

# wetland matters



## OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 39, January-February 1993

### NOW ON VIDEO

Impact Video Productions, in collaboration with Oxbow, Inc., has produced "Birds of the Oxbow", a video cassette of wetland birds that can be seen in the Oxbow. This 32-minute video is of exceptional quality with excellent, close-up shots of many of the birds found at the Oxbow. Included are Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Spotted Sandpipers, Bald Eagles, and Sandhill Cranes. In all, 49 species of birds are illustrated. Each bird, identified by text on the screen, is shown in natural surroundings engaged in such activities as feeding, preening, and caring for young.

The video script was prepared by natural history writer George Laycock. The narration accompanying the video was provided by Thane Maynard,

Conservation Director of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. The narrative gives useful information about each species including such topics as behavior, range, feeding habits, and the best time to view the species at the Oxbow.

The videography is the work of nature photographers (and Oxbow members!) Jeff Donald and Sandy Schnur. Jeff and Sandy, who own Impact Video Productions, have worked closely with Oxbow, Inc. in producing this video.

"Birds of the Oxbow" can be purchased directly from Oxbow, Inc. The price is \$18 for Oxbow members. Nonmembers pay \$20. You can order your cassette by sending in the order form in this newsletter or by telephone. Cassettes will also be available at Oxbow meetings.

A number of local retail outlets carry the video. These include the Cincinnati Nature Center shop, Nature's Niche at the Hamilton County Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve, Memories Photography, in Harrison, Ohio, Wild about Birds in Milford, and all the Pete's PhotoWorld shops.

## Order Now!

### Thank You, Mayor Combs

If you've ever entered the Oxbow area by going over the levee from Center Street in Lawrenceburg, you've probably noticed the trash piled along the dirt road — unless you've been there in the last few months. Lawrenceburg Mayor Donald Combs arranged for city workers to clean up the area. Oxbow, Inc. extends a BIG thank you to all the Lawrenceburg employees involved, and especially to Mayor Combs who realized the importance of removing the trash. The area is adjacent to land owned by Oxbow, Inc. and has been used as a dumping site for years. We know that the cleanup required a great deal of hard work, but now it looks great.

Thank you also to Rick Pope and Paul Roell, who have worked at grading and widening the road into the area. Oxbow, Inc. owns land along the road and plans to start using the margin of the widened road as a place to park on field trips. There are plans to spread a load of gravel in the parking area sometime soon.

Finally, Oxbow thanks the Merrilees Hardware Company of Cleves, Ohio for allowing Oxbow to have a table and V.C.R. to promote the new "Birds of the Oxbow" video.

— Greg Mendell

### Newsletter News

If this Wetland Matters looks funny, it isn't Norma's fault. Oxbow President Norma L. Flannery has also served for over 6 years as the editor, chief writer, and layout artist for the Wetland Matters newsletter. After completing her 37th consecutive newsletter (the November-December 1992 issue) Norma was happy to have someone else try his hand at editing.

Over the years as editor, Norma has spearheaded several important fundraising campaigns and has always kept us informed about wetlands issues in general and the Oxbow in particular. Approaching her level of clarity and wit will be a challenge. Great job, Norma, and THANKS.

### IMPACT

#### VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

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Cincinnati, Ohio  
45223

## Some Good Questions

Every year, students all over the U.S. are asked to carry out a science project for school science fairs. If you know a student who's looking for a topic for a science project, why not suggest one related to wetlands? Here are several questions that might be the start of a good project:

1) What animals (or plants, or soils) are characteristic of wetlands in your area? Can you create a "wetland test" based on the presence and absence of certain animals (plants, soils) that will let you determine whether a given area is a wetland? Do an experiment and determine how well your test agrees with the legal and ecological criteria used to define wetlands.

2) Wetlands are important for flood control and the maintenance of water quality. Can you build a model (a miniature wetland) that demonstrates the way wetlands reduce flooding or remove contaminants from water? How does the effect depend on the way you build your model?

3) Sometimes wetlands are used as the location for solid waste landfills. Do an experiment to determine whether biodegradable products break down faster or slower in wetlands than in other habitats. Is leaching of contaminants more or less of a problem in wetlands than in non-wetland areas? What are the possible effects of periodic flooding?

4) What soil types are characteristic of wetlands in your area? You can measure many properties of soils (particle size, permeability, water-holding capacity) easily with homemade equipment. Can activities such as farming alter a soil's characteristics?

