

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

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SOUTHWEST NATURE PRESERVE • PHOTO BY BOB BRENNAN



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From the President

Dick Schoech

More 'New Normal': Living with Confusion and Uncertainty

My last two messages speculated how the “new normal” will look after COVID-19 subsides. The first message challenged unsustainable growth; the second praised the benefits of diversity. Now I find it difficult to think of the coronavirus subsiding anytime soon. Its persistent spread worldwide, even in countries that thought they had it under control, is frightening.

It's hard to say what's driving the second wave, if that's what this is. Small gatherings of friends and relatives along with super spreading individuals are certainly part of it. Infected children over 10 are likely to be asymptomatic and can spread the virus like an adult. Meanwhile, schools are trying to reopen, only to have hundreds in a district needing to self-quarantine. The president, governors, local officeholders, school boards and parents jostle to enforce their (often politicized) views. We debate mask effectiveness. We read research that suggests infectious particles can travel 16 feet. We learn that if you're close enough to smell garlic on someone's breath, you're close enough to catch the virus if he is infected. What next?

It's easy to become overwhelmed hearing conflicting information from allegedly reliable sources. What we believe determines how much we risk, but we're all struggling to balance our need for human contact with our need for safety. Risk tolerance is a critical, personal calculation as orders to stay home, wear a mask and social distance all disrupt how we enjoy life.

Rallying around a message that unites everyone to mask up for the neighbors is a hard sell, even among those known for being neighborly. Environmentalists like ACC members are some of the nicest but orneriest folks around. However, you don't know if your environmental friends are as risk averse as you, or if they have given up and have increased their risk taking. If you ask, often people exaggerate a low-risk lifestyle to not offend you and to keep you as a friend.

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

Bits & Pieces

The terse treehugger

Dark Sky lights?

Nope, not here.

We must want them way too bright and right in our faces.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org

Update for Arlington Tree Ordinance



Star-Telegram, July 29: City Council's Environmental Task Force and others are working on changes to our 1994 tree ordinance that could provide long overdue protection for trees in the path of development, especially post oaks. We might see bigger penalties for removing trees of even smaller size than those currently considered, and post oaks could receive extra incentives. [View presentation here](#). Look for a vote in late fall, and consider letting the mayor and all of your council members know what you think soon.



Bare-bottom sunburst lichen

We're Contaminated

A recent study gives us depressing information on how bad we are at recycling. And our region has gotten worse over time, adding things like garden hoses, plastic bags and dirty food containers. The study found that almost 22% of our recycling is so contaminated that for every five tons of recyclables collected, one ton must be wasted in a landfill. The "Know What to Throw" campaign aims to simplify recycling, but this looks like a long, hard road.



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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: You have not mentioned the garden guru, Neil Sperry, for some time. Have you become a fan at last?

A: Perfect timing for this inquiry. In his Aug. 28 *Star-Telegram* column, Mr Sperry warns us urgently about acting now to eliminate annual grasses and broad-leaved weeds from our lawns next spring. He recommends three products — Halts, Dimension and Balan — to give us a perfect lawn. A quick look at their EPA labels yields a number of differences. But in terms of hazards we see common themes exemplified by such phrases as “have a worker sip water if able to swallow,” “in case of contact call a poison control center immediately,” “toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates,” “do not apply to water,” “drift and runoff may be hazardous to aquatic organisms.” Looks like a high price for the perfect lawn that no one needs — and a thing we squander precious water on with no regard for the enormous environmental consequences. (See page 21.)



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

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mimatexas.com
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From the President continued from page 3

Luckily for environmentalists, science supports immersing in the outdoors. It puts you in a better mood to be kind to yourself, your pets, your home, your yard and everything else. Hiking by yourself or with a friend while wearing a mask and social distancing is a low-risk way to satisfy physical, mental and social needs at the same time. Hike around your house, your neighborhood, or in a state or national park. Hopefully, further research will not suggest that we wear a well-designed mask and social distance 16 feet apart from friends outdoors. If need be,

though, environmentalists will find activities for such socializing. Now might be the time to learn the art of walking meditation. [More here.](#)

So, our new normal may mean living with confusion from conflicting information about cherished behaviors. Remember what your driver's ed teacher told you: *Focus on the driver who's behind the driver who's in front of you.* Use the environment to help you stay in shape because as Bill Gates warned, finding the new normal may be a long-term struggle:

A global crisis has shocked the world. It is causing a tragic number of deaths, making people afraid to leave home, and leading to economic hardship not seen in many generations. Its effects are rippling across the world. Obviously, I am talking about COVID-19. But in just a few decades, the same description will fit another global crisis: climate change. As awful as this pandemic is, climate change could be worse. The loss of life and economic misery caused by this pandemic are on par with what will happen regularly if we do not eliminate the world's carbon emissions.

