

## CHEROKEE MARSH

MAP EXPLANATION

Map C (for areas 13, 14, 15, 31, 34, 36, 40, 41, 48, 49, and 50, see preceding discussion)

- 54) Shrubby sedge meadow and dense shrubs, in sections 17 SW and 18 SE, apparently suffering from drying, possibly because of airport drainage; study needed.
- 55) Water control device located at head of ditch flowing west, in center of section 18, keeping water levels higher to the east, installed in November, 1973, after dredging of the new ditch to the south. The water level may now be higher in the east sedge meadow (50) because formerly the water north of this point may have flowed south, then west, aided by the earlier east-west ditch that was recently deepened from this point west to Sherman Avenue. (See arrows indicating flow pattern in 1974.)
- 56) Forty acres of healthy, wet sedge meadow with some shrubby areas and a few bog species despite alkaline peat. Noteworthy are bogbean, bog cinquefoil, wiregrass sedge, and two rare plants, (Epilobium lineare [now tenuifolium]) and the grass Calamagrostis inexpansa. This area is important for study of peat origins and the relationship of bogs, fens, and sedge meadows; hence, most or all the ditches on 4 sides may have to be closed to protect the peat and flora.
- 57) A landfill occupies part of this 40-acre tract. Floodplain zoning should prevent further encroachment on the wetland here.
- 58) About 70 acres of partly shrubby, partly boggy, wet, healthy, sedge meadows, with a shrubby shallow cattail marsh in SW part (SW section 18). The new ditching on the east (November 1973) was for the purpose of developing a new golf course on this tract, but such a venture would be difficult to sustain in the wet, soggy peat, and the necessary drainage would threaten the moisture content of the wetlands to the north and east. Soil sampling on this tract in 1974 indicates a rather uniform layer of peat 10 feet deep. Ditching near the landfill tract unearthed poorly-decomposed peat at lower levels containing pieces of wood identified in 1974 as spruce. The vegetation is much like that in area 56, but has a large area dominated by the rare grass, Calamagrostis inexpansa. Besides its intrinsic value, this tract appears to be a cork in the horizontal bottle, keeping the whole marsh wet by retarding westward flow of water toward the Yahara; hence, ditches will probably have to be closed or filled in eventually.

- 59) Another 30 acres like (58) but mowed in several recent years, keeping shrubs down. It is, likewise, in good condition.
- 60) Area of current sod-farming, with small ditches draining southward to the west-flowing main ditch. Evidently some seepage or spring flow comes southward out of the base of the Sherman Avenue drumlin.
- 61) Top and south portion of Sherman Avenue drumlin, privately owned, in section 18 W. See comment on (36).
- 62) Cherokee Golf Course, built on presumed former drained fen used later as a municipal landfill. Note that the ditch crossing the golf course from NE to SW receives feeder ditches draining downhill toward the NW; this is a typical fen location on a hill slope, fed by seepage. The wooded hilltop (76), like the hilltops of areas 61, 64, 53, and 29, each may play a role in groundwater storage and discharge to springs, ponds, and fens. The main ditch crossing the golf course carries drainage from areas 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60 to the Yahara River via the ditch at (63).
- 63) Ditched, disturbed mixed wetland vegetation, showing signs of very fertile water, presumably from oxidizing drained peat in the golf course.
- 64) Small hill, now part of Madison's Cherokee Park, overlooking fen and river, possible source of seepage for fen (section 23 SE
- 65) The Wheeler Road Fen, a small but very high quality natural area of some 3 acres with a rich flora on 6 feet of wet peat over marly fine sand, preserved by abundant water seepage apparently coming from the northeast (64). The fen's water level (at top of peat) is about a foot above the present Yahara River as seen in the ditch left from constructing the Waunakee-DeForest Sanitary Sewer Interceptor (67). The center portion of the fen is undisturbed, with some red-osier dogwood, bogbirch, and sage willow, dominated by big bluestem grass which flowered heavily in 1973 but remained mostly vegetative 1974. In its place there was a heavy flowering in 1974 of two unusual plants for Dane County, Cladium mariscoides, known also from Fish Lake; and Triglochin maritima, which Cheney and True recorded on Lake Wingra in 1873. Wheeler Road Fen has an abundance of gentians, orchids, sweetgrass, valerian, Kalm's lobelia (Lobelia kalmii), fen brome grass (Bromus kalmii), grass of Parnassus (Parnassia glauca), bog goldenrod (Solidago uliginosa), Riddell's goldenrod (Solidago riddellii), rush-leaved aster (Aster junciformis), the sedges Carex sterilis, C. tetanica, C. stricta, and others. Westward the area grades into a floating relic bog mat, with marsh St. John's-wort (Hypericum virginicum), bog cinquefoil, and wiregrass sedge. Northward some earlier disturbance has brought in cottonwoods and willows, and one plant of poison sumac (Rhus vernix), the only one in Cherokee, was found. The

