

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

ACC WORKS TO PROTECT ARLINGTON'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EDUCATION,
COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND ADVOCACY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 10

NOVEMBER 2015

www.acctexas.org

November Meeting

Nicotine Bees

A movie supplied by
Friends of the Earth

Wednesday, November 4, 7 pm
Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)



Honeybees everywhere are dying at alarming rates, and Friends of the Earth is currently running a campaign to educate the public about the adverse impacts of neonicotinoid pesticides on bees.

This movie gets to the truth about why honeybees are in catastrophic decline, and a third of our food supply will be endangered. Come and get the facts.

Bits & Pieces

Wily Wasps

Simple questions about nature have a way of yielding complex and fascinating answers. Like this one that came up the other day:

What's a mud dauber? It's

not one thing but any number of wasps that use mud to make tubular nests for their young, or even just use abandoned mud nests. The blue mud dauber adds to the mud of abandoned nests and provides paralyzed spiders, mostly black widows, as food for its developing young. They may cram as many as two dozen spiders into a nest and are thought to be important in controlling black widow numbers.



Today's Inspirational Moment



"The environment is where we all meet; where all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share."

Lady Bird Johnson

Neil Sperry (again)

A few weeks ago our local plant guru repeated the errors he makes every few months about native plants. Does he believe this stuff or does he need a good editor? Examples:

"Adapted plants *may* be better choices than *some* native plants" – (emphasis mine) vague enough to be kind of true in a very limited way.

"Plants from West Texas or the Piney Woods to our east aren't native here on their own, and there have to be reasons."

– You need to work on your definition of native plants, and
– Some non-native Texas plants are happy here — *in the right places*. Desert willow, for example is native to south-central Texas but thrives here in sunny, very dry spots.

"When you ask for help at the nursery, use the term 'adapted' instead. It will serve your purposes far better." Here's a much better idea: Find real help at the [local Native Plant Society of Texas Web site](http://www.localnativeplantsociety.org).

From the President **Danny Kocurek**



The News

I like to think I don't have a lot of pet peeves, but one of them is definitely hearing what people call news. I once had a heated discussion with a certain

local NPR news reader about why I did not believe that a murder, or any act of violence, is ever news. If it does not significantly affect the future of mankind, I do not call it news.

I gave up on TV news decades ago, and cable news shortly thereafter. Fires, crime, celebrity gossip and sports have never, and will never, alter the future of our planet and are not news. But television has always been a sedative for the masses, replacing religion as a method of keeping people from killing each other or themselves.

Print and the Internet are not a whole lot better with the exception of some shining examples which are not followed as widely as they should be.

I think we should divide everything into two groups. The first is news, which informs or educates so as to improve womankind's future, and the rest

is trivia. Anyone reporting the latter should be required by law to state, "I apologize for the embarrassing slop I am about to read," before every sentence.

Sadly, I have come to the realization that the powers that be are not going to listen to me.



THE POST OAK

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conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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 817-469-9671

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve Photos by Wes Miller

**Third Saturday
Stewardship workday
Blackland Prairie
Nature Preserve
4907 New York Avenue
November 21
9:00 –12:00
Seed harvest!**

Come see what the latest rains have done for our prairie while you help harvest seeds, remove litter, look for birds, and take photos. There's so much to do!

Please wear sturdy shoes or boots and long pants; bring gloves and water (refills provided). Though not required, an RSVP is helpful in case of inclement weather.

See the links below for more information and latest updates:

Friends of the Prairie www.theprairie.org

Friends of the Prairie e-mail
info@theprairie.org



Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



The plant sale for the wildscape was a symphony not unlike *Stomp*, where music emerges from ordinary sounds instead of musical instruments. All those months of pinching, clipping, propagating, weeding and watering culminated in another triumphant sale produced by the wildscape volunteer orchestra skillfully conducted by Josephine Keeney.

This year's performance netted \$5,038.

Staging started rather quietly Friday. Sign coordinators Hester Schwarzer and Larry Norris created a little rustle. Jane Oosterhuis, Marylee Thomason, Joe Martinez and Charlie Amos added a layer of sound with wagon wheels squeaking, pots being stacked and relocated, plop, plop. Interwoven voices embellished the background. Josephine was everywhere directing/

complimenting/choreographing the initial arrangement.

On the morning of the main event, orchestra members donned aprons and walked calmly to their assigned positions. The audience was so anxious to participate that a small crowd arrived half an hour early. Before long the orchestra was in full voice.

Above the hum, conversation solos rose: "That plant is cocaine for hummingbirds," Charlie said as a sales pitch for flame acanthus. A woman squealed with delight when she learned that chili pequin berries are edible. "I am going to put them in my spaghetti sauce!"



