

wetland matters



OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 59 May-June 1996

Birdathon '96

Gaming Development News

Oxbow is concerned with several lawsuits spawned by proposed gambling development in Dearborn County.

Whiteco-Metrocomm, the company that wants to erect billboards in and around the Oxbow, sued in the Dearborn County court to have the decision of the Board of Zoning Appeals overturned. This Zoning Board decision denied Whiteco-Metrocomm's request for an exemption from the current zoning laws about sizes of billboards. The Dearborn County judge recently "threw out" the suit because it was not filed properly. Whiteco-Metrocomm can appeal, but has not yet done so.

In a federal case based on the same zoning decision, Whiteco-Metrocomm is asking to have the county's zoning code concerning billboards declared unconstitutional. In a preliminary telephone conference with the lawyers working on the case, the judge asked Whiteco-Metrocomm and the Board of Zoning Appeals to reach an agreement out of court. The Zoning Board will consider the matter at their next meeting, and a representative from Whiteco-Metrocomm has indicated that they are interested in reaching an agreement.

An out-of-court settlement seems likely in this case because the earliest possible court date is sometime in 1997. Presumably Argosy and Whiteco-Metrocomm would prefer to be in business before the case can be tried in court.

A grand jury in Indiana is investigating events leading up to Argosy's obtaining the "certificate of suitability" for operating a gaming operation in Dearborn County. Records from local governments have been subpoenaed. Argosy has delayed a bond issue to raise funds for its Dearborn County development.

Thankyou

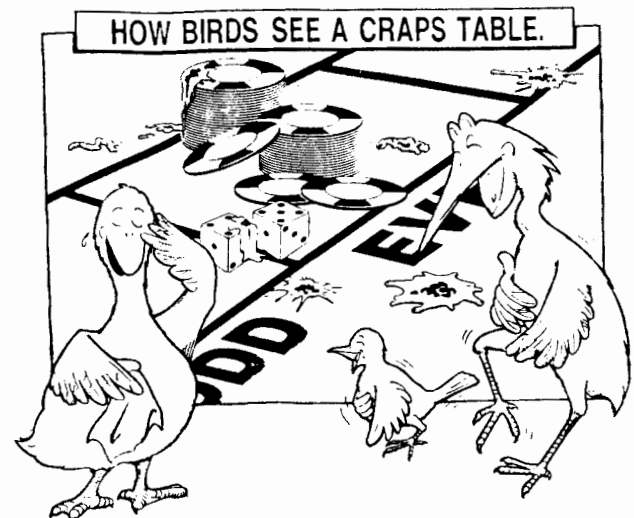
Oxbow is very pleased to have once again recieved a gift of \$500 from the Helen G., Henry F. and Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation

Oxbow's annual fund raising event will take place between 5 PM May 10th and 5 PM May 11. Birders from the Tri-state area (and from as far away as New York and California) will spend this period identifying as many species of birds as possible. In the weeks prior to the BIG DAY, participants will solicit pledges of money for each bird species they find.

Many local environmental organizations sponsor Birdathon teams and split the money they raise with Oxbow. The Cincinnati Zoo, Cincinnati Nature Center, the Cincinnati and the Northern Kentucky Bird Clubs, Gilmore Ponds, Inc. and Raptor, Inc. all have teams entered in Birdathon this year.

Last year, Birdathon raised about \$12,000 to help protect the Oxbow. If you would like to pledge your support for one of Oxbow's teams, there's a form inside that you can fill out and mail in.

Birdathon participants receive a Birdathon T-shirt designed by Fritz Haas. Below is a preview of the Birdathon '96 design. A few extra shirts will be available at Oxbow meetings.



BIRDATHON '96
Benefitting OXBOW Inc.

Calendar

Meetings

May 14 (Tuesday) 7:30 PM Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo Education Building. (Enter through the employee's gate on Erkenbrecker Avenue)

Dr. Meg Riestenberg and Dr. Kay Clifton, both of the College of Mt. St. Joseph, will present their program "Geology, Plants, and People".

11 June (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library (From Cincinnati, turn left off U.S. 50 onto Walnut Street. Turn right onto High Street. The library is on the right side of High Street.)

Dr. Gene Kritsky from the Biology Department of the College of Mount St. Joseph will speak on "Tiger Beetles of Southwestern Ohio Waterways." Gene will tell us about some of his on-going research in the Oxbow area as well.

Field Trips

May 4 (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Meet leader Paul Wharton at the Gardens Alive! parking lot (776 Rudolph Way) for a spring walk at the Oxbow.

May 11 (Saturday) 7:45 A.M. Gardens Alive ! bird walk.

All are welcome on these pleasant and refreshing walks. Meet at Gardens Alive! (776 Rudolph Way) and carpool to the Oxbow Lake or another birding "hot spot". Please call the store if weather looks threatening or if you want more information, (812) 537-8698.

