



# Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2012

Volume 208

## New Beginnings by Donna Horton

### 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. 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: Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

Friday, April 6

### Program information:

- 918-669-6644

- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org  
- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".

\*\* Register for classes 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated. A class minimum of 6 is required.

-Some classes require supplies and allow for limited enrollment.

-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.

-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

Who decided that the year should begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>? For many of us, the year really begins when the first brave little green shoots appear in our gardens, or when the first daffodils bloom, or when we hear the first chickadee of the season sing "Come nest with me!" There are so many ways to begin a year.

Which one is your favorite? Is it the first day the sun feels warm? Or could it be the first day the air smells like spring? Is it the first time you get caught in a sudden spring thunderstorm? Do you hold out for the late arrivals, like the first fawns of the season, or the first columbine flower among Redbud Valley's bluffs?

With all these new beginnings happening nearly every day, perhaps springtime is when we should be making our new year's resolutions. And perhaps one of our resolutions should be to get outside as much as possible every week or every day. Remember how quickly last year sped by? This year we will pay attention to and appreciate and savor and drink in and enjoy each new element of the season as it unfolds. Keep a journal, or jot each noticed event on a calendar.

We should resolve to celebrate the events of the natural world whenever possible. We will not have to rush around buying gifts or sending greeting cards for all of these non-commercial nature holidays. The celebration can be as easy as sitting out on a porch or balcony to enjoy an al fresco supper while listening to the American toads sing their trilling love songs. If your neighborhood has no toads (so sorry!), put on your mud shoes, pack a tarp and a picnic basket, and come out to Oxley Nature Center around the end of March or first of April.

In fact, an excellent way to make sure you keep your resolution is to sign up to volunteer at Oxley Nature Center this season. You can adopt a trail once a week, pick up trash, and trim back branches that try to grow into the hiking zone. You can help us tackle some of the invasive species; you can really see your progress during the spring. You could be a visitor center host one or two weekdays per month; come an hour early to walk a trail or two before starting your shift from 10:00 to 4:00 at the front desk. If you are 18 or older, you could enroll in volunteer naturalist training, and celebrate by leading tours and sharing the season's changes with folks who may be discovering them for the first time.

And who knows? By getting outside and enjoying nature, we may also achieve some of those forgotten and abandoned January resolutions. Without even trying we might become healthier, thinner, richer, wiser, happier, stronger or just generally better people.



# Nature Center Happenings

---

## Volunteer Naturalist Training Offered

Who is a Volunteer Naturalist? Someone who enjoys being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others is the sort of person we are seeking for one of our two Volunteer Naturalist training programs.

Our **weekday session** runs March 6 - March 30, two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. If **evenings and weekends** are more convenient, you may attend training three nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and three weekend days from 1-3:30 p.m. starting Saturday, March 1. Please call for more details about the training schedules.

During training you will become familiar with our trail system as you explore the varied prairie, wetland, and forested areas. We have fun and emphasize leadership skills and interpretation methods.

Upon completion of training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of visitors on weekday, evening or weekend tours. If you are 18 or older, please call. No previous experience is necessary.

---

### 6th Annual Early Spring Butterfly Count for Citizen Scientists!

Join us on **Sunday, April 15** for a spring day 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 area.

Information gathered 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. to dusk**.

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.  
\$3 fee per person  
Free if you register by April 12**

### 2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

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

#### “The Aliens Have Landed”

What are invasive aliens? Join us for a hike to meet some of these alien species at Oxley. We will use alien vines to create woven wreaths. Please bring materials to decorate your wreath so it will match your décor.

**Saturday, April 14, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

#### “Frogs and Tadpoles”

As weather warms, frogs are calling and laying eggs. We will use dip nets to look for tadpoles and frogs. If our hunt is successful each family may take a tadpole home to watch it make its transition into a frog. Please bring a clear, clean jar to provide a temporary home for your tadpole. After the tadpole becomes a frog we request you return to Oxley to release it where it was caught.

**\*\*\* 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 Worm Moon

**Thursday, March 8, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**



A March thaw will draw worms toward the earth's surface. What draws you out to explore on a moonlit night? This time of year is full of exciting changes. Join us on the trails tonight to experience a walk through the wild.

### Full Pink Moon

**Thursday, April 5, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

Some of the first flowers of spring are in bloom now, their colors quickly fading to shades of gray as the sun sets and the moon rises. The world seems new with sounds, smells, and tastes as we discover spring along the trails. Won't you join us?

