

News from Cherokee Marsh

December 2008

Welcome, New Directors!

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh welcome new board directors Steve Ackerman, Nan Cheney, and Justin Sargent. We thank our new directors for volunteering their time and skills to the group!

Hello from Your New Newsletter Volunteer

Hi! My name is Nancy Helgesen Lyons. I'm the new volunteer helping with the *News from Cherokee Marsh*. I grew up on the north side of Madison, and visits to Cherokee Marsh as a child helped shape my appreciation of and concern for the environment. My husband Jeff Lyons and I both enjoy birdwatching at Cherokee Marsh

If you have preferences on how you would like to have this newsletter formatted, such as a text email, a PDF file with photos, or as a link to an HTML page on the Internet, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email is jandn@chorus.net. Please put something in the subject of your emails to indicate that you are emailing me concerning the newsletter, as I share that email with my husband. I look forward to receiving your suggestions and contributions to the newsletter

I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you at future Cherokee Marsh events!

Renew by December 31

Keep your Friends membership current and renew by Dec. 31. Our homepage has a link to a membership form. If you joined after June 30, 2008, you're paid up through 2009.

Volunteer Opportunities this Winter

The Madison Parks Department has scheduled three volunteer days this winter on the ice in Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. The dates are January 10, January 24, and February 7 (all Saturdays).

Volunteers will haul brush bundles and coconut fiber mats onto the ice and dismantle snow-fence cages. When the ice melts, the brush bundles and fiber mats sink. The brush bundles help protect the shoreline by limiting wave action and also provide fish habitat. The fiber mats provide beds for restoration plantings.

On each volunteer day, meet at 12:00 noon in the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North Unit parking lot at 6098 North Sherman Ave. To sign up, and to request to be notified if the event is canceled due to bad weather or unsafe ice, call Laura Whitmore, Madison Parks Department community relations coordinator, at 266-5949.

Ski for Free

Cross-country skiers, when the snow flies, remember that Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's South Unit at 802 Wheeler Rd. has three miles of ski trails with no user fee. The Parks Division grooms these trails for classic skiing. Last winter, despite over 100 inches of snow, they did a great job keeping the trails in shape.

The trails in the Cherokee Conservation Park's North Unit and Mendota Unit are accessed from Westport Meadows Park on Beilfuss Dr. These trails aren't groomed, but are open for skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking.

Update on Sewage Released in Cherokee Marsh

You may remember that during the heavy rains and high water last spring, Madison Metropolitan Sewage District released untreated sewage into Cherokee Marsh. The release was needed to prevent overloading Pumping Station 14 near the Cherokee Marsh School Rd. boat landing.

At the request of Friends of Cherokee Marsh member Jim Hughes, a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) water specialist visited the site. DNR staff agreed to wait to see if there is a seed bed that will repopulate the area with vegetation again, before invasive plants take hold. If this doesn't happen, restoration will be needed. If the area is recovering, an additional year of monitoring will be necessary. The Madison Metropolitan Sewage District has shown a willingness to be a partner and good neighbor if restoration is needed.

The DNR reports that the pumping station is either in the process of being improved to handle greater flow or the improvement is already done.

Lake Mendota Water Levels

The DNR has responded to the City of Madison's request to review the lake-level orders for Lake Mendota by asking the City to request specific target lake levels rather than a general review. The DNR has also offered to meet with the City to talk about short-term actions that might reduce future flooding and wetland damage.

See the following article from the *Isthmus* for more details:

<http://www.thedailypage.com/isthmus/article.php?article=24304>

Art of the Marsh Show

By Jan Axelson

The Art of the Marsh Show remains on display through December at the Lakeview Branch Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave. The show, a collaboration between the Northside Artist Group and the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, celebrates the natural beauty of the marsh and efforts to restore and protect its ecology.

The Lakeview Branch Library is displaying these beautiful pieces of art in the two sections of the community room in the rear of the library.

In January, selected works from the show will be displayed at Manna Cafe and Bakery, 611 N. Sherman Ave.

Trail Maps Online

By popular request, we've posted trail maps for Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park's North and South Units on the Friends' website. From the home page, scroll to Trails and Tours.

Kathleen Falk Signs Conservation Fund Agreements

By Jon Becker



Friends of Cherokee Marsh President Jon Becker, standing second from left, looks on with other regional environmental leaders as Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk signs new Conservation Fund agreements at the most recent Dane County Smart Growth Environmental Coalition.

President Jon Becker had the privilege of being present as Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk signed three important Conservation Fund Agreements at the Coalition's last meeting. Falk wanted to sign the agreements at that time in part to celebrate the Dane County Smart Growth Environmental Coalition's hard work at the grass roots level. One of these agreements will protect 1100 acres west of Mazomanie along the Wisconsin River, while also connecting two other publicly owned lands. Becker, along with other Dane County's regional environmental leaders working primarily on land use and energy issues, has been meeting monthly with the county executive or Topf Wells, her Chief of Staff. Becker has also been attending biweekly meetings of the Yahara Lakes Legacy Partnership, joining dozens of others environmentalists and municipal, county, and state staff working on water quality and quantity issues in the Yahara River watershed.

Annual Meeting

And finally, don't forget our annual membership meeting on Saturday, January 17, 2009, at Lakeview Branch, Madison Public Library, 2845 N. Sherman Ave., 10 am to noon. Our website will have more details soon.

Current Events

For the latest news about events in and around Cherokee Marsh, visit www.CherokeeMarsh.org.