

January—February 2008

No. 129



# WETLAND *matters*

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

Have you visited our website?... [www.oxbowinc.info](http://www.oxbowinc.info)

Need a speaker? Call 513-851-9835

## Gift from the Estate of Jinny (Wiseman) Witte Goes to Support Nature Education

The Board of Directors of Oxbow, Inc. was excited to receive a grant of \$116,563 from the estate of the late Jinny (Wiseman) Witte. Before marrying Russ Witte later in her life, Jinny was married to Art Wiseman. Art and Jinny Wiseman were among the founders of Oxbow, Inc. and our first meetings were held in the basement of the Wiseman's Pharmacy. The Wisemans lived above the Pharmacy and both Art and Jinny were pharmacists. It was home, business and nature academy rolled into one small neighborhood store. Many of the current champions of nature in the Cincinnati area were schooled in the Wiseman's homestyle academy. Many were infected by the enthusiasm and attention to detail, and delight in even the seemingly mundane areas of nature study.

In accepting this legacy from Jinny's estate the Board of Directors of Oxbow, Inc. felt that the memory of Art and Jinny Wiseman would best be served by focusing the gift on nature education. The Board voted to establish the *Art and Jinny (Witte) Wiseman Nature Education Fund*. The Fund would be established by the grant and other funds could be donated to it from other sources. 80% of the yearly proceeds of the fund would be available to fund nature education projects while 20% of the proceeds would be reinvested in the fund to insure growth of the principle.

The fund and its proceeds will be managed by the Board of Directors and their designees. The Board envisions using the Fund to recognize and encourage educational excellence and promote educational opportunities particularly for the preK-12 and college level students. Another function of the fund would be to encourage nature education across the tri-state in conjunction with other like minded conservation groups in the area. The establishment of this fund represents a new direction for Oxbow, Inc. and formalizes our 501(c) 3 requirement for education of the public. Added to our adult community educational lectures held in two states and to our extensive hands-on guided nature walk schedule for families of all ages, we feel we have a strong framework for educating the public in appreciation of nature and helping ensure that future generations continue to appreciate and actively support the work of organizations such as Oxbow, Inc.

## What's Taking Flight?

.....by Jon Seymour

Another year, another summary – sounds boring but it never is! First I want to spend a moment to honor the great conservationists and members that are no longer with us. This year we lost both Karl Maslowski and Charlie Harper. Karl shaped the nature of Cincinnati Area Conservation with his words and scholarship while Charlie shaped it with his whimsical art. These two can not be replaced – ever. We also lost Jinny Wiseman Witte who along with her husband Art Wiseman educated many of the conservationist that now reside and are the movers and shakers of conservation in the Cincinnati area. Many first got interested in conservation in the Wiseman's basement learning about the many facets of birds and birding.

2007 started hot. I do not mean weather-wise. It started with two controlled burns. The first burn managed to ignite about 50% of the prairie area surrounding Osprey Lake. This area has proven difficult to burn since it is a young prairie that we planted only 5 years ago and, combined with the periodic flooding we enjoy, has not built up a layer of ground thatch that sustains the fire between plants. Previous attempts to burn the area have essentially failed to get going. This time we ignited large sections and were pleased with the outcome. If you wandered in and around Osprey Lake prairie this summer you were treated to a perfusion of colorful blooms and butterflies as the fire helped the prairie successfully regenerate stronger than ever in 2007. Hopefully it will continue to gain in beauty and diversity with each subsequent year. The second burn was in the area we manage for the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District. This burned about two thirds of the prairie around Jackpot Pond.

Birdathon 2007 set a new record for the amount of money raised since Oxbow, Inc. resumed management of the Cincinnati Area Birdathon. We hope this year will be bigger and better than ever. All money raised by the Birdathon goes toward enhancing the habitat or improving year round access to the Oxbow area. We want to create an area where people can come and enjoy being close to nature without disturbing it. I have no greater pleasure

*(continued on page 11)*

Oxbow's website has changed to:

**[www.oxbowinc.info](http://www.oxbowinc.info)**

## Election Time Again

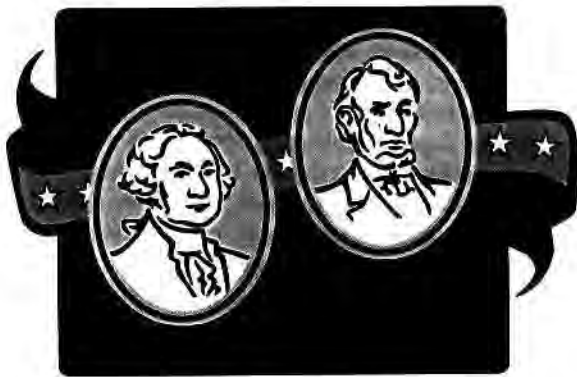
Our January Members Meeting will be held Tuesday, January 8, 2008 at the Sharon Woods Centre in Sharon Woods County Park. We will hold our annual elections at the meeting and we hope as many members as possible will attend to conduct this important part of the annual business of Oxbow, Inc.

