



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 139

May/June, 2002



From the Stump by Bob Jennings

They talk about Spring Fever, that lethargy that hits some of us in the Spring. I'm not sure what causes it, pollen or the phase of the moon or whatever, but I know I get it. Spring makes me lazy.

Out here in the woods, though, Spring Fever is a whole different animal. Spring Fever, the biological kind, is truly feverish. We mark the changes that happen here, daily, even hourly sometimes.

This is the time of the year when one of the staff will ask "Anybody heard parulas?", wondering if any of us has heard the distinctive song of a Parula Warbler. These small, bright birds are one of the first warbler species to arrive at the Nature Center each Spring. Their arrival is one we anticipate. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are another. We know that they will get here about the end of the first week in April, and it's a minor badge of honor to be the first to spot one.

The wildflowers are the same. We await the first bloom of Ragwort, and Dutchman's Britches, and Prairie Irid. We note when we first see Poison Ivy buds opening, and when the Yellow Wood Violets bloom.

A forest in Spring is not a place to stand still. Be stationary too long and something

will grow up your leg or someone will try to nest in your hair. The plants and the mammals and the bugs don't have too long to get their business done. The Least Terns that nest on sandbars in the river have to get their nest built, eggs laid, and young hatched within a few months. The young will have to be capable of finding their own way south by early Fall, so there is no time to waste.

In these early weeks of Spring, it seems we see a change every day. One day we will comment on the lack of Swainson's Thrushes, and the next day the woods will be full of their liquid 'drip' calls. We mark the blossoms of blackberry, anticipating a return when the fruit are big enough for cobbler. Soon we will be searching for fawn tracks and giggling at the antics of 'teenage' raccoons.

In these days joy comes in small doses, day upon day, discovery by discovery. We rejoice in the arrival of cuckoos, and in the voice of American Toads. We watch for the goose out front to hatch the eggs that have been her occupation for the past month. We wait for some unfamiliar dragonfly to expand our knowledge of this place.

I still get the original Spring Fever, the one that makes me want to take a nap, but I get the other kind, too, the one that requires a walk down by the plum tree to see if that Great Purple Hairstreak reappears this year. In fact, if you will excuse me.....



Nature Center Happenings

Oxley Nature Center will be closed Monday, May 27, 2002 for the Memorial Day Holiday.

Happy Holiday!



OXLEY AND REDBUD HOURS:

The gates at Oxley Nature Center are open daily, with the exception of most City holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. At Oxley, you may park outside the gates from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. to walk the trails even when the gates are closed.

At Redbud Valley Nature Preserve, the gates are open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You may **not** hop the fence when the Nature Preserve is closed: on Mondays or Tuesdays, on City holidays, before 8:00 a.m., or after 5:00 p.m.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Call: 669-6644 to register or for more information about programs. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, unless otherwise stated. Programs that are wheelchair accessible are designated with the ♿ symbol.

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



Kid's Saturday Programs

\$2 general public, free to members, all ♿



Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

May 18, 10:00-11:30 "Squashing Flowers And Squeezing Leaves"



We will make our own flower press and gather flowers and leaves to preserve by pressing. Sign-up begins May 5.

Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

May 18, 10:00-11:30 "Create A Walk"

We will walk to find special places and draw maps so someone else can find them. Sign-up begins May 5.



Leopold Education Project

The Leopold Education Project is a critical learning, interdisciplinary curriculum for teachers of grades 6-12 designed to establish a positive conservation ethic among its participants. The LEP is based on the classic literary work, *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold. Goals are to increase general teaching skills involved in outdoor education, to expose students to environmental literature and related activities, and to instill a love, respect and admiration for the land in tomorrow's land stewards. Activities also fit well into projects for 4-H, Scouts, Campfire and other youth organizations.

Join us at Oxley for this session Saturday, June 22 from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (\$30).

Congratulations and Welcome New Volunteers!

This Spring eight new volunteer naturalists completed training and will lead tours for local school groups. Their energy and fresh enthusiasm are vital to making our program a success. Welcome to Vendia Coder, Ron King Jr., Maurine Lantz, Jon Larson, Hazel McEnire, Judy Mehlhorn, Jenny Rutherford and Jim Thayer! We'd also like to welcome new visitor center volunteer Jim McElisic and new trail work volunteer Aisha Dixon. Thank you!!

