

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6

JUNE 2013

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

June Meeting

The O.S. Gray Natural Area Management Plan

Bonnie Bowman, O. S. Gray Board
Member and Past ACC President

Wednesday, June 5, 7 pm
Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)



It's been an inspiration watching the evolution of the old O. S. Gray nursery into a thriving, citizen-based public natural area.

The committed residents who have driven this project for years aren't resting on their laurels, however. Thinking ahead, they've commissioned a comprehensive master plan to understand what's there and to guide future management decisions.

Don't miss your chance to learn more about O. S. Gray and to admire the results of years of volunteer efforts.

Bits & Pieces

More Than Good Looks

A Summer tanager just wouldn't quit singing last Sunday at SW Nature Preserve, and it's not just a loud voice and a pretty face, it's North America's only all red bird. Not only that, Summer tanagers specialize in eating bees and wasps after beating them to death on a branch and rubbing off the stinger. This is a serious bird. Don't mess with it.



Today's Inspirational Moment

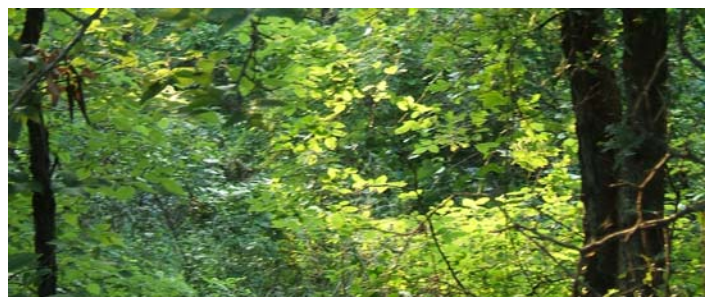


The Earth is what we all
have in common.
Wendell Berry

Prairies Need Friends

The Friends of the Blackland Prairie group is now officially organized and registered to do business in Texas. Jan Miller, Dick Schoech, and John Darling* are the stewards who have pledged to preserve and protect this unique ecosystem, especially the rare remnant of virgin prairie now clinging to life on south New York Avenue in Arlington. If you'd like to be involved in this ongoing effort, they'd welcome your help — contributions of labor and cash are very much appreciated. Donations are 100% tax-deductible.

* Their contact information is elsewhere in this newsletter.



From the President Danny Kocurek



When I was a kid, we did a lot of camping. To be honest, I think we camped because money was tight and it was the cheapest way to take a vacation; but I still had a good time. These days I

can afford nice, comfy, temperature-controlled accommodations and my body objects more and more strongly to sleeping on a cot, but I still go camping every chance we get. With children suffering from “nature deficit disorder” all around us, I find camping to be the easiest way to get my kids really into the outdoors.

They absolutely love camping. Whether it is below freezing or 100 degrees, they always find something fun to do. Exploring wilderness, climbing trees, building animal traps that never work, swimming, paddling, and biking keep them busy from dawn until way past their usual bedtime. While they enjoy playing with electronics and modern day comforts at home, I swear they smile bigger and laugh harder playing out in the woods and rivers.

What I like most is how comfortable it makes them in nature. They know there

are things out there that can hurt them and we try to learn how to limit dangers, but they have also learned to overcome things like ant bites, wasp stings, scrapes, bruises and the occasional snake or skunk encounter.

When I first started working with elementary students at the Wildscape, I was surprised and disappointed to hear questions about whether there were bears and cobras there and whether pill bugs would bite. I think it is hard to fight for a sustainable environment when you don't understand the benefits of snakes, bees and unmowed fields.

