



WETLAND *matters*

Published bi-monthly for the Friends and Members of Oxbow, Inc.

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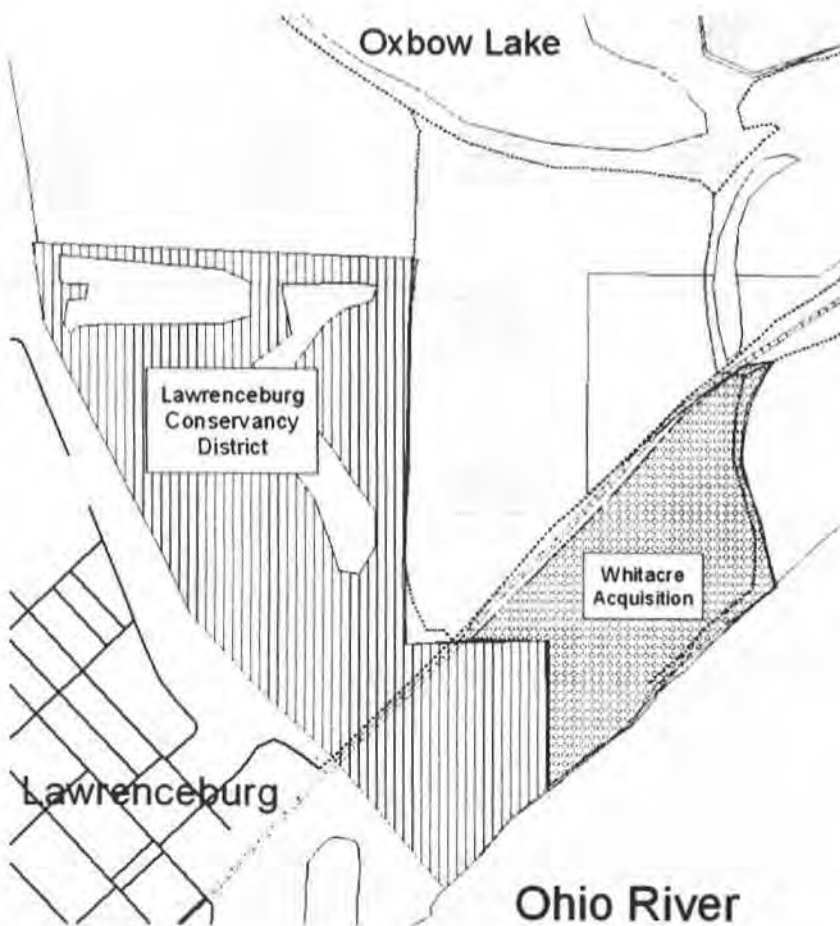
Purchase of Whitacre Property Adds 40 Acres to Oxbow Inc. Land Holdings

by President Jon Seymour

We are thrilled to announce the purchase of 40 acres of Oxbow bottom land on October 12, 2004, from Debbie and Robert Whitacre. Oxbow Inc. purchased the land for \$143,000 and an allowance of a 15 year limited use plan for the Whitacres. The plan allows the Whitacres an additional 15 years of limited use of the property from the date of purchase while placing restrictions on any further development of the property. Oxbow also obtained the rights to the farm income from the property beginning in 2005. This also means that there will be no public access to the land for the 15 years of the contract.

This important purchase gives Oxbow Inc. control of most of the Ohio River shore line between the Argosy Casino and the mouth of

...Continued on Next Page



Whitacre Acquisition Map
by Kani Meyer, Chair,
Oxbow Inc. Land Management

ATTENTION...The January (11) special membership meeting will take place at Winton Centre Auditorium, Winton Woods Park, for this month only. It is hoped a large attendance will ensue.

See *Activities Schedule*, page 3, for further details.

MORE...Whitacre Purchase

the Great Miami River. Now there are only two land owners left in the immediate vicinity of the purchase and we have open offers to each of them to negotiate for the purchase of their properties.

The Whitacre purchase is located east of the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District, south of the CSX railroad tracks, north of the Ohio River, and is bounded on the east by private property. Oxbow will be conducting a survey of the plant life on the property in 2005 and will occasionally monitor the property to be assured that the terms of the contract are complied with.

A Tree for You – A Mudflat for Me

by Jon Seymour

Our mudflat restoration project is proceeding slowly – thank goodness! It is the only project at the Oxbow that I am happy about going slowly. The reason being, the happy coincidence, that our restoration of mudflats coincides with a

tremendous need for water adapted native trees to help prevent stream bank erosion in several stream restoration projects in the tri-state area.

Three different expeditions in 2004 led to the removal of an estimated 700 saplings (all silver maple) for use in several stream bank restoration projects in Butler and Hamilton Counties, Ohio.

