

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3

MARCH 2011

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

March Meeting

Camouflage: Predators and Prey

Troy and Martha Mullens

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



Martha and Troy bring big credentials with them: They're nature photographers, Master Naturalists, and members of NPSOT, BRIT, the Audubon Society, and the Wilderness Society. Get ready for another fine presentation.

Remember to bring something for the raffle

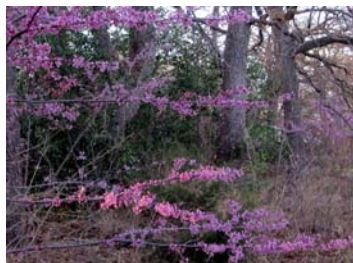
Bits & Pieces

Early spring, and the sap is rising

And so are the insects, even the tiny ones we overlook so easily. The spectacular candy-striped leafhopper would be stopping traffic all over town if it weren't only 5 or 6 mm long. Alas, it packs a punch in terms of a disease it transmits while sucking plant sap.



Today's inspirational moment



the earth laughs in flowers.
e.e. cummings

Sperry Spring

Our Garden Guru, Neil Sperry, gets us going for spring in his March 5th Star-Telegram column. Now pay close attention; some of it even makes sense. Scalp your lawn and use the clippings as mulch or compost – *kind of okay so far*. Apply pre-emergent weedkiller – *not so good*. If your shade trees have freeze damage, you planted the wrong type of trees – *brilliant!* Asian jasmine was the hardest hit ground cover – *right, stop planting it*. Pampas grass should be trimmed at once. You'll need a machete, gloves, goggles – *and a flame thrower*.

Listen to This

You've already got plenty of Internet stuff to eat up your time, but forget that long enough to google "BBC One Planet" and hear just how remarkable an environmental program can be. You'll hear everything from wonderful to appalling, beautifully presented week after week.



Azerbaijani artist who paints with crude oil.

Neighbors



Destruction as usual and something new and constructive in Arlington: It's all happening at the corner of UTA Boulevard and South Davis Drive.

Despite early promises, every tree has been cleared from the site of the Maverick Village Apartments site (left).



Meanwhile city and UTA staff and numerous volunteers have just about finished work on our first big community garden (right). For your plot application, contact Bill Gilmore at 817-459-5499.



THE POST OAK

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natural resources.

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



Tempus fugit...even more so

Last month, we marked the sixth anniversary of restoration efforts at NYABP. Well, a double-check shows that it's actually been 7 years. Yes, 7, as in 2004. Amazing, and even more reason to join us for renewed efforts on March 19, and on 3rd Saturdays thereafter.

A walkabout at NYABP shows lots of trees just waiting for us. And soft green things. And birds. Should be early signs of spring on the prairie: groundsel, prairie celestials anyone? But way too many tree sprouts, so bring your hand saws, loppers, cameras, bird/plant guides, maybe even a friend. Please wear sturdy-soled shoes/boots and long pants. An RSVP is appreciated (in case of inclement weather, etc.) but not required: 817/988-9341.

For map and directions:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&near=arlington+texas&ie=UTF8&hq=hotels&hnear=Arlington,+TX&msa=0&msid=113301949787667296180.000468092dca894c34cbb&z=14>



Prairie Stewards
Restoration Workday
Saturday
March 19, 2011
9 am – noon



Wildscape Update



On February 11, Fort Worth Country Day School students and two of their teachers planted 25 trees in the Wildscape. In addition, they loaded and spread the very heavy decomposed granite on some of the trails. These young men were great. They worked hard and dug lots of big deep holes for burr and chinquapin oaks to add more diversity to our post oak woodland.



We just had another fine privet party in honor of Molly Hollar's birthday on February 16. A big group gathered to beat up on wildscape privet, our best Molly present. And of course, they ended up at Mijo's for lunch, with Kocurek Cake and even balloons.



