

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 5, NUMBER 5

JUNE 2004

June Meeting

TOPIC: Grassroots Organization

SPEAKER: Eleanor Whitmore, Program
Director, North Texas Branch
of Texas Campaign for the
Environment

WHEN: Wednesday, June 9, 7:00 pm

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

**Remember to bring
something for the raffle!**

Tour Time: Trash to Treasure

COPPELL COMMUNITY GARDENS Stephen Smith

On Saturday, May 22, Dale Denton, Al Vincent, Jean-Marie and Stephen Smith delighted in visiting volunteer gardeners at the Coppell community gardens. We travelled there to be inspired by and learn from the busy local activists about the ins and outs of community gardening. The morning's activities yielded 642 lbs of freshly harvested veggies that were loaded into a delivery truck for distribution to emergency-need clients in four surrounding cities.

The purpose of our journey of discovery was to familiarize ourselves with the rules, processes, and secrets for running a community garden that will fit into Arlington's needs. To follow up, we are now seeking volunteers to form a steering committee for Arlington's first community garden.

For more information, contact Dale Denton (817-460-4805), Al Vincent (817-469-8800), or Stephen Smith (817-275-7469).



ARLINGTON SANITARY LANDFILL John Darling

Another Saturday field trip, this one on May 15, gave Jo Briggs, Ann Trenton, Eleanor Whitmore, and Grace and John Darling the chance to see every facet of our landfill with expert guide and solid waste manager Allen Jones.

Opportunities for recycling are plentiful: contractors are recycling concrete and brush, and the convenience center accepts metal, computers, paper, glass, and plastic. The landfill contains an award-winning system for collecting and distributing the methane generated by decomposing garbage. So, in the midst of amazing waste, our landfill people are encouraging the recycling we need so badly.



From the President

Marian Hiler



Did you know that volunteering is actually good for your health? This is not a trick, really. Actual studies by reliable and respected institutions such

as the University of Michigan and Cornell University have shown that people who volunteer regularly in community service are more likely to live longer than those who don't. Just look at Anita Garmon and John Darling. There is evidence that it is good for our immune and nervous systems. It can help overcome depression. There is also a strong correlation between volunteering and having positive self-esteem and personal satisfaction. Helping a cause you believe in can be rewarding and fulfilling.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people with the same values as yours and to develop new friendships. Some of my best friends are volunteers. Another benefit of volunteering is that it can provide an opportunity to learn new skills and gain knowledge. By working at the Molly Hollar Wildscape, I am learning about native plants, information I readily put to use in my own

landscape.

So live a little longer and a bit healthier by giving some of your time to ACC. If you haven't yet participated as an ACC volunteer, I ask you to consider picking just one thing to do on just one day this year. Two or three hours out of the 8,544 hours in 2004 isn't that much, is it? There is such a variety of opportunities available that odds are there is something that fits into your schedule and personal-type type.

If you like working outdoors, there is both our long time project at the Molly Hollar Wildscape and one of our newer projects, the Blackland Prairie Park. If you like to add working with kids into the equation, there is the Hill Elementary Courtyard and the Fitzgerald Elementary garden. All of these projects have regularly scheduled workdays. The Walk on the Wildside could be expanding to include more schools. As interest is growing, more adults will be needed. Our

community garden project is just getting started and could use assistance.

ACC participates in park cleanups at least twice a year. March has the Litter Challenge event and September has the Trinity Trash Bash.

If you are the creative sort, please make that talent available for our float for the upcoming July 4th parade! If you

enjoy talking to people, help staff an ACC table at one of the events we participate in. Arlington Organic Garden Club's annual Natural Urban Living Garden Show is coming up on June 19.

If you can't or don't want to leave the comfort of your home, you still can help ACC. Our fine editor is always looking for new viewpoints for each month's newsletter. The ACC webmaster also would welcome support with open arms. Our phone tree is doing great, but could use some extra help or at least have some backups in the wings.

To find out more about these opportunities, please contact me or one of the other board members. Or, you can do what member Charles Mitchell recently did: When your phone tree contact calls you about the next meeting, let them know how you would like to get involved.

If not for ACC, do it for yourself.



Our president practices what she preaches and demonstrates that volunteering really is good for you.

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ACC to Build Float for July 4 Parade

Stephen Smith is heading this effort, which will feature red, white, and blue recyclables that we need you to save for the float. Stephen is hosting a 7:00 pm meeting of the 4th of July parade committee on Monday, June 7, at his house, 720 Highland Drive. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend.

Please save any recyclables that are mostly red, white, or blue.

Bring them to the June meeting or to Stephen's house.

For more information contact Stephen Smith at buggy188@juno.com or 817-275-7469.

New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Jan Miller



Smiles before the chiggers strike. From left to right: Molly Hollar, Mary Roberts Turner, Nancy Smith, and Laura Whitelaw.

