

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 5

MAY 2019

Main Street Post Oak

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downtown
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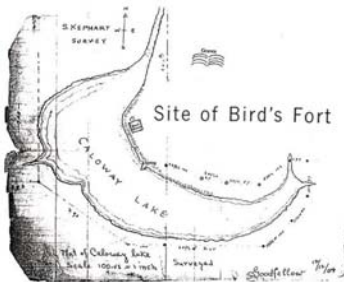
May Meeting Before Arlington:

**Indians, Militiamen, Pioneers and Traders
James Blackshear**

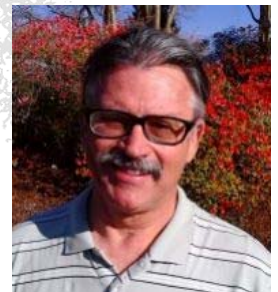
Wednesday, May 1, 7 pm

**[re]Brary, rooms A&B (first floor, just inside main doors)
George V. Hawkes Central Library, 100 S Center Street**

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library**



Come and hear Southwestern historian James Bailey Blackshear speak about the historical significance of this region, including how Indians lived here. Find out about the Battle of Village Creek and the first Texian land developers. The history of Texas is like a patchwork quilt, a collection of individual events, cultures and eras. The threads that weave this history together are its rivers, and people always follow the rivers. The Wichita, Caddo and Cherokee Indians fol-

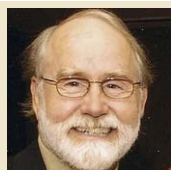


lowed the Trinity River to this part of North Texas and lived here in great numbers. Texian pioneers followed them, building the first Anglo settlements in the region. Within the Viridian development in Arlington sits

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From the President

Dick Schoech

This month I would like to report initial progress on ACC 2019 priority #2, reducing plastic pollution. Our first action is to “Work with ACC membership and supporters to get restaurants to use less plastic.” Below are ACC members’ experiences on our 2019 # 2 priority, reducing plastic pollution.

From Joanne Stewart, 13Mar19: I asked the waiter at **P.F.**

Chang’s if anyone ever asks for biodegradable straws. He said, “NO” but he was all in. He told the manager who came to our table and explained that I would have to contact the main corporation for P.F. Chang’s. He was favorable and told me that they are making biodegradable plastic straws now. We went to **Red Hot & Blue** in Ft. Worth and the young millennial waitress said she didn’t know of biodegradable straws and that no one had ever asked her for a biodegradable straw. But she did note that some customers bring in their own straws.

From Dick Schoech & Joanne Stewart 24Mar19: The Neighbors of Randol Mill Park (NORMP) group wants their members involved in the plastic reduction effort. When the group ate at **J.R. Bentley’s** by UTA, we mentioned ACC’s plastics reduction priority to the waiter who gave us drinks with straws. He was very supportive and talked to the other waitress who talked to the owner. They said the owner was very interested and gave us a phone number and email address for contacting her when we were ready to give out more information about the plastic reduction initiative.

From Dick Schoech & Candy Halliburton, 9Apr19: We ate at the downtown Arlington **Tipsy Oak** and talked to the young waitress about not serving drinks with straws in them. She had heard about the plastic pollution in the oceans and wanted to help if she could. She said she would start asking customers if they wanted straws in their drinks. We encouraged her to talk to other waitresses and the manager when everyone was not busy.

From Candy Halliburton and Jayne Metzger (sometime in April): I’m discouraged. The restaurant was **Division Street Diner**. We talked to the waitress about how straws end up in our water-

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ACC POST OAK

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15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Old elm near Cooper
Roots a little tight just now
But still hanging on

(Take that, John Blair)

Back by Popular Demand

It's not easy being an environmental voter in this town, apparently because the small fraction of eligible voters who do turn out just aren't thinking about issues that concern most ACC members. And the candidates appear to reflect voters' priorities.

