



September—October 2013

No. 163

WETLAND *matters*

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

Have you visited our website?...www.oxbowinc.info

Need a speaker? Call 513-851-9835

Birdathon brings in Money for Habitat and Access Improvements

.....by Jon Seymour

The Greater Cincinnati Area Birdathon concluded with 198 species seen by all the teams combined and 158 species seen by the winning team. But the primary purpose of the Birdathon is to raise money for habitat and access improvements on Oxbow owned lands.

This year so far the Birdathon has raised \$4,417.80 with more still to come in. It is never, never too late to donate to Birdathon. The following teams were responsible for raising money for Oxbow.

Our lead money raising team was the team of Paul Wharton, Jay Stenger, Jack Stenger, and Joe Bens bringing in the amount of \$1,395.50. Congratulations to Oxbow Team #1 for their great success. Other teams bringing in donations of support for their teams were:

- Wayne Wauligman, Jerry Lippert & Madeleine Lippert - \$425.00
- Jon Seymour & the First Timers (none this year) - \$385.00
- Bill Hull & Bill Zimmerman - \$347.50
- Sr. Marty Dermody, Katherine Miller, Lois Shadix, & Chris Moran - \$326.25
- Charlie Saunders - \$215.00
- Dave & Jane Styer - \$126.55
- Gary & Jeremy Stegner - \$125.00
- George Farnsworth, Sean Kirby, & Nick Baker - \$121.00
- Don Begosian - \$106.00
- Mark Koller & Dan Koller - \$105.00
- Miami Valley Christian Academy Teams - \$55.00
- Dave Tozier, Vickie Tozier, John Eckles, & Jen Eckles - \$50.00

- Erich Baumgardner - \$ 15.00
- Evan Leon, John Leon, & Sarah Leon - \$15.00
- Chris Clingman and Suzanne Clingman - \$10.00

The following supporters donated to Birdathon 2013. We thank them all for their dedication to this event and the benefits it gives to Oxbow, Inc. I was especially pleased to open up one member's donation letter and find that it was dedicated to the support of the lowest scoring team. I just had to smile. That is what encouraging all the teams to raise money is all about.

- Robyn and Patton Aungst
- Erich Baumgardner
- Herbert and Wilma Beigel
- Srs. RuthBockenstette and V. M. Forde
- Therese and Jeanne Bocklage
- Don Bogosian
- Margaret Bogosian
- Judy Bohn
- David Brinkman
- Suzanne and Cliff Clingman
- Sr. Marty Dermody
- Tim and Laura Dornan
- John Eckles
- Herman and Frances Eckstein
- George and Vanessa Farnsworth
- Jeff Grothaus
- Bill Hull and Dr. Amy Ruschulte
- Judy Kennedy
- Don and Jeremy Koller
- Robert and Patricia Lacker
- John and Sarah Leon
- Jennifer Loggie
- Kani and Dave Meyer

(continued on page 2)

Birdathon results...(continued from page 1)

- Miami Valley Christian Academy
- Katherine Miller
- Ken Miller and Bethia Margoshes
- Chris Moran
- Al and Regeana Morgan
- Don Morse
- Catherine and Randy Oppenheimer
- Timothy and Diana Peters
- Dave and Ginny Rice
- Joyce Romer
- Charlie and Mary Saunders
- Jon and Jackie Seymour
- Lois and Carl Shadix
- Gary and Sally Stegner
- David and Jane Styer
- Scott and Molly Thomas
- Thomas More Animal Behavior Class
- Joan Carlson Walson
- Wayne Wauligman
- Suzanne Wendt
- Kirk Westindrof
- Mrs. H. Whitney Wharton
- Nancy Whitaker
- Jim and Judy Wilgenbusch
- Bill Zimmerman

**Send your donations to: Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025**



Meet Me Outdoors (Outdoor Adventure and Learning brought to you by Green Umbrella)

The 2013 Great Outdoor Weekend
Meet Me Outdoors at the Oxbow!
Saturday and Sunday, September 28-29
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. both evenings

Meet Me Outdoors at the Great Outdoor Weekend for the Oxbow, Inc. sunset tour at this point in the season that is a peak of the fall migration. We are one of the few places in the country where this type of outdoor extravaganza can be found. It is a smorgasbord of outdoor experiences and fun opportunities for the whole family. So mark your calendar and go to www.greenumbrella.org and follow the links to Great Outdoor Weekend or go to www.cincygreatoutdoorweekend.org. You will find a listing or all the programs and directions to the sites.

