

News from Cherokee Marsh

April/May 2009

Friends Obtain Federal Tax-exempt Status

By Jan Axelson

Good news - the IRS has approved our application to be a Federal tax-exempt organization, also known as a "501(c)(3)" organization. Our new status will help when applying for grants and the new status also means that contributions to the group can qualify as deductible on Federal taxes. A big thanks to our advisor Dana Erlandsen for her expert help with the application!

Upcoming Marsh Walks with the Friends

April 14 (Tuesday), 6:30 - 8 pm Spring Thaw Hike

Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks.

Meet at Cherokee Marsh South Unit, corner of Wheeler Rd. and Kennedy Rd. (Park on street.)

Tour South Cherokee's prairie and learn about efforts to restore native grasses and flowers. At twilight, view the "sky dance" of the American woodcock. Tour leader: Russ Hefty, Conservation Resource Supervisor, Madison Parks.

May 6 (Wednesday), 6:30 pm - 8 pm Watershed Walk

Sponsored by the Benedictine Women of Madison with the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Parks.

Meet at Cherokee Marsh North Unit parking lot, 6098 North Sherman Ave.

Visit a sedge meadow and wet prairie. See spring wildflowers and listen for swamp sparrows and sedge wrens. Learn about the geology and past human impacts in the marsh. Tour leader: Russ Hefty. See the last page of this newsletter for the full schedule of spring watershed walks.

Have You Seen a Blanding's Turtle?

By Jan Axelson

Blanding's turtles live in marshes, shallow bays of lakes, and shallow, slow-moving rivers, and Cherokee Marsh has all of these. A 1980s survey of the Cherokee Marsh Scientific Area (now called the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area) noted the presence of Blanding's turtles. The turtles are a state-threatened species whose numbers have declined due to roadkill and loss of wetlands. A key to identifying a Blanding's is the bright yellow underside of the neck on turtles 3-5 years old and older. In spring, the turtles may travel over a mile to lay their eggs on sandy ground. You might also see one foraging or basking in the sun along the shoreline. For a picture and more information, see:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/ORG/LAND/ER/factsheets/herps/bldtur.htm>. If you happen to see a Blanding's turtle in the marsh, please let us know at info@CherokeeMarsh.org or 467-5207.

The Art of the Marsh is on the Move

By Jan Axelson, Jon Becker, and Steve Ackerman



Marsh Geometry by Juliet Alden Rake



Lower Cherokee Lake by Susan Hoffmann

If you haven't yet seen the Art of the Marsh exhibit, you can catch it through April 16 at the UW Arboretum's Visitor Center. From April 20 through July 30, see the show in Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton's office in the State Capitol (East 16). The artworks are evocative of the ecology and natural beauty of Cherokee Marsh. The show is a joint project of the Northside Artists Group and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

The Magic & Mystery of Cherokee Marsh Through the Lens of Mario E. Quintana



Grass & Droplets by Mario E. Quintana

Through April 16, also in Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton's office, see photos of Cherokee Marsh by Friends member, MATC instructor, and award-winning photographer Mario Quintana. This one-man photography show is being exhibited with the support of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh.

Art Reception for the Artists, Friends, and the Public

On **April 23 from 4:30 to 8 pm**, Lt. Governor Lawton is hosting a public reception for both The Art of the Marsh and The Magic and Mystery of Cherokee Marsh. The location is Lt. Governor Lawton's office in the State Capitol (East 16). For more about Lt. Governor Lawton's Art in the Office program, see http://www.lt.gov.wisconsin.gov/art_office.asp.

Other Upcoming Events of Note

April 21, Tuesday, 5:45 - 7:00pm Future Scenarios for the Yahara Lakes

Sponsored by Nelson Institute Community Environmental Forum
1106 Mechanical Engineering Building, 1513 University Ave.
<http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/outreach/community/schedule.htm>

April 24, Friday, 6:30 pm Evening at Cherokee Marsh

Sponsored by Madison Audubon
Cherokee Marsh North Unit parking lot, 6098 North Sherman Ave.
See cranes, observe the courtship flight of woodcock and snipe, and see spring migrants. Waterproof footwear recommended.

April 30, Thursday, 6:00 pm Frog Walk

Sponsored by the Natural Heritage Land Trust
Starting location provided on registering.
Welcome spring with an evening hike at Cherokee Marsh. Listen for chorus frogs, spring peepers, and wood frogs. Hear tales of the land and how it became protected. To register, contact Martha Frey at 258-9797 or martha@nhlt.org.

