



January-February
1998
Number 69

WETLAND *matters*

Published bi-monthly for the Friends and Members of Oxbow, Inc.

Meetings

January 13, 1998 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m.

Oxbow meeting at Seaton Hall, Mt. St. Joseph College on Neeb Road and Delhi Pike. (Parking is available across Neeb Road from Seaton Hall. For directional information call 513-244-4200.) Attorney Tim Mara, who represents Oxbow, Inc. will talk about the many legal affairs that affect the future of the Oxbow.

February 10 (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.) Our speaker will be Dr. Miller from the Biology Department of the University of Cincinnati. His field of research is the ecology of freshwater systems. He will present information about the research he and his students have done at the Oxbow.

Field Trips

January 17, 1998 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m. Oxbow field trip. Meet Paul Wharton (513-353-3403) at Gardens Alive! parking lot.

February 5 (Thursday) 7:30 p.m. Oxbow field trip

Meet John Kline and Morris Mercer at the Golf Course Clubhouse parking lot in Shawnee Lookout Park for a stroll through the moonlight. Hamilton County Park sticker required. (513-941-2534)

February 28 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. Oxbow field trip

Darlana Graham will lead this trip for a look at the Oxbow area. Expect good views of waterfowl since many ducks should be in migration on the way to their summer breeding grounds. Meet Darlana at the Gardens Alive! parking lot. Questions? 513-681-2574.

Election of Board Members

At the first meeting of the year (the January meeting at Seaton Hall) members are elected to the Board of Trustees. David Styer (513-772-1287) serves as the nominating committee, so if you know someone who has the interest, time, and energy to devote to the Oxbow cause communicate his or her name to David. Oxbow especially needs people to serve as Treasurer and Newsletter Editor.

Development Plans

The plan to develop a strip mall on property at the intersection of U.S. 50 and the I-275 Lawrenceburg exit ramp is on hold. Originally the developer planned to raise the level of the site with fill obtained by hydraulic dredging of gravel from the "ski-lake" borrow-pit. Recent studies seem to indicate that there is too much silt at the bottom of the lake for the dredging to be a cost effective method of obtaining fill.

Oxbow Memorials

In Memory of

Darby Bill

Dale Durbin

Dale Durbin

Donor

Oak Crest Animal Hospital,
Cheryl Devine D.V.M.

Kenneth and Shirley Durbin
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Noll

Tributes

In Honor of

Barbara A. Guthridge
and Everett E. Landen
Wedding

Barbara A. Guthridge
and Everett E. Landen
Wedding

Paul and Mildred
Hellmann
50th Anniversary

Donor

Karl Maslowski

Gilbert Symon

Norma L. Flannery

FIELD NOTES

by Morris Mercer

Outside the day looks more like winter than fall. All afternoon the sky has been light and then dark — as it is now. The snow is falling so heavily I can't even see the river, but I can see the fat gray squirrel on the rail of our deck enjoying a few black walnuts I cracked and put out. If I don't crack them the squirrel carries them off. And when I crack them I get to check them for taste. The walnuts are so good. I guess they aren't all that good for me, but what a way to go.

Frances and I are listening to soft music and our fire feels warm and cozy. I've gathered my notes and have pulled up a chair. If I don't doze off I'll write down some of my memories of autumn at the Oxbow.

I felt a little sad as the third week of October came and passed with little color in the leaves. As November arrived with a beautiful blue sky, I looked across the river and saw the hills of Kentucky in full color. It was as if someone had thrown a switch. I told Frances it was time for a trip to Shawnee Lookout and the Oxbow.

At Shawnee I started up Miami Fort Trail, as I usually do. The color was all around me; a chill in the air, and the sound of dry leaves under my boots. A glance up through the trees revealed a fine looking buck standing on the high ridge silhouetted against the sky. A look through my binoculars also revealed a well-polished set of antlers. Although the buck was watching me he didn't seem to be disturbed by my presence. With deer, it's the time of year that a doe is of more interest than I.