### Standing for Officer Positions:

- President - Jon Seymour
- Vice-President – John Getzendanner
- Secretary – Dwight Poffenberger
- Treasurer – Jim Pohlmann
- Indiana Agent – John Getzendanner
- Ohio Agent – Dwight Poffenberger

### Standing for election to a three year term on the Board ending in February 2011:

- John Getzendanner
- Mike Kluesener
- Steve Pelikan
- Dwight Poffenberger
- Jay Stenger



**Happy President's Day**

## Oxbow, Inc. Memorials & Honorariums

Donor	In Memory of
Gerald & Norma Andres	Allene E. McKinney Schmale
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Durbin	Dale Durbin
Hamilton Co. Community Development Dept.	Allene E. McKinney Schmale
Carol & Steve Lieland	Allene E. McKinney Schmale
Frank & Helen Lukas	Thelma Brasaemle

### Special thanks to:

Margaret M. Jeffery,  
Jean A. Kearns,  
George & Jean Perbix, and  
Kathy & Vishnoo Shahani

for their major donations!

*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 acknowledgements. 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, OH 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.*

## A Crane Festival Minus the Star Performers

.....by Jeanne Bocklage

The 20th Annual Festival of the Cranes at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico, had just about everything but cranes.

My daughter, Therese, and I attended the last day of the 6-day event, November 18, and immediately noted the current tally of feathered guests posted at the visitors' center:

- 1 Bald Eagle
- 80 Canada Geese
- 39,103 mixed ducks
- 38,000 Snow Geese
- 4,455 Sandhill Cranes

Four thousand is a miniscule number compared with former festivals. On previous visits, Sandhill Cranes were wall to wall or field to field, as many or more than Snow Geese. Once we even saw 2 Whooping Cranes in the crowd.

The ranger explained the sandhills were lingering at the southern Colorado refuges, the Monte Vista and the Alamosa, because of warm weather and plentiful food. Only when the weather turns chilly, he said, would the cranes fly south to winter at the Bosque. They usually hang around then until the end of February. This year most cranes missed the Annual Festival.

The Festival, however, was entertaining with 150 events, activities and exhibits. Many rescue organizations were represented, showing their rescued owls, hawks, even a year-old timber wolf who with his four siblings was rescued from a "pet salesman" at about eight weeks of age. Forest, the wolf at the Festival, was the only one of the group able to tolerate humans enough to show.

In the arts tent, twenty-eight top-flight artists offered their wares, almost all devoted to cranes. There were oil paintings of cranes, mobiles of cranes, photos of cranes, cranes on scarves, feathers, jewelry, cranes carved in wood and etched on wine glasses. Therese succumbed to a hand-printed scarf, I to a hand-painted white turkey feather with dangling beads to hang on a wall in my study.

In 2003, birding guru Pete Dunne declared this Crane Festival "one of the top three festivals in North America". In 1991, Roger Tory Peterson was the featured speaker. This year, high school sophomore Malkolm Boothroyd was among the principal speakers. Malkolm and his parents are bicycling from their home in Whitehorse, Alaska, down the west coast, east to Florida, back to Texas and then back home to the Yukon, nearly 12,000 miles, to add new species of birds to their life lists--all without burning any fossil fuels. The family averages 50 miles per day. In order to carry out his plan, Malkolm completed three school years (8, 9 and 10) in two years.

After he returns home, the young man hopes to challenge others to spend a day every spring to search for bird

species, with sponsors putting up cash for each species sited and contributions then given to a local bird conservation organization. Sound familiar? Malkolm's catch is the birding expeditions must be carried out without spending any fossil fuels.

His worst experience on the trip so far was searching for pelagic birds in rough waters off Monterey Bay. That's right -- he went searching on a sailboat.