May 7, Thursday, 10-11:30 a.m. (rain or shine) Cherokee Marsh Family Tour

Sponsored by the Madison Children's Museum
Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park North Unit.
Families are invited to participate in a special tour of Cherokee Marsh. Museum Early Learning Coordinator Cheryl Dewelt Robinson will lead a nature walk for preschoolers with a nature art activity and snacks included. Cost is \$5.00 per child. To register, contact Adam Erdmann at 256-6445 ext. 18 or registration@MadisonChildrensMuseum.org.

May 18, Monday, Wisconsin's Wetland Gems Media Event

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association launches a program honoring 100 wetlands of statewide significance. Additional details to be announced. <http://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/gems.htm>

For more updates on Cherokee Marsh events and news, visit <http://www.CherokeeMarsh.org>.

If you have a photo or article you would like to submit for the newsletter, please email newsletter volunteer Nancy Helgesen Lyons at jandn@chorus.net and put "for the FOCM newsletter" in the subject line.



Wednesday Evening Watershed Walks 2009

A series of walks within the Upper Yahara River Watershed and beyond, extending from Earth Week to Yahara Lakes Week or Take a Stake in the Lakes Days.

Watershed Walks begin at 6:30 p.m.

- April 22** *Patrick Marsh*
Earth Week **Friends of Patrick Marsh** **Stone Quarry Road, Sun Prairie**
Highway 151 south on Columbus Street, east on Stone Quarry Road. Meet Mark Smith, Patrick Marsh Middle School Science Teacher at the wildlife area parking lot kiosk: (608-834-7686).
- April 29** *Culver Conservancy* **Token Creek Watershed Association** **3667 Egge Road, DeForest**
Highway 19, north on Portage Road, east on Egge Road. Meet John and/or Judith Hutchinson of Token Creek Watershed Association for a glimpse of the springs and progress of the restoration of Token Creek: (608-837-2758).
- May 6** *Cherokee Marsh* **Friends of Cherokee Marsh** **6098 North Sherman Ave., Madison**
North Sherman Avenue ends in a gravel road to parking lot. Meet Russ Hefty, Conservation Resource Supervisor and Jan Axelson of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh to visit a sedge meadow and wet prairie. See spring wildflowers and listen for swamp sparrows and sedge wrens. Learn about the geology and past human impacts in the marsh: (608-241-5828).
- May 13** *North Mendota*
Natural Resource Area **Dane County Parks** **56668 Woodland Drive, Waunakee**
Enter off Enchanted View Lane. Continue straight onto gravel road until parking area in front of large gray barn. Meet Nancy Schlimgen to walk to the edge of the Six-mile Creek for a view of its adjacent wetlands within this new natural resource area: (608-849-8870 or 608-770-3477).*
- May 20** *Jackson's Landing* **Town of Westport** **5485 Willow Road, Waunakee**
County Highway M, then south on Willow Road. Meet Jim Stephenson at the Willows Tavern parking lot. Hear the history of this site while viewing the vital wildlife habitat of these preserved wetlands. (*same contact as above)
- May 27** *Governor's Island* **Mendota Mental Health Institute** **Cinder Lane, Madison**
Access Main Drive via Green Avenue or Troy Drive left onto Cinder Lane into parking lot. Meet Gary Maier for his interpretation of Effigy Mounds. (Come early if you wish to walk the Governor's Island loop on your own).*
- June 3** *Holy Wisdom Monastery* **Benedictine Women of Madison** **4200 Co. Hwy. M, Middleton**
County Highway M entrance, then curve to the lower left parking lot. Meet Paul Boutwell to see progress of landscape plans for storm water management considerations surrounding the new LEED certified building and the impact of Lost Lake and the upland prairies on lake quality: (608-836-1631 ext. 121).
- June 10** *Pheasant Branch*
Creek Conservancy
Take a Stake in the Lakes Days **Friends of Pheasant Branch** **Highland Way, Middleton**
Century Avenue west of Hwy Q intersection at the first stoplight turn and proceed to the gate. Meet Janet Kane to get an overview of new management plans for Highland Way portion of the Conservancy and explore the impact on water quality in the conservancy: (608-831-1452).
- June 17** *Dunn's Marsh*
Take a Stake in the Lakes Days **Dawley Conservancy Park** **3051 South Seminole Hwy. Fitchburg**
Seminole Highway South from the Beltline or North from PD/McKee Road. The Seminole Highway parking lot, from the Beltline, is on your right after you pass the marsh and begin to climb a small hill, or on your left a ¼ mile after you cross PD. Meet Brooke Norsted, Chair of Friends of Dunn's Marsh: (baswanson@gmail.com).

Please join us as we experience the sights and sounds of spring in our watershed.

Comfortable shoes suitable for varied terrain are recommended.

Visit www.benedictinewomen.org for a complete schedule of all the walks.

