



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 141

September/October, 2002

From The Past-----September 1978 (Volume1)

Meet Bob Jennings

Robert G. Jennings accepted the position of naturalist with the City of Tulsa in September, 1977. He is responsible for guiding the development of the Mary K. Oxley Nature Center.

Jennings comes to Tulsa from a position of six years as Chief Naturalist with the Kansas City, MO Parks and Recreation Department. His duties in Kansas City included development of education materials and construction of nature trails and study areas throughout the city in addition to the supervision of a staff of eleven Naturalists.

A graduate of the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Bob holds a Master's degree in Biology. His primary study area during his college work was the ecology of birds and mammals, an area of interest he still maintains.



Photo by J. R. Jones

From the Stump

by Bob Jennings

And so it begins--

Even though I've been here for a year now, and many projects are well underway, I have a real sense of beginning. It may be because some things are beginning this fall that we've worked on for so long, such as the Environmental Education program with Tulsa Public Schools, or perhaps it's because we're beginning our Newsletter, a long awaited event.

I really don't know why I have this feeling, and I'm not going to try too hard to find out, because it feels good and I don't want it to go away. Instead I want all of us who have worked to make Oxley a reality to stop and think about the various meanings of "beginning".

Beginning to see the ideas on paper become a reality in the shape of trails and shelters, and knowing that people are already waiting to use them--or--

Beginning to see the first fall migrants pass south over Recreation Lake, and bring with them the promise of cool weather for a change--or--

Beginning to understand the depth of interest within the community for the project, and to feel good that so many people understand--or--

Beginning to look forward to the next major project, building the Interpretive Center, which means (I guess) that I can stop worrying about the projects that are nearly finished--or--

Beginning to wonder if I will ever get a vacation--or--

Beginning to realize that I really can do this job and feel good about the result (yes, I had my doubts for awhile).

But most of all, and this is the really important part--

We are beginning to reach the young ones, with a place where they can touch and hear and smell and taste all those things that used to be pictures in Ranger Rick, where they can learn the importance of snail darters and whooping cranes, where they can see that spiders aren't for squashing, and most of all, where they can see that they share this planet, and that sharing is a two-way street.

For them, and their children, and their children's children, let this be the real beginning.

Today's News-----August, 2002

Robert G. Jennings has retired as the director of the Mary K. Oxley Nature Center after 25 years of service. During his tenure the Interpretive Building was constructed and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve and the Harriet Barclay Visitor Center were brought under the management of the City of Tulsa. Staff increased and more creative programs were made available to the public. Various trails were added and improved upon.

The contributions and leadership provided by Bob Jennings during the first 25 years leads to a great challenge to continue to provide the people of Tulsa and surrounding communities with exceptional service in a natural environment protected for future generations. Bob will be missed; yet his presence is everywhere-- with his staff and volunteers, in the forest, at the marsh, on the prairie--in the broad scheme of things and in the details.

Thank you Bob--Happy Retirement!

Nature Center Happenings

Oxley Nature Center & Redbud Valley Nature Preserve will be closed Monday, September 2, 2002. Happy Labor Day 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

September 21, 10:00-11:30 "Wonderful Worms,"

Come find out what makes worms so special and important.

Sign-up begins September 8.

October 19, 10:00-11:30 "Rattling Bones"

How many kinds of skeletons are there and what are their purposes?

Sign-up begins October 6.



Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

September 21, 10:00-11:30 "Life Under A Log"

We will discover what animals find food or shelter under fallen trees.

Sign-up begins September 8.

October 19, 10:00-11:30

"The Kneebones Connected To..."

Come find out about bones & skeletons.

Sign-up begins October 6.



"The Evening Star"

Sunday, September 1,

8:00-9:00 p.m.

Meet at Stuart Park.

Our "evening star" is not really a star. What does it look like through a telescope? Do we have an evening star all year? What is the "morning star"? So many questions, and each one answered brings up so many more! Bring your curiosity and your questions. Something to sit on and binoculars or a telescope may be useful. Moonset: 3:58 p.m. and Sunset: 7:52 p.m. Sign-up begins August 18. Call for directions.

Star Programs

\$2 general public
free to members

All ages welcome
■ with advance notice



"Planets Before Sunrise"

Thursday, October 17,

5:30-6:30 a.m.

Meet at Lake Yahola.

Sometimes the best time to watch stars and planets is before sunrise. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to sit on and a telescope or binoculars if you wish. We will have our telescope set up. Moonset: 3:39 a.m. and Sunrise: 7:32 a.m. Meet at the east side of Lake Yahola above the circle drive. Sign-up begins October 6.

