

# wetland matters



## OXBOW, INC. NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 43391  
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

Number 61 September-October 1996

### PRIZES PRIZES PRIZES

#### Gaming Development News

1) This summer Argosy held a ground-breaking for their temporary facility. They expect to be in operation by November.

2) On July 31 Judge Meyer upheld his decision to dismiss Whiteco-Metrocom's suit against the Dearborn County Board of Zoning Appeals. There has been little progress on an out-of-court settlement of this matter which resulted from the Zoning Board's denial of Whiteco-Metrocom's request for an exception to the county zoning ordinances concerning billboards. In a letter, Oxbow reiterated to Whiteco-Metrocom that billboards along I-275 are of more concern to us than signs along Route 50.

3) The Army Corps of Engineers has yet to approve Argosy's application to construct their permanent facility. In a letter to Oxbow, a representative of the Corps reaffirmed that they would not approve the application unless the proposal provided for the permanent protection of the mitigation site on which Argosy will construct wetlands to replace those destroyed by their development. This is a point of concern for Oxbow, since the proposed lease allowed for the future development of the mitigation site.

#### Wetlands online: Oxbow has a home (page)

World Wide Web users can now learn about Oxbow, Inc. via the internet. Oxbow's homepage has a map of the Oxbow area, a summary of Oxbow's goals and accomplishments, and information about membership in Oxbow. In addition, past numbers of *Wetland Matters* are available for visitors to download.

To visit the page, point your browser to this URL:  
<http://math.uc.edu/~pelikan/wm.html>

Members interested in supplying additional material for the homepage (perhaps scanned photographs of the Oxbow or HTML versions of Oxbow's educational materials?) should contact Steve Pelikan by email at: [pelikan@math.uc.edu](mailto:pelikan@math.uc.edu)

Oxbow will award a prize to a lucky participant at each upcoming monthly meeting.

We want to increase attendance at Oxbow's monthly meetings. In part this is because the meetings are an excellent way to keep members informed about developments resulting from the arrival of a gaming operation immediately adjacent to the Oxbow Lake. Well informed members are more likely to write timely letters to authorities and to attend and speak at public meetings where decisions affecting the future of the Oxbow are made.

Also, we know that many of this year's meetings will be of interest to you, and don't want you to miss our lineup of fascinating speakers.

Starting this summer, reminders will be mailed to participants at Oxbow's Cincinnati meetings telling them about the next program.

Write and tell us what would make you attend more meetings. Would you prefer meetings held in different locations? Are there specific subjects you'd like programs to cover? Can you suggest a speaker you'd like to hear? Please send your comments and suggestions about Oxbow meetings to:

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

#### Sorry!

In a regrettable oversight, the list of Birdathon '96 participants in the last *Wetland Matters* omitted Karl Maslowski's team. This year Karl was accompanied by Jack Gottschang, George Laycock, and Jay Sheppard. They found 109 species.

Every spring, Karl assembles Oxbow's Birdathon team #1, the "Geriatric Gents". These gentlemen, distinguished members of the tristate's community of naturalists, generously use their influence and well deserved reputations to help Oxbow raise Birdathon pledges. And then they go out and see lots of birds!

Again, Oxbow thanks all the participants in Birdathon '96 especially Karl, Jack, George, and Jay.

# Calendar

## Field Trips

### **7 September (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow trip**

Expert birder Jay Stenger will lead this trip, starting from the Gardens Alive! parking lot. If you have questions, call Jay at (513) 522-4245.

### **21 September (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow trip**

Starting from the Gardens Alive! parking lot, Greg Mendell will lead this trip into the Oxbow area. We'll car-pool into the Oxbow area and search for birds and other wildlife. For more information, please 'phone Greg at (812) 926-2522.

### **5 October (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip**

People say that trip leader David Styer knows more about the Oxbow's birds than the birds know about themselves. He can even help you sort out "confusing fall warblers". Meet him at the Gardens Alive! parking lot for a trip in search of interesting birds. For more information, call David at (513) 772-1287.

### **19 October (Saturday) 8:00 A.M. Oxbow field trip**

Meet trip leader Paul Wharton at the Gardens Alive! parking lot. Mid October is an exciting time for birding the Oxbow since many birds are migrating and almost anything could turn up. Bring your binoculars. Questions? Call Paul at (513) 353-3403.

## Volunteer

### **14 September Oxbow booth at Gardens Alive!**

Oxbow will have an information booth at the garden party at Gardens Alive! If you'd like to help staff the booth, please call Connie McNamee (812) 926-2522.

### **26 October (Saturday) Oxbow Cleanup**

Tom Harrison is organizing yet another cleanup of Oxbow's land. While there is work to be done, these cleanups are also a lot of fun. For information, or to volunteer, call Tom at (513) 961-4878.

## Meetings

**10 September (Tuesday) 7:30 P.M. Oxbow meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo's Education building** (Enter through the employees' entrance on Erkenbrecher Avenue.)

