



WETLAND *matters*

Published bi-monthly for the Friends and Members of Oxbow, Inc.

Oxbow, Inc. Activities Schedule

Programs

Tuesday, March 12, 2002, 7:30 p.m.
Cincinnati Zoo, Education Building

Thane Maynard, a long-time friend of Oxbow, Inc., will have our program. Thane is the voice on the Oxbow video, *Birds of the Oxbow*, and recently returned from Seattle. Come, welcome him home.

Tuesday, April 9, 2002, 7:30 p.m.
Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Ind.

Kani Meyer, an early Oxbow, Inc. Board Member, will speak on the topic, "Mt. Airy Forest: Too Many Deer, Too Much Honeysuckle." Her talk will be appropriate to all "natural" forests of our area.

Field Trips

Saturday, March 16, 2002, 8:00 a.m.

Meet Paul Wharton at Gardens Alive for a trip into the Oxbow area. Migration should be at its best for waterfowl and Paul knows where to find those floating feathers. (513-353-3403)

Sunday, April 14, 2002, 8:00 a.m.

Meet Jay Stenger at Gardens Alive for an Oxbow area walk that Jay knows like the back of his hand. Spring migration should be excellent. (513- 522-8147)

Oxbow, Inc. Buys Small Parcel of Land

The Hayes property, six lots totaling approximately 1 1/2 acres, is now owned by Oxbow, Inc.

This Oxbow property was the possession of eight individuals. Seven of the eight sold their shares to Oxbow, Inc. Tim Mara, Oxbow, Inc.'s attorney, and Mark Westrich, Treasurer, closed the deal January 17, 2002.

Oxbow, Inc. Heartily Thanks

Mr. V. Anderson Coombe

from the Lorika Fund

for His Annual Grant

Patrol Reports Coming In

The Dearborn County Sheriff's Department has submitted reports on its patrolling of Oxbow, Inc. property which show little or no abuse of the land.

There has been some duck, geese and rabbit hunting in the Oxbow but not on Oxbow, Inc. property. One pair of duck hunters in the general area was advised as to obtaining written permission from Oxbow, Inc. for hunting on Oxbow, Inc. property. After snowfalls there were no quad runner tracks. That activity seems to have ceased for the present.

Field Notes

by



Mercer

Winter came to the Oxbow and it has been a strange winter. We have received very little snow. And we have had several days with temperatures in the 60's. But there have been trips into the Valley of the Three Rivers that I've enjoyed very much.

Jim Simpson and I made a trip to the Oxbow on Christmas morning as we have been doing for many years. We arrived at the Oxbow and the dirt road did not look good. We gave the road a try and found the mud was frozen hard enough to hold the car. We drove along the outside curve. As soon as we could see the water in the big bend we could see it was full of ducks. We moved slowly along the rough road. Ducks swam away from us into the open water. A large flock of ducks took to the wing. There were many great blue herons in the trees and in the brush near the water. Several flew out and on around the bend.

We stopped and set up the scope. This was a scene that always warms my heart. The Oxbow full of ducks! Mallards were in the greatest numbers, the black ducks were few for this time of year. The wood ducks were in good numbers and they should have been gone. There were widgeons, several gadwall and a small flock of ring-necked ducks. We moved on toward the big bend. The new water hole on our right, which was formed when the dirt was removed to build the new Greendale levee, had attracted several great blues. It looks as if it will be a good place for wildlife.

Our next stop was at the big bend. From here we could see much of the Oxbow and it was loaded with ducks. Soon the ducks we had flushed were coming back in. I love to watch waterfowl come in to rest and feed, to see them set their wings and glide in. If you are close enough to hear the wind over their wings it's even better.

Jim backed away from the scope and said, "You'll have to take a look at this." I looked through the scope at a great scene: there was a male wood duck in full color and a



hooded merganser with hood up. It would be difficult for me to picture a more beautiful scene.

I hadn't been aware of the clouds that had moved in. Slowly and silently the snow began to fall. Once again I got that old feeling: the feeling I used to get as a kid back in Illinois. We used to jump up and down cheering, "It's snowing! It's snowing!" I didn't jump up and down on the outside, but my heart was cheering on the inside. We thought we better move before the road got slick and we couldn't get out. The snow flakes were so big and really coming down.

We stopped near the beaver lodge and the muskrat houses. I could not help but wonder what it was like inside those shelters. I don't know how it could be warm but I don't have a beaver or a muskrat coat to keep me warm. Here the snow stopped as soon as it had begun. What a strange winter. On one of Jim's walks he had seen a great egret. And that is very strange for this time of year.

The next morning, December 26, Jim and I were back at the Oxbow. We found much of the water iced over. The one open area was full of ducks, mostly the same species we saw yesterday except for a nice flock of green-winged teal. We thought about driving around but we didn't want to flush them.

Frances and I made a trip into the area. As we crossed Lost Bridge we saw a large flock of Canada geese in the soy bean stubble west of the new gravel pit. There was a large number of crows in the same field. Down at Shawnee we saw a flock of black vultures. There were 20 or 30. Steve Maslowski told me he had been photographing black vultures on the east side of town. The last few years we have seen so many more black vultures. This bird always seemed a bird of the south. This year we are still seeing Turkey vultures. This is a mixed up year.