# Programs and Special Events

## March

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

Migration has begun. Courtship songs fill the morning air. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

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

Join us at Redbud Valley Nature Preserve. This is a rugged hike and is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

**20 “Spring Equinox Celebration”** Ages: All  
**Tuesday** 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
**Free; donation of food items are welcomed for the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma.**

The Vernal Equinox marks the beginning of Spring, a season that brings an increase in both daylight and temperatures. We celebrate the rebirth of our flora and fauna. The word *equinox* is derived from Latin words meaning “equal night.” What will you do with your 12 hours of daylight? Why don’t you plan to spend some of it with us? Please see page 4 for more details about our festivities. We hope you will stop by! Meet at Oxley. Registration is not required.

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

The early wildflowers are racing to take in the sun’s energy. Come see what we can find blooming along the trail. Meet at Oxley.

**31 “Make a Natural Cordage Bracelet”**  
Ages: All  
**Saturday** 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
**\$5 for general public** **\$3 for members**

How does one make cordage from natural plant fiber? We will find and collect some plants and learn how they are prepared. You may be surprised how strong the fiber is. We can use the fiber to make a bracelet or small item of your choice. Meet at Oxley.

## April

**1 “Finding Water”** Ages: All  
**Sunday** 3:30-4:30 p.m.  
**\$2 for general public** **Free for members**

First find your way to **Redbud Valley**, where you will make a pair of dowsing rods from a coat hanger. Then you will find out if you are one of the 75% of the population who can find water with them. No foolin’! This hike is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

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

This is such a busy month! Many birds are arriving and all are so active. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.



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

They are back! Join us at Oxley for our first butterfly walk of the season. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Prepare to be delighted. Bring binoculars if you have them.

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

What will we find blooming today? Will you know their names like an old friends? Let’s see what we can find at Oxley.

**29 “Flint and Steel Fire”** Ages: 10 to Adult  
**Sunday** 1:30–2:30 p.m.  
**\$25 for general public** **\$20 for members**

Learn the method of making char cloth, an essential ingredient in starting a fire with flint and steel. Each participant will take home their own kit. Meet at Oxley.

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

## Natural Babies, Natural World

Young children learn by actual contact with real objects, events and people. We will have a story, craft, and time on the trail to experience nature first hand. This will be a sensory experience!

### Birds and Feathers

Monday, March 12, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

### Turtle Tales

Monday, April 16, 1:30-2:30 p.m.



**Ages: 1 through 5 years with caregiver**  
**\$2 for general public, free for members**  
**Please register in advance \*\*\***

## What If?

Think back. What was one of your first memories you have of engaging with the natural world? Who was your mentor? How much time and freedom did you have to spend outdoors? What was one of your most memorable moments. How did being out 'in nature' make you feel?

It is a busy world today. Do you have time to take a moment in the outdoors for yourself? Do you have time to share your love for nature with another? Do you really have time not to?



What if ...

this Spring, you take some time; from somewhere, somehow, however much you can manage. Step out your front door and gaze up at the stars in the night sky, or at clouds scuttling across a mid-day sky. Plunge your hands into fragrant soil and plant a seed. Take care of it, watch it grow, maybe eat it! Observe the changes in the trees as they bloom and leaf out, notice the different colors and shapes of the leaves. Watch the flowers and the birds and insects all around you. Listen to the wind.

What if you reconnect and at the same time, help someone else connect? What if ...

## Spring Equinox Celebration

**Where:** Oxley Nature Center

**Date:** Tuesday, March 20

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**All ages:** Bring your children, friends and family.



Have you ever hunted a mastodon with an atlatl? Now is your chance!

Or, you can dip net and see what creatures live beneath the water's edge. What about those animal tracks; who do they belong to? Explore our native landscape. We will have guided hikes throughout the day, or you may hike on your own and complete a scavenger hunt for a small prize.



Visit us to experience first-hand what happened in the not so distant past. After schooling and chores, children played all sorts of "pioneer games" (jacks, pick-up sticks, marbles, hully gully, and buffalo robe). We will try some of these as well as make acorn cap whistles and learn how to play string games. Try your luck at 'Animal Olympics' or make a mud ball with wildflower seeds to 'Plant a Seed for Tomorrow'.

Come inside, enjoy our exhibits, and refresh your body, mind and spirit with sassafras tea, a spring tonic. We look forward to seeing you! There is no fee for this event, but please consider bringing a donation of canned goods for the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. Be a part of our festivities, it's a wonderful way to greet Spring!