

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2011

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

February Meeting

**Trees for DFW:
Pick 'em, Plant 'em, Keep 'em**

Marilyn Sallee

**Wednesday, February 9, 7 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)**



Marilyn will bring her considerable expertise to selecting the best tree for your location, including which trees grow best here, requirements of the planting site, and other important factors. Don't miss it!

**Remember to bring
something for the raffle**

Bits & Pieces

Now reproducing at a prairie near you

Arlington's hispid cotton rats could easily rule the world if it weren't for disease and predators: a female could be a great-great-great-grandmother at the age of 1 year and be the ancestor of about 15,500 cotton rats. Talk about ecological cannon fodder.



Today's inspirational moment



You can't be suspicious of a tree, or accuse a bird or a squirrel of subversion or challenge the ideology of a violet.

Hal Borland,
Sundial of the Seasons, 1964

This just in

Tough times for our polluting friends as seen in recent news from the Star-Telegram: "Gas drillers face new emissions limits" and "12 drillers accused of fracturing with diesel."

On the other hand, our own Texas Commission on Environmental Quality just approved an air quality permit for a coal-fired power plant in Corpus Christi after the EPA asked the TCEQ to deny the permit. The TCEQ must be right; after all, lots of us played with mercury when we were kids. How bad could it be?

Count the birds

Help us out with the Great Backyard Bird Count. On Saturday, February 19, our backyard will be the Southwest Nature Preserve from 9 till noon. Meet at the northwest gate on Bowman Springs Road.



From the President Jo Ann Duman

I counted 50 noses at our annual potluck brunch January 15. It was a lot of fun seeing long-time friends and meeting some new ones.

Bonnie from Wildlife 911 updated us on the progress of the triage center to be located in Arlington. We learned there will be opportunities for training of wildlife rehabilitators ("rehabbers") and volunteering in the center to help with administrative work and caring for the animals.

Many of you brought your dues and made us all happy, especially faithful treasurer Marian Hiler.

Some of us left dishes behind and had to retrieve them from the Montessori Academy the next week. Leftover food was stowed in the refrigerator for the teachers.

Should we have more social events like this? Please feel free to call or email any of the ACC Board members with your ideas and suggestions. To repay our hosts,

Danny Kocurek will schedule a workday in spring so we can help out with the Academy's gardens and habitat. I expect that will turn out to be as much fun as our potluck, especially if we get some of the parents and children to join us.

The legislature is in session and threats to the environment are high as members deal with the budget shortfall. Let's see, education is the key to our state's future; protection of public health through pollution prevention and control is a sacred duty of elected officials; and tax cuts over the past few years have failed to produce increased state revenues as promised by the governor and his party.

Please do let your state senator and representative know that you want funds for public education, parks, wildlife, environmental protection, air and water quality to be maintained and even increased to serve our growing population.

Reversing over \$10 billion in tax cuts for the Barnett Shale gas drillers would

be a good start to ensuring continued, even increased, monitoring and enforcement by TCEQ to reduce the nose bleeds, headaches and other indicators of toxic emissions from the gas operations.

Winter weather may hang on longer than usual, but spring will be here soon. I look forward to enjoying more time in the wildscape, our city parks and trails, and nearby nature centers. Hope to see you there, too.



THE POST OAK

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Use the handy
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on the back page

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conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Jan Miller. Photos by Bonnie Bilodeau



Eyes (and snow) on the prairie

Despite the brutally cold first week of February, Bonnie Bilodeau and Wesley Miller documented that life goes on, regardless of the wind chill, snow and sleet. Lots of stories: a kestrel, a seemingly out of place meadowlark, and those who just left their tracks: coyote and rabbit.

Snow tracks are something we don't see too often. But they do in Manitoba; here's a site with some interesting insights: www.naturenorth.com/winter/tracks/Ftrack.html. And for a bone-chilling winter's tale, see "How Grouse Saved the World" at www.naturenorth.com/winter/grouse/Fsgrse.html.

Tempus fugit

How's that possible? Can it be...6 years already? "Saturday February 21 marked the inaugural workday at Arlington's New York Avenue prairie site. A great group of volunteers from Arlington Conservation Council, Master Naturalists, and Native Prairies Association of Texas joined Arlington Parks and Recreation staff to begin removing woody species from the prairie. Two dump trucks full of elm, hackberry, mesquite, and other undesirables were sent packing..."

Let's mark the sixth anniversary with something new: restoration workdays each third Saturday. Here's the first one:

Prairie Stewards Restoration Workday Saturday, March 19, 2011, 9 till noon.

Should be early signs of spring on the prairie. Groundsel, prairie celestials anyone? But we've got way too many tree sprouts, so bring your hand saws, loppers, and maybe cameras, bird/plant guides, even a friend. Please wear sturdy soled shoes/boots and long pants. An RSVP is appreciated in case of inclement weather but not required: 817/988-9341 (directions at this number, too.)



