



Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2016

Volume 232

Increase in Red-headed Woodpecker Numbers by Karen Harris

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 are 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 at Redbud Valley 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:

-March 25: Good Friday

Program information:

- 918-669-6644
- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org
- Website at <http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>.

***Register for classes 48 hours in advance.**

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

-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

-Our new mailing address is:
Box 150209, Tulsa, OK 74115

Oxley volunteer naturalist/board member Rusty Grimpe reported that thirty-four Red-headed woodpeckers were spotted in Oxley Nature Center during this year's Audubon winter bird count. That is the highest number of Red-headed woodpeckers recorded in the approximately ten years Rusty has been involved in the Oxley count. It also bucks the national trend of declining numbers.

Science begins with observations like this one. The wonder follows. I wondered why the numbers were so high this year, so I began thinking of other things I knew and observations I have made. I know that for a population to survive and thrive, birds need shelter, including nest sites, food and water. For Red-headed woodpeckers, the first two requirements are met mostly by hollow trees, dead limbs, and standing dead timber. At a conference on backyard wildlife habitats, I was told that placing a snag (small dead tree) in my yard would attract woodpeckers. So, with the help of a friend, I gathered a ten foot tall, heavy, dead post oak tree with broken branches and peeling bark, one I thought had a lot of character. As I finished "planting" the tree beside the pond, I looked up to see my neighbor leaning on the fence with a look of combined bemusement and bewilderment. He said, "Karen, I know you're pretty good with plants, but I don't think that one is gonna make it." I explained the plan and for the next few years until the snag rotted and fell down, we both enjoyed watching the occasional downy woodpecker clinging to the tree.

So I wondered if the increased numbers of Oxley's symbol is possibly a result of damage to large trees caused by the 2007 ice storm. Could it be that in the nine years since the storm, the broken tops and branches died back and decomposed enough to provide hollowed out places for woodpecker homes and plenty of insects for food. How could we test this idea? Let's propose (hypothesize) that if Red-headed woodpecker numbers are up because of more dead timber, then the birds should be spending more time on the dead parts of damaged trees than on undamaged trees. This is where you come in. The next time you are at Oxley and you spot Red-headed woodpeckers, note where the birds are perched. Do you see them on damaged trees, broken branches, a topless trunk, or dead standing timber? You might even quantify your data by noting relative numbers of birds on different perch sites. Let us know what you find.

What if the birds are spending more time on snags? Would that prove I was correct? Not necessarily, but it would support my idea. And maybe it would convince you to "plant" a snag or leave a partly dead tree standing (assuming it won't fall on your house). What if it turns out they are not choosy or they are spotted more often on perfectly healthy trees? That would be good evidence I'm wrong. We would need to continue to wonder why the population has increased, celebrate that fact, and come up with a different explanation. Either way we will have learned something. Then there are other woodpecker questions. What about the other species like pileated, red-bellied, or downy? Are they using the same types of trees?...at the same height? ...in the same areas? I wonder.

Nature Center Happenings

OSU Insect Adventure

Saturday March 19, 11 a.m.- 2 p.m.

The OSU Insect Zoo is coming to Oxley! It's an Insect Adventure! Learn about the fascinating world of insects at this fun, educational activity. Come meet some fascinating species of live arthropods, pet a tarantula, or hold a foot-long millipede. Bring your questions and curiosity!

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension has the only live bug petting zoo in the state. This event is come and go.

**Sponsored by the
Oxley Nature Center Association.**

Are you a member?

Photography, a Passion for all Seasons

Whether you are new to the field or you've been at it for years, our photography sessions will boost your skills. Professional photographer, Dave Muller, will teach you the skills to become a better photographer and to take professional quality photos. This 4-part series will cover topics from beginner level to advance level with emphasis on improving your landscape and wildlife photography. You can pick and choose which sessions work best for you. Each session will consist of classroom instruction, Q & A, and field demonstrations at the Oxley Nature Center. The Saturday sessions are scheduled for April 9, April 23, June 4, and June 25 and will run from 9 a.m. to noon.

Topics to be covered will be as follows:

Session 1 – April 9: Fundamentals

Session 2 – April 23: Focus on Nature Photography

Session 3 – June 4: Night Photography, Post-Processing Workflow, and Photographing Summer at Oxley

Session 4 – June 25: Secrets to Taking and Preparing Compelling and Potentially Award-Winning Nature Photographs.