Bruce Koehler of OKI is the coordinator of this project and has marshaled volunteers from several area conservation groups to help remove the trees from the Oxbow Lake mudflat restoration area, and transplant them along streams sorely in need of tree roots to hold and maintain the soil of the stream bank. Transplantation success has been very high making these saplings even more valuable.

Other benefits of the program have been that these conservation groups no longer have to purchase these trees and scarce funds can be used for other important priorities. In one instance this year the value of the trees was computed as part of the organization's contribution to a project and put them over the top for obtaining matching grant funds that allowed major expansion of the restoration project.

Oxbow Inc. is very proud of its role in supporting other conservation organizations and fostering cooperation that is essential if we are going to have a natural legacy to pass on to our grandchildren.



*Volunteers from a variety of local conservation organizations remove saplings from the Oxbow Lake mudflat restoration area to transplant elsewhere to prevent soil erosion.
Photo by Jon Seymour.*

Oxbow Inc. Memorials

Donor

In Memory of

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Durbin *Birthday Remembrance*
Dale Durbin
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Noll Dale Durbin
Carol Foltz Harold J. Foltz

Tributes

Mrs. Robert L. Black, Jr. *New Year Greetings!*
Morris Mercer
Mandy Seymour *Happy Birthday!*
Jon Seymour

Special Thanks

To Edward & Marcia Wilz, Sr., for their
Generous Annual Gift

Oxbow Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial established in the name of a friend or relative will be enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Each contribution to a Memorial will be acknowledged to the family or to those selected by the donor.

Tributes are also enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Some tributes are birthday or anniversary remembrances, holiday greetings or gratitude acknowledgments. If so desired, "Happy Birthday" or the like can be inscribed in the Tribute notice.

Contributions should be sent to Oxbow Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgment.

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Scouts to the Rescue With an Eye Out For Eagles

Three Boy Scouts of Pack 637 of Aurora were a great help last fall in another cleanup at the Oxbow, working for three hours carrying out trash behind Mercer Pond. Mike Kluesener, Bob Schlegel and Jon Seymour were also on the job. Unfortunately because of the mud, no truck could get back there to pick up the debris and haul it to the dumpster but that came later.

The Scout Leader announced that there was a successful Bald Eagle nest at Versailles State Park during the year that fledged two young. During the week of the cleanup, Tom Uhlman reported seeing four immature Bald Eagles at the Oxbow. There was also a flock of more than 325 Cormorants on Mercer Pond. Should make cleaning up a bit more fun!

Oxbow Inc. Activities Schedule

Programs

Tuesday, January 11, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
**NOTE: Winton Centre Auditorium,
Winton Woods Park**

Scott Peak, local naturalist, will discuss the daily life of the Longhunter as he went about the Oxbow. Dressed in historical garb --with props--Scott will tell of interaction with Native Americans such as Blue Jacket and Little Turtle. He will include insights into the lives of famous Longhunters such as Simon Kenton. Don't miss this! Bring the whole family!

To reach Winton Centre from Winton Road, proceed west on Valleyview Drive, go one block, and take the first left turn. Winton Centre will be immediately on your right. Park in the small lot by the building or in the larger lot further on. Enter building through left hand door. (It's not as difficult as it sounds.)

Tuesday, February 8, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Steve Pelikan, Oxbow Board Member, who has been studying the flies of the Oxbow will present an update on his research and talk about the diversity of flies at the Oxbow and what they tell us about the ecosystem in which they live. You won't believe how interesting the life cycles of most flies are!

The Lawrenceburg library is downtown at 123 High Street. Turn L going west off US 50 onto Walnut Street, then R on High Street.

Field Trips

Friday, January 7, 2005, 7:00 p.m.

Meet John Klein & Morris Mercer at the golf clubhouse parking lot, Shawnee Lookout Park, for a night hike looking for owls. Dress warm, bring flashlights, bring the kids. We'll drive to the trailhead, then hike. Should be lots of fun! (513) 941-2534

Directions: Take the Kilby Road exit from I-275, proceed S on Kilby, Kilby Road dead ends at US 50, turn R and proceed to Elizabethtown (E-Town). Turn L at Lawrenceburg Road, cross the Great Miami River, turn R until you enter the park. Turn L into the park, go up a step hill, pass the maintenance building and turn L into the Golf Clubhouse lot.

Sunday, February 27, 2005, 1:00 p.m.

Meet Paul Wharton at the Oxbow Inc. parking lot for a hike focusing on migrant waterfowl. Usually good numbers in late February! (513-353-3403)

To get to the new parking lot, turn S from Rt. 50 at the Shell gas station in Greendale, drive back to the cement plant, turn R to end of road, then L and, *voila*, there it is.

