



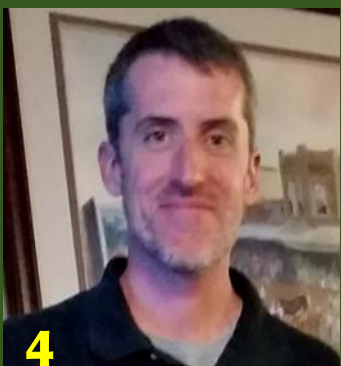
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4

2017: Another Good Year for ACC Meetings!



5



6



7



8



9

1. Luke Metzger — Texas Environmental Issues
2. Vince Hrabal, Jennifer Shaver, David Hildreth — Solid Waste Management
3. Lemuel Randolph — Arlington Parks Update
4. Erik L. Orsak — Water Quality Monitoring
5. Dr Jessica Beckham — Texas Bumble Bees
6. Ranjana Bhandari — Grassroots Environmental Campaigns
7. Stephen Sturdivant — Food Waste
8. Dustan Compton — Water Conservation Initiatives
9. Jungus Jordan, Drew Campbell, Kathryn Wilemon, Kevin Feldt — Future of Local Transportation (Julia Burgen, center)

January Meeting Annual Potluck & Business Meeting

Saturday, January 13, 10 — noon
The Montessori Academy of Arlington
3428 West Arkansas Lane, Arlington TX 76016

**Special Date
&
Location**



**Bring
Some
Food!**

Somehow, it's already time again to prepare (or pick up) a little food, do some sitting around, eat and talk, review our last environmental year, and elect new officers. And of course, it's also time to express your biggest local environmental concerns, share your interests, and be sure your ACC knows what you think it should be doing in 2018. See you there.

Contents

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3 From the President | 9 Spotlight on Fox Squirrels |
| 4 Bits & Pieces | 11 A Fowl Most Fair |
| 6 Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve | 12 Southwest Nature Preserve |
| 7 More Bits | 13 In Case You Missed It |
| 8 Molly Hollar Wildscape Update | |



From the President

Jan Miller

Michael Forsberg uses his considerable talents as a conservation photographer to communicate the beauty and value of Great Plains wildlife and natural resources. His wildlife photos are especially amazing; you've probably seen his work in books and magazines. In any case, his recent words seem appropriate to ACC members as we begin a new year:

First, I want to thank everyone... Your ongoing and growing support and feedback mean a lot as we together celebrate the beauty of the natural world, lift up hope where we find it, and shine a light to address very real conservation challenges in Nebraska, the Great Plains, and beyond. We all play important roles in conservation, and it is only effective long term if done in community. In short, it takes all of us... The natural world is truly just beyond our front door steps, found sometimes in the most unlikely of places, and every bit of nature matters. In conservation work there is no finish line, so 2018, here we come!

Michael Forsberg, conservation photographer

ACC has a long and accomplished history but challenges remain, so we begin again! We kick off 2018 with our annual Members Potluck Meeting on Saturday, January 13. Two important items: 1) We'll review the previous year and plan for the new, so please share your thoughts and ideas. 2) We'll also nominate officers for the next 2-year term. If you'd like to serve as an officer, please reply to info@acctexas.org. As we all know, the needs and opportunities are great, and there's no better place to start than where we live. Please consider volunteering your unique talents with ACC.

Keep your pen and calendar (or electronic alternative) at hand as you read this issue: Start the new year off right with ACC's annual members' meeting and more events. As always, thanks to our devoted newsletter contributors. And to you, dear reader, enjoy!



ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service, and advocacy for a sustainable future

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15th of every preceding month.
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Photo by Wesley Miller

Bits & Pieces

Dipping Our Toes in Mass Transit

From MyArlingtonTX: **Via, City of Arlington Launch Innovative, On-Demand Rideshare Pilot Program** Posted Dec 11, 2017 by Susan Schrock



The City of Arlington, in partnership with Via, is proud to be among the first cities in the nation to offer on-demand ridesharing as a public transportation solution.

