



FCNA News

Volume 2, Number 1, Winter 2002

Friends of the Campus Natural Areas

Dedicated to the Preservation and Stewardship of our Woodlands, Wetlands, Prairies and Shorelines

Stories in the Snow

by Glenda Denniston

The fox trotted along the trail in the marsh, its feet forming a straight line of doubled prints. It stopped to investigate some small burrows in the snow, urinated on a nearby shrub to mark its territory, leaving a musky skunk-like scent, and then continued on its way. At each group of burrows it did the same. Where a rabbit had passed by earlier that night, the fox went off the trail to follow its tracks for a few yards before continuing along the trail.

Farther along the path, the fox tracks changed abruptly. The groups of pawprints became more widely separated from each other and their pattern changed, suggesting increased speed. There was a confusion of tracks and disturbance just off the trail. Also evident were a small bloodstain in the snow near pounce marks, a few tufts of rabbit fur and a fox scat nearby. From this place a continuous furrow appeared in the snow along the path ahead, with occasional fox prints beside it.

In the snow was the story. A rabbit had been hopping through a group of red osier dogwood shrubs, gnawing at their bark. Suddenly it had noticed the fox and made a series of zigzag leaps in an unsuccessful effort to escape. The fox had pounced several times before the successful move. It had defecated near the kill site, in typical fox fashion, and then dragged its meal off to a cache or to eat in some more secure area.

Tracking is a good way to study the lives of the mammals that remain active in the Campus Natural Areas during the winter. The best time to find recent tracks is in the early morning after a new snowfall, especially when the snow has ended in the late afternoon or early evening. This is because most of our local mammals, prey and predator alike, lead their most active lives at night, a time when we are not likely to be around to observe them.

Unlike the mammals of the CNA that truly hibernate (jumping mouse), migrate and then hibernate (most bats) or spend long periods in a state of torpidity, awakening only in mild spells (chipmunk, raccoon and skunk), many remain active throughout the winter. These include vole,

shrew, white-footed mouse, cottontail rabbit, opossum, gray squirrel, deer, muskrat, fox, mink, weasel, coyote, as well as human, dog and cat. In periods of mild weather, raccoons and skunks may also be active. All of these leave evidence of their behavior in the snow for those who can read it.

A good field guide will make tracking much easier. *A Field Guide to Mammal Tracks* by Olaus J. Murie (1954) is a good basic text. *Animal Tracks of Minnesota and Wisconsin* by Ian Sheldon and Tamara Eder (2000) is written specifically for our area. The most informative guide of all, in my opinion, is *Tracking and the Art of Seeing: How to Read Animal Tracks and Sign* by Paul Rezendes (1999).

The best way to become adept at tracking and interpreting sign is by doing it. Start by taking notes and drawing pictures to compare to drawings in books. Include track measurements. Soon you will find yourself recognizing tracks and track patterns of different animals and actively looking for sign: scats (droppings), evidence of biting or chewing on twigs or nuts, scratch or rub marks on tree trunks, holes, nests and burrows. One good way of assessing what small mammals live in an area is by studying the bones, fur and feathers regurgitated by owls in compact pellets after a meal.

The unexpected can happen. I was once following an opossum's meandering tracks on a frozen stream, imagining its waddling gait, checking to see what was in the debris it had poked around in, noting where it had urinated in the snow, when something ahead of me attracted my attention. There, at the beginning of the trail, was the opossum itself, looking over its shoulder at me.

Finding the animal that made the trail, though, is not the true object of tracking. Rather, the search is for the stories told by the tracks and sign, the animal behavior they document. You do not have to be an expert tracker to learn about the lives of the animals that are active in winter. Just start looking in the snow for the clues.

Announcements

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Friends of the CNA

is a 501(c)(3) non-profit
organization

We Welcome Submissions to the FCNA Newsletter and Web Site

The FCNA welcomes the submission of articles and announcements for *FCNA News*. We encourage people to share their checklists and other relevant CNA materials on the FCNA Web Site. For information on submitting material, call Roma Lenehan at 238-5406 or send your articles or checklists to rlenehan@chorus.net.

FCNA Web Site Improvements

If you have not visited the FCNA Web Site recently, you will be surprised. Back issues of *FCNA News* are available. In addition to extensive material on the Class of 1918 Marsh, many new pictures have been added, including photographs of unfamiliar areas such as Caretaker's Woods. New butterfly and dragonfly material appear. A historical section has been developed. Animal and plant information continues to be updated. Visit the FCNA Web Site (www.uwalumni.com/fcna) today!