The floor of the woods was sun-lit, yet there were many leaves on the trees, their colors tending more to yellow and gold than red. The leaves covered the trail; maple, oak, hickory, the star-shaped leaves of sweetgum, and the oblong leaves of pawpaw. I thought the heap of leaves under one tree looked like a pile of gold. A rustling caught my attention and bouncing through the leaves came a bushy-tailed fox squirrel with a dirty face. I glanced at the stains on my fingers and the stain on the squirrel. We'd both been into the walnuts. Is there anything that stains like the hulls of black walnuts?

At the overlook of the Great Miami and the valley of the Oxbow there were more leaves—the large leaves of

basswood and sycamore. A couple dozen of these make a bushel, or so it seems when you're raking them. As I walked on toward the Point a tree gave up most of its leaves in one easy shower, a beautiful thing to see.

A few days later I made another trip to the Oxbow. The sun was low in the sky when I arrived on the big bend of the lake. The fields of soybeans and most of the corn had been harvested. But there at the bend in the lake the corn stood tall, brown, and dry, with golden grain under light brown shucks.



The last rays of the sun were on the far end of the lake. The summer green was gone from the willows, now yellow and brown. There were many Great Blue Herons around the water's edge and in the shallows. There were a group of ducks feeding with their heads underwater most of the time. They were a scruffy looking bunch, and I wasn't sure what they were until they raised their heads. **NORTHERN SHOVELERS!** There's no mistaking that bill. Another flock of smaller ducks worked much the same way at the water's edge—Blue-winged Teal.

A gentle breeze rustled the dried corn husks. The last leaves of a cottonwood lost their grip and began the trip to the lake. I watched as they drifted down and gently hid the surface of the water. The herons began to take off. I counted 27 in the air. They circled back and landed in much the same place they'd just left.