A mixed up winter? Wednesday, January 23, was the winter night walk at Shawnee. This was one of the warmest winter walks we have ever had. Once again, Jon Klein took the group for the hike and once again I stayed in the club house. I thought of days before there was a club house and it was below zero. And of the night it was snowing so hard we could hardly make out the person next to us. On the way home the guy on the radio was telling everyone to stay home. He said I-75 was closed at the cut in the hill. Now that was a winter walk. Tonight I did get to see the group as they came back to the club house. There were friends I hadn't seen for a long time. Great to see them.

In late January, Dave and Vickie, The Texas Mercers, came up for a few days. We had to make a trip to Shawnee. I sat in the car while they hiked the Miami Fort Trail. They said it was a nice walk and they saw lots of deer. They took a look over at the Oxbow. I had a nice nap and

They took a look over at the Oxbow. I had a nice nap and woke up to see several deer.

One day I was over near Cemetery Lake. I saw several gulls on the lake. I saw a coyote running near the lake. Jim Simpson saw a coyote near the Miami on the winter bird count. Now we see beaver, coyote and lots of deer I never saw in my early days around the Oxbow.

Can you believe we are coming up on spring? I don't have much of an idea what kind of a migration we will have at the Oxbow. I bet it will be good if we get water at the right time. There will be some great things to see and to enjoy here in the Valley of the Three Rivers.

THE RED-TAILED HAWK

by David Styer

The red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) is one of the most frequently seen birds in the Oxbow area, especially since it is large and often sits in the open or soars. Except for the rock dove, i.e., the domestic pigeon, I can think of no bird frequently seen in the Oxbow area that shows as much variation in plumage as the red-tailed hawk. From the fall of 1974 until the spring of 1976, a red-tailed hawk that was roughly 90% white spent winters in the Oxbow bottoms. It did have a pale red tail.

This always reminds me of an all-white plumaged red-tailed hawk that Ron Austing and his friends caught in southwestern Ohio in 1960. More details can be found about this bird in Ron's book, *The World of the Red-Tailed Hawk*, a highly readable account about this species. Ron suggests that albino red-tailed hawks may not have the robust health of more normally plumaged birds.

The *typical* red-tailed hawk of the Oxbow area is white underneath with a more-or-less prominent darker band across its breast. The band varies from basically absent to fairly heavy. Just a few times I have seen a red-tailed hawk at the Oxbow that I would call dark. A couple of years ago, Dan Deaton showed me a red-tailed hawk that was wintering along the Ohio River down near Aurora, Indiana. It was a *typical dark western* bird. Not only was it basically all dark underneath, but even its red tail was barred dark (brown) above. On our adult eastern birds, the red tail is not barred above.

I think of red-tailed hawks as varying from very light to very dark, but I doubt that if we tried to put them in a line, that light-to-dark would explain all the variation in plumage. The bird's genes determine this plumage variation. In principle, we could look at the DNA of a couple of red-tailed hawks and see how different two individuals might be.

Or how about this? Compare the DNA of a red-tailed hawk with that of a closely related species; say a rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*).

When I was in grade school, the nature of DNA and the double helix had not been discovered. It was not known that you can see the genetic make-up of an individual by stretching out strings of DNA. Today, one could set out the DNA sequences for two red-tailed hawks and find that they are perhaps 99% the same, or maybe 98% the same.

It's one thing to realize that there is a clarifying principle to compare the similarity of individuals but is another thing to know if this has ever been done with red-tailed hawks. To learn more, I called Mike Braun at the Laboratory of Molecular Systematics at the Smithsonian Institution.

Many readers of *Wetland Matters* will recall that for one year Mike was a faculty member at the University of Cincinnati and that he helped Oxbow, Inc. set up their first Birdathon. Mike said it would be safe to guess; that there could be a substantial difference between two individual red-tailed hawks. He immediately added that, guessing aside, much work has been done on humans and chimpanzees, our closest living relatives.

Furthermore, Mike provided the following startling findings. Any two humans, no matter how different they look to us, are at least 99% the same genetically. They may be up to 1% different. The chimpanzee's DNA sequence will only be 1% to 1.4% different from a human's.

Obviously, the segments that separate humans and chimpanzees really matter. In addition, Mike says that many single species, probably the red-tailed hawk included, have more variability than exists between humans and chimpanzees. Since there is variability, change is clearly possible. I propose that we look at the red-tailed hawk's DNA sequence today, and then look at it ten thousand years from now to see how much difference there is. I'm eagerly awaiting the results.



*Why not go out on a limb?
That's where all the fruit is.*

Mark Twain

.....*And maybe a rough-legged hawk.*

The Sibley Guide to Birds



In the Mailbox...

One Member's Views

To Oxbow, Inc.,

May I make a little complaint? I am getting tired of reading and hearing about developers "gobbling up" farmland. Developers don't do that. They don't go to a farmer's door and confront him with a gun and say "Your land or your life". A developer spying some land he'd like to have, finds out who owns it and then tries to sell the landowner on the idea of selling it to the developer.