Every visit to the Bosque proves astonishing, festival or no, if only to be surprised by a coyote walking along a canal ridge or hundreds of Pintails feeding with tails up, heads under water. What Therese and I saw on this fall day were Kestrels, Crows, Ravens, Pintails, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Marsh Hawk, 4 Green-winged Teals, American Coots, Pied-billed Grebes, Ring-necked Ducks, Red-wing Blackbirds, Canadas, Western Meadowlarks, Buffleheads, Common Mergansers, Mourning Doves, some unidentifiable finches and of course Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes. This winter there will be fun-filled opportunities for photographers. According to tuned-in photographer Jerry Goffe, one may snap a crane or two exquisitely framed inside a full moon on any one of eight specific nights.

P.S. A few weeks after our visit, phone calls to the Bosque revealed the following bird counts:

On November 29:

- 6 Bald & Golden Eagles
- 212 Canada Geese
- 34,997 mixed ducks
- 50,000 Snow & Ross Geese
- 8,394 Sandhill Cranes.

On December 7:

- 8 Bald & Golden Eagles
- 21 Hawks & Owls
- 282 Canada Geese
- 46,628 mixed ducks
- 53,500 Snow & Ross Geese
- 434 American Coots
- 6 Marsh Water Birds
- 2 Shore Birds
- 10,150 Sandhill Cranes

Those Sandhills! They're getting there!



# Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

## Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

Carry a Big Stick – in a pot – with roots

October 6, 2007

by Jon Seymour

It is still dry thank goodness! The weather has been hard on crops but it has allowed me access to all parts of the Oxbow for most of the summer. This is evidenced by the thick layer of Oxbow road dust that covers my car. My wife, Jackie, is appalled by the dust that accumulates, but I cannot see a reason to spend time cleaning it up when the next drive down an Oxbow road relocates all the dust to the car again.

The reason I am glad for the dust today is that I am meeting Bob Minges of the Friends of the Great Miami and Stanley Craig, one of the farmers who leases Oxbow land. We will be heading down to the banks of the Great Miami River to plan the planting of trees by the Friends. If the ground were wet it would be very hard to reach the shore of the Great Miami through the bottoms, at least with my little Saturn. We all meet at the parking area and Stanley has brought his grandson along for the adventure. After introductions we all pile into the vehicles and head for the river.

On the way out to the shoreline we are sickened by the destruction of acres of soybeans by trucks and ATVs that have driven through Stanley's crop of soybeans "for the fun of it!". It is unfortunate that there are those individuals who have no respect for the personal property and hard work of others and think that it is fun to destroy the fruits of the toil of another without thought or care. We have been paying the County Sheriff's to patrol the Oxbow for 3 years now and they have done a heck of a job catching individuals who cannot play by the rules, but unfortunately neither we or they can afford to have them camp out in these remote fields 24/7.

When we reach the bank of the Great Miami, our thoughts are turned back to the happier prospect of trying to stabilize the west bank from further erosion. Our new contracts with our lease holding farmers have clauses that deal with wildlife crop and we are consulting with Stanley about the amount and location of the wildlife crop he will leave this year. We have agreed on a 1500 foot long strip 20 feet wide along the bank of the Great Miami and we are planning to allow the Friends of the Great Miami to plant trees in that strip. As part of the deal Stanley will not farm that strip in the future and the trees will be allowed to grow. (See Friends of the Great Miami article on page 5 for further information). Bob explains to Stanley the plan that the Friends have and we examine the rapidly eroding bank with a sand shelf 10 feet high in spots. Hopefully over the next few years our cooperation with the Friends of the Great Miami

will lead to extensive tree planting in this area of the river bank and the slowing of the powerful erosive forces that the Great Miami exerts when the river floods.

## Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

November 17, 2007

Walking with Wayne – Hike Around the Lake

by Wayne Wauligman

Mike Miller, Jim Stinchcomb and about 30 other hikers from the Tristate Hiking Club joined me today for a leisurely hike to Mercer Pond, Oxbow Lake, the overlook at Flannery Island, and back along the western shore of Oxbow Lake. At Mercer Pond the Ring-billed Gulls were wheeling and diving. One tried to get away with a fish while the others chased him. Walking across the field, we heard a Horned Lark calling above in flight, but the brilliant sunshine made it difficult to find him. A Cooper's Hawk flew overhead in this vast farm field. Five Great Blue Herons stood their ground until we got close. At the Oxbow Lake, the Big John Mussels were exposed and dead from the recent drought. Catfish and Carp skeletons were all around. The Green-winged Teal flew away before our approach, hiding at Osprey Lake. As we crossed the southern end of Oxbow Lake, we tiptoed through on stepping stones of mud with water in the cracks. Cockleburrs snagged our shoelaces. Along the railroad track to Flannery island were large numbers of woodland birds. A Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet were heard along with the more common species. A single flock of 1500 Starlings amazed us with their acrobatic flight. In this 50° weather, four Orange Sulfur Butterflies and one Red Admiral were active. Upstream from Flannery Island more Ring-billed Gulls whirled over the Great Miami River. A Red-tailed Hawk and a Black Vulture soared across the River. Returning along the Ohio River we commented upon the sediment as being more sandy, as opposed to the settled clay of the Oxbow Lake area. Along the return trip west of Oxbow Lake, we could see the Lake had risen recently, with the cracked mud still visible under the clear water. Once the floods return, fish will again swim into Oxbow Lake, and Great Blue Herons, Egrets and the other fishing wildlife will make themselves home. This same hike would be a kayak trip then!

