

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2

MARCH 2014

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

March Meeting

**The Arlington Fire Department
and Gas Wells: inspections,
regulations, and testing**

**Don Crowson,
Arlington Fire Chief/Director of
Emergency Management**

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



Don is a certified firefighter with a bachelor's degree in fire administration and fire prevention technology. He was the department's first medical operations chief before becoming special operations chief and then assistant fire chief.

Bring Something for the Raffle

Bits & Pieces

Back from the Pampas?

A Swainson's hawk soaring over the Blackland Prairie Preserve the other day prompted thoughts of summer (right now!) in Argentina. Why? This handsome hawk makes one of the longest migratory flights of any raptor. Could this bird have been chasing Argentine dragonflies a while ago?



Today's Inspirational Moment



Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries.

Jimmy Carter

Suburban Habitat

For many years this scraggly pecan has hung on in a narrow strip between a gas station and a high school parking lot, a sad survivor to admire idly while pumping gas. The other day, though, it was a wintery oasis of sorts: This poor tree was supporting 17 great-tailed grackles, two squabbling fox squirrels, and parts of three plastic bags. How's that for gas station biodiversity?



Annual Master Composter Class March 7-8

Why compost your yard and kitchen waste? How about healthier plants with less water, fertilizer and chemical use. Learn the basics of backyard composting or improve your technique at this free, informative class. Call 817-459-6778 or check the city Web site for information or to register.

From the President Danny Kocurek



Sometimes it is hard to be a Texan. And during primary season, it is downright embarrassing. We thought no one could ever be more inept and ignorant than Bush or Perry, but now we have a

senator who makes them look semi-rational. And now it is time for our state political hopefuls to try to prove they are more against science, public health and education than their opponent. This is primary season in Texas.

I get to avoid a lot of the pain because I don't watch television and NPR doesn't have commercials, but it is impossible to completely miss candidate ads. I noticed that the most commonly used adjective in all of these ads is "conservative," the use of which I have always found peculiar.

Merriam-Webster gives two definitions of conservative. The first, "not liking or accepting changes or new ideas," seems to be appropriate for many of these candidates, but the second, "marked by moderation or caution," does not apply in the least. A cautious and moderate person would never advocate for increased fossil fuel use and worsening

of climate change, nor would they fight against clean air and water. A cautious person would not put a gas well next to an elementary school before testing to determine if it is safe, nor would they put untested chemicals into children's food. And they would never leave their children with the economic burden climate change and pollution will force on to them. The list goes on and on.

It may seem hard to imagine but it appears our politicians might not be telling the truth. Which leads us to the painful decision part. Not voting is not an option. We have to keep showing up at the polls. Someday our politicians will have to answer to our children for what they are doing, but we need to be able to say we fought their ignorance and greed every step of the way. Otherwise we are equally to blame.

THE POST OAK

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Thanks A.C.C. for working to
conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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Blackland Prairie Preserve Jan Miller. Photos by Wesley Miller

Spring Cleanup!

It's the return of 3rd Saturdays on the Prairie

Saturday, March 15 9 am – noon

Early spring wildflowers will likely be in bloom, so don't miss 'em! Join us for the whole time or any part you can manage. We'll do a prairie walkabout before leaving for lunch. Please RSVP to prairie@acctexas.org in case we need to change plans because of weird weather, etc.

Wear sturdy soled shoes/boots and long pants. Bring gloves, loppers and hand saws if you have them. Please bring your own water, but refills will be provided. We'll work up an appetite, so plan to meet for lunch afterwards.

For map and directions: <http://goo.gl/maps/W01P9>

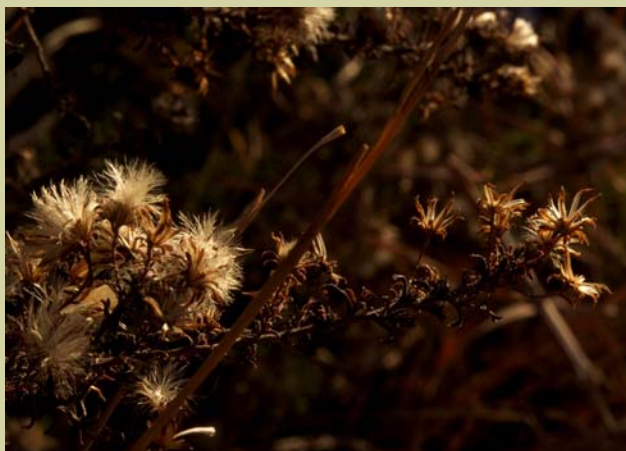


Mark your calendar!