The farmer has a choice -- at least I hope things have not gotten so bad in the United States that no one owns his property. If the farmer is old and unable to farm well any more, or his wife threatens to leave him unless he sells the farm, or the farmer has used improper farming methods and the land is too depleted to grow a good crop, or more efficient farms can raise more and better crops for a lower market price, or the farmer is tired of droughts, floods, tornados, or whatever, he certainly should be permitted to sell his land to whomever will give him a reasonable price. If the farmer wants his land, he doesn't sell it. If the developer threatens him, harasses him, lies to him, tries to cheat him, there are laws to take care of that.

The reason I have supported Oxbow, Inc. these many years is that land acquisition has been done in a fair and proper way, with no coercion (I believe). And they have done with the land what they promised when various transactions were made. Could Oxbow, Inc. be accused of "gobbling" up the land? They got the land fair and square, with the permission of the owners of the property, and kept their promise of what they do with the land.

Developers "gobble" land? I don't think so. They buy it. Is there a law against buying and selling property?

(The "gobbling" I refer to appeared in the latest Oxbow, Inc. newsletter as a quote in the "bio" of Jerry Lippert. He is certainly right about the need to quit taxing businesses so that they can't make a reasonable return on their property, but taxation is a problem of voters who continue to vote for law-makers who grab all the money they can get without regard to the results. They are the gobblers: that is, we are the gobblers.)

Carolyn DeJager

Dear Ms. DeJager,

We agree that everyone has the right to sell or not to sell his land and we support private property rights. Our concern is that we and the wildlife and the tranquility found in nature are being overrun by irresponsible, unchecked,

poorly planned development which we all have allowed and for which we all share the blame. If you read the bio of Jerry Lippert again, you will find that no mention was made of "developers." What was mentioned as being responsible for the gobbling up of open (farm) land was suburban sprawl and the unwillingness of people to draw boundaries to not only protect open land but also to protect the right of individuals to develop the city center without prohibitive taxes.

Your mention of developers as being responsible for gobbling up farmland certainly identifies one group that in general shows little concern for preserving land in a state anything close to natural. But the disappearance of open land is a problem for which we are all responsible in our democratic system. You alluded to this when mentioning how we are all gobblers when it comes to taxes.

Oxbow, Inc. supports private property rights -- always has and always will. Without those rights Oxbow would not be able to accomplish its goals. Thank you for your letter and your serious concerns.

Jerry Lippert



What I See; What to Do

Dear fellow members of Oxbow, Inc.:

I am a member of Oxbow, a Hoosier, rural land owner, and birder/lepidopterist living in Dillsboro.

I access the Oxbow five days a week. I usually hike in, parking far from the concrete plant or near Argosy. I have witnessed families that park pick up trucks far back off the lane that stems from the Argosy area. Deep in the woods that skirt the corn fields as well in the thick brush and old building remains area to the left of the lane, these trucks often discharge quad runners. While the parents have a smoke and toss their butts into the woods, they hoot and howl at the antics of young children speeding up and down the rim areas of corn fields on quad runners. Eight times I encountered these people and those like them. I told them I was an Oxbow member. They yelled back, "Hell, buddy, so am I, yuk yuk yuk!"

Some of these folks carry guns. I have seen men with .22's sniping at birds, men teaching their sons how to shoot .12 gauge shotguns in the cornfields off the lanes and near the lakes, and a woman swilling a bottle of Coors' Lite. Now and then, I escape my duties as marketing director for Millennium Graphics in the city to volunteer as a substitute teacher at Greendale Middle School and other schools. Most of the kids know me and that I enjoy hiking. Many have told me they regularly run quads past Beaver Pond and into the wetlands. A few choose to drink or smoke a little dope.

When I first began membership in Oxbow, I went on a birding trip that met at Gardens Alive. My experience

was very positive. I had a great time and learned more about waterfowl that occupied the lakes and puddles in two hours than I ever learned in books or in school. I was curious why Oxbow is an open area to folks sniping birds and quad runners. When I asked a member I was told some of the land is not actually owned by Oxbow, and that people have rights allowing them to do whatever they want, including hunting.

I am not a conservationist lunatic. I own many guns. I carry a gun permit in Indiana. I grew up hunting. When I left the Army, I stopped killing things. I am of the opinion the majority of you are city dwellers who only frequent the Oxbow in safe numbers. I understand the need for the Dearborn County Sheriff to patrol the Oxbow.

There are some common sense solutions: Let the cops do their jobs and hope no one is trespassing. Carry a cell phone with you at all times. Travel in groups of three or four. A system of identification.

The last is quite easy. Each Oxbow member carries identification. The Oxbow logo is put on 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of pink paper. The paper is laminated. The finished product is placed inside of the vehicle window. Colors are changed yearly. Small laminated luggage tag size cards, each carrying the member's name, date of membership and Oxbow logo, are attached to clothing.

I know of what I speak because my parent company, Millennium Graphics has a commercial division that makes such tags for the government, including the Fernald facility. In this manner, anyone with identification can be identified to the county police by any Oxbow member with a cell phone. Inexpensive. Simple.

I really enjoy walking in the woods, especially the Oxbow. It is so peaceful near the ponds and the river. I can picture early man and the villages of shell traders. I enjoy your bulletins and am proud of my membership. I wish all of you a safe, peaceful birding year.

John H. McClain

Dear Mr. McClain,

We recently received your very interesting letter concerning vandalism and "people problems" in the Oxbow area. Your familiarity with the area as well as your description of what you have experienced, was most informative. The Board is aware of many of the things of which you wrote and we have been very concerned about how to deal with matters of this nature.

