wetland matters

OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391 CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

NO. 37 - SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1992

Agriculture and Wildlife

Much has changed in the last half-century...land use, the flora and fauna, life styles and yes, even some of our values. The early part of this century agricultural practices supported millions of ring-necked pheasants but agriculture is also responsible for their dramatic decline. Agricultural practices helped the barn owl florish in the 40's but agriculture has also contributed to its decline. The farmer of the early twentieth century used his land differently than the farmer of today. Then, there were more acres of hayland. Then, idle, or fallow cropland and fencerows supported a different wildlife than is found on the farms of today. Today's agricultural practices have resulted in increases of millions of more acres being farmed. The removal of the fencerows and fall plowing have all combined to radically change the amount and type of habitat present and, as a result, the kinds of wildlife found on the farmlands. Today, farmers rarely see birds that must rely on grassy fields and unmown hay for nesting, such as the pheasants and bobolinks. Now deer and killdeer are commonplace. Since 1940, America's agriculture has consistently produced record harvests,

creating surpluses that the government has now stepped in to control. Last year, to the benefit of wildlife, this control, in the form of the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Annual Set Aside Program (ASAP), idled over 770,000 acres of cropland in Ohio alone. 32 acres of Oxbow farmland, newly protected by an Oxbow, Inc. conservation easement, was put into the CRP and its crop acres replaced with wetland tree plantings and wildlife food plots. Land use management that encourages the planting of grasses and leaving fallow fields unmowed can produce thousands of new acres of wildlife nesting cover. But, Set Aside and CRP are not the only opportunities to manage wildlife in today's agricultural environment. Wildlife habitat can be further created, or preserved, by a production agriculture that will not negatively impact the farmer's pocketbook. A little land-use advice and a willing attitude can point him, or her, in the right direction.



Agriculture and wildlife are not always conflicting land-use issues.

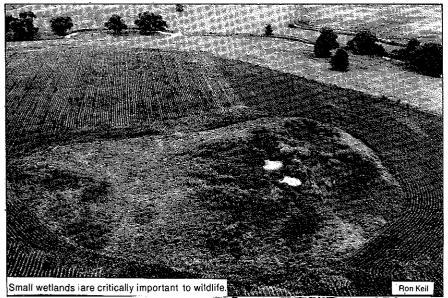
STOW THAT MOWER! Mowing around the farm usually occures after soybeans are planted but before wheat harvest - right during the nesting season! By delaying mowing, or better yet, getting accustomed to unmown grass, land owners will give upland nesting wildlife a chance at raising a few young. Growth of most grasses stops or slows during June. Mowing simply encourages more growth, which requires more mowing, which stimulates more growth which... Clean, sterile-looking farms will produce corn and mice but not much wildlife.

SELL THAT PLOW! Fall plowing reduces the amount of winter food available for wildlife. Large fields and wet springs convince many farmers that spring plowing will lead them to financial ruin and/or personal ridicule by their neighbors and friends. Spring plowing, or the use of conservation tillage, usually has no impact on crop yields. If fall plowing is a must, then unplowed end rows or edges (maybe even unharvested) can provide a significant food source. Oxbow, Inc. leaves a portion of its acres unharvested and knocked down as an over-winter food supply for wildlife.

PLANT A FOOD PLOT! Most farms have at least some idled cropland or odd areas that would be perfect for a food plot. A well-placed patch of corn, sorghum or buckwheat can make a big difference if other habitat components are present. This is a wildlife management technique that can actually benefit the land owner. Corn, sorghum and food plot mixtures are available annually, free of charge. Food plots also attract animals away from cash crops and alleviate damage.

DON'T TOUCH THAT WETLAND! Many farmers view wetlands within crop fields as a nuisance. However, these areas provide excellent habitat and need not be drained to produce a few extra bushels of corn. Some wetlands are farmable in dry years and, in times of drought, may produce the best crops around. Attracting birds to a wetland in the middle of a crop field can have its benefits. Most birds feed primarily on insects and will forage out into crop fields. The use of non, or low-toxic fertilizers and the creation of a 50 foot buffer zone between the Oxbow lake and the crop field are other land-use techniques Oxbow, Inc. has incorporated into the farming practices used on its tillable acreage.

Farming and wildlife do not have to be conflicting land-use issues. Farmers must make a living as they produce our food but, production agriculture does not have to eliminate all wildlife habitat in the process. Minor changes in attitudes and actions can make farmland productive wildlife habitat also. People may value land for different reasons but, even in separate ways, a common ground can be found.



