

The Cherokee Marsh News

The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

Six Acres to Be Added to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park

Jan Axelson

Last December 6, the City of Madison gained ownership of 5.8 acres to add to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Designated the “Wheeler Triangle” in the Cherokee Marsh Special Area Plan, the three-sided parcel lies on the northwest corner of Wheeler Rd. and Comanche Way. (See map on page 2.)

The parcel’s west and north edges border the South Unit of the Conservation Park. As Jim Welsh of the Natural Heritage Land Trust points out, “Cherokee Marsh is the largest wetland in Dane County and is one of the highest-quality, too; the Wisconsin Wetlands Association named it a ‘wetland gem’ in 2009.”

The purchase relied on contributions from many sources. The Natural Heritage Land Trust applied for grant funds and coordinated the purchase. Landowner Dennis Tiziani of Cherokee Park, Inc., agreed to sell the property for less than its appraised value. Funding came from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, the Dane County Conservation Fund, the City of Madison, and members of Natural Heritage Land Trust. The Friends of Cherokee Marsh helped generate crucial local support.

Most of the parcel is wooded, with a mowed strip along Wheeler Rd. Madison Parks’ Conservation Resources Manager Russ Hefty reports that in the short term, Parks plans to maintain the mowed area. In the woods, a priority will be removing female box elder trees to prevent their seeds from sprouting in nearby areas of restored prairie and open oak woods. In time, following staff and community discussions, Parks will develop a long-term management plan for the parcel.

Since 2008, with essential support from the partners named above, the City of Madison has added 363 acres to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.

A version of this article appeared in the Northside News.



See page 3 for more about the new Cherokee Marsh posters.



Inside This Issue

Six Acres to Be Added to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park	1
Annual Meeting:	
Wisconsin’s Birds Need Healthy Wetlands	2
Glendale School Students Create Posters for Cherokee Marsh	3
Thanks for Renewing!	3
Former Landowner Recalls Life at Yahara Heights	4
Christmas Bird Count Yields Eagles, Swans, More	5
Events Calendar	6
Membership Form	7

Annual Meeting: Wisconsin's Birds Need Healthy Wetlands

Sixty percent of Wisconsin's birds use wetlands for at least part of their life cycle. Wisconsin has lost 47% of its wetlands since the 1700s. Marsh plants need cycles of dry weather to rejuvenate.

These are just a few of the things we learned at our annual meeting as Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist Andy Paulios gave a presentation on *Wetland Bird Conservation in Wisconsin*.

Before Andy's talk, Dana Erlandsen reviewed 2012's activities and what's up for 2013, including a preview of the upcoming Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund. (More information on that soon!) Lesleigh Luttrell presented the treasurer's report (see page 5).

Elected to continue as directors for 2013-2014 were Timothy Baker, Janet Battista, Dana Erlandsen, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Justin Sargent. New director Paul Noeldner will serve an initial 1-year term. Continuing directors Jan Axelson, Lydia Maurer, Muriel Simms, Dick Walker, and Dorothy Wheeler are in the middle of their 2-year terms so were not up for election.

Following the member meeting, the directors elected officers for the coming year: President Jan Axelson, Vice President Janet Battista, Treasurer Lesleigh Luttrell, and Secretary Dorothy Wheeler.

Following Andy's talk, folks had a chance to mingle and enjoy refreshments while door prizes were awarded.

Thanks to **Pierce's Northside Market** and Muriel Simms for donating delicious refreshments for the group.

Thanks to these Northside businesses for providing a great selection of door prizes:

Altered States Alterations

Anytime Fitness (Northgate)