However, we really want to vote for the candidates who show at least some inkling of environmental awareness, [so here again are their responses to some of the questions we care about.](#)

Turtle Time

We rarely hear about common snapping turtles in our parks, so Dick Schoech's recent sighting of one pretending to be a rounded rock in Randol Mill Park (*left*) is newsworthy, in treehugger terms at least. This one can't fool us; look at those distinctive pointy bits on the rear of the shell. For a better look (*right*), here's a different snapper in a more flattering pose.



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WORLD TREE

Each tree that grows
Is one more try
To recreate the World Tree,
One more stab
At reconnecting earth and air,
Stone and soul.

That's clear enough
When the tree I see
Ties the ground together
With its tangled roots,
Fills the sky with leaves,
Soars, immense, toward the sun.

But then I watch a seedling
Pushing through the soil,
Lifting hope on high,
Life all future tense,
A prayer for sorrow-free
Tomorrows.

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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Haven't you noticed that it's spring? Why aren't you filling this rag with Wes Miller's prairie photos?

A: Trying hard. After the prairie page, look on 8, 9, and 12. But sometimes they're cropped to fit a space so we're not getting the full impact. We need to talk with Wes to find out how to get on his photo mailing list. Stay tuned.



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www.wbu.com/arlingtontx
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Thanks A.C.C. for working to conserve Arlington's natural resources.

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From the President continued from page 3

ways and in the stomachs of animals and Jayne showed her a picture of the stomach of the whale they found off the coast in Italy. I described the North Pacific plastic garbage patch. The waitress said she was unaware of anything like this, thought it was horrible, and was going to share the information. She later said she shared the info with another waitress. On the way out, I talked to the owner at the door and he claimed his staff is instructed to NOT hand out straws unless patrons ask for them. I have been there three times since then, and the waitresses do not ask. They take them right out of their aprons and plop them down on your table unless you say NO STRAW please, before they do so.

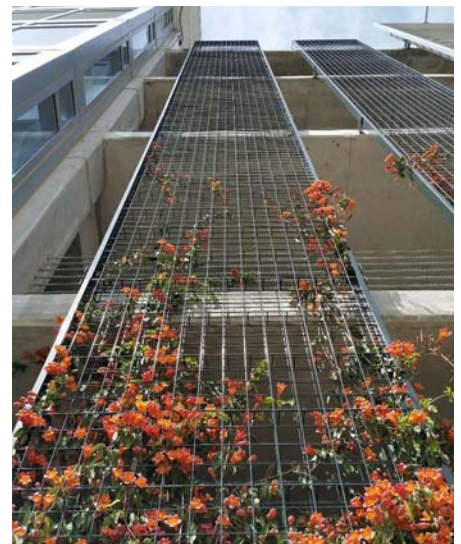
Now it's your turn to become part of our plastic reduction team. Ask restaurants you visit to help reduce plastic by only handing out straws when requested and providing recyclable take out bags. Or, bring your own container for leftovers and takeout, etc. Depending on the restaurant, there may be other options to reduce plastic. Be creative in finding other options and in asking restaurant staff to help our effort. Send your experiences to no-plastic@acctexas.org. For the complete list of ACC's plastic reduction actions, see page 6 of the April Post Oak newsletter at <http://www.acctexas.org/downloads/ACC-2019-04.pdf>.

Botanical Bits *clockwise from right*

Cross vine on a new parking garage at UTA. Big job ahead.

