

September—October 2009

No. 139

WETLAND *matters*

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

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A River Runs through it --- AGAIN!

...by Jon Seymour

Mark Jansen called me and wanted to know if Oxbow, Inc. would be interested in buying his property in the Horseshoe Bottoms. I said we might be interested and arranged for Mark to meet me at the office and show me where his property was and to see if Oxbow was interested.

The property Mark showed me was one of the white areas on our map (still in private hands, see www.oxbowinc.info for a view of our map of all our holdings) that was located on the Indiana/Ohio border right where the Great Miami comes out of Ohio for the first time and enters Indiana. It was adjacent to the conservation easements we hold north of the I-275 Enterprises RV Park. The parcel also contains the mouth of Double Lick Creek, the creek that was dammed to create Hidden Valley Lake. According to Mark's survey the property was much larger than we previously thought, comprising nearly 36 acres. Part of the property lies on the east bank of the Great Miami River.

I took Mark's proposal to the Board and they approved negotiation to purchase the land. After about 2 months of negotiation we reached an agreement and on July 15th we concluded the sale of 36 acres of land (actually about 1/2 is under the Great Miami River) for a price of \$1700 per acre. After fees, taxes, and insurance costs were added and subtracted the final total was \$61,920.80. To this total the survey costs and the legal fees will be added to determine the final cost basis for the land. As part of the sale agreement the Jansen family will retain the right to camp on a portion of the property for the next 30 years. The property can only be reached by the river or by crossing land that is owned by others so access will not be open to Oxbow members except on official Oxbow Inc. business.

This purchase pushes the total property protected by Oxbow, Inc. by either land ownership or by conservation easements to over 1100 acres. It also gives us another critical portion of the river bank that needs to be stabilized to reduce erosive cutting of the bank. Photos of the property are on page 2. Oxbow, Inc. is particularly excited about this purchase as this represents the only land we own fee simple that lies north of the I-275 Enterprises RV Park and is only our second property that encompasses the east bank of the Great Miami River.

Birdathon 2009

Birdathon donations are still coming in and we will have a complete list of donors in the next wetland matters. I have to report that results have been a little disappointing so far this year. Donations are down from 2008 which probably reflects the general level of the economy. It is still not too late to make a donation. Make your Birdathon 2009 donation check out to Oxbow, Inc. and mail it to Jon Seymour, 854 Ligorio Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45218. With a little extra effort we still may top last year's total donations.



Great Outdoor Weekend

It's back – The Great Outdoor Weekend will be held on Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27. There will be over 50 nature related organizations offering free nature fare all over the Tri-state area. Go to www.cincygreatoutdoorweekend.org and select "Programs". This year there will be no distribution of the paper copy schedules. Everything is on the internet this year to simplify the advertising distribution and reduce the costs. Surveys conducted at venue sites the last two years indicated that most GOW participants heard about it by the paper, internet, or radio. All advertising this year will focus on those outlets referring everyone to the internet for the precise schedules.