south (ditched) portion is returning to fen vegetation, with some pioneer cattail, Eleocharis, and Juncus spp., but as yet no big bluestem grass. Across the ditch to the south the vegetation is more shrubby and lower, perhaps never having been fen, as it is farther from the seepage source. The fen needs some restriction of access, as the normally compatible fishing, boating, and dog-walking has become too heavy and people are dropping litter, trampling, and storing boats in the fen. Natural filling of the ditch by river silt deposits will reduce the bank erosion and discourage fishing and boating near this sensitive area of raised soggy peat.
















- 66) Borrow pit. A hill of sandy soil was taken down to aid in filling for sewer construction in the ditch area leading NW from the pump station.
- 67) The sanitary sewer crosses here under the river, after coming south along its west side. Construction caused a level ditch in the fen (65) and erosion on the wooded point in the new county park (68).
- 68) Oak knoll and woods with mesic spring forest flowers and a few relic prairie plants, needing protection and compatible use in these county park lands with a good view of the river.
- 69) Wooded (oak, basswood) knoll in south portion of Cherokee city park, used in the past for youth day-camps, scheduled for future recreational use. The sensitive areas to the NE (area 70) need protection. Disturbance vegetation indicated along Highway 113 on both sides of the river includes grass and cottonwood invasion. In the wooded area, a small kettle pond has water in spring.
- 70) About 15 acres of diverse undisturbed natural vegetation in sections 23 and 26 E, including low prairies, fens, islands of shrubs and aspens, and sedge meadows, with good gradations between them. The area continues northeastward toward the Wheeler Road fen ditch, along the base of the upland. No trails should interrupt this area, but perhaps a dog-walking area could run along its east edge on the upland. The upland comprises about 60 acres of old field and lawn around Lindbergh School, and some box elder woods near (66).
- 71) Sedge meadow in good condition near southern portion of drowned swamp forest offshore (section 23 SW).
- 72) One hundred acres comprising a complex of sedge meadows, forest, shrub tangles, shallow cattail, and mixed sedge meadow, not all examined in detail, but important to be left uninterrupted to give wildlife resting areas and a corridor up into Cherokee from the lake.

## Cherokee Marsh

- 73) Alder thicket, rare in Dane County, one of three in Cherokee (see 10 and 23), in section 27.
- 74) Faint indication of north-south drainage ditch in section 19, west of the airport, suggesting that this 300-acre low, flat area was once wetland.
- 75) Large ditch curving around Truax Field, draining southward into Starkweather Creek and Lake Monona. Large portions of farmland in sections 9, 10, 15, 16, 21, 22, and 28, Town of Burke, including much lowland in sections 16 and 21, are drained out by this route. Drainage effects on areas 50 and 54 in Cherokee need to be examined.
- 76) Twenty-acre hilltop woodlot at corner of Wheeler Road and Sherman Avenue, not examined but may have value for its flora or as a recharge area for groundwater flowing north into Cherokee. It might be of special value to Gompers School as a nearby study site.

## CHEROKEE MARSH

MAP KEY

-  Shallow marsh; cattail, bur reed, often mixed with sedges.
-  Sedge meadow.
-  Grazed sedge meadow.
-  Sod farm.
-  Fen.
-  Shrubs.
-  Tamaracks.
-  Wetland disturbance vegetation, usually predominantly reed canary grass.
-  Old field, prairie.
-  Woods.
-  Cultivated.
-  Mowed lawns, parks.
-  Developed and developing.
-  Quarry and landfill.
-  Spring.