

May—June 2009

No. 137

WETLAND *matters*

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

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Spring in the Oxbow Means Many Things

...by Jon Seymour

It is Spring in the Oxbow and that means work! There is always so much to do in the Spring. Trash from river floods and dumping by thoughtless individuals must be collected so that the Oxbow does not become a trash collection pond. Over the last several years we have removed several tons of trash and over 1000 tires from the Oxbow. While each year seems to yield a little less trash it does not go away and there will always be some trash. This year you have two opportunities to help the Oxbow by picking up trash. Come out for the Great Miami River Sweep on Saturday, May 16, 2009 (9 a.m. to noon). If you miss that date you will have another opportunity to help out on Saturday, June 20, 2009 (9 a.m. to noon) for the Ohio River Sweep. Picking trash out of the Oxbow not only improves the aesthetics of the various views, but improves the health of the animals living in the Oxbow and improves the safety of visitors to the Oxbow.

Spring also marks the start of our road maintenance season. Damages by vehicle traffic on the soft muddy roads over the winter must be graded to fill in the ruts and contoured so that water runs off the road and does not accumulate in puddles on the road. If possible some gravel might get laid before the start of planting season. Once planting season starts the roads in the Oxbow are often filled with utility trucks, seed planters, plant sprayers, tractors, and any other kind of farm vehicle. It is a race to plant a crop after the last freeze and after the last flood in the Spring so you can harvest before the first flood in the fall.

Then there is Birdathon, this year starting on May 8, that 24-hour long celebration of birding in

the Greater Cincinnati area culminating in the tally party (pizza and other stuff) at Winton Centre. Each year we try to grow this event a little larger so that we continue to increase awareness of the joy of birding whether all out, round the clock, or just leisurely watching birds for several hours from your back porch deck. Proceeds from the Birdathon go to projects that improve access and improve habitat in the Oxbow.

I haven't even mentioned the birds. Spring brings the return of the migrating birds. We have already been through the bulk of the duck migration and we are just entering the period of the warbler migration. Tours sponsored by Oxbow will try to find as many of these passing beauties as possible along the hills surrounding the Oxbow and in the bottoms itself.

Spring is a busy time in the Oxbow. Come out to work and help us care for the Oxbow. Come out and enjoy the feeling of Spring in the Oxbow.

Birdathon 2009, May 8-9

Birdathon 2009 starts at 5 p.m. on Friday the 8th and culminates on Saturday, May 9th at 5 p.m. with the Tally party at Winton Center. To enter a team or participate yourself call Jay Stenger at 513-522-4245 or email jaystenger@cinci.rr.com. To pledge for one of the Oxbow teams, clip the pledge form on Page 9 and follow the instructions on the form. The Birdathon Participation Form is on Page 11.

Your support of Oxbow, Inc. is greatly appreciated.

OXBOW PHOTOGRAPHIC 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONTEST RULES

TERM – Midnight 01 March, 2009 through 31 December, 2009 (EST).

AREA – Watershed of the Great Miami and Whitewater Rivers in Hamilton and Dearborn Counties

WHO MAY ENTER - Contest is open everyone except the Principles (organizers) of Ohio Valley Camera Club, the Judges of the Contest, and the board members of Oxbow, Inc. and their immediate family members.

HOW TO ENTER – Entries will be accepted by U.S. Mail and must be post marked no later than 31 December, 2009. Entry forms may be obtained by contacting Oxbow, Inc. or by downloading from the contest information site at (<http://oxbow-celebration.smugmug.com/>) or by contacting an organizer of Ohio Valley Camera Club.

Entries may be submitted to: (Make checks and money orders payable to "Oxbow, Inc.")

Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243

Each submission shall include the following:

One digital copy of submission.
One completed submission form with name of submission.
Entry fee.
Any releases applicable to the entry
Complete EXIF Data as well as location photograph was taken (GPS Allowed).

See (<http://oxbow-celebration.smugmug.com/>) for sizing and additional entry requirements, categories and prizes.

Entry Fees: (Each entrant may enter one photo only per category.)

