

Friends of Cherokee Marsh Newsletter Dec 2017 /Jan 2018

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The Cherokee Marsh News

Dec 2017 / Jan 2018



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Turtles, snakes, frogs, and more!

Mark your calendar for our **annual member meeting** on **Saturday, January 20, 10 am – 12 noon** at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center.

Our special presentation this year is ***Turtles, snakes, frogs, and more!*** Learn about our amazing array of native reptiles and amphibians including where they live, which ones you can find in your backyard, and how to be "snake smart." Our presenter will be Eric Roscoe from the Madison Area Herpetological Society, a group dedicated to educating the public about amphibians and reptiles, collectively known as "herps." Eric has had a strong interest in herps since he was five years old.

At 10 am, before the presentation, we'll hold a short business meeting to review the past year, look forward to the year ahead, and elect directors for 2018-2019. See below in this newsletter for statements by our director candidates.

This event is free and family friendly. Everyone, member and non-member, is welcome to attend. If you need further enticement, we'll have **refreshments** and our popular **door prizes** donated by local businesses plus some special **prizes just for kids**.

We hope to see you there!

Saturday, January 20, 10 am – 12 noon

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

10:30 – 11:30 am — *Turtles, snakes, frogs, and more!* by the Madison Area Herpetological Society

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

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



Show your support by renewing your membership

The end of the year is approaching, and that means it's time to renew your membership. Your member dues help fund our activities to protect, preserve, and restore Cherokee Marsh, Dane County's largest wetland.

Is my membership up for renewal?

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2017, your membership is paid through December 31, 2018. For everyone else, it's time to renew. If you're not sure when you joined, contact us at 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

Visit our [website](#) to find a **member form** to mail or to **pay online**. With either method, you can join or renew your membership and make additional contributions.

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,

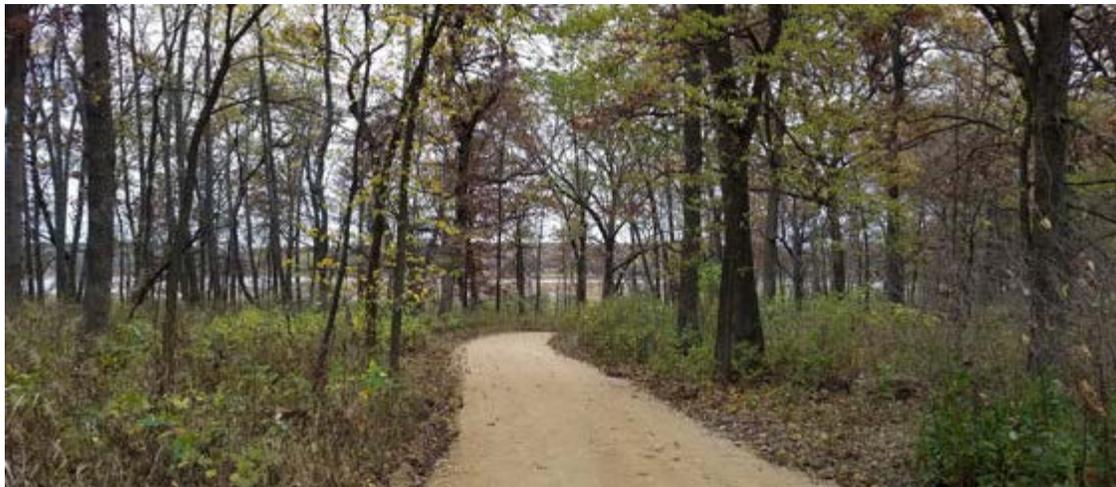
providing a permanent source of funding for the marsh.

Support hands-on, outdoor environmental ed

We also ask you to consider donating to bring local schoolchildren to Cherokee Marsh for [hands-on environmental education](#). Hands-on learning at Cherokee Marsh introduces kids to wetlands and their importance. The Madison Metropolitan Area School District, in cooperation with Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR), 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.



Trail news and ditch filling at North Cherokee

Here is the latest update from Madison Parks Conservation Resource Supervisor Paul Quinlan about management activities in the conservation park.

