



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2011

Volume 206

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 Closings for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

November 11, 24, & 25,
December 24 & 25, and
January 1.

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 unless otherwise stated.

Let's Go -- Get Outside!

Oxley Nature Center staff and volunteer naturalists continue to lead school children on tours through the third week of November. As cooler weather kicks in, so does the busy holiday season.

Studies have shown that nature provides health benefits for stress reduction, improved mental performance and increased vitality. Common sense says getting out for a walk in the woods is good for mind, spirit and body.

Take a break from the frantic bustle of holiday parties, cooking and shopping. Grab the hand of someone you care about and come for a visit. Dress for the weather, layers are always good. Bring a camera and binoculars if you like. But come; for a time out, a deep breath, a moment of reflection.



Stretch your legs, follow animal tracks through the snow, or play indoor games outside: tic-tac-toe, checkers with acorns, hopscotch, tossing games and memory games. A little time outside will quicken your blood, lower your blood pressure and sharpen your senses.

Here, in the forests, fields and wetlands, are many things to be thankful for. The red of the cardinal flashing through the wooded canopy, the cheerful banter of the chickadees, the rustle of the grasses in the wind; all beckon. After your walk, join us by a crackling fire at the Interpretive Center! You bring marshmallows and we'll provide the sticks!

Nature Center Happenings

Winter Solstice Celebration

Join us **Wednesday, December 21** at Oxley Nature Center from **10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

- Make edible treats for Oxley wildlife (take one home).
- Create ornaments using natural or recycled objects, weavings for found treasures, or small wreaths to hang.
- Design wrapping paper using tracks and leaf rubbings.
- Enjoy story time in the new Children's Area.
- Learn about the joys of winter bird feeding.
- Take a winter walk and then warm up by the fire with hot chocolate or hot apple cider.
- Shop for your favorite nature lover in our Nature Store.

** No fee, but you may bring a donation of canned goods for the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. **

New Year's Eve Celebration

Saturday, December 31, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Begin a new tradition. Join us for an evening walk in a winter wonderland to welcome in the New Year!

Following our hike, we will warm up in front of a bonfire and share stories. Hot chocolate, hot apple cider, and the fixings for s'mores will be available.

Weather permitting, we'll have telescopes set up to view Jupiter and its moons and our own moon's craters.

\$5 for general public, \$3 for members, all ages
***** Please register by December 28 *****

Volunteer Naturalists Graduate

Five new Volunteer Naturalists completed their training program. They began leading tours for area school children exploring various habitats at Oxley Nature Center. They may also lead Full Moon Walks, weekend guided tours, or act as roving naturalist guides.

Congratulations and welcome to our new volunteer staff!

**Roger Bey
Jerry Hill
Donna Pelkey
Tom Pendergraft
Sandra Schwinn**



2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

"Animal Tracks"

Saturday, Nov. 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Winter is coming; all the animals are looking to get fat before winter sets in. Come and learn about animal tracks. You will make your own track field guide and then practice using it when we go on our hike to look for tracks.

"Winter Changes"

Saturday, Dec. 10, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Let's explore the forest and find nature's winter treasures. We will also study tree rings. After our hike we will make a holiday ornament from a tree cookie.

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

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

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

Full Beaver Moon

Thursday, November 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The days ahead require careful preparation. Will beavers be active tonight preparing their dens for winter? Who and what else is getting ready? Join us on the trail to find out.



Full Cold Moon

Saturday, December 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Will this full moon rise to cast its glow on a frosty scene? Midwinter nights are long and dark. The moon is above the horizon for a long time. As it lights our way, what will we find?

Programs and Special Events

November

5 “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 search for birds new to our area this morning. Some of them may be old friends!

19 “Earth Science Hike” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

Caves and springs: Redbud Valley Nature Preserve has natural wonders created by the action of water. This hike is not wheelchair or stroller accessible.



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

What stories do plants have to tell when they are bare of flowers and green leaves? Meet at Oxley to explore seed and insect strategies.