What's Taken Flight --

2004

... by President Jon Seymour



My goodness what a year! — That's exactly what I said in last year's year-end summary. But it is still true. This next year we hope will be even better since 2005 will be our 20th Anniversary Year. We plan on celebrating a bit, but more about that later.

This year we had Mark Westrich and Suzanne Skidmore leave the Board of Directors for personal reasons. While we will miss both of them greatly, we were pleased to welcome Jim Pohlman, Mike Kluesener, Jerry Hon and Gay Hon onto the board.

We have been busy with several projects in 2004. We cleared the beaver dam blocking the outlet to the Ohio River eliminating the backflow from the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District into Oxbow Lake. This reduced potential pollution of Oxbow Lake by runoff from the Greendale Business Park across Highway 50 from the Oxbow. With several active families of beaver we will have to keep a constant watch on this critical drainage. The causeway between the Cement Plant Pond and Juno Pond washed out due to the spring floods and another beaver blocked culvert. The old culvert has cross bracing which gives the beaver a handle to block it. We are getting ready to dig up the old culvert and put in a new one that is a little larger and has no cross bracing for the beaver to catch limbs. Even if the beaver do manage to block an end it will be much easier to clean.

Another culvert project will be between Osprey Lake and Oxbow Lake. The frequent flooding is also washing out the low spot in the road between these two adjacent lakes. We will install a series of three small culverts that will take the water pressure/flow off the road and allow it to pass under the road through the culverts. Hopefully with a little bit of road stabilization this will solve the problem.

The new Oxbow Lake overlook parking area was bordered with cable and the low foliage cleared to allow a scenic view of Oxbow Lake from one end to the other. The trees were left intact so there is still a screen for wildlife to feel safe. Stop

Sorry...

Missing this issue are Morris Mercer's Field Notes. Morris has been under the weather(not the same weather that kept the Oxbow too wet to visit). We hope to have Morris back better than new next issue.

and enjoy the view and the wildlife. Both can be appreciated from the seat of a vehicle so members with limited mobility can get to see and appreciate the lake and its beauties.

Plans to burn the Prairie Establishment Area around Osprey Lake had to be altered due to constant flooding and rains in the spring. Finally we were able to bush hog the area this summer and either periodic burning and/or bush hogging will be used to encourage planted and volunteer prairie species and discourage invasive plants. Clean-up volunteers, the land use committee, and Boy Scout troops combined to corral over 600 tires that had floated around the Oxbow and recycle them through the Dearborn County Waste Management District. Several more tons of trash were removed by volunteers but the good news is that the areas we are cleaning are staying relatively clean. There are still remote areas of the Oxbow that harbor tons of uncollected trash but we are making great progress.

It was another great year for nature in the Oxbow. Summer visitors were treated to the site of as many as 60 Great Egrets, even more Blue Heron, several Green and Black-crowned Night Herons, and frequent visits from adult and immature Bald Eagles. Other common residents such as the many Wood Duck, Pied-billed Grebes, Kingfishers, and Double-crested Cormorants also pleased and delighted visitors. If you were lucky you also might have caught a glimpse of the resident engineers being as busy as beavers, which they are.

Flowers and butterflies in their season add to the considerable enjoyment of a walk through the Oxbow.

Our rarest visitors were three American White Pelicans that spent a couple of weeks in March with us drawing visitors from as far away as Dayton to view them. This is getting to be a regular spring thing for us as we have had White Pelicans the last three springs.

Our rarest sighting was that of an American White Pelican in the fall. One stayed with us through the entire month of September. According to Dave Styer's book, *Birds of the Oxbow*, and all additional observations since its publication, this was the first pelican ever seen in the Oxbow during the fall migration.

We are working to reestablish the mudflats on the northeast side of Oxbow Lake for migratory shorebirds. This effort has had the added benefit of helping several other conservation groups in the area. Volunteers have removed over 700 saplings from the mudflat restoration area and have transplanted them in a variety of stream bank restoration projects all over the Great Miami and Mill Creek watersheds. Bruce Koehler of OKI has been coordinating this project which has saved other conservation groups thousands of dollars in tree costs and has provided them with high quality, water adapted, native trees. According to Bruce they have a very high transplantation success rate.

Not the least of our accomplishments has been the recent purchase of the 40-acre Whitacre property along the Ohio River. This property is a great addition to



Bruce Koehler's "tree mobile" is loaded with saplings destined for area stream bank restoration projects. This sapling exchange had many benefits for many organizations.