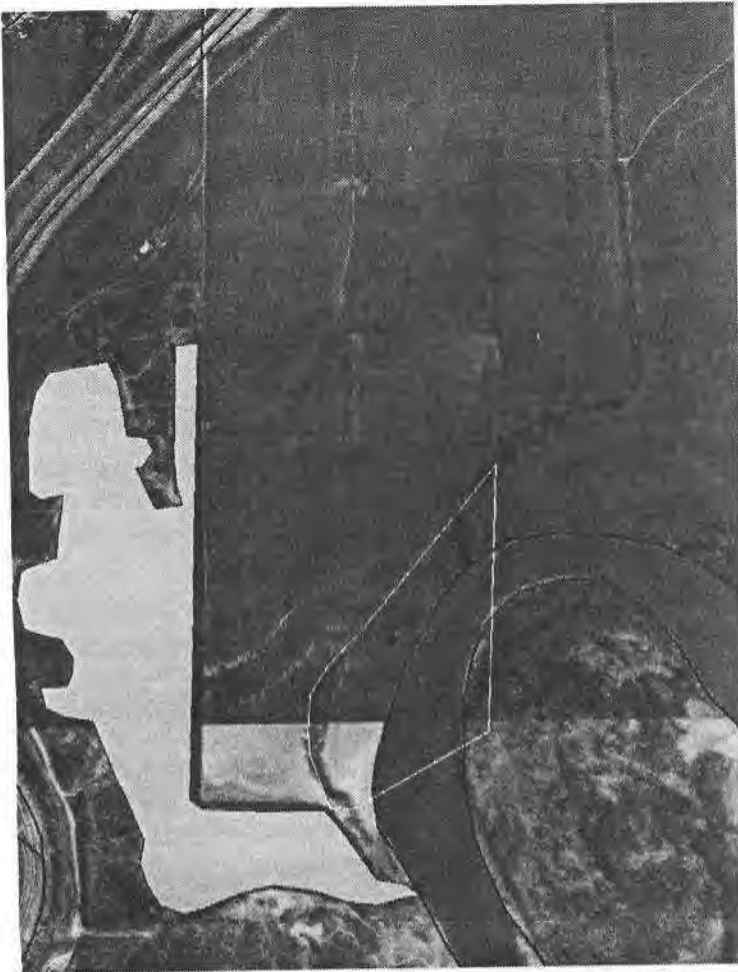
Oxbow Inc. will participate again with two programs. "Going to bed with the animals at sunset in the Oxbow" from 6-8 pm on Saturday the 26th and "Waking up with the Sun in the Oxbow" from 9-11 am on Sunday the 27th. These are family friendly programs designed to reveal multiple aspects of the residents of the Oxbow and inform the participants about the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Oxbow area. Put it on your calendar, bring family, friends and neighbors, and meet us at the Hardintown entrance parking area 10-15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

Bat House over Osprey Lake

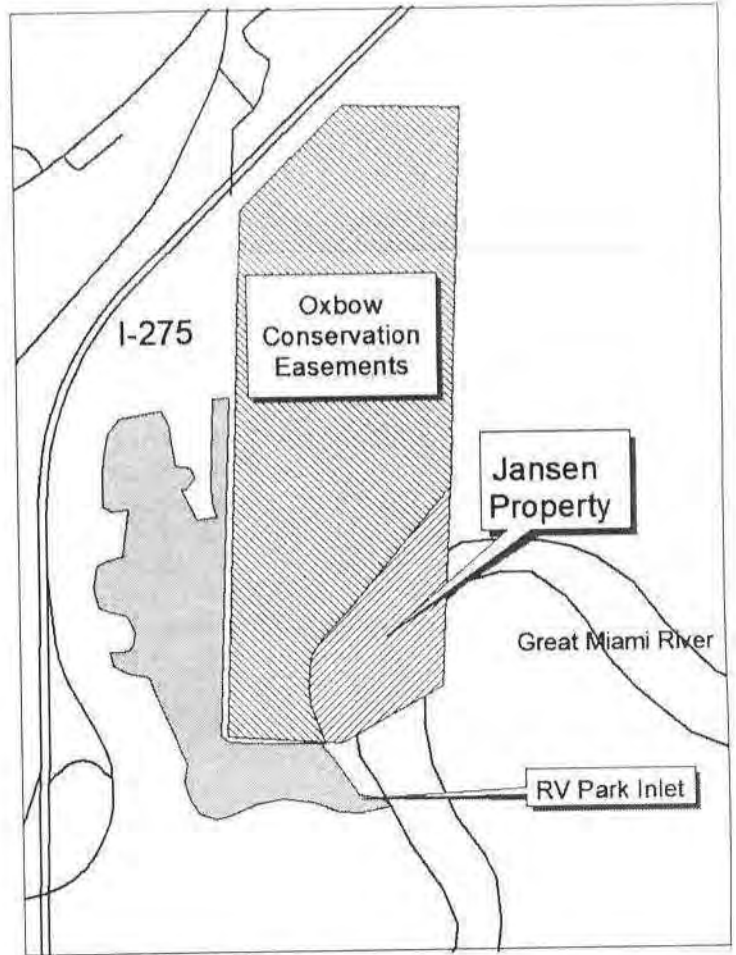


A bat house constructed by Tom Uhlman was attached to the tall Osprey nest pole overlooking Osprey Lake. Tom

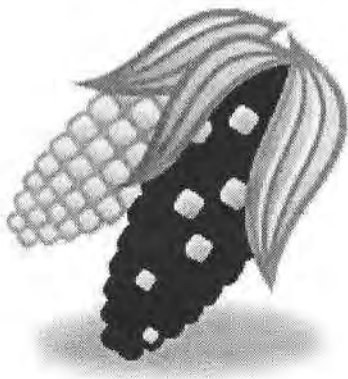
volunteered to put up the house and with a little help from his brother Dave Uhlman and Jon Seymour was able to get it mounted on the pole. Dave and Jon held the ladder and made promises to try to catch Tom if he fell but the bulk of the effort was handled by Tom. Oxbow, Inc. thanks Tom Uhlman for contributing to our attempts to increase the biodiversity of the Oxbow area.