If you, or someone you know, is looking for a way to ease into camping, I am a big fan of going with groups like the Y, the scouts or schools/churches. From help putting up your tent, to the time savings of group meals, to always having

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John Darling, Editor
1316 S. Pecan St., Arlington TX 76010
817-274-1077
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

Jo Ann Duman, John Dycus,
Marian Hiler, Molly Hollar,
Danny Kocurek, Roy Milner,
Wesley Miller, Rosalie Rogers

Proofreaders Grace Darling,
Marian Hiler

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3607 Shady Park Drive
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 277-2138
john@xdycus.com

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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013
SHANEGOETZ@SBCGLOBAL.NET

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Herb 'n Health

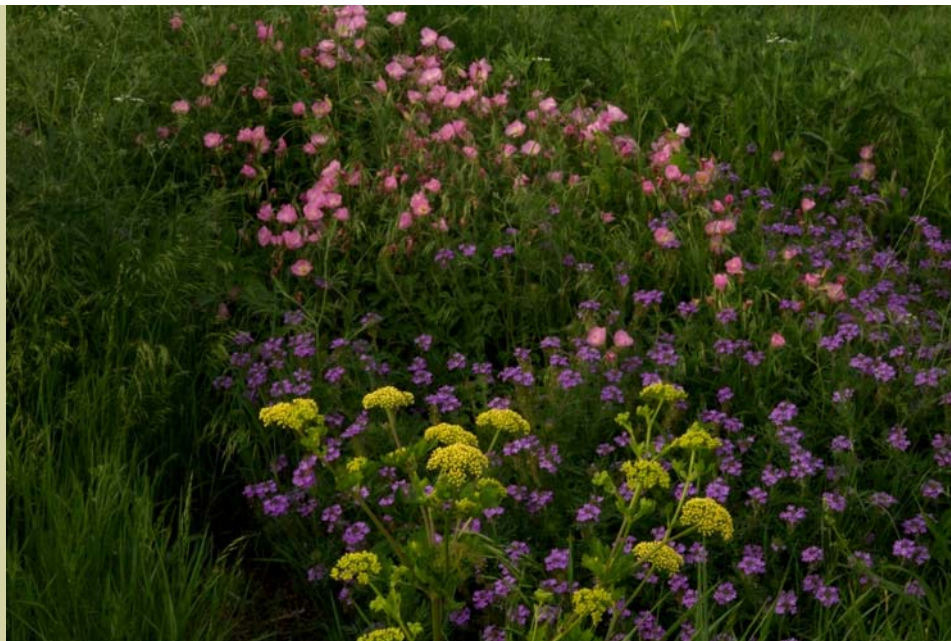
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Karen Foley 817-535-1152

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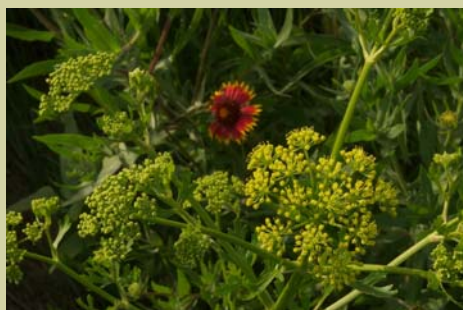
New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park

Photos by Wesley Miller



On May 19, Jim Varnum treated us to one of his marvellous plant walks at the New York Avenue Blackland Prairie. Jim must be one of the most enthusiastic — and busiest — plant authorities in the area, always keen to share his expertise and love of native plants.

We were lucky to have him, and doubly lucky because our prairie must have had just enough rain to look lush and gorgeous for the occasion.



Wildscape Update **John Dycus**



The Molly Hollar Wildscape traveling medicine show made its first Chautauqua stop at Goodman Elementary School in April, and the young audience — a select group of second-

graders — responded with gusto and glee.

Organized by wildscape outreach leader Peggy Quinn, a stout team of volunteers, each with a specialty — Hester Schwarzer and MaryLee Thomason, metamorphosis mealybugs; Joyce Duty and Ann Trenton, flower parts; Joe Martinez and Callie Mitchell, water cycle; Julia Burgen and Josephine Keeney, butterflies; Molly Hollar, seed balls — presented the same material that Goodman students get on the Walk on the Wildside (WOW) field trips, but the little rascals didn't have to pile on a bus to go experience nature.

