



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2009

Volume 184

Oxley Nature Center:

-The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.
-Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.
-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is closed:

all Mondays and Tuesdays.
-Open Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.
-Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
-Closed most City holidays,

******Closings for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:**
Thanksgiving: Thursday and Friday, November 26 and 27.
Christmas: Thursday and Friday, December 24 and 25.
New Years Day: Friday Jan. 1.
Furlough Day Closings:
Wednesday November 5, and
Wednesday and Thursday,
December 30 and 31.

Program information 918-669-6644

-Oxley@cityoftulsa.org
-Website at "http://www.oxllynaturecenter.org".
** Please register for classes 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated.
-Some classes require supplies and allow limited enrollment.
-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

Seasonal Changes By Amy Morris

Today the breeze whispers of change in the air. It has been coming. Some days it comes in great wails of wind and driving rain that lay the tall prairie grasses and forbs over. The next day, the grasses raise up their prone and prayerful forms, stretching skyward again, rejoicing in a new day's sun.

Change marches forward.

Days are much shorter now, shadows longer, the sun casts its light from an angle that lends a unique quality to earth, sky and water. Familiar trees have altered the color in their leaves. Where once were varying shades of green, now are riotous and playful splashes of reds, yellows, and oranges.

On a windy day, swirling leaves float softly to the ground, raining rainbow shapes around our heads. As winter progresses, more fragile ones will fade to a tracery of veins, becoming silvery skeletons. The tougher ones, like oak, provide shelter for a multitude of local residents. Beneath piles of fallen leaves tenants receive a bounty of welcome warmth, moisture and food.

Soon the trees will be bare. Colors become muted, softened, while textures stand out in sharp contrast. This is when we see the bare bones of our trees, their form and branching patterns. Look too, at the patterns of the bark. Each species wears a characteristic outer "skin", though each individual tree will vary.

The very dark checkerboard pattern on the persimmon sets it apart from all other trees, even if all of its signature orange fruits have been consumed by resident

coyotes, foxes, raccoon, opossum, and other hungry critters.

Often, you will find several persimmon trees, (the northernmost New World representative of the Ebony family) growing together in the same area. Even without leaves and fruit, we can identify most all of our forest denizens.

Without cover of leaves, if you look carefully, you may find the nest of a kingbird in the crotch of a branch overhead. This bulky, unkempt nursery was built with stalks of weeds, grasses and moss, then lined with mosses and plant down. Its job completed, it will not survive the winter intact.

Look further, and you may find more of these amazing creations. The beautiful vireo nest is a deep-cupped woven basket suspended in the horizontal fork of a slender branch. This small nest belies its strength. The wall of grasses, paper, bark strips, rootlets and vine tendrils is securely attached to the twig with spider silk. Notice the lovely lichens lining the exterior. Who would ever see it, this little fairy cup in the woodland?

The gulls are wheeling, circling by the hundreds, their white forms in contrast to the gray sky. It is like a great dance, graceful and poetic. It is full of beauty, and yet... there is a feeling of impending urgency. Winter brings hardship. It is about survival. We must keep moving.

Each season brings its own gifts. Come visit and explore the natural world in this season, you will find it constantly changing. What gifts await you: peace, adventure, discovery? You tell us.

Nature Center Happenings

Family Adventure and Discovery Programs

\$2 fee for non members, free for members, ** Please register in advance

Family Adventures: “Snug as a Bug in a ?”

Saturday, November 14, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Where do all the insects go when the weather turns cold? We'll explore some rotten places to live that keep them warm!

Family Discoveries: “Is It Winter Yet?”

Sunday, November 15, 2:00-3:30 p.m.



How do plants and animals prepare for a long cold winter? We'll look at seeds and nuts and gather pinecones and nuts to make an autumn wreath.

Family Adventures: “Snow Crystals”

Saturday, December 12, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Each one is unique. We will make our very own real snow flakes.

Family Discoveries: “Wildlife in Winter”

Sunday, December 13, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

What do the birds and other animals eat during the winter months? We will see if we can find food and we'll make a suet feeder to put out.

Congratulations New Volunteers!

The following volunteer staff has successfully completed Volunteer Naturalist training:



Patrick Blackburn, Bob Brown, Lin Brown, Susan Carr, Jessie Herrington, Bob Hooper, Margaret McQuaig and Gabi Miller.

Our new volunteer naturalists join our veterans out on the trails to guide thousands of school children along our trails and provide them with an exciting and sensory filled educational experience this fall. This volunteer team keeps us moving forward and allows us to meet the needs of the public.

Welcome new volunteer staff , we look forward to many happy seasons with you!



Astronomy Programs

\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages. * Please register in advance.**

Bring lawn chairs and binoculars if you have them and join us at Oxley Nature Center.



Sunday, November 1, “**Enjoying Dark Evenings**” 6:00-7:00 p.m. Sunset: 5:28 p.m. Moonrise: 4:31 p.m. Starlight and moonlight can become a well-loved part of the return to standard time. Make friends with the night sky!

Dress in layers, and bring a folding chair and binoculars if you have them.

***Afterwards, join us on our Full Beaver Moon Walk if you like!

Saturday, December 12, “**Listening for Meteors**” 7:00-8:00 p.m. Sunset: 5:09 p.m. Moonset: 2:16 p.m. The Geminid meteor shower will be near its peak, and perhaps we will see several. But bring an old-time battery-powered transistor radio with a tuning dial if you have one, and we'll listen for meteors *ionizing* the atmosphere! Dress warmly if you want to go outside to watch for meteors.

