

# The Cherokee Marsh News



The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

## Bats Live!—annual meeting to feature bats

Mark your calendar for our annual member meeting, Saturday, January 9, 10 am – noon at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center.

Our special presentation this year is *Bats Live!—Nature’s Nighttime Superheroes* with Jennifer Redell, Conservation Biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ Bat Program. Accompanying Jennifer will be some live bat ambassadors!

Did you know that bats make up 20 percent of the world’s mammal diversity, and Wisconsin is home to seven species of bats? Learn about bats of the world, the secret lives of your own backyard bats, and the Wisconsin Bat Program’s work. Get the latest updates on white-nose syndrome, a disease that has been killing bats in many locations, including Wisconsin.

At 10 am, before the presentation, we’ll hold a short business meeting to elect directors for 2016-2017 and share news about upcoming activities. Everyone, member and non-member, is welcome at both events.

Free and family friendly. If you need further enticement to attend, we’ll have refreshments and our popular door prizes donated by local businesses plus some special bat-themed prizes donated by Lesleigh Luttrell.

### Annual member meeting

Saturday, January 9

**10:00 – 10:30 am—member meeting: accomplishments and future plans, elect directors**

**10:30 – 11:30 am—Bats Live!—Nature’s Nighttime Superheroes with Jennifer Redell**

**11:30 – 11:45 am—Door prizes and social hour**

**Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr, Madison 53704**



Excited kids learn about bats with Jennifer Redell, DNR Bat Specialist. Photo by Kim Wahl.



### Candlelight snowshoe walk!

January 30, details on page 8.

### Inside This Issue

Bats Live!—annual meeting to feature bats	1
County budget funds upper Yahara initiatives	2
Chimney swift tower erected in South Unit	2
It’s time to renew your membership	3
Carp harvested at Cherokee Marsh	3
What we did in 2015	4
Historic photos show dredging of Cherokee Lake	5
Meet the director candidates	6
Eagle nest adopted	7
Events calendar	8
Membership and contribution form	9

# County budget funds upper Yahara initiatives

Jan Axelson

Dane County's 2016 budget includes two items of importance to Cherokee Marsh.

An amendment sponsored by Supervisor Carl Chenoweth-Stoughton, who serves on the Environment, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee, allocates \$250,000 for reducing shoreline erosion on the upper Yahara River, improving the biodiversity of the marsh, and enhancing efforts to remove carp.

This money will fund the first year of a new 5-year program called Restore Ecological Health and Aquatic Biodiversity (REHAB) Initiative at Cherokee Marsh. The program supports an objective of the county's Yahara Clear Lakes Initiative to revitalize Cherokee Marsh as a natural and recreational asset that also benefits the water quality of the entire Yahara chain of lakes. The funding will also pay for additional water quality monitoring and public

outreach.

To support the program in future years, the measure increases the capital budget planning amounts for years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 by \$250,000 per year.

A second amendment sponsored by 18th District Supervisor Michele Ritt allocates \$3000 from Dane County with a \$2000 contribution to be raised by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh to provide an incentive payment for a commercial angler to perform a large carp harvest at Cherokee Lake. The effort is envisioned as the first of a 5-year initiative completed in partnership with the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

We plan to be closely involved with both of these initiatives and will share announcements of public meetings and other news as they develop.

## Chimney swift tower erected in South Unit

Paul Noeldner

Sometimes good things come in big packages! Nature lovers are celebrating Madison's first chimney swift tower at the corner of Wheeler Road and Comanche Way in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's South Unit. The 14-foot, free-standing cedar chimney provides a specialized bird house for chimney swift roosting and nesting.

The tower was constructed and donated by project leader Spencer Statz and other Wisconsin Union Trades volunteers enthused about helping Northside birds and wildlife. The project was coordinated with Madison Parks, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, the Cherokee Park Neighborhood Association, Madison Audubon, and other Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) nature groups with expert advice from the University of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Four Lakes Wildlife Center specialists.

Swifts, like swallows and bats, are aerial insectivores (flying bug eaters) that flutter high overhead while consuming tons of mosquitoes and providing natural, non-toxic bug control. Swifts are constantly in flight most of their adult life. When they do stop to rest, their tiny feet can only perch comfortably on rough vertical surfaces.