Another woman said, "You are all such nice people."

Activity reached a crescendo during the second movement and lasted more than an hour. Lines formed at the cashier's stand. The volunteers answered questions, made suggestions, brought boxes and ferried plants to cars.

Shoppers gathered prized plants and wanted assurance that the ones they placed on the storage shelves would not be lifted by other enthusiastic buyers.

"I don't want anyone to get my plants if I leave them here and keep shopping," one person said. No fights, fist or verbal, were reported among the busy but well-behaved patrons.

Volunteers love this event. Even the one unexpected but welcomed party



crasher, who stepped in to play a part.

Let the credits roll for the "nice people" who performed like a world-class orchestra:

Molly Hollar – greeter/consultant
 Josephine Keeney – orchestra conductor/coordinator
 Jane Oosterhuis, Gailon Hardin – butterfly plants
 Mary Sanford, Marylee Thomason – ground covers/grasses
 Jo Poppelreiter, Kay Sekio, Betsy Kalina – perennials
 Carol Schinski, Sandy Hertzler – shrubs
 Charlie Amos, Jay Hertzler – vines and cacti
 Dick Pafford – trees
 Kevin Donovan, Dick Schoech – ticket writers
 Frank Keeney – signs/helper
 Brian Keeney – signs/carrier
 Joe Martinez – carrier/helper
 Larry Norris – carrier/gatekeeper
 Tracy Bentley – party crasher/floater
 invited by Jay Hertzler/floater



Thanks to Our Last Speaker



At our October meeting, we were fortunate to hear Terry Shultz, President of E-Waste Collections (*left*), as she brought enthusiasm and expertise to the timely topic of electronic waste disposal. Environmentally responsible disposal and recycling of the valuable — and sometimes toxic — components of our old or obsolete electronic devices is a problem that continues to grow more serious. And to back up her words, Terry brought a truck to collect our e-waste! Not only that, but driver Tim Owens (*right*) was a pleasure to talk to. We're indebted to both of them.

WOODPECKER

**The woodpecker, epitome of hope,
Evidently sees his world the same
Turned right side up or upside down.**

**On the bottom or the top
Of the branches where he hunts
The picking's just as good.**

**Perhaps if I could learn
To hop around and feed off wood
I'd cope as well as him.**

©2015 John I. Blair

Roly-poly Marylee Thomason

Remember your first encounter with a roly-poly? The cute little thing crawled in your hand. When you closed your hand on it (as children do), it rolled into a ball. That's when most kids fall in love with roly-polies, also known as pillbugs.

Nature does a lot of experimenting on the way to selecting the survivors in this world, and the lowly roly-poly (*Armadillidium vulgare*) has a fascinating combination of physical attributes. To begin, even though we call it "pillbug," it is not an insect.

Roly-polies are actually terrestrial crustaceans, more closely related to crayfish or crabs than any insect. They breathe through gills, which must be kept moist. Find them in damp environments such as under stones, in decaying logs or under a potted plant.

If they sense danger, their only defense is rolling into an armored ball, called conglobation. Three-banded armadillos do that, too. Nothing scary about these little creatures. No enlarged eye spots, no claws or mandibles, but some really disgusting personal habits.

Can we talk? Roly-polies do not urinate. Their systems have a very high tolerance for ammonia and waste fluids. No need to dilute these with precious water as mammals do. Roly-polies exude waste as a gas through tiny pores in their shells.

Their solid waste is not wasted. They recycle their feces by eating them. This disgusting practice is common enough to have a name: coprophagy.

Unlike humans, who use iron in the blood to transfer oxygen through the bloodstream, roly-polies use copper. Copper is rare in nature so they can't afford to waste it (pun intended). While oxygenated hemoglobin turns red, oxygenated hemocyanin turns light blue. As descendants of ancient lineage, roly-polies are true bluebloods.

There is no end to the potty jokes with these creatures. They can drink from both ends. Water is usually swallowed the normal way through the mouth, but they also can absorb it through tube-like structures, called uropods, in their anus.

They press those tubes against a moist surface and suck up moisture through capillary action. Is "vulgar" beginning to sound appropriate?

Mothers love their offspring, no matter what. Female roly-polies lovingly carry their fertilized eggs in a marsupium or brood pouch located on their underside. Once hatched, the young are completely independent.

They survive in captivity two to three years, happily feeding on decaying animal and plant matter. In the wild they are an important addition to nature's waste management crew. They even clean up after themselves.



