



January—February 2016

No. 177

# WETLAND *matters*

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

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## What's Taking Flight

.....by Jon Seymour

The year 2015 was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization. As an all volunteer land trust we have managed to protect ~1200 acres of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers floodplain in those 30 short years. Starting from nothing in 1985 a group called the Save the Oxbow Society (SOS) wrote hundreds of letters to local legislators and managed to convince them to leave the Oxbow alone. Within two years the Save the Oxbow Society had changed its name to Oxbow, Inc., established itself as a tax-exempt charitable organization (1986) and purchased its first piece of land (1987). It was 27.5 acres of swamp that no one wanted except us and it was the start.

Over 50 members of Oxbow, Inc. came together on Saturday night, October 24<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The new Lawrenceburg Event Center had our room beautifully decorated and the cash bar was a popular gathering spot. A sumptuous buffet was provided. Jim Williams led off the remarks with a verbal picture of the Oxbow area before the settlers arrived. Jim made the point that as an organization we were taking the land back toward its native state and function. Judy Bramstedt, the first President of Oxbow, Inc. spoke passionately of the formation of the organization and the first battles to save the land from development. Judy most remembers the passion and the shared love of the land and its inhabitants that glued the organization together. Jay Stenger, long time Oxbow Board member, spoke on the transition and difference that Oxbow's stewardship has made in our 30 years of existence. Jay reminded us that while we are not perfect, we have managed to bring back many of the habitats and species that naturally inhabited the area. I spoke on the future of Oxbow, Inc. It is imperative that we prepare Oxbow, Inc.

with the tools need to take the work of saving the floodplain far into the future. The implied contract we have made with the former owners, our donors, members, and government agencies requires that Oxbow, Inc. find a way to protect the floodplain in perpetuity. That is a tall order and there is no way to guarantee it. However we can plan and prepare and we will be taking major steps in the next 5 years to make it happen.

*(continued on page 2)*

## BIRDATHON 2016

For the 30<sup>th</sup> year the Greater Cincinnati Area Birdathon is off to a great start. Yes, the first Greater Cincinnati Area Birdathon was held in 1987. There are even a few individuals who participated in the first one still hanging around waiting to see their first Flamingo on a Birdathon weekend. There are even a few folks that will have participated in ALL 30 of the Birdathons. We will be celebrating the birds and 30 years of birding the Greater Cincinnati Area and having a fun time doing it. In the process we will raise money to make the Oxbow a better place. What could be better? Join us on May 6-7 for another birding blast followed by the Tally Party at Fernald, at 5:00 pm. on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup>, where all will be revealed. "Stories from the Birdathon" is the feature of the party along with the annual review of bird species seen. Plus pizza, snacks (some of them healthy) and beverage make for the ending of a perfect 24 hour hunt for species. Come join us and tally some birds. We have plenty of room for participants.

If you cannot be there send in money to support the hard working (?) teams, and the money goes to supporting habitat and access improvements in the Oxbow. HAPPY 30<sup>th</sup> BIRDATHON TO ONE AND ALL.

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

The banquet concluded with a silent auction of many art treasures, most donated from the collection of David and Kani Meyer. Over \$600 was raised. For many, this was their first attendance at an Oxbow birthday party (we have had 3: 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and now the 30<sup>th</sup>). For more it was their first experience inside the new Event Center. I believe everyone was impressed with the room, service, and quality of the food. I know everyone was thrilled by the trip down memory lane and the opportunity to celebrate our success.

This year we signed a contract with an agent to actively work with the remaining land owners in the floodplain to try to arrange real estate deals that would benefit both Oxbow, Inc. and the remaining owners. This is a long term project that we hope will eventually lead to complete protection of the floodplain. We have exhausted all the willing land owners and now are facing land owners who have no express desire to sell. We are hoping that this approach will lead to sales agreements with the remaining land owners but we realize even this more aggressive approach will take time to bear fruit.

The 2015 Birdathon raised over \$4400 for Oxbow habitat and access improvement. This is the most in four years and a much appreciated turn around in the fund raising aspects of the Birdathon. On the fun side we had 19 teams participate (48 individuals) and together they found 193 species. After breaking 200 species last year the 193 was a tad disappointing. Hey, but who's counting.

