



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2012

Volume 212

Outside My Window

By Amy Morris

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 outside of 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:

** Monday, November 12 and November 22 and 23.

** Monday, December 24, and Tuesday, December 25.

** Tuesday, January 1.

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.

The world outside my window is a theater. The sky is filled with shifting clouds. Gulf Fritillaries, Pipevine Swallowtails, and skippers work the verbena and asters in the pollinator garden. There are far fewer flowers now. Goldenrod, mistflower, yellow wingstem, Virginia crownbeard, and asters: this is their season, but it is passing. Soon those that feed on their nectar will be gone.

The trees flanking the prairie change daily, flaunting increasingly brilliant golden hues and joyful reds. The juxtaposition of the seasons is subtle, but true. Autumn is imbued with a sense of richness. The harvest of summer has come to fruition.

The forest floor lay carpeted with acorns, walnuts, pecans, persimmons and sugarberries. Greenbriar, grapes, and holly berries still cling to their branches and vines. In the prairie, grasses bend gracefully under the weight of songbirds seeking the prized seed at the end of their stems.

A chubby woodchuck pauses along the trail by the prairie. He is methodically filling his cheeks with what green growth he can find. Some grubs, nuts, and fruits fill out his menu. His grizzled coat catches the light and shines with good health. It ripples over his back and shoulders, where most of the extra fat he will need will be laid down.



He is preparing for hibernation.

By putting on this extra layer of 'brown fat' he'll be ready to retire to his special hibernation chamber. Here he will spend the winter, his body temperature dropping from 97 degrees to 40 degrees, his heartbeat dropping from 100 beats per minute to 4, and his breathing slowing to once every 6 minutes. Imagine! Four heartbeats a minute. One breath every 6 minutes. Amazing!

Don't hibernate your winter away. Forestall those winter blues. Surrender yourself to the stark beauty of the new season. Bundle up and come for a hike. See nature at its most dramatic time. The bare bones are showing and there are new things to discover. Step beyond the window and onto the stage! Don't forget to drop by and say hello.

Nature Center Happenings

Geology Walks at Redbud Valley

The defining geological feature of Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is the limestone cliff which separates two distinct habitats. Join us for a tour of these rough and rugged trails. These trails are not appropriate for wheelchairs or strollers.

Date: Sunday, November 25 and December 16
Ages: 8 to Adult
Time: 1:30-3:00 p.m.
Free
Must register in advance, spaces are limited.

Deer Census Spotlight Count

Participants will assist biologist in a spotlight survey of whitetail deer in Mohawk Park. Working from a van we will access all parts of the park and count "eye shine". We will use this as a basis for approximating the deer population in Mohawk Park. We will see lots of other wildlife as well. Be prepared to be amazed at the diversity of wildlife in this park!

Open to Friends of Oxley members only -- free.
Date: Wednesday, December 12
Ages: 14 to Adult
Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Must register in advance, spaces are limited.

Happy New Year!

Begin a new tradition with family and friends.



Have a howling good time!

Second Annual New Year's Celebration

We'll take 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 or fireplace to share stories. Hot chocolate, hot apple cider, and the fixings for s'mores will be available.

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

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

***** \$5 for general public, \$3 for members, all ages**
Please register by December 26
Spaces are limited ***

2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

"Animal Tracks"

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

Come and learn about animal tracks. What can they tell us? Make your own track field guide and then practice using it when we go on our hike to look for tracks. If we can find a really good track we will make a plaster cast of it.

"Winter Changes"

Saturday, December 8, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Lets explore the trails and find nature's winter treasures. We will observe the changes in the trees and study the meaning of 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. *****

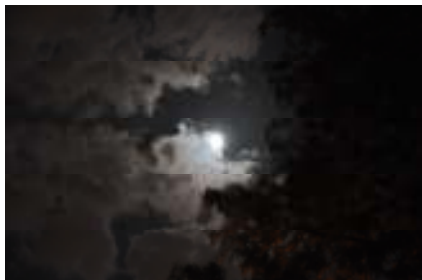
Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature

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

Full Beaver Moon

Wednesday, November 28, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Beavers can be found along wetland areas. At this time of year their fur coats are dense and warm. Perhaps we'll get lucky and discover one on our walk tonight.



Full Cold Moon

Friday, December 28, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The night is long and dark, but we will have the moon to light our way. What wild things will we discover on this night leading up to the New Year?

