



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2013

Volume 218

On Giving Thanks - by Amy Morris

Oxley Nature Center:

- The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.

- Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.

- Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature

Preserve is closed:

all Mondays and Tuesdays.

- Open Wednesday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Hiking outside of these hours is not allowed.

- Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

- Closed most City holidays.

** Holiday Closings:

Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

** Monday, November 11, Thursday and Friday, Nov. 28-29. Tuesday and Wednesday, December 24 and 25 and Wednesday, Jan. 1.

Program information:

- 918-669-6644

- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org

- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".

Mailing address:

Box 150209, Tulsa, OK 74115

***Register for classes 48 hours** in advance, some classes require supplies and have limited enrollment.

- Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.

- Most programs are stroller/ wheelchair accessible.

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The geese fly over in formation, heralding the changing season. Their voices echo as if from another time, another place. Do you remember? This is a timeless passage, a touchstone. This is a moment of grace.

The sun rises slowly over the horizon, easing the chill in the air. The children are bundled in their coats and mittens, their breath like dragon fire as they run through the tall grasses. The eight foot bluestem bows before them, marking their passage, then springs back in place. The tops dance in the cold air. Voices are muffled. What world is this? Where children and nature mingle in unbridled joy ...

The gifts we receive are hidden in everyday things. They are in the small things that sustain our forest, prairie and wetlands. Everything has its place and its purpose: its position in the web, its minute intricacy, or its in-your-face grandeur. It is life.

There are days here when the voices of excited children can be heard, and days when the quiet is a balm to the soul. Each day brings special gifts.

The ubiquitous roly poly is often a child's connection to nature, even if that child lives in a concrete jungle. Somewhere, tucked deep beneath a rotting log in the warmth of leaf litter, this life form has survived and triumphed against the odds.

I am grateful for the familiar roly poly, because in my world, when I am trying to introduce children to the wonder of nature, there is often fear: of wild animals, forests, insects, the unknown. If I can make one connection, break through that barrier of fear or indifference, there is a chance to inspire wonder.

It is that one flicker of interest, one glimmer of insight, that eases the way. One tug touches the heart and makes my spirits soar. Now, they gather round me as we examine the deer tracks in the softest of snow. One child looks up, catching my gaze; "This is the best day of my life," she says.



Nature Center Happenings

Winter Solstice Celebration

Join us Saturday, December 21 at Oxley Nature Center from 6:30-8:30 p.m. to celebrate the changing of the season!

The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year, and is followed by the day the sun begins to return to the Northern Hemisphere. This seasonal change is cause for great celebration. Join us for an evening walk!

Ages: All, \$2 for general public, free for members
Please register in advance

Third Annual New Year's Eve Celebration

Begin a new tradition with family and friends.

We'll take an evening walk to welcome in the New Year! Following our hike, we will warm up in front of a bonfire or fireplace to share stories. Hot chocolate, apple cider, and the fixings for s'mores will be available. With weather permitting, we will have telescopes set up to view Jupiter and its moons and our own moon's craters.

Monday, December 31, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Ages: All, \$5 for general public, \$3 for members
Please register by December 26, spaces are limited

2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

Saturday, Nov. 9, 10:00-11:30 a.m. & 1:00-2:30 p.m.

"Making Tracks"

Who lives here? Come for a hike and see how many different kinds of tracks you can find. What can they tell us? We will make some plaster casts.

There will be no December Class.

Ages: All, Free, registration not required.
The same program will be offered morning and afternoon.

Natural Babies, Natural World

Monday, November 4, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

"A Few of Our Favorite Things"

What are some of your favorite things to find and do when you are outdoors? Join us at Oxley to try ours!

Monday, December 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

"Nature in Winter"

What do plants and animals do when the weather turns cold? What do you do?

Ages: 1 through 5 years only, with caregiver
\$2 for general public, free for members
Please register in advance

Full Moon Walks

**Full Beaver Moon: Sunday, November 17,
7:00-8:30 p.m.**



**Full Cold Moon: Wednesday, December 18,
7:00-8:30 p.m.**

\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages.
***** Please register in advance *****

Volunteer Naturalists Graduate!

Congratulations to our new Volunteer Naturalists who graduated from the fall training program and are now leading school groups, night walks, pathfinder tours, and other tours:

Meg Bilyeu, Maryhelen Hagge, Ron Hull, Janet O'Leary, Julie Ann Raines, Mike Rhoades, Mark Rusling, Ken Seidel, and Susan Stowe.

