



SPRINGS

Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Newsletter

Chinese Delegates Visit Conservancy's Springs

By Tom Bernthal

Two members of a delegation from the People's Republic of China spent one morning at the Frederick's Springs in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy, to learn how the state of Wisconsin monitors water quality and aquatic life in springs and streams.

After catching some frogs, several different minnow-sized fish, and a half dozen other aquatic insects and assorted critters at the springs they visited Black Earth Creek with scientists from the Department of Natural Resources.

It was a cold day, but the delegates were thrilled to get hands-on experience and were truly excited about what they found on the field trip and how Wisconsin monitors and manages its waters. Intrepid Friends volunteers, Tom Klein



Zhang Xiong, Tourism Administrator of Minhang District, Tom Bernthal of the DNR, and Wang Ninghong, Deputy Director, People's Government of Huacao Town, pose on the deck overlooking Frederick's Springs.

and Susan Gruber met the group and told the story of how we make things happen at the Conservancy.

"Joe" and "Grace," were part of a 19 person delegation of local officials from Shanghai and surrounding Districts, visiting Wisconsin to see how various state agencies do their work. "Joe" is Zhang Xiong, the Tourism Director for Minhang District and "Grace" is Wang Ninghong, the Deputy Director for Huacao Town, in Minhang District.

We had an interpreter with us, Xiaochun Zhang, a water resources engineer and water quality modeler in the DNR Research Bureau and Office of Great Lakes. At the end of the day they said the springs and streams field trip was the most memorable experience during their entire visit.

Annual Meeting January 21st

Morning includes breakfast, board elections, and Green Fire

Join the Friends on Saturday, January 21st from 9:00 AM to noon to celebrate another successful year of restoring and promoting the Pheasant Branch Conservancy!

This year, we will meet at the Branch Street Retreat (BSR) for a breakfast buffet of scrambled eggs, bacon, hashbrowns, toast and coffee. BSR is located on the corner of Century Ave and Branch St, across from the Conservancy.

After a brief business meeting and board elections, we will watch Green Fire, an Aldo Leopold documentary.

If the weather and snow conditions are good, bring your snowshoes to explore the Conservancy after the documentary.

The membership application on page 2 doubles as your RSVP form for this year's annual dinner, so be sure to respond by January 19th.

WINTER 2012

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Protect. Restore. Enjoy.



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends,

Winter is a time when we reflect on the past and look forward to the coming year. The Friends are no exception - we have been very busy "wrapping up" 2011 and "ringing in" 2012.

Thanks to your generous support, 2011 was a great year for the Friends. Membership is at an all-time high. Our restoration volunteer base and activities continue to grow, along with our K-12 and adult education programs. Close partnerships with the City of Middleton and Dane County resulted in both small and large improvements to the Conservancy, as well as restoration grants totaling \$25,000.

With your help, 2012 promises to be even better! We invite you to attend our 2012 annual meeting on Saturday, January 21, RSVP below. It is a casual, short gathering that will be held at the Branch Street Retreat, followed by the documentary Green Fire and winter activities in the Conservancy. We hope you take this opportunity to touch base with an old friend or meet a new one. Your participation is not only welcome, it is essential

to the future of the Friends!

I am pleased to inform you that our search for new board members has produced three very qualified candidates: Jane Cummings Carlson, Susan Vennard and Lyman Wible. Please peruse their bios, which are included on page 3.

While we are excited about new board members, we are sad to say "goodbye" to retiring members Brian Butler, Joleen Stinson and Dan Wisniewski. Their contributions are invaluable. While their presence will be missed at monthly meetings, all will continue to serve the Friends as advisors and committee members.

Once again, we thank you for your support of the Friends and the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. You are truly making a difference in your community by preserving this wonderful gem for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Dawn Meyer

OUR BOARD

President *Dawn Meyer* Vice President *Bruce Froehlke*

Treasurer *Hagen Hedfield* Secretary *Dale Klubertanz*

Board Members
Stefanie Brouwer, Brian Butler, Martin David, Susan Gruber, Emil Haney, Michael Knapstein, Mollie Rostad, Maureen Schwarz, Joleen Stinson, Deb Weitzel, Dan Wisniewski

Spring Editors
Joleen Stinson and Stefanie Brouwer

Spring Design
Jeffrey Potter

Illustrations/Photos
Xiaochun Zhang, Michael Knapstein, Debra Weitzel, Tom Klein, Susan Gruber, Colleen Robinson Klug

Send Newsletter Ideas to
office@pheasantbranch.org

Is your Membership Current?
The mailing name block on this newsletter includes your membership expiration date

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!

