

# THE ENVIRONMENTOR

Check out the **Calendar on the EnvironMentor website** for more **Earth Month activities.**

**Celebrate!! Celebrate!!**

Vol. 6, No. 5.

The Internet Site for Environmental Information in Oklahoma

April 2018 - May 2018

Cimmaron Territorial  
Celebration and Cow Chip  
Throwing Contest  
Beaver County Fairgrounds  
Beaver, OK  
April 21

Tour de Trykes  
Croterium  
Downtown Enid  
April 21

Kites over Enid  
Autrey Technology  
Center  
Enid, OK  
April 28-29  
10 am - 4 pm

Tonkawa Earth  
Day  
Tonkawa, OK  
April 22

Earth Day  
Celebration  
Johnson Park, Tulsa  
April 22  
10 am - 7 pm

Public Clean-Up  
Day  
Martin Park Nature  
Center, OKC  
April 21  
10 am - Noon

Red Fern Festival  
Tahlequah  
April 27-29  
Noon - 9 pm  
Free

Owa Chita Sunday  
Washita Battlefield  
National Historic Site  
April 29

Azalea Festival  
Honor Heights Park,  
Muskogee  
April 1 - 30

Open Streets  
Lawton, OK  
April 21  
11 am - 3 pm

Earth Day Festival  
Norman, OK  
April 22  
Noon - 5 pm



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## Not an Endorsement , but ...

Due to an unusually long Table of Contents, “Not an Endorsement, but ,,,” has moved to Page 9. If the Table continues to grow, we might have to find another permanent home for “Endorsement.” This is a good problem to have.

## Quiz!! Quiz!! Quiz!!

This is a tough quiz because this animal is very secretive and does not like to spend too much time above ground.

Hint: This animal has the common name of another animal along with its own..



You can find the answer and more information of Page 8.



An environmental education newsletter for the citizens of Oklahoma sponsored by the Department of Biology at Oklahoma City University. Items appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions or endorsement of the sponsoring organization.

Editor: Beth Landon  
[blandon@okcu.edu](mailto:blandon@okcu.edu)

Please send any submissions to The EnvironMentor Newsletter or The Calendar to:  
[Environmentor@okcu.edu](mailto:Environmentor@okcu.edu)

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If you wish to receive an email announcing when a new issue has been uploaded, please send an email to [Environmentor@okcu.edu](mailto:Environmentor@okcu.edu).

Download your EnvironMentor Newsletter in pdf form from:  
<http://www.okcu.edu/environmentor>

Visit The EnvironMentor Calendar at <http://www.okcu.edu/environmentor/> Scroll down from The Newsletters. Regularly updated as information becomes available.

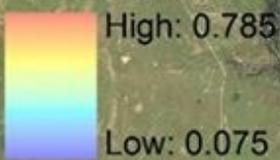
# Nocturnal insect biodiversity at the TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, Osage County, Oklahoma USA

Night-flying insects are one of nature's many building blocks and a recent survey revealed the diversity and biomass of the nocturnal insects of Osage County's Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Several new county moth records and one state moth record were documented at this site.

This project was funded in part by ODWC's State Wildlife Grants Program Grant F14AF01228.



**Night-flying insect biodiversity**



This is the front cover of the Annual Report/Newsletter Crow Creek Community. If you would like to see/read the whole publication “like” them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CrowCreekCommunity/>

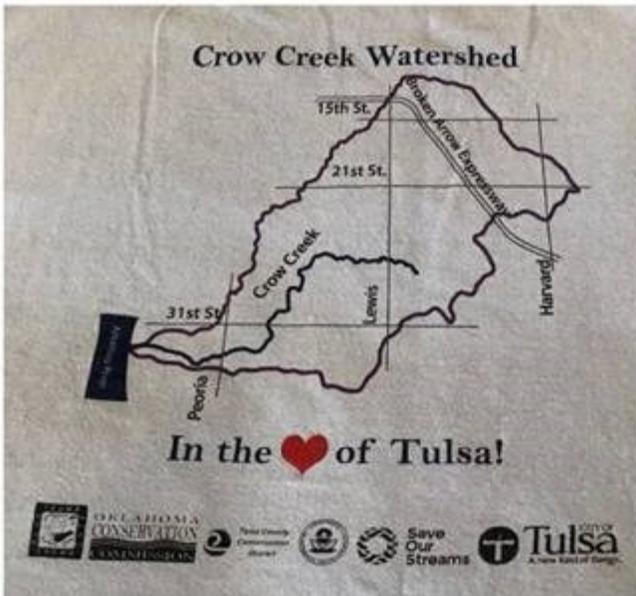
2017

. The EnvironMentor frequently highlights their activities.



## What is the Crow Creek Community ?

The Crow Creek Community is a group citizens working together to help improve water quality and life in and around Crow Creek as it flows through midtown Tulsa. The goal is to increase awareness and take action to save this stream. We hope to join hands with members of the community to help protect and restore Crow Creek to its optimal state of health. This will maximize our own health and enjoyment.



The Crow Creek Watershed includes Florence Park, Maple Ridge, Garden District, Ranch Acres, Utica Square, Zink Park, Cascia Hall, Brookside, A Gathering Place, River Parks and the people that live, shop, and recreate in the surrounding area.





Join us this spring for our virtual BioBlitz! event. This is a great way to get outside, engage with, and learn about the natural beauty that abounds during the spring. Whether you're a casual observer or Ph.D expert the collaborative nature of iNaturalist allows all submissions the opportunity to become research-grade data.