This areal photo of the Jansen purchase shows the planted fields, tree rows at the edge of the property, the Great Miami River and the portion of the property on the east bank of the Great Miami.



This map shows the Jansen purchase in relation to conservation easements owned by Oxbow, Inc. The property is an important link between our easements and the property and conservation easements owned by the Hamilton County Park District in the floodplain on the Ohio side of the border.



Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS

To get to 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 at the corner of Walnut and Center Streets. Free parking is available on Walnut St., Center St., and in the parking lot behind the building.)

Tuesday, September 8, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg
The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Jack Beringer will speak about "Secret Lives of Oxbow Plants." Have you thanked a plant today? An introduction to the life processes of the plants and fungi that make life possible in the Oxbow area. As Emerson wrote "The Earth laughs in flowers" that we can enjoy in our walks through the wetlands along with the many other hidden activities of these organisms that sustain all life.

Tuesday, October 13, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg
The Oxbow, Inc. Office

"Journey to Paradise". This is the story of an early pioneer and his family's journey from Virginia to the Ohio Territory. **Jim Williams** will describe this journey as well as why this man made the decision to move from his comfortable plantation farm to the wilderness of the Ohio Territory. He will describe the perils of the journey west, what the country looked like, and the animals and plants of the time.



Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS

Date & Time: Sunday, September 6th, 2009, 7:30 a.m.
Where: Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.
Leader: Jay Stenger, (513) 522-8147
jaystenger@cinci.rr.com

In our region the fall songbird migration begins in earnest during the month of September and the southbound shorebird migration also peaks at this time. On a good September day the lower Great Miami River Valley can abound with a great diversity of avian species and the Oxbow area is a great place to witness this spectacle. We will take advantage of the season and focus on these fall migrants as we visit several spots in and around the Oxbow and Shawnee Lookout Park.

During our morning visit we can expect to see herons, egrets, shorebirds, ducks, hawks and a diversity of warblers and other songbirds. Eagles have become regular Oxbow visitors and there is a good chance we will see Ospreys, terns and other waterbirds as well. While we will be focusing on birds we will not ignore the other wildlife of this wonderful area. Join Jay for what should be an exiting morning afield. If you have any questions concerning this trip feel free to phone or email Jay.

Date & Time: Saturday, October 24, 2009, 8:30 a.m.
Where: Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.
Leader: Ned Keller, (513) 941-6497, keller@one.net

Autumn is a transitional period in the natural world, when summer is past and the cold days of winter still loom ahead. The southward migration of waterfowl will be well underway and the songbirds that winter in our region will be returning during this season. It is also an invigorating time to be outdoors and the Oxbow takes on a stark beauty at this time of the year.

Wildlife is still abundant in the Oxbow at this season and there's plenty to see. Come along with Ned on this autumn morning walk and see what the changing season brings to the Oxbow. A diversity of ducks, raptors and songbirds will be expected and the last half of October often brings a rare bird or two. While October can have wonderful weather, it can also be cold and wet (and muddy). Dress accordingly as Ned won't let the weather stop him from exploring the Oxbow. Don't hesitate to contact Ned if you have any questions about this trip.

Conservation Corner

The Game is afoot Watson!

As we enter the fall of 2009 with Great Outdoor weekend ahead of us I am reminded that we are still working toward creating a means to keep the Great Outdoor Weekend (GOW) going from year to year. The coalition of groups that came together to create the GOW has struggled each year to find an organization willing to lead the group and take the responsibility of organization, fund raising and publicity. Last year the Cincinnati Nature Center committed personnel to the leadership and this year the Hamilton County Park District stepped up to the plate. However, about a year ago these groups and the others supporting the core effort behind GOW decided it would be prudent to look for an organization to could carry on GOW as an ongoing year to year effort.

