

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 60 July-August 1996

Birdathon Thanks

Gaming Development News

The Indiana Gaming Commission granted Argosy an extension until June 1 to raise the capital needed for the construction of their Lawrenceburg project. Argosy began selling bonds to raise \$235 million and reported by mid-June that they had raised the necessary funds.

Action by the Army Corps of Engineers on a permit application from Argosy will be delayed because construction was begun before the permit was issued. This complicated the permitting process because of the possibility that the construction damaged or obscured potentially important ecological or cultural sites. Earlier this year a similar instance of construction-before-permit slowed the permitting for Argosy's competitor from Rising Sun.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has been petitioned a by land owner in Lawrenceburg to reconsider its approval of Argosy's development plans. The land owner contends that these plans call for construction on land Argosy doesn't own.

Billboard lawsuits. Whiteco-Metrocom filed a petition in Dearborn County court asking judge Meyer to reconsider his opinion in which, on technical grounds, he dismissed the Whiteco-Metrocom lawsuit against the Dearborn County Board of Zoning Appeals. Oxbow submitted a statement supporting the judge's decision.

It is expected that Whiteco-Metrocom will try to reach an out-of-court agreement with the Dearborn County Board of Zoning Appeals, although no Whiteco-Metrocom representative attended the May zoning board meeting. At that meeting, The Board decided that it would stand by its earlier decision denying Whiteco's request for a variance of the county's zoning regulations concerning billboards.

It wouldn't have been Birdathon without the efforts of many volunteers and the generosity of local institutions and businesses.

Fritz Haas designed the Birdathon '96 T-shirts that were awarded to each participant. (Some shirts are still available and can be purchased at Oxbow meetings.)

LaRosa's Pizza fed the masses again this year, donating pizza enough to satisfy the 70-some hungry birders who attended the tally dinner at the end of Birdathon. Several birders mentioned that they cut back on their consumption of snacks by mid-day in order to prepare for the feast. Oxbow is extremely grateful to LaRosa's for their continuing support.

The Hamilton County Park District arranged to let Oxbow use the facility at Winton Centre for the birdathon tally. By waiving the usual fee for renting the room, HCPD contributed substantially to the income that Birdathon generates for Oxbow. Perhaps more important, the Park District made it possible for us to hold the tally at one of the finest facilities in the city; the wildlife and conservation posters on display created a congenial atmosphere sincerely appreciated by the many birdathon participants. (They also enjoyed getting in out of the rain and having furniture to sit on.)

Oxbow also thanks the volunteers who organized birdathon and made the tally run so smoothly. Greg Mendell and Connie McNamee picked up and packaged the T-shirts for efficient distribution to the birders. In addition, Anita Buck, Ken Fulmer, Carol Mundy helped at the tally, getting there early to set up, making announcements and reading the list of birds, making sure the pizza was sliced and the drinks were cold. They remained to clean up long after most birders were on their way home to a well deserved rest.

Calendar

Field Trips

6 July (Saturday) 8:00 A.M.

Meet at the Gardens Alive! parking lot at 776 Rudolph Way — just north of US 50 and just east of the levee.

20 July (Saturday) 8:00 Oxbow field trip

Master birder and raptor enthusiast Ned Keller will lead this trip. Meet him at Gardens Alive! to car-pool into the Oxbow area. The fall shorebird migration should be underway.

14 August (Wednesday) 6:45 P.M. Oxbow field trip

Meet Steve Wagner at the Gardens Alive! parking lot for an evening walk by the Oxbow.

24 August (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Jay Stenger, one of the instructors for the Audubon Society's course for beginning birders, will lead us on a journey looking for migrant birds.

Meetings

9 July (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education Building. (Enter through the employee's gate on Erkenbrecker Avenue)

This evening's speaker will be David Riestenberg, who has been doing a study of the fish that live in the Oxbow. His talk "Fish of the Oxbow" will report on some of his findings — including several species of fish that were unexpected in our area.