Data - ODNR's "WILD OHIO"



A HISTORY OF THE OXBOW AREA.

Don Bogosian



PART 16 - THE LOST BRIDGE.

The "Lost Bridge" was part of a road connecting Elizabethtown, OH. with the "Point" at the mouth of the Great Miami River. The original covered bridge was built around 1870 at an old fording place on the river. It was replaced in 1903 with a steel truss bridge that was washed away in the 1913 flood. The third "Lost Bridge" was also a steel truss built in 1914 by the Capitol Construction Company of Columbus, Ohio. Because of extensive deterioration, this span was removed in 1989, leaving the massive piers standing bare in the water.

"Lost Bridge" got its name because roadway approaches often flooded, leaving the bridge isolated, with no access from either side.

In 1990 the Cincinnati, Lawrenceburg and Aurora Traction Line began providing fast, efficient, and economical mass transportation to Oxbow area residents and businesses. The CLAT Line ran out River Road to Cleves. Near the old canal tunnel at South Miami Avenue it separated into two branches. One branch ran along U.S. 50 to Valley Junction, then up the Whitewater Valley to Harrison, OH. The other branch went over the ridge on Mt. Nebo Road, down into the valley at Miamiview Road where it crossed the "Lost Bridge" into Elizabethtown and continued out U.S. 50 to Lawrenceburg, IN. The Mt. Nebo route lasted only three years when the two routes were combined. The new route ran along U.S. 50 into Lawrenceburg, IN. until 1931.

The Oxbow bottomlands have been crossed by many major roads and bridges. In 1805, Joseph Garrison operated a ferry across the Great Miami River near Cleves. The ferry was replaced in 1834 by a wooden bridge to carry State Line Road. This same road crossed the Whitewater River on a bridge constructed for the I.& C. railroad in 1863. River channel changes resulting from the 1883 flood washed out the Cleves bridge. A new bridge was built in 1884 across the relocated river channel.

All of the Oxbow area bridges were washed out in the 1913 flood. Most of the bridges were replaced at least once after that, and currently, many are being upgraded.

In 1820 Aaron Bateman operated a ferry crossing at the mouth of the Great Miami and Ohio Rivers. Today, I-275's huge bridge connects Indiana and Kentucky. The massive earth embankments, engineered to raise the expressway above the 100 year flood level, created many "borrow" pits that dot the Oxbow area. These flooded borrow pits now provide wildlife habitat to the Oxbow's wetland environment.

Somewhere in the future, "Lost Bridge" will be replaced upon its lonely piers and will again serve to connect the Oxbow to its historic past.

THE END.

con't.

This concludes the series of articles on "A HISTORY OF THE OXBOW AREA." WETLAND MATTERS hopes the series provided a deeper understanding and "feel" for this unique area. We thank the author, DON BOGOSIAN, for sharing with us his extensive research of the Oxbow area. Its early roots anchor it deep in historic love.



DON BOGOSIAN

Don is a habilitation teacher with the Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation. He and his wife Barbara have three sons, Brendan 17, Gavin 14, and Aidan 11. The Bogosians are members of Oxbow, Inc. and participate in the annual BIRDATHONS as The Parrot Patrol.

Reconstruction of Lost Bridge to start this winter

The August 13, 1992 issue of the <u>Dearborn County Register</u> carried the following condensed article by Ollie Roehm, Editor of the <u>Harrison Press</u>.

Due to recently-awarded Ohio Issue 2 funding and funds from the Local Transportation Improvement Program, the Hamilton County Engineer's Department will construct a new bridge to replace the Lost Bridge that formerly spanned the Great Miami River near Elizabethtown, OH.

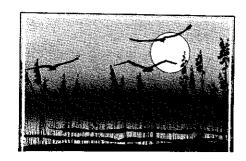
The Lost Bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in 1980 and removed in 1989. Steve Mary, Hamilton County bridge engineer, said the new bridge would benefit businesses on Brower Road, especially the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company. At the request of the Hamilton County Park District, a bicycle path is included in the plan to link the Miami Whitewater Forest bike path to Shawnee Lookout Park near Cleves, OH.

The county must still obtain a construction permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, before bids can be accepted from contractors. "We may be well into the first of next year before things get going." The entire project, at a cost of more than \$3 million should be completed within a year, Mary said.

Issue 2 money comes from a state bond fund that can only be used for infrastructure repairs. LTIP funds are generated by a 1¢ per gallon state gasoline tax.

FIELD NOTES

Morris Mercer.



THE MUDDY OXBOW.

