

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 63 January-February 1997

Gaming Development

Groundwater Study

As part of gaming related-development, Argosy is constructing parking lots in Greendale on the west side of U.S. 50. In response to concerns that runoff from the lots could pollute well water, Argosy sponsored a study of the impact of its remote parking facilities on the quality of the groundwater.

The study found that the ground water beneath the lots is not in the capture zone of Greendale's well field. To avoid contamination of well water by runoff (surface water), Argosy will install a state-of-the-art treatment facility that will capture the first 0.3 inches of rainfall runoff from the lots, extract metals and hydrocarbons, and release clean water. The accumulated (extracted) wastes will be placed in a landfill. The cost of the treatment facility will be over \$500,000. This concern for water quality on the part of argosy is highly commendable. Having established such high standards for the quality of runoff water, we will expect Greendale will hold future developers along Rt. 50 to similar, stringent standards.

The fate of surface water and the ground water below the development along route 50 is currently unknown; it seems likely that much of the surface water ends up in the Oxbow. According to the study by Argosy, ground water in the area flows towards the Ohio.

At the last Board meeting it was agreed that Oxbow would prepare a request for proposals and consider searching for a contractor to perform a surface water study of the region. This study would complement the groundwater findings of the research that Argosy sponsored. Such a study would greatly improve our understanding of the hydrology of the area and enable us to better protect the wetlands by identifying possible threats to water quality in the Oxbow.

On November 22 The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) approved Argosy's application to construct its permanent gaming facilities on the bank of the Ohio River. This permit was necessary before Argosy could open its temporary facilities. Special conditions imposed by IDNR in issuing the permit included:

- Argosy must implement the proposed mitigation plan and construct replacement wetlands outside the Lawrenceburg levee;
- IDNR must receive a conservation easement or deed restriction providing for the permanent protection of the mitigation site within 60 days;
- the mitigation site must be monitored for 5 years and reports of the monitoring provided to IDNR;
- prior to ground-disturbing activities, additional archaeological investigation should be coordinated with the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

The mitigation plan Argosy will implement was designed by Earth Source, Inc. Both Argosy and Earth Source consulted with Oxbow as the mitigation plan was developed, and Oxbow agrees that there is a good chance that the construction of the mitigating wetlands will be successful.

On December 6, the Army Corps of Engineers approved Argosy's application to construct its permanent facility. This cleared the way for the Indiana Gaming Commission to issue Argosy a license after an inspection and test cruise. According to the Cincinnati Post, the Corps imposed the following conditions that protect the Oxbow ecosystem:

- Argosy must implement its proposed mitigation plan and provide for 10 years of site inspection,
- Argosy must not do construction work on the river during fish spawning season (April 1 through June 30),
- During the period April 15th - Sept 15th, Argosy must not cut down trees in which an endangered species of bat (the Indiana Bat) is roosting.

Argosy expects to have its temporary facilities in operation by mid-December.

Calendar

Meetings

14 January (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education Building. (Enter through employees' gate on Erkenbrecker Avenue. If you need directions to the Education building, ask the gate attendant.)

If you're already tired of winter, come hear Dr. Jerry Carpenter (Biology Professor at Northern Kentucky University) talk about his ongoing work in warm water off the Bahamas. His program is titled "Reproduction and Conservation of Crustacea from the Bahamas." This is also the meeting at which we'll elect members to Oxbow's Board of Trustees. Free door prize.

11 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.)

Nature photographer Steve Maslowski will show us some of the educational videos that he's been producing. These natural history videos are aimed primarily at school children, but if you've ever seen any of Steve's photography, you'll know we're all in for a treat. Free door prize.

Field Trips

16 January (Thursday) 7:30 PM Oxbow field trip

Meet trip leader Morris Mercer in Shawnee Lookout Park in the parking lot by the golf club house for our annual night walk. Morris, who loves cold weather, asserts that this will be the "cool" place to be this winter evening. For more information, call Morris at (513) 941-2534

25 January (Saturday) 8:30 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Master birder Paul Wharton will lead this trip into the Oxbow area. Dress warmly and bring binoculars. Meet Paul at the Gardens Alive! parking lot. More info? call Paul at (513)-353-3403

22 February (Saturday) 8:30 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Leave from the Gardens Alive! parking lot on this trip led by David Styer. This winter-look at the Oxbow area could produce great views of wildlife. Call David at (513) 772-1287 if you need more information.

Research

Oxbow uses crop income to give grants supporting research on the Oxbow wetlands. A recent recipient of one of these grants was Richard Koch, graduate student from the Biology Department at the University of Cincinnati. His Master's thesis was written under the direction of Dr. Michael Miller and is titled "*Hydrological influences on autochthonous production and benthic macroinvertebrate heterogeneity of an Ohio River floodplain, southeast Indiana.*"

Richard's work was concerned with tracing the flow of nutrients into and out of the Oxbow area and with studying how the availability of nutrients affects the number and diversity of invertebrates in the Oxbow Lake.