At the same time other large community outdoor activities were beginning to feel the same pinch and started to look around to see if there was a better way to handle some of these projects. All participating parties agree on the tremendous benefit of projects like GOW for spreading the word about outdoor activities in the Cincinnati Area and for getting families and kids involved with the outdoors. It was felt that if there was an overseeing organization that had projects like GOW as central to its mission, this would be a much better way of handling multi-organizational projects.

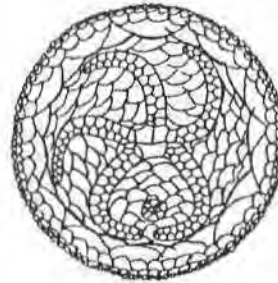
Enter Green Umbrella. This organization was formed several years ago to promote green space and to offer general and specialized support for Land Trusts and other outdoor oriented organizations in the Cincinnati area. They sponsor educational seminars and have experts on their board that are available to advise these organizations. However they are not staffed and have only volunteers to do all the work. A coalition of Cincinnati area organizations approached Green Umbrella to ask if they were interested in expanding their sphere of influence. Green Umbrella changed its by-laws to accommodate the proposed changes and accepted the challenge. Several meetings have taken place to finalize a framework in which Green Umbrella can

accomplish this task. Grants have been written and funding is being sought to establish Green Umbrella with employees that will be charged to manage and organize these area wide programs like GOW. Hopefully by the time the 2010 GOW rolls around there will be staff at Green Umbrella and they will be leading the volunteers from the Coalition of interested parties.



Edrioasteroids, The Elusive Fossils

...by Kani Meyer



Edrioasteroids are an extinct group of echinoderms related to the seastars, sea urchins, crinoids and sea cucumbers. They tend to occur in localized pockets of abundance in the Ordovician rocks of Cincinnati and are much sought after by local fossil hunters. Jack Kallmeyer, President of the Dry Dredgers (the local fossil club), gave a detailed presentation illustrating the anatomy of several species of edrioasteroids, and presented his sometimes harrowing account of collecting over 2000 specimens at a site in Northern Kentucky under high tension power lines during a lightning storm. At this locality, densities averaged an incredible 70 edrioasteroids per square meter. He showed how improper preparation can cause damage to specimens followed by an analysis of his hypothesis about the living positions of edrioasteroids on their various substrates. Edrioasteroids seem to favor living on brachiopods but can also be found on hardgrounds and bryozoans. He carefully recorded the life position of measured specimens and thinks that they can move location as they grow. Edrioasteroids tend to prefer the edges of brachiopod shells where they can take advantage of the brachiopod's feeding currents for their own feeding. But as they grow, they need to move toward the center of the brachiopod valve in order to maintain their attachment to the shell. He is currently collaborating in this study with UC professor Dr. David Meyer.

Wish List for volunteers:

- A volunteer interested in organization to help us organize files in the office.
- A volunteer interested in history to organize historical documents and create a living history of Oxbow, Inc.
- A volunteer interested in interviewing other volunteers and writing up short stories, on the efforts of each volunteer, to be published in our newsletter.

If you are interested or think you might be interested call Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835 to talk about it. Oxbow, Inc. runs solely on the basis of volunteer effort and all that we accomplish is due to our volunteers.

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials & Honorariums

| Donor | In Memory of |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Art & Karen Buechel | Elaine A. Buechel |



| Donor | In Honor of |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Grant & Melissa Cowan | Suzanne Skidmore |



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.

Oxbow, Inc. would like to thank:

Jim and Judy Wilgenbusch for the donation of coffee table books "Wild America" and "John J. Audubon North American Birds" and for the donation of other books for Oxbow's use.

Carol McManaman for her generous donation to our endowment fund.

George Fisher for his generous donation, which included a corporate matching gift.



Taking photos of birds is hard enough. Taking photos of birds in motion is harder and taking good photos as they are coming right at you is even more difficult. Rehikant Meetei took this excellent photo of a rapidly approaching Caspian Tern on one of his visits to the Oxbow.



