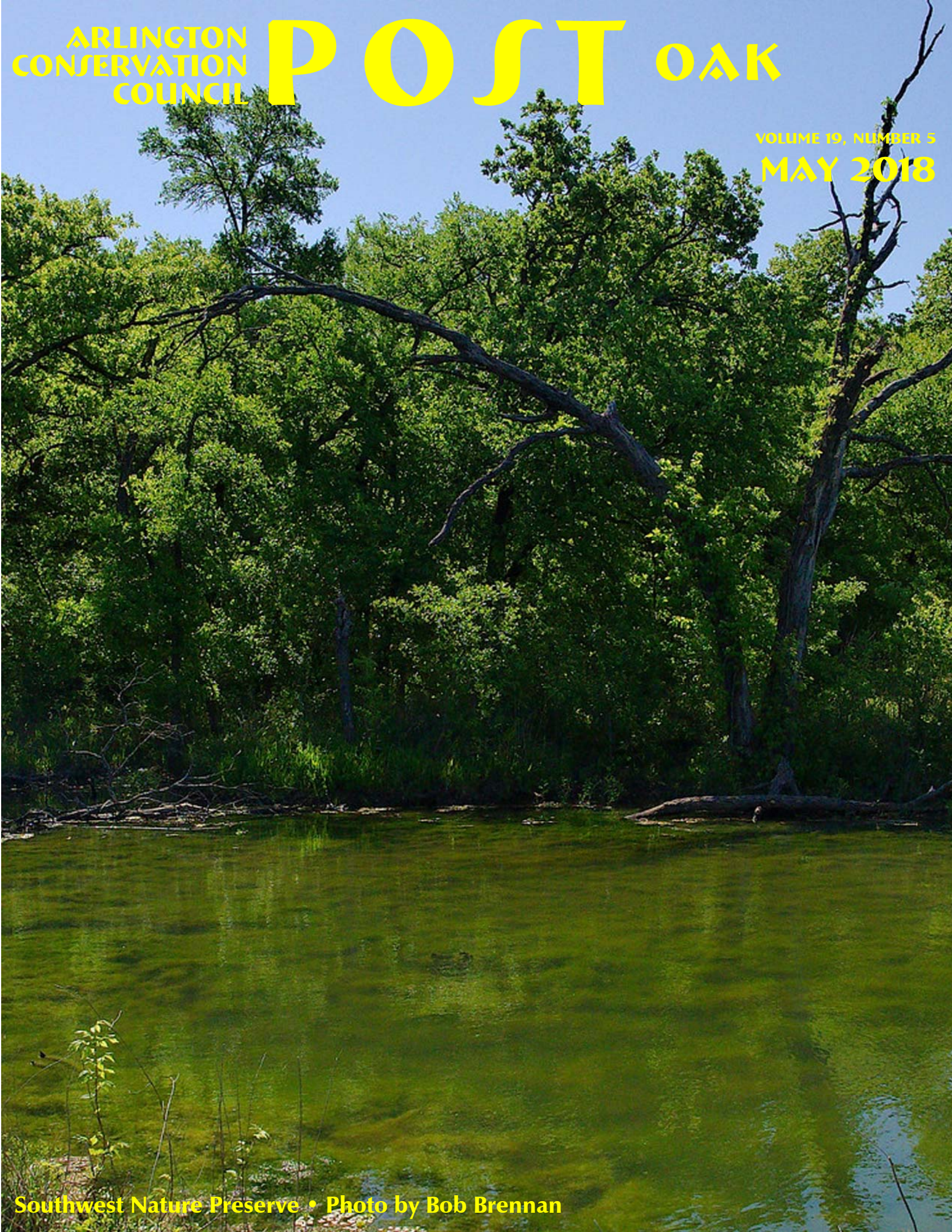


ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 5

MAY 2018



Southwest Nature Preserve • Photo by Bob Brennan



May Meeting

World of Bees

Ryan Giesecke

Wednesday, May 2, 7:00 pm

Fielder Museum

1616 W. Abram Street (corner of Fielder and Abram)

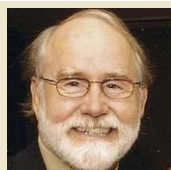


Program Description: Ryan will share his fascination with how bees function, explore our dependence on bee pollination, and detail the diversity of native bee species, as well as discussing ways to get started in urban beekeeping and how non-beekeepers can help our bee population. More details at <http://www.acctexas.org/meetings/>

