

The Cherokee Marsh News

The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

Feathered Friends Are the Focus

Paul Noeldner and Jan Axelson

This spring, birders at Cherokee Marsh have provided new homes for bluebirds, counted cranes, and observed the migration of warblers and other species.

Helping Bluebirds

In partnership with Madison Audubon, Friends member Paul Noelder and helpers have added a new bluebird trail in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit. Look for the small wooden boxes on poles about five feet high. If you're lucky, you might spot a bluebird sitting on top of a box or peeking out the small entrance hole!

You can recognize an Eastern bluebird by its bright blue head and wings, soft orange breast, white on the belly, and soft melodic call. Some boxes provide homes for other cavity-nesting birds, especially tree swallows (blue and white twittering and swooping overhead). You're welcome to watch but please don't disturb the birds by going too close.

Fifty years ago there were very few bluebirds left in Wisconsin due to human removal of thousands of acres of natural forests and dead stumps to make room for farms and cities for humans. Humans in return are accommodating our wild friends by providing boxes to replace those natural tree cavities.

The bluebird trail at Cherokee Marsh is part of a necklace of new trails Paul and others established this spring in various Northside parks and open spaces.

Counting Cranes

On April 14, six volunteers helped count cranes in Cherokee Marsh as part of the International Crane *(continued on page 2)*



Tim Nelson and Paul Noeldner celebrate another new bluebird house in the Conservation Park. Photo by Jan Axelson



The Voyageur canoes are back! See page 4 to find out how to sign up for a tour. Photo by Justin Sargent.

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Feathered Friends

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Foundation's annual Midwest Crane Count. Rising before dawn to begin the survey, the counters detected a total of 43 cranes, including seven pairs performing the unison calls of mated pairs.

Counters Mary Manering and Dennis Tande paddled the upper Yahara River. On land, Daniel Gómez Ibáñez, Virginia Swisher, Jim Hughes and Jan Axelson walked the trails in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit.

Other wildlife observed that morning included bald eagle, wild turkey, great blue heron, Virginia rail, and Wilson's snipe.

Seeking Out Spring Migrants

On May 9's warbler walk in partnership with Madison Audubon, 14 birders found 56 species of birds, including 13 warbler species and four types of woodpeckers. Thanks to Dan Graham and Peter Fissel for leading another fine tour.

See the Events Calendar in this newsletter for upcoming events in partnership with Madison Audubon.

The Story of the Caretaker's House

Jacqueline O'Reilly

Most know that Cherokee Marsh is Dane County's largest wetland, home to a spectacular variety of plants and wildlife, but on the property of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit also sits a unique building: the Caretaker's House.

Situated on acreage originally owned by the Faurbach family, Peter Faurbach fondly recalls the year he spent living in the house with his family in the early 1960s.

"It's where I learned to hunt," he said. "Just surrounded by wildlife: ducks, deer. It's always been a favorite place to go."

When the Parks Division acquired the marsh land in the 1960s, the house came along with it. The hunting lodge was converted to housing for park employees responsible for looking after the marsh, including closing and opening the park's gate, cleaning the public restrooms and continued upkeep of trails. Over the years, the space has housed four different caretakers, including Dan Gill, the house's current resident.

"I enjoy the secludedness of the house," he said. "Especially in Madison, living in the woods and being involved with the natural surroundings is nice."

Because of its initial intended purpose, the Caretaker's House has a very traditional cabin feel, including a large stone, wood-burning fireplace. Over the years, however,

Donation Received from Pierce's Market

Thanks to Pierce's Market for donating \$59.49 to the Friends through Pierce's Community Foundation, which donates to local groups named by shoppers. This the second time we've received a contribution from Pierce's.

To ask the Foundation to direct donations to the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, obtain a Pierce's rewards card if you don't have one and request the Friends of Cherokee Marsh (group #1272) as your group. Then present your card whenever you shop. Your account will also earn points that you can use for free products.

Pierce's donates in proportion to the amounts spent by card holders who have named a group. Pierce's Market is in the Northside TownCenter at the corner of Northport Dr. and Sherman Ave.

You can get a rewards card at the store or apply online:

www.piercesnorthsidemarket.com/loyalty.php?page=enroll

numerous additions have been made, with each room furnished with a different type of wood, including oak and pine. The original structure now stands as a single room that can fit little more than a pool table.

Additionally, from the house stems a path down to the water. Once paved with bottlecaps from the Faurbach Brewery, decades of limestone and fresh gravel have come to cover them up — though a few have maneuvered their way to the surface. Still, along the path is a conical mound that dates back more than a thousand years.

While the Caretaker's House is a unique feature, please keep in mind it is the private residence of a city employee.

(Reprinted with permission from the Madison Parks Division.)

Keep in touch!

Email group

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/cherokeemarsh

Facebook page

www.facebook.com/friends.of.cherokee.marsh

Facebook group

www.facebook.com/groups/cherokee.marsh

FBI Infiltrates Cherokee Marsh! Floating Bog Interceptors to Trap Sediments

Scott McDonell with Jan Axelson

On May 14, a crew from the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department, along with students from the UW Civil and Environmental Engineering Department and volunteers from the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, installed 20 FBIs — floating bog interceptors — to trap sediment and protect the Cherokee Marsh shoreline.

