



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 140

July/August, 2002



From the Stump by Bob Jennings

If you don't mind, I'm going to sit down here in this shady spot by the spring and rest a minute. I know the end of the trail is just up ahead, but I want to pause a minute and think about everything we've seen so far.

Did you notice all the flowers today? There were Bluets and Spring Beauties in that field, and Purple Coneflower back beside the blackberry bushes. The Redbuds were amazing, and the leaves of the Sugar Maples were as brilliant scarlet as I've ever seen them. Lots of ripe persimmons in that grove, just by where the Wild Plums were blooming.

Did you see that spotty fawn hiding in the grass? It wasn't far from that fat old woodchuck by the den. I watched a bobcat catch a rabbit, too, and listened for a while as the coyotes serenaded the last little fingernail of moon.

I was amazed at the number of birds that were around, although this is always a good trail for birds. That Prothonotary Warbler was awesome, like a piece of the sun had come loose and sprouted wings. I almost missed it because I was busy counting the Hooded Mergansers in the open spaces where the lake hasn't frozen yet. The owls were noisy today, too, weren't they? They're always like this in the Fall, as they get ready to nest. I was so involved with them that I just about missed the first Eastern Phoebe of the year. Bluebirds were nesting, and the geese were migrating south, and the hummingbirds are about ready to leave for the year.

I was going to spend a while working on my butterfly identification, but gave it up when that group of school kids passed. Sure, they were a bit noisy, but it was the noise of excitement and curiosity, and that's a good kind of noise. How many do you guess there were? Hundred thousand? More? Hard to tell, but they sure were having a good time.

What's that? I sound a little confused? Well, that's not unusual, just ask the folks around here! Oh, you mean that I couldn't have seen all those things today, cause some are summer things and some are winter things and some are.... Oh, well, I guess you're right. But remember, I've been on this trail a long time. It'll be 25 years here in a month or so, and I guess I was just remembering some of the things that those years have shown me.

I'd better get up and finish this trail. I've got to go back and write that column for our newsletter. This will be the last one, though. Yeah, after all these years I'm going to hand in my papers, and let someone else have a chance at it. Don't know what I'll write about this time.

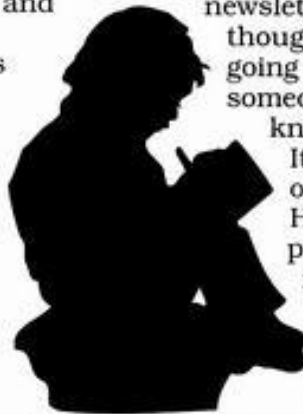
It'll be hard to squeeze 25 years into one last column. And the people! How am I going to thank all the people who've worked so hard and raised money and given money and hours and hours of time.

It's going to be hard to know what to say to them. Maybe I can think of something to leave

behind when I go, something that they can enjoy after I'm off doing something else. Surely there's something that will remind them of me. I'll have to think about it a while.

Well, I'd better go. I think the old legs will get me on up the rise and down to the start of the trail. Hang on just a minute, seems like I've got something in my eye. You go on ahead, I'll be there in a minute or two.

Yeah, It was nice to run into you, too.



Nature Center Happenings



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>"

Nature Center Welcomes Summer Staff

Where would we be without the help of our summer seasonals and T.A.S.K. (Training And Skills Knowledge) teens? Summer is a very busy time filled with guided tours, weekend programs, trail work, mowing, fence building, general building cleaning and maintenance and more mowing! We are happy to have the energy and skills offered by seasonals **Judy LaFrance** (now spending her 4th summer with us) and **Chris McFarland** (a recent graduate of Holland Hall High School). Our T.A.S.K. force includes **Shametra Fields, Sarah Henderson, Brett Patterson and Russell Billings**. We appreciate them tackling the poison ivy and ticks and are glad to have them with us!



Tuesday May 14, staff, volunteers and their guests celebrated together with barbecue provided by the Friends of Oxley Nature Center Association. Everyone brought side dishes and all reminisced about Spring season and had a wonderful time.

"Volunteer of the Year" awards were given to **Elisabeth Ham and Chloee Oney**. These weekday volunteer naturalists also assisted with trail work and the visitor center. **Herb Fowler**, a veteran weekday volunteer naturalist was acknowledged for **10 years** of service.

Our volunteers are our most important asset. With all of their talent, skill and enthusiasm we are able to provide our public with high quality nature experiences! We couldn't do it without them!

Thank You All Volunteers!

Programs and special events

July

6 "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.

6 "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. A shaving horse clamp can be used to hold a workpiece to construct other projects such as ladderback chairs, bows or white oak basket splits. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins June 23.

