

# ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

# POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES  
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2014

[www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org](http://www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org)

## February Meeting

**Packaging and Products:  
takeback, recycling, or trash?**

**Kim Mote,  
Assistant Director,  
Code Compliance Department,  
City of Fort Worth**

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



Kim is a past president of the Texas Product Stewardship Council. He will give us an overview of product recycling and take-back efforts in the state and a peek at the environmental quality chapter of the city's soon-to-be-unveiled 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

**Bring Something for the Raffle**

## Bits & Pieces

### Something Cute, Okay?

She Who Must Be Obeyed has spoken (again), so here we are, forsaking our natural history lesson in favor of the always adorable tufted titmouse. One tiny fact: It has a very long breeding season, from mid-February into June.



### Today's Inspirational Moment



To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring.

*George Santayana*

### Welcome to Arlington

Lemuel Randolph will be the new Director of Arlington Parks and Recreation. Randolph comes to Arlington from McKinney where he served as the Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces. With a total of 20 years of experience directing municipal parks and recreation departments, Randolph has also worked for the cities of Missouri City, Sugar Land and San Bernardino. His first day with Arlington will be February 3.



## From the President Danny Kocurek



*Note: Our president was right on time with his year-end column, but your editor took off December and January. So here is President Danny in our first issue of the year:*

### Year-End Review

It's the time of year where folks want, or have, to tell you what happened this past year, all the wonderful things they accomplished, and their grand plans for next year. Since you religiously read this newsletter, you know everything we did. I think we had a good year. We continued our advocacy and volunteer work and created two new, successful events. The Focus Photography Contest for Kids and the Fix It Green Exhibit at EcoFest showed how well we can plan, organize and complete large projects and get our name out to new audiences. Additionally, our Facebook page, under the guidance of the amazing Candy Halliburton, has taken off this year as a popular clearinghouse of sustainable events and information. At last count, we had over 180 people following our page.

Plans for next year will begin soon. I would like to see ACC become more active lobbying our elected officials at the local and state levels and am always looking for ways to increase outreach and membership. As always, the keys to success will be our members' enthusiastic support, and I look forward to working with you all next year. So as you begin the new year, start thinking about what you would like to do to help out.

Thank you for all you have done last year.



## THE POST OAK

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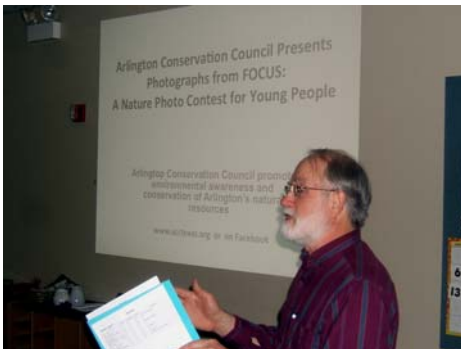
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## The Annual Potluck and Business Meeting, January 18, 2014

Two highlights at this year's brunch: Dick Schoech presided over the awards for our first FOCUS photo contest for young people (most of the winning photos appear on the following pages), and President Danny Kocurek presented the year in review. And one more highlight: a lot of people ate a large quantity of really good food.

As for business, here are this year's board developments: Retiring board members were John Dycus and Ed Pischedda. Continuing board members were Grace Darling, John Darling, Marian Hiler, Marianne Herrmann, Kevin Donovan, and Danny Kocurek. Board members with retiring terms who were nominated for another term were Jan Miller, Dick Schoech, and Frank Keeney. Danny requested a vote of the membership on these nominations. The vote to approve the nominations was unanimous. *Right, contest winners. Below, Dick does the honors.*