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Or pay securely with Visa or Mastercard:

Name: _____

Card Number: _____

Security Code: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Membership Level:

memberships purchased after 9/1 apply to following calendar year

- \$10 Student
- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family

Annual Meeting RSVP:

kindly respond by January 16th

Number of people:

_____ x \$5 ea = \$ _____

Additional Support:

- \$50 Contributor
- \$100 Sentinel
- \$250 Guardian
- \$500 Steward
- \$1000 Conservator
- \$1000+ Benefactor

Please send your membership and payment to:

FOPB
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562-8242

Picture-Perfect Event

By Michael Knapstein

Winners of the 2011 Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy Photography Contest were exhibited at Middleton Art and Framing (6771 University Ave) from December 2nd through December 16th. The exhibit opened with a reception on Friday, December 2nd where the capacity crowd enjoyed refreshments and mingled with the award-winning photographers.

Cash prizes of \$100 were presented to Katie Hunt (winner of the Youth Grand Prize and four First Place awards) and Nancy Korn (who won the Adult Grand Prize, one First Place and two Second Place awards). Diane Hammer was also recognized for winning the Board's Choice Award (in addition to one First Place and one Second Place award).

Additional winners include Michael Anderson (two First, two Second), Heidi Bachmeier (one First, two Second), Ruth Bachmeier (Third), Susan Ickstadt (First), Jennifer Peters (two Third), Dave Peterson (two Second, one Third), Margaret Peterson (Third), Tim Shultz (three First, one Second, one Third), Kurt Westbrook (two Third) and Nick Wilkes (First).



Youth Grand Prize winner Katie Hunt.



Adult Grand Prize winner Nancy Korn receives her \$100 prize from Joleen Stinson while sponsor Tom Crozier looks on.

Several photographs sold the evening of the opening reception. The remaining works will be displayed and available for purchase at the annual meeting on January 21st. The two Grand Prize winning photographs can be won through a raffle, with the winners being drawn at the annual meeting. Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$5 each or 3 tickets for \$10 from any board member and will also be available at the annual meeting. All proceeds from the sale of photographs and raffle tickets will help fund Friends education and restoration initiatives.

The Friends would like to thank Tom and Barb Crozier from the Picture Salon, Marty Smith from Middleton Art and Framing, and Colette Kolker of Clicks by Colette for sponsoring this year's contest. Thanks also go to our contest judges, Mike McDowell, Collette Kolker, Robin Kourakis, Holly Stoenner, Tom Jones, and Ed Grindle.

Plan now to enter the 2012 photo contest! Entries can be submitted online beginning at the end of January. Visit our website for more details.

Board of Director Nominations

Three new board members will be elected at our annual meeting January 21st

By Martin David

Three outstanding members will retire January 1st. Brian Butler and Dan Wisniewski served on a fund-raising team that worked with the Middleton Community Foundation and developed a link to the non-profit, Gathering Waters, who will aid in strategic planning next year. Both Brian and Dan will continue to advise on fund-raising, land acquisition, and long term planning. Thanks for your effort and continuing support.

Joleen Stinson has been invaluable in helping us to keep up a list of current and past members, edit the newsletters,

and create a better website. Joleen has agreed to continue on the Restoration and Management Committee and with the newsletter.

2012 Officers

The Board voted to present excellent candidates for our elected officers and board. Unanimous votes endorsed Dawn Meyer for President, Bruce Froehle for Vice-president, Dale Klubertanz for Secretary, and Maureen Schwartz for Treasurer.

Three new board members are slated for the open positions on our 15 member board.

Jane Cummings Carlson lives just north of Cross Plains with her husband. She currently works as a fitness instructor at Harbor Athletic Club. She recently retired from the WI Department of Natural Resources, forest health protection program. Forest health detects and manages invasive plants, insects, and diseases on all non-federal forestlands of the state. She worked 33 years in the program. At first she served as the state forest pathologist. Later she coordinated the program. Work entailed partnerships with private and government groups. She had the privilege of serving on the Cross

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NATURALIST NOTEBOOK: News of Nature in the Conservancy

A Final Season

By Dale Klubertanz

A swift, windy September quickly laid bare the trees of summer as the change of seasons swept over the Conservancy. Still a steadfast autumn, with its open transparent and muted landscapes, lasted long inside the dominion of this year's early winter months. Drawn to the outdoors and into the woods by a windfall of summer-like days and moderate temperatures, visitors joined the daily transformation of native communities as they played out their preparation for the waning warmth and sunlight. An early snow came and promptly melted away to avail an open access along the gravel and dirt trails of this weathered browning wilderness. By October every creature, tree and plant in the Conservancy was busy putting its fall affairs in order.

