

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 9

OCTOBER 2018



Little blue heron at Southwest Nature Preserve • Photo by Bob Brennan

**Our New
Venue**



October Meeting

DFW: A cradle of turtle diversity and lair of lurking leviathans

**Carl J. Franklin, Biological Curator,
Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center, UTA**

**Our New
Venue**



Wednesday, October 3, 7 pm

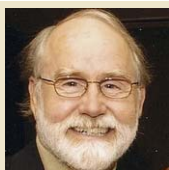
**George W. Hawkes Downtown Library, 3rd floor, Excellence Room
100 S Center St, Arlington, TX 76010**



Herpetologist and author Carl Franklin will share his extensive knowledge of turtles with ACC members. "Texas can boast a high turtle diversity with three species that naturally occur only here and nowhere else. In fact, Texas is home to almost half of the turtle diversity in the United States! With [the state's] rapidly growing population, it is becoming more important now than ever to educate people young and old about these animals, their interesting behaviors, priceless value of their presence in the wild, and the challenges that threaten their very existence." Carl Franklin in TexasTurtles.org

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From the President

Dick Schoech

Lessons from travel in Germany

I write this while recovering from jet lag from a vacation in central and southern Germany with 21 childhood cousins hoping to learn more about our ancestors. My most vivid current memory is how tightly airlines cram passengers into economy seats. My seat was so small that I was unable to bend over to reach the floor, extend my elbows to eat as I normally do, and get things out of my pockets without a huge struggle. Flight attendants had difficulty getting their carts up and down the tiny aisles. Lesson: On long flights, upgrade to get more space if you can afford it.

The trip

We landed in Frankfurt and traveled southwest to Lindau near the Swiss border, the area where my ancestors operated a spa and restaurant. Our return loop was through the Black Forest and Romantic Road, dominated by rolling hills, mountains, and small, ancient, picturesque towns. The weather was excellent most of the time, with cool nights and mildly hot days. A previous drought had been followed by heavy rains which had produced green fields, a record-breaking grape harvest for wine, and loaded fruit trees.

Bicycles and other transportation

Each morning my brother and I walked in cities we visited and saw the commute of cars, mass transit, and bicycles. There was an unending stream of bicycles with school children, office workers of all ages, mothers with little children in various devices, etc. Many cities had installed additional sidewalks to separate those walking from all the bicycles and small battery-operated scooters (see the picture of a bicycle with front cart and the electric bicycle of the Mayor of Lindau in his personal bicycle charging station). The lesson is "build it and they will come." Germany's weather is much colder than Arlington's so why should they have many more bicycle riders and bicycle paths?



Energy

Germany plans to deactivate all nuclear plants by 2022 and produce 65% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030. The countryside was filled with windmills and solar farms. In 2017, it produced 36.1% of its total power needs from renewable sources. On January 1st of 2018, it crossed a symbolic milestone for the first time with 100% of electricity use covered by renewable sources. Lesson:

continued on page 6



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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John Darling, Editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Bob Brennan,
Grace Darling, John Darling,
Jan Miller, Wesley Miller,
Dick Schoech, Kevin Sloan,
Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Bad case of contamination:
11 trash bags pulled
from a recycling
compactor.
So what?

[Read this.](#)

[And this.](#)

Dallas Gets It

From an NBCDFW website: **Dallas takes a step to combat climate change.** A climate action plan will be developed with money from the city of Dallas that was part of a new budget approved Tuesday.

Money that was left over from the Dallas grocery bag fee that was repealed three years ago will pay for a \$500,000 climate change study. Even more money left over from the fee could pay for action on the plan. [Read the whole story here.](#)



Congratulations, APARD!



Here's good news from an Arlington [Parks & Rec website](#): A commitment to the highest level of service in parks and recreation has paid off for the Arlington Parks and Recreation department. They have been awarded the 2018 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management.

The site includes application questions whose answers provide a comprehensive look at the many innovative ways our parks people work so hard for us.

Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org

FINCH AT MY WINDOW FEEDER

John Blair

Finch at my window feeder –
Drab dun underneath,
Flame red above –

I'd only be convinced
To deem you ordinary
If rainbows be ordinary light.