Observations must be made in the month of April within the borders of Oklahoma. Please include a photo and some form of location. This ensures quality data and enables easier identification. Prizes will be awarded to top observers and identifiers! Specific prizes TBA as April approaches!

Go to the URL below, register with iNaturalist, and join this project.

Whether you win a prize or not, you will be a winner!

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/oklahoma-spring-2018-virtual-bioblitz>

**Saturday, May 5, 2018**  
**9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.**

OKC Garden Fest is back at the the Myriad Gardens again and will feature herbs, perennials, annuals, native plants, culinary herbs, vegetables plants, roses, produce, pottery, jewelry, wineries, succulents, ornamental grasses, milkweed, pollinator plants, wildlife habitat and food trucks. Activities for children will also be offered and there is no charge for attending.



Wanting to start a butterfly garden or Monarch Waystation? We'll have an intentionally-managed garden that offers food and habitat for the Monarch butterfly population. Several vendors will offer milkweed for Monarchs along with other pollinator friendly plants.

New this year will be educational talks and demonstrations about gardens and pollinators.

Location: Myriad Botanical Gardens, 301 West Reno Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK

<https://www.facebook.com/events/396516614133338/>

# WHAT TO PLANT

## 12 Monarch Butterfly Plants Suitable Statewide

Visit [okiesformonarchs.org](http://okiesformonarchs.org) for regional plant lists.

For optimum Monarch habitat, plant at least 10 milkweed plants, made up of two or more species, and several annual, biennial, or perennial plants that are in bloom sequentially or continuously during spring, summer and fall.

EARLY BLOOM



**BUTTERFLYWEED**

*Asclepias tuberosa*, likes full sun. Blooms in the spring. Grows .75-1' tall. High drought tolerance. Perennial. Host/nectar plant.



**GREEN MILKWEED**

*Asclepias viridis*, likes full sun. Blooms spring to late summer. Grows 1-2' tall. Medium water use. Perennial. Host/nectar plant.



**BUTTER DAISY**

*Verbesina encelioides*, likes full sun. Blooms spring to early fall. Grows 1-3' tall. Low water use. Annual.

MID BLOOM



**PURPLE CONEFLOWER**

*Echinacea augustifolia*, likes full sun/partial shade. Blooms late spring to early summer. Grows 2-3' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.



**INDIAN BLANKET**

*Gaillardia pulchella*, likes full sun. Blooms in the summer. Grows 1-1.5' tall. Medium water use. Annual.



**BEEBALM**

*Monarda fistulosa*, likes full sun/partial shade. Blooms in the summer. Grows 2-4' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.



**BASKET-FLOWER**

*Centaurea americana*, likes full sun. Blooms in the summer. Grows 3-4' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.



**MAXIMILIAN SUNFLOWER**

*Helianthus maximiliani*, likes full sun. Blooms in the summer. Grows 3-10' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.



**BLAZINGSTAR**

*Liatris punctata*, likes full sun. Blooms in the summer. Grows 1-2' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.

LATE BLOOM



**MEXICAN HAT**

*Ratibida columnifera*, likes full sun. Blooms mid summer. Grows 1-3' tall. Drought tolerant. Perennial.



**BLUE SAGE**

*Salvia azurea*, likes partial shade. Blooms late summer to fall. Grows 3-6' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.



**SHOWY GOLDENROD**

*Solidago speciosa*, likes full sun. Blooms late summer to fall. Grows 2-3' tall. Medium water use. Perennial.

# 2018 Monarch Conservation Webinar Series

ON THE WINGS OF  
MONARCHS: A 10,000 FOOT  
VIEW OF SPECIES RECOVERY

2/27

SUCCESS STORIES IN  
ENGAGING THE  
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY  
IN STATE MONARCH  
CONSERVATION PLANNING

3/27

UNDERSTANDING THE  
ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

4/24

5/22

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS  
IN MONARCH CONSERVATION

MILKWEED SEED  
COLLECTION

6/26

7/24

MEADOW ESTABLISHMENT  
IN THE EAST

GETTING MONARCHS INTO  
BUSINESS: CASE STUDIES OF  
MONARCH CONSERVATION

8/28

9/25

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND  
THE UGLY: MONARCH  
PREDATORS AND DISEASE

"5TH GENERATION"  
MONARCHS: WHAT DO WE  
KNOW AND NOT KNOW?

10/23

11/27

WHERE ARE THE MONARCHS  
AND MILKWEEDS? CROWD-  
SOURCING, MODELING, AND  
SURVEYING ACROSS THE WEST



[monarchjointventure.org/news-events](http://monarchjointventure.org/news-events)



## NATURE MYTHBUSTERS

Dandelions may commonly be known as "weeds"; however they are an important source of nectar for pollinators including Monarch butterflies. As Monarchs migrate north through Oklahoma, dandelions provide much needed food in early spring when few nectar plants are in bloom.

# I HELP MONARCHS

Pass  
it on!

BY PROVIDING EARLY SPRING NECTAR AS THEY  
MIGRATE NORTH DURING A TIME WHEN FEW  
NECTAR PLANTS ARE IN BLOOM.

