



Oxley Nature Center

May/June, 2007

Volume 169

Program information 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 ♿
-Register 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated.

Mohawk Park Fee:

From April 1 to October 31, a \$2 fee per car will be charged on weekends between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Members of Oxley Nature Center and the Tulsa Zoo will get in free.

Oxley Nature Center:

-**Holiday Closing:** Monday, May 28 for Memorial Day.

-Open daily, except most City holidays (see above).
-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, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed. Closed most City holidays.
-Interpretive building will be open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
-Redbud Valley Nature Trail will be open until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday evenings, March 15 through May 31.

Prescribed Burning of the Prairie

by Vinnie Robinson
Natural Resources Coordinator

If you are a frequent visitor to the nature center, you have probably noticed changes occurring. Redbud trees have bloomed and grass is greening up. You may have also noticed the prairie was burned, and wondered what happened. The prairie was burned on purpose. We burn a third of the grassland in three-year consecutive cycles, and we do it for several reasons.

One reason we burn is to control unwanted trees from taking over the prairie. Periodic fire maintains tallgrass prairies by suppressing shrubs and trees, and by stimulating growth and flowering of grasses and forbs. Fire also gives us a better opportunity to get out on the prairie and tackle some of the invasive grasses, such as Johnson grass and Dallisgrass, that we are struggling to control.

Timing of fire is essential to maintaining the species we want. Our early spring burn in mid-March favored late-starting species. Spring fire delays shoots of early growing grasses and forbs during their period of maximum growth. This year we plan to attempt another burn in July, when lightning strikes were traditionally common on the Plains. Mid-summer fires delay shoots of late-flowering plants during the peak of their growth and reproduction, quite possibly giving a competitive edge to earlier species that have already seeded, thereby favoring early-starting species next year.



Preparing for a controlled burn takes a lot of planning and preparation. We get ready to burn starting in January, first charting the areas to be burned. Then we apply for a burn permit from the fire marshal. The permit is usually good for a month. Last year we were not able to burn because of a burn ban for our area of Oklahoma. After we get the permit to burn we brush-hog a fire break 30 ft. wide around the areas. We have to watch weather conditions and plan to burn on the days when everything is right, a south wind of 5-10 mph, and humidity of 40-60%.

When appropriate conditions are forecast, we call volunteers from the "burn crew" and let them know we are ready to go. Weather conditions in our state can change rapidly, so often I am calling people early in the morning, asking them to come on a moments notice. We burn in the morning when humidity is typically higher. On the morning of the burn I also call county dispatch, the fire department, the airport, park security, Mohawk park maintenance, and the zoo.

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Nature Center Happenings

Welcome New Volunteers!

Congratulations to our new **volunteer naturalists** who graduated from the spring training program and are leading groups of eager school children on our trails. Welcome to **Melinda Covey, Jes Lenee, DeAnn McArtor, and Susan McCollum.** Congratulations graduates! **Johnathon Duerbeck** is also a new volunteer leading groups.



We welcome back **Martin Sarasua** this season as an experienced trail guide of many years!

Jackie Kelley is helping in the **visitor center.**

New this year to our **burn crew** is **Harold West** and **Rusty Grimpe.**

Bob Brewer is sharing his interest in **Primitive Skills** by assisting with classes. Thank you all volunteers!

\$2 for general public, free for members

Kid's Saturday Programs

Please register in advance, all &



Discovery Club (Ages 3-5)

Each child accompanied by an adult

May 19, "Water World 'Wonder' Land"

10:00-11:30 Let's check out BJ's Pond. We'll try dip netting to see what kind of wildlife lives in wet places.

Adventure Club (Ages 6-8)

Kids only, please



May 19, 10:00-11:30 "Trees are Terrific"

Let's find out some of the 'tree'mendous things they do to help us. How can we help them?

\$2 for general public, free for members

Full Moon Walks

Registration required, all ages, &

Why Join us for a Full Moon Walk?

It's daylight savings time, and we'll start our walks when it's still light. The day is slowly inching toward dusk. As the sun sets, the moon rises. This is when many of our mammals are out and about. This period of activity, at dawn and dusk, is **crepuscular**.

Before electricity, humans were basically **diurnal**, active during the day. Now we are active at all times of the day and night. Some people keep a **nocturnal**, or night time, activity schedule.

No matter what schedule you keep, make time to spend an evening with us. Grab the kids away from the TV or computer, invite a friend to join you, and meet us at the nature center to walk in the woods and along the prairie. We'll tune all our senses to a different channel.

We'll listen for the song of coyotes and the calls of owls. A breeze may carry the scent of a passing fox, a beaver territory, or a night blooming flower. We'll watch for glowworms, fireflies, eyeshine, and the erratic flight of bats. A sky full of stars will end our walk about. Won't you join us?

