



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2010

Volume 200

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:

Thursday, November 11,
Thursday and Friday, November 25 & 26 (holidays).
Friday & Saturday, December 24 & 25 (holidays), and Saturday, January 1 is a holiday.

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. A class minimum of 6 is required.

-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.

Breathless by Amy Morris

What moments take your breath away? What small, simple events occur that send a shiver up your spine and remind you that you are connected to something greater than yourself? What leaves you filled with a sense of wonder and awe?

I had my head down, watching an amazing variety of wasps working the goldenrod. They were different shapes, sizes, colors; hourglass bodies weaving busy patterns amongst the brilliance of tiny golden flowers seeking what -- nectar, pollen, spiders? I was entranced.

It was early; a cool, late October morning, cloudy and breezy. Suddenly, something prompted me to cast my eyes upward, where heavy gray clouds lumbered below white clouds scuttling across flashes of blue. There I saw them, coming from the direction of Lake Sherry, heading west, a great flock winging across the sky.

The stream unfolded steadily, pouring beneath the belly of the clouds. At times it thickened, then seemed to swirl in a circle, then stretched out again, moving as one. As it got nearer, I could see the individuals, the sharp bend of the wings, the brilliant white underbellies. I could hear the whisper of muted cries trailing above the wind.

They wheeled and soared, like a great brush stroke against the canvas of the

sky, dipping briefly from sight behind first the willow, then the cottonwoods. The wave continued to flow forth above the prairie from the east.

I was witnessing a primal dance in the circle of the seasons. Spellbound, I watched as they kept coming, appearing in drifts over the trees and growing ever larger as they drew near.

I felt weightless, as if I could lift off the ground and join them in their journey, to follow them I knew not where. This thing we call migration ... how do they know where to go, and how and when to return? Despite all we do know, many more of our questions remain unanswered.

For that moment I was transfixed. My spirit soared with them. My worries and burdens drained from me. In this world of so much change, so many unknowns; this continuous pattern of life, this intricate web, this precious continuity, enveloped me in its reassuring wholeness.

Gazing upward, following the swirling flock until it disappeared over the treetops to the west, I followed with my eyes and heart, breathlessly, humbled by the timeless event that played out before me. Then I turned, renewed, and bent once again before the glory of the goldenrod.

Nature Center Happenings

Green Woodworking at Oxley with Joe Marcoux-- Sunday, November 7

Please register in advance, Ages 16 to Adult

\$20 for general public, \$15 for members

Green woodworking continues in the shop. Do you like the concept of transforming a freshly cut green log into a useful everyday item with the use of hand tools? Feel a connection with your past as you use a shaving horse, spoke shaves and crook knives to carve a ladle or a scoop.

Bob Daniels will be there to share his study of the Swedish carving technique as taught by Swedish carver Willie Sundquist. Join us to create something both beautiful and useful!

Sunday, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Bring a lunch!

John James Audubon Activities -- Saturday, November 20

Free and open to the public, but please reserve your spot by contacting Jim Mitchell at jc4649mit@cox.net or 918-272-6755.

Birding with Audubon

Join performer Brian "Fox" Ellis (as John James Audubon) on a unique guided bird watching adventure as he regales listeners with his in-depth observations of species we encounter along the trail.

Fox is an internationally renowned storyteller, author and naturalist bringing art, history, ecology and literature to life in the persona of John James Audubon.

Please call to reserve a spot on either:

Thursday, November 18, 4:30-6:00 p.m. **or**
Saturday, November 20, 8:00-9:45 a.m.

Bird is the Word Workshop

A poet's eye and gift for language is similar to the detailed observation and ability to communicate complex ideas required of field ecologists. In this workshop participants will be immersed in the writing process, learning tips for effective journaling and for turning field notes into publishable poetry and stories. You'll learn to use poetry to help you write clearer, more exciting essays.

In the second half of the workshop we'll learn from each other to improve our bird ID skills and how to lead more effective birding adventures. Come celebrate the voices of nature and find your voice in the natural world. For experienced as well as beginning birders. Please bring paper, pen and binoculars. You must call to reserve a space. **10:00-12:00 noon -- November 20.**

Celebrating Tulsa Audubon Society -- 75th Anniversary!

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

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

Full Beaver Moon

Sunday, November 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Sound carries on a still, frosty night — perhaps we will hear the slap of a beaver's tail on water. The moon will rise through gnarled branches towering above. Come walk with us through the crunch of fallen leaves. Will our way be lit by glowworms?



Full Cold Moon

Tuesday, December 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Today is Winter Solstice, the first day of winter. Are you willing to venture out on this shortest day of the year, to celebrate the stark beauty of nature? Tonight is the 'longest night', but tomorrow the days begin to lengthen. Join us for a reprieve from the season's hustle and bustle.

Programs and Special Events

November

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

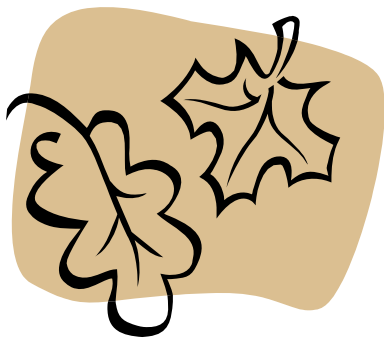
Come meet some of our winter visitors and be enchanted by our year round residents. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

13 “Explorations with a Naturalist” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

What special discoveries will await us today? What secrets will be unveiled? Join us at Oxley prepared to hike the trail and find out.