Student/Youth – \$10.00/photo
Over 18 years old - \$20.00/photo

Prize Subject Categories:

Landscapes	Plant Life
Bird life	Mammals
Insects, Fish and Aquatic Life	Reptiles and Amphibians
Human Interaction - Pictures showing humans connecting with / impacting natural surroundings within the watershed areas	
Nature's Power – Extreme weather or its impacts (hurricanes, tornadoes, drought, lightning, floods, etc.) and signs of global warming	

Cash Prizes for winning entries.

Entries will be judged by professional photographers. Winning Entries will be displayed by local conservation oriented organizations during a traveling tour.

Entrant Classes:

Student/Youth - In high school or up to age 18.
Adult- Over age 18.

Additional information can be acquired by accessing the message board at Ohio Valley Camera Club or contacting one of the below websites or email addresses.

Ohio Valley Camera Club – <http://photo.mectup.com/9/>

Oxbow, Inc. - <http://www.oxbowinc.org/> or <http://www.oxbowinc.info/>

Photo Contest Info Site - <http://oxbow-celebration.smugmug.com>

Photo Contest Info email - oxbow.photographic.celebration@gmail.com

Contact Information: Photo Club (513) 271-5979, Oxbow, Inc. (513) 851-9835

Mystery Photo Contest

Last issue we ran another mystery photo taken by photographer Tom Uhlman. Most entries correctly identified the photo. It is a photo of an ice sheet suspended above the ground where it originally froze solid before the receding flood water withdrew from underneath the sheet leaving it suspended in the vegetation that supported the sheet. Another feature of the ice sheet is the round stalactites' formed by melt water on top of the ice sheet flowing through small breaks in the low areas of the suspended ice sheet and refreezing below the sheet. It is a fantasy icescape formed by the natural ebb and flow of floods in the Oxbow during the winter freezes. Our winner, chosen at random from among the entries, is Bill Montgomery. He will receive a photo, suitable for framing, of a scene in the Oxbow.

Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS

To reach the Oxbow, Inc. Office take Highway US 50 south from the #16 exit of I-275. Pass the Argosy exit and turn left at the second stop light onto Walnut St. 301 Walnut is on the right side at the second stop light where Walnut changes from two way to one way. Free parking is available on Walnut St., Center St., and in the parking lot behind the building.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg
The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Jack Kallmeyer, President of the Cincinnati Dry Dredgers, the local fossil maven group, will speak to us about his hunt for the elusive edrioasteroid. If you don't know what this is (and even if you do) come and enjoy the thrill of the chase, the agony of the dig and the excitement of the analysis. (P.S.—an edrioasteroid is Cincinnati's official fossil.)

Tuesday, May 12, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg
The Oxbow, Inc. Office

John Klein, Hamilton County Park District Land Manager, will update us on the current status of deer population control in the parks. Usually we think of alien invasive species as being the primary threats to forest diversity, but sometimes our own native species, when uncontrolled by natural predators, become as much a menace. John will provide an overview detailing the 7 year history of the Park District's Deer Management Program as well as what he sees as challenges for the future.

Oxbow 25th Anniversary Photo Contest

As part of the 25th Anniversary of Oxbow, Inc. in 2010 we are sponsoring a photo contest that will highlight the nature found in the Great Miami River and Whitewater River valleys of Hamilton and Dearborn Counties. See the contest rules on Page 2 and start snapping those photographs to get just the perfect picture and send it in to the competition.

Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 30 2009, 8:00 a.m.
Leader: Charlie Saunders, (513) 829-6981
Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance just beyond the cement plant.

Spring migration will be winding down by this date, but the Oxbow and the lower Great Miami River valley will be alive with breeding birds. Join Charlie for a morning walk in the Oxbow and maybe a side trip over to Shawnee Lookout while we look for the abundant bird life in the area. Charlie, who is an expert birder, also has a strong interest in butterflies and will focus attention on them as well. There should still be some late spring migrants around and there is always a chance for something rare or unusual at this season. Add to that the over one hundred species of birds that breed in the Oxbow area and we should have a lot to look for on what should be a pleasant morning trip in the Oxbow area. Call Charlie if you have any questions.

Sunday, June 7 2009, 8:00 a.m.
Leader: Wayne Wauligman, (513) 992-4430,
WRWPGW@aol.com
Meet in the parking lot at the entrance to Shawnee Lookout Park.