5) What determines the monetary value of wetlands? How can you assess a wetland's value for agriculture and its potential value if developed? What methods do other people use to assess the value of wetlands? Are there benefits provided by wetlands that can't be measured in terms of money?

6) What geologic factors determine the distribution and location of wetlands in your area? Can you predict the location of wetlands by features on a topographic map? Do an experiment to determine how good your procedure is.

7) Many people are concerned because wetlands are disappearing all over the U.S. What is happening to the wetlands? Where is the loss largest? What legislation is there to protect wetlands? What agencies are responsible for enforcing the legislation?

## S.S. E.A.R.T.H.

Students at Seton High School have formed a new club called SS EARTH (Seton Students Environmentally Aware and Ready To Help). Oxbow Inc. congratulates SS EARTH's members on their awareness of the importance of environmental issues and on their willingness to help worthy environmental causes. It is vitally important that young people learn to care for the earth's resources and habitats.

Members of SS EARTH are invited, as is every interested person, to attend Oxbow's programs and field trips. So we hope to meet SS EARTH members face to face sometime soon.

## Adventure Travel Expo

The Adventure Travel Expo will take place at the Cincinnati Convention Center on January 15-17, 1993. The Expo is presented by the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and produced by Hart Productions.

The Expo will feature dozens of tour operators from around the world with information on safaris, hiking, photo expeditions, river rafting, biking, trekking, scuba diving and more. There will be slide presentations and lectures on international travel adventures and unique destinations. What's more, the Expo is held on the first weekend of the Cincinnati Travel, Sports & Boat show, so admission (\$6.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children under 13) includes both the Expo and the Travel, Sports and Boat show.

Through the courtesy of Hart Productions, Oxbow, Inc. will have a booth at the Expo. If you'd like to help staff the booth, see the "Volunteer Opportunity" in the Calendar section of this Newsletter for more details. Of course, booth volunteers will get into the Expo free.

If you attend the Expo but can't volunteer to help staff the booth, be sure to stop by, say "Hi", and admire the new display material Oxbow has included in the booth.

### Moving?

please send your address label and

NEW ADDRESS:

to: OXBOW, INC P.O. Box  
43391, Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-0391

## Volunteers Staff Booths

The most important thing that Oxbow, Inc. does is educate people about wetlands. We can't hope to save and protect wetlands --- not even the Oxbow --- unless many people --- lots and lots of voters --- understand the importance of wetlands and learn to appreciate them.

That's why Oxbow runs a Speakers Bureau and organizes field trips. It is also why Oxbow, Inc. occasionally staffs information booths at the Zoo and at commercial shows held at the Convention Center. Oxbow volunteers talk with people who stop at the booth, telling them about wetlands and about Oxbow. Sometimes people buy T-shirts. Sometimes they become members. Sometimes they get interested enough to attend an Oxbow field trip. What's important is that people hear Oxbow's message.

In the past, we've had booths at the Toys for Adults Show, the Home and Garden Show, and the Travel, Sports and Boat Show. The producers of these Convention Center shows have been generous in providing Oxbow, Inc. with a free booth. The Cincinnati Zoo invites Oxbow to participate with a booth at their EARTHDAY Weekend and Wildlife Weekend programs.

If you think that meeting people and telling them about wetlands and Oxbow is something that you'd be good at, why not give it a try? Watch for a "volunteer opportunity" in the Calendar section of Wetland Matters (There's one in this issue.) The booth coordinator will pair you up with an Oxbow board member from whom you can learn the fundamentals of working a booth. Shifts for volunteers at the booths are usually about 3 hours, but flexible arrangements are possible. As an added benefit, booth volunteers at the Convention Center shows and at the Zoo get in for free.

Many people find working a booth to be great fun. On every shift one has the opportunity to meet interesting people who are serious about environmental issues and interested in nature. It doesn't take much to get caught up in the enthusiasm of the crowd, and most volunteers find that the time at the booth passes quickly.

In addition to phoning the booth coordinator, there are other easy ways in which you can indicate your interest in volunteering. Put a note in with your next membership renewal, or just drop a line to: Oxbow, Inc. P.O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH, 45243.

# Calendar

## Meetings

**12 January (Tuesday) at 7:30. Oxbow Meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo Education Building.** (Enter through the exit gate on Erkenbrecher Avenue.)

Al Winstel, Naturalist for the Hamilton County Parks, will present a program on "The Wetlands at Sharon Woods". Al will have slides and tell us about a wetland across town from the Oxbow.