Wildscape Update John Dycus



For the longest time, Molly Hollar wrote this update, I would do a little editing on it, and it ran under my face and name. Then Ann Knudsen took it on. Same arrangement.

Now this month's installment comes from Diana Kunde, retired business columnist at The Dallas Morning News, which for this purpose makes her even more wonderful. She also volunteers at the wildscape. Diana, welcome.

that uses fish and plants to create a complete small ecosystem. "It's a combination of hydroponics and aquaculture. The fish we use to fertilize the plants, water is brought back to the fish (filtered by the plants), and the cycle is continuous."

Result: reusing water, creating fertilization on site, even growing the fish food. Chow envisions systems like this helping solve worldwide food shortages, especially for urban areas. He has six systems set up at his own and friends' homes, and now he and a friend are working on a tower with the potential to produce more than 2,000 heads of lettuce. "Even if we get half," Chow said, "that's still sizable."

The idea is to employ ecological concepts to create sustainable systems. "We can use the tools of nature to take care of our problems. The only thing missing is the human element."

Chow says he likes volunteering at the wildscape as a way to meet people who share his goals. "It's not every day that people come together to do such things."

On this day they came together to eradicate the invasive Bermuda grass that has taken over the sunny slope along the sidewalk leading down the hill from the butterfly garden. Volunteers have tried pine needles and endless weeding, but neither was a lasting solution.



A fringe benefit of volunteer work at the Molly Hollar Wildscape is the interesting folks you meet. Like Chowgene Koay (Chow, for short), a UTA senior who showed up to help one sunny and cold winter Wednesday morning in January.

Chow's friend Ellen Ranit, also a UTA student, had invited him to come along. As Chow said, "I like getting my hands dirty; I like doing things, rather than talking about things." He likes doing things so much that he took only nine academic hours in his interdisciplinary studies major this semester so he'd have "more time for my projects."

Over lunch at Mijo's, Chow showed wildscape volunteers the photos of his latest adventure, an aquaponic system



We used Josephine Keeney's approach, the "lasagna" method, which involves wetting down newspaper pages, then placing the multiple sheets in overlapping layers to cover the grass, followed by a thick layer of mulch.

It was a full morning's work for about eight volunteers.

"Come on, folks, this isn't a party," Josephine said at one point. We volunteers, our hands in cold water on the 40-degree morning, kind of knew that. But if it gets the Bermuda grass permanently out of the way of the glorious wine cup, primrose and other native wildflowers this spring, it will have been well worth it.

And we meet such interesting people!

OS Gray Natural Area: Let's Plant



Note: There's been lots of activity at our newest natural area since its dedication on October 2. Thanks to Kevin Donovan, here are the details for the next event:

Our next Community Day at OS Gray Natural Area will be a day for planting.

As always, please dress for the weather and working in a natural area. Wear long pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes/boots and work gloves. We are happy to report that the OS Gray Natural Area has been approved by the Cross Timbers Master Naturalists for volunteer hours.

We'll also have some Girl Scouts selling cookies!

Hope to see you there!

What: Super OS Gray Happy Valentine Planting Bowl
Where: OS Gray Natural Area, 2021 W. Abram St.
When: Saturday, February 12, 2011
Time: 9 am to noon
Bring: Shovel or your favorite planting tools. We'll be planting native plants and some trees.



Hike & Bike: Our Opinion

Note: On February 3, the Arlington Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of the proposed draft Thoroughfare Development Plan and the Hike and Bike Master Plan. City Council is scheduled to consider the plans on March 1, so if you have opinions about them, you should make them known to the mayor and your council members before then. Your ACC board voted to send the following letter to City Council:

The ACC Board of Directors considers the proposed Hike and Bike System Master Plan a step toward making Arlington a more livable, more sustainable city. As for Greenways Inc. being involved, one of our directors witnessed the Greenways approach at a trails conference and came away impressed; she believes we should commend you for your choice of partners here, and so we shall.

Properly implemented — and that includes running a sidewalk around the tree rather than cutting the tree down — this plan could improve our air quality, economy, health and safety. We hope it proves a successful tactic, perhaps in concert one day with mass transit, to give Arlington a more enlightened transportation system.

The Arlington Conservation Council board endorses the plan.

Sincerely,
Jo Ann Duman
President
Arlington Conservation Council

Overdue Dues

It's past time to pay dues.
Join today or renew by
sending in the form on
the back page,
or pay Wednesday at the
monthly meeting.
It's all up to you.



Want Board Minutes?

At the ACC board meeting in February, officers were elected (see back page), and some interest was expressed in making board meeting minutes available to any member who wants them. This seemed reasonable, so if you would like a copy, please send a message to Grace Darling at darlingg@sbcglobal.net.

Remember though, that any member is always welcome at board meetings, which are normally held at 7 pm at the Fielder Museum on the first Wednesday of almost every month.