Associated Bank

Benvenuto's Italian Grill

D & S Bait-Tackle

Coffee Gallerie

Culver's

HMOOB Oriental Market

Jim's Meat Market

Jung Garden Center

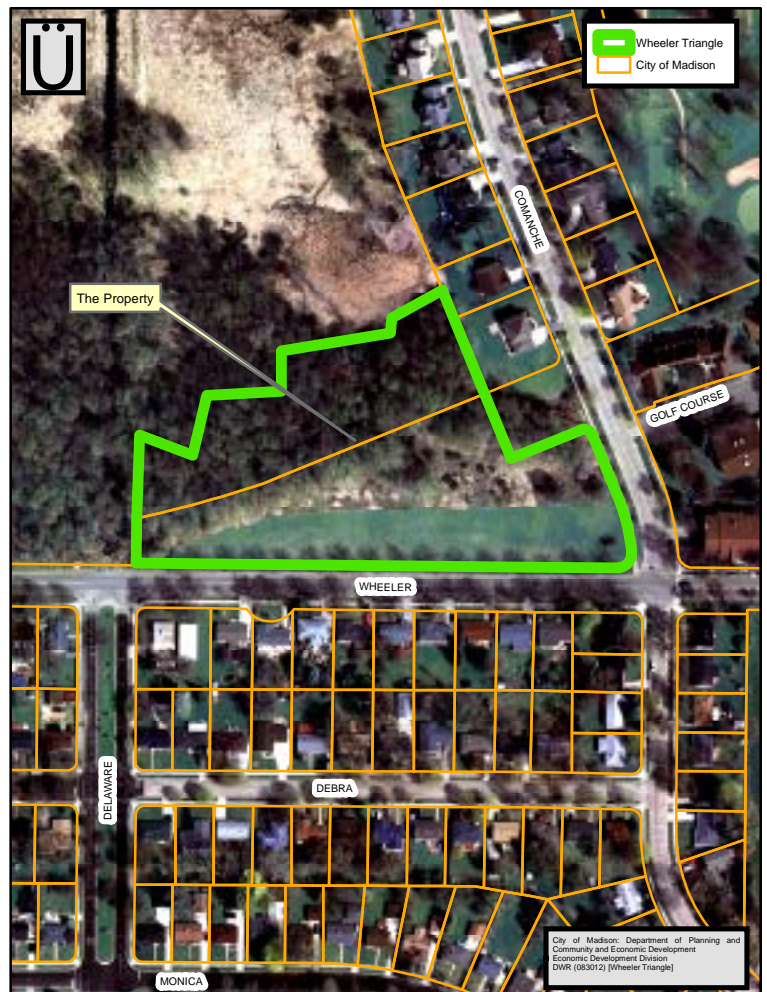
Northgate Barber Shop

Northside Family Restaurant

Northside True Value



Andy Paulios shares his knowledge of wetland birds with the group. Photo by Jim Hughes.



The Wheeler Triangle (see page 1) adds 5.8 acres to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Map by City of Madison: Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

Glendale School Students Create Posters for Cherokee Marsh

Jaime Borotz

Third-grade students at Glendale School came together on November 16th to engage in various projects for a school-wide Day of Service. The purpose behind the Day of Service was to give students an opportunity to see how they can have an impact on the larger community.

Many community partners across the Madison community were contacted, including the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. In planning the Day of Service, I reached out to Cherokee Marsh as a possible project because Cherokee Marsh is the largest wetland in Dane County and students are naturally curious about what kinds of wildlife and habitats are found near us.

Students in Mrs. Biesenthal's class learned about why wetlands are important and they created posters that will be displayed in the marsh later this year for visitors to view.

Their involvement in this project was so meaningful because the class spent time learning about the marsh and then they were able to apply that new learning to create posters featuring different forms of wildlife such as birds and other animals found in marshes.

The kids put their heart into the project and they hope their signs can benefit visitors at Cherokee Marsh.



Watch for these new posters on the signboard at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit. Photos by Muriel Simms.

Thanks for Renewing!

Thanks to all who have renewed their memberships for 2013. If you haven't renewed or would like to join the Friends, please take a minute to fill out and mail in the form on the last page of this newsletter or go to CherokeeMarsh.org to renew online.

Thank you to **R.W. & Marlys Mittelstadt** for their donation of \$87.80 to the Friends in memory of **Dr. John Szveda**.

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

Former Landowner Recalls Life at Yahara Heights

Jan Axelson

This past Thanksgiving weekend, while tending a burning brush pile at Yahara Heights County Park, volunteer Jim Hughes met a family who mentioned that they used to own the land they were now walking on.

The family members agreed to return and share their memories of the land. This is the family's story.

In the early 1960s, the Allyn Roberts family bought 150 acres extending from River Rd. in the Town of Westport to the Yahara River across from what is now Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's South Unit and the Cherokee Park neighborhood.

