



Oxley Nature Center

July/August, 2008

Volume 176

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.

-Closed: Friday, July 4

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

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-The Preserve will be closed Friday, July 4.

-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.

The Gift of Flowers by Amy Morris

So just what is the "silver lining" to all those storm and thunder clouds?

It is a rainbow of color spreading across the landscape, from the golden glow of ragwort scattered throughout the early forests in spring to the last nod of goldenrods in late autumn. The wildflowers, some native, some introduced, some considered weeds, are absolutely spectacular this year, given our abundant rain and sunshine.

Some roadside wildflowers shout to be noticed, waving to passersby in the breezes. Others are more subtle. All are exquisite in their own way. The large pale pink flowers of Showy Evening Primrose delicately nod their round faces, their whiskery stamens arising from pale lemon yellow bases.

Boldly colored magenta verbena grows from spring through summer. Its fading florets take on an indigo hue, a color seldom seen in nature. It is well worth taking the time to catch a whiff of its delightful fragrance.

Our state wildflower, *Gaillardia*, is affectionately called Indian Blanket or Firewheel. Both it and tall, slender *Coreopsis tinctora*, or Tickseed, sway together like dancers in a chorus line, their cheerful yellow corollas accented by deep red centers.

Goat's-beard, a tall member of the sunflower tribe, wears its sepals extended outside beyond its petals. When it goes to seed, it is every child's dream of a giant dandelion puff, with silken parachutes to be blown and dispersed to the winds.

What about the Queen Anne's Lace? Several umbels containing tight clusters of tiny white florets form a large, lacy flat head at the top of erect, branching stems. According to one legend, a dark red floret at the center of the herb refers to a drop of blood from Queen Anne, who pricked her finger while making lace. This "wild carrot" has finely divided, feathery leaves and a deep taproot. As the seeds ripen, the flower folds up, becoming cup-like, and has been referred to as "bird's nest".

Liatris (blazing star, gay-feather) have tall purple plumes on erect stems that punctuate roadsides and prairies with their exuberant color. These settle in next to lavender Basket-flower, of the thistle tribe. Black-eyed Susan, Sneezeweed, Indian Paintbrush and Antelope Horn Milkweed are added to the mix, providing a recipe for an outstanding panorama. Sprinkled with Spiderwort and a dusting of Fleabane, the "ingredients" list for the landscape is intriguing.

The flowers are superlative. Every color palette is represented. But enough said. You have to see them for yourself. Such a profusion of flowers requires nothing but for you to be present. Drive the back roads to Redbud Valley. Or any back road in the country. Take that old fashioned "Sunday drive". Better yet, park the car and walk the trail. Burn calories instead of gas. The gift of delight and wonder will find its way in, settling in your bones like a happy memory.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteers Celebrate Season

Neither rain nor mud nor high winds, chiggers nor mosquitoes nor ticks, could keep our volunteers from happily appearing to meet every challenge nature presented.

Why? Because of the look of wonder in the eyes of the kids when they saw the deer bounding off through the trees. Or the giggles emanating as they fished tadpoles out of the marsh, or marveled at water snakes sunning on logs.

This was all possible because a lot of folks devoted hours of their time clearing trails and making them accessible and safe for school children and all others to enjoy.

On Monday, June 9, our volunteers celebrated the spring season with a barbecue and potluck dinner at the Tulsa Garden Center. This was our opportunity to recognize volunteers that have reached milestones in their service to Oxley Nature Center.



The following volunteers received awards:

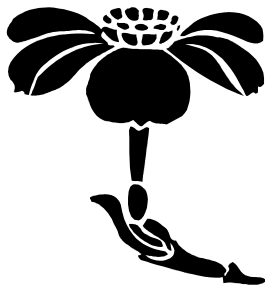
Len Eames: > 40 seasons of amazing service!

Jonathan Duerbeck: Outstanding Volunteer Award
3 years of service (6 seasons)

A Very Wet Spring!

Our spring season was beset with plenty of thunder, lightening and rising flood waters. This kept some school groups from visiting Oxley for their field trips.

Some schools cancelled because of muddy trails, others could not get into the park because of flash flooding, and others could not go out because of thunderstorms. We hope to see all these schools in the fall!



Become a Volunteer Naturalist

Children and nature. Nature and children. With **your** guidance and enthusiasm, it can be a Win—Win situation! Join us and become a volunteer naturalist.

Our 4 week autumn training session begins September 2 and ends September 25. Training sessions are two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. Training is fun, and will familiarize you with our trail system and its varied natural communities.



Following training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of children, for an hour or two one morning a week from October through November.