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

David Riestenberg will repeat his July program for the benefit of Oxbow's Indiana members. Whether you're an amateur naturalist or an avid angler you'll want to hear what David has to say.

Volunteer

Fund raising

Oxbow needs someone to help mail proposals for corporate and foundation grants. The information has already been prepared and is on a computer disk. If you are interested in helping, please call Greg Mendell at (513) 556-4424 (days) or (812) 926-2522 (evenings).

Board Changes

Kani Meyer has served on Oxbow's board since the organization was founded. We're sorry to announce that at the May meeting, she resigned from the board in order to take on a challenging job in Louisville involving subjects close to her heart: conservation and education. President Norma L. Flannery said she hoped that Kani would think of her resignation as simply a "leave of absence" and return to the board as soon as possible. The entire board concurred.

Meg Riestenberg, who has served for years as one of Oxbow's advisors, agreed to join the board and fill the vacancy. She will concentrate on Oxbow's research initiatives, coordinating different projects and soliciting applications for Oxbow's annual research grants.

With a little help from our friends ...

A heartfelt thank you to Jack Smith! Jack volunteered his time and skills to fabricate a display framework for Oxbow's exhibit of photographs and informational materials. The clever design makes it easy to fold and transport. It will surely see a lot of use.

Oxbow member Velda Miller donated a *Birds of the Oxbow* video tape and a copy of David Styer's book *Birds of the Oxbow* to the Aurora Public Library. Thank you Velda, that was a great idea!

By the way, if you've attended an Oxbow meeting in Indiana recently, you've actually had correspondence from Velda: she's the person who mails the postcards reminding everyone of upcoming Oxbow meetings. Recently she's started sending reminders for the Cincinnati as well as the Lawrenceburg meetings. She's been doing this chore for years and her efforts are greatly appreciated not only by Oxbow Inc., because she helps keep attendance at the meetings high, but by the many Oxbow members who've been reminded at the last minute about a program they wanted to attend but had slipped their minds.

Oxbow's Speakers Bureau Fan Mail

Oxbow has a Speakers Bureau that gives presentations to local schools and organizations that want to learn about the Oxbow. As you know from reading his Field Notes in this issue, Morris Mercer is one of the active participants in this endeavor; it was under the auspices of the speakers bureau that he accompanied so many school kids to the Oxbow this spring.

One of the other presentations he made in April was to a Cinergy employees' environmental group.

Oxbow received a letter from Ed Young of the "Green Team" that is typical of the kinds of reactions that Morris (and Oxbow's other speakers) get to their presentations.

Helping people to understand the beauty and importance of the Oxbow is the first step in teaching them to preserve it. We all know that Morris is an expert at this, but these excerpts from Mr. Young's letter are a timely reminder:

Oxbow, Inc.

The technical support "Green Team", the environmental committee for our department, has taken on the task of doing as much as we can to help make our fellow employees, our customers, and any people we can influence, more aware of the importance of protecting our environment...

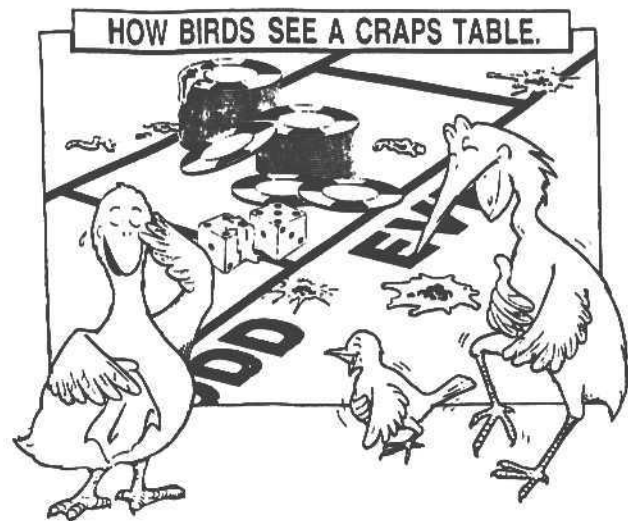
April 17th we had our first department meeting. In recognition of Earth Day we celebrated with a full day of awareness speakers and a lunch. Oxbow's Morris Mercer was one of six speakers at our meeting. We asked each of the 95 participants to fill out a report rating our content and each speaker on several points. Morris was our favorite speaker.

