

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 6

JUNE 2019



Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve
Photo by Wes Miller

**Fielder
Museum**

June
June Meeting
Friends of the Parks:
Successes and Challenges
in Arlington's Best Public Natural Areas
Wednesday, June 5, 7 pm
Fielder House Museum

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

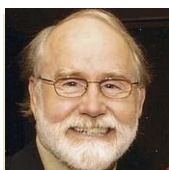
Our June meeting is all about Friends of the Parks. ACC's top 2019 priority, as you may already know, is to connect, support, and enhance Friends of the Parks groups in Arlington. For our first step with this priority, each Friends group representative will talk for about 7 minutes about their park, their projects, successes, issues, and plans. After all the presentations, we will have a short question-and-answer session and discuss what future efforts are needed.

The purpose of this meeting is to inform ACC members and friends about our most valuable parks and to discuss coordinated steps that could be taken to assist Friends groups in future projects. Invitees include representatives from the Blackland Prairie, Crystal Canyon, O.S. Gray, Randol Mill Park, River Legacy, Southwest Nature Preserve, and the Molly Hollar Wildscape.

Please join us for this fast-paced and informative look into Arlington Parks and their Friends groups.

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From the President

Dick Schoech

My message this month is to encourage your participation in ACC's 4th of July parade float. You might remember that ACC won the prize for the best parade float in 2017 and first prize in the noncommercial division in 2018. So ACC's float has a big reputation to uphold. The challenge is not simple since all materials on the float are recycled and recyclable.

In addition, the float must be beautiful, educate the public about the environment and sustainability, and hold up our prize-winning tradition. But these challenges are just what get ACC members excited.



Marian Hiler is ACC's creative genius and overall design expert who will translate this year's parade theme, Happy Birthday USA, into a float that is beautiful, educational, and prize winning. Mike Kolanko will supervise the float's construction by many volunteers in his backyard. Danny Kocurek will provide a lot of materials, get the recycled paint from the Environmental Collection Center, and dumpster dive for anything no one else can bring or find. Many others are involved in multiple ways, such as picking up soda straws of the needed colors, wires, and drink cans that are fashioned into bird feathers, wildflower petals, and anything else on Marian's "must have" list. The final construction effort involves painting, gluing, finding the trailer, screwing together the float scene structure from junk wood/cardboard and other junk, installing the decorations, finding a reliable truck to pull the float, etc.

The final work, after everyone is nearly exhausted, is to walk in the parade, look good, wave to the crowd, and survive the weather

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

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Why'd we plant that boring shrubby tree?

Once a year we remember:
Roughleaf dogwood!

We were so smart to do that.

Simplified Recycling Starts Today

Our Council of Governments (NCTCOG) launched the Regional Recycling Educational Campaign today! Thanks to all participants for helping to clarify the recycling message across the region.

[TimetoRecycle](#) will be the hub for NCTCOG's promotional activities.

The "Do You Know What to Throw?" quiz is central to the campaign efforts and [can be found here](#).

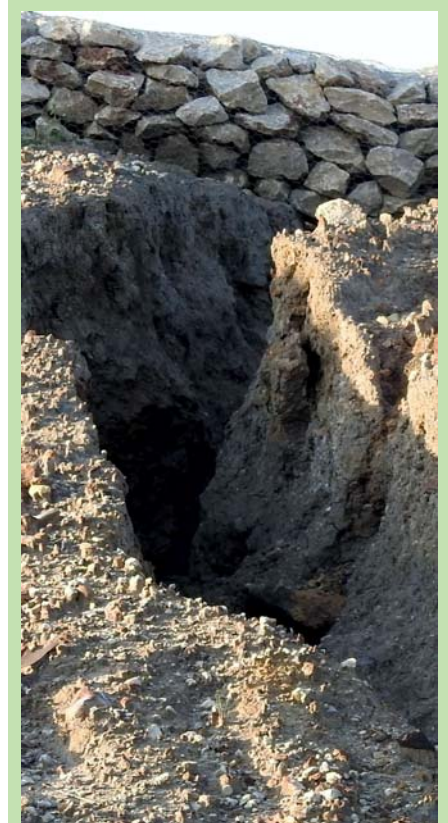
Fiery Searcher a Good Neighbor

Ann Knudsen found this beautiful ground beetle at the wildscape recently and was fast enough to get the shot. This agile, mostly nocturnal predator is found all over the country and is valued for its ability to consume large numbers of caterpillars, including many considered to be pests. Even the larvae eat caterpillars voraciously. Adults can inflict a painful bite with



their large jaws and are known to emit a foul chemical when handled. You can easily guess the best advice: Admire but don't touch.

