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10th anniversary annual meeting to feature talk on cranes

We're having a party! Mark your calendar for our annual member meeting and celebration of our 10th anniversary on Saturday, January 21, 10 am – 12 noon at the Warner Park Community Recreation Center.

We are excited to announce that our special presentation this year will be Cranes: Ambassadors for Conservation, with Richard Belfuss, President and CEO of the International Crane Foundation.

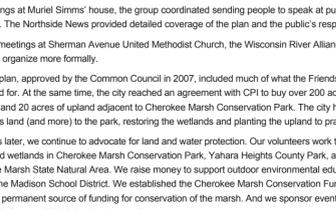
Cranes are among the most endangered families of birds in the world with 11 of the 15 crane species threatened and many populations in peril. We'll explore the role of cranes as sentinels and flagships for conservation worldwide including protecting critical habitat areas for endangered whooping cranes on their wintering grounds in Texas. We'll also highlight the unique story of crane recovery here in Wisconsin and the role of cranes in conserving some of our most treasured landscapes.

At 10 am, before the presentation, we'll hold a short business meeting to celebrate our anniversary and elect directors for 2017-2018.

This event is free and family friendly. Everyone, member and non-member, is welcome to attend. If you need further enticement, we'll have refreshments and our popular door prizes donated by local businesses plus some special children's prizes.

Saturday, January 21, 10 am – 12 noon
10:00 – 10:30 am—member meeting: accomplishments and future plans, elect directors
10:30 – 11:30 am—Cranes: Ambassadors for Conservation, with Richard Belfuss from the International Crane Foundation
11:30 – 11:45 am—Door prizes and social hour

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr, Madison 53704



We celebrate ten years!

In 2017, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh will celebrate our tenth anniversary as a nonprofit group. From its beginnings as a loose group of advocates responding to a development proposal, the Friends has grown to an organization with 200 members.

The event that sparked the group's formation was a public meeting in 2006 where City of Madison staff introduced a proposed plan for Cherokee Park, Inc., to develop 260 acres in six parcels adjacent to Cherokee Marsh. Following the meeting, Northsides Ellen Barnard and Pat Woicik began a conversation about the best way for the public to respond to the plan to protect the marsh as much as possible.

Concerns about the development plan included keeping polluted urban storm water out of the wetlands, providing protected buffer land between the wetlands and developed areas, and maintaining expanses of habitat for wildlife.

Ellen approached Northside Planning Council (NPC) Director Jim Powell for advice on advocating for the marsh. Jim suggested forming a group and giving it a name, so Ellen, Pat, and other supporters began using the name Friends of Cherokee Marsh, though formal organization came later.

NPC arranged for representatives of the group to present the issues to Mayor Dave Cieslewicz at one of NPC's quarterly meetings. Ellen recalls that "it really was the NPC's support and encouragement that gave us the starting oomph."

In gatherings at Muriel Simms' house, the group coordinated sending people to speak at public meetings. The Northside News provided detailed coverage of the plan and the public's response to it.

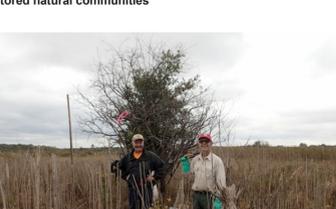
In public meetings at Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church, the Wisconsin River Alliance helped the group organize more formally.

The final plan, approved by the Common Council in 2007, included much of what the Friends had advocated for. At the same time, the city reached an agreement with CPI to buy over 200 acres of wetlands and 20 acres of upland adjacent to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. The city has since added this land (and more) to the park, restoring the wetlands and planting the upland to prairie.

Ten years later, we continue to advocate for land and water protection. Our volunteers work to restore prairie and wetlands in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, Yahara Heights County Park, and the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area. We raise money to support outdoor environmental education through the Madison School District. We established the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund to provide a permanent source of funding for conservation of the marsh. And we sponsor events for the public including monthly bird and nature walks.

We thank *all* of our members and supporters over the years, and we hope you will join us as we look forward to continuing our activities to protect, preserve, restore, and enjoy Cherokee Marsh, our wetland gem.

A version of this article appeared in the Northside News.



Order your 10th anniversary T-shirt!

To celebrate our 10th anniversary, we decided to make a T-shirt! The design features our logo and the message *Celebrating 10 years 2007 - 2017*.

The shirts are white organic cotton with short sleeves and available in men's and women's sizes.

The shirts are available for a limited time only. **We must receive your order by Dec 31, 2016.** You can order by [mail](#) or [online](#).

We expect to mail or deliver the shirts in late January/early February.

All profits from the shirts will go to support [hands-on environmental education at Cherokee Marsh](#).



It's time to renew your membership

Show your support for Cherokee Marsh and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh by renewing your membership.

Your member dues help fund our activities to protect, preserve, and restore Dane County's largest wetland. And this year, for a limited time only, you can also [order a Friends of Cherokee Marsh 10th Anniversary T-shirt](#) along with your renewal.

Is my membership up for renewal?

All memberships expire on December 31. If you joined the Friends after June 30, 2016, your membership is paid through December 31, 2017. 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 renew

Fill out and mail the [member form](#) or [join or renew online](#). With either method, you can join or renew your membership, make additional contributions, and order a T-shirt.

