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The Cherokee Marsh News

Dec 2019 / Jan 2020



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Save the date!

The special presenter for our annual meeting will be
*Elliot Funmaker of the Ho-Chunk Nation with
the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dance Troupe.*

**Saturday, January 11, 2020, 10 am - 12 noon
Warner Park Community Recreation Center**



Annual meeting to feature Ho-Chunk singers, dancers, and history

We are excited to announce that our member meeting on January 11 will feature the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dance Troupe performing traditional songs, stories, and dances of the Ho-Chunk people. Troupe leader Elliott Funmaker Sr. of the Ho-Chunk and Meskwaki Nations will share history that has been passed on through the generations.



Before the performance, we'll hold a short meeting to review the past year, look forward to the year ahead, and elect directors for 2020-2021. If you need further incentive to attend, we'll have free refreshments and a selection of door prizes. All are welcome to attend this free, family-friendly event.

The event is **Saturday, January 11, 10 am – 12 noon** at the **Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr.**



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. Renewing now saves us the time and postage to mail a renewal letter.

Is my membership up for renewal?

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2019, your membership is paid through December 31, 2020. 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 download 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 Cherokee Marsh 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. [Learn more about the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund.](#)

Support hands-on, outdoor environmental education

We also ask you to consider donating to bring local schoolchildren to Cherokee Marsh for hands-on environmental education. The learning experiences are led by trained naturalist guides provided by the Madison Metropolitan Area School District in cooperation with Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR). The classes are responsible for transportation to the marsh, and many classes struggle to find funds to charter a bus. A donation of \$45 buys transportation for 20 kids. [Learn more about hands-on environmental education at Cherokee Marsh.](#)

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.



DNR crew reports on work in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, established in 2013 by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, provides grants to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) crew to maintain the high quality, diverse wetlands in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area (SNA).

This year, the crew reports they used the funding to treat invasive cattail, reed canary grass, and phragmites in the wetlands. Using funding from other sources, the crew also cleared brush from 4 acres of high quality sedge meadow. With the funds remaining from the grant, the crew plans to do more brush work this winter and spend extra time controlling wetland invasive plants in the summer of 2020.

The crew reported that it was gratifying to remove large specimens of buckthorn because birds and other animals eat the berries and spread them throughout a site. Cutting off the seed sources lessens the chance of new populations of buckthorn getting established. Adjacent land provides brush for bird and animal species who prefer more cover.

We were delighted to read this comment in the report:

It's impossible to overstate how incredible this site is. To have a wet-prairie

complex of this size and diversity right on the edge of a densely populated area is truly remarkable. It's a dream for botanists and anyone who loves the variety of smells and colors of wildflowers that only the highest quality remnants can offer. All of us on the SNA crew are always all smiles whenever we get the privilege of working at Cherokee Marsh.

[Learn more about the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund.](#)

[Learn more about the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.](#)



Welcome to our new member coordinator

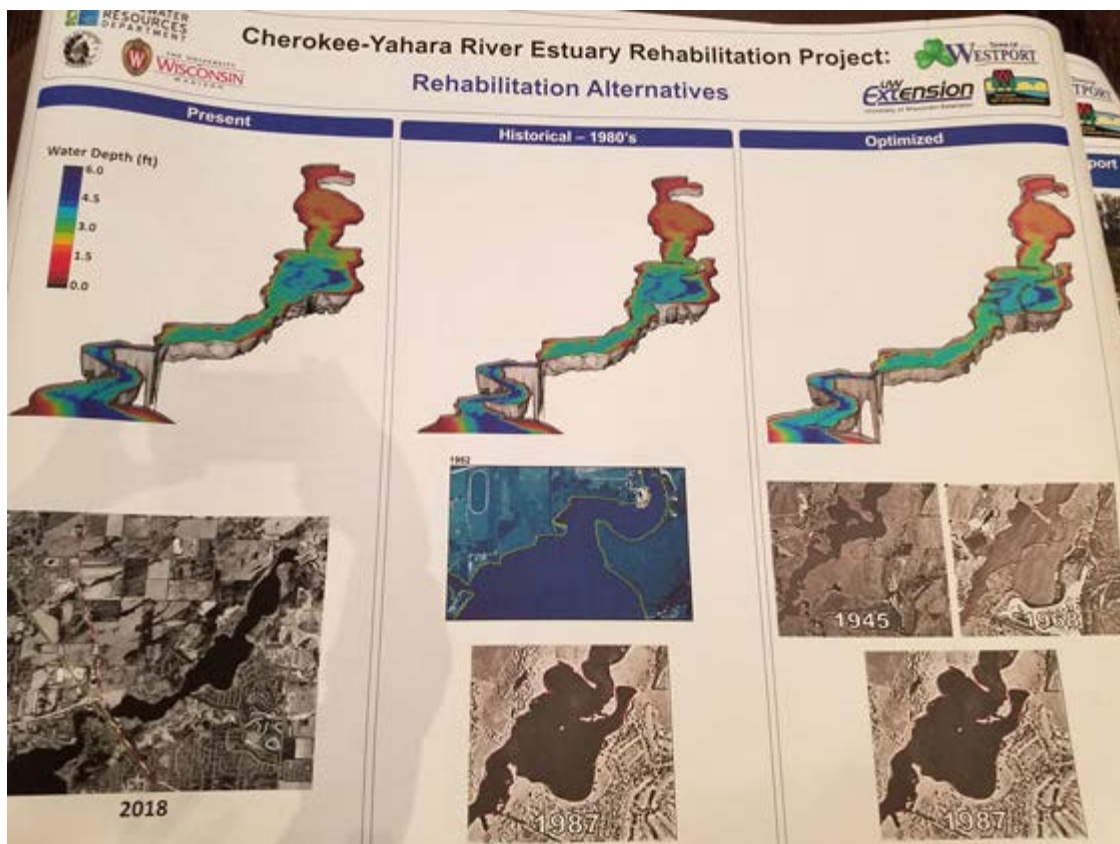
We would like to extend a welcome to our new member coordinator, volunteer Danielle Perry. Danielle is responsible for keeping track of our growing membership. When you renew, you'll receive a letter of thanks from Danielle.

