Mary K. Oxley Nature Center

September - October 2018 Newsletter

Visit us as we prepare to welcome Fall with two brand new course offerings for children! Pre-K through 2nd graders will love our new "Discovery Club" - Janiene Oliver will be teaching this class which will have fun activities and lots of exploration. We are also offering "Drawing and Painting the Animals of Oxley" - Claire Harkness will provide plenty of opportunities for kids to enjoy and learn about the natural world by drawing it.

Species in Focus: Groundhog (*Marmota monax*)

photograph by Amy Morris

Also called "Woodchucks" this jumbo-sized member of the Sciuromorpha subfamily of rodents (which also includes squirrels, chipmunks, marmots and prairie dogs) can weigh as much as 15 pounds. Groundhogs are diggers with thick curving claws, and make spectacular tunnels in which they sleep, hibernate and nest. Some of their tunnels are up to 30 feet in length and contain a separate compartment just for their waste! When outside their burrows, groundhogs behave altruistically by whistling to warn the rest of the colony when danger is in sight. Thus the other name for groundhogs - "Whistle Pig".

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photograph by Greg Silva

A Hint of Things to Come

by Amy Morris, staff naturalist

A brilliant yellow and black male goldfinch pulls a bill full of white blowsy fluff from a thistle head. Some of it rises up into the air and drifts away like my thoughts. It is mid-August as I write this. The temperature is 98 degrees with high humidity. Yet, as I watch the panting bird, I feel restless. There is a sense of change in the air.

The goldfinch is on a mission. The soft thistle down will line a small cup-shaped nest of tightly woven forbs. Spider silk will bind the rim of this tiny work of art. The female is the builder of the nest, but she accepts materials from her mate. Goldfinches are late nesters. They wait until thistle has gone to seed to build their nests and lay their pale blue eggs.

Even as goldfinches are tending their nurseries, there are signs that the season is beginning to change. Though it is still mid-August, the shift toward autumn has begun. The play of light on the land is changing, and the days are shorter. What are some of the signs you are seeing?

Purple Martins are staging to begin their migration south. In the following months, up into October, flocks of songbirds and kettles of hawks will fly southward along migratory pathways. This is a great time to listen to and watch the sky.

All along our trails, round green fruits of walnut trees lay strewn along the paths. Some bear the teeth marks of squirrels and other rodents. The harvesting and laying aside of summer's bounty has begun. After such a wet and prolific summer, it is important to prepare for the winter. Who knows what unusual trends the weather will bring? It is best to be ready.

In early October we will begin looking forward to the arrival of our northern visitors: juncos,

White-crowned Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Lincoln's and Song Sparrows. These delightful visitors will keep us company throughout the fall and winter months, delighting us with their antics at our birdfeeders.

Mid-October often brings our first frost. It will leave a rim of shimmering ice lining the edges of green leaves. Will we light a fire in our fireplace? It is hard to imagine now as I watch the goldfinch panting on his perch.

There is a sense of change in the air. It is subtle now, but there nonetheless. How do you measure your transitions: the last tomato in the garden, the last leaf left on the cottonwood tree, or perhaps the first football game of the season? Come share your autumn story with us, and harvest a basketful of memories!

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEW CLASSES!

"DISCOVERY CLUB"
DETAILS: Ages Pre-K through 2nd Grade. Third Saturday each month. 10:30 - Noon. Free for Members, Non-members $5 per session Registration is required. Call 918.596.9054 to register or ask questions. Class meets at the Mary K Oxley Interpretive Center classroom.

"DRAWING AND PAINTING THE ANIMALS OF OXLEY"
DETAILS: Ages 8 - 12 years; Fourth Saturday each month. 1:00-2:30PM; Members $3, Non-members $8.00 per session. Registration is required. Call 918.596.9054 to register or ask questions. . Class meets at the Mary K Oxley Interpretive Center classroom.

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - Programs in September

1 September "Saturday Morning Birding" (Recurs every 1st Saturday of the month)
DETAILS: Ages: All; 8:00-9:45AM; Registration not required; Saturday; Free to all.
Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 September "Second Saturday Sketchers: Using Watercolor III" (Recurs every 2nd Saturday of the month)
DETAILS: Ages: 14 and older; 10:00-11:30AM; call 918.596.9054 to register in advance; Members free, Non-members $10.00 per session.
Join us for our monthly nature sketching group with Claire Harkness. We will draw and paint on location in the preserve and in the classroom. All levels of familiarity with drawing and painting are encouraged to join. This session we will continue our exploration in watercolors. Weather permitting we will paint in the forest during class. Please email claire@arborvitaecards.com for supplies list.

10 & 24 September "Natural Babies: Who Has Been Here?"
DETAILS: Ages: 1-5 + Caregiver; 10:30-11:30AM; Registration is required; Call

918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
Ramona Jackson will lead our discussion of tracks and signs made by animals of Oxley. After a story and studying the tracks, we will work on a craft, and take a walk to see what animal tracks and signs are close to the building.

