

2022 Annual Report

Forest Restorations

APF volunteers worked throughout the year to cut, remove, and burn invasive plants such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multi-flora rose. The organization held 11 workdays on the second Saturday of each month. In addition, small teams of 2-4 people worked on an ad hoc schedule. Two partner events were held with Boy Scout Troops 168 and 50 on April 9th and August 16th, 2022. Major progress was made in the Sholts Forest restoration.

Arthur Sholts Memorial Forest

1. **Picnic Area:** General maintenance of weeds and grass was completed throughout the year.
2. **Shady Grove:** General maintenance was completed throughout the year. The grass was cut twice during 2022.
3. **Ridgeview Lane Entrance Area:** The area was maintained throughout the year. Annual flowers were added for color. APF received many complements.
4. **Sholts Memorial Forest:** APF volunteers worked on a variety of projects. The first project was a major effort to target female box elder trees. The second project was the planting of woodland flowers along trails. The wild ginger patch (near Ridgeview Entrance) was expanded. The third project included the removal of invasive trees and shrubs from the northern tree line (adjacent to Village of Oregon boundary). The fourth projects focused removing brush around oak trees and planting 8 oak trees (white, red, burr) on October 8, 2022.
5. The **Porta San** door has been broken since May 2022. Repairs and/or replacement of the unit/door is pending.
6. **DCP Friends Grant.** A Dane County Parks (DCP) grant funded a contract with Arbor Systems to remove over 40 stumps and cut down two large cottonwood trees.
7. **Dane County Chainsaw Day:** The event was held on March 4, 2022, in the Sholts forest. Female box elder trees and other invasive plants were cut, moved, and burned. Over 35 trees were cut to create a oak woodland space.
8. **West Woods (45 acres) & Adjacent General Area:** Several meetings were held during 2022. The goal was to discuss restoration tasks for a 1–5-year period. The APF Board recommended a hybrid approach to match the layout of oaks in the forest. This includes more of an oak woodlot approach at the western portion and development of a gradual transition to an oak savannah at the eastern portion. The oak savannah would extend into the adjacent leased farm field (last phase) to increase the size of the oak savannah. The project would extend over multiple years and the work would be completed in increments. DCP and contracted staff (forester, logger) would do large tree removal and heavy-duty work. APF's role is like APF's activities in Sholts Forest. Limited work will focus on the wetlands area (location of APF trail camera). The overall project will need to include access to the western acreage of the park and parking off Locust Grove Road.
9. **Turf Trails (West of Union Road)** Our goal called for a 12-foot strip of turf next to the agricultural crops. In several areas, crops were planted too close to the boundary and resulted in no turf trail. Improvement needed for 2023.
10. APF collaborated with Scout Troop 168 to develop a small camp site. The site was used in September 2022.

Prairies

1. **Sholts Prairie.** APF volunteers worked with DCP staff on spring maintenance and throughout the summer to remove invasive weeds. Excellent growth occurred in 2022. APF coordinated prairie seed collection activities with DCP volunteers.
2. **Sholts Prairie Extension.** The first year of planting seeds showed very good results in 2022. The removal of 18-22 trees from the tree line east of the Sholts Prairie will benefit the overall goal of better nesting habitat for birds.
3. **Triangle Prairie.** (11 acres) The 2022 land management plan set a goal of planting seed in January 2025. DCP is to ask farmer to have soybeans planted in 2024. APF would like to schedule this on the DCP work plan.
4. **Native Plant-Savannah Project.** APF planted prairie seed in the parcel just East of Union Rd in the northwest corner of the Sholts forest on December 8, 2019. General maintenance was done in 2022. No activity planned for 2023.

5. **Prairie Seed Collection.** APF partnered with DCP staff to collect prairie seeds from August through October. Five volunteer events were conducted. APF continued its annual event on October 15, 2022, with 30 National Honor Society students from the Oregon High School. Ten APF volunteers supported the event.
6. **Dog Park Prairie Progress.** See below.

Dog Park

The Dog Park-Bike Path project was completed and opened on November 30, 2021. The official grand opening was held on May 19, 2022. The event was attended by over 150 people and numerous dogs. It was very successful. Many compliments have been received since December 2021.

This was the third year of growth for the prairie. APF volunteers worked with DCP staff on spring maintenance and throughout the summer to remove invasive weeds. Excellent growth occurred in 2022. APF coordinated separate prairie seed collection activities with DCP sponsored work events and staff. Operation Fresh Start also contributed work time at the dog park.

APF will assist DCP with maintenance in 2023.