The Via rideshare program, which officially launched December 11, 2017, in Arlington, provides affordable transportation to key areas

of the city, allowing riders to access entertainment, shopping and dining options, work or school, and even medical appointments. Customers can book a seat in a six-passenger Mercedes-Benz van through the Via app, and Via's sophisticated technology will match them with others going their way. Rides are just \$3 per trip.

SperryWatch

Recently the Garden Guru reminded us that he really likes Chinese pistache (or pistachio). It's one of his top 10 trees and on his best fall color list. On his website he said something nice about the female's red berries. And he recommends it while annoying native-plant people: "Even those of us who feel that having a plant that is adapted to our locale is a lot more important than having one that is native, have to admit that most of our good landscaping trees are, indeed, natives. Chinese pistachio is the exception."

So what's the problem? The tree is on the Texas Invasives list. Here's something from naturalist Cliff Tyllick: "But for Chinese pistache, we might already be too late. The first seedlings of trees planted 30 years ago are getting big enough to produce significant seed crops themselves. We need nurseries to quit supplying the female plant, and we need to uproot or kill every sapling we find in the wild, no matter how small." Once again Mr Sperry is on the wrong track.

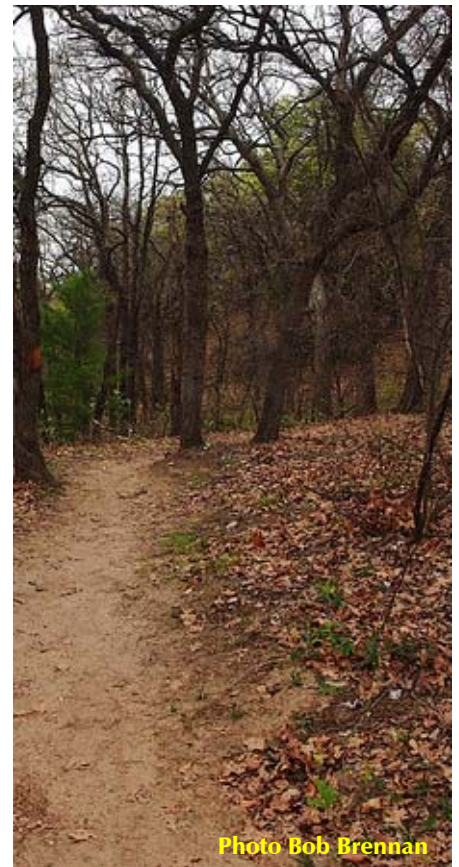


Photo Bob Brennan

Inspiration

I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show.

Andrew Wyeth

Why is My Newsletter Late?

The photo tells the story. It's not that your editor is a slug. It was that annual trek to deep South Texas in search of warm weather (didn't work), subtropical birds, and elusive endangered cats. And here's one now, thanks to hours of fiddling with the trail camera instead of slaving over the newsletter. Next step: a big grant to further the investigation and produce an even better photo. No, it's not a house cat; don't be silly.



**Join us and act locally.
Use the handy
application form
on the back page.**

Question Corner John Darling

Today's question is shamelessly lifted from a casual conversation in which I pretended to be a naturalist: "Should I put up a screech-owl house if I value the lizards in my natural landscape?" The answer seems simple enough: Our native lizards are tucked in for the night by the time screech-owls get to work, so the lizards ought to be safe. However, it never hurts to check, and the Internet makes it easy. We can start with [All About Birds](#)

from Cornell's Lab of Ornithology and be shocked by the huge dietary variety: "Eastern Screech-Owls eat most kinds of small animals, including birds and mammals as well as surprisingly large numbers of earthworms, insects, crayfish, tadpoles, frogs, and lizards. They eat many kinds of mammals, including rats, mice, squirrels, moles, and rabbits."

What, lizards? Can that be right? Okay, we'll try the antiquated source I grew up with, Arthur Cleveland Bent's monumental *Life Histories of North American Birds*. It's on line and easy, with a wonderful [index](#) to familiar species that takes us right to lots of numbers (255 stomachs yielded 39 birds, 102 mammals, 100 insects, and 2 lizards). Don't want to think about owl stomach contents?



Distract yourself with anecdotes: A screech-owl wrenched a canary between cage bars and ate it. Or, it took way over 100 songbirds to feed three young screech-owls from hatching to fledging.