## Friends of the Great Miami plant trees along river

.....by Bruce Koehler

Friends of the Great Miami, the citizen-based river advocacy group in Butler and Hamilton counties, recently planted native trees at the Oxbow Wetland.

With grant funding from the Hamilton County Storm Water District, the Friends invested about \$1,600 in 154 sycamores in one-gallon pots. On October 27<sup>th</sup>, the saplings were given a new home along the west bank of the Great Miami River near its confluence with the Ohio. Oxbow, Inc., made an arrangement with Stanley Craig, the tenant soybean farmer, to leave a 20-foot-wide swath of the riparian corridor for reforestation.

Upon turning the first shovel-full of dirt, volunteers realized their riverside planting spot was blessed with rich, floodplain soils. The dirt had an ideal mixture of clay, sand, silt and humus, but no rocks. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources and other agencies encourage the restoration of riverside forests because they protect water quality by stabilizing the banks, shading the water, taking up excess nutrients and filtering pollutants.

The extensive network of tree roots holds the river-bank soils in place, reducing erosion and keeping the banks stable. The shade helps reduce water temperatures and maintain high oxygen levels that benefit aquatic wildlife. Fallen leaves and other organic debris deposited in the river by trees provide *food energy* to aquatic life.

Many nutrients, sediments and pollutants contained in storm runoff are filtered out before they reach the river and are held in the leaf and humus layers on the riparian forest floor. The nutrients feed tree growth while pollutants are broken down into harmless compounds. Additionally, porous soils of the forest floor readily allow water to infiltrate, increasing groundwater recharge and reducing the potential for flash floods.

Bob Minges, a riverside resident with experience in environmental monitoring, organized the event with Brian Bohl, President of Friends of the Great Miami, and Jon Seymour, President of Oxbow, Inc.

Friends of the Great Miami and Oxbow, Inc., are natural partners in river conservation. The Friends have harvested surplus tree seedlings and willow stakes from the Oxbow Wetland while donating surplus cable for Oxbow property management.

As an all-volunteer organization, Friends of the Great Miami can put donations to good use. The non-profit group has attracted grants or donations from the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, Miami Conservancy District, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, Hamilton Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, Cinergy Foundation, Buckeye United Fly Fishers and Xavier University. For more information about the Friends, visit their website at [www.fogm.org](http://www.fogm.org) or call Marketing Director Mark Fritsch at (513) 738-0889. (See photos on page 6)

## Oxbow's Christmas Wish List 2008

*It is the Christmas Season so like many others we have prepared our Wish List for Santa. Last year he filled half our wishes so we must have been pretty good. We hope that if members know about items and talents that we need, they might realize ways they might be able to help, and may want to play the part of Santa.*

- We need a volunteer coordinator who can make calls and send emails to current and past volunteers to encourage and coordinate attendance at clean-ups, alien plant removal sessions, and special project tasks.
- We need a volunteer to clean-up our mailing list. We have several elected officials and state department personnel on our mailing list who are no longer actually active and we need to get current.
- We need a volunteer to review our record keeping and practices when compared to the new national Land Trust Accreditation Standards.
- We need someone to donate office/storage space in the immediate Oxbow area where we can store our materials, records and supplies now housed in the various homes. If you know of a location we might use or if you have a space you would be willing to lease please call.
- We need a volunteer to design our Education program. We would like to establish a children's education program. While we already have an adult education program we need of an education program designed for kids K to College. If you have an interest in designing and/or delivering a school age programs based on the Oxbow please consider volunteering your time and talent.
- We need someone to donate a pickup truck in good working order so that we can have greater flexibility hauling trash out of the Oxbow.
- We need someone to donate the year round use of a dumpster in the Oxbow area so that we can take the trash we have on a daily basis there for dumping. (We will still ask Rumpke to donate a dumpster on site for large projects.)

