



WETLAND *matters*

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

Oxbow, Inc. Activities Schedule

Programs

Tuesday, January 14, 2003, 7:30 p.m.
Earth Connection, Mt. St. Joseph College

Mike Busam, President of Gilmore Ponds Nature Conservancy, will speak on the preservation of Gilmore Ponds, its opening to the public with trails and viewing platforms and its inclusion in the Metro Parks system. He will include the joys and frustrations along the way.

To get to the Earth Connection building at Mt. St. Joe drive south on Neeb Road past the intersection of Neeb and Delhi Pike and immediately turn left into the parking lot. Drive to the rear and turn right up a slight hill to a parking lot alongside the Earth Connection. This is a new meeting place with special environmental characteristics.

Tuesday, February 11, 2003, 7:30 p.m.
Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Nature Photographer Steve Maslowski will present a program entitled "The Season of the Salmon" complete with his own inimitable video.

Field Trip

Sunday, February 23, 2003, 9:00 a.m.

Meet Jay Stenger at Gardens Alive for a late winter look at the Oxbow. Late winter and early spring are great times for duck spotting at the Oxbow.

C, G & E Becomes First Corporation to Donate Land to Oxbow, Inc.

Oxbow, Inc. President Norma Flannery is most pleased to announce that the Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company, a subsidiary of Cinergy Corporation, is the first corporation to donate land to Oxbow, Inc. The site comprises 20 acres on the east side of the island at the mouth of the Great Miami River. Oxbow, Inc. owns the land on the west side and the center tract belongs to another corporation.

Ms. Flannery met with C, G & E officials-- Tim Hayes, Sr. Environmental Scientist; Jim Piraino, Sr. Real Estate & Right of Coordinator; John Stowell, General Manager, Environmental & Public Affairs-- December 13 and the official transfer of the acreage was accomplished.

Cinergy is known for its very good environmental policies. Cinergy provided the 35-foot pole for the first Oxbow, Inc. osprey nest in August plus the crew to erect it. The company also actively encourages peregrine nesting elsewhere in the area. Oxbow, Inc. is fortunate to have such a corporate friend.

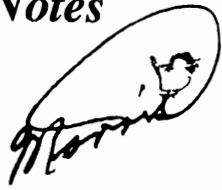
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Of Special Note

The next issue of *Wetland Matters* will feature a full-page, up-to-the-minute color map of the Oxbow area showing all the recent land acquisitions as well as names of the various sites. It will be printed on a separate sheet so you may take it with you on your trips to the Oxbow or keep it as reference for articles appearing in this newsletter.

Field Notes

by



Mercer

It's early December and time to put some of my field notes together. This has been such a beautiful fall season here around the Oxbow. After looking at my field notes, it seems I've been involved with birds of prey more than usual.

One afternoon, Frances and I were enjoying a drive through Shawnee. We saw a lump beside the road. We slowed down to see what it was. As we came near the lump a great horned owl took off. I was a little surprised to see an owl in the middle of the afternoon.

Another fall morning I was on my way to the Oxbow. We had some rain a few days before and I was afraid the dirt roads around the Oxbow would be muddy. One look at the road and I knew if I got in I would need help getting out. I just turned around and went back across Lost Bridge down along the Great Miami to Shawnee Lookout Park. The leaves were so pretty and I like seeing them blow across the road. Seeing the deer in the autumn leaves was so nice. I went up and over Cliff Road back along the Ohio and home.

When I arrived home, Frances told me that I had missed a phone call. She said Rick Pope was on his corn picker near the Oxbow. He called on his cell phone to tell us he could see a mature bald eagle there at the Oxbow. I had missed seeing that one but I thought of the many times and places I've seen an eagle around the Oxbow. It is always special to me to see an eagle.

My next encounter with a bird of prey was on a frosty morning here at home in the yard. Earlier, we had put out four tomato plants with the help of our daughter, Marilyn. We had staked them and gotten ready for the crop. We did have lots of tomatoes and now as the frost came, we had picked some nice green ones for some fried green tomatoes. I had sat down in a lawn chair and was cutting the rag ties from the stakes. I was watching gulls flying down the river toward the Oxbow and birds busy at the bird feeder. I heard a sound I didn't remember hearing before. The sound seemed to be of a bird facing pure terror. A house sparrow sized bird dodged into the hedge near me. I felt something brush my face. I'm sure it was the wing tip of a Cooper's hawk as it passed me. I heard the wings as they touched tree limbs as the hawk dodged through the trees. The hawk had missed this opportunity but after seeing him fly I didn't think he would go hungry for long.

