



Oxley Nature Center

January/February, 2013

Volume 213

Night Magic 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:

** Tuesday, January 1 and Monday, January 21.

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.

- Our new mailing address is: Box 105209, Tulsa OK 74115

How many of you have stepped outside the comfort of your well known, brightly lit surroundings, into the dark unknown? Have you had that opportunity? Exploring the outdoors at night can be an exhilarating, yet somewhat uncomfortable experience. Because most of us are creatures of the day, we find the night to be filled with mystery. It is a different world. At the edge of night, with the setting of the sun, dramatic changes are constantly taking place.

Dusk is a perfect time to explore. It is now that many animals begin their daily activities. As dusk approaches, then melts into night, traces of orange, red, and other colors disappear, and sky slowly reveals the glow of countless sparkling stars scattered across the inky heavens. By this time, with little exposure to artificial light, our eyes have adjusted to night vision. Let's see what things we might discover on a 'Night Walk' at Oxley Nature Center.

The evening is calm and cool, and the voices of Barred Owls carry easily through the air from three directions; two distant, one so close as to startle! Is it haunting? Sound manifests well on such nights. Just to the side of the trail, off in the forest, a foraging animal is rustling in the leaf litter. What is it; an armadillo, skunk, or perhaps opossum? We wait, breathless, as a skunk noses close enough to the trail's edge that we can see his stripes. He seems unconcerned at our presence.

As we approach the marsh, we hear the distant call of geese overhead. Then, our feet are upon the boardwalk and a myriad of sounds greets each step. A flurry of wings burst from beneath our feet as birds take to the air, a whirl of wings whistling as they gain height. The rapid, rhythmic flapping carries our spirits upwards as the birds call out in their surprise: quacks, trills, and lovely, haunting musical melodies. We climb the stairs of the observation tower overlooking Lake Sherry. The water is calm, reflecting the sky above. To the left, in the cattails, we hear loud movements of what can only be a large beaver mucking through the shallows.

Later, along Coal Creek Trail, we startle a roosting Great Blue Heron, who lifts into the air, squawking with his tremendous voice, and flies off slowly downstream, his 72" wing span beating a slow rhythm. Crossing the bridge, SLAP! Ripples of water spread out from a source beneath our feet, velvety waves radiate to the very edges of the creek bed. "Where" we ask, excitement in our hushed voices? We look to the opposite side of the bridge, focused on the creek. Then suddenly, way upstream, we hear and see another SLAP! How did he get so far so fast?

More comfortable in our 'quiet' night skins, we turn toward home, still alert for the unknown. We practice new skills, walking quietly and using peripheral vision. Then we hear them, their voices raised in sing song celebration, lifted up to the sky - coyote music. We lift our faces too, and no longer feel like strangers to the night.

Approaching the building, flushed with cold and excitement, we tell of our favorite thing. For many, it is being here, where 'the wild around us' really works its magic.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Staff Luncheon and Awards

Volunteer and Oxley staff, families, and friends celebrated our fall season with an awards luncheon December 1. We gathered together to honor all our volunteer staff and share a meal of barbecue (compliments of ONCA) and potluck dishes. We look forward to this time together to visit with one another and celebrate. **The following volunteers reached significant milestones:**



John Kennington -- Outstanding Volunteer

Bambi Murphy -- 15 Year Award

Brad Dishman, Kurtis Keener, Adrian Ruby -- 3 Year Awards

Our volunteer staff serves Oxley Nature Center in many capacities. With dedication and enthusiasm, they meet the needs of the public with a variety of programs and so much more. **Many thanks!**

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.

Dates: Sunday, January 20 and February 17

Ages: 8 to Adult

Time: 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Must register in advance, spaces are limited.

Free

2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

“Winter Fun”

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

Do you know the correct way to safely light a fire in a fireplace or hearth? We will demonstrate this skill and then take a hike outside to see what winter is bringing to the pond and forest. After our walk we'll return to the fire to warm up and roast marshmallows.

“Animals in the Snow”

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

What do animals do in the snow? What do they eat and where do they sleep? We will take a short hike looking for clues animals leave behind. If we find tracks we will make plaster casts.

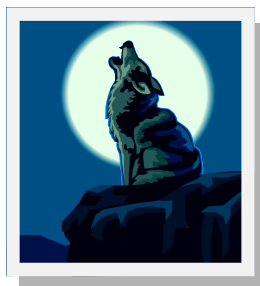
Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature

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

Full Wolf Moon

Saturday, January 26, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Join us tonight to see if we can hear wolf's 'little brother' coyote raising his voice to the full moon in song. What other sounds are carried on the night air?



Full Snow Moon

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

This can be a time of heavy snow. Join us to see how the weather may affect the activity around us. A bright moon and snow would mean some great tracks to follow!

Programs and Special Events

January

5 “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.

5 “Fireside Birding” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

Sip hot chocolate or coffee and tally the birds that come to the feeders. Meet at Oxley.

19 “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.

20 “Terrific Terrariums” **Ages: All**
Sunday **1:30 - 3:00 p.m.**
\$7 for general public **\$5 for members**

Is the cold, dry weather starting to get you down? Join us to create your very own green habitat using a recycled glass container. Meet at Oxley. Please call to register.

26 “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? Join us to find out.

26 “A Walk in the Woods on a Winter’s Day”
Ages: All
Saturday **8:00 - 10:00 a.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

Come out early and hike through the forest to the marsh. Investigate several habitats and see what animals are awake midwinter. Please register. Meet at Oxley.

February

2 “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.

3 “What’s on Your Bucket List?” **Ages: All**
Sunday **1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**
\$35 for general public **\$30 for members**

This class will involve a demonstration of how wooden buckets are constructed. Participants will then assemble their own buckets. The fee is per bucket (a family may assemble a bucket). Please register. Spaces are limited. Meet at Oxley.

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

Join us at Oxley to explore the nuances of a bottom-land floodplain.

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

What will we find as we explore the trails? Join us at Oxley to find out.

23 “Build a Pair of Snowshoes” **Ages: All**
Saturday **2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**
\$5 for general public **\$3 for members**

Bring an old pair of tennis rackets and we will provide everything else you need to make a working pair of snow shoes. You can find them at secondhand stores, thrift shops or flea markets. Meet at Oxley. You must register by Thursday, February 21.

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

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!

Promise of Plants

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

What happens to plants when winter comes? How do plants spread their seeds? On our walk we will gather seed heads for a winter bouquet.

Beautiful Birds

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

What makes birds unique? We will look at some bills, beaks and feathers. What do birds eat and how do they build a nest?

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

Volunteer Naturalist Training in March

Who is a Volunteer Naturalist? It could be you! Do you enjoy being outdoors and sharing the experience of nature with others? We are offering two Volunteer Naturalist training programs in March.

Our **weekday session** runs March 4 - March 28, 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 Sunday, March 3. 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.

A joy shared is a joy doubled -Goethe