At the time of purchase, the previous year's property taxes on the parcel had been around \$300. However, the land hadn't been reassessed since the 1930s, and the following year, the taxes rose to around \$4000. This amount was much more than the family could afford.

To reduce the tax burden, the family gave up ownership of most of the property. Through a combination of donation and purchase, Dane County obtained the southern portion of the property along the river. This area, now part of Yahara Heights County Park, included shoreline wetlands, farmland, woods, and two Indian mounds. The northern portion of the property, where the Roberts family had a home, was opened to residential development and became the neighborhood along Riverview Dr. and Caton Ln. south of River Rd.

The property also included two islands in the river, but these have since eroded away due to high water levels.

The family's memories include fishing from shore, many hickory trees in the woods, and a large pumpkin patch. Mr. Roberts invited an expert from the State Historical Society to view the property's Indian mounds, known as bear and panther, or water spirit, mounds. Near the mounds were piles of clam shells left by the early residents.

A favorite memory of Mr. Roberts was coming across two sandhill cranes performing a courtship dance on the spirit mound.



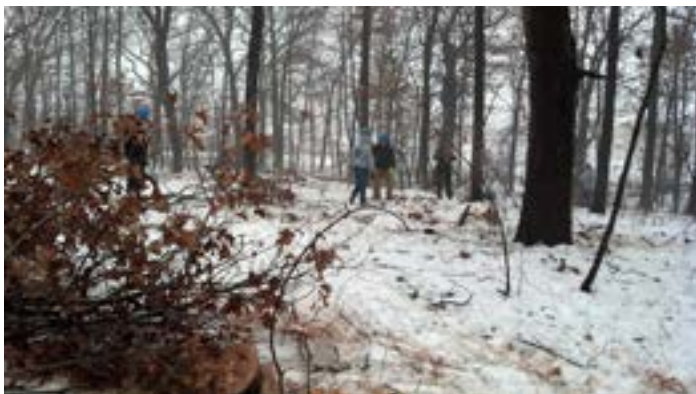
Caton and Allyn Roberts shared their memories of Yahara Heights with Friends members Jim Hughes and Jan Axelson. Photo by Janet Battista.

The family no longer lives on the property, but family members live nearby and enjoy visiting the park and reminiscing. On our tour with the Roberts family, we shared how Dane County Naturalist Wayne Pauly and volunteers are restoring the area to prairie, oak savanna, and sedge meadow.

To visit Yahara Heights County Park, from Madison, take HWY 113/Northport Drive north. Turn right on River Rd. then an immediate right onto Catfish Ct. Follow the sign past the dog exercise area to the trails. For more information go to cherokeemarsh.org/visit.



Maybe you've seen them – a crew from Operation Fresh Start has been restoring wooded areas in the North Unit this winter. Photo by Jan Axelson.



Read current and past issues of this newsletter at cherokeemarsh.org

Christmas Bird Count Yields Eagles, Swans, More

Paul Noeldner

Cherokee Marsh is the centerpiece of the annual northside Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Bird Count teams all over the country who are crazy enough to brave the elements from pre-dawn to dusk do the CBC every year on selected dates close to Christmas regardless of weather and depth of snow.

The goal is to track down every bird in a 7.5-mile radius. The Northside team is one of many participating in the count sponsored by Madison Audubon.

Surprisingly to novices, there are always birds to be found, including some we think of as summer birds like Robins and even Bluebirds. Birds migrate primarily when the grocery shelves are bare, although migration is also based to some extent on biological clocks driven by hours of daylight, temperature and so forth.

Mike Rewey, who leads the Northside CBC team, and Paul Noeldner joined Trish O’Kane at her house for hot cocoa and homemade bread, and we all headed out in the gray drizzly dawn just in time to see a Great Horned Owl silently glide into the Wild part of Warner Park.

From there we cruised the hotspots. We scoped some great backyard bird feeders for Cardinals and Finches, searched the wonderfully restored habitat in Lakeview

Hill Park for Woodpeckers, Nuthatches and elusive Brown Creepers, and slogged through the Yahara River bottoms by the Highway 113 bridge and School Road boat landing for Kingfishers.