Our efforts to participate in the Indiana Bat migration study were doomed by rain and the resulting late season floods. A mid-July flood not only took out the electronics in the bat tower transmitter but also drowned half the crops in the Oxbow casing total loss of half of our planted crops and some anguish to our farmers. While this happens occasionally, it is always distressing when it does happen. The unusual spring and early summer rains brought several flocks of shorebirds into the Oxbow and one of those flocks included the Oxbow's first Whimbrel. This brings the bird species count to 288 species. We are closing in on the magic 300.

During the late summer and early fall the Ohio River went toxic with a 700 mile long toxic algae bloom. This algae bloom was highly unusual for its length and duration and had many wondering what the future had in store for the Ohio. Since the River is the primary drinking water source for millions along the Ohio River, a disruption in its quality would have a huge impact on the area. The level of the water in the Oxbow, at the time of the algae bloom was higher

than the Ohio River level so we did not experience any bloom. The incident served to emphasize the fragile nature of our water supply to many in the area.

We again awarded college scholarships of \$500 each to 5 worthy seniors at local high schools. Katie Lofton, William Henry Harrison High School (headed to the University of Toledo); Paul Elliot, East Central High School (headed to Washington University-St. Louis); Jenna Lyons, Taylor High School (headed to Bowling Green University); Morgan Cady, Lawrenceburg High School (headed to Paul Smith's College of Arts and Sciences), and Carley Ochs, South Dearborn High School (headed for Northern Kentucky University). We wish them all great lives and careers and a never ending passion for nature.

#### **Oxbow's Christmas Wish List for 2016**

*During the Christmas Season, like many others, we prepared our Wish List for Santa. In the past Santa has filled several of our wishes so we must have been on the good list. We hope 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 still need a volunteer interested in interviewing other volunteers and writing up short stories, on the efforts of other volunteers, for publication in the Wetland Matters. This is very important since our volunteers are wonderful and deserve to be recognized in many ways for their unselfish efforts.
- We need a volunteer coordinator to make phone calls and send email messages to the many volunteers who participate in our activities through the course on the year. While we have many activities that could use volunteers during the year we have no one to drum up support and follow up with the volunteers and their efforts.
- If you have a truck in good shape that you are no longer using and wish to donate it to Oxbow, we are interested. Having a truck available to use, when we have to haul something in or out of the Oxbow, is a valuable necessity. Lack of a truck has more than once caused us to lose the opportunity to haul a piece of trash out of the Oxbow when conditions were right to do so. We have an offer of a nearby location where we can park the truck when not in use so all we need is a donor and a truck that works.
- We need volunteers to help with an Art Show we are planning for late 2016. We have a start and basic plans but will need additional help to pull it off.

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

# Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

*Wednesday, November 25, 2015*

It is the day before Thanksgiving but a cursory view of the Oxbow reveals no turkeys to be found. Maybe they have a secret calendar. Actually turkeys are uncommon in the Oxbow. I have seen them a few times, but the flood plain, while an excellent feeding ground when the corn is up, is not an "excellent" breeding ground. And it may be that even the floodplain soil repels turkeys. Birds that scratch the dirt for grubs, seeds, and roots, do not like soil that balls into mud and sticks to their toes. They may even avoid such an area. If the Oxbow soil is wet it can form a nasty mud that sticks to everything building up extra pounds on shoes that dare to tread over it. I have the boots to prove it. There are, however, "turkey" vultures flitting here and there through the sky who are undeterred by mud.

Today I am taking a maintenance tour. I know most people enter the Oxbow to see wildlife or simply enjoy being outdoors. Sometimes I can do this too, but all too often I am on a maintenance tour like today. Last week I spent time at the Hardintown end of the Oxbow picking up trash left by unthinking users of the area. My big find was a paper lawn fertilizer sack floating in the water. Inside the sack was a plastic bag and inside the plastic bag was the guts of a deer. I pulled it to shore and emptied the contents on the shore line and consigned the bags to my trash collection. A few days later one of my friends that is a member of Oxbow, and attends my church, took me aside after service and told me he had taken a friend into the Oxbow and was listing some of the birds they saw. At the end, as almost an afterthought, he mentioned a few crows they had seen. Crows are known to harass raptors so I asked what the crows were doing. He said they were feeding on a pile of deer guts along the shoreline. I had to smile. There is only one reason someone would try to hide a deer gutting and that is if the deer was killed illegally. Normally the hunter would leave the guts on the ground where they would feed raccoons, opossums, fox, coyotes, raptors, and of course crows. Most hunters appreciate that this is part of the cycle which returns nutrients to the environment. Someone went to a lot of trouble to hide the signs of their illegal kill but the crows ended up with the spoils anyway and at least it did not rot in the lake.

