

June Meeting

Texas bumble bees: natural history, research, and conservation

Dr Jessica Beckham
Post-doctoral research associate,
University of North Texas

Wednesday, June 7, 7 pm

Pantego Lions Center

3535 Marathon St, Pantego TX 76013
Near Pioneer Parkway and Smith Barry Road
Behind the Runner Shop [Google Map](#)

Bumble bees are important pollinators in both natural and agricultural systems. Unfortunately, they are declining worldwide; five of the twelve documented species found in Texas have experienced range reductions. This program will introduce you to the natural history of bumble bees, identification of common species in Texas, ongoing research at the University of North Texas, and ways that you can help to conserve these vital resources.

Dr Jessica Beckham is a Texas bumble bee expert and all-around "bug nerd." She has researched a variety of topics pertaining to native Texas bumble

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Bits & Pieces

Aquatic interlude

It's very dark, we're squishing through pondside mud at SW Nature Preserve, tiny Cricket frogs indulge in staccato serenades, and we accidentally disturb a couple of Blotched water snakes as they consider their late dining options.

Rejecting our company, they abandon their plans and silently swim away. Dinner delayed for those harmless snakes, but a perfect night in this precious oasis for mildly muddy lovers of nature.



Today's inspirational moment

Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.
Albert Einstein

No, thanks

Just a little reminder: Don't buy a bird feeder from a business that advertises with an image of a House sparrow. The feeder might be okay, but we really don't want to encourage glaring ignorance about invasive exotics, even ones with feathers.



TEXAS WILDSAPES

No more wildscapes?

TPWD has closed applications for Wildscapes due to "lack of staff and current hiring freeze." Also no more "Best of Texas Backyard Habitat Certification" applications. More info (but not much) here: http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/

From the President Jan Miller

Transitions and tributes

May brought major transitions to ACC stalwarts:

Most regrettably, long-time ACC member Sharon Schoech lost her battle with cancer. We're grateful to have known her smile, gentle wit and cheerful enthusiasm on many projects through the years. Our deepest sympathies to her husband, ACC Vice-President Dick Schoech, and family. Please see Ann Trenton's tribute to Sharon later in this issue.

Molly (Wildscape) Hollar made her retirement official, announcing her move from Arlington to Fort Worth. She's traded in her condo for a high-rise view of Trinity Park and the river after leaving her namesake project at Veterans Park in Ann Knudsen's capable hands. Molly has introduced many of us to an inexhaustible joie de vivre found by nurturing native plants and animals in our landscapes. Salute, Molly! More accolades to Molly in this issue; don't miss them.

Julia Burgen Park on the Johnson Creek Greenway was dedicated on May 25, with a crowd of family, friends, associates and dignitaries, and with weather suitable to the glorious occasion. Maybe it was Julia's smile that lit up the day, but it was shared by many others, delighted to see the long-imagined transition from flood-ravaged homes to a verdant greenway, at last made a reality. See photos of the event and more in this issue.

Much more in this issue, thanks to many of you and to our devoted editors. Enjoy!

Don't forget! ACC's June 7 meeting will be at a different location, Pantego Lion's Club (3535 Marathon Dr, Pantego, 76013). There should be plenty of room, so invite a friend AND a neighbor. We welcome [feedback](#) as we evaluate this potential new location. Thanks!

THE POST OAK

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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller

Jungles and grasslands are the logical destinations, and towns and farmland the labyrinths that people have imposed between them sometime in the past. I cherish the green enclaves accidentally left behind.

E. O. Wilson



Sharon Schoech Ann Trenton



Sharon, left, with Peggy Quinn and kids at Walk on the Wildside in March, 2016.

The last day I sat with Sharon we were alone while I read aloud from Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. As I read and held her hand, the hospital chaplain came into the room. Dick wasn't there. The chaplain asked me to tell him about Sharon. We chatted a bit.

I've known Sharon 10, maybe 15 years. We aren't close in the sense of exchanging every detail of our lives or spending days together, but we have that bond that transcends. She is always present with me in some way.

She's in love with nature. She connects with every insect, every bird, every living being. Look at the soft blanket with the butterflies, the pillow with all its colorful insects. This softness is Sharon, so gentle, so vulnerable, so incapable of harm.

