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The Cherokee Marsh News

June / July 2023



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News from the marsh



Thanks to Madison Parks for providing trail maps, which we installed at six trail crossroads in Cherokee Marsh - North Unit. The maps were in use within minutes of being installed!



Use the boot brush stations by the kiosks in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park to help prevent the spread of invasive plants (and animals, such as jumping worm eggs).



It's another successful year for nesting purple martins on Burning Wood Way, near Chinook Ln in the Cherokee Park neighborhood. Here is an update from steward Cindy Carlson:

Earlier this spring, Mark Ewig and neighbor Dale Schultz worked to increase the stability of the pulley system for the soon-to-be arriving purple martins. With that accomplished, the 10 condo units were erected by Cindy and Mark the afternoon of April 13 (which featured much more favorable weather than last year's windy and cold conditions!).

The martins also must have enjoyed the sunny and warm weather because the first appeared the next day! Two martins were visible on April 15.

Eventually, at least 11 martins have been spotted and have been very active in their Cherokee Park home. Unfortunately, several house sparrows also found the environs to their liking but they were encouraged to move elsewhere.



Thanks to our volunteers who helped removed invasive scilla (Siberian squill) bulbs from Cherokee Marsh - North Unit this spring.



Prairie Partner interns begin work at Cherokee Marsh

The Prairie Partner interns have begun their season with us. The five interns work each Tuesday for 12 weeks, alternating between Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's three units and Yahara Heights County Park / Cherokee

Marsh Natural Resource Area.

Big thanks to Paul Quinlan at Madison Parks and Lars Higdon at Dane County Parks for providing staff to help supervise the interns this year.

Thank you also to those who have donated to support the interns. [Make a donation.](#)

Pictures coming soon!



A crew member lights a line of fire for a prescribed burn.

Prescribed burns help keep our natural areas healthy

Jan Axelson

Each spring, Madison Parks conducts prescribed burns at Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. A trained “burn boss” is responsible for managing the fire and ensuring the burn is performed safely.

Before burning, the team defines a target area by setting firebreaks, typically existing or temporary mowed paths or edges of bodies of water. The crew uses drip torches to place fuel to start the fire line, and wind carries the flames

across the target area. Burns take place only when the wind speed and direction are deemed safe.

Burning is effective because Wisconsin's prairie and savanna plants evolved with fire. The deep roots of prairie flowers and grasses help the plants survive heat and flames, and the bur oaks of the prairie have fire-resistant bark. Species that aren't native to our area, including non-native honeysuckle and buckthorn, are killed or set back by burning. Following a burn, the native prairie and savanna plants can thrive with less competition.

Most animals can flee flames by leaving the area or going underground. To prevent killing an entire population of an insect or other creature, the crew burns only a portion of a block of habitat each year.

The Parks Division also uses prescribed fire in forested areas and wetlands. In forests, the fire runs quickly through the landscape without generating enough heat to damage trees. In wetlands, fire can burn off grasses, shrubs, and cattails that can choke out native sedge meadows. Prescribed burns such as these continue a practice of Native Americans, who ran fires through the landscape to improve hunting and harvests and to ease travel.

Dane County Parks and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also use prescribed burns to manage lands.

(A version of this article appeared previously in the Northside News.)

Thank you

We want to acknowledge these recent donations:

in memory of Bill Davis - Virginia Davis

in honor of Judy Skog - Steve Ackerman and Anne Pryor

Register for Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin field trips

Once again this year, there are a number of Natural Resource Foundation field trips in the Cherokee Marsh watershed. These may have space remaining:

June 28 - Red-headed woodpeckers at Cherokee Marsh

July 24 - Restoring a lost landscape: Westport prairie partnership

Aug 9 - Twilight paddle on the upper Yahara River

[More information and register](#)



Welcome to our newest board member, Linda Malkin. Front row, left to right: Lesleigh Luttrell, Linda Malkin, Jan Axelson. Back row, left to right: Jim Mand, Mary Binkley, Paul Noeldner. Not shown: Timothy Baker, Sheila Leary, Wendy Murkve.

Events and volunteering

Join us for any or all of these upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Events are free with no registration required unless otherwise indicated.

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, June 4, 1:30 - 3 pm, Wildflower wander with Mary Binkley and Sheila Leary

AND

Sunday, July 2, 1:30 - 3 pm, What's hopping? with Mary Binkley

AND

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](#)

Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

Sat, June 24, 10am – 12pm

On this morning walk we'll observe and learn about butterflies, those exquisitely beautiful creatures that dance around us in summer. Tod Highsmith and Dreux Watermolen will lead this 2 hour walk at Cherokee Marsh on the northeast side of Madison. We will observe a variety of butterflies as they take nectar from wildflowers, and learn about their identification, behavior, and lifestyle. Bring binoculars if you have them — close-focusing ones work best. We have a few extra pairs of binoculars. Wear sturdy shoes, long pants and a hat for protection from the sun.

This is a joint trip of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association, with Madison Audubon Society, and Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Registration required. [More information and register.](#)

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.

Night moth walk

Friday, July 28, 9 pm – 10:30 pm

Join naturalist Jeff Steele on this night walk to see and learn about moths and other night-flying insects. We'll walk to different viewing spots to view insects under ultraviolet light. Be prepared for mosquitoes. A flashlight may be helpful for walking. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park - North Unit, 6098 N Sherman Ave.
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Chainsaw training

Volunteers who want to use chainsaws on public land must complete training. These trainings are hosted by Dane County Parks, but the certification is valid for Madison Parks and DNR properties. Multiple dates.

[More information and sign up](#)

Board meetings

Friends of Cherokee Marsh board meeting. Public welcome. Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr. *In the summer, you will likely find us outdoors at the Rainbow Shelter.* Third Wednesdays. To confirm time and place, contact janaxelson@gmail.com.

Wednesday, June 21, 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Wednesday, July 19, 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Self-guided nature adventures

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

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

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