Many thanks to all the volunteers, especially ACC members John Darling and Molly Hollar, who braved the chiggers and waded through lush prairie vegetation on May 22. Grasses are now knee- to hip-high, quite a change from our first workday back in February. The plant diary continues to grow: currently blooming are Engelmann daisy, gaillardia, lemon mint, purple paintbrush, snakeherb, clasping coneflower, prairie larkspur, Indian plantain, verbena and a few gems that were not easily identified. Yes, driving by you might say it is a 'vacant field', but once you've seen the diversity of native blackland prairie, it is something very special.

Stay tuned for the next workday which will be scheduled for mid to late June. Please contact Jan Miller (817/483-0579 or jmiller12@mindspring.com) for more information.

Thanks to our May Speaker

At our May meeting, Tarrant County Commissioner Marti Vanravenswaay presented the latest air quality developments, expertly fielded numerous questions, and chatted afterwards with Wildscape guru Molly Hollar (left) and former City Council member Julia Burgen (right).



New Park Dedicated Candy Halliburton



Gary Jolivet, Kelton Warren, Andrew Williams, and Steven Williams ignored the weather and began enjoying Webb Park right away.

On Saturday, May 22, with a stiff wind threatening to pull up the stakes on the tent erected for the guests, whose finely groomed coiffures competed with the kites for air time, a new community park was dedicated in Arlington. The mayor, several present and past city council members, Park and Recreation Board Members, and of course representatives from our wonderful park staff, attended the opening of Webb Community Park. The 144-acre park is located in SE Arlington, at Mansfield Webb Road and Webb Ferrell Road, not far from Tarrant County College.

Webb Community Park is situated on land that was part of a historic 19th century settlement. This park was included in the 1997 Park Bond Election and was funded in part by a \$500,000 grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The park includes baseball and soccer fields, a basketball court, a picnic pavilion, playground, and last, but in my opinion, best, a trail (alas, it is cement) to a lovely, serene pond and fishing dock.

Trinity Trail Bridge Already Popular

Here's a headline from the latest issue of Texas Trails Network *Network News*: 280' Bridge Connects Arlington's River Legacy Trails. Arlington Park and Rec's John Fain reports there that residents are already enjoying the bridge, which completes a 7-mile trail from Fort Worth to Grand Prairie.

Work continues on a new trail entrance and parking area along Collins Street just north of the Trinity River, and its dedication is scheduled for July 23 at 10:00 am. In a recent conversation, Park Planner Gordon Robertson said that wildlife is abundant near the new bridge; a short time ago, for example, several people got a long, close look at a bobcat along the trail.



Last November workers installed the central section of what must be Arlington's most impressive pedestrian bridge.

Wildscape Update John Dycus



Gita Mani, a splendid individual of breath-taking charm, has taken a job in Dallas, and the new responsibilities plus commute have forced her to relinquish her Post

Oak column to someone (me) who wouldn't know most plants—sweet verberna!—from what W.C. Fields said when he hit his thumb with a hammer. But at the moment I'm the best you've got, so let us trail into the swale together.

The Wonder of the Wildscape, Molly Hollar, explains that native plants require three years or so of root growth before much shows above the surface. Well, they're showing big time this season in the most picturesque Veterans Park spring that many of us have ever seen. The south end of the park is awash in blooms. In the butterfly garden by the parking lot: evening primrose, salvia greggii, mealy blue sage and coreopsis. In the meadow: cutleaf daisy, butterfly weed, mealy blue sage and evening primrose. At the overlook: winecup, wild foxglove, scurvy pea, pavonia and monfreda. In the pavilion area: clasping coneflower, prairie verberna and black-eyed Susan. Opposite the bioswale: zexmenia, mealy blue sage, purple coneflower, lantana, winecup and evening primrose.

Plant Sale

More than \$3,000 to benefit the Wildscape was collected May 1—in excess of 100 customers bought 1,100

plants—and late purchases are still being made. Trees, shrubs, perennials, gloves and books were sold and handouts distributed on a day that started cold and wet and stayed cold and windy. Experts on hand included, for native grasses, John Snowden of Bluestem Nursery; butterflies, Henry Turner; organics, wildlife gardens and rainwater harvesting, Lucy Harrell; composting, John Darling and Steve Smith; and native plants, Gailon Hardin. Beginning butterfly garden packages were sold with Henry's butterfly gardening material included.

About 20 volunteers, using a working plan created by Taylor Stephens-Parker, helped make this our most successful sale. Shirley Craig and Pat Lovejoy coordinated the sale operation with assistance from Michelle Ansdotter, while Jan Miller provided water. Shirley provided lunch, Pat the coffee, and Taylor and Pat made those beautiful color, laminated plant signs. Jean-Marie Smith and Hester Schwarzer staffed the money table; afterwards, Jean-Marie made a thorough record to help in planning future sales. And the helpers just kept coming: Wildscape tours, Anne Alderfer and Molly Hollar; arranging for experts, books and handouts for the information

table, Jan Miller (who also completed the Wildscape Trail signs); pickup truck and trailer, Anne and Randy Alderfer, with Jennifer Hiler helping transport the plants.

TUESDAY WORK-DAYS, 9 am-noon

and 1-4 pm. Anne Alderfer, Ann Trenton, Dixie Norwood and Molly Hollar have been planting the bare spots created by the irrigation trenching machine with winecup, coreopsis, mealy blue sage, horse herb, violets and meadow sedge.