**9 February (Tuesday) at 7:30. Oxbow Meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library.** (From Cincinnati, 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.)

At this program Oxbow members will be asked to express their opinions about various land management practices. A representative of the Planning Section of the Division of Outdoor Recreation of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources will show slides depicting different management styles, and the audience will be asked to rate them. This is a rare opportunity to express your opinion about the management of public land. Be there!

## Field Trips

For more information or more detailed directions about these trips, contact the trip leader at the phone number provided.

**28 January (Thursday) at 7:30 P.M. Oxbow Field Trip.**

Meet trip leader Morris Mercer for a delightful nighttime winter walk at Shawnee Lookout Park. The walk starts at the parking lot at the golf club house. You will need a Hamilton County Parks decal. Morris can be reached at (513)-941-2534.

**27 February (Saturday) at 9:00 A.M. Oxbow Field Trip.**

Meet Dave Styer at the 50's Root Beer parking lot for this trip into the Oxbow area. There should be a good variety of water birds around, so bring your binoculars and a field guide. You can call Dave at (513)-772-4395.

## Volunteer

**15,16,17 January (Friday - Sunday). Oxbow Booth at Convention Center**

Oxbow will staff a booth at the Adventure Travel Expo, held at the Convention Center. If you'd like to be part of the action by volunteering to help at the booth, contact booth coordinator Anita Buck at (513)-681-2574.

## Ohio Tax Checkoffs

It's TAX TIME again! You can do good things for wildlife and natural areas by checking off all or part of your refund on your Ohio State Income Tax form, directing it to either the **Division of Wildlife** or the **Division of Natural Areas and Preserves**. Below is a summary of how the two divisions have spent money they received through the checkoff program. It gives both the amount (and the percentage of the total) which was spent on various programs.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Wildlife



**Land Acquisition** \$921,619 (20%)  
(Program priority is on wetlands)  
**Facilities Development** \$525,563  
(11%) (Priority is on development of access for recreation, including handicapped access)  
**Special Projects** \$3,032,230 (66%)  
(These include bald eagle protection, river otter reintroduction, urban peregrine falcon releases, and

education in schools)

**Dept. Taxation Fees** \$114,231 (2%) (required by checkoff legislation)

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

**Land Acquisition** \$1,882,617 (32%) (2240 acres at 29 areas in 19 counties)

**Facilities Development and Preserve Management** \$1,234,977 (21%) (49 major projects at 66 sites)

**Special Projects** \$591,270 (10%) (examples: county natural area inventories, scenic river monitoring and tree planting, land owner contact program)

**Research and Preserve Monitoring** \$632,368 (11%) (including 113 research grants on endangered species and natural areas)

**Information and Education** \$524,205 (9%) (examples: newsletter, nature preserve directory, checkoff program)

**Administration** \$831,589 (14%) (salaries and program operating expenses)

**Dept. Taxation Fees** \$113,943 (2%) (required by checkoff legislation)



## Birdathon '93 is coming.

Birdathon is Oxbow's biggest fundraising event of the year. The way it works is simple. Participants solicit co-workers, friends, family, neighbors, and anyone else they can think of for pledges of money for each species they find. Then the fun begins. During a 24 hour period in early May, participants cover the Birdathon area looking for birds. Some of them spend all night at it. Most of them get wet. The team that finds the most species of birds wins the coveted "Golden Starling Award". Some participants compete in other categories such as "most birds found by a single person" and "most birds found in a single county".

We hope that Birdathon 93 will have even more participants and raise even more money for Oxbow than Birdathon 92, which provided Oxbow, Inc. with over \$15,000.00.

If you plan to participate or if you'd like more information about Birdathon, call Anita Buck (513-681-2574). After all, it's never too early to start collecting pledges.

Watch for more Birdathon information in the next Wetland Matters. A description of Oxbow, Inc.'s own Birdathon teams (and an opportunity to make a pledge supporting one or more of the teams) will accompany details about the Birdathon rules, and a list of the different categories of competition.

## Nominations for the Board?

Oxbow, Inc.'s business is conducted by an elected Board of Trustees. The Board meets once a month, and Board members serve three year terms. The election of new Board members takes place at the January Oxbow meeting, which will be held on 12 January 1993 at 7:30 P.M. at the Cincinnati Zoo. If you would like to nominate someone to serve on the board, contact Dave Styer, (513)-772-4395, who is in charge of the nominating committee. In particular, the board needs someone willing to coordinate the marketing of shirts and videos, and people with skills along these lines should be brought to Dave's attention.

## Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

### In memory of

Margaret Duffy Conway  
Richard Crosset, Jr.  
Dale Durbin (Birthday and Christmas Remembrance)  
Dale Durbin  
Julie Godsey (Christmas Remembrance)  
Julie Godsey (Christmas Remembrance)  
Julie Godsey (Christmas Remembrance)

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Pat Goodpaster  
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Winston F. White Sr.

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CMSGT James and Billie Godsey  
(San Antonio, TX)  
Mr. and Mrs. William D. Farrell  
Norma L. Flannery  
Sally and Alfred Ambrosius  
Rosemary and Bill Farrell  
Rosemary and Bill Farrell  
Frieda R. White

## Oxbow Tributes

### In honor of

Gary W. Beck (Birthday Gift Membership)  
Happy New Year, Aunt Norma

### Donor

Mary Jo, Charlie, and Katie Beck  
Zoe

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. 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.

## T-shirts on SALE

To reduce inventory, prices have been reduced on Children's size Oxbow T-shirts and on the all cotton Birdathon T-shirts with Fritz Haas designs from 1991 and 1992. Kids' shirts have been reduced to \$5.00, and Birdathon shirts are marked down to \$7.50. The selection of sizes is limited.

You can order T-shirts from Oxbow by mail, but include your 'phone number in case the sizes you want aren't available. Better yet, you can purchase T-shirts and sweatshirts at any Oxbow meeting.

## Oxbow Awarded Grants

Oxbow, Inc. has been awarded grants from two foundations: the Helen G., Henry F., and Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation, and the Cornelius and Anna Cook O'Brien Foundation. Oxbow's Board of Trustees thanks both of these foundations for their generosity.

As important as the funds such awards provide is the recognition of the value of Oxbow's work by such prestigious foundations.

# FIELD NOTES

Morris Mercer

We've been on the move much of the time since the last Oxbow newsletter, and I thought that just this once I would share a trip that wasn't in the Oxbow area. Even so, it's a trip I recommend highly.

My wife, Frances, and I made our second trip to Alaska recently. Our first trip was in the summer, but we wanted to see the far north with snow on the ground. We found it all in Haines, Alaska. The Land of the Eagles.

The Haines Highway, which is kept open year around, runs from Haines, Alaska to Haines Junction in the Yukon Territory. The highway follows the Chilkat River for several miles, and five miles of the Chilkat valley have been set aside as a Bald Eagle Preserve.

The Chilkat is fed by warm springs, and the water stays unfrozen all year. The eagles are attracted to the area by the open water and a late run of spawning salmon.

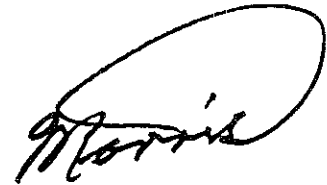
Just the day before we arrived the people from Fish and Wildlife made an eagle count and found 2008 eagles in the preserve. They also reported

seeing a pack of wolves along the river.

We saw moose and many eagles as we drove out to the preserve. But as we arrived at one of the pull offs, we couldn't believe what we saw. There were eagles everywhere. In the trees, in the air, and in the river. There was always an eagle screaming. We also enjoyed seeing wolf tracks and basked in the images they fired in our imaginations.

A picture which keeps returning to my mind is of us standing beside the Chilkat with the snow almost to my knees. The wide valley is before us, a valley filled with eagles. The snow-covered mountains rise up from both sides of the river and the air around us is filled with large snow flakes floating softly to the ground. Standing there trying to absorb the wild beauty around us, my heart seemed to soar as on the wings of an eagle. I told Frances, "Heaven must look much like this".

Although I look forward to visiting the valley of the eagles again, I also look forward to winter here and to seeing wildlife in the Oxbow area. I never tire of my trips to the Oxbow. Hope to see you there.



## ORDER FORM

### OXBOW, INC. VIDEO

Telephone Orders: CALL (513)-471-8001  
(sorry- no credit cards accepted)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

No of Cassettes

\_\_\_\_\_ \$18.00 (members)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 (nonmembers)

Postage & Handling (\$2.00 each mailing address)  
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TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to: OXBOW, Inc  
Mail to: P O Box 43391  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-0391

## My First Oxbow Visit

My first visit to the Oxbow was on September 29, 1984. I still have the notes that I scrawled in my notebook on the occasion. They remind me of the details but most of the impressions of that first trip remain remarkably clear in my mind.