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/Energy/Climate-and-COVID-19>

The Watchdog Needs You watchdog@acctexas.org

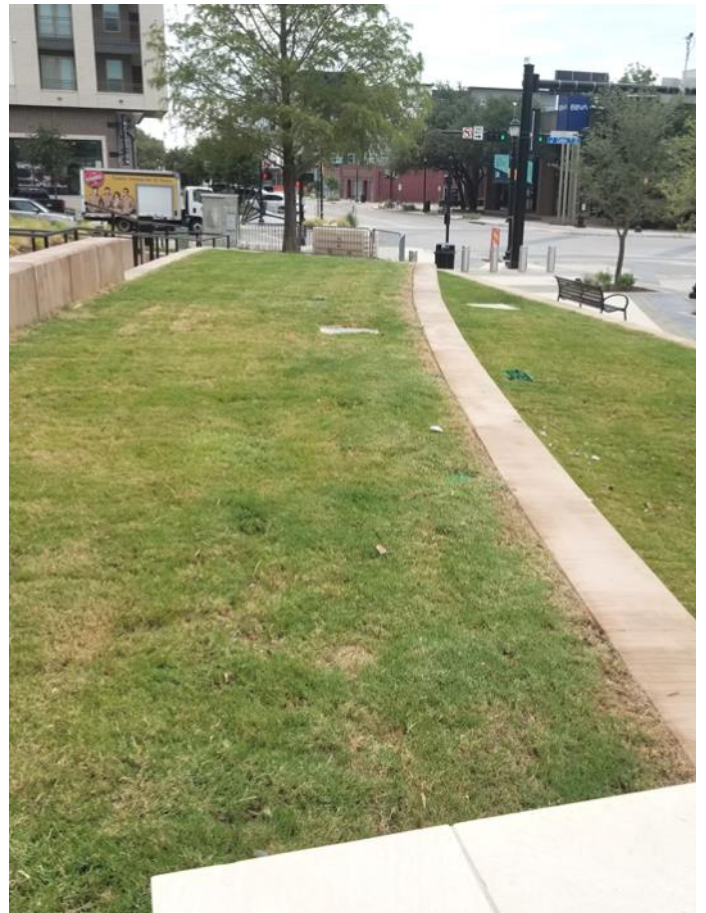
**We try hard, but we can't keep up with every environmental thing.
So if you see something we should know about, send an email message to the watchdog.**



City Hall Landscape John Darling



It's not fair to judge a landscape when planting is still in progress, but we can see some things at this stage: much more concrete, far fewer kinds of plants, and what seems to be an absence of natives. It looks like the concept behind this change can be summed up by something I heard when a pollinator garden was rejected: "They want to go in a different direction." By the way, City Hall is not curved. But when it comes to environmental matters, it's not exactly straight. *Below left*, old native plant beds. *Below right*, new planting, same general area.



Miscellaneous

Help Wanted with Environmental Questionnaire

Grace Darling

Nov. 3 will be here before you know it, and the start of early voting is even closer, Oct. 13. So what do you think about preparing and sending a brief questionnaire to aspiring city leaders to gauge their environmental credentials? I think it should be no more than 10 questions, direct and specific to our region, on issues of conservation and sustainability.

Here are the candidates and their districts, all over Arlington:

District 1: J.J. Fenceroy, Helen Moise

District 2: Jo Anna Cardoza, Raul Gonzalez

District 6 (at large): John D. Hibbs,
Ruby Faye Woolridge

District 7 (at large): Hunter Crow,
Chris Dobi” Dobson

Victoria Farrar-Myers, Antoine Lane

Let me know what you think. I can coordinate the assembling, editing and distribution of the questions if you'll send your submissions to me at darlingg@sbcglobal.net.

THREE WAYS OF LOOKING AT VULTURES

The great black vultures, stretching silent wings,
Soar across the hill on the morning breeze.
They drift above the trees, above the lake,
And look so natural in the world,
These graceful birds of death,
Thrilling to see, beautiful, and chilling.