New trail work and burn crew members : Alex Ramsey, Anne Brockman, Anthony White, Bambi Murphy, Becky Grigg, Chris Evans, DK Davis, Donald Schlack, Kathryn McGraw, Katie Smith, Kirsten Havig, Marilyn Clarke, Matt Maloney, Philip Ruth and Zoe Cieslak.

New marketing/PR committee: Mary Coley, Roger Bey, Russ Doden, Sapna Raje, Shanna Lewis, and Vicky Slabaugh.

Prefieldtrip presentations at schools: Mary Kenkel and Susan McCollum

Volunteer Visitor Center Hosts: Kim Owens and Susan Stowe

Thank You!

Programs and Special Events

November

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

Join us for birding at Oxley.
Bring binoculars if you have them.

16 "Making Fire" **Ages: 10 to Adult**
Saturday **10:00-12:00 noon**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**
 registration is required

Learn how to make fire with hand drill, bow drill, and flint and steel. Meet at Oxley.

17 "Geology Walk at RBV" **Ages: 8 to Adult**
Sunday **1:30-3:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join us at Redbud Valley for a geology walk. This walk is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.



23 "Botany Walk" **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

What will we find blooming or growing along the trail?
Meet at Oxley.

24 "Cattail Baskets" **Ages: 10 to Adult**
Sunday **1:00-2:00 p.m.**
\$5 general public **\$2 for members**
 registration is required

We will weave a simple basket using cattail leaves and snailseed vines. Meet at Oxley.

December

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

Join us for birding at Oxley.
Bring binoculars if you have them.



21 "Winter Solstice Walk" **Ages: All**
Saturday **6:30-8:30 p.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**
 registration is required

The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year, and is followed by the day the sun begins to return to the Northern Hemisphere. This seasonal change is cause for great celebration. Join us for an evening walk!
Meet at Oxley.

22 "Geology Walk at RBV" **Ages: 8 to Adult**
Sunday **1:30-3:00 p.m.**
Free **registration is required**

Join us at Redbud Valley for a geology walk. This walk is not stroller or wheelchair accessible.

28 "Botany Walk" **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

What will we find today? Have the trees all lost their leaves? Join us at Oxley to find out.

****Please register 48 hours in advance of classes unless stated otherwise.
A minimum of 6 registrants is required.**

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers)

Date: Saturday, November 16 Time: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Cost: \$20 for Curriculum and Activity Guide

Project WET is a curriculum and activity guide for classroom teachers, home school teachers, as well as Boy & Girl Scout leaders, for kindergarten through twelfth grades, and uses content matter from science, social studies, language arts, math, and art. The integrated design of the activities will show you how to enhance your existing curriculum area with many interesting inquiry approaches to learning. The collection of innovative, water-related activities are hands-on, easy to use, and fun!

Participants should bring a sack lunch and drink, and dress comfortably to do both in-classroom, as well as outdoor activities, at the beautiful Oxley Nature Center site. Snacks and all materials needed will be provided.

Register for this workshop that is relevant to the Common Core curriculums, by calling the lead facilitator Deidra Wakeley, 918-745-9264.

In Praise of Persimmons -by Amy Morris

We have several persimmon trees at Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve. In fact, these trees can be found throughout Eastern Oklahoma. They are one of the last trees to leaf out in the spring and the first to lose their leaves in the fall. The tree's dark checkered bark makes it stand out, especially if it is heavy with fruit. Persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*, is the northernmost New World member of the ebony family.



It is the bright orange, slightly wrinkled fruit that interests me; and every opossum, raccoon, fox, coyote, deer, and fruit eating bird around! Get it before it is ripe and your mouth will pucker in anguish, due to the astringent tannins. But at that moment of ripeness, when it is just soft and the skin is wrinkled, it has a sweet, creamy taste all its own.

The fruit can be used in many ways. I like to eat when it is just ripe, as do many residents of the nature center. This, the largest native berry in North America, is very nutritious. It contains the enzymes papain and bromelain (good digestive enzymes), protein, glucose, vitamins A and C, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron, copper, and manganese. Did I mention great flavor?

It can be processed to make bread, pancakes, pudding, syrup, fruit leather and dried fruit. Pulp can be used to make jelly, beer, and wine. The 1 to 8 seeds (8 seeds!) were used as buttons by the Confederate Army during the American civil war. They were also ground and roasted as coffee extenders, and were squeezed to produce an oil. I have used green persimmons to produce both a durable ink and dye.

With all these potential uses, I still like them best out of hand, when I am strolling through the woods. And I always look for opossum in the tree, slaking his hunger.