

The Cherokee Marsh News

The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund Established

Jan Axelson

We are fortunate to have over 2000 acres of land in public ownership in and around Cherokee Marsh. These lands are home to native plant communities such as sedge meadow, tallgrass and wet prairie, rare fens, and oak openings.

But along with the land comes responsibility. Maintaining and restoring native landscapes requires ongoing management to clear invasives; conduct prescribed burns to benefit native, fire-tolerant species; restore formerly drained wetlands; and plant degraded areas to natives.

As public money for conservation decreases, private funding to support this work becomes ever more crucial.

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh directors have long been thinking about how to provide a permanent, sustainable source of funding to support conservation at Cherokee Marsh. While funding from sources such as grants is helpful, we wanted something more long term.

So we talked with land managers, Friends groups around the state, and others who have experience with fund-raising. And we found a way to help.

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh are proud to announce that we have established the *Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund* to support the management, protection, conservation, restoration and appreciation of Cherokee Marsh and its watershed.

With contributions from you and others who love Cherokee Marsh, the fund will provide a permanent source of money for restoration at Cherokee Marsh.

Why Funding Is Needed

An example of where funding is needed is the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area (SNA). The DNR has designated 325 acres in Cherokee Marsh as an SNA because it is an outstanding example of Wisconsin's native landscape of natural communities.

The SNA's sedge meadows are a mosaic of grass-like sedges and colorful wetland flowers. The SNA also contains a fen, which is a groundwater-fed wetland and

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Without prescribed burns to emulate the naturally occurring fires of the past, the sedge meadows of Cherokee Marsh would not thrive. Photo by Janet Battista.

**The Friends of Cherokee Marsh
are an
award-winning group!
(See page 2)**

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Conservation Fund

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the rarest wetland plant community in Wisconsin.

Prescribed burns and other management activities for the SNA cost a minimum of \$12,000 per year. In recent years, the Dane County Airport has provided funding for the SNA as part of the project to realign County HWY CV to extend the runway safety area. But that funding has run out.

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund can help to fill the gap and ensure that this area remains the high quality wetland it is.

How It Works

To start the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, we established an *Acorn* fund with an initial contribution of \$1000 to the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. We chose to work with the Natural Resources Foundation because of their dedication to natural resources in Wisconsin and their experience in managing funds like ours.

The Natural Resources Foundation will manage the fund's money through their Wisconsin Conservation Endowment, which is a permanently endowed, professionally managed fund made up of dozens of targeted, individual funds invested and managed as a whole.

On reaching \$10,000, the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund will begin to make annual distributions from earnings to support conservation at Cherokee Marsh. Each year, Natural Resources Foundation staff will consult with the managers of the public lands to decide the best use for the distributions

As the fund grows, so will the annual distributions. In this way, the fund provides a permanent source of funding for conservation.



We were honored to receive Madison Parks' Volunteer Group of the Year award at the volunteer celebration on March 4 at Bolz Conservatory. From left, Jan Axelson, Parks Director Kevin Briski, Janet Battista, Jim Hughes, Muriel Simms, Lydia Maurer, Paul Noeldner. Photo by Madison Parks.

How to Contribute

We are counting on our members to provide generous support for this new fund. Your contribution will help to quickly bring the fund up to and beyond the \$10,000 needed for the fund to begin paying annual distributions to support conservation at Cherokee Marsh.

If you love and enjoy Cherokee Marsh, help us meet our goal. You can donate online or by phone or mail. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible.

- **Donate online** through the Natural Resources Foundation at wisconservation.org. Select **Donate Now**, then **Support an Endowed Fund**. Under **Program Designation**, select **Endowed Fund**, and in the box below **Enter the Fund Name here**, enter **Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund**.
- **Mail a check** to Natural Resources Foundation, Attn: Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, PO Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701.
- **Donate by phone**. Call the Natural Resources Foundation at (866) 264-4096.
- **Donate through the Friends of Cherokee Marsh**. Use the form on the last page of this newsletter or just enclose a note that the money is for the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund. We will forward the donation to the Natural Resources Fund.

We very much appreciate any donation amount!

Questions? Natural Resources Foundation staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Call (866) 264-4096 or email info@wisconservation.org.

Celebrate Cherokee Marsh

Join us on Earth Day, Monday, April 22 at 4 pm to celebrate 363 acres added to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park since 2008. We'll be giving special recognition to those who helped make the land acquisitions happen.

Meet at the Wheeler Triangle at the corner of Wheeler Rd. and Comanche Way. From downtown, take N. Sherman Ave. north. At Wheeler Rd., turn left and travel 1/2 mile to the corner of Comanche Way.

Local Students Help with Restoration Project

Tim Nelson

On February 15, students from Shabazz City High School's "Project Green Team" and volunteers from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh (FOCM) removed trees and brush from an ecologically sensitive area of Cherokee Marsh. This part of the marsh, north of Dane County Airport and west of VFW Post 8433, is managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The area where the work took place is called a "calcareous fen." The U.S. Geological Survey says that this type of fen is "the rarest wetland plant community in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and probably one of the rarest in North America." The unique mixture of minerals in the groundwater creates an alkaline soil that is favored by a select group of plants.

The DNR actively manages this area by cutting trees and brush, removing invasive species of plants, and setting controlled fires. Jared Urban, the DNR volunteer coordinator, was in charge of the work party. He and volunteers from FOCM cut trees and brush with chainsaws while the Shabazz students used hand saws and loppers and stacked the brush into piles. In the spring the area will



DNR Volunteer Coordinator Jared Urban, second from left, tells students about the marsh. Photo by Peter Fee.

be burned, and the rare native plants will have a better chance for survival.

A version of this article appeared in the Northside News.

