



# Oxley Nature Center

July/August, 2011

Volume 204

**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.

## **\*\*Holiday Closing for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:**

Monday, July 4.

## **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.

## **Summertime, and the Living is Easy** by Amy Morris

What are some of your best memories of your summer vacations as a child? What about your children? Are they 'plugged in': to a television, computer, an X-Box? This summer, bring the kids outside and see what you might find. Rise early, gather your favorite people, and greet a new day fresh with possibility and adventure. It is here, in the bottomland flood plain of Oxley Nature Center, where you can immerse yourself in the vibrant world of nature. The turtles bask along the island shore in the pond, slipping quietly into the water if alarmed. Move with stealth; practice and you may sneak up on them.

There, in the forest, revealed by a snort and a stamping of hooves, are seven deer. Their bodies are broken shadows in the leaf light, blending beautifully. Then one whirls and dances away; the others follow. You have been holding your breath — so close they were. You approach the area, finding pointed split hoof tracks have turned the loamy soil, where a veteran tree has fallen and decomposed, replenishing the earth. You breath deeply of this scent, you will remember it. Then you see them, the tiny prints, no bigger than an inch in length — fawns! How did you miss seeing them?

Approaching the prairie trail, a delicate weaving overhead catches the light, breaking it into a hundred prisms of color. Its lines span four feet from one tree to another, shimmering and strong. In its center, on its lovely orb, rests its architect, a golden orb spider no larger than a penny. The breeze rises and the silky pocket bows first out, then in, scattering rainbow rays. How does she know how to weave this intricate web?

At Coal Creek, looking down, you see a 2-foot long spotted gar swim lazily under the bridge at your feet. Turning to watch it come out the other side, you may wonder at the long, slender body and the tapering nose with many sharp teeth that tear at prey; a primitive type fish this one. At Blackbird Marsh, butterflies work the flowers, and Yellow Water Lotus rises from the lily pads in an explosion of gold amongst the cattails. Lying down on your belly on the boardwalk, you can watch the water striders skate across the waters surface, as tadpoles rise to the surface to gulp air. Dragonflies patrol their territories from several different vantage points. A Great Blue Heron stands tall and motionless at the edge of the shore, scanning the water for fish or frog.

Turn onto your back, look up. Feel the sun's warmth on your skin. Listen to the breeze in the willows nearby. Crows fly by, carrying on a conversation. The clouds scuttle across the sky. Relax, and ponder your questions. Each leads you further into the adventure. Curiosity feeds us. This life, shared with the deer and the spider and the turtles is the most profound mystery of all. For this moment it is enough to settle in and watch, listen and wonder.

Get outside this summer. There are miles of trails to roam and explore. Bring a picnic lunch to share. Do an impromptu scavenger hunt. Create new memories, of the very best kind.

# Nature Center Happenings

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## Volunteer Staff Dinner and Awards Celebration

We have had the great pleasure of working with a wonderful volunteer staff this spring season. We gathered together at Oxley Nature Center on June 2 to celebrate our spring season and present awards to those who have reached a 'milestone' in their service to the Nature Center.

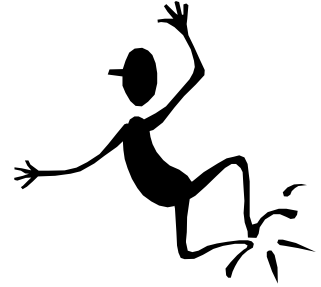
Awards were presented to the following volunteers:

**Rusty Grimpe:** 10 Year Service Award

**Orman Landers:** 3 Year Service Award

**Tyler Rigney:** 3 Year Service Award

**Jacquie Young** received her fire-making kit for her 10 years of service.



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## Become a Volunteer Naturalist

Children and nature, nature and children -- with your enthusiasm and guidance, it can be a win-win situation! Join us for our training program **September 6-30th**. Our training schedules are flexible.

Training is fun, and will familiarize you with our trail system and its varied natural communities. Following training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of children, for an hour or two one morning a week from October through November. You may also lead Full Moon Walks, weekend guided tours, or become roving naturalist guides.

If you are 18 or older, please call for more information or to receive an application packet. No previous experience necessary.

