

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

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Riverboat Update

1) In a decision given November 21st, the Indiana Supreme Court upheld the state's riverboat gambling law. This clears the way for the Gaming Commission to begin the process of awarding licenses. It is expected that the first license will be awarded in Gary, with the next two licenses being granted in Larwenceburg and Evansville. Public hearings are part of the licensing process, and the Gaming Commission will schedule hearings in Dearborn County before awarding a license to one of the applicants.

In addition to the question of the potential effects of proposed development on the Oxbow ecosystem, it will be important to consider to what extent developers will fulfill their entire plans and keep their promises to the community. Gaming developers in other parts of the country, after receiving licenses based on plans that included the construction of hotels and convention centers, have forfeited rather small bonds after choosing not to carry out their plans. Instead, they installed much smaller gambling operations which failed to provide many of benefits to the community that were in the original plan.

2) Oxbow, Inc. received notice from the Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) of applications from a Columbus, Ohio sign company, and from a land owner in the area, who plan to install large billboards along I-275 near the bridge over the Ohio River and all along the eastern side of I-275 from the bridge to the underpass by the cemetery. Some 25 signs appear to be included in the two proposals, although one of the proposals was vague about both the number and the locations of the proposed signs.

Large, illuminated signs have altered the appearance of interstate highways near most other gambling operations in the U.S., and it shouldn't be surprising that plans to install many such signs near Larwenceburg have already been made and set in motion. That local landowners and residents tolerate such blights is explained partly by the fact that typically many thousands of dollars are received in rent for each sign.

Oxbow is concerned about the possible effects of illuminated signs on wildlife in the flood plain and

about problems that could result from construction in wetlands and in a floodway. Oxbow's attorney, Tim Mara, informed Mr. Satchwell of the Dearborn County zoning commission that Oxbow intends to oppose these and any other plans to install billboards in the area. He also suggested to Mr. Satchwell that the zoning commission might reconsider the current zoning laws about billboards in light of the fact that gaming operations will likely lead to many requests to erect them.

Oxbow will forward petitions asking IDNR to hold informal hearings on each of the proposals to put up billboards.

3) Oxbow has forwarded a petition to the Army Corps of Engineers asking that a public hearing be held as part of the Corps' consideration of a proposal to develop on the bank of the Ohio River south of the (ex)Pearson-Holowell lumber yard. An application to dredge in the Ohio River was filed by the Argosy gaming company, which has recently purchased the lumber yard.

Last year, Oxbow received a copy of a memorandum of understanding between the Corps and the Indiana Gaming Commission which seemed to call for the Corps to postpone consideration of proposals from gaming companies until the Commission had awarded licenses. So it isn't certain when the Corps will begin review of the Argosy proposal. Oxbow's request for a hearing is not an opposition to the proposal, but an attempt to ensure that the possible deleterious effects of the construction on the area's wetlands will be carefully considered, that all relevant data will be available to the Corps, and that all pertinent laws and regulations will be observed.

MOST IMPORTANT: licensing and permitting processes call for public input and public hearings. You can learn the dates of any public hearings related to development in the Great Miami flood plain from Wetland Matters. We will also provide you with addresses to which you can send your comments. It is vitally important that Oxbow members and other concerned individuals attend public hearings, write letters, and otherwise express their concerns about protecting wetlands. Only by speaking out clearly, with a unified voice, we can make a difference.

Calendar

Meetings

10 January (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo Education Building (Enter through the exit gate on Erkenbrecher Avenue.)

The agenda for this meeting includes election of board members. This evening's program will be given by Dr. Steven Rogstad from the biology department at U.C. Steve has spent many years studying tropical forests around the world. He'll share some of his experiences and slides with us.

26 January (Thursday) 7:30 P.M. Slide program at Lawrenceburg Public Library

This program will be given by Virginia and David McNeil, who will describe a visit to Italy: Rome, Florence, Tivoli, Pompeii and Capri are some of the highlights of the trip. This program, the 20th in a series of slide shows presented by Elvin Blasdel, is free and open to the public. Donations for the new Dearborn Adult Center will be accepted. For more information, phone Elvin Blasdel at (812)-537-2602.