If you can help with any of these needs or think you know someone who can, please call Jon Seymour at **513-851-9835**.





Anthony McMurray digs a hole for a tree sapling that is even younger than he is. (photo provided by FOGM)



(FOGM President Brian Bohl plants a native sycamore tree by the Great Miami River. (photo provided by FOGM)



Three Great Egrets rest in the shallows of Oxbow Lake where the "fishin' is easy" during the drought of the summer of 2007. (Photo by Allan Claybon)



(left to right) Stanley Craig, area farmer, Kaleb Gillespie, Stanley's grandson, and Bob Minges, FOGM, inspect the eroding west bank of the Great Miami River just above the railroad bridge. Friends of the Great Miami started a reforestation project along a 1/3 mile stretch of the river bank, on Oxbow property, to stabilize the river bank. (photo by Jon Seymour)



Some of you traveling to the far reaches of the Oxbow area may have noticed the new sign placed at the Argosy entrance to the Oxbow. It is a duplicate of the sign at the Hardintown entrance and is designed to inform visitors to the Argosy side of the rules for behavior while visiting the Oxbow area. (photo by Jon Seymour)



Sandhill Cranes in the Oxbow are a little harder to see than at Bosque Del pache. Sandhills are marsh birds but not really water birds. Sandhills occupy the edge of the marsh hunting and feeding in the upland areas adjacent to the marsh. They retreat to the water areas of the marsh for breeding and security. This photo shows the birds feeding in standing corn along the edge of Oxbow Lake. These wary birds seldom allow the close approach of any human being on foot. (Poor digiscopé photo by Jon Seymour)



Snow geese fill the view at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. (photo by Therese and Jeanne Bocklage)

A Sandhill Crane escapes the bustle of the refuge for a little solitude in drainage ditch. (photo by Therese and Jeanne Bocklage)



A carpet of snow geese cover a marsh area at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. (photo by Therese and Jeanne Bocklage)



**usings**

by Dave Styer

### The Great Horned Owl

Preparing an article on the Great Horned Owl brings back memories of experiences with people as much as it reminds me of the owl itself. I dusted off and read my copy of *The World of the Great Horned Owl* by Ron Austing and Jack Holt. Some time ago, the late Ida Suttman gave me her copy of this book. Ida was a senior citizen when I arrived in Cincinnati in 1970, and she was still birding when I left in 2001. I remember winter cruises along Lawrenceburg Road in Shawnee Lookout Park with Morris Mercer to watch deer and look at the eye-level Great Horned Owl nest. That was in 1985, when the owls took over a 1984 Red-tailed Hawk nest. Later in the season, when the Red-tailed hawks were ready to nest, they built a new nest 100 yards up river. Morris got to watch both nests fledge young.

One of the marvels of avian biology in the Cincinnati area is the Great horned Owl incubating eggs in the dead of winter. We read, for example in *The World of the Great Horned Owl*, that the timing is perfect. As the young owlets grow their appetites increase. By the time they fledge in April their appetites are humongous, but the fledglings are clueless about how to find food. At the same time young mammals and birds are becoming maximally available. Many of these are easy prey, so that the Great Horned Owl parents can capture enough food to keep their offspring well fed. There is a reason crows go berserk when they see a Great Horned Owl; they definitely don't like their nestlings being fed to the owls. By fall there aren't nearly as many native prey sources, but by then the young owls are finally learning to capture their own prey.

The cold that a Great Horned Owl's egg can tolerate is impressive. Houston, Smith, and Rohner, in their Great Horned Owl treatment in *The Birds of North America* (BNA) give an example of an egg that withstood 20 minutes at -13 F when the female joined her mate "hooting at a neighboring male." Incubating temperature must be nearly 100 F. At any temperature much higher than this the egg would be cooked. Fortunately, proteins are far more stable at low temperatures than high temperatures.

The vision of owls is a surprise to a lot of people. *The Handbook of Birds of the World* states that "contrary to popular belief, owls cannot see well in extremely dark situations, and they have no difficulty whatsoever in seeing during daylight hours." Certainly Great Horned Owls have large eyes that, like large camera lenses, let in a lot of light. No doubt their night vision is better than ours, but not by as

much as you might think. An example related in Ron Austing and Jack Holt's book is instructive. One way to learn what birds have been migrating at night in the area is to go to the base of TV towers first thing in the morning and gather dead birds. [It is said that migrating birds get confused by the lights on the TV towers, and fly in circles around the towers. If the towers are supported by guy-wires, flying into these cables kills the birds.] There are likely several members of Oxbow, Inc. who helped Art and Jinny Wiseman with such a study. Of course, foxes, feral cats, owls, and other predators take advantage of these TV tower kills. Ron and Jack write of a similar study in Florida led by the ornithologist Herbert Stoddard:

The investigators at the TV tower believed that horned owls have only slightly better night vision than humans. Observations indicated that they do much hunting on bright moonlight nights. On dark nights they appear most active in the early dusk of the evening or as daybreak approaches. Most of the dead birds eaten by the owls were red-eyed vireos, but only those which were found lying on their back, the white breast making them very conspicuous on all but the blackest of nights. Few of those lying on their breasts, with the greenish back up, were eaten by the owls.