Everyone was dazzled by the beautiful slides, impressed with Mr. Mercer's detailed knowledge and account of bird activities, and in general charmed by his humble eloquence...

We thank you for all you do in your worthy cause and applaud the Oxbow and Morris Mercer personally for the beauty you have revealed to us and endeavor to preserve for posterity...

The "green team" arranged to send Oxbow a donation, saying they hoped it would help to finance and encourage Oxbow's efforts in some degree. The donation came through the support of the Cinergy Foundation, Inc., the philanthropic arm of the Cinergy Corporation, which is the parent company of both Cincinnati Gas and Electric and PSI Energy.

So Mr. Young's letter had three kinds of good news for Oxbow. The support of a major corporation is appreciated. The sincere appreciation of Morris's efforts and abilities as a speaker on behalf of preserving the Oxbow (while not surprising to those of us who know him), is certainly well deserved. And the efforts of Cinergy employees at spreading the word about protecting the environment are heartening. We wish them every success.



BIRDATHON '96
Benefitting OXBOW Inc.

Bird List 196

Common Loon	✓
Grebe, Pied-billed	✓
Horned	✓
Double-crested Cormorant	✓
Bittern, American	✓
Least	✓
Great Blue Heron	✓
Egret, Great	✓
Little Blue Heron	
Cattle Egret	✓
Green-backed Heron	✓
Night-Heron, Black-crowned	✓
Yellow-crowned	✓
Swan, Tundra	
Mute	✓
Goose, Gtr White-fronted	
Snow	
Canada	✓
Wood Duck	✓
Green-winged Teal	
American Black Duck	✓
Mallard	✓
Northern Pintail	✓
Blue-winged Teal	✓
Northern Shoveller	✓
Gadwall	
American Widgeon	✓
Canvasback	
Redhead	
Ring-necked Duck	✓
Scaup, Greater	✓
Lesser	✓
Oldsquaw	
Scoter, Black	
Surf	
White-winged	
Common Goldeneye	✓
Bufflehead	✓
Merganser, Hooded	✓
Common	
Red-breasted	✓
Ruddy Duck	✓
Vulture, Black	✓
Turkey	✓
Osprey	✓
Bald Eagle	✓
Northern Harrier	✓
Hawk, Sharp-shinned	✓
Cooper's	✓
Red-shouldered	✓
Hawk, Broad-winged	✓
Red-tailed	✓
Rough-legged	
American Kestrel	✓
Peregrine Falcon	
Ring-necked Pheasant	
Ruffed Grouse	
Wild Turkey	✓
Northern Bobwhite	✓
Virginia Rail	✓
Sora	✓
Common Moorhen	✓
American Coot	✓
Sandhill Crane	
Plover, Black-bellied	✓
Lesser Golden	
Semipalmated	✓
Killdeer	✓
American Avocet	

