



# Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2006

Volume 162

## Program information and Registration:

**-918-669-6644**

**-Oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us**

**-Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".**

-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.

-Wheelchair accessible programs designated by & symbol.

-Programs with insufficient registration may be cancelled 48 hours prior to program.

## Hours

### Oxley Nature Center:

-Open daily, except most City holidays.

-Oxley gate open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

-Interpretive building open from 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 12 noon-4:30 p.m. Sunday.

-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

### Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-Open Wednesday through Sunday, except most City holidays.

-**NEW!** During daylight savings (April 6-October 26) Redbud Valley gate and trails will be open on **Thursdays** from **8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.**

-On Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays gate and trails will be open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.

-Interpretive building will be open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

## Redbud Valley Nature Preserve—Dreams Do Come True!

On a drive 12 miles northeast of downtown Tulsa, a dusty road drops from the flat grasslands into a cool, lush haven of unusual flora, fauna, and geology reminiscent of the Ozarks. Here, Dr. Harriet Barclay of the University of Tulsa, took her students to study the unique environment of a living classroom known as Redbud Valley. Over those 40 years of exploration, the fragility of the valley became increasingly apparent to Dr. Barclay. Bordered by the Port of Catoosa, the Dewey Rocky Mountain Portland Cement Company, and threatened by progress from increasing commercial and industrial development, Redbud Valley was in danger of being swallowed up by conflicting outside forces. A true wilderness treasure was in danger of disappearing.

Dr. Barclay took action. In the summer of 1969 she approached the Nature Conservancy in Washington D.C. with a request for help in preserving the 85-acre wilderness tract. The conservancy agreed, purchasing the land for \$80,000. They then leased it to TU for \$1 a year, with the stipulation that the **debt must be paid off with funds raised locally. Redbud Valley Nature Preserve became the first Nature Conservancy project in Oklahoma.**

A 13-member project committee, consisting of representatives of the life sciences department at TU and other nature organizations, began raising funds to pay back the loan. Many people and organizations stepped forward to help. The project committee had raised \$35,000 toward paying off the debt when they appealed to The Tulsa Tribune for help.

That was 34 years ago. On April 5, 1972, the newspaper began writing a series of articles on Redbud Valley Nature Preserve. Environment writer, Jim Sellers, set forth a challenge, enlisting the aid of the citizens of Tulsa and the surrounding communities. The Tulsa Tribune set a fund-raising goal of \$60,000; \$45,000 to pay off the debt, and \$15,000 for improvements such as signage and parking; with a deadline of May 20, 1972.

In the days and weeks that followed, the Tribune introduced its readers to the wonders of Redbud Valley, and the importance of its preservation. With the support of the project committee and others, tours of the site, and lectures on its uniqueness, helped the public understand what was being asked of it. Donations started to flow in on a daily basis.

One donor wrote "Granted, \$1 as one raindrop, doesn't make much of a splash itself; but if each ecology-minded person would mail a \$1 contribution today, Redbud Valley would belong to Tulsa tomorrow." And it wasn't just Tulsa that would benefit. Donations were coming from all over Oklahoma and from other states. Contributions arrived day by day, dollar by dollar, paying off the \$45,000 debt, reducing the principal and interest on the note, one small amount at a time. All contributions were acknowledged daily in the Tribune.

Leading with donations were the young people of the area; schools, university students, Girl Scout troops, 4-H clubs, and Campfire Girls. On April 15, pupils at Hoover Elementary School organized an on-going fund-raising competition. Their original goal was to raise \$100, which they accomplished in three days by running errands, selling pop bottles, and knocking on doors. They quickly revised their goal to \$1000, and amazed and delighted their parents, teachers, Principal Walker Dobson, and The Tulsa Tribune with their total donation of \$1,156.46! Holland Hall Middle School students produced a 50-page publication called Rebus (Latin for riddle or puzzle) filled with drawings, writings, mazes, and thoughts centered around nature, pollution, and conservation. The magazine was made available for 25 cents, with all proceeds going to Redbud Valley.

Numerous garden clubs were among the most consistent contributors. Nature lovers, grandparents, anonymous individuals, nursing home residents, the Kiwanis Club, Rock and Mineral Society, Inc., honorariums and memorials to various individuals; all these gifts helped the fund grow. By April 28, the fund reached over \$10,000. The project committee sent out letters to large businesses encouraging them to join the project. PSO was the first large firm to make a donation, followed by others.

On May 16, a little over \$19,909 had been raised, approximately one third of the goal that had been set for the May 20 deadline. The Tulsa Tribune acknowledged that if the goal was not met, they would continue to accept donations through the summer and then conduct a follow-up drive in the autumn. \$25,000 became the temporary goal for the "spring effort". On the 22 of May, University of Tulsa President J. Paschal Twyman presented a gift from TU of \$10,000, saying "The preservation of this ideal laboratory would contribute significantly to the educational experience of countless numbers of university students in the years to come." Donations now totaled \$34,391.09. Apparently, the "spring fund drive" wasn't over yet!