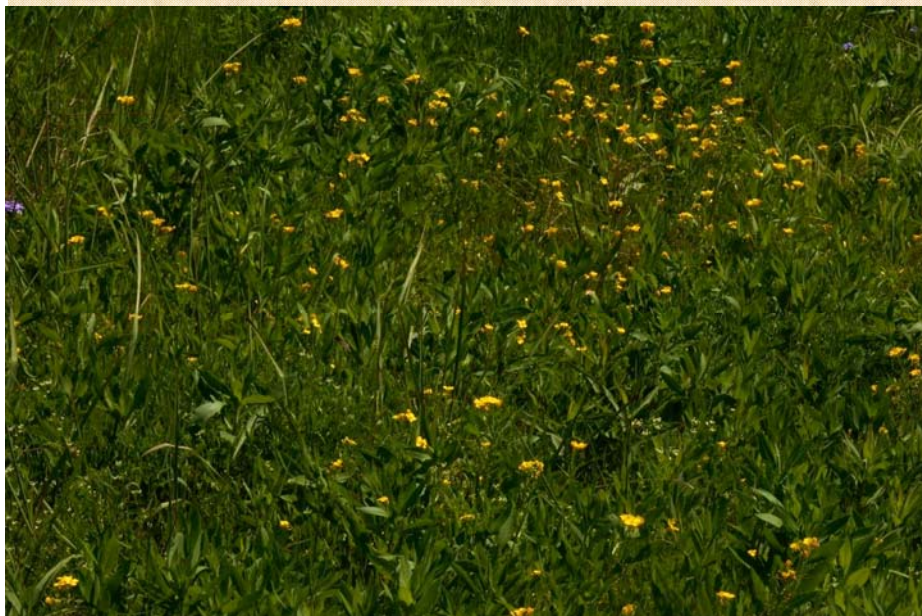
Mixed native plant bed at UTA Architecture building. Experiment by Prof David Hopman with species selected to function together harmoniously. Used to be boring turf.

New favorite urban post oak on Main Street. This one hasn't heard about post oaks being fussy. (trunk on cover)



Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve

photos by Wes Miller



More Bits

BIRD SANCTUARY

Beyond the trailer park,
Beyond the baseball field,
Beyond the shacks on stilts,
And even beyond the smelly sewage plant
On the mud flats at the edge of town,
Eden exists, if only in our minds.

We step along the narrow path
And through the high gate, framed in oleander blooms,
And suddenly come out
Where water spreads and rushes rise
And flocks of seabirds fill the skies.

Two alligators guard the way
Like dragons by a treasure hoard;
And egrets, cormorants, pelicans, ducks,
Grebes, avocets and sora rails . . .
All these and more are there to find
From the boardwalk where we stand
Dreaming of a pristine land.

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Thanks to Our Last Speaker



ACC board member John Darling (left) with speaker Kevin Sloan

Last month the remarkable Kevin Sloan, city planner, landscape architect, writer and professor, honored us with “City by Nature: The North Texas Branch Waters Network.”

The program was delightful but a little hard to describe, especially after misplacing two pages of frantic notes. One possible summary might be that we in the Metroplex are in a position to mix our brand of urbanism with wildlife through environmentally thoughtful development of our varied waterways. But no blanket approaches: Different situations call for individualized solutions.

But this doesn’t do justice to the wealth of images, examples, and stories that swamped the room in a wonderful way.

We’re truly indebted. Thank you, Kevin Sloan.



May Program continued from page 2

what became known as Calloway Lake, one of the few natural lakes in North Texas. The historic Bird's Fort was built next to the lake and was visited by founding fathers such as President Sam Houston. After being retrieved from the Comanches, one of the most famous Texans who ever lived, Cynthia Ann Parker, lived in a nearby cabin. Come hear about our celebrated, almost forgotten past.

Presenter: Dr. James Bailey Blackshear teaches Texas and U.S. History at Collin College in Plano and the University of North Texas at Dallas. He has written two books on nineteenth century Southwestern history: *Honor and Defiance: A History of the Las Vegas Land Grant in New Mexico* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2013), and *Fort Bascom: Soldiers, Comancheros and Indians in the Canadian River Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016). His articles have appeared in the *New Mexico Historical Review* and the *Military History of the West*. He has also published stories in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series.



The Arlington Environmental Hall of Just Missed Fame

Here's a splash of downtown color on the Arlington Museum of Art, complete with oversize monarchs. That's nice, but the native nectar plants once scattered around the former parking lot are gone. A pollinator garden here would be appropriate, but all those new saplings will probably make the place too shady. Bad bonus: terrible unshielded lights. At least we have paintings of butterflies to remember them by.



Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



The Molly Hollar Wildscape fulfilled its mission to educate the community with two WOWs (Walk on the Wildside) field trips this year for 110 fifth-grade students from Thornton Elementary School on March 22 and 90 fifth graders from Anderson Elementary School on March 29. Fourteen third-grade students from Merryhill School joined the Anderson students.



