



Wildlife Study Area Cleanup Volunteers 2019

## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center

### July - August 2019 Newsletter

The Summer months of July and August this year are going to be different than usual. Because of the recent floods and the resulting trash devastation in the Wildlife Study Area of Oxley Nature Center, the plants and animals that live here will be repairing, rebuilding, perhaps even re-locating new food and habitation. This summer will be a time of change and new growth. As we repair Oxley with the help of all of our wonderful staff and volunteers we look forward to observing the amazing adaptations our nature friends will achieve.



photo Steve Doak

## Two Lessons (Re)Learned from the May 2019 Flood

*By Karen Harris, Volunteer Naturalist*

### 1. Everyone Lives Downstream

Nature centers like Redbud Valley and Oxley are outdoor classrooms. When I taught Ecology, my students took their final exam at Redbud Valley. One of the questions involved riparian areas. It asked why most of the trees in the valley were mid-successional softwoods rather than the dominant hardwoods found further up the hill. When they saw the big sycamore undercut by Bird Creek, they knew the answer. As streams meander back and forth across the flood plain, they alternately erode one bank undercutting trees like the sycamore and deposit silt and sand on the other bank knocking down and burying vegetation there. This meandering continually sets back succession to earlier shrub and softwood stages and, over the years, deepens the valley floor. When streams are channelized, levees built, and hard surfaces like parking lots and rooftops go in upstream, the water runs off faster and the meandering stream cuts through the land much more rapidly. Of course, the speed is further increased by heavier rain events. The natural process became crystal clear recently in the Wildlife Study Area near Bird Creek. That area of Oxley will remain closed until trails can be cleared and rerouted.

On the positive side, because Oxley is a natural flood plain area, it provided open space to retain and sponge up the floodwaters, slowing the flow, and protecting areas further downstream. While repair of amenities at Oxley such as the boardwalk and trails are time-consuming and require hard work, they are far less costly to humans than damaged homes or lost lives. Leaving riparian areas and flood plains green provides a buffer against floods further downstream. Protecting riparian buffers by restricting development is a logical conclusion from this lesson.

### 2. Mother Nature Bats Last

When a raging Bird Creek washed out the South bank just inside the Nature Center gate, it released tons of garbage buried there in the 1960s. That created a tremendous mess of un-decomposed trash including plastic bread wrappers hanging from shrubs and trees and cans and bottles exposed on the ground. As long-time ONCA board member Dick Sherry pointed out, burying garbage in a flood plain was a mistake. Staff and volunteers are left to clean up a mess that should never have been made. If we think we can throw Mother Nature a garbage curveball "away" we are mistaken. She has shown us that there is no "away" and she proved it by reaching out and batting a line drive of our stuff right back at us.

If we can remember this lesson, we can learn to work with Mother Nature instead of trying to compete against her. Land use should take into account that flood plains flood! Reduce, re-use, recycle and dispose of waste responsibly. We can either learn this lesson from the flood or take yet another line drive to the shins.

Oxley remains a place for enjoying nature, taking a quiet walk in the woods,

studying birds and plants and insects, and restoring one's soul. It also teaches us big lessons about our place in nature.  
See you on the trail.

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### **Volunteer Naturalist Training Begins in September**

Do you enjoy being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others? We are offering Volunteer Naturalist training throughout September. We are looking for weekend, evening and weekday volunteer staff.

During training you will become familiar with our trail system as you explore the prairie, wetland, and forested areas. We emphasize leadership skills and interpretive methods. Upon completion of training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of visitors on weekday, evening or weekend tours. Most tours are school field trips during October and May. You may also serve as a Visitor Center Host or Outreach Volunteer. If you are 18 or older, please call for more details about the training schedules. 918-596-9054

No previous experience is necessary.

**Weekday sessions:** September 3- September 26 two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon.

If **evenings and weekends** are more convenient, you may attend training on evenings and weekend days until requirements are met.

Training schedules are flexible, and dependent on number of participants. Please call for details.