Under bright moonlight I think I could do about as well as the Great Horned Owls. As for the Red-eyed Vireos, it sounds like they should have gotten a little more sleep!





# Conservation Corner

.....by Jon Seymour

*"It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to the land can exist without love and respect, and admiration for the land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense." Aldo Leopold, 1948.*

## *Ohio River Valley Land Conservation Conference*

A few members of the Oxbow Board of Directors recently attended the Ohio River Valley Conservation Conference sponsored by the Midwest Office of the Land Trust Alliance held at Winton Woods County Park. The one and a half day event covered such topics as the Land Trust Accreditation Program, the new nationally devised program for accrediting the functions and execution of a land trust; board development, how to increase board participation and commitment; planning and fundraising to support a first staff person and a group session on cooperation and interaction of land trusts that share the Ohio River valley. Following these sessions there was a full day training session funded by the Land Trust Alliance on the function of the land trust boards of directors in preparing and assuring the perpetuity of the land trust.

The Board of Directors of Oxbow, Inc. takes its role, in preparing for the future protection of the land owned by Oxbow, Inc. very seriously. Some of the activities that are very important to our long term success are: projects in education, access to the area, habitat improvement, building of perpetual care endowment, consolidation of land holdings, increased security, active farming policy, land acquisition, land management, membership growth, enhanced publications, and many others that are designed to keep Oxbow, Inc. an active vital organization now and long into the future. So far we have been very successful but past success is no guarantee of future success. We will have to be creative and committed to assuring to the perpetual success of Oxbow, Inc.

## *Conservation Day at the Indiana Statehouse*

Oxbow, Inc. will once again spend the day of January 10, 2008 at the Indiana Statehouse helping to educate state legislators about the importance of preserving the natural heritage of Indiana. Since most of the land we own, or seek to purchase, resides within the state of Indiana, Oxbow, Inc. spends most of its legislative education efforts with local government in Dearborn County and with the state legislators

from Indiana. We will have a booth in the rotunda of the statehouse. Any Oxbow, Inc. members that would like to join me there, especially those living within the state of Indiana, are welcome to come and help educate the legislators, their staff organizations, as well as department personnel about the importance of land conservation. If you wish to join me there call me at 513-851-9835 to discuss the particulars.



## **Colony Collapse Disorder – the next “Bee Movie”!**

Gene Kritsky, professor of Biology, at the College of Mount St. Joseph entertained and educated us on Being Bee 101. His topic of Bee Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has become a very serious agricultural issue in the United States and by direct extension a very serious food shortage issue. Beekeepers in the United States have been reporting large decreases (as much as 40%) in the number of viable colonies they manage. Hives have been abandoned even when the condition of the hive and the available amount of honey for food have been adequate. Since no one knows the cause of this, the condition has been given the name “Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)”.

Dr. Kritsky listed several potential causes for CCD that have been proposed during this last year and proceeded to show why each one was unlikely to be the sole culprit. While some of the proposed causes may play a role in CCD the actual cause or causes have yet to be determined. Dr. Kritsky recounted his own research in the design of bee hives over the centuries, starting in ancient Egypt, in an effort to determine if there was something in the old designs that was a benefit but we have “forgotten” from the past to the present. Clearly there may be more art in beekeeping than hard science on which decisions can be based to eliminate this problem.

## OXBOW INC. FIELD TRIPS

To reach the upper Oxbow Inc. parking lot near the cement plant, turn south from Rt. 50 at the Shell gas station in Greendale, drive back to the cement plant, turn right to the end of the road, then left. The lot is on your right.

**Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 8:30 p.m.**

*Morris Mercer Memorial Hike  
Shawnee Lookout Park*

Meet John Klein, Land Manager for the Hamilton County Park District, at Shawnee Lookout Park's Archaeology Museum/Golf Clubhouse. This will be the third Morris Mercer Memorial Hike, in honor of the man who helped found Oxbow, Inc., and who every year co-lead this hike with John Klein on a Friday on or near a January full moon. You can tell your favorite Morris story and John will supply the traditional M&Ms. We will walk one of the nature trails in Shawnee Lookout park, calling for owls along the way. For more information, call John at 521-7275, ext. 227.