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

December

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

Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them. People of all ages and levels of birding experience are welcome!

3 “Soap Making” **Ages: 12 to adult**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
\$20 for general public **\$15 for members**

Experience soap making the old fashioned way. You will use fats and lye to create the base, then customize your soap using essential oils, oats, spices or dried herbs.

10 & 11 “Brain Tanning, Parts 1 & 2”
Ages: 16 to adult
Saturday & Sunday **9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**
\$150 for general public **\$125 for members**

See page 4 for details.

17 “Earth Science Hike” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

Go with the flow: Mohawk Park is bottomland forest along Coal Creek. Discover how the water flows through the creek, lake and marsh. What plants and animals thrive in this environment? Meet at Oxley.

21 “Summer Solstice Celebration”
Ages: All
Wednesday **10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

See page 2 for details.

31 “New Year’s Eve Celebration” **Ages: All**
Saturday **5:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.**
\$5 for general public **\$3 for members**
Advance registration required!
See page 2 for details.

Brain Tanning

--Saturday, December 10 and Sunday, December 11, 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

--**Fee:** \$150 non-members, \$125 members, **Class Size:** 6 **Ages:** 16 to adult

Others may audit the class and drop in anytime to watch and ask questions and stay as long as you like for \$10. In this workshop participants will prepare a raw skin in the much the same way as it was done by those who came before us.

Rufus describes the process as, "easily practised". It might be so for a hardy pioneer toughened by the rigors of frontier life but for modern Americans it is a difficult, labor intensive process. It is recommended that class participants be in good physical condition. But the end result is worth the exertions and time put into the project for you will take home a leather that wears like iron and so luxuriously soft that you will quickly forget your previous labors.

According to Rufus Sage, a trapper in the Rocky Mountains, as described in his journal, 1843:

"The usual mode of dressing skins, prevalent in this country among both Indians and whites, is very simple in its details and is easily practised. It consists of removing all the fleshy particles from the pelt, and divesting it of a thin viscid substance upon the exterior, known as the "grain," then, after permitting it to dry, it is thoroughly soaked in a liquid decoction formed from the brains of the animal and water, when it is stoutly rubbed with the hands in order to open its pores and admit the mollient properties of the fluid, -this done, the task is completed by alternate rubbings and distensions until it is completely dry and soft.

In this manner a skin may be dressed in a very short time, and on application of smoke, will not become hardened from any subsequent contact with water."

From *The Log of the Sun* by William Beebe:

"The Personality of Trees -- When we come to consider the tree as a living individual, a form of life contemporaneous with our own, and to realize that it has its birth and death, its struggles for life and its periods of abundance, we will soon feel for it a keener sympathy and interest and withal a veneration greater than it has ever aroused in us before."

From time to time we watch old friends die. These old tree friends have been rooted firmly in place, having formed a spacial map in our minds and hearts. They give us a sense of place, a sense of history.

Recently an old dead Burr Oak found its way to the ground from which it had risen. On counting its growth rings, it was estimated to be almost 200 years old. How many years had it produced the large, favored acorns of so many wildlife species? How much shade and shelter had it provided? This tree was a source of sustenance and survival for an untold number of living things: from bacteria to birds, lichens to deer.

My great grandfather's parents may have courted under the sheltering branches of this tree, and brought generations of their children here. It sequestered carbon dioxide from the air, and provided oxygen.

It continues to give. Bark beetles and countless larvae, fungus and other decomposers work their magic. Life literally crawls along and within the branches and trunk, heartwood and sapwood. Warmth and aroma arises from the newly forming soil. From this seeds will grow.

Do you have a special tree? Did you plant a tree as a child, or have you planted one with a child? Tell us your story, and we will share a favorite one on the website. Planting a tree is a wonderful tradition and gift to the future. Plant one that is native to the area, and the impact is increased exponentially. Planting one tree can create an entire community of inhabitants in time!