Under the noon sky the woods spread lush and green
Around the trees where the vultures roost;
But these two trees are rotting,
And on the ground beneath
Everything reeks of death and digestion,
The awful and the necessary.

It's evening and the sun sinks
Toward the western hills.
In their ritual of farewell to the light
The vultures are spiraling
So high they rise nearly to the clouds.
They thrive by finding death,
But they give the dead back to the living land
And in their evening flight
Link the earth to the shining air.

John I. Blair, 3/25/2002

©2002 John I. Blair

The Hidden Menace of Paper Cups

They almost look like a benign kind of everyday litter, but all those paper coffee cups rolling around in the parking lot are hiding a nasty secret: they're lined with plastic so they can't be composted easily.

But that's only part of it. The EPA says that about 400 million paper cups are thrown away every day in this country. They can last in landfills for 500 years, and a lot of polluting energy goes into their production. Why are we doing this? Visit [this EPA site](#) for interesting information.



Green Oaks Preserve



About two months after our last look, the preserve is looking more organized. Almost all of the destroyed post oaks are gone, along with the mountains of chipped trees. And the slope is being flattened to make way for the houses, offices and, of course, the take-out restaurant and wedding chapel.



Eventually there will be plenty of green. Some highlights from the planting plan:

Crepe myrtle — 32
Nandina — 28
Mexican feather grass — 2,060
Chinese elm — 71
Live oak — 57
Dwarf yaupon — 127
Texas ash — 44
Bigtooth maple — 16
Bermuda grass — 203,786 square feet



Arlington Environmental Hall of Shame

Not spying on the neighbors, just out walking the demented mutts and hoping for positive newsletter fodder. But no such luck. Haven't we heard yet that plastic bags get tangled in the recyclable sorting machines? Here we're wasting a petroleum-based bag while hurting the struggling recycling business. And our carefully sorted recycling will be picked up and mixed with this junk. Enough junk and the whole truckload goes to the landfill. We must do better.



The latest rules (below) should also say **NO PLASTIC BAGS AT ALL. PERIOD.**



Accepted Materials

Ensure items are empty, clean and dry.[™]
Asegúrese de que los artículos estén vacíos, limpios y secos



REPUBLIC
SERVICES

We'll handle it from here.®



Paper & Cardboard

Cardboard (flattened), office paper, file folders, magazines, catalogs, newspaper and inserts, junk mail, telephone books, etc.
Cajas de cartón (desarmadas), papel de oficina, carpetas de archivos, revistas, catálogos, periódicos y folletos, directorios telefónicos, etc.



Aluminum/Metal

Aluminum, tin or steel cans, foil, pie tins
Latas de aluminio, hojalata o acero, papel de aluminio, bandejas de papel de aluminio



Cartons

Milk and juice cartons, aseptic containers
Cartones de leche y jugo, envases asepticos



Plastic

Plastic bottles, containers
Botellas y envases de plástico



Glass

Glass jars, bottles
Botellas y envases de vidrio



NOT ACCEPTED IN RECYCLING CONTAINER

NO ACEPTADOS EN CONTENEDORES DE RECICLAJE

NO plastic grocery bags
Bolsas de compras de plástico

NO food waste
Restos de alimentos
NO yard waste
Desechos de jardín

NO light bulbs, window glass or mirrors
Bombillas de luz, vidrio de ventanas o espejos

NO batteries
Baterías

NO ceramics or dishes
Cerámica o vajilla

NO oil containers of any kind
Recipientes de aceite de cualquier tipo

NO cellphones, computers or electronics
Celulares, computadoras o productos electrónicos

NO clothing
Ropa

NO styrofoam
Poliestireno

NO hazardous waste containers
Recipientes de desechos peligrosos

NO garden hoses
Mangueras de jardín

NO construction waste
Desechos de construcción

RepublicServices.com

Dream City Composting John Darling

We'll get to composting in a moment, but first let's say that you are a cynical old fool who has snapped under the weight of his city's environmental sins and can no longer tolerate the hypocrisy of his "Arlington Green Team" T-shirt. What's a treehugger to do? You can't donate it to Goodwill for fear of seeing it walking around spreading a falsehood. Can't burn it — CO₂ and particulates. So what's left? Why, composting, of course: You can make a meaningless statement while enriching the soil for your native plant beds. Perfect.