Rain Garden and Native Plant Projects

In 2022, APF expanded the number of native plant gardens from 12 to 16. The most noticeable garden was the new one established at the Main Street walk-in park entrance. Funding from the Native Plant Society of WI was partially used to support the cost of planting. Other sources of plants were "Plant Dane program," and Prairie Moon Nursery purchases. Also, individual donations were received from APF volunteers as well as plants from the Wisconsin Fox Lake Correctional Institution created the beds. The types of gardens include rain gardens (2), monarch garden, perennial and prairie plants. Many plants are considered pollinators. All gardens will be maintained in 2023. One or two new beds will be established in 2023 for the purpose of raising prairie plant plugs. APF volunteers are coordinating activities with DCP staff. A 2022 summary report is available upon request.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens (OBG) Tour Partnership, July 8 & 9, 2022

Each year OBG sponsors a home garden tour consisting of five home gardens, within in one community, in Dane County. In 2022, they organized the tour in Oregon. OGB offered a partnership with APF. The APF Board accepted. Anderson Farm County Park became the 6th site. They featured the park in over 20,000 wrap-around flyers with the WI State Journal, 1500 tour maps, and various social media activities. APF hosted an information station and facilitated a "self-guided" walking tour of the Sholts Forest and Prairie. Over 226 people used the station and took a tour of the Sholts forest and prairie as well as nearby native plant gardens.

Pollinator Garden

APF maintained the pollinator garden (southeast corner of the Sholts Prairie) and an informational sign during 2021. The burr oak planted in 2019 is in excellent condition. Upkeep of the garden will continue in 2022.

Bird & Bat Habitat

1. **Blue Bird Trail.** APF maintained a blue bird trail consisting of 24 houses in 2022. APF fledged 48 bluebirds. The trail was maintained by APF volunteers. The results were reported to the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. APF recommends creating a sign for the bluebird trail and to name it the "Ames-Anderson Bluebird Trail."
2. **Wood Duck House.** The house is located near the wetlands in the west part of the park fledged 4 wood ducks.
3. **Kestrel Houses.** APF managed 4 kestrel houses. APF worked with the Audubon society to tag some of the birds.
4. **Bat Houses** APF managed 4 bat houses.

Educational & Outreach Events

1. **Maple Syrup Event,** APF needed to cancel the 2022 event because of the bad weather and conditions at the park. Plans for 2023 will be discussed in February with the Brooklyn Elementary School. Generally, this is a 90-minute experience held twice in early March. The event is instructed by Gene Berman, permit holder for maple syrup tapping at the park. The past events have been very successful. Activities and plans depend on DCP and Oregon School District guidelines for group events.

2. **Arbor Day-Forest Education.** APF conducted an event on April 29th. Over 60 six graders attended. The event was co-sponsored with Dane County Parks and Arbor Systems (AS). AS staff led the 5 educational stations on trees. The event was very successful.
3. **Candlelight Walk & Bonfire.** APF cancelled the November 5, 2022, event due to bad weather conditions such as high winds and a storm. This was not conducive to group events and safe fire conditions. APF hopes to partner again on November 4, 2023, with the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Oregon Wellness Coalition.
4. **Snapshot Wisconsin.** For the third year, APF was a local observation station for a Wisconsin DNR citizen science project. APF collaborated with Snapshot Wisconsin to monitor wildlife by the West.

Art and Public Information

Fairy Door Project. APF implemented a unique art project in 2022 entitled the "Woodland Fairy Door Trail." It is in the Sholts Memorial Forest. It consists of 13 art objects. The objects include a part of a house and a fairy sitting in the front stoop of the house. They are attached to trees about 7 feet off the ground. Plans are being discussed to increase the number of fairy doors. The project is to encourage families to bring their children out to the park and take a walk looking for the fairies. It is a seasonal project (March to middle of December).

Rock Art Project. APF implemented a second project to encourage families to use the park. The project was kicked off on May 6, 2022, with an event attended by 150 people. Seven businesses donated door prizes. It consists of 26 rocks (one for each letter of the alphabet) to be painted with a graphic corresponding to a letter of the alphabet. For example, an eagle for the letter e. Rocks were placed along hiking trails in the Arthur Sholts Memorial Forest. Nineteen local artists contributed their talents and painted the rocks. Additional ideas are being discussed for an expansion of this project.

Interpretative Signs. DCP staff are collaborating with a new graphic designer and printer. The project is still pending.

Anderson Farm Center (Agriculture)

Irrigation. APF and Rooted solved the "access to water" problem that existed for the last three years. The new agriculture well and pump house were used in 2022 to support the installation of a new irrigation system. The installation was completed by July 15, 2022. The underground irrigation system serves 12 acres of land.

We worked with Rooted (our partner) and installed the new irrigation system in early July. The system works very well. The system has a combination of equipment for garden hoses and can also manage up to 2-inch hoses. Individuals leasing garden plots are responsible for moving water within their garden plot.