Today I am heading down the railroad track entrance and stop at the entrance sign at the south

end of the property. Here summer growth has partially obscured the signs and I break several of the stalks down and return to my car for my hand saw (magic car has nearly everything). After sawing off a few scraggly bushes at their base the view to the sign is clear as one approaches in a car down the railroad track road. I notice that the sunlight that hits this sign full force in the afternoon has started to fade the map and the Audubon Bird Area signs. The others seem to be OK for the moment.

Turning around I trek to the top of the railroad bed to the sight of the switch that take the number of tracks from two to one for its trip through the city of Lawrenceburg. Here I want to check on the mitigated area south of the tracks that belongs to the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District (LCD). Originally I understood that there were three pools constructed south of the railroad track that formed the descent of the water draining out of the main portion of the conservancy district down to the Ohio River. Now as I look out on the river I see that it is a bayou all the way from the Ohio to the outlet of the pipe under the railroad track. I wonder if this is going to become a problem in the future or whether it will stabilize and be alright. We will have to see.

Back in the car I pull forward a few hundred feet to where a Dearborn County Sheriff's deputy is sitting in their vehicle watching the area and working on their computer. I have to ask him to pull off the road a bit so I can get around and I thank him for the service they provide to the Oxbow in continuing to keep it safe and free from damage. We pay the deputies to watch the Oxbow on their off duty hours as an extra duty, but we are thrilled that many of them see it also as a great opportunity to be outside and enjoy the beauty of the Oxbow area. Many have evolved into passionate protectors of the area.

My next stop is the mowed firebreak between the LCD prairie and the woodland at the end of the LCD pond complex. We do not own the LCD land but in partnership with LCD we are paid a small fee to manage the prairie on the property. The firebreak is one of the management tools. Each year we pay to have the firebreaks mowed or bush hogged as need. Often 2X a year. The down side is that they attract vehicle traffic, particularly fishermen. As I walk the firebreak I have mixed feelings about the vehicle use. While we do not want the traffic on the firebreak, I have to admit that the volume of traffic along most of the length of the firebreak prevented anything from growing and portions are basically bare dirt. I do not like the idea but I know that bare dirt is the best firebreak. However, the round about traffic circle at the

*(continued on page 4)*

*Horseshoe Diary (Continued from Page 3)*

end of the firebreak as it dives to the water's edge is a bit much. It does destroy prairie that is intended for protection. We will continue to work on methods to protect these fragile areas.

The last stop of the day is along the Oxbow Lake itself. During the year, several people have asked whether I had seen the eagles nest along Oxbow Lake. I had answered "no", and assured each of the observers that I would check it out. I was pretty certain there was no eagles nest and that the many expert observers leading birding treks into the Oxbow would have reported the location of any such nest, but with the leaves down I wanted to see for myself if I could figure out what they were seeing. As I approached Oxbow Lake I could see the nest in the tree from quite some distance away. It is in the location that had been described to me, but it is obviously not an eagles nest. The nest is flat and saucer shaped, and is high on the outer edge of the tree supported by branches maybe three inches in diameter. It is probably a Red-tailed Hawk nest. I will try to see if it is occupied next spring. Eagles nests are VERY heavy and never found in the extremities of a tree unless near the trunk of a very old tree. Even a first year mating pair will build a nest that weighs 400 lbs and would crush any light weight limbs. Experienced pairs add to the nest every year and nests weighing 2000 lbs or more have been documented. This takes an extremely sturdy tree and many nests end up breaking the branches that originally supported them. Next year we will see if any hawks return or maybe a pair of Great-horned Owls, or maybe both in their turn.

Friday, November 27, 2015

REI's #optoutside has become a rallying call to those wishing that "Black Friday" was not the focus of every thought and action of the Christmas Season. The local REI store placed Oxbowinc.org on their list of places to opt out. Since we had nothing prepared for this and had not featured it ourselves, I am concerned that we might have a few people show up in the Oxbow and wonder what there was to do. To this end, my wife Jackie, and I have stationed ourselves along the main entrance near Hardintown in case anyone drives in looking lost. Jackie and I have never been late Christmas shoppers, often starting on the next Christmas list as early as March, so by the time "Black Friday" rolls around we are usually pretty much done. Opt outside is often our normal course for this traditional shopping day.