14 February (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library (From Cincinnati, turn left off U.S. 50 onto Walnut Street. Turn right onto High Street. The library is on the right side of High Street.)

This evening's program will be given by one of Oxbow's founders, David Styer. He will describe the research that went into his book *Birds of the Oxbow* and relate some of his more interesting discoveries about bird-life in the Oxbow area.

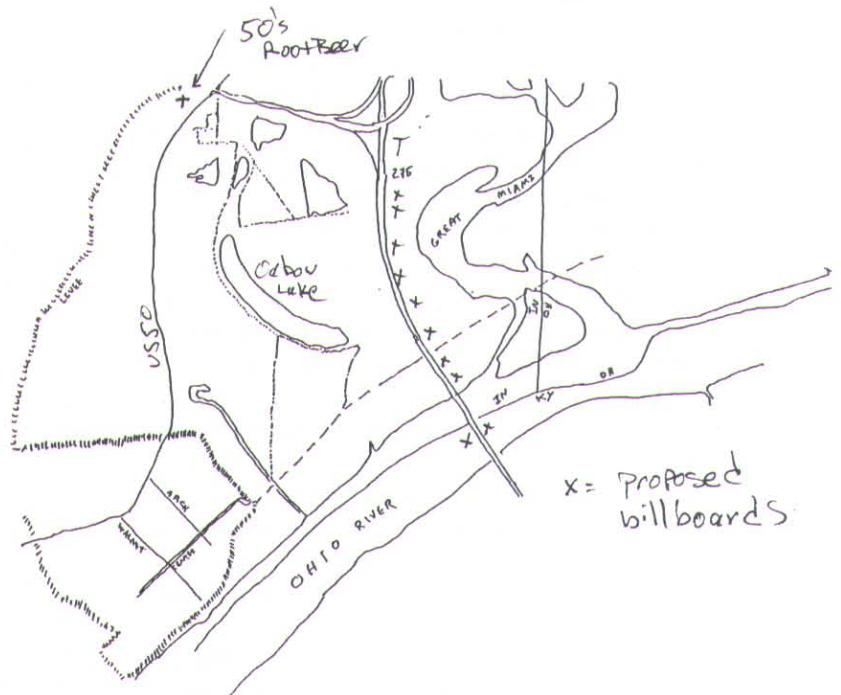
Field Trips

12 January (Thursday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow field trip at Shawnee Lookout Park.

Meet Morris Mercer at the Golf Club House for a winter's night walk. The colder it is and the more snow there is, the happier he'll be. For more information call Morris at (513) 941-2534

19 February (Sunday) 9:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip.

Meet Ned Keller at the 50's Root Beer parking lot for this trip into the Oxbow area. There should be good numbers of migrant waterfowl in the area, and that's what this trip will concentrate on. Bring binoculars / scopes if you have them. For more information, call Ned at (513)-941-6497.



Cleanup

On October 22 volunteers from Cincinnati Bell Telephone and AT&T Pioneers (a community service organization of Bell employees) joined several Oxbow members to clean up trash on Oxbow's land. The day started out gray, but turned bright and pleasant by midmorning. Everyone was amazed at the amount of trash that was removed from the area. Old washing machines, hot water heaters, construction scrap, and old tires were just some of the items that were hauled away. Lawrenceburg's Mayor Combs provided a dumpster and arranged to have the extra piles of trash the volunteers collected hauled away as well. Our thanks go to him for his help as well as to Patti Miller the local community services director of CWA local 4400, for helping to organize and support the cleanup. The biggest thanks goes to the Pioneers and Oxbow members who turned out and put in a hard but rewarding day picking up and hauling trash out of the flood plain.