20 “Soap Making” **Ages: 18 to Adult**
Saturday **2:00-4:00 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. Meet at Oxley.



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

What will we find this time of year? Are all the leaves off the trees? What are winter weeds, and how do they spread their seeds? Come to Oxley and explore.

****Please register 48 hours in advance of classes unless stated otherwise. A minimum of 6 registrants is required.**

December

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

One day it is 73 degrees, the next 23 degrees. What will we find today? Where will the birds be? Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

11 “Explorations with a Naturalist” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

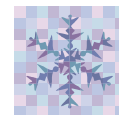
The cooler weather quickens our movements. What happens to other living things? Meet at Oxley to hike the trails to see what we can find.

18 “Naturalists Choice” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-11:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

Join one of our naturalists to see what is happening today at Oxley. We will take a walk on the trails and explore a hidden corner of the Nature Center.

26 “Botany -- Winter Tree ID” **Ages: All**
Sunday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

To trees, winter is a time of drought. Their twigs hold buds above leaf scars that contain spring's leaves or flower buds, protected by moisture conserving scales. We use buds, bark and branching to ID trees. Join us at Oxley to learn some of our common trees.



January 1 **“Saturday Morning Birding”**
Ages: All **8:00-9:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

What a great way to start a New Year! Join us for birding at Oxley and try out a new lifetime hobby. The Nature Center is closed for the holiday today but the intrepid birders will be gathering. Beginners are welcome! Bring binoculars if you have them.

The Bur Oak, A Living Legacy of Life

By Joe and Amy Marcoux

This is the time of year the trees shed their fruits: acorns, pecans, walnuts, hickory nuts. My husband is a wood worker, and he uses salvaged wood to create beautiful things, so perhaps it should not be surprising that he feels he needs to give back. He plants trees -- native trees, just about wherever he goes. This fall he has been going on about Bur Oaks. This is what he says.

The Bur Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, is the classic tree of the American savanna, a towering giant that has sheltered and fed peoples of the Great Plains for centuries. A member of the Beech Family (Fagaceae), the Bur Oak is a member of the White Oak subgroup and hybridizes with related species. Here in Tulsa we are in a metropolitan area, but we live in a forest. We see foxes, raccoons, hawks and a lot of other wildlife in our neighborhoods. The reason for this is our trees. We have over 80 species of trees in Tulsa, Of those, one of the grandest and most majestic is the Bur Oak.

A trip along Riverside Drive and through the neighborhoods bordering the Arkansas river reveals a number of veteran Bur Oaks. Mohawk Park has a number of them also. Bur Oaks are enduring, drought tolerant trees with tap roots reaching far down to seek water. No wonder it was chosen as 'Urban Tree of the Year' in 2001. They are hardy, highly adaptable to soil and site conditions and can tolerate city pollutants and compacted soil.

Oxley Nature Center exhibits a cross section of a Burr Oak that was uprooted in a windstorm in 1985. Growth rings indicate the tree took root in 1848, and was 54 feet tall when it fell. By Burr Oak standards, Oxley's tree was in the prime of its nut bearing years. Being a slow grower, these oaks do not begin producing acorns until around their 35th year. From 75 -150 years they are at their optimum seed bearing age, but will produce their large acorns for up to 400 years! Bur Oaks produce abundant acorns every 2-3 years, with light crops during the interim years. These trees grow to 85 feet, with a 60 foot canopy spread, and have roots as expansive as the above ground tree. Their largest leaves can be up to 1 foot long and 6 inches wide, the largest of all oaks.

If you wanted to create a long term legacy for your local ecosystem, you could do no better than to plant a Burr Oak acorn. This is the perfect wildlife plant. Many invertebrates and vertebrates such as deer, squirrels, mice, wood ducks, jays, and rabbits feed on Burr Oak acorns. For centuries local people have found the nuts sweet enough to eat raw or roasted or prepared as meal or flour. Acorns are high in fat (37%) and protein (8%). Hundreds of insect herbivores use oaks as host plants, shelter and food for some part of their life cycle; and these in turn feed other wildlife. A large oak canopy provides nesting sites for birds such as chickadees, wrens, woodpeckers and owls, A stand of oaks will lead to a great increase in biodiversity.

As Bur Oak acorns fall in the autumn, gather them quickly, as they germinate right after maturation. Check the acorns for signs of rot or insect damage. Healthy nuts can be placed in the soil now, 1.2-2.5 cm deep (on their sides), or store overwinter in a cool moist place to plant in spring. Taproots rapidly penetrate soil and grow more than a meter in the first spring growing season. It is this early root development and high water use efficiency that has allowed this oak to pioneer dry sites and compete with shrubs and grasses.

Plant an acorn for biodiversity. Plant one for your children. There is a good chance your children and your grandchildren and many generations to come will know and enjoy these very trees. Take the time to introduce them to one another. All this from an acorn. What better legacy than that?