Happy New Year! Oxley Nature Center is starting the year creatively with two new programs you might consider. The Nature Journaling Group will help you to develop your observational skills as you take the time to observe, reflect and sketch along the trails at Oxley. The new Drawing Nature Around You program will likewise give you the chance to start or continue your nature drawing practice. It's a new year, time to make new choices and develop new skills!

Oxley Volunteer Training

The gift of volunteering

By Claire Harkness

For many Tulsans, volunteering with organizations they love and want to support is a very important part of their life. Being allowed to participate in strengthening those organizations gives pleasure, satisfaction and a sense of self-worth. Oxley Nature Center is unique in providing many rich and complex ways that Tulsa citizens can actively volunteer.

Let's look at some of these ways volunteers contributed to Oxley Nature Center in 2024: **School Tours:** A team of volunteer naturalists led groups of school children during the week both spring and fall, introducing them to the trails and the nature surrounding them. These hikes foster questions about the flora and fauna unique to our area which thrive at Oxley. Volunteers led 52 school tours this past year with 1,840 children and adult visitors. **Full Moon Walks**: Leading groups of Tulsans on monthly evening walks to enjoy the park at night in the moonlight is done by another group of volunteers. This year they led 275 visitors on the trails at night, enjoying the nighttime music of howling coyotes, calling Barred Owls and chirping frogs. **Park Upkeep:** one team of mighty volunteers meets twice a week to tackle heavy duty physical tasks such as fixing fences, painting signs, replacing steps and boardwalks, digging trenches, eradicating invasive species, clearing storm debris and ridding the park of trash. There is much physical labor and logistical know-how that goes into maintaining a nature park the size of Oxley. Hammers and shovels are hefted, tractors driven, loppers hoisted, paint brushes used and plans devised. **Interpretive Center hosting**: Another group of volunteers staff the front desk at the Oxley

interpretive center. These are the people who greet you when you enter the building, and answer your questions about trails and species and bathroom availability. Should you find something in the Burr Oak Nature store you would like to purchase, they will help you. In 2024 the Interpretive Center volunteers engaged with 17,082 visitors. **Event hosting**: multiple volunteers are behind the special events that Oxley holds throughout each year. The popular Hay Ride and Wiener Roast in the fall brings out volunteers to cook food, set up lanterns and tables, and guide guests. For the annual Book and Tree Sale, 115 native tree seedlings were grown by one volunteer and many others contributed much loved and read books about nature. This year the Book and Tree sale earned $1,700 for Oxley Nature Center. **Informational and Marketing Support**: behind the scenes support is given by yet another team of volunteers who create and update the Oxley website, design and produce the monthly newsletter, map and design trail brochures for the park as well as produce graphics for outreach events.

Lisa Cobb, Oxley's Volunteer Coordinator calculated that in 2024 Oxley's 50 volunteers contributed over 4,290 hours to the support of the nature center. What a gift. But as much of a gift as that is, we volunteers receive in return something even more valuable: we are invited to lend our strengths, our expertise, our wits and skills to this enterprise we all value. Now that's a gift.

Signs of Winter

photos by Greg Silva and Bryan Tapp

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - January Programs

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

Project FeederWatch
Every Thursday and Friday in January, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Stay warm inside while helping collect community science data to submit to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. We'll teach you all that you need to know. Bird watching and learning has never been so much fun! No registration required and all ages are welcome!

Winter Discovery Walks
Fridays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
These informal walks will be facilitated by Oxley staff naturalists. Meet by the message board in the parking lot and we'll walk together to see what the trails have to show us. These are free, drop-in events for all ages and abilities.

Saturday Morning Birding
January 4, 8:00 – 9:45 a.m.
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!

Oxley Green Teens!
January 4, 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

This program is for 13-18 year-old nature enthusiasts interested in having a positive impact on the environment and we are still accepting participants! Please feel free to call us (ask for Lisa or Maggie) if you or anyone you know is interested.

***Little Seedlings**
January 14 and 17, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
This program for curious little nature-lovers (ages 1-5) and their caregivers includes a craft and a guided trail walk to explore the theme of the month: "Animals leave tracks in the snow." (The Tuesday and Friday sessions are the same).

***Full Wolf Moon Walk**
January 13, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Small, guided groups explore the trails by night. All ages welcome!

