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The Cherokee Marsh News

Dec 2020 / Jan 2021



In this edition

- [Annual meeting and special guest — virtually](#)
- [It's time to renew your membership](#)
- [New kiosk displays for the conservation park](#)
- [What we did in 2020](#)
- [Meet the candidates](#)
- [Steve Lang receives Bluebird of the Year award](#)
- [COVID-19 update](#)
- [Upcoming events](#)



Annual meeting and special guest — virtually

Each year in January, we hold a member meeting to share our accomplishments for the past year, elect directors, and host a special guest. This year these events will be virtual and held on two different evenings.

Special presentation: what have we done to deserve all these cranes?



For our special guest, we are delighted to announce a presentation on **What have we done to deserve all these cranes?** with University of Wisconsin Professor Emeritus Stan Temple.

In recent years islands and sandbars along the Wisconsin River have hosted ever-growing numbers of greater sandhill cranes as they prepare to depart for their wintering areas. Flocks of upwards of 10,000 birds converge on the stretch of the river above and below the Aldo Leopold's Shack each fall. That's a large proportion of the cranes that now nest in Wisconsin. Why has there been such an impressive resurgence in the crane population since Aldo Leopold worried about its impending extirpation 80 years ago, and what attracts all these birds to the vicinity of the Shack?

Join us to learn about the remarkable recovery of Midwestern sandhill cranes, their migratory behavior, and recent controversies, such as crane hunting, that have attended their new status as an abundant bird.

Professor Temple is Beers-Bascom Professor Emeritus in Conservation in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology and former Chairman of the Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development Program in the Gaylord

Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW–Madison.

What have we done to deserve all these cranes? with Professor Emeritus Stan Temple

Tuesday, January 19, 7 pm

If you miss the live presentation, it will be available online afterwards. We will share details when available.

Annual meeting

Our annual meeting will include a year in review and election of directors for 2021-2022. See below in this newsletter for candidate statements. Immediately following the annual meeting will be a short board meeting to elect officers for 2021. All are welcome to attend either or both meetings.

The annual meeting will be via Zoom:

Wednesday, January 20 at 5:30 pm

How to attend

The talk by Stan Temple will be presented on both Zoom and Facebook Live. The annual meeting will be held via Zoom only. We will send all recipients of the Friends newsletter a reminder in January with the links and instructions to attend.

However, if you want to save the dates and the Zoom links in your calendar now, these are the Zoom links for each event:

Talk on Cranes by Stan Temple, Jan 19, 2021, 7:00 PM Central Time

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84205987203?
pwd=Tkc4UzBtNk9ub2xVVHBWcS9vQ2xoQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84205987203?pwd=Tkc4UzBtNk9ub2xVVHBWcS9vQ2xoQT09)

Friends of Cherokee Marsh Annual Business Meeting, Jan 20, 2021, 05:30 PM Central Time

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82935060505?
pwd=L3pwSzhnbHdtSVRaRm42eVdTUmNRQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82935060505?pwd=L3pwSzhnbHdtSVRaRm42eVdTUmNRQT09)



It's time to renew your membership

The end of the year is approaching, and that means it's time to renew your membership in the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. Your member dues help fund our activities including our popular naturalist-led and self-guided Bird and Nature Adventures, hiring five summer interns to perform restoration work, funding kiosk enhancements on city and county public lands, and more.

[Join, renew, or donate](#)

Renewing now helps us by saving time, resources, and postage to send a renewal letter in the mail.

Is my membership up for renewal?

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2020, your membership is paid through December 31, 2021. For everyone else, it's time to renew. If you're not sure when you joined, contact us at [*janaxelson@gmail.com*](mailto: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

To download a member form to mail or pay online, visit:

[Join, renew, or donate](#)

Your donation may be deductible even if you don't itemize

Thanks to the CARES Act, part of the federal government's pandemic relief program, cash donations of up to \$300 made to qualifying tax-exempt organizations before December 31, 2020 are deductible when filing taxes in 2021, even if you don't itemize.

[Learn more](#)

The Tax Identification Number for the Friends of Cherokee Marsh is 77-0689194.