We'd be at a book sale and she would show me cleverly illustrated

children's books and tell me about re-reading a favorite story, "Wind in the Willows." Then she'd grab a big, oversized book of the amazing worlds of non-human critters. She volunteered at BRIT, at River Legacy, with kids at the wildscape, AAUW, the list goes on. Books, nature, kids ... and more.

She had a wonderfully intuitive relationship with children. She engaged them and shared their awe, curiosity and understanding. Her walk was always the walk-in-the-woods kind — meandering, slow, a pleasant time of observation. No hurry. What better person to mentor nieces and text "Sweet dreams!" wishes at night.

Sharon told me about TED talks way back when, and she told me about *Buddha's Brain* by Rick Hanson. Neuroscience, yes! Smart sister, always exploring.

We shared lots of caring for mother stories. She surely enjoyed her mother and could recount their lives together with love and humor. She traveled back and forth to Dallas for years to spend time with her mom and to be sure she could continue living as independently as possible in her own home. She succeeded. Jean Petree lived to 97 and, I suspect with pre-science, passed a few months ago.

Sharon handled her brother Fritz's affairs when he died unexpectedly in 2014. It was a complicated, difficult time for her. Difficult for all of the family.

I can't talk about Sharon without including Dick. They are partners, equally gifted, caring, warm, sensitive and wise. It seems I can only speak in superlatives, and I'm so happy to have experienced their light-hearted sense of humor and their delight in laughter.

So happy to have experienced my friend Sharon Schoech.

From Dick Schoech: We will have a Celebration of Life around July 1st or 2nd at River Legacy Living Science Center, 703 NW Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76006. All who knew Sharon are welcome.

Sharon was an early and consistent volunteer at River Legacy. For those wanting to do something in her honor, a donation to the River Legacy Living Science Center would be much appreciated. To contribute, [click here.](#)

A Special Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Tribute to Molly

Once in a while a Paul Bunyan walks among us. Ours is Molly Hollar. The warm glow of her presence and the benevolence of her leadership embrace all who know her.

Molly has been tromping through the wildscape at Veterans Park since its inception in 1994 as an urban renewal project proposed by the Arlington Organic Garden Club and the newly reformed Arlington Conservation Council. "Six other people were interested, but they all had jobs," she recalled. 'You lead,' they said. 'We will help you.' And they did. They probably did more work than I did."

This little band took on a half acre of land overgrown with invasive vegetation and replaced it with beautiful native plants typical of an Eastern Cross Timbers woodland. Over time more areas were included, and bridges and paths were added. Now the wildscape spans five acres.

Molly credits the Arlington Parks Department, LTV, Northrop Grumman, scout groups, "Mike Warren's kids," and the many individuals who dig, plant, trim, mulch and weed. She shuns the spotlight, but it is obvious from the awards and medals and the heartfelt gratitude that without her dedication and drive there would be no wildscape.

On October 29, 2005, about 100 people stood in the parking lot to watch the former landfill become the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park. With typical modesty, Molly thought someone was pulling a prank; she had to be reassured that the dedication was real.

Molly has retired and passed the reins to professional native gardener, Ann Knudsen. If you call, Molly will tell you, "The first part of my life I started a nursery school for my children. Having



majoring in child development, I knew the importance of early childhood education and I wanted my children to have a good nursery school."

"The second part of my life, after my kids were all grown, was the wildscape. I think it was the best. Moving to Trinity Towers is the third part of my life. It is so wonderful here that I want everyone I know to understand that this is not just for rich people."

"I guess I just always have to have a crusade, and this is the latest crusade."

In the 23 years that Molly steered the wildscape, she received many accolades. Here are some from the hearts of those she touched:

Heather Dowell

How do I even start to express what Molly Hollar means to me? A few words that come to mind are amazing, inspirational, respectful, giving, joyous, genuine, graceful, dignified, natural, beautiful, dynamic, loving, honest and a gift to this earth! She is the Energizer

Bunny for our planet, the gift that keeps on giving.

Molly has inspired me to push against the norm and go native. She taught me that when someone shuts a door on the right way, you just need to keep looking for the next door and find that new path. I have watched her set the example and selflessly give the credit to others.

