

*Friends of Cherokee Marsh and the Upper Yahara Basin
Position - Cherokee Park Boardwalk*

Statement

The highest priority of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Upper Yahara Basin is the preservation of the existing diverse ecosystems located in Cherokee Marsh. With this in mind we do not support the creation of a new boardwalk that would in any way reduce, disturb, or unfavorably affect the high quality sedge wetlands at the location of the old river edge wooden boardwalk.

The Friends recognize the great value to educators, naturalists and visitors that a river boardwalk at the edge of the wetlands would have. We encourage the City of Madison Parks Department to research boardwalk alternatives that would not damage the wetland, and we strongly encourage cooperation between the Parks Department and the Friends' experienced naturalists and educators in planning the final design and location of a replacement boardwalk and interpretive materials.

Supporting information

A. Reasons for rejecting a similarly situated replacement boardwalk:

1. Any disturbance to the existing vegetation would encourage the growth of invasive plants, especially reed canary grass, phragmites, and non-native cattails. Such disturbance could occur during construction and/or maintenance of a permanent boardwalk.

2. Installation of posts to hold up a permanent boardwalk would not only disturb the existing wetland vegetation, but may also encourage loosening of the underlying peat layer.

3. A wider boardwalk to facilitate wheelchair access could shade out a significant amount of wetland vegetation, depending on where it is situated.

4. A permanent wooden boardwalk would prevent land managers from conducting the necessary periodic burns to rejuvenate the wetland vegetation and reduce the numbers of invasive plants.

B. A Google search using the phrase "floating bridge" and/or "floating boardwalk" reveals several applications of floating bridges over wetlands, including one in Wisconsin at Horicon Marsh, see the following web sites:

<http://www.pbase.com/marke/image/41624360>

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs/02232812/page01.htm>

<http://www.treetrust.com/photogallery/landscape/pages/stlouispark.htm>

<http://www.watermancenter.org/brickpond.htm>

<http://conserveland.org/stories/bog1>

Floating Boardwalk at Horicon Marsh



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