Even though the excursion has been declared “better than Six Flags,” answers to the question, “What was your favorite part of the WOW today?” still come as a



surprise. The favorite this time around: “The mud!” aka the Seed Balls and Soil session.

From paved sidewalks to mulched pathways through the woods, volunteer guides lead groups of students and adult chaperones from station to station. Travel entertainment included Scavenger Hunt cards. Everyone checked off a spider web, lizard, acorn, crawling insect, wildflower and weed. But squirrels retained their status as most popular item on the list.

All of the presentations generated interest, but there were a few standout moments.

The Water Shed, which demonstrates how manmade pollutants

affect our water supplies, got a dramatic response. Students enjoyed spreading food coloring, black pepper, sprinkles and season salt all over the miniature environment, but to see the “oil,” “fertilizer” and other “pollutants” washed into the streams and lake was horrifying. One young man exclaimed, “This town is evil.”



At the Environmental Cleanup, a student stood stunned looking back and forth from the rotting logs, dead leaves and food scraps to the finished compost. He saw

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Wildscape Update continued from page 10



the dead leaves, banana peels and orange rinds in various stages of decomposition, but it was still hard to believe that bacteria, fungi and tiny insects could make such a transformation from solid things to soil amendment.

Hands down, the most popular were the earthworms at the Seed Balls & Soil. Carol Shinsky-Marcotte brought a bucket of worms, which she encouraged the students to touch and hold. These unfamiliar creatures were met with snatching finger touches and pokes with little sticks. The entire Merryhill class declared this their favorite adventure, and several fifth-grade students mentioned what a fascinating experience it was to meet an earthworm in person.

Carol had a reaction, too, when she heard the student reviews. "It w(o)rms my heart to read your message! If just one child learned appreciation for the natural world, it was all worth it."

Thank you, thank you, to the wonderful volunteers who put on the show, and to Ann Knudsen,



Hester Schwarzer and Marylee Thomason for organizing the events.

March 22, 2019 WOW

Butterflies and Metamorphosis - Josephine Keeney and Hester Schwarzer

Environmental Cleanup - Dawn Hancock and Marylee Thomason

Erosion - Jane Oosterhuis and Dick Schoech

Seed Balls and Soil - Sandy Van Meer, Christel Danning, Carol Shinsky-Marcotte and Joyce Duty



Watershed - Bev Crawford and Sandy Dhabolt Hertzler with Alex Cowart assist

Guides:

Vicky Brady	Danese Dunaway
Wayne Halliburton	Patti Manness
Joe Martinez	Patsy Miller
Cheri Mills	Laura Penn
Gordon Scruggs	Debbie Stilson
Mary Lou Yost	

March 29, 2019 WOW

Butterflies and Metamorphosis - Hester Schwarzer and Josephine Keeney

Environmental Cleanup - Dawn Hancock and Marylee Thomason

Erosion - Jane Oosterhuis and Dick Schoech

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Wildscape Update continued from page 11

Seed Balls and Soil - Joyce Duty and Carol Shinsky-Marcotte, Ann Shaw and Sandy Van Meer
Watershed - Anne Alderfer and Bev Crawford with Marian Hiler assist

Guides:

Vicky Brady	Alex Cowart
Joe Martinez	Cheri Mills
Melinda Pajak	Rosalie Rogers
Gordon Scruggs	Debbie Stilson
Otto Witt	Mary Lou Yost

Note that the wildscape mission — “To educate the community to use native plants to conserve resources, attract wildlife, and connect with nature” — features inviting the community to get involved.

Eagle Scout Project

On April 6, Joe Martinez coordinated a new Eagle Scout project in the wildscape. Aiden Martinez, age 19, led his team to build a new arbor at the northeast wildscape entrance. It was a cold, misty, windy day, but Aiden and fellow scouts from Troop 396 persevered. They worked six hours to dig two 2'x3' holes, erect two cedar posts and a cross beam. This sturdy, handsome new cedar arbor bears a plaque memorializing their excellent work.