...Photo by Jon Seymour

Oxbow, Inc. It is bordered by the Ohio River on the south side, the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District on the west side, the CSX tracks to the north and by private property to the east. This property contains the extension of Wood Duck Slough which formed the pre-1847 mouth of the Great Miami River. Currently it is wooded along the slough and the Ohio River and most of the rest is farmed. This brings our total owned acreage to about 750 acres. The Whitacres have retained limited use of the property for 15 years so it will not be open to the public during that period.

As I mentioned at the start, 2005 will be our twentieth anniversary and we hope to celebrate our success with some member activities that will bring more of us together and allow more folks to experience the joy of the Oxbow. Look for announcements in future newsletters for anniversary related member events.



Night Heron
Audubon/Dover

Elections to be Held at January 11 Meeting

At the Tuesday, January 11, 2005, members' meeting, the following board members are standing for election for three year terms: Jeanne Bocklage

John Getzendanner

Mike Kluesener

Steve Pelikan

Dwight Poffenberger.

The officers standing for election are:

Jon Seymour, President

Kani Meyer, Vice-President

Dwight Poffenberger, Recording Secretary

Jim Poehlmann, Treasurer

Dennis Mason, Corresponding Secretary

John Getzendanner, Indiana Agent

Dwight Poffenberger, Ohio Agent.

There is a change of the meeting place -- not EarthConnection as has been announced-- but rather the Winton Centre Auditorium, Winton Woods Park. See *Activities Schedule*, page 3, for directions.

For 2005-- A plan for proper care, pleasure and prosperity.....

Oxbow Vision



Function: Preserve, protect, and improve the flood plain wetland

This is an active process that requires land acquisition, land management, and dedication to constant diligence in this stewardship.

Highest priority to the preservation of the migratory stop over and resting area

The Oxbow is a flood plain wetland with several permanent lakes, ponds and marsh areas. The main purpose for the existence of Oxbow, Inc. is to preserve the area as a wetland functioning as a major migratory stopover for a large variety of migratory birds, particularly waterfowl and shorebirds, and as a resting/roosting area for a wide variety of waterfowl and wading birds during the summer and fall months. In winter, the area serves as a hunting ground for raptors and a resting area for wintering waterfowl.

Active land management is required to preserve the Oxbow Area

In order to preserve the function of the Oxbow the land must be actively managed. Land management tools such as agriculture, limited burns, control of noxious plants and destructive wildlife may be necessary to preserve the function of the Oxbow area.

Multiple uses can coexist within the Nature Conservancy

Fishing, hunting, birding, and other activities associated with the enjoyment of nature can coexist in the Oxbow area. Not all uses can be accommodated in every area but through creative management the Oxbow can support a variety of uses while maintaining its main function as a wetland preservation and wildlife conservation area.

Accessibility to all encourages ownership and participation

Members, sponsors, visitors and others dedicated to protection of the environment need to feel close to the Oxbow and to be able to view and participate in the experience provided by interactions with the Oxbow area. Persons with limited mobility should also have the opportunity to enjoy the Oxbow experience.

The Oxbow is a source of knowledge

The Oxbow is a classroom for teaching all generations about ecology and the close interaction between wildlife and their habitats. Educational activities for children and adults will bring knowledge to new generations that they may also be encouraged to preserve the natural world. It serves as a model of how a group of dedicated individuals can have a significant impact on the environment by working together with farmers, land owners, businesses, local and state governments, regulatory agencies, and other environmental organizations (both profit and non-profit) to achieve a success.

Of Bits and Peeps...



Composting Makes Good Sense

How does your garden grow? Well, if you're wise, it will grow better with the aid of the compost that you have made. John Duke from the Greater Cincinnati Chapter of the American Compost Society spoke at the Oxbow Inc. meeting October 12 in Lawrenceburg to show us why, what and how to compost. The would-be turnout must have "turned in" early on this very rainy evening and thereby missed receiving free compost containers.

Why should you compost? Compost is a valuable asset to any garden. Also, composting is a great way to handle yard waste especially if you have a chipper or other means of reducing the size of the particles. It provides a natural means of improving the soil and eliminates many types of material from already over-stressed landfills.

What can you compost? Think "brown" or "green". You can use leaves, grass clippings, wood chips, bark, paper byproducts, garden waste, cow or horse manure, or kitchen waste such as coffee grounds, egg shells, fruit and vegetable waste. You should NOT COMPOST meat, milk products, pet or human feces. These items could spread disease or draw rodents.

How should you compost? The material to be composted should be held in some sort of container, such as fencing, and situated where it will receive some sunlight. It is important that it be IN CONTACT WITH THE SOIL so it can make use of the microorganisms which live there. Earthworms are immeasurably helpful to the compost.

