



Oxley Nature Center

September/October, 2008

Volume 177

Mohawk Park charges a \$2 fee per car on weekends April through October for non-members.

Oxley Nature Center:

The Oxley Nature Center Interpretive building will be closed for renovations until further notice.

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

-Closed: Monday, September 1

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

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

-The Preserve is closed all Mondays and Tuesdays.

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

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

-Closed most City holidays,

Program information 918-669-6644

-Oxley@ci.tulsa.ok.us

-Website at "http:www.oxleynaturecenter.org".

Please register 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated. Some classes require special supplies and allow limited enrollment.

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

-Most programs are wheelchair accessible.

So, What Are You Afraid Of?

By Amy Morris

I'll confess. With me it was those black field crickets that stole into our coffee cups in our kitchen cupboards. Yikes! And June bugs. Playing softball in the summer at night under lights left me leaping into the shadows to avoid the bombardment of those velcro missiles. I was terrified.

These critters were new to my world, alien. Their strangeness, their movements, startled me. Having recently moved from Canada, I was unprepared for the rich biodiversity of an Oklahoma summer.

At fifteen, I was familiar with grasshoppers, daddy-long-legs, spiders, flies, bees, and butterflies. But nothing prepared me for the incredible invertebrate fauna that inhabited my new found home. Can you say SCARY?

I'll admit. It took a while. Quite a while in fact. A tenuous truce was drawn. I learned to turn the cups open side down in the cupboards. I stopped plucking caterpillars off the parsley. I tried to resist the almost automatic frantic jolting of my body every time I got "buzzed" by an insect going about it's business.

Slowly, "*they*" began to win me over. The miniscule, the miraculous, the mysterious multitudes: insects and their kin, the spiders.

Around me is a world literally buzzing with life. The seasonal symphony in Oklahoma begins with the stridulations of grasshoppers, katydids, and crickets, and builds to the crescendo of cicadas. The night songs fill the world with depth and information. These are love songs and insect talk. Who knew!

There is amazing drama everywhere. It is there for any attentive observer.... life unfolding, bigger than any movie mogul can dream up any day. Creatures of incredible diversity in behavior, color, size, and bizarre, downright "other-worldly" forms.

Overcoming fears and changing attitudes takes time, and, more importantly, someone that can help provide a fresh perspective and appreciation. That someone could be **you**.

Within yourself, cultivate a willingness to be open to something so different from yourself, so foreign, as to take your breath away. Then stand back and patiently observe. There is always something to be found... in the water, on plants, underground, in the air. Prepare to be delighted, even shocked.

What is more enchanting than the flickering, flashing dances of fireflies on a summer's night? Or as intriguing as the spider's silken web of extraordinary strength, executed with astonishing beauty and brevity of resources (they recycle their silk)! What about color? Marvel at iridescent rainbow bright tiger beetles and intricately patterned butterflies.

I looked up the word "crawly" and "crawl" in the thesaurus: experiencing a repugnant tingling sensation. Now wait a minute! Isn't this just a matter of perception? What about using tickly? How would that change your outlook,...with one simple word change? Experience a tickly tingling sensation. Now that's more like it.

Have you ever seen an inchworm crawling up a child's arm? It's measuring that child for a new set of clothes! It's all in how it is presented. The threat disappears, imagination kicks in, and the child's world opens up to all kinds of new ideas and opportunities.

Yes, a person's curiosity truly can "get the best of them". Or bring OUT the best in them. And isn't that a good thing? *They*, the countless insects we share this planet with, are out there waiting to be discovered. What are you afraid of? If it's mini beasts, grab your inner child and go explore. Look into their world, and prepare to be amazed.

Nature Center Happenings

\$2 for general public, free for members

Kid's Saturday Programs

Meet at the Tulsa Zoo Helmerich Center

September 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Please register in advance

October 11, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5)

Each child must be accompanied by an adult.

"Wee World" What will we find when we inspect the variety of plant and insect life in a micro habitat?

Adventure Club (Ages 6-8)

"Floaters, Swimmers, and Divers" You go to a pool for fun - what if you lived there? We'll look closely at the little ones who do just that.

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5)

Each child must be accompanied by an adult.

"Lumps and Bumps" Do insects depend on plants for food, shelter, and protection? Let's find out how!

Adventure Club (Ages 6-8)

"Who's Batty" People say confusing and even scary things about bats. Find out what is true and what is just a story. Learn about the bats that live around here.

Are YOU a Junior Naturalist?

Curious about what makes the natural world work? Interested into "digging" a little deeper to discover hidden worlds right beneath your feet? If you have always loved a mystery, we may have just the place for you!



We are looking for Junior Naturalists, kids ages 9-11 with a boundless curiosity, that can meet together one Saturday a month, September—May, from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Cultivate your curiosity, explore special interests, discover what you can do for "nature" and what it can do for you!

**** If you are interested in meeting other like-minded kids, please call us soon at 669-6644 to register!**

September 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m. "Orientation" During our first meeting we'll discuss projects you might like to work on this season. We'll learn to use the water testing kit and tour the backyard habitat garden that we'll help maintain at Oxley.