Presenter: Ryan maintains several beeyards in the Dallas area and runs Honey Bee Relocation Services, a small company specializing in live bee removal, taking bees out of problem spots and getting them back into productive situations. Ryan is president of Trinity Valley Beekeepers Association in Dallas, active in the Texas Master Beekeeper Program, and does a good deal of educational work pertaining to bees and beekeeping.

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From the President

Dick Schoech

Is Earth Day failing the planet?

Earth Day has been with us since the 1970s. What have we learned? According to all accounts, the earth is more threatened now than ever before. Earth Day was originally conceived as an environmental teach-in to make us aware of what we are doing to the planet. While we now have substantial data on how humans are impacting the planet, public opinion has not followed scientific facts. It seems like mass changes in public opinion are often accompanied by a strong backlash. However, Earth Day was designed to counteract this backlash and produce action. While the Paris Climate Accord has a weak global action agenda, most states in the U.S., including Texas, have not followed this global effort. Why is that? Has Earth Day been a failure?

Americans seem to like mass events like sports and concerts, especially large celebrations like the legendary Woodstock festival that celebrated the counterculture of the 1960s. EarthX in Dallas is based in this tradition of bringing masses of people together to celebrate the planet and to help people save it. However, such mass celebrations often do not change public opinion or result in action. Their design may be flawed because the resources required to get thousands of people in one location is more destructive than protective of the planet. So, the more successful EarthX is, the more destructive it might be to the planet. This contradiction reminds me of a comment by E. F. Schumacher in his 1973 classic book *Small is Beautiful*. He observed that the more labor-saving devices a society had, the harder people worked. Schumacher argued that for the world to survive, our unsustainable economy must be replaced by appropriate technologies. So, the underlying EarthX premise that “bigger is better” and “growth is good” may need to be rethought from a “small is beautiful” perspective.

This year in DFW we have seen a scattering of small, beautiful Earth Day events designed to give people planet-saving options to EarthX. Southwest Nature Preserve April events like the scat and track animal identification walk, species recording challenge, and tree identification walk are great examples. Other examples are the BRIT nature walk, the O.S. Gray and Tandy Hills star parties, the Randol Mill Park trash pickup, NPSOT native plant sale, and the library’s green book check-out effort. Additional group options could be tree and pollinator garden plantings, bird identification and eBird reporting, and bioblitzes documenting species diversity. Individual actions could be planting an organic garden, installing a composting or rain harvesting system, a family bike ride or walk in a natural area, celebrating a meat or plastic free day, and reducing household energy use. E. F. Schumacher would argue that these uncoordinated series of small, beautiful events can be coordinated.

continued on page 7



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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Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger

The last straw?
Could last until 2218.
Read [this](#).



Conserve North Texas



Here's a [new website](#) that is "...intended to serve as a clearing-house to easily locate resources and tools that support efforts to conserve resources in various sectors and/or measure progress. ...The

Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region is expected to grow by 48% by 2040, to approximately 10.6 million. Conservation and resource efficiency will be critical to accommodating growth while also preserving existing regional resources. ...This website was developed to provide local governments and other users a "one-stop-shop" for a comprehensive inventory of programs, tools, case studies, and other resources that address water, energy, and transportation topics."

A Year's Worth of Plastic

Yes, more plastic, and not just straws. Treehugger brings us this startling [project](#) by Daniel Webb, who saved every piece of plastic he bought or received in a year. Most depressing fact: of 4490 pieces only 56 were made of recycled plastic. After much arranging and photographing, he ended up with a 40-foot wide mural. Brace yourself and have a look.



Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org



Reminder

The ACC members email group is only for ACC business such as meeting announcements. The ACC Yahoo group is for general discussion of environmental and sustainable ideas and issues. To join the ACC Yahoo group, go to <http://www.acctexas.org/> and click on "Send/receive messages from our Yahoo group." This will take you to the ACC Yahoo group site (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/arlingtonconservationcouncil/info>) where you can subscribe and unsubscribe under the Group Email Addresses heading.

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

Question Corner John Darling

How can somebody claim to love an animal and love to kill it?

The other night an inept (my opinion) TV weatherman (his opinion) showcased himself in a sappy feature with a local billionaire. They had become buddies through their shared love of bobwhites. Killing them, that is. Meaningless conversation followed, but that casual claim refused to go away.

Apparently it's an old claim, not just loving to hunt but loving the thing you hope to kill. Here's part of a non-explanation from an *Outdoor Life* editor: "How can we love and admire a wild animal one minute and look forward to taking its life the next?"



I cannot completely answer that question, although I've heard it discussed many, many times. I've never heard or read a succinct explanation, and I don't believe it can be explained in simple terms, though several philosophers have tried." Well thanks, that clears it up.

Admission: For years I killed animals for science and I learned all the right things to say when some tree hugger protested: "Well, of course we need 30 of these lizards from this place on this date for a statistically valid population sample." But I never learned to love the killing, and it was a relief to leave it behind. And the idea of shooting a bobwhite for fun? For six ounces of meat? For some primeval connection with nature? I can't picture a convincing explanation.



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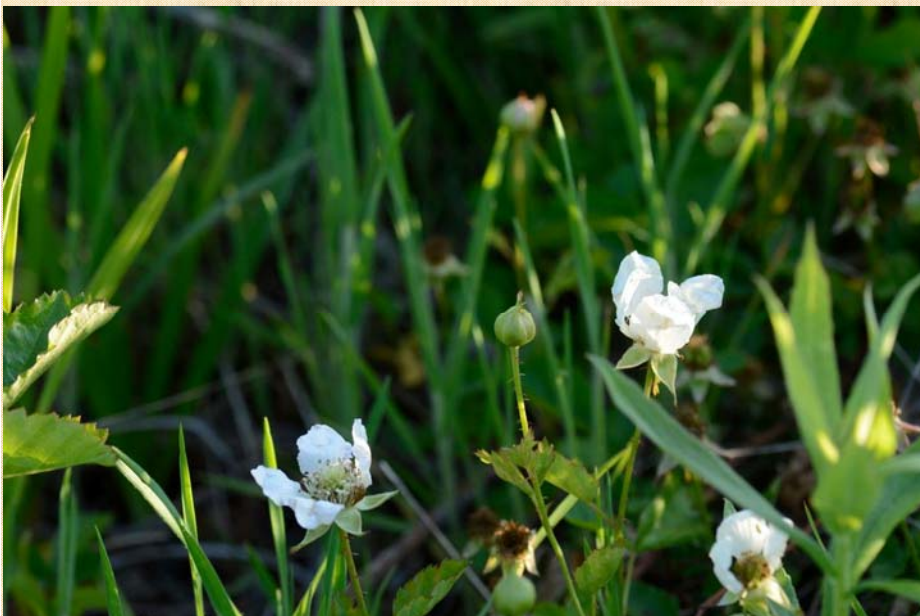
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Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



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



More Bits

MIRACLE

Looking at a tiny fly today
Clinging to my window screen
I see a miracle in miniature

So right in every way with its
Compound eyes, antennae,
Wings and tail, glistening face.

I feel challenged by the thought
We humans are in any sense
The apex of existence.

For this title size is not a measure
But success; and what
Is more successful than a fly,

Here since Tyrannosaurs
Left manure all around
For them to glean?

We're the new kids on the block
And have strayed toward another choice,
One that's wrecked the place, I ween.

©2018 John I. Blair,

4/21/2018

From the President continued from page 3

The environmental community can begin rethinking ways that groups and individuals can use appropriate technologies and small, beautiful, coordinated events so future Earth Days will be more protective of our planet.