13 "Butterfly Walk"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All ■
10:00 - 12:00 noon
registration not required

Meet at Oxley parking lot promptly at 10:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

20 "Dragonflies"

Saturday
\$2 for non-members



Ages: All ■
10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
free to members

Join us at Oxley for a special presentation on dragonflies by Roy Beckemeyer. We will receive an introduction and slide show before going out on the trails to see these flying predators. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 7.

27 "Nature Printing"

Saturday
\$2 plus \$2 for materials



Ages: 8 & up ■
10:00-12:00 noon
members pay only \$2

We will wander the trails at Oxley to find material to make our own nature print. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 14.

August

3 "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.

10 "Butterfly Walk"

Saturday
Free



Ages: All ■
10:00-12:00 noon
registration not required

Meet at the Oxley parking lot promptly at 10:00 a.m.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

11 "Evening at Oxley"

Sunday

\$2 for non-members

Ages: All ■
6:30-8:00 p.m.
free to members

Enjoy the long summer evenings with a stroll down the trails, either on your own anytime, or this evening with one of our naturalists. Meet at Shelter #4 in Mohawk Park. Sign-up begins July 28.

17 "Beat the Heat Hike"

Saturday

\$2 for non-members

Ages: 5 & up
7:00-9:00 a.m.
free to members

Come start your day amid the serenity of Redbud Valley on a late summer weekend morning before the day's heat sets in. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins August 4.

25 "Teneriffe Weaving"

Sunday

\$2 plus \$10 for materials

Ages: 14 & up ■
1:00-4:00 p.m.
members pay only \$10

Weave a nature design using the teneriffe weaving technique--an easy project in the air conditioning on a hot afternoon. The weaving may be hung on the wall or be used as the bottom for a basket. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins August 11.



Oxley Nature Center 2nd Annual Butterfly Count July 2, 2002



The 28th annual North American Butterfly Association (NABA) 4th of July Butterfly Count tracks butterfly populations in Canada, the United States and Mexico. For the second year we will census populations at Redbud Valley and Oxley. If you would like to help us spot and count butterflies between 9:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. on July 2 please give us a call for more information (669-6644).

A Tour Of The Moon

Tuesday, August 20--8:00-9:00 p.m.

Visit (with your eyes and imagination) the Lunar Alps and the Sea of Tranquillity. Find out why the Moon's face is marked and look at those marks through our telescope. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on and a telescope or binoculars if you wish. Meet on the east side of Lake Yahola. Moonrise is 7:14 p.m. and Sunset is 8:08 p.m. Sign-up begins August 11. Non-members pay \$2, members may attend for free.

Dragons & Damsels: Dashing Jewels of the Insect World

If you spend any time at all in the summer alongside a pond, lake or stream, you will soon notice the zooming, soaring, aerobatic flying of dragonflies and damselflies. These wonderful insects have been gracing Oklahoma skies for hundreds of millions of years. In fact, the largest insects ever known to have flown were the giant dragonflies (with 27 to 29 inch wingspans!) that flew in the Permian period 265 million years ago. Their



fossils have been found in Kansas and Oklahoma. About 135 species of dragonflies and damselflies have been recorded in Oklahoma. They are beneficial insects, eating other bugs - mostly mosquitos and other small pests - and, contrary to popular folklore, are harmless to humans.

Learn what many of them look like, and how to interpret their behavior when you see them in the field. Roy Beckemeyer, a retired aeronautical engineer who has studied them for many years will share his enthusiasm by doing a multi-media presentation on these colorful and fascinating insects. We will then go for a walk and see them up close and personal. Join us July 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Registration begins July 7. The fee is \$2 for non-members and free to members.



Baby Boom

Spring arrived with a refreshing sense of renewal. In late March a pair of Canada Geese appeared on the pond outside the Interpretive Center at Oxley. We monitored the process as the female constructed a nest on the island and laid and incubated her eggs. On May 2nd four goslings hatched.



In early April we watched as a large woodchuck repeatedly carried huge mouthfuls of leaves past the library window. It wasn't until April 29 we discovered she had been preparing a bed for her three young in a burrow system directly under the front deck. A "baby boom" right outside our front door!

From the back deck another family of woodchucks could be seen playing on the trailside near the pond. Just off the back boardwalk on May 30 a newborn fawn spent the day curled in the grasses of the woodland floor where its mother had left it in hiding. Visitors, their voices quieted with awe, were able to watch this spotted fawn as it slept or carefully explored its surroundings with only a twitch of its dark wet nose or a turn of large, velvety ears.