SW Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Saturday, Nov 7

9:00—12:00: Community volunteers trail building

Tuesday, November 17

Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve monthly meeting

6:30—8:00 pm

Lake Arlington Branch Public Library*

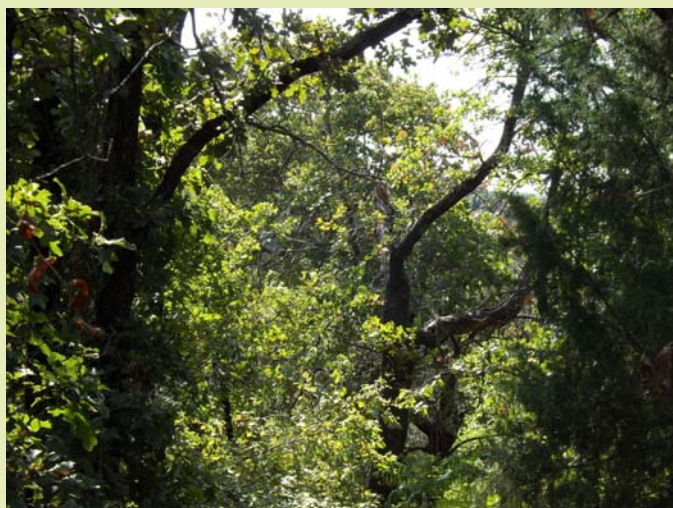
4000 Green oaks Blvd.

(NW corner of Green Oaks Blvd and Pleasant Ridge Rd, next to St Vincent DePaul Catholic Church)

*This event is not sponsored by the Arlington Public Library

Thursday, Nov 19

9:00—12:00: Thursday volunteer event



The popular boardwalk at SWNP was vandalized recently. About 50 feet were burned, making the boardwalk and fishing platform off limits until they can be reconstructed. The repair will take time and considerable funds that could have been used in other constructive ways. If you see suspicious activity at the preserve (or anywhere for that matter), call 911.

Meanwhile, the Friends work continues with building trails, managing invasive plants, improving aquatic habitats, conducting outreach activities, and more. Hope you'll join us.

For more information, visit www.swnp.org or contact info@swnp.org.

#OPTOUTSIDE

Along with a growing but still small list of retailers, REI recently announced they would close their stores and online retailing on "Black Friday", November 27, and going outside. Taking it a step further, they're inviting us, too:

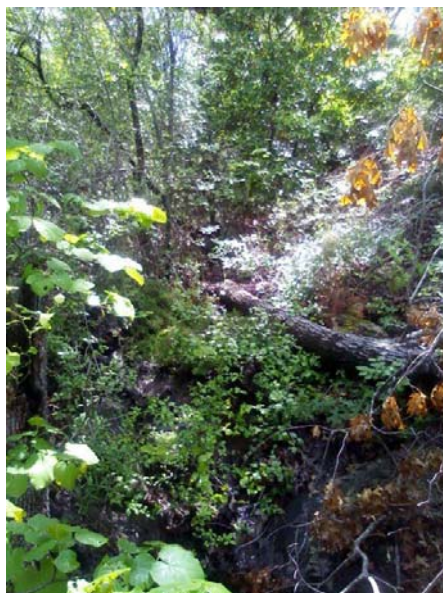
REI believes that being outside makes our lives better. That's why this Black Friday, we're closing all 143 of our stores and paying our employees to head outside. We want you to JOIN US.

So far, over 1 million people have pledged to participate. OPTOUTSIDE doesn't have to be a grand expedition: a walk outside, birdwatching in a park or visiting a nature center or preserve you've always meant to check out. Take the family, a friend, a dog, or go alone.

What a great way to start taking back the holiday season — and maybe even more. How about you?

Photo of the Month

Back to nepotism, but at least we've got a beauty here, compliments of Grace Darling and Eagle Mountain Lake Park. *National Geographic* hasn't called yet, but surely it's just a matter of time.



Start Thinking about Walk on the Wildside

Although it's not yet Christmas, wildscape volunteers are beginning planning for Walk on the Wildside for next spring. For each of the three events, we will need 10 presenters and at least 10 group guides.

On March 24, 80 or so 3rd graders will be at the wildscape from 9 till noon along with seven or eight teachers and parents from Goodman Elementary in Arlington.

On April 8, Anderson Elementary will bring 88 4th graders from 9 to noon.

In addition, we have a request from a former Goodman teacher for about April 1st.

Please consider joining us. The kids are always excited and well-prepared.

For more information, contact Peggy Quinn at 817 371 0773.