Support the Conservation Fund

When you renew, please also consider including a donation to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund. The fund pays a yearly dividend to support conservation at Cherokee Marsh. The dividends grow as the fund grows, providing a permanent source of funding for the marsh.

Support hands-on, outdoor environmental education

We also ask you to consider donating to bring local schoolchildren to Cherokee Marsh for hands-on environmental education. The Madison Area School District sponsors uses hands-on learning to teach children about wetlands and their importance. The school district provides trained naturalist guides, but the classes are responsible for transportation, and many classes struggle to find money to charter a bus. A donation of \$45 buys transportation for 20 kids.

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 2016

2016 was another busy year as we continued and expanded our activities to protect, preserve, and enjoy Cherokee Marsh. Here are some highlights.

We restored natural communities

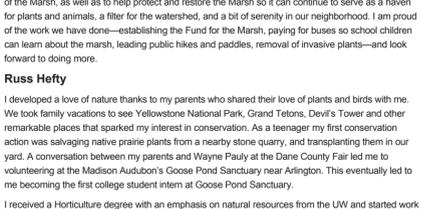


Volunteers Tim Nelson and Jim Hughes take a break in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.

In the Cherokee Marsh Wildlife Natural Area (SNA), in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), volunteers continued in our project to remove invasive giant reed grass (phragmites) from the high-quality wetlands. We also pulled garlic mustard in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park with the Madison Area Weed Warriors and removed invasives and collected prairie seeds with County Park volunteers at Yahara Heights County Park.

The Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund, started by us in 2013 and managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, now holds over \$21,000 to provide a permanent source of funding for conservation of the marsh. The DNR crew plans to use this year's distribution to fund a crew to control invasives in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area.

We advocated for a healthy marsh



Commercial fisherman net carp at Cherokee Lake.

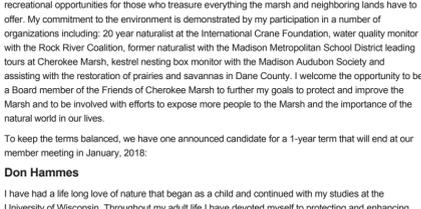
We worked with the Clean Lakes Alliance and Dane County to provide funding for carp removal in the upper Yahara River. We began working with Dane County to find a solution to shoreline erosion on the upper Yahara River.

We provided input on the plans for a new stormwater pond along Wheeler Rd and an improved entrance to South Cherokee.

We contributed \$1250, including \$175 from our Bienvenidos fundraiser and an additional \$320 donated by Friends members, to bring schoolchildren to the marsh for hands-on, outdoor environmental education. We provided information cards to inform teachers about the marsh and how to schedule a guided visit for their classes. We led a tour to introduce the naturalist guides to the conservation park.

We talked to folks and shared stories while tabling at the Northside Farmers Market, and we kept you informed with our newsletter, Facebook page, website, emails, and Northside News articles.

We explored and had fun!



Our bird and nature walks have proved to be very popular.

Our monthly, guided Bird and Nature walks continue to draw folks from around the city and beyond.

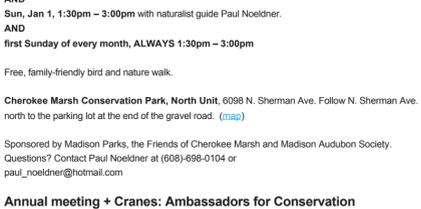
Other tours we cosponsored and promoted included a warbler walk, woodcock walk, paddle tour, butterfly walk, Hayrides and Hikes, and a candlelight hike. Our tour partners included Madison Audubon Society, Madison Parks, and the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Society, and new this year, the Sierra Club Four Lakes Group and Outdoor Afro. With the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, we sponsored two fundraiser tours for the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund.

Thanks to a generous donation by member Mike Revey, Cherokee Park has a new purple martin house with member Ellen Barnard as caretaker.

We supported Master Naturalist training on Madison's North Side with a scholarship to Kathleen Wolf.

We sponsored a presentation about bats at our 2016 annual meeting.

You make it possible



Guide Alex Singer gathers a group for a bird and nature walk.

With your support and participation, we can continue to expand our activities to promote land and water protection, restoration, education, and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh. If you have ideas and water protection, restoration, education, and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh. If you have ideas and water protection, restoration, education, and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh. If you have ideas and water protection, restoration, education, and enjoyment of Cherokee Marsh.

Questions? Contact Paul Noeldner at (608) 698-0104 or paul_noeldner@hotmail.com

Annual meeting + Cranes: Ambassadors for Conservation

Sat, January 21, 10am – 12pm

Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Dr, Madison, WI 53704, USA (map)

More details above.

Candlelight snowshoe hike

Saturday, January 28, 6:30 – 8:30 pm (come anytime from 6:30 on)

Our candlelight event is back! Tour the marsh on snowshoes by candlelight. Then warm up with hot cider by the fire. Bring your own snowshoes. If there is no snow or little snow cover, the event will be a walk.

Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks. If you have questions or would like to help set up the event (we need volunteers!), contact janaxelson@gmail.com or call (608) 215-0426.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit, 6098 N. Sherman Ave. Travel north on N. Sherman Ave to the main parking lot at the end of the gravel road. [\(map\)](#)

[Sign up to receive notices about upcoming events](#)