The entire crew pauses briefly from their labors of cleaning the banks of the Ohio River in one of the more remote locations in the Oxbow. They are still wondering how they ever got two trucks back there to haul out trash. (photo by Jon Seymour)



A grant from the Four Seasons Garden Club has allowed the planting of native perennials around the entrance sign at Hardintown. The grant will assure continued maintenance of the native species. Land Manager, Kani Meyer, hopes to extend the plantings to the area surrounding the raised bed which was initially part of an Eagle Scout project. Oxbow, Inc. is pleased that the Four Seasons Garden Club has chosen to provide continued support for our efforts. (photo by Jon Seymour)



The Levee sign funded by a grant from American Electric Power (AEP) is dedicated. Left to Right are Sharon McFarland (AEP), Vic Grieve (Lawrenceburg Conservancy District, LCD), Ahmand Arce (AEP), Bill Zimmerman (Kraemer Design & Productions), and E.B. Seitz LCD (Photo by Jon Seymour)



The first rays of the morning sun rise over Shawnee Lookout to illuminate Oxbow Lake and start a new day. (photo by Jon Seymour)



Tom Uhlman attaches the bat house he made to the Osprey nest pole overlooking Osprey Lake. Jon Seymour and Dave Uhlman steady the ladder and are ready to catch the bat house if it should fall. (photo by passing photographer)



The west bank of the Great Miami River as it passes through the Jansen purchase. The tree line indicates the location of Double Lick Creek as it enters the Great Miami. Bank erosion is the dominant feature as the river is carving its way west at this location. Over the next few years Oxbow, Inc. will plant trees to stabilize the river bank in an attempt to at least slow the process of meandering down. Undercutting the outside banks is a natural river process that is accelerated by farming practices that do not allow for sufficient trees to grow along the river bank. (photo by on Seymour)



On the shore opposite the mouth of Double Lick Creek the story is the opposite. New dry land is being built and occupied by an emergent plant community. (photo by Jon Seymour)



Musings

by Dave Styer

American Coots and all the other Rails on the March

[Did he mean 'on the marsh?']

When my friend Joanne was a beginning birder, she saw some American Coots, and she asked a ranger what species of duck she was seeing. To her amusement she was corrected thus: "Them aren't ducks, them are coots." We learn that coots are in the rail family, *Rallidae*. Although the family has many secretive, nocturnal, marsh-loving species, the American Coot is not at all secretive. Ducks have webbed feet, but rails don't. Coots do have lobes on the sides of their toes. The lobes aid in swimming, but they are not as efficient as webs. I would guess, then, that the fastest ducks swim faster than the fastest coots, but I haven't heard of any races. Rails are much better at walking than ducks.

The coot's bill really doesn't look like a duck's bill. Bills and feet are things we can see in the field. The ornithologist who dissects ducks and rails sees many other differences in these two groups of birds.

Besides anatomical features of the rail family, behavioral features may play an important role. All rails flick their tails upward. This is a feature S. Dillon Ripley calls "the tail jerk" in his monograph *Rails of the World*. In the American Coot the tail jerk exposes the most striking feathers on the bird, the white undertail coverts. I feel that this must serve as a signal, similar to a deer flashing its tail as it runs off. Ripley mentions that some people have suggested that the tail jerk might be "an automatic nervous response, a kind of releaser of nervous energy." He believes that it is advantageous for feeding:

The tail jerk, like the head glide of a walking pigeon, accompanied by a very short momentary pause in the forward gait, gives the walking rail a pulsed and instantaneous clear view. The head is quite still at the moment of the muscular effort put into the tail jerk. Thus, the rail has a correlated time fraction of clear view in contrast to blurred view if the head is continuously moving. At the same time, small prey creatures are diverted by seeing the motion of the hinder end of the predator's (the rail's) body and thus lose contact with the arrested, clear-viewing, striking end, the head. That's an interesting idea that never occurred to me.

