

Oxley Nature Center

July/August, 2007

Volume 170

Program information 918-669-6644 -Oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us

- -Website at "http:www. oxleynaturecenter.org".
- -Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated. -Wheelchair accessible programs designated by & -Register 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated.

Mohawk Park Fee:

From April 1 to October 31, a\$2 fee per car will be charged on weekends between the hours of 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Members of Oxlev Nature Center and the Tulsa Zoo will get in free.

-Holiday Closing:

Wednesday, July 4.

Oxley Nature Center:

-Open daily, except most City holidays (see above). -Oxley gate open from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. -Interpretive building open from 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 12 noon-4:30 p.m. Sunday. -Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-Open Wednesday through Sunday, from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed. -Closed most City holidays. -Interpretive building will be open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Come visit us!

You Can Make A Difference, Become a Citizen Scientist

Do you want to do something good for your community, but you're not sure where to start? Do you have a desire to better understand the world around you? Enrich your life by taking part in a scientific adventure that sparks your interest. Better yet, bring along a friend or a child, and share a common interest together. Do good AND have fun!

Try citizen science, or volunteer environmental monitoring, and start collecting data on a variety of things; biodiversity, water quality, and air quality are only some of the possibilities. There are opportunities for people of all ages, skill levels, time commitments, and interests.

Dedicated participation by a large network of volunteers enables scientists to accomplish research objectives that may otherwise not be feasible. The partnership between the public and professional scientists is a vital component.

The longest-running, currently active citizen science project is probably the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, which began in 1900. Tulsa's Audubon chapter is very active, and if birds interest you, they can help you become involved in that project and others as well. Two teams count in Mohawk Park and often need help. Beginners are welcome.

The Cornell University Lab of Ornithology's Citizen Science Program runs a variety of projects. They publish scientific papers using data collected by volunteers. Perhaps you have participated in one of their projects already. These are citizen science projects you can do at home! Project Feeder Watch is where volunteers count birds that visit their feeders from November to April. Another is the Great Backyard Bird Count, where for 4 days last February, over 50,000 people reported observing more than 6 million birds of 600 species in their backyards!

Scientists answer questions about trends and patterns in populations using this data collected over vast geographic, time, and size scales. Such data collection is possible only by using large numbers of volunteers in a large number of areas over a period of years. This allows information to be used to monitor bird populations and shape conservation efforts, and often leads to smaller, more focused studies.

The Astronomy Club of Tulsa can help get you started with projects, too. Citizen scientists can collect data on eclipse observations and other events. Some have even reported new comets!

In Project BudBurst, scientists use data supplied by citizen scientists to produce maps of when plants bloom and leaf out all over the US. They then compare them to historical data to see how the nation's backyards, parks, and forests are changing. Data collected by plants lovers serve as an indicator of changes through time and across landscapes.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Diversity Program encourages citizens to participate in their Hummingbird Survey. "Your watchful eyes and survey participation help biologists learn more about the state's hummingbirds." Participants are asked to record the first and last observation of hummingbirds in their yards. We now know two species travel through Oklahoma and two nest here.

Journey North is an online program engaging over half a million students in North American schools in a global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change. Students K-12 track migration patterns of monarch butterflies, bald eagles, whooping cranes, hummingbirds, and other animals; as well as the budding of plants, changing sunlight, and other natural events. Students field observations are shared and entered into a global context. It is a remarkable exercise in citizen science participation.

A local conservation organization, Blue Thumb is a water pollution education program that uses volunteer monitoring of watersheds and streams. Participants gain an understanding of our water resources during its training program, and use newly learned skills to collect data.

What do you gain?

More time with a friend or family, new friends, new interests, a new understanding, the opening up of a whole new world, the sharpening of your senses and observations skills, a renewed sense of wonder and hope, a sense of satisfaction and achievement: these are only some of the possibilities.

What do we all gain?

Citizen scientists become better educated about conservation, making them more effective stewards within their own communities. Helping to gather as much information as possible allows decisionmakers to make effective and sustainable choices in planning for our environment and our futures.

Now that's a win-win situation!

When you are ready to give it a try, call us, we've got some butterflies that need counting (see pg. 4)!

Nature Center Happenings

\$2 for general public, free for members

Full Moon Walks Registration required, all ages, &

"Full Buck Moon"

Sunday, July 29, 7:00-8:30 p.m.