The 5th Addition parcel is the woods and prairie land just north of the new, south parking lot at North Cherokee near the end of N. Sherman Ave.

New trails

We "roughed in" the new trails across the 5th Addition parcel and west of the

main park access road. People are free to use them now, but we plan to start mowing them regularly next summer and expect to have them "officially" open then. Concurrently, we will add gravel where needed and assess whether we need to sow turf grass along any portions of these trails. If so, portions may be temporarily re-routed or closed while the grass gets established.

Trail maintenance

On the old trails, we widened the curve on the maintenance road and resurfaced it from the junction back to the boat house. This was necessary for maintenance vehicle access. We also added gravel to build up the trail past Lu's Pond. This trail is located on what used to be N. Sherman Ave., and several layers of roadway have slowly sunk into the marsh over time. While the gravel path/roadbed was solid, it was below grade and wet for much of the year. We top-dressed the trail that leads east from the parking lot across the prairie, and the trail along the south side of the drumlin. The main access road also received some yearly maintenance.

Ditch filling

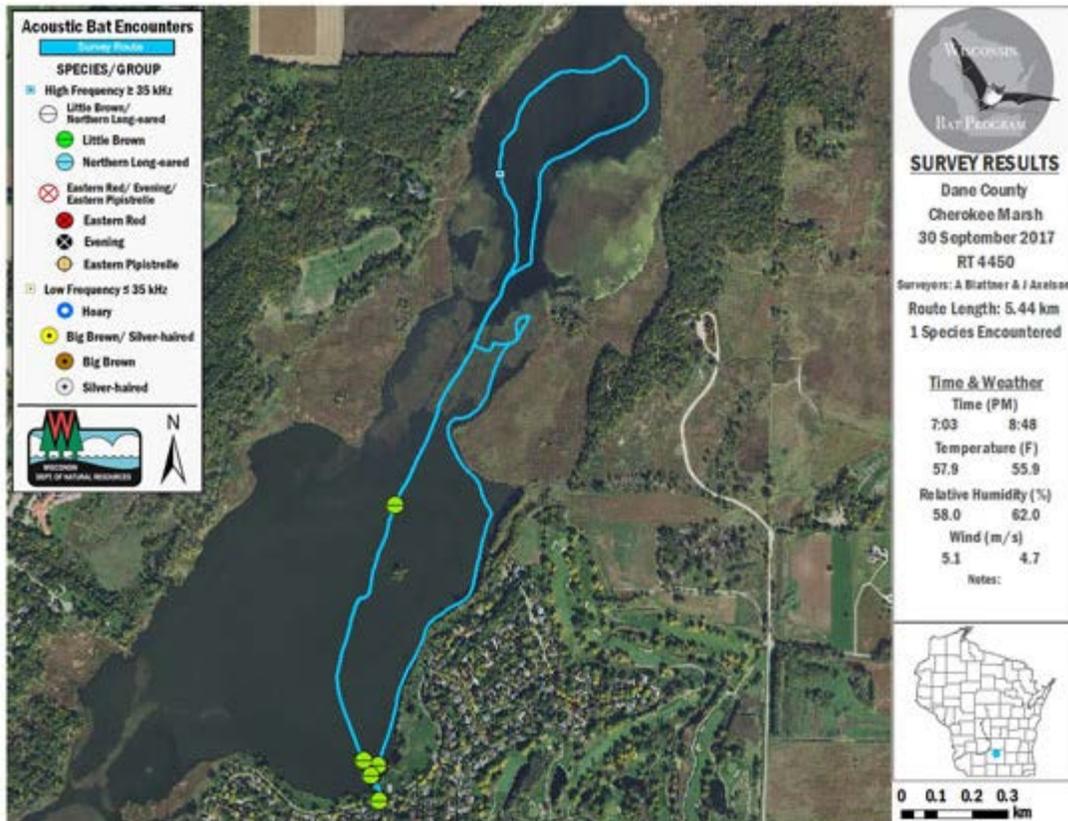
Some of the activity people may have noticed in the new parking lot was also associated with a ditch fill project. Our contractor staged his equipment here when he filled in the southernmost ditch in the south end of the park (east of N. Sherman, north of the driving range). He worked during the first week of November until conditions became too wet. This is the first part of a larger project that will fill in just over 1/2 mile of ditches to restore more natural hydrology to the marsh.