Another interesting feature of the rail family is the reluctance of many species to fly. Some of the Pacific island dwelling species can't fly very well, if at all, but others perfectly well can fly, and even fly long distances during migration. Consider the flightless rails of remote tropical islands. Their ancestors flew there, but no longer

needed to fly, because the islands had no predators. Their offspring on the island likely could fly, even if they didn't bother to. This brings us to the 'use it or lose it' business. Copies of the DNA sequence of the parent generation pass on the structure to the next generation. If the copy is perfect, then the individuals in the next generation will be able to fly just like their parents. The crux of the matter is the transcription is not always perfect. (You make mistakes, although I never do; it's my training in Unclear Physics.) Suppose there is the slightest transcription error in the DNA that negatively affects the ability to fly. If the chick happens to be a Blackburnian Warbler in Ontario, the error is fatal. If the chick is a rail on a tropical island paradise, the same error might be of no negative consequence. Without knowledge of DNA copying it looks like lack of flight causes eventual loss of the ability to fly. In fact, DNA transcription errors cause the loss of ability to fly, and the lack of necessity allows the condition to persist. On a small, windy island flight might be dangerous. A flying bird might be blown off the island, so that lack of flight might be beneficial.

Since all rails are strong walkers and reluctant flyers I wasn't surprised to learn about flightless rails on tropical islands. However, the article on the American Coot by Brisbin and Mowbray in *The Birds of North America* mentions an unexpected and dramatic event published in the 1931 *Wilson Bulletin*. Dr. A. G. Prill was in the Warner Valley region of Lake County, Oregon, in May of 1929.

This area is an immense marsh and lake region, some thirty-six miles long and from five to seven miles wide. Large and small lakes, ponds, and water almost everywhere, and large areas of tules and flags, with wild grasslands.

I was located at the southern end of the valley, and on my arrival was informed that thousands of large black-colored birds were passing through the marshes northward. So on the next morning, May 9, I went to the location mentioned, which was about two miles out in the marsh and there in full view some 300 yards distant were the coots (*Fulica Americana*) marching northward like an immense army, from six to twenty-five of them abreast. They followed the course of dry land wherever possible, and did not enter the water to swim across ponds and lakes, but followed the shorelines, in constant motion. They did not seem to be feeding. They would not rise to the wing unless approached too close, and then would fly only a short distance, and continue their northward course.

On that day, and the next three days, Prill estimated that he saw 10,000 American Coots marching north, and that there must have been many more. What an experience; coots on the march!

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

.....by Jon Seymour

Thursday, July 16, 2009

The half-moon is high in the sky above the Oxbow as I drive the Oxbow Lake Road to my destination, the Oxbow Lake Overlook. It is dark but the half-moon light and the reflected glow from the light pollution along U.S. Highway 50 and from Lawrenceburg/Hollywood Casino make it fairly easy to see what is about you on all sides. What the light pollution does not reveal the light from my car's headlights does. I find my way to the overlook with no problem, disappointed only in the fact that I did not find any nocturnal mammals lurking along the road. It is 5:15 AM when I reach the overlook.

Sane readers may ask, with a degree of legitimacy, "What are you doing there???" The simple answer is taking advantage of an opportunity provided by one of my neighbors. My neighbor had booked passage on a 6:00 AM flight to Texas and, since she does not drive, needed someone to pick her up at 4:00 AM and take her to the airport. I had volunteered figuring that there were not going to be too many others among her neighbors and friends that were going to jump at the chance to get up at 3:00 in the morning. My second thought had been that since I was already in the neighborhood; why not watch the sunrise in the Oxbow. I had never done that except in the winter and it would not be the same. I had to admit that the opportunity to leisurely watch the sunrise and observe the dawning of the day in the Oxbow at mid summer made it rather appealing to take my neighbor to her 4:30 AM rendezvous at the airport.

With the car turned off I decide to sit on the overlook bench and await the sunrise. The weather is pleasant and sitting on the bench in the early morning is quite comfortable. It is too dark to see any distinct objects except those very near me. I can hear, and the first sound to welcome me is that of a protesting Great Blue Heron. I am obviously offending its' sensibilities and seems to tell me that I am too close and how dare I disturb its' nap. The second sound is the "quark" of the Black-crowned Night Heron apparently agreeing with his cousin but protesting in a different language. I wonder if they understand each other and figure that it is nearly certain that after these eons of close association in shared habitat they would recognize each others' alarm calls.

Other birds are adding their voices to the morning. Cardinals sing along the tree lined shore, the distinctive descending quacking of a Mallard is loud and nearby. A Wood Duck's squeal sounds so different and unducklike. A single Song Sparrow calls from the wood row behind me and another answers him from just off to my left. The Indigo Buntings start to add their voices. They are often early singers but they have just now started. Maybe they just arrived in this corner of their daily territorial dispute but they are singing now and they will not be outdone. The

Chickadees and Tufted Titmouses start to clamor and seem to be everywhere at once, several birds constantly changing location around me. Over my shoulder a Common Yellowthroat calls from the prairie area.