We also want to express our thanks and appreciation to Jim Hughes, who has served as our member coordinator for the past 9 years and saw our membership through a period of much growth and expansion.





The snag that was home this year to a family of red-headed woodpeckers in Cherokee Marsh - South Unit has toppled over naturally. Snags, which are standing, dead trees that have lost most of their branches, are important habitat for cavity-nesting birds including nuthatches, bluebirds, chickadees, house wrens, tree swallows, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and woodpeckers.



Friends comment on concepts to manage the

upper Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh

Jan Axelson

[As we've reported](#), Dane County's Land & Water Resources Department recently invited the public to share ideas on how to enhance water quality, the fishery, wildlife populations, and recreation on the upper Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh. County staff called the meetings in response to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) planning and analysis grants awarded to the county. The area under consideration extends from just downstream of State Highway 113 to about three miles upstream, where the river narrows.

At the meetings, representatives from the county, the City of Madison, and the DNR were on hand to share information and answer questions. Friends of Cherokee Marsh directors attended the meetings along with other Friends members and local residents.

John Reimer from Dane County Land & Water Resources and Professor Chin Wu from the University of Wisconsin's Civil & Environmental Engineering Department presented a concept to construct a series of peninsulas along the shorelines near Cherokee Lake. The peninsulas would capture sediments and channel the river's flow.

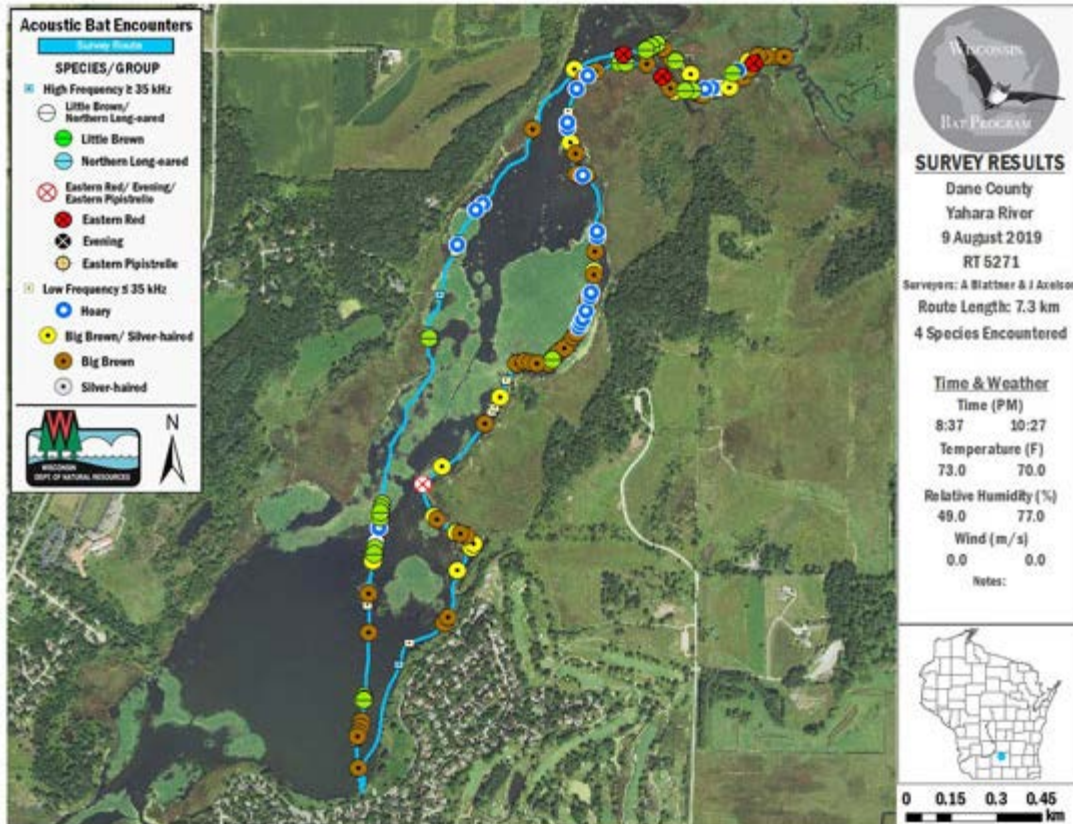
In our comments to the steering committee, we stated we would welcome projects that help stem continued loss of shoreline wetlands at Cherokee Marsh and provide other benefits. However we strongly recommend that any proposal put forth by the steering committee include analysis from wetland ecologists that have experience with the upper Yahara or similar peat wetland ecosystems.