***Nature Journaling Group**
Nature Journaling begins Thursday, January 16, and will meet for the 5 following Thursdays from 2:00 – 4:00pm (ending February 20). The fee is $20 for members, $25 for non-members.
Nature Journaling is a powerful method for connecting with the more-than-human world. As a practice, it provides an opportunity to dive in deep with your observations. Imagine taking an hour or more to get to know a mushroom, a grasshopper, or a blooming prairie grass. By studying their edges, their shadows, their shapes, patterns, and behaviors, a new relationship is cultivated. Oxley Nature Center's new Nature Journaling Group will be facilitated by Mary Seabourn with support from other Oxley staff and volunteers. Each session will include time out on the trails to make observations, time to reflect on what we're noticing, time to write and sketch, and time for optional sharing and group discussion. We will offer this as a 6-week session to start, with the possibility of continuing it. The fee is for all 6 sessions, so when you sign up you'll be committing to the series.

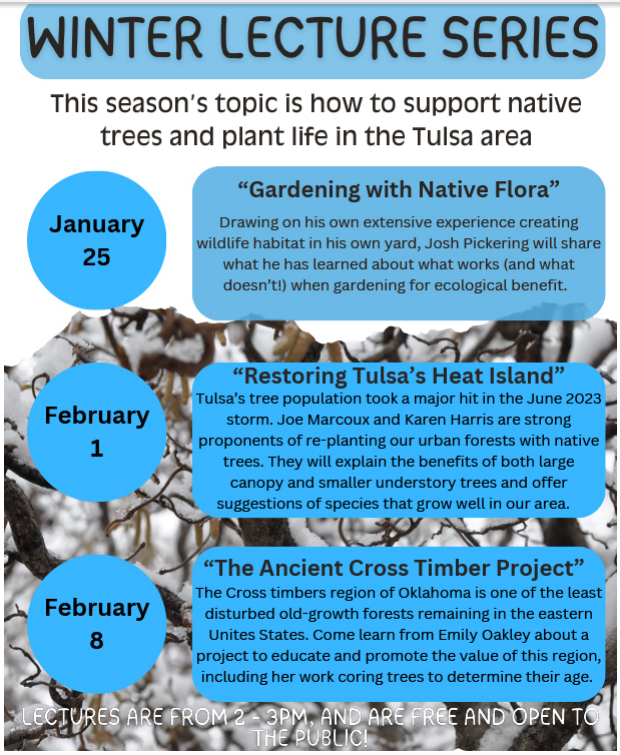
Saturday Morning Botany Walk
January 18, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Oxley Naturalists guide this free drop-in event, where we explore the lives of plants in the forest, prairie, and wetlands, and how they are responding to the seasonal changes.

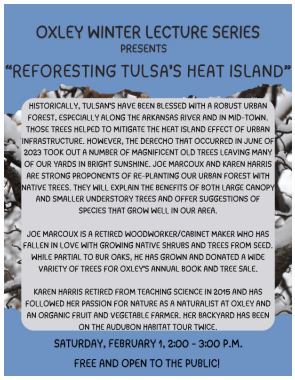
***Drawing Nature Around You**
January 18 and 25, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Do you want to learn to draw and paint the natural world around you? Have you seen a lovely flower in a garden or spied a colorful bird on a branch when out on a walk and wanted to capture this outdoor beauty accurately? This two-session workshop introduces you to the pleasures and the skills gained by starting a nature drawing practice. The collaboration of two specialty centers within the City of Tulsa's Parks, Culture & Recreation Department brings a unique visual arts and environmental learning experience together! Students learn several illustration techniques including careful observation of a subject, measurement, representing depth and three-dimensional form, as well as gain on-site painting and/or colored pencil skills and best practices ensured to enhance the finished drawing. A supply list is provided to each enrolled student. No previous experience is necessary. The first session, January 18, is held at Oxley Nature Center; the second session, January 25, is held at WaterWorks Art Center. Don't miss this incredible opportunity!

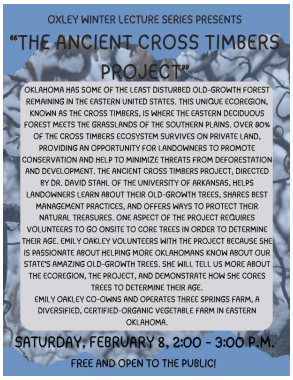
All About Nature Book club
January 24, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. The book for January book club is The Serviceberry by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Copies are available in the gift shop.

Winter Lecture Series
January 25, February1, and February 8, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
The topic for this winter's series is how to support native trees and plant life in the Tulsa area. On Saturday, January 25, join us as Josh Pickering speaks on the topic of "Gardening with Native Flora". The next week Karen Harris and Joe Marcoux will present "Reforesting Tulsa's Heat Island" and on the 8th Emily Oakley share about her work on "The Ancient Cross Timbers Project". These lectures are free and open to the public, no registration required.

*indicates that pre-registration is required. Call 918-596-9054 to receive your member discount.







Frost Flower | Bryan Tapp

OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

Interpretive Center hours are 10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday, and Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday.

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