



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

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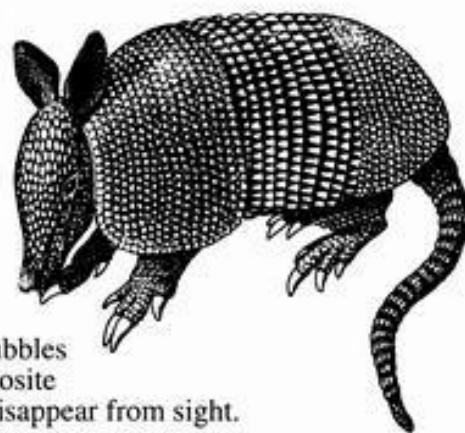
Reflections

by Eddie Reese

I never saw a woodchuck, or groundhog as they are also called, until I moved to Tulsa. In the plains of the Texas Panhandle and western Oklahoma where I grew up, woodchucks are scarce as fur on a frog. Apparently they weren't particularly plentiful around Tulsa until recently. The first woodchuck I ever saw was climbing a tree near Bird Creek in the Wildlife Study Area. I knew instantly what the critter was. I just had no idea woodchucks could climb trees. I was also surprised to see that he was soaking wet. It was a hot summer day. Apparently he had just come out of the creek. He was ten feet up in the tree when he spotted me and scurried down the trunk and dashed into his burrow. And what a burrow it was! Surveying the area I found four burrow openings on the bank surrounding a large cottonwood tree. I was impressed. This animal could excavate extensive tunnel systems, climb trees, and swim. I was kind of surprised he didn't just jump out of the tree and fly away. I learned a great deal about an animal I had never seen before in just a few minutes. I could have read about woodchucks in a book or maybe watched something about them on TV, but it wouldn't have been the same. I'm glad I took the time to go for a walk and see it for myself.

Another animal that surprised me was the wild turkey. Many years ago when I was much younger and on the school track team, I used to train by running off road on game trails around the granite hills near home. I surprised several animals on these runs. Once I rounded a bend in the trail and came upon a rattlesnake. Travelling too fast to stop or veer off to the side I leapt over the startled snake and kept going. It was just a few moments later that I saw a turkey in the trail ahead. Being a very alert bird she started running down the trail ahead of me. It was as if she wanted to race, and I was happy to oblige. At that time I was the fastest miler in the state of Oklahoma; surely I could outrun a goofy looking turkey. Even with the extra adrenalin from the rattlesnake encounter I was no match for her. I had no idea turkeys were so fast!

On another training run I startled an armadillo. Of course sneaking up on an armadillo is no feat. Anyone treading softly and patiently can walk close enough to touch one. I didn't get close before the armadillo was spooked. The armadillo, using its defense mechanism to startle a predator, jumped straight up in the air, maybe three feet. When he came down he took off running down the trail. Well of course I tried to outrun him. It didn't take long to tell I could easily outpace an armadillo, so I just paced along behind him. Presently the trail wound down by a stream. The armadillo quit the trail and plunged into the water! I was stunned as if mortally wounded. The stream was as clear as tap water. I could see the armadillo actually running across the bottom of the stream, which was ten or so feet across and maybe three feet deep. There were bubbles streaming from his nose as he crossed, and when he came out on the opposite bank he never broke stride. I just stood there in disbelief, watching him disappear from sight.



I have been fortunate to witness many other wonderful things. Most of them outside, whether in the woods or out on the prairie. I would have never seen them if I hadn't gotten off my duff, left the "things to do" list on the table, and got out there. Life's too short, those chores will be there when I get back. See you in the woods.

Nature Center Happenings

Oxley and Redbud Valley will be closed:

**Friday, July 4.
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>"

Oxley Nature Center's 3rd Annual Butterfly Count--Tuesday, July 1st, 2003



The 29th annual North American Butterfly Association (NABA) 4th of July butterfly counts track butterfly populations in Canada, the United States and Mexico. For the 3rd year, we will census populations at Redbud Valley, Oxley Nature Center, and Stuart Park. If you would like to help us spot and count butterflies anytime between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on **July 1st**, please call for more information. If you RSVP by June 20, participation is free. After June 20 the fee is \$6 per person.



Star Program

**\$2 for general public
free to members**

All ages welcome

♿ with advance notice

"Mars Watch"

**Wednesday, August 27,
8:45-10:00 p.m.**

We will enjoy the spectacle of the brilliant planet Mars in a dark sky. Bring something to sit on and binoculars if you have them. Flashlights should have a red filter. Meet at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve north of Pawhuska. Sign-up begins August 17.