## Focus Contest: Selected Winning Entries



1<sup>st</sup> place, grade 3, Cindy Sanders



2<sup>nd</sup> place, grade 3, Signy Ackermann



1<sup>st</sup> place, grade 4, Meg Owens

2<sup>nd</sup> place, grade 5, Anna Lewis



1<sup>st</sup> place, grade 5, Isabella Robinson

3<sup>rd</sup> place, grade 5, Nathan Rosselli





## Focus Contest: Selected Winning Entries



4<sup>th</sup> place, grade 5, Benjamin Kocurek

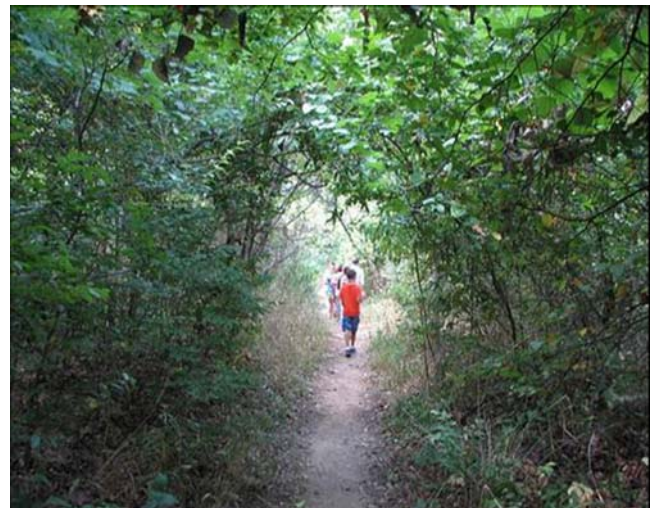
1<sup>st</sup> place, grade 6, Giselle Glass



Honorable mention, grade 5, Harry Black



2<sup>nd</sup> place, grade 6, Rachel Wilder



Nicolas Hellmund, grade 5

Signy Ackermann, grade 3





## Blackland Prairie Preserve Jan Miller. Photos by Wesley Miller



Update: The Master Plan for the Blackland Prairie Preserve was approved unanimously by the Parks Board on January 13. It now proceeds to the city council for their vote.

Note: Below are Jan's answers to recent questions from a Dallas Morning News reporter.

### What is the significance of the Blackland Prairie Preserve to Arlington?

BPP is the last remnant of blackland prairie in the city of Arlington and possibly in Tarrant County. There are very few prairie remnants left of any size in North Central Texas and the blackland prairie is even more rare. In its prehistoric range, from near the Gulf coast north to Nebraska, less than 1% of blackland prairie remains. This is a last refuge for the plants and animals supported by these soils, and the preserve is complete with gilgai (sometimes called buffalo wallows), a topographical feature unique to blackland prairies. The preserve is also a tremendous resource for research and opportunity for educators as well as a beautiful place to relax and to watch the changing seasons.

### What does the ACC hope to see happen to the preserve?

ACC looks forward to seeing this preserve restored to a functioning ecosystem and becoming a prairie gem for the North Texas area. With good resource management, interpretive signage, and a few other improvements, this preserve can nurture its wildlife and provide opportunities to the public for wildlife observation

as well as an escape from urban living. Additional improvements such as a water source can make the site much more attractive to wildlife such as grassland birds. Mowed trails and interpretive signage would allow the public greater access and provide understanding of the prairie's unique features. A small shelter



or interpretive area could provide shelter and meeting area for study groups and possibly an area to observe wildlife.

Arlington has been incredibly fortunate to have this small blackland prairie preserved, but with minor improvements, the preserve can become much more valuable as a natural resource and will benefit the public.

### What are the major challenges facing the preserve?

Management of invasive species, including trees and brush, plus non-native grasses like KR bluestem and Johnson grass. Historically, prairies were maintained by disturbance, such as large grazing mammals (bison) and/or prairie wildfires which limited tree and shrub growth to creek and river banks. But neither of these approaches is readily available, so tree growth has been managed by volunteers and Arlington Parks and Recreation Department. But

it's labor-intensive and still doesn't recycle nutrients or stimulate plant growth the way a prescribed burn or grazers would.

The preserve is now land-locked, surrounded on all sides by development.

