

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 56 November-December 1995

Christmas Bird Counts

Calendar

Meetings

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

Al Winstel, Naturalist for the Hamilton County Park District, will share a trip to the island of Grenada in search of Cook's tree boa. His title is "Tracking the tree boas on the tropics."

18 November (Saturday) 7:30 P.M. Gilmore Ponds Conservancy annual meeting at Winton Centre in Winton Woods.

Everyone is invited to the Gilmore Ponds Conservancy's fifth annual meeting. The program's speaker will be Karl Maslowski. He will present his color motion picture "Wildlife by day and by night." There will be refreshments, door prizes and a Kiddie Korner, as well as an update on activities at Gilmore Ponds Interpretative Preserve. Admission is free. You'll need a Hamilton County Park motor vehicle permit.

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

Dr. Meg Riestenberg, from the College of Mt. St. Joseph, Department of Chemical and Physical Science, will be this evening's speaker. Dr. Riestenberg, who serves on Oxbow's advisory board, will speak on "Geology, Plants, and People."

Field Trips

12 November (Sunday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow Fieldtrip.

Jay Stenger will lead this field trip into the Oxbow area. He'll be looking for whatever birds are in the area — ducks, winter residents, and late migrants. Meet at 50's Root Beer. For more information, call Jay at (513)-522-4245.

For December field trips, we'll participate in the area's Christmas bird counts. Below we've listed the organizers of the counts. Be sure to call and let them know you plan to participate.

17 December (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. 8th Ohio River CBC. The count circle includes the Oxbow flood plain. This is a relatively new count and new species are added to the list almost every year. Call Joe Bens, (513)-221-1835.

23 December (Sunday) 34th Western Hamilton County CBC. Call Ned Keller (513)-941-6497

30 December (Sunday) 49th Cincinnati CBC. Call Jay Stenger (513)-522-4245.

Billboards

We thought that everyone involved had reached an agreement. Whiteco-Metrocom, the company planning to construct billboards in the Oxbow area, would limit the number of signs erected, avoid erecting signs in specific locations that Oxbow, Inc. felt were especially sensitive, and would distribute them equitably among interested land-owners. In exchange, Oxbow, Inc and others would not object to Whiteco's application for a waiver of the County zoning regulations on the maximum size of billboards. This brief description is a tremendous over-simplification of the understanding. There were many interested parties including area land-owners, the local chapter of the Sierra Club, and several different groups of Native Americans. Oxbow's president, Norma L. Flannery and attorney, Timothy G. Mara, worked hard and talked with many people as the arrangement was hammered out.

The arrangement collapsed at a meeting of the Dearborn Zoning Commission when Whiteco's request for a variance was denied. Oxbow representatives made no objection to the granting of the variance, and the reasons for the denial are not clear at this time.

As a result, we're back to square one: Whiteco-Metrocom will begin litigation in an attempt to win the right to construct large billboards. As was their original plan, they now intend to construct some 50 billboards in the Oxbow area instead of the approximately 15 called for in the tentative agreement.

As always, Oxbow will try to work with all interested parties to ensure that development takes place with a minimum of damage to the environment.

Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Cathal Branigan
Ginger DeLorenzo
Paul Gladwell Glass
Julie Godsey
Peanut Groene
Dr. Walter W. Lippert
Lucian Murphy

Donor

Gloria McKinley
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
Rosemary and William Farrell
Norma L. Flannery
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
Mary Jo Sage
Bob & Tina Schlegel

Oxbow Tributes

In honor of

Sharon & Mike O'Connell
— 25th Anniversary

Donor

Richard & Janet Todd

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 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 enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

Gift suggestions

Oxbow has many gift suggestions for the approaching holiday season. A **gift membership in Oxbow** is always appropriate. Your gift will be announced in *Wetland Matters* if you wish. Or how about a stylish **Birdathon T-shirt** with a Fritz Haas design? A few all-cotton shirts from the two previous years are available: inquire about available sizes.

David Styer's book *Birds of the Oxbow* would appeal to any birders or naturalists on your list, as would the ***Birds of the Oxbow* video** produced by Impact Video.

Another perennial favorite is an **Oxbow shirt or sweatshirt** carrying the wood duck logo designed by Charlie Harper.

Baseball-style caps with Oxbow's shorebird logo are available (one size fits all) in several colors.

Most Oxbow merchandise can be purchased at the monthly meetings. Or, to order by 'phone, call Connie or Greg at (812)-926-2522.