Answer to Quiz! Quiz! Quiz!:

Crawfish Frog. You may wonder why because they don't particularly look like a crawfish. It is because they frequently take over crawfish burrows in which to hide. So how would you go about seeing them? See the answer below from biologists with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

"Locating them by their calls during the brief breeding season is a reliable way to observe them, although they quickly retreat to the nearest burrow upon being approached. Occasionally, individuals may be seen crossing roads on rainy evenings during breeding migrations. (This profile was

created by Dr. Laurie Vitt as part of a partnership between the Wildlife Department and the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. It was funded as part of a larger State Wildlife Grant to survey and inventory amphibians and reptiles of the Wildlife Management Areas of Oklahoma: T-35-P-1.)"

You, too, can report sightings of rare species:

"Oklahoma's Wildlife Diversity Program is tracking rare species throughout the state. Help our biologists document where unusual species occur by reporting your sighting [online](#) or by sending in the following form."

<https://wildlifedepartment.com/wildlife/wildlife-diversity/report-rare-wildlife-sighting>

We are hiring two summer positions  
at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.

Deadline is April 13

[https://www.nature.org/about-us/careers/  
careers-interactive-job-map.xml](https://www.nature.org/about-us/careers/careers-interactive-job-map.xml)



# NATURE?

## JOIN OUR TEAM!

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[careers.nature.org](https://careers.nature.org)

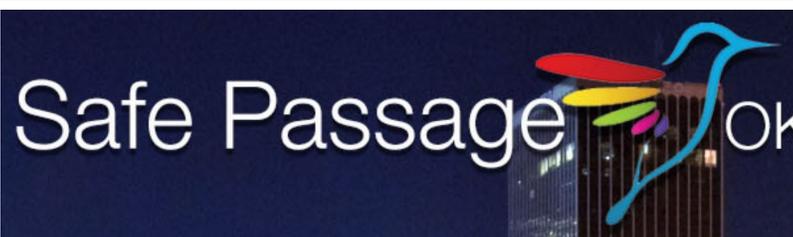
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## NOW HIRING IN OKLAHOMA!



The Nature  
Conservancy   
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

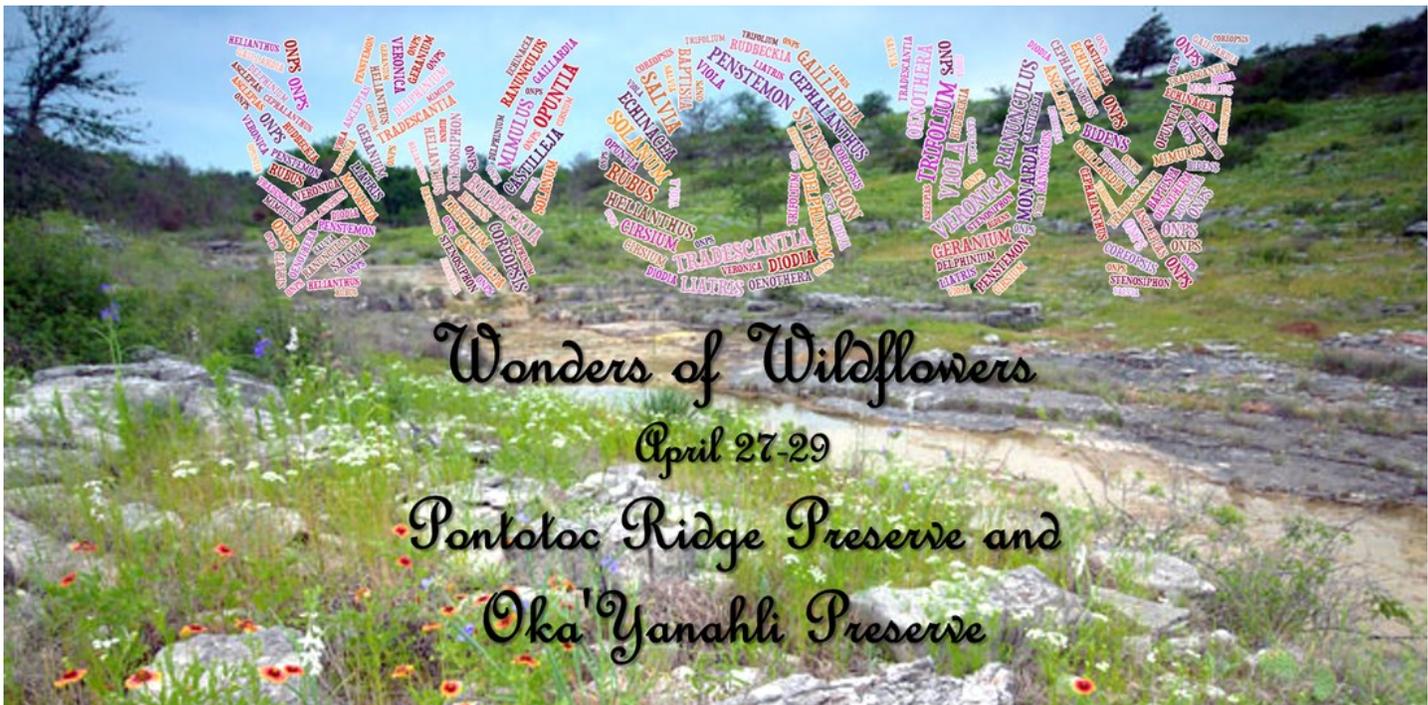
Not an Endorsement , but ...



Click below for more information:

<http://www.safepassageoklahomacity.org>

Nathan Kuhnert from OKC has been monitoring, in a systematic manner, bird strikes of buildings in downtown OKC for several years. He has also been working with Dr. Scott Loss at OSU, who is the leading researcher in the country on this issue.