We can't do anything about this, but providing water to the wildlife that can still access the site will help. They can then stay on the prairie to feed, nest and shelter without having to risk leaving the preserve for water. This is especially important for grassland birds as well as some reptiles. Lack of public knowledge about the preserve and prairies in general is another challenge. Driving by, most people wouldn't guess that the site is anything other than a typical field. But visitors who venture out into the prairie quickly become aware of its

huge diversity in native grasses and wildflowers, then begin to see the many butterflies and native pollinators, and then see the hawks and other birds they wouldn't find in their back yards. Then they come back in a few weeks and realize there's a whole new palette of plants. It continues all year, always interesting.





**Blackland Prairie Preserve: December Ice** Photos by Bonnie Bilodeau



## Wildscape Update **John Dycus**



Icky weather has limited wildscape activities. When it's rainy and windy and cold, the volunteers prefer to spend their work time indoors thinking about what they'll do when it's not rainy and windy and cold.

Joyce Duty and Peggy Quinn arrived around 9 a.m. one day recently and found themselves all alone. Joyce suggested that they cut back straggly

Turks cap. About that time, a gaggle of 8- and 10-year-olds from the Merryhill School announced themselves and, armed with empty trash bags and young person zeal, proceeded to spend some quality time cleaning up the place. Very nice!

To increase participation, Molly Hollar has expanded work hours. On Wednesdays the volunteers are encouraged to work from 9 to noon, eat lunch and return by 1. Soon the weather should be conducive to pulling weeds and watering the poor, parched plants.

Many of the volunteers dropped by the thank you luncheon for Pete Jamieson, newly retired Arlington Parks and Recreation Department chief. Pete was a giant in the florasphere, and he made the city better. He just did. We will truly miss him.

Coming soon: Walk on the Wildside for Goodman Elementary School, March 26. "Hope for nice weather and sign up to do demonstrations and guided walks," Peggy implores. "This is one of our very important public activities. We need you." Reach Peggy at [pegquinn@tx.rr.com](mailto:pegquinn@tx.rr.com).



## Nature Smartphone Apps **Dick Schoech**

Apps are small downloadable programs, often free, that make that smartphone you received for Christmas really smart. They can be educational, utilitarian, and just plain fun.

This app review is based on personal experience along with web searches. It is designed to spark your imagination on the type of nature apps available. It is not comprehensive, does not feature the best apps, and is primarily for adults, not children. I have an Android phone so I am not able to test iPhone or Windows apps. Also, functionality on one smartphone platform may not be the same as on another. Your app experience on an iPhone might be better or worse than on an Android or Windows phone, and even on different makers of Android and Windows phones.

Apps below are listed by function and identified by phone type (iPhone, Android, and Windows). However, popular apps, or their equivalent, are available for any smartphone, so search your app store if an app appeals to you. Also, Amazon has an app store that features a free app each day. I found the \$10-20 Audubon Birds app for free at Amazon. Watch for specials and discounts during the holidays. App stores have web sites that provide information on available apps. Also, most apps have their own web sites that are easy to locate by entering the app's name and the word "homepage" into a web search engine such as Google or Bing. Browse these web sites like you would your favorite book store, since approximately one million apps are available.

Many free apps or trial apps with limited functionality are available so you can try the app to see if you like it before paying several dollars for it. However, free apps that sound useful and are not trials of for-pay apps should be approached with caution. Some developers of free apps collect information from your phone for marketing purposes in order to be compensated for their work. A Dec 14, 2013 Reuters article on Android Privacy (<http://news.yahoo.com/google-removes-privacy-feature-android-mobile-software-214257829-sector.html>) stated: "Many third-party apps for Android devices, such as music-identifying service Shazam and popular smartphone flashlight apps, require access to personal information that does not always have an obvious

*continued on page 9*



## Good-bye from Pete



Dear Arlington Citizens and Valued Customers,

I'd like to wish each of you a Happy New Year, and I hope this message finds that you're off to a great start. This will

be an exciting year for Arlington Parks and Recreation, beginning with the direction established in a new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, to be completed and submitted for City Council consideration this spring. I hope your plans for the year will include the department's services, as I know the staff looks forward to serving you.