Note: You can read *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, by E. F. Schumacher at <https://web.archive.org/web/20141014171926/http://www.ditext.com/schumacher/small/small.html>

No More Mess

A lot of disorganized vegetation was recently removed from one side of a small creek in central Arlington. It was a mess, just brush that had filled in over decades among the scattered post oaks. Must have looked bad to somebody, and security types hate that stuff because terrible things might happen there and you can't see anything from your passing squad car.

So for one reason or another, it had to go. Or did it really? Nobody was asked about how it slowed erosion, much less about all the other values of that messy habitat. About all the insects, frogs, lizards, birds, and mammals that have lived there long before we decided that we just really can't abide a messy landscape.



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



Ann Knudsen "Did you have a good time?" Enthusiastic response: "It wasn't just good, it was great!"

Walk on the Wildside Merryhill School April 27, 2018

This is dedicated to the Merryhill School principal, teacher, bus drivers and chaperones who made the first Merryhill WOW wonderful.

Crowds of children spilled out of buses early Friday, April 27. A few harried adults tried to make order, but they were no match for the energy emanating from the group. These kids were on a field trip in the forest. What could be more exciting?

Soon the students agreed to get organized, but only because that was the fastest way to start the adventure. Teams joined with teachers, parents and a docent and headed out to explore the world of the wildscape.

Encouraged by the Scavenger Hunt sheet, students quickly encountered the unusual, such as a cardinal feeding her babies in a nest. That's a wow all by itself. Other important sightings included mammals — a dog with his owner ("That's a mammal!"), the feral cat that likes people ("That's another mammal!").

Ann Knudsen pulled together a very successful WOW on short notice and deserves great appreciation. Many thanks to the station masters, who made their subjects fascinating:

Joyce Duty — parts of a flower
Jane Oosterhuis — erosion
Josephine Keeney — butterflies
Joe Martinez — poison ivy
Carol Marcotte and Sandy Van Meer — soils
Marylee Thomason — nature recycling

Thanks to the guides who kept time and kids in good order:

Vicky Brady Gordon Scruggs
Danny Kocurek Mary Sanford
Peggy Quinn Rosalie Rogers

Merryhill third-grade teacher Amy Bradley expressed everyone's enjoyment in a letter:

We had such a fun time today, Marylee! The kids loved the stations, and it was well organized. I don't know who was in charge of the weather, but they did a great job. My group was happy to find a few unplanned surprises. We saw a mother cardinal feeding the babies in the nest, a lizard sunning himself, and a swallowtail caterpillar.

The kids enjoyed telling each presenter that they knew you. It was like name dropping to them. Thanks so much for organizing it for us. I hope you will pass on my

appreciation to the other volunteers. I also hope we will be welcome back next year. It was great!

Amy



Joe Martinez "Are you a grandpa? Because you sure are a good one."



Rosalie Rogers "Have you been doing this a long time?" "Yes." "We're your favorite group. Right?"



Marylee Thomason "Eeeew!" for the bacteria-covered sweet potato.

Wildscape Extra *Marylee Thomason*



Hester Schwarzer and Frank Keeney

\$\$ for the wildscape at the Fielder House Museum plant sale

Record sales of \$900 were a testimonial to the growing desire for native plants at the very successful Fielder House Museum plant sale sponsored by the Arlington Garden Club. The date was April 21. That is just five days since income taxes were due and maybe some mistimed car and house insurance bills too.

And it rained! People came anyway.

Josephine Keeney first established the Fielder House Museum fall plant sale in 2007 with plants she propagated at home. Sales were light, but people toured the garden and learned about native plants that support butterflies.

This year the Arlington Garden Club sponsored a spring native plant sale.

Vendors took booths and sold their own plants. Josephine brought plants that she grew at home and plants from the wildscape greenhouse to reduce the inventory there. Ten percent of all sales were donated to the Arlington Garden

Club to maintain the landscaping on the Fielder House Museum grounds.

Total sales were impressive. The wildscape grossed \$600 and Josephine garnered \$300 for the Fielder House butterfly garden.

Special thanks to the stalwart workers who delivered plants and stayed through the rain to sell as long as there were buyers.