During the month of June the lower Great Miami River Valley is alive with breeding birds. But the primary focus of this trip will be herps, because this is also a great time of year to find reptiles and amphibians (herps) in the Oxbow area. Our trip leader Wayne Wauligman is an excellent birder but his first love may very well be herpetology, the study of reptiles and amphibians. While these creatures are common during the warm months, they can be difficult to see and find. Not so for Wayne who has experience, a sharp eye and knows where to look for them. Wayne will most likely find several species of herps (snakes, skinks, turtles, frogs, toads and salamanders) and probably catch quite a few to boot. Wayne will also keep his eyes and ears open for birds and discuss flood plain ecology. Wayne will begin on the Shawnee Lookout side of the river and probably move to several other sites in the Oxbow area as the morning progresses. Wayne suggests dressing for possible rain, mud and shallow water. Join Wayne on what should prove to be a fascinating and fun morning trip in the Oxbow area. The trip will end before noon. Contact Wayne if you have any questions. For directions to Shawnee Lookout, a Hamilton County Park, use the following link.

<http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/parks/shawneelookout.htm>

Conservation Corner

.....by Jon Seymour

"Land-use is good only when it considers all the components of land, but its human organization often tends to conserve one at the expense of others." Aldo Leopold, Conservation: In whole or in part? 1944.

"Our power to disorganize the land is growing faster than our understanding of it, or our affection for it." Aldo Leopold, Review of "Our Heritage of Wild Nature" 1946

Over 60 years ago Aldo Leopold voiced these two great dilemmas of the drive to conserve our natural heritage. The first being humans who see land for only one use such as agriculture, suburban development, or a wild sanctuary. Often these narrow points of view eliminate any discourse or beneficial agreement between groups pushing their own viewpoints. The second is that the understanding of what is the best use of land is a changing target. Land use is very complex and the balance required for perfect land use is something we may never fully understand. In fact in our haste to achieve the best use of land (whatever viewpoint we approach it from), we often get it wrong and really mess up. This goes for the conservationist as well as the developer. We cannot afford the arrogance that just because we are working to save a place for nature in the Cincinnati metropolitan area, gives us the actual understanding of how to do it exactly right. That degree of knowledge we may never have.

After saying that, I am still amazed that we seem to have hit on a solid foundation on which to build a protected place for nature. Oxbow, Inc. was born in a storm with nature lovers of all descriptions uniting to prevent the development of a barge port on the Great Miami River. There were many bad feelings left over from that storm. There was even disagreement among the members of the then Save the Oxbow Society on just what it meant to save the Oxbow and for who or what.

A delicate balance was established that permitted hunting, fishing, bird watching, farming, botanizing, hiking, kayaking, and canoeing to mention a few. Some of these types of outdoor use had to be restricted slightly so that the other uses could also be enjoyed. This has not happened without issues arising and there have been heated arguments on occasion.

What we have found out is that we are ahead of the curve in that many organizations are just now trying

to figure out how to make their land more available to wider varieties of land use than before and therefore attract more people into enjoying an outdoor experience. That does not make in any less difficult to manage. The Board of Oxbow, Inc. is made up of a very diverse set of individuals who also see the primary use of the Oxbow area in slightly different ways. While they may disagree on primary land use they all agree on the importance of having the land protected so that it can be used by the wildlife that make the Oxbow home.

As we continue to evolve as an organization and learn more about our duties of stewardship of the land we hope we will avoid some mistakes and learn from others along the way. We know we will never make all the right decisions for the Oxbow land but we hope that by being careful we are right much more often than we are wrong.

Help Clean Up the Oxbow

Great Miami Sweep
May 16, 2009
9 a.m. - noon

Ohio River Sweep
June 20, 2009
9 a.m. - noon

Every year the rivers bring in trash that litters the Oxbow area with everything from refrigerators to tires. Please come on out this year to help us keep the Oxbow clean. **We especially need people with trucks!** We will provide gloves, bags, bug spray and water. Please let Kani Meyer know that you can help out by calling 513-948-8630 or emailing her at kaniau@yahoo.com.

Hunting Permit Applications Due July 1, 2008

Oxbow, Inc. members who wish to apply for permits to hunt on Oxbow, Inc. land must submit their application by July 1, 2009 to:

Oxbow, Inc.
 C/o John Getzendanner
 21007 Crestview Ct.
 Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Your application must include a copy of your valid Indiana hunting license and a completed memorandum of understanding printed below. Cut out the memorandum (on page 11). Complete the form and mail it with a copy of your license and a self addressed stamped envelop to John. Once accepted you will receive a permission slip to hunt on Oxbow land designated for hunting, east of I-275. Members must have dues paid current to the time of application. Any violation of the memorandum of understanding will result in immediate revocation of hunting privileges.