June 8 (Saturday) 7:45 A.M. Gardens Alive! bird walk

Meet at Gardens Alive! (Please see above for details)

June 9 (Sunday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip

Ned Keller will lead this walk. Meet at the upper boat ramp at Shawnee Lookout Park. A variety of

Oxbow Memorials

In memory of

Pretzel Belton
Julie Godsey
Dusty Miller
Hester Stephenson
Frieda R. White
Frieda R. White
Frieda R. White
Frieda R. White

Donor

Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
Norma L. Flannery
Cheryl Winslow-Devine, D.V.M.
Clifford and Patsy Budke
David and Maureen Bill
Mr. and Mrs. Russell Brown
Mark W. Lawson
Wink and Carolyn White

Pledge Now for Oxbow's Birdathon Teams

Oxbow will sponsor several teams in Birdathon '96. You're invited to pledge your support for any or all of Oxbow's teams. Pledge for your favorite or for the highest-scoring team. Some people pledge a fixed amount, others pledge some amount per species found. Whatever you choose, you can make your pledge by sending in the form below. After Birdathon is over you'll receive a letter telling you how Oxbow's teams did, where they went, and the good birds they saw, along with a memo advising you of your pledge total. All pledges to Oxbow teams go directly to Oxbow, Inc.

Oxbow's remarkable success at protecting habitat is directly attributable to its members' generosity. Thank you in advance for your pledge supporting Oxbow's Birdathon teams.

Oxbow Team #1 "Geriatric Gents and a Junior." Karl Maslowski has agreed to reassemble his team of expert birders to compete in Birdathon '96. Last year, his team concentrated on Adams County where they found nearly 100 species.

Oxbow Team #2 "Fire and Brimstone Birder's Guild." Joe Bens and Paul Wharton. Last year Joe and Paul came in second for the Golden Starling Award. They promise to try harder this year.

Oxbow Team #3 "No See Ums." Charlie Saunders and Steve Pelikan. Last year, along with David Styer, who's spending the spring in California, Charlie and Steve tied for first place in the competition for the Golden Starling.

Oxbow Team #4 "No See Ums (west)." David Styer, who's spending the spring in California will participate in Birdathon in Monterey. Because he'll be outside the official Birdathon area, he can't compete for prizes. We hope you'll pledge support for his effort anyway!

BIRDATHON '96

Oxbow Team Pledge Form

YES! I want to pledge per species: ___\$2 ___\$1___75¢___50¢___25¢___10¢ other ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

My pledge is for Oxbow team #1, "Geriatric Gents..."

My pledge is for Oxbow team #2, "Fire and Brimstone..."

My pledge is for Oxbow team #3, "No See-Ums"

My pledge is for Oxbow Team #4, "No See-Ums (west)"

My pledge is for the highest scoring team

mail to: Oxbow, Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243

Field Notes

Morris Mercer

Late winter and early spring have been great and it is nice to think of the beautiful days and remember the hours shared with so many nice folks. One afternoon, just as the sun was leaving the western sky at that special time when everything takes on a golden glow, we stood and watched great flights of Mallards, Blacks, and Pintail settle into the old cornfield along the Great Miami.

The large flights of migrant ducks were in the Oxbow a few weeks early this year. The weather and the water levels have been perfect for attracting ducks. I've seen more Canvasbacks than ever before. We had especially good numbers of Common Merganser, Goldeneye, Pintail, Widgeon, and Green-winged Teal as well. The large gangs of Mallards were here in February. People impatient for spring dread February, but this is one of the finest months at the Oxbow.

This last summer our family took a tour across the Dakotas, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba — the North American Duck Factory — where we saw waterfowl in their summer home. This March, Frances and I joined up with our son David for a peek at some of the ducks on their wintering grounds.

David lives in Houston, Texas now and while we were there we took a day trip to the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is about 60 miles west of Houston. I was looking forward to seeing some Prairie Chicken again. I recall seeing them in the fields back in Illinois when I was a school kid. (Now that was a ways back!)

As we neared the refuge we turned on some narrow country roads and followed the signs. We saw Loggerhead Shrikes and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers on the wires along the road. We also saw Texas Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush in bloom. We were watching for Prairie Chicken.

The land was flat and covered with low, dry brush. I thought of the old story about the land so flat that you could but down a 2 x 4 and back up water for 20 miles. But they're in the midst of a drought. We passed a few potholes where dead fish lay on the cracked dry bottom of what had been a water hole.

We stopped at a little shelter and picked up a brochure and field checklist. Frances was reading the brochure, which told us that there were fewer than 100 Prairie Chicken on the 8,000 acres of the refuge. And the area with the chickens is closed to the public. We passed the Refuge Headquarters and moved on down the auto tour route.