Note from the Friends: if you decide to explore the new trails, be aware that some portions have uneven ground, cut stumps, and other hazards.



Receive notices about prescribed burns

Would you like to be notified automatically about prescribed burns at Cherokee and other emergency information? Dane County Emergency Management provides this service. You can request notices by phone, text, and/or email. [Sign up.](#)



September survey detects few bats

Jan Axelson

On the evening of September 30, volunteer Andria Blattner and I paddled the upper Yahara River in search of bats.

Using equipment on loan from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), we paddled the shoreline of Cherokee Lake and upstream. The equipment detects and records the high-frequency calls of bats. From the recording, staff from the DNR's bat program produce a map (shown above) that shows what bats were detected and where.

On our survey, we had five hits for little brown bats on Cherokee Lake, four of them near the paddlecraft landing. Our only other hit was a single high-frequency call upstream, probably another little brown.

Last year's survey, conducted on June 29, yielded bats all along both shorelines, including little brown, big brown, and a couple of hoary bats. We don't know if the sparse findings this year are due to the lateness in the season or a general decline in bat populations.



What we did in 2017

As we look forward to continuing our activities in our eleventh year of stewardship at Cherokee Marsh, here is look back at 2017.

Restoring



We restored the area around the bear effigy mound at Meadow Ridge Park.

As we reported in our [Oct/Nov newsletter](#), this year we **completed a 6-year goal of removing invasive phragmites** in a portion of the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area (SNA).

We worked with Parks staff to **plant emergent aquatic plants** on the edge of the new storm water pond at Wheeler Road and Bonner Lane.

We **continued our efforts to remove garlic mustard** in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park and **removed invasives and collected prairie seeds** with County Parks and Operation Fresh Start at Yahara Heights Park.

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, started by us in 2013 and managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, continues to grow and **provides a permanent source of funding for conservation** of the marsh. The DNR crew plans to use this year's distribution to fund a crew to control invasives in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.

Advocating



We donated \$1200 including \$326 from T-shirt sales and \$423 in targeted donations from Friends members, to **bring schoolchildren to the marsh for hands-on, outdoor environmental education.**

We talked to folks and shared stories while tabling at the **Northside Farmers Market**, and we kept you informed with our newsletter, Facebook page, website, emails, and Northside News stories.

Exploring and having fun!



Now in their fourth year, our monthly, guided **Bird and Nature outings** continue to draw folks from around the city and beyond.

We enjoyed celebrating our **10-year anniversary** at a gathering at Drumlin

Ridge Winery.

Other tours we co-sponsored and promoted included a **candlelight walk, two warbler walks, a woodcock walk, butterfly walk, Hayrides and Hikes, and an effigy mound tour.** Our partners included Madison Audubon Society, Madison 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.

We sponsored a **presentation about cranes** at our 2017 annual meeting.

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*), or attend one of our monthly meetings.



Meet the director candidates for 2017–2018

The Board of Directors is responsible for planning, coordinating, communicating and managing the activities of our organization. At our annual member meeting, 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 Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr. All meetings are open to members and the public. To confirm the time

(occasionally we reschedule) 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 or any of our other directors.

This year, directors Timothy Baker, Janet Battista, Dana Erlandsen, Russ Hefty, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Mary Manering are in the middle of their 2-year terms and thus aren't up for re-election.

Three of our directors, Dorothy Wheeler, Dick Walker, and Don Hammes, are retiring from the board. All were involved with our group from its early years. Dorothy helped get our group off the ground and advocate for land purchases. Dick was always ready to help with events that involved art or being on the water and also managed our door prizes for many years. Don shared with us his years of experience advocating for environmental and wildlife issues. We thank Dorothy, Dick, and Don for all they've done to help our group grow and thrive.

