



Oxley Nature Center

January/February, 2014

Volume 225

Blackbird Marsh, December 15, 2014 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 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.

**** Please Note Closings:**

Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-Thursday, January 1, and Monday, January 19.

-Sunday, March 1 through Thursday, March 5.

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

We have all heard the saying: 'Nothing is constant except change'. Nothing made this more apparent than a walk yesterday to Blackbird Marsh after an absence of four weeks. Four weeks!

The marsh has been transformed. I knew we have been seeing a lot of mink this year, which could mean a lot of muskrat, a favored prey species for them. Beaver activity has been high, with the downing of several trees in the floodplain.

But I was not prepared for the clearing and building that has taken place at the marsh. Cattails and lotus have been cleared, for food and for homes that have been engineered. What does this tell us about our beaver and muskrat populations? How does their activity affect other animals?

Our marsh is gradually filling in with sediment, herbaceous material and trees. Succession is slowly turning the area from a marsh to a forest. With the assistance of our beaver engineers, maybe we can turn that around!

Beavers construct their homes out of sticks, twigs and mud. Here, their homes are found along Coal Creek and at the marsh. Some are constructed of larger sticks (branches), while other more recent ones look mostly like mud and cattail stems. Or are they beaver lodges? Could they be something else?



Dams are built using branches from trees the beavers have cut down, as well as grass and mud. Damns provide a deep water refuge where a beaver can escape predators and have a safe underwater entrance to its lodge.

When were you last at the marsh? Come out and have a look around. What changes will you see? Perhaps you can catch the marsh creatures in the act of creating their beautiful and architecturally unique homes! Then

stop by the Interpretive Center and let us know: Who built that flat mud terrace with the dive hole in the center?

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Luncheon and Awards Celebration

Volunteer and Oxley staff, families and friends celebrated our fall season with an awards luncheon December 6. We gathered to honor our volunteer staff and share a meal. We love this time to get together to visit with one another!

Two volunteers reached significant milestones:

30 Year Award: **Mary Lou McGilbra**

40 Year Award: **Dick Sherry**

Our volunteer staff serves Oxley in many capacities. With their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm, we are able to “Inspire the Wonder” in school children, maintain our trails and acreage, provide public programs and so much more.

Thank you!

Volunteer Roundup in February

Oxley Nature Center is sponsoring a volunteer roundup on **Thursday, February 12, from 10:00-12:00 noon or 7:00-9:00 p.m.** Join us to learn about the many different volunteer opportunities we have to offer.

We will have question and answer sessions, staff and volunteers to visit with and refreshments. Afterward we'll go on a short trail hike.

Have you got some time to share? Please call 918-669-6644 to register. We look forward to hearing from you!

A joy shared is a joy doubled -Goethe

Volunteer Naturalist Training Begins in February

Do you enjoy being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others? We are offering Volunteer Naturalist training beginning February 28. We are looking for weekend, evening and weekday volunteer staff; but all new volunteer naturalists must participate in the Certified Interpretive Host Workshop (see page 4 for details). Oxley will provide the cost of basic training. Certification or NAI membership is the responsibility of the participant.

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 10th-31th, two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon.

Evening and weekend sessions: nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and/or weekend days from 1-3:30 p.m. Please call for more details about the training schedules. These schedules are flexible.

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

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

Full Wolf Moon

Sunday, January 4, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Our full moon walks are something to howl about! Start your New Year right with a night hike through a winter wonderland. We'll stalk as quietly as wolves to see what we can discover.



Full Snow Moon

Tuesday, February 3, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Will there be snow? Bundle up in layers and join us for a walk through forests of trees, their bare branches reaching for the glittering sky. What will we find?

Programs and Special Events

January

3 “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.

4 “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.

10 “The Night Shift: Owls” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

What special tools do owls have for working at night? We'll take a short walk to look for places they may live and make a craft too! Meet at Oxley.

18 “Geology Walk at RBV” **Ages: 8 to Adult**
Sunday **1:30-3:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join us at Redbud Valley for a geology walk. This walk is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

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

Meet at Oxley for a winter botany walk.

24 “Rag Rug Class ” **Ages: Adult**
Saturday **10:00-1:00 p.m.**
Free **register by January 10**

Would you like to learn to make a rag rug? Class size is limited so please call by January 10 to register. A materials list will be provided. A donation to Oxley would be appreciated. Meet at Oxley.

**We cannot teach people anything;
we can only help them discover it
within themselves.**
-Galileo Galilei

February

7 “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 “The Legend of the God’s Eye” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
Free **registration not required**

Have you heard the legend of the God’s Eye? We’ll take a short walk to collect materials and create weavings. Meet at Oxley.

15 “Geology Walk at RBV” **Ages: 8 to Adult**
Sunday **1:30-3:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join us at Redbud Valley for a geology walk. This walk is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

21 “Going Natural With Beekeeping”
Saturday **10:00-2:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Come visit Oxley and learn about a **natural** beekeeper’s ‘year’. You will be introduced to three different types of honeybee hives. Also discover ways to help native pollinators with suitable plantings and homes for solitary bees! Bring a sack lunch.

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

Join us at Oxley for a winter botany walk.

Certified Interpretive Host Training Workshop

When: February 28 & March 7, 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 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.

For more information or to download a registration form:

http://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/_certification/CIG_Workshops/CIH-2014-11-OK.aspx

For information contact: Donna Horton, Trainer @ DonnaHortonCIT@att.net, 918-587-0522.

Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workshop

When: March 16-19, 2015, 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. It is a busy and focused 32 hours, including an open-book exam, writing a themed outline, and making a 10-minute presentation. Must be 16 or older.

Sunday, March 15, 2015, from 12:30-4:30 is an optional **Interpreter's Book Club** pre-workshop for an additional fee. This workshop is not required for certification.

For more information contact: Donna Horton, Trainer @ DonnaHortonCIT@att.net, 918-587-0522.

Window View

The view is framed by a wall of windows. Beyond, the winter light shifts and bathes the scene in spectral light. Far across the prairie stands a column of red oaks with their rust ochre leaves stubbornly clinging to gnarled branches. Beyond them, a silver halo of shimmering leafless branches rise. The sky is a light pewter.



At the feet of the trees lining the prairie, golden grasses rise thick and lush. Throughout are pockets of wildflower seed heads, offering their bounty. Their slender bodies bow as birds land, hopping out to the ends of the narrow stems, plucking tiny seeds from capsules at the end.

Below, mice harvest what drops, or climb the narrow stalks and gather their own! There are rodent runways all along the ground, not readily visible to prying eyes. Some are well developed trails beneath grass tunnels, leading from one food cache site to another.

Somewhere there, in the middle of the higher grasses, is a deer 'lie', where the whitetails have bedded down to get out

of the cold north wind. If one looked carefully, one might see a pair of ears twitching.

Green rushes rise in bunches around the edge of the pond. The water is multiple colors: greens and grays and silver ripples with orange reflections of trees. Two Canada Geese float regally on its surface.

Overhead, a chevron of geese slice through sky, winging their way ... where? The single lead bird bends slightly to the North, and all others follow suit, a perfectly performed ballet. Where did the phrase come from ... 'In the dead of winter'? From here one can see; life always goes on!