Nature came to them.

The wildscapers brought supplies and everything needed to create a multifac-

eted learning time. Several sixth-graders joined in to escort the second-graders to science stations scattered around the Goodman Outdoor Gardens. In the process, the sixth-graders recalled their own WOW experiences (when they were third-graders).

"I heard some of them say, 'I liked the butterfly table' and 'My favorite was making seed balls' and 'Composting was cool,'" said Goodman science lab teacher and wildscape champion Carrie Donovan. "I wish I could remember all their conversations. I was amazed at all the science concept connections they were making. These sixth-graders sounded like real scientists sharing their own experiences in the field!"

Added Peggy: "The students are always so attentive, pleasant and interested. Tarri Miller is the third-grade science coordinator who makes sure the kids are prepared for the field trip. Of course, Carrie is the wonder woman who teaches the kids the science content."

The weather was a bit chilly for outside education, but the Goodman teachers thoughtfully provided hot coffee

and snacks. Carrie even baked a special treat for the volunteers.

Carrie says her greatest accomplishment as a science teacher has been getting students outdoors to work directly with nature and to explore the "big ideas" in science such as life and earth science. She credits the Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Master Composters, former teachers and other environmental experts associated with the wildscape.

"Our sixth-graders will be graduating soon and taking with them those science enrichment memories of Walk on the Wildside," she said. "Thanks again to the Molly Hollar volunteers for helping our students make those science concepts not only fun, but more meaningful and memorable."

Back at Veterans Park, another fun event for the volunteers was a recent mini-class on making compost tea, led by Master Naturalist/Master Gardener Bill Hall. Bill makes this enjoyable as he shows how he creates a delicious drink for plants from simple equipment (think: bucket), then gives it away to a lucky volunteer.



Upper left, Goodman students planting natives donated by Norma Martinez. Upper right, Joe Martinez with water cycle students. Lower right, Joyce Duty explains flower parts. Lower left, Callie Mitchell demonstrates the water cycle.



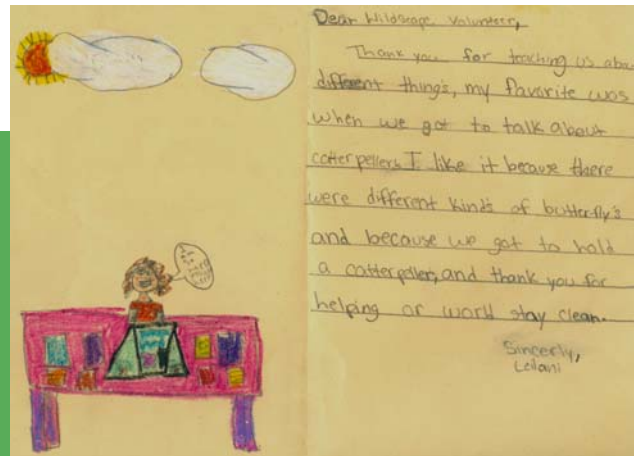
Wildscape Update: Thanks from Goodman Elementary