Thursday, May 29 – Fieldtrips

Friday - Saturday, May 30-31 – Conference

STATE PRAIRIE CONFERENCE FORT WORTH, TX MAY 29-31, 2014	 PRAIRIES IN A CHANGING WORLD WATER SCARCITY • CLIMATE CHANGE • PRAIRIE BIRD CONSERVATION • RESTORATION AFTER ENERGY PRODUCTION • PRAIRIE STORYTELLING • FIELD EXPERIENCES AND MORE More information at prairiepartner/page/2014-sop-conference	Co-Presented by
		 Native Prairies Association of Texas CPP



Wildscape Update Photos by Molly Hollar

More and more, it's all about water — not just at the wildscape, of course, but everywhere. Even at the wildscape there's increased attention to using water sparingly as volunteers work to give new native plants a foothold and help established plants survive drought.



Diana Kunde



Joyce Duty



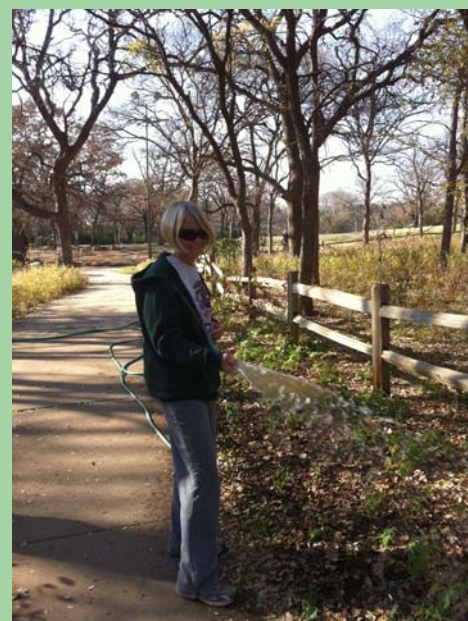
Terry Gratton



Gordon Duty



Beverly Crawford and Ann Trenton



Beverly Crawford

Southwest Nature Preserve

Want to help at our newest natural area? Attend the next meeting of the Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve on Tuesday, March 18 at 7:00 pm. (Location to be determined.)

This group has set goals to help the Parks Department manage the challenges faced by this very popular new preserve: removal of invasive species, habitat restoration, trail management, erosion control and more. If you are interested in joining the group's many activities or for more information, please contact prairie@acctexas.org.

*NOTE: Due to road construction, Bowman Springs Road is currently one-way, southbound only. See map for directions: <http://goo.gl/maps/slUD7>



Thanks to Our Last Speaker

We had a fine meeting last month, and a full house enjoyed hearing Kim Mote, Assistant Director of the Fort Worth Code Compliance Department. Kim's topic was Packaging and products: takeback, recycling, or trash? It's always great to hear an enthusiastic speaker discuss matters of environmental importance, and that's just what we got: a fascinating mix of trash history, landfill use, legislative progress, and the future of our wasteful consumer issues. Thanks, Kim.



Left to right: Speaker Kim Mote, Feb. program chair Grace Darling, ACC President Danny Kocurek.

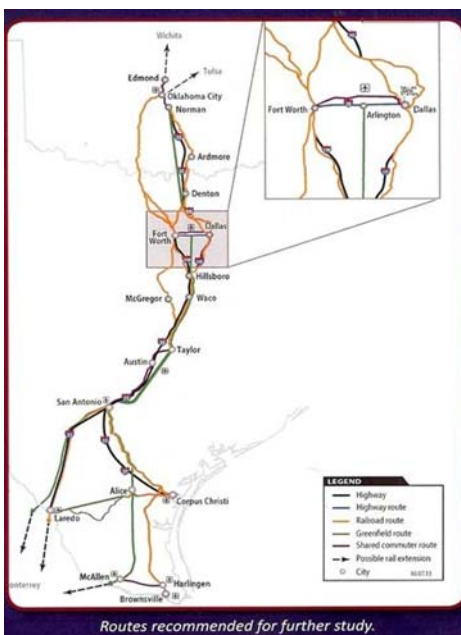


Make Arlington better: Join ACC today. Use the form on the back page.

