



Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2010

Volume 186

A \$2 fee per car (for non-members) is charged on weekends April - October to enter Mohawk Park.

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, 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:**

Friday, April 2.

Program information:

- 918-669-6644
- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org
- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.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.

How To Be Wealthy by Eddie Reese

I have these moments sometimes. Usually it is when I am alone outside somewhere, in the woods or in the prairie. I feel like it is a gift just for me, I guess because I am the only one there to receive it. And it is these times when I feel like a kid again where nearly every experience is new and it feels good to be alive.

One summer morning I was walking down a wooded trail at the nature center. It had rained the night before but it was a bright sunny day. The forest had a dense canopy above but swords of sunlight cut through the foliage to the forest floor. A flash of light caught my attention off to my left. I turned and looked but saw nothing until I took a step backward. And there it was. Several steps away off the trail was a bright red light hanging from a small tree. What amazed me was the brightness and intensity of color of the little light. But I could only see it if I stood in one spot. If I moved a step forward or backward it vanished. If I raised up on tiptoe or kneeled it vanished. Way out here in the woods it couldn't be an electrical light of course. I thought about it for a while and decided it was a small shaft of light refracted through a small drop of water hanging from the tip of a leaf. For a few minutes the bright light persisted.

Astronomically speaking I was in the right spot at the right time. In other words light from the sun had travelled 93 million miles where some of it collided with a small planet hanging in a void of space. And some of that light sneaked its way though a dense canopy of foliage just to collide with a very small drop of water. The drop of water acted like a little prism and refracted the sunlight into its different wavelengths. I was standing in just the perfect spot at the perfect angle for the red spectrum of light to pass through the tiny pupil of my eye.

Of the six billion people on the planet, I was the only one able to see it. Some might have dismissed it and walked on. But for some reason the experience seemed significant. After all, I was the only one. I walked over to the little tree where I could see the drop of water clinging to the tip of a leaf. I knew that soon that small bit of water would move on to continue its journey to all the places water goes. It might someday be a flake of snow caught on the tongue of a child or gushed from the blow hole of a whale.

But for that moment it made me a much richer person. I am reminded of a line in a song that goes, "I'd be a poor man if I never saw an eagle fly". It is the same feeling when you cross paths with a bobcat in the woods. For only an instant your eyes meet. Who knows who is startled the most and then the shy creature instantly vanishes, seemingly in the blink of an eye.

No amount of money in the world can buy those experiences. They belong to you. Even the poorest of us can claim them. You might be considered wealthy indeed if you could only claim a single wonderful experience.

You might find this wealth in your own backyard. I hope so. But people of the Tulsa area are rich in a most wonderful way. We have Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve. These may be the only opportunities available for many of us to experience a wild place so close to home.



Schedule some time and increase your wealth, for it was once said: *"In nature one receives far more than he seeks."* --John Muir.

Nature Center Happenings

What The City Budget Crisis Means To Us

Recent budget shortfalls resulted in another staff position loss for the team at Oxley Nature Center. Our staff of 6 is down (permanently) to 4 (1989 levels). We began managing Redbud Valley Nature Preserve in 1990. There is no question the Country, State, City and Park Department are facing unprecedented economic stresses unknown in the last 80 years.

The significance of natural areas like your nature center on the very edge of a city with a population of 400,000 people must never be underestimated. Mohawk Park is a gift to the future,

bestowed by the citizens of Tulsa just prior to the depression of the 1930's. Oxley and Redbud Valley were later established through the hard work of countless dedicated citizens. We intend to protect the integrity of these areas to the best of our abilities. We will honor the work that came before.

I looked up the definition of **value** in my old thesaurus. As a noun: meaning, merit, worth; as a verb: admire, appreciate, value; as an adjective: of great value; Syns: costly, inestimable, invaluable, precious, priceless, worthy; --*Idioms*: beyond price, of great price.

We, and your city officials, need to know what it means to you! Let us know, let them know, is this a resource *you* value?

Family Adventures and Discoveries Programs

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

Family Adventures: "Off the Beaten Path"

Saturday, March 13, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Do you ever wonder where that animal trail goes? We will follow it and see where it leads to ... perhaps a deer bed or a fox den.

Family Discoveries: "Finding Spring"

Sunday, March 14, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Is the ground warm? Are turtles awake? Are the plants coming up? We'll discuss plant parts and make some wildflower seed balls that we can plant in our gardens.



Family Adventures: "Is the Nursery Ready Yet?"

Saturday, April 10, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Birds build nests for their babies. How hard would it be to build a nest using just the tools a bird has? We will look at different nests and try to build one of our own!

Family Discoveries: "Frogs and Toads"

Sunday, April 11, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Learn how amphibians are different from reptiles and mammals. We'll hunt for eggs, tadpoles, frogs or toads and make a toad abode for the garden.

Astronomy Programs

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

Bring lawn chairs and binoculars if you have them



Monday, March 15, "Galileo's Planet With Handles" 8:00-9:30 p.m.

Sunset: 7:36 p.m. Moonrise: 9:32 a.m.

Four hundred years ago, the planet Saturn was a mystery to Galileo. Not only did it have an odd shape, but those extra bits sometimes disappeared! Take a look and see for yourself. Meet at Terrace Park.

Thursday, April 15, "A Pair of Crescents" 8:00-9:00 p.m. Sunset: 7:50 p.m. Moonset: 4:17 p.m.

The tiny new crescent Moon hovers near an even tinier crescent Mercury after sunset. Which will we see first? Meet at the circle drive at Lake Yahola.

Evening Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

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

Full Worm Moon

Sunday, March 28, 7:00-8:30p.m.

It's the time of year when the soil warms up and the earthworms become active again and make their way toward the surface. What critters are looking for grubs and worms for a meal?