"Full Flower Moon"

Wednesday, May 2, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Flowers are abundant after spring rains. Our walk will begin with the sky still light and butterflies and bees still collecting nectar. As the sky darkens and we return from our walk, what will we see and hear?

"Once in a Blue Moon"

Thursday, May 31, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The origin of the term '**Blue Moon**' is steeped in folklore, dating back to 1528. Today the expression is used to refer to a rare event, such as the occurrence of two full moons in one month. The second full moon in a calendar month, the '**Blue Moon**', occurs infrequently, once every 2.72 years on average. Join us on this special full moon walk.

"Full Strawberry Moon"

Saturday, June 30, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

This is the first full moon of the summer season. Are wild strawberries still in bloom? Which critters at Oxley might dine on fresh berries?

Programs and Special Events

May

5 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All, &
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required
The Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have arrived, as have the flycatchers. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

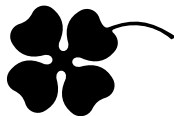
5 "Choosing a Field Guide to Birds"
Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-11:30 a.m.
\$2 for general public free for members
How do you select the best field guide to birds? We'll explore several options to consider before buying one. Meet at Oxley.

12 "Butterflies" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required
Join us at Oxley to look for Hayhurst's Scallopwings, Goatweed Leafwings, and other butterflies. Bring binoculars if you have them.

12 "Nature Hangers" Ages: 5 to Adult, &
Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members
We will make a stylish hanger out of natural materials. Bring an old drycleaner hanger and a bit of imagination. Meet at Oxley.

13 "Visiting 'Mother Nature' at Redbud Valley"
Ages: All
Sunday 3:00-4:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members
What's going on with 'Mother Nature' today? Spend some quality time with everyone's Mother. Meet at Redbud Valley.

20 "The Pleasure of Herbs"
Ages: 12 to adult, &
Sunday 2:00-4:00 p.m.
\$5 for general public \$3 for members
What is an herb, and do we have any growing here naturally at Oxley? We will explore some of the trails looking for native herbs. Then we'll make something fragrant to take home as we sip herbal tea.

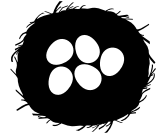


May

26 "Wildflowers" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free no registration required
Join us at Redbud Valley to see what is in bloom. We may see wild rose, poppy mallow, gaura, yucca, and evening primrose.

27 "Field Sketching" Ages: All, &
Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members
Learn to draw nature and document what you see. Bring paper or a sketch book and pencils and join us at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome.

June



2 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All, &
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required
Our summer migrants have arrived and now is a good time to watch for nesting birds. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

9 "Butterflies" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required
Are the butterflies as beautiful as their names? Come search for the Common Wood Nymph, Little Wood Satyr, and Silver-spotted Skippers. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

23 "Wildflowers" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:00-12:00 noon
Free no registration required
Early summer wildflowers are in bloom, providing nectar for hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, and other insects. Yarrow, coneflowers, yellow sweet clover, sensitive briar and common milkweed are only some of the flowers in bloom now. Join us as we explore the trails at Oxley to see what's in bloom.

Please register two days in advance of classes
* unless stated otherwise. *

Then we are ready to start the fire. Volunteers stand ready with rakes, rubber flappers to squash out embers, and backpack sprayers. We light the fire on the downwind side and back burn upwind until we have a good fire break, then we light the upwind side and watch it closely. We take care not to totally surround and trap wildlife, leaving them an avenue of escape.



After the area is burned, and everyone is suitably covered with soot, we monitor the area the rest of the day and

make sure the fire is completely out. Good weather conditions and a really good volunteer burn crew are vital to making this important habitat maintenance task a safe and effective tool for maximizing the diversity and fecundity of our prairies.



Thank You to the Fearless Burn Crew!

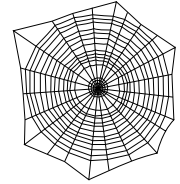
Times of Change

May and June, by nature of the timing of their appearance in our yearly cycle, are months of rapid and dramatic changes. It is almost impossible to keep up with the life forces expressing themselves at every turn.

Perhaps then, it is wise to choose a few, and really observe. Settle in and appreciate the details, the subtleties, the surprises! Allow yourself to become inspired, connected. Enjoy a small corner of your world.

ANONYMOUS from Nature Magazine, May, 1957

Throughout the night he spun a thread
 With which he wove medallioned lace
 That stretched between two milkweed pods
 Beside a dusty, traveled place;
 The pattern was a scalloped round -
 Each radius exactly drawn
 With trellised filaments between,
 And over all bright diamonds shone;
 In meshed and tenuous design
 It was a fragile, wayside sonnet -
 The maker, heedless of acclaim,
 Had left no signature upon it.



By Bertha Wilcox Smith

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