



# Oxley Nature Center

May/June, 2008

Volume 175

**Mohawk Park charges a \$2 fee per car on weekends April through October for non-members.**

## **Oxley Nature Center:**

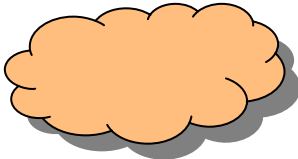
**The Oxley Nature Center Interpretive building will be closed for renovations until further notice.**

-Gate and parking lot 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.

**Closed: Monday May 26**

## **Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:**

-Open Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.  
-Interpretive building open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
-Closed most City holidays.



## **Program information**

**918-669-6644**

**-Oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us**

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

**-Please register 48 hours in advance** unless otherwise stated. Some classes require special supplies and allow limited enrollment.

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

-Most programs are wheelchair accessible.

## **Weather or Not**

by Amy Morris

I got the call early this morning. Mohawk Park is closed. Now it is a scramble to call the schools and our naturalist volunteers. Busses will have to be cancelled, new plans made. This is the third time this spring the park has been closed due to flooding. Bird Creek, the lagoons, and smaller tertiary creeks have risen out of their banks and left roads and trails impassable.

This is, after all, bottomland floodplain. We are all at the mercy of our environment and weather conditions to a great extent. It is difficult to bear the disappointment the children must feel at the sudden cancellation of a much anticipated field trip.

We suspected today's call might come when the heavy rain began to fall late yesterday afternoon. A night walk was cancelled for the second time due to thunderstorms. Driving home, I dodged rapidly rising water along the roads edge where storm sewers were taking in great gulps of water.

Ominous dark clouds lit up with vertical daggers of cloud to ground lightening. My eyes scanned the wall of clouds to the east, looking for a telltale sign; a swirling wind funnel to dip its tail below the bank of clouds. No dreaded tornado appeared.

Looking back to December, starting with the ice storm, I have to say we have had some tough weather events. You can't change it. You can't make it go away. Weather is not a factor to be ignored. It is nature's force incarnate. It is powerful, it is sublime. "Weather or not" we like it, we have to live with it.

Nature is amazing in all it's various guises, in the expression of all it's unpredictable moods. It can be dangerous, and deadly. We stand by helpless as the sky above our heads assaults the earth with weather patterns that may terrify and destroy.

Here in Oklahoma, that may mean ice storms, such as we had this past December, leaving behind a path of destruction that will take months to clean up. Yet as we cut and haul broken limbs, we see the signs of rebirth everywhere. Woodland flowers like ragwort and wild phlox are blooming in record numbers, splashing the forest floor with brilliant yellows and cool blues. The newly opened canopy overhead is admitting more sunlight.

In early spring, heavy rains cause flooding, washing away roads and bridges; even changing the very lay of the land. Dramatic thunderstorms, with their pyrotechnic light shows and scourge of hailstones, drive people under the safety of cover.

We do not take people out on the trails during thunderstorms. However, strolling along a trail in a slow, steady rain or drizzle is another story. Footfalls become whisper quiet. The world around you embraces you. Sounds become intensified, colors soften, yet intensify. It is magical.

Powerful winds die down to a whisper. The sky becomes an amazing canvas of billowing gray clouds with sun beams streaming through to touch the horizon. A skink emerges from beneath a damp and decomposing log and flashes like a specter into a sunbeam where he pauses, gleaming.

Overhead, a sun bright male goldfinch gleefully fluffs his wings. Feathers on his head stand slightly askew. Off among the dripping trees a warbler raises his voice in song. Whether or not we can do anything about the weather, it will change.

A walk in the woods, on the prairie, or along a wetland is well worth getting out for. Don't let weather keep you from enjoying the natural world that it makes possible.

# Nature Center Happenings

## Volunteer Naturalists Graduate

We would like to extend a big **WELCOME** to our new spring school season volunteer naturalists:

**Pam Hodge and Montez Mutzig**

Pam and Montez finished their training program and joined our team of volunteer naturalists leading tours.



Our dynamic team of volunteers strive to serve the growing needs of our communities and the children that keep them vital. This spring they have been exploring wonderful habitats at Oxley, sharing discoveries at every turn in the trail!

The next volunteer naturalist training class will begin September 2. Reserve your space in it now!

## Full Moon Walks

\$2 general public, members free. Register in advance, all ages

### "Mother's Moon Walk"

**Saturday, May 17 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

The *Full Moon Walks* of late spring and summer will find us prowling the trails at dusk due to our longer days. Will mothers be out and about with their young? Join us to see what is happening during this full moon. Meet at Oxley.

### "Honey Moon Walk"

**Wednesday, June 18 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

June flowers provide pollen and nectar for the honeybees that pollinate them. We'll engage our other senses (what's that smell?) as we explore the evening trails at Oxley.

## Kid's Saturday Programs

May 10, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

\$2 for general public, free for members. Please register in advance.

### Discovery Club (Ages 3-5)

Each child must be accompanied by an adult

#### "Reptiles and Amphibians"

What are some of the differences between a reptile and an amphibian? Find how to tell one from the other. We will make a frog or a turtle to take home.

### Adventure Club (Ages 6-8)

#### "Things With Stings and Wings"

It's going to sting me—or not! Learn to recognize which scary insects are safe and how to act around the others.

### Junior Naturalist (Ages 9-11)

#### "Wet and Wild"

What kinds of things live in a wetland, and what special adaptations do they have to live there? Let's explore muddy shores on waters' edge and find out!