Looking down at the lake, the surface is taking on a lighter tone reflecting some light of the newly lightening sky that is being illuminated by the rising sun still tucked away just below the horizon. The light is enough so that I can see my first shape in the water, a single Wood Duck floating in the middle of Oxbow Lake and off to my left were the water seems to be just a little brighter than straight ahead or to my right where tree shadows seem to darken the surface. I look at my watch – see first bird at 5:30 AM. My next bird that I can see is a Great Blue Heron lazily winging from my side of the lake to the opposite shore where it disappears into the shadows. Next several Double-crested Cormorants lounging on a couple of trees caught in the middle of Oxbow Lake are visible in my scope (light gathering scopes are very nice) sharing their perch with a Black-crowned Night Heron. It is 5:50 AM and official sunrise is near at hand. It is still fairly dark and will be for a while as the sunrise climbs up over the real horizon – the wooded slopes of Shawnee Lookout County Park.

At 6:00 AM, as if one of those bird wall clocks that chime the hour with bird calls, two cardinals start dueling calls. One near me on my near right is answered and warned by another on the lake shore opposite our perch. This continues uninterrupted for nearly 15 minutes and is probably part of a daily ritual that each bird has come to expect as the day gets underway. You can almost visualize them punching the time clock and checking out together like in an old Looney Tunes cartoon where at the end of a long contentious day the wolf and the sheepdog check out at the time clock when their shift ends and go home buddies until they check in again tomorrow and play at being enemies again for another shift.

By 6:20 the surface of Oxbow Lake is fairly well illuminated and large numbers of Wood Ducks are foraging the middle and the edges of Oxbow Lake. Two Great Egrets decide this is a good time to head for breakfast and drop out of the roosting trees and land in the smartweed flats separating Oxbow Lake from Juno Pond. They are soon joined by more egrets and the number in the flats quickly rises to nine. It is now 6:30 and the sun has poked up above the hills of Shawnee Lookout rising just to the left of the highest point of the park, the Fort Hill promontory. A small head floats to the surface near the shore and heads toward the north end. Shortly thereafter a large head swims rapidly toward the south end of the lake along the opposite shore. Both beaver are starting their daily routine or more likely finishing their nightly routine.

Around me American Goldfinches, Robins, Crows, Mourning Doves, House Wrens, Carolina Wrens, Northern Flickers, and Grackles have all added their voices to the morning cacophony. It is great music and never repeats itself. In the smart weeds flats a doe has joined the egrets. Gingerly stepping through the mud the smart weed is growing in trying to avoid falling into a hole. No running here if it can be avoided. The Great Egrets ignore the large furry

(continued on page 10)



Tim Lewis and Don Himburg clean up the riverbank. (photo by Kani Meyer)

Ohio River Sweep

.....by Kani Meyer

On Saturday, June 20, under the threat of rain (that didn't actually materialize, thankfully) a stalwart team of "river rats" gathered along the banks of a swollen Ohio River to clean away the debris of careless people. All the usual plastics, Styrofoam, balls, bottles, tires and barrels were located in the thin strand above the river but, since access was limited by the high water, there were areas we usually get into that we couldn't get to this year. Once again, Oxbow thanks Ron Ison, Exaucet and Gustel Bamanabio, Tim Lewis, Charlie Saunders, Bob Schlegel, Don Himburg, Chris and Alex Powell, Ted Scheall, Jon Seymour and Dave Meyer for all their dedication and exertion in helping to keep the Oxbow area clean! Thanks also to Rumpke, Inc. for the donation of a dumpster for both our clean ups and to the Dearborn County Solid Waste Management District for arranging for the pick up of tires. Without their annual assistance, our clean ups would be much more difficult!



Jon Seymour and Charlie Saunders unearth a plastic drum. (photo by Kani Meyer)

it can be avoided. The Great Egrets ignore the large furry mammal in their midst. The sun has cleared the tree tops and now down on my right the darkest area at the far south end of Oxbow Lake is finally light enough to distinguish ducks swimming near the shore. A bachelor group of five bucks are crossing the lake at this point. The birding scope come in handy again and I can see the antlers on each deer and see that they are in velvet. Even in mid-July this is an impressive group that would make any hunter cry. There are two 6-point bucks, 2 8-point bucks and one 10-point buck bringing up the rear. All that corn, all the woodlands, and all the wetlands have added up to a magnificent small herd.

