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The bountiful rain we've received recently means many things for Oxley Nature Center. It means boots are essential for happy hiking on muddy trails. It also means lovely patterns of animal footprints on those trails - can you spot the difference between armadillo prints and raccoon prints? The rain also means that everything is GREEN and you will be dazzled by all of the different shades of this color. So bring your bug spray, your boots, and swing by the Interpretive Center and pick up a "tracks card" and see what you can find on the trails!

Fawn and Mother | Greg Silva

HOME
by Sasha Martin

I have been searching for home
longer than I dare say;
house after house, ill-fitting,
someone else's borrowed dress.

It is high noon and I am
just now shifting

these outstretched hands
over my own heart;
just now realizing
everything, everything
is a child of soil and sky's romance;
every horizon, an embrace.

At fifteen, shattering
in an abandoned house,
the long night a blindfold,
I could not see Great Mother
I could not see Great Father;
A steady horizon, unimaginable

—but even then, there was the River Seine,
shushing: soft, the home that never breaks.

Now, Oklahoma storms do the singing:
Hail, damaging winds, tornadoes.

But not always.

I have stopped running

every time it rains.

Now, I stand on the shore,
shoulders drenched.

Now, Lake Sherry offers her lullaby
of light and wave and wing.

It is high noon and I am just now
listening, hands over heart

I am held, I am held

I make the home
of myself
softer

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - June Programs

Call 918-596-9054 to register for any program that requires pre-registration.

June 1, 8:00 – 9:45 a.m. **Saturday Morning Birding**
All ages and skill levels are welcome for this free drop-in Birding Walk, guided by Oxley Natural Resources Coordinator, Josh Smith. Bring binoculars if you have them!

June 11 and 14, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Little Seedlings "Dirt Discovery"**
Experience nature with your little ones. Through stories, crafts, and time exploring the trails, we will help to inspire a lifelong love of the outdoors. For our June sessions, we will sift through the soil looking for worms and roly polies.

June 13, 20, and 27, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Nature Story Time**
In partnership with Early Learning Works *Talking is Teaching* program, Oxley Nature Center invites families with children 8 and under to join us for a free, fun, nature-themed opportunity to TALK, READ, and SING. This event includes time to enjoy a book with your child, a FREE book to take home, a fun activity, and an optional short nature walk. If the weather is nice we will hold this event outdoors. In case of uncomfortable heat, humidity, or rain, we will use the classroom inside the Interpretive Center. The is free for all participants, but please register online or call us to RSVP at 918-596-9054.

June 15, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Saturday Morning Botany Walk**
Oxley Naturalists guide this free drop-in event, where we explore the lives of the plants and what's blooming in the forest, prairie, and wetlands.

June 19, all day. The Nature Center will be closed for the Juneteenth Holiday

June 21, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. **Full Strawberry Moon Walk**
Small, guided groups explore the Nature Center by night, without flashlights, learning to use senses other than sight. $3 for members, $5 for non-members. (Pre-registration required, please call to receive your ONCA discount.)

June 22, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Wild Voice Poetry Workshop: Trust & Love**
Using poetry, collage, and a trail walk, we will explore the themes of "Trust and Love," deepening our connection to self and world. Guided by Oxley artist-in-residence Sasha Martin. Adults and youth ages 9 and up: those under 16 should be accompanied by an adult participant. To receive your ONCA discount, give us a call to register. (Pre-registration required.)

June 22, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Butterfly Walk**
Stroll the grounds in search of butterflies on this walk guided by Oxley Volunteer Naturalists. This is a free, drop-in, family-friendly event.

June 22, 8:30 – 11:30 p.m. **Moth Night**
The vital role that moths play as pollinators is often overlooked. This free, family-friendly nighttime event is all about observing, identifying, and appreciating moths. Viewing stations will be set up in Fawn Grove and the trees will be baited to see what species we can

attract. Experts will give a short talk at 8:30 and will be on hand to help with identification, sharing information, and answering questions. Bring a lawn chair and bug spray, and join us!

June 28, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **All About Nature Book club**
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. June's selection: A Country Year: Living the Questions by Sue Hubbell

**** Coming in July: Beginning Outdoor Archery ****
Registration is now open for the 4-part archery course taking place on July 10,17, 24, and 31, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. The cost for the whole series is $20.00 for ONCA members ($25 for non-members). Call us to register! For ages 8 and up

"Never Give Up on a Turtle"

by Karen Harris

Two young children and their grandmother come to Oxley almost every Sunday to feed the fish and turtles the floating fish food from our vending machines.The kids always stop to say hello, ask politely for a cup to hold the food, and head out to enjoy watching the aquatic turtles, especially the big snapper, swim to the surface to grab the morsels. A couple of Sundays ago, they came in excitedly telling Judy and me that they had seen a female turtle laying eggs by the side of the road into the parking lot. Their grandmother even showed us a picture she took as the turtle released one of her eggs.Yes, it's turtle time. Aquatic turtles are basking on and sliding off logs into the water. Box turtles are on the move (many crossing roads). And females are digging nests and laying eggs.

It was, therefore, appropriate that Mary picked Sy Montgomery's book Of Time and Turtles, Mending the World Shell by Shattered Shell as the Oxley Nature Bookclub book for May. It is the story of a few very passionate people, including the author, who worked to rescue, revive, house and release turtles that had been harmed in various ways by human activities. Montgomery tells us a few important facts about turtles. Turtles have been on the earth for a very long time, over 250 million years. Many species can live for a hundred years or more. They move slowly and they brumate (slow their metabolism to a crawl) so their dimension of "time," whatever that is, may be on a different scale than ours. Sadly she also tells us, "Turtles are the most imperiled major group of animals on earth." From the stories she tells of recovery from various severe injuries, we learned the remarkable ability turtles have to recover given a chance and expert loving care. Hence the quote from one of the rescuers, "Never give up on a turtle." Several bookclub members spoke of how this book changed their perspective on turtles that they see mangled by the side of the highway. I was sad to read of all the ways humans bring harm to these magnificent creatures, but also encouraged by the successful rescues.

According to the OK Department of Wildlife website, Oklahoma is home to eighteen

species of turtles. They divide them into four categories: snapping turtles, mud/musk, pond/box, and softshell. Two of our volunteer herp experts Greg Silva and Rusty Grimpe who have spent countless hours at Oxley, tell us they have seen ten of the eighteen species here: Eastern Snapping Turtle, Mississippi Mud Turtle, Common Musk Turtle or Stinkpot, Ouachita Map Turtle, Eastern River Cooter, Three-toed Box Turtle, Ornate Box Turtle, Red-eared Slider, Spiney Softshell, and Smooth Softshell. All but the two box turtles are aquatic so it makes sense that Oxley is prime habitat with our Lake Sherry, BJ's pond, Blue Heron Swamp, the Marsh, and usually slow-moving Coal and Bird Creeks.

I invite you to come out this summer to do a little turtle watching for yourself and pick up a copy of Montgomery's book from the Bur Oak Nature Store. If you see a turtle crossing the road and want to help, the Wildlife Department encourages you to be safe, pull off on to the shoulder, turn on your hazard lights, and use caution to move the turtle completely off the road in the direction it was heading. If you find an injured turtle and want to help, Wild Heart Ranch near Claremore, 4thewild.org, is licensed for wildlife rehabilitation and accepts turtles.

Barred Owl | Greg Silva

OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday

Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday

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