## Letterboxing 101

Discover letterboxing, a worldwide adventure game that began in England in the 1800's. This scavenger hunt offers an opportunity to search out and find a hidden cache that allows you to collect and trade graphic art images.

Participants will create their own unique rubber stamp block, using carving tools provided by the instructor. Participants will also receive an ink pad and a stamping journal. Additional rubber stamp blocks may be purchased as supplies last. After our stamps are created, we'll hunt some letterboxes nearby. Create a family tradition!

Sunday, May 4, 2:00-4:00 PM

\$7 for non members

Please register in advance

Ages: 12 to adult

\$5 for members

Meet at Oxley picnic shelter

# Programs and Special Events

## May

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

Young birds are fledging. Great Crested Flycatchers are making their distinctive loud whistled *wheep* call. Mississippi Kites are hunting insects on the wing. Join us at Oxley during this busy time and bring binoculars if you have them.

**17 "Butterflies"** Ages: All  
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon  
Free registration not required

Some butterfly names indicate the particular host plant preferred by the caterpillar. The hackberry emperor and the pipevine swallowtail are examples of this. Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.

**18 "Beginning Birding"** Ages: All  
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.  
\$2 for general public Free for members

What is all the fuss about? Come find out why birding is such a popular hobby. We have seed and hummingbird feeders set up that afford us a close up view of several different species of these beautiful feathered fliers. Join us at Redbud Valley.

**24 "Wildflower Walk"** Ages: All  
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon  
Free no registration required

The wildflower season is in full swing. Along woodland paths the elusive green dragon rises upwards. Blackberries and deciduous holly should be in bloom. What else will we find at Oxley?

**31 "Wary not Scary"** Ages: All  
Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.  
\$2 for general public Free for members

Plants and animals have all kinds of special defenses to protect themselves? Join us for a walk in their neighborhood to learn what some of their defense strategies are. When we know what to look for we can "be prepared instead of scared!" Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley.

**Classes are handicapped accessible unless stated otherwise. Please register two days in advance of classes unless stated otherwise.**

## June

**7 "Saturday Morning Birding"** Ages: All  
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.  
Free registration not required

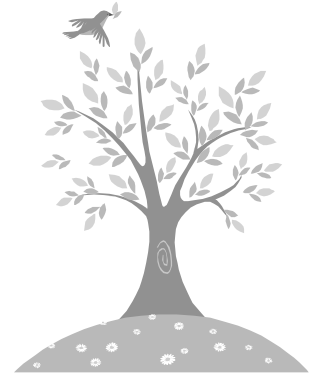
Join us at Oxley to listen for the musical, melodious phrases of the Warbling Vireo, or perhaps the "long, liquid song of 3 to 5 phrases, ending in a complex trill" of the lovely Wood Thrush. Bring binoculars if you have them.

**8 "Fun With Fossils"** Ages: 5-12  
Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.  
\$2 for general public Free for members

Fossils are the preserved record of ancient plant or animal life. We will look for some fossils and then make our own. Each child must be accompanied by an adult. Join us at Redbud Valley.

**14 "Exploring Your Senses in Springtime"**  
Ages: All  
Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.  
\$2 for general public  
Free for members

Come taste the air, touch the skins of trees, smell the life in a wetland, hear a medley of songs, and gaze through tangles of leaves and grasses. Meet at Oxley.



**21 "Butterflies"** Ages: All  
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon  
Free registration not required

Butterfly names are great fun. Come look for the *fiery skipper*, or the *dainty sulphur*. If we're lucky, we'll see a *question mark*, or perhaps a *mourning cloak*. Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.

**28 "Wildflower Walk"** Ages: All  
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon  
Free no registration required

Join us for a walk at Oxley to see what critters might be eating the ripe mulberries and blackberries. Tall poppy mallow is in bloom. What other flowers will we find?

## 4th of July North American Butterfly Count

### Calling all citizen scientists!

Join us on **Tuesday, July 1** for a summer day in the great outdoors in pursuit of butterflies. No experience is necessary. You will be part of a team with an experienced guide to spot, count, tally, and/or identify butterflies in a specific count area.

Information gathered is used to supplement data collected nationwide during the annual July butterfly count held by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). NABA monitors populations and raises public awareness and local interest in butterflies.

We will be meeting at 9:30 a.m. and will count until 5:00p.m. or later. You are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water, hat, and binoculars if you have them. Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley Nature Center.

**Please call and register in advance so teams can be assembled! The \$3 fee will be waived if you register by June 27.**

## Bringing Nature Close to Home

Do you realize you have the power to choose some of your neighbors? You can invite them to live on your windowsill, your doorstep, your balcony, or in your yard. If you have only a sunny window, you can grow a plant!

### The Audubon Society is holding its 15th Annual Wildlife Habitat 2008 Garden Tour and Plant Sale.

Saturday, June 7, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, June 8, 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

### Visit [www.tulsaaudubon.org](http://www.tulsaaudubon.org) for tour information and a map to the 6 featured gardens.

A \$5 admission donation is requested, children under 13 free.

Oxley Nature Center will have a booth at one of the gardens. Other gardens will feature native plant vendors and bird houses.

Stop by with your questions about attracting birds, bees, bats, and butterflies to your yard. Find out about invasive alien plants. What should you plant and what should you avoid? Plant some seeds of wonder this spring and watch them grow!

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