Oxbow, Inc. will again participate by offering two evening (sunset) hikes of about a mile and a half in the Oxbow from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday evenings. This is a wonderful time of day in the Oxbow. Many of the visitors to the Oxbow visit only in the morning looking for birds in the early hours of the day. But dusk has its own set of birds, as well as amphibians and mammals. We hope to see and hear many such denizens of the Oxbow. While the time of day is the same both Saturday and Sunday, the cast of characters as well as the play of nature that unfolds can be very different. We never know who the star of the show will be. In past years the star has jumped around from being a Bald Eagle, to a River Otter, or to an American Avocet (a bird usually not found east of the Mississippi River). Since outdoor walks often turn into mystical adventures, we may witness a murder of crows, view a siege of herons or egrets, admire a romp of otter, attend a wake of vultures, and empathize with a piteousness of doves.

This is a great time to bring friends, family, and neighbors out to the Oxbow to introduce them to the area. We will cover many aspects of the Oxbow as well as the nature that will surround us.

And, do not forget about the other Great Outdoor Weekend events. With Oxbow being late in the day, you and your family have time to "hit" 3 or more of the other 150 programs happening that weekend. This is monster fun so set the weekend aside on your calendar and start planning which events you will attend using the websites listed above.

Window on the Future of the Oxbow (Part III)

.....by Jon Seymour

"We shall never achieve harmony with the Land, any more than we shall achieve justice or liberty for all people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve, but to strive....." Aldo Leopold, "Conservation", 1938.

Now in 2013, what is ahead for Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.? Well, I think it will be a great future but we are going to have to work at it -- hard. Our farm income has been growing steadily and for the most part supports the day to day operations of the corporations. However, we have to ask ourselves if we can continue to farm the Oxbow far into the future. Even if we protect the land and keep it available for farming, will there be any farmers in the area willing to farm it? There are no guarantees. Two of our farmers are past retirement age, one is approaching that age and fortunately one of them is a young man. But will he continue farming? What will happen to our bidding process if there is no competition? As you can see this is an area of great concern. The Board is aware of this and there are four options that we are keeping our eye on and working out what will be the best for Oxbow. Those options are: 1) continue farming as currently practiced, 2) Convert the least desirable farm land to a Mitigation Bank, 3) determine whether small plot farming/gardening would be possible alternative, and 4) revert some or all of the farmland back to natural or planned succession. Options 2, 3, and 4 come with a cost of either loss of dollars or increased management time for the organization, or both versus our current method -- option #1. This is a fluid situation and the Board will continue to stay apprised of the situation and determine if any one of these or maybe something we have not yet considered needs to be put in place.

In 2017 the Board will inherit control of the Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman legacy gift. We have been working hard over the last 5 years to develop a better understanding of the management of investment funds. We established a committee of the Board consisting of a retired financial planner, an accountant, a lawyer, a community representative, and myself (as President of the Board). The committee's function is to advise the managers of the legacy gift of Oxbow's interests and desires as well as to become familiar with the functions of managing an investment portfolio. So far this process has allowed Oxbow to develop our own philosophy and strategy of investment. It has been a crash course for the Board but we will be ready to take over complete management of the Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman fund when the legacy control ends in 2017. Ginny's initial gift was a stock portfolio valued at \$1,600,000 dollars in 2007. Within months after we received the gift the stock market col-

lapsed. I am pleased to say that we have now recovered the original value of the portfolio and during that time the portfolio has generated an additional \$287,000 in the 5 year period or \$57,400 on average each year of income for Oxbow. This will become important for the future of Oxbow.