She so happily shares her knowledge. After being with her a few minutes you can tell you are blessed to be in her presence — you are talking with a being who stands above the crowd and walks among the clouds. I know Molly will laugh these words off, but when you stand with her you truly stand with greatness. You can feel it.

Molly will forever be in my life as she and my daughter share the same birthdate, 80 years apart. I am so fortunate to know her, and even though she is passing the torch, her smile, hard work and love for nature and the wildscape will always burn strong.

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A Special Wildscape Update continued from page 5

Thank you Molly, for all you have done for Arlington, the Molly Hollar Wildscape, the visitors and volunteers. You have truly impacted my life and the life of my family, personally and professionally. Molly is like the sun and I know we will all continue to walk in her warmth.

Enjoy your retirement, sweet Molly, you earned it.

Dick Pafford

From the time of Molly's wildscape presentation to my 2011 Master Gardener Class, Molly has been an inspiration and wealth of knowledge. She is truly one of the kindest and most giving people I have ever met and I cherish every day I have spent working with her. She always put the concerns and consideration of others before anything else we did.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to say a few words about this wonderful lady.

Joe Martinez

Molly, love you like I would my own mother. Met Molly several years ago at the wildscape while walking in Veterans Park. She invited my wife and me to listen to one of her mini classes. After the class she asked us to come to the greenhouse in Randol Mill Park and without realizing what had happened, we were inducted into Molly Hollar's wildscape volunteers. Been 9 years now. Wow!

Josephine Keeney

The One and Only Molly Hollar. She is truly famous around the Metroplex and for many good reasons. She has worked tirelessly for over 20 years to advance the cause of native plants and wildlife preservation.

She has led groups of volunteers in the work of restoring the five-acre piece of woodland that we call The Wildscape.

Her kindness and generosity have attracted many people like bees to flowers, and now that she needs to rest we will continue her work and carry the banner of conservation in her name.

I met Molly in 2005 shortly after I became aware of native plant conservation. I went to the wildscape one day and there she was with her gray hair flying in the wind, gathering seeds. I told her that I would like to work with her and she said "Yes," so when I retired shortly after, I started volunteering with her at the wildscape. She encouraged me to join the Master Naturalists and I love it.

I have been working for native plant conservation since then, and it has become my passion and my mission.

All because I met Molly at the wildscape.

Wesley Miller

I guess one thing that I am most grateful to Molly for is her demonstration of how to befriend visitors to the wildscape and to APRD workers. Helps Arlington better nourish the reunion of humans with the rest of nature.

Dick Schoech

I met Molly after buying the property where we built our home. I started googling about sustainability, discovered wildscaping and met Molly a few days later. Through Molly, I also discovered ACC. Life would be a lot easier and I would have a lot more free time had I never met her, but it wouldn't have much purpose.

Ann Trenton

Molly, a Bodhisattva, driven by compassion and generosity in all its expressions, patient, honest and wise, and no one works harder for the benefit of all.

I always remember the first time I heard the expression "a day made in heaven"

and Molly's use of it and how only Molly can charge the expression with all the zest and sunshine and joy her own life expresses.

Kay Sekio

It was more than 15 years ago that I read an article about a lady bringing great changes to Veterans Park. Little did I know at the time that I would get an opportunity to work with Molly for the wildscape. She has not only significantly influenced our way of preserving nature but also set a precious example of selfless volunteerism to us. This is my 14th year at the wildscape and I would like to continue to work with great fellow volunteers toward a fruitful future of the wildscape Molly started. Molly, thank you very much for all you've done for us.

Patty Meek

Molly has that unique quality of making people feel like they have been friends for ages. She made me feel so welcome, and the knowledge that she passed on to me I will cherish forever. There are not enough words to express the gratitude I feel for her coming into my life. I truly feel honored to know Molly!

Peggy Quinn

About 7 or 8 years ago, Benjamin Kocurek — Danny's oldest son — had listened carefully to Molly's rants about the horrible qualities of privet. That spring as he roamed through Fort Worth's Botanical Garden on his 3rd grade field trip, he repeated Molly's lecture to his class and teacher. They were, of course, horrified and disgusted, but he persisted. He probably was not successful in converting this small audience, but it was amusing to watch. Molly's legacy lives on.