To reach the Shawnee Lookout Archaeology Museum/Golf Clubhouse, take Lawrenceburg Road south into Shawnee Lookout Park, and at the first Park intersection, take a left turn up the hill. Turn left into the Museum/Clubhouse parking lot.

**Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, 8:00 a.m.**

*Early Spring Waterfowl Trip*

Meet Paul Wharton, expert birder and member of the winning Birdathon teams from 2006 and 2007, for this search for returning waterfowl. Meet at the Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant. For more information, call Paul at 353-3403, before 8:30 p.m.

**Saturday, March 29, 2008, 9:00 a.m.**

*The Fowl Return  
Miami Whitewater Forest*

Join Wayne Wauligman, local naturalist, for a hike and wildlife discovery program at Miami Whitewater Forest, upstream from the Oxbow. Attention will be given to wildlife such as ducks, geese, and hawks, all migrating through the area from their winter homes. Meet Wayne at the Miami Whitewater Forest Visitor Center. We will carpool to the Shaker Trace Wetlands. The program will last three hours. For more information, call Wayne at 922-4430 or email to [wrwpgw@aol.com](mailto:wrwpgw@aol.com).

## OXBOW, INC. PROGRAMS

**Tuesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 7:30 p.m.**

*Sharon Centre in Sharon Woods  
The Ever Changing Dynamics of  
Bird Habitats in the Tri-State Region*

Jay Stenger, an Oxbow, Inc. founder and member of numerous winning Oxbow Birdathon teams including the past two years, will speak tonight on the status and distribution of avian habitat in the Tri-State region, how it is changing, and what can be done to improve it. Through a slide presentation Jay will discuss the historical, current and future status of our regional habitats and how these changes affect individual species and overall bird populations. For more information, call Jay at 522-8147. To reach Sharon Centre, go north on Reading Road/Route 42, proceed through downtown Sharonville, bear right onto Route 42/Lebanon Road, and watch for the entrance to Sharon Woods on your right hand side. Or, from I-275, take exit #46, the Sharonville/Route 42 exit, go south on Route 42/Lebanon Road, stay on Route 42 past Kemper Road, and look for the entrance to Sharon Woods on your left hand side. Once inside the park, pass the entrance booth, pass over the creek on the bridge, then take the first left into the large parking lot. Sharon Centre is the large building at the end of the parking lot.

**Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 7:30 p.m.**

*Lawrenceburg Public Library—Lawrenceburg, IN  
Winter Constellations and the First Quarter Moon*

An Astronomer from the Cincinnati Observatory Center or Cincinnati Astronomical Society will come out to show late Winter and Spring constellations on a big screen indoors, then we'll step outside to view the moon and other celestial objects through large telescopes (weather permitting). This is a great chance to learn about the night sky and to view the moon and other objects as the experts show them to us through high-powered telescopes. For more information, call Craig Niemi at the Cincinnati Observatory Center at 321-5186, or email to Craig at [observatory@fuse.net](mailto:observatory@fuse.net).

The Lawrenceburg Public Library is downtown at 123 High St. Going west on US 50, turn left onto Walnut St, then right onto High St. The Public Library will be on your right.

**Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 7:30 p.m.**

*Lawrenceburg Public Library—Lawrenceburg, IN  
Pelikan's Recorded Bird Sounds*

You won't hear pelican calls at this program, but you will hear dozens of recorded bird calls made by Steve Pelikan, Oxbow Board member and dogged recorder of local bird calls. Steve has been studying the calls of the Northern Cardinal in our area, as well as many other birds' calls, and he will elaborate on his research and recordings while playing some of the calls for us and giving ideas as to what the various calls mean.

The Lawrenceburg Public Library is downtown at 123 High St. Going west on US 50, turn left onto Walnut St, then right onto High St. The Public Library will be on your right.



*What's Taking Flight? (continued from page 1)*

than hearing, from folks I meet in the Oxbow, about how wonderful the area is and how much they enjoy being there. We know the animals that make the Oxbow their home and part of their daily routine think the same way.

We continue to be active in the reforestation of the area adjacent to the Great Miami River. In recent years we have provided thousands of seedlings and cuttings to aid reforestation of the riparian areas up river. This year we were the recipient of potted sycamore trees, provided by Friends of the Great Miami, that we hope will help stabilize the eroding west bank of the Great Miami as it nears its mouth. These cooperative efforts between conservation organizations multiply the power we have to accomplish our mutual goals.

