The petition against paving the trail north from Century to Orchid Heights Park garnered over 1200 signatures in two weeks. The signatures came from every district of the city, with the strongest concentration from areas adjacent to the conservancy. This was only natural since much of the canvassing was done within the conservancy. Surprisingly the bikers, who might have been expected to favor paving, turned out to prefer the present surface by a large majority. Other user groups, from mothers pushing baby carriages to joggers and hikers, also gladly signed the petition.

Meeting on August 11, the Plan Commission voted 3-2 to exclude the paving proposal from the Bike-Ped Plan. The Plan

Continued from page 1

is currently being revised by city staff. Upon completion, there will be another public hearing, followed by a Plan Commission vote. Thereafter it will go to the Common Council for final consideration and adoption.

The Friends of Pheasant Branch will follow the process and keep the public informed through its website and through periodic electronic reports.

Get Info and Share Your Comments:

For more information on the plan or to comment on the plan contact Mark Opitz, Assistant Planning Director and Zoning Administrator, mopitz@ci.middleton.wi.us, 827-1070.

What's New at the Bock Forest?

Free Public Events Scheduled Throughout the Fall

By Stephanie Jones, BioLogic Environmental Consulting

This was a milestone year for John C. Bock Community Forest. In 2009, the City of Middleton and the conservancy initiated a major plan — long in the making — to restore farm fields and Southern mesic forest to prairie, oak savanna, and oak woodland, ecosystems which occupied much of the conservancy (and Southern Wisconsin) until the arrival of European settlers. Oak savanna is one of Wisconsin's rarest ecosystems — of 5.5 million acres of savanna that existed prior to European settlement, only a few thousand remain.



Learn more about the Bock Forest this Fall.

making Bock a better site for wildlife habitat, for biodiversity conservation, and for adding natural beauty.

The 'Bock Forest Discovery Series' of public events to be held at the forest includes myriad educational events, including naturalist tours, forestry demonstration, and tree planting. All events are free and open to the public. For more information on the Discovery Series or the Bock Forest restoration, please contact Mike Healy, project manager for BioLogic Environmental Consulting, at 608-277-9960 or mhealy@gobiologic.com.

Recent visitors to Bock may notice that many trees and shrubs have been cut and even removed from the site. This is because the City and its contractors have been clearing space for oak trees and other savanna and woodland flora. Much of the brush removed includes the invasive shrubs buckthorn and honeysuckle, which choke out native vegetation, supporting significantly less wildlife than oak woodlands and savannas. According to Mike Healy of BioLogic Environmental Consulting, the company managing the restoration project, brush removal is crucial to

Bock Forest Discovery Series

Meet at the John. C. Bock Community Forest, Highland Way Entrance:

October 11: Oak Savannas: Then and Now, 1 pm - ?

November 7: Forestry Day at Bock Forest, 9am – 3pm

December 13: Winter Tree ID Walk, 1 pm - ?

April 2010: Public Tree Planting at Bock Forest

Dedication Theme is Gratitude

By Julia Riley & Dawn Meyer

A perfect blue sky and a festive white party tent welcomed the 100+ attendees of the John C. Bock Community Forest Dedication hosted by the Friends on July 25. Friends President, Jim O'Brien, kicked off the ceremony. He and former Friends board member, Sally Kefer, spoke about the extraordinary grass-roots fundraising effort which raised \$3 million dollars to purchase the 19.2 acre property. Both Jim and Sally expressed appreciation to the many donors who made the purchase possible



Howard Teal, Sharon Bock, Sally Kefer, Al Goldstein, Jim O'Brien, Lloyd Eagan and Brian Butler at the Kiosk Donor Board.

Sharon Bock, widow of John C. Bock, and long-time friend, Al Goldstein, shared their favorite memories of the man whose vision to preserve natural spaces with mature trees is remembered in the land's namesake. Next, Director Lloyd Eagan, Department of Natural Resources South Central Regional Office, congratulated the Friends of Pheasant Branch and the City of Middleton on their successful history of re-

ceiving Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant funds for various conservancy projects. These funds contributed greatly to the land purchase effort.

