



Oxley Nature Center

January/February, 2017

Volume 237

A Sense of Place 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:**

-Sunday, January 1, and
Monday, January 16.

Program information:

-Our new phone number is:
918-596-9054

- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org

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

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

***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.

It is a cold, brisk January morning, and I can see my breath. It issues from the warmth of my being and joins the breath of the forest around me. I shiver. My cheeks are cold. I wrap my arms around myself, but I am content, peaceful.

I have found my way to the park where the old bur oak tree towers over my head, reaching its gnarly arms into the bright blue sky above. Branches trace the outlines of this architectural masterpiece. A few dead leaves cling stubbornly to arthritic stems. They rustle, whisper, groan. This generous tree is an old friend, and I visit often.

Its great trunk stands solid and firm in the soil, supported by a network of roots and rootlets forming highways of communication and nutrition. At the base of its trunk, a large hollow begs a child to explore its secrets, or a raccoon to climb higher inside its chambers. This basement floor is home to many.

Moving up the trunk are many floors leading to a penthouse apartment in the highest canopy. Stretching to the sides are even more living and feeding places. This entire tree is a microcosm complete; a web, an ecosystem. Vines meander up, seeking sun, sprawling and scrambling ever higher. A marriage of convenience and support.

A chorus of scolding breaks out over head, as two gray squirrels appear mid-tree, racing across a highway of limbs. I see one make a great leap, and disappear into a neighboring sycamore. The other stops, and glares at me, tail flicking angrily back and forth. His raspy barks, chucks, and chirps admonish me. It is breeding season. I look into the shadows of the sycamore for the other. That is when the acorn, resting in its bristly cap, falls to the ground in front of me! Nosy neighbor appropriately rebuked. I can't help but smile.

Natures' gifts are available to every one of us. Our world expands when we are open to what nature offers us, embracing the reality that we are a part of something larger than ourselves that is cyclical and ongoing.

In this new year, come find your joy, make your connection. This is your place. The trees and squirrels are waiting to make your acquaintance.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Staff Luncheon and Awards

Volunteer and Oxley staff, families, and friends celebrated our fall season with an awards luncheon December 3. We gathered together to honor all our volunteer staff and share a meal of barbecue (compliments of ONCA) and potluck dishes. We look forward to this time together to visit with one another and celebrate.

The following volunteers reached significant milestones:

Janet O'Leary -- Volunteer of the Year

Roger Bey —5 Year Award

Mollie Brower, Pat Davenport, Mary Kenkel, Peggy McMath, and Pat Vawter -- 3 Year Awards

Our volunteer staff serves Oxley Nature Center in many capacities, meeting the needs of the public and the resource with dedication and enthusiasm. We could not do this without them! **Thank you Volunteers!**

Volunteer Roundup

What gifts do you bring to the New Year?

We need help protecting and managing our beautiful resources, reaching out to children about nature, and so much more.

Oxley Nature Center is sponsoring a volunteer roundup on **Thursday, February 9, 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 volunteer staff to visit with, and refreshments. Later we will take a short hike.

Can you help? Have you got time to share? Consider joining our team, we would love to meet you!

A joy shared is a joy doubled -Goethe

Volunteer Naturalist Training in March

Who is a Volunteer Naturalist? It could be you! Do you enjoy being outdoors and sharing the experience of nature with others? We are offering two Volunteer Naturalist training programs in March.

Our training schedules are flexible, depending on number of participants. **Weekday sessions** may run March 2- March 30, two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. If **evenings and weekends** are more convenient, you may attend training two evenings from 6:30- 8:30 p.m. and three weekend days from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Please call for details about the schedules.

During training you will become familiar with our trail system as you explore the 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. The majority of tours are school field trips.

For 18 years or older, no previous experience is necessary.

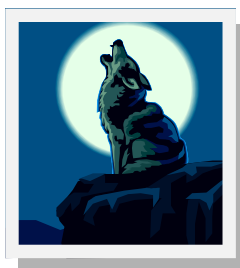
Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

\$3 donation requested, all ages, must register 48 hours in advance

Full Wolf Moon

Thursday, January 12, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Our full moon walks are something to howl about! Join us tonight to see if we can hear wolf's cousin, coyote, raising his voice to the full moon in song. Start your New Year right with a night hike at Oxley.



Full Snow Moon (Lunar Eclipse)

Saturday, February 11, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

This can be a time of heavy snow. Bundle up in layers and join us to see how the weather may affect the activity around us. A bright moon and **snow would mean** some great tracks to follow!

Programs and Special Events

January

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

Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.
All ages and skill levels are welcome.



21 “Lecture Series, Part 2” **Ages: Adult**
Saturday **10:00-11:00 a.m.**
Free for Members **Registration is required**
\$20 for non-members (includes individual Oxley membership and associated benefits for one year)

“Research in site fidelity and habitat use: from dark-eyed juncos to mosquitoes,” by Valerie A. O’Brian

Oxley Nature Center was an ideal setting for undergraduate research on movement and site faithfulness in wintering dark-eyed juncos. Juncos captured in one area of Oxley preferred to stay nearby, demonstrating a more restricted range of movement by these birds than expected. The area of scientific thought developed while conducting junco research at Oxley contributed to a post-doctoral research project on habitat associations of mosquito species in Payne County, Oklahoma.