Set up and delivery:

Josephine Keeney
Larry Norris
Bob Poppelreiter

Sales:

Josephine Keeney
Ann Knudsen
Jane Oosterhuis
Kay Sekio
Hester Scharzer

Umbrella:

Frank Keeney



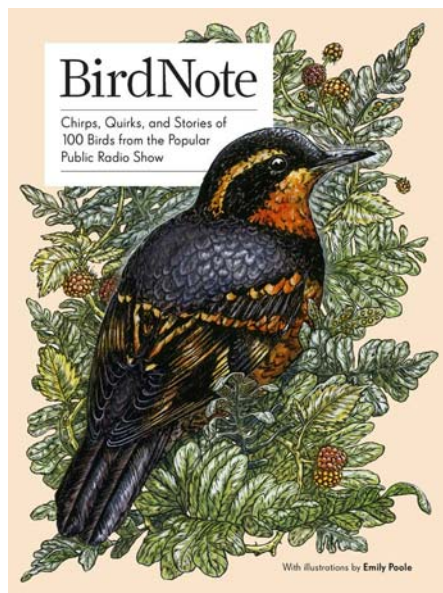
Josephine Keeney, Jane Oosterhuis, and Kay Sekio

In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

The **pecan** is the only tree nut indigenous to North America, growers say. Sixteenth-century Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca wrote about tasting the nut during his encounters with Native American tribes in South Texas. The name is French explorers' phonetic spelling of the native word "pakan," meaning hard-shelled nut. (*Star-Telegram* 4/29/18)



Radio's popular **BirdNote** is now in book form, pairing 100 essays from the past 14 years with illustrations by Emily Poole (Sasquatch Books, 2018). "Each essay is brief but packed with wit and fascinating science. For example, the gray jay, a bold camp robber, builds its winter stash by stealing bits of food, coating them in sticky saliva, and gluing them to trees like spitballs. The American robin sits contentedly on an anthill, letting the ants crawl around in its feathers. Why? Experts think the ants' formic acid secretions help control feather mites and other parasites." (*Sierra*, May/June 2018)



The **National Wildlife Federation's Garden for Wildlife movement** is the nation's longest-running and largest effort dedicated to helping wildlife locally, with more than 7 million people participating and over 2.5 million acres of Certified Wildlife Habitat® backyards, gardens, fields, and community spaces across the United States. *Garden for Wildlife* encourages Americans to plant native plants—from wildflowers to trees—and to provide natural sources of food, water, cover, and places to raise young for wildlife in their backyards and communities. Participants can **potentially double the number of diverse local wildlife** while increasing the natural spaces within their communities. Natural green spaces reduce urban temperatures, reduce water runoff and pollution, and provide a healing connection to nature. "Seeing wildlife in our yards is a great indicator of the

health of the local environment. In fact, the ongoing health of our communities is directly linked to the health of the wildlife with which we share our backyards, towns, and cities," says a senior NWF officer.



Americans speak out en masse in favor of **regulations for the oil and gas industry**. Over the past months more than 400,000 Americans weighed in on a proposal by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to gut the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Methane and Natural Gas Waste Prevention Rule. And **more than 98%** of the comments received urged BLM to keep the strong rule in place to force oil and gas operators to crack down on waste and pollution when profiting from the public's natural resources.

Introducing Yoakum, Texas Grace Darling

It took a bit of coaxing, but our editor was finally persuaded to accept my belief that the human environment is as much a concern of ACC members as the natural one. This is a test: If, after reading the piece below, you agree with me or side with him, please let us know so future negotiations won't be as hard. Here's the story.

It is early afternoon on a Wednesday and my husband and I are returning home to Arlington after a few days in the Rio Grande Valley. We are driving our trusted 24-year-old Previa, packed to the roof rack with assorted human and canine paraphernalia plus our dog family of four foster failures and one hopefully temporary, basket-case foster pup. We are traveling north through south-central Texas — Compost Man at the wheel eschews interstate highways — and looking forward to

a late lunch in Schulenberg at the world's best Whataburger (trust me, I'm a connoisseur), when we arrive at the 4-way red-light intersection of US77A and Hwy 111 on the western edge of Yoakum. We come to a full stop and so does the van's engine. No sound, no lights anywhere. This whale (ark?) is definitely beached.