Wait, two lizards? Were they insomniacs or just really hoping to leave the gene pool? Despite this, your lizards will be a lot safer than your mice and birds. Anyway, screech-owls are already happy suburbanites with warbler breath. Best advice: Put up the box and look away.



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Photo Wesley Miller

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

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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



It looks sparse and it feels sparse.
It is sparsely populated, sparsely
watered, sparsely adorned, and
sparsely acknowledged. That is
its real strength.

Andrew John Liccardo
Llano Estacado:
An Island in the Sky



More Bits

Thanks to Our Last Speakers



Left to right, Jungus Jordan, Drew Campbell, Kathryn Wilemon, and Kevin Feldt with program namesake Julia Burgen

In November, the ACC Julia Burgen Lecture Series featured an excellent panel discussion, Arlington on the Move: A transportation Forum. As planned, the program occurred less than a month before Arlington launched the beginning of Via, an on-demand rideshare service.

Our remarkable panelists included:

- Jungus Jordan, Fort Worth city council member with years of experience on boards concerned with regional transportation issues
- Drew Campbell, Executive Director of Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition
- Kathryn Wilemon, Arlington City Council member specializing in transportation and infrastructure
- Kevin Feldt, North Central Texas Council of Governments, Program Manager, Transportation Department, who spends a lot of time on the topic of high-speed rail

This program had everything, including engaging expert speakers, all the complications of booming population, mass transit in every form, competing financial demands, and conflicting political issues. Then add in all the implications of self-driving vehicles and you have a fascinating evening.

THE FINCH FLIES UP

The finch flies up,
Throwing itself at sky with wild abandon,
Trusting thereby to flee
The mildly menacing shadow
I'm making in the window.

I follow its flight with grateful eyes,
Glad in my ache-filled morning
At motion so free of limits,
A body so blessed with youth,
However circumscribed.

In moments the finch turns back,
Perches on a laurel tree
And watches me, no doubt to check
If safe again to feed; possibly
Also to see what age looks like.

©2013 John I. Blair

Unclear on the Concept?



Yes, it's that time of year, when we roll out the recycling cart and pile up the leaf bags. The cart's contents go off to new lives while the bags waste landfill space, eventually produce methane, and never become compost. Really, we ought to consider taking the city's free annual backyard composting class, coming up on February 23-24. Recycling Coordinator Jennifer Shaver has all the information. Find her at Jennifer.Shaver@arlingtontx.gov or 817-459-6778; you'll be glad.

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Forget the headlines for a moment, those that portend our doom. A five-acre haven of peace and tranquility beckons right in the heart of Arlington — the Molly Hollar Wildscape.

Although its name might suggest unbridled antics or creatures lurking in the shrubbery, volunteers will find companionship, activity to suit any level of physical prowess and a purpose far more satisfying than the job they retired from.

For those who can't make the regular Wednesday morning workday, the first Saturday of every month offers the same benefits condensed.

The most obvious gain is escape from the daily assault of domestic and international chaos. Even the name — *wildscape* — belies a calming and restorative enterprise.

There are no disputes over territory and no demonstrations to depose our leaders. Free and open elections are the norm. By-laws are being rewritten with full disclosure and *sans* acrimony. Timing and location of Friends of the Wildscape meetings are published on the website for anyone to read. Sexual harassment is nonexistent.



AARP touts gardening as offering five important benefits.

- Exposure to Vitamin D, which boosts calcium, bones, and the immune system.
- Decreased risk of dementia. “A study in 2006 found that gardening could lower the risk of dementia by 36 percent.”
- Mood enhancement. “A study in the Netherlands, cited by CNN, suggests that gardening fights stress even better than other hobbies.”
- Enjoyable aerobic exercise. “Gardening is a great form of aerobic exercise; plus you might become so engrossed in your work that you don’t

even realize that you’re breaking a sweat.”

- Helps combat loneliness. “After retirement many people with fewer socialization opportunities find community gardens can be a fun way to engage with other people.”

Wildscape regulars can attest to all of the above. New members to the “family” are welcome to come when you can and leave when you have to, as Molly often said. We always have a break and snacks, which are often home-grown or homemade.

