



## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center

### September - October 2019 Newsletter

So much has changed in the past two months after the flood, after the clean-up, and after new growth. You will be as happy as we are to see how the Nature Center has sprung back to life and charged ahead, giving us new vistas, new favorite spots, new places to enjoy.



Come sit a spell

[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.



Knuckles

## Getting to Know "Knuckles"

Bryan Tapp

One of the remarkable things about Oxley Nature Center – aside from the fact that it is 800 acres of urban wilderness staffed by some of the most remarkable people you will ever meet – is that with a little time and patience it is possible to “get to know” and understand some of the wildlife in the Preserve. Most memorable to me, is getting to know a Great Blue Heron that I call ‘Knuckles’ and watching a Red Shouldered Hawk grow, fledge and become a frequent sight along the trails and near the swamp, and watching fawns grow up, and have fawns of their own – I still see that hawk on occasion. The Preserve is haven for life at all scales, and hikes during the year show the full range of behaviors over the seasons. It has been a blessing to fall in love with the Great Blue – Knuckles. I first met the

bird in spring 2016 while hiking to recover from open heart surgery, and noticed that this one heron had a damaged toe. It was incredibly tolerant of human proximity, if you moved slowly, were quiet and respectful (*I always talk to the bird, ask permission to take photos, and back away if it shows any signs of stress*). Over the three years, I have taken several hundred photos of this bird with its amazing range of graceful poses. During sessions, it will sometimes come so close that I can no longer focus, instead I just watch and listen, and enjoy the peaceful focus that it exudes as it fishes. I have literally fallen in love with this bird, and seek it out at every visit. It is in the Preserve frequently. When the bird was attacked this spring by a large snapping turtle in the swamp near the beaver lodge, it looked like it might be lost. That was heart wrenching to see and hear. I managed to take several photos of the struggle and was thrilled when the bird managed to escape and recover (yes, I cried). Knuckles has given me some of my best and most memorable photos. This remarkable bird is likely a favorite of many who visit Oxley and notice this beautiful animal along Coal Creek or in the swamp. Beyond the photos and the grace, there are generations of juvenile Great Blue Herons that share the distinctive markings and personality traits. These, I term Anak. They too are tolerant of human proximity if care is taken. At present, I think I recognize three offspring; the youngest flew into the swamp last week, still a bit clumsy and tripping over its feet, but with those classic markings. I hope that all visitors to Oxley have the chance to learn, absorb some of the beauty and peace, and become familiar with some of the wildlife and witness the changes over time in the Preserve. As always, in a natural setting, please take away only memories and photos, and leave only footprints.

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

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

### *7 September "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.

### *9 September "Natural Babies! Preparing for Fall?"*

Ages: 1- 5 + caregiver; Monday, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Registration is required; Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

Days are getting shorter and the weather is getting cooler. Autumn will soon be here. How do plants prepare for fall and how do we? Let's explore Meadow Lark Prairie to discover the plants growing there. What colors will we find?

### *13 September "Full Harvest Moon Walk"*

Ages: All; Friday, 7:00-8:30 p.m.; \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

This is the full moon nearest the autumn equinox and a micro moon. The season is changing. It is a time to gather crops and supplies for winter. Join us to explore the trails. Let's harvest some memories tonight.

### *14 September "Junior Naturalists"*

Ages: 8-12 years; Saturday, 10:00-12:30 p.m.; Registration is required; Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session; Meet at the Fawn Grove at Oxley.

Come join the Junior Naturalists at Oxley Nature Center for a morning of adventure and nature connection! Guided by the changing seasons and our own curiosity, we will hike, journal, tell stories, play games, craft, learn wilderness skills, and practice good park stewardship. Come to all our meetings or the one that fits your schedule.

### *21 September "Butterfly Walk"*

Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon; Free; Registration not required



Have the Monarchs begun their migration south? Join us to spot skippers and hairstreaks and other winged beauties feeding and pollinating fall wildflowers! All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

*21 September "Fall Butterfly Count"*

Ages: 12 to adult; Saturday 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.

*28 September "Botany Walk"*

Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon; Free, Registration not required  
Many of our beautiful autumn wildflowers are blooming now. Join us for our botany walk at Oxley to find out!

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

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*5 October "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.

*12 October "Junior Naturalists"*

Ages: 8-12 years; Saturday, 10:00-12:30 p.m.; Registration is required; Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.; Meet at the Fawn Grove at Oxley.  
Come join the Junior Naturalists at Oxley Nature Center for a morning of adventure and nature connection! Guided by the changing seasons and our own curiosity, we will hike, journal, tell stories, play games, craft, learn wilderness skills, and practice good park stewardship. Come to all our meetings or the one that fits your schedule.

*13 October "Full Hunter's Moon Walk"*

Ages: All; Sunday, 7:00-8:30 p.m.; \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members  
The days are growing shorter and the sky is growing dark a little earlier each day. Join us to hunt for crepuscular creatures that step out into the night. The moon rises at 4:07 p.m.

*14 October "Natural Babies: "Who's There?"*

Ages: 1-5 + caregiver; Monday, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Registration is required; Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.  
Who is awake at night and who is awake during the day? When do you sleep? We will discuss who is diurnal or nocturnal. On our walk we will keep our eyes open to see if we can find nests or burrows where animals could be hiding.

*19 October "Butterfly Walk"*

Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon ; Free, Registration not required  
Join us for the last butterfly walk of the year. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

*26 October "Botany Walk"*

Ages: All; Saturday, 10:30-noon; Free, Registration not required  
The season is changing, and days are becoming shorter. How does this affect plant life? Join us for the 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.

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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