15 September "Butterfly Walk" (Recurs every 3rd Saturday of the month, March through October.)
DETAILS: Please note time has changed to 10:30-Noon for September and October. Ages: All; Free to all; Registration not required
We'll be searching for butterflies! All ages and skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

NEW 15 September "Discovery Club: Scaled Critters" (Will recur every 3rd Saturday of the month through February)
DETAILS: Pre-K through 2nd Grade; 10:30-Noon; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
Who are some of our reptile friends? Join Janiene Oliver for a story and a song, and then we will create a craft and go exploring on the trails. Join us for these fun activities!

22 September "Botany Walk" (Recurs every 4th Saturday of the month, March through October.)
DETAILS: Ages: All; Please note that the time has changed from 9:30-11:00 to 10:30-Noon for September and October; Free to all; Registration not required
Join us at Oxley for our Saturday Morning Botany program.

24 September "Natural Babies: Who Has Been Here?"
DETAILS: Ages: 1-5 + Caregiver; 10:30-11:30AM; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
Note: This is the same class held on Sept 10. Ramona Jackson will lead our discussion of tracks and signs made by animals of Oxley. After a story and studying the tracks, we will work on a craft, and take a walk to see what animal tracks and signs are close to the building.

24 September "Full Harvest Moon Night Walk"
DETAILS: Ages: All; 7-8:30PM; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members $3 Non-members $5.
Join us as we explore along the trails with all our senses! What memories will we harvest on tonight's adventure?

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - Programs in October

6 October "Saturday Morning Birding" (Recurs every 1st Saturday of the month)
DETAILS: Ages: All; 8:00-9:45AM; Registration not required; Saturday; Free to all.
Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 & 22 October "Natural Babies: What Makes a Bird a Bird?"
DETAILS: Ages: 1-5 + Caregiver; 10:30-11:30AM; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
How can you tell a bird is a bird? Join Ramona Jackson as we look at some of Oxley's study skins and compare the birds beaks and feet, feathers and bones. We will work on a bird themed craft to take home. We can study birds at the Oxley feeders and walk to see what birds are in the woods.

13 October "Second Saturday Sketchers - Painting in the Woods" (Recurs every 2nd Saturday of the month)

DETAILS: Ages: 18 and older; 10:00-11:30AM; call 918.596.9054 to register in advance; Members free, Non-members $10.00 per session.
Join us for our monthly nature sketching group with Claire Harkness. We will draw and paint on location in the preserve and in the classroom. All levels of familiarity with drawing and painting are encouraged to join. Email claire@arborvitaecards.com for a supplies list.

20 October "Butterfly Walk" (Recurs every 3rd Saturday of the month, March through October.)
DETAILS: Please note time has changed to 10:30-Noon for September and October. Ages: All; Free to all; Registration not required
Join us at Oxley for our final Saturday Morning Butterfly program of the year. Will we see Monarchs flying overhead as they head to Mexico?

NEW 20 October "Discovery Club: Night Fliers" (Will recur every 3rd Saturday of the month through February)
DETAILS: Pre-K through 2nd Grade; 10:30-Noon; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
What is a mammal that flies at night and eats lots of bugs? Join Janiene Oliver for a story and a song, after which we will create a craft and go exploring on the trails. Learn some facts about our furry friends!

22 October "Natural Babies: What Makes a Bird a Bird?"
DETAILS: Ages: 1-5 + Caregiver; 10:30-11:30AM; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members free, Non-members $5 per session.
How can you tell a bird is a bird? Join Ramona Jackson as we look at some of Oxley's study skins and compare the birds beaks and feet, feathers and bones. We will work on a bird themed craft to take home. We can study birds at the Oxley feeders and walk to see what birds are in the woods.

24 October "Full Hunters Moon Night Walk"
DETAILS: Ages: All; 7-8:30PM; Registration is required; Call 918.596.9054 to register. Members $3, Non-members $5.
Join us for an evening walk along the trails. We will explore with all of our senses! The full moon rises early this morning. Will we see it?

27 October "Botany Walk" (Recurs every 4th Saturday of the month, March through October.)
DETAILS: Ages: All; 9:30-11:00AM; Free to all; Registration not required
Join us at Oxley for our Saturday Morning Botany program.

NEW 27 October "Drawing and Painting the Animals of Oxley" (Recurs every 4th Saturday of the month)
DETAILS: Ages: 8 - 12 years; 10:30-Noon; call 918.596.9054 to register in advance; Members $3.00, Non-members $8.00 per session.
Join us for a new monthly drawing and painting class for children with Claire Harkness. Students will learn to draw and paint the animals commonly found at Oxley. We will use both live and preserved models. Art and animal lovers are welcome!. Email claire@arborvitaecards.com for a supplies list.

photograph by Bryan Tapp

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center Hours

Oxley and Redbud Valley are closed for Labor Day on September 3rd, 2018

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.

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