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# The Cherokee Marsh News Dec 2021 / Jan 2022



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## Annual meeting to feature

# Madison's Conservation Parks: celebrating 50 years

Our annual member meeting is scheduled for:

**Saturday, January 15, 10 am - 12 noon**

**Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr**

We'll begin with a business meeting to review 2021, look forward to 2022 (our 15th year!), and elect directors for 2022-2023. Election information is below in this newsletter.



*Si Widstrand, enjoying retirement*

Our special guests will be Si Widstrand, retired Conservation Resources Manager for Madison Parks, and Brandon Mann or Jay Walters from the current Conservation Parks crew. Si will share with us the early history of Madison's Conservation Parks. Brandon or Jay will share what's happening now and planned for the coming year at Cherokee Marsh and other Conservation Parks.

We are planning to also have a Zoom option to attend virtually. We'll provide this information via email closer to the meeting date as well as on our website's calendar.

10:00 - 10:30 am - business meeting

10:30 - 11:30 am - Madison's Conservation Parks: past, present, and future

with Si Widstrand and current Parks crew  
11:30 am - 12 noon - social time

We hope to see you there in person or virtually!



*The former driveway to the family farm is now the entrance road to the School Rd boat landing. Photo courtesy of Susan Edquist.*

## **History of South Unit "Faraway Farm" shared**

*Jan Axelson*

We recently learned some Cherokee Marsh history from Susan Edquist, who grew up on land that is now part of Cherokee Marsh's South Unit.

Susan's family, the Wests, included her parents, Lyle and Grace West, her brother, Robert, and herself. They moved to what was then called Faraway Farm in the early 1950s. Susan was the last West to live there full time, leaving

in 1965 when she graduated from East High School. Robert West continues to make his home in Wisconsin and Susan now lives in North Carolina.

The entrance to the family's farm was at the corner of School Rd and Wheeler Rd at the current site of the South Unit's main entrance. An early address for the farm was "Route 1," later replaced by 5002 School Rd. After the City of Madison obtained the land, School Rd north of Wheeler Rd became the public entrance road to the boat landing.



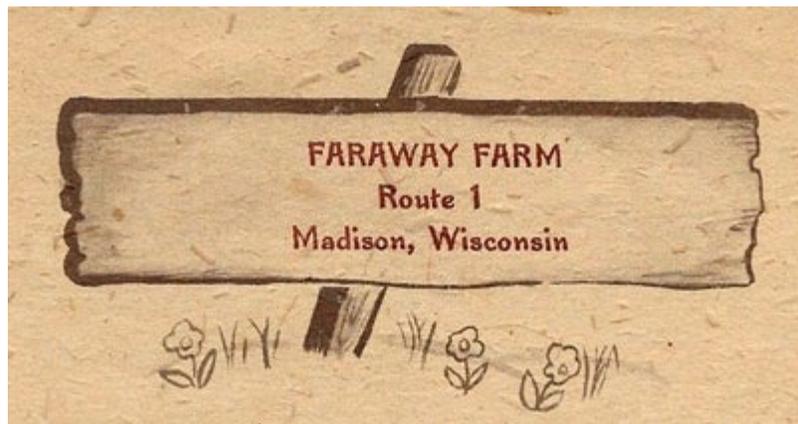
*The home of Dr. J.P. West.* Photo courtesy of Susan Edquist.

Susan's uncle, Dr. J.P. West, had a home nearby at the corner of Wheeler Rd and School Rd. Dr. West owned land stretching east to N. Sherman Ave. Some of his land also became part of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.



*View of the farmyard.* Photo courtesy of Susan Edquist.

Susan tells us, "It is very satisfying to know the Park management, employees, and volunteers have done so much to properly take care of this unique and special place. I am proud that I am part of the history of that land. How fortunate are those who can now visit and enjoy 5002 School Road, my old homeland."



*The farm's letterhead.* Photo courtesy of Susan Edquist.



## **Public meeting on Cherokee Golf Course renovation held**

*Jan Axelson*

On November 17, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) held a public information meeting concerning a permit application for the proposed Cherokee Golf Course renovations. About 20 people attended the meeting in person with others tuning in via Zoom.

As we've reported, the project involves a complete reconstruction and redesign of the Cherokee Golf Course. The redesign will include lengthening holes, widening playing surfaces, and expanding ponds connected to a tributary of the Yahara River.

Dennis Tiziani, authorized representative of Cherokee Park, Inc., applied to the DNR for a Wetland Individual Permit for wetland fill or disturbance and associated Individual Permits for the creation of a Connected Enlargement, Dredging, and Stream Relocation of an unnamed tributary stream to the Yahara River in the Town of Westport. The DNR has made a tentative determination that it will issue the permit.

