

# wetland matters



## OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

2073 HARRISON AVENUE  
CINCINNATI OHIO 45214

NO. 25 SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1990

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS PROTECT THE OXBOW

In 1988 the Hamilton County Park District promised voters that 31% of the revenue generated by their proposed one mill, 15-year tax levy would be spent on land acquisition and natural resources. The levy passed by a 60% favorable vote.

The Board of Commissioners, in August, 1990, announced that 675 acres of the Oxbow adjacent to Shawnee Lookout Park's Uhlmansiek Wildlife Sanctuary has been protected by the purchase of conservation easements from area land owners. To date, the Park District has spent \$594,000 to protect this important wetland habitat.

Conservation easements are legal documents that prohibit future development of the property but allows the land owner to keep and use his land in its traditional manner. Easements become a part of the deed and are binding legal contracts upon all future heirs and/or new owners.

The area is agricultural. Crops will continue to be raised, insuring the presence of waste grain, an important food source for waterfowl on their migration to northern breeding grounds. These acres are now protected for all time.

An "Oxbow Area Preservation Commemorative Ceremony", hosted by the Park District, was held on August 24th at Shawnee Lookout Park. A large, sandblasted sign was unveiled by the directors of the Ohio and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources, Joseph Sommer and Pat Ralston who came from Columbus and Indianapolis to attend the ceremony. The sign lists the names of concerned conservationists who have worked together to protect the Oxbow. The following are represented by plaques on the board:

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Oxbow, Inc.  
Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
The Earl M. Pope Family  
The Edwin Pope Family  
James M. Pope  
The Walter L. Pope Family  
The Brown & Smith Family  
The Robert Weber Family  
The Graham Family  
The Rumpke Family

The Park District has left room on the board for the names of other land owners who may wish to join the conservation effort at a later date.

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Thanks to the cooperation of the Ohio Division of Watercraft and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department, those attending the ceremony were taken on a boat ride on the Great Miami River to view the Oxbow from a different perspective.

Combining the acres now protected by the Hamilton County Park District with the land owned in Indiana by Oxbow, Inc. and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, almost half of the Oxbow is protected. Oxbow, Inc. is currently working with Indiana land owners, using conservation easements in an effort to protect 180 additional acres.

\* \* \* \* \*

Special donations to the land fund are being encouraged to cover the costs of the conservation easements and surveying. Be reminded that donations are tax deductible and that 95 cents of each dollar you donate goes directly to the land preservation fund.

### Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

* * * * *		* * * * *
*		*
	1990	
*	In Memory Of:	Donor
*		
*	Fred E. Bates	Bob and Tina Schlegel
*	Ida Jean Calloway	Ken Fulmer
*	Al Dilz, Sr.	Pat Shanklin
*	Frederick A. Fischer	David A. Skidmore
*	Helen and Dean Oatman	Pat Shanklin
*	Helen Steinway	Pat Shanklin
*	Leo Weyer	Wayne Wauligman
*		
* * * * *		* * * * *



#### HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS GET INVOLVED.

While working the Oxbow, Inc. booth at the Cincinnati Zoo's recycling and wildlife weekend, President Norma Flannery was presented with a \$65 check.

Mrs. Amy Spicher, a teacher at William Mason High School, Mason, OH, made the donation which represented the proceeds of a recycling project and a bake sale by her class of Junior students.

Mrs. Spicher said at times her class room was piled high with bags of aluminum cans. A number of times the class noticed that the principal would walk by the room and just shake his head. "Believe me, \$65 represents a **LOT** of cans!", Mrs. Spicher said.

Oxbow, Inc. wishes to thank the William Mason High Juniors for donating the fruits of their labors to the preservation fund and to send our best wishes for a successful effort during the current school semester!

