

# The Cherokee Marsh News

Aug / Sept 2016



We hope you enjoy this early edition of your Aug/Sept newsletter with an invite to a fun fundraiser at Benvenutos and updates on happenings in both city and county parks.

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## Dine at Benvenuto's and help bring kids to Cherokee Marsh

Anita Weier

You will have a chance on **Tuesday, Aug. 9**, to support children's environmental education while enjoying a Benvenuto's meal.

Anyone who has lunch or dinner at the Northside Benvenuto's—or orders delivery or take-out or buys a gift card—will be making a contribution to the Friends of Cherokee Marsh that will help bring groups of schoolchildren to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park for guided, hands-on learning. However, **you must tell the restaurant staff specifically that you want your payment to benefit the Friends of Cherokee Marsh**, a nonprofit organization.

[Benvenuto's](#), located at 1849 Northport Drive in the Northside TownCenter, then will donate a generous 20 percent of the tab to the Friends. The restaurant also offers one-half off bottles of wine on Tuesday nights.

For the 2015–16 school year, Friends' funding brought 573 students from eight Madison elementary schools to the marsh. “We want to give all kids a chance to visit Cherokee Marsh to learn about our wetlands while experiencing them first-hand,” said Friends President Jan Axelson.

As the Madison Metropolitan School District faces repeated budget cuts, the Friends' funding will be even more vital, according to a school district official.

The Friends' ongoing work also supports the goal of the City of Madison's initiative to Connect Children to Nature, sponsored by the National League of Cities and the Children & Nature Network with a \$25,000 planning grant. Madison was one of only seven cities selected to participate in the program, which aimed to increase equitable access to nature.



## **Welcome to new Madison Parks staff**

At our July meeting, we welcomed Madison Parks staff members Lisa Laschinger, who recently was promoted to Operations Manager and Paul Quinlan, the new Conservation Resource Supervisor.

*From left, Lisa Laschinger, Friends President Jan Axelson, and Paul Quinlan.*



## **Welcome to new County Parks Botanist/Naturalist**

Here is an announcement and welcome from County Parks Director Darren Marsh to Lars Higdon, the new Dane County Parks Botanist/Naturalist.

*I am excited to announce the hiring of Lars Higdon as the new Dane County Parks Botanist/Naturalist. As many of you are aware long time Park Naturalist Wayne Pauly will be retiring at the end of September 2016. Wayne has worked for more than 42- plus years as our County Naturalist and Restoration Ecologist. Lars will have the unique opportunity to work with Wayne for a couple of months as part of a transition plan. Lars will begin work on July 27, 2016.*

*Lars is returning to Wisconsin by way of Southern California, where he worked for the last five years as Project Manager for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy planning, overseeing, and implementing large-scale habitat restoration projects. His work included coordinating, training, and supervising staff and volunteers and ensuring the successful completion of restoration work from start to finish.*

*Prior to working for the Conservancy, Lars was the Restoration Ecologist for Madison Audubon Society's Faville Grove Sanctuary for three years where he helped guide restoration efforts across a landscape of wetland, prairie, and oak savanna habitats. While with Madison Audubon, Lars worked closely with teams of volunteers and interns to collect, process, and distribute large*

*quantities of native seed; conduct prescribed burns; and remove invasive species from restorations and high quality remnant communities.*

*Lars holds a B.S. in Natural Resource Management from UW-Stevens Point and an M.S. in Landscape Architecture (Restoration Ecology) from UW-Madison. Lars feels a deep connection to the natural areas and landscapes of the upper Midwest, especially the prairies and oak savannas that bless Southern Wisconsin. He is thrilled to be coming home where he and his fiancé are excited to put down roots in the thick prairie sod and develop deep connections with the people, places, communities and natural treasures that make Dane County such a wonderful place to live!*

*Please help me in welcoming Lars Higdon to our program.*

*Darren*



## **Updates provided on park projects**

We've checked with City staff for updates on the new North Unit entrance and trails, the North Unit's closed restrooms, and the improved paddlecraft launch.

### **New parking lot and trails**

Last year, we reported on plans to move the North Unit's entrance gate about a half mile to the south, near the current park boundary on N. Sherman Ave. Just inside the gate will be a new parking area with access to new trails that connect to the current trail system. These plans are in the works for completion this year.

Also proposed last year was a new trail loop at the north end of the park. Concern about how to route the trail across wetlands has delayed development

of this trail.

Read our original article at:

[cherokeemarsh.org/newsletter/cherokee\\_marsh\\_news\\_feb\\_mar\\_2015.pdf](http://cherokeemarsh.org/newsletter/cherokee_marsh_news_feb_mar_2015.pdf)

## **Restroom closure (North Unit)**

Why are the restrooms in the North Unit still closed? Since 2013, the restrooms have been open from April through October with a portable toilet on site the rest of the year. This year, an ongoing problem with bacteria in the well water has kept the restrooms closed into summer.

We are encouraging Parks to get the problem resolved as quickly as possible or at minimum, to ensure that the portable toilet is checked frequently and to obtain permission to open the restrooms even if the water isn't drinkable.