Future of Rail Travel Roy Miliner

As you may or may not know, Texas is looking at Fast Passenger Rail Service. There are plans now for bringing three types of passenger rail service to the area. They vary from conventional rail service (70 - 90 mph) similar to TRE service, higher speed service (110 - 125 mph) and high speed rail service (165 - 220 mph).

There are two different studies being done. One includes routes from San Antonio to Austin to Dallas - Fort Worth continuing to Oklahoma city. The other would start from Houston and go north to Oklahoma through the Dallas - Fort Worth - Arlington area.



A number of routes are being studied. Several have stops in the area of the Entertainment District off I-30. Other routes go to CenterPort on the TRE lines. Currently there is no federal or state funding for these projects, so backers are first looking to see if they can sell the idea to a private entity interested in building and running the service.

The presentation recently given at the North Central Texas Council of Governments office was fairly brief with a number of questions following. One question was whether the project is one big project. The short answer is that it

would be done in phases, mainly working on the most needed routes first. Cost for the service would be between air fare and the cost of driving it yourself.

A major consideration concerned the types of transportation that would be available to get the passenger to the final point of travel.

If the service comes through Arlington, it would run at TRE- like speed on the low end while going from Dallas to Arlington and finally on to Fort Worth.

Another thought was that the service would run both east to west and west to east hourly so it could be used for commuters just needing to go to Fort Worth or Dallas as well as to the far points of the routes.

As part of an earlier rail study that primarily involved extension of the TRE service, the following locations were made part of that plan, some of which may be considered as part of the new plan or may still happen as a separate plan for the Metroplex. The one thing that is holding up this metro plan is the funding that the counties are to vote on.

PROPOSAL FOR W-1 CORRIDOR

- station at NAS
- Grand Prairie Station area at SH161
- Arlington Station at SH 360
- Arlington/UTA station at West Street
- special events service to Ballpark and AT&T Stadium

The question here may be why is this important to us. A quick and easy answer would be that this could take me and thousands of others out of our cars for either a short commute or a trip across the state or nation. With good transportation options available or stops close to our destinations this would be a solution to increasing traffic congestion.

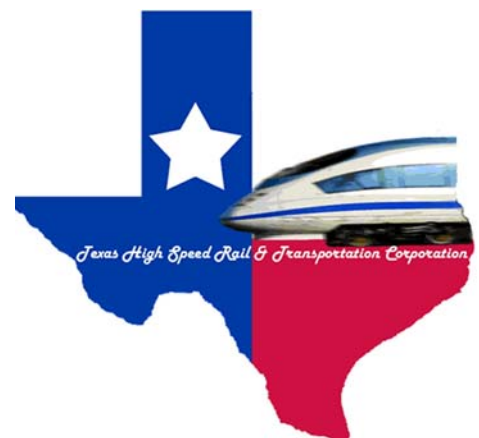
The central goal of public transportation is to give us alternatives to driving. In the major metro areas of Texas and the nation, the only way we can stop the growing air quality problem is to reduce the number of miles that we drive, and

right now the best answer is to create and provide options that would be attractive to people so that their love affair with driving can be ended.

One service that for now is only available on the east coast is the ability to carry your vehicle along with you on car carriers. Just drive up to the station, have your car loaded and board the train for the trip. Use your own vehicle at your destination instead of renting one.

Everything we are looking at for Texas exists either in other parts of the U.S. or overseas. As technology improves, these services will be faster and more environmentally friendly.

Even now if you look at TRE service here as well as DART light rail service, tens of thousands of people use these services daily. Both services are well ahead of what was projected. Even the service here in Arlington that goes between UTA and Centerport Station has a growing ridership and is currently ahead of its projected numbers. For five dollars you can go to any place the T or DART serves, and this also covers the return trip. If you are over 65 you can get an ID card from DART or the T that will give you the same service for \$2.50 daily. This is a great savings of fuel and money and a big plus for our air quality.



