

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2003

A Fabulous Fourth for ACC

For the second year people at Arlington's Fourth of July parade had the opportunity to recycle their plastic bottles and aluminum cans, thanks to the efforts of a few heavily perspiring volunteers. We are also indebted to the Arlington Fourth of July Parade Association for including us as the official recyclers.



There were several differences this year, and all of them were positive. We had 14 bins this time, including several loaners from UTA's Environmental Health and Safety office. There were three ACC trucks dashing around to place bins just as streets were being closed. Thanks, Steve Rothwell and Jean-Marie and Stephen Smith. Afterwards the real fun began as Marian Hiler, Roy Miliner, Jean-Marie and Stephen Smith, Dale Denton, and John Darling sorted out the trash and removed bottle caps. We ended up with six full trash bags of bottles and one bag of cans—up from one bag total last year.



August Meeting

TOPIC: Basic Tree Biology and
Construction Effects on Trees

SPEAKER: Courtney Blevins, Regional
Urban Forester, Fort Worth
Office, Texas Forest Service

WHEN: Wednesday, August 13, 7:00 pm

WHERE: First United Methodist Church,
313 N. Center at Division.
(Enter through north door.)

Remember to bring
something for the raffle!

From the President

Marian Hiler



The camaraderie of thirty-three fellow conservation-minded folks and good food made for a great mid-year review meeting on July 19 at the Epworth

United Methodist Church.

Since pictures are worth so many words, I gave a PowerPoint presentation that covered events, accomplishments, and works in progress so far this year. Sue Phillips, the new chair of the Parks Board, without the need for such props, painted quite eloquently her own pictures of the parks in Arlington. She congratulated ACC for making a difference and challenged us to get "involved in groups besides yourselves. You can only be effective when you join hands with other groups and work together." Sue's goal is to raise awareness of the value of our parks. She encouraged us to do just this as we encounter others in our daily routines. (I was glad I spoke first; Sue would have been a hard act to follow!)

The discussions at the meeting as well as the completed surveys that were handed out that morning give the Board

lots of valuable feedback and ideas to act on. Thanks to all those who filled out the survey.

The most frequently voiced concerns were loss of our trees and green spaces, preservation of habitat, and reactivating an involved environmental constituency.

Topping the list of most important current activities is the Wildscape, recycling, composting, and spreading the environmental word. Some of the things mentioned that we should be doing but aren't were: taking action on the governmental level; establishing apartment recycling; using the Internet to communicate; raising funds; speaking out; and getting more active members.

I was happy to see that several members indicated their willingness to participate in various activities: working at the Molly Hollar Wildscape, writing an article for the Post Oak, working at the ACC table at events; and attending City Council meetings. As we continue to get better organized and keep improving our communication to you all, we will be contacting you to participate when the need arises. If we catch you at a time when you can, that's

wonderful; if not, we understand and maybe you can help us the next time. We never want you to feel pressured to say yes.

Your board would love to hear from more of you. We truly are listening. If you feel otherwise or want to give us



Julia Burgen introduces Parks Board Chair Sue Phillips to the enthusiastic audience at our first mid-year review meeting.

more input, please feel free to contact any and all of us. Our phone numbers and email addresses are on the back of this newsletter (finally, I know).

We will have more social gatherings and field trips to get some more of that great camaraderie. Two field trips in the works are a visit to the drying beds later in the fall during migration season and a possible visit to a recycling center. It makes for a stronger membership if you really do feel that you are part of the group. After all, that's what it means to be a member.

POST OAK

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Give to ACC While You Shop!

ACC is a participant in the Tom Thumb "Good Neighbor" program, the Kroger "Share Card" program, and the Albertson's "Community Partners" program. These programs enable you to support ACC while you save on your grocery purchases.

If you shop at Tom Thumb remember to link your Reward Card to ACC's "Good Neighbor" account number 5468. If you shop at Kroger or Albertson's contact either Marian Hiler or Jean-Marie Smith and we will mail you a card to present to the cashier each time you shop.

A percentage of the total purchases made under these programs will be donated to ACC each quarter. Every little bit helps!

Ulrich Herrmann, one of ACC's founding members, is currently undergoing treatment for rectal cancer. Although he's not up to visitors right now, receiving cards and well wishes would certainly help to lift his spirits.

