

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 14, NUMBER 10

NOVEMBER 2013

THE 2013 JULIA BURGEN LECTURE **SAVE THE NIGHT**

A HEAVENLY EXCURSION IN THREE PARTS

When & Where: Wednesday, November 6

5:00 pm - Lighting Assessment Workshop featuring a walk-around critique of UTA campus lighting. Chemistry & Physics Bldg Rm 303 (conference room above the planetarium)

7:00 pm - "The November Night Sky"
Planetarium

7:15 pm - "Save the Night" lecture with Q&A
Planetarium



It's all free but workshop seating is limited. Register using the form at arlingtonconservationcouncil.org.

When confirmed, you'll get directions and a parking pass.

Two nationally respected conservationists will examine the impact of nighttime artificial light on physical, mental and spiritual health. Cindy Luongo Cassidy will lead the 5:00 - 6:45 walk-around critique of campus lighting.

Following the planetarium show, "The November Night Sky," she and Paul Bogard will present "Save the Night." Participants will learn how to have sufficient outdoor light at night while saving energy, minimizing glare, increasing safety, reducing light trespass, and creating an esthetically pleasing nocturnal environment.

Paul Bogard, author of *The End of Night: Searching for Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light*, is an assistant professor of English at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Cindy Luongo Cassidy, owner of Green Earth Lighting, specializes in consulting services to reduce light pollution.

Julia Burgen, for whom the lecture series is named, is a tireless conservation advocate and former Arlington City Council member. She is a former ACC president.

From the President Danny Kocurek



I would like to recognize and thank the folks responsible for the huge success we had at EcoFest with our Fix it Green Exhibition. We had a phenomenal team of volunteers who made everything work. They not only created a wonderfully

educational experience for visitors, the entire project was done for about \$10 worth of hardware and the purchase of material for the vests and tablecloths (which can be reused).

I am afraid I have lost track of all of the things Jan Miller did. She obtained donations from the Arlington ReStore, researched and created display signs, designed and printed name tags, she painted, she packed her vehicle to the roof with stuff and hauled it to the exhibit and back, and then she put in a 12-hour day at EcoFest, starting setup at 7 am, helping visitors all day and finishing unloading at 7 pm. Everything she was asked to do, got done, along with several things she was not asked to do. At one point as a joke, I asked her to translate the Beatles White album into Inuit. She was half way through Rocky Raccoon when I finally stopped her.

Kevin Donovan, Frank Keeney, Roy Miliner and Dick Schoech helped paint and prepare exhibits and then put in a 12-hour shift working the exhibit. Dick also helped research and design our display signs. Frank placed all of our information on the website and scrambled to get our QR sign functional. Doreen and Zack Kaszak helped paint, helped setup, helped visitors and then helped take down the exhibit. It was like watching Eveready Bunnies. They also solved a major problem with our signs that threatened to hamper the entire project. Grace and John Darling and Jim Robinson put in lengthy shifts helping at the exhibit. Ramakrishna Aduri, Eoin Donovan and Fabian Ortiz showed up at the perfect time to help us with the noon rush.

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park

Photos by Wesley Miller



That land is a community
is the basic concept of ecology,
but that land is to be loved
and respected is an extension
of ethics.

Aldo Leopold



Wildscape Update **John Dycus**



The annual fall plant sale was a blooming success. Head honcho Josephine Keeney reported that 776 native Texas plants sold for nearly \$4,000. Proceeds will help

fund the wildscape and wildscape greenhouse projects. All the plants had been patiently nurtured by greenhouse volunteers; unsold plants will be coddled for another year or planted.

Now that beds along the sidewalks have been pretty much planted out, namesake Molly Hollar can turn her attention to the inner, wooded trails.

The following Saturday, Molly and co-coordinator Bev Crawford hosted a volunteer appreciation lunch at the clubhouse for Molly's new digs in northwest Arlington. Volunteers feasted on sandwiches and Thai food, then went to Molly's light- and plant-filled new home for dessert.

At lunch, Hester Schwarzer led a discussion of what had brought all the busy supporters to the wildscape and what made them stay. Folks made their initial visits for various reasons — they needed hours to fulfill Master Gardener or Master Naturalist requirements, they happened to be walking in Veterans Park and were intrigued, etc. Not surprisingly,

many added, almost as one, “and then, of course, I fell in love with Molly.”