I'd moved to Cincinnati only a month before and was fortunate enough to find that there was someone else at work who was interested in birds. This guy — his name was Dave Styer — gave me directions for getting to the Oxbow one Thursday and the very next weekend I made the drive from Cincinnati to the Oxbow lake. Overnight a high pressure area had moved in. The day was sunny and about 50 degrees. I turned in at the cement plant about 9 in the morning and spent several hours exploring the area. There were a good number of shorebirds and migrant warblers around. I remember standing very close to a flock of Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and a Stilt Sandpiper, watching them feeding in the bright sunlight. I also recall having wonderful views of Chestnut-sided Warblers, their lime-green caps glowing as they foraged low in the trees along the lake.

As I was getting ready to leave I met Dave Styer, who was with a small group of people. They'd just arrived, and I stayed to tour the area with them; admiring the shorebirds again, and looking at several interesting sparrows. Afterwards, we car-pooled to a road cut in Kentucky and my companions gave me a brief explanation of the local geology. We fanned out and looked for fossils. That was my first introduction to brachiopods and the Deep Stage Ohio River. In my desk at work, I've still got one of the fossils I found that day.

After a quick, late, lunch we drove around back roads in Indiana. Stopping several times, we added a couple more birds to the day's list. I learned a few more of the common roadside plants of the area, and we all enjoyed the early fall colors on some of the trees. It was a long day and it was getting dark by the time I got home but my crash course in how to appreciate the Oxbow area really paid off.

Since then I've made over 80 trips to the Oxbow. I'm still learning many things about the plants and animals of the region. Without fail I encounter something new and interesting on each trip I make. Just this past October I added two more birds to my Indiana lifelist while taking an afternoon stroll along the Oxbow lake. The trip before that, I found one of the more common weeds — an Amaranth — with both flowers and seeds on it so that I was finally, after two years, able to identify it.

If you've never visited the Oxbow you should. One of the best possible introductions to the area can be had by attending the monthly field trips that are organized by Oxbow, Inc. The upcoming walks are always listed in the newsletter, and everyone is welcome to take part. If you're already in the habit of visiting the area, why not invite some others along on your next trip? Show them around and get them hooked on the area the way Dave Styer hooked me. I bet your experiences in the Oxbow will only be enhanced by sharing them. —S.P.

## A Member Writes ...

About 4:30 P.M. on November 13 I was in my yard when I suddenly recognized a very distant but familiar series of bugle calls. I scanned the sky and saw a flock of Sandhill Cranes at high altitude. I ran to the house and told Mildred to come out quickly. We counted forty birds, wheeling and winging in haphazard fashion. Evidently they were seeking a site to light for the night. From their position high over Price Hill they could surely see the Ohio River but it would be the congested area of factories, boat harbors and barge operations. As the birds slowly drifted toward the southeast I wished I could have suggested a change in direction that would have taken them to our OXBOW!

—Paul X. Hellmann

## Tri-State Wildlife Center

Once called the "Cincinnati Zoo Wildlife Rescue Program", the Tri-State Wildlife Center has expanded and outgrown the space donated to it by the Cincinnati Zoo. The center is currently searching for new facilities and has started fundraising. In addition to a new location, the Center will need a variety of equipment such as refrigerators and cages.

The two major missions of the Tri-State Wildlife Center are wildlife rehabilitation and education. The Center is unique in our area because its staff take in and care for any kind of injured and orphaned animals. Center staff and volunteers also offer programs about wildlife for schools, clubs, and other organizations.

For more information, or if you can offer the Center much-needed resources, call Bea Orendorff at (513)-761-6605.

### 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	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

### Corporation Officers

President, Norma L. Flannery (513)-471-8001  
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Recording Secretary, Dennis Mason (513)-385-3607  
Corresponding Secretary,

Suzanne Skidmore (513)-561-5718

Treasurer, Jim Rettig (513)-561-0211

Agent, Dave Styer (513)-772-4395

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Bonnie Fancher (812)-438-3641

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Programs: Ohio, Morris Mercer (513)-941-2534

Indiana, Betty Myers (812)-537-1631

Research, Kaniaulono Meyer (513)-948-8630

Speakers Bureau, Morris Mercer (513)-941-2534

Volunteer Coordinator,

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## Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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