



Oxley Nature Center

May/June, 2006

Volume 163

Program information

918-669-6644

-Oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us

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

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

-Wheelchair accessible programs designated by & symbol.

Mohawk Park Entry Fee:

Non-members will be charged an entry fee of \$2 per car 9:00-5:00 p.m., on Saturdays and Sundays, April -October.

Oxley Nature Center:

**Closed: Monday, May 29

-Open daily, except most City holidays (see above).

-Oxley gate open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

-Interpretive building open from 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Monday through Saturday; 12 noon-4:30 p.m. Sunday.

-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-Open Wednesday through Sunday, except most City holidays.

-**NEW!** During daylight savings (April 6-October 26) Redbud Valley gate and trails will be open on **Thursdays** from **8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.**

-On Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays gate and trails will be open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

only. Hiking after these hours is

not allowed.

-Interpretive building will be open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

A Vision Shared

History can reveal extraordinary stories about the people and places that give us a sense of place and belonging. A story can be a remarkable thing. This story traverses a period of time beginning with the early history of Tulsa and follows many plots until the present time. It is an account of events that led to the development of an amazing place called Oxley Nature Center, 800-acres of diverse natural land set aside for the plants, animals, and people of the surrounding area. Oxley is contained within Mohawk Park, Tulsa's largest park at 2,832-acres, one of the nation's largest municipally owned parks. It is with Mohawk Park that our story begins.

The town of Mohawk, which took its name from the Mohawk Indians, one of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, sprang up north of Bird Creek in May of 1906. It served a large ranch established by W.E. Halsell, a Texas cattleman, and his Cherokee wife. Located four miles northwest of Tulsa, it stretched from the Arkansas River nearly to the Verdigris, and from the Creek Nation Boundary almost to present day Bartlesville. The U.S. post office that served Mohawk closed in July, 1915, and within less than seven years Mohawk Park would adopt the name of the now defunct town.

Bird Creek's path shapes the Mohawk Park we know today. It lies in the Bird Creek floodplain, and began as riparian forest bottomland hardwoods. The fact that we have this park today is largely due to the cognizance and fortitude of several astute leaders and the local citizenry that supported a lofty dream. That dream has allowed hundreds of thousands of families to recreate close to home for over 80 years.

By 1920, the salty and sandy Arkansas River was no longer an adequate water supply for a burgeoning city experiencing booming growth in the oil fields. Citizens of Tulsa supported a multimillion dollar bond to bring water from the Spavinaw Hills, 60 miles northeast of Tulsa. It was one of the largest public work projects in the country during that era, and was considered an engineering marvel. Construction began in 1922 at a project cost of \$7.5 million.

Spavinaw Creek, draining a 400-square mile area of Ozark wilderness, was dammed to create 17,000-acre Spavinaw Lake, with its supply of clear, spring water. The longest pipeline of its time was constructed to carry the water to Tulsa. By 1924 the pipeline was operational and water flowed into the Mohawk pumping Station. Treatment facilities were added to the water plant five years later.

Mohawk Park itself was actually an offshoot of the Spavinaw project, originally obtained to serve as a 500-acre reservoir to hold water for Tulsa. The City could not afford such a large real estate transaction at the time, but a group of prominent Tulsans formed a trust agreement with the City to underwrite the purchase. The City agreed to repay the money as it became available at a 6% interest rate. The water board, the nucleus of the group that visualized the dream of Mohawk Park,

Nature Center Happenings

Welcome to Our New Volunteer Naturalists

Five new trainees graduated from volunteer naturalist training this spring and will join us on the trails to help with school groups in April and May. We are very happy to welcome **Richard Clark, Carol Eames, Thea Lancaster, Bob Lange, and Linda Young**. Carol has already been volunteering for us in other capacities, and responded to our need for more school guides. Richard, Linda, and Thea are members of the Northeast Chapter of The Master Naturalist Program (O.S.U. extension service). We are fortunate to have these five eager naturalists join our team and look forward to working with them in the future.



\$2 for general public, free for members **Kid's Saturday Programs** Please register in advance, all &

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

May 20, 10:00-11:30 "Water World"

Water is everywhere! Let's dip net at the pond and see who lives there. We'll find all kinds of wet treasures: tadpoles, fish, and water insects. Let's explore!



Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

May 20, 10:00-11:30 "What's a Flower For?"

Not all flowers are pretty but they all have important jobs to do. We'll look for some of these "hidden" flowers and try to figure out how they contribute to their ecosystem.

\$2 for general public, free for members **Full Moon Walks** Registration required, all ages, &

Friday, May 12, 7:30-8:45 p.m. "Flower Moon"

This is the time of abundant flowers in bloom. We can watch which flower colors fade first as day moves into night. What other mysteries await us on the trail?



Friday, June 9, 7:00-8:30 p.m. "Strawberry Moon"

This full moon is named for the wild strawberries that were harvested. The day will still be light as we explore the "crepuscular" lifestyles of the wildlife at Oxley. What might we see and hear this time of day?

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signed the trust agreement on October 25, 1924. The Exchange Trust Company was the trustee that created the fund to buy the land. The men who signed the trust agreement risked their own money to finance the park until the City could vote bonds. Not only would Tulsa get the 500-acre reservoir to hold its water, it would get well over 2,200 acres in excess of that to create a park for the people.