Sometimes it is a good idea to add soil and various additives to the mix. It should be kept reasonably moist and turned from time to time to aerate it and equalize the temperature which may rise to 140 degrees F. in some parts of the pile.

When the compost is ready, it will be dark brown, friable and have an earthy smell. It is best used as a mulch rather than mixed with the soil. It is possible to make "compost tea" by soaking compost in water and then straining it. The resulting "tea" can be used to beneficially water indoor plants.

Mr. Duke's presentation was most helpful and we are grateful for his sharing his expertise.

.....by Carol Molleran

Highlands Nature Sanctuary Is a Beauty

Debbie Miller, retired teacher and newly elected president of Highlands Nature Sanctuary, introduced Oxbow Inc. members

to this lovely 1900 acres, November 9, at the College of Mt. St. Joseph. Handsome photos by her husband, photographer Bob Miller, showed off wild flowers, butterflies, old trees, a winding creek and assorted living creatures.

The sanctuary, in existence since 1996, is 15 miles east of Hillsboro on Rt. 50, near Rocky Fork Lake. It is home to 14 species of orchids, 60 species of butterflies and, of late, a mink. Ohio has 80 species of fresh water mussels and 19 of these can be found at Highlands.

You can visit for a day or rent for a weekend or more one of several buildings on the property. Hermitage Lodge sleeps ten and is situated on Rocky Fork Creek as is also Heron Woods, a two-bedroom guest house. You can't go wrong spending time in this beautiful area. For more information, log onto highlandssanctuary.org.

Good Sightings on a November Sunday

Eleven hikers enjoyed the Oxbow the afternoon of November 28 while discussing how migrant ducks enjoy Ritz Carlton accommodations at Motel 6 prices at the Oxbow. There is fine dining with wonderful all-day buffets featuring aquatic insects, smartweed and other wetland plant seeds, waste grain and aquatic plants. The Oxbow also offers excellent security for its waterfowl guests --the large expanses of water and fields allow them to see predators coming with time to escape. And location? The Oxbow is situated at one of the best locations possible for migrating waterfowl, at the confluence of two major rivers. It's no wonder the ducks stop again and again to redeem their Reward Points for more free, ritzy accommodations each year.

During the hike, our group observed the following: Two Palm Warblers fed along the east shore of Oxbow Lake, low in the willows. (It was a bit late for Paul Warblers, most of which depart our area by mid-October.) Seven Hooded Mergansers, 3 male, 4 female, added special beauty. Eight Black Ducks flew overhead. Seven Pied-billed Grebes were feasting at the early- dinner buffet. Twelve Great Blue Herons stood tall above the field plants, looking like unusual large posts in the distance. A Downy Woodpecker was heard calling from a wood lot near the cement plant pond. A Northern Flicker flew over Oxbow Lake. Five Horned Larks flew up and then landed again in a field. Approximately 200 Turkey Vultures roosted on the towers by the distant Miami Fort Power Plant. Several Black Vultures soared above the smoke stacks. Two Kingfishers made an appearance.

A young boy on the hike found numerous tracks of raccoon and deer, and he and his younger sister found a nice chunk of beaver-chewed tree trunk in the classic pointy shape the beavers leave the tree after felling it.

Though waterfowl, which we had counted on, were not plentiful on this day there was much to discover, and our group was made up of enjoyable persons game for a good hike. Wayne Wauligman was my co-leader on this fun-filled adventure.

.....by Jerry Lippert



#100 And Going Strong! Part Four

by Jeanne Bocklage

This recorded celebration of the first 100 issues of *Wetland Matters* and the exciting history they unveil concludes with this issue. Issues #85 through #100 reveal strategic land acquisitions, prestigious awards and the largest monetary gift ever received -- a gift from William Rowell Chase.

Acreage added included 70 acres purchased from the city of Greendale, Indiana, former property of Don and Vera Evans (after nearly four years of negotiations on the part of then President Norma Flannery); 3 acres of unclaimed land from an erroneously established property line; 75 acres, including Beaver Pond now known as Mercer Pond and much farm land; six small lots totaling 1 1/2 acres; 12 acres, property of Nell Smith, former Lawrenceburg school teacher, and her niece, Phyllis Hust; and 75 acres purchased from Mildred and Janet Hayes. Besides these additions, CG&E/Cinergy donated 20 acres of its property, the first corporation to aid Oxbow Inc. in this manner. At this juncture, Oxbow Inc. owned outright or in conservation easements 960 acres of the Oxbow, an unbelievable achievement in 17 years.

