

# The Cherokee Marsh News

*The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh*

## Don't Miss These Events Coming Up Soon

### Cherokee Marsh Buffet Dinner and River Tour

**June 7 (Monday), 4 pm to 8 pm**

Join the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, the Rock River Coalition, local elected officials, Parks staff, marsh researchers, and others for a buffet dinner and paddle in Cherokee Marsh.

Come for the dinner, the paddle, or both. Bring your own canoe or kayak, help paddle one of the provided replica Voyageur canoes, or rent a canoe at the landing. Everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information and a registration form, see page 5.

### Informational Meeting on Proposed Wheeler Road Development

**June 17 (Thursday), 6 pm**

Details on page 2.

### Cherokee Marsh Clean-up Event

**June 12 (Saturday), 9 am to noon**

As part of Dane County's Take a Stake in the Lakes Weeks, the Friends are sponsoring a clean-up event in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, South Unit.

We will provide large trash bags, bag ties, and gloves. You will receive a *Take a Stake in the Lakes* T-shirt.

Location: meet at the corner of Wheeler Road and Comanche Way.

This is our group's first formal clean-up event. If you can help, please contact Dick Walker at 608-242-4411 or rdwalker@wisc.edu and tell him the size shirt you would like.

### Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh Walk

**June 19 (Saturday), 10 am to noon**

Details on page 4.



*Black Hawk Middle School seventh graders explore the wetlands of Cherokee Marsh on Earth Day with school-district naturalist Ami Rupnow. Photo by Jan Axelson.*



### In This Issue

Don't Miss These Events Coming Up Soon	1
Senior Housing Proposed for Wheeler Road	2
The Gradual Destruction of a Floating Island	3
Counters Tally Sandhill Cranes in Cherokee Marsh	3
Events Calendar	4
Friends Notes	4
Send Your Legislator Down the River	5
Membership Form	6



# The Gradual Destruction of a Floating Island

Virginia Swisher

Heavy rains and high water take a toll on Cherokee Marsh, sometimes causing large chunks of bog to be lifted up and ripped away. They then float up or down the river, sometimes coming to rest along the shore again for some period of time. But the pair of pictures below show that the outlook for these pieces of bog staying intact and later permanently reattaching themselves to the marsh is not good.

In the spring and summer of 2008, a series of very heavy rains caused the levels of the Yahara River to be unusually high, with many shifts and changes in the shore of the marsh. In mid-July of that year, a few days after there had been torrential rains, a substantial island floated into view and came to rest mid-river, near the Cherokee Park neighborhood. The island was approximately 50 feet wide by 75 feet long. In the picture on the left below, a heron a bit left of center provides a reference for its size.

Whereas smaller chunks of detached bog are generally pushed up or down river by wind and water and disappear from view fairly quickly, this particular island looked for awhile like it might become a permanent fixture. However, that first summer one of the residents of Cherokee Park swam under the island from one side to the

other and verified that it was not attached to anything. He also reported that it was not solid enough to stand on. Nevertheless, the island stayed in the same spot for several months, until March of 2009. At that point it was blown further north by high winds.

The island came to rest again not far up the river, and it has stayed in the same spot since that time. The picture below, taken on April 19, 2010, gives an idea of what is happening to the island, over time. It should be noted first that the pictures are not comparable, in two ways: one, in July, 2008, the island and the marsh on both sides of the river were covered with tall grasses, making them look more substantial; two, the island is now sitting at a point where the river is wider. Despite these differences it should be apparent that the island is now much narrower, and it is gradually being whittled away by the action of the wind and water. This wearing down of the bog has happened even though, in comparison with 2008, the weather has not been particularly severe, and the water level is currently about three feet lower than its maximum in 2008. In short, even without storms, water erodes, and it looks like this island will disappear altogether before very long.



*The floating island arrived near the Cherokee Park neighborhood in mid-July, 2008. Photo by Daniel Gómez Ibáñez.*



*By April 19, 2010, the island was much reduced in size. Photo by Daniel Gómez Ibáñez.*

## Counters Tally Sandhill Cranes in Cherokee Marsh

Jan Axelson

On the cold morning of April 17, I joined four other volunteers rising before dawn to count sandhill cranes in Cherokee Marsh. We covered three areas.

Paddling the upper Yahara River, Dennis Tande and Mary Manering counted 12 cranes. In the northern portion of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit, Daniel Gómez Ibáñez and Virginia Swisher counted 25 cranes. In

my area, the southern portion of the North Unit, I counted 13 cranes. The actual number of cranes was likely less than our combined total of 50 because some cranes were likely counted in multiple areas as they flew about.

Our count was part of the annual 2010 Midwest Crane Count conducted by the International Crane Foundation. Since the 1930s, the estimated number of sandhill cranes in Wisconsin has increased from 25 to over 10,000.