## 2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

**Saturday, July 9, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

### “Flying Flowers”

Butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and other insects resemble flying flowers as they dart or float through the air. Let's observe some of these beautiful animals and make some refrigerator magnets to take home.

**Saturday, August 13, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

### “Water, Water Everywhere”

Although not a living resource, water is often the defining resource of an ecosystem. Come explore our pond, marsh and lake as we hike through the Nature Center. We will use dip nets to explore life forms living in these watery environments. Join us at Oxley.

**\*\*\* Free, all ages, registration not required. The same program will be offered morning and afternoon. \*\*\***

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## Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

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

### Full Buck Moon

**Friday, July 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

This is the time of day when deer are active. We may see buck deer with their new velvety antlers emerging from their foreheads. What else might we find?



### Full Red Moon

**Saturday, August 13, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

Come stroll in the sultry haze of a summer evening. We will listen to the night music nature provides. As the light changes gradually we'll immerse ourselves in the moment.

# Programs and Special Events

## July

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

Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them. We will use our ears and eyes to see what birds are out and about this morning.

**10 “Marsh Madness”**      **Ages: All**  
**Sunday**      **8:00-9:45 a.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **Free for members**

Blackbird Marsh is a nursery, grocery store, antacid, filtration system and much more. What does this all mean? Come find out about this important habitat. If the water is high enough we will do some dip netting. Meet at the teaching shelter parking lot at Oxley (follow the sign).

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

What beautiful butterflies will we see today? Bring binoculars if you have them and join us at Oxley to find out!

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

Has it been hot and dry or have we had rain? How does this affect plant life? Meet us at Oxley to find out.

**31 “Redbud Rock Art”**      **Ages: All**  
**Sunday**      **1:30-3:30 p.m.**  
**\$2 for general public**      **Free for members**

Redbud Valley is known for its rock formations. Come for a hike. Stop in at the visitor center before or after and choose a rock to paint and take home to place in your garden, give your favorite friend as a gift, or keep in your pocket. The hike at Redbud is not wheelchair or stroller accessible.

## August

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

Morning hours are a good time for birding. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.



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

Different butterflies have unique flight patterns and behaviors they can be identified by. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

**21 “Rocks, Acid Rain and Bath Fizzies”**  
**Ages: 5-12 (accompanied by parents)**  
**Sunday**      **1:30-2:30 p.m.**  
**\$3 for general public**      **\$1 for members**

Come learn some common rocks and how they are affected by acid rain. To simulate the effect we will make old fashioned bath fizzies: a hard packed mixture of chemicals which effervesces and makes bubbles when added to bath water. Meet at Oxley.

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

What will we find in fruit or bloom this time of year? Join us at Oxley to explore some trails.

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

## 4th of July North American Butterfly Count

### You Can Be a Citizen Scientist!

Join us at Oxley on Tuesday, July 5th to spot, count, tally and identify butterflies. Information gathered is used to supplement the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Summer Butterfly Count held annually in June and July.

Citizen scientists participate in local counts, increase their own knowledge, raise public awareness and contribute valuable data about butterfly populations.

We will meet at **8:30 a.m.** and count until dusk, weather permitting. You are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring lunch, water, hat, sunscreen and binoculars if you have them. Meet at Oxley Nature Center.

No experience is necessary. You'll work in teams with experienced naturalists counting on different teams in different areas.

**Please call and register in advance so teams can be assembled! The \$3 fee (which goes to NABA) will be waived if you register by July 1.**



### American Lotus, Nelumbo lutea

This spectacular wildflower can be found at Blackbird Marsh, where still water and a muddy bottom meets its cultural requirements. Its large blossom rises above the water on a long stem attached to the center of a large round blue-green leaf.

The seed-bearing structure in the center of the flower resembles a shower head. As it dries up and turns brown it looks like a wasp's nest. When dry, the stalk of the seed pod arches over and the receptacle breaks off, floating in the water and releasing its seeds.

People used to eat the young green seeds raw for a chestnut-like flavor. As the seeds matured they were ground into flour or boiled to extract their oil. Many species of duck eat the seeds. They are rich in amino acids and nutrients. Roots produce starchy tubers that are eaten by beaver and muskrat. People find they taste like sweet potato, and can be baked or dried. Even the young leaves are edible.

This is a great wildlife plant, providing cover and food. It is a multi-purpose plant of great beauty.