Swifts are particularly enjoyable to watch in the evening as they gather in large flocks and swoop down to roost in open chimneys in spring and fall. Because so many natural, hollow trees and open chimneys have been lost to development and modernization, swift towers are an important way to provide "accommodation architecture" to support the birds.



Nature lovers celebrate the new chimney swift tower in the South Unit. Photo by Paul Noeldner.

Other ways to support swifts are to leave dead trees standing where this can be done safely and to leave unused brick and masonry chimneys open at the top where possible.

### Keep in touch!

Sign up to receive updates about events and volunteer opportunities at:

[CherokeeMarsh.org](http://CherokeeMarsh.org)

# It's time to renew your membership

Show your support for Cherokee Marsh and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh by renewing your membership this December.

Your member dues help fund our activities to protect, preserve, and restore Dane County's largest wetland. And just as important, your membership helps to demonstrate public support for protecting the marsh.

## Is my membership up for renewal?

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2015, your membership is paid through December 31, 2016. For everyone else, it's time to renew. If you're not sure when you joined, contact us at [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com) or (608) 215-0426.

As a member, you'll receive our newsletter six times a year, and you'll know that you're helping to protect and preserve a healthy Cherokee Marsh.

## How to renew

You can save us time and money by renewing now.

Use the member renewal form on the last page of this newsletter or at [CherokeeMarsh.org](http://CherokeeMarsh.org).

You can also renew and donate online at [CherokeeMarsh.org](http://CherokeeMarsh.org).

Pay online with your PayPal account or use a credit card. You don't have to be a PayPal member to pay online.

## Support the Conservation Fund

When you renew, please also consider including a donation to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund. The fund pays a yearly dividend to support conservation at Cherokee Marsh. The dividends grow as the fund grows, providing a permanent source of funding for the marsh.

On the renewal form, check the **Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund** box and indicate the amount of your contribution. You don't need to write a separate check.

## Help bring schoolchildren to the marsh

Also on the renewal form you will find a checkbox to support transportation to bring local schoolchildren to Cherokee Marsh for field studies.

The field-study program, sponsored by the Madison Area School District and Madison School and Community Recreation, uses hands-on learning to teach kids about wetlands and their importance. The school district provides trained naturalist guides, but the classes are responsible for transportation, and many classes struggle to find money to charter a bus. A donation of \$45 buys transportation for 20 kids.

## A membership is a perfect gift

If you know someone who loves Cherokee Marsh, consider giving them a gift membership to the Friends this holiday season or as a birthday gift.

# Carp harvested at Cherokee Marsh

*Jan Axelson*

In early November, a commercial fishing crew came to the Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh to harvest carp. Reducing the carp population is desirable because the fish stir up the bottom and muddy the water. This activity makes it hard for good aquatic plants to grow and feeds algae blooms on the river and downstream.

Launching their boats from the School Rd boat landing, the crew of six set a net across Cherokee Lake (near Burning Wood Way), then pulled in the net and loaded the captured fish onto the boats. The fish went to a processing plant in Iowa for use in pet food. As they loaded the boats, the crew tossed any netted catfish and other game fish back into the river.



*Commercial fisherman harvest carp at Cherokee Lake.*

Photo by Jan Axelson

# What we did in 2015

Jan Axelson

2015 was another big year of growth and new activities for our group. Here are some highlights.

## Restoring natural communities

In the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area (SNA), in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), our volunteers removed close to an acre of invasive giant reed grass (phragmites) from the high-quality wetlands.

We pulled garlic mustard in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park with the Madison Area Weed Warriors and at an outdoor, working meeting with Parks staff and volunteers from around the city. We collected prairie seeds with County Park volunteers at Yahara Heights County Park.

We adopted one of the floating bog interceptor (FBI) structures, part of a shoreline protection and restoration project of the UW Civil and Environmental Engineering Department.

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, started by us in 2013 and managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, has continued to grow and this year made its first annual distribution, providing \$699 to the WDNR for management of the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.

