



Winter Wetlands | Bryan Tapp

## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center

### January - February 2020 Newsletter

Some people love Spring, some the Fall, but Winters at Oxley Nature Center are magical! Frost flowers bloom at your feet in the grasses, friendly deer show their subtle coloration, and mysterious, misty mornings abound. What will you see on your next adventure?



Winter at Oxley Nature Center - Photos | Bryan Tapp



Lauren and Chet Fraser enjoying Ramona's "Natural Babies" class

During the month of December, Ramona Jackson's "Natural Babies" class held at Oxley Nature Center celebrated the cold weather. Her group of 1-5 year olds and their mothers and fathers explored the ways that people and animals spend their time during the colder months. The group took a walk in the woods and worked together to create snow globes.

Ramona has been teaching her "Natural Babies" for many years and it remains one of the most popular classes Oxley offers to the public. Currently this class is offered the second Monday of the month from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. and is taught year round. Little ones learn about the flora and fauna at Oxley through song, crafts, walks and games.

This is a really fun and interesting class for the little ones and is open to the public, do you know someone who might enjoy it?

## Two Reflections on Time

By Karen Harris, Volunteer Naturalist

Back in October, I read an argument for having year-round Daylight Savings Time. The writer said it would give us more daylight. I'm guessing that came from someone who spends most days indoors, isn't paying attention, and/or was misled by the name Daylight Savings Time, which is a misnomer because it saves us neither daylight, nor time. I do agree, however, that keeping one time system is a good idea but for different reasons. Springing forward and falling back forces our biological clocks to adjust two times a year and makes most of us tired and cranky. And there's that inconvenience of changing all the dang clocks.

Why not keep our clocks the same and pay closer attention to the change in amount of daylight during the year? I love making note of the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes and the Summer and Winter Solstices. The deck railing at our cabin has three corners that mark the location of the sun as it rises over the horizon at the two solstices and the equinox. Just a few days ago, on December 21, I watched as the sun came up over the right most corner and celebrated our turn toward spring. Soon there will be a crescendo of birdsong at dawn, the first woodland wildflowers will burst forth, and somewhere around the Spring Equinox



the buds, already present on the dogwood twigs, will open. None of that depends on how we set our clocks. The earth's tilt and orbit around the sun combine to cause the daylight cycle. I don't wish for more daylight, but I do hope for more time to experience the glorious seasonal changes that occur because of its cycle.

That brings me to a second reflection. For me, these seasonal changes seem to be occurring faster and faster over the years. I have a young friend who recently turned seven. She thinks the time between birthdays is an eternity. As I approach seven-ty, birthdays seem to occur sometime between breakfast and lunch. Why is that? Einstein said time flows at a different rate depending on where we are. He had some proof involving a clock on a train. Well, I'm not on a train and I never understood Einstein anyway so I came up with my own explanation. I think I experience a year differently than my young friend does because it is a much smaller fraction of the time I've been around. It's 1/7 of her total experience and approximately 1/70 of mine, so from my perspective, a year is shorter. That makes me wonder if other creatures experience time the way we do. We know daily animal activities are light dependent, some nocturnal, some diurnal, and some crepuscular. Other activity patterns follow lunar and seasonal cycles. But do carolina wrens or a river otters have mental constructs similar to our minutes and hours? What is a year to a 300 year-old post oak? How could we set up an experiment to find out? Humans need clocks to coordinate our activities but I'll bet we'd be better off not changing them twice a year. Instead, let's celebrate the changes in day length and come to Oxley during the various seasons. Gate is open from 8am-5pm.



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

**Call 918-596-9054 for information or to register (please register 48 hours in advance)**

*4 January "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.

*10 January "Full Wolf Moon Walk" Ages: All*  
Friday, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

\$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

Our full moon walks are something to howl about! Start your New Year right with a night hike through a winter wonderland. We'll stalk quietly as wolves to discover the magic of woods and wetlands.

*11 January "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 January "Natural Babies! Mid-Winter Magic" Ages: 1- 5 + caregiver*

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

Registration is required Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

January is cold and marks the middle of the winter season. How do you keep warm?

How do you think the animals are keeping warm? We will walk the trails and see if there any of the hibernating animals are awake and looking for food.

*25 January "Botany Walk" Ages: All*

Saturday, 10:30-noon

Free, Registration not required

What happens to plant life during these colder winter days? Join us for the botany walk at Oxley to find out!

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

**Call 918-596-9054 for information or to register (please register 48 hours in advance)**

*1 February "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 February "Junior Naturalists" Ages: 8-12 years*

Saturday, 10:00-12:30 p.m.

Registration is required Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

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.

*9 February "Full Snow Moon Walk" Ages: All*

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

\$3 for members, \$5 for non-members

Will there be snow? Bundle up in layers and join us for a walk through forests of trees, their bare branches reaching for the glittering sky. What will we find as we engage our senses?

*10 February "Natural Babies: "February's Promise" Ages: 1-5 + caregiver*

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

Registration is required Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.

February is finally here, and birds are returning to seek safe places to build their nests. It won't be long, and Spring will be here. Let's celebrate by creating some colorful stick art. Winter in the woods has been absent of pretty colors. We will add some colorful paint and yarns to our sticks and take them home to remind us that Spring is coming.

*22 February "Botany Walk" Ages: All*

Saturday, 10:30-noon

Free, Registration not required

We are on the other side of winter and headed toward spring. Will we find some fresh green growth under leaves and on tree branches? Let's find out!

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## Mary K. Oxley Nature Center Hours

Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve will be closed Wednesday, January 1st, and Monday January 20th.

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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