# Wonders of Wildflowers

April 27-29

Pontotoc Ridge Preserve and

Oka'Yanahli Preserve

[Click here for more info.](#)

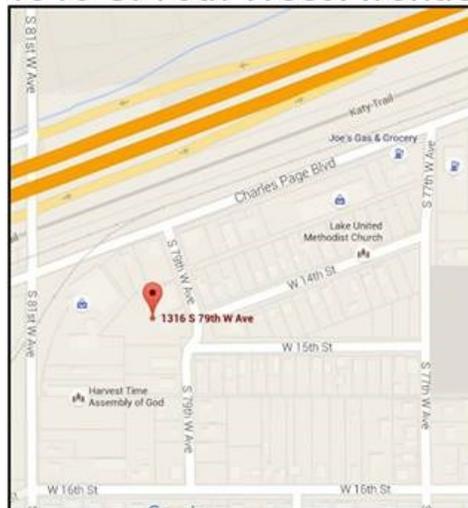
# FREE TIRE RECYCLING EVENT!

**Saturday, April 21, 2018 - 8:30 to 12:30**  
**At (former) Lake Elementary School**

**For residents of:**

- Sand Springs
- Bixby
- Broken Arrow
- Coweta
- Claremore
- Collinsville
- Glenpool
- Jenks
- Owasso
- Tulsa (City/County)

1316 S. 79th West Avenue



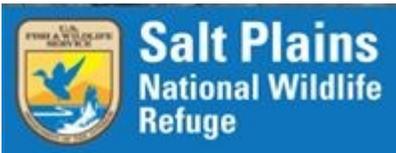
**Please:**

- No Wheels/Rims
- No Commercial/Industrial
- No Tractor Tires
- No Dealers
- Up to 15 Tires Per Person



**Brought to you by The M.e.t. and Tulsa County**  
**918-584-0584 - www.metrecycle.com**





Beginning at sunrise April 1 the crystal digging area at the refuge will be open for visitors. It will remain open daily, from sunrise to sunset, until October 15. Bring the family out to the refuge and harvest your own selenite crystals (the state crystal of Oklahoma) and create memories that will last a lifetime.

REDUCE · REUSE · RECYCLE · REPLENISH · RESTORE · REFRESH · REPLANT · REBUILD

**EARTH DAY 2018**

**SUNDAY APRIL 22  
12 PM TO 5 PM  
REAVES PARK  
NORMAN, OK**

**FREE FESTIVAL!**

FAMILY FUN ACTIVITIES THAT TEACH THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING OUR EARTH'S AIR, WATER, FOREST, WILDLIFE AND ALL NATURAL RESOURCES!

**NORMAN** parks and recreation

Environmental SERVICES

TREE CITY USA

REDUCE · REUSE · RECYCLE · REPLENISH · RESTORE · REFRESH · REPLANT · REBUILD

NORMANFUN.COM · GREENNORMAN.ORG · (405) 366-5473 · (405) 292-9731



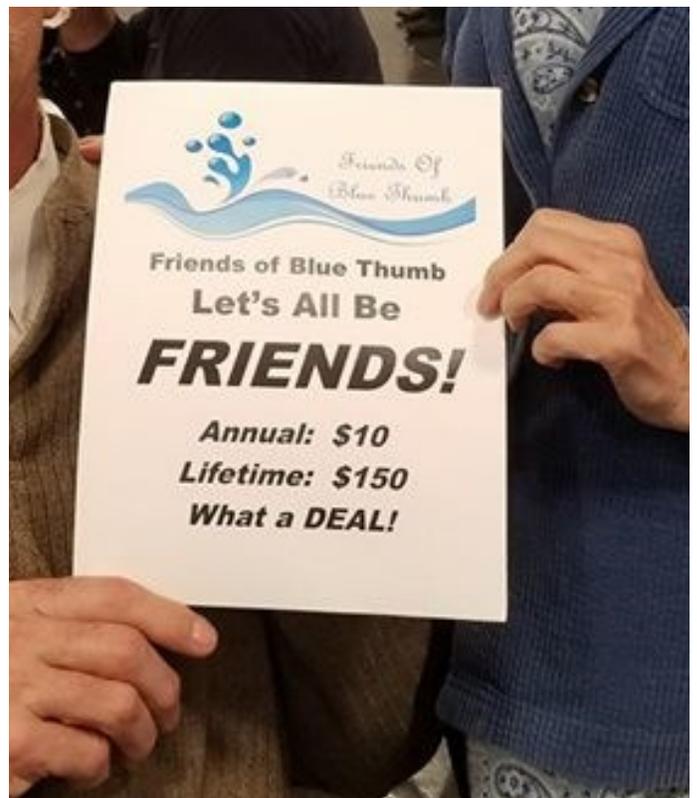
**Monday, April 23, 2018**  
through  
**Sunday, April 29, 2018**

From 23-29 April, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) is hosting the nation's largest celebration of environmental education for the **14th annual National Environmental Education Week (U.S. only)**. Each year, NEEF partners with educators, students, government agencies, businesses, communities, nonprofit organizations, and others to inspire environmental learning and encourage stewardship of essential resources: land, air, and water.