Toxic Spill of Hydraulic Fracturing Fluid at Lake Arlington Jan Miller

When I first heard this story, I couldn't help but think of the old saying, "If a tree falls in the forest, will anybody hear?" Report of a toxic spill of fracturing fluid that reached Lake Arlington made its way to public notice recently, almost eight months after the event. The Star-Telegram noted on March 2, 2011, that a Quicksilver gas production site on the west side of Lake Arlington had noted and reported the leak on July 15, 2010.

The total volume of fluid leaked is unknown, but 3990 gallons were vacuumed up at the site. Because there was no containment berm, fluid traveled 450 feet and reached the lake. It is unknown how much fluid reached the lake but the estimate is

210 gallons. The measure of environmental impact used in the assessment was visible fish killed. No study of the actual environmental impact was done. Fluid traveled 75 feet in another direction and damaged plants covering 700 square feet. The gas company failed to notify the city until 8 hours after the spill was discovered, in violation of city ordinance. Arsenic and carbon tetrachloride levels were above normal in water samples from the lake.

The Star-Telegram noted that the spill is "a perfect example of why city officials are drafting a Lake Arlington Master Plan and other ordinances aimed at protecting the lake." As the drinking water source for a reported 500,000 Arlington-area residents, additional

safeguards for Lake Arlington are needed. Unfortunately, numerous gas wells already dot the west side of the lake, a large compressor station sits at the west end of its dam and more wells are rapidly appearing. Along the east side, residential areas are pushing the drilling sites farther away from the lake, but into neighborhoods.

When gas drilling operations are next to our water supply they present a big risk that residents will face for decades. Will gas operators do the right thing by meeting and exceeding safety and operational requirements ahead of regulations? Will city, state and national leaders step up to enact impartial scientific evaluations and rapidly implement effective protections for public health and safety?

Gas Well Tour

Have you ever wondered what they are, those strange things around drilling rigs and other natural gas-related installations? Would you like a quick education on what is involved in natural gas drilling in the Barnett Shale?

If your answer is yes, you will have an opportunity to satisfy your curiosity on Saturday, March 26, when Alisa Rich, MPH, PhDc, president of Wolf Eagle Environmental, will lead us on a tour of gas drilling sites.

We will meet at 9:30 am at the Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St., for a short orientation and then carpool to the sites.

In preparation we will view a video of the operation of a drilling rig, which is extremely good, and a Powerpoint presentation that we will send to you by e-mail. The tour lasts until noon, and afterwards we will go to lunch at Mijo's for further conversation.



Membership Task Force Update

The ACC Membership Task Force is officially up and running. Despite a chair of questionable competence, the task force members have hit the street running. Our first priority is retention of our current members, so if you have not rejoined ACC this year, we hope you will mail us your check without delay.

Our next project will be recruiting new members, and that is where we would like your help. If you have a friend, relative, neighbor, spouse, ex-spouse, barber, mechanic, accountant, manicurist, dog stylist, gardener, preacher, rabbi, church member, or anyone you like, please consider telling them about ACC. You can refer them to our website, our Facebook page, or me for more information.

If you have ideas on how to expand our membership or would like to join our task force, please contact me also. Mostly, however, I want to thank you very much for your continued membership and support.

Danny Kocurek
Chair, Membership Task Force

Leadership North Texas Visits Austin Danny Kocurek

I have been participating in Leadership North Texas (LNT) this year as a representative of ACC. LNT is likened to a graduate program for programs like Leadership Arlington, where participants learn about regional issues. Last month we had a session in Austin to learn about our Legislative process. We spent the day listening to legislators, administrators and staffers discussing the problems we are facing this session. In summary, it is a nightmare for everyone, with an enormous deficit and lots of political games being played by clueless elected officials.

I was fascinated by a presentation from Clay Reed, the lead attorney in the Attorney General's office fighting the EPA on behalf of our state. For those of you who have not been following this closely, despite a ruling by our conservative-dominated Supreme Court that the EPA is required to regulate greenhouse gases, Governor Perry has

spent millions of dollars arguing that we cannot do this because it is bad for business in Texas. I think the presentation was best summed up by an inadvertent quote Mr. Clay made to what he thought was a completely sympathetic group. He said, "There are a few enviros in Texas who want to prevent global

warming, but the majority of Texans support it." I honestly do not think he really meant what he said, but I found the statement most enlightening.