Today we are disguised as trash collectors armed with buckets, bags, and 3 ft. long, day-glow orange, trash grabbers. We are trying to blend into the wildlife, but I doubt we will succeed. While we find some trash near the entrance, I had just picked up the area a week before and new trash was light. Jackie almost immediately finds a blob of deer guts near the parking area that was not

there last week. It was not fresh, so it had likely been there a few days and surprisingly did not show many signs of disturbance by the areas other wild residents.

Traffic is light and visitors seem to be those that have been here before so we move our trash collection efforts down the hill to the overlook. Here we are more successful in finding trash to collect. There are a few fishermen present and I welcome them and ask what they are catching. I always work this around to my "elevator" speech regarding "some fishermen" seem to leave a lot of trash behind while some actually clean up after themselves as well as the others that came before. Both statements are true, but these fishermen insist they fall into the latter category, for which I thank them. Funny, in all these years no one has ever admitted falling into the first category.

A couple who are doing geo-caching show up. They are opting outside on their own, no encouragement needed. They have been in the Oxbow before, but this is the first time they have run into someone who could answer questions about the area and tell them its history. After I give them a brochure, Jackie and I decide to take our talent elsewhere and pile the collected trash into the back of my car and head for the trash bin. After unloading we head back into the Oxbow at the Hollywood Casino entrance. Two stops along the road and walking a long stretch yield several more bags of trash and we deplete our supply of bags. Jackie finds another dead deer. This time she finds a whole carcass which implies a more likely "natural" death. It still could be the result of a gunshot wound and the deer "got away", but without Oxbow CSI on the case to gather evidence and confirm the cause of death, we will never really know. After the final trip to the dumpster, we head out to treat ourselves to a well-earned restaurant stop.

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary – of Long, Long Ago.

.....by Vernon Hall (edited a bit by Jon Seymour)

I was born and grew up in Hardentown (Hardinsburgh) from 1941-1960. I was born in a 4 room log cabin (*From the map Mr. Vernon drew the log cabin was located somewhere near the current entrance to the Oxbow.*) The "old bed" bottoms was my front yard for fishing, hunting, working for farmers and just running wild with the neighborhood boys and girls. The new highway ruined a good playground for the county kids often referred to as "river rats" by the city kids that lived in Lawrenceburg. We got electric when I was 10 years old and we used a hand pump well and an out-house until we were moved out in 1954 so Dearborn Gravel could dig gravel to build the concrete foundations of Lawrenceburg and Greendale. That is why they are so strong. They are held up by Hardentown. We got broad shoulders and strong backs. I graduated from Lawrenceburg High School in 1959. Those were the good old days. (*Vernon Hall now lives in Florida*)

### **Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS**

To reach the Oxbow, Inc. office take Highway US 50 west from the #16 exit off I-275. Pass the Hollywood Casino 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. **All meetings are at The Oxbow, Inc. Office, 301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg unless otherwise noted**

**Tuesday January 12, 7:30 PM**

#### **Beer: Past, Present, and Future of the Nectar of the Gods**

Andrew Rasmussen is an award-winning teacher at Mount St. Joseph University, where he advises MSJU's Biological Honor Society, teaches microbiology, biology, and the art and science of beer-making. His talk will be entertaining and informative as well!

**Tuesday February 9, 7:30 PM**

#### **Fascinating Flying Squirrels**

John Klein spent his 33-year career as Land Manager for the Hamilton County Parks. Now five years into retirement, he enjoys teaching others about the wonders of nature through hiking and kayaking. He has been observing and studying flying squirrels for the past two years and has become fascinated with these friendly yet rarely seen animals.

**Tuesday March 8, 7:30 PM**

#### **Surface Water Chemistry and Creatures Associated with the Lower and Middle Great Miami River: the Health of Water in our Oxbow Lakes and Feeder Streams.**

Michael Miller taught Limnology (fresh water biology) at the University of Cincinnati for many years, and in retirement has been using his impressive energy, knowledge and skill in helping to protect our waterways. Michael is a kayaking enthusiast, bicyclist, and a member of the Mill Creek Yacht Club!