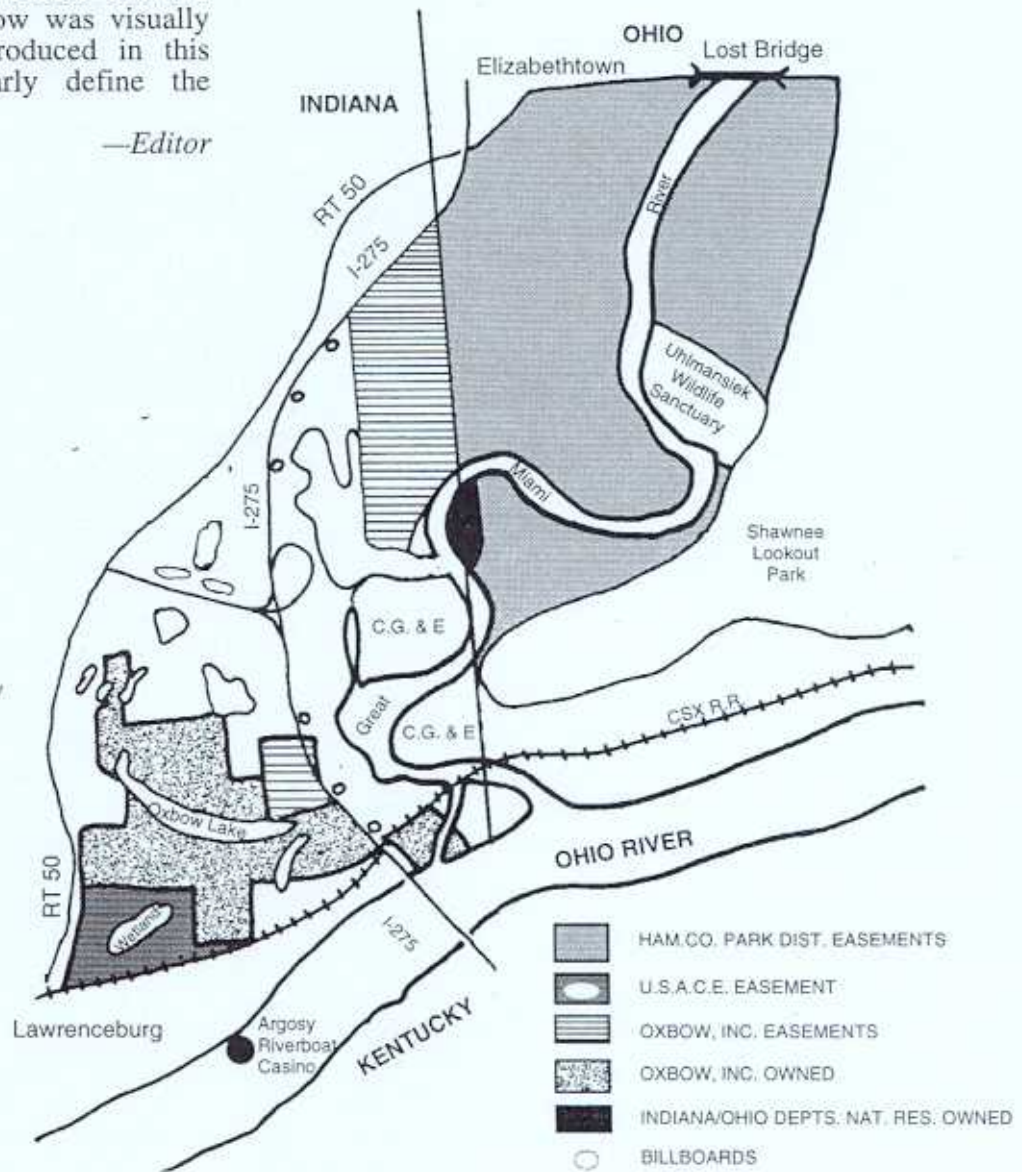
As I stood there, out of a brushy area came a real class act—two pair of Wood Ducks with the males in full plumage left a silver wake. What a beautiful, tranquil scene was before me. I remembered a line from a song Louie Armstrong used to sing, "And I said to myself, what a wonderful world." It is a wonderful world. As I turned to head for home I thought if we were to listen to the autumn breeze we might hear God whisper, "Use it, but don't abuse it."

The seasons cycle on at the Oxbow and soon we will all enjoy the beauty of winter. Come and join me afield.

OOPS!

In the last issue of *Wetland Matters* the map of the Oxbow was visually confusing. It is reproduced in this issue to more clearly define the protected areas.

—Editor



OXBOW, INC.

Oxbow Easements	258 acres
Oxbow Owned	407 acres
Total	665 acres

COMBINED

Oxbow, Inc.	665 acres
U.S.A.C.E.	103 acres
Ham. Co. Park Dist.	911 acres
IDNR-ODNR	25 acres
Total	1,704 acres
at a cost of \$1.5 million +	

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
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391
513-471-8001

Corporation Officers

President, Norma L. Flannery(513) 471-8001
Vice President, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
Recording Secretary,
Dennis Mason(513) 385-3607
Corresponding Secretary,
Suzanne Skidmore(513) 561-5718
Treasurer, Mark Westrich(513) 637-2175
Agent, Dave Styer(513) 772-1287

Committee Chairpersons

Conservation, Bill Bocklage(513) 922-2445
Easement Inspection,
Michael Kluesener(513) 574-1220
Richard Pope(513) 637-1365
Fund Raising, Greg Mendell(812) 926-2522
Marketing, Connie McNamee(812) 926-2522
Land Management, Dave Styer(513) 772-1287
Preservation, Norma L. Flannery(513) 471-8001
Programs, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
Research, Meg Riestenberg(513) 921-3986
Speakers Bureau, Morris Mercer(513) 941-2534
Newsletter Steve Pelikan(513) 681-2574

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Need a Speaker?
Give Us a Call!

P.O. BOX 43391
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