Yellowlegs, Greater	✓
Lesser	✓
Solitary Sandpiper	✓
Willet	
Sandpiper, Spotted	✓
Upland	
Ruddy Turnstone	
Sanderling	✓
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	✓
Western	
Least	✓
White-rumped	
Baird's	
Pectoral	✓
Dunlin	✓
Sandpiper, Silt	✓
Buff-breasted	✓
Dowitcher, Short-billed	✓
Long-billed	✓
Common Snipe	✓
American Woodcock	✓
Phalarope, Wilson's	
Gull, Bonaparte's	✓
Ring-billed	✓
Herring	✓
Tern, Caspian	✓
Common	✓
Forster's	✓
Black	✓
Dove, Rock	✓
Mourning	✓
Cuckoo, Black-billed	✓
Yellow-billed	✓
Owl, Barn	✓
Eastern Screech	✓
Great Horned	✓
Barred	✓
Long-eared	
Short-eared	
Northern Saw-whet	
Common Nighthawk	✓
Chuck-will's-widow	✓
Whip-poor-will	✓
Chimney Swift	✓
Ruby-thrtid Hummingbird	✓
Belted Kingfisher	✓
Woodpecker, Red-headed	✓
Red-bellied	✓
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	
Woodpecker, Downy	✓
Hairy	✓
Northern Flicker	✓
Pileated Woodpecker	✓
Olive-sided Flycatcher	
Eastern Wood-pewee	✓
Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied	✓
Acadian	✓
Alder	
Willow	✓
Least	✓
Eastern Phoebe	✓
Great-crested Flycatcher	✓
Eastern Kingbird	✓
Horned Lark	✓
Purple Martin	✓
Swallow, Tree	✓
Northern Rough-winged	✓
Bank	✓
Cliff	✓

Barn Swallow	✓
Blue Jay	✓
American Crow	✓
Carolina Chickadee	✓
Tufted Titmouse	✓
Nuthatch, Red-breasted	✓
White-breasted	✓
Brown Creeper	
Wren, Carolina	✓
House	✓
Winter	
Marsh	✓
Kinglet, Golden-crowned	
Ruby-crowned	✓
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	✓
Eastern Bluebird	✓
Veery	✓
Thrush, Gray-cheeked	✓
Swainson's	✓
Hermit	✓
Wood Thrush	✓
American Robin	✓
Gray Catbird	✓
Mockingbird	✓
Brown Thrasher	✓
American Pipit	
Cedar Waxwing	✓
Loggerhead Shrike	
European Starling	✓
Vireo, White-eyed	✓
Bell's	
Solitary	✓
Yellow-throated	✓
Warbling	✓
Philadelphia	✓
Red-eyed	✓
Warbler, Blue-winged	✓
Golden-winged	✓
Tennessee	✓
Orange-crowned	✓
Nashville	✓
Northern Parula	✓
Warbler, Yellow	✓
Chestnut-sided	✓
Magnolia	✓
Cape May	✓
Black-throated Blue	✓
Yellow-rumped	✓
Black-throated Green	✓
Blackburnian	✓
Yellow-throated	✓
Pine	✓
Prairie	✓
Palm	✓
Bay-breasted	✓
Blackpoll	✓
Cerulean	✓
Black-and-white	✓
American Redstart	✓
Warbler, Prothonotary	✓
Worm-eating	✓
Ovenbird	✓
Waterthrush, Northern	✓
Louisiana	✓
Warbler, Kentucky	✓
Connecticut	
Mourning	✓
Common Yellowthroat	✓
Hooded Warbler	✓

Warbler, Wilson's	✓
Canada	✓
Yellow-breasted Chat	✓
Tanager, Summer	✓
Scarlet	✓
Northern Cardinal	✓
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted	✓
Blue	✓
Indigo Bunting	✓
Dickcissel	✓
Rufous-sided Towhee	✓
Sparrow, American Tree	✓
Chipping	✓
Field	✓
Vesper	✓
Lark	
Savannah	✓
Sparrow, Grasshopper	✓
Henslow's	✓
Fox	
Song	✓
Sparrow, Lincoln's	✓
Swamp	✓
White-throated	✓
White-crowned	✓
Dark-eyed Junco	
Longspur, Lapland	
Snow Bunting	
Bobolink	✓
Red-winged Blackbird	✓
Meadowlark, Eastern	✓
Blackbird, Rusty	✓
Common Grackle	✓
Brown-headed Cowbird	✓
Oriole, Orchard	✓
Northern	✓
Finch, Purple	✓
House	✓
Pine Siskin	✓
American Goldfinch	✓
Evening Grosbeak	
House Sparrow	✓

Snowy Egret
Franklin's Gull

204 species

Birdathon Results

The checklist shows the list of birds that were reported by teams participating in the Tri-state region. Since non-competing teams raised money for Oxbow with personal Birdathons in southern Texas, southern Arizona, California, and northern Ohio, the total list of species observed this for Oxbow's benefit is truly huge — much bigger than fits on any of our available checklists.