It has been my honor and privilege over the past 32+ years to work with an outstanding team of park and recreation employees, including 12 years as the department's director. My last day as director of the department was December 27, 2013. I am grateful for the kind thoughts and well wishes that so many people shared with me in the months leading up to my retirement.

The employees of the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department represent some of the best and brightest professionals in our industry, and each team member is focused and dedicated to providing great parks and outstanding

recreational opportunities to the citizens of Arlington. I could not be more proud of the work they do and the commitment they have to doing it.

On February 3, 2014, Lemuel Randolph will begin his employment with the City of Arlington as the new Director of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Randolph has 20 years of professional experience and is uniquely qualified to help advance the department's programs. If you are not a current customer, please know that Mr. Randolph and the entire Parks and Recreation team will be working hard to earn your business.

I am grateful beyond words for the opportunity that I had to serve you and contribute to an award winning park system. My time with the City of Arlington has provided me with many of my most cherished memories. From my heart to yours - thank you, and farewell.

Sincerely,  
Pete Jamieson

## Nature Smartphone Apps continued from page 8

connection to the app's functionality, such as phone call information and location data." Fortunately, you are usually able to see what features of your phone an app can access before downloading it. Read the privacy information in the app description in the app store as well as some of the comments from users to see what you can expect from an app. Now that the downside of apps has been briefly discussed, the fun side can be enjoyed.

### Apps for Birding

Bird field guides. iBird Pro and Audubon Birds (Android, iPhone, Windows 8) are two of the most popular of many field guides providing bird pictures, descriptions, songs, preferred habitat, range, similar looking birds, linking with eBird, and bird identification by inputting characteristics such as size, color, time of year, location, etc. ibird provides an



extensive comparison of 7 guides, see <http://www.ibird.com/compare#> These apps are sophisticated guides that can cost up to \$20, so look for sales and coupons.

### Apps for improving your bird sound identification skills

Larkwire Birdsong Master Birder: Land Birds of North America by Larkwire, Chirp! Bird Song USA by iSpiny and iKnowBirdSongs by FlipCardApps are three iPhone apps discussed at <http://blog.allaboutbirds.org/2013/12/05/our-review-best-iphone-apps-for-learning-bird-songs/> Note: For a discussion on the ethical and responsible use of playback bird sounds in birding, see <http://www.sibleyguides.com/2011/04/the-proper-use-of-playback-in-birding/>

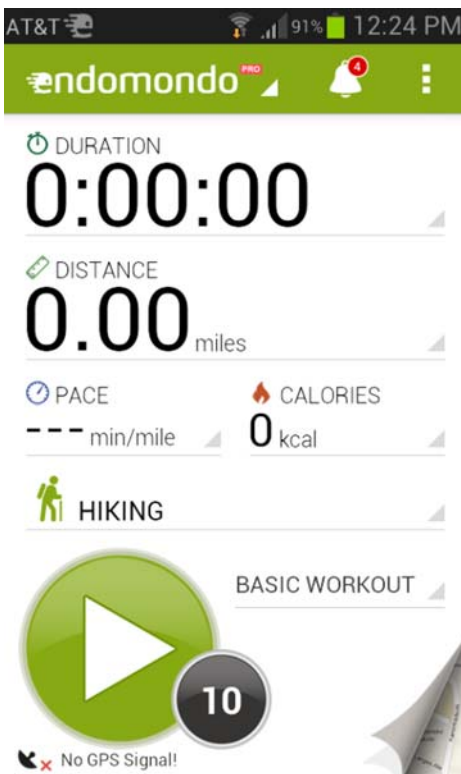
*continued on page 10*



## Nature Smartphone Apps continued from page 9

### Apps for Hiking

**Find the best trails.** Trailhead by The North Face (iPhone) and EveryTrail (Android) finds trails, hikes, bike routes, tips, etc., based on your location. Many similar type apps exist, so search your app store.