Now we come to the central question that needs to be solved, how to ensure the perpetuity of Oxbow. The answer to this question was and is my purpose as President of Oxbow. From the very start of our association with the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA), this was the heart of what we wanted to learn from the LTA. They actually give courses in this subject at regional and national meetings of the LTA. I have attended several and will be attending more. We have had other members of our Board attend some of these meetings and will be pressing for more Board members to attend more of these programs. There are two major groups of Land Trusts, staffed or all volunteer. We are the "all volunteer" variety. The first thing you notice attending LTA meetings, is that the "all volunteer" variety sometimes goes out of business while the staffed organizations rarely go out of business. The "all-volunteer" groups often run out of volunteers. More specifically, at some critical point in their existence a "super" volunteer fails to step forward and take charge of the organization and the organization grinds to a halt under its own weight of responsibilities. This is not anyone's fault. You just cannot assume that there is always going to be a "super" volunteer ready, willing and available at the exact moment they are needed most desperately. Therefore, in an organization as complicated as Oxbow, we need to switch from an "all volunteer" status (which we can quite rightly say, that up to this time, we have been very proud) to a staffed organization. This is the first step toward perpetuity.

Ah but what is the right staffing for perpetuity. Most organizations hire an Executive Director as their first staff and often this is done through a grant received from a supportive foundation. Again the LTA meetings have been extremely helpful in examining this situation. There are two major problems with this plan of action: 1) The Board at this point tends to take a holiday assuming that the new Executive Director will now handle everything, and 2) The new Executive Director is often forced to spend half of their time seeking future foundation grants to pay for their own salary down the line when the initial grant runs out. Needless to say that this scenario can lead to a great deal of stress for both the new Executive Director as well as the Board and to a great deal of disillusionment for both parties. And as a result the organization often suffers. Our current thinking is to start by hiring a full or nearly full time office manager. I have been preparing the job description for a while now. The office manager would report to the President of the Board and would primarily be responsible for day to day

(continued on page 5)

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

May 22, 2013

.....by Jon Seymour

I am waiting in the Oxbow office for Susan Ray, a freelance writer for the *Beacon*, a monthly newspaper published in Bright, Indiana (Dearborn County). Last year they won the "Business of the Year" award from the Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce for their excellent publication that celebrates all things Dearborn County. A month ago I had sent the publisher, Celeste Calvitto, an email after I read an article in the *Beacon* on several small Dearborn County parks. I had asked her why they had not done an article on the Oxbow. She replied in her email that she had not heard of us! I would have feigned horror, but truly, that is the most common phrase I hear about the Oxbow. Often from folks who have lived within 15 miles of the Oxbow all their lives. I was not really surprised. I shared the name of our website with her and she emailed back and told me that she would assign a writer to the story and the writer would contact me soon. Now I was waiting for Susan to arrive. I had scheduled the whole afternoon and we had a lot of ground to cover.

Susan arrives a few minutes early and we spend a few minutes in the Office talking about the history and purpose of Oxbow, Inc. I suggest that we can continue to talk in the car and that they best way to understand the Oxbow is to actually get out in it and enjoy it. My goal is to enthuse Susan with the many aspects of the Oxbow and the Oxbow organization, her goal is to enthuse the public, the readers of the *Beacon*.

Our first stop is the entrance and the vernal ponds. These man-made ponds are primarily for educational purposes but they will also benefit many a salamander, frog, bird, and bat. They allow us to discuss at length the various circles of life that surround such ponds and often amaze the listener with the complexities of these interlocking circles. Amazing is good because as an educator you are always looking for the "Ah Ha Moment" when you can "actually see" the light bulb turning on in the listeners head. These moments are the most powerful educational tools of all since they are often the beginning of the desire to know more in the mind of the listener. And someone yearning to learn more is what it is all about.

I am sharing all sorts of information on Oxbow but at the same time bemoaning my fate that most of the large wading birds are nearly absent. It is after all about 2:00 in the afternoon, the time that it is the hardest to find birds moving about. I only have a few birds to show Susan (Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Double-crested Cormorant) nothing fancy like a Bald Eagle shows up to clinch the deal. I have to remind myself that these small numbers are often very exciting to new observers. I have seen so many spectacular things in the Oxbow that I guess I have become a bit jaded and sometimes desire spectacular more often than I have a right to expect. Still the Oxbow never fails to impress and Susan is certainly getting the feel of the area and what it has taken for Oxbow, Inc. to have protected it.

Susan does not know how long it will take her to finish the article or exactly when it will appear in the *Beacon*. So after completing a Shell to Slot tour, we part our ways and I return to the office to complete my tasks for the day.

