

# The Cherokee Marsh News



The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

## Airport plans response to potential crash in marsh

Anita Weier

You've likely seen videos of plane crashes in rivers in New York and Taiwan. What if a plane came down in the Yahara River in the Cherokee Marsh?

"It scares me to death that something could happen here," said Tim Butcher of the Dane County Regional Airport, who organized a Cherokee Marsh Exercise in late August to help emergency responders understand the site and its challenges, coordinate victim recovery to collection points, and ensure effective communications.

Participating in the exercise at the airport firehouse and Cherokee Park on Cherokee Lake were the Madison Fire Department, Dane County Communications Center, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Dane County Sheriff's Office, Air National Guard, and Airport Fire Department. Representatives of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh also attended.

Andy Paulios of the DNR said that water levels and lotus beds would make it difficult to move through the area. The group decided that airboats would be the best way to travel in the marsh as they can move on land and sea and travel over water vegetation.

Kurt Welke of the DNR stressed that other boats would be hampered by shallow water in some areas and the lack of a hard bottom, which he referred to as "pudding." Following the main channel would be vital.

Ice and flowing water from natural springs would create difficulty in winter, and a crash at night in any season would add confusion. But fast action is needed because survivors would be disoriented and hypothermia could set in.

Helicopters with buckets to lift crash victims could be the best transport method, and helicopters and drones could best locate people in the water.

The DNR has Marsh Masters—amphibious vehicles that can carry 10 to 12 people—but one could not arrive from Portage immediately.

Tim Mrowiec of the Madison Fire Department said a unified command post would be set up in Cherokee Park



Officials return to Cherokee Park after a tour of the marsh. Photo by Anita Weier.

on Burning Wood Way. "We would set up triage with ambulances and keep Comanche Way clear," he said.

The use of differing communications channels by state, city and county agencies has to be worked out.

After the officials went from the airport to Cherokee Park, groups of them toured the marsh by airboat. A plan to use buoys as simulated victims for rescue was discarded because of high wind. But Butcher stressed that the networking and planning that took place was vital, "so you know each other and what you're supposed to do."

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# Tour the Indian mounds at Yahara Heights

Yahara Heights County Park, on the north side of the upper Yahara River, is home to two effigy mounds: a bear mound and a panther, or spirit, mound.

In recent years, the area around the mounds had become overgrown to the point where the shapes of the mounds were nearly invisible to visitors. An informal path even passed right across the top of the bear mound.

In recent years, volunteers have spent many hours restoring the mounds and the area around them, removing brush and encouraging the growth of native grasses and flowers.

To celebrate the restoration as well as the new Yahara Heights brochure create by volunteer Erica Zar (see our June/July 2015 newsletter), we are sponsoring a walk to view and learn about the mounds.

Leading the walk will be Bob Birmingham, former State of Wisconsin Archaeologist and author of the book, *Indian Mounds of the Four Lakes Region*. Friends volunteer Alex Singer will share information about the over twenty acres of restored prairie in the park.

**Indian mound walk at Yahara Heights**  
**Saturday, Oct 3, 9-11 am**



*Yahara Heights Park, on the north side of the upper Yahara River, is home to two effigy mounds. Photo by Jan Axelson.*

**Yahara Heights Park, Catfish Ct entrance.** Heading north from Madison on HWY 113/Northport Dr., 1/3 mile past HWY M, turn right on River Rd., then immediate right onto Catfish Ct. Meet at the brown trailhead sign just before the fenced dog exercise area. The address for navigating is Catfish Ct, Waunakee, WI 53597.

## DNR crew receives Fund distribution

We are delighted to report that the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund recently made its first distribution. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) crew that works in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area requested and received the distribution of \$699.15 to buy a wiping applicator and pay for crew time to use the applicator to control giant reed grass (Phragmites) that is threatening the diverse sedges, grasses, and flowers in the wetlands.

The crew plans to use the applicator to supplement the Phragmites removal done by teams of volunteers from the Friends. The applicator is especially suited for areas that aren't easily accessible to volunteers.

The Friends established the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund in 2013 to provide a permanent and sustainable source of funding for conservation at Cherokee Marsh. Established through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the fund supports the management, protection, conservation, restoration and appreciation of Cherokee Marsh and its watershed.



*DNR crew members Sam Smyrk and Bridget Rathman try out the new wiping applicator in a Phragmites patch in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area. Photo by Jim Hughes.*

For more about the fund, see:

<http://cherokeemarsh.org/conserv>

**Thank you** to the family and friends of Jack Martin for their generous memorial donations of \$2340 to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund.

# New storm water catch basins remove phosphorus

This fall, a contractor for the City of Madison has been reconstructing the water mains and storm sewers along portions of Burning Wood Way and Comanche Way in the Cherokee Park neighborhood.

A new feature of the storm sewers is underground catch basins on Burning Wood Way, which drains into the upper Yahara River and Cherokee Lake.

Previously, storm water flowed from on-street drains through underground pipes directly into the lake and river. With the new system, storm water passes through the catch basins, where sand and other heavy debris sink to the bottom, before continuing on to the lake and river.

According to project manager Eric Dundee, catch basins typically remove about 25% of phosphorus from storm water. Most leaves and grass clippings float and pass through the basins so it's still important to keep these items out of the streets.

The Streets Division typically cleans catch basins twice a year but monitors new basins to determine the best cleaning frequency. Residents can report any basins that are full or plugged.