We plan to discuss this at the February meeting. I will let you know the results. I think we are lucky to have someone like you who truly cares about the Oxbow.

Suzanne Skidmore, Cor. Sec.

(All four letters have been abbreviated because of space limitations.)

CONSERVATION CORNER County Park Survey Conclusions

by *Jon Seymour*

The Hamilton County Park District recently (January 16) announced the completion of their report on the surveys and meetings, involving thousands of responses, that they have been conducting over the past year.

There were three major conclusions: 1) Focus on acquisition and protection of greenspace, 2) Concentrate on purchases next to current holdings and purchases to connect existing greenspaces with corridors, 3) Develop partnerships with other public and private organizations to leverage land holdings of all interested groups in Hamilton County. Since Oxbow, Inc. holdings are adjacent to Hamilton County Park holdings around Shawnee Lookout this potential expansion of Park lands may help fill in areas of the Oxbow not currently protected.

The current Hamilton County Parks levy will expire in 2003 and a new levy will be needed. The Park District will be pointing with pride to the acquisitions and improvements that the last levy, passed in 1988, has allowed. They will use the vision established by the current series of meetings and surveys to support their need for the next levy and show the public what the next levy will buy them.

DO US A FAVOR....

Postal regulations require an annual update of organizations' members' addresses so if you will check your address label on your copy of *Wetland Matters* and find an error, please send your correction to: Oxbow, Inc., P.O.Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391.

JOIN THE CLEAN-UP.....

The 15th Annual Winton Woods Clean-Up, co-sponsored by the Forest Park Environmental Awareness Program and the Hamilton County Park District, will take place Saturday, April 20, 9:00 a.m. to noon, rain or shine. Volunteers are to meet at the Kestrel Point Picnic Shelter located beside Winton Center off Winton Road at 8:45 a.m. to register.

Last year, 250 volunteers picked up eight tons of litter in less than three hours. Raffle prizes and free cookies follow the clean-up.

Church Names Oxbow, Inc.

A Beneficiary

Ken and Shirley Durbin were members of the Third Protestant Memorial Church of Cincinnati which closed in the year 2000 after 162 years of service. They are still proud of their former church for many reasons: its long history, its part in Cincinnati's German heritage and its generous spirit.

The building at 2502 Ohio Avenue was sold and members of the congregation were asked to submit names of non-profit organizations that could benefit from the sale. As a result, fifteen organizations have been named recipients and Oxbow, Inc., thanks to the Durbins, is one of them. The first gifts will be awarded this year. Furthermore, 40% of the sale went into an endowment fund which will provide continuous gifts every year.

The Durbins favored Oxbow, Inc. because their son, the late Dale Durbin, a naturalist with the Hamilton County Parks, had a love of the Oxbow area.

The original church bearing the name of the Third Protestant Memorial Church was situated at the corner of Ohio and Calhoun Streets, Clifton. (Earlier churches had various other names.) This congregation, chiefly Low Germans, stemmed from a church at Walnut Street and Buckeye Alley, south of Ninth Street, downtown Cincinnati. The group of High Germans who did not develop into the Third Protestant Memorial Church formed another congregation which can be tracked today to St. John's Unitarian, Clifton.

One of the exciting aspects of the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Third Protestant Memorial Church in 1988 was the contact made by the historical society of Oldenburg, Germany, its mother church area. Professor Antonious Holtmann of the University of Oldenburg led 25 members of their historical society to Cincinnati and presented microfilms of the beginnings of the history of the Cincinnati group in Oldenburg. Duplicates of the microfilms were presented to the Cincinnati Historical Society and the Hamilton County Public Library.

Oxbow, Inc. heartily thanks Ken and Shirley Durbin as well as the Third Protestant Memorial Church for their concern and generosity.

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

Donor	In Memory of
Audrey Barth	Bill Bocklage
Jeanne Bocklage	Bill Bocklage
Michael J. Nolan	Nannie Burgess
Oak Hills Animal Hospital,	Raff Castelini
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.	
Walter & Susan McBeath	Ronald C. Davis
Cincinnati Bird Club	Virgil Gex
Oak Hills Animal Hospital,	
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.	Copper Gilbert
Blanche Baylis	Anna Kohlhass
Oak Hills Animal Hospital,	
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.	Kukla
Mr & Mrs. Fred Moore	Allan W. Osterbrock
Michael J. Nolan	Evelyn Riegler
Sandy & Pete Alderucci	Clare Schuermann
Bill & Mary Lou Berlier	Clare Schuermann
Jim, Beth, Andy & Nick Bollin	Clare Schuermann
Mrs. Fred Kilian	Clare Schuermann
Dan & Janet Leonhardt	Clare Schuermann
Kenneth & Beverly Lohr	Clare Schuermann
Dr. & Mrs. Albert Niedhamer	Clare Schuermann
Kit & Jack Overbeck	Clare Schuermann
Paul & Pat Schinkal	Clare Schuermann
Mrs. Barbara Staudigel & Mrs. Claire Schneider	Clare Schuermann
Judy Wilgenbusch	Clare Schuermann
Jean Wilkinson	Clare Schuermann

Tribute

Stan & Debbie Boehmer,
"Happy Holidays!" Norma L. Flannery

A NOTE ON MEMORIALS.....