## OXBOW, INC. JOINS "PLUNK!" - WHAT'S THAT?

To see that the people of Ohio have a voice in the Wetland and Critical Habitat Legislation Bill, Oxbow, Inc. has joined a Miami Group Sierra Club-sponsored coalition/network. Its purpose is to monitor, comment, and ultimately take a stand on the current draft of wetland legislation completed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

"Preserving the Last Ohio Wetlands Network/Coalition", or PLOWNC, pronounced "PLUNK", is presently researching the 14 states that have, or are trying to pass, similar legislation to see which has come up with the best. All have included "No Net Loss" initiatives in their legislation. The current ODNR draft does not address "No Net Loss" even though it is now Federal policy and Public Law. Other critical language in the draft needs to be addressed to see that wetlands in the state of Ohio are protected. If you wish more information about PLOWNC, contact: Trish Zaffel

Lands Issues Committee  
Miami Group, Sierra Club  
311 Forestwood Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45216  
513-821-5978

## SPECIAL THANKS! ! !

Oxbow, Inc. wishes to spotlight a number of special contributions that have been received recently. We are deeply appreciative of all donations, large or small. They are the force that enables Oxbow, Inc. to continue towards its goal of a protected Oxbow.

MS. JULIE AMANN, teacher. \$67.75 collected by the children's Vacation Bible School at Oakhills Presbyterian Church, 6233 Werk Road.

MIAMI GROUP, SIERRA CLUB, \$500. Members of the Miami Group held their annual auction which features "bid-for" services from walking your dog or sitting your house to preparing and serving a gourmet sit-down dinner. Their check represented the entire proceeds of the 1990 Auction.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF OHIO, \$2500. Once again the Board of Directors of the Audubon Society of Ohio has been generous in their support of Oxbow, Inc. In her accompanying letter, President Carol Avril states, "We are happy to be a continuing contributor to the preservation of this important area."

GREEN TOWNSHIP CIVIC CLUB, \$200. President George J. Busche. "We deem it a privilege if we can help a worthwhile cause."

### ANONYMOUS.

\$2000 membership.  
\$ 5779.21 sale of donated shares of stock\*

A SPECIAL THANKS! ALSO to all of the members of Oxbow, Inc. who have renewed their annual membership, and by so doing, renewed their commitment to the Oxbow.

\*It is a policy of Oxbow, Inc. not to hold stock shares donated to the Corporation.

## A HISTORY OF THE OXBOW AREA.

Don Bogosian



### PART FOUR - HISTORIC TRIBES OF THE OXBOW AREA.

As the previous articles in this series have indicated, there were many and varied groups of native Americans who lived in this part of Ohio a thousand years ago. But, by the time the first white men came to Ohio, few Indians were left in Ohio, including around the Oxbow. As a matter of fact, a recent map of native populations of the United States shows this part of Ohio as being occupied by "Poorly known Indian tribes". War, disease, and famine apparently decimated the Indians in southern Ohio. Few villages dating to early historic times have been found, although there were more villages further up the major tributaries of the Ohio, including the Great Miami and the Whitewater. Perhaps the inhabitants of Ohio around 1700 did not want to live close to the Ohio River, since it was busy with explorers, settlers, and war parties. Historic Indian tribes of the Wyandotte, Delaware, and Shawnee all claimed this part of Ohio and groups from all three occasionally hunted here and utilized the nearby salt springs. Since the Delaware traditionally had lived on the East Coast, and the Wyandotte came here from Canada, the Shawnee claim is probably the most legitimate.

Most experts agree that the Shawnee were descended from the Fort Ancient mound builders of Ohio, even though they were driven out of Ohio in the early 1700's by the Iroquois, who were seeking control of all of Ohio in order to monopolize the fur trade. But, by the mid-1700's the Iroquois empire had contracted back into New York State and the Shawnee returned to Ohio.

But, the Shawnee found white settlers also coming here, especially along the Ohio River. So, the Shawnee spent much of their time attacking these early settlers, and one of their favorite strategies was to post lookouts on the ridge at Shawnee Lookout Park and conceal war parties on the Great Miami behind the ridge, out of view of the Ohio River, poised to attack settlers' boats on the Ohio.