Be a Master Composter



Once again, Arlington is offering its annual Master Composter training class. This program is designed get you started as a composter, to improve your composting skills, and to train and recruit local volunteers who will promote composting and yard waste reduction.

Course Details

Where: UTA SWEET Center
406 Summit Avenue

When: Friday, February 25, 2011, 6 to 9 pm and Saturday, February 26, 2011, 9 am to 4 pm

Fee: No fee for Arlington residents.
\$20 for non-residents.

Attendance on both days is required to become a Master Composter. Class graduates will receive books, workshop materials, and a compost thermometer.

To complete their training, Master Composters are required to contribute 20 volunteer hours, which may be spent working at a compost demonstration site, educating the public about composting, or helping at special events. Outreach opportunities will be tailored to suit individual needs.

The level of involvement is left up to the individual. We encourage everyone to at least complete the initial certificate requirements, but that is not mandatory.

To learn more, feel free to contact Lorrie Anderle, City of Arlington Recycling Coordinator at 817-459-6778 or at Lorrie.Anderle@arlingtontx.gov. Or register online at http://www.arlingtontx.gov/environment/composting_mastercomposter_register.html.

Environmental & Sustainability Studies Lecture Series

Note: These lectures are open to the public, but the schedule should be off because UTA was closed most of last week. Check the UTA Sustainability Web site for the latest information.

The series is sponsored by University Sustainability Committee and School of Urban & Public Affairs. The lectures are held on Thursday mornings, 9:30-10:15 in Room 115 of Trimble Hall.

February 10: Green Chemistry and Sustainable Technologies: Necessity and Opportunity. Dr. Frank Foss, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

February 17: Clearing the Air: Air Quality Problems and Solutions in the 21st Century. Dr. Melanie Sattler, Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering

February 24: The Metropolitan Environment and Social Justice.

Dr. Michan Connor, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies Program, School of Urban & Public Affairs

March 3: Establishing Common Ground in Sustainability.

Dr. James Welch, Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies Program, School of Urban & Public Affairs

March 24: Sustainable Real Estate.

Dr. Fred Forgey, Clinical Professor, Fort Worth Center

March 31: Cities Discover Sustainability.

Mr. Richard Greene, Adjunct Professor, School of Urban & Public Affairs

April 7: Sustainable Urban Landscapes.

Dr. Wanda Dye, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture

April 14: Culture, Environment, and the Literary Roundtable.

Mr. David Wallace, doctoral student, Department of English

April 21: The Walls that Surround You: Sustainable Architecture.

Dr. Douglas Klahr, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture

April 28: Sustainability-Focused Literacy Instruction in K-12 Classrooms.

Dr. Peggy Semingson, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction

May 5: How Green is your Campus?

Meghna Tare, Director, Office of Sustainability

Clean Air Attack



On February 2, former Downwinders at Risk president Alexandra Allred published a fascinating editorial in the Dallas Morning News — Keep your hands off our hard-won kiln emissions limits. Here's a bit of the piece:

Rep. John Carter of Texas has a funny way of expressing his concern sometimes. One of the first things he did at the start of the new Congress was to use an obscure parliamentary maneuver to try to repeal Clean Air Act emission limits for U.S. cement plants put into effect this last September.

...Over the last 20 years, these kilns have spewed almost a billion pounds of air pollution into the sky above my family's home, including mercury, lead, benzene and soot. Exactly the kinds of toxic air pollution reduced by the limits Carter now wants to permanently repeal.

Want to read more? Find the editorial at <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20110202-alexandra-allred-keep-your-hands-off-our-hard-won-kiln-emission-limits.ece?action=reregister>

Texas Appliance Rebate Program

The State of Texas will implement a mail-in rebate program to help residents replace older, inefficient appliances with new, ENERGY STAR® qualified and ultra-efficient appliances. The program will reopen on December 20, 2010. The previous program began at 7 a.m. Central Time on April 7, 2010 and closed later that day.

Covered appliances are

- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Room air conditioners
- Gas storage water heaters

- Gas tankless water heaters
- Electric heat pump water heaters
- Solar water heaters
- Central air conditioners

Customers are required to provide proof of haul-away of replaced appliances.

Consumers can also obtain a bonus rebate by providing proof that their old appliances were recycled through a State Energy Conservation Office partner retailer or recycling center.

NOTE: For questions about your rebate such as status, timeline, and rebate amount, please contact your state's program directly through their Web site.

The program works as a first-come, first-served, and will end when the funds (\$10M) are exhausted.

Contact: Texas State Energy Conservation Office. Find all the information at <http://www.texaspowerfulsmart.org/rebate/>.

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

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

First-year member \$10.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Supporting \$40.00

Sponsor \$100.00

Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ _____

New member ☐

Renewing member ☐

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Contributions and dues are not tax-deductible. ***Please add \$5.00 if you want a paper copy of the newsletter mailed to you.***

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council

PO Box 216

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, February 9
7 pm

Marilyn Sallee
Trees for DFW

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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