THANK YOU

Barb Hoffman
Jack and Jan Pricketts
Peg Rudman
Phil and Julie Ruwe
Kevin Streckfuss
Linda Weberding
Maggie Weigold
Peggy Wood

Tom Harrison
Kani Meyer
Greg Mendell
Connie McNamee
Mike Kluesener

Letter

Oxbow sent a letter to the Indiana Gaming Commission, Federal and Indiana agencies, local newspapers and several Cincinnati institutions stating that only Oxbow President John Getzendanner, Oxbow Executive Director Norma L. Flannery and Attorney Timothy G. Mara were authorized to officially speak for Oxbow, Inc. and for Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. The letter went on to clarify Oxbow's policy by stating:

"The official corporate policy regarding riverboat casinos in Dearborn County, Indiana, is that no gaming company will be endorsed. After a decision by the Indiana Gaming Commission, Oxbow Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. will work closely with the company or companies selected and with the state and federal agencies involved in the licensing process, and will strongly attempt to discourage any building in the Great Miami River flood plain. All legal means will be taken to protect the unique and irreplaceable Oxbow ecosystem."

Roland S. Corning II

Roland S. Corning, the son of Bill and Barbara Corning of Versailles, died at his home in Lafayette, Louisiana on Monday, October 28.

He worked as a surveyor, was a graduate of Purdue University, and served in the Vietnam War.

Memorials may go to the Roland S. Corning Memorial Fund Weather Station for the South Ripley School.

Bill and Barbara Corning were the first land owners in the area to join Oxbow's cause and they have always been strong supporters of Oxbow. They sold Oxbow a conservation easement on their holdings in the bottoms and put the land in the Conservation Reserve Program — planting native trees on the land and letting it grow up in forest.

COMING IN MARCH

HIKING KENTUCKY Scenic Trails of the Bluegrass State by Darcy & Robert Folzenlogen

Over 180 dayhikes at 62 areas across Kentucky.
Designed for families, naturalists & weekend hikers.

Suggested Retail Price: \$14.95

Save \$2.00 by ordering before March 1 from Willow Press
6053 S. Platte Canyon Rd., Littleton, CO 80123
Invoice will be sent with book in March; free shipping!

Field Notes

Morris Mercer

As autumn was about to give way to winter I received a request from a cousin asking me to fill him in on some family history. In my search for the information I came across some old field notes from a February afternoon in 1970. I enjoyed retracing a winter trip to the Oxbow at a time before I-275 was built.

We had been to church, come home, and enjoyed a nice dinner. I wondered what was going on at the mouth of the Great Miami River. There was one way to find out, and I was soon on my way. I parked the car at the foot of the big hill and climbed the hill at Shawnee to the "Point" that overlooks the two rivers.

A strong west wind had a good shot at me out on the point. The trees swayed, bowed and the bare limbs creaked and groaned in the wind. Across the Miami I could see flights of ducks going down towards the Oxbow. So I headed down the steep hillside, on through the woods to the railroad, and then across the bridge.

Now the railroad bridge is one real cool place on a winter day. Today the west wind tore at my jacket and drove that hard snow and sleet into my face. Through half-closed eyes I looked out across the Ohio. The waves were running about knee-high and were capped with white foam. The railroad wasn't built with the hiker in mind. The ties are too close together to step on each one, and too far apart to skip one with each step. And one must "Stop Look and Listen" before walking out onto the bridge. Yet if you get caught in the middle of the bridge with a train coming, there is a little platform to stand on — it hangs out over the river. The platform takes some getting used to, though, especially when a fast freight comes past close enough to reach out and touch. That's when the little platform goes into its dance. It shakes, rattles and rolls as the train rushes by. Crossing the bridge I could see the piers that would someday support the I-275 bridge into Kentucky.