Programs and special events

September

7 "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 "Geo-What?"

Sunday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: All ■

2:00 -3:30 p.m.
free to members

Geocaching. ("gee"-oh cash'-ing.") is a great excuse to get out hiking in places you might never have known existed. It involves using a hand-held global positioning system (GPS) receiver to find something hidden or described and posted on a website. Bring your GPS if you have one. You don't need one to enjoy this program. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins August 25.

14 "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.

15 "Teneriffe Weaving"

Sunday

\$2 plus \$10 for materials



Ages: 14 to adult ■
12:30-3:30 p.m.
members pay only \$10

Weave a nature design using teneriffe weaving techniques. The weaving may be hung on a wall or be used as the base for a basket. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins September 1.

28 "Getting To Know Goldenrod"

Ages: All ■

Saturday

\$2 for non-members



10:00-11:30 p.m.
free to members

We will explore the prairie at Oxley for this late blooming summer flower. It is home to many creatures. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins September 15.

October

5 "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.

12 "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.

12 "Field Sketches: Art in Nature"

Saturday

\$35.00 for non-members



Ages: 14 to Adult ■

10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
\$30.00 for members

Sketching--a form of visual note taking--is an invaluable tool for observing the world of nature around you. Field sketches are simple drawings done on location as we explore the trails at Oxley. We will capture still and moving subjects, learning how to emphasize their essential elements. Sketches can be used to document sightings, identify specimens or can be used as a reference for more detailed renderings. Bring a lunch, good walking shoes, a sketchbook or journal, pencil, eraser and a drink. Class is taught by Brenda Knapp. Meet at Oxley. Register any time with payment of fee.

26 "Fall Harvest Fun"

Saturday

\$2 for non-members



Ages: All ■

1:00-2:30 p.m.
free to members

We'll supply everything you need to create the best looking jack-o'-lantern on your block. Fabric scraps, yarn, paints and ribbons are just some of the things we'll have for your use. BYOP (bring your own pumpkin). Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins October 13.

\$2 for non-members, members free

Autumn Twilight

All Ages. All ■



Are animals more active when the moon is up?

Let's find out. Join us for a stroll on the trails at Oxley on an early October evening. Walks will begin at 7:30 p.m.

and end at 9:00 p.m. Groups (of 6 or more) may join us Wednesday, October 9. Groups may register beginning September 1. Families and individuals may join us Tuesday, October 15, with registration beginning October 6. We hope you will join us for an Autumn night walk.



SEPTEMBER

Volunteer Naturalist Training

Share your appreciation of nature with others! If you are 18 or older enroll now in our training program September 3-27. Learn how to lead groups for our fall season. No experience is required. For more information contact Oxley Nature Center.

Junior Naturalists

The Junior Naturalist program for 3rd through 5th graders can lead you to new discoveries with nature. If you can join us for adventures the 2nd Saturday of the month (September through May), please call us for enrollment information.

The Stump by Amy Morris

The stump had been there for many years. It had seen many seasons pass. Its auspicious beginning was not unlike that of many of its kind. Somewhere a squirrel was preparing for a cold winters day, engaged in the gathering and burying of acorns. Many of these concealed acorns the squirrel sniffed out--they provided sustenance to see him through to warmer spring days. He didn't find them all, however, and several remained nestled in the rich soil of the forest floor. One of these awakened and sprouted with the warming soil temperatures and spring rains. It sent a tentative shoot above its subterranean home. A tree began to grow.

Each season, each year, it continued to grow. Within, it carried the mark of history. Summer drought and winter freezes were etched upon it, recorded for those who could read the signs. The tree flowered and set fruit. It provided food and shelter for many that shared its space. Its roots reached down deep into the soil, seeking water and nutrients, holding the tree fast to the earth. Its trunk stretched upwards, branches reaching toward the sun, leaves soaking up life-giving energy.

Many children sought reprieve from the sun beneath its generous branches. Many theories and discoveries were shared about the complexity, and simplicity, of life. More squirrels buried its fruit, and more acorns were left to germinate when conditions were favorable. The tree stood tall and was witness to many things.

The tree never stopped giving sustenance to those around it. Even as it dropped leaves and branches, even as it dwindled to nothing but a stump, it continued to feed and shelter others. Children sat upon the stump as they explored the myriad of life around its base and within its crevices. Under its patient watch the seeds of understanding were sown. Descendants of the Red-headed Woodpecker that had laid her first clutch of eggs in the dying tree still fly amongst the branches of the great trees descendants. Saplings reach eagerly for the sky.

The stump slowly feeds itself to the soil that gave it life. The cycle of life continues.