We worked to get approval for a volunteer construction crew to build Madison's first chimney swift tower.

## Advocating for a healthy marsh

We spoke in favor of funding for carp removal and shoreline restoration in the Dane County budget. We supported Dane County's acquiring 81 acres along the upper Yahara River at HWY 19.

We continued our organizational membership in the Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Clean Lakes Alliance (CLA), including participating on the CLA Community Board.

To support bald eagle populations, we have adopted the bald eagle nest on the upper Yahara River. To support the



*Enthusiastic volunteers are the key to our success with restoration projects. Photo by Janet Battista.*

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, we are sponsoring the common yellowthroat warbler species.

## Reaching out

We contributed \$500 and an additional \$625 donated by Friends members to support transportation for hands-on, outdoor science education in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.

We talked to folks and shared stories while tabling at the Northside Farmers Market, Clean Lakes Festival, and Madison Fishing Expo.

We kept you informed with our newsletter, Facebook page, website, emails, and Northside News articles.

## Having fun!

We continued our popular monthly Bird and Nature walks and provided Madison School District Naturalist Guides to lead the walks.

Other tours we cosponsored and promoted included a warbler walk, North Unit and South Unit restoration tours, woodcock walk, paddle tour, butterfly walk, Indian mound tour, Hayrides and Hikes, and a candlelight hike. Our tour partners included Madison Audubon Society, Madison

*(continued on page 5)*



*Our fundraiser pontoon barge tour sold out on the first day! Photo by Timothy Baker.*



*The North Side Farmers Market is one of our favorite spots for promoting the marsh. Photo by Jan Axelson.*

## What we did *(continued from page 4)*

Parks, Dane County Parks, and the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association.

With the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, we sponsored two fundraiser tours for the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund: our first ever pontoon boat tour, with support from Dane County Land and Water Resources and the WDNR, and an off-trail wetland hike.

We sponsored a presentation on pollinators at our 2015 annual meeting. We published and promoted two volunteer projects: a Cherokee Marsh bird list and a brochure for Yahara Heights Park. And we got ourselves a logo!

### You make it possible

With your support and participation, we can continue to expand our activities to promote land and water protection, restoration, education, and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh. If you have ideas for activities or would like to help, we want to hear from you. Call (608) 215-0426, write ([janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com)), or attend one of our monthly meetings.



*Folks of all ages enjoy our naturalist-led bird and nature walks. Pictured is guide Nelson Eisman exploring pond life with walk participants. Photo by Paul Noeldner.*

## Historic photos show dredging of Cherokee Lake

These photos from 1962 show the illegal dredging operation that created Cherokee Lake, along what is now Burning Wood Way, from a wetland. Thanks to the Wisconsin Department of Resources for providing these images.



# Meet the director candidates

Our Board of Directors is responsible for planning, coordinating, communicating and managing the activities of our organization. At the annual member meeting (see page 1), members elect directors for the coming two years.

The board usually meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Lakeview Branch of the Madison Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave. All meetings are open to members and the public. To confirm the time or request an agenda, or if you're interested in joining the board or helping out on a committee, contact Jan at (608) 215-0426 or [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com).

Half of the directors' terms end in even-numbered years and half end in odd-numbered years. Directors Timothy Baker, Janet Battista, Dana Erlandsen, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Justin Sargent are in the middle of their 2-year terms and thus aren't up for re-election.

Here are statements from the six announced candidates for six positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2018:

## **Jan Axelson**

I believe the Friends perform an important role as a voice for Cherokee Marsh and want to continue to work to increase awareness of the beauty and importance of the marsh, to preserve and restore public lands in the marsh, and to protect the ecosystem in the face of development in the watershed.

Since moving to Madison's North Side 15 years ago, I've spent many hours exploring the marsh on foot, skis, snowshoes, and in paddlecraft. I enjoy using my skills as a writer and webmaster and helping out in the field to benefit the marsh.

## **Jim Krause**

I am a resident of the North Lake Mendota Neighborhood adjacent to the southern portion of Cherokee Marsh, and daily I witness its benefits and beauty. I will use my scientific background in the biological sciences and my appreciation of sustainability and understanding of the ecological role of our watershed, to help enhance the future of the Marsh and our Madison lakes. I can achieve this goal by being an active member of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and its Board of Directors.