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.

We want to belatedly welcome Joanie Kanter as our member coordinator. Joanie does the important work of keeping track of memberships and renewals. When you renew your membership, you'll receive a thank you letter from Joanie.



New kiosk displays for the conservation park

Maybe you've seen it — the first of four planned new kiosk displays is up in the North Unit's lower parking area along N. Sherman Ave. The display includes a new, large, up-to-date trail map and information about the park and what you might see on your visit. The reverse side of the kiosk will hold announcements and other seasonal information.

The South Unit's display panel has been printed and awaits installation on the kiosk just up the hill from the parking area at the corner of Wheeler Rd and School Rd.

Similar kiosks and displays are planned for the North Unit's upper parking area and Meadow Ridge Conservation Park / Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit.

These long-awaited kiosks and display panels are the result of a collaboration between the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks. Volunteers contributed the many fine photos on display.

New trail map for the Mendota Unit and Meadow Ridge

Along with updated maps for North and South Cherokee, Parks has produced a long-needed trail map for the Mendota Unit and adjacent Meadow Ridge Conservation Park.

Trail maps

[North Unit](#)

[South Unit](#)

[Mendota Unit and Meadow Ridge](#)



What we did in 2020

Jan Axelson

Though 2020 has been a challenging year, we have many accomplishments to celebrate. Here are some highlights.

We started the year with an **annual meeting** featuring special guests Elliott Funmaker and the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dance Troupe, who shared their Ho-Chunk traditions, handmade regalia, songs, and dances.

We sponsored a highly successful **candlelight walk**. (When this event resumes, perhaps in the fall of 2021 or the following winter, we will likely run buses to the event to reduce traffic and parking issues.)

As Covid-19 began to impact what we could do, we adapted.

Individually and in small, socially distanced groups, our volunteers put in over

400 hours mostly **removing invasive species** including pulling garlic mustard and Japanese hedge parsley and cutting and treating phragmites on City, County, and DNR lands.

We hired and supervised five **Prairie Partner interns** who put in close to 500 hours of conservation work at Cherokee Marsh and Meadow Ridge Conservation Parks and Yahara Heights Park.

We kept our monthly, guided **Bird and Nature Adventures** going with limits on participation and suggestions for self-guided adventures any day.

In cooperation with the River Alliance of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin DNR, we served as hosts for a socially distanced **Aquatic Invasive Species Snapshot Day**.

We **documented shoreline wetland loss** caused by high water on the upper Yahara River.

We collaborated with Madison Parks to achieve installation of the first of four volunteer-designed **kiosk displays** installed at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Yahara Heights and the Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area also received new kiosk displays from County Parks.

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, or contact me at (608) 215-0426 or (*janaxelson@gmail.com*).



Meet the 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 thank director Russ Hefty, who is retiring from the board after five years of service. We are pleased to announce that Russ will remain involved as an advisor to the group.

Directors Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, Sheila Leary, Paul Noeldner, and Jim Mand 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 2021 annual meeting consists of current directors Timothy Baker, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Mary Manering.

Our board usually meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm. Currently we are meeting virtually via Zoom. 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 three candidates for three positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2023:

Timothy Baker

Cherokee Marsh is a great place to walk and explore nature with my wife, Beth, and two children, Della and Dorothy. It's also an obviously important component of the lakes and wetlands system that defines the Madison area.

I joined the FoCM board in 2010 amid concerns about the health of the marsh, especially in the face of potential development. I've also served on the City of Madison Committee on the Environment and the Clean Lakes Alliance Community Board in recent years, but my time with the FoCM has been the most rewarding because this group has been so effective in not only protecting and restoring the marsh and related ecosystems, but also educating and encouraging people to experience the joys of the biotic communities found here.

I especially enjoy helping people learn about native plants, birds, and aquatic life, as well as a variety of outdoor activities including birding, fishing, hunting, and native plant restoration.