(The article appeared in the August 2013 edition of the Beacon and amazed me with the extent of Susan's research. Unknown to me, she contacted Oxbow's old friend Matt Stenger and had him tour the Oxbow with her, and provide additional material for her article. The article was centered on the front page and then occupied 1/2 of both pages 4 and 5 of the paper (being the only print article to appear on those pages).

Her article was amazingly accurate with only one exception. In the final paragraphs she is giving directions to the Oxbow and manufactures a railroad track on top of the levee (20 years ago, but not now). Since the appearance of the article I have had several inquiries about the Oxbow and several people more have mentioned seeing the article. Thanks to Susan for a job well done.)

(Window on the Future - continued from page 3)

operations and member communications. This would gradually free several volunteers from various current duties and allow them to volunteer for other needed activities. It would also free the President of the Board from many of the day to day management activities now consuming the time of that office and allow them to concentrate more energy on building the strength in perpetuity of the organization. It has the primary benefit of eliminating the need to have a "super" volunteer in the President position. This does not change the need to have what is called a "working Board" as we currently have and it does not eliminate the need to have volunteers working on projects. It does concentrate the tasks needed to carry-on the organization's day to day business into paid staff hands that assures that the organization will continue to function smoothly without crisis from fluctuations in volunteer commitment.

Beyond this the next employees would be a part time education director (we could share with another organization if appropriate) and finally a part-time land manager. These activities are currently provided by volunteers but as I mentioned above, when Morris Mercer became ill, our outreach education program was at risk. Fortunately I had started to take over from Morris prior to the time his illness stopped his ability to give the outreach presentations. We only experienced a lull in our outreach program. It could have been worse. The third staff would be a part-time land manager (seasonal). Our current land managers are volunteers and the level of need would still require many volunteers but this issue goes back to the farmers that we mentioned at the start of this part. Currently the farmers donate many hours of work toward road maintenance, our prairies were planted with equipment donated by farmers, our roads are graded and repaired by equipment donated by farmers. What happens if we have no farmers or farm equipment available? We will have to rent it and someone will have to operate it and coordinate the rentals and operation. In addition controlling invasives and planting new vegetation can be very time consuming.

With these three positions in place we could now entertain the aspect of hiring an Executive Director to manage the staff and allow a transition in the Board from a "working Board" to an "oversight Board". Now back to the income from the Wiseman (Witte) legacy gift. It would allow the funding of the first two positions. These two positions, office manager & education director, on their own would push Oxbow a long way toward assurance of perpetuity.

The office itself was rented with this transition in mind. There is actually room for three people to work in the office on Walnut Street. Two desks are already present and a third could be added. Our plan is looking forward to 2017 is to have this structure (2 staff) ready to put in place

when we gain actual control of the Wiseman (Witte) fund. While there is no legal restriction placed on the use of the money from the Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman fund, the Board has voted to use the fund as an endowment and to put the proceeds from the fund (dividends and interest and minimal withdrawals) back into the organization. It is the proceeds from the fund that would finance the first two staff hires. The job of the Board would then become finding additional endowment funds that would allow the funding of the remaining two staff. Not an easy job but no one guaranteed easy.

As I have laid out this plan you may have noticed a change in the role of the Board as this transition takes place. The Board still has to be an active working Board, but now it has to become a personnel manager, it has to become a more active fundraiser, and it will also have to deal with changes in the demographics and the economic, social and cultural pressures that will be encountered in coming years. This also means that the make-up of the Board will have to change with time to include more experience in personnel management, fundraising, community communications and marketing. These are more the activities of an "oversight Board". I believe the best future structure for the Oxbow Board would be half "working" and half "oversight". The hiring of staff will allow the Board more time to seek out the proper individuals to fill these new "oversight" positions.

As to land, there is still 700 acres of bottom land to obtain and that is the immediate focus. We have been actively seeking to buy this land for several years and we are waiting for willing sellers. Our goal remains to preserve, improve, and protect the entire floodplain.

Finally, you may have noticed that up to this point Part III has not one word about birds, or fish, or mammals, or plants, or butterflies, or etc. But, everything said so far is necessary for the perpetual protection of this little strip of nature that the members of Oxbow have worked so hard to protect for all those inhabitants of nature. So back to the original question posed to me by a long standing member of Oxbow, "Do we have a plan?" I hope this three part treatise has helped answer the question. If any members have other questions or comments, I would be more than happy to try to answer them either personally or for all to see in *Wetland Matters*.