With an instinctual certainty, the teeming

of migratory birds could be seen and heard overhead and aground as they began their journeys in September. Now in November and December the forest,

Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. " -John Muir

prairies and wetlands are almost quiet. Only the calls of the most northern commuters remain as they pass through on a valued rest stop, finding open water and food in the conservancy wetlands as an invitation to prolong their stay. The excited raucous presence of the omnivorous Sandhill Crane and noisy flocks of herbivorous Canada geese filled the open watery grasslands with extra-seasonal joy, heard long into the last remaining months of the year. As the wetlands became frozen or things

to eat turned thin, these holdovers were finally sent further southward for more hospitable surroundings, inching closer to their winter destinations with each stopover.

As one more cycle of seasons yields into winter, the wilderness habitats of the Conservancy are left again to the creatures that opt to tough

it out, with opportunities to prosper among the slimmer pickings of the now sparse landscape. Members of the human community venturing from the comfort of their homes will likewise benefit from the more silent, intimate and expansive experience of wintertime, hearing the final refrains of a dialogue that began in spring. Absorbed into the special wonder of winter by both its affinity and vastness, they can almost forget that it will all begin again with a turn of a season.

Fighting Aquatic Invasives at the Springs and Wetlands

By Tom Bernthal

The Friends received a DNR Aquatic Invasives Control Planning Grant to develop a plan to control aquatic invasive plants in the Dane County portion of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

Volunteers have spent many hours attacking the most visible problem areas around the springs. Reed canary grass monopolizes the wetland around the springs. It is gradually choking out all but the hardiest native plants. European watercress has completely covered the surface of some of the smaller spring boils. Volunteer efforts have had short term success, but will need to be repeated every year, unless a more comprehensive approach can be developed.

The grant was used to hire an experienced restoration firm, Integrated Restoration to analyze the site and make detailed



A volunteer pulls watercress right out of the spring.

recommendations with a timetable over a 5 year period for implementation. If the plan is favorably reviewed by the DNR aquatic invasives program, it will likely form the basis for a follow-up grant to fund the actual control activities.

Initial recommendations call for careful spot treatments using a grass-specific herbicide to control reed canary grass. These treatments need an Aquatic Plant Management permit which requires specific methods to protect the aquatic life at the springs and downstream. Fortunately the hand-mowing we have done over the past 3 years has removed much of the thick "thatch" of dead grass that builds up and shades out growth of

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Aquatic Invasives...

Continued from page 4

native plants. Since reed canary starts growing earlier in the season than most native plants, it can be treated without harming native sedges and grasses that are present in the area. Reed canary grass will still sprout from untreated underground rhizomes and from seed present in the wetland soil, so multiple years of treatment are required. The trick will be to time the treatments when maximum damage can be done to reed canary just before native plants put out their spring growth spurt.

In the springs themselves, some of the smaller “boils” have become virtually invisible due to a thick over-growth of European watercress. This is the same plant we value for watercress salad, but if left unchecked it will cover all but the most vigorous of the springs. Fortunately

it is easy to pull and this year a group of Middleton area high school students dedicate several Sunday afternoons to



This pickerel frog was found by a Middleton High School student during a fall workday removing watercress.

pulling enough for many pounds of salad!

The good news from this effort is that students encountered many pickerel frogs, some interesting minnow-sized stickleback fish, and some fierce looking predacious diving beetles. They also learned how to identify a special native plant, round-leaved monkey-flower, that is growing in the rocky areas at the head of the springs. We expect it will benefit from our careful removal of competitive watercress.

There are other plants and specific areas of the County Conservancy wetlands that will also be addressed in this plan, such as invasive shrubs, hybrid cattail and giant reed grass. The report is to be received by the end of 2011.

Board Nominations...

Continued from page 3

Plains library board for many years. She enjoys many walks and runs through the Conservancy and is excited to have opportunities to shape future projects.

Susan Vennard considers herself lucky to be living near the Conservancy in Middleton Hills. She has been a prairie restoration volunteer for 10 years. Recently Susan was certified to participate in prairie burns. She has worked with the Friends of Brooklyn Wildlife Refuge, along the Ice Age Trail, and with the Friends of Pheasant Branch. She believes that the whole community benefits from beautiful, healthy, green spaces. She is excited to work with the Friends of Pheasant Branch towards that end!

