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The Cherokee Marsh News

Dec 2022 / Jan 2023



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Annual meeting: Nature is for everyone

Our annual member meeting is scheduled for:

Saturday, January 21, 10 am - 12 noon

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr

We'll begin with a business meeting to review 2022, look forward to 2023 (our 16th year!), and elect directors for 2023-2024. Election information is below in this newsletter.

Our theme this year is *Nature is for everyone*. Learn about activities and opportunities from local groups focused on making the outdoors welcoming for all.

10:00 - 10:30 am - business meeting

10:30 - 11:30 am - Nature is for everyone

11:30 am - 12 noon - social time

We'll provide more information via email closer to the meeting date as well as on our website's calendar.

We hope to see you at the meeting!



It's time to renew your membership

If you've renewed your membership for 2023, thank you! 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, 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, 2022, your membership is paid through December 31, 2023. 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 join or renew

To pay online or download a member form, visit:

[Join, renew, or donate](#)

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our Tax Identification Number 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 2022

Jan Axelson

2022 has been another busy year of working on restoration, education, and advocacy and *having fun* at Cherokee Marsh.

We started the year with a virtual **annual meeting celebrating 50 years of Madison Conservation Parks**. Our special guests were Si Widstrand, retired development director for Madison Parks, and Jay Walters, conservation technician for Madison Parks.

Our volunteers put in over 400 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.

For our third year, we hired and supervised five **Prairie Partner interns** who put in close to 400 hours of conservation work at Cherokee Marsh and Meadow Ridge Conservation Parks and Yahara Heights Park.

Our volunteers sewed a record 45 seed collecting bags for use by DNR volunteers in nearby State Natural Areas.

We continued our monthly guided **Bird and Nature Adventures** featuring topics including birds, wildflowers, bugs, and trees. Special events included an evening frog walk, a night moth walk, and Hayrides and Hikes in partnership with Madison Parks. We paddled the upper Yahara River and discussed environmental issues with State Senator Melissa Agard and her staff.

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**. Other **citizen science** we supported included our continuing plant surveys in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, the International Crane Foundation's Great Midwest Crane Count, Madison Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, and the Natural Resource Foundation of Wisconsin's Birdathon.

We celebrated the return of nesting **red-headed woodpeckers** in snags at Cherokee Marsh - South Unit and **purple martins** in artificial gourds at Cherokee Park. A pink streak moth, found in high quality prairies, was observed on a moth walk.

We talked to Northsiders and other community members while tabling at the **Northside Farmers Market** on two Sundays.

We continued to follow and report on the **Cherokee Golf Course renovation** project.

Last but not least, we enjoyed watching **goats** hired by Madison Parks perform "prescribed grazing" on brush at Cherokee Marsh - South Unit.

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*) or any other director.



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 Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, Sheila Leary, Jim Mand, and Paul Noeldner 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 2023 annual meeting consists of current directors Timothy Baker, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Wendy Murkve and new director candidate Sean Gere. Director Mary Manering is retiring after six years of service. Our thanks to Mary for serving on the board and serving as secretary.

Our board meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr. In good weather we may meet outdoors at the rainbow shelter. 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 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 three candidates for five positions with terms that will end at our member meeting in January, 2025:

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.

Sean Gere

I have been an arborist in many capacities for 32 years. I own a tree care company here in Madison but in a past life travelled many places in the world

while working for a company out of CT training folks to be arborists. Sometimes that would involve research projects also. So, I've always been intrigued by all things trees which means their associates too.

I've been an avid forager with a particular interest in fungi for ~30 years. I have attended and completed Master Naturalist training.

I enjoy being around passionate people and learning from everyone.

I'm involved in a couple of local mycological based projects here in Madison that will benefit the community and the land. Among others, one goal is to connect and build momentum for these projects and community.

Lesleigh Luttrell



I first joined the Board in 2011 and am definitely willing to continue to serve another term on the Friends of Cherokee Marsh board. We've been able to accomplish so much in the past few years thanks to our active, involved and generous members and leadership. I look forward to doing my part to help continue our work preserving and protecting our wetlands and encouraging everyone to enjoy our treasured Marsh.

Wendy Murkve



I joined the board in 2022 and hope to be elected for a full term. As a Northsider of almost 32 years, I've fallen in love with Cherokee Marsh and have spent countless hours hiking, kayaking and snowshoeing, wandering - looking, and listening to the sights and sounds and smells of the marsh. It reminds me of my childhood, spent growing up on the banks of the Yahara River in McFarland. I am also working on a personal photography project to share the beauty of the South Unit as it changes throughout the year.

I'm still learning about the Board, but I currently prepare the monthly Events newsletter and work on our social media sites, as well as volunteer work cleaning up trash, pulling garlic mustard, and other projects.