On another afternoon Frances and I saw a barred owl sitting on a limb pretty much out in the open. And again in early afternoon. Another time, we saw a hawk as we drove along, a nice red-tailed hawk, but there was something wrong. The hawk

was flapping its wings but going nowhere. In fact, it was hanging upside down with a leg caught in a tree branch. I wondered what I could do to help it get loose. I stopped and backed up even with the tree it was caught in. The bird flapped even harder and freed itself. It flew a short way and landed on a branch. The leg seemed fine and we were glad of that.

The Thanksgiving season was extra nice this year. The Mercers, Dave and Vicky, came in from Sugarland, Texas; the Mercers, Noel and Katie from Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and the Simpsons from Centerville, Ohio-- all to enjoy some time here in the Valley of the Three Rivers. For the kids from Baton Rouge one of the highlights was the snow. We watched them play, throwing snow balls for a while and then we headed for the Great Miami and Shawnee. The valley and hills were so pretty, all white with snow. A trip across Lost Bridge and we could see the gulls-- some on the sand bar in the river, others in the water and many in the air. Ring-billed gulls were all I saw. At Shawnee we saw a herd of deer. There were 15 or 20 and they were so pretty in the snow.

It was much too muddy to drive into the Oxbow. Jim Simpson took care of that. He walked back into the Oxbow. He saw many species of ducks. There was a flock of green-winged teal, some 50 to 75. Hope we can find them on St. Patrick's Day. He also saw an osprey. The osprey better keep moving or he will get frost bitten.

The next day Jim walked back again but the Oxbow was all ice covered. He walked back to Beaver Pond. As he approached the water hole the wood ducks began to take off. He said there was no way he could count the wood ducks. He guessed there were between 150 and 200 wood ducks that took off. I was thinking it was summer when I saw so many wood ducks in the same field Jim was standing in. The soybeans were just a few inches high when I saw the ducks. Now the woodies were on their way south for the winter. I always wonder what all stops at the Oxbow that we never see. Jim did say he heard some sandhill cranes but he never saw them. There is really nothing that sounds like a crane except a crane.

I do think the Oxbow is a wonderful place. It has been a long-time love of mine. Now winter is coming to the Oxbow and I've always liked winter. Well, I do like spring, summer and fall, too, around the Oxbow. But don't miss the beauty of winter.



Paula Steenken



by Dave Styer

Karl Maslowski and the Oxbow

Karl Maslowski is known to us all as a professional nature photographer and nature writer. He is a 2003 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement in Nature Photography Award of the North American Nature Photography Association. For fifty years Karl wrote a Sunday nature column for *The Cincinnati Enquirer* titled "Naturalist Afield after World War II" and "A Naturalist in the Miami Valley Prior to World War II". The older title hints more of Karl's long-time relationship with the Oxbow area. This article focuses on that connection.

On May 24, 1931, when Karl Maslowski was 16 years old, Ralph Dury took him to the Oxbow area to meet Milton Trautman. That spring Trautman was inventorying fish at the mouth of the Great Miami River. (Trautman subsequently wrote two landmark books, *The Birds of Buckeye Lake* (1940) and *The Fishes of Ohio* (1957).) Milton Trautman told Karl about some of the exciting birds he had been seeing. For example, just the day before he had seen a least bittern on a railroad bridge over the Great Miami River. Karl tells me that Trautman also taught him, that day, how to make a mammal skin (for a museum collection); done with a prairie whitefoot mouse that Karl had grabbed too hard. This was the same day that Karl found prothonotary warblers, perhaps a first record for the Greater Cincinnati area. What an exciting day for a young naturalist!