Texas Natural History Jan Miller



The Texas Master Naturalists' annual meeting is always a great venue to share exciting projects and successes, but also to meet and learn from the professionals representing academia, non-profits, government and business. This year's keynote address by Dr David Schmidly (mammalogist and author of *Texas Natural History: A Century of Change**) provided sobering facts and great insight about what Texas has lost, even as most of us are unaware. He listed the many mammal species lost in the last century. The loss of these key mammals sometimes came from overharvesting, but most often as the result of lost habitats, which were even less noticed. Mismanagement of the land through development, water misuse, fire suppression, overgrazing, invasion by alien plants, loss of wetlands, etc. have all contributed to major habitat loss.

With the habitat and wildlife losses, there's the loss of public perception. Dr Schmidly offered this quote: "...each succeeding generation...has markedly different expectations of what is natural because they encounter increasingly altered systems that bear



less and less resemblance to the former, pre-exploitation versions. This loss of perspective is accompanied by fewer direct human experiences (or even memories) of once undisturbed systems."

Peter R. Grant, vol. 154, No. 1.
The American Naturalist, January 2000

Basically, we don't know what we've already lost — landscapes, plants or mammals — because we either don't remember it or never realized it was slipping away. For example, did you know that until the last century, Texas was home to gray wolf, red wolf, black-footed ferret, jaguar, margay and mountain sheep? Only decades before, we'd also lost bison, elk, and grizzly bear. These "charismatic megafauna" are top of the food chain species, ones that you'd think we'd really notice, but unsung are many more, all the way down the food chain.

Dr. Schmidly didn't just bemoan the losses, but cited the work of those who have noticed, archived, advocated and mitigated change through the years, like the incredible Vernon Bailey (1864-1942) and Dr C. Hart Merriam (1855-1942). He also had several points for meeting 21st century conservation challenges. Most were large scale, but

"making conservation education a priority to the public" is something we can all contribute to, even in simple, personal ways. There's a real need to communicate with the public about the natural world that's still here and how our lives impact it and can be enriched in return. We know that when people experience and begin to understand nature, they want to know more about it, and eventually to care for it.

Schmidly closed his talk with this powerful quote:

"Write and speak with appreciation for all you have been gifted. Recognize that politics with no biology, or politics without field biology, or a political platform in which human biological requirements form but one plank, is a vision of the gates of hell."

Barry Lopez, *The Naturalist*, 2001

*The online edition of the *Mammals of Texas* is available at <http://www.nsrl.ttu.edu/tmot1/>



For Your Information

2015 Computer Roundup!

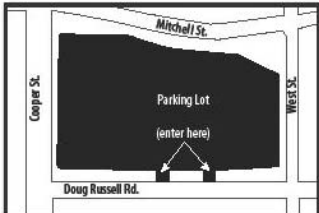
It's Free!

Saturday
Nov. 14, 2015
8 a.m. - 12 noon

WANTED

- Computers • Monitors
- TVs • Keyboards
- Printers • VCRs
- Radios • Video Cameras
- Cell Phones

Bring your old electronics to the UTA parking lot at the southeast corner of Mitchell and Cooper!




Proof of Arlington residency required. This event is for Arlington residents only. Businesses should contact the City of Arlington for information on how to recycle electronics. We will not be accepting large, household appliances such as washers, dryers, refrigerators. Call 817-317-2000 for disposal of these items.

Did You Know? The Arlington Landfill accepts old electronics for recycling year-round. Just drop them off at the landfill for free, where they are stored and then taken to a recycler.

More information: 817-354-2300 (landfill office).

More e-waste recycling opportunities: visit www.arlingtontx.gov/recycle/recycling-information-electronic-waste/.

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Root and Branch Review

Downwinders at Risk presents:

Thursday, Nov 5
7:00 – 9:00 pm

All-Star Symposium: "The Future of Fighting Fracking in Texas"

FREE. Texas Theater,
 231 W. Jefferson, Oak Cliff

Friday, Nov 6
Noon – 1:00 pm

"Send an SOS to EPA" FREE

EPA Regional Headquarters,
 1445 Ross, Dallas

Form a visual "SOS" message with our bodies to let the agency know its help is needed to overcome Texas' resistance to enforcement of federal environmental laws.

Saturday, Nov 7
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Organizational and Informational Workshops for Activists

\$50 at the door
 First Unitarian Church,
 4015 Normandy

For more info
 or to register:

www.rootandbranch2015.org

Downwinders at Risk:
www.downwindersatrisk.org 469.608.1972

Methane rule comments due before Nov 17

Like a lot of us, you missed last month's EPA public hearing on proposed amendment of new source performance standards (NSPS) to limit methane and VOC emissions for oil and gas production. Comments can still be submitted online before November 17. Here's the info:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Docket ID #:EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-0505

Missed Opportunities at the New Library Grace Darling

Editor's note: Arlington environmentalists are used to the idea that our city ranks very low in matters we consider crucial. Of course, we know we're not Austin; but more and more it's clear that we're not even Denton or Dallas in terms of sustainability.