For more information click below:

<https://www.neefusa.org/environmental-education-week>

See Page 12 for clickable EE Week Resources



# Lek Treks & More

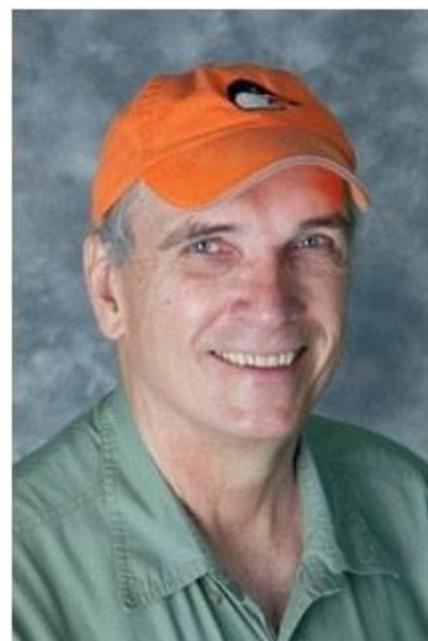
## Lesser Prairie-Chicken Festival

Woodward, Oklahoma



Registration is now open for the  
2018 Lesser Prairie-Chicken Festival!  
April 11-18, 2018  
Featuring keynote speaker Al Blatt

Al Blatt of Hartland, Minnesota is a writer, speaker, storyteller and humorist. Al writes humor and nature columns for many newspapers and does regular radio shows about nature. He writes a number of popular cartoon strips that are syndicated nationally and is author of the book, "A Life Gone to the Birds." He is a columnist for Bird Watcher's Digest and writes for a number of magazines and books. He is a trustee of the American Bald Eagle Foundation in Haines, Alaska. Al has hosted TV shows, speaks around the country, and has received numerous awards. Al speaks to anyone who will listen. His mother thinks he is special.



Join us in Woodward, Oklahoma, in northwest Oklahoma April 11-18 for the 2018 Lesser Prairie-Chicken Festival. Besides seeing the Lesser Prairie-Chickens (and so far 99% of participants have had close looks!) and birding around northwest Oklahoma, we are again offering these special features for 2017:

An opportunity to [view Greater Prairie-Chickens](#) from blinds in Osage County, Oklahoma!  
[Packages](#) designed specifically for photographers!

To access the registration pdf click on this URL: <http://lektreks.org/lek-treks-2018.pdf>

If you have any question, feel free to contact John Kennington at 918-809-6325 or [johnkennington@gmail.com](mailto:johnkennington@gmail.com)



**EE Week Resources**  
**April 23 - 29, 2018**

[Resources for Educators](#)

[Resources for Businesses](#)

[Resources for Citizen Science](#)

[Resources for Health and Wellness](#)

[Resources for Communities and Non-Profits](#)

Sponsored by



Vendors Call:  
405.818.4135

# SPRING FEST

APRIL 28 8<sub>AM</sub> TO 6<sub>PM</sub>

ARTS, CRAFTS, MUSIC, FOOD

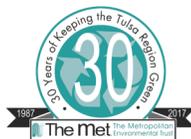
## FREE FUN

NORTH SIDE OF HWY 9 @ 156TH - NEAR AST MEDICAL CENTER





The M.e.t.'s Recycling Directory is the encyclopedia of recycling for the Tulsa Metropolitan Area. In our directory, you will find up-to-date information on the best places to locally dispose of various items. Click [here](#) to access the full PDF version of the directory. For a printed booklet, call our office at 918-584-0584.



### Now Taking Applications for the 20th Annual Wildlife Youth Camp



"A week full of fun outdoor activities, conservation education and team building is in store for up to 35 lucky teens selected to attend the 20th annual Wildlife Youth Camp. Applications are now being accepted for this summer's once-in-a-lifetime event."

"Applicants must be Oklahoma residents who will be 14 to 16 years old as of June 24, 2018."

"The application is online at

<https://www.wildlifedepartment.com/education/youthcamp.htm>.

The page also includes additional information about the camp and photos from previous years. Applications must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. April 13, 2018."

## Okies for MONARCHS



### Join Us for a Monarch Meetup

Have questions about gardening for pollinators? Want to meet others in your community who are helping save the monarchs? Then join us for a Monarch Meetup!

We are hosting Monarch Meetups throughout the state to connect locals with monarch/pollinator experts in their community. These free social events are a great way to engage your local officials.

We will be hosting these events statewide for the next few years and aim to hit all parts of the state!

Hideaway Pizza is kindly hosting our first round of meetups.

April 3 - Bartlesville | April 10 - Yukon  
April 17 - Owasso | April 24 - Edmond  
May 1 - Tulsa | May 8 - OKC

[Get all the details here!](#)



Saturday, September 8, 2018

9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

Follow VegFest on Facebook

<https://www.vegfestokc.com/>

This is the first ever VegFest in Oklahoma City and we are thrilled to be here! This festival serves as a time to celebrate, educate, and promote plant-based foods, animal rights, and environmental sustainability. There will be food, cooking demos, fitness, speakers, and a whole lot of fun! Whether you're vegan, veggie-curious, or just looking to enjoy a Saturday - join us! It's FREE!

10th Annual  
Red Slough Birding  
Convention  
May 5-8, 2018



Three of Oklahoma's bird watching hotspots will be toured as part of the 10th Annual Red Slough Birding Convention, hosted by the Idabel Chamber of Commerce May 5-8, 2018.

"The chance to see 150 species of birds during the four-day convention has been drawing bird watchers to southeastern Oklahoma for the past decade," said Robert Bastarache, U.S. Forest Service district biologist and event committee member. "It's always fun to introduce someone to a new bird and to showcase the management efforts on the three conservation areas."

Experienced guides will lead convention participants on morning tours of the Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, Little River National Wildlife Refuge and McCurtain County Wilderness Area.