Programs and special events

May

4 "Saturday Morning Birding"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

8:00-9:45 a.m.
registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

5 "Redbud Valley Wildflowers"

Sunday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: All

1:00-3:00 p.m.

free to members

Come search the fields and woods for Old Plainsman, Green Dragon, Antelope Horn and Shepards Purse. These are only a few of the wildflowers that will be in bloom. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins April 21.

11 "Butterfly ID for Beginners"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

10:00-12:00 noon
registration not required

We will be doing butterfly identification for beginners. We'll view slides and specimens indoors and then go outside for the last 45 minutes. Meet at Oxley. Bring binoculars if you have them.

11 "Build a Shaving Horse"

Saturday

\$2 for non-members

Ages: All

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

free to members

We'll all pitch in and help build a traditional shaving horse from a log. All traditional hand tools will be provided--no electricity, no gas--just sweat. The shaving horse can then be used to construct other projects such as ladderback chairs. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins April 28.

25 "Roaming the North Woods"

Saturday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: All

10:00-12:00 noon

free to members

Let's explore the mysteries of the North Woods trails. Meet at the circle parking lot on the east side of Lake Yahola. Sign-up begins May 12.

June

1 "Saturday Morning Birding"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

8:00-9:45 a.m.

registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 "Saturday Morning Butterfly Walk"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All

10:00-12:00 noon

registration not required

Meet at the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 "Art in Nature: Butterflies in Watercolor"

Saturday

\$25 for non-members

12:30-4:30 p.m.

\$20 for members

Class taught by **Brenda Knapp**
Fee must accompany registration.
Please call for materials list.
For ages 14 through adult



Come explore the beauty of butterflies through the medium of watercolors.

9 "Wet and Wild"

Sunday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: All

1:00-2:30 p.m.

free to members

After we learn the biotic index we'll dip in the marsh & rate the water quality on what we find. Sign-up begins May 26.

23 "Fossils, Flowers & Footprints"

Sunday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: 10 & up

8:30-10:30 a.m.

free to members

We'll explore Redbud Valley looking for fossils, wildflowers and animal tracks. Redbud is always good for a surprise too. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins June 9.

"Finding Your Way"

Saturday, June 29

1st Session: Map and Compass

Time: 9:00-12:00 noon

Instructor: Susan Thrasher, Arkansas Search & Rescue

Come learn basic map and compass skills.

Fee required at time of registration.
For ages 16 through adult.

2nd Session: Global Positioning Systems

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Instructors: Doug Farrell, Thales Navigation

Learn the basic functions of a GPS unit
and locate a geocache at Oxley.

Members: 1/2 day--\$15.00, All day--\$25
Non-members: 1/2 day--\$20.00, All day--\$30.00



Thoughts of Spring

by Lynda Fritts

As Winter's gray cold gives way to Spring's warmth and sunshine, we sigh with relief. We've already seen mats of yellow dandelions and purple henbit; days have become noticeably longer, seemingly giving us more time.

What other changes have you noticed? When did you first hear a lawnmower? Have you or your neighbors had a garage sale yet this Spring? Are you looking forward to garden-fresh vegetables?

All these things lend themselves to Springtime, just as some other things we sometimes take for granted. The absence of Winter's visiting sparrows and juncos is definitely noticeable at my house, along with the arrival of hummingbirds, orioles, catbirds, and martins. I just *thought* I was busy during December! Along with the spring housecleaning and yardwork, I've got to make sure all the nest boxes are cleaned out, insides soaped, then properly hung; as well as making sure there is plenty of fresh water in the birdbaths and mud for the robins' nestbuilding and Winter's suet containers stuffed with short pieces of yarn and fabric scraps and hair from the cats' groomings and keeping feeders filled, _____ yes, even now.

Gosh, I've got so much to do I really don't have time to sit here writing! Thanks for reading this far, but now I've got to get busy. Oh, before I go, can you find some time in your busy spring schedule to do a few things for our feathered friends? They've flown so far (from Central and South America) just to grace us with their presence and cheer us with their songs and youngsters! Thanks!