Becoming an Eagle Scout is an impressive achievement and must be earned before the age of 19. Only 4% of Boy Scouts attain the rank of Eagle Scout after a lengthy review process. The requirements necessary to achieve this rank take years to fulfill and include earning at least 21 merit badges.

To become eligible for the rank of Eagle Scout, you must first earn Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks. These ranks require accomplishments in camping, cooking, navigation, nature, aquatics, first aid, fitness, leadership, safety, citizenship, and “Scout spirit.”



Alexander von Humboldt: A Tribute Grace Darling

In 1799, 60 years before Charles Darwin wrote *On the Origin of Species*, young Prussian scientist Alexander von Humboldt left the European shores on a 3-year trip to South America that was to shape the way we now look at the planet we inhabit and our role in molding it. "The real purpose of the voyage, he said, was to discover how 'all forces of nature are interlaced and interwoven' -- how organic and inorganic nature interacted." In her beautifully researched biography, *The Invention of Nature*, Andrea Wulf recounts Humboldt's learning process through mind-opening travel and how an enormous stamina and capacity for work, powers of observation, meticulous record-keeping, agile mind, and prodigious writings transformed the former Prince of Empiricism into the Father of Ecology. Following are some excerpts:

"The book was called *Essay on the Geography of Plants*, and was published in French and German. . . . The three-foot by two-foot hand-coloured engraving was a large fold-out and showed the correlation of climate zones and plants according to latitude and altitude. . . . In previous centuries, botany had been ruled by the concept of classification, . . . [and] plants ordered in their relationship to humankind, . . . such as medicinal and ornamental, or according to their smell, taste, and edibility. . . . Linnaeus had revolutionized this concept with his so-called sexual system, classifying the world of flowering plants based on the number of reproductive organs in the plants -- the pistils and

stamens, . . . but botanists remained wedded to the idea that taxonomy was the supreme ruler of their discipline.

Humboldt promoted an entirely different understanding of nature. . . . Instead of looking only at an organism, Humboldt now presented relationships between plants, climate, and geography. Plants were grouped into zones and regions rather than taxonomic units. In the *Essay* Humboldt explained the idea of vegetation zones -- 'long bands' as he called them -- that were slung across the globe. . . . Humboldt plaited together the cultural, biological, and physical world, and painted a picture of global patterns.

Over thousands of years crops, grains, vegetables, and fruits had followed the footpaths of humankind. As humans crossed continents and oceans, they had brought plants with them and thereby had changed the face of the earth. Agriculture linked plants to politics and economy. Wars had been fought over plants, and empires were shaped by tea, sugar, and tobacco. Some plants told him as much about humankind as about nature itself, while other plants gave Humboldt an insight into geology as they revealed how continents had shifted. The similarities of their coastal plants, Humboldt wrote, showed an 'ancient' connection between Africa and South America as well as illustrating how islands that were previously linked were now separated -- an incredible conclusion more than a century before scientists had even begun to discuss continental movements and

the theory of shifting tectonic plates. Humboldt 'read' plants as others did books -- and to him they revealed a global force behind nature, the movements of civilizations as well as of landmass.

[In the Aragua Valley around Lake Valencia, present-day Venezuela], the locals told Humboldt the lake's water levels were falling rapidly. Vast swathes of land that only two decades earlier had been under water were now densely cultivated fields. What had once been islands were now hillocks on dry land as the shoreline continued to recede. Humboldt concluded that the clearing of the surrounding forests, as well as the diversion of water for irrigation, had caused the falling water levels. As agriculture had flourished in the valley, planters had drained and diverted some of the brooks that fed into the lake to irrigate their fields. They had felled trees to clear land, and with it the forest's undergrowth -- moss, brushwood, and root systems -- had disappeared, leaving the soils beneath exposed to the elements and incapable of water retention. . . . The dryness of the land had increased in tandem with the clearing of ancient groves. . . . Now, with the trees felled, heavy rains had washed away the soil. All this was 'closely connected,' Humboldt concluded, because in the past the forests had shielded the soil from the sun and thereby diminished the evaporation of the moisture. . . . It was here, at Lake Valencia, that Humboldt developed his idea of human-induced climate change."