***Participants in the outdoor programs need to be aware of the following potential hazards that could be encountered during any of the outdoor programs offered by Oxbow, Inc.:***

The trails are uneven graveled and often unmaintained dirt roads. We may have to go off the road if there is an obstacle in the road. Areas off road are often more uneven, may have poison ivy and may be close to water and steep banks. You must decide for yourself if you are able to safely navigate this terrain. If at any point an individual decides they need to discontinue the tour the tour leader will do their best to help them to the extent that that it does not prevent the tour from being completed for the enjoyment of the other participants or put their safety at risk. There are no restrooms. (ADA)

#### **Hunting Permit Applications Due July 1, 2016**

Oxbow, Inc. members who wish to apply for permits to hunt on Oxbow, Inc. land must submit their application by July 1, 2016 to:

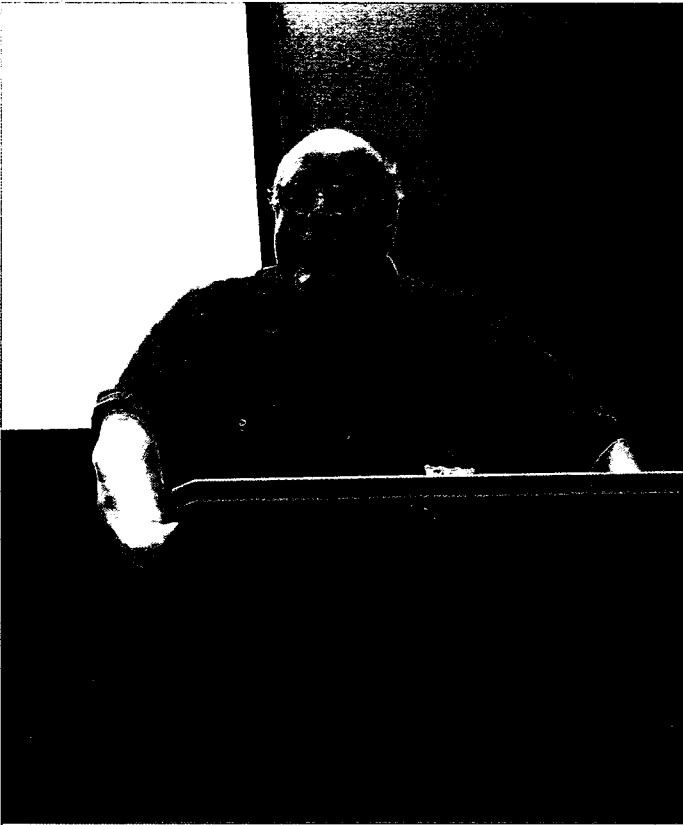
Oxbow, Inc.  
c/o Denny Mason  
10210 Scull Rd  
Cincinnati, OH 45252

Your application must include a copy of your valid Indiana hunting license and a completed memorandum of understanding printed on page 11. Cut out the memorandum. Complete the form and mail it with a copy of your license and a self-addressed stamped envelope to Denny. 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.

If you have any questions contact Denny Mason at 513-385-3607.



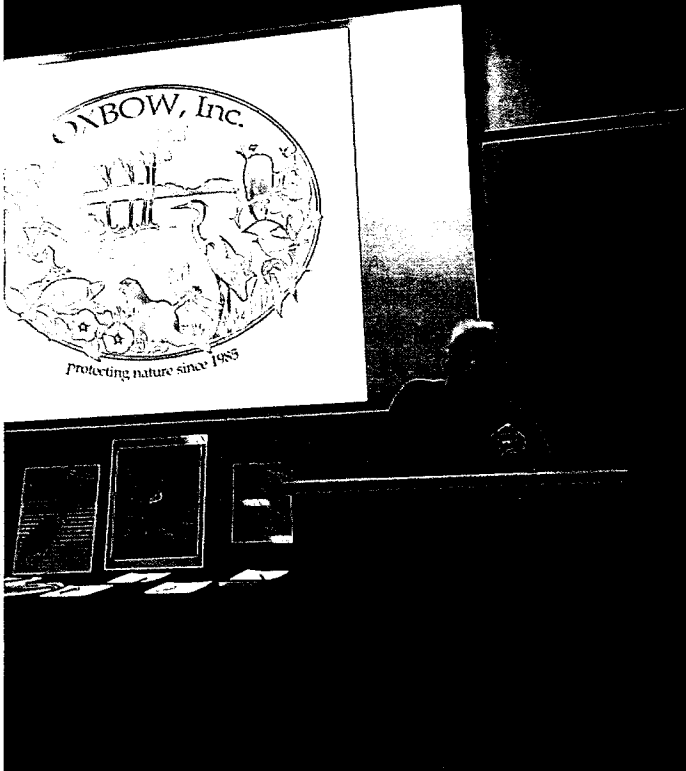
A Carolina Wren sits in frozen branches on the northern edge of its range in the Oxbow. Climate change has made for recent warm mild winters that has led to populations of Carolina Wrens moving north. But severe winters can cause the collapse of the northern populations and reduce the numbers of Wrens even as far south as the Oxbow. (photo by Wayne Wauligman)