For Friends of Oxley members, the fee is \$20/person. For non-members, the fee is \$40 for the first session you attend (of which \$20 will pay for your individual membership fee) and \$20/session thereafter. More information will follow on how to register and pay. For now, all you need to do is **SAVE THE DATES!**

Volunteer Naturalist Training Begins in March

Do you enjoy being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others? We are offering Volunteer Naturalist training beginning March 1st. We are looking for weekend, evening and weekday volunteer staff. Training sessions will take place throughout March. You will become familiar with our trail system as you explore the varied prairie, wetland, and forested areas. We 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 for more details about the training schedules. No previous experience is necessary .

Weekday sessions: March 1st-31st, two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon.

Evening and weekend sessions: Schedules to be determined but will include nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and/or weekend days from 1-3:00 p.m. Please call for more details: 918-669-6644

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

\$3 requested donation per person, all ages welcome ** Please register in advance **

Full Worm Moon

Wednesday, March 23, 7-8:30 p.m.

Temperatures warm and soils thaw.
Worms make their way to the surface.
Join us to search for signs of Spring!



Full Pink Moon

Friday, April 22, 7-8:30 p.m.

Some of our earliest wildflowers are pink.
This is the time for many new beginnings.
Come explore the trails with us!

Programs and Special Events

March

2 “Basket Guild” **Ages: 13 to Adult**
Wednesday **6:00-7:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join us for a basket-making class that meets once a month at Oxley. We are experimenting with different techniques and materials. This is for all skill levels.

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

Join us for birding at Oxley.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

14 “Natural Babies: The Wind Blew”
Ages: 1-5 years with caregiver
Monday **10:30-11:30 a.m.**
Free **registration is required**

What things can the wind blow, and where does it come from? Can it be helpful or harmful? Let's hike and listen to and feel the wind. We will make a wind sock to take on the trail.

19 “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. We will be offering these walks the 3rd Saturday of the month March through October. Start a new family or personal hobby! Please note, times vary based on the month:

March-April - 10:30-12 noon; May-August- 9:30-11:00 a.m.

September-October—10:30-12 noon

All ages/skill levels welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

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

Meet at Oxley for an early spring botany walk.

28 “Natural Babies: The Wind Blew”
Ages: 1-5 years with caregiver
Monday **10:30-11:30 a.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Repeat of March 14 class.

April

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

Join us for birding at Oxley.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

6 “Basket Guild” **Ages: 13 to Adult**
Wednesday **6:00-7:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join a basket-making class at Oxley for all skill levels.

9 “Cloud Gazing” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Cirrus, Stratus, and Cumulus— magic words? No! The sky is perfectly blue, and the clouds are perfect, too. Come spend some time cloud gazing with us.

11 & 25 “Natural Babies: Mushrooms in the Rain” **Ages: 1-5 years with caregiver**
Monday **10:30-11:30 a.m.**
Free **registration is required**

What are fungi, and how do they grow? Let's collect some to make some mushroom prints!

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

Meet at Oxley to search for spring butterflies.

22 “Sounds Frogs Make” **Ages: All**
Friday **6:00 –6:45 p.m.**
Free **registration required**

How do frogs find each other? With everyday objects you will mimic a frog to search for your partner. Follow this with a Full Moon Walk!

23 “Earth Day Recycling” **Ages: All**
Saturday **12:30-4:00 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

Join us at Oxley to create some unique recycled works of art. This is a make and take class.

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

Join us at Oxley for a spring botany walk.

Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workshop

When: March 14-17, 2016, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily

Where: Oxley Nature Center Instructor: Donna Horton

The National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Guide program offers professional certification designed for anyone who delivers interpretive programs to the public. From the theoretical foundations of the profession to practical, hands-on-training, we learn how to design and present programs that help audiences make connections.

Must be 16 or older.

For more information contact:

Donna Horton, Trainer @

DonnaHortonCIT@att.net, 918-587-0522.



Certified Interpretive Host Training Workshop

When: March 26 & April 2, 2016, 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

Where: Oxley Nature Center Instructor: Donna Horton

The National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Host program offers a two day professional certification designed for new hires, seasonals, volunteers, maintenance workers, receptionists, law enforcement or anyone who has public contact but does not present formal interpretive programs to the public. It covers the basics of interpretation, how to provide great customer service and hospitality, and how you can use informal interpretation to support your agency's mission as you interact with visitors. Must be 16 or older.

Project Learning Tree Workshop

Saturday, March 12, 9:30-3:30 p.m.

\$20 fee for curriculum materials

**To register contact Deidra Wakeley,
Science teacher and facilitator:**

wakelde@tulsaschools.org



K-12 public, private, and home school teachers, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Campfire leaders will learn to use strategies and techniques to teach topics such as forests, wildlife, water, community planning, and energy. Through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities, PLT helps young people learn "how to think, not what to think", about complex environmental issues. Participants should bring a sack lunch, dress comfortably, and be prepared to go out on the trails for activities.