A **1996 Hamilton Count Motor Vehicle Permit** provides the recipient with a year's use of the area's finest parks. (It is also a small way to support the H.C.P.D. which has done so much to help Oxbow protect the Great Miami floodplain.)

A **gift certificate from LaRosa's** (they help Oxbow each year by providing pizza for the birdathon tally) is something anyone can use.

Finally, consider one of the **Robert Folzenlogen books** (*Walking Cincinnati, Hiking Ohio, Hiking Kentucky, and Birder's Guide to the Cincinnati Tristate*). These books would appeal to anyone with an interest in the outdoors. (And Willow Press supports *Wetland Matters* with regular advertisements.)

Field Notes

Morris Mercer

On this cool, wet autumn evening I've looked at my field notes from a late summer trip to the Oxbow. The word that stands out is "HOT." And it was on a hot August evening I walked up to the bank of the beaver pond as the sun was setting. The sky was hazy, and a haze covered the edge of the lake near me. A few dead leaves from the cottonwood trees and duck feathers floated on the surface of the water. I watched as the sun disappeared behind the hills. The corn tops were silhouettes against a golden sky.

Great Egrets were easy to see. Some stood in the shallow water, others rested in the green willows. As I walked up for a better look, a Wood Duck took to the wing, and gave an alarm call as it flew low across the water. I soon found that there was more life at the water hole than I had thought.

Across the lake the Great Egrets and the Great Blue Herons were fishing. I watched as they stalked the shallow water. With their long, slow strides the birds moved in slow motion. Then a complete stop with eyes fixed on the water, looking statue-like before spearing a fish. But on many attempts, they'd come up with no more than a wet head.

And there was the Snowy Egret with a different hunting style. It ran around and seemed to dazzle its prey with fancy footwork. The Double-crested Cormorants seemed to enjoy the deeper water. I saw a cormorant come up with a nice fish, and watched to see what the bird would do with a fish that size. After a few minutes, it had the fish pointed head-first down its throat. Then the fish simply disappeared down the bird's neck.

As the light began to fade, I made a search of the water's edge with the aid of the 'scope. A few Blue-winged Teal, and several Mallards, worked the shallow water along the bank. A beaver-felled cottonwood lay mostly in the water; a Black-crowned Night-heron found a perch on a branch above the water. With one foot at the water-line and the other well up on the branch it didn't look too comfortable. But it seemed to be having good luck fishing from there.

I sat down to enjoy the tranquility of the evening, and picked a nice patch of cockle-burs on which to rest. The burs were green and soft, but in a few weeks, I knew, they'd be brown and hard — not the sort of thing to sit on.

Twilight was coming up the valley and it seemed almost by magic the deer appeared. A doe and her

spotted fawn were the first I saw. The fawn came out in the water to play. On around the water hole a doe came out of the willows to drink, and then to browse the willows. Farther along the bank, a buck appeared. He raised his head as if to show off his antlers with their velvet cover. As I sat quietly and watched I reflected on how lucky I've been to have a place like the Oxbow in which to enjoy wildlife.

I was privileged to make several trips to the Oxbow with young people this summer. One morning I went out Dr. Gene Willike and his graduate students from Miami University. On a September afternoon I joined Jane Church and the young people from "One Earth, One People." We had a special treat on that trip since a dozen or more graceful Forster's Terns had stopped in for a visit. And late September I toured the Oxbow with Jane Lutz and her class from Miami University. The weather was that of early autumn, but the wildlife we encountered was much the same as had been around all summer, although we did see 75 Double-crested Cormorants.

It's a thrill for me to see young people with an interest in the natural world. It will be up to such young people to save what's left of our wetlands and other wild places — work, I can't help but feel, that'll be placed in good hands.



SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFER FOR OXBOW MEMBERS

WALKING CINCINNATI (2nd Edit).....\$12.95
HIKING OHIO.....\$12.95
HIKING KENTUCKY.....\$14.95
A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO THE
CINCINNATI TRISTATE (2nd Edit).....\$12.95
Great Gifts for Outdoor People

Any 2 for \$22, any 3 for \$33, any 4 for \$44.
Send check to Willow Press, 6053 S. Platte Canyon
Road, Littleton, Colorado 80123; free shipping!
Offer expires December 31, 1995

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 area known locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from industrial development and to preserve the existing agricultural floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This is an agricultural area rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland. You can 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
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Corporation Officers

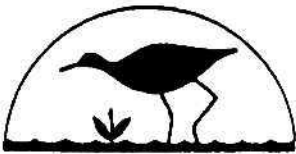
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Wetland Matters, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.

Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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