In his acknowledgments, Richard writes, "This work was funded by two yearly grants (1993 and 1994) from Oxbow Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio. The support from Oxbow, Inc., however, went far beyond monetary. Their interest and passion for this particular floodplain region proved to be a catalyst for much of my research. I hope the findings presented within this thesis can help in their endeavors to preserve this oxbow ecosystem."

Election of the Board

Oxbow's business is conducted by an elected board of trustees that meets monthly. Trustees serve 3 year terms and approximately 1/3 the board is elected each year.

Elections are held at the first meeting of the year: the January meeting at the Zoo.

If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the board, please first determine whether (s)he is willing to serve and then contact the nominating committee (David Styer (513)772-1287)). Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the January meeting, but it is much easier if we can have our ballots prepared in advance.

Field Notes

Morris Mercer

This year the "Alaska Bald Eagle Festival" was held from November 15th to the 17th. Frances and I joined a nice group of people and some 2000 Bald Eagles at the gathering along the Chilkat River. It was an adventure we will long remember. The eagles visit a 5-mile stretch of the Chilkat, about 20 miles north of Haines, Alaska, in order to feed on a late run of chum salmon. Here, warm upwellings in the river keep it unfrozen long after everything else is iced over. The salmon spawn and then die. The eagles come from all over Alaska, British Columbia and from as far away as Washington to eat the dead and dying salmon.

We flew from Ohio to Bellingham, Washington where we boarded a ferry and began our trip up the Alaska Marine Highway. Most of my time at sea was on a troop ship during WWII where the bunks were stacked six feet high and so close you could hardly turn over. Compared with that, our small cabin was luxurious. After the long flight, we were glad to climb into our bunks.

The morning came quickly and we looked out at a beautiful sunrise. Moving north all day, we saw our first whales about 4:00 P.M. when a couple of humpbacks thrilled us by coming up close to the ship. They say it rains 300 days a year there, so we weren't surprised that it rained as we arrived in Ketchikan just after breakfast the next day. After a bus trip to downtown Ketchikan where we saw Creek Street, the Totem Pole park, etc. we got back on board and sailed even farther north, reaching Wrangell after dark and Petersburg sometime after 10:00. Through the afternoon we encountered a large number of White-sided Pacific Dolphins. They put on a good show.

Sunrise found us in Juneau where we saw several Barrow's Goldeneye, Oldsquaw, White-winged and Surf Scoters and watched 120 school kids come aboard. They, too, were going to visit the Valley of the Eagles.

Leaving Juneau we had a spectacular view of the big, snow-covered mountains and the Mendenhall glacier. We were sitting in the lunch room watching white-capped waves when we saw that telltale spray shoot into the air. It was "Thar she blows!" as we sighted more whales.

About 2:00 P.M. we pulled in to Haines and the kids went ashore and climbed onto yellow buses. We continued by boat for about an hour and half to our last stop, Skagway. The next few days we devoted to history in Skagway, filling our imaginations with the Klondike Goldrush of 1897-98, White Horse Pass, Eldorado, Dead Horse Gulch, Soapy Smith, Broadway and "Gold, Gold".

Then it was time to leave Skagway for Haines. By boat it would take an hour. Skagway is one of the few towns on the Alaska coast you can drive to, but to drive to Haines would take about 8 hours. We took a plane and flight time was just 10 minutes, but it was a beautiful flight through snow-covered mountains.

There was always something going on in Haines, as the Alaska Bald Eagle Festival moved into full swing — talks, videos, live birds, artists, museum tours and, my favorite: field trips to the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve a couple times each day. You must see it to believe it. The eagles are in the trees, in the air, down in the river valley pulling salmon up on the bank to feed on, others coming to try to take over. Eagles screaming at all times. There are several pullouts on the road along the river. It's strange to stand next to a tree with 5 or 6 adult eagles above you — and a little risky too. We had three blue-sky days in Haines.

It was time to leave Haines and the Valley of the Eagles, but we were taking many memories with us as we boarded the ferry to return to Juneau. We found nice tilt-back seats, left our coats, and went to the lunch room for a snack. We hadn't been there long when a voice came over the speaker. "There are northern lights" We went for our coats and out on the weather deck.

The night was most beautiful. The blue-black sky was filled with stars. Orion was just above the snow-covered mountains and the Seven Sisters were almost straight over head. The northern lights looked as if there were a big city across the mountains where we knew there was none. The lights were white, blue and green. While we watched a long shaft of light seemed to go up to the last star in the handle of the Big Dipper. The wind was wild and tore at our jackets, but the night was so special it was hard to bring ourselves in—even to get warm.

