

WETLAND

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

Oxbow, Inc. Activities Schedule

Programs

Tuesday, November 13, 2001, 7:30 p.m. Clifford Room, Mt. St. Joseph College

<u>Suzanne and David Skidmore</u>, world travelers and long-time Oxbow, Inc. supporters, will take us on vacation via slides to some of our National Parks.

Tuesday, December 11, 2001, 7:30 p.m.

Bright Elementary School Gymnasium

Lawrenceburg, Indiana

<u>Sam Carman</u> of the Indiana Forestry Service will portray a legendary Indiana naturalist in a one-person show. See story on page 2.

Field Trips

Saturday, November 10, 2001, 8:00 a.m.

Meet <u>Paul Wharton</u> (513-353-3403) at Gardens Alive. This should be a nice time of the year for a walk around the Oxbow. Paul can find the wild life.

There will be no Oxbow, Inc. field trip in December. You may wish to take part in the Hamilton County Parks' winter bird count on December 8, 8:00 a.m. (513-728-3551)

The September 11, 2001, meeting was canceled along with most other gatherings. We hope to re-schedule noted wildlife photographer Steve Maslowski for a future date.

A Special Report from Oxbow, Inc. President Norma Flannery

We should be closing soon on the purchase of more than 70 acres of land from the City of Greendale. This important tract of land was actively used for farming until acquired last year by the city as part of its project to flood proof the Greendale Industrial Park by converting the abandoned railroad embankment that parallels U.S.50 into a levee. The almost completed levee stretches from the I-275 exit ramp on the east to the existing Lawrenceburg levee at the road leading to the Argosy Casino.

The City of Greendale acquired this land from Vera Evans as a source of clay and soil needed to strengthen and add height to the abandoned railroad embankment so it would meet federal standards for flood protection. Oxbow's Attorney Tim Mara and I met frequently with the Mayor of Greendale and other city officials to ensure that the material was removed from this site in a manner which left the land suitable for wildlife habitat.

Mindful of our needs, the city contoured the borrow pits to create gradual slopes into the water, mud flats and even islands within the new 30-acre lake which should provide wonderful nesting places for waterfowl and other wildlife.

The Oxbow, Inc. board of directors has

more.....Special Report from Norma Flannery

decided that most of the balance of the 70-acre tract will be leased to a farmer so that it can be returned to cropland, consistent with Oxbow, Inc.'s long standing practice. We will seek sealed bids from area farmers. It has been our policy to choose tenant farmers not just for the maximum dollar return, but also to consider factors such as commitment to minimum use of pesticides and chemicals and to leaving some unharvested crop to support wildlife over the winter season.

This important acquisition is an example of what can be accomplished by working with local communities. While Oxbow, Inc. is prepared to fight for the future of our wetland ecosystem, as we have had to do from time to time in the past, so much more can be accomplished when people of good intentions work together to achieve a win-win result.

We, again, want to thank Mayor Hedrick and the City of Greendale for their cooperation on this vital acquisition.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO RULES PASS

The proposed changes to the Oxbow, Inc. Articles of Incorporation and Regulations, spelled out in the September-October, 2001 issue of *Wetland Matters*, passed unanimously at the October 9 meeting at the Lawrenceburg Public Library.

Birdathon Finals

The 2001 Birdathon final tally amounts to \$4,500, according to Norma Flannery. Oxbow, Inc. is most grateful to all who participated --those who tracked down the various species and those who sponsored the trackers.

Sam Carman Portrays Charles Deam at Special Oxbow, Inc. Meeting December 11

A very special meeting you won't want to miss, according to co-chairs Morris Mercer and Velda Miller, has been arranged for December 11, 7:30 p.m., at Bright Elementary School, Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Sam Carman, Education Director of the IDNR-Division of Forestry, will portray Charles Deam, a unique Indiana naturalist, in a one-man show.

Charles Deam: In His Own Words brings to life a legend who had a profound effect on Indiana's natural environment. Deam traveled throughout all of Indiana's 1,016 townships to collect more than 78,000 plant specimens, discovered 25 new plant species, has a state recreation area and a U.S. wilderness area named in his honor, and initiated Indiana's State Forest System leading to the 13 state forests bedecking the state today.