Visit us on the Web
www.acctexas.org



South slope of Mt Viridian: Still here (so far), still crushing trees and increasing flooding in River Legacy Park along FM 157. Lately we're hearing about the absence of permits required to make this mess.

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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: The question is, where can I put the last few bits?

A: Right here.

Bees: Go to [this site](#) and you will be rewarded with a wealth of information on bees, not to mention terrific bee portraits.

Some very unusual nature writing: You will find a dramatic, lyrical tribute to several unpopular creatures in [Praise Song for the Unloved Animals](#) by Margaret Renkl. Never seen anything like it.

Julie Thibodeaux, Julie Ryan: The Texas chapter of the Sierra Club has honored managing editor Thibodeaux and reporter Ryan with its [Environmental Reporting Award](#). They both work for Green Source DFW, whose weekly bulletins you ought to be reading if you're not already.

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Wild Birds Unlimited
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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GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

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

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SPARROW NEST

The sparrows' giddy enthusiasm
 For endless mating
 Makes them see the sloping shingles
 Over the patio door
 As a perfect platform for nest building.

Straw, grass, plastic, rags,
 Flower stalks, fur,
 All get dragged across the lawn
 And up the house side
 To be jammed among the
 Rest of the mess—
 Beautiful in bird brains as
 Superb spring housing.

Then begins egg hatching
 In the heart of the bulging bundle.

Many roll and go
 Splat on the concrete six feet below;
 Occasionally the entire nest
 Slides suddenly free,
 Spends a moment in the air
 And startles a lurching squirrel
 When it lands.

But sometimes even
 Silly birds get it right
 And shelter naked nestlings
 Snug from storms
 Until it's time for flight.

* * *

Only I lament awhile
 The flight school failures
 Who crash onto the steps
 And give them decent burial
 In the compost pile.

©2002 John I. Blair

From the President continued from page 3

which is typically rain or intense heat. If you'd like to be involved in this challenging but rewarding 4th of July float effort, email info@acctexas.org.

If you cannot participate in this major ACC community education effort, consider helping these other ACC 2019 priorities:

- Work to connect, enhance, and advocate for “Friends of The Parks” and similar groups
- Work to reduce plastic pollution in our environment, e.g., bags, cups, and straws
- Work to develop Arlington actions on climate change
- Work to prevent monarch butterfly extinction

Again, email info@acctexas.org if you can help.

The Loquacious Tree Hugger

Two points carried over from last month:

1. The text was a haiku intended to demonstrate the sensitive, poetic side of Mr Terse Tree Hugger. Either we lack haiku fans or the multitudes were too intimidated by the erudite display to applaud. Or to react in any way at all. No more haiku for you. You had your chance.
2. Following a suggestion that the remarkable tree was, in fact, deceased, TTH returned to photograph its canopy and found a sad sight. Now you'll just have to take his word for it: That old elm was not exactly lush in May, but it deserved better.



Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve

photos by Wes Miller



More Bits

ANTS

The ants go marching by
Along a metal tube,
Hundreds of tiny beasts,
Head to tail west,
Tail to head east.

I've watched them
These weeks past,
Not knowing where
They're coming from
Or where they're going.

Oh I can see
The caravan extends
Into a hole beneath
The house roof,
No doubt a nest

Where ant queens rule,
Laying myriad eggs,
Trusting six-legged serfs
To bring food, guard,
Build, mend, clean, dig.

And at the other end?
What deeds of foraging
Take place? Loads of seeds?
Pet chow chomped?
June bugs dismembered?