As I neared the Oxbow I could hardly believe my eyes. The Oxbow and the partly flooded fields were alive with ducks and geese, and more were coming all the time. I watched a flock of Pintail as they came in against the wind and seemed to hang suspended just above the weeds, before they ever so gracefully lowered themselves into the shallow water. A group

of 25 or 30 Baldpate came in and splashed and swam nervously before exploding back into the air. I enjoyed their musical calls as well as the loud quacking of the many Mallards and Black Ducks.

I saw more than 15 species of waterfowl. Some were on the ice, some in the air, others in the water diving and tipping. Then came a familiar sound and I looked up to see a flight of Canada Geese moving in on fixed wings. I took a second look as there were a few Snow Geese in the flight. What a picture and what a beautiful winter afternoon!

But the dark day was growing even darker and I had a way to go before night. Back up on the railroad, the wind hurried me down the tracks. Now it was at my back. I stopped to count a flight of Mallards and there were 23, but more flights were coming. Where were they coming from? Where were they going? I enjoyed a feeling of euphoria, it seemed my head had taken wings. How beautiful it was here at the mouth of the river on a winter evening.

There was a flock of Common Mergansers fishing in the Miami where warm water was coming from the Miami Fort Power Plant. I stepped down off the railroad and into the woods. It seemed so warm there; the wind had died down, and large snow flakes settled earthward. I thought of home: loved ones, the living room with a glowing fire, supper. Home, were I could share my stories of a winter evening at the Oxbow.

Reviewing my notes was a nice trip down memory lane, but we still have an Oxbow you can visit. If you enjoy seeing wildlife, don't miss the winter. To me, it's one of the finest times to be abroad in the Oxbow.



Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Sherman Bergmann
Martha Ann Brigham
Roland S. Corning
Dale Durbin
Dale Durbin
Alma Flannery
Julie Godsey — remember
Frederick P. Grove
William Lane
Ted Manassah
Jananne Morse McNitt

Donor

Cheryl A. Winslow, D.V.M.
Fred and Peggy Gatch
Normal L. Flannery
Shirley and Kenneth Durbin
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Noll
Norma L. Flannery
Norma L. Flannery
David and Suzanne Skidmore
Ralph and Marcia Lane
Norma L. Flannery
Fred and Peggy Gatch

Oxbow Tributes

In honor of

Bud Zimmer and Letty Bergstrom
(20th Anniversary)
Matt Pelikan (Gift membership)
Ed & Faith Pelikan (Gift membership)

Donor

Charlie Saunders
Anita Buck and Steve Pelikan
Anita Buck and Steve Pelikan

Oxbow, Inc. has established memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each memorial, established in the name of a friend or loved one, 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. Contributions should be sent to Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to include the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgment.

Election of Board of Trustees.

The January Oxbow meeting, to be held at the Cincinnati Zoo's education building, is the annual members meeting at which members are elected to serve 3 year terms on the Board of Trustees. At the January meeting nominations will be accepted from the floor, but it will be easier if we can have ballots prepared in advance. If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the Board, please do so by phoning the head of the nominating committee, David Styer, at (513)-772-4395.

The size of the Board of Trustees remains fairly constant with about 20 members. Board members serve in staggered 3 year terms, so approximately 1/3 of the board is elected each year.

Moving?

The Post Office will not forward Wetland Matters.
Please send your change of address to:

Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-0391

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 is rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

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

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

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391
513-471-8001

Corporation Officers

Executive Director,
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Recording Secretary,
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Corresponding Secretary,
Suzanne Skidmore (513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Jim Rettig (513) 561-0211
Agent, Dave Styer (513) 772-4395

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Bill Bocklage (513) 922-2445
Easement Inspection,
Michael Kluesener (513) 574-1220
Richard Pope (513) 637-1365
Fund Raising, Greg Mendell (812) 926-1966
Land Management, Dave Styer (513) 772-4395
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery (513) 471-8001
Programs, Morris Mercer (513) 941-2534
Research, Kaniaulono Meyer (513) 948-8630
Speakers Bureau, Morris Mercer (513) 941-2534
Newsletter Steve Pelikan (513) 681-2574



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