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You might have noticed that Oxley Nature Center has been expanding the programs we offer to Tulsans! Be sure and keep an eye out for some returning programs and some new ones which will be coming this fall:

- Nature Story times for ages 0-8
- Archery
- Full Moon Walks
- Poetry Workshops
- Save the date for Poetry Walks coming in mid-November

Lake Sherry needs your help!

It’s a Breach, Dam it!

By Karen Harris

Many visitors to Oxley have expressed concern about the lack of water in Lake Sherry. From the east edge of Blue Heron Trail to the island, tall vegetation has replaced the shallow water where only a few months ago, folks were able to view Limpkins probing the muddy bottom for fresh water mussels and snails. Staff and volunteer hosts explain to those visitors that a breach in the dam has allowed water to escape since April. A couple of heavy rains partially refilled the lake but also led to more dam deterioration.

Several days ago Josh showed Mary and me where the water was escaping. Trees, brush, and poison ivy vines were growing on the dam there and one tree had fallen. It seems counterintuitive that tree roots, which hold soil and prevent erosion in most situations would help cause a breach. But roots expand and can actually split rock so, when they expanded and caused rock and soil movement, the constantly present water behind the dam entered the spaces and started the process. Then when the tree blew down, roots were ripped apart exposing more substrate and causing more damage. Because of the pressure from all that lake water, collapse of that part of the dam was inevitable. Since the lake feeds Blue Heron Swamp and the Marsh, they are drying up too.

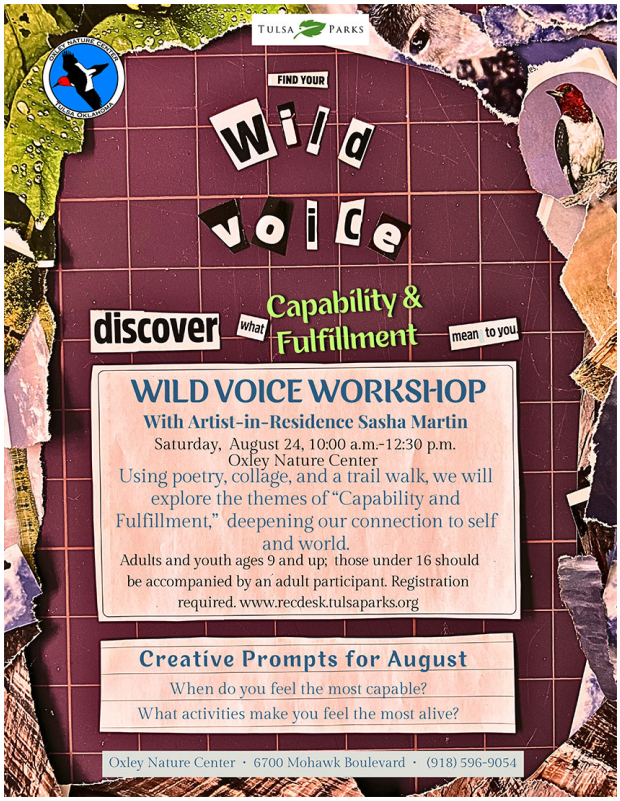
Oxley is dedicated to providing environmental education and recreational opportunities for visitors. It is also a wildlife sanctuary. Those purposes are inherently interconnected. Many of our educational programs are built around wildlife study. People come from around the region for a chance to see reptiles, birds, and mammals that call Oxley home. Lake Sherry and the other two wetlands are normally filled with small unseen aquatic plants and animals near the bottom of food chains that support the animals we can see. They compose an important stopover for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds and habitat for aquatic insects, resident birds, semi-aquatic mammals like beaver and muskrats, and, of course, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and the crustaceans the Limpkins snag. As they dry out, those habitats are lost and the animals will leave it, if they can, or die, if they can’t. Snails and mussels cannot walk or fly to another lake. Dead fish have already been seen on the exposed lake bottom. If the dam is not repaired, this fall, migratory waterfowl, looking for their familiar stopover, will have to fly on to find another wetland for rest and refueling. Those creatures lose their homes and we lose the chance to see them, wonder about them, and learn from them. Oxley needs Lake Sherry, and Lake Sherry needs the dam breach repaired.

Some of the many species who use Lake Sherry

How will we dam the breach and restore the water in Lake Sherry? The City of Tulsa has already had an engineering study done so we know how best to fix it and what that will cost. Maggie has met with Tulsa Park officials and ONCA representatives to develop a strategy to fund this expenditure which was in neither the ONCA nor the City budget.

Lake Sherry needs your help. If you would like to donate to repairing Lake Sherry's dam, please send a check to ONCA specifying that the money goes to dam repair, or you can use PayPal with the same stipulation. Better yet, come out for a walk and drop off your donation at the visitors' center. We would love to see you.

GUIDED NATURE WALKS
These free walks are led by experienced and knowledgeable Oxley staff and Volunteer Naturalists. Join us!
saturday
August 3
Birding
8:00 - 9:45 a.m.
saturday
August 17
Botany
10:30 a.m. - noon
saturday
August 24
Butterfly
10:30 a.m. - noon


TULSA PARKS
FIND YOUR
Wild
Voice
discover
what
Capability & Fulfillment
mean to you
WILD VOICE WORKSHOP
With Artist-in-Residence Sasha Martin
Saturday, August 24, 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Oxley Nature Center
Using poetry, collage, and a trail walk, we will explore the themes of "Capability and Fulfillment," deepening our connection to self and world.
Adults and youth ages 9 and up; those under 16 should be accompanied by an adult participant. Registration required. www.recdesk.tulsaparks.org
Creative Prompts for August
When do you feel the most capable?
What activities make you feel the most alive?
Oxley Nature Center · 6700 Mohawk Boulevard · (918) 596-9054

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - August Programs

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

August 3, 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!

August 17, 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.

****NEW****August 18 , 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. **Basket Weaving**
Join us to learn the art and skill of basket weaving. This is a hands-on course that will teach and guide you through the process of various beautiful and functional techniques. We will provide all materials and this indoor course is for all skill levels. $8 for Oxley members, $10 for the general public. Pre-registration is required and space is limited, so give us a call to sign up!

August 23, 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. August's selection: Mama's Last Hug by Frans De Waal.

August 24, 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.

Raccoon family

OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

After Nature Center hours, trails are open for hiking until 9:00 PM.

10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday

Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday

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