

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
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August Meeting

Disease Vectors: Insects and the diseases they transmit to people

Terry Gratton,
Emeritus Professor,
UNT Health Science Center

Wednesday, August 8, 7 pm
Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)



Terry will discuss insects from a public health perspective. He will explore a number of insect vectors that can carry disease. We'll look at their life cycles to better understand how to control them.

With some precautions and knowledge we can safely go about doing the work we love to do, that needs to be done, and continue enjoying what nature has to share with us.

Bring something for the raffle.

Bits & Pieces

City Hawk

The other day a Cooper's hawk was crouched over a dead starling. Nothing strange about that; this hawk specializes in dashing through branches to prey on other birds. The odd thing was the place — a wide strip of grass at the main library. Cooper's hawks have become more common in urban areas. This one looked right at home in a busy spot.



Today's Inspirational Moment



The world is big and I want to have a good look at it before it gets dark.

John Muir

Green and White and Red all Over

It's so dry that even a lot of prickly pears look stressed: Some are infested by cochineal bugs, parasitic scale insects that produce carminic acid to deter predators. The acid is extracted from the insects and used to make carmine dye.

Hard to believe? Try scraping some off, squash them and just see what color you get.



Congratulations, UTA



They made it — UTA has received LEED Gold certification for College Park Center from the US Green Building Council. The award recognizes high performance in just about every environmental category you can imagine.

Conservation is Patriotic **Grace Darling**

Conserving our country's natural resources – our land, air, and water – is patriotic, say Americans. A full 74% of bipartisan voters agree that even with federal budget problems, funding for conservation should not be cut. They believe that “one of the things our government does best” is protecting the country's “history and natural beauty through national parks, forests, and other public lands.” What's more, 83% of responders would be willing to pay more in taxes to fund protection of land, water, and wildlife habitat in their area. In all, 79% of American voters reject the notion that protecting the environment is at odds with a strong economy.

Surprising statements, indeed, given the political polarization of our society, yet those were the results of a bipartisan national poll conducted by The Nature

Conservancy and released on the Fourth of July. “Many Americans spend the [holiday] outdoors, in a local park, at the beach, on the water, or in a national park,” said Mark Tercek, president and CEO of TNC. “By our actions we are celebrating and enjoying both the creation of our republic and the long history of our country's commitment to conservation of our land and water.”

As Conservancy scientists explain it, previous polls by the Pew Center on the importance of conservation to the American public asked questions focused on tactics – laws and regulations – needed to accomplish specific goals. This approach left a wrong impression of indifference or hostility toward conservation by a majority of Republicans and Tea Party affiliates.

Joe Fargione, lead scientist for TNC's North American program, believes the Conservancy poll gives a more accurate reflection of Americans' attitudes toward environmental protection because it does not confuse tactics with values. “There is still broad support for a pragmatic approach to conservation that preserves our natural heritage” for our children and grandchildren, says Fargione. “In fact, these issues are so important that people are willing to pay for them.”

“Our shared values are clear: Americans care about clean water and healthy wildlife, no matter their political affiliation. The question is, will we use the innovative, pragmatic solutions that can be found across the political spectrum to conserve this legacy for future genera-

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THE POST OAK

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Jan Miller Photos by Wesley Miller



Great Outdoors

The calendar is officially turned to August and the thermometer bears out the truth of another scorching Texas summer. But in another month or so (surely)

we'll be turning thoughts again to outdoor activities, including prairie restoration at New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park. Until then, here are a few items of interest: one inside, one inside but at a distance and one outside but close and early enough to beat the heat.



Saturday, Aug 11, 8:00 am. Jim Varnum nature walk at O. S. Gray Natural Area

Jim leads a nature walk at OSGNA at 8:00 AM on Saturday, August 11. Everyone is invited to attend. The walk will last an hour or so, but the parking lot is nearby if you want to leave early. Jim guarantees you will see pecan trees.