It is hard for sentient beings to follow the legislative process without giving up hope on the future of our species, but I did learn one thing that I would like to pass on as a ray of hope. A legislative aide was asked what citizens can do to influence the legislative process and he responded, "contact your legislators and, perhaps more importantly, their chief of staff." He said they really do listen to constituents.

If you have not contacted your legislator yet this session, you really have no right to complain about all the insane things they are doing. It takes less than a minute to call and leave a message that you are in support of or opposed to something. If you do not know what number to call, go to <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>. You can find your representatives, their phone numbers, how they voted on bills and all kinds of information. Please consider calling your senator and representative today and let them know how you would like them to represent you.



Gratuitous Flowering Trees



Around Town **Grace Darling**



Photo: Arlington Parks & Recreation Department

Community Garden Takes Root

For 3 days last week, volunteers toiled in the soil – well, not really – near the corner of Summit and UTA Boulevard (Border St) by building 80+ raised planting beds, filling them with good dirt, and topping paths with mulch. They would have finished on the third day but for running out of cardboard, which is laid down on the ground to block weeds. (Pizza boxes are ideal because they are not recyclable, but strangely for a college setting they weren't available at the time.) Applications for plot rentals are now accessible through the godfather of the garden, Bill Gilmore of Arlington Parks and Recreation Department, 817-459-5499. The fee will be \$25 through December 31, rising to \$35 next year.

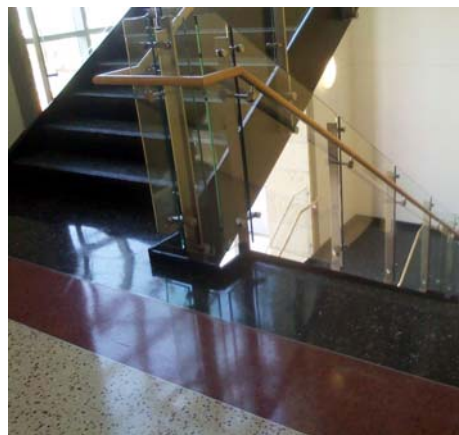
The fees collected will go to fund improvements to the garden.



A Gem of a Building

Last Friday UTA officially cut the ribbon on the magnificent Engineering Research Building, the site of biomedical engineering and computer science research on campus. After a lovely ceremony studded with speeches by local

dignitaries, visitors went on self-guided tours of the great-looking building and peeked into various laboratories where faculty and graduate students explained their work. The ERB facility is hoping to qualify for LEED Gold status, meaning it is a green structure designed with sustainability in mind and filled with natural light, energy- and water-saving features, and recycled materials – note the beautiful Enviroglas floors in stairwells, my personal favorite. Keep your fingers crossed that the ERB marks the start of a trend in public building construction in Arlington, and hooray to UTA for leading the way.



Green Cement Is Here to Stay

It now seems that the lawsuit brought by the Ash Grove cement manufacturing plant against Arlington and Dallas will have a happy resolution. The terms of the court-mandated settlement have been rewritten and are expected to be accepted by the cities' respective city councils when the issue comes up for a vote – March 22 in Arlington. The new agreement maintains reasonable caps on toxic emissions while allowing 3 years for the manufacturer to ramp up the technology in its kilns to meet new standards expected to be issued by EPA in the near future. Hats off to Arlington and Dallas officials who stood firm against the bully from Midlothian.



Preserve Plans Sail Forth

Even as the gas drilling rig on the northeast corner bores away and the pipeline hub going on across the street creates a scene of loud devastation, the Southwest Nature Preserve dream moves another step closer to reality. At a recent meeting of neighbors, the Master Plan was well received and drew no opposition, clearing the way for a successful journey through the Arlington city council. Our thanks and congratulations to everyone who held on to the vision and participated in the process.

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 _____

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First-year member \$10.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Supporting \$40.00

Sponsor \$100.00

Lifetime individual \$250.00

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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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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, March 9
7 pm

Troy & Martha Mullens
***Camouflage:
Predators & Prey***

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