Funds raised during 2021 through grants and donations were used to pay for the related expenses. Many favorable comments were received. Access to water was a major reason for the success of the food pantry garden. It was a "lifesaver" during July's hot spell.

Community Gardens

During 2022, APF worked with Rooted (Manager of the gardens) to maintain the community garden program (23 gardens). Sixteen plots were tended by Hmong grower or families and leased through limited agreements. Most gardeners have expressed an interest in returning for the 2023 season. APF's pantry garden is one of the gardens.

Food Pantry Garden

In 2022, APF maintained a food pantry garden consisting of an in-ground garden and eight raised beds. APF partnered with the Oregon Area Food Pantry (OAFP) to grow fresh produce. Over 3,000 pounds of fresh produce (22 vegetable varieties) grown for three food pantries. The three pantries are in Oregon, Belleville, and Verona. A new relationship was started with Little John's kitchen. They donated 400 square feet of refrigerated warehouse space off Greenway Cross Road, Fitchburg enabling APF to store onions and squash. Volunteers provided 640 hours of time towards this project.

Eagle Scouts. During 2022, one eagle boy scout project was completed by Tyler Richter. Tyler, other scouts, parents, and friends built a 3-bin compost station. Each bin is 6 feet by 6 feet and 5 feet high and located in the food pantry garden. The workmanship was very high. The group donated over \$800 for the cost of this project.

APF maintained a community orchard of 20 trees (10 apple and 10 peach) They were planted in 2021.

APF continued as an affiliated garden within the Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens Association. They provided free seeds again in 2022.

Notable details include:

1. The Oregon High School (OHS) Future Farmers of America (FFA) students and Jillian Beatty, FFA teacher grew vegetable seedlings for APF to use.
2. The Oregon High School girls cross country team provided 6 volunteers for work events on four occasions.
3. APF harvested 30 lbs. of peaches from our new community orchard. (No apples this year. We expect an apple harvest in 2023)
4. We purchased and plowed into the soil about \$1,700 of compost (Keleny-Purple Cow). It seems to make a substantial difference.
5. APF planted three of our raised beds (three out of eight) in asparagus and raspberries.
6. APF started a second crop in early August of spinach, peas, and radishes.

805 House

APF volunteers continued their monitoring of the house, spring house, and surrounding grounds throughout 2022. Equipment and tools are stored in the basement and garage. The garage is at capacity. The house was vacated in 2014 and is need of repair. APF volunteers also cut tall grass and weeds adjacent to the community and food pantry garden plots. APF maintained three flower beds around the house.

Administration

General

1. **New Horizons Project.** APF started a new fundraising project entitled the New Horizons Project. The project was initiated by an anonymous donor who offered a “dollar for dollar” match on any funds APF raised before 12/31/22. APF raised \$10,000. It was matched by the donor on January 3, 2023, with a \$10,000 check. Funds will be focused on infrastructure for the park. The total amount of donations is \$20,000.
2. The APF Board met with DCP staff via Zoom on February 4, 2022, to review the accomplishments of 2021 and make plans for 2022. The meeting reviewed key items from the 2021 land management plan.
3. APF Board meetings (12) were held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. All meetings were held in either Zoom and in person formats. Minutes and treasurer reports are available upon request.
4. APF’s Annual Meeting was held in person on September 21, 2022. Andy Hoernemann was elected Vice-president for a 3-year term. Nancy Murphy was elected for a 3-year term as Secretary. The attendees heard a very interesting presentation from Michele Manske, Savannah Institute, on the topic of agroforestry. Progress reports were provided by Roe Parker, APF, and Joleen Stinson, Dane Co. Parks on 2021-2022 accomplishments. Potential activities for 2022-2023 were also discussed.
5. APF collaborated with Lars Higdon and Shane Otto to develop our fourth land management work plan. The meeting was conducted on January 3, 2022. A 2023 plan is being worked on.
6. APF was featured in 13 newspaper articles during 2022. (Oregon Observer).
7. APF maintained a website with information and calendar events. The site was used to collect donations.
8. APF successfully used Facebook to keep members and the public informed of APF activities.
9. APF published 8 newsletters (online and email) to members, press, and interested stakeholders. The newsletters averaged a 49% readership. APF received several complements about their newsletters.
10. APF’s financial foundation is solid for 2023.

Volunteers & Membership

- A. APF memberships for 2022 peaked at **237 members**.
- B. The total number of 2022 volunteer hours (All activities): **3,900 hours**.

5-Year Summary

2018 - 1,825 volunteer hours
2019 - 2,950 volunteer hours
2020 - 2,700 volunteer hours
2021 - 3,300 volunteer hours
2022 - 3,900 volunteer hours