I learned that
even metamorphosis
can change an
animal

From:
Laila Lemus

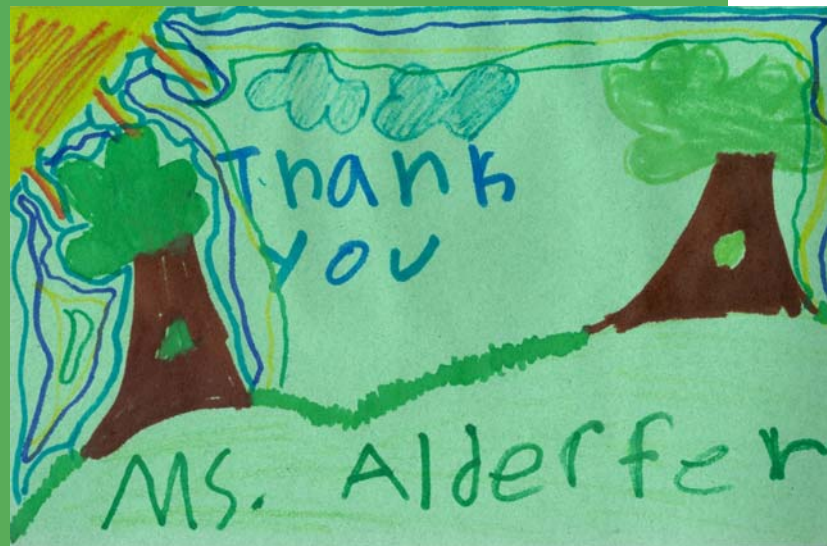
For:
Wow volunteers



Dear Wildscape volunteer,
Thank you for teaching us about
different things, my favorite was
when we got to talk about
caterpillars. I like it because there
were different kinds of butterflies
and because we got to hold
a caterpillar and thank you for
helping our world stay clean.

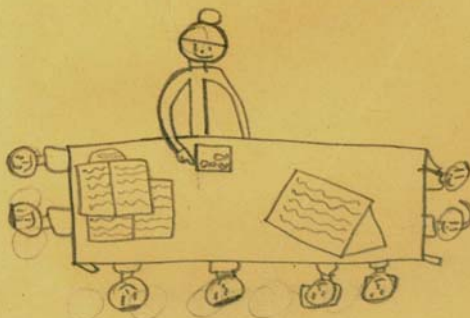
Sincerely,
Lailani

Dear Ms. Peggy,
Thank you for
working at the field
trip. My favorite station
was with Ms. Molly
because we got to
through the balls on
the ground. Thank you
for keeping Arlington



Dear wildscape volunteer,
Thank you for working at
the wildscape. My favorite station
is the butterfly life cycle because
it's talking about butterflies.
thank you for keeping Arlington
beautiful and clean and we
are very happy of you.

from, A
Aubrey



Dear Wildscape Volunteer,
Thank You for working at
the Wildscape center. My
favorite station was station 1
because we get to throw
ball that made of seed.
Thank You for taking care
of Arlington and keep the
place clean.

Love
Nhu,



Greetngs from Out East Jo Ann Duman

It's been one year since I left Arlington and all my friends to move to Texarkana. What I learned from ACC members and 10 years of ACC programs certainly color the way I see things in my new home.

I want to share a little of how this beautiful area in extreme northeast Texas compares to the lovely Cross Timbers area you still enjoy.

RECYCLING



Starting in 2001, my family and I enjoyed curbside recycling in Arlington, which some ACC members and other residents worked to get started decades ago. I appreciated the ease of the program for a couple of reasons: Baltimore, where I lived from 1991 to 1995 picked up paper or cans and bottles on alternate weeks. When I moved to Virginia in 1995, I was back to taking my newspapers and magazines to a state park, and putting cans and bottles in bins at local facilities that processed them.

Arlington is finally moving to carts for recycling, and I hope you like it as much as I like the Texarkana cart program. One day a week both or either cart can be put out. Since I compost I have no "smelly" stuff in my trash so I sometimes skip a week or two in rolling that big one out to the curb. From the city's Web site I understand that the recycling program was started to extend the life of the landfill. Even though it seems there's lots of open land around here, it's expensive to get the permits and develop the liners, etc., for a new sanitary facility. Texarkana, Arkansas, does not have

curbside recycling, but collects items one Saturday a month right next to the Farmers Market. My big concern is glass. In Arlington it seemed wasteful to me that the glass was broken and baled with crushed plastic, but here no glass is accepted. Although for total energy and resource savings, melting old glass and remaking new glass containers is very efficient, the transport cost for glass is high due to the weight. There are no glass factories or other users at all in Arkansas or anywhere close in Texas. My family and I are keeping our glass for now and looking for ways to reuse or pass it on.

REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

It took years for me to become consistent in taking my own bags when I shop, but I finally achieved that in retirement. I have one large bag into which I fold all my others, and it is always in the car with me. I also have a red bag that zips up into a small rectangle that fits in my purse that I use just about everywhere that isn't a grocery store. Super 1 Foods here takes 5 cents off for each reusable bag. Super 1 also has bins outside its store for plastic bottles, shopping bags, and cans. I think El Paso was the first city in Texas to ban plastic bags and they did it because the bags were 25% of the litter the city had to pick up. Austin recently passed a ban. The plastic bag makers are always going to fight bans, but if more customers brought their own bags, I think merchants would eventually support a ban.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

With a combined population of about 50,000, the two Texarkanas manage to support a bus system. There are 9 routes and buses run from 5:30 am to 6:20 pm. The routes from near downtown serve shopping malls on both sides of Interstate 30, the two regional hospitals, the three major school campuses (Texarkana Community College, University of Arkansas Health Sciences, and Texas A&M-Texarkana) and residential areas



along the routes. The buses are smaller than the ones used in Dallas or Fort Worth. Most are the size of airport shuttle buses, so they fit in one traffic lane same as a van. There's a larger size, but it also is shorter and narrower than a big city bus. They're not a hindrance at all in traffic. I've seen the drivers get out to help bicyclists put their bikes inside, making it easier for people to bike to the bus stop and then back home. Seems like Arlington would be smart to look at a system of small vehicles and routes for major shopping and employment centers instead of big, expensive systems like fixed rail or the Dallas-sized buses that are much more expensive to purchase and operate.

BIRDING

Some of you knew Sarah Dendy, who was so generous in showing me the best Arlington parks for birding, and of course, the Darlings, who enticed me to the drying beds with their reports of the many species there. Tex-Ark Audubon meets first Monday of the month at Texarkana College. Last meeting I learned a team of members have finished up 4 years of data collection at nearby Wright Patman Lake, and the ranger there has submitted a nomination to become an IBA (Important Birding Area). The same hardy team of folks are working now on Lake o' the Pines about an hour away from here. Obviously the birding is good or these places wouldn't be worth the effort to get IBA designation. I've been enjoying the migrants at my bird feeder, including goldfinch and buntings recently, and keep making resolutions that I will get up early enough

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Greetings continued from page 6



Wright-Patman Lake

to spy out warblers at nearby Millwood Lake, Arkansas, and Red Slough Wildlife Management Area, Oklahoma. Next month at Audubon we're going to discuss what it means to advocate for a species and how one or more of us might do that. Thank you, by the way, to Dick Schoech for passing along the info on "10 important things" to do for birds.

SIERRA CLUB

Based on my 75503 zip code, I was put in the Arkansas Sierra Club. I keep up with emails from Texas Sierra Club, and am now learning about the ongoing concerns in our nearby state, which are much the same as in Texas but with a whole new set of state agencies to learn about.

COMPOSTING

My daughter-in-law Michelle has an organic garden, so I've been saving my coffee grounds and peelings from fruits and vegetables for her compost bin. Neither she nor my son drink coffee so I feel good about contributing the grounds to them. In Arlington, I put my grounds on my flower beds and watched the earthworms turn them over and make them disappear. Since Michelle just got a new, large bin, my son is going to bring their medium-sized tumbler to me. Then I can stop storing my materials in my freezer between visits to their house and put them into my bin daily. I had never heard of Master Composters until I moved to Arlington, and can't find any here, although there are Master Gardeners who are very active. Without the Arlington's training class, I doubt I would

do much composting, so I am happy to have learned so much from them.

ENERGY AUDIT

I just got one today. SWEPCO (Southwest Electric Power Company) and SECO (State Energy Conservation Office) in the Texas Comptroller's Agency are funding residential and public building improvements. Three young men zipped around my two-bedroom place, replacing weather stripping around two doors; sealing the walls around pipes for kitchen, bathrooms, and water heater, and the vent for the dryer; stripping around the attic access; and taping up connections in the attic ductwork for heating and cooling. You might check out the website for SECO and learn what may be available in Arlington.

FUSE

I don't have an ACC anymore, of course, but finally found Friends United for a Safe Environment. We meet second Tuesday of the month at the Texarkana Public Library (which serves both the Arkansas and Texas sides, as they say here).

Next month is FUSE's 25th anniversary. The group started when the fight began in the 1980s over how to address three nearby Superfund sites; these are battle-scarred veterans I'm learning from. For our May program I arranged with the Climate Project for a Climate Reality presentation. There are no trained presenters in our area, so Victoria Serda of Ontario, Canada and her daughter Corinna presented via Skype and the Internet. (You can see Victoria's bio at http://theclimateproject.org/presenter/victoria-serda_2981).

It was a dramatic, science-based, positive exercise with a lively question-and-answer period. I highly recommend ACC have a similar program soon. Al Gore will be training more presenters in July in Chicago. I am considering applying to do that. Learning how to do Skype, connect with the library projector and a laptop computer, was a challenge

for me. But the library staff and Victoria herself taught me a lot.

TRAILS



Partnership for the Pathway
...building a trail for two cities
*Six years of
brining trail
to Texarkana!*

Besides "Friends of" groups for various parks here, some very energetic people decided to form a group dedicated to trails: Partnership for the Pathway. I've even been told by city staff that they just have to think of paths (pedestrian, running, biking) because the Partnership folks show up at every public meeting to ensure development, and any street improvements consider how to accommodate healthful access for people, not just cars.

The Partnership fundraiser is an annual marathon that brings in \$65,000, so they have some money to make things happen that otherwise wouldn't. They do make things happen and I would love to show any ACC members all the different trails if you will come for a visit (I do have a guest room).

President continued from page 2

plenty of s'more supplies when you forget one ingredient, there are many benefits. By far the greatest benefit is having a variety of playmates to explore and create with.

So grab a child, grandchild, niece/nephew, or all of the above and get them immersed in nature. It's easier than you think and as much fun as you remember. And hopefully all of that laughing and smiling will make them want to protect the environment and our futures some day.

ACC Embraces Online Presence Roy Miliner

For years ACC has had a Web page, and it has served us well with all the news and programs that we have had for so long. The only problem we had with this online arrangement is that a person would have to be looking either for us directly or for environment groups in general.

We also printed our monthly newsletter at a substantial cost to our organization. The idea was that we would reach the general public by placing our printed newsletters in popular places around town, at the public libraries, for example. This also required a big commitment from members to put them together and get the newsletters out to those locations.

As an organization we had to do things a little differently to recognize the new technology that was taking over the country.

The first thing was to improve our Web page to make it more current and informative. This involved a new Webmaster and lots of discussions about what our Web site should be.

At some point we had to look at the cost and effectiveness of the printed newsletter. We decided that because most of our membership had email accounts, we could send an electronic version of the newsletter straight to those who had email addresses and print them



for those who did not. We did this by making the email versions optional to members, noting that the email version would be in full color versus the black and white printed forms.

At this point the 21st century had arrived for ACC.

We were happy with our progress, but we really needed to go further and broaden our presence online. So a couple

of years ago we launched our ACC Facebook account, which dramatically increases our online visibility. In some ways on Facebook we repeat our Web site with announcements but also can quickly add pictures, generate on a daily basis events and issues that face our organization, and get responses from those viewing our account.

It took a while, but we know our account is viewed by a growing number of people, including local elected officials and city department staff.

But like most organizations, we are still not totally where we want to be online. It's important to continue to improve because being online gives us worldwide presence not just local.