In Issue #85, Norma Flannery was named by *The Dearborn County Register* its weekly Millennium 2000 Award recipient for Oxbow Inc.'s continued efforts to protect "this vital wetland for wild transients". Two issues later, the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy along with other sponsoring organizations proclaimed our Oxbow "An Important Bird Area". In Issue # 91, Norma won the highly acclaimed National Wetlands Award and traveled to Washington, D.C., for the presentation, one of eight environmentalists to be so honored. Norma had been nominated by Bonnie Fancher of Vevay, Indiana, high school science teacher and a founding member of Oxbow Inc.



Back to newsletter #85. (Bill Bocklage, editor at the time, had begun his editorship with Issue #72.) The uncommon generosity of William Rowell Chase, our greatest benefactor, who died March 15, 1998, was announced with the bequest of 9000 shares of P&G stock which when sold realized almost one million dollars for Oxbow Inc. This allowed for the land purchases already mentioned.

Also this issue announced the death of Edward Thayer at age 85, Oxbow Inc. Board Member for many years and "one of the top birders in the world", a rating he merited from the American Birding Association in 1999 for his having identified nearly 6,000 bird species throughout the world. Mr. Chase

learned about Oxbow Inc. from Mr. Thayer through their membership in the Harvard (University) Club.

Moving on to #88, we find that The Third Protestant Memorial Church, which had closed after 162 years of service to Cincinnatians, chose Oxbow Inc. as one of 13 organizations to benefit from its endowment fund.



Today's three newsletter columnists were hard at work in this series of newsletters. Morris Mercer wrote of finding humpbacks and Atlantic Puffins and Arctic Terns while whale watching off the coast of Maine (#85). Jon Seymour in his first "Conservation Corner" (# 93) told of attending meetings (even way back then!) to secure grants for conservation groups like Oxbow Inc. and Dave Styer presented an engaging picture of Karl Maslowski in "Musings" (#99). (When the Oxbow Inc. founders met early on, they needed \$200 to incorporate and so Karl quickly passed his hat. According to Dave, Karl still has that very special hat.)

Some amusing tales of Birdathon exploits were told by Charlie Saunders and Jerry Lippert. We began the photo/feature to introduce our board members. Reporter Cindy Starr was thanked for her feature in *The Cincinnati Post* on Oxbow Inc.

Other noteworthy events took place. Two osprey nests on top of 35-foot poles were installed at the Oxbow under the guidance of John Getzendanner. When the West Nile Virus made its ugly appearance, members were warned not to pick up dead birds. Steve Pelikan began his series of articles on insects of the Oxbow. "Flies are important," Steve wrote, "because of their potential effects on our health and the health of our domestic animals. In the midwest, if you die from an animal bite, it is almost certain that the bite was from a fly--probably a mosquito spreading a viral disease such as encephalitis."

My husband died March 13, 2001. Ill but determined, he struggled with that March/April Issue #88, but he did it (with just a bit of typing help), God bless him! Steve Pelikan edited the next two issues and then I got the pleasant task with #91.

In that issue, it was reported that the 13 -year total of Birdathon honored pledges from Jon Seymour's P&G friends amounted to \$12,000. In Issue # 92, Board Members reacted to 9/11, paying tribute to bravery and offering a source of consolation in the beauty and peace of the Oxbow.

In #93, the Dearborn County Sheriff's Department was reported patrolling Oxbow Inc. property for trespassers including those dumping or hunting illegally and Tim Mara explained conservation easements. Issue #98 noted the 10th Anniversary of Miami U. students visiting the Oxbow as the first step toward a Master's Degree in Environmental Science.

A striking color map of the Oxbow was a highlight of #100 (March/April 2003). Norma Flannery lived to see this map printed (she died April 1, 2003), a firm desire of hers because it showed the growth of Oxbow Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana. Norma wrote me at the time that "Every Oxbow Inc. member should be proud of the success of Oxbow Inc. In 1985 when our preservation program began, all 2,500 acres from Elizabethtown, Ohio, to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, belonged to individual owners. Oxbow Inc. today is responsible for the protection of 960 acres and with the partnering of a number of local, state and federal agencies, the protected acres total 2,200."

My, my, my!

Big thanks to those first four presidents, Judy Bramstedt, John Miller, John Gatzendanner and Norma. Norma served the longest term--13 years. You have met many others through the *Wetland Matters* pages, who also devoted years of service to Oxbow Inc. and deserve our gratitude, such as Dr. Aaron Perlman who has served continuously as a Board Member since 1987.

This is the final installment of this history feature. The first three installments appeared, of course, in Issue #100, then also # 102 and #106. The editors who told the story were Ruth Trosset, Norma Flannery, Steve Pelikan and Bill Bocklage with a late assistance by Bill's wife. It was a joy following in all their steps.