Faith in miracles
Isn't needed
To name wonder here,

Birdseed transmuted
Into seamless flight
Through liquid air,

Into feathers
Claiming fragments
From the gleaming sun.

©2018 John I. Blair,
5/28/2018

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

Question Corner John Darling

Why are you filling this space with a huge dumb picture? Can't you think of just one good question? No.



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1660 W. Randol Mill Rd.
Arlington, TX 76012
(817) 275-1000
www.wbu.com/arlingtontx
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
9 - 6 Sat, 12 - 5 Sun

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Mailing Address
1813 W. Tucker
Arlington, TX 76013
E-mail: schwettmammarvin@sbcglobal.net



Paul Krudsen's
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Event Photography
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3607 Shady Park Drive
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(817) 277-2138
john@xdycus.com



Law Office of
SHANE GOETZ

1304 West Abram Street
Arlington, Texas 76013

shane@goetzlaw.com
Local: 817-274-2905
Metro: 817-265-2902
Fax: 817-861-8909
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From the President continued from page 3

Texas is way behind many European countries in switching to renewables. If Germany with its cold climate can produce substantial solar power, so can Texas. I saw few rooftop solar panels when our return flight circled over Arlington.

Diversity

Germany's history is filled with bloody battles with outsiders and clashes between local tribes and competing Christian religions. Historically, governments ranged from dictators to semi-democratic systems. Churches often changed from Catholic to Protestant and then back again for faith, politics, and a variety of other reasons. Those who did not convert to the latest systems were not treated kindly. I avoided visiting the torture museums as I had seen enough examples from the dungeons of the castles we toured.

People in the big cities were very diverse since Germany has accepted many refugees over the years. However, in the countryside very little diversity seemed to exist. Currently, Germany is struggling to handle a backlash due to the recent influx of refugees from Africa and the Middle East. They have absorbed many more immigrants than most other European countries and tribal politics are the result. Lesson: Texas has absorbed many fewer immigrants but immigration continues to be a major political issue worldwide. Strong leadership is needed and public opinion must be respected for a community to absorb large numbers of immigrants.

Livability

Streets in many city centers were turned into car-free pedestrian areas

with vendors, restaurants, entertainment, and stores for shopping. These areas were crowded with locals and tourists enjoying their day and especially relaxing in the evenings. There were many places to sit and visit, and most restaurants and stores had plenty of customers.



Arlington is moving in this direction with the recent reworking of Abram street, the new user-friendly downtown library, and the Levitt entertainment area.

Cities were mostly spotless. It was hard to find trash anywhere on our walks. Recycling seems available everywhere, but I was unable to judge the recycling progress from walking the streets. Last evening, I walked in Randol Mill Park and saw all the trash high in the creek beds due to recent flooding. Maybe Arlington will find a way to get residents to clean up after themselves — Germany proves it is possible.



All roads were in excellent shape. I did not see one pothole.

One obvious area where the U.S. is far ahead of Germany is in safety. Bathtubs had steep sides, slick bottoms, and no grab bars. Many walking areas had small to large step-ups that were especially troublesome to tourists gawking up at churches and castles. Over half of our group slipped or fell at one time. Seems like Germany could use an agency like our much-maligned OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).

Greenspace



Most towns were along strategic parts of rivers, with the riverfront being the major walking and recreation areas. It was a far cry from our Trinity River, which I have been told carries only trash, flood and sewer water out of our area. When will we see the Trinity's potential as the wonderful DFW resource and restore its natural beauty and the prominent role it had in the past? Arlington has much potential to lead in this area, since River Legacy Park covers a large section of the Trinity. In the picture below, note the river banks have been kept low and free of construction in order to absorb and slow flood waters. Also, note how residents flock to these areas on a sunny afternoon.

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by Wes Miller



This page is meant to be nothing but good — a showcase for the beauty of our prairie remnant. But we can't ignore the bad that just keeps coming. Green Source DFW tells us the saddest sort of story about a local prairie in [Goodbye to a prairie:](#) Richardson meadow slated for development. What can we think? It could so easily have happened here.



More Bits

October meeting parking notes

Street parking is on Center just north of Abram. Note that Center is one way southbound, so if you are coming from the south, you must get north of the library (via Mesquite, West, or Cooper for example), then approach it on Center from the north.