2009 Oxbow Birdathon Just Around The Corner

.....by Jay Stenger, Oxbow Inc. Birdathon Committee

The annual Oxbow Inc. Birdathon is fast approaching. It is not too late to take part in this important, but fun, annual event. We welcome and encourage your participation in this annual fundraising event and spring birding celebration. The Oxbow Birdathon has become an exciting local birding and conservation tradition in our area since it first began 22 years ago in 1988. We (Oxbow Inc.) have come a long way over those years, and thanks to people like you, great strides have been made towards protecting the valuable wetlands we know as The Oxbow. But there is still much to do, more land to preserve and habitat to improve. The Birdathon is our major annual fundraising event. But it's also much more than that. It is also a social event wherein like-minded people come together once a year to support conservation in our region and celebrate nature and birds during the peak of spring migration.

As in past years the Birdathon will be held over a 24-hour two-day period during the peak of spring migration. This year it will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8th and end at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, May 9th. It will culminate in a grand tally and pizza party to be held at the Winton Woods Visitor Centre in Winton Woods. Over the 24-hour period, teams or individuals, will try to find as many species of birds as possible and collect pledges for each species found. Fifty percent of the pledges (100% of Oxbow Inc. sponsored teams) will then be contributed to Oxbow Inc., to be used specifically for improving bird habitat and birding access in the Oxbow area. The other fifty percent is contributed to the organization of each team or participants choice. Remember that all Oxbow Inc. contributions to this event are tax deductible as is the mileage driven for the event. Last year 17 teams took part and helped raise over \$6,800.00 for Oxbow Inc., which will be used towards projects that will support wetland habitat improvement and accessibility. During last year's event the 17 teams identified an outstanding total of 197 species of birds as a group.

We view this as much more than a friendly birding competition. We see this fundraising event as a community celebration of local birding and conservation efforts and as an opportunity to raise much needed funds for several projects that include bird habitat management and birder accessibility in the Oxbow, as well as a way to raise funds for other area conservation and environmental groups. This is a chance for like-minded individuals and organizations to come together in the spirit of camaraderie for a common purpose and to help make a difference. Anyone can participate on any skill level. There are several competitive categories one can chose from, or you are welcome to participate as a non-competitor in any manner you would like. If you can't physically participate we welcome your donation to the cause. A pledge form can be found in this newsletter. Any amount is appreciated. The bottom line is that we will raise some money for a worthwhile cause and have fun doing it during the peak of spring migration. I hope you can participate and/or donate a few dollars to this effort. If you would like to register as a team or an individual in the Oxbow Birdathon feel free to call me at (513) 522-8147 or email me at jaystenger@cinci.rr.com.

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials & Honorariums

Donor

Sister Marty Dermody
Do and Bill Kuhlman
Do and Bill Kuhlman
Jon & Jackie Seymour
Jon & Jackie Seymour

In Memory of

Caroline Miller
Norma Flannery
Caroline Miller
Norma Flannery
Morris Mercer

Oxbow, Inc. would like to thank:

Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Bassett,
Mr. Wayne Wauligman
and
Third Protestant Memorial Church Fund

for their generous gifts

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.



Our last issue's Mystery photo drew entries that properly identified the photo as an ice sheet formed during an Oxbow flood and left suspended in the foliage when the water receded. Melt water forming on top of the ice sheet has broken through in some low spots in the sheet and refrozen below the sheet to form beautiful round icicles. (photo by Tom Uhlman)



Our Mystery Photo is the top portion of this photo. As can be seen the suspended layer of ice in the Mystery Photo is not alone as there are multiple layers of ice suspended at various levels of the retreating flood. (photo by Tom Uhlman)



Friends of the Great Miami (FOGM) planted trees in December along the Great Miami to help stabilize the river bank. Pictured are L to R. Janelle White and Brian Bohl. Digging holes, planting the trees and hauling water can be tiring work. Thank goodness the Oxbow soil is soft and deep and the water is a few steps away in the river. Also present for FOGM were Michael Miller, Bob Minges, Bruce Koehler, Anthony McMurray and Dan Taphorn. (Photo by Dan Taphorn)



Kayaking is special in the Oxbow. This Oxbow sunset was taken by Denis Conover on a recent kayak adventure in the Oxbow. Sunsets like this one silhouette ducks and geese as they return to the Oxbow in the evening and reflect from the still waters of the flood to enhance their glory.