If you've ever wondered at (or about) butterflies visiting flowers in your yard this evening's program, "Watching Ohio Butterflies" will be of interest. Using slides, butterfly enthusiast Steve Pelikan will tell us enough to get started watching butterflies. He also has some hair-raising stories about his adventures counting butterflies.

### **4-6 October Indiana Audubon Society Fall Meeting**

The Indiana Audubon Society will hold its fall meeting in Connersville, IN on the weekend of 4 October. \$3.00 for the entire weekend with meals available at an extra cost. Free primitive camping. For more information, contact Pamela Keller (317) 349-2972.

**8 October (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.)

This evening's speaker will be Professor Thomas C. Rambo from the Biology Department of Northern Kentucky University. He's just returned from a research trip to Costa Rica's Osa peninsula, so he'll have lots of new and exciting things to tell us about his subject: "Costa Rican Forests: An Intimate View"



## Oxbow Memorials

### In memory of

Marion Aplin  
Frank Fulmer

Edna Maslowski  
Douglas Miller  
Roger Tory Peterson  
Charles H. Randolph, D.D.S.  
Helen Styer  
Helen Styer

### Donor

Steve Pelikan and Anita Buck  
Frederick C. Young and  
Bob and Tina Schlegel  
Karl Maslowski  
Patricia Niehoff  
Mr. and Mrs. William D. Farrell  
David and Suzanne Skidmore  
Norma L. Flannery  
Steve Pelikan and Anita Buck

## Oxbow Tributes

### In honor of

Lou and Kay Koenig  
(50th Wedding Anniversary)

### Donor

Helen Vath

## Trash

It isn't a pleasant topic to talk about, but some people insist on abusing Oxbow's land by dumping trash, damaging farm crops, hunting and trapping out of season and without permission, and by disturbing the lake side, ruining farm roads and causing erosion with their off-road vehicles.

Oxbow regularly schedules clean-ups and asks for volunteers to help pick up trash that has been dumped on our land. Don't make the mistake of thinking we're worried about a bit of litter! Cleanups involve hours of hard, muddy work removing large appliances, heaps of construction scrap, and the like that's delivered to Oxbow's land by people who think of it — and treat it as — their personal dump. In addition to calling upon volunteers' good will to help remove the mess, Oxbow incurs expenses in disposing of the trash properly.

There are better ways to use Oxbow's resources, both human and financial, than cleaning up other people's trash. For this reason, in October 1989, the board adopted the following policy. It still expresses a realistic compromise between the two seemingly opposing goals of protecting Oxbow's land from abuse and letting everyone enjoy it.

## Policy on Visitors to Oxbow Land

While Oxbow would like to welcome members and friends to enjoy visits to our property, there are constraints that prevent us from extending an open invitation at this time.

The first problem is that we still rely on the good will of our neighbors to enter our own land. It is of utmost importance that we respect our neighbors' properties. People may not enter cultivated fields or posted areas but should stay on the edges and turn-rows.

In the future we hope to have land open to visitors at all times, although we anticipate having some areas closed seasonally. The level of visitation must always be held low enough that it doesn't substantially interfere with wildlife. Historically, individuals who treat the Oxbow area respectfully have not been asked to leave, except during waterfowl season. In any case, larger parties that plan to visit should first contact Oxbow, Inc..

Shawnee Lookout Park is part of the Oxbow area, and the public is welcome there. Also, the Great Miami River is in the public domain, and there is a boat ramp at Shawnee Lookout.

Still, the best way to visit Oxbow's land is on foot, and as part of one of our monthly field trips.

Field Notes  
Morris Mercer

As summer came to the Oxbow, Frances, my wife, Marilyn our daughter, Jim our son-in-law, Sarah our grand-daughter and I were touring the Northeast. One of our stops was Fall River, Massachusetts where we went aboard the old battleship USS Massachusetts. In addition, we saw a destroyer, submarine, a landing craft, and two P.T. boats from World War II. There were plaques telling where the ships had been, and the battles and landings they had covered. Many of the places I'd been to at the same time. I wondered if one of the P.T. boats was the one I'd taken a ride on in the South Pacific, all those many years ago. The thought was to cross my mind again on this trip.

In Plymouth and Boston we studied history. Then we moved north to spend some time in the Bar Harbor area. One morning we enjoyed watching a family of Peregrine Falcons on a high cliff. The young were just leaving the nest. There were a couple of days we went out looking for whales. On our first trip we saw several finback whales. On the next trip we saw four whales, but one was the "right whale", and the captain told us we were lucky as there are but a few right whales left in the world.

We toured the rock-bound coast of Maine taking in such sites as light houses, and wild flowers. We also enjoyed seeing several birds we don't get around the Oxbow such as Greater Shearwater, Leach's and Wilson's Storm-petrels, Northern Gannet, Great Black-backed Gull, and many others.