Happy 2018, everyone! Come and join the fun.

Spotlight on Fox Squirrels Grace Darling

It came at a run, immediately curious to see what was going on in its backyard, climbing a tree at a safe distance and tiptoeing to the tip of a branch from where it could keep an eye on me, flicking its tail and chattering loudly all the while to let me know I was intruding as I hung laundry on the line. La ardilla (Spanish for squirrel, always a female noun) was fulfilling its role: perpetually alert with an in-your-face attitude, a fierce bundle of tawny hair and teeth with big eyes, successful forager and road pizza much too often. Our brief encounter made me think of how little we know about this ubiquitous rodent with whom we share so much of our world.

Fox squirrels are found throughout the eastern and central United States. They occur as far south as northeastern Mexico and as far north as south central Canada, and have also been introduced into cities in the western United States. Fox squirrels inhabit almost all timbered areas in Texas except in the Trans-Pecos and far western Panhandle.

Like cockroaches, humans, rats, and other generalists, fox squirrels are well adapted to survive wherever there are food sources to support them: They mainly eat the acorns, nuts, flowers, mast, and buds of oak, walnut, hickory, and pecan trees. They also eat fruits of osage orange, green shoots, buds and seeds of maple, mulberry, hackberry, elm, buckeye, horse chestnut, wild cherry, dogwood, hawthorn, hazelnut, ginkgo, and pine trees. At times, fox squirrels may eat tubers, roots, bulbs, fungi, insects and insect larvae, and bird eggs.

Three subspecies of fox squirrels (*Sciurus niger*) occur in Texas; our Central Texas *S. niger limitis* is not as large



as those in the Piney Woods nor as brightly colored in its belly as the Panhandle variety. Adults weigh an average of 1.3 pounds and measure 18.5 inches from nose to tail. They are generally grayish or brownish on the upperparts of the body with rusty or buff underparts, though there is considerable color variation, with some almost totally black and others pure white. The feet are cinnamon in color while the tail is black with cinnamon.

One of the principal adaptations of fox squirrels is their ability to move very quickly whether on land or on tree tops. They can quickly leap from one tree to another to avoid predators, have sharp claws which helps them climb trees easily and grasp nuts and other objects strongly, and have excellent eyesight to locate food sources and predators from a long distance.

To aid climbing, fox squirrels are equipped with strong abdominal muscles, flexors of forearms, extensors of digits and sharp claws. They have strongly developed senses of sight, smell, and hearing. Fox squirrels use their whiskers as touch receptors that enhance their environmental awareness.

The vibrissae or whiskers grow around their eyes, chin and nose as well as on the forearms. They have long bushy tails and strong hind legs. The skull contains 20 teeth arranged in a typical rodent pattern.

Fox squirrel populations in Texas show two peaks of breeding activity. A winter breeding period usually begins in December and continues into February and a summer period begins in May and continues into July. The gestation period is approximately 44 days with peak birth rates occurring during February and July. At birth the young weigh approximately 0.5 ounce, are naked and the eyes and ears are closed. Weaning begins during week 8 and is usually completed by week 12. Fox squirrels reach sexual maturity at approximately 11 months of age. Old females will rear two litters annually while young females normally will rear only one litter their first year. The average litter size is two or three infants, which may be called babies, kits, kittens, or pups depending on your preference.

A fox squirrel home range is typically 5 acres, where they may spend their

continued on page 10

Spotlight on Fox Squirrels continued from page 9



entire lives. They are non-territorial because they do not defend foraging or nesting sites; in fact, they are somewhat communal in their use of nests and probably also of winter food stores, so you may have several squirrels living in your backyard sharing overlapping "territories."

During winter, fox squirrels use tree dens to shelter themselves from the cold and for raising young. The typical tree den is 12 to 21 inches in diameter and 14 to 16 inches deep. The squirrels will make their own or choose natural cavities or holes made by woodpeckers. Leaf nests or dreys are fashioned during summer and may be used throughout the year when tree cavities are scarce. Leaf nests are globe-like, built of twigs and leaves cut by the squirrel, and usually on deciduous tree forks about 9 meters from the ground.