### Trail logging and exercise monitoring

Endomondo (Android, iPhone, Windows) is an exercise app that can track distance, duration, pace, elevations, calories burned, hydration needs due to water lost, and many other things for walking, hiking, biking, rowing, dancing, and almost every sport and form of exercise. It can plot your movements on a Google map so you can tell precisely where you have been along with elevation changes. A word of caution, your smart phone might not work in remote hiking locations making this app useless.

### Determining sunrise and sunset time and location

The Photographer's Ephemeris, Sun Surveyor, Sun Seeker, and LightTrac show sun and moon positions and the exact direction and time of sunrise, sunset, moonrise, and moonset, overlaid on a map or satellite image of the area. These apps are useful for hikers, photographers, etc. They are often available for both Android and iPhone.

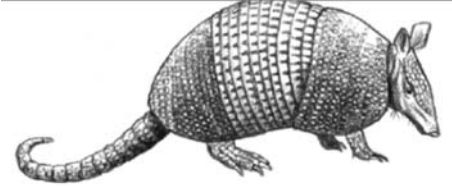
### Apps for Plants

**Plant identification.** Florafolio (iPhone) is a field guide to native plants of North America. TreeBook and TreeID (free, iPhone) are resource guides for trees in North America. NatureGate (free, Android, iPhone) allows you to click on a list of plant characteristics such as plant height, shape, and flower color to obtain an identification. Landscaper's Companion (Android, iPhone) is a reference guide for 26,000+ plants, including trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials. Leaf Snap (free, iPhone) uses facial recognition software on a submitted picture of a leaf to identify trees. It also provides high-resolution images of leaves, flowers, fruit, petiole, seeds, and bark. Currently, only New York and Washington, DC trees are covered by LeafSnap but it is being expanded to cover the US. 1,000 Weeds of North America (Android) helps users identify 1000 broadleaf weeds.

**Gardening.** Beginners Gardening Guide (free, Android) contains information about garden design, plant nutrients, and other basic information for growing vegetable or flower gardens. Garden Pro (iPhone) is a reference app that can help you plan and manage your garden. Its main interface is an exhaustive list of flowers, herbs and vegetables, their soil preferences and basic care instructions. Garden Squared (Android) helps you to select dimensions of small beds from 1x1 to 4x8 feet.

### Insects for Plants

BeeSmart (Android, iPhone) helps gardeners select pollinator-friendly plants



### Overview

Size of a domestic cat, weighing 8-17 lb (3.5-8 kg). Body, tail, and head are covered with a horny armor derived from the leathery skin. A few hairs are found between scales. Body color a light tan to gray. Large gray to black ears.

### Tracks



that are native to a specific ecoregion. Audubon Butterflies and Audubon Insects and Spiders (Android, iPhone) are 2 of the many North American field guides that Audubon publishes. Others include mushrooms, trees, and wildflowers. Bugs In The Garden, (Android) has photos of some common insects while Garden Bugs (Android, iPhone) has a comprehensive list of insects and also lists of plant diseases, including advice on treatment.

### Apps for Mammals, Fish, and Reptiles

**Guides for identification.** Mammals of North America (Android, iPhone) is the Princeton field guide to the land and marine mammals of the United States and Canada. TX Snakes (iPhone) allows users to identify Texas snakes in any of the 250 counties in Texas by their pattern or by if it has a rattle. Again, Audubon has many field guides for mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians, with some being region specific.

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## Nature Smartphone Apps continued from page 10

**Tracking.** Scats and Tracks of North America (Android) allows you to easily find the scats and tracks of many North American species. Similar apps are Critter Trax and MyNature Animal Tracks (Android) and iTrack Wildlife (iPhone).

**Calling.** CritterCall (Android, iPhone) contains 30+ wild game (turkey, deer, waterfowl, predators) calls for training, calling game, or for having fun.