The glide begins at the perch where the fish is spotted spending time near the surface of the water. The size of the catch is gauged - not too large to carry - large enough to provide a meal. Timing is everything and the Bald Eagle breaks from the perch in a rapid flight that generates a fast glide as it nears the prey. Timing is everything to the photographer Bruce Leonhardt who just happened to be ready to record this daily drama in the life of an adult Bald Eagle fishing on Jackpot Pond. (photo by Bruce Leonhardt)



Strike. A perfect one claw grab and the fish is a meal for an eagle. The mechanics of the strike are nearly impossible. The decision to go is made early. The water/air interface distorts the actual position of the fish below the water and that has to be adjusted for. Line of sight cannot be maintained through the course of the dive. The claw has to strike the water and close automatically as soon as it touches the target. The bird has to pull the extra weight of the fish out of the water without being dragged into the water by the sudden acquisition of an anchor. All must go perfectly as it has for eons as nature renews its cycle of life. (photo by Bruce Leonhardt)



usings

by Dave Styer

The House Wren

This is the year for celebrating 200th anniversaries. Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln were born the same day (Feb 12) in 1809. That is the same year that the House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*, was entered as a species in the scientific literature in an article by the Frenchman Louis Pierre Vieillot. Although Vieillot is not as well known in America as Audubon and Wilson, he did live for some time in the United States while avoiding various revolutions. Vieillot is well known to ornithologists (at least his name is well known) because he named so many bird species. The Cedar Waxwing and the Louisiana Waterthrush are among the species he named.

The wren family is remarkable in that it has roughly 85 species, all of which live in the New World, and only 1, our Winter Wren lives in the Old World. It is no wonder that in England the Winter Wren is known simply as "the Wren." Until Columbus sailed to America no other wrens were known to science. Even the Vikings, before Columbus, would not likely have encountered any wrens but the Winter Wren. [Come to think of it, did the Vikings ever encounter anything very New World-like, e.g., a hummingbird, and report it back home?] In the Oxbow area alone there are commonly House Wrens in the summer, Winter Wrens in the winter, and Carolina Wrens all year long. Sedge Wrens have been seen there during the fall migration since *Birds of the Oxbow* (1993) was written, and there is some hope of seeing a Marsh Wren.

House Wrens, like many wrens, are notable singers, with a big voice for a small bird. I likely knew House Wrens before I became a bird watcher, but the first incident I really remember happened after I became a birder, and the incident has left me with a guilty feeling. It was summer, about 1952 and a House Wren regularly sang just outside the living-room window. I had just bought from "The Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University" a volume of A. A. Allen's *Birdsong Recordings*. I put the record player by the living-room window and played the House Wren song at twice natural volume. The wren outside sang once and then was completely quiet. In fact, I never heard the wren again. Did the poor bird have a heart attack and drop over dead or did the "super wren" just drive it away forever? I'll never know. Rest assured, that's something I haven't done again.

The House Wren is widely distributed. It breeds all across the lower 48 states from California to the Mid-Atlantic States, and north into Canada. Recently my wife,

Jane, and I were birding in Peru. There we often saw or heard House Wrens. Or did we? If it looks like a House Wren and acts like a House Wren and sings (sort of) like a House Wren, must it be a House Wren? Our *Birds of Peru* field guide says, yes, it is a House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*. The American Ornithologists' Union's *Check-list of North American Birds* (1998) indicates that DNA study suggests that the South American bird is a different species, but more study is needed. *The Handbook of the Birds of the World* (2005) designates the South American bird as the Southern House Wren, *Troglodytes musculus*.