Jay Stenger spoke to those in attendance of the 30th birthday party about the status of the Oxbow today versus when we started 30 years ago. (Photo by Cammie Seymour)



Judy Bramstedt, first President of Oxbow, Inc., 30 years ago (when she was but a child) and Jon Seymour current President of Oxbow, Inc. share a story of the formation of Oxbow, Inc. Judy spoke to the attendees at the 30th Birthday party on the formation of Oxbow, Inc. and Jon spoke to the assembly on the future of Oxbow, Inc. (Photo by Cammie Seymour)



Jim Williams, long time member and retired naturalist from Great Parks of Hamilton County, spoke on the state of the Oxbow area when the pioneers arrived and first settled the land that had been in the stewardship of the native peoples for 8000 years. (photo by Cammie Seymour)



Members of Oxbow attend the 30th Birthday Celebration of Oxbow, Inc. at the Lawrenceburg Event Center. (photo by Jon Seymour)

### **Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS**

**Directions for Oxbow Inc Field Trip Meeting Location — Unless otherwise indicated, all trips start at the upper Oxbow parking lot.** To reach the upper Oxbow parking area, go south on US Hwy 50 from the I-275 #16 exit. In about 200 yards, turn left (east) at the edge of the Shell/Subway and go over the levee to where the road T's with a fence directly in front of you. Turn right and go to the Oxbow entrance sign. Turn left into the Oxbow. The upper parking area is immediately on the right.

#### **Annual Moonlit Evening Winter Walk**

**Date: Friday, January 22, 2016**

**Time: 7:00 P.M. (Evening)**

**Meet: At the Shawnee Lookout Golf Course Parking Lot**

**Leader: John Klein, (513) 304-2310, [john.klein2@yahoo.com](mailto:john.klein2@yahoo.com)**

One of Oxbow Inc's beloved founders, Morris Mercer, loved the night winter woods, especially if there was snow on the ground. He and his good friend John Klein started doing this night walk in the Shawnee Lookout woodlands that overlook the Oxbow many years ago. Morris is no longer with us, but John loves the tradition and has kept Morris's spirit alive. We now refer to this annual event as the Morris Mercer Memorial field trip.

If you are looking for a unique experience come and join John as he leads us on about a two hour night walk around Shawnee Lookout Park to see what the night woods have to offer. John, an Oxbow Inc board member and retired Land Manager for the Hamilton County Park District, is the perfect guide. There will be a full moon on this date and there is a fair chance that owls, deer and flying squirrels will be seen or heard. John will talk about the history of the Oxbow and Shawnee Lookout area and also have a scope available for stargazing. And as always at some point, John will pass out M & M's to celebrate Morris's memory.

Meet John in the parking lot of the Shawnee Lookout Golf Course Clubhouse at 7:00 pm. The rest rooms will be open. The park is normally closed at this time of night but the rangers will have the entrance gates open for us. Remember that its January at night so be sure to dress warmly. John is like Morris, in that he would like a little snow on the ground. However severe weather will cancel this trip. If you have any doubts as to whether the trip is cancelled, call John at (513) 304-2310. This trip is highly recommended.

Visit the Shawnee Lookout website for Park Maps and other info  
<http://www.greatparks.org/parks/shawnee-lookout>

#### **Early Spring Waterfowl Migration**

**Date: Saturday, February 27, 2016**

**Time: 8:00 A.M.**

**Meet: In the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow**

**Leader: Joe Bens, (513) 353-4229, [joebens@live.com](mailto:joebens@live.com)**

Early spring waterfowl migration should be in full swing by this date and they will be the primary focus of this trip. However a diverse number of other early spring migrants and seasonal species will also be seen. It's also a great time of year to find Bald Eagles and other raptors in the Oxbow. Our trip leader, Joe Bens, is one of Oxbow Inc's original member and he is an expert birder. He has great bird finding abilities so expectations are high. Joe plans to move around to several spots in the Oxbow area depending on accessibility and water conditions as flooding is the norm in the Oxbow at this season.