City of Middleton Alderperson, Howard Teal, thanked everyone involved in acquiring this special piece of land. He brought the City's giant pair of "dedication scissors", which were used by Sharon Bock to cut the green ribbon strung across the kiosk containing the major donor board. Wrapping up the ceremony, Mike Healy, BioLogic Environmental Consulting, spoke briefly about restoration plans for the land and provided aerial photographs showing past agricultural use.

Following the dedication, all celebrated in the main theme of gratitude for the generosity of so many who came together to preserve the land for future generations.

The View . . .

Lands Committee (CLC) meeting. The attending neighbors requested that a 10 foot wide buffer of existing vegetation be retained as a transition screen until the restored vegetation was planted and allowed to grow to a sufficient height. Alderperson Gurdip Brar made a motion to support this request, but the majority of the CLC members took a stance they labeled “purist” that all invasives had to be removed from the site, which included the buffer area.

The CLC conceded that replacement screening could be considered as provided in the land management plan under Management Recommendations Objective 4: Minimize Impact to Adjoining Neighborhoods. Klein directed the new owner of BioLogic Environmental Consulting, Mike Healy, to prepare information on a screening plan.

I organized a “Walk and Talk” meeting with adjacent neighbors and Healy, representing the City, to learn more information about the upcoming proposals for screening. About 30 neighbors walked to the Highland Way entrance on July 22nd and we formed a circle as Healy invited neighbors to introduce themselves. In the introductions, neighbors expressed not only anger about the extent and pace of the restoration work, but a deep personal grief associated with the changes. Healy listened thoughtfully to these comments and discussed the types of replacement shrubs that would be allowed.

The screening plan was presented to the CLC on August 4th, but it was noted that the current budget did not include funding for this work. The CLC suggested that conservancy neighbors pay for the replacement screening themselves. The next step in the clearing process was discussed – removal of Cottonwood trees and female Boxelders, discussed in an addendum to the land management plan prepared in July.

The July addendum was based upon a meeting that was held in May 2009 with various interested parties. The July addendum changed the original plan’s recommendation to leave Cottonwoods on the eastern property boundary for screening and sus-



The Conservancy Lands Committee denied requests from adjoining neighbors to leave a 10 foot buffer strip of vegetation as transitional screening while the area is prepared for planting of trees over the next several years. Pictures show before (top) and after (bottom) land-clearing work.

neighbors to attend these sessions.

Another positive step is that Alderperson Howard Teal, Chair of the CLC, recently attended the Friends’ September board meeting. We both agreed to work harder on communication with each other. Teal committed to having a member of the CLC attend our board meetings to learn more about our activities. We agreed to have one of our board members attend the CLC meetings to stay in touch with conservancy projects.

It will take a labor of love from neighbors, Friends, and the community to return this land into a thing of beauty and a place for wildlife to call home again; but when the landscape is altered in such an extensive way, we must all work together to ensure that its transformation is complete.

Continued from page 3

tainable forestry rotation to complete removal at any time. Several people present at the May 2009 meeting did not concur that Cottonwood trees were even discussed at that meeting. Friends President, Jim O’Brien, sent a letter in August to the City requesting that the City leave in place the remaining vegetative buffers until it has, from its own budget and from funding the Friends hope to raise, the means to provide the screening pledged in the land management plan.

As I reflect on the events of the summer and my behavior, I can only say that you can never anticipate the full effect of this type of restoration work from a plan, especially a plan that changed. When you are smack dab on the front line, the view is painful. I, like my neighbors, formed a love relationship with this land and felt its beauty and soul everyday. I’ve grieved the loss of the plants, birds, and wildlife, which do not live here now, as deeply as the death of an old friend.