Oxbow, Inc. has established memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each memorial established in the name of a 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 enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

COMING FEATURE....

Board member and U.C. math professor Steve Pelikan is beginning this March a research survey of the Flies ((Order Deptera) at the Oxbow.

Why flies? Many reasons, one of which is they are food --fillet mignon to many birds and fish. Steve promises to give us reports as his research proceeds.



RAISING BABY RAVENS....

Bernd Heinrich, biology professor and author of *Mind of the Raven*, (Harper-Collins, 1999), considers it a great joy to raise baby ravens for research. He claims that ravens are not only the largest of the blackbird family but also the most intelligent.

One year he parented six nestlings at about five weeks of age. This is what he fed them:

“Day One: 1 woodchuck and 1 snowshoe hare, skin, bones, guts and all...(roadkills).

Day Two: 3 red squirrels, 1 chipmunk, 6 frogs, 8 chicken eggs (shells and all).

Day Three: 2 gray squirrels, 5 frogs, 6 eggs, 6 mice.

Day Four: 1 hindquarter of a Holstein calf.”

And Heinrich writes that in the next few days, “their appetites picked up.” *Wetland Matters* readers may not be interested in adopting ravens but they can't go wrong giving *Mind of the Raven* a read.

Oxbow, Inc. Election Results

The Oxbow, Inc. Board of Directors unanimously reelected the current group of officers with the exception of vice-president at the board meeting January 23 at the Cincinnati Zoo. Jon Seymour was elected vice-president replacing Morris Mercer who chose not to run because of health problems.

The officers continuing for another year are:

President: Norma Flannery

Recording Secretary: Patti Niehoff

Corresponding Secretary: Suzanne Skidmore

Treasurer: Mark Westrich

Ohio Agent: Dave Styer

Indiana Agent: John Getzendanner

Norma has served numerous terms as president, “Too many to remember the number,” she says. Suzanne, Dave and John also are long-time officers.

At the general membership meeting at the Zoo January 8, the following were unanimously elected or reelected for a three year term on the Board of Directors: Jeanne Bocklage, Norma Flannery, John Getzendanner, Steve Pelikan, Dwight Poffenberger and Suzanne Skidmore.



Am I Making a Difference?

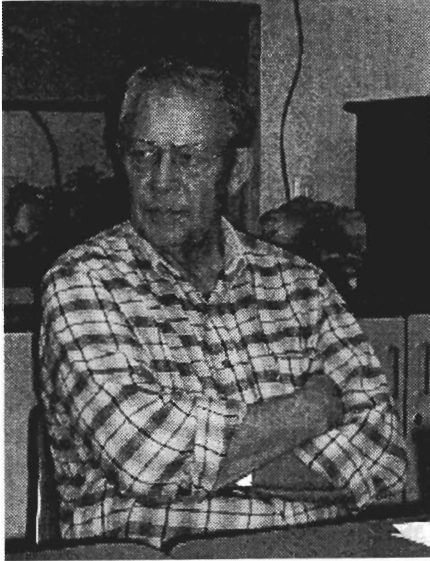
I saw them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in my hometown.
With a heave, and ho, and a “Yes, yes,” yell,
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.
I said to the foreman, “Are these men skilled
As the ones you'd use if you had to build?”
He laughed and said, “Oh no, indeed!!
The most common labor is all I need!
Because I can destroy in a day or two,
What it takes a builder ten years to do!”
I thought to myself as I went my way,
Which of these roles am I willing to play?
Am I the one who is tearing down,
As I carelessly make my way around?
Or am I the one who builds with care,
So the world is better because I was there?

Anonymous

Time to Meet Five More Outstanding

Members of the Board of Directors

With various talents, from various backgrounds, all Members of the Board of Directors work diligently to meet Oxbow, Inc.'s grand plan for preserving the Oxbow area for wildlife -- for now and decades to come. In keeping with our promise made in the last issue, *Wetland Matters* presents five more Members of the Board. We are proud of their generous gifts of time, energy, themselves.



John Getzendanner

John S. Getzendanner, Sr....Born and reared in Price Hill. John and Nancy have four children, eight grandchildren. Retired. Spent time with Cincinnati Bell, Western Southern Life and 26 years with CG&E as a gas serviceman. John finds it difficult to remember when he wasn't working. While in high school, he worked for an architect.

For 23 years, John and his family have called Hidden Valley Lake "home". Two of his married children also now reside at Hidden Valley. (Two children live out-of-town.) The place is dear to his heart and he has served on just about every committee there as chairman; currently Chairman of Streets and Parks Committee. For many years, he was a member of the Board of Directors.

John touched many lives as he gave 25 years of service as a Boy Scout leader in Western Hills. He has been on Oxbow, Inc.'s Board since 1988 filling various positions, currently serving as Indiana Agent. (Every corporation must have an agent to handle state communications.)

Biggest Frustration: "Too many commercials on TV."

Dream Job: "Retirement."

Interests: Fishing, hunting, trapping, scuba diving. And where does he like to scuba? Where else? Hidden Valley Lake. "Why not?" John asks with a half grin.

Morris Mercer....Hails from southern Illinois. World War II Marine. Lives in Saylor Park with wife, Frances. Two children, three grandchildren. Retired from Otis Elevator Company. There's no one we know who doesn't like Morris's column, "Field Notes". We suspect most *Wetland Matters* readers turn to it first.