JULY 27, 1992 - no snow on the ground and time for a field trip to the Oxbow. It had been raining most of the day and, prior to that, there had been more than two inches of rainfall. I wondered if anyone would show up for a walk in the mud. But, by starting time, 15 to 20 folks were ready to give it a go. We all loaded into three vans and moved towards the Oxbow.

The road into the fields was under water. It was no place for a walk. One birder said, "since we can't go look for the birds, we'll let the birds come to us." And on this evening, that idea worked fine!

A great egret could be seen at any time. We saw egrets standing in the shallows; we saw egrets in flight; we saw egrets in the willows; and we saw one great egret being attacked by swallows! A couple of kingfishers were busy and noisy. There were swooping swallows collecting bugs and insects over the flooded Oxbow. We did not see much of the shorebirds, as the shoreline had disappeared well back in the standing corn.

We saw wood ducks, flickers, goldfinches, great blue herons, and a mallard hen with young chicks. The evening was beautiful. The shadows were long and a soft breeze played in the willows. The rain had cleansed the air and we had an exceptional look at a fishing green heron, showing colors not always visable on this bird. There were flights of grackles and red-winged blackbirds. We watched a flight of black-crowned night herons come in silhouetted against the blue of the evening sky.

We hadn't checked the buzzard tower so we set up 'scopes and counted more than 30 perched turkey vultures. There were several purple martins in the air while many more sat, side by side, on dead branches at the top of a large old maple. Many were juvenile birds. Soon they will be tested as in a few weeks they will begin their winter flight to a distant spot in South America.

I suddenly realized that the sun had long ago left the western sky. Again, it was time to turn towards home. A group of very nice folks had shared a beautiful summer's evening in the wetland, (and I do mean wetland,) in this special spot we call "The Oxbow."

HIKING OHIO

Scenic Trails of the Buckeye State

by Robert Folzenlogen

A guide to over 100 Day Hikes at 64 areas across the State.

Illustrated with maps and photos.

Available at bookstores, nature centers, and outdoors shops; or send \$14 95 to Willow Press, 6053 South Platte Canyon Rd Littleton, Colorado 80123

The Oxbow."



Last April, at the request of the Town of Greendale, IN. The Metropolitan Research and Development, Inc. of Cincinnati sent a proposal to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources that put forward a flood levee project located east of U.S. 50 between the connection ramp to I-275 and the Lawrenceburg flood levee. The proposal represented a specific effort by the Town of Greendale to find a feasible financial solution for flood-protecting the industrial-commercial property on the west side of U.S. 50.

The proposed levee curved 1,500' to the west, taking it to the Oxbow lake

shoreline before its re-entry into the Lawrenceburg levee.

Implementation of the project required 400,000 cubic yards of fill to construct the levee to Elevation 493. Existing railroad tracks were to be relocated. Drainage for the protected area (Industrial Park) included a retention basin, pipes located in the levee with backflow control and pumping system to discharge storm water from the retention pond to the unprotected side (west of U.S. 50 Oxbow area) of the levee during periods of Ohio River flooding. The preliminary summary of the cost of the proposed project was

\$5,200,000.00. The 400,000 cubic yards of fill were to be obtained from the site (the two acres picked up by the 1,500' curve into the Oxbow area) by grading to a depth of 4-6' over 50-75 acres of the area.

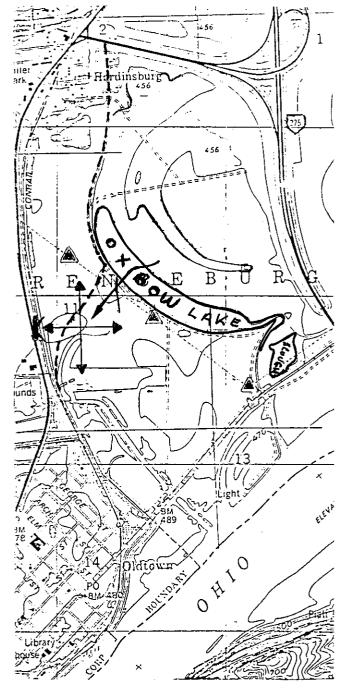
The proposed found "no conditions which suggest that the site includes wetlands, lakes or any other environmental condition which (would) require special handling of the surface drainage system."

The IDNR's Division of Outdoor Recreation's review of the proposal established that formal approval will be required by the IDNR for construction in a floodway. In opposing the project as proposed, the Division noted "numerous wetlands, including a large oxbow at the Great Miami River, (that) characterizes the vicinity of the project site. This high quality habitat is used heavily by waterfowl and other wildlife. Construction of the project would impact several wetlands and would infringe greatly upon the Oxbow itself. In addition, project construction would result in unreasonably detrimental impacts to fish, wildlife and botanical resources."