Counterclockwise from left:

1. It's a cotton shirt, so just add it to your dead leaves and water it.
2. Add more leaves for air spaces and water again, especially at this time of year.
3. That's a lot of carbon, so now add kitchen waste for nitrogen.
4. Finally, cover it all with more dead leaves.
5. In a week or so, turn your pile, mixing, fluffing and watering.
6. Keep it up, and in a while that shirt, like our environment, will be unrecognizable.



Cheesy Advertisement



Take this easy personality test: Would you rather be an acorn weevil or dog vomit slime mold?

Hint: Many believe that well over 99% of acorn weevils would belong to ACC, while only 3% of dog vomit slime molds ever consider membership.



Don't Be a Dog Vomit Slime Mold!

Join ACC!

**Use the form on the last page.
It might do some good, and anyway it can't hurt.**

Blackland Prairie Site

Photos by Guy Random



*Deep cracks in rock-hard soil.
Plants in every condition,
from spent and brittle to
prime of life. And somehow
in these mean days, so many
are just making their start.*



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



What were we doing in the Molly Hollar Wildscape in July? Watering and weeding and enjoying each other's company despite the heat and humidity.

This month Jerri Chapman and Jane Strittmatter, two MOD Squad Master Gardener interns, came to visit and fulfill their environmental hours.



Ann Knudsen gave Jerri Chapman a tour and showed off the second rain garden under construction.



In the rain garden, Olivia, a 9-year-old Merryhill School student, dug into the work with purpose, while Joe Martinez supervised. Head excavator Joe wrangled extra muscle from Eric Strickland and youngsters Olivia, Ethan, Nate and Lydia.

Master Gardener Angie Davis drove all the way from just this side of Weatherford to help weed, water and trim on two Wednesdays. She is a great worker and good company.



Angie Davis in stylish hat holding evidence of her weeding prowess.

Eric Strickland brought the Kubota again. He and Joe Martinez moved the big rocks into place in the planned photo opportunity spot. Decomposed granite will be placed around the rocks and blooming plants around the perimeter to give photographers a place to take pictures without their subjects trampling in flower beds.



They needed a little help from Olivia to pull the last rock into place.

The following week, Ann Knudsen expressed a desire to position the rocks at slightly varying angles. When the naysayers departed, Marylee Thomason and Olivia took up the challenge. They had to ask Joe Martinez not to help for fear of losing bragging rights.

continued on page 15

Wildscape Update continued from page 14



With Olivia wielding a pole for leverage and Marylee using it for shoving, the mighty-mites managed to reposition the heavy rocks.

The next week, they tipped the largest rock to a more comfortable sitting slant, but something was needed to stabilize it. Carol Marcotte took Olivia one direction while Ramona Gratton and Marylee went other places to forage for small stones.

Tireless volunteers Jane Oosterhuis and Josephine Keeney keep the butterfly garden looking like the envy of everyone who has tried to have one at home. Ramona Gratton, a returning

regular from earlier years, bolsters the watering brigade. Robin Agee and Debbie Stilson come whenever they can and do whatever needs doing.

It seems fitting to end with a message from Molly Hollar. Now living at Trinity Terrace in Fort Worth, Molly loves to see pictures of her friends working in the Wildscape, “my favorite place,” which she willed into being starting with a skeleton staff of two, herself and Julia Burgen, in 1994.

In one recent text she said, “Thanks to all of you great Wildscapers for braving heat, floods, and more to keep a beautiful habitat for our birds, butterflies and wild creatures for us to visit.” She especially wanted to tell everyone, “Thanks to all the great Wildscapers for keeping on volunteering to make our Wildscape even Better!!” Followed by a string of enthusiasm emojis! It’s how Molly talks about the Wildscape!



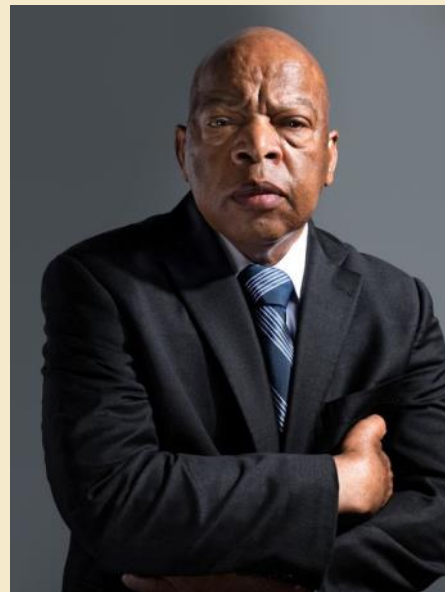
The butterfly garden, exuberant in kinder, wetter days.