We caught a flight from Juneau to Seattle and on to L.A. From there we flew direct to Cincinnati. In the last two days of our trip we were in bed for a total of three and a half hours. You might say we were "Sleepless in Seattle" as well as several other places. But it was a great adventure that I'd recommend to anyone.

Now I'm looking forward to winter in the Oxbow. I've even heard reports of a Bald Eagle out there. Who can guess what all we'll see this season?



Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Leonard Boehmer
Krissie DeLorenzo
Herb E. Desh
Dale Durbin
Dale Durbin
Kathryn Ellesberry
Daisy Meyers
Roy C. Nelson
Martha Jesse Radike, Ph.D.
Herbert G. Rother

Donor

Norma L. Flannery
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
Jane and Roy Bernzott
Shirley and Ken Durbin
Ron and Jean Noll
Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Brown
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
David and Suzanne Skidmore
Robert and Geraldine Krueger
Rosemary and Bill Farrell

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.

Billboards

Oxbow's attorney, Tim Mara, reported to the Board in November that interested parties appear to be closing in on a settlement of Whiteco-Metrocomm's suit in federal court. One possible agreement would allow Whiteco-Metrocomm to erect 6 billboards in the area and would provide that county zoning rules be modified to put a permanent cap on the total number of billboards in Dearborn County. Of special interest to Oxbow is the possibility that the agreement will also include a separate cap on the number of billboards allowed in the Oxbow area.

There have been recent proposals to construct billboards in Greendale. The plans provided with these proposals are too sketchy to determine the nature or location of the proposed signs. It appears that none of the signs will be constructed in the Oxbow. Rather, it seems, they'll contribute their charm and grace to Rt. 50 in Greendale.

Happy
Birthday!
Oxbow
turned 10
in 1996.

The facing page is a facsimile of Oxbow's first newsletter. (Dates, addresses, and phone numbers have been omitted.)

The Oxbow:

"The Oxbow" is a huge floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami River and the Ohio River. This area has long been known to dedicated birdwatchers as a unique bird sanctuary. Thousands of migratory birds, particularly waterfowl, shorebirds, and many water-related species, rely on this important staging area for resting and refueling on their long annual migrations. These visitors include individuals of various species rarely if ever seen elsewhere in the Midwest.

Recent Activity:

In 1985 the continued value of the Oxbow area to wildlife was threatened by an Ohio proposal for state development of port facilities for river barges in this area. A letter-writing campaign opposing such a use for the area succeeded in blocking this particular plan. Awareness of this threat served to mobilize concerned nature-lovers for organized action to protect the Oxbow from future active development. Their activity has led to formal organization of OXBOW, INC. This group has now been incorporated and expects to receive not-for-profit status before the end of 1986. Regular meetings are held each month. The next meeting will be held September 17.

Executive Committee:

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Judy Bramstedt (President) | Jerry Johnson (Vice President) |
| Cay Tuck (Secretary) | Art Wiseman (Treasurer) |
| David Styer (Agent) | Bonnie Fancher |
| Morris Mercer | Bea Orendorff |
| Donna Wagner | |

Goals:

Oxbow, Inc. is beginning an ambitious process of growth toward its long-range goal of "Saving the Oxbow" from all future threats to migratory bird and wildlife activity. Meanwhile, short-term goals are receiving active attention from skeleton committees.

It is essential to identify landowners in the Oxbow area and to enlist their cooperation and support for our goals. It is equally important to increase public awareness and demonstrate broad support from the entire extended community. Fund-raising must be expanded beyond individual memberships to large grants from businesses and foundations. Our goals and needs will be publicized through media coverage, public meetings, newsletter, a speakers' bureau, and an education committee.

As much as possible about the Oxbow area must be learned and published. Wildlife inventories will be essential in demonstrating its value. Oxbow, Inc. hopes to encourage such studies by assisting qualified biologists in finding and applying for available funding, after access to potential study areas is obtained from landowners.

Needs:

Your time and diverse skills will be essential for all our activities. Please volunteer by contacting any of the members listed above.

Contributions are also welcome! Checks payable to Oxbow, Inc. may be sent to...

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

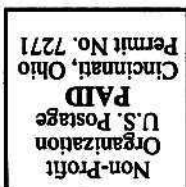
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Recording Secretary,
Dennis Mason (513) 385-3607
Corresponding Secretary,
Suzanne Skidmore (513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Mark Westrich (812) 637-2175
Agent, Dave Styer (513) 772-1287

Committee Chairpersons

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Easement Inspection,
Michael Kluesener (513) 574-1220
Richard Pope (513) 637-1365
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Marketing, Connie McNamee (812) 926-2522
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Preservation, Norma L. Flannery (513) 471-8001
Programs, Morris Mercer (513) 941-2534
Research, Meg Riestenberg (513) 921-3986
Speakers Bureau, Morris Mercer (513) 941-2534

Newsletter Steve Pelikan (513) 681-2574

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



Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!