I was born and raised in the State of Wisconsin and was educated in the University of Wisconsin system. My passion for science spans both university academic positions and in the private sector as a biochemist, pharmacologist and neurobiologist. My wife and I relocated 30 months ago to the Madison area, and I have enthusiastically participated with the Friends of Cherokee Marsh as a member in various activities that maintain and restore the pristine nature of the Marsh. I have also

participated as a Board member over the past year. My goal is to work with other Board members to enhance our Cherokee Marsh treasure for all stakeholders. This dedicated group has done a great job in fostering the goals of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh by citizen outreach, volunteer activities, raising awareness of the value of our Marsh and in collaborating with other groups to help maintain and preserve our valuable watershed.

## **Paul Noeldner**

I was active on the Madison Audubon board for many years and currently enjoy helping on the boards of Wild Warner and Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Being a board member and core volunteer offers great opportunities for hands on restoration work such as phragmites control and prairie seed collecting, and for organizational work to promote the goals of the Friends such as newsletter articles and information tables at events.

My special contributions are in helping the Friends partner with Parks and other groups to promote nature education and outreach such as the annual Bird City Celebration, the new Northside Nature Center, and monthly Bird and Nature Walks, and in citizen science such as helping start and coordinate Bluebird Trails, the new Cherokee Swift Tower and other habitat initiatives. If elected I look forward to continuing to work with our wonderful group of Cherokee nature lovers.

## **Dick Walker**

I have lived in Madison for over 45 years, on Lake Mendota for over 28 of those years and the last 9 years in the Cherokee Marsh area, albeit off the water. I have always been concerned about the health of the lakes of the area and know that they are affected greatly by the health of Cherokee Marsh and other sources of water north of the lakes and the cities around those lakes. I should like to continue to be a part of an organization whose primary interest is in the Marsh's well being, however that interest is expressed.

I feel that the Marsh and the areas surrounding it need to be protected against any further abuse and FOCM is one voice to be heard for its well being and long term survival.

I became a printmaker, taking my first art classes shortly before retiring from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1995, where I served on the faculty for over 30 years. What started as a way to become more knowledgeable about prints, which I had collected for many years, turned into a learning process of production and preservation. Still active today while serving on several boards and other volunteer activities.

*(continued on page 7)*

## Meet the directors *(continued from page 6)*

### Anita Weier

I would be proud to rejoin the Board of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh after a four-year gap when I served on the Madison City Council.

My major environmental achievement as a council member was leading a successful fight to prevent construction of a 96,000-square-foot warehouse in green space next to Troy Gardens. I also worked with the Madison Parks Department and the Natural Heritage Land trust to arrange for the city's acquisition of the Wheeler Triangle for expansion of the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.

I live near the marsh and enjoy walking there. It is truly a Wetland Gem that deserves protection. The marsh provides habitat for wildlife, protects water quality and gives residents of the region a place to relax and enjoy hikes through wetlands, forest and prairie.

It is vital that the Friends of Cherokee Marsh continue efforts to protect the marsh from its increasingly urban surroundings and to help restore the wetland.

### Dorothy Wheeler

I have a lifelong interest in protecting the environment, I won my election to the county board in 2004 by emphasizing my desire to keeping our urban environment as clean as possible and I kept my promise to do just that.

My voting record as recorded by the Sierra Club was 100% on environmental issues. I still want to keep working on this important goal and I feel that being on the board of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh gives me the opportunity to continue to support a cleaner environment for the enjoyment of generations to come. I like helping to protect the habitats of the wildlife that live and thrive in the marsh as well as in the uplands adjacent to the marsh. I like knowing that protecting the marsh helps filter the water that goes into our lakes keeping them cleaner. All of the lakes in the Mendota chain need the marsh to protect their waters so the marsh is a treasure in our midst. I like feeling that I have a small role in protecting it.

## Eagle nest adopted

If you've attended one of our bird and nature walks, you've likely been treated to a view of the bald eagle nest on the upper Yahara River and maybe even got a look at the eagles at the nest or flying by.