If I'm elected to a full term, I hope to continue work we've started recently with local Scouts BSA and Girl Scouts councils to bring youth to the marsh for outdoor education and perhaps service projects.



Photo by SSgt Cameron Lewis

F-16 fighter jets depart Truax Field

Jan Axelson

For 30 years, visitors to Cherokee Marsh have been likely to see F-16 fighter jets leaving or arriving at Truax Field, just southeast of the marsh. Marking the end of an era, the 115th Fighter Wing's last F-16 fighter jets left Truax Field on October 5.

The F-16s, officially called Fighting Falcons but also known as Vipers, have been based at Truax since 1992 when they replaced the A-10 Thunderbolt II "Warthog" aircraft. The departed F-16s will remain in use, flown by other units in locations across the U.S.

To replace the F-16s, 18 F-35A Lightning II fighter jets are expected to arrive at Truax Field in the spring of 2023. The F-35A is the smallest and lightest of the F-35 variants. In selecting Truax as a site for F-35s, the United States Airforce considered the local weather, the availability of airspace and training range, capacity needs, environmental requirements and cost. Until the F-35s arrive, F-16s from other units will operate out of Truax Field.

Public opinion on the impending arrival of the F-35s has been split. Supporters cite jobs, the positive economic impact of the airbase, and the importance of helping protect the safety and security of Wisconsin and the nation. Those opposed have expressed concerns about increased noise levels, the cost of soundproofing nearby homes, pollution, and a belief that the F-35 aircraft are expensive, unsafe, and unneeded for the nation's defense.

[Statement from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh statement on the Environmental Impact Statement](#) regarding the addition of the F-35 plane to Truax Field

A version of this story appeared in the Northside News.



Explore the snowy outdoors by ski, snowshoe, or hiking boots

We're reposting this seasonal reminder about winter activities from last year, with some updates.

You can snowshoe and hike in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North and Mendota Units. Please stay on trail and leave pets at home. Other locations with trails include Dane County's Yahara Heights Park, Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area just east of Yahara Heights, and Token Creek Park, which has a dedicated snowshoe trail. Dogs on leash and off-trail exploring are allowed on these county lands.

When conditions allow, Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's South Unit has trails groomed for classic cross-country skiing. The trails require no fee or permit. Token Creek County Park has trails groomed for classic and skate skiing. Please don't hike or snowshoe on trails that are groomed for skiing.

Ice fishing is popular at Cherokee Lake off Burning Wood Way in the Cherokee Park neighborhood. For supplies and advice, visit D & S Bait and Tackle, 1411 Northport Drive.

Be aware that the lake and river ice is never officially declared safe for walking or other activities. This season, the Madison Fire Department has already been called to rescue folks who fell through the ice at Cherokee Lake. If uncertain, don't risk it.

Don't forget that Madison Friends of Urban Nature (FUN) sponsors monthly, small-group, guided bird and nature adventures at Cherokee Marsh's North Unit. If you prefer to adventure on your own, FUN has suggestions for where to go and what to look for each month. See *Upcoming Events* below for details.

[Winter Fun in Madison Parks](#)

[Winter Recreation in Dane County Parks](#)



Events

Unless otherwise indicated, events are free with no registration required.

[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 4, 1:30 - 3 pm, Winter Native Plant ID with naturalist guide Eva Roos,

AND

Sunday January 1, 1:30 - 3 pm, My Nature Resolutions with naturalist guide Sheila Leary

The 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

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

Brush cutting work party

Thursday, December 15, 9 am - 12 noon

Meadow Ridge Park, 4002 Meadow Valley Dr, park on street near the kiosk and playground.

Help us continue our work to clear brush from the woods at Meadow Ridge Conservation Park near Cherokee Marsh - Mendota Unit. No experience needed. Loppers provided, but you're welcome to bring your own. Certified chainsaw operators are also welcome. Bring your own saw and PPE. Signup recommended so you can be contacted of any changes or cancellations. To sign up, contact Jan at janaxelson@gmail.com or 608-215-0426.

Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 17, dawn to dusk

Join our team to look for birds in Cherokee Marsh and other Northside locations. Join us for any or all of the day or count at home at your feeders. No experience needed. We welcome beginning birders. Contact Paul Noeldner, paul_noeldner@hotmail.com, 608-698-0104. [More information](#).

Annual member meeting

Saturday, January 21, 2023, 10 am - 12 noon

Warner Park Community Recreation Center

See story above in this newsletter.

Board Meetings

Wednesday, December 21, 5:30 - 7 pm

AND

Wednesday, January 18, 5:30 - 7 pm

Self-guided nature adventures

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

tinyurl.com/selfguided-adventures

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