Karl remembers going there about a week later in his half-brother's old Chevy and making more trips there in the 1930s with others, naturalist Woodrow Goodpaster and Gordon Acomb, in particular. Karl especially remembers that he added the Caspian tern to his life list in the Oxbow area. Perhaps it was on April 30, 1932, when he saw four. Back then the Caspian tern was far rarer in the Cincinnati area and a record by Milton Trautman a year earlier (on May 25, 1931) along the Great Miami River in the Oxbow area may have been the first in the 20th century. Imagine seeing not one, but four Caspian terns!

When Dr. Frank Neuffler of U. C.'s Evening College asked Karl to give a bird course, Karl agreed to give a few lectures and walks. On one of the walks they went to a farm that is now part of Shawnee Lookout Park. On that trip they saw an osprey catch a fish. Gordon Acomb must have been along on that trip. Karl remembers that Gordon had a telescope that greatly aided viewing. Like Caspian terns, telescopes are much more common now.

Similarly, in 1937, in the Oxbow area Karl and Goodpaster saw the 20th century's first record of horned grebe in the Greater Cincinnati area. Karl wrote, "The horned grebe has been recorded from Cincinnati many years ago, but we know of no recent records for this bird. We were highly pleased therefore

to see two of these birds on the Great Miami River on March 27."

Maslowski and Goodpaster discovered a flock of palm warblers over-wintering in the Oxbow area in January, 1939. Some of the warblers' feet were caked in balls of mud but at least some survived the winter.

Those were exciting times at the Oxbow but World War II came along and Karl was a military photographer in Europe. When Karl returned and resumed his column in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, one of the first places he reported on was the Oxbow area.

In a different vein, Karl and the late Jim Anderson made many fine duck hunting trips to the Oxbow area. He certainly wants Oxbow, Inc. to remember that duck hunting has a time-honored tradition in the area.

In the years since Oxbow, Inc. was formed, Karl, George Laycock and Morris Mercer have set up a traditional St. Patrick's Day field trip to the Oxbow. The only rule is that they can't break into the Lorna Doone cookies until they see a green-winged teal.

When I called Karl to talk about his experiences in the Oxbow area, the first thing he mentioned was the beginning of Oxbow, Inc. He wanted to make sure we didn't forget Judy Bramstedt, the first President of Oxbow, Inc. If Judy hadn't stepped up and set up the organization, the Oxbow area might today be lost for wildlife.

By the March, 1986, meeting of the Oxbow (sub) committee (of the Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club), it had been determined that it would cost \$200 to incorporate. Karl asked if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wouldn't buy the area but was assured that they wouldn't. Then, Karl passed his hat around and we chipped in enough money to incorporate. Karl says he still has that hat.

In a previous article, I wrote about Morris Mercer and his involvement in the Oxbow area prior to the formation of Oxbow, Inc. This article has looked at some of Karl Maslowski's pre-Oxbow, Inc. experiences. I know of no one else active with Oxbow, Inc. whose experiences in the area cover so large a span of time.

Karl
Maslowski





by Jon Seymour

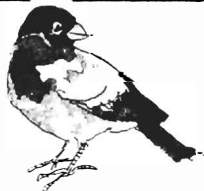
Happy New Year!!! As of this writing Oxbow, Inc. is set to acquire more land as the C,G&E/Cinergy Corporation is planning on GIVING the deed to the east end of the island at the mouth of the Great Miami to Oxbow, Inc. This is wonderful and continues to extend Oxbow, Inc.'s influence on the use of the flood plain. We are grateful to C,G & E/CINERGY for this magnificent gift.

Oxbow, Inc. already owns the west end of the island and that leaves CSX as the only other owner of the island. CSX owns the center third of the island which is the location of their railroad trestle crossing the greater Miami River.

Kani Meyer, the head of our land management committee, is setting the plans in place for the development of prairie grassland around the new ponds where the dirt was removed for the addition to the levee. Kani is also planning a controlled burn of some of the non-agricultural areas that have gone to "weeds".

While our land acquisition activity is slowing down a bit we are becoming very active in management of our land. Land management is an active pastime and our committee is beginning to shape the future of Oxbow, Inc. The land management committee is also selecting areas to establish a parking area and to provide a handicapped accessible overlook to Oxbow Lake for visitors. These changes reflect a major break from our past policy of discouraging unguided visitors. This change was made possible in the last six months with the completion of several land purchases that created a solid block of Oxbow, Inc. land.