Evening Full Moon Walks

\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages. Meet at Oxley Nature Center . * Please register in advance,**

Full Beaver Moon

Sunday, November 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The beavers of Oxley's wetlands wear their fur coats to keep them warm and insulated against the frosty waters of creek and marsh. Dress warmly and join us to discover if they are active on this night.



Full Cold Moon

Thursday, December 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

During this month the nights are long and dark. Brighten your week with a winter walk under the Full Cold Moon. What wild sounds will be carried on the nights cold air ...owl song? Join us at Oxley to find out.

Programs and Special Events

November

7 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

The winter sparrows and juncos have arrived, flitting about in the fields and along the woodland edge. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.



14 "Autumn Colors at Redbud Valley" Ages: All
Saturday 9:00-10:30 a.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Where did all the leaves go? By this time, we may have more leaves under our feet than over our heads. Join us at **Redbud Valley** to see what colors still remain. This hike is **not** stroller or wheelchair accessible.

21 "Old Fashioned Soap Making" Ages: Adult
Saturday 1:00-3:30 p.m.
\$20 for general public \$15 for members

Come experience soap making the old fashioned way. We will use fats and lye for the base. Each participant may customize their soap for their own purpose using essential oils and various additives. Call early to sign up, spaces are limited. Meet at Oxley.

22 "Discovering Wetlands" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

What do the plants and animals that live in our wetlands do as winter approaches? Do they have special adaptations that help them survive? Join us at Oxley to explore the marsh and creek.



28 "Botany Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Will there be any fruits left on the deciduous hollies or persimmon trees? What will we find? Join us at Oxley to see what edibles are available for wildlife as winter approaches.

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

December

5 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

Gadwall and teal gather at Lake Sherry, while geese and other birds wheel across the morning sky. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

5 "The Holly and the Ivy" Ages: All
Saturday 1:30-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

What are plants doing in December? Join us at Oxley to look for flowers and berries and other *surprising* winter plant activity.

6 "Felting Fun" Ages: 16 to Adult
Sunday 1:30-4:30 p.m.
\$30 for general public \$25 for members

Handmade gifts and ornaments are the best! Felted objects have a wonderful warmth and texture. We will learn the basic skills necessary for needle felting, and create some fun projects to take home. Meet at Oxley.

19 "Nature Ornaments" Ages: All
Saturday 1:00-2:30 noon
\$3 for general public \$1 for members

We will weave small wreath ornaments out of natural vines and decorate them for Christmas using ribbon and natural objects. Join us at Oxley for this fun project.

26 "Botany Walk, Forest Trees" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

What tree is that? How do you identify a tree when it is no longer wearing its tell tale leaves? Join us at Oxley to look at some of the common trees. We will look at form, branching and bark.

27 "Brain Tanning Demonstration" Ages: All
Sunday 1:30-3:30 p.m.
\$12 for general public \$10 for members

Brain tanning a deer hide results in a buttery soft leather ideal for use in clothing, moccasins, bags and other useful items. Come prepared to participate in some stage of processing a hide in this ancient manner. Meet at Oxley.

JANUARY

2 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

Join us at Oxley for **Fireside Birding!** Bring binoculars if you have them. We will study the birds that gather at our feeders while enjoying the warmth of a crackling fire in our fireplace.

What could be more fun than a wiener roast and hayride?

-- Being an active member of Oxley Nature Center!

Find out by becoming a member of Oxley Nature Center NOW!

The Friends of Oxley Nature Center is hosting its Annual Members Event on Saturday, November 7.



Annual Members Only *Weiner Roast and Hayride*

The Friends of Oxley Nature Center is a non-profit group that supports the activities of Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve.

We invite you to **join** our Mary K. Oxley Nature Center Association (ONCA) today. Your benefits include:

- No charge or reduced rate enrollment in programs and workshops.
- Discounts in our gift shop, *The Nature Store*.
- Subscription to the Oxley Nature Center newsletter.
- Invitations to special members-only events and programs.
- Free year-round admission to Mohawk Park.

Your support helps us raise funds for special exhibits, supports our volunteer staff and nature center staff in their training, and aids in protection of habitat and wildlife resources. Help us be good stewards of our natural resources, and pass this legacy onto our children.

TULSA  PARKS

Join today online at www.oxleynaturecenter.org RSVP in time to attend the Hayride. We promise a very fun time!

Memberships Renew Each September

Membership Categories:

- \$10 Individual
- \$15 Family
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$100 Patron
- \$250 Corporate
- \$500 Life

Have you got the Winter/ Holiday Blues?

Take a break from the hurry and scurry of all your "to do" lists and bring yourself, a friend, or your family out to Oxley or Redbud Valley. Walk the trails in the quiet of the morning. Listen to the plaintive call of geese winging overhead. Here chickadees scold and woodpeckers drum in the forest.

The dried grasses and forbs in the prairie rustle. Is it the wind? Wait! A small sparrow lands on the slender end of a grass stalk and sidles down toward the seed head. The grass bends, but supports the weight, and gives up its treasured seed to the probing beak.

Take a breath. Life is good.
Come experience it for yourself.



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