Lyman F. Wible lives in Northlake Subdivision with his wife Lyn, with three adult children in nearby communities. He is a certified engineer who practiced his skills during a 40 year career. His specialties included environmental management, water resources, environmental regulation, and industrial consulting. He serves on an advisory

committee to the DNR Secretary. The committee oversees the Green Tier Program for excellence in environmental management. Lyman served several terms on the Board of the Friends of the UW Arboretum, and enjoys outdoor activities in the Conservancy and elsewhere.

Updating the Bylaws

Members at the annual meeting must vote to approve changes in the by-laws.

We need to start the process of selecting candidates for the Board and officers earlier. That provides members with timely information about candidates.

The Board unanimously approved the following amendment to the duties of the governance committee:

“The Governance Committee shall consist of three or more members of the Board of Directors. This committee shall be responsible for Board assessment, training and nomination of new Board members. The governance committee shall nominate candidates for the offices

of President, Secretary, Vice-President, and Treasurer. The governance committee shall submit its nominations to the Board at least 2 months prior to the annual meeting.”

The by-law for the governance committee allows for nominations by any member.

“All nominations shall be from the membership of the Corporation. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the slate of nominees for officers shall be submitted to the full membership at least 21 days prior to the annual meeting of the membership. Additional nominations may be made by submitting the name of a member in good standing, in writing and signed by five or more members in good standing, to the President, at least 10 days prior to the annual meeting. If no additional nominations are submitted, the slate of candidates will be elected at the annual meeting without ballot. If additional nominations are received, the elections shall be conducted at the annual meeting by secret ballot.”



EDUCATION CORNER:

Kids for the Earth Program News

Year in Review

By Colleen Robinson Klug
With Gratitude...

Financial support from grants and gifts helped us reach our goals for 2011. The money allowed us to tackle challenges of a growing program and think into the future.

Thank you to our grantors, for your vision, your work, for supporting us and including us as a partner toward an even better tomorrow: Besadny Grant by the Natural Resources Foundation, Middleton Community Endowment Fund grant, and Middleton High School Ecology Club.

Thanks to all Friends, especially those who give directly to education. Finally, board members, community members, and other organizations who volunteer their time, skills, and programs in partnership with us.

School Field Trips

Nearly 800 students in grades K-5 enjoyed educational experiences in the Conservancy in 2011. Supplementing classroom studies, these field trips offer concrete, real world examples and context for learning. They give meaning to the concepts so important to understanding our world and our relationship to it.

Field trips are led by professional naturalists. Six who have been leading trips for us for several years helped train ten new naturalists last spring. Now we can fulfill more requests for field experiences and have a strong seal of approval by teachers who have seen these talented naturalists work.

Transportation funds for field trips are still hard to come by. Besides working to create relevant programming for additional grade levels, the cost of transportation remains our biggest challenge.

Staff Development Offerings For Teachers

Our Education for Sustainability courses for teachers and naturalists were cancelled due to low enrollment in 2011. We are exploring the reasons for this, as well as what our role and possibilities are in the future. We are dedicated to partnering with the teachers to provide outdoor experiences for students. We will keep that in mind while evaluating our options for 2012. Email your ideas education@pheasantbranch.org.

Conservancy Days

235 people joined us during our eight Conservancy Day Programs in 2011. Our email list grew by 60 people! The eight-month schedule worked and we will do it again in 2012. If you have program ideas, email education@pheasantbranch.org.

2011 programs included: 2 bird hikes with Mike McDowell, Native Forest Blooms, Pheasant Branch Conservancy ROCKS - geology program, A Prairie Photo Walking Tour, Prairie Lore Program by Wayne Pauly, Green Fire Documentary of Aldo Leopold, and Universe In The Park - star gazing.

Coming up in 2012...

Nature Net

Thursday, March 15, 2012

6:30 - 7:30 PM

Middleton Alternative Senior High School

Children under 12 need an adult chaperone but are more than welcome to join the fun!

Discover how you can help scientists, conservationists, city planners, and even your best friend understand more about the Conservancy's wildlife. Nature Net is a fun and easy

way for anyone to enter wildlife observation records online. This information is used by community members who want to know what there is to see. It is also used by wildlife ecologists at the DNR who make plans and programs for wildlife safety and management.