So why not shake off your cabin fever and join Joe for what should be a productive morning of wildlife viewing in the Oxbow. Aside from seeing waterfowl and other birds, mud and cold weather is also guaranteed, so dress appropriately. This is a morning trip that should end before noon. Restrooms are available nearby. Feel free to contact Joe if you have any questions regarding the trip.





## usings

by Dave Styér

### The Horned Lark

Whenever I see Horned Larks, I feel an extra pleasure. Horned Larks are beautiful birds, but so are many other species. I enjoy hearing the high-pitched, tinkling song of Horned Larks, but I find the song of the American Robin more beautiful. The contrast between the beauty of the bird and the stark land in which it lives must be the factor that sets up my special pleasure upon being with them.

Horned Larks are in the Oxbow area all year, but the largest numbers are seen in late fall and winter, when storms must drive many birds south. This surely suggests that many Horned Larks live farther north, which is, indeed, true. The fact is that the Horned Lark has one of the world's largest songbird distributions. They live across Eurasia. In England they have been mostly winter residents along the shores, and they are known, appropriately, as Shore Larks. Horned Larks nest over most of North America, including Mexico. There are even populations that live in North Africa, and in Colombia, South America. The Lark family, *Alaudidae*, is reasonably large, containing 96 species, but the Horned Lark is the only one native to the New World. The famous Skylark is another member of the family. Attempts have been made to introduce the Skylark to North America, but, except for Vancouver Island, British Columbia, all have failed.

The Horned Lark breeds earlier in the year than any other songbird in the area. I don't remember the dates, but I know that I have seen young off the nest before I have realized that they had actually started breeding. According to Bruce Peterjohn, in *the Birds of Ohio*, Horned Larks didn't start nesting in Ohio until after 1880. The same would have applied to southeastern Indiana. Our nesting Horned Larks have moved in from the prairie states to the west. Welty and Baptista, in *The Life of Birds* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), present fascinating commentary on the Horned Lark's early nesting:

*Temporal events operate...to affect avian evolution. Apparently the incubation calendar of the Horned Lark, *Eremophila alpestris*, is fixed partly by the weather and partly by predators. In the northern United States in April, many young of the Horned Lark succumb to late snows, cold rains, or food*

*shortages. But late hatching is no cure for the trouble since "predaceous enemies cause a greater and greater loss as the season advances into June and July. The optimum season for the welfare of the young is shown to be in May" (Bent, 1942). The fledglings are thus caught in a selective vise, one jaw of which brings physical pressures, the other, biological pressures.*

Whether the predators that drive early breeding of Horned Larks in, say, Nebraska are also in the Greater Cincinnati area I don't know. Even so, you can bet that our birds would still have the drive to breed as early as possible. Besides that, parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds is said to be very damaging to the Horned Lark's breeding success. Horned Larks that lay their eggs in winter aren't likely bothered by cowbirds that early in the year.

Since the Horned Lark is a breeding bird in the Oxbow area, I'll comment more on the lark's breeding biology. The female has a brood patch, that is, a patch of bare skin on her belly that she can get in direct contact with the nest eggs to incubate them with her body heat. The male Horned Lark does not have a brood patch, so the female does all the incubating. Once the eggs hatch, the male shares in the duty of feeding the young.

I have never seen a Horned Lark's nest, and I have never really tried to find one. Apparently they are right out in the open on the nearly bare ground. According to Gayle Pickwell, in Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds*, the female is very subtle and makes it exceedingly hard to find the nest. So, the way to find a nest is to wait until the young hatch, and then watch the male making trips to feed the young. Because the male hasn't cared for the eggs, and actually feeds the chicks less than the female, he hasn't fine-tuned the art of protecting the young, while the female has. That's why it's easier to use the males to find the nests.

### HOLD THE DATE

Saturday, Sept 10 for Bob Nuhns Oxbow Butterfly count. As usual, we will meet at the Hardentown Oxbow parking area and go for maybe 1-2 hrs or as many as people want to hang out!