Morris, living close to the Oxbow, visits it often. We believe he has probably seen every one of the 265 species seen and/or heard at the Oxbow over the years. He's our in-house Oxbow expert and although he has been active in other nature organizations, Oxbow, Inc. is his favorite. In fact, Morris deserves most of the credit for starting Oxbow, Inc.

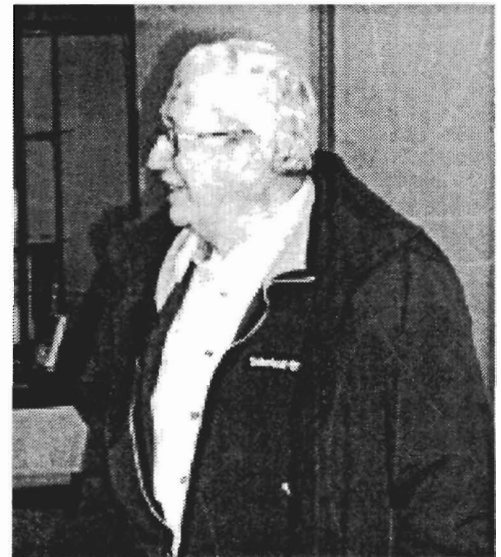
Many throughout the tri-state, including countless school children, have heard one of Morris's Oxbow talks. He has served many years as chair of Oxbow, Inc.'s Speakers' Bureau as well as Vice President. He also arranges the nature walks and evening programs for members.

In a *Cincinnati Enquirer* article on Oxbow, Inc. a few years ago, Morris was described as "the grandfatherly type." If that implies that he is kind and considerate and encouraging to the young, the description is perfect.

Interests: "Family, Church, the Oxbow and the history of World War II," Morris says. "Being in the Pacific I knew little that was going on in the rest of the world and not all that much of what was going on in the Pacific."

Biggest Frustration: "That health has slowed me down to a crawl."

Dream Job: "Not really looking for a job."



Morris Mercer

J. Dwight Poffenberger, Jr....Cincinnatian with a wonderful bubbly laugh. Graduate of the University of Michigan (B.S. in Mechanical Engineering) and George Mason University College of Law. Wife Lynn and two daughters: Lisa, 3, and Amy, 1.

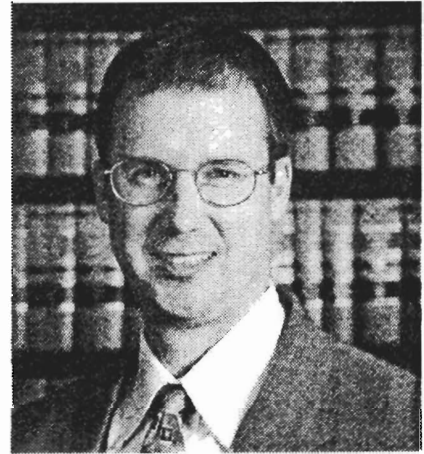
Dwight is an Associate with Wood, Herron & Evans, a law firm engaged exclusively in the practice of intellectual property law. Prior to this, he worked for the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Enforcement and the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office where he was a patent examiner.

He got interested in birding through Ducks Unlimited and finds the Oxbow the greatest place to spot migratory birds. "No other local area can top it," Dwight says. "In fact, more corporations and individuals should become Oxbow, Inc. members to help save the area."

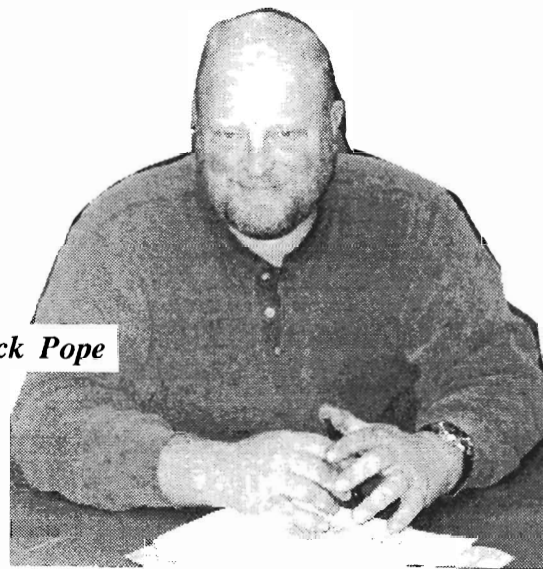
Interests: Environmental Law, fishing, hunting.

Biggest Frustration: " State and federal failure to enforce environmental laws because of politics."

Dream Job: "Environmental attorney for groups such as Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, Rivers Unlimited."



Dwight Poffenberger



Rick Pope

Rick Pope....Grew up in the Harrison, Ohio, and Lawrenceburg, Indiana, neighborhoods. "I've had twelve years of formal education but I'm still learning through contacts with Oxbow, Inc.," Rick says. He describes himself as a "token farmer" but a ring of modesty surrounds that statement. Rick farms some 700 acres along the southern Ohio/Indiana border: Pope Farms, Inc. owned by Rick and his wife.