If we are stealthy and quiet this time of day is good for seeing deer. The male deer, or bucks, will be sporting their new, velvet-covered antlers on their foreheads. This spring's spotted fawns will be cavorting around their mothers. Will we find them at Oxley this evening, or something else?

"Sturgeon Moon"



Tuesday, August 28, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

This moon was named because it was a good time of year to cast lines for fish. Oxley is home to many aquatic creatures; fish, frogs, turtles, insects, birds, and mammals! Almost all the animals come to a water source on a regular basis, leaving traces of their visit. Let's see what we can find tonight.

Volunteer Awards Dinner

On Tuesday, May 22, Oxley Nature Center volunteers, family, friends, and staff gathered at the Tulsa Garden Center to celebrate with a potluck dinner and awards ceremony. Oxley Nature Center Association (our Friends Organization) provided the venue and the barbecue for this semi-annual event.

Our volunteers make it possible for us to serve the recreational and educational needs of Tulsa and surrounding communities.

This season the Schumann family received our outstanding volunteers award for their dedicated service to keeping the Coal Creek Trail, Blackbird Marsh, and other areas at Oxley free of trash. Coal Creek is one of our most difficult trails to maintain as new trash is washed in and deposited every time it rains or the water level fluctuates. John, Paula, and Michael (age 7) are among the many hard workers who help to ensure your walk is more pleasant, and our park is more beautiful!

Many Thanks to all of you for all you do! 💖





Seeds of Possibility by Amy Morris

Need some more distractions while you are driving that car from Tulsa to Oklahoma City? Put down that cell phone, that map you're reading, that hamburger and shake. Forget about applying makeup. Sit back, and ease into a road trip across our beautiful state. Could it have looked this way 100 years ago?

There are many organizations, communities and individuals that have been working hard to beautify our state by promoting the planting of wildflower plots along our roadsides. Large sums of money have been raised and donated to ODOT (Oklahoma Department of Transportation) to buy and plant seeds.

These seeds have been planted over the past years and have resulted in various wildflower plots along our highways. Some lonely stretches of asphalt have become explosions of color and new life, a beautiful respite for weary travelers and visitors to our state.

This spring has been an absolutely spectacular year for wildflowers! Urban gardens and wild spaces alike are awash in colors of all kinds: blues, yellows, whites, pinks, oranges, reds, purples, and the greens of native grasses.

Along I-40, a splash of wine cups, yarrow, spiderwort, milkweed, evening primrose, Indian paintbrush, and coreopsis livened the highway

through the countryside this spring. That is until it was mowed, while in full bloom no less! What happened! Why is ODOT mowing its own wildflower plots?

When one plants a seed, a multitude of responses begins, a chain reaction. A whole web of life is set in motion. The plant grows, flowers, fruits, and goes to seed. Some part of this process is bound to attract insects and other invertebrates, which in turn attracts those who find them to be a satisfying meal, a bird perhaps. And so on....

Could these narrow wildflower plots potentially crisscrossing our state represent wildlife corridors so desperately needed? Are they more than just colorful and pretty. Does the milkweed feed the migrating monarch and the salvia the migrating hummingbirds. Are they onto something here with the planting of each seed?

If you appreciate the wildflowers along our roadsides, and see a certain common sense in reducing the use of fossil fuels to mow them down, consider calling the Director of ODOT, Gary Ridley: 405-522-1800 or 405-521-4675. Color Oklahoma, with the Native Plant Society, is circulating a petition you may sign "To Save Our Wildflowers", which will be available to sign at Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley.

What do you envision tomorrow and 100 years from now on that road trip along that highway? Wildflowers perhaps?

Programs and Special Events

July August

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

A walk through the woods may turn up various vireos and woodpeckers, some gnatcatchers and chickadees. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

14 "Butterflies" Ages: All, & Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon Free registration not required

We may find an American Snout, a member of the Brushfoot butterfly family, or a variety of Skippers. Bring binoculars if you have them, and meet us at Oxley.

22 "Squash-Berry T-Shirts" Ages: All, & 2:00-3:30 p.m. \$5 for general public \$3 for members

Bring a light-colored t-shirt that you can turn into a work of natural wearable art. You will use fabric paint and various berries such as blackberries and blueberries for your individual design creation.