Drought Update and Classes **Dustan Compton**

Our water supply currently sits at about 72%. We entered Stage 1 drought restrictions (twice per week watering schedule) on June 3rd, 2013, and without significant rainfall this spring it looks like we will continue the water restrictions this summer. If the water supply drops to 60% capacity, we will enter Stage 2 watering restrictions and that will be a once per week watering schedule. Did you know that our water supply comes from Richland Chambers and Cedar Creek Reservoirs and they are located approximately 100 miles south-east of Dallas? For more information including videos and tips, go to: http://www.arlingtontx.gov/water/waterconservation_drought.html

Free Classes in March

Below is our schedule of classes in March. They are all free and I hope to see you there. If you would like to pre-register for the classes and receive a reminder, please call (817-459-6628) or email: dustan.compton@arlingtontx.gov

The Edible Landscape

Monday, March 10, 6-8 p.m.
Central Library, 101 E. Abram St.

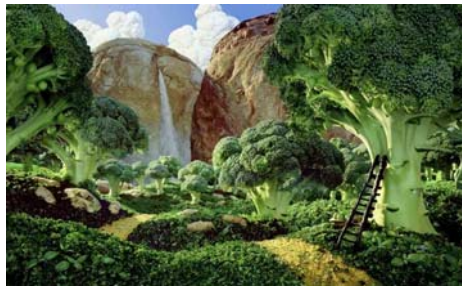
Why water and mow what you can't eat. Utilizing areas in your landscape to grow edibles is a way to add food on your table and reduce your grocery bill. This program teaches you how to incorporate edible plants into your home garden and landscape. You will learn how herbs, fruits and vegetables can add to the colors and textures of your permanent landscape combining both aesthetics and functionality. Patrick Dickinson, Urban Water Program Coordinator with Texas A&M AgriLife Research, will be the speaker.

Fix a Leak Week Activities

Saturday, March 22, 10 am. – 12 pm.
Local Home Depot and Lowes Stores
(No need to pre-register)

Fix a Leak Week is celebrated in March as a time to remind everyone to check their household fixtures and sprinkler systems for leaks. This year,

Arlington Water Utilities has coordinated with local WaterSense Retail Partners to provide free "Fix a Leak Workshops." Please visit a local Home Depot or Lowes store on Saturday, March 22, from 10 am – 12 pm, to learn how to repair and replace leaking faucets, toilets, and sprinkler systems. More information can be found in the February water bill insert or by clicking here: http://www.arlingtontx.gov/water/waterconservation_learning_opportunities_resources.html



Landscape Basics

Thursday, March 27, 6-8 pm.
Southeast Branch Library, 900 S.E.
Green Oaks Blvd.

Is your landscape brown and crispy? Learn to create and install a water efficient landscape or garden. You will learn proper soil preparation, native and adaptive plant selection, and how to design and plan a small or large project. A recommended plant list will be provided. Dotty Woodson, Water Resources Extension Program Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will be the speaker.

Other Interesting Events

Free composting classes every month: <http://www.arlingtontx.gov/environment/compostingclasses.html>

Tarrant County Master Gardeners Association's (TCMGA) Annual Plant Sale

Scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2014
from 9 am – 3 pm at the TCMGA

Community and Demonstration Garden at Fort Worth's Resource Connection. The garden is located off Campus Drive, north of I-20 at 1801 Circle Drive. The sale will include hundreds of perennials, annuals, roses, herbs, succulents, vines, native plants, grasses and hanging baskets. Demonstrations on rain barrels, composting, sharpening tools and container gardens will be featured. Bring your plant and gardening questions to the "Ask a Master Gardener" table. Proceeds benefit the TCMGA activities supporting community outreach and education. Cash and checks are accepted. Credit cards will be accepted for purchases over \$25.00.

Water Conserving Plant Sales in Arlington (May 3), Fort Worth (March 29 and April 26), Mansfield (April 12), and other Metroplex Locations

Texas SmartScape™, its member cities, The Home Depot®, and Weston Gardens have partnered to offer you special deals and great savings on select varieties of low-water-use plants that will thrive in the Texas heat. We will be hosting several plant fairs across the metroplex this spring. In addition to the discounts on select native and adaptive plants, you can talk with a Master Gardener, plant expert, or irrigation specialist and get ideas and tips for landscaping in North Texas. Plan to attend one of the plant fairs near you and bring your kids, as there will be fun for the whole family! Visit www.txsmartscape.com for more information about the plant sale and to learn more about using native and adapted plants to conserve water. Email info@txsmartscape.com for questions about each event.