We stated our support for continued carp harvests as needed and for planned bathymetric surveys and base maps displaying river bottom, shoreline conditions, and vegetation.

We also requested to be included in future meetings and activities of the steering committee as the grants specify.

The County has promised that additional information from the meetings will eventually be available online. When available, we'll post links at Cherokeemarsh.org/news.

[View the grants](#) and [read our full comments](#).



Upper Yahara survey finds three species of bats

Jan Axelson

In the evening of August 9, Wisconsin Bat Program volunteer Andria Blattner and I set out by canoe to survey for bats on the upper Yahara River. We launched from the landing on Burning Wood Way, paddled upstream along the east shoreline to the mouth of Token Creek, then back along the west shoreline.

Since bats fly at night, it's hard to detect them by sight, and the sounds they produce are at too high a frequency for human ears. So we used a handheld instrument on loan from the Bat Program to detect and record the bats' calls. From the recording produced, Bat Program staff produce a map (shown above) that shows the bats detected and their locations.

On receiving the results of our survey, we were delighted to see that the instrument detected bats all along both shorelines and found four species: big brown, little brown, eastern red, and hoary. Our previous survey on September 30, 2017, detected only a few little brown bats, possibly due to being late in the season. A survey on June 16, 2016, detected good numbers of little brown and big brown bats and two hoary bats.

Andria also brought a bat detector along on our July 26 moth walk at Cherokee Marsh - North Unit. Due to equipment malfunction, we didn't get a map of the survey, but the detector recorded over 100 hits identified as big brown, little brown, and eastern red bats.

The Department of Natural Resource's Wisconsin Bat Program monitors and manages bat populations in the state. Much of the data the program collects comes from citizen scientists. [Learn more about the Wisconsin Bat Program.](#)



Board member Sheila Leary shows off our display at the Wisconsin Wetlands Association conference.

What we did in 2019

As we get ready to begin our 13th year of stewardship at Cherokee Marsh, here are some highlights from what we did in 2019.



Volunteers look for aquatic invasive species on Snapshot Day.

Volunteering as land stewards and citizen scientists

We held 11 volunteer workdays to remove invasive species and promoted and participated in additional workdays with Dane County Parks and Groundswell Conservancy.

We performed plant surveys in seven locations in Cherokee Marsh's North and South Units, monitored frog and toad populations, and sampled aquatic invasive species at several Northside locations.



Beds of American Lotus have become established in the upper Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh.

Advocating

We submitted comments on issues including a long-term plan for the upper Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh, the Yahara lake levels task force recommendations, dogs in Madison parks, and the proposed addition of F-35 jets at Truax Field.

We stated our support for land acquisition at Token Creek.

We talked to folks and shared stories at the Northside Farmers Market and in our newsletter, Facebook page, website, emails, Northside News stories, and at the Wisconsin Wetland Association's annual conference.



Our monthly bird and nature outings are popular with folks of all ages.

Exploring and having fun

We held a bird and nature outing on the first Sunday of every month of the year.

We sponsored or promoted 13 additional events featuring butterflies, chimney swifts, moths, tree ID, and more.

We held fundraiser events at Benvenuto's Italian Grill and Ale Asylum, earning over \$400 to support Cherokee Marsh.

You make it possible

It's only with the support and participation of you, our members, that we can

continue and 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. Attend our annual meeting or a board meeting, call (608) 215-0426, or write (janaxelson@gmail.com).



From left, director candidates Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, Jim Mand, and Sheila Leary, retiring director Jim Krause, and director candidate Paul Noeldner.

Meet the director candidates

Our 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.