**Oxbow Inc. would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts.**

Joanne Jeffrey  
 Ken Miller & Bethia Margoshes  
 Steve & Karen Maslowski  
 Charles Noe  
 Wilson Palmer  
 David & Margaret Yelton

**Donor**

Ken & Shirley Durbin  
 Jane Henry  
 Jon & Jackie Seymour

**In Memory of**

Dale Durbin  
 Bonnie Fancher  
 Bill Hamel

**Donor**

Nancy Saunders

**In Honor of**

Mary & Charles Durbin



*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 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025.  
 Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.*

**Birdathon Participation**

Oxbow, Inc. wants to have as many bird-watchers as possible participate in the Birdathon. While there is a basic competition for the most species seen in the Birdathon area during 24 hours, there are many ways to compete besides most species for the total Birdathon area. To get your mind working, here are some possible categories of competition:

*-if not the entire Birdathon area then a portion-*  
 Most Species seen: in one state, in one county or a river watershed

*-maybe it is a small area-*

Most Species In One Location: like the Oxbow, backyard, or a big sit

*-maybe the type of team-*

Most Species seen: by a family, a group under the age of 20, a school class

*-maybe it can be a special category-*

Most money raised: by a team, an individual, a class

*-or-*

Most birds seen without using fossil fuel, while building a deck, taking the kids for a hike

*-or-*

Most birds photographed

You can even make up your own category. If it has anything to do with counting bird species in the Birdathon's 24 hour time window we will probably accept it.

Remember the purpose of the Birdathon is to raise money for improving Oxbow habitat and Oxbow accessibility projects. Each team or individual participating should do everything it can to raise money for Oxbow. **The way to do it is to have fun birding! Then celebrate all the fun at the Grand Tally Party**

If you want to enter a team (or as an individual) in the Oxbow Birdathon, **please call Jay Stenger @ 513-522-4245 or Jon Seymour @ 513-851-9835.** We like to know how many are going to be participating on the Birdathon so that we can get the Pizza order right for the Grand Tally Party at the finish of the Birdathon. There is \$5.00 fee per person to participate which goes to cover the cost of the food at the Tally Party. See you ALL there.

**Birdathon Pledge Form for Birdathon 2016  
(May 6-7, 2016)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4172  
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025  
Attn: Birdathon

My Pledge for Birdathon 2016 is:

Fixed Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Check Enclosed ( ) Bill me after the Birdathon  
(Be sure to pick a team to support with your check. It means a lot to the birders.)

-OR-

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 – Joe Bens, Jay Stenger &amp; Jack Stenger

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #2 – Wayne Wauligman &amp; Erich Baumgardner

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #3 – Sister Marty Dermody, Lois Shadix,  
Katherine Miller & Chris Moran\_\_\_\_\_ Team #4 – Charlie Saunders, Bob Lacker &  
Steve Pelikan

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #5 – Jerry Lippert &amp; Madeleine Lippert

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #6 – Jon Seymour &amp; the First Timers

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #7 – Brian Wulker, Bill Zimmerman & William  
Hull

\_\_\_\_\_ Team #8 – Dave &amp; Jane Styer (West Coast Big Day)

**Make checks payable to  
Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.**

**Note this is a change to allow us to keep better track of the money for the purposes of habitat restoration and improved access. All donations to Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. are tax deductible.**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

(A hunting permission slip with a confirmatory stamp and authorized signature will be returned to you upon acceptance of your application.) **HUNTING PERMISSION REQUESTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 1, 2016**

*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.

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc.  
c/o Denny Masn  
10210 Scull Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45252  
Phone: 513-385-3607

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 (ie. 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

**Hunting permission is granted for one year (July 1 to June 30 of the following year) only and must be reapplied for yearly.**

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 \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Return Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, 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 know 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 4172  
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025  
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, Ed Gemperle	(812) 539-3666
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, Ed Gemperle	(812) 539-3666

### Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Easement Inspection, John Getzendanner II	(812) 537-0481
Education, Velda Miller	(812) 584-0187
Field Trips, Jay Stenger	(513) 522-4245
Kathy McDonald	(513) 748-0281
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 307-5284
John Klein	(513) 941-4877
Programs, Dr. Meg Riestenberg	(513) 921-3986
Webmaster, Kani Meyer	(513) 307-5284
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
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513-851-9835



Need a Speaker?  
Give Us a Call!

www.oxbowinc.org

LAWRENCEBURG, IN 47025

P.O. BOX 4172