## Events Calendar

### Cherokee Marsh Buffet Dinner and River Tour

**June 7 (Monday), 4 pm to 8 pm**

Location: Nau-ti-gal Restaurant and School Rd. boat landing.

See page 5 for details and a registration form.

### Cherokee Marsh Clean-up Event

**June 12 (Saturday), 9 am to noon**

See page 1 for details.

### Informational Meeting on Proposed Development

**June 17 (Thursday), 6 pm**

Location: Warner Park Community Recreation Center  
See page 2 for details.

### Butterflies of Cherokee Marsh

**June 19 (Saturday), 10 a.m. - noon**

Led by conservation biologist Kathy Kirk. Observe a variety of butterflies as they take nectar from wildflowers and learn about their identification, behavior, and life-style. Bring binoculars if you have them. Long pants and a hat recommended. This is a joint tour with the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association, Madison Audubon Society, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Location: Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit. Meet in the parking lot at the north end of Sherman Ave.

### Save the Dates

Check our website and future newsletters for details about these upcoming events.

**Wildflowers of Koltes and Westport Drumlin.** August 12 (Thursday), 6 pm. Sponsored by Good Oak Ecological Services and the Madison chapter of Wild Ones.

**Canoe Cherokee Marsh Ecological Restoration.** August 15 (Sunday), 7 am. Bring your own canoe or kayak. Sponsored by Madison Audubon, Madison Parks, and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.



Read past and current issues of this newsletter on our website at [www.CherokeeMarsh.org](http://www.CherokeeMarsh.org).

## Friends Notes

### Our Thanks

Thank you to Janet Ballweg, John W. Feuerbach, Jr., MaryJo Moubry Feuerbach, Kay H. Rutledge, and Jeffrey R. Stevens for their generous donation of \$150 to the Friends in honor of George F. Hartman, who passed away in January. George studied under Aldo Leopold, loved the outdoors, and frequently fished in the lakes in and around Madison.

### In Memory

We were sad to learn of the passing this spring of Nan Cheney, a former Cherokee Marsh naturalist guide, Friends director in 2008-2009, and long-time activist for social-justice and environmental causes. We enjoyed working with Nan and will miss her enthusiastic support of our activities.

### Directors Update

The Friends welcome four new directors to our board: Timothy Baker, former and now returning directors Janet Battista and Sheri Harper, and Dorothy Wheeler, who has transitioned from advisor to director. Directors Steve Ackerman and David Clutter have resigned from the board due to schedule conflicts. Thanks to Steve and David for their service and welcome "aboard" to Timothy, Janet, Sheri, and Dorothy.

### Friends of Cherokee Marsh

PO Box 3390

Madison WI 53704

[info@CherokeeMarsh.org](mailto:info@CherokeeMarsh.org)

[www.CherokeeMarsh.org](http://www.CherokeeMarsh.org)

*To protect, preserve, and restore the beauty, value, and health of the Cherokee Marsh and upper Yahara River watershed.*

#### Directors

Jan Axelson (President)

Timothy Baker

Janet Battista

Dana Erlandsen (Treasurer)

Sheri Harper

Justin Sargent (Vice President)

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Dorothy Wheeler (Secretary)

#### Advisor (non-voting)

Don Hammes

# Send Your Legislator Down the River

Monday June 7, 2010

## Nau-ti-gal Restaurant - Cherokee Lake and Marsh

Organized by the Rock River Coalition

Sponsored by UW-Extension, Department of Natural Resources, Friends of Cherokee Marsh & Rutabaga Paddling Sports



The Cherokee Lake and Marsh in Dane County is the location of this year's Send Your Legislator Down the River paddle and town hall meeting. The event will start at the Nau-ti-gal Restaurant where we will enjoy a picnic dinner (indoors) and conversations with legislators. Afterwards, we will drive to the School Road boat landing on Cherokee Lake and Marsh. We will put-in and take-out at the same boat landing, so shuttling will not be necessary. The paddle will be approximately 4 miles in length and is expected to take about two hours.

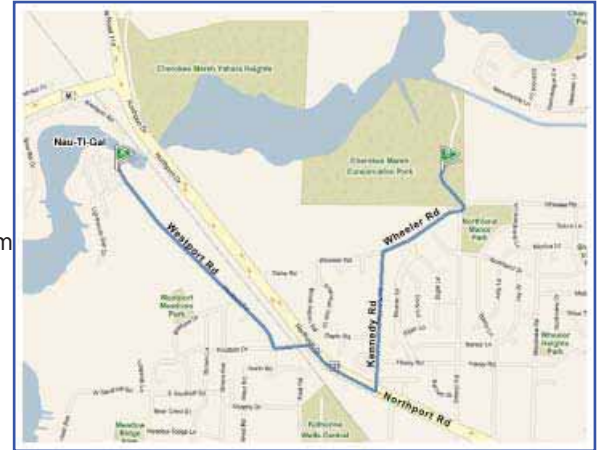
Participants are encouraged to bring their own canoes or kayaks for the paddle. Others can rent canoes or be a paddler on one of the two 25 foot-long Voyageur replica canoes (space for up to 14 people). Paddles and life jackets will be provided for canoe rental and for the Voyageur canoes.