I could sit here hours,
Days, months, years
And not be noticed
Or simply be avoided
While ant life persists,

If not for each (ant lives
I think ephemeral are),
Then for their myrmex universe
Where I am merely something big
That blocks the road.

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Thanks to Our Last Speaker



ACC President Dick Schoech (left) with
Dr James Blackshear at the May meeting

Last month's ACC meeting was a big success. Members and many guests filled the Central Library's large room to hear Dr James Blackshear present, "Before Arlington: Indians, Militiamen, Pioneers and Traders." We enjoyed a sweeping, complex story of the many indigenous peoples and cultures that occu-



A trio of authorities on local history: left to right, Geraldine Mills, Executive Director, Arlington Historical Society; Dr James Blackshear; O.K. Carter, author, columnist and historian

Photos by Carol Marcotte

ried our area long before outsiders appeared and learned how they managed to support surprisingly large populations without damaging the region's natural resources. Of course, the appearance of early settlers changed everything, with the ravages of disease and armed conflict.

We're indebted to Dr Blackshear for his expert and engaging presentation.



Randol Mill Park Cleanup Carol Marcotte

On Saturday, May 4, three ACC members along with other neighbors of Randol Mill Park came together to clean trash from the Randol Mill Park and creek.

It's an annual event organized by long time ACC member, Joanne Stewart. Participating ACC members are Joanne Stewart, Jon Stewart and Carol Marcotte.

As a member of ACC, you can appreciate all the hard work and planning to make such events happen. Volunteers for the event are always welcome. Thank you, Joanne!



Joanne Stewart (seated), Jon Stewart, and Carol Marcotte at the cleanup

The Arlington Environmental Hall of Fame

At the corner of Park Row and Pecan a large piece of city land was once a casual dump, then for decades an overgrown weedy patch. Years ago, our Parks people made this land into a wildflower area. They contended with ferocious Johnson grass and unhappy neighbors for several seasons, then simply mowed it all, a lot. But this year someone decided to mow around two spots and they are overflowing with native wildflowers. A simple decision and a very happy result.



Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

While President Trump and Nancy Pelosi talk about infrastructure, the wildscape is acting on it.

Arlington Parks Department champions Martin Sanchez and Michael Debrecht walked through the wildscape in mid-May. They staked out the location of nine new interpretive trail signs and told Ann Knudsen and Jane Oosterhuis that the kiosks will be made of cedar, which should last 20 years.

The department's Tom Olsen on May 22 unveiled the pedestals for the new signs. The colorful signs will describe things people might see at that location.



Tom Olsen, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, unwraps the pedestal for a new interpretive sign at the overlook.

The movable signs asking visitors to "Please Stay Off the Plants" have been so successful that 10 are on order to replace lost or damaged ones. The signs can be placed where plants are blooming to remind people to stay on the trail and not get all trample-y.

A new **photo site** is planned for fall installation. This will give professional and amateur photographers a backdrop for beautiful outdoor pictures, with a place for the subject to stand or sit with seasonal flowers all around. This has the potential to be a combined effort between wildscape volunteers and the Boy Scouts.

Next month, Angel Garza of Boy Scout Troop 638 will earn his Eagle Badge building a replacement bridge in the seasonal wetland area near the pavilion. Angel has committed to another Eagle Scout project to create two rain gardens in the erosion area. The scouts are a very valuable asset for the city and the wildscape. (Correction from April: Eagle Scout project leader Aiden Martinez is 18 years old.)

The memorial for devoted wildscape volunteer Sharon Schoech will be in the woodland area near the north entrance. Boulders in a semicircle on a floor of decomposed granite will create a space where children can sit to hear a

presentation or have a snack. Dick Schoech will make a donation to cover expenses. No plaque, just a wonderful memory.

In addition to all of the activity at the wildscape, the annual Fielder House Museum Plant Sale on April 27 was a great success, moving almost 500 plants provided by the wildscape greenhouse, Gailon Hardin's home garden and Josephine Keeney's home garden. The event began at 10 am, and by 11:30 half of the plants were headed to a new home. Net proceeds of nearly \$468 benefit the wildscape treasury. Thanks go to the volunteers who hustled the plants: Charlie Amos, Phil Baloga, Kay Dansby, Gailon Hardin, Josephine Keeney, Frank Keeney, Kay Sekio, and cashier Hester Schwarzer.