Sam Carmen will not only feature Deam's accomplishments but give a glimpse of his irascible personality. Carman's presentation, in conjunction with the Division of Forestry's Centennial Celebration, has been receiving "marvelous comments". Velda states. "We are very fortunate to book him. It takes over five hours for him to travel here from his home, set up and then pack-up and return home."

Two of Deam's books, both recently reprinted, will be given away as door prizes. Oxbow, Inc.'s short business meeting will follow the forty-minute performance. Family and friends are most welcome.

Others invited to the performance include Cathy Mund, fourth grade teacher at Bright Elementary and her class and their parents. Four years ago, Cathy began a successful Outdoor Club for fourth and fifth graders at the school to learn about the environment on field trips. Both Velda and David Styer, *Wetland Matters* columnist, have taken the Outdoor Club and their families to visit the Oxbow and Shawnee Lookout. From 18 members at the start, the club now numbers almost 70.

Bright Elementary School is on State Line Road, off Route 50. If traveling on I-275 West to the meeting, take the Lawrenceburg exit, go east on US 50 as if headed back towards Cincinnati. Soon after re-entering the state of Ohio, there will be a stoplight where a road comes in from the left. This is State Line Road. Turn left at this light and continue for about 3.8 miles.(If traveling west on Route 50, turn right on State Line Road.) The school is on the left side of the street immediately after Seldom Seen Road. Entrance to the school's parking lot is off State Line Road.

Election of Board Members

Set for January 8, 2002

Six members of the Board of Directors, Oxbow, Inc., are up for re-election. Members attending the January 8, 2002, meeting at the Cincinnati Zoo Education Building will do the voting. Only Oxbow, Inc. members in good standing are eligible to vote.

The six board members up for re-election to a three-year term are:

Jeanne Bocklage Norma Flannery John Getzendanner Steve Pelikan J. Dwight Poffenberger, Jr. Suzanne Skidmore

A Bill That Would Favor Oxbow, Inc. Calls for Action

Rob Portman (R-Oh) has introduced a bill to Congress (H. R. 2290) -- Conservation Tax Incentives Act of 2001-- that would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide a tax benefit to landowners who sell their land for conservation purposes.

This bill would exclude from gross income 50% of any gain from the sale of land or an interest in land or water to an eligible conservation entity, provided that the land or water or interest in the property was owned by the taxpayer or a member of a taxpayer's family for three years prior to the sale.

The sale must be transacted with an eligible conservation entity that intends to use the land or water for specified conservation purposes. The bill is related to S-1329 (Jeffords, I-Vt) by the same name and introduced to the Senate on August 3, 2001.

Oxbow, Inc. members are encouraged to contact their representatives in the House to vote for passage of House Bill H. R. 2290.

From National Wetlands, July/August 2001. Newsletter is published by the Environmental Law Institute.

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

Donor

In Memory of

Donor	In Memory of
Oakcrest Animal Hospital, Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M. Norma L. Flannery Oakcrest Animal Hospital, Cheryl L. Devine, D.V.M. Pam Bayer	Molly Duvall Julie Godsey Nicholas Heiman Richard Schuermann
Wm.& Judith Bookmyer	Richard Schuermann
Richard & Mari Cappel Sandy Cranert Laura Ellis Gloria Goetz Dawn Gruenemeier	Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann
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John & Pam Koenig Jan & Steve Kramer & Family Daniel & Janet Leonhardt Bob & Grace Lorenz Judi Lowe	Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Newman Pat & Paul Schinkal Claire Schneider Pat Schoch Barb Staudigel	Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann
Doreen Warther Lynn Wehner Judy Wilgenbusch Ms. Jean Wilkinson David Yelton & Family	Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann Richard Schuermann

Oxbow, Inc. has established memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each memorial established in the name of a 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., PO Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

Field Notes

Mercer

It is time for another Oxbow newsletter and I've made but a few trips into the Oxbow area. I cannot hike any more and the rain has come often enough to keep those dirt roads around the Oxbow very muddy. I've sure missed being there.

