

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 62 November-December 1996

Gaming Development News

Oxbow's president, Norma L. Flannery, and attorney Timothy G. Mara met in August with representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers to offer Oxbow's ideas about Argosy's application to construct their permanent facility. They stressed that the mitigation site should be protected permanently and raised concerns about access to the site since the current right-of-way into the bottoms (and Oxbow's land) crosses the area that will be protected by an easement. They indicated that Oxbow would like to be assured that we can visit the mitigation site for appropriate activities such as nature study and scientific research, and asked that no road be permitted across the mitigation site.

Argosy plans to begin gaming operations from their temporary facility in November.

Billboards: Whiteco-Metrocomm and other interested parties have been talking and attempting to reach an out-of-court agreement on the number and nature of the billboards to be permitted in the Oxbow area. Whiteco-Metrocomm's current proposal is to erect 8 billboards, all on land owned by I-275 Enterprises. Oxbow would like to see a smaller number of billboards, to have fewer billboards placed in the bottoms, and to have the billboards (which produce a substantial monthly income to the landowners who permit them) shared more evenly among interested landowners in the area. Representatives of Whiteco-Metrocomm indicated that they understood Oxbow's concerns about the effects of lighted signs on migratory birds and they agreed to turn off the lighted signs at midnight using a sophisticated satellite-based control system. They also indicated that they understood the concern, voiced by many, that construction and maintenance of the billboards could disrupt or destroy cultural artifacts and archeological sites.

Educational Materials

Connie McNamee has attended several workshops about environmental education this summer. She'll head a committee to assemble packages of learning materials that Oxbow will loan to schools. If you have suggestions about what materials would be useful and appropriate, she'd be pleased to hear them.

Oxbow is particularly interested in hearing from teachers: What supplies and/or materials would help you teach your students about the Oxbow? Wetland biology, ecology, local history, and archaeology are all subjects that can easily be related to and studied in the context of the Oxbow area.

School Field Trips

A grant to Oxbow from the Helen Steiner Rice Foundation in honor of John Ruthven supports the visits of schoolchildren to the Oxbow area. This last spring Morris Mercer accompanied over 600 school children on field trips. Funds to sponsor such visits are still available, but Morris's date book is filling fast. Demand by schools for trips has far exceeded what any one person (even Morris!) can handle, so we're looking for additional trip leaders. Oxbow members who'd be willing to lead visits of schoolkids should contact Morris, as should teachers interested in scheduling a field trip to the Oxbow.

Colleges and universities use the Oxbow as an educational resource as well. This year, the Oxbow was the destination of field trips by biology classes from Miami University and the University of Cincinnati. Professor Mike Miller, from U.C., said that the Oxbow was his class's favorite trip and described the Oxbow area as "amazing."

A biology graduate student from U.C. is using plant materials from the Oxbow in her research on plant genetics.

Calendar

Meetings

12 November (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education building (Enter through the employees' entrance on Erkenbrecher Avenue.)

Nature photographer Steve Maslowski has been producing educational videos and will show us the results of some of his recent work. If you've seen Steve's photography in the past, you'll know we're in for a real treat this evening!

10 December (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.)

Ever seen a meat-eating butterfly? How about butterflies that fly in the winter? For this evening's program butterfly enthusiast Steve Pelikan will tell us what's interesting about our area's butterflies. His talk is illustrated with slides of many of Indiana's butterflies.

Field Trips

9 November (Saturday) 8:30 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Meet bird and nature enthusiast Darlena Graham at the Gardens Alive! parking lot for a fall trip into the Oxbow area.

For December fields trips, we'll join one or more of the area's Christmas Bird counts:

Ohio River CBC.

This count includes the Oxbow region. Phone Joe Bens (513) 221-1835 for more information.

22 December (Sunday) Western Hamilton County CBC. Phone Ned Keller (513) 941-6497 if you plan to participate.

29 December (Sunday) Eastern Hamilton County CBC. Phone Jay Stenger (513) 522-4245 if you plan to participate.

East Fork Lake CBC

Phone Joe Bens (513) 221-1835 for more information.