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A Special Wildscape Update continued from page 6

Debbie Whiteman

Ms. Molly,
I remember meeting you early on in our Master Gardener Class of 2009. You were so kind, so friendly, and so very knowledgeable. Not only about plants but life in general.

We often ate lunch together in the atrium where you shared your high-powered chocolate and raw almonds among other goodies.

There was just something about you; so serene, so comfortable with life, so good with people. It's no wonder you were so great in managing the park. I just want you to know I was lucky to have been in the same class with you.

You were such an inspiration to me and so many others.

Thank you for all that you have done to promote a better environment for flora and fauna. The Earth is a better place because of you!

John Dycus

Molly Hollar is warm and wonderful, insightful and true, a Texas rendering of Eleanor Roosevelt in work boots, with trace elements of Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir. She makes things happen. Good for her. Good for us all.

Marian Hiler

Molly always makes you feel like you are the most important volunteer ever. To paraphrase her brother, "If I were half as good as Molly says I am, I'd be twice the person I really am." She's so adroit at misdirecting the spotlight away from herself — the person who really is the best volunteer. And the most humble.

Dawn Hancock

So here is my little story: When I first returned to the Native Plant Society of Texas after retiring from teaching at age

63, I learned that the wildscape used volunteers at the greenhouse to multiply plants to go back to the wildscape. I showed up one potting day and Molly and I got so interested in potting and talking that we were locked in by the staff. No worries, said Molly. I know the combination to the lock. Well, not so much. What to do? Easy, peasy: We will just use those barrels by the fence and climb over. Now this is not a low fence. It is maybe 8 feet. But over we go and I am thinking to myself, "I want to be just like Molly when I grow up."

John Darling

Around 2000 one of Molly's daughters was my dentist. Once, after I mumbled something about nature, she said, "You just have to meet my mother!" She took me to her that day, we talked, and when the fog lifted, I was the newest victim of the Molly Effect. I still can't see through the fog, but that meeting led to getting the compost site started at the wildscape and a whole lot of fooling around with newsletters. How did this happen? I can't say for sure, but maybe it was her wonderful mix of focus, enthusiasm and innate goodness. Thanks, Molly.

Susan Marchbanks

Here's my memory:
When I was a fairly new Master Naturalist, I was always a little disappointed when volunteers I had already met a number of times would introduce themselves. I started having a complex about how I remembered meeting these people, but no one ever remembered meeting me. Until I met Molly. I met her once and from then on, every time we met, she called me by name. Molly was the first person who made me feel "a part of". There is a quote "They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel." Molly made me feel included and that's a nice feeling.

Marylee Thomason

Molly, you changed my life.

I just wanted to volunteer doing something outside but what I found was a new world. In this one a warm and always welcoming friend accepted me and everyone else as we are. What I tell people about you is that you start saying something nice about a person as soon as you meet them. I wish everyone I know could experience the warmth that flows from you right from the beginning.

From you I learned about native plants and their value for the environment. I rolled up the Asiatic jasmine that covered my front yard and planted natives.

I love my tiny wildscape. The lawns around me seem like deserts.

A healthy lifestyle is so important to you that you can't help insisting that everyone at least know what they should be doing.

I believed you and became vegetarian. My psoriasis disappeared two years ago, and most of my food allergies are gone.

You are crusading for Trinity Towers because it represents all that you believe in. I may end up there someday, but right now I want to soak up some more of the good feelings I get from feeding the hungry feral cats, opossums and raccoons at my back door, the fun of designing and installing native plant gardens for friends and family and knowing that I have given the native creatures a place to thrive in my yard.

The years since I met you have been the happiest of my life.

There is no other way to thank you but to remain a friend and visit you often in your new home.

Sincerely, Marylee Thomason

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bees, including their use of urban green spaces, statewide species distributions, and species persistence across northeast Texas. She is currently evaluating the taxonomic status of the Sonoran bumble bee as a post-doctoral research associate at the University of North Texas.