Some instinct kicks in so I jump out and start directing traffic around our obstructing vehicle. Within seconds, an SUV mom stops alongside and offers assistance. Thanks, but what kind do you suggest? She'll think of something, she says, waving goodbye as she rushes to pick up children from school. A few more seconds and a City of Yoakum public works truck pulls up behind us, Shane and Pete eager to help. They are followed in short order by a private telecom 4x4 with two more kind young men, and the four self-

described mechanics now pore over the innards of the Previa with Compost Man as I continue to direct traffic through the busy intersection. The dogs are observant but blessedly quiet. Eventually the men realize the danger of our exposed location and put their shoulders to the task of rolling the van around the corner.

The van has come to rest on a road shoulder adjacent to a used-car lot. Fate, right? I try not to take it as a sign of things to come and busy myself with keeping the dogs from overheating, because we are in full sun, it's in the high 90s, and the now-inoperable electric windows are all the way up. The telecom guys peel off first, chagrined at their inability to fix the van but they've been called to a job. Shane and Pete are also on the clock and after a while must leave us too, promising to stop by a garage at the other end of town to get a mechanic for us. We cannot ride with them — city policy. We exchange phone numbers and they depart. Some time later Pete calls to say the garage man will be with us in about 30 minutes.

An hour passes and the only visit has been from Officer Page of Yoakum PD, who checked our bona fides, ran the van's plates, wrote a report and wished us well. Compost Man googles the phone number for the city, explains our predicament to the lady who answers, and she promises to follow up. Moments later we receive another call from Pete, who says they are stuck on a

continued on page 14



Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Free and open to the public

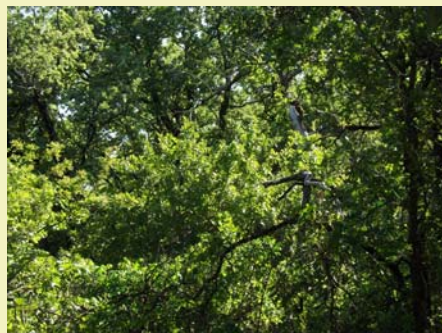
Saturday, May 5, 10:00 am

Tree Walk

Meet at Southwest Nature Preserve parking lot

Jeremy Priest, City of Arlington Forester, will lead a walk along the trails, observing and identifying trees with a focus on historic trees. One of our post oaks might be 200 years old.

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



City Nature Challenge

In the Best Places, With the Best People

by Michael Smith

May 3, 2018

Note: Michael Smith is coauthor of [The Great Rattlesnake Highway](#), a blog you really should look into if you crave good stories about searching for Texas creatures. The piece below is excerpted from one of Michael's posts; visit the blog to read the rest and much more.

There is a wonderful community of naturalists in Fort Worth and surrounding areas, and some of us got together on April 28 to do two important things: add a little bit to our knowledge of natural history, and enjoy each other's company. Nic Martinez, Clint King and I had offered to lead some activities at the Southwest Nature Preserve, a 58-acre patch of Eastern Cross Timbers in Arlington. Nic knows a lot about the fish and other aquatic life of ponds, rivers, and other wetlands. He was there with several nets, ready to help participants take a look at what lives in the ponds at the preserve. Clint's specialties are invertebrates and herps, and reptiles and amphibians are my first love. As so often happens in these events at Southwest Nature Preserve, other people who specialize in plants, birds, and other things were there as well. That's the best thing about it. As we walk along, somebody mentions the odd presence of farkleberry, a shrub whose little flowers tend to hang downward, "like chandeliers," someone says. The thing is that we are a little west of where farkleberry naturally occurs, supposedly, but here it



is anyway. Then at the lovely whistling call of a bird, someone else says, "Listen – it's a chuck-will's-widow!" And later, as nightfall comes to the pond, I point out the calls of cricket frogs and bullfrogs. We all learn from each other.