In Cherokee Marsh we spotted two Bald Eagles on the island and five beautiful Swans ethereally floating like mirages in the mist.

At the end-of-day CBC team gathering at the UW Arboretum center, Sumner Matteson told us he saw the same swans from his area just north of the Yahara River and two were Trumpeters and the other three were Tundras. We believed him because Sumner is the DNR Endangered Species specialist who first brought Trumpeter eggs back from Alaska to reintroduce them in Wisconsin.

Every year is magical and well worth the cold and wet. It’s far more than just an outing for birders; it’s important citizen science that benefits all of us. Counts have been gathered for over a hundred years from locations all over the U.S.

See madisonaudubon.org/audubon/cbc for local results and to join a team next year.

Friends of Cherokee Marsh 2012 Financial Statement	
Balance 12/31/11	\$5,070.97
Income	
Contributions	\$1,342.30 26 donors
Member Dues	\$1,809.27 82 memberships
Memorial Contributions	\$132.80 3 donors
Grant	\$1,000.00 Sisbro Social Justice Fund
Interest	\$2.34
Fundraising/Miscellaneous	\$174.49 Pierce's, Calendar Sales
Total	\$4,461.20
Expenses	
Donations	\$100.00 Dane County Parks
Education	\$1,000.00 donation to MPS
Events	\$61.02 annual meeting
Fees	\$10.00 WI nonstock corporation fee
Insurance	\$350.00
Mailing Costs/PO Box Rental	\$225.49
Organization Dues	\$200.00 Clean Lakes Alliance/NH Land Trust
Printing	\$95.07 newsletters
Special Projects	\$251.10 Field Trip brochure printing
Website Expense	\$65.00 Domain name registration
Total	\$2,357.68
Balance 12/31/12	\$7,174.49

Madison Parks Volunteer Recognition Celebration

Monday, March 4, 6–8 pm
Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave.

The celebration of Madison’s many park volunteers will include a light dinner, remarks from Parks Superintendent, Kevin Briski, and an awards presentation.

Anyone who volunteered in City Parks in 2012 is invited to attend. Sign up by Feb. 25 at:

surveymonkey.com/s/2013VolunteerCelebration

Events Calendar

Directions to locations follow the event listings.

Help Burn Brush Piles

Saturday, February 2, 9 am – noon

Koltes Drumlin / Westport Prairie

Help remove brush from the prairies and burn brush piles created this summer. Sponsored by the Prairie Enthusiasts. Call to confirm. Details at:

theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/empire/workdays.html

Candlelight Ski

Saturday, February 2, 6 – 8 pm

Ski a scenic trail by candlelight and enjoy hot cocoa around a campfire. Bring your own skis. Help reduce waste by bringing your favorite mug. All ages welcome. No charge. Co-sponsored with Madison Parks.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, South Unit, 5002 School Rd., corner of School and Wheeler Rd.

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, 6098 N. Sherman Avenue.

Coming Up Later This Year

Shrub Planting

Help Madison Parks plant 200 native shrubs in the restoration area surrounding the new stormwater ponds in the South Unit. More details in the April/May newsletter.

Tours in Partnership with Madison Audubon

Save the dates for these tours in partnership with Madison Audubon:

April 19 (Friday)

Evening at Cherokee Marsh

May 8 (Wed.)

Warbler Walk at Cherokee Marsh

May 8 (Wed.)

Evening at Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit

May 9 (Thu.)

Evening at Token Creek

June 22 (Sat.)

Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

August 3 (Sat.)

Cherokee Marsh, Upper Yahara River Tour

October 9 (Wed.)

Cherokee Marsh, North Unit



Last December's blizzard created many beautiful scenes including this view of the area just north of the Wheeler Triangle. Photo by Muriel Simms.

Coming Soon

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund

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.

Your contribution of time, talent, or funds will help preserve and restore the crucial wetland ecosystem of Cherokee Marsh.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mallard \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron \$500 |

- Additional donation \$ _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in honor of _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in memory of _____

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

In addition to my contribution, I can help with

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

Name _____

Family member(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Second Email _____

We won't sell or distribute your email address.

- Don't publicize my financial support.

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!

www.CherokeeMarsh.org

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.

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