Here's a list of the Birdathon '96 participants, grouped by category of competition and then by team.

Most Pledges Raised

Jon Seymour. (over \$9.00 per species) It seems that Jon really understands what Birdathon is about: he's always won the "most pledges raised" category of the competition. He knows extra pledges do more good for Oxbow than extra birds — even on a Birdathon! Over the years Jon, with the help of his generous sponsors, has raised over \$5,000.00 to help Oxbow protect wetlands and preserve habitat. 'WAY TO GO, JON!

Non-competing participants:

Hank Armstrong and Deaf-as-a-Post; Jim Black; Chris Blatz Cathy Carter, Jerry Carter, Kim Oswald and Bill Stanley **Common Loons**; Bill Bocklage; Sandy Cooper and the **Bullskin Creek Bird Club**; Holly and José Daltabuit, **The Ross Roadrunners**; Sister Marty Dermody; John and Barb Eckles, **Birdus Eludus**; Norma L. Flannery; John and Sarah Leon, **Two in the Bush**; and David Styer, **No See Ums West**; Susan Wilkinson and David Axt.

High school age and younger (Fearsome Fledglings Award):

Casey Cooper-Fenske, Kevin Cooper-Fenske, Jimmy Harris, Anna Kober, Stan Rullman **The Cincinnati Zoo Junior Zoologists** (101 species); Mariah Campbell, Jeff Davis, Tony King, Matt Scherer, Scott Shreve, David Wheat, Randy Vayo, **North West High School Knight Herons** (71 species); Brian Hubbard & Family **Gilmore Ponds Junior Hawkeyes** (68 species)

One County Award

Erich Baumgardner, Jerry Lippert, and Wayne Wauligman **Finneytown Fabulous Flying Fortuneseekers** (Hamilton County, 130 species)

Most species entire Birdathon area (Golden Starling Award)

Joe Bens and Paul Wharton, **Fire and Brimstone Birder's Guild** (156 species); Steve Pelikan and Charlie Saunders, **No See Ums East** (146 species); Jeff Hayes, Ned Keller, Jay Stenger and Alan Walls, **Cincinnati Bird Club, Birds R Us** (144 species); Bill Buskirk and David Dister, **Wood Warblers** (135 species + 1 hybrid); Steve Bobonick, Bill Creasey, and Dave Helm, **Cincinnati Nature Center team #1** (129 species); Joe Caminiti, Kathy Caminiti, Lee McNeely and Tommy Stephens, **Bluegrass Buteos** (124 species); Jim Berry, Dave Brinkman, Jon Seymour, Ryan Smith, **The Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History** (117 species); Dotti Posillico, Robin Reitz, David Tennant, Dennis Timberlake, **Cincinnati Nature Center team #2** (90 species) Mike Busam, Bill Garnett, Gina Garnett, Keith Gehring, George Humphreys, **Gilmore Ponds** (60 species)

Field Notes

Morris Mercer

The spring of '96, didn't it rain, didn't it rain! We've had so much rain, I know it's been a hardship for many, but I'd rather have it cool and wet than hot and dry. Somewhere in the middle would be about right.

It seems a little strange to think back over the very wet spring on an evening such as this: the day has been cool and the sky blue. A crescent moon is high over the Ohio River and the air is filled with the fragrance of locust blossoms. Today I noticed how many of the hillsides looked as if they were covered with snow and it was easy to be impressed with the abundance of the usually inconspicuous locusts.

The lilacs are covered with flowers and I've enjoyed seeing the little lantern-like blossoms in the paw-paw patch. When I take a trip afield I frequently concentrate on seeing birds and other wildlife, but there is so much in nature to enjoy!

Field trips have been different for me this spring; most of them have been with school children and their teachers. In the past 6 weeks I've gone out with over 600 kids ranging from first grade to high school. Because the water has been so high, we've seen most of the area from a school bus. Thanks to Gardens Alive! I was able to meet groups at their parking lot which is near the Oxbow.