Friends of the CNA Completes First Year

The FCNA has completed a busy first year. In addition to incorporating and getting 501(c)(3) non-profit status, the FCNA has: had Stan Temple speak on Urban Natural Areas at its Annual Meeting; put in hundreds of volunteer hours removing garlic mustard and other invasive species, continuing the Upper Bill's Woods Planting Project, and planting and watering hundreds of plants and shrubs at the new Picnic Point Entrance Project; developed a Web Site; produced three newsletters; had eight field trips in the CNA; recruited 179 members; and raised \$26,590. Join us for our second year. Members will receive renewal notices one year after they became members of FCNA.

Madison Christmas Bird Count December 14

The Madison Christmas Bird Count circle includes the Campus Natural Areas. By helping with the Christmas Bird Count, you are helping with the longest running bird census in the US. The data will be used to assess long-range trends in bird population and the effects of sudden changes like the arrival of the West Nile Virus. Participants of all skill levels are welcome. Contact Tony Kalenic and Carol Anderson at 249-8836 or kalander@mailbag.com if you want to help.

FCNA Celebrate Class of 1918 Marsh in April

The Friends of the CNA will celebrate the Anniversary of the Class of 1918 Marsh at their April Annual Meeting. Watch for details of this exciting event!

UW to Hold Hearing on Proposed Parking Lot

In early 2003 the UW will hold the first of a series of public meetings about a proposed four-story parking lot to be located on lot 76 behind Nielsen Tennis Stadium. This lot, which will provide needed parking for the hospital complex, will be visible from the Lakeshore Path and the Class of 1918 Marsh. The meetings will be part of the environmental impact study.

Around the CNA

Trail Improvements

Several trails damaged during the wet weather this spring will be protected from further erosion with a cover of bark. Contact Bill Muehl (238-7717) if you wish to help with this trail maintenance.

Angler's Cove Project Continuing

Planning for the repairs of Angler's Cove is continuing, aided by the \$10,000 FCNA gift and the \$40,000 DNR Best Management Practices grant (see page 6). Students and partners will continue to be involved in the planning process. The goal will be to minimize water coming into the area by using infiltration methods like rain gardens located at the edge of Eagle Heights Apartments. The large parking lot will be replaced by a smaller reconstructed parking lot in 2003 using methods that encourage water infiltration. Existing gullies and the eroding shoreline will be stabilized. Eventually volunteers will help plant native plants.

The Spirit of Camp Gallistella: Tent Colony Chronicles, Part II

by Jane Camerini

From 1912 until 1962, Camp Gallistella was the only university housing available to students with families as well as the least expensive summer housing in town. Camp Gallistella, the unofficial name for the U.W. Tent Colony, provided summer school students with rustic accommodations on the wooded lakeshore of Lake Mendota in what is now the North Shore Woods in the Campus Natural Areas.

The name “Camp Gallistella,” which is how the tent colonists referred to their community, provides two clues to life at the lakeshore colony. The softer, more affectionate name speaks to the solid sense of community, a quality remembered by all of the tent colonists I have spoken with as well as those who left written records in *The Breezes*, the newsletter of the colony which began in 1920. Most families cherished the mix of simple, close to nature, communal life and sought to repeat as many summers as they could. It was common for families to return to the tent colony for four to ten years while one or both parents matriculated towards an undergraduate, or more typically, a graduate degree.

The second clue in the name “Camp Gallistella” points us directly to Eleanor Munn Gallistel, the wife of Albert Gallistel, UW Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds. The Gallistels lived in the old cottage on the east end of the tent colony, which was on the site

when the university purchased the land. Although Albert Gallistel was the official supervisor of the tent colony from 1919 until his retirement in 1959, Eleanor voluntarily administered its affairs. Once each summer Eleanor Gallistel hosted an annual tea party on the porch of the cottage. She provided the lace tablecloth set with wildflowers in vases while the women, donned in skirts for the only “formal” event of the summer, brought homemade cookies and brownies. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gallistel were honored at various cook-outs by the ever-grateful campers for making their summer accommodations healthful, affordable, and congenial.

The tent colonists made the most of their surroundings. While the men donned ironed shirts and ties to attend summer school classes, their wives managed their children, their small budgets, and their improvised households by sharing their limited resources. The children enjoyed fishing, swimming, and collecting mulberries in the old daisy field. Singing around a campfire was a regular Sunday night event, and each summer colonists held a variety of picnics, skits, and the annual Water Carnival.