The surprise at the end of lunch was the distribution of a pale green Molly Hollar Wildscape T-shirt. A shirt will go to anyone who has contributed at least 30 hours. The volunteers are now fashionable as well as functional.

Molly would have you know that co-coordinator Joyce Duty, Joe Martinez, and Kay Seiko helped clean up after lunch and Frank Keeney did valet parking duties.

That kind of volunteer appreciation is just one more reason why we can't have too much Molly.

Very happy plant sale volunteers



Left to right: Joe Martinez, Joyce Duty, and Terry Grafton pose in their new wildscape t-shirts.



From the President **continued from page 2**

Dustan Compton was our liaison with the City, helped us with research, created 2 displays and printed and delivered all of our display signs.

The amazing Alma Pohler from River Legacy helped us with volunteers who jumped right in and did a great job. Crystal Windham, Maneesh Roberts, Mary Johnson, Emmanuel Terrazas, and Jose Alcaraz all worked beyond their planned shifts; without their help we would have been overwhelmed.

Peggy Quinn sewed our tablecloths and snazzy bright green vests. Ed Kocurek helped engineer and build the

signs, mount the door, rip out the insides of the hot water heater and install the exhibit. Lorna Marsh helped do an



assortment of tasks to make the exhibits beautiful. Ed Pischedda helped out with painting. John Dycus designed and printed our visitor cards and ACC signs. And Marian Hiler and Ann Knudsen repurposed our parade float skirts into beautiful 16 foot long banners which ensured everyone knew where and who we were.

I fear I have forgotten people who deserve thanks, so please remind me. I assure you it is because of my inadequate brain and not my lack of appreciation. Thank you.



You! Renew! Today! Please! Thanks!

(No more exclamation points if you act soon.)

Memberships Expire at the End of December

You know how much we need you, so please renew or join today.

Help us bring out the best in Arlington.

Use the handy membership form on the back page.

2013 DFW Smog Report: Failure Again Downwinders at Risk

Even a Mild Summer Can't Keep DFW from Once Again Violating Now-Obsolete 1997 Ozone Standard

Only Two Out of 18 Monitors Complying with New EPA Ozone Standard

Highest Readings in Keller and Grapevine, 10 out of 17 Monitors See Rise in Averages

Is Air Pollution from Natural Gas Production Preventing Clean Air Progress in DFW?

Note: This report is reprinted from downwindersatrisk.org, where you can learn much more about our air issues.

The 2013 Ozone Season ended on Thursday the same way the previous 16 have ended: with North Texas out of compliance with the 1997 federal clean air standard.

Even a mild summer with lower temperatures and more rain couldn't save the numbers from exceeding an

illegal three-year running average of 85 parts per billion at monitors in Keller and Grapevine.

What makes this year's violation particularly troublesome is that the 1997 standard has been replaced with a more protective one that's 10 ppb lower. So for the next DFW air plan to succeed, it will have to reduce smog to levels no DFW monitors have ever recorded.

That new plan has its official kick-off event next Tuesday, November 5th,

beginning at 9 am in Arlington at the Council of Governments headquarters. It's the first briefing from the state on the computer model it will be using to base the plan on. Everything about one of these plans is based on such a computer model, a model only the state can run. For now. The plan must be submitted to EPA by June of 2015.

Downwinders will have representatives at this meeting, as well as every other one that takes place between now and

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Thanks to Our Last Speaker



We're indebted to Meghna Tare, Director of Sustainability at UTA, for last month's program on sustainability initiatives at the university. Meghna reviewed a very broad range of projects, activities and issues through which UTA is demonstrating its commitment to the environment. The breadth of topics is truly remarkable, ranging from LEED-certified building to recycling and academic offerings. It's a real pleasure to learn that our hometown university is striving for such worthwhile goals.



Smog continued from page 5

June 2015. Director Jim Schermbeck is one of three representatives from environmental groups on the North Texas Clean Air Advisory Committee, whose members get briefed by state staff on a plan's progress. It's the only opportunity citizens groups have to cross-examine the state's staff about its assumptions.

Even though extremely high ozone numbers were rarer this year, there were enough bad air days to cause the running averages of 10 out of 17 monitors, called "design values," to rise - not the kind of trend you want when your next task is complying with a tougher standard.