You can mail yours to 913 Shady Oaks Court, Arlington, TX 76012. If you want to check on how Ulrich is doing as well as Marianne, she said she would welcome calls at 817-275-8092. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Weed Police: Step Away from the Sea Oats

Jeff Quayle

Two weeks ago I was cited for having grasses over 10" tall in my city (River Oaks, a suburb of Fort Worth). The offenders are inland sea oats and Canada wildrye. The area in question is what I'd call a woodland setting, with the two grasses, plus American beautyberry, rusty blackhaw viburnum, and Eve's necklace. Wood sage (*Teucrium canadense*) is also scattered, but I plan to remove it because it's too invasive. The code officer has been to my place several times in the past few years and has tried to see it my way, but doesn't see anything wrong with the code governing grasses over 10" tall. It's the usual outdated city weed law. Then I was cited again, without any notice about what I needed to do to comply with the code requirements. I have a court date in two weeks and plan to dispute the citations. Each ticket is \$315.00! I live in a small city (population about 7000), so hopefully I can convince the judge that I haven't done anything wrong.

When I spoke to the code officer yesterday, and I asked him about what he considered when writing out the ticket, he said bluntly - ANYTHING over 10". My neighbor across the street has pampas grass, and he's allowed to have it. Doesn't seem right. I told him I was using native plants to conserve water, plus my yard was a Texas Wildscape planted with natives to attract the birds, bees, butterflies. His response was that we live in an urban area and native plants don't belong in the urban areas, only in the countryside. He seemed to be saying that we're NOT allowed to choose plants that conserve our water and benefit the environment. He obviously doesn't understand what all of us are doing and why.

I have an appointment next week with the mayor on this issue. I'll use the opportunity to try to work with the city to rewrite or amend the city weed law codes. I have a friend on the city council who will probably support revamping the codes. I've already contacted John Davis, our local Urban Biologist with TPWD, to see if he can help me out.

If anyone has any suggestions, please let me know.

Jeff Quayle, priarielover@ev1.net

Passenger Pigeon Egg in Texas

John Blair

**This morning on Public Radio
I heard that a small museum in Texas
Had just acquired some boxes of eggs
And one egg was labeled "passenger pigeon."**

**Oologists from California,
Zoologists from New York City,
Came to examine the precious find.
They prized up the fragile cardboard lid
And peered within. There lay the egg,
Nestled a century in its dusty coffin,
Away from any light or air.**

**Some frowned, saying "it's too brown."
Turning it over others checked again
And announced, no, it looked
Like the real thing after all.
So now in the entire world remained
One hundred and thirty empty eggs
Plus some stuffed and mounted skins.**

**Once three billion blackened the skies
With their beating wings, shaking the ground
With the sound of their passing
As they surged from grove to grove,
Nature's bounty made manifest,
An inexhaustible resource.**

**In 1914 the last one, Martha,
Old in years, irreplaceable, mateless,
Died at the Cincinnati Zoo.
Now these men, who will never see
The mighty swells of migrating birds
Or feel their tremor and majesty,
Debated a bit of moldy shell.**

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Thanks, Julia

A reception honoring Julia Burgen for her service both as a former city council member and as a longtime active environmentalist will be held Sunday, October 5, 2:30 to 5:30 pm, at the Fielder Museum. ACC is a cosponsor along with the Arlington Historical Society and East Arlington Renewal. Julia has given much of her time, energy, and heart to work on making Arlington a greener place to live. Not much of a return, but we will give her an evening of fun. Please try to keep that date open so you can attend. More details in the next newsletters.



Wildscape Update Gita Mani



What's in bloom?

Mealy blue sage, salvia coccinea and zexmenia have been the valiant holdouts, blooming despite the 100-degree scorches this summer.

Elsewhere, Turk's cap and violet ruellia stipple the wildscape red and purple.

Why water native plants?

A wildscape is an attempt at restoring the land to the way it might have been if it hadn't been disturbed. But for a few, most plants at the Molly Hollar Wildscape are indigenous. Until well established—when they will require almost no water other than rainfall—native plants need deep watering 3-6 times each year per Sally Wasowski's book on landscaping with natives. Also, plants need to be watered to a depth of 4" once a week for the first 2-3 summers. Once established, they become drought resistant, going dormant under unfavorable conditions and bouncing right back the following spring. Given that the wildscape will take two or three more years to get there, it needs loving care, read attentive irrigation. Parks personnel are watering the 3.5-acre

wildscape with two sprinklers at a time—a challenge given the size of the wildscape and the hot weather. The hope is that parts of it will eventually be irrigated by the city, and watering it will stop being the demanding manual operation it currently is.

Highlights of Wildscape Workdays

The turnout at Tuesday workdays has been very good. Recently, Devanie Fergus, Ann Trenton, Helle Calhoun and Molly Hollar removed beggar's ticks from the pavilion area.

The honeysuckle by the parking lot was tied up to coax it to grow over the top of the front kiosk.