In 1781, Joseph Brandt and George Girty led a large band of Shawnee in an attack on a group of Colonial Militia led by Colonel Archibald Lochry, near present day Aurora, Indiana. Lochry was killed and 64 other Colonials were captured. The captives were led back to a camp on the Great Miami near Jordan Road where the Indians waited for reinforcements of British troops from Canada. The combined forces then set off down the Ohio River in an effort to destroy George Rogers Clark's army - an effort that fortunately failed.

Next - Celeron and the French.

## BIRDATHON '90 - GOAL IN SIGHT!

Art & Jinny Wiseman

With only one team, and several individual stragglers, still to report their results and share their BIRDATHON '90 pledges with us, we are pleased to report that we are within a hair of last year's results. As we go to press, our income from BIRDATHON '90 totals **\$16,250.52** with all expenses paid. This figure compares very well to last year's total of just over \$17,000. **WILL WE MAKE IT ???** Final results will be reported in the next issue of WETLAND MATTERS.

## FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR OXBOW, INC.

Oxbow, Inc.'s Conservation Committee, Bonnie Fancher, Chair, and President, Norma L. Flannery have been in contact with Congressman Lee H. Hamilton, IN., for assistance relating to proposed and future development planned for Dearborn County in the Oxbow floodplain from the I-275 Lawrenceburg-Greendale Exit Ramp, east to the Ohio state line. This is the same area for which the Dearborn County Planning Commission repeatedly discussed a plan to pass a local recommendation for building in the Oxbow floodplain at 480 feet, 12 feet below the 100 year regulatory flood level of the State of Indiana's determination of 492 feet.

Congressman Hamilton has met with officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to discuss issues related to development and conservation in Dearborn County. Congressman Hamilton has offered to arrange a meeting between Oxbow, Inc. and representatives from the Corps of Engineers, FEMA, IDNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Bloomington, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to discuss any future plans for the Oxbow area.

Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, OH., has written to the District Commander of the Corps, urging his careful consideration of any application presently on file or submitted in the future for Federal permits to develop properties in the Oxbow area.

Oxbow, Inc. appreciates the efforts being made by Senator Metzenbaum and Congressman Hamilton to assure that development in the Oxbow floodplain, if done at all, is done properly, and that applications for permits are submitted as provided for by State and Federal law.

President Bush's "No Net Loss" Federal Policy, which has been enacted into Public Law, makes the time right for local political bodies to educate themselves to the understanding that floodplains and wetlands may no longer be filled and developed in the name of economy, progress and the tax base. That is an era that has ended.

## I.D.N.R. TAKES ACTION AGAINST DEVELOPER.

Hoosier Environmental Council.

"Michael Wolff, developer and President of the Brown County Club has been issued a notice of violation by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for not obtaining a permit to construct in a floodway. Wolff had begun unauthorized work on Axom Branch Road near Lake Monroe in Brown County. Wolff wants to improve access to club property to develop a several-hundred acre RV resort, directly across the lake from the Charles Deam Wilderness in Hoosier National Forest. Wolff is also in hot water with the Army Corps of Engineers for partially filling a wetland without obtaining permission.

The DNR should be commended for issuing the notice of violation against Wolff. Nevertheless, Wolff has contacted the DNR to rectify the violation, and he is being offered the opportunity to apply for an after-the-fact permit. Wolff has already pleaded ignorance to the Corps, so apparently the same excuse has satisfied the DNR.

The fact that Wolff was offered the opportunity to apply for after-the-fact permits from both DNR and the Corps is a grave concern to environmentalists and wilderness enthusiasts. Fortunately, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has denied water quality certification for Wolff's project, an action that precludes the Corps from issuing a permit. It is hoped that IDEM's action will also prevent the DNR from further considering Wolff's construction in a floodway permit...."