Oxbow Gifts

It is nearly time to start thinking up gifts for friends and family. Oxbow has lots of suggestions to help you through the season. Most Oxbow merchandise is available at Oxbow meetings.

How about **Oxbow shirts** with the Charlie Harper Wood Duck Design and the message "Oxbow —The Duck Stops Here"? Or **caps** with Oxbow's shorebird logo? Recent and vintage **Birdathon T-shirts** with a variety of designs by Fritz Haas.

David Styer's book *Birds of the Oxbow* is perfect for an amateur naturalist or bird watcher. The American Birding Association describes the book in their catalog, "...Text details occurrence/abundance of area birds. Includes graphs, early/late and spring/fall dates, records, and text. An impressive compilation for a critical habitat."

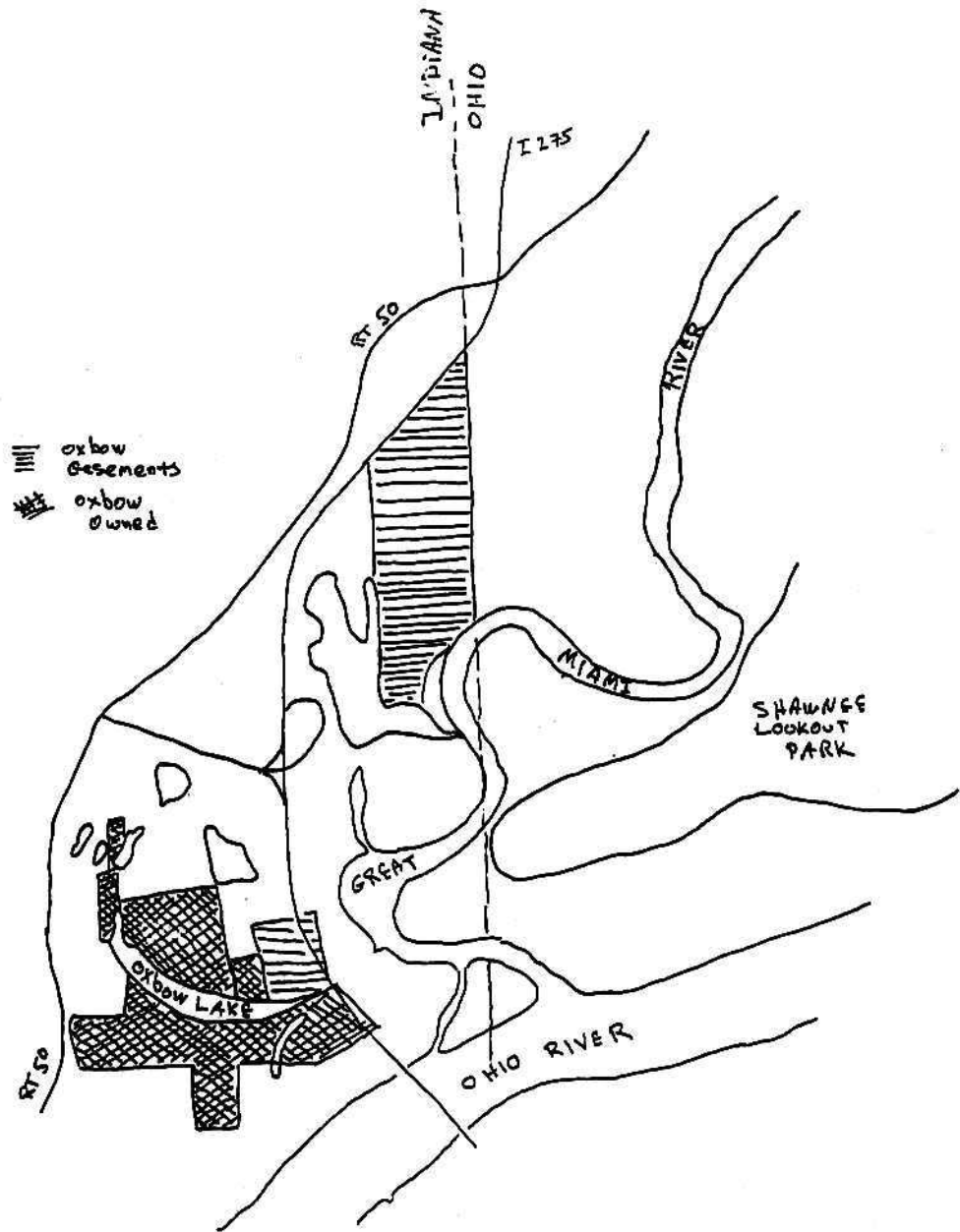
The video tape *Birds of the Oxbow* produced by Impact Video shows many of the Oxbow's birds in natural settings. The informative script describes behavior and identification of birds as well as the importance of the Oxbow ecosystem.