It is time to leave and on my way out I flush a Green Heron from the roadside shore of Juno Pond. It gives me all four of the common heron species for the day. As I leave I note that it is not quite 7:30 in the morning yet. Just about the time my alarm would be going off. Now I know what I have been missing sleeping away all those early morning hours.



Dedication of Levee Sign

The sign explaining the Oxbow area to travelers of the Levee between Highway 50 and the Oxbow has been in place since April. The dedication of the sign was held just recently. Assembled for the dedication were Sharon McFarland and Ahmand Arce representing American Electric Power (AEP), Bill Zimmerman (Kraemer Design and Production), Jon Seymour (Oxbow, Inc.), and Vic Grieve and E. B. Seitz from the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District (LCD). The sign explains the importance of the Oxbow area for wildlife and tells of Oxbow, Inc.'s efforts to preserve and improve the floodplain. AEP provided the grant to fund the sign and Oxbow, Inc. coordinated the efforts to bring the project to completion. Bill Zimmerman, Oxbow, Inc. member, donated his time and talents to create the design and order the production. E.B. Seitz arranged for permission to install the sign on the levee and Vic Grieve assembled the installation crew and oversaw the installation of the sign. In all it was a great community effort. The sign is accessed by users of the bike/walking path on the top of the levee and is made from tested materials that should weather well the extremes of climate we have in southeastern Indiana.



Wetland Banking

On July 14, Dr. Barry Dalton, Director of NKU's Ecological Outreach and Mitigation program, presented an illustrated talk about his involvement in wetland banking. By law any wetlands destroyed in the path of development must be mitigated so that there is no net loss of these important ecological areas. However, the quality of the wetlands that are used in this mitigation process is sometimes questionable. Banking is a program available to landowners that allows quality wetlands to be restored to areas that were once wetlands and resold as credits for mitigation purposes. There are upfront costs for the initial survey and feasibility assessment of the land for mitigation, followed by a detailed plan for restoration and monitoring. Once approved by federal agencies, these lands can be sold as mitigation credits and the money applied to the actual restoration of the wetland. The landowner maintains ownership but must place an easement on the land so that there is no future development of the land. Dr. Dalton described a 480-acre tract that he has been involved with in Ohio and described the different wetland habitats that they are in the process of restoring on this land. In this way large areas of quality lands can be set aside and restored to replace wetlands (including streams) adversely affected by development.

How many post holes could a Woodchuck dig? If a Woodchuck could dig post holes.

Paul Strasser brought his amazing story of perseverance and passion to Oxbow, Inc. and talked to our assembly about the Red Wolf Sanctuary, Inc. and Raptor Rehabilitation Center. Paul and his wife started this labor of love about 20 years ago and obtained a growing collection of Red Wolves and other North American Wildlife. Initially the operation was small and used techniques for containing the animals that were allowed at that time. As time passed, regulations changed, and Paul found that his simple enclosures and systems did not meet regulatory standards.

After years of work and planning Paul has recently moved his operation to a 450 acre farm just outside of Rising Sun where he is in the process of creating modern outside (hence the post holes title of this piece) enclosures and pens for his ever growing brood of wolves, foxes, bobcats, pumas, and bears. Around the enclosures he is also establishing native habitat in new prairies and wetlands he is creating. If this were not enough he is also licensed as a raptor rehabilitation center and can care and release injured birds.

It is slightly ironic that he is now licensed in Indiana as a "roadside zoo" which brings to mind scenes of traveling Route 66 in the 50s. Many folks have not seen a roadside zoo in a decade. However you are encouraged to see Paul's "roadside zoo" – just call Paul at 812-438-2306 for a tour. This is a great educational opportunity for children of all ages whether they come as families or classrooms.

Happy 
Halloween

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.**
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| | |
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| Vice President, John Getzendanner | (812) 537-5728 |
| Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger | (513) 241-2324 |
| Corresponding Secretary, Dennis Mason | (513) 385-3607 |
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