

THE CHEROKEE MARSH NEWS

Yahara Heights County Park Relies on Its Volunteers

Jan Axelson

Longtime Northside resident Gayle "Tread" Treadaway has discovered that volunteering in county parks is a great way to stay fit while helping the community at the same time.

Tread began volunteering seven years ago at Donald Park near Mount Vernon but in recent years has been focusing closer to home, in Yahara Heights County Park. Many Northside residents know Yahara Heights, just off HWY 113 at River Rd., as the "dog park." But adjacent to the dog exercise area are over 300 acres of County land that includes woods, restored prairie, and wetland.

The budget for maintaining the park is limited, so Tread is part of a small but dedicated group who help out by mowing trails, clearing brush, planting trees, and collecting and planting prairie seeds. Tread knows from experience that high quality county parks require folks who are willing to pitch in.

Under the guidance of Dane County Naturalist Wayne Pauly, volunteers have helped plant about 30 acres of prairie and over 100 trees. This summer, grant money from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act funded clearing additional acres of old field to prepare for restoring to oak savanna and prairie - with the help of volunteers, of course.

Volunteers are in the park every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until noon as well as on other scheduled work days year round. If you're interested in helping out, stop by and talk to any volunteer you see working in the park or call the County Parks Volunteer Coordinator, Rhea Stangel-Maier, at (608) 224-3601.

As Tread says, "The cost of Park maintenance is very expensive. The sense of satisfaction from volunteering and improving our parks is priceless!"



Volunteer Gayle "Tread" Treadaway nurtures newly planted trees through dry spells. Photo by Jim Hughes.

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Support Funding for Land and Water Conservation in 2010 City and County Budgets

In 2007, the City of Madison, Dane County, and the State Stewardship Fund all contributed to buying 270 acres to add to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park.

Madison and Dane County are now in the process of putting together their budgets for 2010. Tax revenues are down, and the budgets will require hard choices. You can help preserve funding for conservation by letting your representatives know that this funding is important to you. Tell your alder that you support City funding for acquiring land for and maintaining our Conservation Parks. Tell your County supervisor that you support funding for the Conservation Fund and the Land and Water Legacy Fund.

City of Madison Budget

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/comp/budgetindex.htm>

How to contact your alder

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/Council/contact.cfm>

Dane County Budget

<http://www.co.dane.wi.us/budget>

How to contact your County supervisor

<http://www.co.dane.wi.us/coboard/supervisor.aspx>

Promote Cherokee Marsh in Art

Public Art for the North Side

A group of folks on Madison's North Side are developing ideas for public art projects to be put in place over the next couple of years. If you'd like to be a part of the group planning and designing projects, contact Ellen Barnard at cherokeemarsh@gmail.com.

Photo Contest

October 16 is the deadline for the River Alliance of Wisconsin's photo contest. Submit photos that represent the diversity of life, including people, in and along our rivers. The winning image will be on the cover of the River Alliance's newsletter, and the photographer will receive a framed print. Details at:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/wisconsinrivers>

Friends of Cherokee Marsh Day at the Northside Farmers Market



Friends of Cherokee Marsh Day at the Northside Farmers Market on August 30 drew crowds to see the animal exhibits (left) and hear the Knotty Pines (right). A big thanks to Emily Steinwehe, Nancy Fonzen, Brad Wennen, and Dean Anderson for their generous help with the exhibits and entertainment! Photos by Jim Hughes.

Help Keep Invasive Aquatic Species Out of the Marsh

Researchers have discovered another invasive, the spiny water flea, in lakes Mendota, Monona, and Waubesa. The spiny water flea eats creatures that eat algae, so their presence may result in increased algae in the lakes. Boaters and paddlers in Cherokee Marsh and elsewhere should take care not to bring invasive aquatic species along for the ride.

From the Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds:

To avoid accidentally transporting aquatic invasive species to other waters, before launching boats and after leaving the boat landing at the end of the day, boaters should:

- Inspect and remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boat and equipment;
- Drain water from boat and equipment (motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers);
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash;
- Spray/rinse boats and recreational equipment with high pressure and/or hot tap water; OR
- Dry boats and equipment thoroughly for at least five days before launching into a different water body.

“Aquatic invasive species are a serious threat to our aquatic ecosystems and economy in Dane County,” said Sue Jones, Watershed Management Coordinator. “The Dane County plan provides a proactive response to address this significant environmental challenge by combating problems caused by aquatic invasive species that are already here, such as Eurasian water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed, and preventing the introduction of others such as Asian carp and Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia,” she said.

“Implementing the plan will involve the county working together with stakeholder groups, surrounding counties and the state to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species into Dane County waters,” according to Ron Martin, plan coordinator.

More information on the Dane County Aquatic Invasive Species Plan is available at the Office of Lakes and Watersheds' web site: <http://www.danewaters.com>



Environmental News Briefs

Land Use and Wetlands: A Local Decision Makers' Guide to Wetland Conservation

This new publication from the Wisconsin Wetlands Association provides town, village, city and county land use officials with basic information about how wetlands benefit Wisconsin's communities and offers practical steps they can take to improve consideration of wetlands and wetland laws in local land use decision-making.