Several factors led to the closing of the tent colony despite protests from loyal tent colonists. Additional apartments were built for married students at Eagle Heights Apartments in the nearby pasture. Noise from construction of the Cove, a large apartment building at the west end of the tent colony, began to disrupt the sense of peace and quiet. The Gallistels retired in 1959, and with that the tent colonists lost their strongest sponsors. The colony’s tent platforms and study halls were in need of repairs at the same time the number of students who attended the University only in the summer began to dwindle. Camp Gallistella closed at the end of the summer in 1962. The feelings of harmony and goodwill that were nurtured there continue to live on in the hearts and minds of the tent colonists and their children.



Students found time for work as well as leisure at the UW
Source: Tom Brock Archives

University Bay: Preservation and Change

by Roma Lenehan

University Bay makes the Campus Natural Areas and the UW-Madison Campus a unique place. The Bay and the lands along it provide a place to enjoy nature and get away from the city. University Bay, with its loons, great blue herons, and other wildlife, appears to be a timeless oasis. However, humans have used the Bay and the surrounding area for thousands of years. Recently the area has faced repeated threats from human development. Despite many environmental victories, the Bay continues to face challenges.

What is University Bay?

Today University Bay is a 262-acre shallow area of Lake Mendota protected by Picnic Point from the winds and waves of the main lake. Willow Creek drains into it. The Bay provides a home for a diverse set of plants and animals that like the shallow and sheltered Bay.

University Bay has undergone a series of changes. Like Lake Mendota, glaciers created the Bay by converting a steep valley into a broad, gradual Bay. After the glaciers retreated about 13,000 years ago, Lake Mendota was larger and deeper. A larger Bay covered the playing field area and lapped at the surrounding ridges. Eventually the lake outlet eroded, lowering the lake levels. A sandbar (now Willow Drive) separated a sedge meadow area from the Bay. After settlement, a series of dams at Tenney Park raised the lake levels again, flooding the existing marshes and creating new marshes including the 130 acre marsh beyond the sandbar.



University Bay and its diverse plant community in 1914.

Courtesy of the UW Archives. Meurer Collection

Winter 2002 / FCNA News / Page 4

Human Usage of the Bay

Humans have lived in the University Bay area for many years. About 2000 years ago Native Americans built seven mound complexes near the Bay. More recently, the Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) hunted, fished, and harvested wild rice and other plants in the Bay marshes.

Early settlers continued to use the resources of the Bay. They collected marsh hay. Tony Breitenbach remembers fishing from the back of his Shorewood home on University Bay Drive (A. C. Breitenbach interview, July 11, 1973). People hunted game. The Wisconsin Conservation Department declared the UW-owned portion of the Bay a University Bay Game Refuge in 1927 at the request of the Board of Regents, ending shooting on campus. Legal hunting in the Bay region finally ended in 1941 when the UW acquired Picnic Point. In 1944 the University Bay Game Refuge was expanded to protect 692 acres.

Developing and Preserving the Bay

From the beginning the University recognized the importance of the Bay. In the 1890s, when the predecessor of the Park and Pleasure Drive Association asked to build a road across the sandbar inside the Bay, the University Board of Regents refused to allow a causeway to be built across the Bay. Instead, Willow Drive was built along the sandbar at the old edge of the lake, separating the 130 acre marsh from the Bay itself. This road allowed easy access to the west campus and encouraged its development.

Over the years, the marsh inside Willow Drive, except for the small Class of 1918 Marsh, was drained, filled, and developed. In 1894 the 20 acre marsh east of Willow Creek was converted into experimental fields. Between 1914 and 1922, the 84 acre floating marsh west of Willow Creek was turned into experimental fields using tiles and a pump. When the tiles broke down in the 1960s, much of this area was developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. While part was developed as surface parking lots (Lot 60) and the Nielsen Tennis Stadium, much of this area was maintained as open space, such as the playing fields and the Class of 1918 Marsh. Nevertheless, today development pressures are becoming more intense because most of the

available Campus land has been built on. This year the University is proposing to build a four-story parking ramp on surface parking lot 76 by the Nielsen Tennis Stadium because no alternative location is available.

Although much of the east side of the Bay is built upon, a significant amount of land along the Bay has been preserved. However, this has required continual vigilance. When the University was trying to acquire Picnic Point in 1939, a group of Madisonians wished to develop University Bay into a recreational area by putting a road across the Bay and draining and/or filling much of the inner Bay with sand to create a beach. Without authorization, some University officials ordered cinders to be dumped in the Bay at the base of Picnic Point, creating what is now the Picnic Point Parking Lot and beginning the process of filling the inner Bay. A wide variety of UW personnel objected to this proposal which would destroy the natural character of the Bay. A 1939 petition notes the importance of this area:

This area has been for forty years or more an extremely useful part of the teaching and research equipment of our departments. It serves as a resting and feeding area for migrating waterfowl, and as a spawning area and nursery for game and other fishes. There is no other area quite like it within reasonably easy access. The protected shallow water makes possible an aquatic flora not duplicated elsewhere in the Madison area (Biology Faculty to Pres. E. B. Fred, petition, June 7, 1939).