Web sites:

http://www.arlingtontx.gov/parks/simple/park_osgray.html

<http://www.facebook.com/OSGrayNaturalArea/info>

<http://www.arlingtonvibe.org/2010/11/new-video-o-s-gray-natural-area/>

Location - 2021 W. Abram St. Arlington TX 76013 (between Bowen and Fielder).

Saturday, Aug 11, all day. Texas Bluebird Society symposium - Gainesville

Annual symposium with featured speakers Keith Kridler, author and

naturalist (Bluebirds & More) and Dr. Ken Steigman, Director and bluebird bander at Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area. Topics covered are bluebird basics, house sparrow control, gardening for bluebirds and more.

Advanced registration ended July 28 but at-the-door registration is available (without lunch).

Visit www.texasbluebirdsociety.org for info including registration form.

Thursday, Aug 16, 12:00 - 1:00 pm. Wildlife for Lunch Webinar - rainwater harvesting for wildlife

Join Texas Wildlife Association and Texas AgriLife Extension for the next free Wildlife for Lunch webinar:

Topic: "Rainwater Harvesting for Wildlife" The webinar will cover watershed and land stewardship, requirements of wildlife habitats, water demand of wildlife, rainwater harvesting for bird baths and water guzzlers. Examples will also be given of devices and simple construction techniques for building your own watering device.

How to sign on: Point your browser to <https://texas-wildlife.webex.com> on the day of the webinar and click to join the Wildlife for Lunch webinar. Each seminar is fully interactive and allows you to engage the experts, make comments and ask questions during the course of the presentation.

If you can't make the live webinar: Each webinar is archived and available for viewing at the TWA website: www.texas-wildlife.org

Wildlife for Lunch webinars continue each month through December 2012. Contact Courtney Brittain at cbrittain@texas-wildlife.org or call the main office at (210) 826-2904.

Just a note

Minutes from a recent ACC board meeting included regrets about ACC's support of the Save Winfrey Point petition and that not enough research went into the issue. There are qualified, knowledgeable people on both sides, along with polarized value judgments.



Arboretum consultants maintain that the site is not pristine blackland prairie, but even so it has demonstrated value by providing wildlife habitat, education, research and habitat restoration opportunities, ecosystem services (e.g. water quality), and open space. Intact, functioning blackland prairie ecosystems are almost non-existent, but this could be as close as it will ever exist in Dallas. The Arboretum also has a highly vested interest in development of the site.

Based on my reading, opinions of other prairie folk and volunteers who have worked there for many years, I still have no regrets about ACC's support for Save Winfrey Point. ACC always needs to be vigilant about its positions and more information is nearly always better, but — just my \$0.02 — this is a good cause.

Winfrey Point is stable for now, but the development status is yet to be decided. If you're interested in following, check the Facebook sites for Save Winfrey Point.



Wildscape Update John Dycus



What has been eating the violet ruellia? Wildscape namesake Molly Hollar was surprised to find a squirrel munching on the seeds of the lovingly tended plants.

Remembering that the wildscape is supposed to provide food for wildlife, she left the furry critter undisturbed to have his lunch.

Watering continues to be the wildscape order of the day. Molly and her hardy volunteers now have 2,000 feet of soaker hoses on the ground, all connected to seven water sources via

couplers and manifolds. New plantings get watered once a week.

Add to the moisture mix more than 50 gator bags. Each holds 20 gallons, which seep into the ground over six to 10 hours, eliminating runoff. Fifteen-gallon flat gators aid the very small trees, which cannot withstand the weight of a full gator.

One benefit of the drought (it's a short list), it shows which plants best tolerate big-time stress. Native post oaks survive all but the severest conditions, and this summer the violet ruellia, coralberry and inland sea oats are actually thriving. So are the understory trees planted to increase biodiversity, the rusty blackhaw

viburnum, Mexican plum, Eve's necklace and Carolina buckthorn.