Lesleigh Luttrell

I would be honored to continue to serve on the Friends of Cherokee Marsh board. Preserving and enjoying our natural areas is even more important today and the role of Friends groups and volunteers remains vital. While we have not been able to enjoy the marsh in large groups or meet in person lately, the support of our members has remained strong. Thank you so much for everything you do in these unusual times. I look forward to continuing our work, and our enjoyment of nature, in the future.

Mary Manering

As a Madison native and a 36-year resident of the Cherokee Marsh area, I am pleased to submit my name as a candidate for the Friends of Cherokee Marsh Board. It is important to me to be involved in activities to improve the health of the marsh in order to provide necessary habitat for wildlife and recreational opportunities for those who treasure everything the marsh and neighboring lands have to offer.

My commitment to the environment is demonstrated by my participation in a number of organizations including: 25-year naturalist at the International Crane Foundation, water quality monitor with the Rock River Coalition, former naturalist with the Madison Metropolitan School District leading tours at Cherokee Marsh, kestrel nesting box monitor with the Madison Audubon Society, and assisting with the restoration of prairies and savannas in Dane County.

I welcome the opportunity to continue as a board member of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh to further my goals to protect and improve the marsh and to be involved with efforts to expose more people to the marsh and the important role of the natural world in our lives.



Steve Lang receives Bluebirder of the Year award

Friends member and enthusiastic bluebirder Steve Lang has received the 2020 Bluebirder of the Year award from the Bluebird Restoration Society of Wisconsin (BRAW).

Steve was cited for his contributions to BRAW's Trail Builder program for new members. Steve built and donated 125 nest boxes with predator guards to give to new BRAW members who want to establish or restock bluebird trails.

Each of Steve's nest boxes has two clamps for attaching to a pole. By counting his empty clamp jars, Steve calculates that in all, he has built over 400 bluebird houses in the past two years.

When not building nest boxes, Steve joins his wife, Mary, in monitoring 30 boxes at Yahara Heights and 40 boxes at Token Creek. This year the boxes produced an amazing 300 fledglings.

Congratulations to Steve and a big thanks for his and Mary's work to bring bluebirds to the natural areas of Cherokee Marsh and Token Creek!

Learn more about the [Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin](#)



COVID-19 update

Bird and nature adventures

Our bird and nature outings are now adventures! Monthly adventures are continuing, *limited to the first 10 participants* on site, no advance signups and with limited publicity. Recent adventures have drawn few participants so feel free to come out and participate. See the Events calendar in this newsletter for details.

As conditions change, it's possible that scheduled adventures may be cancelled and new events may be added. Check our website [calendar](#) for the

latest updates.

Self-guided adventures

See what you can find! Visit natural areas on your own for self-guided adventures. See the signage at the entrances to the North Unit for ideas on what to look for each month.

Board meetings

Our board meetings will likely continue to be held virtually for some time. If you are interested in attending a virtual board meeting, contact Sheila Leary at smleary@charter.net for details.

Latest updates on COVID-19 openings, closures, and more

[COVID-19 update from Madison Parks](#)

[Dane County Parks Changes and Updates Due to COVID-19](#)

[Public Health Madison & Dane County updates](#)



Upcoming events

Check the listed contact information to verify that events are still on.

[See the full calendar](#) for latest information or [sign up](#) to receive notices about events and volunteer opportunities.

Self-guided nature adventures

Get ideas for your own self-guided nature adventures at Cherokee Marsh and other locations.

<http://tinyurl.com/madisonfunactivities>

Bird and nature adventures

Limited to the first 10 participants on site, no advance signups.

Do not use parks or trails if you are sick with symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. Maintain a social distance of at least six feet from people other than your household members.

Sun, Dec 6, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, history of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park restoration with Paul Noeldner

AND

Sun, Jan 3, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, nature resolutions with Paul Noeldner

AND

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

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

Contact: Paul Noeldner, paul_noeldner@hotmail.com, 608-698-0104

What have we done to deserve all these cranes?

Virtual presentation with Professor Stan Temple

Tuesday, January 19, 7 pm

See above in this newsletter for more information.

Annual member meeting

Virtual meeting

Wednesday, January 20, 5:30 pm

See above in this newsletter for more information.

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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