The street parking could be challenging if Center Street traffic is heavy: It is back-in diagonal. You might prefer the parking garage across Center from the library that you can also enter from Mesquite.

THE TOWHEE AND THE MOCKINGBIRD *John Blair*

The towhee and the mockingbird
Are not inclined to share
The same expanse of rail

On my backyard deck.
First one and then the other
Gives an attack, a dare,

Evidenced by flapping wings
And pecking beak. I don't know
Which one triumphed

If either did. The point
I think is inability
Of some to see

How easy it could be
To occupy this spacious world
If each would recognize
The others' right to live.

©2017 John I. Blair,
12/16/2017

Thanks to Our Last Speaker

Another month, another great tour: In September, ACC members and friends were treated to an in-depth look at our LEED-certified Downtown Library. We were led by Erin Halovanic, Library Services Manager (below left with ACC President Dick Schoech), who seemed delighted to have us and was adept at explaining how the building promotes the latest approaches to modern library function. Erin also seemed to know how much we crave sustainability: She enthusiastically pointed out the library's many green features.



Rewilding Kevin Sloan

Kevin Sloan is a landscape architect in Dallas and an architecture professor at the University of Texas at Arlington. He is a Dallas Morning News Community Voices alumnus.

Read the whole story at [Morning News, September 13.](#)

"It's not the butterflies, it's the turkeys." The contractor put his hands on his hips. The Airfield Falls Conservation Park was under construction and the quarter-mile-long butterfly walk was complete.

The butterflies had arrived so abundantly that the contractor said he had to "brush them away from his face." Flocks of wild turkeys appeared to feast on the butterfly cloud. The bobcats were after the turkeys.

While our client had requested a butterfly garden to satisfy the conditions of a grant, my landscape architectural practice had discovered something tremendously important through this experience, but we got there by working backwards.

We discovered rewilding.

Rewilding is an approach to landscape and environmental development that is sweeping the globe. What makes rewilding distinct is how the process begins, by defining an inventory of natural life that a new or repurposed site can reasonably and practically support. The natural life inventory can range from honeybees, pollinating butterflies and migrating hummingbirds, to turkeys and alpha predators like coyotes and bobcats. The needs of the natural life drive the plant selections and the strategies of the landscape design. And then, careful design using elements of the original native ecology puts human activity back into the rewilded environment so that both humans and wild can co-exist.



The 14-acre Bluestem Park in Fort Worth was restored to its original Blackland Prairie state with 50 native plant species and 500 native trees. (Debra Hale/Hillwood Properties)

The Arlington Environmental Hall of Fame

It's Dick Schoech again, this time with four recycling carts at one house. Serious recycling.



TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE | SOUTHEAST CAMPUS

An indigenous community in Mexico confronts internal divisions and illegal loggers in order to recover the ancient forest they nearly destroyed. Like the millions of monarch butterflies that also call this forest home, their survival depends on it.