Between 1922 and 1928, land for the 2,832-acre park was obtained in sections. The people of Tulsa rose to the challenge, some selling sizeable tracts of land for \$1. Much of the land in the Bird Creek Bottoms was considered to be swamp. When Will O. Doolittle, first superintendent of the Tulsa Park and Recreation Department, first saw Mohawk Park in 1926, it was under 3 feet of water. Did the vision the people of Tulsa had for their park falter under that deluge of water? It appears insightful determination prevailed.

In 1927 the City purchased the land, spending less than \$300,000. The following year, 1928, Tulsa citizens voted a bond issue to provide money to buy park equipment and initiate development of a 70-acre zoo. Dikes had to be built along Bird Creek, and a dam was built where Coal Creek entered. Until park development began farmers continued to plow and harvest croplands, cut timber in the North Woods, and graze cattle in Mohawk Park. Although little was done the first four years of the Depression, it was during the 1930's when many changes began to take place in Tulsa's largest park. With many federal programs available, and a determined citizenry, the park began to assume its place in the future of this city.

Programs and Special Events

May

6 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All, &
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

The Parula and Prothonotary Warblers have returned to Oxley, and perhaps Summer Tanagers will be spotted. Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them.

6 "Aquatic Plants" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:00-12 noon
\$2 for general public free for members



We'll follow the Green Dragon Trail to Blackbird Marsh where we will meet some of the plants that prefer a wetland habitat. Meet at Oxley.

13 "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-12 noon
Free registration not required

Will we see the Silvery Checkerspot, Dainty Sulphur, or perhaps a Little Wood Satyr? We'll explore the prairie and forest and find out! Meet at Oxley.

20 "Trail Math" Ages: All, &
Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members

How tall is that tree? There are ways to measure things in nature with and without a ruler. Come use your own personal measuring tools. Meet at Oxley.

21 "Miniature Ecosystems" Ages: All, &
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members

Let's go in search of some of the mysterious lilliputian forests that grow throughout the "wild woods" of Oxley. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass if you have one.

27 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All &
Saturday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
Free registration not required

What is blooming during this last flush of spring? Who is taking advantage of the blossoms to be found? Join us at Oxley to watch the activity the flowers inspire.



June

3 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All, &
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required

In June one year we were able to watch Least Terns diving into and fishing in BJ's Pond. What will we find this time? Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them.

10 "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-12 noon
Free registration not required



Meet at Oxley for our butterfly walk as we look for Pearl Crescents, Eastern-tailed Blues, and other butterflies nectaring on the wildflowers.

11 "Wildflower Bookmarks" Ages: All, &
Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public free for members

Would you like something special to mark your place in a book? We'll go for a walk, collect some wildflowers to press, and create a unique bookmark. Meet at Oxley.

17 "Fiber Cordage" Ages: All, &
Saturday 1:00-2:30
p.m. \$2 for general public free for members

We will learn the ancient technique for making hand spun cordage using prepared fiber from native plants. Sources and preparation methods will be discussed and demonstrated. Meet at Oxley.

24 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:00-11:00 a.m.
Free registration not required

Join us at Oxley to see what is blooming along the forest edges and in Meadowlark Prairie.

25 "Sky Watching" Ages: All, &
Sunday 2:00-3:00
p.m. \$2 for general public free for members

The sky is always changing, even if it seems like it isn't. Bring along a journal or a sketchbook if you have one. Meet at Oxley.



Spring Art with Heidi Contreras

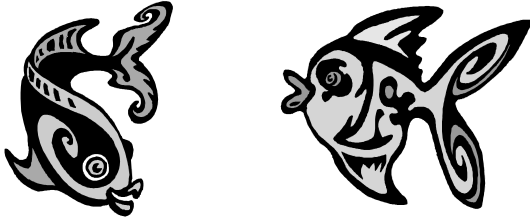
"Goldfish & Water Lilies"

Saturday, May 13

Ages: 5-9, & 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Ages: 9-up, & 1:30-3:00 p.m.

\$20 for general public \$15 for members



Create a watercolor painting of a pond in spring, bursting with life. A materials list is available upon fee payment. Please register in advance. Class sponsored by ONCA.

New Perspective, ...and Respect

I thought my "to do" list was bad. So I took myself outside in the sunshine to walk the trails. The place was "busting at the seams" with new life and activity. In the woodlands, where the warblers and vireos and other migrants had returned, the persistent call of a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher buzzed on the edge of my consciousness. Then I spotted one flitting around in the branches of a nearby tree. Another joined the first, carrying nest material. My eyes followed the birds to a small, cup-shaped nest that was taking form in the horizontal fork of a nearby Hackberry. I watched as both birds made repeated trips to their nest with new material. I marked on my "mind map" where this small refuge existed so I could follow the progress of the growing family in the next few weeks.

The one-week building process resulted in a nest finished with fine, downy plant materials, held together with spider silk, and concealed on the outside with a fine camouflage of lichens. Exquisite work! The finished nest awaited 4 eggs that hatched after an incubation period of 13 days. The new chicks were fed for 14 days; those tiny, insistent, gaping maws all open at once to receive an abundance of insects. Exhausted parents (they **must** have been exhausted!) continued to feed their young for 3 more weeks after fledging—a big job! My question now was, would they raise a second brood? Now that, my friends, was a real "TO DO" list.

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