The purpose of the public meeting was to enable members of the public to learn more about the requested activity and submit written or oral comments about the waterway and project in light of the legal standards that apply.

Those responding to questions from the public included Ryan Pappas, DNR Water Management Specialist, Jeffrey Kraemer of Heartland Ecological Services, Steve Wenzloff of PGA Design Services, and Scott Anderson, Civil Engineer from Snyder & Associates..

In response to a question about how the waterways and proposed plantings would be monitored, Pappas responded that Cherokee Park is required to follow the 5-year monitoring conditions in the permit and that the DNR does occasional compliance monitoring and will act on tips.

In response to a question about the plan to remove over 400 trees from the golf course, Steve Wenzloff responded that the trees were mostly dead or dying ash or willow. No answer was provided to a question about how the tree removal would affect stormwater runoff.

Responses to other questions include:

Any installation of bleachers would be temporary.

There are no plans to fence the golf course.

The project will increase the flow rate through the golf course but will have no significant effect on the water levels in the downstream canal in back of Menomonie Ln.

### **Our comment**

Our comment to the DNR is:

*We appreciate the efforts of DNR staff in requiring changes to reduce wetland destruction and improve water quality in the drainageways that flow into the Yahara River.*

*In areas with restored, native vegetation, continued monitoring and maintenance are essential to prevent the recurrence of invasives. We urge the DNR to conduct monitoring and order compliance as needed over the life of the permit, and we encourage Cherokee Park, Inc, to continue these efforts beyond the permit's timeframe.*

### **Comments accepted through Dec 3**

Any member of the public may submit written comments by emailing [Ryan.Pappas@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Ryan.Pappas@wisconsin.gov) or writing to Ryan Pappas, 1155 Pilgrim Rd., Plymouth, WI 53073 by U.S. mail. Comments should include the docket number (Docket # IP-SC-2021-13-01717; 01719) or applicant name (Cherokee Park, Inc.) and should relate to whether the project meets the legal standards listed above. Comments must be postmarked no later than December 3rd, 2021, in order for them to be considered.



## Kiosk projects completed in Madison and Dane County parks

We are delighted to report that our work to enhance visitor information and resources at five parks is complete.

### Madison Conservation Parks

At Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, Madison Parks installed new kiosks at the North Unit's upper and lower lots (6098 and 5098 N Sherman Ave), the South Unit (802 Wheeler Rd), and Meadow Ridge Conservation Park / Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit (4002 Meadow Valley Dr).

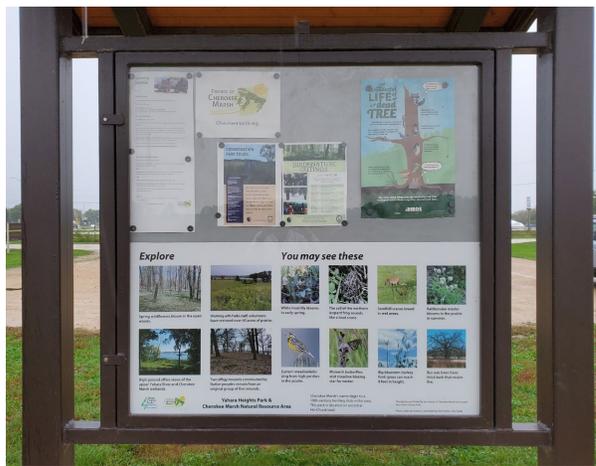


We worked with Parks staff to design the display panels that include trail maps, photo displays, and other visitor information. The reverse sides have notices about events and other timely information. A bike rack is also now available near the South Unit's kiosk.

### **Dane County Parks**



Across the river at Yahara Heights Park and the Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area, Dane County installed kiosks at the west entrance just north of the dog park entrance (Catfish Ct, Westport) and at the newer east entrance (5720 River Rd, Westport). Each entrance has a small gravel parking area. We worked with Parks staff to finalize the design of the displays, which include a trail map and other visitor information.



*The Public Lands map shows 13 access points and 5 watercraft launches in the Cherokee Marsh watershed.*

With a grant from Dane County Parks, at each location we added a visual display on the reverse side of the kiosk, a magnetic board for attaching event notices and other information, a Cherokee Marsh Public Lands display, and bike racks.

### **Thanks to all who helped**

Thanks to Ann Shea, Paul Quinlan, and others at Madison Parks for helping to make the Conservation Park kiosks a reality and working with us on the content. These kiosks will likely be a prototype for kiosks at other Conservation Parks.

Thanks to Sara Rigelman for working with us to implement our Dane County Parks grant.