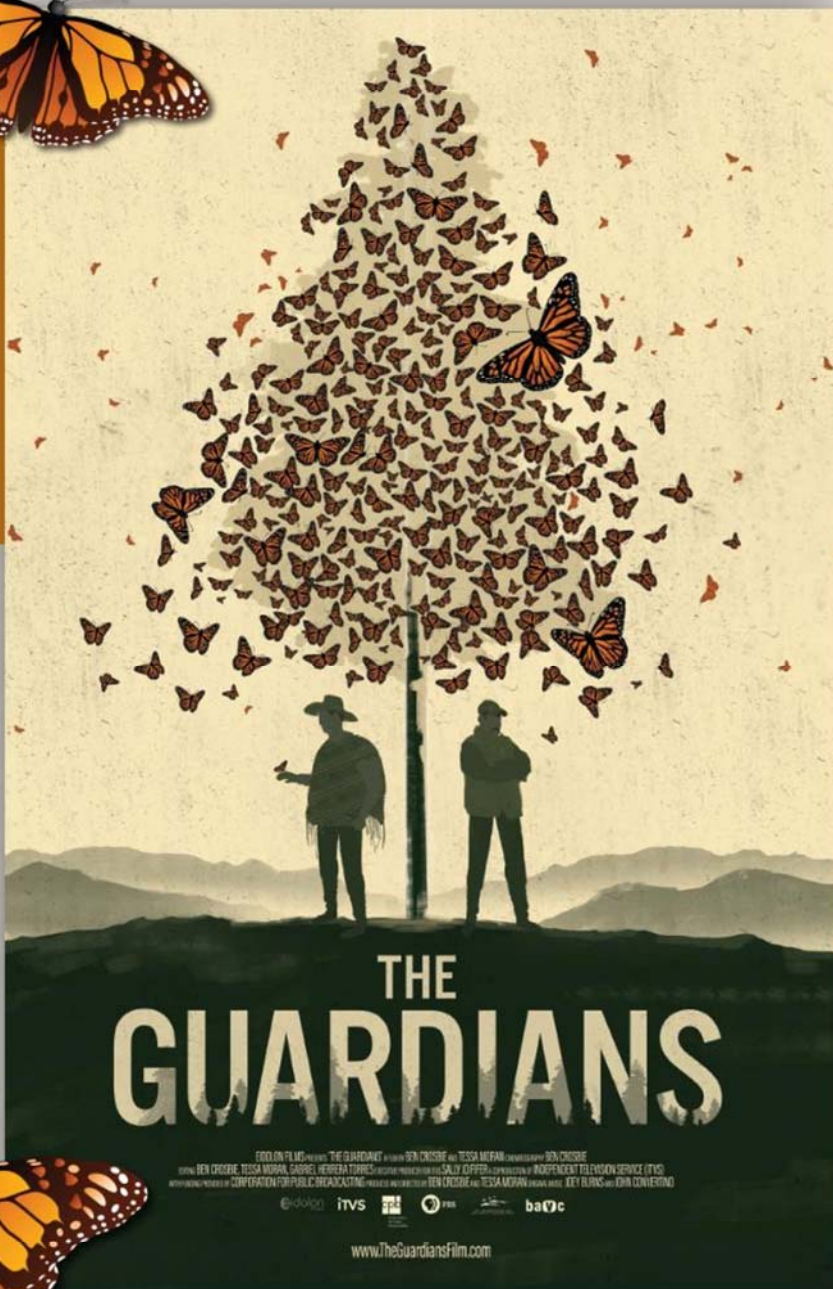
The GUARDIANS, a film by BEN CROSBIE and TESSA MORAN
With original music by CALEXICO

Screening Date:
**October 3 and
October 11**
1 & 6pm
Ballroom

About the Film

In an ancient forest in central Mexico, Oyamel trees sway with the weight of millions of monarch butterflies that coat its branches in clumps of orange and black. They make a perilous 3,000 mile journey from Canada to hibernate in this unique eco-system each year. But the population faces collapse, hitting a record low of 33 million, down from 1 billion just twenty years ago. Many of the Monarchs make a stop on the Southeast Campus on their way to and from Canada to Mexico!

In the valley below, the people of Donaciano Ojeda must carve out a sustainable future in their ancestral lands that are now part of the protected Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve. Once loggers of this forest, they decided twenty years ago to stop, and to protect it and regrow it instead. Santos, a charismatic avocado farmer and Artisteo, a philosophical tree caretaker are the storytellers of the community's journey as they face new threats of illegal logging, internal divisions, and their own mortality. Paralleling the lives of human and monarch, the Guardians is a cinematic meditation on life, death and the lengths we go to for the next generation.



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Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



Wildscape Fall Native Plant Sale

Wildscape plant sale rain or shine!

It rained. Yes, all day. Everything was still a tremendous success. Eighteen kinds of plants sold out. A dozen others were refilled from inventory.

Approximately 200 people made purchases large and small for income to the wildscape of over \$5100.

The great benefits of planting natives from the wildscape are that they are



organically grown from local stock so they adapt better to the North Texas climate, have lower than non-native water requirements and do not require pesticides or fertilizers to thrive.

Children were never more lovingly and hopefully sent off to college than were Josephine Keeney's plants to new homes. She and the greenhouse crew raised most from cuttings, some from seed, with careful attention to soil and water conditions. She is nodding as she reads this.



