



# Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 148

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## The Voice of the Coyote by Eddie Reese

Ever since I was a kid I knew I was not cut out to live in the city. I certainly knew I never wanted to. Whenever we visited relatives in the big town or actually lived there, I always felt surrounded and closed in like being stuffed in a box. It was such a relief to get out into the open spaces.

I was lamenting my current situation. All I wanted to do was go home. But there I was just sitting there waiting for the light to switch green; for the third time. It was





taking forever to get through this intersection. The assault on my senses increased the anxiety swirling around inside me. Exhaust fumes, the whine of tires on concrete, the thumping of someones' bass two cars behind me. It was all too much for a country boy.

If only I could hear a coyote sing I would be alright. When was the last time I'd heard them? The last night walk, that was it. It was dark and chilly and we had taken the Wildlife Study Trail. The two families I was walking with suddenly stopped and became very still. Somewhere not far away a lone coyote broke the stillness of that uncommonly quiet night. A couple of others joined in. Coyote song filled the river valley like mist. For a few minutes we listened and then it was over. You could see the wonder on the faces of the people. We decided they sounded happy that night but it was definitely a wild sound. To me it's the sound of

freedom, like honking Canada geese as they fly over or when the only sound you can hear is the wind in the cottonwood trees on a summer day.

It's moments like these that set the spirit free. But coyote song is my favorite. Coyote song is peculiar. When two coyotes sing a duet as they are fond of doing, they don't bark haphazardly or in unison. Together they gather up speed and produce such a torrent of yips and yaps that the two song dogs sound like an entire pack of animals. Whatever the reason for the singing, the effect on my soul is what I reach for. I consider us lucky, the city dwellers we have become, to have a place like the nature center where we can go and experience wonder, and leave the traffic and the city behind.

# Nature Center Happenings

 **We will be closed for the following holidays:** 

Tuesday, November 11,  
Thursday & Friday,  
November 27 & 28 &  
Wednesday & Thursday,  
December 24 & 25.

**Happy Holidays!**

## 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

\$5 for general public, \$3 for members, all ♣

### Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

November 15, 10:00-11:30 "Sock Walk"

We will learn about seed dispersal. Come prepared to meet some of these hitchhikers. Sign-up begins Sunday, November 2.

December 20, 10:00-11:30 "Winter Wildlife Holiday"

Come help us make edible treats for the wildlife at Oxley. Sign-up begins December 7.

### Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

November 15, 10:00-11:30 "Letterboxing for Kids"

Rubber stamps and pocket notebooks will be provided for the finders of Oxley Nature Centers' letterboxes. Sign-up begins Sunday, November 2.

December 20, 10:00-11:30 "Winter Forest & Friends"

We'll create a masterpiece as we learn who we can find in the winter forest. Sign-up begins Sunday, December 7.

**"Lunar Eclipse Watch"**  
Saturday, November 8,  
5:30-9:00 p.m.

If you can't join us tonight, try to watch the moon from wherever you are. The totality portion of the eclipse will be between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. Bring binoculars if you have them. Sunset: 5:19 p.m. and moonrise: 5:18 p.m. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins October 26.

## Star Programs

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

**All ages welcome**

♣ **with advance  
notice**

**"Planet Watch"**  
Thursday, December 11,  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Which bright point of light is a star, and which one is a planet? Maybe we'll spot a man-made satellite, too. Bring something to sit on and binoculars if you have them. Meet on the east side of Lake Yahola above the circle drive. ♣ make arrangements to arrive early. Sign-up begins November 30.

# Programs and special events

## November

1 "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.

1 "Fall Leaves at Redbud Valley" Ages: 5 & up ■  
 Saturday 9:00-11:00 a.m.  
 \$2 for general public free to members



Nature is shifting seasons. We will stroll the trail at Redbud Valley. What colors will we find on nature's palette: red, orange, yellow...? Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins October 19.