"Readers Determined" said the headline in The Tulsa Tribune on the 24 of June. Five days earlier the editors felt certain they would have to extend the campaign to pay off the mortgage into the autumn. With another flood of checks arriving daily, they were no longer so sure. Contributions, large and small, continued to pour in. By June 6, the Tribune reports, "Our readers have pushed the drive to save Redbud Valley Nature Preserve past the \$40,000 mark!"

By July 1, funds totaled \$43,278.45, and by March 20, 1973 over \$49,000 had been raised. The loan from The Nature Conservancy had been paid in full, as stipulated, by funds raised locally. By April 25, 1974, readers had responded to the fund-drive sponsored by The Tulsa Tribune by contributing \$50,000! An amazing thing had happened. All kinds of people drew together, gave what they could, and made the dream a reality everyone could own. Redbud Valley had been preserved, not only for the present but also for future generations.

This wild preserve is still a safe respite and refuge not only for the unusual flora, fauna, and geology; and the university students who knew it through field trips; but also for all people who wish to enjoy its beauty and study its unique features. You can still drive down that two-lane road where you drop suddenly into that magical world. Managed by the City of Tulsa's Oxley Nature Center since 1990, Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is open Wednesdays through Sundays. In 1992 the City of Tulsa purchased additional acreage, increasing the Preserve to nearly 200 acres. An interpretive building near the trail-head contains exhibits and is staffed from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Occasional programs are offered here, from primitive skills classes to wildflower or geology walks. The best thing though, the simple thing, is to take a walk, clear your head, and heighten your senses.

Along the steep hillside, cool and moist, you'll find Sugar Maples, Blue Ash, and Dutchmen's Britches. Above Bird Creek, towering limestone bluffs and caves, with seeps and springs, provide a microhabitat for bats, a variety of ferns, and columbine. Fossils of crinoids, brachiopods, and horn coral from a long ago inland sea, may lay visible to the sharp eye, partially buried in the rocks beneath your feet.

Climbing higher still, you arrive on the top of the limestone where a shallow layer of soil hosts Smoke Tree, mixed-oak woodlands, various grasses and forbs, two species of cactus, and yucca. Beneath the rocks, tarantulas share their homes with Great Plains Narrow-Mouth Toads, and scorpions hide during the day. Several species of snakes and lizards live here, as do over 200 species of birds, and a variety of mammals. The narrow trail through this preserve hints of the wildlife that thrives here and uses the same trail, leaving scat, tracks, and food remnants. These residents are the only ones who can wander off the trail, who can feed on the plants, who can use the resource. We visitors can collect only photos, drawings, knowledge, and memories. But how very lucky that we can, due to the foresight of those individuals 34 years ago. A small thing, a great thing...come experience it for yourself. And tread lightly, gratefully, on this small piece of wilderness. It's your place too.

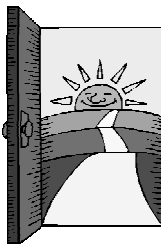
# Nature Center Happenings

## Become a Volunteer Naturalist

All kinds of people donate their time; the one thing they all have in common is their friendliness and enthusiasm. The high quality of our programs is due to our volunteer staff. If you would like to join this outstanding group of dedicated people, call to sign up for our weekday volunteer naturalist training (beginning February 28 or March 1), to volunteer as a visitor center host, trail work or burn crew member, or to adopt a trail. We have lots of places where your talents could be of great use!

### Weekday Volunteer Naturalist Training

Volunteers who conduct tours will attend a six-part training session, and then work one morning each week during April and May, guiding a small group of students in Oxley Nature Center's award-winning program of discovery. Training emphasizes interpretation



methods and leadership skills, rather than memorized facts. The Oxley trail system will become familiar as the training takes you exploring forests, wetlands, and grasslands. You will have a chance to observe a veteran volunteer naturalist work with students before going solo yourself. Please call us for more information about joining our team of volunteers. We look forward to hearing from you!

\$2 for general public, free for members

### Kid's Saturday Programs

Please register in advance, all &

#### Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

#### March 18, 10:00-11:30 "Eyes in the Sky"

We will make our own binoculars, go bird watching, and see what we can find.



#### April 15, 10:00-11:30 "Wings and Things"

Let's explore the prairie trail and look for things with wings. Birds use wings to fly, what else has wings?

#### Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

#### March 18, 10:00-11:30 "Shower Power"

Make rain and explore the water cycle using games and stories. We'll take a hike to our wetland area.

#### April 15, 10:00-11:30, "Where's Your Baby?"

What do the youngest birds, toads, insects, and other baby animals look like? Let's look for their nurseries.

### \*\*\*\*\* Astronomy Programs \*\*\*\*\*

\$2 for general public, free to members, registration required, open to all ages, & with advance notice. Bring binoculars if you have them, and meet on the east side of Lake Yahola above the circle drive.

Thursday, March 23, "Spring Stars" 7:30-9:00 p.m. It may be cold, it could be warm. No matter what the thermometer says, the calendar and the stars say it is spring! Join us and bring something to sit on.