Kani and the Land Management Committee are also looking at improving the farm road system and the drainage of the agricultural areas. So much to do!!! Look for special announcements of activities in the future where Oxbow, Inc. members will have the chance to clean-up, fix-up, and have fun activities while helping manage the Oxbow.



Said the Robin

Said the robin to the sparrow
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."

Said the sparrow to the robin
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."

OXBOW, INC. ELECTIONS

SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY MEETING

Oxbow, Inc. members will vote for six persons to serve three-year terms on the Board of Directors at the Tuesday, January 14, 2003, 7:30 p.m., meeting at the Earth Connection, Mt. St. Joseph College, as well as consider certain changes to The Rules and Regulations of the Corporation.

Members up for re-election are Denis Conover, Mark Esposito, Dennis Mason, Kani Meyer, Richard Pope and David Styer.

Changes to be ratified by the membership were listed in the previous issue of *Wetland Matters*. These changes have been approved by the Board of Directors.



New Year Special

10 Gift Memberships at 50% Off

To celebrate the New Year, Oxbow, Inc. is offering a special package of 10 Oxbow, Inc. gift memberships for the price of 5-- half-price special good until Valentine Day, February 14, 2003.

Send names and addresses of 10 people whom you wish to receive the gift memberships plus a check for \$50 to
Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-0391

The recipients will receive a card saying that they have received a one-year gift membership from you. This includes a one year subscription to *Wetland Matters* (six issues). This is a fine opportunity to share Oxbow, Inc. with your best friends!



In the Mailbox...

The Old Man and the Youngster

To: Peggy Gatch, Chairman, Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

We recently received your notice of a memorial contribution, made to your organization by the Oak Crest Animal Hospital in memory of our "mini" family member, Tugger. Nice people at Oak Crest!

Tugger had a younger brother named Punch who, earlier this year, disappeared one dark and stormy night from our backyard while he and Tugger were out taking care of business. It seems that the backyard gate had not been completely closed and the two decided to go on an excursion. That had happened once before, some years ago, and the two had been found, together, several hours later and several blocks away. This time, however, since Tugger didn't get around as well as before, Punch left him behind. We found the old man at the head of the driveway but the youngster was nowhere to be seen. Hours of frantic searching, ads in the local papers, signs on light posts and almost daily visits to the ASPCA were unsuccessful. Since Punch had "personality plus", we believe that he was found and now resides with another family to whom he brings the love and joy he brought to us. And that's a good thing because the alternatives are not to be contemplated.

The enclosed is in his memory.
Ed and Karen Wichta, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 16, 2002

Where's Beaver Pond?

To: Jeanne Bocklage, Editor, *Wetland Matters*

I read with much interest the recent Field Notes by Morris Mercer in the November-December 2002 *Wetland Matters* newsletter. In that article numerous Oxbow place names were used, the location of which I do not know. I would very much like to learn these local site names. Please publish in a future issue a map with the locations of Beaver Pond, Wood Duck Slough, Jack Pot Pond and all named sites shown.

Thank you.
Gerald Young, Lawrenceburg, Indiana, November 7, 2002

Editor: *No sooner wished for than granted. A full page color map with all sites marked will appear in our next issue. Enjoy your visits, Mr. Young.*

Readers may reach *Wetland Matters* by E-mail: mattiebow @ aol.com.

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

Donor

Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.
Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.
Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.
Shirley & Ken Durbin
Jeanne Bocklage
Frances & Morris Mercer
Bob, Wendy & B.J. Fuerisch
Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.
Ed & Karen Wichta
Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M.

In Memory of

Chester Cooper
Bogey Daugherty
Bubba Downey
Dale Durbin
Bernard Martin
Bob Meyer
Davenger Phillips
Emerson Schad
Punch Wichta
Tugger Wichta

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 acknowledgment.



Some cormorants stand guard beside Beaver Pond.

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		

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391
513-471-8001

Corporation Officers

President, Norma L. Flannery	(513) 471-8001
Vice President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Suzanne Skidmore	(513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Mark Westrich	(812) 637-2175
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, John Getzendanner	(812) 537-5728

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Easement Inspection, Richard Pope	(812) 637-1365
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery	(513) 471-8001
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**Need a Speaker?
Give Us a Call!**



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