Also remember, in this season of giving, that many organizations have given to Oxbow during the year and are worthy of your support:

The Hamilton County Park District, strong supporters of Oxbow's conservation efforts, arranged for us to hold the Birdathon dinner at their facility and to waive the usual fees. H.C.P.D. shops carry a variety of nature-related merchandise. They also have good prices on high quality bird seed. And what could be a better gift than a H.C.P.D. motor vehicle permit for 1997? It provides 365 days of outdoor recreation in some of the county's most beautiful open spaces.

LaRosa's Pizza donated food to Oxbow for the Birdathon tally again this year, so consider supporting them. Ask about gift certificates, or order from them for an office celebration. Call 347-1111 for pizza. And thank them for supporting Oxbow.

Willow Press, publisher of *A Birder's Guide to the Cincinnati Tristate*, *Walking Cincinnati*, *Hiking Ohio*, and *Hiking Kentucky*, supports Oxbow by placing advertisements in *Wetland Matters*. These books are sure to appeal to Oxbow members and their friends. User-friendly and informative, they give people all the information they need to get out and enjoy our area. They're available at local stores or you can order directly from Willow Press. (See the ad. in this newsletter.)



The map above is a progress report. It shows the land in the flood plain of the Great Miami River that is protected from development by Oxbow. Either Oxbow owns the land outright or owns conservation easements on the land.

As the map shows, there's still lots more to do. We hope to purchase more land as it becomes available.

HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR OUTDOOR PEOPLE!

- A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO THE CINCINNATI TRISTATE...\$12.95**
- HIKING OHIO...\$12.95**
- HIKING KENTUCKY...\$14.95**
- WALKING CINCINNATI...\$12.95**

Available at bookstores and nature centers or directly from Willow Press, 6053 S. Platte Canyon, Littleton, Colorado 80123; 303-797-3415

Field Notes Morris Mercer

Late summer and early fall have been delightful and I've enjoyed many evening trips to the Oxbow. When we've finished supper and there are a couple of hours of daylight left, I head out. The fields along the road are yellow with goldenrod and sprinkled with the purple of ironweed. The day's blue sky is now crossed by a few white wispy clouds.

As I reach the Oxbow the sun is standing just above the Indiana hills; by the time I reach the Beaver Pond the hills are dark and the sun half hidden. There's light enough to show off the corn tassels in an evening glow and to see large flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds as they pass overhead. At the water's edge a pair of Wood Duck explodes from under my feet, giving their alarm cry as they fly across the pond.

What a beautiful scene before me: Some Great Egrets preen in the trees, showing off their snow-white plumage in the willow's green, while others slowly stalk the shallow water. Many Great Blue Heron are doing the same. Double-crested Cormorants come and go from the lake and feed while swimming cormorant fashion, more under than on top of the water, but with a long, crooked neck sticking out. I notice even more cormorant in the cottonwood trees along the west bank of Beaver Pond.