Happy plant sale organizers left to right, Jane Oosterhuis, Josephine Keeney, and Kay Sekio.

Weeds have taken advantage of the rain to proliferate with treacherous vigor. The choices are to view the onslaught in dismay or dig in and pull the villains

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Wildscape Update continued from page 10

out. For wildscape volunteers there is really only one way. Dig in and pull out.

Joe Martinez faced the challenge of hauling off the mountains of weeds with strength and ingenuity. He pushed this pile, at least twice, uphill past the stones that hold the dirt path and over to the grassy area where the city mulches them with the grass when the area is mowed.

Right, BEFORE: Marylee Thomason eyes the daunting sea of false carrot

Below, AFTER: The small army cleaned up everything but poison ivy in the infested area

Left to right, Josephine Keeney, Marylee Thomason, Joe Martinez, Sherri McGinnis, Ann Knudsen, Jane Oosterhuis, Rosalie Rogers



Right, Joe Martinez with loaded wheelbarrow. No hill for a wildscaper.

Photos this month by Josephine Keeney, Ann Knudsen, Kay Sekio, and Marylee Thomason



Many Thanks to Idlewild Botanical Marian Hiler

We mourned when Redenta's Garden Shop closed its Arlington doors last year. But luckily for us, Jennifer and Michael Greathouse discovered that the property was available and made it their own, opening Idlewild Botanical last fall. From the get-go this new treasure in organic gardening has been passionately involved in making the environment better. It not only sells organics with an emphasis on native plants but it has been providing activities to encourage kids to connect with the natural world. Projects like spring break camps with planting activities for kids. Or a butterfly garden at their daughter's school where the kids are involved in the planting, learning about which plants attract butterflies.

I witnessed that passion first hand when I visited Jennifer to pick up a generous donation from Idlewild Botanical. She donated 10% of sales during this year's earth week. Jennifer said that she picked ACC for the earth week donation because she liked ACC's Focus naturalist photo contest though she realized we didn't do it last year. She knows there are a lot of groups that deal with protection of areas but she really wants to support a group that's providing more education, especially for kids. She said most kids nowadays have zero understand-

ing of the natural environment. "If they don't understand it, then they're not going to protect it."

A big part of Jennifer's motivation is her 8-year-old daughter who has developed that same passion. As Jennifer and I were talking, her daughter brought over a white flower petal from a pineapple guava tree. After watching a young squirrel going from bloom to bloom eating the petals she decided to give one a try. She said it tasted "cinnamony" so wanted her mom to try it, too. It's that type of curiosity Jennifer wants to instill in other children.

Thanks to Idlewild Botanical's donation, ACC's board will be discussing what more the group can do to expand its educational activities. Perhaps by organizing a series of different one-hour classes for kids, e.g., nature photography; birding for kids; good bugs vs bad bugs. If this piques your interest please let us know.

Give Idlewild Botanical a visit. Let them know how much you appreciate its donation and what they're doing for our natural world.



Lucy Harrell organic gardening class



Sarah Chapman, general manager



All Bottled Up

Two photos in search of a category: Walk of Fame? Or maybe better, Reduce Reuse, Recycle. Marian Hiler imagined this whimsical walk of upside-down bottles embedded in something or other, and she got Mike Kolanko to install it in her front yard. Wonderful use of glass, something recyclers don't value anyway. But somebody had to empty about 1150 soda and beer bottles. Not to mention assorted tumblers, jars, and olive oil bottles.