The plant sale has become an event where Master Gardeners mingle with new homeowners and knowledgeable landscapers. Dogs wander about with their owners as if they're in PetSmart.

Babies are admired. Children come along wondering at their parents' passion for gardening. In every conversation valuable plant lore is exchanged.



There is nothing like good advertising. Many people took Josephine's excellent fliers and passed them out wherever they went.

As in the past three years, Frank Keeney blanketed the environmental community with e-mails announcing the sale. The notice went to "2,000 of my closest friends" — Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and members of the Native Plant Society, Organic Gardening Club and Arling-



continued on page 12

Wildscape Update continued from page 11



ton Conservation Council. Attendance shows that Frank is reaching the right people.

Maybe a quarter of the sales topped \$75. Two men who voluntarily maintain their church's garden came back three times to fill a cart with plants.

Kay Sekio had the light-bulb idea to push a feature plant for a butterfly



garden. She made a sign showing the plant's importance in the butterfly life cycle and displayed it prominently with a large specimen.

Inside the dry greenhouse where the sales table was located, she set up another sign with pictures and text showing the volunteers engaged in gardening activities. At least one man was inspired to join.



Gailon Hardin printed plant tags with the common and Latin plant name, size, sun exposure, bloom time, perennial or annual, what insect or bird it attracts, and www.thewildscape.org. Buyers appreciated the tags so much that they demanded "sticks" if there were none in the pots they were buying.

This note left on the square says it all: "Best web site! And everyone is extremely helpful. Of course, the plant selection is superb, which is why we never miss this sale!"

Special thanks to the faithful volunteers who shared plant information, wrote tickets and carried pots, flats and whole carts of plants to people's cars:

Ann Knudsen, wildscape volunteer coordinator
 Charlie Amos
 Sheila Franklin
 Gailon Hardin
 Marian Hiler, wildscape treasurer
 Brian Keeney
 Frank Keeney, publicity and signs
 Josephine Keeney, greenhouse coordinator
 Danny Kocurek, wildscape board president
 Joe Martinez
 Larry Norris
 Jane Oosterhuis
 Jo Poppelreiter
 Hester Schwarzer
 Kay Sekio
 Marylee Thomason



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling



Ecoanxiety is an emerging condition. Named in 2011, the American Psychological Association described it as the dread and helplessness that come with “watching the slow and seemingly irrevocable impacts of climate change unfold, and worrying about the future for oneself, children, and later generations.” This sort of disposition toward ecological-based distress does not pair well with a president who has denied the reality of the basis for this anxiety. Donald Trump has called climate change a fabrication on the part of “the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.” He has also led the United States to become the only G20 country that will not honor the Paris Climate Accord, and who has appointed fossil-fuel advocates to lead the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. For people who experience climate-related anxiety, the current political climate certainly exacerbates their symptoms. But there is hope: the remedy is knowing what one can do to mitigate environmental degradation.

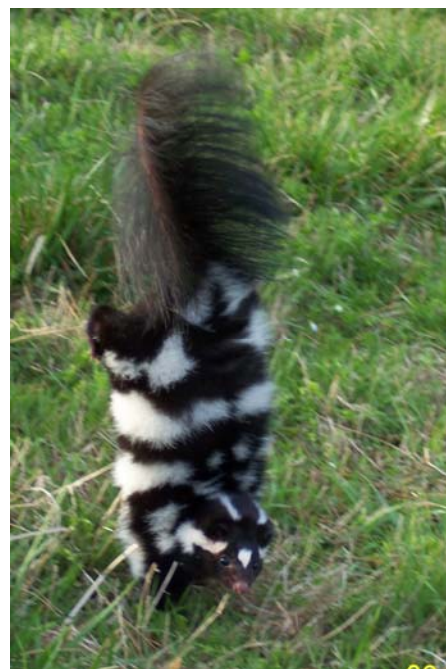
Like what? Helen Harwatt is a researcher trained in environmental nutrition, a field focused on devel-

oping food systems that balance human health and sustainability. She and colleagues have done research on maximizing the impacts of individuals — and, as with so many things in life and health, that tends to come down to food.