When looking through my old field trip notes, I found notes I had written about a trip made several years ago. Jim Simpson and I have been leading trips to Spring Valley in April each year for many years. It is a field trip for the Cincinnati Audubon group. Jim is the leader but I go along.

In years gone by Frances and I have taken the canoe up to Centerville the day before the field trip. We welcomed a chance to visit with Marilyn, Jim and Sarah. The afternoon before the field trip Jim and I would take the canoe out to Spring Valley to check out the wildlife. On this particular trip Sarah was only five years old, but ready to check everything.

The day had been a mix of thunderstorms and blue skies. As we reached the lake a thunderstorm was passing to the south but it looked good around the lake. We put the canoe in, loaded up and began our trip across the open water. We soon closed in on a large flock of coots. I told Sarah to watch and she could see the coots walk on the water. The coots soon began to half fly and walk across the water. When they were some distance from us, the coots went back into the water. They went in with all the grace of a concrete block. Sarah enjoyed that.

We heard the thunder and looked up to see the storm was coming our way. We dug in with the paddles and headed toward the parking lot. Large rain drops began to hit us. We hurriedly pulled the canoe out, turned it upside down and loaded our gear in the car. We looked around for Sarah and she had crawled under the canoe. The rain was very heavy but didn't last long. We were soon back on the lake. And there was that sweet smell after the rain.

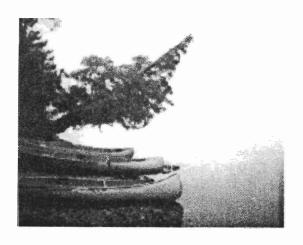
We saw a hen wood duck fly from one of the many wood duck nest boxes. We pulledp to the box and Sarah stood up and was able to see the the many wood duck nest boxes. We pulled up to the box and Sarah stood up and was able to see the duck's eggs in the nest. We moved on, then picked up the dip net we had brought along and caught a painted turtle. Sarah looked the turtle over and returned it to the lake. On back in the cattail marsh we came up on a nesting Canada goose. She had built her nest on a muskrat house. The goose was sitting on the nest and the gander patrolled the water around it. We saw several nests and all were on muskrat houses.

It was a beautiful spring afternoon. We went around a clump of cattails and Sarah said, "Granddad, there are some blue-winged teal." The teal were soon in the air. We saw mallards, shovelers, green-winged teal. We came upon a large snapping turtle. It was much too big to go in our dip net. We really didn't want anything to do with that turtle.

Spring Valley is known for the sora and Virginia rails that stop there. Jim had made a tape of their calls and had good luck calling them out of the marsh where we could get a good look at them. We saw the osprey and many other birds on that field trip but what I enjoyed most was watching Sarah. I might add that we were late for supper but Marilyn and Frances understood and were expecting us to be late.

Sarah is growing up. This past spring Sarah was a freshman at Centerville High School. She was on the Science Olympiad Team. Centerville won the state and went on to the National Finals in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Centerville team came in third over all. Sarah and her partner, Carolyn Valpey, (their category was *For the Birds*) came in second in the nation. They each received a scholarship to the University of Colorado.

I'm writing this on a beautiful afternoon, the first day of autumn. I hope I can give you more of a report from the Oxbow as 2002 comes around.



In the Beginning, There Were Morris and the Oxbow

by David Styer

All readers of *Wetland Matters* know Morris Mercer from the Field Notes that share his love of the Oxbow area. The other day Morris and his wife, Frances, and I met for a leisurely lunch and discussion of the Oxbow. I asked about efforts prior to the formation of Oxbow, Inc. to save the area for wildlife.

Following Marine service in World War II, Morris and Frances moved to Cincinnati where Morris worked for the Otis Elevator Company. Although Morris has loved nature since he was a child in southern Illinois, he knew nothing about the Oxbow. He remembers going bowling in Columbia Park, in what is now Shawnee Lookout Park. That must have been in the early fifties and he remembers having to manually set up his own pins. Since he liked nature, Morris wandered the area and discovered the Indian mounds. He didn't know what they were, but he met people who did and who suggested some articles he could read about the area. Morris was particularly taken by the story about the Harrison home that was razed. The lack of appropriately quick action to save the home seemed a great shame.