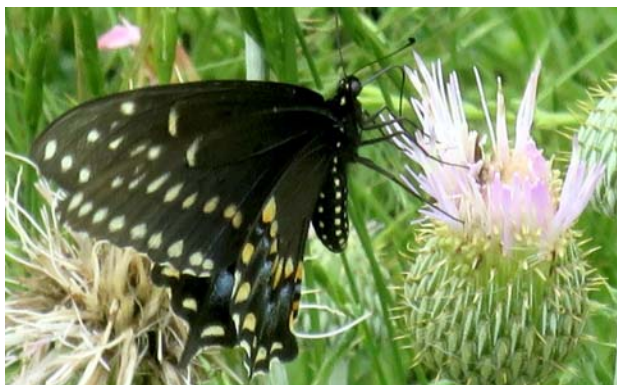


2019 City Nature Challenge

It's amazing: DFW placed 7th in number of observations among about 160 sites worldwide in this year's City Nature Challenge. And we documented over 2600 species. There's a big warm glow coming from this international effort to connect people everywhere with nature, and it's great to be part of it.

Below, black swallowtail. Photo by Dick Schoech, Stella Rowan Prairie.

City	Observations	Species	People
"La Paz, Brazil"	46931	3005	1500
"San Diego County, CA, USA"	38241	3019	1188
"San Francisco Bay Area, CA, USA"	38028	3183	1947
"Tena, Ecuador"	37965	2653	1185
"Klang Valley, Malaysia"	37916	3020	518
"Quito, Ecuador"	36401	666	1372
"Dallas - Fort Worth, TX, USA"	36370	2637	1008
"Los Angeles County, CA, USA"	34125	3249	1555
"Hong Kong SAR, China"	31144	3596	1128
"Washington, D.C., USA"	29942	2258	1258
"Mazatlán, Mexico"	27684	2500	511



City Nature Challenge 2019



Largest citizen science competition in the world

- 160+ cities
- 6 continents

Anticipating...

- 25,000+ participants
- 750,000+ observations
- 20,000+ species

Competing for the most...

- observations
- participants
- number of species



Hard Work on Johnson Creek

It was years ago that officials decided to begin major flood control measures on Johnson Creek near Six Flags and the baseball and football stadiums. Of course that's where the expensive real estate is, but it's downstream, near the end of the creek's path through the city. To a nonprofessional this decision felt backwards. You can fix the downstream part, but you haven't dealt with several miles of upstream erosion and tons of silt carried by heavy rains and dropped somewhere.

A couple of small projects did happen, especially the reshaping of the streambed and storage ponds at the Center/Mesquite bridges. The work looked simple: Make the bed wide so rushing stormwater slows and drops its load of silt and trash while some water is stored and the rest flows gently away.

But that wide bed must be maintained, especially if there are miles of rapidly eroding stretches upstream. It seems as if no maintenance has occurred since the bridges project first went in, and a lot of that wide channel has silted up so that neighbors just downstream are still losing property as the creek continues to cut away its banks. In May workers made a start on removing silt but at last look more heavy rain had interrupted the work.

The need is clear, but there's a sad environmental side effect to the maintenance. Over the years plants have colonized the area and some trees have grown large, giving us a bit of riparian habitat used by birds and even occasional beavers and foxes.

But what about a bigger solution? Back in the heyday of Johnson Creek planning, there was a beautiful proposal for one or more major storage ponds in Vandergriff Park, a spot that seems strategically located to help with flood control and downstream siltation. And Vandergriff Park has one huge environmental advantage: Even drastic reshaping of the channel there would not involve knocking down trees.

Would that solve the Johnson Creek problem? Probably not; there should be more buyouts and maybe other projects, but it should be a good start.



In Case You Missed It — Energy Stories Grace Darling



The rollout of Illinois' **Clean Energy Jobs Act** (CEJA) has focused attention on the bill's four main pillars: a 100% renewable energy target by 2050, the decarbonization of the state's power sector by 2030, the **electrification** of the transportation sector, and a focus on **equity and economic justice**. But there's a hidden gem of an opportunity in the bill that is just as promising as solar panels and electric cars: energy efficiency. Energy efficiency programs and technology are among the most cost-effective routes to lower climate emissions and energy bills. And just like solar, wind, and other clean energy tools, it's a **job creator**. One of the greatest opportunities for energy efficiency is in low-

income home retrofits. CEJA includes a new Health and Safety Fund that will supplement necessary improvements so low-income residential and non-profit buildings don't miss out on important efficiency opportunities because of budget concerns. The legislation also calls for more program bundling and closer coordination of energy efficiency, Illinois Solar for All, and electrification incentives with low-income assistance programs and utility hardship programs. This coordinated strategy will better serve the people who need help the most. *(By Christie Hicks and Andrew Barbeau, EDF Blogs, May 30, 2019)*