To honor our resident eagles, the Friends have adopted their nest through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Adopt an Eagle Nest program. Our \$100 donation supports eagle populations and research in Wisconsin. To learn more about the program, see:

[dnr.wi.gov/topic/endangeredresources/adopt.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/endangeredresources/adopt.html)

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To keep the terms balanced, we have one announced candidate for a 1-year term that will end at our member meeting in January, 2017:

### Russ Hefty

I developed a love of nature thanks to my parents who shared their love of plants and birds with me. We took family vacations to see Yellowstone National Park, Grand Tetons, Devil's Tower and other remarkable places that sparked my interest in conservation. As a teenager my first conservation action was salvaging native prairie plants from a nearby stone quarry, and transplanting them in our yard. A conversation between my parents and Wayne Pauly at the Dane County Fair led me to volunteering at the Madison Audubon's Goose Pond Sanctuary near Arlington. This eventually led to me becoming the first college student intern at Goose Pond Sanctuary.

I received a Horticulture degree with an emphasis on natural resources from the UW and started work for the City of Madison as a season conservation ranger in 1980. Since 1991 I have been privileged to lead Madison's conservation parks as the Conservation Resource Supervisor. Cherokee Marsh has always been one of my favorite parks as it offered the opportunity to restore native plant and animal communities on a large landscape scale like no other place in Madison. I have led efforts to save the peat wetlands along the Upper Yahara River for the past 15 years. More recently we've worked on restoring a large oak savanna / prairie complex and our efforts were rewarded when red-headed woodpeckers nested there for the first time in decades.

In January 2016 I will be retiring from the City of Madison Park Division after 34 years of service. Serving on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh will allow me to stay involved in protecting this very special resource.



*Our certificate makes it official.* Photo by Janet Battista.

# Events calendar

Don't miss out on last-minute events that don't make it into this calendar. To receive updates about events and volunteer opportunities, sign up at:

[CherokeeMarsh.org](http://CherokeeMarsh.org)

## Annual member meeting and Bats Live!

Saturday, Jan 9, 10 am

Warner Park Community and Recreation Center

See page 1 for details.

## Monthly bird and nature walks

Sunday, Dec 6 AND

Sunday, Jan 3 AND

First Sunday of EVERY month

ALWAYS 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit.** 6098 N. Sherman Ave. Travel north on N. Sherman Ave to the main parking lot at the end of the gravel road.

Free, monthly, family-friendly bird and nature walks.

On December 6, enjoy a nature discovery walk, campfire, and hot chocolate. We will wander the trails to find secret places where the bees, bugs, bats, birds and bunnies snuggle in for a Wisconsin winter. Watch and listen for geese and swans. Dress warm and bring your curiosity!

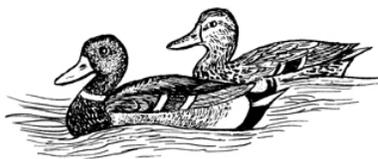
Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Madison Parks, and Madison Audubon Society. If you have questions, contact Paul Noeldner at [paul\\_noeldner@hotmail.com](mailto:paul_noeldner@hotmail.com) or (608) 698-0104.

## Candlelight snowshoe

Saturday, January 30, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit.** 6098 N. Sherman Ave. Travel north on N. Sherman Ave to the main parking lot at the end of the gravel road.

Tour the marsh on snowshoes by candlelight. Then warm up with hot cider by the fire. Bring your own snowshoes. If there is no snow, the event will be a walk. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks. If you have questions or would like to help set up the event (we need volunteers!), contact [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com) or call (608) 215-0426.



*A contractor has cleared and graded a portion of the Fifth Addition acquisition in the North Unit to prepare for seeding to prairie. The area is just west of N. Sherman Ave and north of the golf course. Photo by Jan Axelson.*



### Friends of Cherokee Marsh

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Madison WI 53704

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[CherokeeMarsh.org](http://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

Jim Krause

Lesleigh Luttrell (Treasurer)

Paul Noeldner

Justin Sargent

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Dorothy Wheeler (Secretary)

#### Advisor

Don Hammes