Flying High

Thursday, April 19, 2012

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Meet at the Dane County Pheasant Branch Road entrance

Join renowned bird enthusiast Mike McDowell for an enchanted hike. Bring your binoculars, or let us know if you need to borrow some. Plan to crane your neck toward the sky in awe of hundreds of active birds that are back to sing songs of a warming season.

Also on the planning board are another archeological hike by the Wisconsin Historical Society, more butterfly hikes (not usually on an official Conservancy Day Thursday), a fun fungus walk and more!



Nearly 50 cub scouts and their parents visited the Conservancy to learn about its amazing features.



GET OUT THERE: Restoration Volunteer Opportunities

Restoration Activities Year-Round

By Susan Gruber

Restoration work slows as the weather cools, but it never stops. Even when the weather is cold, windy, and dark, volunteers show up. I have figured out some people love to work when it is warm and others enjoy the cool days. Just when we don't expect anyone to show up, we have a great group of people ready to work!

This fall we worked on the west side of the hill, clearing sumac and honeysuckle. The wonderful oaks are beginning to stand out after being surrounded by thick undergrowth for years. Our hope is that if we get a fire through the area in the spring, native plants will emerge. The piles of brush are being prepared for winter burns, all we need is snow.

Several projects are underway. Through our REI grant, five interpretive signs were designed: local Native American Indian mounds, prescribed fire as a management tool, the oak savanna, invasive plants and prairie restoration. Watch for them in the spring. The signs have website references so visitors can find out more from their phones while reading the signs or from their computers at a later time. Dynamic signs will keep the information current for the curious Conservancy visitor.

A group of high school students along with Deb Weitzel attended a restoration class at the Arboretum last summer. They are now working around the springs. Along with Tom Bernthal and Tom Klein,

the students spent several days hauling reed canary and other invasives out of the springs. This led to discovering many aquatic insects, frogs, minnows, etc.

We are hopeful that the ravine restoration project will happen in the spring. This project will clean up the gully along the eastern boundary.



The Watson family works together to collect prairie seeds during the REI workday.

It is currently filled with burdock where birds fly into and are unable to free themselves. It will require many years of managing once the area is cleared. The area would be a wonderful place for the Northlake Neighborhood Association or a group of friends to adopt.

Several Restoration and Management committee members did a "walk-around" with Wayne Pauly in November. We are putting together a 5 year restoration project plan. This should help develop a realistic budget and a plan for fundraising to accomplish the projects. Since most of the work in the County section of the Conservancy is done by our volunteers, a plan will help prioritize our efforts and help determine which projects will need to be contracted out.

There are no scheduled work days in January and February. However, we plan to continue our work during those months. An announcement/reminder will be sent to people on our email list, see sidebar to be added to the list. Regular first Wednesday and third Saturday workdays will begin again in March.

UPCOMING WORK PARTIES

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

Responsibilities include invasive plant control, seed collecting & spreading, etc.

Wednesdays, 9:00 AM – noon
March 7, April 4 and May 2

Saturdays, 9:00 AM – noon
March 17

April 14*, 21, & 28*
May 5* & 19*

*with Middleton High School students

No experience needed, just a desire to clear invasive plants and give back to a place you enjoy.

Meet at the Pheasant Branch Dane County Parking Lot

1.2 miles north of Century Ave on Pheasant Branch Rd, unless instructed otherwise. (fire number 4864)

Additional work days are periodically scheduled. Contact Susan Gruber at office@pheasantbranch.org or call 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.

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

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FRIENDS OF PHEASANT BRANCH
CONSERVANCY, INC.
P.O. Box 628242
Middleton, WI 53562-8242

*To receive a paperless newsletter or be removed
from the mailing list, please contact:
office@pheasantbranch.org. Thank you!*

RSVP for the Annual Meeting Breakfast By January 19th
Details on the cover, RSVP page 2 . . .

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY WINTER AND SPRING 2012 EVENTS



CONNECT WITH NATURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

JANUARY

21st - Annual Meeting Breakfast (RSVP page 2)

FEBRUARY

Get outside and enjoy the Conservancy!

MARCH

7th, 17th - Restoration Work Parties (page 7)
15th - Conservancy Day (page 8)

APRIL

4th, 14th, 21st, 28th - Restoration Work Parties (page 7)
19th - Conservancy Day (page 8)

MAY

2nd, 5th, 19th - Restoration Work Parties (page 7)

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.pheasantbranch.org

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