Besides serving as Oxbow, Inc. chairman of Easement Inspections, Rick is under contract to farm Oxbow, Inc. land. He got interested in birding through other Oxbow, Inc. members.

Family: wife Susan, daughters Angie and Karen, two grandchildren, including a grandson born New Year's Day. (With his physique and that twinkle in the eyes, Rick could easily play Santa for those grandbabies.)

Interests: Photography, snow skiing, motorcycle riding, camping and hiking.

Biggest Frustration: "Closed-minded people."

Dream Job: "Have it!!"

Jon Seymour.... A clinical epidemiologist and toxicologist from Madison, Wisconsin, with a B.S. in Chemistry, Ph.D. in Biochemistry. He has over 40 published papers and abstracts. Married to Jackie for 31 years. Three children: Dan married to Kristin, Cammie and Mandy.

Jon tells us he got started as a birder while taking a class at the University of Wisconsin called "Wildlife Ecology". The class spent time at the Aldo Leopold Reserve (Leopold of *Sand County Almanac* fame) and toured "the shack" where Leopold lived at various intervals.

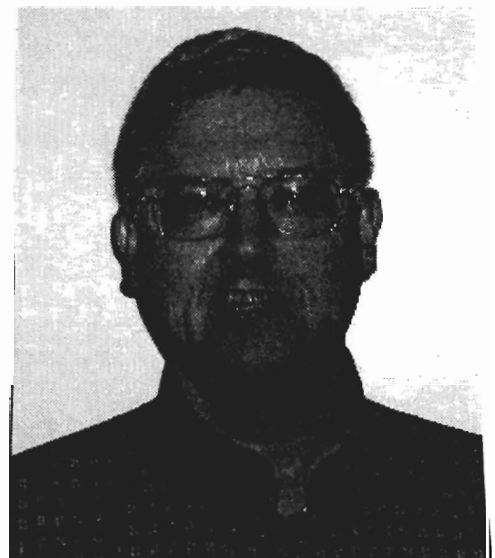
His first visit to the Oxbow " was memorable for the flocks of black-crowned night herons and for the washing machine and sofa dumped at the edge of the road", Jon explains with a frown and slight smile. "We have made tremendous progress in protecting and preserving the Oxbow but there are still major private properties within and adjacent to the Oxbow area. We need to redouble our efforts to obtain these parcels."

Jon was unanimously elected Oxbow, Inc.'s Vice President last month and has been ably filling two chairmanships: Conservation and Speakers' Bureau. He's our man at P&G who swells the Birdathon fund.

Interests: "Amateur naturalist. Bird watching. Teaching and science research. "

Biggest Frustration: "Not enough time and not enough money to save the wild habitats faster than they are being destroyed," Jon states.

Dream Job: Managing a National Wildlife Reserve.



Jon Seymour

It took but one field trip and some very nice people.....

How I Got Hooked on the Oxbow

by Jerry Lippert

It was March, 1984, and I would get my introduction to the Oxbow at the peak of waterfowl migration. I was sixteen years old and had never been to Shawnee Lookout. Two friends and I, Erich Baumgardner and Gary Hunt, saw an advertisement for a birding hike at Shawnee Lookout and the Oxbow region. The ad was probably in the Audubon newsletter. Though I had been bird watching from about the age of 12, I had never been on a trip to the Oxbow and had never gone in pursuit of ducks. I remember looking at the waterfowl section of the bird book a lot, but never dreaming that I could see most of these birds in Cincinnati. The part of town I lived in didn't have any major waterfowl staging areas and I wasn't aware that any place in the area did have such habitat. I was in for a treat. After the long drive to Shawnee Lookout, and meeting the field trip group, soon we were watching some hooded mergansers in the flooded parking lot by the boat ramp. What kind of place was this, that exotic birds (so they seemed to us) like hooded mergansers could be found in a flooded parking lot? Erich, Gary and I were bowled over.

Next, leader Morris Mercer took us to the overlook of the Great Miami River along Lawrenceburg Road, the one that has the huge heavy equipment tires as a platform. Morris set up his spotting scope. The river was spilled out into the flood plain, forming a shallow temporary estuary. With the naked eye, one couldn't tell there was much out there. But when Morris trained his Questar on the area, it was another story.

I'll never forget my first look through Morris's Questar. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was like being transported to the ducks' world, like being amongst them on the water in their whirl of seemingly happy activity, even though we were a thousand yards away! Gadwall, redhead, pintail, blue-winged teal, American wigeon and many others now lost to memory swam in the shallow floodwaters. Wow!

Morris was calling out the names of various duck species, one after another. It was too good to be true! How could they all be here at once? We in the group were taking our turns looking through the Questar. It seemed that every duck from the bird book was out there in the far section of the field that was flooded. I was amazed. And -- I was hooked!

Morris made sure everyone saw lots of duck species that day. He seemed to me like Marlon Perkins in a way, the legendary leader of a legendary safari that was so good, it could well be televised and sponsored by an insurance company.

We got a kick out of how Morris's jacket had two name patches on the front, one on top of the other, both reading *Otis*. So we wondered if his full name was really *Otis Otis* and for many years we referred to him as Otis Otis, tongue in cheek. Recently, I told Morris about this and he laughed. He told me that he worked for the Otis Elevator Company. One year Otis Elevator issued a new patch with a new design which they wanted all employees to put on their work jackets, so that's how Morris ended up with two *Otis* patches.