Acorns are the natural mainstay of fox squirrels and most important in fall and winter. Nuts are eaten from the time they start to develop and are buried in the fall in individual caches at the surface of the ground for winter use. The squirrels can relocate them by smell.

In captivity, fox squirrels have been known to live 18 years, but in the wild most fox squirrels die before they become adults. Their maximum life expectancy is typically 12.6 years for females and 8.6 years for males.

Some curious facts about fox squirrels:

- Fox squirrels and Eastern gray squirrels are alike in many ways. They breed at the same time of year, nest in the same kind of places, and eat the same foods. But while gray squirrels are never far from good tree cover, fox squirrels prefer open, savannah-like habitats, where trees are widely spaced and the understory is sparse.
- Fox squirrels are strictly diurnal and spend more time foraging and running about on the ground than do gray squirrels. They may be seen in fields quite far from any trees, where a gray squirrel would not stray.
- Both species feed on acorns, which are rich in tannins. Tannins are poisonous to many animals, including worms, and keep the squirrels free of roundworms and tapeworms.
- Fox squirrels accumulate another chemical compound, porphyrin, in their bones and teeth, which makes their bones and teeth pink and bright red under ultraviolet light. Here's a mystery: gray squirrels eat the same foods and this does not happen to them—nor to any other healthy mammal.

ANOTHER COLD DECEMBER DAY

Another cold December day,
Gray and gloomy,
Chance of rain or snow, me
Tucked into my self-made tomb.

Spring seems so far
And hope a fading myth at last
For boxing up along
With ornaments and wreaths.

But then I look outside
To see a pudgy squirrel,
Surprised, drop down
From the feeder he was rifling,

Pause a moment on the deck
rail,
Then go galumphing off
Toward the yard, his bushy tail
Wagging me a rude farewell.

If he can be so bold
Out there in the ragged world
How can I not at least break
fast
And set again upon my own
way?

©2014 John I. Blair

A Fowl Most Fair John Dycus

Editor's note: For years, writing expert John Dycus has been editing silently in the background to improve parts of your newsletter. Here's a rare look at John unfiltered. It's certainly not Arlington environmentalism, but it's pure Dycus.

A FOWL MOST FAIR

On the outside a Greenberg smoked turkey looks like a Klingon with a sunburn.

So don't eat the skin.

Everything else is moist, tender hickory-fired joy.

I ate my first Greenberg smoked turkey this Christmas.

Loved it. Wanted more.

But that's not our story today.

My friend Bill Sanderson had called the Tyler company to place an order.

When it came time to pay, the turkey lady said in her soft East Texas voice:

"I am so sorry, but we don't accept the Discover card."

Just the way she said it, you knew she was.

Bill was crestfallen.

This was to be his first Greenberg smoked turkey. The centerpiece of the meal.

He can sound pretty torn up on the phone.

"Hang on a minute, let me check something," the lady said.

Soon she was back.

"We're just going to send you this turkey and bill you for it," she said. "Is that all right?"

Why, yes, it was.

Ten people on Christmas Day 2017 visited the Sanderson family homeplace, which coincidentally is about the same age as Greenberg Smoked Turkey, Inc.

They came in shifts.

With each new arrival, someone retold how a wise woman and her supervisor shipped a gussied-up turkey to the Pleasant Grove section of Dallas with no payment guarantee other than the buyer's word.

And that's the real story.

Savvy smoked-meat Piney Woods power player keeps its faith in mankind, risks a turkey, a double handful of secret rub and a FedEx charge, and creates an experience that makes you want to go tell your mama.

We're bombarded with bad news. Something uplifting comes along, we gobble it up.

And my friend will pay that bill.

If they ever mail it to him.



**It's
Time
To
Pay
Your
Dues.**

**The
Flowers
Need
You.**

Thanks.

**(There's a form on
the last page.)**

Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

No January Program Meeting

Business Meeting Only: Tuesday, January 16, 6:00 pm

Program Meetings Resume February 20, 2018

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

Coming up: Great Backyard Bird Count

February 17, 8:00 am

Details soon on the website and Facebook

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org.