The Miami Valley Christian Academy was a 2012 recipient of an Art and Ginny Wiseman (Witte) K-12 Education Grant. They built a bird blind on the back area of the school property facing a wooded area and completed the bird blind with feeding stations and cover planting. It serves as an outdoor laboratory for nature education. (Photos by Bill and Rene' McGill)



Back row: Bill McGill, Tyler Ficker, Jerry Engel, Rob Ficker
Front Row: Alex Byrd, Jack Byrd



The blind sits against the woods with protected planting and feeding area well defined and an entrance that allows access without disturbing the feeding birds.



Stepping stones allow access to feeders during muddy weather.



The observation slit with a comfortable bench allows for easy and prolong observation by many students at the same time.



New Oxbow T-Shirts Are Here

The new oxbow T-shirts, designed by local wildlife artist Ann Giese, are available. \$15 if picked up at the Oxbow office. By mail, \$19 (including shipping). Advertise your love for the Oxbow area with this great t-shirt.

Oxbow T-shirts come in M, L, XL and XXL only. If there is a large demand for another size, we may be able to have them printed. To order your T-shirt, send \$19.00 per shirt, to:

Oxbow, Inc.
Attn: T-shirt
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Be certain to include
your return mailing
address!



If you are lucky and your timing is perfect and you are following a beaver and you make him angry so that he will send you a warning splash, and you have your camera out and ready, and your focus and lighting are correct and you actually have it aimed at the splash and you push the shutter at just the right time you might get a photo of a beaver splash. Of course, you have to be lucky enough to find a beaver in the first place. *(Photo, skill, and luck by Wayne Wauligman)*



11 18 2012 13 18

Culverts are designed to let water pass under a road so that by the water not passing over the road, the road will not wash out. But culverts on certain occasions may even become the road (water road) as illustrated in this photo of a kayak passing through the causeway culvert. Remember to duck (and that is not Mallard). *(Photo by Denis Conover)*

Oxbow Inc. PROGRAMS—submitted by Kani Meyer

To reach the Oxbow, Inc. office take Highway US 50 west from the #16 exit off I-275. Pass the Hollywood Casino exit and turn left at the second stop light onto Walnut St. 301 Walnut is on the right side at the second stoplight at the corner of Walnut and Center Streets. Free parking is available on Walnut St., Center St., and in the parking lot behind the building. All meetings are at The Oxbow, Inc. Office, 301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg unless otherwise noted

Tuesday, September 10, 2013 @ 7:30pm

301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg—The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Dr. Dave Meyer has dived on coral reefs around the world in his 40 year pursuit of crinoids. Over that time human activity as well as climate change has presented a great many challenges to the health and well-being of coral reefs. This program will explore those changes with vivid underwater photographs.

Tuesday, October 8, 2013 @ 7:30pm

301 Walnut St., Lawrenceburg—The Oxbow, Inc. Office

Dr. Steve Matter of the University of Cincinnati has spent many years investigating factors affecting movement among populations of the Rocky Mountain Apollo Butterfly *Parnassius smintheus* and the consequences of local extinction and recolonization. This talk will focus on perspectives he has developed on climate change through this long term study.

Oxbow Inc. FIELD TRIPS—submitted by Jay Stenger

***Revised Directions for Oxbow Inc Field Trip Meeting Location — Unless otherwise indicated, all trips start at the upper Oxbow parking lot.** To reach the upper Oxbow parking area, go south on US Hwy 50 from the I-275 #16 exit. In about 200 yards, turn left (east) at the edge of the Shell/Subway and go over the levee to where the road T's with a fence directly in front of you. Turn right and go to the Oxbow entrance sign. Turn left into the Oxbow. The upper parking area is immediately on the right.

Saturday, September 7, 2013, 11:00 AM—Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance

Leader: Bob Nuhn, 513-742-3705, nnuhn@cinci.rr.com

This field trip will focus on butterflies. Bob Nuhn, a retired Hamilton County Park Naturalist and butterfly specialist, considered to be the authority on the subject, plans to search for a variety of butterflies that may astound you. We plan on a 3 hour trip but Bob may stay out longer if there is interest. A side trip to Shawnee Lookout is a possibility. Sunscreen, insect repellent and water could prove useful. Contact Bob with any questions.