Oxbow, Inc. viewed this proposed project as the strongest threat to the Oxbow since the successful defeat of the industrial port facility visualized in 1985.

Sincere thanks must be given to IDNR director, Pat Ralston and his people, for recognizing the importance of protecting special and unique habitats from the backhoe and the bulldozer.

Proposed levee Scale: 1"=2,000"



TRI-STATE WILDLIFE CENTER.

Bea Orendorff



This spring and summer has been a season of rebirth for more than the earth and our native wildlife: the Cincinnati Zoo's Wildlife Rescue Program "fledged" out on its own under the name of the TRI-STATE WILDLIFE CENTER, a private, non-profit organization dedicated to education about, and rehabilitation of, our native wildlife. The Center has outgrown its space donated by the Zoo and is looking for a new permanent location. In the last seven years the organization has grown from 15 volunteers caring for 400-500 young animals, to over 40 volunteers caring for over 1,600 young and adult animals in 1991! The Center handles everything from hummingbirds to herons and owls, and from bats to opossums and coyotes. Even some reptiles have found their way to our door! Over 4,000 calls are answered each year covering subjects such as:

- + What is the right mixture for a hummingbird feeder? (1 part sugar, 4 parts water, no red food color.)
- + How to keep bunnies out of the tulip beds? (Sprinkle blood meal around the edges.)
- + What kind of bird is singing all night long? (Mockingbird.)

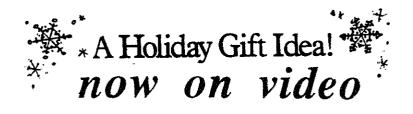
Tri-State Wildlife Center receives no government funds and depends on private donations to continue providing its services to the residents of the greater Cincinnati, southeastern Indiana, and northern Kentucky. At present the search is on for a suitable tract of land on which to build our facility. Once the Center is in operation in a centralized location, there will be a great many opportunities for volunteers performing a variety of jobs:

- + Answering the Hotline.
- + Rescuing wildlife to deliver to the Center.
- + Hand-feeding bats and baby birds.
- + Fundraising and much more!

The Center will also need equipment and office supplies. Oxbow, Inc. has graciously agreed to allow us to keep you informed of our progress in upcoming WETLAND MATTERS. If you are interested in becoming a member or a volunteer, or in donating equipment please contact Bea Orendorff at 513-761-6605.









OXBOW, INC. is collaborating with IMPACT VIDEO PRODUCTION to produce a video cassett of the birds that may be seen in the Oxbow and other wetland areas.

The species name will be shown with the live video of the bird. Background music moves the video along in a pleasing manner. The narration is done by Thane Maynard, Conservation Director of the Cincinnati Zoo.

This 30 minute video is of exceptional quality and has excellent close-up shots of the birds. All of the shots are the work of Jeff Donald and Sandy Schnur Both are perfectionists, a trait that is reflected in their work.

Cassetts will be available for purchase prior to Christmas and will be a gift you will want to give as well as have for yourself. The price is low for the quality of the work - \$18 for Oxbow, Inc. members - non-members pay \$20. Get a head start on your Christmas list. Mail the coupon and a check and order now. Be sure to tell us where your video is to be mailed.

If you're a member who has only been able to dream about joining Morris on an Oxbow field trip, here is your opportunity to see the birds that stop to rest and feed in our area. Just pop your tape in the VCR, prop up your feet, and enjoy!

ORDER FORM



PHONE-IN ORDERS

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MESSAGES from MEMBERS.

This year I again participated as a member of one of the two Cincinnati Nature Center teams and had a personal total of 109 species. While helping the CNC achieve their pledge goals, I also take personal pledges from my friends and co-workers at the Sharon Woods Technical Center of Procter & Gamble against my own personal total. This is the fourth year that I have collected money for Oxbow, Inc. in this manner. Each year has had more success than the previous year. The totals in previous years have been \$180, \$330, \$500, and this year \$670.

I am honored to represent the fine people who back me each year. I never fail to be astounded by their generosity and support. Of course they deserve all the credit. I was just having fun. I wish you all continued success in your efforts to preserve wetland habitat in the Cincinnati area.

Sincerely, Jon Seymour.



The following must be received in the same manner it was sent - tongue-in-cheek!

