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The Cherokee Marsh News Feb / March 2022



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Cherokee Golf Course permits granted

Jan Axelson

On December 21, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued the requested wetland fill permits for the proposed Cherokee Golf Course renovations. Portions of the site fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has also issued a permit.

The Dane County Board has approved a petition to rezone 3.07 acres, reduced from 5.48 acres in the original application, from wetland status to non-wetland status.

The County's staff report included these findings:

The rezone petition would have no significant impact on stormwater and flood water storage capacity, maintenance of dry season stream flow, the discharge of groundwater to a wetland, the recharge of groundwater from a wetland to another area, or the flow of groundwater through a wetland.

The overall site design and mitigation, including the installation and maintenance of vegetative buffers and other practices to meet stormwater sediment standards should improve water quality protections compared with current conditions. In addition, as a condition of DNR permits, the site must abide by pesticide limits and nutrient management plans designed to limit pollution of downstream surface water.

Land-disturbing activity will be subject to erosion control permits.

Shallow water depth and existing perched culverts limit accessibility of most of the wetland areas to local fish species. Proposed wetland restorations and enhancements elsewhere on the site will likely provide higher quality fish habitat that will compensate for any loss of habitat due to fill.

All wetland fill or cut areas are dominated by non-native and/or common, invasive species of vegetation. Existing wetland areas are relatively small, isolated from other upland or aquatic habitat types, and surrounded by manicured turf grass associated with the golf course. Existing habitat values are likely to be minimal. As part of the WI DNR permit, the applicant will be completing habitat and wetland enhancement and mitigation activities that will likely result in an overall net improvement of wildlife habitat functional value, compared with current conditions.

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.

Read more about this project

[Our Dec 2021 / Jan 2022 newsletter](#)

[Our Oct / Nov 2021 newsletter](#)

[Dane County Legislative Information Center documents about the project](#)



School Road pumping station rehab nears completion

Along the entrance road to the School Rd boat landing is the brick building of Pumping Station 14. You may have noticed the extensive work being done at the site in recent months. We asked what was going on, and Amanda Wegner, Communications & Public Affairs Manager for the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, provided this information:

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is currently rehabilitating Pumping Station 14, located at 5000 School Road. Put in service in 1971, this pumping station's service area covers 14,654 acres in the Village of Dane, DeForest, Waunakee and Windsor, sanitary and utility districts in the Towns of Vienna and Westport, and part of the City of Madison.

As much as possible, the wastewater collection system uses gravity and the land's natural slope to move wastewater. Pumping stations help move wastewater from a lower elevation to a higher elevation, using mechanical energy to move the wastewater uphill through pressurized pipes called force mains.

Eventually, the wastewater from the force mains is discharged back into the gravity pipes at high points in the system, and the process repeats until the wastewater reaches the Nine Springs treatment plant. The District regularly assesses the condition of its pumping stations and prioritized this station for rehabilitation due to the age and condition of the station, critical components, and electrical service. For instance, some components were so old the District could no longer obtain replacement parts.

As critical infrastructure, projects such as the Pumping Station 14 rehab are vital to maintaining reliable operations to safely convey and treat wastewater to protect human health and the environment.

In this rehab project, the District is replacing the station's pumps and all its piping. Other updates include new electrical, HVAC, odor control equipment, and a new control system. The addition of an onsite generator helps ensure station resiliency and redundancy.

Construction started in late 2020. Unfortunately, supply chain issues have affected the ability to get necessary components, which has delayed the completion of the project. It is expected to be complete sometime this summer.

Through the winter, contractors are primarily working inside the pumping station to make the necessary improvements and upgrades. Later this spring, attention will turn to the station's exterior. Exterior updates and finishes include a new driveway; new landscaping; diverting part of the walking path around the back of the station; installation of a split-rail fence; and the addition of a drainage ditch to prevent flooding at the site.

For more information about the District, visit madsewer.org.

Some history of the site from former Conservation Resources Manager Russ Hefty:

Adding the connection to areas to the north required laying pipe under the

Yahara River and a high quality shoreline wetland. In an attempt to preserve the existing wetland, wetland ecologist Jim Zimmerman requested keeping the peat separate as the line was being dug so the peat could be put back in place, but the effort failed and the peat washed away. Despite some more recent efforts to restore vegetation, the area remains largely open water.



Seeking volunteers who like to sew

Do you like to sew? Once again this year we are looking for a few volunteers to help make bags for seed collecting. Starting in mid-summer each year, volunteers (and Prairie Partner interns) from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Dane County Parks, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Natural Areas team, Groundswell Conservancy, and other groups collect seeds from natural areas for use in future restorations.

Originally designed by volunteer Rumi O'Brien of the Prairie Enthusiasts, the bags have become more and more popular as seed-collecting groups learn about them. The bags we use are donated chicken feed and bird seed bags. To make a bag functional and durable for seed collecting, we sew on an adjustable shoulder strap and reinforce the top and bottom by sewing bias tape along the edges.

Sewing takes about 30 minutes per bag and doesn't require any special thread or needles. The stitching just needs to be functional, not pretty. We provide the bags, bias tape, and strapping. This year's bags will go to Groundswell Conservancy and the DNR's State Natural Areas program.