And thanks to our volunteers. Mary Manering, Sheila Leary, Sue Manske, and

Jan Axelson worked with Madison and Dane County Parks staff to bring these projects to completion. Doug Norgord of Geographic Techniques, LLC designed the Public Lands map and patiently worked with us through many rounds of editing. Many photographers contributed images for the displays. Jim Mand is keeping all six kiosks up to date with notices.

*Visitor tip: if you're not familiar with the trails, take a photo of the trail map before heading out.*



## It's time to renew your membership

If you've renewed your membership for 2022, thank you!

If you're a current member, you've likely received our renewal notice in the mail. If you aren't yet a member, please consider joining.

Your member dues help fund our activities, including our popular naturalist-led bird and nature adventures, hiring five summer interns to perform restoration work, helping to fund kiosk enhancements on city and county public lands, and much more.

[Join, renew, or donate](#)

Renewing now helps us by saving time, resources, and postage to send reminder letters.

## **Is my membership up for renewal?**

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2021, your membership is paid through December 31, 2022. 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 join or renew**

To pay online or download a member form, visit:

[Join, renew, or donate](#)

## **Your donation may be tax deductible**

**Thanks to the CARES Act, part of the federal government's pandemic relief program, your donation may be deductible even if you don't itemize.**

The law permits taxpayers to claim a limited deduction on their 2021 federal income tax returns for cash contributions they made to certain qualifying charitable organizations. These taxpayers can claim a deduction of up to \$300 for cash contributions to qualifying charities (including the Friends of Cherokee Marsh) during 2021.

[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.



## What we did in 2021

*Jan Axelson*

Although 2021 was another year with challenges, we have many accomplishments to celebrate. Here are some highlights.

We started the year with our first ever **virtual annual meeting** featuring University of Wisconsin Professor Emeritus Stan Temple presenting on *What have we done to deserve all these cranes?*

Individually and in small, socially distanced groups, our volunteers put in over 600 hours mostly **removing invasive species** on City of Madison, Dane County, and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands, including pulling garlic mustard and Japanese hedge parsley and cutting and treating phragmites. We also collected seeds for use in future restorations and performed plant surveys in seven locations in the North and South Units for our third year.

In a new project, our volunteers sewed 35 seed collecting bags for use by DNR volunteers in nearby State Natural Areas.

For a second year, 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 continued our monthly, guided **Bird and Nature Adventures** featuring a wide range of topics including birds, wildflowers, bugs, and trees. Our geology walk with Emeritus Professor Dave. Mickelson attracted a record 60+ participants..

In cooperation with the UW-Madison Division of Extension, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, we again served as hosts for **Aquatic Invasive Species Snapshot Day**.

We collaborated with Madison Parks to achieve installation of four **kiosks** installed at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North and South Units and Meadow Ridge Conservation Park. At the kiosk areas at Yahara Heights and the Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area, with the help of a Dane County Parks grant, we added visual displays and bike racks. (See story in this newsletter for details.)

We supported acquiring 22 acres of woods (the Hornung Woods) on the southeast corner of Wheeler Rd and N Sherman Ave, adjacent to Whitetail Ridge Park and near Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit.

We provided input to the DNR on a request by Cherokee Park, Inc., for a dredging permit on the Cherokee Golf Course. (See story in this newsletter. We will continue to monitor this project.)

## **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.

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

Our candidate slate for terms that begin at the 2022 annual meeting consists of current directors Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, Sheila Leary, Jim Mand, and Paul Noeldner.

Our board meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr. The meetings are open to all. To confirm the time (occasionally we reschedule) or request an agenda, contact Jan at (608) 215-0426 or [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com) or any of our other directors.

If you are interested in joining our board, we invite you to attend a board meeting. Our bylaws permit adding interim board members at any time.

Here are statements from the slate of five candidates for five positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2024:



## **Jan Axelson**

Since moving to Madison's Northside 21 years ago, I've spent many hours exploring the marsh on foot, skis, snowshoes, and by canoe and kayak. As the Friends begin our 15th year, I would like to continue working to encourage folks to visit the marsh for learning and enjoyment, to preserve and restore our public lands and waters in and around the marsh, and to protect the watershed in the face of development.



## **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

in and around Cherokee Marsh. Having a background as a Naturalist, I have given many nature tours of Cherokee Marsh trying to help others appreciate what is outside, and hoping they will want to help preserve and improve the beauty and diversity here.

Cherokee Marsh has changed dramatically through the impact of people, and will benefit through restoration efforts to return it to a more natural, healthy nstate. I wish to be a part of this.



### **Sheila Leary**

I am finishing my third year on the Friends board. As a resident of Madison's Northside for more than 30 years, I have a profound appreciation for the Cherokee Marsh public lands—as precious habitat for flora and fauna, as respite for stressed humans, and as hardworking wetlands providing flood control and water filtration.