Volunteers and Staff Celebrate Spring Season With Awards Dinner

On May 20 staff and volunteers gathered to eat a barbecue (provided by ONCA) and pot-luck dinner. All our volunteers have made this spring season a success with their enthusiasm and time. Several volunteers have reached significant milestones. Volunteers receiving awards:

Roger and Patsie Van Denhende-----Three years service


Jacques LaFrance and Bob Pugh-----Ten years service

Marilee Chambers and Ben and Bev Windham-----Fifteen years service

Mary Ellen Johnston received an award as outstanding volunteer who has contributed her efforts above and beyond usual expectations. **Thank you all volunteers!**

Programs and special events

July

5 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All 
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required



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

5 "Early Morning Deer Quest" Ages: All 
Saturday 7:00-8:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public free to members




We will go in search of the elusive white-tailed deer and her fawn. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins June 22.

12 "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All 
Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Free registration not required



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

13 "Carving a Rubber Stamp" Ages: All 
Sunday 2:00-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public free to members

You will need your own rubber stamp if you decide to hunt the nature center's new letterboxes. Please call for a materials list. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins June 29.

13 "Geocaching for Beginners" Ages: 12 & up 
Sunday 4:30-7:30 p.m.
\$30 for general public \$25 for members



Learn how to play this world-wide scavenger hunt game using a map and compass, and a GPS receiver. You will be using the nature center's equipment. Bring a hat and a water bottle. Wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Sign-up begins June 29.

26 "Summer Wildflowers at Redbud Valley" Ages: All 
Saturday 8:00-10:00 a.m.
\$2 for general public free to members




We'll go see, and smell, what's blooming along the shadier trails at Redbud Valley. Bring a hat and a water bottle. Sign-up begins July 13.

Welcome Summer Seasonals

We are happy to have Julie Monnot, Chris McFarland, and Brett Patterson to help us with maintenance, trail work, and summer groups. Welcome to our team!

August

2 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All 
Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
Free registration not required




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

9 "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All 
Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Free Registration not required



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

10 "Build a Pump-Drill" Ages: 9 & up 
Sunday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public free to members

Participants will construct an ancient hand-powered drill using natural, locally found materials. The "pump-drill" is used to drill beads or start a friction fire. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 27.

23 "Solar Graphics" Ages: All 
Saturday 10:30-11:30 a.m.
\$5 for general public \$3 for members



We will make "sun pictures" using special paper and treasures you find here at the nature center. We'll take advantage of the sun's energy to create original keepsakes. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins August 10.



Perseid Meteor Shower

Every August since 1864 an annual meteor shower leaves people gazing into the night sky for a glimpse of the "shooting stars" that streak across the heavens. These "shooting stars" are the remnants of a comet that left a trail of sand-grain size debris in the path of Earth's orbit in 1862. These particles burn up as they enter our atmosphere, creating a brief streak of light we call a shooting star. Take a friend or child with you where the skies are dark to enjoy this spectacular show.

Summer Workshops for Teachers at Oxley

July 8: WET in the City

This urban environmental education program for teachers (K-12) is to facilitate and promote awareness, knowledge and stewardship of regional water resources. This is a new program developed by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE), and is a joint project of the Mohawk Water Treatment Plant and the City of Tulsa. To register, call WITC at 591-4051 or email WITC@cityoftulsa.org.

Time: 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Bring a lunch.

Fee: \$10.00

July 22: Oklahoma Spirit Project

Join us to learn about Oklahoma's ecoregions, endangered species and conservation projects. A 150 page curriculum supplement, "Spirit of the Last Great Places", will include videos and hands-on activities. For information call Mary Coley at 446-6296 or email her at MMcint2415@aol.com.

Time: 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Bring a lunch.

Fee: \$10.00

July 29: "Sense of Place" Workshop

Regain your "Sense of Place" at this workshop designed to help you learn and care about the place that you live. An overview of "The Discovery Journal" and an on-site Oxley sensory hike will lead to discussions of geography, history, and biology. For information call Mary Coley at 446-6296 or email her at MMcint2415@aol.com.

Time: 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Bring a lunch.

Fee: \$15.00

August 4 & 5: Project Learning Tree & Project WILD

These two educational programs will be combined in an overnight workshop. Project WILD is a natural resources education program that emphasizes wildlife. Project Learning Tree uses the forest as a "window" into the natural world, helping young people gain an awareness and knowledge of the world around them, as well as their place within it. For information call Oxley Nature Center at 669-6644.

Time: 7:00 p.m.-8:00 a.m. Bring a snack to share.

Fee: \$20.00