Update

Pollinator/monarch project

Planting Day #1 on December 15 at the SWNP pollinator/restoration project site was a success, thanks to a bevy of volunteers including ACC folks Annabelle Corboy, Jim Domke* and Dick Schoech. As dry as it was then, who would've thought that the next three days would break the fall drought with four inches of rain? Cover crop seedlings were seen on December 29; it's a start! About half of the site was planted, so Planting Day #2 will be scheduled soon. If you can help, please contact info@swnp.org.

*Thanks to Jim for his video of planting activities. See that video and Bob Brennan's photos on the [Friends website](http://www.friendswebsite.org).



In case You Missed It **Grace Darling**



Donna Piercy and her team of dedicated volunteers for **Project Feeder Watch** are ready to roll again for the fourth year at Tierra Verde Golf Course and at Veterans Park, where three new nest boxes have been installed. If you'd like to join the bluebird brigade and help monitor the parents' courtship, mating, egg-laying, and incubating success; delight in watching the chicks' development and eventual fledging; and have some free time on Tuesdays or Fridays, be sure to contact Donna at depiercy@hotmail.com.

Proposed Clean Power Plan Repeal. Some of the biggest U.S. power companies said they are pushing ahead with investments in renewable and gas-fired electricity, regardless of the Trump administration's move in early October to repeal Obama-era federal limits on carbon emissions at power plants. The regulations were designed to slash air pollution, protect the quality of major waterways, and spur cities to reduce ozone, but were deemed too restrictive by business interests and never enacted after 28 Republican-led states sued the feds. Since being ripped for holding a lone hearing in West Virginia, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will now solicit public input in the form of comments as he considers the next regulatory steps to follow the law, which requires the agency to regulate greenhouse gas emissions in some fashion because of the "endangerment finding," a 2009 Supreme Court ruling that called carbon dioxide a threat to public health. The **deadline for comments is April 26, 2018**, and they must be

submitted by **Email** to a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov (include Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355 in the subject line of the message); **Fax** to (202) 566-9744, Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355; or **Mail** to Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), Mail Code 28221T, Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20460. Transparent? No. Cumbersome? Yes. Worth doing? Most definitely.



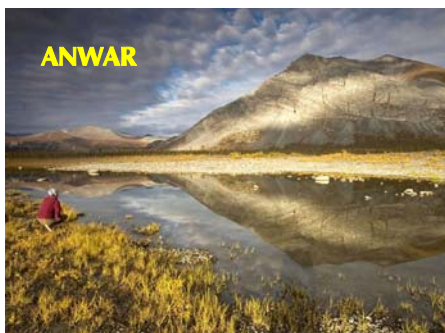
The Washington Post has chosen the nine **most consequential environmental stories of 2017**. Here's the list:

1. U.S. pulls out of the Paris climate change accord. We are now the only country in the world to reject the deal.
2. A sea change at the EPA. Administrator Scott Pruitt has begun to dismantle Obama's environmental legacy by rolling back the Clean Power Plan (see above), reduce the agency's reach, pause or reverse numerous environmental rules, and cut its workforce to Reagan-era levels.
3. Shrinking national monuments. Emboldened by slashing almost 2 million acres from Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said the borders of other



continued on page 14

In Case You Missed It continued from page 13



monuments in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as in the West, are being reviewed.

4. Drill, baby, drill. The Trump administration has opened up 77 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas exploration. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is said to be next.

5. Approving the 1,172-mile Dakota Access and the 1,700-mile Keystone XL oil pipeline. The pipelines will extend from the Canadian tar sands region to refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast, in parts running through Native American lands. Several tribes are suing.

6. Weakening/abolishing the Endangered Species Act. Led by the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, who has vowed to invalidate the 44-year-old act, Congress has passed bills that would remove protection from wolves and other wildlife that may interfere with commercial development, private landowner rights, and extraction of natural resources such as coal and gas. Deadline for written comments has been extended to April 26, 2018.