Recently Harwatt and a team of scientists from various universities calculated just what would happen if every American made one dietary change, namely substituting beans for beef. They found that if everyone were willing and able to do that, the U.S. could still come close to meeting its 2020 greenhouse-gas emission goals, pledged by President Barack Obama in 2009. That is, even if nothing about our energy infrastructure or transportation system changed—and even if people kept eating chicken and pork and eggs and cheese—this one dietary change could achieve somewhere between 46% and 74% of the reductions needed to meet the target.

— James Hamblin in *The Atlantic*, August 2, 2017

The Strange Case of the Disappearing Skunk. The species of skunk that literally stands on its front paws when threatened is quickly vanishing from its historic range across our central, eastern, and southern states. Known to be good mousers and helpful in controlling insects, the eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius*) has declined by as much as 90% in some parts of its range and will soon become an endangered species unless we intervene.



Why are eastern spotted skunks declining while striped skunks are thriving? Research has shown that the secretive spotted skunks favor closed canopy forests thick with vegetation where the dense undergrowth and their broken markings help them hide from predators like great horned owls. Undoubtedly habitat loss is a major factor, but is there something else going on? Other suspected causes are pesticide use, because insects are a large portion of the skunk's diet, and diseases spread by feral and domesticated cats to which the skunks are susceptible. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would help us find out and give states the funding needed to take preventive action on behalf of the declining spotted skunk and other species headed toward extinction. Please tell your member of Congress to support the Recovering

continued on page 14

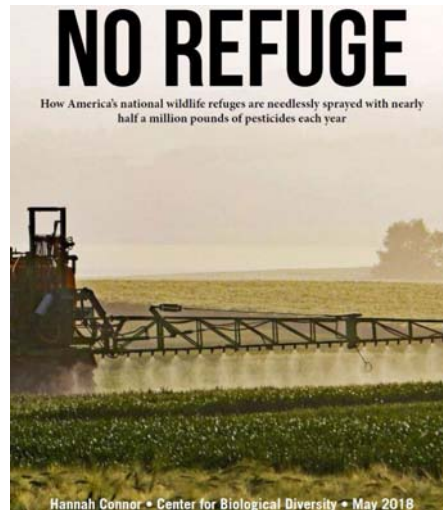
In Case You Missed It continued from page 13

America's Wildlife Act. — Marina Richie, National Wildlife Federation blog, May 17, 2018

More on Texas skunks at *The Big Stink* by Russell Roe, tpwmagazine.com/archive/2016/jun/ed3skunks/

Sample: All carnivores have anal scent glands, and animals such as weasels and badgers have enlarged anal glands that can be used for defense. Skunks not only have bigger anal glands, they also have the ability to spray their scent from nipples that can be precisely aimed and controlled. When a skunk is ready to spray, nozzles emerge from either side of the skunk's anus. Each nozzle is surrounded by muscle tissue that can contract to direct the discharge 15 feet or more. The foul-smelling discharge is a sulphide known as n-butyl mercaptan that can sting the skin, cause temporary blindness, and produce a pungent, gagging odor that is unmistakable.

From *Environment Texas* in September: The Trump administration has just **lifted a ban on GMOs and bee-killing pesticides in wildlife refuges**, threatening the bee populations in more than 850 million acres nationwide. We are losing 30% of our honeybee population every winter. The rusty patched bumblebee is now on the endangered species list. Bees are suffering from a variety of hazards, especially killer pesticides such as neonicotinoids, one of the most widely used pesticides in agriculture. And now, bees aren't safe from these killer chemicals even in wildlife refuges.



Environment Texas is working around the clock to save the bees. We're lobbying the EPA to ban neonicotinoids. We're urging states to take action on neonics, too. We started the Bee-Friendly Food Alliance to organize restaurant owners and chefs to help protect the bees. Our Go Bee Friendly program educates the public on growing gardens that encourage bee growth. We're even challenging companies such as General Mills, which pledged to plant 100 million wildflower seeds — but still refuses to say whether it uses crops grown using bee-killing pesticides in its products.