If you have access to a sewing machine and are interested in sewing 5 bags, contact Jan at janaxelson@gmail.com for details.



Jay Walters explained how Madison Parks has been using goats to control invasive plants.

Annual meeting featured Madison's Conservation Parks: celebrating 50 years

Our annual meeting, held via Zoom on January 15, featured Si Widstrand, retired Conservation Resources Manager for Madison Parks, and Jay Walters, Conservation Technician for Madison's conservation parks. From Si we learned about the history of Madison's parks and conservation parks in particular, and Jay shared news about current and future projects, including a plan to use goats in Cherokee Marsh - South Unit.

Elected to 2-year terms that began at the 2022 annual meeting were directors Jan Axelson, Mary Binkley, Sheila Leary, Jim Mand, and Paul Noeldner. Directors Timothy Baker, Lesleigh Luttrell, and Mary Manering are in the middle of their 2-year terms and weren't up for re-election.

At the regular third-Wednesday board meeting, the directors elected the following officers for 2022: President Jan Axelson, Vice President Timothy Baker, Treasurer Lesleigh Luttrell, and Secretary Mary Manering.

Friends Of Cherokee Marsh
2021 Financial Report

Balance 12/31/20 Balance 12/31/21
\$30,664.48 \$33,103.48

Banking Summary	12/31/2021	Note	Approved Budget
Income			
Dues	\$3,111.08	136 memberships	\$3,000.00
Contributions	\$3,500.88	70 donors	\$3,500.00
Memorial/Honor Donations	\$500.00	8 donors	\$350.00
Environmental Education	\$558.81	12 donors	\$500.00
Endowment	\$2,276.22	20 donors	\$2,500.00
Major Donations	\$6,100.00	6 donors (incl IRA distributions)	
Prairie Partners Fundraising	\$7,830.18	40 donors	\$7,500.00
Interest	\$3.35		\$10.00
Total	\$23,880.52		\$17,360.00
Expenses			
<i>Regular Expenses</i>			
Insurance	\$469.00	additional for grant	\$400.00
Printing	\$0.00		\$250.00
PO Box Rent	\$146.00		\$130.00
Postage/Envelopes/Supplies	\$234.52		\$300.00
Events - regular	\$555.00	annual meeting, walks	\$700.00
Website/Software	\$114.60	MailChimp	\$120.00
WI Dept Financial Inst	\$10.00	annual fee	\$10.00
<i>Other Expenses</i>			
Brochure/Fundraising Materials	\$0.00		\$300.00
Display	\$62.18	Kiosk materials	\$300.00
Kiosk Project	\$8,137.91	grant, 75% to be paid by County	\$3,000.00
Donations/Dues to other groups	\$425.00	Groundswell River Alliance CLA	\$450.00
Environmental Education	\$1,200.00	to MMSD for transportation	\$1,200.00
Endowment	\$2,207.00	donations to Conservation Fund	\$2,500.00
Field Work	\$130.11	supplies	\$200.00
Other (unbudgeted)	\$335.50	Master Naturalist class	
Prairie Partners	\$7,414.90		\$7,500.00
Total	\$21,441.72		\$17,360.00

From our Treasurer

Lesleigh Luttrell

The 2021 financial report above shows our yearly income and expense totals. Here are a few notes on what happened in January. We had paid in advance for the space at Warner Park Community Center to hold an in person annual meeting – which ended up not being a safe option. The City of Madison refunded the \$250 paid which makes the total spent on events \$305 (including a donation in honor of the 2021 speaker and support for the popular Moth walk). The County did come through with their 75% of the money spent on Kiosk project so the amount covered by the Friends was \$2034.91.

We do not yet have the audited 2021 report on the Conservation Fund through the end of 2021, but we are very pleased to report that the fund balance at the end of November was \$50,333.45. With the generous help of Friends we have

reached a long time goal of passing \$50,000 in the fund. Onward to the next goal! I will report the end of year balance and other details in our next newsletter.

Thank you!

To all who have renewed your membership for 2022, thank you! If you haven't yet renewed or joined, here is the link with information:

[Join, renew, or donate](#)



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, Feb 6, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, 50 years of conservation parks with Madison Parks Conservation Resources Supervisor Paul Quinlan. Have a question

about Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park? This is your chance to ask it.

Sunday, March 6, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, Sugar moon, hunger moon, with Master Naturalist Kathleen Wolf.

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

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

Volunteer event - help brush piles + cookout

Fri, Feb 4, 1 pm – 4 pm

We're continuing with our project to burn the brush piles we made this fall.
PLUS enjoy Mary's famous hamburgers cooked on the coals, hot drinks, and toasted marshmallows.

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 be working on the hilltop. We'll be setting fire to existing piles and possibly hauling brush to consolidate the piles. Bring work gloves, wear old clothes (they might get burn holes), and dress for the weather.

If you can join us, it's helpful for our planning if you respond to this email or text Jan at [608 215 0426](tel:6082150426)

Meet at:

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.](#)

Self-guided nature adventures

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

tinyurl.com/selfguided-adventures

Board meetings

Wednesday, Feb 16, 5:30 – 7 pm

Wednesday, Mar 16, 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 to confirm location.

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