Here's an open letter regarding several aspects of our city's environmental failures:

Dear Mayor Williams and City Council Members:

The new central library design does not include a dedicated dumpster for recyclables. Due to space constraints at the new library site, the plan is for the library to share a modified recycling depository with City Hall. I find this to be unacceptable.

It's not merely recycling at the library that is a concern, but the absence of an easily accessible, dedicated dumpster for recyclables next to the trash dumpster, like the one we had before which is now missing. That recyclables skip was heavily used by visitors to the library and workers in downtown businesses, as well as by residents of apartment complexes near and far whose managers don't participate in recycling — which is pretty much all of them.

To think that those users can be accommodated in the existing, inadequately small and screened-from-view recycling dumpster on the west side of City Hall is naive. Or perhaps those recyclers are meant to use the skip at the east end of the Municipal Court parking lot, unmarked and invisible from Mesquite Street. I only found it after an extensive search of the city's website; certainly there are no physical signs indicating its presence. Does anyone else even know it's there?

As a newly designed municipal building, the central library should not only have ample provision for recycling

but also enjoy other energy and resource conservation features. We have been assured that the city will try for LEED certification of the new building, but it's too soon to know at which level because it's too early in the design process. There is even the hint of a surprise later on that would considerably enhance the building's energy efficient profile, but it cannot be shared with the public at this time.

I find it curious that Council took months arguing over the facade and other aesthetic aspects of the new library, yet not a single official queried the apparent absence of any green features in the plan. But we are told this perception is wrong: the new central library will be a model of ecofriendly design and energy conservation. So why the inexplicable silence about your green intentions, when you should be shouting them from the (garden) rooftops to loud cheers from your constituents?

If the will to show a good example in tax-payer supported facilities doesn't exist, sustainable design is much less likely to be accepted by the public. These technologies and applications are found throughout our daily lives in the workplace, in retail and other private businesses, so why not in our municipal buildings?

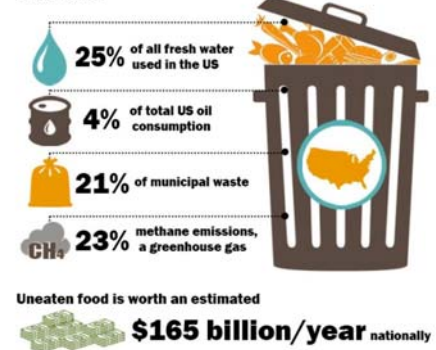
The old library was completed in 1973, about the time the EPA banned asbestos-containing materials for fire-proofing and insulation purposes. Forty years later, the central library building was torn down largely because of the asbestos problem that prohibited any remodeling or expansion. Here we are now in a similar situation, building flagship city facilities according to codes developed in the 1970s. While other cities team with LEED certified buildings, Arlington has only two such facilities, Fire Station #9 and the airport terminal; the subcourthouse is owned

by Tarrant County. We are in danger of reliving those mistakes and failing to learn the lessons of the past.

Arlington has adopted the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code that establishes minimum regulations for energy-efficient buildings. Now it's time to ramp it up and adopt the 2012 or, yes, even the 2015 IECC. We are falling behind by standing still. I expect my city to embrace the 21st century and follow the most up-to-date best management practices in construction. I hope the Dream City will wake up before it's too late.

FOOD WASTE AFFECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

In the United States, uneaten food annually accounts for



The North Central Texas Council of Governments held a workshop on October 21 on food waste recovery. Topics included what the waste means to our economy, our environment, and our social systems, and what we can do about it. For more information visit the [NCTCOG Web site](#) and look for food recovery topics.

From MyArlingtonTx: City of Arlington releases 2014 annual growth profile results. Find a description and a few key points [here](#). Here's one place where you won't be troubled by the environmental implications of endless growth. So enjoy it if you can.

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

Name _____	First-year member \$10.00	
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E-mail _____	Sponsor \$100.00	
	Lifetime Individual \$250.00	
	Other \$ _____	

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Contributions and dues are not tax-deductible. Note: If you cannot pay, please let any board member know. The only available newsletter format is electronic, and it can be obtained via e-mail and the ACC Web site.

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
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Don't Forget!**Wednesday, November 4****Fielder Museum
7:00 – 8:00 pm****Nicotine Bees*****A movie provided by Friends of the Earth***