Spring Activities Jim Domke

Hi there,

It all started with the Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve scheduling a Beginner Bird Watch and seeing the announcement on the recreation centers Community Bulletin Board. Asking if it could be moved to a more visible location and being told the other flyers are only for the Arlington Park and Rec Dept. But the volunteer groups for Southwest Nature Preserve, Wildscape in Veterans Park and Friends of O.S. Gray are part of the Park and Rec Department. Aren't they? The response was "okay who do we call at the administration building?"

I went to the Naturally Fun website and looked at their calendar. No mention of events or the existence of the city volunteer groups! So I worked up this list:

May 2019 activities at the Arlington Parks and Recreation volunteer groups.

Nature lovers are welcome. Learn about native plants and wildlife in Arlington.

Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve:

April meeting moved to April 27 for the City Nature Challenge on Saturday afternoon with volunteers offering to guide residents. Focusing on finding and documenting native plants and wildlife, they need all the eyes and ears for the winning recognition on the Nature Challenge. Starts at 2:30 with a trail walk followed by a survey at the fishing pier at 3:00 pm, and ending at the pollinator meadow at 4:00 pm. You'll need the Free iNaturalist cell-phone app available at [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).

Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve May meeting May 21 at 7:00p.m., there will be a presentation by Heather Bass, native landscaping consultant for BRIT in Fort Worth.

Meeting the third Tuesday of every month at the Community Room at the Arlington Police Department's West District Service Center at 2060 W Green Oaks Blvd.

Facebook page: Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve or www.swnp.org

Friends of O. S. Gray Natural Area – 2021 W Abram St

Facebook page: The Friends of O. S. Gray Natural Area

Community Day on the second Saturday each month (weather permitting). Special events during the year include: *Chalk the Walk* and *Star Gazing & Storytelling*. Follow Friends on their Facebook page.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape in Veterans Park volunteers

May's meeting on Saturday, May 4 will be helping at the Native Plant Society's Spring Plant Sale at River Legacy Park from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm.

Facebook page: the Molly Hollar Wildscape or www.thewildscape.org (full of helpful information and links to groups in Tarrant county)

Celebrating their 25th year, volunteers meet at the Wildscape (go to second parking lot on Spanish Trail) at 9:00 am on first Saturday of every month to do maintenance and planting, then listen to a presentation at 11:00 am.

They also maintain plants in a greenhouse at Randol Mill Park on Wednesdays.

Jim Domke

jim.domke@gmail.com

In Case You Missed It Grace Darling



Follow the money. (From *Reveal*, online publication of *The Center for Investigative Reporting*, by Elizabeth Shogren, April 8, 2019): Under Republican and Democratic presidents from Nixon through Obama, killing migratory birds, even inadvertently, was a crime, with fines for violations ranging from \$250 to \$100 million. But not anymore. Newly confirmed Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt has adopted a December 2017 [legal opinion](#) that declared the [1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) applies only when companies kill birds on purpose.



Bernhardt, a former industry lawyer, played an important role in directing the new interpretation. At least one of Bernhardt's former clients, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, pushed for the change. But Bernhardt did not consider it a conflict of interest to work on the issue.

In the past, companies have paid enormous fines under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. For instance, in 2010, the Deepwater Horizon rig explosion killed 11 people and triggered an 87-day oil gusher in the Gulf of Mexico. Scientists estimate hundreds of thousands of birds were killed. BP agreed to pay \$100 million for criminal violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



Millions of birds die every year due to [waste pits](#) for mines and oil fields, electric power lines, wind turbines, communications towers, and commercial fishing. The threat of prosecutions and fines was a powerful tool to encourage industries to figure out ways to avoid killing birds. Oil companies put nets over waste pits. Electric companies separated wires so eagles and other raptors wouldn't get electrocuted. Fishing crews put weights on the long lines so birds wouldn't get drowned when they dove for the bait. Many birds were saved.