Come prepared to have fun and meet at Oxley.

Please register 48 hours in advance of class.

28 "Wildflower Walk"

Saturday

Ages: All, & 10:30-12:00 noon
Free no registration required

Join us at Oxley to see what is blooming in some of the wetter or more shaded areas at Oxley. We may see wild rose, jewelweed, trumpet creeper, starry campion, and smartweed.

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

Will we see sandpipers, herons, and egrets down by the lake, or the flash of an Indigo Bunting or a bright red Summer Tanager? Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

11 "Butterflies" Ages: All, & Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon Free registration not required

Is a Gray Hairstreak something you find in your hair one morning? Maybe, but here at Oxley it is one of the delicate Gossamer-wing butterflies. Join us to learn more and bring binoculars if you have them.

19 "Rainbow Walk"

Sunday

\$2:00-3:00 p.m.

\$2 for general public

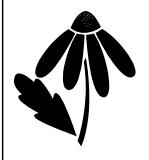
free for members

Do you know the meaning of ROY-G-BIV? We will explore a trail at Oxley and seek natural things showing the 7 different colors of the rainbow. Please register 48 hours in advance of class.

25 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All, &
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free no registration required

The prairie is alive with wildflowers. Thistle, white boneset, partridge pea, senna, yellow wingstem, aster, and passion vine are only some of the things in bloom. Join us at Oxley to enjoy the color.

Wildlife Habitat Garden To Inform Visitors



With a generous donation from the Tulsa Audubon Society, Oxley Nature Center is preparing garden beds around its interpretive building to plant demonstration gardens featuring wildlife-friendly native plants. Visitors will be able to get information on planting native plants to attract wildlife in their own backyards. A matching indoor exhibit is planned in the near future. Come get ideas for your habitat and watch our garden grow!



4th of July North American Butterfly Count

We need citizen scientists! Join us at Oxley on July 3rd to spot, count, tally, and/or identify butterflies. Information gathered will be used to supplement the NABA Summer Butterfly Count held annually in June and July.

Last July, 29 participants counted butterflies of 58 different species. The 2006 Tulsa count was in the top 12 counts for biodiversity, up there with the amazing counts of Mexico and California, the Patagonia and Ramsey Canyon Counts in Arizona, the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley Count in Texas, and the Kissimmee Prairie sanctuary count in Florida!

With 29 observers, the Tulsa Count showed we are meeting NABA's goal of raising public awareness and increasing both participation in counts and local interest in butterflies.

Date: Tuesday, July 3

Time: 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Participate in all or part of the count)

**Please call and <u>register in advance</u>. The \$3 fee will be waived if you register before June 30.

No experience is necessary. You will work in teams with experienced naturalists counting in different target areas. We need many sets of eyes and pointer fingers!

Who is our "Official State Butterfly"?

I am one of the largest butterflies, sporting long "tails". I am very graceful, and fly rather slowly. I often fly low over open fields and meadows looking for various clovers to nectar on. I have become quite used to living in suburban and urban areas, so you may find me in your garden or at your local park. Not only am I using my sense of smell to direct me to good nectar sources, but as a female I'm also looking for a suitable place to lay my eggs.

You might think I'm choosy, but I'll only lay my round, yellowish colored eggs on plants in the carrot family. That's because when my eggs hatch, that is what my caterpillars eat. They like lots of native and naturalized plants, like Queen Anne's Lace, but they also eat herbs like fennel, dill, and parsley (which you can plant to attract them)!

I must admit, my caterpillars are little eating machines. As they eat, they grow, shed their skin, eat, and grow some more. Each stage between a shed is called an instar, and each instar looks a little different. When they're big enough, about the size of your little finger, they are black, yellow/green, and white. If you disturb them, an orange, fleshy horn-like organ will emerge from behind their head and give off an odor foul enough to deter predators.

When the caterpillar is ready to form a chrysalis, it fastens its hindmost feet with silk and loops a tough silk thread behind its body, fastening the ends to a support such as a twig. It then sheds its skin and becomes a chrysalis. Finally, something emerges from the chrysalis. Fluids fill black wings dotted with yellow, blue and orange. Now I am finally ready to fly!

Who am I? (kcalB liatwollawS)

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