<http://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/localgovs.htm>

Proposed Changes to Shoreland Development Standards

The state's 40-year-old shoreland development standards for unincorporated areas (areas outside city and village boundaries) are being updated to improve lake and river protection while also providing more flexibility for property owners and streamlining the permitting process.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/news.htm>

Hunting Season Continues through the Fall

Deer, waterfowl, and other game hunting are allowed on DNR lands in Cherokee Marsh, and waterfowl hunting is allowed in the upper Yahara River. A portion of Yahara Heights County Park is open to archery hunting. There is no public hunting in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. Here are some season dates to be aware of:

Deer

Archery season: September 12–January 3 (Earn-a-buck)
Youth Season: October 10–11 (exempt from earn-a-buck)
Early firearm season: October 15–18 (antlerless-only)
Traditional 9-day firearm season: November 21–29 (Earn-a-buck)

10-day muzzleloader-only season: November 30–December 9 (Earn-a-buck)

Late firearm season: December 10–13 (antlerless-only)

Holiday firearm season: December 24–January 3 (Earn-a-buck)

Ducks

October 3–11, 2009 and October 17–December 6, 2009

Canada Geese

September 19–October 11 and October 17–December 17, 2009

Hunting and Trapping Regulations

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/regs/index.htm>

Lotus Beds Expand in the Upper Yahara River



This aerial photo from September 14, 2009, shows how American Lotus continues to expand in the upper Yahara River. The lotus beds help protect the shoreline, trap sediments, and attract wildlife. The bottom of the photo shows the wetlands of Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's South Unit. The top of the photo shows Yahara Heights County Park. Photo by Russ Hefty.

Board of Directors Update

We have a change in officers for the remainder of 2009. Jon Becker has retired as a director and as President of the Friends. The directors thank Jon for his generous contributions of time and expertise on behalf of Cherokee Marsh and the Friends. Jon was instrumental in getting the Friends group established, and as a director and President, Jon served as a dedicated advocate for the marsh.

The Board has elected Jan Axelson to serve as President for the remainder of 2009, with Aaron Stephenson as Secretary/Treasurer and Justin Sargent continuing as Vice President. Following the January, 2010 membership meeting, the board will elect officers for 2010.

Events Calendar

FALL COLOR WALK

October 11 (Sunday), 2 pm to 4 pm

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit

Focus on fall colors. Led by Russ Hefty, Conservation Resource Supervisor for Madison Parks.

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit, 6098 North Sherman Ave. Meet in the parking lot. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks.

FALL PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTING

October 16 (Friday), 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Yahara Heights County Park

Wear long pants, long sleeve shirt, bring pruning shears and gloves if available.

North of Madison, going north on Hwy 113 and just past the intersection with Hwy M, turn RIGHT (east) on River Rd., then RIGHT on Riverview Rd. to the "T" intersection with Caton Ln., turn right and drive into the prairie.

Contact Rhea Stangel-Maier, Dane County Parks Volunteer Director, at 608 224-3601 with any questions.

WETLAND WORK DAY

October 17 (Saturday), 9 am to 12 noon

Yahara Heights County Park

Help stack brush into piles for winter burning in the first step of a wetland restoration. Wear sturdy shoes and bring drinking water and work gloves if you have them.

Meet at the Yahara Heights dog park parking lot. North of Madison, going north on Hwy 113 and just past the intersection with Hwy M, turn RIGHT (east) on River Rd., then immediate RIGHT on Catfish Ct.

Contact Jim Hughes at 608-354-8385 if you have questions.

A note from Jon:

After agreeing to serve a second term as board president this year, I resigned in August for work-related reasons. Having collaborated for over three years with many others to found the Friends and then grow its membership, budget, organizational capacity, directors, and advisors, I am certain the Friends have a solid foundation for the future. I hope that during my tenure more people became aware of the Marsh's beauty and natural diversity, becoming inspired to protect its natural systems, restorative qualities, and aesthetic riches from the effects of development. I will focus what remaining time I have available for community service on broader environmental policy, planning, issues and advocacy having to do with the challenges to the region's environment and the Yahara watershed, especially those crucial to the future of Cherokee Marsh's ecology.

Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Inc.

PO Box 3390

Madison WI 53704

608-467-5207

info@CherokeeMarsh.org

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)

Justin Sargent (Vice President)

Aaron Stephenson (Secretary/Treasurer)

Steve Ackerman

Nan Cheney

W. David Clutter

Dana Erlandsen

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Advisors (non-voting)

Don Hammes

Dorothy Wheeler

Read past and current newsletters online at

<http://www.CherokeeMarsh.org>

Join us or renew your membership!

Your contribution of time, talent, or funds will help preserve and restore the crucial wetland ecosystem of Cherokee Marsh. The Friends 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'm interested in helping 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!