Then we moved farther north, as Jim had reservations for us to visit the island where the Atlantic Puffin nests. The night before our Puffin trip we stayed in Machias, Maine and "checked out the action" along the Machias River from our motel room. We watched a harbor seal chasing fish and saw an Osprey grab a fish out of the water in front of the seal, while a Bald Eagle looked on from a tall pine.

Early the next morning we drove to Jonesport, where we went aboard "The Chief" for our ride to Machias Seal Island. After about 90 minutes in the fast-moving boat we reached the Island. Birds seemed to be everywhere. From the boat we could see families of Common Eider, Puffins, Gulls, and Razorbills.

They took us ashore, a few at a time, in a small boat. We were all given sticks about 4 feet long and we began our walk to the bird-blinds. We soon learned the reason for the sticks. Nesting Arctic Terns were all around us, but wouldn't dive below the tops of sticks we were holding above our heads. I had to check this out, so I held my stick down at my side. The terns swiftly rewarded me with pecks on the head. We were told there were about 500 pairs of Arctic Terns nesting on the island.

The stay in the blind was unbelievable. Little windows could be opened for observation and picture taking. The Puffins were everywhere. Puffins were on the rocks, and in the air. We could even hear them walking on the roof of the blind. They were even under the rocks, since Puffins nest in burrows beneath the boulders that cover the island.

Much too soon it was time to start back to the main land. The boat turned sharply and moved out, spraying those of us in the back seat with sea water. I moved up close to the cabin and took a seat on the deck. As we bounced along on our way home I thought of a day long ago and far away... .

We were on an island in the South Pacific and we had been eating K-rations, dehydrated eggs and dried potatoes. I was a Marine, and we had heard that the sailors on the P.T. boats were eating very well: real eggs, potatoes, etc. So a buddy and I hiked down to the P.T. base and asked if we could go along on a patrol. After a little checking, they said we could.

We watched a beautiful sunset as we bounced across the blue ocean heading for a Japanese-held island some eight hours away. A sailor had told us we would have to stay topside as it was crowded below. We sat on the deck in front of the cabin and only went below for a rest stop and to eat. OK! did we eat! I still remember that chocolate pie.

## School kids visit the Oxbow

It was almost midnight when we arrived on target just off the coast of New Ireland. It seemed like kids playing or taunting "Nyah nyah you can't catch me." But I guess we weren't much more than kids. We were less than 100 yards from shore when we turned away from the island. One of our aircraft came over and dropped some bombs on the island.

A sailor came and told us to hang on as we were going to get out of enemy water before daylight. What a ride that was. We ran through several squalls where we bounced over one wave and cut through the next. We got so wet it was a good thing we were in the warm Pacific. We'd sat on the deck for more than 18 hours and could hardly walk when we made it back. But that food sure tasted good...

Now we were coming back from a fine trip to see the Puffins. Sarah came over and sat on the deck beside me. She leaned against me and we shared some chocolate. We talked about our great trip and about the all nice people we had met.

Since we've been home from New England I made a few trips to the Oxbow. I've seen Great Blue and Green Herons, Great Egrets, Yellowlegs, Double-crested Cormorants, and a Kingfisher. I was also surprised to see the Oxbow flooded in July.

Now I'm looking forward to an autumn full of visits to the Oxbow.



A grant to Oxbow in honor of John Ruthven is used for the purpose of providing education about and access to the Oxbow area. This opportunity comes at an ideal time when many school systems have trimmed their budgets after failing to pass levies; one of the first items to be cut is the budget for field trips. Oxbow is pleased to be able to offer school children the opportunity to learn about and visit the wetlands.

This school year, Oxbow will continue to offer these trips, but we'll only be able to schedule a limited number of trips each month. Teachers interested in bringing a class to visit the Oxbow should talk with Morris Mercer (513) 941-2534.

With all the programs and trips that he led for school classes this spring, Morris has been getting a lot of thank you letters. These generally express a sincere appreciation of Morris's efforts. Most students also mention a topic in the history of the area, or the geology or natural history of the Oxbow with which Morris captured their attention. Here's a composite formed from some of the letters Morris received in late May:

Dear Mr. Mercer,  
I want to thank you for showing us the Oxbow. It was fun when we went on the trail.. The deer we saw were neat...

... I really enjoyed you wasting your time just to take us on a hike ...

... Thank you for spending your sweet time...with us.

... I liked looking at the deer. ... Also I liked the trailer park under water ...

...On the way back to school I liked the overlook. I will tell everyone I know about the Oxbow ...

...I really learned something. Thanks again.

## 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 ecosystem known 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 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.

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  
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513-471-8001

## Corporation Officers

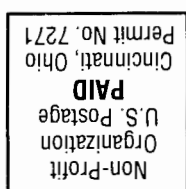
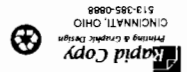
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Dennis Mason (513) 385-3607  
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Wetland Matter, the newsletter for members of Oxbow, Inc., is published bimonthly.



**Need a Speaker? Give Us a Call!**



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