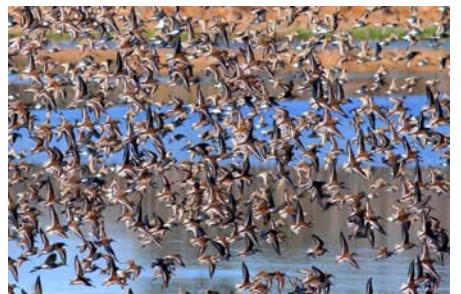
Scientists caution that weakening the Migratory Bird Treaty Act imperils many types of birds that

are endangered or declining in numbers, and it also eliminates an important source of wetlands restoration funding: penalties paid by violators.



Restored wetlands help bolster fish and shellfish, clean water, and protect people from big storms.

"It will unravel a lot of progress over the past several decades," said a Canadian professor. "Those conservation efforts are benefiting birds, sure. But they're also benefiting many other species that are using coastal habitats, and they're also benefiting people," said a Cornell University scientist. Doing away with the fines "actually could be putting other communities at risk from storm surges and other negative environmental impacts," she added.



continued on page 16

In Case You Missed It continued from page 15



Let's keep on breathing. (From *The Guardian*, by Emily Holden, April 24, 2019): Air quality in the U.S. has been improving since the 1970s (due to pollution laws like the 1970 Clean Air Act and the use of less coal and more natural gas), but that progress may be backsliding and 43% of Americans are now living in places where they are breathing unsafe air, according to the American Lung Association's annual assessment of government data. Deaths from air pollution in the U.S. were cut in half between 1990 and 2010, but still accounted for one out of every 35 deaths — more than from traffic accidents and shootings combined, according to one 2018 study.



Both smog and particle pollution are linked with breathing problems, lung and heart complications and early deaths. Smog occurs when sunlight reacts with gases from cars and power plants. Particle pollution also comes from

burning fossil fuels, as well as from burning wood in fireplaces or stoves, and from wildfires. As temperatures rise, wildfires are getting worse and spewing smoke across the west. Worse droughts could also lead to more wind-blown dust. And more smog, or ozone, is forming on warmer days. For the three hottest years on record, 2015 through 2017, about 141 million people lived in counties that saw unhealthy levels of particle pollution or unhealthy levels of smog. That is 7 million more people than in the group's last report. "We're seeing in this year's report the impacts of climate change on air quality in really stunning terms," said Paul Billings, a vice-president for the association.



It's not all bad news. (From *HowStuffWorks.com*, by Jamie Allen, January 10, 2019): Five positive environmental stories from 2018 are summarized on this website, annotated as follows:

5. The ozone is healing.
4. The second-largest coral reef (off the coast of Belize) is no longer endangered.
3. Bans on plastic are happening everywhere.
2. Swiss businessman donates \$1 billion to support local conservation efforts around the world, push for land and ocean protection,



raise public awareness about the importance of conservation, and to fund scientific studies to identify the best strategies to reach his target. In an op-ed he penned in *The New York Times*, Hansjorg Wyss said he was inspired to donate the money by the National Parks Service in the U.S., which has helped preserve 15% of the Earth's lands and 7% of its oceans since Yellowstone was named the world's first national park.

1. China is winning war on pollution. It wasn't long ago that China, the most populous country in the world, was making news for apocalyptic pollution days that browned out the sun. Now, just 4 years after Chinese premier Li Keqiang declared war on pollution, the country has seen astounding success. Recent studies show China's cities and rural areas "have cut concentrations of fine particulates in the air by 32% on average." That beats the 20% average reduction in U.S. air pollution following 1970's Clean Air Act. China's quick and effective work is leading to projections of longer lifespans, not to mention the corollary: improved health for citizens.

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How did you hear about us? _____

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Editor John Darling
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POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

May Meeting

Wednesday, May 1, 7 pm

[re]Brary, rooms A&B (first floor, just inside main doors)
George V. Hawkes Central Library, 100 S Center Street

Before Arlington:

Indians, Militiamen, Pioneers and Traders

James Blackshear