This all happened on the weekend of the [City Nature Challenge](#), a friendly competition held annually to see who can document the most wildlife and plants on citizen science platforms like iNaturalist. Among major U.S. cities, Dallas-Fort Worth turned in the most observations last year, and this year it is looking like we are among the top five in terms of the number of people involved, number of species seen, and the number of observations documented. [Ed. Note: At final tally, DFW came in second in Observations.] People with tons of experience and people with little or no experience got out

there, took photos of plants and animals, and posted them on iNaturalist, where the camera's or phone's meta-data provided the location and time, and experts confirmed the identities of critters, flowers and trees. While technology took care of those details, we were free to re-connect with old friends and make new friends.

Back at the parking lot, we said goodbye. The woman who had said she didn't want to see spiders and snakes thanked us, and I think she meant it. I hope she had fun, and that she was left with the perception that these are harmless and useful critters that can be admired from a few feet away without much worry. And all the other folks, the naturalists and nerds, we all went home with that satisfied feeling from being in the company of others who share an intense love of wild places, even on small preserves surrounded by urban development.

Yoakum continued from page 11

job but will go by the garage and see about the holdup as soon as they can. As it was bound to happen, two men from Cooper's garage show up almost immediately and begin to tinker under the van's hood. In due course they are joined by the nice lady, SUV now laden with children and groceries; one of the telecom guys, driving his personal car because he's on his way home; and Shane and Pete, job completed and about to clock out for the day. They are checking up on us and all sadly shake their heads when the mechanics deliver their diagnosis: the van is dead.

This is our predicament in a nutshell. The garage does not have manuals or computer software for a 1995 Toyota; our only hope for fixing the van rests with a dealership, and it's forlorn — we know from experience most dealers' software doesn't go back that far and their technicians are much too young. The nearest Toyota dealer is in Victoria, 45 miles away. There is no towing service that will take the van that far. Even if a tow truck willing to take it to Victoria were to be found in a neighboring town (e.g., Hallettsville, 19 miles), only one of us could ride in the cab. The rider would have to rent a large vehicle in Victoria and backtrack to pick up the other person, the dogs, and our belongings. Very few motels will accommodate two people and five dogs, so we'd have to continue through to Arlington, still almost 300 miles away.

Dogs are watered, walked, and reloaded. Compost Man and I rehy-

drate and refuel from the convenience store across the highway. It's time for a Plan B. A mental review of the family finances points to a clear path. I call our local Chase Bank branch but they are closed, so I dial the 800 number and a helpful young man assists in transferring funds from my retirement account to our checking account. Armed with a figure-to-stay-under goal, I start test-driving vehicles in the used-car lot. It's after hours for them too, but they sense a sale is imminent given the circumstances. We require a certain amount of room, and after discarding an Expedition, Escalade, Sedona, Traverse, 4Runner, etc., I settle on a high-miles but well-cared-for Highlander. Negotiation is minimal, but the Triple R Motors boys, Bryan and Jared, do offer a small trade-in value for the Previa and a cash discount on the Highlander. The local banks are long closed and there is no electronic way to verify my check is good, so the owner is consulted by phone and he agrees that we sound like nice people and lets us drive the car away on the strength of a handshake.

Five hours later we arrive home safe, comfortable, and in fine spirits, our faith in the innate goodness of people restored, at least for a while. Some folks would say only in our state, but I believe we might have had the same experience anywhere; what do you think? In any case, if you find yourself near Yoakum, Texas, please stop and say Howdy from John and Grace.

The Last Bit

(Back to being a serious environmental newsletter, just for a moment if that's okay with everybody.)



Turtle Time

A sad sight last week in front of *Post Oak* world headquarters: a three-toed box turtle crushed by a car (now tastefully blurred). Why here? There's a vacant brushy lot across the street and the POHQ and adjoining lot are chaotically wild-scaped. Could our efforts have created a deadly magnet? No more environmental guilt, please; we just want to make butterflies happy.

This just in: As this long-overdue issue enters its final moments, an uncrushed box turtle hunkers in the yard. You're welcome here, but you must stay out of the street.



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POST OAK
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PO Box 216
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May Meeting
Wednesday, May 2
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World of Bees
Ryan Giesecke