You Should Know

We have heard a lot about the late John Lewis, but very little about his environmental legacy. There was much more to this outstanding man that we can admire as environmentalists. [This site](#) contains a fascinating appreciation that you definitely should read. It is said that he had a fine sense of humor, so maybe it's all right to place his photo near a special Windex bottle.



Not exactly local, but right under my nose in the kitchen: A [program](#) by SC Johnson to make Windex bottles that go a step beyond its 100% post-consumer bottles to something called ocean-bound plastic. The company is doing this in conjunction with [The Plastic Bank](#), which also sounds interesting. Of course there are critics, but look over the sites and see what you think. Real hope or a drop in the bucket?



Can't get enough of this topic: Trees sort of talk to each other. This [Treehugger site](#) might not appeal at first, but scroll down to the BBC video for a pleasant look at what appears to be happening in the forest beneath our feet.



It's horrible that wind turbines kill birds and bats, but [a study claims](#) that painting one blade black can reduce bird mortalities by 72%. While admitting that the number of deaths fluctuated considerably from year to year, there may be some encouragement in knowing that researchers are working on the problem. The article includes a discussion on why birds fly into turbines.

Texas Tree Showdown

Here's a thing you might find interesting from the Texas Chapter of the [International Society of Arboriculture](#). Jeremy Priest, Arlington's City Forester, helped set it up. The contest covered the whole state, and the trees were chosen from the [Texas Tree Planting Guide](#). Some small observations related to our area: It's such a shame that the post oak, our most important tree, is too difficult to make it into the *Tree Planting Guide*. Strangely, the guide includes several nonnative trees, including golden rain tree, which is listed as [invasive](#). In the bracket below, two of the oaks we should be planting lost immediately to the live oak. And last, is it possible that we are planting way too many live oaks to the detriment of badly needed tree diversity? (See page 9.) We don't know how Jeremy voted, but we can safely assume the best.



Southwest Nature Preserve

Friends of SWNP Events & Programs

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

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

Friends meetings, programs and activities continue to be on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We miss you and hope we can see you in person soon. Take care!

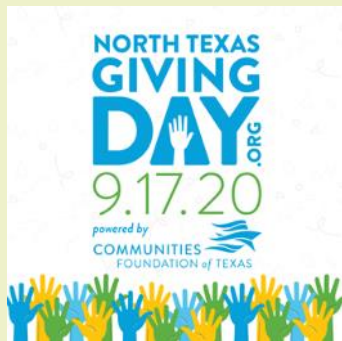
Sunday, Sept. 6, through Saturday, Sept. 12 Fall DFW Socially Distant Bioblitz



Participate in a [Fall DFW Socially Distant BioBlitz](#) using iNaturalist any time Sept. 6-12! This will be a local City Nature Challenge limited to the DFW area. While the competing areas (see link above) are based on the six local Master Naturalist chapter areas (see link above), you don't need to be a Master Naturalist to participate. You don't need to join any projects, either; observations made in these areas and on these dates will be added automatically to the project. Where and when you explore and observe are up to you! Celebrate the coming of fall: Get outside, find some wild organisms (no pet gerbils or potted caladiums, please) and have fun making some iNaturalist observations!

Thursday, September 17 North Texas Giving Day

The [Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve](#) are again participating in North Texas Giving Day, sponsored by Communities Foundation of Texas with additional local support by Arlington Tomorrow Foundation.



There will be an Arlington Gives! event this year, but it will be streamed live on the Levitt Pavilion's Facebook page. The online event will feature concerts and giving updates throughout the day, culminating in a 7 pm concert featuring Radney Foster.