We want to thank directors Jim Krause and Anita Weier, who are retiring from the board. Anita served with us in 2010-2011 and again after four years on Madison's Common Council, from 2016-2019. Jim served two terms beginning in 2016. Their energy and contributions to our group's activities will be missed.

We also report with sadness the recent passing of Dick Walker, who served on our board from 2009-2016. Dick was especially helpful with anything that involved art or boats!

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

election.

Our candidate slate for terms that begin at the 2020 annual meeting consists of current directors Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, and Sheila Leary, and Paul Noeldner and new candidate Jim Mand.

Our 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.

Here are statements from the slate of five continuing candidates for five positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2022:

Jan Axelson

As the Friends enter our 13th year, I would like to help continue working 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 Northside almost 20 years ago, I've spent many hours exploring the marsh on foot, skis, snowshoes, and by canoe and kayak. I enjoy using my skills as a writer and helping out in the field to benefit the marsh.

Mary Binkley

I wish to remain on the friends of Cherokee Marsh Board of Directors because I firmly believe in the necessity of preserving and improving the land and waters around Cherokee Marsh, which in turn helps to make this area such a wonderful place to live.

Nature, and In general just being outdoors has always spoken to me, as witnessed by my having as many field guides as I could get my hands on when I was a child, and being outside as much as possible. Fun for me was peering into ponds, puddles, looking under rocks and logs, catching insects, or seeing what was living in the trees. Knowing what I was seeing and its relationship to

other things outside has always been, and continues to be important to me.

I have spent years as a naturalist giving walking tours to groups of people in an attempt to interest more folks in what is outside, and of course hoping they will take part in preserving and improving these beautiful areas, such as Cherokee Marsh.

Cherokee Marsh had been changed dramatically through the impact of people, and is in need of help in restoration and invasive species removal to return it to a more beautiful state. I wish to be a part of this.

Sheila Leary

I have just completed one year on the Friends Board. I am a Wisconsin Master Naturalist volunteer and retired from a career in academic publishing and marketing. For the Friends, I have focused my contributions primarily on communications, public outreach, and events, but have also led nature walks and participated in outdoor stewardship work, such as collecting seeds, pulling garlic mustard, and sampling for aquatic invasive species.

I've lived in the Cherokee Park neighborhood for 20 years and enjoy volunteering to protect and promote the extraordinary environmental treasures of the Upper Yahara region.

James Mand

I have been a member for 10 years, and am now submitting my name for a position on the FOCM board. I have been the Bluebird Monitor for the Cherokee Marsh North Unit for 3 years now, checking and maintaining 19 nest boxes, since retiring 3 years ago from a production management position with a local manufacturing company.

Also have volunteered for work parties, clearing invasive buckthorn, garlic mustard etc., as well as seed collecting. Looking for more opportunities to contribute.

I grew up in Chilton WI. Have had a life-long interest in nature and birds. Earned a degree in Biology from WSU-Oshkosh. Have lived and worked in the Madison area for 40 years. Currently live in Cherokee Condos near the marsh.

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.



Our thanks

We recently received \$560 in donations in memory of long-time Friends member Robert Schmidt. We thank Robert's wife, Betty, for thinking of the Friends in suggesting memorial donations. The donated funds will be used to bring schoolchildren to the marsh for environmental education.



Photo by Sue Scott

Upcoming events

[See full calendar](#)

Bird and nature outings

Sun, Dec 1, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, Adapting to winter with Naturalist Guide Lynn Persson. Walk the trails and learn fun facts about how plants, wildlife and humans have evolved and learned to adapt to winter.

AND

Sun, Jan 5, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, Nature resolutions with Naturalist Guide Paul Noeldner. Make a New Year's nature resolution! Share your ideas for helping the environment in 2020 as we explore the trails.

AND

first Sunday of EVERY month, year-round, ALWAYS 1:30 pm – 3 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 and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Questions?
Contact Paul Noeldner at (608)-698-0104 or paul_noeldner@hotmail.com

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

Annual member meeting

Sat, Jan 11, 10 am – 12 noon

With special guests Elliot Funmaker Jr and the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dance Troupe. Elect directors, free refreshments, door prizes. See story above for details.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr ([map](#))

Candlelight walk

Sat, January 25, 2019, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit, 6098 N. Sherman Ave. ([map](#))

Tour the marsh by candlelight, then warm up with free hot cocoa by the fire. Three lighted loops, arrive anytime, walk at your own pace. Bring your own snowshoes or wear appropriate winter footwear. This event will take place with or without snow cover but may be canceled if conditions are icy or otherwise unsafe. Check our [website calendar](#) for cancellation updates.

Board meetings

Wed, Dec 18, 5:30 pm – 7 pm

Wed, Jan 15, 5:30 pm – 7 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 ([map](#))

Receive notices about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities

Our newsletter comes out 6 times per year. You can also 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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