The City did not seize the opportunity, either, to act in the spirit of its namesake as a “Good Neighbor”; and as it takes a hard look at its upcoming budget, we hope it will fulfill its commitment to continue the restoration work it began this summer. A positive step is the City’s planned outreach efforts to neighbors and the public, “The Bock Forest Discovery Series” (see article on page 5), and the Friends encourage

Blandings Turtles Found in Conservancy

Volunteers help build nesting sites for threatened species

By Alice Thompson and Mary Linton,
Thompson and Associates Wetland Services

The Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) is a state threatened aquatic turtle found in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The turtle has distinctive yellow dashes on its dark shell and a bright yellow chin. The reclusive turtle is found in shallow marshy habitats but nests in well drained upland soils. The turtle has wanderlust and can travel for long distances to look for food or lay eggs and thus are vulnerable to road kill and other threats. The Blanding's Turtle lifestyle is an important example of how the protection of wetlands needs to include adjacent intact uplands. The turtles travel long distances in uplands and are not particularly adapted to our fragmented landscapes.

The City of Middleton Conservancy Lands Committee (CLC) hired us to train citizen volunteers to collect data on the presence or absence of Blanding's Turtles in Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Spring, 2009. Mary Linton, a local expert on reptiles and amphibians, trained us in how to look for and recognize a Blanding's. A total of 22 volunteers spent 92 hours between April 18 and May 9, 2009 surveying for Blanding's Turtles in the marsh, Middleton Hills Pond and Graber Pond. There were 6 sightings of Blanding's Turtles within the Pheasant Branch marsh, and one probable sighting at Graber Pond. Additionally one Blanding's turtle was seen basking at Dorn Creek.

Four nesting Blanding's Turtles were discovered by Guerdon Combs and his daughter between June 23-28, 2009. With Guerdon's assistance two of these nests were protected with chicken wire cages to prevent predation by raccoons, dog and other predators. The nickel to quarter sized turtle young emerge in fall and travel to the marsh to overwinter.

Blanding's Turtle females can live up to 60-70 years and lay eggs from the time they are about 18 to the end of their life. They have fidelity to nesting sites, possibly returning to where they were hatched; they return year after year to the same place to lay their 6-20 eggs in a shallow nest in sunny locations with well-drained



State-threatened Blandings Turtle (top), a protected nest site (middle) built by volunteers from United Way

soils. The presence of three females attempting to lay eggs near the turquoise water tower on the east side of the conservancy gave us the understanding that the area was attractive as nesting grounds. We wanted to increase the available areas to nest in and hopefully attract them away from the trail.

Over 30 United Way Day of Caring volunteers under the direction of Mark Horn of the Friends of Pheasant Branch worked on August 28, 2009 to build new nest areas. We located four areas high on the slope adjacent the water tower in grassy open areas. The volunteers removed the sod and prepared the ground for loads of clean sand trucked in by City of Middleton's Dennis Hellenbrand. The United Way crew also cleared brush and tree limbs that could shade the nests over time and removed many invasive shrubs in the hedgerows adjacent the water tower.

This work is an outgrowth of the survey work this spring to confirm the state threatened Blanding's Turtles and is part of an ongoing commitment by the City of Middleton's CLC to protect this charismatic species within the conservancy. The next step is to create a viewing area and educational sign adjacent the trail in the vicinity of the new turtle nests to explain the areas to the public. It is impressive to stand at the nesting areas next to the water tower and see how far the Blanding's turtles travel from the marsh to nest every year. Next spring and summer we will document if the turtles use these areas. We also hope to obtain funds to radio track some Blanding's in the marsh and discover more answers to their movements within and beyond the marsh. It is important also to gain an understanding of the larger population of turtles within Middleton so we hope with enough enthusiastic volunteers

to expand our survey to all the kettle ponds as well as the conservancy next spring.

Thanks to all the volunteers who have surveyed for turtles, watched for nesting turtles and helped build new nesting areas! You've made a real difference!

THE 2010 PHENOLOGY CALENDAR ...

Learn about nature with a 2010 Friends of Pheasant Branch Phenology Calendar!

- ☛ Beautiful Color Images by Local Photographers
- ☛ Checklists for Seasonal Animal & Plant Activities
- ☛ Sunrise, Sunset & Weather Data
- ☛ Monthly Nature Notes

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\$14.50 each
 \$25.00 for two
 \$37.00 for three (additional calendars are \$12/each)

Price Includes Shipping to Your Door!