I thought I really knew the House Wren, but perhaps not. We were taught in school that the advantage of the scientific name over the common name is that a bird may have many common names, but only one scientific. I looked up "House Wren" in my old *Birds of America* (1936) book. The book conveniently gives "Other Names. Brown Wren; Common Wren; Wood Wren; Stump Wren; Short-tailed House Wren; Jenny Wren." For communications in different places it clarifies things to be able to say "I mean *Troglodytes aedon*" no matter what you call it. There's just one catch (Is this Catch 22?), what they taught us in school is not clearly true. There are publications where the bird is called the House Wren, and the scientific name is given as *Troglodytes domesticus*. How can that be? The people who publish articles with this alternate scientific name for the House Wren claim that Alexander Wilson actually published a description of the House Wren a year earlier, 1808. There are rules that give priority to the first published scientific name. Wilson was not obscure and unnoticed, so there must be some other reason why Vieillot's description has been almost universally accepted.

Let me suggest a reason why the House Wren is now *Troglodytes aedon* rather than *T. domesticus*. The species name *domesticus*, domestic, is appropriate enough but boring. In Greek mythology Aedon was a songstress. Here is what Earnest Choate says in *The Dictionary of American Bird Names*. The name *aedon* was taken from Aedon, the daughter of Pandereus, who was changed into a nightingale by the gods but into a wren by Vieillot. All right!



Reflections

by Tim Mara, esq.

It's hard to believe, but Oxbow has been around for almost a quarter of a century. Organized in 1985 to protect the wetlands at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers from destructive development, Oxbow has succeeded in preserving forever almost 1000 acres of important wildlife habitat.

Oxbow, Inc. is a non-profit corporation with almost a thousand members. Our group is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization, and as such contributions to Oxbow are tax deductible. Our generous members and others have literally donated millions of dollars which has enabled Oxbow to buy the land we now own and to be in a position to acquire additional land in the future as it becomes available.

As we reflect upon the successes of the past and the challenges of the future, it is important not to forget why wetlands are so important. They are nature's kidneys because of their ability to filter impurities from water. Sediment settles out of runoff and dissolved contaminants bind to plant surfaces and are transformed, resulting in improved water quality. The Oxbow wetlands have been recognized by the Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area (IBA) because they are an important resting, nesting, and feeding area for waterfowl and birds. Each year, the Oxbow wetlands are inundated by flood waters for days and sometimes even weeks, and serve as a storage area for floodwaters which would otherwise cause loss of property or even loss of life.

The Oxbow wetlands and the adjacent rivers also provide recreational opportunities such as canoeing, fishing, and bird watching. Limited hunting by members is allowed in some of the more isolated areas of the Oxbow by special permit only. Oxbow, Inc. continues to lease several hundred acres of prime farm land to tenant farmers. Their environmentally sensitive use of the land, including participation in a program to leave behind some corn for waterfowl, is a vital part of Oxbow's stewardship efforts.

Oxbow members and the public are invited to visit and enjoy the wonders of the Oxbow wetlands. Guided walks are conducted at least a couple times each month, and volunteer opportunities are available to those who want to be more involved in the on-going efforts to preserve the Oxbow wetlands.



Aliens Invade!

...by Kani Meyer

Alien invasions are not just the stuff of science fiction. Land managers across the United States do battle with aliens all the time. Bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, common reed, autumn olive and oriental bittersweet are only a few of the alien invasive plants described by speaker Tom Borgeman of the Hamilton County Parks Land Management Department. Invasive plants damage diversity by crowding out native plants and altering habitats for animals. Tom discussed chemicals such as RoundUp and other means of dealing with these problem species and described the amazing recovery of native plants once the aliens are removed. Interest in this topic stimulated much discussion on which chemicals are best and at what concentrations. Tom also noted that introduced insects such as the emerald ash borer and gypsy moth also cause habitat damage and managers in this area are on the lookout for outbreaks.

Birdathon Pledge Form for Birdathon 2009 (May 8-9, 2009)

Mail To: Jon Seymour
854 Ligorio Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45218

Name _____

Address _____

My Pledge for Birdathon 2009 is:

Fixed Amount: \$ _____ () Check Enclosed
() Bill me after the Birdathon

If you elect a fixed pledge please remember to specify below which team the pledge is for.