Valerie A. O’Brian Ph.D is an Assistant Professor of Biology at Tulsa Community College—Metro Campus.

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

It’s cold outside. Let’s explore how plants react to the cold. What adaptations ensure survival? Join us on the trails at Oxley to find out.

February

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

Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.
All ages and skill levels are welcome.

13 & 28 “Natural Babies: Bluebirds”
Ages: 1-5 with caregiver
Monday **10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**
\$3 suggested donation **Registration required**

Young children learn by contact with real objects, events and people. We will spend time on the trail to explore nature first hand. This will be a sensory experience! Come learn about our beautiful bluebirds!

18 & 19 “Great Backyard Bird Count” **Ages: All**
Saturday & Sunday **12:30 - 3:30 p.m.**
Free **Registration not required**

Join us at Oxley or Redbud Valley Nature Preserve to participate in a Citizen Science Project. We will be counting birds at: 12:30, and 1:30, 2:30 and/or 3:30. Join us for one or all counting periods and learn more about our local birds!

18 “Lecture Series, Part 3” **Ages: Adult**
Saturday **10:00 - 11:00 a.m.**
Free for Members
\$20 for non-members (includes individual Oxley membership and associated benefits for one year)
Registration is required

“Course-based ecological research at Oxley” by Charles R. Brown.

For over 20 years, Field Ecology and Ornithology Courses have used Oxley to illustrate fundamental concepts in a field setting. Students have also used Oxley for individual research projects. This talk will give an overview of the kinds of research done by students in these contexts.

Charles Brown is a Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Tulsa.

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

The landscape looks all gray and brown. Is something stirring? Let’s see if we can discover signs of renewed plant life along Oxley’s trails.

Certified Interpretive Guide Training

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



Certified Interpretive Host Training

When: Saturday, March 4 & 11, 2017, 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 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 information contact: Donna Horton, donnahortoncit@att.net
Phone 918-582-0522

For more information or to download a registration form:
<http://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/>

What will come if You Put Out Birdseed?

The brilliant red Northern Cardinals with their black facial masks and orange bills flutter to the ground like red tissue paper under the bare branches of the redbud tree. There they forage through the dried brown leaves, tossing about bits and pieces of debris as they seek tasty morsels of seeds. The seeds contain life's fuel: calories, protein, amino acids, and minerals; all the elements required for survival during the winter's harsh stay.

What other birds might visit if you offer a selection of seed during the cold winter months? They will delight you with their antics. The tiny Carolina Chickadees, with their black caps and throat patches, dart quickly to the ground, seize sunflower seeds and return immediately to the limbs in the redbud. There they balance the individual seed between their toes and the tree branch. With concentrated blows from their tiny sharp bills, they strike through the tough outer shell until the inner treasure is revealed, the nutritious nut meat. A pair of Tufted Titmice rapidly chase one another through the branches. Their heads are topped with gray crests and their sides beneath their wings are washed with a pale and subtle orange. With the chase over, they hammer their sunflower seed in much the same way as the chickadees.

An American goldfinch is feeding on the ground beneath the redbud. This male is already beginning to replace his dull winter plumage with bright strokes of yellow along his breast and wings. Small puffs of white down float above the dark wing bands. His dining technique is unique. He takes a whole sunflower seed lengthwise in his bill, cracking and rolling it. He drops the seed to the ground, picks it up in his bill, and works it around some more. Eventually the seed coat cracks and splinters to give up its prize.

The Dark-eyed Junco is also hopping around beneath the tree, picking here and there with his pale pink bill. His gray and brown upper body sharply contrasts with his stark white breast. He is dining on smaller seeds fallen between the grasses: millet, safflower, and cracked corn. He hops a few steps, dips his head to the ground, lifts and tilts his head as he cracks and swallows his seed, and hops forward again, repeating the process.

The White-throated Sparrows also feed along the ground with their peculiar shuffle and kick gait. These brown sparrows, with their pale yellow eyebrows and white throat patches, kick their feet back in the soil to uncover hidden seed. Then they shuffle both feet forward and back, forward and back; a dance before dining.

A Downy Woodpecker has also visited the redbud today, climbing the vertical trunk with her special arrangement of toes: two forward and two back. She clings easily upside down on the branches. Her white underside and white back contrast with her black and white barred wings and black tail. She is not in the tree seeking her usual fare of insects. Today she drops to the ground and scavenges for seed amongst the grass and leaves, picking up peanut and sunflower pieces. She supplements her diet of dormant insects with the offerings under the redbud.

With a swift and undulating flight, a White-breasted Nuthatch approaches and lands in the redbud. This is a sleek and streamlined bird with a short tail, a long sharp bill, a black cap, a white face and breast, and a beautiful rust color beneath its tail. It does not feed, but flies off to another perch several yards away. As the sun lowers in the sky and dusk descends, the birds disperse and retreat to their winter roosts, satisfied for the night.