Makes a Great Gift!



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2010 Calendar Order:

 NAME

 ADDRESS

 CITY STATE ZIP

 PHONE (optional)

 E-MAIL (optional)

 NUMBER of CALENDARS

 CALENDAR COST

2010 FOPB Membership:

- \$10 Student
- \$20 Individual
- \$30 Family
- \$100 Friend of the Friends

TOTAL
 Calendars + FOPB Membership

Payment Method:

- CHECK
- VISA
- MASTERCARD

 CREDIT CARD NUMBER EXPIR. DATE

Please write checks to: FOPB

Mail form and payment to:
 Friends of Pheasant Branch
 P.O. Box 628242
 Middleton WI 53562-628242



www.pheasantbranch.org
 Friends of Pheasant Branch

Thanks to Three Departing Board Members

Their commitment to the conservancy made a big difference

By Hagen Hedfield, Julia Riley & Jim O'Brien

With this issue, we say good-bye to three Friends' board members who resigned this Fall; and thank you for your many contributions to our organization. The board hopes to call on the expertise of these colleagues as the need arises.

Paul Helgeson

Paul and Judy are leaving Middleton and moving to their farm in Dunn County for a well-earned change of scenery. Recently retired from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, Paul managed renewable energy programs, particularly those relating to solar and biomass-generated energy. As enthusiastic hikers and bikers and ardent environmentalists, they are looking forward to new adventures.

Paul was a founding member of the Friends of Pheasant Branch and a member of our first Board of Directors. He is particularly proud of the Friends' success in restoring Conservancy lands and influencing local policy issues.

Paul also served Middleton as a member of the City Council from 1997 to 2005. While there, he served as an original member of the Conservancy Lands Committee and as Chair of the Public Works and Finance Commissions. In honoring Paul's service, the City recently proclaimed: "Now, therefore, we the Mayor and Council of the City of Middleton commend community volunteer and former Council member Paul Helgeson for his twelve years of outstanding public service, including eight years of elected service to the people of Middleton and especially to the seventh aldermanic district. On this day of August 18, 2009, we do hereby proclaim the exemplary work of Paul Helgeson and wish him well in all of his future endeavors as we express our appreciation for his excellent service representing the public interest in Middleton."

We are most grateful for Paul's significant contributions to the Friends of Pheasant Branch. He will continue his involvement with the Friends as an advisor.

Janet Kane

Pheasant Branch Conservancy was recently named one of the state's "Workhorse Wetlands." Janet Kane has been the "Workhorse Board Member" for the Friends organization. From keeping the mailing list updated, answering mail and emails, sending



The Friends extend a special thanks to Janet Kane for her dedication and work on the Kids for the Earth program.

thank you letters to contributors, pulling reed canary grass from the springs (pictured left), writing grants for restoration and education funding, and helping organize teacher field trips to the conservancy, Janet has done it all.

Janet Kane is a cum laude graduate of Knox College in Galesville, Illinois, who subsequently earned a PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She worked on curriculum development and evaluation at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at UW-Madison before retiring. A member of the Friends since 1995, Janet has built an award-winning environmental education program between the Friends of

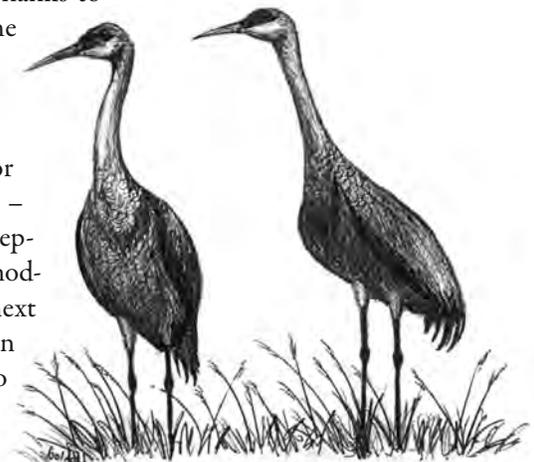
Pheasant Branch and the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District. Thousands of children have experienced the beauty of the conservancy and the miracle of nature because of Janet's outreach efforts.