### Apps for Exploring and Learning about Nature

**Citizen scientists.** Project Noah, Sci.Spy and iNaturalist, Wildlife-Sightings.net. These apps (free Android, iPhone) allow citizen scientists to document and explore nature. Users take pictures, mark their locations, and submit them to scientific projects. Project Noah community members can help identify the plant or animal users photographed and see a map of other wildlife that has been spotted near them. Species Finder (Android) allows you to find species where you live or anywhere else in the U.S. that are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. It also links to



free endangered species ringtones and actions you can take to help save endangered species.

**Field work.** H.E.R.P.–Mobile (Android, iPhone) allows herpetologists to easily collect records of reptiles and amphibians in the field and later sync them to your account on NAHERP.com.

**Night sky watching.** Google Sky Map (free, Android) allows you to hold your phone up to the sky to see a well-documented map of the stars, planets, constellations, meteor showers, etc. Be sure to set your location or allow the app to use your phone's GPS. Similar iPhone apps exist.

### Web sites useful for finding and reviewing nature apps

A Guide to Mobile apps, [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/m/mobile\\_applications/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/m/mobile_applications/index.html)  
AppCrawler, <http://appcrawler.com/app/related/1129693>

The top 10 gardening apps you need now, <http://www.gardenista.com/posts/the-top-ten-gardening-apps-you-need-now>

## The 2013 Julia Burgen Lecture: Save the Night

On November 6, ACC went to UTA for its most ambitious annual Julia Burgen Lecture. The article below from the UTA *Shorthorn* tells the story (omitting only ACC's role):

### Lecture teaches how to reduce light pollution by Kathryn Cargo.

Posted: Wednesday, November 6, 2013  
Updated: 10:38 am, Thu Nov 7, 2013.

The majority of the United States has not seen the Milky Way with their own eyes because of light pollution, a lecturer told an audience at UTA on Wednesday night.

More than 50 people from the UTA and Arlington communities gathered on



campus on Wednesday night to learn about the night sky, light pollution, how light pollution harms the world and what can be done about it.

Cindy Cassidy, owner of Green Earth Lighting, led a lighting assessment

workshop with a walk-through critique of lighting at UTA. A planetarium show, The November Night Sky, was followed by the Save the Night lecture and Q-and-A session.

Cassidy's goal is to educate others about light pollution and the harmful effects it has on earth, from plants to humans and how to correctly produce artificial light, she said. People are not aware of the harm from light pollution, Cassidy said. Paul Bogard, author of *The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light*, and Cassidy led the lecture.

"We're not saying no light, but responsible, thoughtful, intelligent light

*continued on page 12*

## Save the Night continued from page 11

instead of wasteful, harmful light,” Bogard said.

Artificial street lights, gas station lights and stadium lights are types of light that disrupt the lifestyle of animals and humans, Cassidy said.

Most of the lights out on the street glare upward, illuminating the sky, taking away from the light of stars and actually limiting the sight of those around it. If a light source has a shield on it directing light down towards the area needing illumination, light pollution is decreased, providing more safety and a healthier environment.

Spanish sophomore Daniel Wright attended the workshop and lecture. He was interested in the topic after reading an article in National Geographic. Wright said he found the information from Save the Night fascinating. He has a streetlight outside of his residence hall window that shines into his room at night, which sometimes affects his sleep.

“The amount of our artificial lights we have is making night disappear, which effects nocturnal animals and makes it to where we can’t look up at the night sky,” Wright said.

The glare from a light limits the vision of people driving or walking into a store, Cassidy said.

The lecture included pictures that proved an individual was not visible when a light was unshielded but was when it was shielded.

Cassidy has worked with conservation of light and light pollution education for about 10 years and began working in the field when she realized she could not drive at night because of the glare from city and streetlights.



*Above left, Speakers Cindy Cassidy, Paul Bogard, and ACC President Danny Kocurek. Above right, Julia and Jack Burgen.*





## 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

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**Don't Forget!**

**Wednesday, February 5**

**7:00 pm**

**Kim Mote**

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