Date: Saturday, September 21, 2013, 8:00 a.m.

Where: Meet at the Shawnee Lookout Boat Ramps Upper Parking Lot (See the directions below).

Leader: Jack Stenger, (513) 503-3389, jackstenger@gmail.com

Fall migration for many species of birds will be the focus of this month's field trip. Warbler and other songbird migration peaks during September and shorebirds, herons, egrets and other water birds continue south as well. Raptors are also on the move at this season. Our trip leader, Jack Stenger is a skilled birder with many years of Oxbow birding. Jack will start the morning seeking migrant songbirds on the Shawnee Lookout side of the Great Miami River. We will work our way to the Oxbow in hopes of finding more songbirds and water birds. Expect to stay until noon or later if the birds are cooperative. It will likely still be hot so bring sunscreen, insect repellent and water for your comfort. Contact Jack with any questions.

The upper boat ramp parking lot is located directly across from the entrance to Shawnee Lookout Park. To get to Shawnee Lookout from I-275, take the Kilby Road exit and turn right onto Kilby Road, then a right turn onto U.S. 50, then left onto Lawrenceburg Road, cross the bridge, then turn right and go approximately 1.5 miles to the park entrance. The parking lot is on the left. Further directions to Shawnee Lookout, a Hamilton County Park, may be found at the following link. A motor vehicle permit (\$10 annual, \$3 daily) is required and can be purchased at the entrance.

<http://www.hamiltoncountyparks.org/parks/shawnee-lookout.html>

Date: Sunday, October 6, 2013, 8:00 a.m.—Meet in the upper Oxbow parking lot at the main entrance to the Oxbow.

Leader: Ann Oliver, (513) 307-0929, annieobirder@yahoo.com

October is an interesting season from a birding perspective. Fall migration will be in full swing, with shorebird migration winding down and waterfowl migration just beginning. Some summering and migrant songbirds are still lingering while many of our winter residents are returning in force. Raptors (hawks & eagles) are on the move throughout the month. The various habitats of the Oxbow and the lower Great Miami River valley are a great place to see this diversity.

Our trip leader, Ann Oliver, is an experienced birder plans to visit several spots in the Oxbow as well as a few on the Shawnee Lookout side of the river to take maximum advantage of this seasonal "mixed bag". Come out and join Ann as she leads us on a crisp autumn morning visit to the Oxbow. Feel free to contact Ann if you have any questions.



usings

by Dave Styer

The Savannah Sparrow

In the Oxbow area I have known the Savannah Sparrow only as a migrant. They are especially common in the fall, when there is a large amount of the grassy or weedy habitat that they prefer. The Oxbow area is on the south edge of their breeding range, so there is some possibility that they would nest, perhaps in the restored prairie area.

The Savannah Sparrow has a very large range. It breeds across northern North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, including all of mainland Alaska and Canada, except extreme north-central Canada. In the rest of North America it can be seen as a migrant or a wintering bird. Savannah Sparrows even have a separate breeding range in Mexico. If you are a birder who plays the game of seeing birds in every state possible, you should be able to get a Savannah Sparrow record in every state, except Hawaii. Was Hawaii made a state to thwart these birders at their game?

This leads to a story about a person who was, perhaps, a bit early, and ended up a bit late because of it. Maybe this is a remake of the story of the tortoise and the hare. The details of this story can be found in James D. Rising's article on the Many Savannah Sparrows in *Birding* magazine (Nov 2010). In 1811 Alexander Wilson, father of American Ornithology, described the Savannah Sparrow, and gave it the scientific name *Fringilla savanna*. Wilson simply didn't know that this sparrow had been described years earlier. He named it for Savannah, Georgia. Apparently we like the name Savannah associated with this sparrow, even though the rules of nomenclature dictate that the older scientific name must apply. The current scientific name for the Savannah Sparrow is *Passerculus sandwichensis*. What is this? "Of the Sandwich Islands," i.e., Hawaii? No way! The British ornithologist, John Latham, named the bird before 1789 the "Sandwich Bunting," after a specimen from Sandwich Bay of the Aleutian Island, Unalaska, in Alaska. (Search as I would, I cannot find which of the numerous bays of Unalaska was called "Sandwich Bay.")