A recent **EPA report** titled **Quantifying the Multiple Benefits of Energy Efficiency and Renew-**

able Energy--A Guide for State and Local Governments aims to describe and explain the economic and societal value of these benefits so that they are considered along with costs. The original 2010 version was the first to organize and present a comprehensive review of the multiple benefits of clean energy and the methods available to quantify them. In this follow-up, the Guide shows policy makers and analysts how to measure the direct electricity, electricity system, emissions, health, and economic benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy; provides detailed information about a range of methods for quantifying each of these benefits, with key considerations and help-



Inefficiencies in Energy Extraction and Use

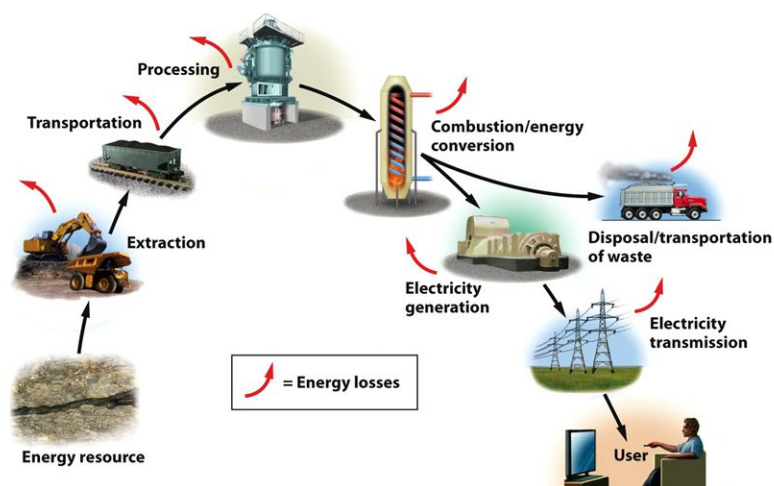


Figure 12.5
Environmental Science
© 2012 W. H. Freeman and Company

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In Case You Missed It continued from page 15

ful tips for choosing the methods; and includes case studies of state and local energy efficiency and renewable energy policies, programs, and investments with a list of tools and resources available for each type. This is a must-read for all city officials charged with energy management.



Electric utilities that operate nuclear plants are boasting of being "carbon free" by mid-century. They insist that their aging nuclear plants must be part of the equation to keep costs down. But even though Japan

closed most of its reactors after Fukushima, carbon emissions went down, because the Japanese ramped up energy efficiency and [solar](#) investments. "It turns out that relying on nuclear energy is actually a bad strategy for combating climate change," wrote a former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. "One accident wiped out Japan's carbon gains. Only a turn to renewables and conservation brought the country back on target." Dr. Gregory Jaczko describes the pervasive political influence of the nuclear power industry in Congress and among his fellow commissioners. Their opposition derailed much of the safety measures he proposed in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. In



Kyocera TCL Solar Inaugurates Floating Mega Solar Power Plants in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan.

2011 an investigative series by The Associated Press detailed the collusion between regulators and the industry to weaken safety standards to keep existing plants economically viable. Since Fukushima, Germany has ordered the shutdown of all nuclear plants by 2022. Japan has reopened only a few reactors. Even France, long a champion of nuclear power, is ramping down its nuclear fleet because of safety concerns. But in the U.S., the Trump administration and lawmakers in some states continue to support [taxpayer-financed subsidies](#) to bail out money-losing nuclear plants. On grounds of both economics and safety, that's a fool's bet.

(Gregory Jaczko is the author of Confessions of a Rogue Nuclear Regulator, founder of Wind Future LLC, and teaches at Georgetown University and Princeton University.)



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

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