All must surely agree with Norma that "Every Oxbow Inc. member should be proud of the success of Oxbow Inc."



Mike Kluesener

Welcome Back, Mike!

After serving on the Oxbow Inc. Board of Directors in the 1990s, Mike Kluesener is back on the Board, appointed by President Jon Seymour and currently up for election to a three year term. Welcome back, Mike!

A lifelong resident of Western Hills (and a West High graduate), Mike moved his family last June to a 15 acre farm in Sunman, Indiana. His wife, Kathy, and 14-year-old daughter now have their horses and Mike has a cockatiel inherited from his 19-year-old son. Also in the family are two dogs and a cat.

An automotive distributor by profession, Mike has a keen knack for engineering, such as figuring drainage and building culverts. He credits his love of the outdoors to his dad. "It began," Mike says, "when he took me fishing and hunting ." Fishing and hunting are Mike's favorite hobbies to this day.

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usings

by Dave Styer

Art and Jinny Wiseman

In the past, I have written about Morris Mercer, and about Karl Maslowski, two of the founding fathers of Oxbow Inc. with rich bird experience in the Oxbow area prior to 1986, when Oxbow Inc. was formed. I would be remiss if I didn't fill in the picture with an article on Art and Jinny Wiseman. Art, the late Arthur J. Wiseman, died in 1998, and Jinny has since married Russell Witte, cousin to former Oxbow Inc. board member Suzanne Skidmore.

This story begins around 1960, and comes about, at least in part, because the skilled and successful pharmacists Art and Jinny Wiseman lived above their pharmacy. Even when the pharmacy was closed people would come knocking, and Art or Jinny would go downstairs and take care of the people's needs. Oh, for the good old days of the home pharmacy. Art and Jinny, though, needed a break, and they decided that bird watching in the country would provide a good, restful escape. They started spending Sundays birding away from home.

This is where personality kicks in. Art and Jinny were soon studying bird life. The young but experienced naturalist Ron Austing provided excellent guidance. By 1963, Art and Jinny were taking their rowboat with a 3.5 horsepower outboard motor down the Great Miami River in the Oxbow area and making wonderful discoveries. Here are a few of the highlights. August 7, 1963, was the sort of a day you don't forget. They saw two Little

Blue Herons that day and a small flock of Wood Ducks. Although Wood Ducks are common now, they had nearly disappeared in the first half of the twentieth century, so this was an exciting find. The real highlight of the day was the four Buff-breasted Sandpipers they saw. This was the earliest fall record, and the greatest number seen at once in the Greater Cincinnati area. On July 22, 1964, they saw and photographed an adult Franklin's Gull near Lost Bridge. That was the first record of this bird in the Greater Cincinnati area. Nearly two years later, they saw an immature Franklin's Gull near the mouth of the Great Miami River. In 1965, they found Tree Swallows nesting in a Wood Duck box along the Great Miami River. This was the first recorded nesting of Tree Swallows in the Greater Cincinnati area, and the discovery is one of Jinny's favorite memories. On July 25, 1965, they saw 21 Little Blue Herons. That's more than the combined total of Little Blues that I've seen there in 30 years.

Following the Oxbow exploration, the Wisemans moved on to a period of bird banding, mostly at the Cincinnati Nature Center and then at Jinny's mother's place in Northern Kentucky. The gathering of precise data must have been very compatible with the practice of pharmacy. By the time I met Art and Jinny, in 1971, they were nearly finished banding. Two or three years later I asked them why they had stopped banding – given that they were so successful at it. The answer was simple: it was one thing to collect data, but an entirely different thing to do something with it. Field biologists say that it takes four hours inside for every hour in the field. Art and Jinny didn't just let their mountain of data slip away. Their most renowned work resulted in an article by Art on feather molt and the aging of young Northern Cardinals.

During this time period, Art became (volunteer) Curator of Birds for the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, and Art and Jinny ran the Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count for the



Art, far left, and Jinny, far right, with other volunteers, manning an Oxbow Inc. display at the Cincinnati Zoo probably in the late 80s. Note all are wearing the popular Charlie Harper T-shirts.

Cincinnati Bird Club. They were so involved that they sold their business, with enough income from the sale to live comfortably, to devote all their energies to natural history! How many of us have the nerve to do something like that? Soon afterward they started a class in making museum study skins in their former pharmacy in order to help Barry Wakeman's Junior Zoologists go a step beyond what the zoo had to offer. A generation of junior and not-so-junior zoologists spent every Thursday evening at the Wiseman's.