Dustan Compton
Conservation Program Coordinator
Arlington Water Utilities
817-459-6628
www.SaveArlingtonWater.com

This & That **Grace Darling**

MONARCH WAYSTATION GRANTS

The Native Plant Society of Texas awards small grants to nature centers, schools, educational groups and others to help fund development of Monarch waystations on public sites in their immediate areas. This program was started to educate members and the public about Monarch conservation and to encourage restoration of Monarch



habitats throughout the Texas migration flyway. Funded by NPSOT, the program will accept applications for new gardens or improvements of previously installed Monarch waystations. Grants range from \$50 to \$400, and funds must be spent on native milkweeds and native nectar plants. Recipients are required to match the amount of the grant with volunteer labor and submit a final report by July 31.

The deadline for application is March 15. You may download the application form here:

<http://npsot.org/wp/monarchs/files/2014/02/MonarchGardenGrantApplication.pdf>

NATIVE LANDSCAPES IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Along the same theme of gardening with native plants, two recently approved applications to the Arlington Planning and Zoning Commission include landscape plans that incorporate many Texas natives. Through a collaboration between developers and local NPSOT chapter officers, brokered by the Heart of Arlington Neighborhood Association (where the projects are sited) and the city's Planning and Development Depart-



ment, the original landscape plans were modified to "maximize aesthetics, wildlife value, and biodiversity within the native landscape palette." Congratulations to the project designers, Mycoskie, MacInnis, and Associates; to developers Ryan Dodson and Jeff Fulencheck of 404 Border and Jay Matthiesen and colleagues of Sapphire Inspired Living; and especially to P&Z Commissioners and city staff, for being receptive to the message of landscaping with native plants. May the trend take hold and prosper.

GREEN SOURCE DFW AWARDS

Two of our own local celebrities are among the finalists for the 2014 GSDFW Sustainable Leadership awards. The Molly Hollar Wildscape was a top vote-getter in the Grassroots Non-profit Organization category, along with Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge and Texas Campaign for the Environment's Dallas office. Jan Miller,



helper extraordinaire of multiple environmental organizations in Arlington, is vying for the Volunteer title together with Claudia and Ed Meyer of Dallas and Alexandria Beck of Denton. All these good folks and groups, in these and other categories, will be recognized at an awards ceremony on March 13. For details and to register, go to: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2014-green-source-dfw-sustainable-leadership-awards-tickets-10461756395>

HELP WANTED NOTICE

An ACC member (thanks, Kathleen) has passed along a request for assistance from Rick Garnett, an Arlington resident who teaches Ecology at Nolan Catholic High School. (This is the job held for many years by the late, beloved Joe Kuban). It seems that Nolan has just acquired White Lake plus adjacent land, which sits off Oakland Avenue behind the school buildings. Rick has been asked by school administrators to put together a plan to restore the property for the use and enjoyment of school families and the surrounding community. The site currently has some ducks and shorebirds as well as other fauna in a mixed vegetation-water feature setting. An integral part of the strategic plan he has been charged with creating involves site restoration, and that's where ACC friends come in. If you have the expertise and time to advise Rick on best environmental practices for this type of project, please get in touch with me — darlingg@sbcglobal.net — and I'll connect you.

THE STATE OF OUR STATE

I've just come across a wonderful resource to share with Post Oak readers, the Meadows Foundation Environmental Plan, http://www.mfi.org/grants/files/EnvironmentalPlan_PUBLIC%202012-2021.pdf. This thoroughly researched booklet describes the current conditions of the Texas environment (as of 2012) and projects what the state will be like in 2060. The plan focuses on six strategies: water, land and habitat conservation, stewardship, public education and advocacy, air quality, and energy efficiency. In a brief but thorough manner, with a good balance between text and graphics, MFI takes a sober, unbiased look at the challenges we face and the management strategies available for each of these problem areas. It makes for grim reading at times, but don't let that put you off this factual, highly readable, and ready-made source of environmental data for Texas.

Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

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

Membership Information

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Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

First-year member \$10.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Supporting \$40.00

Sponsor \$100.00

Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ _____

New member ☐

Renewing member ☐

How did you hear about us? _____

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington TX 76004-0216

Don't Forget!

Wednesday, March 5

7:00 pm

Chief Don Crowson

The Arlington Fire Department and Gas Wells: inspections, regulations, and testing



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