I could stay forever, but want to check the Oxbow Lake while there is still some daylight. As I walk up to the big bend in the lake the dreamlike peace and quiet is interrupted only by the squawk of a Black-crowned Night-heron as if in protest of my being there. Across the lake are many more Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, nine Blue-winged Teal, and a few Mallard. Swallows dart above the water.

I take a deep breath and a long look at the scene around me. The wispy, swirled clouds have changed from white to a soft pink and are reflected in the lake's satin surface. The cool, still, evening air is scented with a scent I call "September in the River Valley". There is no other odor like it. As I take another deep breath my thoughts turn down memory lane to other places I've smelled that smell — I remember the same odor from the bottoms along the Wabash River many years ago.

The sky, ever changing, shifts from pink to a deep, beautiful red. Twilight's come to the Oxbow and as I wait patiently, more heron arrive to spend the night. Then all color is gone and the dim outlines of the thin clouds, now turned gray, are only visible by the light of the crescent moon high overhead. There's a little

chill in the air and a vapor rises from the lake. It's time for me to turn away from the bank. Crickets and katydids sing their farewell as I head home and night comes over the Oxbow once again.

Late on another evening Jim Simpson and I were standing on the bank of the Oxbow when our attention was drawn by two unfamiliar bodies in the water. With the 'scope we discovered they were beaver swimming with just their heads out of the water. We also saw another beaver at the edge of the brush. It was eating the bark from a piece of willow that was two or three feet long. I expected a confrontation as the swimmers approached the one eating on the shore, but nothing much happened: the feeding beaver began to eat bark from the other end of the willow. We eventually saw four beaver at one time that day, and that's the most I've ever encountered at the Oxbow.

A little more than a week ago I caught a glimpse of something large and white going in toward Beaver Pond. I had seen a Mute Swan on the Great Miami near Lost Bridge, so I thought it might be the swan. But when I made my way to Beaver Pond what I found was a White Pelican. I'd never seen a Pelican at the Oxbow before so I called Dave Styer. He said the only other record of a Pelican in the area was from Frank Langdon in 1878 telling of a specimen taken near the mouth of the Great Miami. So it had been a while. Over the next few days my family and many other people managed to see the bird.

John Klein stopped for me one morning a little after 6 AM. We met a group of birders from across the country (Maryland, Oregon, etc.) for a field trip to the Oxbow. We saw good numbers of large waders but the bird I enjoyed most was the Osprey. We saw it first as it flew above the Oxbow Lake. Later one took off from the cottonwoods along the Beaver Pond. It was a pleasant morning and I believe our visitors had a good time.

Now the leaves are turning and fall is upon us. Soon cold winds will blow and I anticipate spending some cool times around the Oxbow. I hope I see you there!



Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Ann Currie Geddes
Julie Godsey
Marianne Grote
Roger Tory Peterson
Ruth Bayer Supe

Cleo Pielage-Waller

Donor

Pat Shanklin
Norma L. Flannery
Jim and Chris Rettig
Jim and Chris Rettig
Roy and L.J. Bernzott and
Sally, Marilyn, and Lois
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.

Oxbow Tributes

In honor of

Morris and Frances Mercer's
50th Anniversary
Morris and Frances Mercer's
50th Anniversary
Art and Jinny Wiseman

Donor

Arthur and Jean Crontz

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Hard and
Mr. and Mrs Charles F. Thompkins
Anonymous

Oxbow 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.

Address Verification

To retain the right to mail *Wetland Matters* in bulk at non-profit rates, Oxbow must certify each year that our mailing list is correct. Please check the mailing label on the back of this newsletter and notify Oxbow if you find any error. Please pay particular attention to the ZIPcode. We hope to use commercial software to update the mailing list with ZIP+4 codes soon, but if you would like, you can mail in your full 9-digit (ZIP+4) postal code on the address correction form and we'll add it to the mailing list.

NAME:
STREET:
CITY/STATE:
ZIPCODE:

mail to:

Oxbow, Inc.
PO Box 43391
Cincinnati, OH 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.**
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Wetland Matter, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.



Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