The year of 2007 will be remembered by many as the year that Oxbow Lake dried up. This is part of the natural cycle of the lake but many members and friends were very concerned that this was a disaster. If you asked the egrets, herons, and vultures that stuffed themselves on the easy-to-catch fish in the drying lake they would answer that this was a miracle. Free easy-to-catch fish – all you can eat. Dr. Michael Miller of the University of Cincinnati, an expert on the life cycle of the Great Miami and Oxbow Lake, is excited by the prospect of new life entering and establishing a slightly different ecosystem than existed before the drought. He and his students will study the lake's recovery and examine the differences between what was the old ecosystem and the new one that will flourish next spring.

2007 also marks the first year of our new farm lease contracts that provide for the farmers to leave more unharvested corn and soybean in the fields to provide winter food for the residents of the Oxbow. We expect this to really boost the attractiveness to wintering waterfowl of the Oxbow and provide increased food to fuel both the fall and spring migrations. This is an exciting event for us and represents our longterm efforts to determine the shape of the lease contracts and to work with the individual farmers to gain their support and understanding of these efforts.

I like to end these yearly reviews with special mention of our residents. We were fortunate to have an American White Pelican in the Oxbow area for much of the summer. This was our first summer pelican and it was seen by many visitors. The unharvested corn left in the fields last winter sheltered and fed hundreds of wintering ducks even during the February ice storms. Thousands of ducks used the Oxbow as a stop on their northern migration. The drying lake brought record numbers of Great Blue Heron and Great Egret. Many early morning visitors saw a nearly primeval sight with hundreds of Great Blues and Great Egrets spread out feeding in Oxbow Lake in the early morning mists. There were several species of shorebirds that took advantage of the extensive mudflats and fed leisurely in full view of the Oxbow Lake overlook. Bald Eagles have graced the Oxbow frequently this year and Merlins, the smaller cousins of our resident Peregrine Falcons, have shown up more frequently than normal.

On the furry side we still have our deer herd and the resident engineer Beavers have been active. We still have occasional sightings of River Otter, the most recent being in front of our Great Outdoor Weekend guests. Every trip to the Oxbow area yields a different experience and a different cherished memory. Don't be shy! Come out and spend a little time enjoying your natural heritage in the Oxbow in 2008.

**SAVE THE DATE!!!  
POLISH THE BINOCULARS LENS!!!  
DUST OFF THE BIRD BOOKS!!!  
GET OUT YOUR CHECK BOOKS!!!  
START YOU PENS!!!**

**That's right—Birdathon 2008 will be back on May 9-10.** We hope it will be bigger and better than ever. The Cincinnati Nature Center will be back with a team or two and we hope to continue to expand participation both as birders and as donors. As in the past the money raised will be dedicated to habitat and access improvement. Stay tuned to upcoming *Wetland Matters* for all the news and announcements. Plan to count birds, plan to raise money, and plan to donate money. This is a wonderful way for everyone to participate in improving the Oxbow and have fun doing it.

### Moving your nest?

**Make sure *WETLAND MATTERS* goes with you!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Old Address:**

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**New Address:**

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

**Oxbow Inc.**

**P.O. Box 43391**

**Cincinnati, OH 45243**

**Please mail right away - *Wetland Matters* is third class mail and is not forwarded!**



## 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.**

Prothonotary Warbler	\$ 15	Wood Duck	\$ 25
Great Blue Heron	\$ 50	Green-winged Teal	\$100
Great Egret	\$250	Osprey	\$500
Bald Eagle	\$1000		
Charm of Goldfinches (Group Level)	\$25		

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 43391  
Cincinnati OH 45243-0391  
513-851-9835

### Corporation Officers

President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Vice President, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Dennis Mason	(513) 385-3607
Treasurer, Jim Poehlmann	(513) 931-4072
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, John Getzendanner	(812) 537-5728

### Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Easement Inspection, Mike Kluesener	(812) 623-7800
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Programs, Jerry Lippert	(513) 522-6567
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Newsletter Editor, Meg Poehlmann	(513) 931-4072
Newsletter Email: <a href="mailto:meggster@fuse.net">meggster@fuse.net</a>	

Member Communications: Joanne Earls, Kathleen Corneil, Lynda Mason, Velda Miller, Pat Shanklin, Sarah Shell, Suzanne Skidmore, Barb Varland, Jim Wilgenbusch

*Wetland Matters, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Permit No. 7271