During that time period Morris became friends with others who liked the area. Hershel Stone encouraged Morris to join the Cincinnati Bird Club where Morris got to know most of the Cincinnati area birders.

By 1972, Morris was sufficiently concerned about preserving the integrity of the Oxbow area that he contacted The Nature Conservancy. He was in touch with the Ohio state director, Devere Burt, who became an Oxbow enthusiast. At the same time, Hershel Stone went to the courthouse in Lawrenceburg to learn the ownership of the land in the Oxbow area. Morris and Hershel felt set back when they discovered that the land was in the hands of many different owners. Also, Devere then became the director of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History. Nothing regarding the Oxbow actually happened.

In 1984 and the spring of 1985, Morris and I made an even stronger effort to protect the Oxbow. We held monthly planning meetings with Devere Burt and Dave Imbrogno. We also enlisted the help of Myra Messick and Art Wiseman and his wife, Jinny. We had meetings at the Oxbow with The Nature Conservancy and various state agencies. Again nothing happened. In part, this was true because people felt there was little need to take action; the area was a flood plain.

In the fall of 1985, the Oxbow area was clearly threatened with total destruction by barge port construction. Dozens of people pitched in to protect the area. Oxbow, Inc. was formed by spring 1986. Fortunately, much of the previous work done to protect the area was useful and Oxbow, Inc. got off to a strong start. Thus, Oxbow, Inc. did not form in a sort of spontaneous creation. Rather, the organization arose, like a Phoenix, from the ashes of previous attempts to save the area. Morris has been an important figure in all of these preservation efforts.



Frances, Morris and Katie on their deck at home



and the OXBOW

The world-shaking, world-shaping events of September 11, 2001, demand our attention. The 7000 deaths of innocent people, the victims' families now and forever without their loved ones, the destruction of two symbolic landmarks and the partial destruction of a third, the uncertainties of our country's economic and military futures evoke extreme sadness and fear. Not one of our lives will be the same as it was on September 10.

We are thankful for the brave passengers on United Flight 93 who made the supreme sacrifice. We are thankful for all citizens who united together and gave of their strengths and their pocketbooks. America will heal.

Some years ago, a columnist wrote, in reference to Jackie Kennedy Onassis's endeavors for the arts, that man's desire for beauty will outlive his urge to destroy. Our spirits thrive on beauty. Beauty heals.

Recently Laura Bush inaugurated a Washington D.C. concert to aid the families of those who died in the September 11 tragedies, saying that music is "the speech of angels." Our spirits thrive on music. Music heals.

The Oxbow with its beauty, its bird-song heals.

SEPTEMBER 11

Several Oxbow, Inc. officers and members of the board of directors, believing the Oxbow area can be a source of beauty, peace and comfort in what another writer called "this autumn of tears" offer the following thoughts:

The symbols of civilization's ingenuity and technology, being man-made, will forever be vulnerable to destruction while nature endures, providing a place of quiet where man may find solace or be comforted in times of distress.

Norma Flannery, President

Since 9-1-1-0-1, I thought of many things that have changed forever in our country. I think of a place I can go to forget for a while all of these many troubles, all the sorrow, hatred and uncertainties that have come to our world.

Around the Oxbow, it is harvest time. The fields of soybeans are yellow. The cornfields are standing tall and brown and hanging heavy ears of golden grain. Around the water holes, the cottonwood trees have lost most of their leaves. A wood duck glides across the still water. Beaver are busy around their lodges. A deer comes to the water's edge to drink. A flight of teal drop in to feed and rest on the way to South America to spend the winter. I'm so thankful for the Oxbow and other places of peace.