This year we are requesting donations to continue restoration and improvements at the two-acre Pollinator Meadow, plus support for development of a bird habitat and viewing area. Funds are also needed to maintain the preserve's trail system with interpretive signs, kiosk postings and free educational materials. New for 2020, to keep trails passable and preserve habitats, short raised walkways are needed over seeps and drainages that become impassable after rain. And as always, funding is needed to support day-to-day work of trail maintenance, erosion control, invasive species removal and native plant seeding.

continued on page 19

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 18

The Pollinator Meadow Jim Frisinger

How healthy is the Pollinator Meadow at the Southwest Nature Preserve? Michael Brooks, a district conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service in Arlington, provided a three-year checkup Aug. 17. This two-acre tract was added to the Arlington preserve when Bowman Springs Road was widened in a land swap with the City of Kennedale. A traditional Texas meadow was planted by the City of Arlington, Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve and countless volunteers. Brooks says little blue stem grass should comprise about half the plants in this Silawa fine sandy loam soil, and there is a lot of it present. Good! Such soil also typically supports yellow Indiangrass and sideoats grama (both present). The big challenge is beating back invasives, which have moved in alongside these desirable species. His prescription for management: immediate mowing to knock down giant ragweed, Western (field) ragweed and Johnson grass. *Note:* Thanks to prompt action by Park & Rec's Armando Belmares, mowing has been scheduled.



Above, Natural Resource Conservation Service District Conservationist Michael Brooks assessing the Pollinator Meadow. Right, from left, Benjamin Harrison and Michael Brooks from NRCS and Jim Frisinger with Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve.

Yucca Meadow: Waiting for Next Year

It's the end of August and many of the yucca pods look worn and dry. Some are opening to spill out seeds that have not been eaten by yucca moths and other creatures. There



must be dozens, maybe hundreds of seeds in every pod. Germination must be terribly low or the meadow would be overflowing with yuccas. All the plant-sucking bugs we saw last time are gone. With any luck the yucca moth larvae are safe underground until next spring when they emerge as adults to repeat their fascinating story.



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

Flood strategy shifts (*The New York Times*, 8/26/20). Rebuilding over and over after successive floods makes little sense, says the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), telling local officials that they must agree to force people out of their homes or forfeit federal money for flood-protection projects and buyouts. In tacit acceptance of the reality of climate change and rising sea levels, both FEMA and HUD have started billion-dollar programs designed to pay for large-scale relocation nationwide, while state governments along the Eastern Seaboard, California and the Gulf of Mexico have begun planning for relocation of homes away from the coast, heeding scientists' warnings that some places cannot be protected. In pol-speak, this strategic shift reflects "a transformational opportunity to change the way the nation invests in resilience."

Julia Burgen Park (re)connects (*Arlington City Council meeting*, 8/18/20). Two years after agreement with TxDOT for the design and construction of a linear hike/bike trail extension within Julia Burgen Park, and a year after authorizing a design contract with Halff Associates for such a trail connection, city leaders have learned that a portion of the land needed for the proposed trail

alignment has been designated as "Ecosystem Restoration Area" by the USACE. This designation prohibits disturbance of the existing habitats, which, coupled with the challenging topography, would mean construction would be very costly and destructive to the trees and natural area. Ergo, staff was directed to explore an alternative trail alignment. After consultation with UTA officials and neighborhood stakeholders, the result is a longer, stronger and more environmentally friendly revised trail alignment (see below) at the same projected price tag.

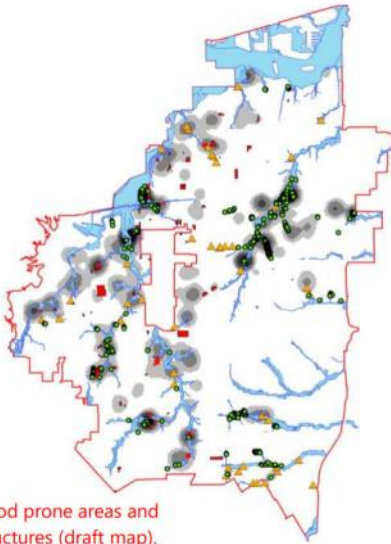
Trees, trees and more trees (*Environmental Task Force*, May 19, 2020). In March, Arlington's Environmental Task Force heard

a presentation by Mary Graves of Texas Historic Tree Coalition on why and how to designate tree and natural areas as historic, and in May the ETF accepted a staff report on Cross Timbers recognition, tree preservation vs. mitigation, and landscape ordinance administration. ([View report here.](#)) Suffice it to say that the proposed amendments to the UDC are still based on a point system credited to the developer to achieve the required 35% of tree preservation and increased fees for tree removal and replacement, rather than the immediate moratorium on tree felling demanded by ongoing, flagrant desecrations of our native forest.

continued on page 21



In Case You Missed It continued from page 20



Flood prone areas and structures (draft map).