If you are 18 or older, love nature and sharing it with children, please call us for more information. No previous experience is necessary.

Oxley Nature Center's "**Traveling Booth**" will be at the Pearl Farmer's Market on July 28 and August 25 from 4:30-7:00 p.m. Come by and visit with us about **backyard habitats**.

Oklahoma Wildlife Expo, September 26-28, 2008 --- Volunteers Needed!

Oxley Nature Center is seeking 12 enthusiastic volunteers to represent Oxley at a membership booth at the Outdoor Marketplace at the Lazy E Arena near Guthrie. The Wildlife Expo, the state's largest indoor and outdoor recreation event, attracted over 35,000 people last year for fun, dynamic experiences in a variety of outdoor skills.

If you are interested in participating, please apply to staff at Oxley Nature Center. Some funding will be available for expenses.

\$2 general public, members free

Full Moon Walks

Register in advance, all ages

"Full Thunder Moon "

Wednesday, July 16, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The *Full Thunder Moon* will find us prowling the trails at dusk after a long, hot summer day. Will the heat be eased by a summer rain storm? Join us to see what is happening during this full moon. Meet at Oxley.

"Full Red Moon"

Friday, August 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Was the *Full Red Moon* named for raging prairie fires that lent a red glow to the evening skies? Let's look for our own signs of "red" as we explore the trails with all our senses. Meet at Oxley.

Programs and Special Events

July

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

A large variety of birds nest here due to our diverse habitats. We may see a variety of woodpeckers, flycatchers, and warblers. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

12 "Summer Cool" Ages: All
Saturday 9:30-11:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Come enjoy the coolest outdoor spot around. We'll hike to a shaded area where a spring emerges to flow over moss covered rocks to a pond below. This trail is not wheelchair accessible. Meet at Redbud Valley.

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

Is that a gossamer-wing, a brushfoot, or a swallowtail? Look at their size, shape, posture, and flight style. Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.

20 "Rock Art" Ages: 6-12
Sunday 1:30-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Come create a work of art using various flower parts and a suitable rock tool to hammer out a creation on water color paper. Learn about plant parts and pigments. Meet at Redbud Valley.

26 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

The prairie is blooming with coreopsis, ironweed, vervain, thistle, gaura, and Illinois bundleflower, an important wildlife food. Join us to see what animals are using these plants. Meet at Oxley.

26 "Wheat Weaving" Ages: All
Saturday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
\$7 for general public \$5 for members

Join us to create a piece of heritage folk art. You will need patience and manual dexterity to weave your own wheat dolly. 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 to allow time to prepare supplies and programs.

August

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

Early morning is the best time for birding. Birds are active now before the heat of the day. Purple Martins, our largest swallows, are gathering in large numbers for their migration south. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

9 "Water Testing 101" Ages: All
Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

What can we learn about water quality and the aquatic life forms that live in the marsh by performing simple tests? We will test surface water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and ph levels. Meet at Oxley.

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

We may find Monarch caterpillars munching on milkweed, or Giant Swallowtails nectaring on thistle. The little skippers are flitting everywhere. Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.

17 "Early Morning Hike" Ages: All
Sunday 7:00-9:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Greet the morning and beat the heat with an early hike in the shadow of trees and towering limestone bluffs. This trail is not wheelchair accessible. Meet at Redbud Valley.

23 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Have you ever heard of a **chocolate sunflower**? This is a common, or local name, for one of our wildflowers. Come find out why it got it's name and learn some other fun names for local plants. Meet at Oxley.

30 "Nature Journals & Sketching" Ages: All
Saturday 9:00-11:00 a.m.
\$5 for general public \$3 for members

Bring home your nature experience memories with a nature journal. We will learn to do gesture sketches and you will have time to go out on the Redbud Valley trail to add entries to your new journal. Meet at Redbud Valley.

Annual 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 5:00 p.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.

Participate: to have a share, take part in something.

We need your member support! Members of Friends of Oxley Nature Center help support our educational programs and allow us to protect and maintain habitat and its wildlife at Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve.

“Tangible” membership benefits include: free year-round admission to Mohawk Park, a 10% discount in The Nature Store, invitations to “Members Only” events, and no charge or reduced fees for programs or workshops. Individuals can join for \$10, families for \$15.

To join or find more information and other membership categories, check our website: www.oxleynaturecenter.org. For more on those “intangible” benefits, well, join your fellow members on an autumn cookout and hayride, under the stars...

If you are not a member but would like to continue receiving our bi-monthly newsletter, please notify us by August 1. Please call 669-6644 or e-mail oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us.

*Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth
Find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.*

---Rachel Carson

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