“FBIs are one promising approach to reduce the sediment movement in Cherokee Marsh,” said County Board Chair Scott McDonell, a proponent of the Clear Lakes Initiative designed to clean up the county’s lakes. “The FBIs are made from natural materials and look a bit like a raft. They’re anchored in place and are planted with reeds which will sprout and help to create a barrier over time,” he added.

The use of FBIs has been developed by University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor Chin Wu and his students, Stacey Schmidt, Nathan Wells, and Khurram Khan, as an approach to capture sediments and diminish wave action that erodes the shoreline. The floating bog interceptors, deployed in the northeastern portion of Cherokee Marsh, were positioned to best protect the shoreline and are based on best management practices

“FBIs are designed to incorporate ecology and ecosystem services into coastal engineering protection,” said Wu. “By employing the reverse engineering principle, we aim to use a series of FBIs to reconstruct eroded shorelines and restore aquatic plants to the marsh.”



These experimental “FBIs” will help trap sediments and protect the shoreline at Cherokee Marsh. Photo courtesy of Dane County.

In addition to the FBIs, the county is also funding research and implementation of the removal of carp in Cherokee Marsh. The county is working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and UW-Madison this summer to study the carp populations and to examine the role of carp in sediment re-suspension in Cherokee Marsh in preparation for possible removal in the winter months. This installation follows a successful test run last fall. Researchers will monitor the effects of the FBIs through the summer.



Timothy Baker and daughters Della and Dorothy plant wildflowers in the prairie at the Friends’ Earth Day planting event in the North Unit. Photo by Janet Battista.

Boardwalk Update

Work has begun on replacing the remaining sections of wooden boardwalk east of the entrance road in the North Unit. Crews from Operation Fresh Start are performing the work under the supervision of Madison Parks.

While the wooden boardwalks have been beloved by many, using aluminum makes it much easier for crews to burn the surrounding wetland. (Yes, you can burn a wetland!)

Prescribed burns of natural areas are one of the most effective ways to kill off invasives and restore high quality habitat with diverse, mostly native plants. Maintenance costs are also much less for aluminum compared to wooden boardwalks.

Events Calendar

Evening Paddles in Voyageur Canoes

Two tours!

Wednesday, June 6

5:00 pm – 6:45 pm AND 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Meet at the School Road boat landing.

Tour Cherokee Marsh in replicas of the vessels used centuries ago by French voyageurs to cross Lake Superior and other large North American waters. Each canoe holds 10 paddlers. No experience needed. Paddles and life preservers provided. Or join the tour in your own canoe or kayak.

Space is limited in the Voyageur canoes, so reservations are highly recommended. To reserve a spot, send the paddlers' names, ages of any children, and your preferred date and time to susan.josheff@wisconsin.gov

You'll receive an email message if the trips are canceled due to weather. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as part of Dane County's Take a Stake in the Lakes Days.

Take a Stake in the Lakes Clean Up

Saturday, June 9, 10 am – noon

Meet at the corner of Wheeler Rd. and Comanche Way.

We'll head out to pick up trash wherever needed around the marsh. Participants get a free *Take a Stake in the Lakes* T-shirt.

Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh as part of Dane County's Take a Stake in the Lakes Days.

Directions: from the intersection of N. Sherman Ave. and Northport Dr./HWY 113, head north on N. Sherman. At the 4-way stop, turn left onto Wheeler Rd. and continue for about 0.5 mile to the intersection with Comanche Way.

Butterfly Walk

Saturday, June 30, 10 am – noon

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

Observe a variety of butterflies as they take nectar from wildflowers. Bring binoculars if you have them — close-focusing ones work best. A few pairs of binoculars will be available for loan. Wear long pants and a hat for protection from the sun. This is a joint trip with the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association and Madison Audubon.



Save the Dates

Check our website for upcoming details on these tours in partnership with Madison Audubon.

August 4 (Sat.)

Upper Yahara River Tour

School Road Boat Landing

October 10 (Wed.)

Fall color walk

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

Directions

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

6098 N. Sherman Ave. Head north on N. Sherman Ave to the parking lot at the end of the road.

School Road Boat Landing

Heading north on Northport Drive/HWY 113 from the intersection with N. Sherman Ave., turn right on School Rd. Where the road curves right onto Wheeler Rd. take an immediate left into Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Follow the gravel road to the boat landing.

Friends of Cherokee Marsh

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Madison WI 53704

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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 (Vice President)

Dana Erlandsen

Lesleigh Luttrell (Treasurer)

Lydia Maurer

Justin Sargent

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Dorothy Wheeler (Secretary)

Advisor (non-voting)

Don Hammes

Membership Form

Join or renew online at CherokeeMarsh.org

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.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mallard \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Blue Heron \$500 |

- Additional donation \$ _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in honor of _____
- Additional donation \$ _____ in memory of _____

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

In addition to my contribution, I can help with

- Field work Publicity Tours Education Board/Committees

Other _____

Name _____

Family member(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Second Email _____

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

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.

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh is a Federal tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.