This plan was dropped, but in 1940 a new harbor and marina were proposed for University Bay that would require dredging and filling the Bay. Aldo Leopold wrote in opposition to the proposal, noting that the University needed to set a good example in order to encourage farmers to preserve marshes (A. Leopold to A. M. Brayton, letter, Aug. 31, 1940). In 1941 the UW acquired Picnic Point, protecting the area from commercial development.

Today Picnic Point is an essential part of the Campus Natural Areas. The Bay edge has been preserved from Limnology Laboratory to Picnic Point, forming a natural corridor called the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path. The Bay provides a place for people to walk, boat, fish, observe nature, and watch the sunset.

The University Bay has been studied for over 100 years and continues to be monitored by students and researchers. These studies indicate that the plant and animal communities of the Bay have changed over the last century, probably partially because of a decrease in water quality due to human development of the surrounding uplands. These ecological issues will be explored in future issues of *FCNA News* and on the FCNA Web Site (www.uwalumni.com/fcna).

University Bay Project

From 1972 to 1976 the University Bay Project studied the history and ecology of the Bay area with the goal of minimizing the environmental impact of humans in the increasingly utilized Far West Campus. Initiated by a \$87,000 Golden Jubilee gift from the Class of 1922, the Project produced a diverse set of publications. The Project used a \$69,000 Brittingham Grant to develop a master plan for the University Bay region, *University Bay Study*. It compiled a bibliography of all previous work on the Bay. Geological, water quality, and vegetation studies were completed. Plans for the management of the Class of 1918 Marsh were developed. R. E. McCabe and S. A. Carpenter produced a manuscript, *A Niche in Time*, a history with photographs of the University Bay region through 1948. Unfortunately, like many of the publications of the University Bay Project, this history was never published. It, like all of the Bay Project materials, can be found in the University Bay Project boxes in the Steenbock Memorial Library Archives.

Join the Friends of the Campus Natural Areas

Name _____	Student	\$10	Γ
Address _____	Individual	\$20	Γ
City, State _____ Zip Code _____	Household	\$35	Γ
Phone (optional) _____ Email (optional) _____	Steward	\$50	Γ
Γ Please send me information about how to volunteer	Patron	\$100	Γ
(Include your email address or telephone number if you would like to volunteer.)	Other	_____	Γ

Please write your check to the Friends of the CNA

Mail this form with your check to: FCNA P.O. Box 55056 Madison, WI 53705

The Friends of the CNA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

What's Happening on the Lakeshore Path?

Major renovations will be taking place on the Howard Temin Lakeshore Path starting late this fall or early next spring. The path has flooded severely twice in the last decade. To improve drainage, the pedestrian path will be narrowed from twelve to eight feet, and the section from Picnic Point to the boat landing will be raised. Boat landing traffic will be simplified with direct access to and from Lot 60. Construction on the west end of the Lakeshore Path will begin in spring 2003.

Another part of the project involves replacing the disintegrating water main carrying lake water to the Charter Street Heating Plant. This project is scheduled to begin in October and will take thirty to forty-five days. The path in this area will be restored to its existing limestone screenings but with improved drainage. The path here will not be paved.

Walkers and cyclists along the Lakeshore Path will be detoured during the construction of an expanded Crew House. Selection of a contractor is scheduled for late 2002 with ground breaking scheduled for February 2003. Construction should take about eighteen months.

The current plan for some of the trees in the project is to let them die naturally rather than remove them, and to replace dead trees with swamp oaks where appropriate. Grading along the path may necessitate the removal of some trees, however. There may be an opportunity for the FCNA to help with new landscaping between the path and the lake.

DNR Grant Received

UW-Madison Gaylord Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies received \$136,434 from the Department of Natural Resources Urban Nonpoint Source and Storm Water grant program to improve the quality of water going into Lake Mendota. Forty thousand dollars will go to re-construction of the Angler's Cove area to decrease erosion. The Friends of the CNA provided \$10,000 in matching funds to help obtain this Angler's Cove grant. The other \$96,434 will go to (1) a Water Resource Management workshop where graduate students under Ken Potter and Fred Madison will develop recommendations to decrease the amount of pollution entering the lake from the UW campus and (2) project assistants to follow up on these recommendations.

FCNA

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