This story is about John Latham, and his timing. He was born in 1740. The rules of scientific nomenclature following Linnaeus (born 1707) were fairly new when Latham was young. I don't know, but it is also possible that there was some British resistance to a more continental development. Prior to 1789 Latham described many new bird species. He gave them all English names, but no scientific names. Why bother? Sometime, likely in the late 1780s, Latham realized that the world scientific community was not going to recognize species as properly described until they were given a scientific name following the binomial nomenclature of Linnaeus. In 1790 Latham republished his various bird descriptions with scientific names. Unfortunately for him, in 1789 the German naturalist Johann Friedrich Gmelin had taken all of Latham's descriptions and published the species with scientific names attached. Gmelin was eight years younger than Latham, and recognized sooner that the scientific community was going to require "Latin" names. Thus Gmelin gets the scientific credit for describing the species. Gmelin simply took Latham's "Sandwich Bunting" and Latinized it to *Emberiza sandwichensis*. I don't know that Gmelin was slow, but steady; it does appear that Latham was a little early and then a little late.

Don't feel too sorry for John Latham. He learned his lesson, lived to the ripe old age of 96, and got to name plenty of other birds. For example, he got to name the Superb Lyrebird! That's the story about how John Latham, coming along a little bit early, may have been conditioned to be a bit late.

You may have noticed that the scientific name for the Savannah Sparrow is not *Passerculus sandwichensis*, rather than *Emberiza sandwichensis*, as Gmelin named it. The change of names is due to the fact that Linnaeus had earlier (1758) applied the name *Emberiza* to several European Buntings. The Savannah Sparrow is much more closely related to other American sparrows than it is to any of those buntings. Since the other sparrows were not considered to belong to the genus *Emberiza*, the Savannah Sparrow could not, either. So Bonaparte made up the name *Passerculus* (little sparrow) for the genus of the Savannah Sparrow, and that name has stuck to this day. Oh, yes, this was not Napoleon, but his nephew Charles L. Bonaparte, an ornithologist who moved to Philadelphia. I don't blame him.

The New Oxbow T-Shirts Are Here

The new oxbow T-shirts, designed by local wildlife artist Ann Giese, are ready for sale to all Oxbow supporters. It is lovely design featuring an Oxbow scene surrounded by iconoclastic symbols of nature protected within the Oxbow area.

The sale of these shirts is not a fundraiser but are intended to raise awareness of the Oxbow and to show that the Oxbow's supporters love the Oxbow area. Plus, we are ready to recruit a new member when your friends (or total strangers) ask you about your great t-shirt.

Oxbow T-shirts come in M, L, XL and XXL only. If there is a large demand for another size, we may be able to have them printed.

To purchase the shirt, you have two options: Pick up your shirt at the Oxbow office for \$15.

If you don't have time to stop by, we can mail your shirt for \$19 (the extra \$4 covers shipping and handling). Send \$19.00 per shirt, to:

Oxbow, Inc.
Attn: T-shirt
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Make checks payable to Oxbow, Inc. Be sure to include your return mailing address.

Update on Miami Valley Christian Academy Art and Ginny (Witte) Wiseman Education Grant

.....by Bill McGill

The Nature Preserve at the Miami Valley Christian Academy has developed very nicely. With help from Oxbow, Inc. we have been able to plant a variety of native plants, flowers, ferns and shrubs that will help attract birds, butterflies and wildlife.

Also we have placed Screech Owl boxes in the wooded area, a Kestrel box in the open field behind the church, and also a ¼ mile bluebird trail around the school and the playground area.

Special thanks to Tyler Ficker and Adam Budneski who used their Eagle Projects to build the bird blind with fencing and stepping stones.

We would like to thank Jay (Oxbow, Inc. Board member) and Paula Stenger for attending the dedication of the preserve in May and viewing all that was accomplished with the aid of Oxbow, Inc. generous support.

Some notable birds already seen in the Preserve area are: Dark-eyed Junco, Pink-sided Junco, Herring Gull, Sandhill Cranes, American Turkey, Green Heron and Prairie Warbler.

Oxbow, Inc. Honorariums & Memorials

Donor

Dottie Hilvers

Memorium

Ron Hilvers

Thank You

Oxbow Inc. would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts.