I asked Dave to stop, as I wanted to check a bird on a post. After a glance I asked Dave to get out the scope because we'd never seen a Crested Caracara. Dave pointed out a cloud to our southeast. It turned and the sunlight caught the white wings as we both said "Snow Geese."

Our map showed an area called "Pintail Marsh" down toward the flight of geese. We were anxious to move on. The land grew wetter as we moved toward the marsh. In the shallow water were Blue and Green-winged Teal, Shovelers, White-faced Ibis, several Little Blue Herons, Great Egrets and shore birds. It was here we pulled over to let a car pass. (We only saw one other car during our 3-hour visit).

In the bright sunlight we put up the scopes to inspect Pintail Marsh. Dave said, "Look at this, Dad." I looked through his scope. There was a beautiful Cinnamon Teal in the foreground; behind him were both blue and white phase Snow Geese. A surprise to me was all the White-fronted Geese, almost as many as the Snow Geese. We found Ruddy Ducks and our first Mottled Ducks, along with more ibis and Black-necked Stilts. Dave called me for another look through his scope — on a willow limb was a heavy-bodied snake sunning itself. On the willow next to it were three more that looked just like the first one.

Dave had to get his mother over for a look. She had the reaction he expected, claiming that it reminded her of Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The brochure said we might see King or Rat snake or Cottonmouth. We didn't check the insides of the snakes' mouths, but I'd bet they were white. We left them in the warm sun.

It was great fun to share a scope with Dave again, and to visit an area where some of our migrant waterfowl spend the winter. These birds winter on the Gulf Coast, South and Central America and each summer they fly as far as the Arctic Circle. I sure enjoy seeing those that stop at our Oxbow to rest and feed.

1996 has been great so far out at the Oxbow, and now I'm looking forward to spring. Have you seen the "Potted Owls" yet? If not, you'd better hurry!



**Treasurer's Report
1995 Oxbow Inc.**

Oxbow's land was surveyed and marked last year -- for an expenditure of about \$14,000 -- to forestall potential and actual encroachment by developers, vandals, and dumpers.

Other threats to the Oxbow arise from proposals made by various corporations, local governments and others to construct roads, billboards, levees and otherwise develop the refuge. Oxbow, Inc. continued to meet these challenges, defending the wetland before various boards, commissions, authorities and private interests at a cost of about \$24,000 for legal expenses.

Net income declined in 1995 largely because the special court-ordered pollution donations expired in 1994. Dues and Birdathon revenue also waned, but interest income increased significantly. Expenses declined except for the legal and survey expenditures discussed above.

Assets increased more than \$33,000 in 1995.

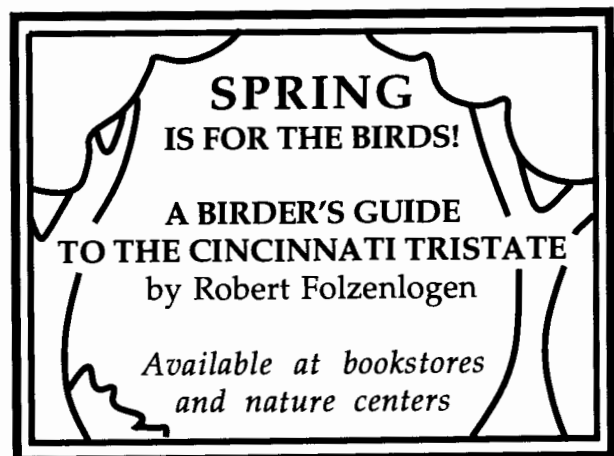
Mark M. Westrich
Treasurer, Oxbow, Inc.

Oxbow Inc.
P.O. Box 43391
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243
1995

	Revenue
Dues	23,036.00
Donations	21,914.35
Memorials	3,946.00
Land Acquisition	2,269.87
Interest	5,344.34
Fund Raising	25.00
Birdathon	12,296.16
Crop Income	15,159.50
Book Sales	40.85
Video Sales	193.80
Shirt Sales	296.00
Cap sales	200.00
Miscellaneous	219.50
Revenue	84,941.37

	Expense
Postage&phone	1,323.50
Office Supplies	140.21
Newsletter	1,924.66
Taxes & Insurance	1,822.58
Legal	23,863.64
Fund Raising	65.16
Book Cost	22.50
Video Cost	100.00
Shirt Cost	1,323.35
Cap Cost	254.07
Miscellaneous	20,609.98
Expense	51,449.65

Capital & Assets	
Cash	120,136.93
Land	175,551.60
Easements Owned	231,963.28
Equipment	1,132.75
Book Stock	105.00
Video Stock	960.00
Shirt Stock	1,135.08
Cap Stock	180.39
Assets	531,165.03
Debt	0
Equity	531,165.03
Total	531,165.03



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 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
513-471-8001

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Michael Kluesener (513)-574-1220
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Wetland Matters, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.

Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!



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