Programs and Special Events

November

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. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

10 “Old Fashioned Soap Making”
Ages: 12 and up
Saturday **10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon**
\$15 for general public **\$10 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 using essential oils and various additives. Call early to sign up, spaces are limited. Meet at Oxley.

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

Join us at **Redbud Valley Nature Preserve** to explore the rugged features of this habitat. This walk can be difficult and is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

17 “Carving a Letterbox Stamp” **Ages: All ***
Saturday **1:00 - 2:00 p.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

If you are a player in the worldwide game of letterboxing, you know that ‘boxers’ put more value on images collected from hand-carved stamps. *Participants must be old enough to use very sharp carving tools safely.* There is a \$5 materials fee for 1.5” x1.5” stamp block. Meet at Oxley.

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

What will we find as we explore the trails at Oxley? What wild edibles remain for the animals to feast on? Meet at Oxley.

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

December

1 “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. All ages and skill levels are welcome.

15 “Earth Science Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30 - 12:00 noon**
Free **Registration not required**

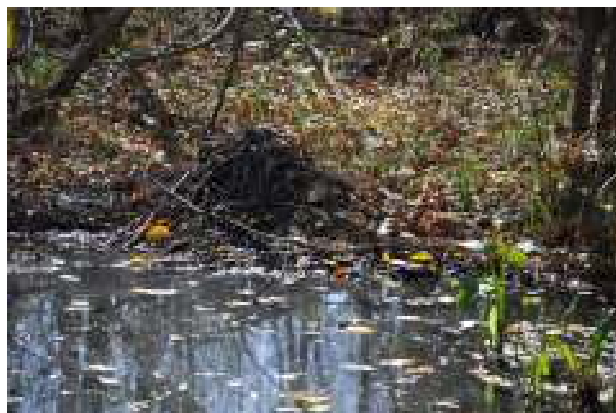
Meet at Oxley to discover the nuances of a bottom-land floodplain.

15 “Nature Wind Chimes” **Ages: All**
Saturday **12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**
\$5 for general public **\$2 for members**

Make a wind chime from beautiful natural items such as bamboo and mussel shells. Meet at Oxley.

21 “Winter Solstice Walk” **Ages: All**
Friday **6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

Let’s take an evening walk at Oxley and celebrate winter solstice. Take time out of your busy holiday schedule and join us for some quiet time in nature.



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

The trees are bare, the forbs are without flowers. What interesting things are revealed to us? Join us at Oxley to find out.

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!

Looking at Leaves

Monday, November 19, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Leaves are very important parts of all plants. They help make food for the plants so that they can live. Plants need sunlight, water, soil, and nutrients. We will collect leaves to create our own leaf collection.

Winter Changes

Monday, December 10, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

We will look for signs of winter. Daylight is short. How do plants and animals adapt to this change? Most of the trees are bare. Some animals are gone and some are hibernating. How do we adapt? We'll color a 'Winter Book' to take home.

**** Ages: 1 through 5 years with caregiver**

**** \$2 for general public, free for members**

**** Please register in advance, spaces are limited.**

Volunteer Outreach Coordinator Needed

We need your help.

The Oxley Nature Center Association is seeking volunteer staff to represent Oxley Nature Center to the public through its traveling exhibit. A position for a Volunteer Outreach Coordinator is our first priority. This person would be responsible for accepting calls/requests for our booth, scheduling volunteer staff to man the booth and set it up and take it down. This position could be handled /fulfilled from home.

Other positions available are :

- Outreach Booth Volunteer Staff
- Visitor Center Host
- Marketing/Publicity
- Clerical work/Data entry/Photo organization

If you are interested in this position or any of the others, please give us a call at 918-669-6644 with any questions you may have. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!

How does life play out in the colder months?

It's busy! What can we look for on our excursions into the wild on winter days.

Birds of all kinds remain very active through the winter. Visit the lake or marsh to see waterfowl. A lack of leaves on our hardwood trees make many of the smaller songbirds all that more visible to us. The prairie is alive with bird activity.

Watch as gray squirrels emerge from their leafy night nests high in the trees. Their acrobatic antics can leave us laughing, as they leap from one slim branch to the next, stopping to feed on tender buds. They may come to the ground to seek hidden food caches of acorns and seeds.

Mud or snow cover leaves clues of all kinds of animal activity. Animal 'highways' through forest and prairie are set in stark relief. Old nests reveal themselves among winter branches. There is so much to discover.

What are you waiting for? Get busy.
Come out and play!

~ Amy