"Wetland birds and warblers are staples of the Red Slough and Little River tours, while scarlet tanagers and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker are highlights of the McCurtain County Wilderness Area field trip," Bastarache said.

In addition to the morning bird-themed tours, participants of the Red Slough Birding Convention can also take guided afternoon tours of the region's diverse dragonflies, prairie wildflowers and champion trees.

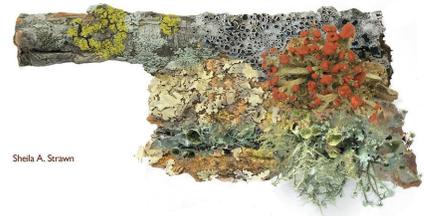
The \$125 registration fee covers the six tour options (including transportation to the conservation areas), three evening presentations, a banquet and the 2018 birding convention T-shirt. More information about the event, including the registration form and past bird lists can be found at [redsloughconvention.com](http://redsloughconvention.com).

"Tree Communities with Lichens and Mosses"  
Saturday, April 14, 2018  
Presenter, Dr. Sheila Strawn, Lichenologist

*Tree Communities* will first show participants how to differentiate between mosses and lichens, where each grows, and how each reproduces. In the class we will describe their most important characteristics and how to begin identifying them. Websites will be given for further study. During the field study, you'll learn how lichens and mosses interact with other organisms on trees, recycling resources among them. You will begin to see how these organisms change the environment and how humans change their environment. You will learn to use a hand lens to view intricate structures of organisms that live on trees and recognize characteristics of lichens and mosses that determine their roles in tree communities.

Contact Tenkiller State Park Naturalist, Leann Bunn ([Leann.Bunn@travelok.com](mailto:Leann.Bunn@travelok.com)) to register

Lichen Study Guide  
for Oklahoma and Surrounding States



Sheila A. Strawn

Sheila A. Strawn, Ph.D.

Author, Lichen Study Guide for Oklahoma and Surrounding States

[sastrawn@hotmail.com](mailto:sastrawn@hotmail.com)



## Upcoming Events Hackberry Flat Center—2018

- Jan. 13—Duck! Duck! Goose! & Hawks! Tour 1-3:30 pm
- Feb. 10—Chicken Hawks & Hoot Owls Program & Tour 9-Noon
- March 10—Prairie & Wetland Tour 9- Noon
- April 20—Bird Migration Tour 6 – 8 pm
- April 21—Bird Migration Tours 9 - Noon 1- 4pm
- April 27—Bird Migration Tour 6 - 8 pm
- April 28—Bird Migration Tours 9 - Noon 1- 4pm
- May 4—Bird Migration Tour 6 - 8 pm
- May 5—Bird Migration Tours 9 - Noon 1- 4pm
- June 9—Breeding Bird Tour 7 – 11 am
- August 11—Nature At Night 7 – 11 pm  
Star Party 11 pm- ?
- Sept. 8—Wetland Tour 9 – Noon
- Early October—Monarch Watch Dates & Times TBA
- November 10—Wetland Tour 1 - 3:30 pm
- December 15—Winter Wonders 9– 11 am

**Tours require reservations. Due to length of tours, children must be at least 8 years old. There is no fee. Dress appropriately.**

For more information go to: [www.wildlifedepartment.com](http://www.wildlifedepartment.com)

Or [Melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:Melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov) or 405-990-4977

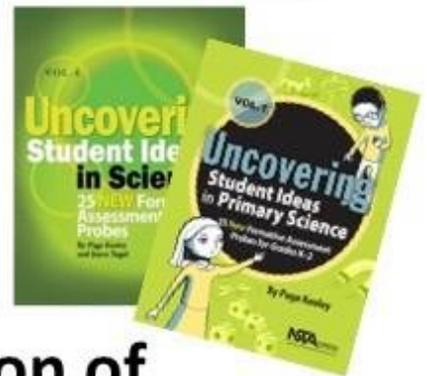


# 2018 State Conference

## ★ 3D Science ★



**Featured Workshop  
with Page Keeley!**  
And book signing!



**Celebration of  
Science Education**  
A dinner event!

## And so much more...

Exhibitors, Vendors, Presentations,  
Hands-on Workshops, Collaboration



**Dates: June 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Location: University of Central  
Oklahoma**

Register: [oksta.org/events](http://oksta.org/events)

# 4-H Fish & Wildlife



## Experience

July 12th, 2018

8am-4pm

Lunch \$5.00

Bonham Pond Education Center at the  
Great Salt Plains Refuge

RSVP to the Alfalfa County Extension office by  
July 3rd, 2018.

Transportation to and from event is the  
responsibility of the parents.



Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Higher Education Act), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, genetic information, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or status as a veteran, in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This provision includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services. The Director of Equal Opportunity, 406 Whitehurst, OSU, Stillwater, OK 74078-1035; Phone 405-744-5371; email: [eeo@okstate.edu](mailto:eeo@okstate.edu) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies. Any person who believes that discriminatory practices have been engaged in based on gender may discuss his or her concerns and file informal or formal complaints of possible violations of Title IX with OSU's Title IX Coordinator 405-744-9154.

# Cottontail Rabbits

and

# Cottonwood Trees



Photo from: <http://www.factzoo.com/mammals/cottontails-american-reproduction-specialists-white-tails.html>

Long ago, rabbits had long bushy tails like squirrels. They were very proud of their tails.

One day, Mama Rabbit was busy working in the burrow. Baby Bunny had nobody to play with. "I'm bored," he nagged. "Mama, come for a walk in the woods with me." But Mama had too much work to do.

"I'm a BIG Bunny," said Baby Bunny, "I can help!" But everything he tried, he messed up. (*Such*

*as sweeping the floor, gathering berries, grinding corn meal.*) He really was too small. But he kept nagging.

Finally Mama Rabbit suggested, "Maybe you are big enough to go for a walk by yourself!"

"Oh yes!" said Baby Bunny, "I'm a BIG Bunny!"

Mama Rabbit said, "The path from our house into the woods is open and sunny and safe -- as far as the cottonwood tree. You can walk alone on this part of the path. But when you reach the cottonwood tree, you must turn around and come home. Can you do that?"

"Oh yes! But Mama, what's a cottonwood tree?"

"A cottonwood tree is very easy to recognize. It has a tall, straight trunk with silver-grey bark." As she spoke, she gestured with her front paws. (*You do it too*) "It has triangle-shaped leaves that wave gently in the wind, making a sound like rain. At this time of year, it has cotton-covered seeds that fall to the ground and pile up like snow."

Baby Bunny repeated her words and her gestures. (*You repeat and gesture, encouraging listeners to join in.*) "I can remember that! I can go for a walk by myself!"



Photo from: <http://www.carolinanature.com/trees/pode.html>

Baby Bunny started out walking. (*Make a bunny with one hand by holding two fingers up over a fist.*) At first he was scared and shy... Hop. Hop. Hop. (*Hop your hand slowly; encourage listeners.*)

Then he began to relax. The path was sunny and safe. Hop hop. Hop hop. He was having fun!

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Suddenly he saw a tree with a tall straight trunk (*everybody gesture together*)  
with silver-grey bark

triangle shaped leaves going back and forth in the wind  
making a sound like rain  
and cotton-covered seeds

piling up on the ground like snow.



Photo from:  
<http://bcchsforestry.weebly.com/well-known-trees.html>

He knew what that was: the cottonwood tree. And he knew that meant he was supposed to stop, turn around, and go back home.

"But I don't want to stop. I'm having fun. I'm a great big brave Bunny! I can keep going." So he did. Hop hop hop hop! Hop hop hop hop. Hop ... hop ... hop ...hop ...

Because this part of the path was not open and sunny. Trees and sticker vines made a roof over the path. It was like a dark tunnel, very scary and creepy. Hop ... hop ... hop ...hop ...

Then Baby Bunny heard a terrifying sound: "Whoot! whoo ... Whoot! whooo ..."

It was an owl. And owls like to eat Baby Bunnies!

But his Mama and Papa had taught him what to do. He hopped off the path into the sticker vines, and he crouched very low. Then he held VERY still -- because owls can only notice things that move. If you hold still and don't make a sound, you are invisible to them!

Baby Bunny stayed still in the sticker vines while the owl flew over, "Whoot! whoo ... Whoot! whooo ..."

Baby Bunny thought, "I'm invisible, I'm invisible, I'm invisible," and the owl... just... flew away!

Baby Bunny sat up. "Whew! That was close! I want to go home!"

He tried to hop back onto the path, but something was holding his long bushy tail. Really it was caught in the sticker vines, but he was so frightened, he did not look back to see. He was so frightened that he pulled and pulled to get free. He pulled so hard that --- snap!! -- his tail broke off!

Baby Bunny hopped back onto the path and hopped fast, hop hop hop hop, until he saw a tree with --

a tall straight trunk (*all gesture together*), silver-grey bark, triangle shaped leaves making a sound like rain, and cotton-covered seeds piling up on the ground like snow.

He knew what that was: the cottonwood tree. And he knew that meant he was back at the safe, sunny part of the path.



Photo from: <https://fmr.org/news/2016/11/10/saving-our-cottonwoods>

He was safe. But the place on his back, where his tail used to be, was very sore. He wanted something soft to put on that hurting place.

He saw the cottonwood tree's fluffy seeds on the ground, piled up like snow. He gathered pawful of cotton and packed them together into a ball, the way you would make a snowball. He put it on his back, in the place where his tail used to be. That felt better.

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Baby Bunny hopped slowly home, Hop ... hop ... hop ...hop . Mama Rabbit said, "Oh, Baby Bunny, you were gone such a long time! You must have had a lovely walk."

Baby Bunny said, "No ..." and showed her what had happened to his tail.

Since that time, they say, the rabbits no longer have long bushy tails like squirrels. They just have a little white ball that looks like cotton. And they are not proud of it. They sit on it, to hide it. We can only see it when they run away.

*From The Earthteller,*

*Fran Stallings*

Many folktales pretend to explain how various animals got short tails (A2378.4.1). This one explains not just the loss of the long bushy tail, but also the substitution of a "ball of cotton."

You will probably have a smart 6yr old who objects, "That may explain how ONE rabbit got a short tail, but what about the other rabbits?" Ask her, how would *she* explain it? (How would you?)

When young listeners join in on the gestures that illustrate this story, the activity helps to drain off some of the wiggly energy that can make it hard for them to sit still and listen. And those gestures will help them to remember how to recognize a cottonwood tree when they see one!

### **FACTS about cottonwoods**

Willa Cather described cottonwoods: "the light-reflecting, wind-loving trees of the desert, whose roots are always seeking water and whose leaves are always talking about it, making the sound of rain." (*The Song of the Lark*, start of chapter VI).

Those leaves are roughly triangular, giving cottonwoods their species name *Populus deltoides*. But it's the flattened petiole (leaf stalk) that makes those leaves flip and flutter against one another in the wind, "making the sound of rain."