The City of Madison installs catch basins wherever feasible. If a sewer slope is too great or the sewer mains are too



*This under-street catch basin, shown under construction, will capture debris from storm sewers and keep it out of the Yahara River and the lakes downstream. Photo by Jan Axelson.*

large, a catch basin won't work because the high flow velocity empties the basin during large storm events.

During construction, the project is using erosion control measures to protect the lake and river. Inlet protectors on storm drains capture soil and debris. Silt socks, which are tubes of filter fabric filled with organic material and placed along the edges of piles of dirt or sand, prevent erosion. The culvert under Comanche Way used turbidity barriers to capture sediment.

## We have a logo!

This newsletter features the debut of our official logo. We chose a leopard frog to represent us in part because leopard frogs are present in large numbers in the marsh. Also on the logo are a lily pad and blossom of white water lily.

Our logo designer was Kandis Elliot, emerita senior artist in the Department of Botany. Kandis recently completed a huge poster containing life-size illustrations of all of Wisconsin's 183 fish species. The poster measures 13 feet long and 44 inches high. To learn more about this and other posters drawn by Kandis, or to buy a copy, see:

<http://news.wisc.edu/23919>



Our thanks to Kandis for a great logo!



*How many of these 183 fish species live in the marsh? Image provided by Kandis Elliot.*

# Operation Fresh Start helps with restoration

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park benefitted again this summer as a crew from Operation Fresh Start (OFS) returned to help with restoration projects. The crew of 6–8 spent fourteen weeks working in parks around the city.

At Cherokee Marsh, the work focused on removing invasive species to make room for diverse native plants. The projects included girdling hundreds of aspen trees, pulling garlic mustard and Japanese hedge parsley, and removing burdock and invasive thistles.

OFS is a nonprofit organization whose programming helps youth earn high school diplomas and learn job skills, develop career goals, and serve the community by working in conservation or building trades. OFS has been partnering with the City of Madison for thirty years.

To learn more about OFS, see:

<http://operationfreshstart.org>

Read more about Operation Fresh Start in our Oct, 2010 newsletter:

[CherokeeMarsh.org/newsletter/cherokee\\_marsh\\_news\\_1010.pdf](http://CherokeeMarsh.org/newsletter/cherokee_marsh_news_1010.pdf)

## Help lead the Friends

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh board of directors is a group of volunteers who are elected by the members to plan and manage the activities of the group.

We are always on the lookout for new directors who have an interest in helping protect, preserve, and restore Cherokee Marsh. We are especially interested in folks who have skills or interest in any of these areas: working with volunteers, member communications and social media, working with kids and schools, fundraising, public advocacy, grant writing, and newsletter writing or production. But most important is enthusiasm and a willingness to help work toward our goals.

If you are interested in joining our board or finding out more about it, contact me at [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com), (608) 215-0426, or contact any other board member or come to one of our monthly meetings. We usually meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Lakeview Branch of the Madison Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave. Contact us to confirm the time and location. All of our meetings are open to the public.



*DNR volunteer coordinator Jared Urban (second from right) joined the volunteers on the final Phragmites Friday of the year working in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.*

Photo by Janet Battista.



*Hayrides and Hikes are back! See page 5 for details. Photo by Jan Axelson.*

### Keep in touch!

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

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

# 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)

## Indian mound walk at Yahara Heights

**Saturday, Oct 3, 9 am, Catfish Ct entrance.**

See page 2 for details.

## Monthly bird and nature walks

**Sunday, Oct 4 AND**

**Sunday, Nov 1 AND**

**First Sunday of EVERY month**

**ALWAYS 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

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

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.

**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.

## Prairie seed collecting

**Tuesday, Oct 13, 9 am – noon**

**AND**

**Friday, Oct 23, 9 am – noon**

Help collect seeds of prairie flowers for use in restorations in county parks. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirt. Bring drinking water. Gloves and pruning shears will be available; bring your own if you prefer. Contact Rhea at 224-3601. Sponsored by Dane County Parks with support from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

**Yahara Heights Park, Caton Ln entrance.** Heading north from Madison on HWY 113/Northport Dr., just past HWY M, turn right on River Rd., then right on Riverview Dr., which dead-ends at Caton Ln. Turn right on Caton and (for volunteer events only), drive into the park from the end of Caton Ln. The address for navigating is Caton Ln, Waunakee, WI 53597.



## Hayrides and Hikes

**Saturday, October 17, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon**

Tour Cherokee Marsh on a tractor-pulled hay wagon, take a short guided hike, or do both!

Hayrides are \$2/person to offset the cost of Parks staff time. Volunteers from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh will lead free, short nature hikes.

No reservations needed. Show up any time from 9 am to 11:30 am for a hayride or a hike.

If you have questions, contact Paul Noeldner at [paul\\_noeldner@hotmail.com](mailto:paul_noeldner@hotmail.com) or (608)-698-0104.

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



## Friends of Cherokee Marsh

PO Box 3390

Madison WI 53704

[info@CherokeeMarsh.org](mailto:info@CherokeeMarsh.org)

[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

# Membership and contribution form

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_
- Osprey \$100
- Sandhill Crane \$250
- Great Blue Heron \$500

Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional donation to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Find out more about the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund at [CherokeeMarsh.org/conserve](http://CherokeeMarsh.org/conserve)

### Additional donation to fund transportation to bring schoolchildren to the marsh for field studies:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Second (family member) 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.