7. Hurricanes and wildfires of epic proportions. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria brought unimaginable devastation to the Houston area, the upper Gulf Coast, Florida, and Puerto Rico. In California, the Sonoma fire

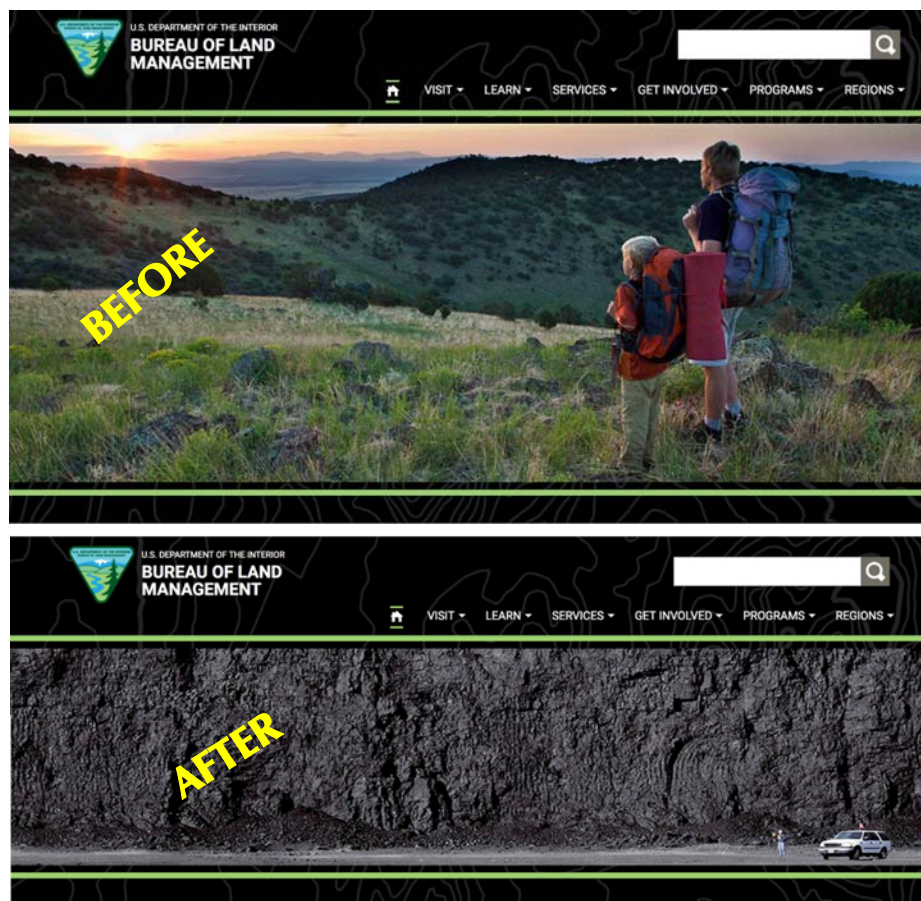
north of San Francisco and the Thomas fire near Santa Barbara combined to kill 45 people, burn more than 500,000 acres, destroy nearly 2,000 structures, and cost hundreds of millions to fight.

8. Criminal indictments in Flint. Three-plus years after the tainted water supply investigation and cover-up in this mostly minority, low-income community, 15 public officials have been charged with involuntary manslaughter and lesser charges. In addition to ongoing worries that thousands of young children were exposed to dangerous levels of lead and other toxins, the crisis has been linked to an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease that contributed to at least a dozen deaths. (Read more here: <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/04/us/>

flint-water-crisis-fast-facts/index.html.)

9. The People's Climate March on Washington. While not as large as January's Women's March or the March for Science a week earlier in April, the message to the president on the occasion of his 100th day in office was clear: Stop the rollback of environmental protections and take climate change seriously. Sadly, Trump was not around that day.

Not Fake News. One of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's first acts in office was to remove a bright and colorful picture of a western landscape from the Bureau of Land Management's website and replace it with a black wall of coal.



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

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Danny Kocurek
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**Special Date
&
Location**

POST OAK
Arlington Conservation Council
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Arlington, TX 76004-0216

**Special Date
&
Location**

January Meeting
Saturday, January 13, 10:00 – noon
The Montessori Academy of Arlington
3428 West Arkansas Lane, Arlington TX 76016
Annual Potluck & Business Meeting