The drought-tolerant mountain laurel is being added. Indigenous to the Hill Country, it once was considered insufficiently cold-tolerant for this region. However, changing temperatures have made it feasible to use here. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe it's not.

For the July mini-class, certified arborist Danny Wright of Organicare demonstrated tree planting techniques. Hester Schwarzer will give a presentation on bees Saturday, Aug. 4.



Above: At the July miniclass, Danny Wright demonstrated tree planting techniques. *Below:* Soaker hose at work with gator bag in the background.



Planting Progress

Despite the heat, it's always worth taking a moment to enjoy the difference that so many volunteers have made in transforming the Wildscape. *Below, left:* Before planting. *Below, upper right:* A nearby area about one year after planting with appropriate natives. It hasn't completely filled in yet but already looks good. *Below, lower right:* An area planted several years ago that is now totally mature.

These photos show how it takes native plants several years for the plantings to grow their roots deep enough to become established and reach their potential. Volunteers and park visitors know this, but it's good to remind ourselves that the result is always worth the wait.



Green Golf: ACC June meeting

Our June meeting featured one of the most remarkable programs ACC has ever held. We toured Tierra Verde Golf Club, the first golf course in Texas and the first municipal course in the world to be certified as an Audubon Signature Sanctuary. Thanks to Mark Claburn, Director of Superintendents, we looked behind the scenes, enjoyed the beautiful setting, and got the environmental details underlying the operation. Thanks, Mark. Your enthusiasm and knowledge are a true inspiration.



Above, Mark explains the production of biodiesel from kitchen grease for use in powering the mowers. *Below*, the biodiesel machine. *Right*, even the city's million-gallon water tank has green features.



The Truth about Trash Trawlers Jo Ann Duman

"In your part of town, but surely not in my neighborhood." That's what I said to my son who told me a couple of years ago that a guy in a pickup drove through his south Arlington neighborhood about 2 a.m. on curbside collection days to go through the trash. I just couldn't imagine that someone my neighbors and I didn't know was regularly in our neighborhood without our knowing. In May I found out the truth.

Most of you know that I moved to Texarkana June 1. I'm the kind of person who gets rid of stuff before I move. I've had many friends who move everything then sort out and discard on the other side (or leave stuff in boxes in rental storage units or the garage for years). I'd been cleaning closets for two years to declutter my house to put it on the market, which I finally did in March. Even so, when it actually sold in April, I still had things to get rid of to downsize from my three bedroom, 1610 square foot, two-stall garage house in Arlington for a two-bedroom 1200 square foot duplex with carport.

My son helped me put things for sale on Craigslist. We took at least ten carloads of stuff to Goodwill that I thought was good enough for them to be



able to sell. I also used Freecycle, which lets people post things they have to "offer" or ask for things they "want." You can join them at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ArlingtonTxFreebiecycle>. This is a great way to pass on one or two items at a time. I found a taker for my plastic bin full of wrapping paper and gift bags, for example, and another one for a large roasting pan and 16-quart stock pot. Over the years I have also put small furniture pieces on the curb a couple of days before trash day, and often someone picked them up within hours. This May, one of my neighbors even knocked on the door and offered to pay for the camping table I set out, and I told him I

was just very happy that he could use it and to help himself.

But what about the trash trawlers? I found out the truth about my neighborhood when my son was helping me pack the last week in May. He was staying in my front bedroom with the view of the street. Sure enough, he saw a man in a sedan come through and check out the black trash bags at 4 a.m. The trash trawler took a decorative birdhouse that I thought Good Will probably wouldn't have a buyer for, and a brushed aluminum desk lamp. The desk lamp had a place to plug in a portable computer and a telephone cord. Even though the small lamp was like new, it was old technology. None of us use phone cords anymore to transmit data so my son and I decided to discard it. I'm glad that at least those items were diverted from the landfill.

