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Join us Saturday, June 17th from 1:00 - 2:30PM for an enjoyable workshop making pollinator hotels. This will be a fun activity for the whole family and you'll leave with helpful homes for your own pollinators! Please be sure to call 918-596-9054 to register .



Seedlings end the year on a high note

Since October, dozens of little ones have made lasting memories at Oxley in the Seedlings program. We spent our days making art to reflect nature and seasons- leaf rubbings, pinecone bird feeders, beaver hand puppets, nesting balls, seed bombs- to name a few. The best memories were discoveries made on the trail. Each month, we shared a new experience and learned to engage our senses. For every bumpy tree we touched, wild onions or wildflowers we smelled, redbud blooms we tasted, or a bird's song we heard, new little naturalists were being molded.

As the program ended for the year, during the final May session, we got to have the most unique experiences anyone could dream of. As we walked down the Red Fox Loop where it neared the end of BJ's pond, we came upon a female turtle digging a hole at the edge of the trail. She paddled the wet mud to either side of her body, revealing a shallow hole beneath her. The moment I realized what she was doing, I got excited. I asked the kids, "what do you think she is doing? What might she be making a hole for?" After a couple of moments of puzzling I said, "I think she might be digging a nest and later she will lay eggs in that hole." As if the turtle and I had worked out a well-written script before that day's walk, she laid an egg immediately after those words came out of my mouth. With 9 tiny sets of eyes gazing upon her intently, another cycle of life began. This was a new experience for me and for the seedlings, too. I immediately felt a closer bond to the animals and plants around me and to the mother turtle. I was reminded of why I love nature so much and the 9 new little naturalists just realized how much they did.



Male and female eastern dobsonflies, *Corydalus cornutus* (Linnaeus), showing differences in mandibles and antennae. Photograph by [Lyle J. Buss](#), University of Florida.

Naturalist's Notebook

By Karen Harris

A CHILD INSPIRES THE WONDER

One Saturday last month a little boy brought in a large dead insect he had found on the trail and showed it to Naturalist Mary Seabourn. Mary got a field guide out and together they identified it as an Eastern Dobsonfly, *Corydalus cornutus*. She then helped the youngster learn a little more about dobsonflies and he wrote the name on a Post-It note so other visitors could learn about it too. It'll be on the reception desk for awhile if you want to see it.

Dobsonflies are super cool. They are among the largest insects, only surpassed by some butterflies and moths. Their larvae, called hellgrammites, live in the gravel in the bottom of streams and are top predators of smaller larvae, and even small fish! I first learned about them when a friend told me he collected them to use as bait when fishing for smallmouth bass on the Illinois River. He told me to be careful because they can give one a pretty good bite, even drawing blood. I've found them in Spring Creek when I do bug collections for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (one way to measure the health of a stream). They are considered signs of a relatively unpolluted and healthy stream, and are important contributors to stream diversity as a top predator. I'm always thrilled when I look in the kick net and find a huge hellgrammite next to tiny stonefly or caddisfly larvae.

Interestingly, the little boy's find is my first look at an adult. This one looks to be a female. The adult male dobsonflies have impressively long sickle-shaped jaws which they use to grab hold of the females during mating. The female adults, on the other hand, have mandibles similar to the hellgrammites so they can bite too. We might say those jaws put the "hell" in hellgrammite. So why have I never noticed dobsonflies at Oxley? It could be because adults are fairly short-lived (a week or less) and are mainly active at night, spending their days in thick vegetation near a stream. And I wonder where the hellgrammites are living. Maybe they are in Coal Creek. However, Coal Creek looks nothing like Spring Creek; it's too murky to see the bottom. But are there sections of it with gravel and rocks? It's wonderful to think Oxley has water clean enough to support these sensitive insects. Now I want to look for dobsonflies along Coal Creek during a Full Moon walk. I also plan to look for egg cases deposited on leaves overhanging the creek. They resemble white splashes of bird poop. Thanks to an observant little boy, I am now inspired to go on an insect safari for adult dobsonflies and learn more about them. You can come too.



BIRD QUIZ: What Bird Is This?



Answer: Eastern Towhee



All About Nature Book Club

A Tour of the Prairies, by Washington Irving

extended stay abroad, Irving accompanied Commissioner on Indian Affairs Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, along with a few other companions, on a surveying mission deep into Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Written more as a travelogue than (what this reader thought) would be bits of naturalist writings on Oklahoma's plant and animal life, [A Tour on the Prairies](#) focuses on the adventure and the adventurers themselves: their follies, their hunting successes, and what it was like to try to traverse the dense vegetation of Indian Territory, especially the "forests of cast iron," also known as the crosstimbers, a stretch of about forty miles of rough country covered in post-oak and black-jack oak. Their trip lasted about a month, and Irving's accounts of the journey are well-worth the read.