Boy Scouts led by Charlie Sqyres built a rail fence slightly downhill from the overlook bench. The fence will prevent erosion by keeping kids from riding their bikes down the steep slope. Another boy scout plans to level the space in front of the bench. The scouts also removed privet from the land below the fence. In the fall, the area around this most occupied bench—favored for its view of the water feature and the trail through the woods—will be embellished.

Native Plant Propagation

The password to plant propagation at Molly's house is 'bumping up.' Or 'gallon pots.' Either one could buy you entry into a balmy patio party where anywhere from six to a dozen bumper-uppers



Through the scorching heat they toil, never stopping, never yielding.

convene every Friday morning to move countless flats of baby plants to gallon pots. Regulars include Devanie, Shirley Craig, Becky Bronstein, Henry Turner, Ann Trenton, Helle Calhoun, Jean Hiler, Gailon Hardin, Anne Alderfer, Taylor Stephens-Parker, Jennifer Hiler, Pat Lovejoy, and Martha Siegel. Starting in the fall, the focus will shift to plant propagation via cuttings.



Gailon Hardin lugs a load of greenery to eager Master Composters, who immediately stuck it in a new pile.

The propagation team has grown over \$10,000 worth of plants; some will be sold in the fall plant sale, some reserved for the spring plant sale, and the remainder planted in

the wildscape.

Devanie and Molly bumped up plants to 300 one-gallon pots donated by Hare's Nursery. Fifty more flats need to be bumped up, creating a huge need for one-gallon pots. If you have empty nursery containers begging disposal, please drop them off at Molly's. Call her at 817-860-5580 to arrange container drop-off or to join in plant propagation.

Thanks!

To the volunteers, Master Gardeners and Boy Scouts who pitched in with workdays, plant propagation and donations



These Boy Scouts somehow dug post holes at the edge of our precipice for the new rail fence at the overlook. They're proud—and they should be.

continued on page 5

Wildscape Update *continued from page 4*

of plants and pots. Many thanks also to parks personnel for the work they do no matter the weather. When I asked parks employee Estella Cortez if she wore her cap all the time, she half joked about getting a big sombrero.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park

Next Saturday workday:

September 6

Time: 8 am – 11 am, refreshments will be provided.

Directions: Veterans Park is at the corner of Arkansas Lane



It's all hard work at Molly Hollar's propagation sessions. Or maybe not, but at least there's shade.

and Spanish Trail. Parking for the Wildscape is at the second entrance, off Spanish Trail south of Arkansas Lane.

Weekly workdays

Tuesdays from 8 am – 11 am. Call Molly at 817-860-5580 if you plan on going.

Looking Ahead

The most pressing need for volunteers is for the two workdays in October when our top priority will be planting gallon pots.

October 4: Workday and Native Plant Sale

October 25: Workday

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Meeting

On August 31, Arlington Parks and Recreation Department hosted a meeting to update citizens on its draft Master Plan. Over 100 people were present at Bob Duncan Recreation Center to hear Director Pete Jamieson and Planner Gordon Robertson present a summary gleaned from months of work. In this time of budget problems, both emphasized the need to do more with less, and a big part of that involves partnerships with, among others, civic groups like ours.

This plan differs from its predecessor in placing more emphasis on maintenance and development and less on acquisition of new park property. This emphasis is the opposite of that preferred by many ACC members at the meeting, but there are still several interesting acquisitions in progress or planned. Board members will be working on constructive comments to submit in response to the latest master plan, and anyone interested in helping is certainly welcome. Just contact any board member to add your voice.

More Post Oak Loss Ahead?

Members of a church on heavily wooded property at Fielder Road and Pioneer Parkway have decided to sell their land in order to expand to a larger property (also heavily wooded) farther west. Representatives of a large drugstore chain are said to be considering purchase of the current church lot, and we're wondering if the new owners will try to preserve as many oaks as possible. Just across the street another church has removed trees for its expansion. Will the south side of Pioneer soon match the mostly treeless north?

Thanks

To Shane Goetz for supporting our efforts. If you'd like to help and publicize your business, call any board member for details.

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Above left, a few of the post oaks around the church on the south side of Pioneer Parkway at Fielder Road. Above right, a big difference on the north side where another church is expanding. The oaks are (or were) not part of a complete ecosystem in either case, but their loss does mean less arboreal habitat, less oxygen production, and less pollutant removal. And there's an esthetic loss, of course. Any suggestions on how we might persuade the buyers to keep the oaks?

Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

Membership Information

Please circle membership category.

Name _____

Individual \$12.00

Address _____

Student \$6.00

Family \$18.00

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Supporting \$24.00

E-mail _____

Organization/Business \$36.00

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216.

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council

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Don't forget!

At the August meeting
Courtney Blevins will present
*Basic Tree Biology and
Construction Effects on Trees.*
Don't miss it!

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