Saturday, April 1, "Targets for Binoculars" 7:30-9:00 p.m. First we'll clean and adjust our binoculars. Then we'll start finding different kinds of things in the night sky: moon, stars, a planet or two, a lovely star cluster, and more. If you don't have binoculars you may look through the Nature Center's pair.

\$2 for general public, free for members

### Full Moon Walks

Registration required, all ages, &

#### Tuesday, March 14, 7:00-8:30 p.m. "Worm Moon"

It is the last full moon of winter. The temperatures begin to warm, the ground thaws, and worm castings appear above ground. Can the Robins be far behind? Let's walk in the moonlight towards Spring.

#### Thursday, April 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m. "Pink Moon"

This full moon, named for moss pink, an early wildflower, will guide us along the trails as all colors fade into the darkness, lit only by the moon.



# Programs and Special Events

## March

**4 "Saturday Morning Birding"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **8:00-9:45 a.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.  
Bring binoculars if you have them.

**4 "Grass Mats"**      **Ages: 5 & up, &**  
**Saturday**      **1:00-3:00 p.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **free for members**  
We'll visit our prairie and gather some native grasses to weave a grass mat to sit upon. Meet at Oxley.

**11 "Butterfly Walk"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Meet in the Oxley parking lot for our first butterfly walk of the season. Is it too early for a Falcate Orange Tip or a Spring Azure? Let's find out.

**12 "Tracking for Beginners"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Sunday**      **2:00-3:30 p.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **free for members**  
Those aren't bear tracks are they? If we can't find any tracks, we'll hunt for other ways to figure out who hops, crawls, or staggers through the area. Meet at Oxley.

**18 "Spider Search"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **free for members**  
What is a spider and where can we find them? We'll travel the trails through forest and prairie in search of a variety of spiders. Meet at Oxley.

**25 "Wildflower Walk"**      **Ages: All**  
**Saturday**      **9:30-11:30 a.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Join us at Redbud Valley to see if the Dutchmans Breeches are in bloom. What else is in bud?

**26 "Life of a Beaver"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Sunday**      **10:00-12 noon**  
**\$2 for general public**      **free for members**  
Learn about the beaver's habits and lifestyle. Why do they cut down trees? What purpose does a dam serve? Meet at Oxley.

## April

**1 "Saturday Morning Birding"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **8:00-9:45 a.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.  
Bring binoculars if you have them.

**1 "Star Maps"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **free for members**  
Make your own planisphere to take home and use. If you like, you may bring a picnic supper, and then attend the astronomy program at 7:30, using your new map! Be sure to register for that program too, if you plan to attend. Meet at Oxley.

**8 "Butterfly Walk"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Meet in the Oxley parking lot for our butterfly walk. We'll look for Question Marks, Goatweed Leafwings, and more.

**9 "Welcome Hummingbirds!"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Sunday**      **1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
**\$3 for general public**      **\$1 for members**  
Our hummingbirds will soon be returning. We will make a nectar feeder and find out what makes these tiny birds so special. Meet at Oxley.

**15 "Birds, Birds, and More Birds"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **1:00-2:30**  
**p.m.** **\$2 for general public**      **free for**  
**members**  
We will learn about our returning song birds, and how to make a bird friendly environment to attract them to our own backyard. Meet at Oxley.

**22 "Wildflower Walk"**      **Ages: All, &**  
**Saturday**      **9:30-11:30 a.m.**  
**Free**      **registration not required**  
Join us at Oxley to see what is blooming on the Wildlife Study Trail. We'll look for the yellow blooms of Ragwort and the blue of Wild Sweet William. What other wildflowers will be blooming before the forest canopy overhead fills in?



## Calling all Butterfly Enthusiasts—Early Spring Butterfly Count at Oxley!

**Date: Saturday, April 15      Time: 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

We'll be conducting our own Spring and Fall butterfly counts to supplement information gathered for the NABA Summer Butterfly Count held annually in July. Let's find out what's out there! There is no fee, and you can participate in all or part of the count. Please call in advance to sign up. We need people to spot, count, tally, and/or identify butterflies. Join us for this fun event and help us add to the knowledge base of these beautiful insects.

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### **Leopold Education Project**

**Date: Saturday, April 29, 2006**

**Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.)**

**Fee: \$35.00 per person (includes a copy of *A Sand County Almanac*, set of Task Cards, and the curriculum).**

**A light snack and drink will be provided. Bring your lunch.**

The Leopold Education Project is a critical learning, interdisciplinary curriculum for educators and youth leaders of grades 6-12 designed to establish a positive land ethic among its participants. The LEP is based on the classic literary work, *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold. Goals are to increase general teaching skills involved in outdoor education and to instill a love, respect and, admiration for the land in tomorrow's land stewards. Activities also fit well into projects for 4-H, Scouts, Campfire, Master Naturalists and other organizations.

Please come dressed for the outdoors, wear sturdy shoes, not sandals—and be ready to have fun!

**Please call and register in advance. Sponsored by the Mary K. Oxley Nature Center Association**

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