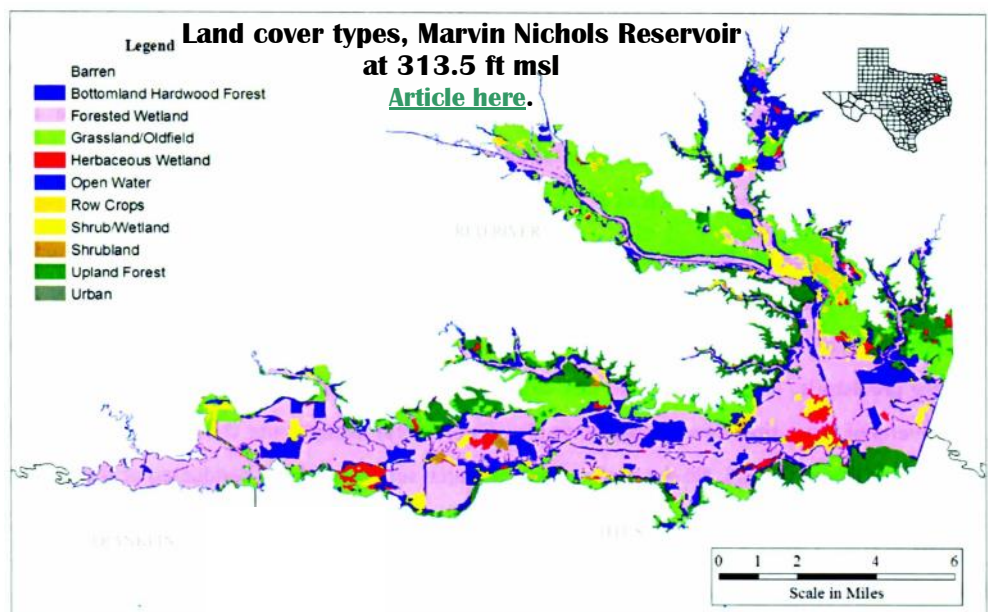
Arlington's Environmental Commitment (*City Council annual retreat, July 7, 2020*). The council's Environmental Task Force presented its [final report](#) that focused on four key areas: carbon footprint, natural environment, solid waste management and stormwater management. As a first, conceptual step to achieving basic sustainability goals, the report is a welcome nudge to action and a reminder of how far we have yet to go as a city. Of particular interest is the stormwater management section and the flood risk areas map (page 24), which highlight the disastrous disconnect between new development plan reviews by Planning and Development staff and construction oversight and enforcement by Public Works and Transportation – both departments focusing on their respective ordinances and

neither trained in ecological principles of watershed management. On a happier note, friends and admirers of the Southwest Nature Preserve will rejoice in the many photos included in the report.

Water: the stuff of life and conflict (*recent Star-Telegram article; Rita Beving, Public Citizen, July 25 communication; [Texas Water Development Board site](#)*.

This feud between water districts has been simmering for at least 20 years: Region C (DFW) wants to build a reservoir (Marvin Nichols) in Region D (East Texas) because it and its consultants believe this water source will be essential for the expected population growth and sustained prosperity of cities like Plano, Frisco, McKinney, etc. Marvin Nichols is expected to cost \$4.4 billion and to go online in the 2050s.

Not surprisingly, Region D is loath to flood more than 66,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, farmland and range “to water Dallas and Collin counties’ lawns,” as they see it. As Rita Beving tells us, “much of this land has been passed down for generations since settlers’ times [and] DFW cities are still among the highest per capita users of water in the state. ... Our local Region C water districts, cities and water retailers could do more with conservation before building a reservoir, one of the most expensive options by which to secure more water. ... DFW should do all it can with conservation and other measures before kicking Texans off their land and denying them their livelihoods and quality of life.” The Texas Water Development Board is expected to weigh in by the end of this year.



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	
Address _____	Individual \$15	New Member ☐
_____	Family \$25	
Phone _____	Supporting \$40	Renewing member ☐
E-mail _____	Sponsor \$100	
	Lifetime Individual \$250	
	Other \$ _____	

How did you hear about us? _____

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No September meeting • Keep on staying safe