Janet will be moving to New Jersey this fall with her husband Michael as he assumes a new position at Princeton University. The multi-tasking skill set and energy Janet brought to the Friends organization will be greatly missed, and it may take several people to try and "fill her gloves." We wish her the best, and she assures us she'll keep in touch.

Rick Kurz

Rick Kurz served as the Friends' treasurer for several years. During this period Rick wrestled with an increasingly complex budget and with a computerized bookkeeping program that would handle these complexities. While this activity was taking place, Rick also organized and ran our annual fundraiser at the Capital Brewery. Thanks to his efforts, the fundraiser has become a tradition in just three years.

We thank Rick for tackling a big job – bringing our bookkeeping system into the modern age. Our next treasurer will have an easier job thanks to Rick's hard work.





EDUCATION CORNER: Conservancy Days Program News

Fall Conservancy Days Calendar

By Colleen Robinson Klug

Frogs, night hikes, bird houses, leave no trace ethics and more have been fun and exciting topics so far this year on the third Thursday of the month. Join us at next month's program:

Live Birds-of-Prey – And Wonder!

Thursday, October 15, 2009

7:00 – 8:00 pm

Madison Christian Community, 7118
Old Sauk Road, Madison

Additional programs are in the works for Thursday, November 19 and December 17. Be sure to stay updated online at www.pheasantbranch.org. If you have ideas for future programs, please let Colleen know (see contact information below). We'll see you in the conservancy!

New Kids for the Earth Field Trips

Six new field trips are ready to go, thanks to a Wisconsin Environmental Education Board grant and several area teachers and naturalists who worked together to create them. These field trips are specifically designed to link to curricular units and classroom learning in the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, but the activities can be used with a variety of units.

The new field trips stress hands-on activities and complement FOSS units in grades K-5 – trees, soil, water, food webs, and landforms. With these new offerings, we hope to see many more classes using the conservancy to enrich and enhance learning.

To arrange for a field trip for your class, contact Colleen Robinson Klug, Education Coordinator, Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc., 608-231-6035 or education@pheasantbranch.org.

Professional Development Series

Learn about the conservancy and wildlife with these classes for teachers and informal educators:



Conservancy Days programs - like this summer program on soil science - are great opportunities for kids, families and teachers alike.

FREE Conservancy Bus Tour

Wednesday, September 23, 2009

4:00 – 6:30 pm

Meet at Northside Elementary School,
3620 High Road, Middleton

This year's bus tour will highlight and sample activities from the new field trips! Teachers can learn about what's available and explore connections between the conservancy and the curriculum.

Bird Smorgasbord

Thursdays, April 8, 15, and 22

4:00 – 8:00 pm

Middleton Alternative Senior High
School, 2429 Clark Street, Middleton

This year's professional development series will bring together some of the best bird resources out there! Flying Wild, One Bird Two Habitats, and projects from the International Crane Foundation and Audubon are all included! It's a custom made series to learn how birds can help us better understand our world on many levels! It is NOT about learning to identify all of the birds and bird calls. Learning about birds is a rich and diverse endeavor.

Next April, teachers can fly through this exhilarating world and land with some truly useful tools for their classrooms and outdoor spaces! Offered through the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District, this series is open to classroom teachers as well as naturalists and volunteers interested in environmental education programs.

Register for the professional development classes with Colleen Robinson Klug, Education Coordinator, Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Inc., 608-231-6035 or education@pheasantbranch.org, or through the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District at <http://www.mcpsd.k12.wi.us/prodev.classes.cfm>.

Bock Discovery Series

See page 5 for upcoming public events sponsored by the City of Middleton at the John C. Bock Community Forest.