Boardwatch, Aug., 1990

# FIELD NOTES

Ned Keller.



Birding can be slow in the summer, but with a little luck, there are still good birds to be found. On the Oxbow field trip on Sunday, July 22nd, luck was with us. No rain fell from the threatening skies, and we were able to find several unusual birds.

We began by walking the Miami Fort trail at the end of the ridge in Shawnee Lookout. The songs of Wood Thrushes accompanied us nearly the entire time; and after considerable searching, we had a good look at one. That is typical of summer birding: you hear many more birds than you see. We also heard many (and saw a few) Indigo Buntings, Rufous-sided Towhees, Eastern Wood Peewees, and other forest birds. The bird of the day at Shawnee Lookout, though, was only seen, and not heard. That was a female American Redstart. Redstarts are common here in migration, but are quite rare during the summer. Shawnee Lookout is the best place to find them, since the upland areas are primarily the second growth habitat which is preferred by Redstarts.

Since it had rained heavily during the days leading up to the field trip, we expected the Oxbow to be extremely muddy. When some of us drove there after birding at Shawnee Lookout, we found out that we were right. River bottom mud has to be experienced to be believed. It is sticky enough to pull gym shoes right off your feet, and it is slippery enough that you can find yourself sitting down unexpectedly. If you don't believe me, ask some of the people who ventured along the lake.

For those who braved the mud, the birds were ample reward. At the very outset, we were treated to a close view of a Caspian Tern fishing. As we moved along, through ever-deepening mud, we found several Great Blue Herons, Green-backed Herons, Great Egrets, and Black-crowned Night Herons, as well as a few shorebirds. Just when we decided that the mud was just too heavy to go farther, we scanned across the fields one last time, and found the high-light of the entire trip -- an immature Little Blue Heron! Although the adults of this species are blue, as their name implies, the immature bird resembles a small Great Egret. Fortunately, it was close enough to its larger cousins to make the difference obvious. All in all, our trip proved again what we already knew -- that the Oxbow is one of the finest birding areas anywhere near Cincinnati.

\* \* \*

Morris Mercer and Frances are on vacation, having undertaken to drive to Alaska and back. Morris is probably collecting a whole new selection of stories to tell us when he returns. We thank Ned Keller for filling in for Morris.

ED.

"WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR . . ."



**OXBOW, INC. IS WISHING TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO  
DONATE A LATE-MODEL PHOTOCOPIER.  
ANYONE INTERESTED, PLEASE CALL 481-4302 AND MAKE OUR DAY!**

# Meetings

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 7:30 P.M. NEW LOCATION!

The Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, 1720 Gilbert Avenue. Enter through the side door behind the stone towers. Jerry Johnson from Oxbow, Inc.'s Speakers' Bureau will present his outstanding slide program "The Oxbow Story".

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 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.

An opportunity to meet Earl Thirey of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History Staff and hear of the exciting plans that are about to become a reality with the opening of the **NEW MUSEUM** at the Cincinnati Union Terminal.

## Field Trips

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 6:30 P.M. Meet "Ol' Hawk-eye" Jay Stenger in the Fifties Root Beer Parking Lot, U.S. 50 and the Lawrenceburg-Greendale Exit Ramp off of I-275.

Jay Stenger 513-522-4245

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 9 A.M. A weekend morning walk through the Oxbow area with Steve Wagner. Meet Steve in the Fifties Root Beer Parking Lot U.S. 50 and I-275 Lawrenceburg-Greendale Exit Ramp.

Steve Wagner 513-831-7606



## MOVING?

Make sure your WETLAND MATTERS newsletter goes with you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Old Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

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### Corporation Officers

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Fund Raising, Greg Mendell	812-926-1966
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Research, Kaniaulono Meyer	513-948-8630
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### Editor

Norma Flannery	513-471-8001
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### 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

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc., 2073 Harrison Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45214

## Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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