Per Species Pledge: (Circle One, you will be billed after the Birdathon):

\$ 5.00 \$4.00 \$3.00 \$2.00 \$1.00 \$0.75 \$0.50
\$0.25 Other \$ _____

My Pledge is to Support the following Oxbow, Inc. Team:

- _____ Highest Scoring Team
- _____ Team #1 – Paul Wharton, Jay Stenger, Jack Stenger and Joe Bens
- _____ Team #2 – Jerry Lippert, Erich Baumgardner and Wayne Wauligman
- _____ Team #3 – Sister Marty Dermody, Katherine Miller and Sarah Krailler
- _____ Team #4 – Dave and Jane Styer (West Coast Big Day)
- _____ Team #5 – Jon Seymour and the First Timers
- _____ Team #6 – Young Ohio Birders – Greater Cincinnati Chapter
- _____ Team #7 – Steve Pelikan, Mike Busam and Charlie Saunders

Make checks payable to Oxbow, Inc. All donations to the Birdathon are tax deductible.

Friends of the Great Miami tree planting efforts sow seeds for the future.....

.....by Brian Bohl

Throughout the lower Great Miami River system, Friends of the Great Miami has worked to replant native tree species to improve the quality of this valuable resource. Friends of the Great Miami (Friends) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), citizen based organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing the quality of the Great Miami River for present and future generations. In the fall of 2008, the Friends worked to replant river banks of the Great Miami River from Heritage Park, near the Butler County line to the Oxbow Wetland near the confluence with the Ohio River.

Over the past couple of years, the tree plantings at the Oxbow have developed as a result of a budding partnership between Friends of the Great Miami and Oxbow, Inc. Oxbow, Inc. has been able to provide the preserved land and the Friends have supplied the saplings ready for planting. In 2007, 154 Sycamores were planted in the Oxbow floodplain, followed by 75 silver maples on December 13, 2008. Sycamores have the strongest root systems of any tree species in the area, making them an ideal choice for a river bank planting. Their roots serve to bind the soil, thereby preventing flowing water within the river from eroding the stream banks. Like sycamores, silver maples are hardy along riverbanks as they can grow more than 20 inches per year, can have a life expectancy of greater than 50 years and can easily grow to more than 40 feet at maturity.

Establishing viable native tree populations along rivers such as the Great Miami is important for many reasons. The extensive network of tree roots holds the soils in place, reducing erosion and maintaining stable banks. This in turn, helps to improve water quality by reducing sediment loading to the river. Excessive stream bank erosion and sediment input cause habitat degradation for fish and other aquatic organisms. Although rivers do naturally erode, meander and change course over time, there is a balance that must occur in order to maintain water quality and habitat. Planting riverside trees helps to restore the natural process of erosion and deposition.

In addition to preventing excessive stream bank erosion, tall riparian trees provide shade, lowering water temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen levels, which benefits aquatic organisms. Additionally, leaves and other organic matter deposited in the river from trees provide a food source for river species.

Riparian or riverside plantings are considered the "last line of defense" that a waterway has to remove contaminants. In both urban and agricultural areas, storm water runoff may transport a variety of pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, oils, greases, salts and eroded particles. Without a viable riparian corridor, there would be little to no filtration zone to remove these substances before they make their way to the river. Nutrients from fertilizers and animal wastes can actually stimulate tree growth. Similarly, the tree roots and soil filtration zone can help to convert pollutants into less harmful substances. Filtration of storm

water through the roots and tree canopy also serve to reduce the potential for downstream flooding.

The tree acquisition, storage and transport for replanting in the Oxbow has been made possible by Bob Minges, who serves on the Friends' Board of Trustees. As an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, Friends of the Great Miami aims to efficiently leverage resources such that projects like the Oxbow tree plantings will provide as much benefit as possible for the quality of the lower Great Miami River. For more information about the Friends, you can visit the website at www.fogm.org or contact Brian Bohl at (513) 253-3460.



So You Want to Go to the Oxbow?

.....by Jon Seymour

It doesn't seem like that much on the surface. But over the past year I have heard it time and again from regular visitors, occasional visitors, and first time visitors to the Oxbow. "It is really great since you graveled the roads!" (By now you might realize that the first line is also a pun.) This project is funded by Birdathon money which is dedicated to habitat improvement and access improvement. Why did we decide to gravel the roads in the Oxbow and what has that meant to visitors? There are actually several reasons for the gravel.