Ken Miller & Bethia Margoshes

Mike Miller

Mrs. H. Whitney Wharton

Kathryn & Vishnoo Shahani for their generous gift to the Art and Ginny Wiseman Education Fund

Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial established in the name of a friend or relative 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.

Tributes are also enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Some tributes are birthday or anniversary remembrances, holiday greetings or gratitude acknowledgements. If so desired, "Happy Birthday!" or the like can be inscribed in the tribute notice.

Contributions should be sent to: Oxbow, Inc., P. O. Box 4172, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.

Some Moments in the Early History of the Oxbow Area

.....by Tim Mara

In the Spring of 1790, Alexander Guard and his wife and children landed at North Bend on the Ohio River. The following Spring, Captain John Hayes, an officer of the American Revolution, landed at that same point with his family and others. By 1793, Hayes had leased land at the mouth of the Great Miami River from John Cleves Symmes, and the Hayes family moved there that Spring. That same Spring, Guard and his family also moved to the mouth of the Great Miami and then slightly up river near the place that later became Hardinsburgh. They cultivated the land as best they could despite hostile Indians.

A traveler reported in the February 7, 1795 issue of the *Sentinel of the Northwest Territory* that "Arrived here yesterday from the mouth of the Great Miami ... informed us that on Monday last the Indians killed two men ... about one mile and a half from that place."

By 1796, Hayes and family had moved to the big bottoms north of what is now Lawrenceburg. Shortly thereafter, Henry Hardin and his family settled on the site of present Hardinsburgh. In the ensuing years, the town was laid out at a horseshoe bend in the Great Miami. That spot was ideal for a landing which facilitated loading and unloading of produce. Hardinsburgh flourished for decades, competing with Lawrenceburg, until 1847 when a major storm and flooding caused the river to change course, leaving Hardinsburgh without its river.

Almost two hundred years later, soon after being incorporated in 1985, Oxbow, Inc. began acquiring many of the same properties first settled by Hayes, Guard, Hardin and others. A few of the parcels were actually purchased from direct descendants of those original settlers. Oxbow's current holdings extend from the mouth of the Great Miami up the valley and include the landing at Hardinsburgh labeled "Broadway" on a map from an 1875 atlas of Dearborn County, which is very near to Oxbow's parking area, and, of course, the former river channel described in historical accounts as "the horseshoe bend in the Great Miami" that we now know as Oxbow Lake. That horseshoe bend is labeled "Old Channel of Great Miami R." in an 1899 atlas. Both maps are shown below.



Sources: The above information and maps were obtained from the following publications available at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County:

History of Dearborn County, Indiana: her people, industries, and institutions, Archibald Shaw (1915)

Atlas of Dearborn County, Indiana by Albert T. Gridley (1899)

Atlas of Dearborn County, Indiana by D. J. Lake (1875)

Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, 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 know 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.**

Prothonotary Warbler	\$ 15	Wood Duck	\$ 25
Great Blue Heron	\$ 50	Green-winged Teal	\$100
Great Egret	\$250	Osprey	\$500
Bald Eagle	\$1000		
Charm of Goldfinches (Group Level)	\$25		

Mail to: **Oxbow, Inc.**
P.O. Box 4172
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
513-851-9835

Corporation Officers

President, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Vice President, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Corresponding Secretary, Dennis Mason	(513) 385-3607
Treasurer, Ed Gempeler	(812) 539-3666
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger	(513) 241-2324
Indiana Agent, Mike Kluesener	(812) 623-7800

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Easement Inspection, Mike Kluesener	(812) 623-7800
Education, Velda Miller	(812) 584-0187
Field Trips, Jay Stenger	(513) 522-4245
Land Management, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
John Klein	(513) 941-4877
Programs, Kani Meyer	(513) 948-8630
Research, Dr. Steve Pelikan	(513) 681-2574
Speakers Bureau, Dr. Jon Seymour	(513) 851-9835
Newsletter Editor, Meg Poehlmann	(513) 931-4072
Newsletter Email: meggster@fuse.net	

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

Printed on recycled paper by
Rapid Copy Printing - 513-385-0888

513-851-9835



Need a Speaker?
Give Us a Call!

www.oxbowinc.info
LAWRENCEBURG, IN 47025
P.O. BOX 4172