Every duck we saw through Morris's scope that March day, except mallards, was a new one for my life birding list. As teenagers, Erich, Gary and I had discovered something: Here was a destination! This whole incredible Oxbow region, such a magnet for waterfowl, was a place we had to get back to. We would try to return as often as possible from then on.

Later that March, Gary and I returned on a freezing, wind-chill dominated day to stalk waterfowl along the big bend of the Great Miami River near its confluence with the Ohio River. We crept slowly up

behind a huge log on the riverbank. The log made a great blind and from there we watched hooded mergansers, common mergansers and other waterfowl through binoculars. The views we got of those birds, at close range, I'll never forget. Gary and I will also never forget how cold our hands got in the wind. We only had one pair of gloves between us and kept switching them back and forth, and using one at a time. I'll never forget seeing how red Gary's hands were from the cold. (Was I hogging the gloves?) But we'll also always remember how worthwhile it was too. I may never get that close again to truly wild ducks who aren't aware of my presence. Before long we attended other bird hikes in the Oxbow with Jay Stenger and Dave Styer and returned on our own, too.

Once, trying to get a view of some open water, Erich, Gary and I were quickly driven out of an area near I-275 by men with shotguns. How nice that before long Oxbow, Inc. would become a landowner. In 1988, I was fortunate to participate in the first Birdathon fundraiser organized by Oxbow, Inc. and haven't missed one since. Looking back, those early Birdathons had a special component because Art Wiseman and his wife, Jinny, were there, both such knowledgeable birders, both quite welcoming to younger folks like us and both so instrumental in organizing Oxbow, Inc.

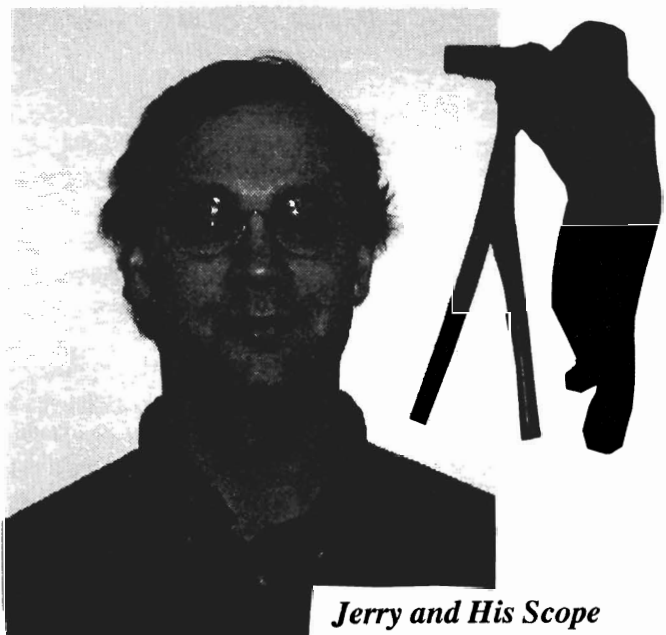
Once, when Jinny challenged one of our team's Birdathon sightings at the tally, we were sure of ourselves and defended our identification. However, the bird, a red-necked grebe, was not accepted by Jinny as part of our final count. After the Birdathon tally, our team returned to Gilmore Ponds where we had ID'd the "grebe". Sure enough, Jinny was right. The bird was not a red-necked grebe. The first time we had identified it at long range, looking into the sun. Not a good way to ID a bird, especially a rare bird. It turned out to be a hooded merganser. Ooops!

Another benefit of those first trips to the Oxbow was that I was shown how indispensable a spotting scope could be to birding. After working the summer of '84 and saving enough money, in August I went to the Cincinnati Nature Center and bought a Bausch and Lomb Discoverer 15-60x zoom spotting scope and a tripod. Here were some tools to help me find more ducks in the future. Immediately I was using the new setup to find new bird species. I still have both today.

If it weren't for good trip leaders like Morris Mercer, Jay Stenger and Dave Styer, and all of the hard work put in by groups like Oxbow, Inc. and the Audubon Society, I might never have gained such an appreciation of waterfowl or the Oxbow at such an early age. These trip leaders showed me a place and a world that otherwise might have taken me another decade to discover, or I might never have discovered at all. People who give of their time and effort have an impact far greater than they might realize. The Oxbow and waterfowl watching have become for me abiding interests which will likely be lifelong and all because people like Morris, Jay and Dave let me look through their scopes and showed me the ropes.

Since then, many others have shared more about the Oxbow with me and spent time there with me. Wayne Wauligman has taught me about the reptiles and amphibians there. Denis Conover has taught me about many plant species there. Wayne and I made some nice treks there at Thanksgiving time to find ducks. This past May while on Birdathon, Wayne, Erich and I caught a huge 6'6" black rat snake there that was sunning itself in the middle of the dirt road alongside the Oxbow Lake, the biggest wild snake I've ever seen.

If not for the preservation of a large part of the Oxbow region at Shawnee Lookout and Oxbow, Inc. lands, it would be much harder to see such a concentration of ducks in our area as we saw that day in March, 1984, and which can be seen there each March. It's not only the Oxbow itself but the people we share it with that make it a special place.



Jerry and His Scope

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 area 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		

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