Here are statements from the four announced candidates for four positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2020:

Jan Axelson

It's sometimes hard to believe that our group is in its eleventh year. In that time, I believe we've performed an effective role in providing a voice for Cherokee Marsh. I would like to help continue in our work to increase awareness of the beauty and importance of the marsh, to preserve and restore our public lands in and around the marsh, and to protect the watershed in the face of development.

Since moving to Madison's North Side 17 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 Mendota unit of Cherokee Marsh, and daily I witness its benefits and beauty. I will use my scientific background in the biological and physical 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 Wisconsin and was educated in the University of Wisconsin system (PhD, biochemistry). My passion for science consists of past university academic appointments and private sector experiences in the biotechnology industry as a biochemist, pharmacologist and neuroscientist. I enthusiastically participate with the Friends of Cherokee Marsh in various capacities as an ambassador to help maintain and restore the pristine nature of the marsh, and to educate others as to its importance.

My wish is to continue 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, educational efforts, 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, Friends of Starkweather Creek, Friends of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Being a board member of Friends of Cherokee Marsh alone has been very rewarding and I have hopefully contributed to our success. Also working on the boards of several other groups and working regularly and closely with Parks staff and core volunteer offers great opportunities for helping to facilitate hands on restoration activities, educational initiatives and organizational work.

I also enjoy helping promote the goals of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh with activities such as newsletter articles and information tables at events. My special contributions are in helping the Friends of Cherokee Marsh partner with Madison Parks and other Madison FUN Friends of Urban Nature groups to promote Nature Education and Public Outreach through co-sponsored activities beyond what the Friends already do very well. These additional value activities include helping start and maintain the Northside Nature Center, scheduling leaders and facilitating logistics for seven free family friendly Bird and Nature Outings every month year round in local area parks and natural areas including Cherokee Marsh, helping coordinate the annual city-wide Madison FUN Bird

and Nature Festival that features all of our local nature groups to engage the public in celebrating Earth Day, Arbor Day and Bird Day, and helping organize and teach the Madison FUN partner groups co-sponsored summer Master Naturalist Class to nurture the next generation of leaders.

I also enjoy helping other volunteers initiate and lead citizen science activities at Cherokee Marsh and other locations for bluebird trails, martin houses, swift towers, and other accommodation architecture and native habitat initiatives. All of these activities enhance nature recreation, nature education, natural health and nature restoration with a focus on local urban natural areas and support the Friends and the city's mission to connect communities and kids with nature. This in turn helps build support for our natural areas and Friends groups and the work that the Friends do to protect, expand, and restore critical wetland habitat. Friends of Cherokee Marsh plays a lead role in all of these activities and I am happy to have the opportunity to ask for your support to continue working as part of the Friends board and our wonderful volunteers to help meet all of these worthwhile objectives.

Anita Weier

I would be proud to continue my service on the Board of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. I served on the board both before and since my two terms 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.

Because our bylaws require balancing the directors' terms, we have one candidate for a 1-year term that will end at our member meeting in January, 2019:

Mary Binkley

My desire to be on the board of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh stems from my love of the land and therefore the desire to preserve it. Having worked as a Naturalist giving tours of the marsh to children (and adults) for a number of years, and living nearby, I am quite familiar with the portion of the marsh most visited by those wishing to enjoy it's features. Since there is always more to learn and experience at a landscape as diverse as Cherokee Marsh, I look forward to involvement in caring for, and opportunities to learn about the marsh, as well as provide more energy to help with current projects and perhaps make a positive difference for the marsh and those that enjoy it.

My enthusiasm for nearly anything found naturally outside, from the rocks and soil to birds and insects is always high, so I have no difficulty talking about such things in a positive fashion.

Politically I am uninvolved, and have no desire to become involved, so that portion is best left to others. However when it comes to other facets of care, I believe that I could be of value.



Friends member writes bird and snake books for kids

Friends member Jean Krieg recently completed Master Naturalist classes on

Madison's North Side. Master Naturalists typically conclude their training by completing a capstone project of their choosing. Jean decided to publish two books for kids. Here is her story.