Morris Mercer, Vice-President

During the days following our national tragedy one of the songs we kept hearing again and again was America, The Beautiful. Whenever I hear that song two places come into my mind. One place is our beautiful Smoky Mountains National Park. The other place is my favorite part of the Oxbow area, the island at the mouth of the Great Miami River. Oxbow, Inc. now owns part of the tip of this island. From the beach on the tip of this island one can look across the Ohio River and view the gorgeous wooded hills of Boone County, Kentucky. I hope that this view of wild America can be preserved for future generations of Americans to enjoy.

Denis Conover, Board Member

The New York City and Washington, D.C. tragedies make places like the Oxbow more important than ever. I thank the people who had the forethought to save this area.

Suzanne Skidmore, Corresponding Secretary

I remember well this late, cold December afternoon at the Oxbow.

It was well below freezing but the three maples formed a hide and deflected much of the wind. (When it's this cold, windblown weeds are especially noisy and sound like paper crunching.) Presently, rhythmic crunches became distinguishable from the cacophony -- was a deer skulking just out of view?

I dare not move until I find it. Closer it approaches and now I can see -- yes, it is a large deer! -- and it comes directly toward me until it slows to browse just a few arms' lengths away. On this day I can not take him since my buck bag has already been filled so I watch in awe.

After some time he drifted out of sight, then out of earshot. The wind increased and in the same instant I realized that it was getting colder and that the deer was long gone. I wondered if I hadn't just imagined the encounter, but he was here all right; there were his footprints in the snow.

Mark Westrich, Treasurer

One evening a few weeks ago, my young friend, Alex, and I went to the Oxbow. We parked near the entrance and walked back a short distance to watch the shorebirds wandering around and feeding on the mud flats. We looked back toward the Beaver Pond and saw that the trees were decorated with cormorants. At dusk we heard the quonk call of a couple of black-crowned night-herons, as they came out to feed. We than drove along the edge of the Oxbow. In the fading light, Alex saw a fine cluster of great egrets in the willows and maples across the Oxbow. We enjoyed the peaceful scene and went home feeling refreshed and uplifted.

David Styer, Ohio Agent

When Mr. Scarlet Tanager visits the Oxbow, perches on a treetop framed by the bluest of skies and sings his heart out, then we know that

God's in His heaven; All's right with the world.

Jeanne Bocklage, Editor, Wetland Matters



Stanley W. Trosset, Jr.

A THANKSGIVING TREK

By Jerry Lippert

Oxbow, Inc. Board Member

A number of years ago during the week of Thanksgiving, Wayne Wauligman, another friend of his, and I went to the Oxbow. It was a cold day, windy and heading towards late afternoon when we got there. But it was one of those perfectly cold days in November when you don't mind it being cold because something about the combination of it being fall and the particular look of the clouds, and the wind, make you feel the vitality of life course through your veins and spirit. Plus, you know that in a few hours you'll likely be home and warm again.

The Oxbow area was partially flooded. A layer of shallow water lay between us and a spot of land we hoped to reach. From that spot of land, we thought we could view a group of ducks that were further out at another pond. We had come to find ducks.

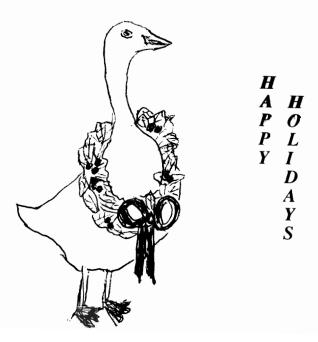
We decided to trek through the cold water. At first, it was COLD! Then we quickly got used to it. The water between my boots and skin soon began to warm, almost like the wet suit principle. It was so much fun to be afield with these guys, to be making the best of an otherwise cold and mostly gray day, that the water in my boots only seemed to

make it more of an event. After awhile we reached the spot of land we had decided on and indeed we did get a view of the ducks off in the now nearer distance.

One thing I like about wild ducks is how truly wild they are. They always find that farthest off spot which is equidistant from all spots where a human, or a fox, could bother them. The hunted must be wild and must find safe harbor.