Please excuse me for being late with the enclosed BIRDATHON '92 pledge check for only recently have I returned from a small hunting and trout fishing trip to Michigan. I was very pleased with "my" team, the Geriatric Gents and a Jr., this year. One really should expect less of them each year as their skills decrease - sight, hearing, ability to walk, etc. I am enclosing a little extra over my pledge to cover the birds they missed. I hope this venture can go on for years and that I don't have to remit with a memorial instead of a pledge.

Regards, Gil Symons



One day this June I finally sought out the Oxbow. I did not even know how to get into it. I parked in the Root Beer parking lot and walked around until I found the road leading into the concrete place. Is this the entrance? I walked the dirt road into the corn fields. I saw one Great White Egret and a few White-tails. (deer). It seemed strange yet great to see that great white bird somewhere other than Florida. What a priceless place!

Sincerely, David Jolley



Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial, established in the name of a friend or loved one, will be enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Each contribution to a Memorial will be acknowledged to the family or to those selected by the donor and should be sent to Oxbow, Inc., P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH. 45243. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of the donor and those to receive the acknowledgment.

Oxhow, Inc. Memorials

IN MEMORY OF

Russell S. Rilea

DONOR

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Henrietta Beamer W.D and Rosemary Hasler Farrell Bob and Tina Schlegel Frederick Eckert, Jr. Glen Amburgy N8TEI, Amelia, OH Julie Godsey Samuel Bernstein K8HBN Julie Godsey Julie Godsey Ann Biek, Dowagiac, MI Irene Chandler, Haslett, MI Stanley and Frances Cohen Anne Allen Crockett, Louisville, KY Catherine A. Curran Julie Godsey Julie Godsev Julie Godsey 🟜 Julie Godsey * Julie Godsey Richard & Grace Dillon, West Chester, OH * Julie Godsey Jean Downie Pete & Stelle Gadek, Perth Amboy, NJ Julie Godsey * Julie Godsey CMSGT James H. Godsey, Jr. & Family, San Antonio TX David J. Hirschberg, South Easton, MA * Julie Godsey * Julie Godsey Mary Agnes Hogue * Julie Godsey Beverly S. Holland, Haslett, MI Julie Godsey Virginia Jaikens KA8CPS, *
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Judith A. Meyer

ED: Memorials in remembrance of Julie have exceeded \$2,200 to date. Oxbow, Inc. sincerely thanks her many friends who honored her wish by sending donations in her memory. She will not soon be forgotten.

Meetings

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH, 7:30 P.M. Cincinnati Zoo Education Building. Enter through the Exit Gate on Erkenbrecher Avenue.

Thane Maynard, Director of Conservation for the Cincinnati Zoo, will present a program on an important issue that is facing a serious political battle for its survival. Maynard, star of radio and television, and bon-vi-vant of the animal world, will speak about "Saving the Endangered Species Act." Thane always presents an exciting program. Don't miss this one!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13TH, 7:30 P.M. Lawrenceburg Public Library. Turn left off of U.S.50 onto Walnut Street. Turn right onto High Street. The library is on the right side of High Street.

Dr. Valarie Pence, plant physiologist and head of the Plant Division of CREW (Center for Reproduction of Endangered Wildlife) presents a look at Costa Rica's diverse ecosystems in her program "Habitats of Costa Rica." She is presently engaged in research to save Ohio's endangered plants and trees.

Field Trips

THE SDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 6:30 P.M. 50's Root Beer Parking Lot.



Meet Jay Stenger for an evening trip around the Oxbow. Shorebirds should be found if the water has receded far enough to first find the shore.

Leader - Jay Stenger 513-552-4245

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10TH, 9 A.M. 50's Root Beer Parking Lot.

Join Dave the Dignified as he scouts the Oxbow area. Fall migration should make this an exciting morning in the field.

Leader - Dave Styer 513-772-4395

THE 50'S ROOT BEER PARKING LOT IS ON U.S.50, WEST OF THE I-275 LAWRENCEBURG-GREENDALE EXIT RAMP.



Make sure your WETLAND MATTERS newsletter goes with you!

Name	New Address
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Speakers' Bureau, Kaniaulono Meyer	513-948-8630
Volunteer Coordinator, John Getzendanner	812-537-5728

Editor

Norma L. Flannery

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 area known locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from future industrial development and to preserve the existing agricultural floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This is an agricultural area rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland. You can 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	Organization/Club	\$25	Cornerstone	\$250
Family	\$15	Supporting	\$50	Sponsor	\$500
Contributing	\$25	Patron	\$100	Benefactor	\$1000

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Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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