For my Wisconsin Master Naturalist Capstone project, I remembered a time a few years ago that my four-year-old niece was interested in learning more about a House Sparrow nest and eggs. I tried to find a book at a bookstore and online and could not find a book of photographs of common birds appropriate for a four-year-old. So, I decided to finally create a book years later as my Capstone project.

To limit the book's content to the top reported Wisconsin birds, I requested Wisconsin eBird data for years 2012-2016. Then I used my spreadsheet skills to obtain the list of the top 30, a number that represents a variety of bird species.

I chose Shutterstock as the source for all images as the quality is excellent. For each bird species, I attempted to obtain images of the male, female, nest in a typical habitat, and eggs. If that was not possible, other relevant images were used, such as a bird at a feeder in the winter; in other words, settings where a child might notice a bird. In addition, when the male and female of a species are similar in appearance, the top left image is representative.

Anke Keuser, a PhD student, Environment and Resources — and a Wisconsin Master Naturalist instructor — reviewed the contents of the book for accuracy.

I enjoyed creating the bird book and so decided to create another Wisconsin nature photograph book for children, this one on snakes. There are 22 snakes that live in Wisconsin, which is a perfect number for a book! I chose Shutterstock as the source for all images except for one that I obtained from Rori Paloski, a Wisconsin DNR contact, who also reviewed the contents of the book for accuracy. One large image of each of the snake species is featured. The status (common, special concern, or endangered) and length of each snake is also provided.

Both books are picture books appropriate for children ages 3–5, however other ages will learn and enjoy from it. Here are links to more information and to buy the books:

[My First Book of Common Wisconsin Birds](#)

[My First Book of Wisconsin Snakes](#)

Jean has generously agreed to donate copies of the books as door prizes for kids at our annual meeting.



New environmental position, City of Madison

Greenway Vegetation Coordinator — Stormwater Utility

This position consists of program coordination, project work, and specialized field work relating to the management of City of Madison Engineering and Stormwater Utility lands. The work involves direct responsibility for specialized programs and activities pertaining to vegetation maintenance around ponds and within greenways, which are lands dedicated to the passage of water. Apply by Dec 18.

[More information](#)

Welcome to new volunteer Aaron Brown!

Aaron is our new communications and social media volunteer. He's already been helping out with emails and Facebook posts. Thanks for volunteering, Aaron!



Upcoming events

[See full calendar](#)

Bird and nature outings

Sun, Dec 3, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm, Winter returns to the marsh with School Naturalist Guide Lois Komai. Experience the "quiet time" and explore evidence of animal life and ways the plants and animals prepare to live and protect themselves during the winter.

AND

Sun, Jan 7, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

AND

first Sunday of EVERY month, year-round, ALWAYS 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Family-friendly bird and nature walks led by naturalist guides and other local experts.

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.
([map](#))

Sponsored by Madison Parks, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Audubon Society. Questions? Contact Paul Noeldner at (608)-698-0104 or paul_noeldner@hotmail.com

[Madison Parks Bird and Nature Outings page](#)

Annual member meeting PLUS *Frogs, turtles, snakes and more!*

Sat, Jan 20, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr

See above in this newsletter for details.

Candlelight walk

Sat, Jan 27, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

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. ([map](#))

Tour the marsh by candlelight, then warm up with a hot beverage by the fire. This event will take place with or without snow cover. Bring your own snowshoes or wear winter boots. Three lighted loops, arrive any time, walk at your own pace. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks. If you have questions or would like to help set up for this event, contact janaxelson@gmail.com or call (608) 215-0426.

Board meetings

Wed, Dec 20, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Wed, Jan 17, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Members and the public are welcome at our monthly board meetings. Occasionally we reschedule, so contact us to confirm: (608) 215-0426, janaxelson@gmail.com

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr

Receive notices about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities

Our newsletter comes out six times / year. You can sign up to receive timely notices and reminders, including announcements for last-minute events and volunteer opportunities that don't make it into the newsletter.

[Sign up](#) **to receive notices about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.**

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