Full Pink Moon

Friday, April 30, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

It is staying light later. This moon is named for the early spring wildflowers that display different shades of pink. As we explore the trails, which colors will disappear first as the sky darkens?

Programs and Special Events

March

6 “Saturday Morning Birding” Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required



March makes us ever hopeful for the return of our spring migrants singing their courtship songs. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

7 “ Draw Nature” Ages: All
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Bring a sketch book and medium of choice and receive instruction on drawing what you see. This class is for kids of all ages. Meet at Oxley and bring along your creativity.

20 “Spring Songs” Ages: All
Saturday 1:00–2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

The forests are echoing with songs and calls. Every puddle has a frog or toad chorus. The prairies are alive with chirps and warbles. What does it all mean? Join us at Oxley to find out.

21 “Spring has Sprung!” Ages: All
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Signs of spring abound everywhere on this day after Spring Equinox. Let’s scout for active signs of awakening among the plant and animal residents of Oxley Nature Center. Wear boots if it is muddy!

27 “Botany Walk” Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Everywhere the buds are swelling. In the forest, Spicebush shows sprays of yellow bloom throughout, while violets peek up from beneath the leaf litter. Join us at Oxley to explore.

28 “Through The Looking Glass” Ages: All
Sunday 2:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members



Prepare to be transported. With the use of a simple magnifying glass we can discover a whole new world of wonders just beyond our normal range of eyesight. Bring your favorite magnifying lens if you have one. Meet at Oxley.

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

April

3 “Saturday Morning Birding” Ages: All
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

It is time for the Yellow-throated and Parula Warblers to make an appearance. Who else will fly in? Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

17 “Elm Bark Baskets” Ages: 15 to adult
Saturday 12:30-4:30 p.m.
\$20 for general public \$18 for members

Learn how and when to harvest elm bark and make a beautiful and functional basket. Meet at Oxley.

17 “Butterfly Walk” Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required



Join us for the first butterfly walk of the year! Weather permitting we may see Monarchs, Spring Azures, Black Swallowtails and others. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

18 “Needle Felted Soap” Ages: 16 to Adult
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
\$6 for general public \$4 for members

We will take a bar of Ivory soap and cover it with a design of your own creation using wool and needles to felt it. This will result in a bar of soap that scrubs as you wash, and shrinks as your soap shrinks. This will make a great gift! Join us at Redbud Valley.

24 “Botany Walk” Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Join us at Redbud Valley for this wildflower walk. We may catch the last of the Dutchman’s Breeches and Redbuds. We’ll also look for Trout Lilies and False Rue Anemone. This hike is NOT wheelchair or stroller accessible.

25 “Nature Printing: Design Your Own Lunch Bag”
Ages: 14 to Adult
Sunday 2:00-4:00 p.m.
\$10 for general public \$8 for members

We will take eco-friendly 100% recycled cotton lunch bags and turn them into works of art using natural objects found around the nature center. Join us at Oxley to create something beautiful!

Saturday, April 24, the main entrance to Mohawk Park will be closed from 12 noon-4:00 p.m. Please use the back entrance to access Oxley Nature Center. Sheridan from Apache to 36th St. N. will be closed during this time (there is a BIG Air Show!).

Start Your Volunteer Naturalist Career Now!

Oxley Nature Center's Mission Statement is: *"Inspire the Wonder!"* Volunteer Naturalists help make that happen. They guide hearts and minds as well as feet, making new discoveries for themselves each time. They share their love of nature, showing how to appreciate the ever-amazing world around us. Apply now and enroll in training today.

The training is as much fun as leading the tours. You will learn Oxley's trail system and start to become familiar with forests, fields, and wetlands that are bursting their way through springtime. Our hands-on interpretive methods emphasize leadership skills rather than memorizing and reciting facts. We learn by doing.

Weekday training prepares those who will work one morning each week during April and May with small groups of school children. The 6-part training begins **March 2 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon**, meeting two mornings each week (but not during Tulsa Public Schools' spring break).

Evening and weekend training focuses on leading tours for families and youth groups, also in small groups of 12 or fewer. Part 1 (of four parts) is from **6:00- 8:00 p.m. on March 26**; training is every day for 4 days. Times vary each day.

Training schedules and the volunteer application packet may be found online at <http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>. Click on the links to the volunteer program. Or, give us a call and we can mail you the information.

No previous experience is needed to become part of Oxley Nature Center's awesome Volunteer Naturalist team. Applicants must be 18 or older.

4th Annual Early Spring Butterfly Count

Calling all citizen scientists!

Join us on **Thursday, April 15** for a spring day in the great outdoors in pursuit of butterflies. No experience is necessary. You will be placed in a group with an experienced guide to spot, count, tally, and/or identify butterflies in a specific count area.

Information gathered on the spring count is used to supplement the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Summer Butterfly count held annually in July.



We will be meeting from **8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.** and you are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water and binoculars if you have them. Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley Nature Center.

Please call and register in advance so groups can be assembled!

Drop-ins are welcome but should bring \$3 to cover their count fee.

The U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap in its federally-assisted programs and activities. If anyone believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with our department or the Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.



Coal Creek Trail

What is there to see along this trail that connects to Blackbird Marsh, Blue Heron Trail, Green Dragon Trail and Woodpecker Trail? You may find beaver sign of all kinds, chewed trees and dams, even slides down the steeper slopes. Look for raccoon prints leading to mussel shells along the water's edge. Watch carp and gar spawning in the shallows.

Non-venomous water snakes sun themselves on the branches overhanging the water's edge while water turtles resting on partially submerged logs slip quickly into the water at the first sign of danger. A wide variety of birds inhabit this special conjunction of forest and water.

What is there to see? Come find out for yourself. Nature's mysteries await you.