After a career in communications, marketing, and event-planning, I enjoy applying those skills to varied projects for the Friends of Cherokee Marsh. I am also a certified Wisconsin Master Naturalist and lead wildflower walks at the Marsh. In the spring and fall, I help pull garlic mustard and gather seeds. If re-elected, I look forward to continuing those efforts and to introducing some new

educational events at the Marsh when the pandemic eases.



### **James Mand**

Having just completed my first term on the Board of Directors, I would like to submit my name to be elected to a second term on the board. Have enjoyed working with other board members and group members in promoting the goals of the Friends, through educational opportunities, volunteer work parties with City & Parks departments.

Have also been the Bluebird Monitor for Cherokee Marsh North Unit for 5 years now, checking and maintaining 20 nest boxes.

And have recently started taking care of the 6 kiosks (2 brand new) at the various Cherokee Marsh units and 2 county parks units in the watershed. Posting notices of upcoming events for the public, such as nature walks and volunteer opportunities.

Originally from Chilton WI (Calumet County), have had a life-long interest in nature and birds.

Graduated from WSU-Oshkosh in Biology, and Geology.

Have lived in the Madison area for 40+ years. Retired 5 years ago from a production management position with a local metals manufacturing company.

Live in the Cherokee Condos near the marsh.



### **Paul Noeldner**

Being a board member of Friends of Cherokee Marsh continues to offer wonderful special volunteer opportunities and I would love to continue to help contribute. I enjoy helping with newsletter articles, events and collaboration on volunteer activities with Parks staff and other groups.

My main contribution is helping organize and lead Madison FUN partners co-sponsored year round family and kid friendly Bird and Nature Adventures and other outreach and education activities to help connect more people and diverse communities with Cherokee Marsh and with our Friends group and to help grow support for our goals.

**Thank you** to Julie Olsen and Tim Valdez for their donation to the Prairie Partner interns in memory of Jim Hughes.



## Upcoming events

[Sign up](#) to receive notices about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities including announcements for last-minute events and volunteer opportunities that don't make it into the newsletter.

[See the full calendar](#) for latest information.

## Bird and nature adventures

**Sunday, December 5, 1:30 pm – 3 pm**, Native plants at Cherokee Marsh with naturalist guide Eva Roos.

**Sunday, January 2, 1:30 pm – 3 pm**, Nature resolutions with Master Naturalist Sheila Leary.

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](mailto:paul_noeldner@hotmail.com), 608-698-0104

[Madison Parks bird and nature adventure page](#)

## **Volunteer event - help cut brush**

**Thurs, Dec 9, 9 am – 12 noon**

We're heading out again to continue our work to cut and stack brush to restore the lake views from the ridge at Meadow Ridge Conservation Park, located just across Sauthoff Rd from Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit.

Meet at:

**Meadow Ridge Park**, 4002 Meadow Valley Dr.

Heading north on Northport Dr/HWY 113, just past Warner Park, turn left onto Troy Dr. In about 1.25 mile, Troy Dr curves right and becomes Green Ave. Turn left onto Meadow Ridge Ln and follow it to the end at Meadow Valley Dr. Park on the street.

We'll walk up the hill to the work site. Bring work gloves and drinking water. Tools provided; bring a long-handled loppers if you have a favorite. If you can join us, it's helpful for our planning if you respond to this email or text Jan at 608 215 0426.

*Most of our volunteer events happen on short notice and don't make it into the newsletter. [Sign up to receive notices about volunteer events.](#)*

## **Annual member meeting - Madison's Conservation Parks: celebrating 50 years**

**Saturday, January 15, 10 am – 12 noon**

**Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr**

See story in this newsletter for details.

## **Sunset snowshoe walk**

**Monday, February 14, 4:30 – 6:30 pm**

Enjoy a sunset winter walk at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Snowshoes provided, or you're welcome to bring your own. Basic snowshoe instruction provided. This program is weather/snow dependent. Sponsored by Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR).

\$5 resident, \$7.50 non-resident

**All participants must register** and an adult over 18 must register and participate with youth participants.

[More information and register](#)

## Self-guided nature adventures

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

[tinyurl.com/selfguided-adventures](https://tinyurl.com/selfguided-adventures)

## Board meetings

**Wednesday, Dec 15, 5:30 – 7 pm**

**Wednesday, Jan 19, 5:30 – 7 pm**

Our board of directors is responsible for planning, coordinating, communicating, and managing our activities. Everyone is welcome to attend board meetings. We've resumed in-person meetings in the Warner Park Community Recreation Center. Contact [janaxelson@gmail.com](mailto:janaxelson@gmail.com) to confirm location.

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