My suggestion for you would be to make the trash trawlers' discoveries easier by putting good stuff in the top of your plastic bag if you decide not to Goodwill, Freecycle or otherwise discard any usable item. You might also want to sit up in the early morning hours one collection day to watch for your own trash trawler and add him to your life list the same as other rare and useful birds.

Patriotic from page 2

tions? Preserving these shared values should be something that Americans of all political stripes can get behind," Fargione concludes.

Let us start here and now. Join ACC and do your patriotic bit for our country.

<http://www.nature.org/newsfeatures/pressreleases/conservation-is-patriotic-and-has-bipartisan-support-according-to-new-poll.xml>
<http://blog.nature.org/2012/07/conservation-is-patriotic/>

Showing
Shining
Sunlit
Scales
SNAKE
Silently
Shoves
Stems
Sideways
Slides
Somewhere
So
Secret
Sssshhhh

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Andy Wasowski

Andy Wasowski died the other day in Taos. A sad loss for his family and for lovers of native plant landscaping, especially for those who had the pleasure of hearing him and his wife, Sally, speak.

Long ago (20 years or more?) we sat in that greenhouse classroom at King's Creek Gardens, me expecting something worthwhile but maybe a little dull, when Andy effortlessly took over the place with an energetic mix of humor and knowledge. I was laughing most of the time, but the important ideas have stuck. You can find them in their fine books, particularly *The Landscape Revolution*.

Rest in peace, Andy Wasowski, and thank you. – Editor

4th of July Parade Danny Kocurek Photos by Paul Knudsen and Marian Hiler

For as long as anyone can remember, ACC has been creating thoughtful and beautiful floats for the Arlington 4th of July Parade each year. Where most organizations tape a few streamers to a trailer or reuse the same float each year, ACC works hard to make something memorable.

At this year's parade, ACC continued this tradition and more. Not only was it creative, beautiful, and well received by parade watchers, ACC was one of only two floats to incorporate a QR code. QR codes are those squares of seemingly random, black dots that you can take a picture of and it will link you to a Web site. Frank Keeney created and printed a QR code for the float that got many comments and at least a dozen hits during the parade. Who would have thought a bunch of old treehuggers would be leading the smartphone revolution.

Lots of folks worked on the float this year as always. Marian Hiler once again helped plan and organize the float and design the banners. Marianne Hermann, Peggy Quinn, Candy and Wayne Halliburton, and Sharon Schoech helped cut out letters from reused paper for our signs. Peggy Quinn, Marian Hiler, Dick Schoech, Frank Keeney, Roy Miliner, and Wes Miller helped construct the float out of reused and scrap lumber and paint it with leftover paint. Special thanks again this year go to Dale and Lorna Marsh for pulling the float and hauling it around and James Hollar for letting us use his trailer this year. And lastly our enthusiastic floatees. Dale and Lorna Marsh, Roy Miliner, Wes Miller, Diana Kunde, Paul Knudsen, Peggy Quinn, Barbara Kocurek, Sandra and Jim Robinson, and Frank Keeney waved and smiled and sweated and smiled some more.

Another first this year was the ACC orchestra featuring 4 adorable violinists playing America the Beautiful in the back of the pull vehicle. Special thanks to Isabella Robinson, Jessa Adkins, and Benjamin and Nicholas Kocurek for their hard work practicing and performing.

Most notably, however, super special thanks go out to Mike and JoAnn Kolanko without whom the float might have been a trailer with a few streamers. They helped plan, design, obtain materials for, construct and provide a place to store the float during construction. Beyond all that, they provided the artistic skill to make the float memorable and truly beautiful. They took the ACC float to a new level.

As a result of everyone's hard work, ACC won First Place in our category. Thank you all, and see you next year.



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4th of July Parade: Hard Work Behind the Scenes



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THE POST OAK

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, August 8

7:00 pm

Terry Gratton

Disease Vectors:

Insects and the diseases they transmit to people



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