From our new vantage point in the middle of this freshwater field, we got a decent view of several species through binoculars. What I remember now is not their species but that I was glad to be seeing them, glad they had found a refuge here in this refuge. I also remember that as we walked back, cold, wet and muddy, the sun was going down, giving the steel gray clouds a golden backing. The wind was stirring as it braced us and we had that almost youthful camaraderie of being on an adventure, out of our regular element but loving every minute of it. We also had the camaraderie that comes from being afield with good folks who are enjoying the moment.

Though cold, wet and muddy -- what some might take for a failure of a trip -- we had done exactly what we wanted to do and were exactly where we wanted to be. Hiking through the waters of the Oxbow with those guys and seeing the wild ducks make that Thanksgiving stand out in my memory.



DID YOU KNOW?.....

Congress passed the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Act in 1934. This established the sale of migratory bird stamps to raise money for acquiring wetland habitat.

Midwestern prairie potholes were drying up and waterfowl populations were at an all-time low. President Franklin D. Roosevelt convened the perfect committee to get the Act passed: Aldo Leopold, cartoonist J. N. "Ding" Darling and publisher Thomas Beck.

In 1949, Leopold's A Sand County Almanac was published the year following his death. This book has been called the Bible of the Conservation Movement.

Oxbow, Inc.'s Attorney Mixes Business With Pleasure...

An Almost Perfect Day at the Oxbow

by Tim Mara

On September 27, Norma Flannery and I met with Greendale officials to finalize plans for closing on our purchase of city-owned land. (See Norma's report, page 1) To properly prepare for that meeting, I decided it would be wise to walk that land to make sure the contouring of the borrow pit had been completed to our satisfaction.

I entered the Oxbow by the cement plant and parked near the small lake Oxbow had acquired last year from the Clarks. I parked at that lake and began my ninety- minute walk, expecting to encounter few people on this Thursday afternoon. Immediately, I spotted three men fishing from the banks of this small lake. They appeared to be quietly enjoying their visit to the Oxbow on this warm fall day. I waved and walked on.

I walked along the dirt road which separates the Oxbow Lake on the left from the soybean and corn fields on the right. The only sound was that of the dry corn stalks and the leaves on the maple trees lining the lake as they rustled in the breeze. Through the trees I could see a white egret standing in the shallows of the lake and two large turkey vultures gliding a foot or two above the water. Across the lake, leaves on several trees were just beginning to turn red.

Walking on, to my right was the new lake created by the City of Greendale. The slopes leading down to the lake had indeed been contoured per Oxbow Inc.'s specifications. There were several islands deliberately left in the lake by Greendale's contractors. Tall grass and other vegetation was already growing on those islands and along the shores. Birds were already wading in the water as if they knew this had been created just for them.

As the Oxbow Lake curves eastward toward I-275, I left the well-traveled dirt road which parallels the lake and took a barely discernible road west toward the Argosy wetland mitigation area and the shallow body of water Morris Mercer has dubbed Jackpot Pond. This road was largely overgrown with weeds and as I walked hundreds of grasshoppers sprang to life. Stepping off the road, I walked through the grassland to get a better view of the mud flats surrounding Jackpot Pond. The solitude was quickly disturbed as five dirt bikers whizzed by on the road, first heading toward the railroad tracks which parallel the Ohio, and then turning east along the tracks to disappear through the trees. Because their bikes were covered in mud I could not read their license plates. I could only wonder if they had gotten that mud by riding through the mud flats of Jackpot Pond or low spots in the corn fields. How much damage had they caused in the process?

I turned and headed back to my car, revisiting the fields and lakes. As I returned to the main dirt road which parallels the Oxbow Lake, I stepped off the road to let a pickup truck pass. I could only hope that the three teenage occupants had come to enjoy the great scenery and not to do any harm to it. As I neared my car, two vans entered the Oxbow area. I had encountered a total of thirteen people in my ninety- minute walk. Clearly, some were there because they appreciate the beauty of the Oxbow area. Others, such as the dirt bikers, were there to use it in ways that can only damage the environment.

So much has been accomplished but so much remains to be done to preserve the Oxbow. Hopefully, the latest acquisition from the City of Greendale puts us closer to our goal.

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 area 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		

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