GET OUT THERE: Field Trips & Volunteer Opportunities

Service to the Land: A Summer Intern's Experience

By Megan Goplin

In the prairie restoration business, it seems the buzz is about what's blooming in the grassland, or the latest method for successful weed control. This summer, however, Pheasant Branch was invaded by a new type of creature. You may have noticed them

in the prairie or along the slope of the drumlin, perhaps even near the springs or walking the trail, usually armed in some way with a weapon to use in the ongoing battle against invasive weeds.

So what were these less-than-elusive creatures wrecking havoc on the brush invading the prairie, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their path? This summer marked the first sighting of a crew of five interns at the Pheasant Branch Conservancy every Wednesday taking part in the volunteer coordinated prairie and oak savanna restoration.

As one of the five lucky students on the intern crew, I was thrilled to see Pheasant Branch listed as a work site—what a beautiful place to work! Each Wednesday we were warmly welcomed by site managers Susan Gruber and Janet Kane with the Friends of Pheasant Branch, and Don Ferber and Wayne Pauly with Dane County Parks; along with numerous eager volunteers. This truly set Pheasant Branch aside from the other sites we worked—how wonderful to be able to meet such interesting people!

Apart from the occasional bee sting, poi-



2009 Summer Interns: Matt Groshek, Jo Horton, Dylan Kirk, Jessica Buchberger, Megan Goplin.

all five interns when I say it was a real pleasure to work with the enthusiastic crew at Pheasant Branch this summer.

We will not likely forget the attention to teaching, delightful stories, positive attitude, and stellar baking skills of the crew. It is in this way I will take what may be the most valuable lesson I learned this summer while at Pheasant Branch: each individual has something unique to contribute to the collective well-being of all. And when applied to restoration, this fact helps explain the success of the conservancy through the continued work of its committed volunteer organization.

After twelve weeks of learning, I connected to this place, and even more so to its people. I extend a heartfelt thanks to the Friends of Pheasant Branch on behalf of those who enjoy Pheasant Branch, to the future volunteers and interns, and most especially the crew I worked with this summer. Your ongoing commitment to the conservancy is meaningful and greatly appreciated. It was bittersweet to see the end of the internship, but I hope to see many of you on the prairie!

son ivy run-in, or inconvenient stormy weather (the sort of thing that come hand in hand with this line of work) we took much enjoyment in working to maintain the natural integrity of this special place—and we were well rewarded for our labor. I speak for

Fall Work Parties

After a wonderful and productive summer with interns and other volunteers, we return to our fall schedule of work in the Conservancy. 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.

Thursdays 9:30 am – 12:30 pm:
October 1; November 5;
December 3
Brush cutting, etc.

Saturdays 9:00 – noon:
September 19, 26;
October 3, 17
Brush cutting, etc. working alongside high school students most of these dates.

Sign Up for Email

If you are NOT on our "Prairie" email list to receive a reminder of work sessions, additional work days or updates, please contact Susan Gruber at office@pheasantbranch.org, sgruber42@gmail.com or 836-3848 to be added to our email list. Volunteers are notified via email and signs along the trail. Join a fun group of hard-working people to care for this very special place.

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please contact: office@pheasantbranch.org by
email. Thank you.*

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Order Your 2010 Calendar Today!
Details & Order Form Inside . . .

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY
Fall & Winter Events 2009-10



Connect with Nature in Your Community

September 2009

- 23rd – Bus Tour for Educators (page 10)
- 26th – Work Party Day (page 11)

October

- 1st – Work Party Day (page 11)
- 3rd – Work Party Day (page 11)
- 11th – Bock Forest – Oak Savannas (page 5)
- 15th – Conservancy Days (page 10)
- 17th – Work Party Day (page 11)

November

- 5th – Work Party Day (page 11)
- 7th – Bock Forest – Forestry Day (page 5)
- 19th – Conservancy Days (page 10)

December

- 3rd – Work Party Day (page 11)
- 13th – Bock Forest – Winter Tree ID (page 5)
- 17th – Conservancy Days (page 10)

April 2010

- 8th, 15th, 22nd – Bird Smorgasbord for Educators (page 10)
- TBA – Bock Forest – Tree Planting (page 5)

www.pheasantbranch.org

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The Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy