

Friends of Cherokee Marsh & Upper Yahara Watershed

Response to DRAFT Cherokee Special Area Plan

STORMWATER/GROUNDWATER CONSIDERATIONS

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh and the Upper Yahara Watershed (FOCM) recognize the many wetland functions provided by Cherokee Marsh.

The Draft Special Area Plan (SAP) summarizes these functions well, including the critical role the Marsh plays in maintaining water quality in the Madison Lakes.

Directly or indirectly, degradation of the Marsh would severely impact the quality of life and economy of Dane County and the Upper Yahara region.

Stormwater management activities, changes in groundwater recharge and increased groundwater extraction may all contribute to degradation of the Marsh.

We reviewed the SAP with these considerations in mind, and provide numerous recommendations to help strengthen the City's stated goals.

- 1. FOCM strongly endorse the City's stormwater management goal stated on page 18 of the Draft SAP: "One additional goal of stormwater management planning should be to divert urban runoff away from high quality peat wetlands, and into other water ways and wetlands that are less susceptible to impact."**

Specifically, we support efforts to divert stormwater away from the wetlands located north of Wheeler Road and east of Sherman Avenue. Therefore, the two proposed detention basins located north of Wheeler Road and illustrated on Draft Map 9A should be removed until a more satisfactory stormwater management plan is proposed for that area.

- 2. FOCM also strongly endorses the statement on page 17 of the Draft SAP: "Stormwater management facilities should be designed to protect the Marsh to the greatest degree possible." We therefore request that consideration be given to providing for design standards and stormwater management requirements beyond those routinely required under City Ordinances and State Codes. This may contradict statements in the MOU and**

Annexation Agreement referring to routine regulatory requirements.

- 3. FOCM further endorses the statement on page 29 of the Draft SAP: “A high priority has been placed on a detailed study of groundwater resources and restoration of groundwater and surface water levels to protect the State Natural Area in the eastern part of the marsh.”**

Neither CPI nor the City has provided enough information to assure that the wetlands, springs and fens at Cherokee Marsh and at the nearby Yahara River edge would not be affected adversely by increased groundwater extraction at Municipal Well UW-13, located on Wheeler Road. FOCM continues to encourage the City of Madison, Dane County and DNR to fund a revised and updated regional hydrogeologic model for the Upper Yahara Watershed. The fine-tuned model would help planners and the public understand how proposed developments, including that at Cherokee, would affect surface water features such as wetlands, springs, and fens as a result of groundwater extraction at municipal wells.

- 4. FOCM welcomes the City’s “Management Plan for Eastern Wetland.” The level of detail describing each named management unit and the “General Land Management Recommendations,” indicate sensitivity to the biodiversity and general importance of the Marsh. We recommend that the City establish baseline conditions for biodiversity and water levels in the marsh so that development impacts might be monitored over time. For example, should water levels appear to be declining due to groundwater pumping at UW-13, restricting water usage and/or using UW-7 may be necessary.**

Overall, it would be prudent for the City to approve phased development in the Marsh area, so that short-term adverse effects could be remedied through changes in water usage, alteration of stormwater management plans, or the modification of future development phases. Long-term adverse effects will be our legacy to future generations.