### **Certified Interpretive Host Training Workshop**

When: September 6 & 7 2019, 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

Where: Oxley Nature Center Instructor: Donna Horton, CIT

The National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Host program offers a two-day professional certification designed for new hires, seasonal staff, volunteers, maintenance workers, receptionists, law enforcement or anyone who has public contact but does not present formal interpretive programs to the public. It covers the basics of interpretation, how to provide great customer service and hospitality, and how you can use informal interpretation to support your agency's mission as you interact with visitors. Must be 16 or older.

For more information contact:

Donna Horton, Trainer: DonnaHortonCIT@att.net, 918-587-0522.

## **Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - Programs in July**

**To register for programs, ask questions, or anything else, please call us at 918-596-9054**

*1 July "4th of July Butterfly Count"* Ages: 12 to adult; Monday 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.; Registration is required, Free

Join us to spot, count and identify butterflies at Oxley. Citizen scientists participate in local counts, increase personal knowledge, and raise public awareness. You will be contributing to valuable data about butterfly populations. Participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water, hat, insect spray and binoculars if you have them. No experience is necessary. You'll work in teams with experienced naturalists.

*6 July "Saturday Morning Birding"* Ages: All; Saturday, 8:00-9:45 a.m.; Free, Registration not required

Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

*13 July "Discovery Kids! What Color is Nature?"* Ages: 3, 4 and 5 + caregiver; Saturday, 10:00-11:30 a.m.; Registration is required Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

We will take a nature walk at Fawn Grove and gather green leaves of different shapes and sizes. We may also gather a few flowers of different colors. Afterward we will make chlorophyll collage prints with our leaves!

*16 July "Full Buck Moon Walk"* Ages: All; Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Registration is required; \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

Are the bucks beginning to grow out their antlers? Will they make themselves known tonight? Join us for nocturnal explorations of the trails.

*20 July "Butterfly Walk"* Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon ; Free, Registration not required

So many butterflies! American Ladies, Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, Red Admirals and hairstreaks! What will we see today? All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

*20 July "Moth Magic"* Ages: 12 to Adult; Saturday, 7:30 p.m.- Midnight Participants must enter Mohawk Park by 9:00 p.m.; Registration is required, Donations are Accepted

It is National Moth Week. Join us as we light up the night to see what is attracted to sheets and bait trees in three different areas at Oxley. We'll have a short program about moths and what makes these beautiful animals so unique. Then we'll go out and see who comes to the lights! Join us for all or part of this adventure.

*27 July "Botany Walk"* Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon; Free, Registration not required

How did the rain and floods impact the flora of Oxley? Join us for our botany walk at Oxley to find out!

## **Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - Programs in August**

*3 August "Saturday Morning Birding"* Ages: All; Saturday, 8:00-9:45 a.m.; Free, Registration not required

Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

*8 August "Volunteer Roundup"* Ages: 18 and Up; Thursday, 10:00 a.m.-noon OR 7:00-9:00 p.m.; Registration is requested

Would you like to share your love of nature? We offer many different opportunities where you may share your special skills, receive training, work on our trail system, introduce children to nature and so much more. Join us at one of these informational meetings. Meet veteran volunteer staff, go for a short trail hike (the moon is full tonight) and have your questions answered. We look forward to meeting you! Call 918-596-9054.

*10 August "Discovery Kids! "Magic Mud"* Ages: 3, 4 and 5 + caregiver; Saturday, 10:00-11:30 a.m.; Registration is required Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

*"The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful."* e.e. cummings Playing in mud is a joyful experience that can also make you healthier. How mud is made? Let's experiment by making mud pies and creating our own magic mud paintings. Wear your grubby clothes. Mud will be messy.

*16 August "Full Sturgeon Moon Walk"* Ages: All; Friday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Registration is required; \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

Currently bucks are beginning to grow out their antlers. Will they make themselves known tonight? Join us for nocturnal explorations of the trails. The moon rises at 9:14 p.m.

17 August "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon ; Free, Registration not required

The butterflies are out and about! What will we see today? All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

24 August "Botany Walk" Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon; Free, Registration not required

How do plants adapt to the heat of summer? Join us for our botany walk at Oxley to find out!

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## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center Hours

It costs \$2 per car from April through October to enter Mohawk Park on weekends unless you are a member of Oxley Nature Center or the Tulsa Zoo.

Please note: Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Preserve will be closed Thursday, July 4th.

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

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is open Friday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The visitor center is open from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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