## **Canoe/kayak launch (Cherokee Park)**

The improved canoe/kayak launch in Cherokee Park along Burning Wood Way is scheduled for completion later this summer. Next year, the paddlecraft racks in the park will be moved to a location closer to the launch, and the current racks will be replaced with lower-profile racks. To find out about storing watercraft on these or other city racks, visit:

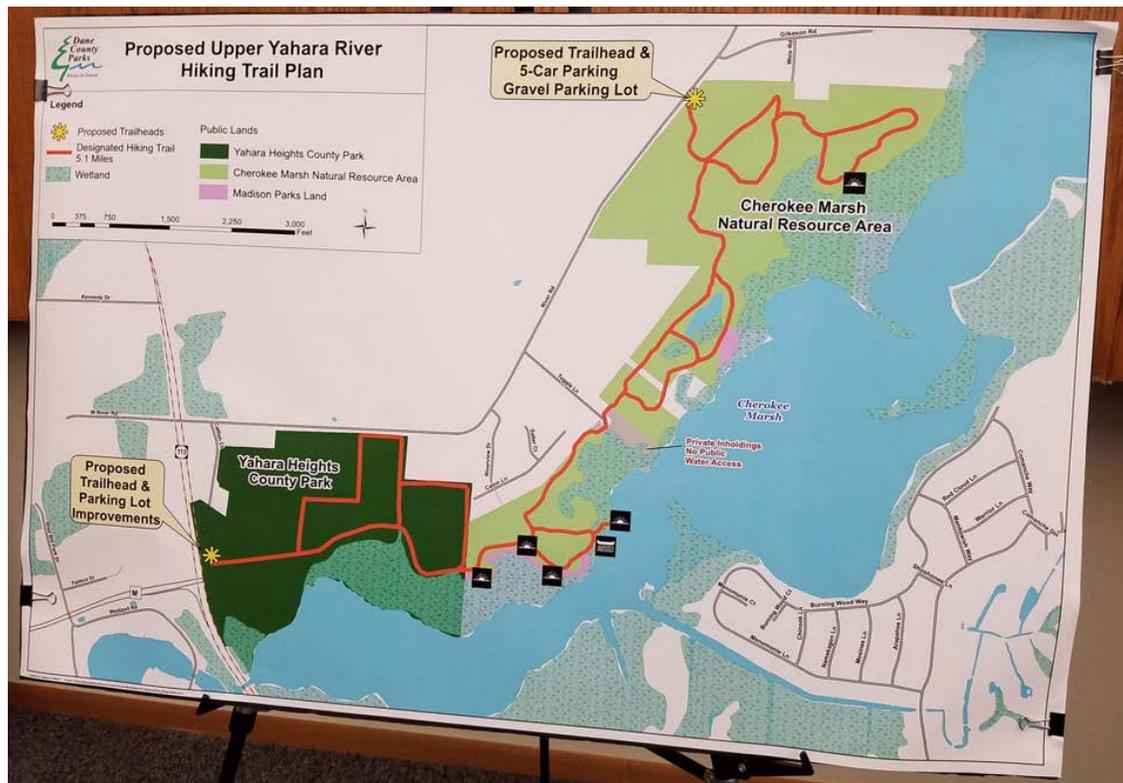
[cityofmadison.com/parks/canoekayakstorage](http://cityofmadison.com/parks/canoekayakstorage)

## **Literature box (North Unit)**



The next time you visit the North Unit, check out the literature box Parks has mounted on the signboard. We hope to keep the box stocked with trail maps and Nature Passports for kids.

Of course you can also find these items on our [website](#) and [Naturenet](#) (for Nature Passports).



## Trail system and parking proposed for Yahara Heights

At a public meeting in Westport on July 20, Dane County Parks staff presented plans for a trail system and parking at Yahara Heights Park and the Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area adjacent to the park.

The plan does not add any new trails but documents the existing trail system that has been maintained by volunteers. Signage will mark easements across private land.

Also proposed are an improved trailhead and parking lot just north of the dog exercise area on Catfish Ct and a new 5-car parking lot on River Rd just south of Gilkeson Rd.

The long-term plan is to move the parking from Catfish Ct. to River Rd, but this will wait until the intersection of HWY 113 and HWY M is reconfigured at an as-yet undetermined time in the future.

## Upcoming events

[See full calendar](#)

## **Bird and nature walk**

**Sun, Aug 7, 1:30pm – 3:00pm**

Join Naturalist Guide Nelson Eisman in search of frogs, toads, and other aquatic life using nets, magnifiers and other tools to help kids of all ages get close-up looks at some of the fascinating creatures in the marsh.

**AND**

**Sun, Sept 4, 1:30pm – 3:00pm**

Steve Lang will share stories about the foxes and other critters he has photographed in the marsh.

**AND**

**first Sunday of every month, ALWAYS 1:30pm – 3:00pm**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit**, 6098 N. Sherman Ave.

([map](#))

Free, family-friendly bird and nature walk. 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. Sponsored by Madison Parks, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Audubon Society.

## **Benvenuto's fundraiser**

**Tues, August 9, 11am – 10pm**

**Benvenuto's Italian Grill**, 1849 Northport Dr. Madison, WI 53704

**All day, Aug 9 only**

Help connect kids with nature by having a tasty lunch or dinner at Benvenuto's, ordering takeout or delivery, or even buying a gift card. **If you mention the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Benvenuto's will generously donate 20%** of the tab to support bringing schoolchildren to the marsh for environmental education.

## **Submit your photos for the Madison Parks calendar**

**Wed,, Aug 31**, is the deadline to submit your photos taken in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park (or other City of Madison parks) for consideration for the **Madison Parks 2017 calendar**. Details at [cityofmadison.com/parks/blog/?Id=9365](http://cityofmadison.com/parks/blog/?Id=9365)

[Sign up to receive notices about upcoming events](#)

MailChimp.