8 "Kid's Nature Card Design" Ages: 6-10 ■  
 Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.  
 \$7.50 for general public \$6 for members

Students will design and illustrate their own cards using natural objects as subject matter. Students will learn how to do basic greeting cards, pop-up cards, and how to letter a message within the card. Meet at Oxley. Fee must accompany registration, register at any time.

9 "Caveman Beds" Ages: 4 & up ■  
 Sunday 1:30-4:00 p.m.  
 \$2 for general public free for members

We will build a simple grass mat with tall prairie grasses. First we have to build a loom with string and sticks. This is a great project for a parent and child. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins October 26.

22 "Search for Hidden Homes" Ages: All ■  
 Saturday 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
 \$2 for general public free to members



Where does everyone go when it's cold outside? Come search for warm, snug places to hide from winter weather. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins November 9.

## December

6 "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.

6 "Searching for Frost Flowers" Ages: All ■  
 Saturday 9:00-10:30 a.m.  
 \$2 for general public free to members

If temperatures are mild, we'll look for the plants that make frost flowers. If it's cold, we might find the frost flowers themselves. We'll also pay attention to what plants are doing in late autumn. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins November 23.

27 "A Winter Walk" Ages: All ■  
 Saturday 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
 \$2 for general public free to members

Come for a winter stroll to enjoy the crisp, fresh air. We'll see if anyone is out and about or if they left signs and clues for us to find. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins December 14.

### Congratulations New Volunteers!

Nine people have successfully completed basic volunteer naturalist training and will be leading school tours this Fall:



Richard Alford, Shelly Cox, Su Davis, Michele Dziadik-Willingham, Mary Lou McGilbra, Kristen Melton, Janice O'Meilia, Jacquie Young and Stephenie Gifford.

People that have applied to volunteer in other areas are: Dennis Bridgewater, Richard Hembree, James Travis Miller, Sue Mooney, Rita Needham, and Cindy Witherspoon. We welcome everyone and are glad to have you with us!

## Through The Window

Imagine you had a library with large windows overlooking a pond, forest and prairie. During the summers' heat it is cool and during the winter a crackling fire often warms the room. Outside the windows a parade of life goes by. In March a pair of Canada Geese nest on the island in the pond, the female sitting and tucking in bits of vegetation as the male swims by on guard. On a single day in May, a bounty of birds come to drink and bathe in the water feature just outside the window. There are warblers, tanagers, indigo buntings, gold-finches, hummingbirds, cardinals, titmice, and chickadees. In addition to the birds that day, a skink and a woodchuck drop by. Frogs frequent the little pool too. Wildlife is attracted to the running water.

In the view out across the pond you can see turtles, snakes, and ducks swimming. Fish are jumping and dragonflies are hunting. Across the pond along the trail a mother woodchuck and six youngsters play and sun on the bank. In August a mother racoon and her young kit walk along the bank of the pond at the waters' edge and then swim across to the island where they explore. In late September a mother racoon passes by the windows several days in a row, and eventually returns with three youngsters in tow. They climb the large white pine outside the window, a little awkward, very cautious, and vocalizing encouragement to one another. The next day they dine on poke berries, reaching up and pulling the bright purple berries within reach.

The red berries of the green dragon compliment the color of the cardinal flower and goldenrod. On beyond into the prairie you may see a coyote or white-tailed deer. The prairie is resplendent with color the first of October. The big bluestem is a wave of russet color, punctuated by purpletop grass, white crowns- beard, goldenrod, yellow coreopsis and asters. Clouds of mist rise from the pond, softening the reflections of clouds in the still water. Butterflies appear to float by; sulphurs, whites, fritillaries and swallowtails. Monarchs dressed in orange and black are preparing for their long migration.

In winter the birdfeeder attracts a variety of birds; winter visitors and residents alike. Opossums also visit the birdfeeder. And there is a vole beneath his tunnels of dried grass that partakes of the feast. You may want to settle in with a good book or just reflect on the refuge nature finds here with us. You don't even have to leave the building. Imagine that.