Russ Hefty, the Conservation Resource Supervisor with the City of Madison Parks, will be our special guest during the paddle. Russ will share his work on various restoration efforts to restore wetlands in the Cherokee Marsh. The work accomplished has included planting aquatic plants to protect the sedge marsh from erosion caused by wave action.

Regardless of weather, the dinner and roundtable will be held.

### Agenda

- 4:00 - 6:00pm Registration
- 4:00 - 5:30pm Buffet picnic dinner served
- 4:45 - 5:30pm Welcome and River Town Hall Meeting: a chance to talk to your local elected officials and state legislators.
- 6:00 - 8:00pm Paddle Cherokee Lake and Marsh



A) Cherokee Marsh, canoe launch site.  
B) Nau-ti-gal Restaurant 5360 Westport Rd

More information on Cherokee Marsh can be found in the Yahara Waterways Water Trail Guide (<http://www.danewaters.com/articles/guideDownload.aspx>) & on the Friends of Cherokee Marsh website (<http://cherokeemarsh.org/>).

**Dinner:** Hamburgers, cheeseburgers and chicken breasts sandwiches, pasta salad, potato salad, chips, desert and beverage. Beverages will also be provided for the paddle.

### Send Your Legislator Down the River - 2010 Registration Form

Please make checks payable to the Rock River Coalition. Send signed forms and payment to Rock River Coalition, ATTN SYLDR, 864 Collins Road, Jefferson WI 53549.

Registration can also be done on-line at <http://www.rockrivercoalition.org>. Payment through PayPal.

For questions call Marie at 920-674-7297 or email [marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

# adults attending RRC Member \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$13 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # adults attending not RRC Member \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$18 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # attending age 6-12 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$11 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 # attending age 5 or under \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ 7 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Rent spot in canoe (Maximum \$10/canoe no charge for youth not paddling or under 5 years.) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ 5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Late registration fee (after May 31) \$ 5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 RRC membership (category \_\_\_\_\_) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 T-shirt, short sleeved \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a vegetarian dinner  
 I will only be at the River Town Hall Meeting & dinner  
 I/We have a canoe/kayak which we will use,  
 Names of others sharing canoe \_\_\_\_\_  
 I/We have an extra space in our canoe  
 I/We would like a space in the Voyageur Canoe (if space available)  
 I/We have an extra canoe we will bring  
 I/We would like a spot in the jon boat/motor boat (if available)

I am an elected official representing \_\_\_\_\_

In consideration of the "Sponsors" (as defined below) accepting this registration, I, the undersigned entrant, intending to be legally bound, do hereby agree not to sue and hereby waive and release all sponsors, governmental bodies, organizations, officials, elected officials and individuals associated with the 'Send Your Legislator Down the River' canoe and motor boat event (the "Event") and each of their respective officers, directors, employees, heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns from any and all claims, actions, damages or injuries suffered or incurred by me or which arise out of my participation in the Event, unless caused by the willful misconduct of any of the Sponsors. I hereby agree to the use of my voice or picture or any other record of the Event for any purpose whatsoever. This release applies to and binds the undersigned entrant, his/her heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns and is for the benefit of all of the Sponsors. This registration is invalid unless signed by the entrant. If entrant is under 18 years of age, the parent or legal guardian of the entrant must also sign the form.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Signature (under 18): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

One hold harmless clause must be signed for each person attending. More forms on reverse. Extra forms will be available at the event.

# Membership Form

## YES! I want to be a Friend of Cherokee Marsh.

Your contribution of time, talent, or funds will help preserve and restore the crucial wetland ecosystem of Cherokee Marsh. We sponsor and promote activities and events such as:

Planting native species, collecting seeds, and controlling invasive species.

Wetland educational events and opportunities.

Paddle outings, hikes, and cultural events.

Individual \$15

Osprey \$100

Family \$25

Sandhill Crane \$250

Mallard \$50

Great Blue Heron \$500

Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships are per calendar year. Memberships paid after June 30 are valid through the current and following year.

In addition to my contribution, I can also help with

Field work  Publicity  Tours  Education  Board/Committee work

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Include your email address to receive our newsletter. We won't sell or distribute your email address.

Don't publicize my financial support.

Please mail this form and payment to:

Friends of Cherokee Marsh, PO Box 3390, Madison WI 53704

Thank you for joining us in our effort to protect this valuable resource!

[www.CherokeeMarsh.org](http://www.CherokeeMarsh.org)

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh are dedicated to protecting, preserving, and restoring the beauty, value, and health of Cherokee Marsh and the upper Yahara River watershed.