I recall a typical trip ... I watched as the big yellow bus worked its way through the construction on U.S. 50 and finally reached the Gardens Alive! parking lot where we'd planned to meet. Boarding the bus I looked into the shining faces of a new group. We went out onto I-275 and across the Ohio River into Kentucky. This gave us a good look at the flooded Oxbow area. Turning around at the first exit in Kentucky we went to Elizabethtown, Ohio, crossed the flood plain on Lost Bridge Road and drove along the river to Shawnee Lookout Park. In Shawnee we hiked up the Miami Fort Trail to the high ground. From there we had an excellent view of the flood plain.

But no trip was typical! On the first school field trip I accompanied, I met Ms. Margaret Wienholts and her 5th grade class from Fairfield Central. It had been raining for hours, but had almost stopped as we reached Miami Fort Trail. But then again, it looked like it could start up again real soon. So the question was, "Should we or shouldn't we?" Everyone was tired of being on the bus, and I said I didn't mind

getting wet. So the decision was: "Let go for it!" And a cheer went up. We began our breathtaking climb to the overlook. It was when we reached the top that the sly opened and the rain really came down. There was no reason to run as we were all soaked immediately. I enjoyed the rest of our walk in the rain. Ms. Wienholts was treated to a different hair do, but she didn't seem to mind. The children seemed to think it was fun and were anxious to tell their pals what had happened to them.

On another trip we had 62 first and second graders on the bus. The driver was able to stop the bus where we were able to see two owlets in the nest of a Great Horned Owl. Watching the excited children was something to see (and something more to hear!).

Each trip was an experience. On one trip, the river was so high we drove through water on Lost Bridge Road. It was great fun for the children. On many trips the water was so high the road was closed. We always saw wildlife: sometimes Double-crested Cormorants, or Ring-billed Gulls, Caspian Terns, Great Blue Heron or Great Egrets. There were usually some ducks and geese, and we frequently saw deer. (With all the rain, these views were often through steamy windows!)

On another hike out Miami Fort Trail there were more than half a dozen Black Vultures circling "the Point". I told the students that it wouldn't be a surprise to see Turkey Vultures there, but many people would be surprised to see Black Vultures this far north, although we have seen them here over the years.

We were late getting started on another trip because the driver missed a turn and they were on I-74 headed for Indianapolis before they turned around and got pointed south on I-275. While on another trip the bus broke down and I called Frances to come after me, while another bus was sent for the students. Then there was another trip when it rained the entire time although the weather report said it would stop by noon. We made the decision to have lunch really in hope that the rain would stop in time for our hike. It didn't, and the shelter where we ate was an island in the middle of a huge puddle.

Lunch was over, but where was the blue sky? Above us the clouds were very, very dark. The lightning flashed, the thunder crashed and rolled across the sky, the wind blew and the rain came down. There would be no hike today. We had to go to Cleves, as Lost Bridge was closed due to high water. When we crossed back into Indiana we found U.S. 50 was too, as the underpass was flooded. We had to turn around and get back on I-275 to return to Gardens Alive!

It was difficult to show the students the wetlands, because they were all under water. But they sure learned why it's called a "flood plain"!

After spending so much time with young people this spring, I naturally thought about what kind of world we'll leave to them. Chief Seattle put it so well when he said, "All things are connected. Whatever

befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. We did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."

I say, let's save some of the wild things for those that come after us.



Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Duncan Idaho DeZarn
Ruth Hartman
Woody Huelsman
Kirby Johnson
George Koehler
Virginia L. Kortier
Belle Tebbs Lowe
Bandit Miller
Josef Rother
Amos Tonnies-Uhlenbrock
Peggy Wilz
Peggy Wilz

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Rosemary and Dom Farrell
Cheryl Winslow-Devine D.V.M.
Ron and Dottie Hilvers
Jack and Sue Ulrich

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		

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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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