

**Craig, Sondra**

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**From:** Jai Johnson <jai.johnson.tns@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:08 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** You can be pro-marsh without being anti-homeless

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Dear Representative,

Early this spring, I ran across a man in the marsh who was easily in his 70s or 80s. He was doing the hard work of hauling refuse up out of the marsh onto the bike trail, from window blinds to insulation to wet, rotting blankets. And that was before this year's influx of tent dwellers.

The La Crosse River Marsh is one of the healthiest urban wetlands in the nation. Generations have invested their work and worry to protect this precious asset, to mitigate lead contamination, ban bow hunting, pick up litter, remove invasive species, add recreational amenities, stop the north/south corridor. That last issue alone has consumed thousands of hours of citizen activism.

Sadly, our marsh is now a large, unregulated campground with no sanitation services or oversight. Overlaying the sea of ordinary trash are gas grills, bicycles, propane tanks, tarps, garden tools, shopping carts – you name it. If you have not seen it first-hand, I respectfully suggest that you abstain from voting on this item. Believe me, if you have not seen it, you cannot possibly imagine how dire, how extreme the situation.

In closing, we are fortunate in La Crosse to have many, many helpers. People faced with housing challenges have dozens of options to get the help they need. But living in our marsh cannot be one of those options. Despoiling this regional, natural treasure cannot, must not be the “solution” to homelessness.

Thank You,

Jai Johnson

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***Jai Johnson***

*Ethos ~ Pathos ~ Logos*