October 11, 10:00-11:00 a.m. We will do some water testing and work on the native garden. A tour of the prairie will introduce us to some of the common insects that will be emerging next spring. Are you starting to get some ideas for some projects of your own you might like to do?

Astronomy Programs

\$2 for general public, free to members, registration required, open to all ages.

Bring binoculars if you have them, and meet at the circle drive on the East side of Lake Yahola.

Saturday, September 6, **"What Is It?"** 7:45-8:45 p.m. Sunset: 7:39 p.m. Moonset: 11:15 p.m. How does one tell a star from a planet? What are the little points of light moving swiftly across the night sky? Have you ever seen a daytime satellite? Some mysteries do have answers!

Wednesday, October 29, **"Follow the Moon"** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Sunset: 6:28 p.m. Moonset: 7:10 p.m. Can we find the tiny crescent of new moon tonight? Start a "moonth" of hunting the moon every day, with a take home kit to help you.

\$2 for general public, free for members

Full Moon Walks

Registration required, all ages

"Full Harvest Moon"

Monday, September 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m.



Gather family and friends together and join us at Oxley. What memorable impressions can be harvested from an evening walk under a full moon? You may be surprised!

"Full Hunter's Moon"

Tuesday, October 14, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The Hunter's Moon was named for a time of stocking the larder with supplies for the winter. Tonight we will hunt for signs of the changing seasons. Meet at Oxley.

Programs and Special Events

September

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

A parade of shorebirds that arrived in July may still be found at Blackbird Marsh. Are the herons and egrets still around? Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

7 "Wet and Wild" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

What kind of critters can we find living in and around BJ'S Pond? Join us to dip net and get up close and personal to some water loving creatures. Meet at Oxley.

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

Monarchs and Painted Ladies and sulphurs and fritillaries and hairstreaks and swallowtails and snouts --- Oh MY! Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.

20 "Nature Printing" Ages: All
Saturday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Are you feeling creative? Come create a work of art using various plant parts on water color paper. Learn about plant parts and pigments. Meet at Oxley.

27 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

The late blooming prairie is providing nectar for the last of the Monarch migrants and other insects. Seeds are setting for next years crop. Meet at Oxley and help scatter seeds as we explore.

28 "Hobo Hike" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$3 for general public \$1 for members

Join us to explore a passage to another world. Bring a cracker and juice snack. We'll tie it up in a bandana and set out, stepping back in time. Meet at Oxley.

Classes are handicapped accessible unless stated otherwise. Please register two days in advance of classes unless stated otherwise to allow time to prepare supplies and programs.

October

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

Migration begins mid-summer and continues into October. Join us to see who is arriving, departing, or staying year-round with us. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

12 "Field Sketching" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

This sketching class is for all levels. Bring your pencil and pad. We will hike and draw along the way. Meet at Oxley.

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

If we are very fortunate we may find other butterfly life stages: a chrysalis hanging from a wildflower stem, an egg or a caterpillar on a host plant. Is there a story here? Bring binoculars if you have them and meet us at Oxley.



25 "Wildflower Walk" Ages: All
Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
Free registration not required

Plants are changing hue throughout the forest and on the prairie. Come see the range of colors in the grasses, vines and trees. Meet at Oxley.

26 "Spiders Secrets" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$2 for general public Free for members

Arachnophobia! Why do some people have such a fear of spiders? Let's discover some of the good things spiders accomplish as they spin through life. Meet at Redbud Valley. This hike is not handicap accessible.

26 "Hobo Hike" Ages: All
Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
\$3 for general public \$1 for members

Join us to explore a passage to another world. Bring a cracker and juice snack. We'll tie it up in a bandana and set out, stepping back in time. Where will our adventure take us this time? Meet at Oxley.

Fall Butterfly Count

Join us **Tuesday, September 30**, for a day outdoors counting butterflies. You will join a team with an experienced guide to spot, tally, and identify butterflies in a specific count area. No experience is necessary.

Information gathered will supplement data from our spring count as well as that collected nationwide during the annual July butterfly count held by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). NABA monitors populations and raises public awareness and local interest in butterflies.



We will be meeting at 9:30 a.m. and will count until 5:00 p.m. or later. You are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water, hat, and binoculars if you have them. Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley Nature Center.

Help at the Oklahoma Wildlife Expo!

Oxley Nature Center will have an information and membership booth at the Outdoor Marketplace at the Lazy E Arena near Guthrie, **September 26-28**. The Wildlife Expo, the state's largest indoor and outdoor recreation event, attracts thousands of people from all over the state with a variety of outdoor activities and events.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to promote our nature center, please call 669-6644. Some funding will be available for expenses.

Volunteer Naturalist Training

If you enjoy being outdoors sharing nature with children, join us for our training program beginning September 2 and ending September 25. Training sessions are two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon.

Training will familiarize you with our trail system and its varied natural communities of prairie, forest, and wetlands.

Following training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of children, for an hour or two one morning a week from October through November.

If you are 18 or older, please call us for more information. No previous experience is necessary.

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