Bluebirds have new nestboxes at the wildscape Donna Piercy

There are flashes of blue at the wildscape! Volunteers have been reporting Eastern bluebirds at Veterans Park for some time. Years ago two nestboxes were placed there and one was still being used. We are now giving them additional help. Three new nestboxes are planned for the perimeter, and we have been able to place two. A bluebird pair has been busy having clutches in the old nestbox, so we have not been able to give them their upgrade.

Eastern bluebirds like open areas with occasional trees, but the old nestbox being used is in the middle of a heavily wooded area. It is difficult to see what's happening because it is so dark inside the box. But they are there: clutch number two has four eggs and one hatchling at last check. As my birding mentors have said, "Birds don't read the field guides." And indeed, open grassland is a short flight away.

We have big hopes for our nestboxes. As of this writing, in the two new nestboxes, we have a bluebird nest and a wren nest. A clutch of chicka-



dees has already fledged. We allow these other native cavity nesters to use the nestboxes, as all these birds have lost nesting habitat.

The nestboxes are monitored weekly. Data are reported to Nestwatch, part of Cornell's very large ornithology research program. We report when nests are built and when the eggs are laid. We follow through with the number of eggs, hatchlings, nestlings, and fledglings we see for each box as it happens. Nestwatch is a phenomenal citizen science project that contributes to our knowledge of bird populations, reproductive biology, and climate change. Bluebirds and nuthatches are of particular interest to Audubon: data on these two birds were collected this spring as part of new research into birds that may be particularly susceptible to global warming.

If you are interested in learning more about bluebirds or would like to help monitor these nestboxes, please let me know — depiercy@hotmail.com. Bluebirds breed into summer so there is still time to learn the ropes. Thank you, Ann Knudsen and Charley Amos of Wild Birds Unlimited for making this possible.

Thanks to our speaker

In May our speaker was Erik Orsak from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington Environmental Services (USFWS ARLES).

Erik provided a review of his office's background, tracing its origins to rising environmental concerns in the 1960s. While the EPA regulates environmental risks as they impact human health, USFWS draws its authority from the Endangered Species Act to protect wildlife species and their habitats. The ARLES office provides support to government agencies and the public related to migratory birds and federally threatened/endangered species. Natural stressors plus anthropogenic pressures put species at risk, with Texas' biggest challenges being climate change/drought, land use practices (agriculture, oil/gas industry), industrial contaminants, over-grazing/fire suppression and changing land uses.

While ACC has had contacts with several other ARLES representatives over the years, this was our first time to meet Erik. With his expertise in chemistry, toxicology and water monitoring, he provided a new perspective and very interesting program with genuine enthusiasm and patiently answered our many questions with good humor. Thank you, Erik!

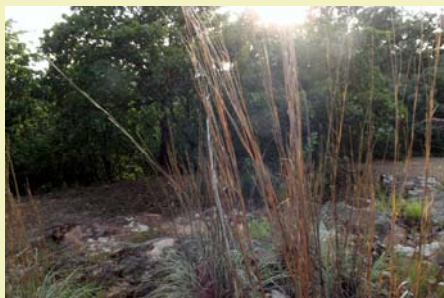


Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller**Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting**
Free and open to the public**Tuesday, June 20, 7:00 pm****West Arlington Police Service Center, Community Room****2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76013**

Parking is available in front of the building, via Ron McAndrew Drive.

Living with Arlington's wildlife*Ray Rentschler, City of Arlington***An Evening at the Preserve**

was celebrated on May 20 at Southwest Nature Preserve. Jim Frisinger led the first of two walks, "Secret Features of SWNP," highlighting natural and historical points of interest. After a hot dog supper and socializing as the sun set, the group embarked on a "Night Hike and Owl Prowl" led by Michael Smith. While no owls presented themselves, Chuck-wills-widows were heard, pond margins were lively with singing cricket frogs and a couple of non-venomous water snakes, and orb weavers dotted the trails.



For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve,

see www.swnp.orgor e-mail info@swnp.org.

Editor's choice

MORE THAN I CAN KNOW

At dark-moon time
I look up at the stars,
Contemplate the thought
Of what I'm seeing,

And find I cannot grasp
The reality of that
Any more than I can grasp
What's inside my fragile body.