From *TexPIRG*: You probably didn't put it there, but there's a good chance that if you used a plastic bottle recently, it ended up in the trash. Your food containers and grocery bags likely did too, even if you put them in the recycling bin. We're in the midst of a **plastics recycling crisis** that's getting worse by the day. Last month, China strictly tightened its limits on accepting waste from the U.S., disrupting the system most U.S. recycling plants

had come to rely on and casting doubt over the billions of pounds of recyclable plastics that used to go to China. We're using a two-pronged approach to get out of this plastic waste crisis: getting the word out to consumers about what's really happening to their trash, and reforming policy to cut down on the plastic we produce. Without reform, an estimated 25,000 tons of plastics end up in U.S. landfills every day. Because waste and recycling policy happen at the state and local level, we are waging a national campaign to confront the plastics crisis by pressuring municipal leaders, state legislatures, and governors to act now.

And from *The Guardian*: Among the **measures government can take** to deal with the recycling crisis are:

- 1) require all packaging to be reusable, compostable or recyclable by 2025;
- 2) offer short-term incentives to local councils and industry to renegotiate recycling contracts, ramp up construction and operation of domestic materials recovery facilities, and develop new markets for recyclable waste;
- 3) set up a system of substantial infrastructure grants for local government and industry and smaller amounts for transport subsidies, education campaigns, and grants;
- 4) invest in new uses of recyclable materials;
- 5) foster improvements in the quality of recycled products; and
- 6) support financially the development of domestic markets for recycled products.

Southwest Nature Preserve Jan Miller

Friends of SWNP Monthly Meeting

Free and open to the public

Saturday, October 20, 2:00 - 8:00 pm

Southwest Nature Preserve's 5th Anniversary Event

The Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve invite you to enjoy an afternoon and evening exploring the beauty and natural features of the preserve. Activities will include:

- **Soak It All In** Take time to observe what's all around you
- **Meet Your Neighbors** For kids and beginners, a walk designed to familiarize people with some plants and animals they have seen but maybe never been introduced to
- **Photographing the Preserve** learn how to use the natural world to make artful photos
- **Evening Walk** and more activities that adults and kids will enjoy and learn from

All activities held at Southwest Nature Preserve, 5201 Bowman Springs Road, Arlington, TX 76017

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve
and to sign up for email updates, see www.swnp.org or e-mail info@swnp.org.

Friends of SWNP events and programs are free and open to the public.

Coming Up

Saturday October 6

8:00 am Bird Workshop (limited space, RSVP)

8:30 am Bird Walk at SWNP

Workshop and walk led by Master Birder Walter Berk. You'll learn what birds to look for now, how to identify them and the habitats they prefer. Workshop space at the nearby Kennedale Municipal Center is limited, so please **RSVP**. All are welcome at the walk. Bring binoculars if you have them, but we'll have extra if needed.

October 5 - 21

Texas Pollinator Bioblitz

Celebrate Texas' bees, butterflies, bats, moths, wasps and the plants they pollinate by participating in Texas Parks and Wildlife's event. Participate by entering your observations using the iNaturalist app and/or website and following the activity by email and Instagram. For details or to sign up, contact <https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/bioblitz>

Tuesday November 13

Texas Native Cats presented by Monica Morrison

Friday November 23

Opt Outside: Nature Crawl

A great alternative to Black Friday. Save the date!

continued on page 16

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 15

Pollinator/Restoration Project Update

To ensure that SWNP's Pollinator Meadow is even more diverse next year, we're making arrangements to plant more natives in October. If you can help, be sure you're signed up for email updates at info@swnp.org.



Photos by Bob Brennan



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	
Address	_____	Individual	\$15.00	New Member ☐
	_____	Family	\$25.00	
Phone	_____	Supporting	\$40.00	Renewing member ☐
E-mail	_____	Sponsor	\$100.00	
		Lifetime Individual	\$250.00	
		Other	\$ _____	

How did you hear about us? _____

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**SPECIAL
MEETING
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 Arlington Conservation Council
 PO Box 216
 Arlington, TX 76004-0216

**OUR
NEW
VENUE**



October Meeting
Wednesday, October 3, 7 pm



George W. Hawkes Downtown Library
3rd floor, Excellence Multipurpose Room
100 S Center Street

**DFW: A cradle of turtle diversity
 and lair of lurking leviathans**
Carl J. Franklin