- Graveled roads provide fewer reasons for well meaning visitors to drive off the road and damage fields, woodlands and prairies.
- Graveled roads require fewer hours of maintenance and fewer days per year that machinery needs to be used to keep the roads passable.
- Graveled roads allow a wider variety of visitors since there is less fear of driving on gravel and small buses can be used to deliver tour groups to the Oxbow on a more certain basis.
- Graveled roads allow more days of access for visitors to the Oxbow over the course of the year.
- Graveled roads allow more visitors to actually plan to visit the Oxbow because of the improved certainty of access.
- In the future we may be able to close off some of the old dirt roads and reclaim some areas by having good graveled roads as better alternatives to travel.

There are some things that graveled roads will not do. They do not improve access during floods. If the road is underwater do not drive in the Oxbow. They do not stay pristine and solve all problems. The gravel sinks into the river silt and slowly disappears. We will have to build a base and apply a skim coat to the roads each year for a while to make the road strong and capable of bearing up under the stress of many visitors. They can still wash out.

So what has this meant to visitors to the Oxbow? It means that most visitors are happy to see the roads are graveled and they can feel more comfortable attempting to drive in the Oxbow. In general, since we graveled the roads the number of visitors to the Oxbow seems to have increased. Personally it meant that this Spring I could drive my Saturn down the Oxbow Lake Road. In the past I could not drive the road in the spring due to deep ruts and water retention. That did not happen this year and I am most pleased.

Birdathon 2009
(Sponsored by Oxbow, Inc.)
Participant Registration Form

Choose one or more of the following categories:

- Most Species by a Team (most overall species by a group)
 Most Species by an Individual (most overall species by an individual)
 Most Species in a Back Yard (most species observed from one yard)
 Most Species One State (most species by state, either Ohio, Indiana or Kentucky)
 Most Species One County (most species in any one county, ex: Hamilton)
 Most Species In One Location (recorded in one defined area, ex: The Oxbow)
 Most Species Non-Fossil Fuel (recorded without using any gasoline)
 Most Species Big Sit (recorded from one fixed 30 x 30 foot spot)
 Most Species Family (most species by a family, with at least one child)
 Most Species Under Age 20 (most species seen by a group 19 & under, + 1 adult)
 Most Funds Raised by a Team
 Most Funds Raised by an Individual
 Most Funds raised by Persons Under 20 Years Old
 Other: Name your own: _____

Mail completed form to:

Oxbow, Inc
9761 Winton Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45231

Include a check made out to
Oxbow, Inc. covering the team fee
with this application.

Remember—the
purpose of the Birdathon is
to raise money for improv-
ing Oxbow habitat and
Oxbow accessibility
projects.

I want to enter a team (or as an individual) in the Oxbow Birdathon.

Organization Represented (IF Any) _____

Team Captain _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Address _____

Names of Team Members : _____

Name of Team: _____

Number of Team Members (or single individual) _____ X \$5.00 = \$ _____

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

(A hunting permission slip with a confirmatory stamp and authorized signature will be returned to you upon acceptance of your application.)

Application and Memorandum of Understanding: I am a member in good standing of Oxbow, Inc. and request permission to hunt on Oxbow, Inc. property east of I-275 as will be shown on the map affixed to the permission slip that must be carried while hunting on Oxbow property.

I agree: to hunt subject to the following Oxbow, Inc. rules:

- I will practice good hunting ethics at all times.
- Others may rightfully visit the area and my activity has no priority over that of others.
- During my use of Oxbow, Inc. property I will not litter, remove or damage Oxbow, Inc. property, or cause any habitat destruction.
- I will not leave any structures on the property (i.e. hunting stands, duck blinds, etc.).
- I will carry a valid permission slip at all times while hunting on Oxbow, Inc. land.
- I will obey all applicable laws

I understand that hunting privilege will be revoked if any of the above regulations are violated. I understand that I enter Oxbow, Inc. property entirely at my own risk and hold Oxbow, Inc. free of liability for any hazards, known or unknown to it. I HAVE INCLUDED A COPY OF MY VALID INDIANA HUNTING PERMIT and A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

Your Signature: _____ Date _____

Return Mail Address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc., c/o John Getzendanner, 21007 Crestview Ct., Lawrenceburg, IN 47025, Phone: 812-537-5728

(Hunting permission is granted for one year (July 1 to June 30 of the following year) only and must be reapplied for yearly.) HUNTING PERMISSION REQUESTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 1, 2009

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

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