What made this month's book club meeting extra special was our accompanying field trip out to the Keystone Ancient Forest to visit the crosstimbers and, of course, to stand where Irving stood. We enjoyed the trek along Frank's trail and marveled at the toughness of this thick Oklahoma landscape. According to the Nature Conservancy, "This ancient crosstimbers forest has survived ice, fire and drought where post oak and redcedar trees have aged from 300 to 500 years old, making this area older than the United States itself." Lucky for us that its rugged terrain prevented development and today, we still have the privilege of walking under its canopies in a state of wonder.



Do you have a Teen who loves to draw? There is still room for more artists in Kayla's Nature Drawing Class for Teens! June 3rd, 2:30 - 4:00PM. Call 918-596-9054 to pre-register.

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DRAWING

CLASS



Nature Drawing Class for TEENS at Oxley Nature Center

June 3rd, 2023
2:30pm - 4pm

In this class for teens, Artist-in-Residence Kayla Anley will lead students through taking a closer look at the natural world and using pencil and charcoal to express their observations. All art supplies are included. \$10 for non-members, \$5 for Oxley Nature Center Association members

@kaylaanleyart

@oxley_nature_center



Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - June Programs

Interpretive Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Sundays Noon – 4:30 p.m.
Call 918-596-9054 for program reservations.

Saturday, June 3rd - **Saturday Morning Birding**
8:00 - 9:45 a.m.; All ages welcome.; Free! Registration not required.
Join us for birding at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Saturday, June 3rd - **Drawing Nature for Teens**
2:00- 4:00 p.m.; Pre-Registration required.; Cost: \$5 ONCA members, \$10 non-members.; Ages 12 to 18.
Sign up today for a special nature drawing class with Artist-in-Residence Kayla Anley. All skill levels welcome and supplies will be provided. Dress for the outdoors.

Saturday, June 3rd - **Full Strawberry Moon Walk**
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.; All ages welcome.; Pre-Registration required.; Cost: \$3 ONCA members, \$5 non-members. Please bring exact change.
We will explore with all our senses! Wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather.

10:00- 2:00 p.m.; All ages welcome.; Free! Registration not required.
Come celebrate and learn all about insects! Explore Oxley to see what you can find!

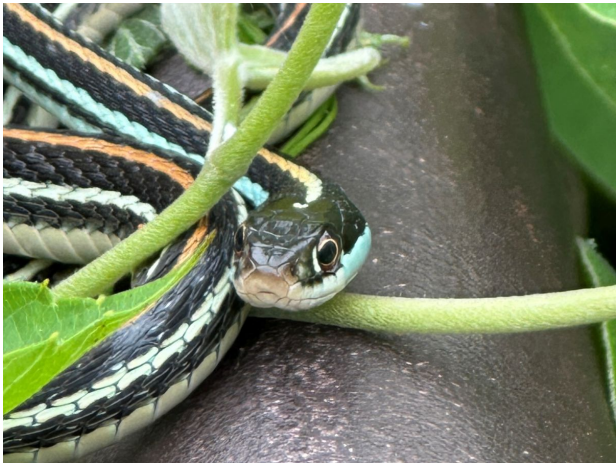
Saturday, June 17th - **Wildflower Walk**
10:30 a.m. - noon; All ages welcome.; Free! Registration not required.
Come see what's blooming on a walk with Oxley naturalists!

Saturday, June 17th - **POLLINATOR HOTELS!**
1:00p.m. to 2:30 p.m.; All ages welcome.; Free! Pre-Registration required.
Join us for a workshop on creating helpful homes for pollinators!

Friday, June 23rd - **All About Nature Book Club**
Ages: Adult; 11:00 - 12:30 p.m.; Pre-Registration Required
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment.
June's selection: The Reign of Wolf 21; The Saga of Yellowstone's Legendary Druid Pack by Rick McIntyre, Forward by Marc Bekoff. Please bring your own book (book club titles are also available for purchase in the nature center gift store).

Friday, June 23rd - **MOTHING NIGHT!**
8:30pm to 11:30pm; All ages welcome.; Free! No registration required.
Meet in the Fawn Grove. Discuss the importance of moths as pollinators, then visit the viewing stations to see which species show up!

Saturday, June 24th - **Butterfly Walk**
10:30 a.m. to Noon
All ages welcome.; Free! Registration not required.
Summer is almost here. Warmer weather results in more butterflies active in field and forest. No experience necessary. Bring binoculars if you have them.



Ribbon Snake



OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday

Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday