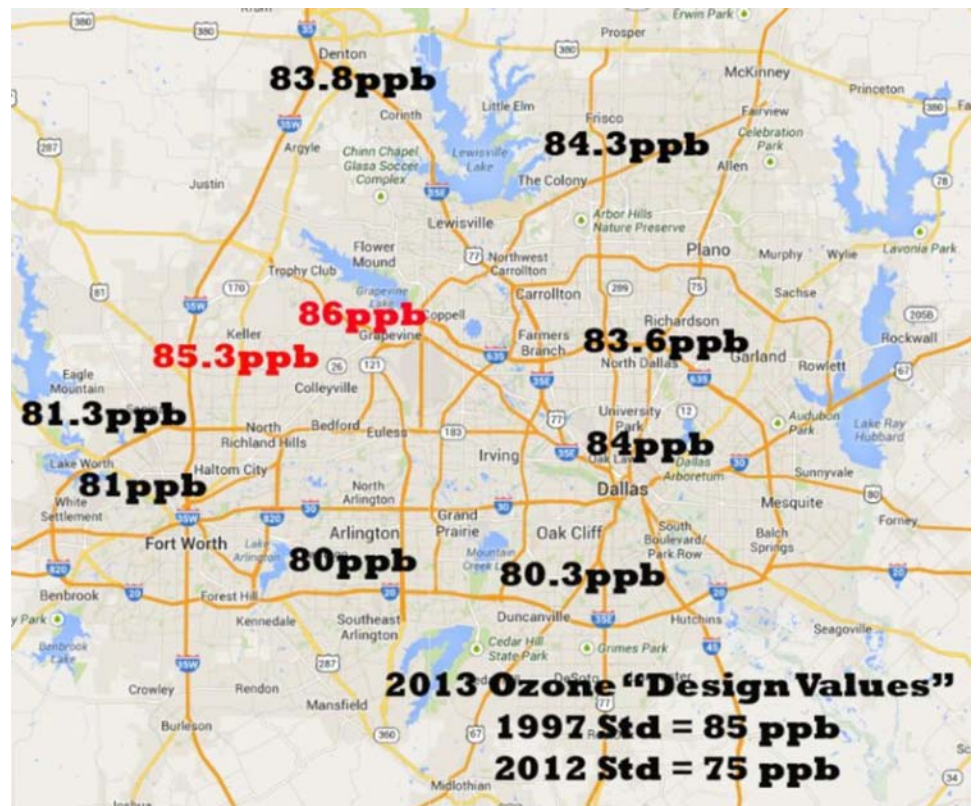
One of those increases is worrisome because it marks the third year in a row the central city monitor in Dallas near the corner of Mockingbird and I-35 (Hinton Street) has increased its annual average.

This is a monitor that had a "design value" of 67 parts per billion in 2010 - that is, it was in compliance with the new 75 ppb standard just three years ago. But now this monitor is up to 84 ppb and almost out of compliance with the 1997 standard. That's quite a swing in three years - again in the wrong direction.

Every monitor inside the DFW metro area and even most "rural" monitors had a design value above the new standard of 75 ppb. Only Kaufman and Greenville made it under the wire, barely, with readings of 74 ppb.

As usual, the worst ozone levels were found in the northwest quadrant of the DFW area. This is a well-known historical pattern caused by the predominant southeast to northwest winds that blow pollution from the coast up through the coal and gas patches of East and Central Texas, over the Midlothian Industrial Complex and North Texas central urban cores into Northwest Tarrant, Wise, and Denton counties.

This pattern has been the target of the last three state clean air plans, but somehow it never gets fixed the way Austin predicts it will.



If you look at the readings of DFW's air monitors since 1997, (as you can with our downloadable pdf), you'll see that the last clean air plan to make a dent was the 2006 effort that looked like it was going to succeed for a year or two. Since 2008, however, air quality that was supposed to be getting better has gotten worse or stagnated.

While cars have gotten cleaner during this time, and pollution from cement and coal plants has been reduced, there's one "source category" of pollution that's increased significantly since 2008: the gas industry.

In submitting the last DFW air plan to EPA in 2011, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality estimated there were more tons of smog-forming Volatile Organic Compounds being released by the gas industry in the official DFW non-attainment area than by all the cars and trucks on the road combined. That wasn't true in 2008.

Moreover, this is new air pollution in a smog non-attainment area that doesn't

have to be offset by reductions in pollution elsewhere in DFW. Unlike every other large industry, the gas industry is exempt from this offset requirement of the Clean Air Act.

You always hear about what kind of DFW smog problems all those nasty cars cause. You never hear about the smog problem caused by the gas industry.

Could DFW's continuing inability to comply with the old 1997 ozone standard be due to this new under-regulated source of air pollution?

Denton's Airport monitor's 4th highest reading of 85 ppb this summer, the one that officially counts toward its running average, was the highest such reading in the entire state, including Houston.

There's no doubt Denton is in the middle of the local gas patch, as are the Keller and Grapevine monitors that had the highest design values this year. Given the decreases in pollution from other categories, are gas patch emissions keeping these numbers from coming

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Smog *continued from page 6*

down the way they were supposed to? Austin keeps saying no, but the evidence is compelling.

Just last year there was a study out of Houston showing how a single flare or compressor station could significantly impact local ozone levels by as much as 5 or 10 ppbs. TCEQ itself just produced a study this last summer showing how Eagle Ford Shale gas pollution is increasing ozone levels in San Antonio.

Other studies show how gas patches are producing record levels of ozone in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah where there were no such problems prior to the industry's arrival on the scene.

Local Barnett Shale gas pollution might explain these Tarrant and Denton county monitors' problems, but they don't explain the rise in numbers of the Dallas monitors, since the wind during ozone season comes in from the south to southeast.

What new pollution is coming from that direction? Gas industry pollution from numerous compressor stations and processing plants stations in Freestone, Anderson, Limestone, and other counties just about 90 to 100 miles south-southeast of Dallas.

If one adds up all the emissions these facilities are allowed under their "standard permits," it exceeds the pollution from coal plants like Big Brown. That's a huge hit from sources that weren't there 10 years ago.

In effect, DFW is getting squeezed between gas pollution being produced in the middle of its urban areas and gas pollution blowing in from the south. We're in the middle of a big, gas-produced ozone sandwich.

Officials with Gov. Perry's TCEQ would rather drink lye than admit gas pollution is causing smog problems for DFW. But such an admission might be

the only way you ever start to bring DFW into compliance with the Clean Air Act.

This is why local DFW municipal and county governments serious about air quality must divorce themselves from Austin's politicized science and begin to seek their own solutions. Austin really isn't interested in solving DFW's chronic smog problems. Heck, the Commissioners who run TCEQ don't even believe smog IS a health problem.

Forecasters are saying drought conditions are the new normal for North Texas. If that's true, this last summer seems like an exception to the rule. And if we couldn't catch a break when it's cooler and wetter than it should be, it's hard to imagine making much progress when we're facing more summers like 2011.

Downwinders will have a summary of next week's modeling meeting in its "Fighting for Air" blog. Stay tuned.

An Option for Downtown Arlington *Roy Miliner*

In a lot of ways Arlington is a unique city. For years it was the fastest growing city in the U. S. Arlington's population was doubling every 12 years. In 1950 Arlington had a population of less than 50,000 people. Now, 63 years later, we are looking at a population that may soon top nine times the 1950 number in a land area that is only 97 square miles.

Arlington is evolving from a bedroom community to the 50th largest U.S. city in population. Our economy is based on entertainment, education, and to a lesser degree, industry.

Because we are located between two other better-known cities we have had problems with our identity, and as of late have been trying to elevate Arlington's profile nationally.

You may ask what all of this has to do with our ACC goals of making Arlington a more environmentally friendly place to live. My answer is a lot, because our city government is focused on public services, maintenance, and how to pay

for them. There are answers that include both the economy and the environment. Cities across the world have capitalized on their economic goals by using their natural resources as the key element for that growth.

What are the natural resources in Arlington that can be used for economic growth and also benefit the population with a cleaner, more environmentally friendly place to live?

Even though I have lived all of my adult life in Texas, I was born and grew up in the southern range of the Smoky

Mountains in a city that was primarily industrially based and to a lesser degree a tourist stop. In 1968, Chattanooga was named the dirtiest city in the U.S. on national news — not a title that any city would want.

I got to live there during a dramatic time in a city that moved its focus from industrial growth to becoming a cleaner place to live. Changes occurred on many fronts, including stronger air quality standards that the manufacturing districts had to react to in a specified period of time. The response: Some industries saw the economic benefits of staying and conformed to new requirements, while others decided to pack up and move.

At the same time one of the first malls to open in Tennessee started to draw downtown businesses away with its free parking and the new idea of a weather-controlled environment for shoppers.

Many changes were put into place that were primarily based on the city's



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Downtown Arlington continued from page 7

rich history, beautiful nearby forest-covered mountains, and the Tennessee River that flowed through the middle of downtown. With both public and private money, leaders built a new nature-centered city featuring a tree-lined downtown that included two new parks, one in the central downtown area and the other on the shores of the Tennessee River. The city has renamed itself as the River City and advertises itself as “Chattanooga, A Great City by Nature.”



You may ask what has this to do with Arlington. There are lots of things that both cities have in common. Both have major auto assembly plants; tourism makes up a large part of city revenue; both host state universities (UTA in Arlington and UTC in Chattanooga) and both are overshadowed by other major cities.

I find it amazing that here we can see things on a small scale but not see what can be done on a much larger scale. We encourage people to use rain barrels to capture water from rooftops, but fail to implement large-scale water conservation. UT Arlington gives us a vision on how that is done on a much larger scale



by channeling the water from the roof of the Special Events Center to rock gardens along the street before the overflow, if any, goes on to the retention park just to the south. They also capture the condensation from the large air handling system and send it to the fountain at the north entrance of the building.

Also in terms of water, there are hints that can be found in the entertainment district where we have two small lakes just north of the Ballpark with a nice water feature and a pumping system that feeds water to irrigate Richard Greene



Park. A number of things were done along Johnson Creek in this area to control the flow of the water, saving Six Flags from flooding problems and in the process creating a pleasant creekside area for visitors.

This has been a long buildup to what I can envision for downtown Arlington. There are many ideas about what we need to do there to make downtown a place where people would want to come to, not just to drive through.

As a point of information for anyone who doesn't know the history of downtown, there was once a gathering place around a large natural spring fountain. When City Hall and the library were constructed, the spring was built over and the fountain was lost.

Arlington is blessed with a number of natural springs and waterways, most of which flow undisturbed out of the city to the Trinity River and finally out to sea.



I believe that we could do things in downtown Arlington that could utilize the spring water that we are throwing away and create an attraction that would be a place to enjoy. At the same time it could function as a large retention pond for water that could be used to support landscaping projects throughout downtown. Pumps for this kind of project could be solar powered, and the water would be used to supply water features as well as for a centralized drip system for downtown landscaping.

This wouldn't be cheap, but I think it would be a step above the kinds of things we are currently considering to create a more people-friendly downtown — one that is self-supporting and that takes advantage of a natural resource that is already in place.



Southwest Nature Preserve Dedication

Note: The following has been modified from a recent article at myarlington.gov.

Arlington residents no longer have to travel to Dallas or Fort Worth to visit a nature preserve, as the city's first is officially open after being in the works for years. City leaders, staff and residents celebrated with a ribbon-cutting event full of activities on October 19 at the Southwest Nature Preserve.

Several involved in the multi-year project made brief remarks at Saturday's event, reflecting on the dedication, persistence and effort put into restoring, preserving and maintaining the 58-acre area's ecology.

In 2005 Arlington worked with the Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit, to acquire the land, a remnant of the Eastern Cross Timbers Forest. After securing funding, the city later purchased

the acreage from the Trust and in 2010 worked with citizens, consulting firm Half Associates and a 22-person Advisory Committee composed of residents and numerous organizations — from Texas Parks and Wildlife to the Audubon Society — to develop a master plan.

Creating a preserve comes with a different set of challenges than a typical park does. For instance, there was public debate about whether the preserve should contain any concrete paths. Ultimately, a single concrete pathway to a pond boardwalk was constructed, but that will be the only concrete trail within the preserve.

Phase I improvements to the preserve include a lighted parking lot with an electric entry gate, an amphitheater, shaded picnic tables and a boardwalk that leads to a fishing pier on one of the

preserve's four ponds. Visitors are also greeted with educational signs about the area's ecosystem.

Saturday's event utilized all the new features, as the ribbon cutting took place in the amphitheater, Fort Worth Fly Fishers helped visitors fish, and families ate food provided by the Parks and Recreation department. Master Naturalist Jim Varnum also hosted a nature walk to educate attendees about native plants.

The Southwest Nature Preserve is located south of I-20 at 5201 Bowman Springs Road. One-and-one-half miles of soft-surface trails line the interior of the preserve, and visitors can see the Fort Worth skyline from a high sandstone bluff known by locals as Kennedale Mountain. The city hopes to add two additional lighted parking lots, a pavilion and waterless toilet facility to the property in the future.



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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, November 6

5:00 and 7:00 pm

**Save the Night
at UTA**