Art and Jinny started with a desire to escape and a passion to learn. But learning leads to change. They grew to love the diversity of bird life, and to appreciate how different birds were restricted to different habitats. They led field trips and the bird skinning class to share this knowledge with others. They were active in the early development of Raptor, Inc. By the 1980s, they were also ready to directly help with land preservation projects. They helped Jim Becker with his first efforts to save Gilmore Ponds. They worked with several of us who were trying to preserve the Oxbow shortly before the barge port threat and the formation of Oxbow Inc.

Once the threat of destruction of the Oxbow area came, Art and Jinny, like Norma Flannery and Morris Mercer, put their lives into the project, and this lasted until Art's health failed. Many will remember the Oxbow board meetings at the Wiseman's amidst shelves of drying bird skins. Jinny is amazed at the success of Oxbow Inc. and she feels just great about it. If Art were here, I'm sure he too would be amazed and pleased. I'll guess that when a young couple in their thirties left their pharmacy one day to learn birds better, they had no idea of the long and wonderful journey they had just begun.

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Southeast Indiana Is Working Hard For the Environment

*by John Miller, Guest Columnist**

Conservation and protection of the environment is happening all over southeast Indiana. SE Indiana has been inhabited by Europeans for several generations longer than many parts of the state. As a result, land in a completely natural state is scarce. Oxbow Inc. is doing its work in a highly disturbed environment. The Oxbow is graphic proof that there is still great importance to saving and restoring less than pristine environments.

In southeast Indiana there are a number of efforts ongoing to find and protect the good natural areas remaining. Oak Heritage Conservancy is a land trust operating in this arena. It is working to protect an area from Dearborn County, west along US 50, to I-65 and then south to Louisville and back upriver. Working with willing landowners, OHC is helping communities protect natural and agricultural lands. OHC has values like Oxbow Inc. OHC is organized to help with the unmet needs a land trust can provide.

To the north of us, White Water Valley Land Trust, based out of Richmond, Indiana, is protecting land in the region that the state sees as the last chance to create a state forest.

Have you heard of the Red Wolf Sanctuary? Big news from Paul Strasser: he is planning to move from Farmers Retreat to the buffalo farm just south of Rising Sun. The buffalo farm has over four hundred acres. The farm's use as the new Red Wolf Sanctuary will keep the land from being developed into housing that overlooks the Ohio Valley. The sanctuary will be adjacent to the environmental park of Rising Sun. People are seeing a possibility of connecting the enviro park through the buffalo farm to Rising Sun with a hiking, biking trail.

Are you up to exploring a great place that is reasonably close to the Oxbow? With over two dozen known Indian mounds and village sites this place, the Laughery Creek area, was once an important suburb of the Indian culture at the mouth of the great Miami River. Laughery Creek forms the border between Ohio County and Dearborn County. It has good water and soils and a pleasant climate. In its day, it was located just off the Ohio River interstate. It still is a very pleasant place to be. The most continuous roads along the creek are on the Dearborn side but some of the best views are on the Ohio County side.

If you go, find a good map and take your time. The distance along the creek, between Friendship and its mouth at French, is not long. The roads are all paved but not built for speed. Now if you can find your way to where Bells Branch Road crosses Laughery Creek you've found one of my favorite spots. Where Mexico Ridge crosses Bear Creek as it flows into Laughery is a place not to miss. By the way, if you continue out Mexico Ridge into Ripley County you will come to Dewberry. A right turn will bring you into Friendship through the campground. Don't tell any one that I just told you the secret way the locals use to get in and out of the Shoot. (Twice a year, in the spring and fall, there is a muzzleloading shoot held in Friendship. As indicated, the traffic can be quite amazing.)

What's the difference between a creek and a river? In the case of Laughery Creek, one mile. Laughery is 99 miles long. Official registry as a river requires one hundred or more miles of watershed. The Dearborn County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring the Lower Laughery Watershed Project. The project is compiling data about the 53 thousand acre watershed from Versailles on down stream. Monthly water testing is on going and after a year of data collection and a lot of work by some wonderful volunteers an action plan will be completed. Plans to correct problems may get partial federal funding.

I'm partial to OHC, but I want you to know that all these groups can benefit from your support. It takes volunteers, dollars and moral support. Pick those that interest you and help.

** John Miller is President of the Oak Heritage Conservancy and an early president of Oxbow Inc.*

Oxbow, Inc.

A nonprofit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands ecosystem known locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from industrial development and to preserve the floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This agricultural area is rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland ecosystem. Make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource. Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is encouraged and solicited.

Individual	\$10	Family	\$15
Contributing	\$25	Supporting	\$50
Patron	\$100	Cornerstone	\$250
Sponsor	\$500	Benefactor	\$1000
Organization/Club	\$25		

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