In early summer when cottonwood trees drop their seeds, many other wild and cultivated plants are tossing invisible pollen to the winds. Allergy sufferers blame what they can see: cottonwood seeds! But in fact the seeds have little if any allergenic power. Cottonwood pollen is far more likely to cause trouble – but the pollen was shed back in the spring, when oak and redcedar pollens were also making allergy sufferers miserable. So it's unfair to blame cottonwoods, especially not the seeds.

Cottonwood trees are dioecious ("dye E shus"): male and female parts grow on separate individual trees. The tree in the story must have been female. Her cotton can blow up to five miles! If gardeners don't want the fluffy white seeds "piling up like snow" in their yards, they may prefer to plant a male.

Cottonwood trees indeed grow tall, up to 150 feet when they have plenty of water. Once established, they send their roots deep and can tolerate drought. They formed the tall spine of the "shelterbelt" plantings of trees that helped counter Oklahoma's Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Their thick bark helps them to survive prairie grass fires.

This fast growth produces soft, light wood, and the branches break off easily. However, the trees can stay alive even when the trunk has been hollowed out, providing valuable shelter for wild-life. Several species of Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) eat the leaves.

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## SOURCES

### Story:

I heard a version of this story from Te Ata Fisher, a Chickasaw Indian storyteller (now deceased) who was designated as a Living Treasure of Oklahoma and has been inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame. We think she learned it from Seneca nation sources.

<https://hof.chickasaw.net/Inductees/1990/Te-Ata-Thompson-Fisher.aspx>

In 2017 the Chickasaw Nation released “Te Ata” a dramatic movie based on her life story.



### Facts:

[https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/cather/willa/song\\_of\\_the\\_lark/chapter1.6.html](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/cather/willa/song_of_the_lark/chapter1.6.html)

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/trees/cottonwood/cottonwood-tree-in-landscapes.htm>



A Tip From  
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Be cottontail-aware! We currently have over 25 cottontails in our cottontail nursery. Some have been accidentally singed when people are burning brush piles. Many animals make homes in those brush piles that have been sitting there for weeks. Always give the brush piles a good shake and give the animals in them a chance to move out before starting the fire.

Not only is it  
“The Year  
of the Bird,”  
it is also ...

2018  
YEAR OF THE  
BEET  
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On February 23, 2013 The EnvironMentor dipped a toe into social media. We made this decision because, at this time, there are two to three months between issues of the Newsletter. During this past gap an important event had an application deadline of April 1st so an announcement went out from Facebook. We won't bother you with anything trivial, so ...

## “Like” The Environmentor on Facebook!!



## QUIKList Oklahoma

Leopold Education Project

<http://www.aldoleopold.org/Programs/lep.shtml>

Type in Oklahoma

Oklahoma Blue Thumb

<http://bluethumbok.com/>

Oklahoma Blue Thumb Association

[ok.bluethumb.association@gmail.com](mailto:ok.bluethumb.association@gmail.com)

Oklahoma Envirothon

<http://www.oklaenvirothon.org/>

Oklahoma Green Schools

<http://www.okgreenschools.org/>

Oklahoma Master Naturalists

<http://okmasternaturalist.org/>

Oklahoma Native Plant Society

<http://oknativeplants.org/>

Oklahoma Recycling Association (OKRA)

<http://www.recycleok.org/okra/>



10301 South Sunnyslane Road  
405-814-0006

<http://>

[www.museumofosteology.org/](http://www.museumofosteology.org/)

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Project Learning Tree (PLT)

<http://www.plt.org/>

<http://www.forestry.ok.gov/project-learning-tree>

Project WET

(Water Education for Teachers)

<http://www.bluethumbok.com/project-wet.html>

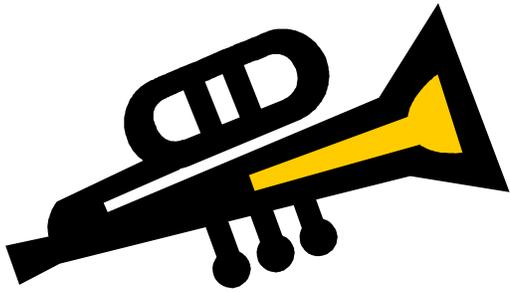
Project WILD

<http://www.projectwild.org/>

As with all hyperlinks in The EnvironMentor Newsletter, these are clickable.

Do you know an environmental group in Oklahoma that should be listed. Send that information to:

[environmentor@okcu.edu](mailto:environmentor@okcu.edu)



# The Calendar

Most people who remember The EnvironMentor Newsletter know that the pages at the end of the issue were reserved for The Calendar. Being online has some great advantages. When you downloaded your copy of the newsletter you may have noticed the box on the right side of the webpage. This is a convenient listing of the next events from The Calendar. This will always be up-to-date because it happens automatically. For more information on the event just click on it and a window will open up with all the details. If you wish, you can access the rest of the calendar from the there.

To have your event posted to The Calendar, copy and paste the following list into an email, fill in as much information as you wish, and send it to: [Environmentor@okcu.edu](mailto:Environmentor@okcu.edu)

Title of your event:

Start Date and Time

End Date and Time

Location

Location Address

Contact Name

Contact Phone

Contact Email

Details in Narrative Form

Location Link

Event Link

Map Link

Please note: We are not able to publish for-profit information.

To go directly to The Calendar click on:

<http://www.okcu.edu/environmentor>