So now we are launching our Twitter Account (Coming Soon). We will connect using Twitter with environmental organizations worldwide. In our brief research we have found over a hundred organizations that we can follow, and we hope they will follow us. Twitter will be an educational tool as well as another way for us to get our issues out to the public.

Thanks to Our Last Speaker

At our May meeting Keri Barfield, Research Programs Manager at BRIT, presented an enthusiastic overview of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. What a pleasure it was to hear about the many innovative activities and programs associated with this remarkable organization. Hard to believe that it's right next door in Fort Worth — and that there's so much going on with one of our favorite things, native plants. Thanks, Keri.



Bad Day for Yuccas



Development of the SW Nature Preserve will surely bring increased popularity and visitation, and that's not necessarily good. After anticipating the blooming of the Glen Rose yuccas there for some time, on May 26 we found mindless vandalism — at least 28 of the flowering stalks had been cut. Only a handful remained to produce the next generation. Obvious questions: What kind of person would do this? And why?



A Recycling Challenge **Marian Hiler**

You'd gladly recycle it if you could. It's nearly impossible not to wind up with some from time to time. I'm talking about expanded polystyrene (EPS) or what is commonly referred to as Styrofoam. From drink cups and food containers to those dense molded blocks your electronics are shipped in. But nobody takes it. Right? Take heart, you diehard greenies.

It's not as convenient as your curbside for weekly pickup, but a local company has a free public 24-hour, seven days a week drop-off location. In 2010, Dart Container opened their 12th drop-off location in the country in Waxahachie. Instead of going to the landfill, the foam material is reprocessed into building insulation, plastic lumber, picture frames, moldings and many other products.

Recently, I took my turn — and my first visit — to Dart Container to leave a truckload of polystyrene that my family has been saving up.

The drop-off site is easy enough to get to. It's in the northern part of Waxahachie at 850 Solon Rd, off the I-35 frontage road just north of the 287 junction. The collection center is a stand-alone metal shed located to the left of a guard's gate.

The center is do-it-yourself, though the guard was kind enough to answer my questions. The unlocked door is kept closed. Inside are large bag stands to place your bagged food containers on the left and foam molded blocks on the right. It's that easy.

To recycle the EPS one does have to commit an area in their garage for storing it to make the commute to Waxahachie worthwhile.

I'm impressed with Dart's commitment to the environment, based not only on its Environmental Ethic Web page, but also on the many awards the

company has received. Earlier this year, Dart won the first annual EPS Industry Alliance Excellence in EPS Recycling Award for its "extraordinary commitment to the advancement of expanded polystyrene (EPS) recycling."

The award recognized Dart's decades of community recycling efforts. In addition to their 18 drop-off locations in the US and world-wide, Dart invested in improving and increasing curbside recycling options in California. It was able to identify equipment that made sorting and processing foam at material recovery facilities more efficient. Over 65 California cities have curbside recycling for EPS.

Maybe one day we will have the same convenience of taking our used takeout containers to our own curbside. Until then, we can make a trek now and then to beautiful Waxahachie, leave our foam collection and maybe bring back some recycled antiques from one of the downtown shops.



Dart Container Corporation
drop-off location for
Food Service Foam Products
and Packaging Foam Products
850 Solon Road
Waxahachie, TX 75165
Open to the Public 24 Hours a Day,
Seven Days a Week
<http://www.dart.biz>

Recycling Guidelines

- Make sure your foam has the right symbol.
- Place foam in clear, sealed bags.
- Place packaging foam and food service containers in separate bags.
- Food service containers **MUST** be clean and rinsed.
- No straws, lids, plastic wrap or trash.
- No packaging peanuts (not all peanuts are polystyrene)
- No foam insulation



Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

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

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington TX 76004-0216

Don't Forget!

Wednesday, June 5

7:00 pm

Bonnie Bowman

**The O. S. Gray Natural Area
Management Plan**



Printed on recycled paper