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Oxley Nature Center | Amy Morris



## Volunteer Naturalist Notebook

By Karen Harris

Silly Goose

As I walked along Coal Creek to Blackbird Marsh, a stiff breeze out of the northeast made me pull my hood up. The oaks still clung to last year's browned leaves, while in the understory, blackhaws glowed fresh green. Just then a puff of warmer air brought the subtle sweet scent of the opening buds of wild plum trees and I put my hood back down. Around a bend on the marsh trail, a tufted titmouse sat on a low branch, peering at me with his huge black eye and, with his chest reverberating, called "peter, peter." A few meters away, another titmouse (maybe his mate?) answered softly. Chorus frogs were voicing their comb teeth songs from among the still dormant buttonbushes. I returned to Coal Creek and heard the plop of a red-eared slider turtle as it slid off its basking log. Geese were calling from Lake Sherry. Gadwalls, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, and a pair of Blue-winged Teal were dipping, butts up, to puddle among the greening emergents near the shore. I was thinking, how wonderful! All these signs of spring point toward easier days ahead for Oxley's inhabitants.

That's when I noticed a chunk of rotted wood drop into Blue Heron Pond from the broken out top of a dead tree. I walked closer and there she was. A goose stared down at me as if to ask what she should do about the egg, the egg that sat precariously at the edge of the broken trunk. I wanted to ask her if this was her idea of a great nest site. She will be so exposed. Can she roll that egg back from the brink? If she hatches it, can she successfully defend the chick from a hawk or an owl or a raccoon? Will the dead tree even stand long enough to support her during incubation? I know there are lots of geese - maybe even too many. This egg is of no consequence...except to this goose...and now to me. You can bet I'll be checking on her.

On a simple walk at Oxley, I was able to fill multiple senses with harbingers of the April portion of spring and connect emotionally with a goose. What a gift!

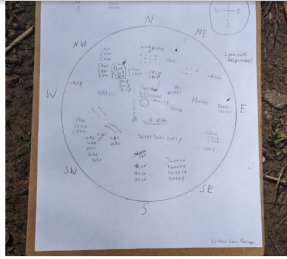


### ***Volunteer Spotlight!***

This month for our volunteer spotlight, we are highlighting volunteer Glen Smith. Glen has been a part of the Oxley community since 2017 and contributes to our mission in a number of ways: as part of the trail maintenance crew, at the visitor's desk, and out on school tours as a nature guide. Glen grew up in Tulsa, OK along Mingo Creek and recalls spending much of his childhood exploring the natural world outside his house. After high school, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, was stationed in Okinawa and served in Vietnam. Later, he attended Florida State University where he earned his B.S. in Biology, with an emphasis on Marine Biology. Glen's research projects at university led him on an incredible journey to Antarctica, where he spent 16 years studying the microbial ecology of marine sediments and algae in ice. If you get an opportunity to talk with Glen about his incredible work there, don't hesitate! He shared some images and stories of the wild beauty he encountered while there and they are breathtaking.

These days, Glen enjoys birding and wildlife photography. For him, the most rewarding part of volunteering at Oxley Nature Center is getting outdoors, especially with young children, and sharing the cycles and patterns occurring in nature. His favorite trails are Thrush and the North Woods because they are quiet and provide more opportunities to see birds. To Glen, if he had to describe Oxley in one sentence, he would say that "It's a great place to get out and get associated with the natural environment, to feel like you are out in the woods."

Thank you, Glen, for all of your hard work and commitment to Oxley Nature Center!



### Junior Naturalists!

For the last couple months, Oxley Naturalist Mary Seabourne has led the junior naturalists in their immersion in the world of birds. In February, they built roosting boxes with Mr. Josh—mastering the art of power tools—and cleaned and prepared nesting boxes for the breeding season. In March, they explored the language of birds and made soundscape maps. As always, there was plenty of time for games and discoveries along the trail.



*Ragwort along the North Woods trail | Claire Harkness*

### Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - April Programs

Call 918-596-9054 for information or to register for programs (please register 48 hours in advance).

2 April "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All  
Saturday, 8:00-9:45 a.m. Free, registration not required.  
Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome.  
Bring binoculars if you have them.

16 April "Butterfly Explorations" Ages: All



butterflies and what are they finding to nectar on? No experience necessary. Bring binoculars if you have them.

16 April "Junior Naturalists: Life in the Soil" Ages: 8-12  
Saturday, 10:00-12:30 p.m. Registration is required and begins Friday, April 1st @ 10:00 a.m.  
Free for Members, Non-members \$5 per session.  
Come join us for a morning of adventure and nature connection.  
As they eat, grow, or tunnel through the earth, the many inhabitants of the soil have an important role in the ongoing life of terrestrial ecosystems. This month, the junior naturalists will take a closer look at some of the amazing creatures that make big impacts right under our feet.

16 April "Full Pink Moon Walk" Ages: All  
Saturday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Registration is required by Thursday, April 14 at 4:00 p.m.  
Please bring exact change or a check made out to City of Tulsa.  
\$3 members, \$5 non-members.  
This moon is named for the phlox wildflower that blooms in the early spring. Join us to celebrate this beautiful time of year! Will the frogs be singing?

23 April "Explore the Flora" Ages: All  
Saturday, 10:30-noon. Free, registration not required.  
Spring is here! Wildflowers rise from the leaf litter, dead prairie grasses, and along the water's edge. Tree buds unfurl. There is no shortage of green growth to discover!



Oxley Nature Center Hours

Oxley Nature Center will be closed Friday, April 15 for Good Friday. The Interpretive Center will be closed but you may hike the trails.

Park in the Oxley parking lot from 8:00 a.m.to 5 p.m. or outside the gray stone gate from 5-9 p.m.