Oak Woodland Restoration Begun at South Unit

(Adapted from the informational sign at the site.)

This winter, Madison Parks began work on an oak woodland habitat restoration as part of the continuing restoration of the area around the new stormwater ponds north of Wheeler Rd. between School Rd. and Comanche Way.

A Parks crew used a forestry mower, which is designed to move and chip brush and trees less than six inches in diameter. The species targeted for control were buckthorn, honeysuckle, and small box elder saplings. Patches of native shrubs remained.

The forestry mowing was the first step in a comprehensive adaptive restoration process. A prescribed burn this spring will consume much of the "stringy" wood chips. Exotic shrubs that may regrow after the fire will be treated with a spot application of herbicide.

Then the area will be planted with native grass, sedge, and forb seeds. In time, the area will support a diverse oak woodland community. Openings in the forest canopy will allow for natural regeneration of hickory and oak trees. The increase in plant diversity will increase the diversity of wildlife species using the restored habitat.

Park staff first learned of forestry mowing as a land management practice about 10 years ago. The Wisconsin DNR has used forestry mowing to restore over 1000 acres of wet prairie and oak savanna in the Southern Kettle

Moraine Forest. Other organizations using this method of land management include The Nature Conservancy, Prairie Enthusiasts, United State Fish and Wildlife Service, and many private landowners with natural areas.



Keep in touch!

Email group - news and discussion

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/cherokeemarsh

Facebook page - news

www.facebook.com/friends.of.cherokee.marsh

Facebook group - photos, open discussion

www.facebook.com/groups/cherokee.marsh

Events Calendar

Directions to locations follow the event listings.

Scatter Seeds in an Oak Opening

April, date and time to be announced

Help scatter grass and flower seeds in a restoration of an open oak woodland. Date and time will be posted on our website, Facebook pages, and email group.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

Help with a Prairie Burn

Saturday, April 6, 10 am, may work through lunch

Help with a prescribed burn of the restored prairie in Yahara Heights County Park. Bring drinking water and wear appropriate clothing (no nylon or flammable synthetics) and hat. Sponsored by Dane County Parks with the Adult Conservation Team. To sign up, call Wayne Pauly at 608-245-6898.

Yahara Heights County Park

Garlic Mustard Pull

Sunday, April 7, 2013, noon – 3 pm

Help pull invasive garlic mustard in the woods. Sponsored by the Madison Area Weed Warriors

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

Celebrate Cherokee Marsh

Monday, April 22, 4 pm

Corner of Wheeler Rd. and Comanche Way.

See page 2 for details.

Help Plant Trees and Shrubs

Saturday, April 27, 9 am – noon

Celebrate Earth Day by helping plant, mulch, and water 339 bare-root native shrubs and 22 oak trees in the restoration area surrounding the new stormwater ponds. A contractor will auger the holes in advance. Wear work clothes, gloves, and sturdy boots. Parks will provide shovels, but bring a favorite shovel if you have one. Cosponsored by Madison Parks.

Meet at the corner of Wheeler Rd and Ilene Ln. From downtown, take N. Sherman Ave. north. At Wheeler Rd, turn left and travel about 0.8 mile to Ilene Ln.

Evening at Cherokee Marsh

April 19 (Friday), 6:30 pm until dark

Observe the courtship flight of woodcock and snipe. See cranes and spring migrants. Sponsored by Madison Audubon and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

More!

Save the dates for this events later this year. Times and other details will be posted on our website, Facebook pages, and email group.

Warbler Walk at Cherokee Marsh

Wednesday, May 8

Evening at Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit

Wednesday, May 8

Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

Saturday, June 22

Cherokee Marsh, Upper Yahara River Tour

Saturday, August 3

Cherokee Marsh Stormwater Ponds Tour

Wednesday, October 9

Locations

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

6098 N. Sherman Ave. Head north on N. Sherman Ave. to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Yahara Heights County Park

Heading north on HWY 113/Northport Dr., just past HWY M, turn right on River Rd., then right on Riverview Dr., and right on Caton Ln. From the end of Caton Ln., drive into the park. (Drive in for volunteer days only. Otherwise, park on the street.)

Friends of Cherokee Marsh

PO Box 3390

Madison WI 53704

info@CherokeeMarsh.org

www.CherokeeMarsh.org

To protect, preserve, and restore the beauty, value, and health of the Cherokee Marsh and upper Yahara River watershed.

Directors

Jan Axelson (President)

Timothy Baker

Janet Battista (Vice President)

Dana Erlandsen

Lesleigh Luttrell (Treasurer)

Lydia Maurer

Paul Noeldner

Justin Sargent

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Dorothy Wheeler (Secretary)

Advisor (non-voting)

Don Hammes

Membership Form

Join or renew online at CherokeeMarsh.org

YES! I want to be a Friend of Cherokee Marsh.

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh are dedicated to protecting, preserving, and restoring the beauty, value, and health of Cherokee Marsh and the upper Yahara River watershed. Your contribution of time, talent, or funds will help preserve and restore the crucial wetland ecosystem of Cherokee Marsh.

Memberships are per calendar year. New memberships paid after June 30 are valid through the current and following year.

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Mallard \$50
- Additional donation \$ _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in honor of _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in memory of _____
- Osprey \$100
- Sandhill Crane \$250
- Great Blue Heron \$500

Additional donation to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund \$ _____

Name _____

Family member(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____ Second Email _____

Phone _____ Don't publicize my financial support.

I'm interested in helping with:

- Field work
- Publicity
- Tours
- Education
- Board/Committees

Other _____

Please mail this form and payment to:

Friends of Cherokee Marsh, PO Box 3390, Madison WI 53704

Thank you for joining us in our effort to protect this valuable resource!

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh is a Federal tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.