An unannounced emergency workday occurred the Saturday before the plant sale and the "Walk on the Wildside."

The decomposed granite provided by the Parks Department had been spread on the previous Tuesday workday by Ann Trenton, Dixie Norwood, John Hamlett and Molly Hollar. A kind passer-by volunteered to push the heavy wheelbarrows of wet decomposed granite, but the material was depleted before the entry path could be resurfaced to cover the gooey clay left by the

trenching. The Parks Department came to our rescue once again by having more decomposed granite delivered Friday. Hard-core workers Marian Hiler, John Darling, Jean-Marie and Steve Smith, and Molly Hollar were already scheduled to install native plants at Vandergriff Park on Saturday morning. True to form, they finished at Vandergriff Park and reconvened at the Wildscape—toiling in the rain—to spread the mountain of decomposed granite onto the wildscape entry trail.

Graffiti Removal and Water Quality Testing

Jean-Marie and Stephen Smith continue to sand the graffiti from the benches and test the water. Stephen also replaced the broken Lexan in a kiosk door just before the plant sale.

Disc Golfers at Veterans Park have volunteered to place rock to border more trails, completing the trail from

continued on page 5



Wildscape Update *continued from page 4*

the pavilion to the original meadow and from the pavilion toward the creek. And the Parks Department—thanks, Jay Falgout and Martin Sanchez—recently provided several loads of stone and that decomposed granite for the trails, plus a wonderful new sprinkler system. Now planting can happen almost year 'round instead of only in the fall, and the plants won't take so long to show progress. Once fully established, the Wildscape will probably need watering only 3-6 times a year.

Volunteers Have Much to Show for their efforts in the Parks Department greenhouse Fridays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon. These volunteers — Friday is full at present, but help is needed Wednesday — have provided both indigenous native plants for the Wildscape and funds for other non-plant repairs and improvements. The Parks Department donates half of its greenhouse and outdoor plant space. Glenn Troutman of the Parks Board comes regularly on Wednesdays to help.

Nature Notes

Girl Scouts from ACC member Vickie Dixon's troop cleared weeds and planted a small area just east of the pavilions with prairie verbena, coreopsis, coral berry and Carolina buckthorn. ... Beautiful weather continues to swathe the Wildscape in bloom and birdsong, with a spectacular waterfall at the creek during rainy times and sightings of wildlife of all kinds: hum-

mingbirds, ladybugs, anoles, dragonflies, toads and even a box turtle. A screech owl still reigns supreme from his 20-foot perch behind the pond. ... More Tuesday volunteers are needed to put out all the plants pouring from the greenhouse. Molly Hollar will be at the wildscape from 9 am to 4 pm Tuesday if anyone can help fill in the bare spots in the garden. Molly will bring the plants; tell her if you're coming. Reach her at mahollar@earthlink.net, (817) 860-5580 or (817) 319-6924.

Molly Matters

"A huge thanks to our lovely Gita Mani, who wrote this column for a year. Gita has supported the Wildscape not only by writing, but by working as a volunteer and bringing others, including husband Ram, to help as well. We will really miss her and hope to see her as a visitor when time allows. And thanks to companies like Jean-Marie Smith's employer, the Cotton Patch Cafe, which provided water for 'Walk on the Wildside,' and to all who have contributed nearly 20,000 hours of time and toil and talent to this 10-year-old project. It has grown from half an acre to a 3.5-acre habitat featuring all the diversified ecosystems of upland and riparian woodland, seasonal wetland, and mini-prairie. Grants, donations and hard work have resulted in a beautiful place, complete with hardscape of pavilion, benches, bridges, kiosks and trail signs where people can reconnect with nature and enjoy observing wildlife."

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

THE MOLLY HOLLAR WILDSCAPE AT VETERANS PARK

Monthly Workday Saturday, July 10

Time: 8:00 am – noon; refreshments will be provided. Focus: weeding and mulching. We will concentrate on helping all our new plants survive the summer heat with lots of mulching. If you'd like to volunteer, please call Molly at 817-860-5580.

Weekly Workdays Tuesdays, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

If you have a few hours in the morning or afternoon and you'd like to help Molly with planting, call her at 817-860-5580.

Directions: Veterans Park is at the corner of Arkansas Lane and Spanish Trail. Parking for the wildscape is at the second, or southernmost, entry, off Spanish Trail south of Arkansas Lane.

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

METRO 817/265-2902
LOCAL 817/274-2905

THE LAW OFFICE OF SHANE GOETZ

715 WEST ABRAM ST. ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013



Order Your T-Shirt Now

Don't forget to place your order for our official lime-green ACC t-shirt. Contact Marian Hiler by phone or e-mail, or tell her at the June meeting. The shirt bears our logo (above) across the back, a smaller one in front, and is admired by all who see it (except an unfortunate few who don't understand the virtues of lime green).

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

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Don't forget!

Eleanor Whitmore

Grassroots Organization

June 9

First United Methodist Church

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