Neither macrocosm
Nor microcosm
Makes sense to tender minds
Like mine or most —

To think I am a part
Of more than I can know
And more than I can know
Is part of me.

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8/26/2016



LISTENING FOR THUNDER

Late April night in Texas,
Two a.m.; I cannot sleep.

Pale leaves, soft as skin,
Shiver in the breeze.

Small birds hold their breath,
Frightened at the restless air,

And in a tossing treetop
A squirrel chitters in its nest.

The moon dims;
Stars disappear.

Half invisible
The faintest flash of light

Tells tempest comes,
Gale, rain, hail;

And all that we can do
Is wait.

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Julia's park dedicated May 25, 2017



After years of struggle, waiting, and hoping, city officials have dedicated Julia Burgen Linear Park on the Johnson Creek Greenway. The day was beautiful, the crowd was sprinkled with dignitaries, and well-deserved praise was heaped upon Julia for her crucial role in preserving Johnson Creek. For much more on the park's history and Julia's role, see last month's *Post Oak*.

Above: Julia Burgen; top right, Grace Darling, Victoria Farrar-Myers, Donna Darovich, Deborah Spell, Richard Greene, Julia Burgen, Mayor Jeff Williams, Dr Bob Cluck, and Lana Wolff; Right, Mayor Jeff Williams, Julia, Donna Darovich; bottom right, Victoria Farrar-Myers, Deborah Spell, Julia.



In case you missed it Grace Darling



Let's Move? No more

According to a report on *USA Today*, and despite former first lady Michelle Obama's public health campaign to combat childhood obesity, "the percent of children aged 6 to 12 who were physically active ... had its biggest drop in 5 years and is now under 25%." What's worse, the poorer the family, the greater the inactivity, whereas families with income above \$75,000 are becoming *more* active. Some are calling for renewed PE teaching in school, fearing a healthcare time bomb and a moral issue for American society. We say just taking a nature walk a couple of times a week will do wonders for your health.

State Parks to be Shafted, Again

As reported by the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, after years of diverting collected taxes to the general fund in order to balance the state budget, in 2015 the 84th Legislature gave 94% of the sales tax revenue on sporting goods to Texas Parks & Wildlife and

municipalities to spend on new parks and to maintain and staff existing state and local parks. The Texas Historical Commission would receive 6% of the tax revenue.



The 2018-19 portion of the revenue for parks was expected to be about \$313 million, but the Texas House and Senate have failed so far to appropriate the full amount. HB 78, a bipartisan bill introduced by Rep. Ryan Guillen (D-Rio Grande City), aimed to permanently require the Legislature to dedicate the full 94% of sporting goods tax revenue to parks, once and for all; sadly, the bill was left pending in committee.



There Is Good in Darkness

Lights out for the Texas skyscraper that caused hundreds of songbird deaths, reports *Audubon Newsletter*. At the urging of Houston Audubon and other local wildlife groups, a building in Galveston, Texas turned off its lights for the first time in dec-

ades. Why? To save birds. The building was the site of a particularly deadly night of bird window collisions, and by putting lights out, birds will hopefully be able to avoid collisions in the future.



If Only

From *Texas Environmental News* for May 26: President Trump's formal budget cuts EPA spending by 30%. [That means] \$8.2 billion is eliminated. Over 3,000 staff, gone. Less money to TCEQ. Jed Anderson, a candidate for TCEQ commissioner who recently filed a petition to simplify TCEQ rules to help deal with potential budget cuts, said that foundational improvements are needed to the Clean Air Act and other environmental statutes to better align responsibility and authority between the states and the federal government. States like Texas must adapt their environmental programs to be smarter, simpler, and more succinct. "With simplicity will come better transparency," Anderson says. With transparency will come better accountability. The more simple things are, the more everyone understands them. The more everyone understands them, the better they can comply with them. It's that simple." As for me, I just want some of whatever drugs he's on.



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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
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**Note
Special
Location**

Don't Forget!

Wednesday, June 7

Pantego Lions Center

3535 Marathon St, Pantego TX 76013

Near Pioneer Parkway and Smith Barry Road

Behind the Runner Shop [Google Map](#)

7 pm

**Note
Special
Location**

Dr Jessica Beckham

Texas bumble bees: natural history, research, and conservation