

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 9

OCTOBER 2020

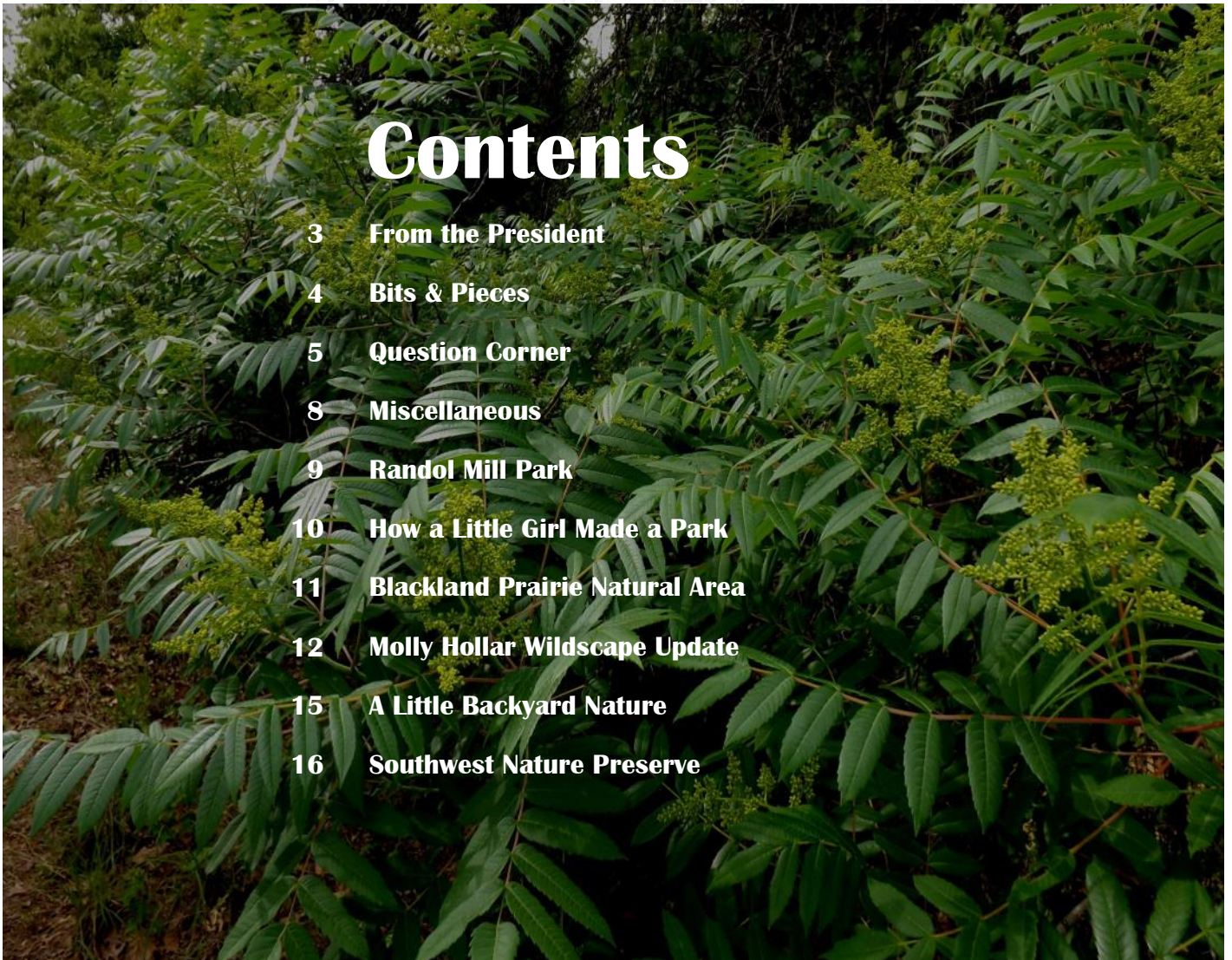


SOUTHWEST NATURE PRESERVE • PHOTO BY BOB BRENNAN



Contents

- 3 From the President
- 4 Bits & Pieces
- 5 Question Corner
- 8 Miscellaneous
- 9 Randol Mill Park
- 10 How a Little Girl Made a Park
- 11 Blackland Prairie Natural Area
- 12 Molly Hollar Wildscape Update
- 15 A Little Backyard Nature
- 16 Southwest Nature Preserve





From the President

Dick Schoech

The New Normal: Rethinking Our Systems That Are Failing Us

My recent columns focused on the post-pandemic new normal from the perspective of an environmentalist concerned with sustainability. As the coronavirus stresses the way we live, it exposes the failure of many fundamental societal systems — healthcare, education, law enforcement, criminal justice, forest management. Responding to system failures has to be part of our new normal.

America has always been the country offering individual freedom, rugged individualism and economic opportunity. America's land and climate had plenty for everyone, but it was not sustainable as the population boomed. When things were good, we ignored warnings about future problems. Take water, for example. Growing up in rural Texas and Arkansas, my friends and I hiked where we wanted without fear of trespassing. We swam in rivers and lakes without fear of disease. We caught and ate fish without fear of contamination. Now we would be shocked to find anyone swimming in the foamy green water of the Trinity River at River Legacy.

We see signs telling us not to eat the fish we catch. Many drink bottled water because they think it's safer. We fear hiking through private property as gun violence is at record levels. We learn that we eat lots of plastic, especially nano-plastic particles, because we're using more plastic than we can remove from our environment. Science magazine tells us 30% of birds in the U.S. and Canada have vanished since 1970.¹ Haley Samsel, ACC's October presenter, informs us on the front page of the Star-Telegram that Fort Worth and Arlington have paid fines over the years for allowing raw sewage to escape.² Now we find that the Endangered Species Act is being weakened, thus challenging the very ecosystem on which life on earth is based.

With so many fundamental systems failing society, how do we start fixing things? Some advocate eliminating current systems and starting over, e.g., defunding (restructuring) police departments and designing a whole new approach to making citizens secure. However good this might sound, replacing the old system with a new one requires a powerful change agent, is disruptive, and often the new system proves

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

Published 10 times a year by
Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

John Darling, editor
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Bob Brennan,
Annabelle Corboy, John Darling,
Carrie Donovan, John Dycus,
Marian Hiler, Sam Kieschnick,
Carol Marcotte, Gyde Martin,
Jan Miller, Guy Random,
Dick Schoech, Michael Smith,
Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The terse treehugger

Parking garage deluxe:
more cars in less space
plus acres of cross vine.

Not bad, UTA.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org



Giant blue sage

Best Green Face Award



Carolina sphinx after gorging
itself on sacred datura for a
week. Now believed to have
been transformed into blue jay
tissue.

UTA's Milkweed

Still flourishing after several
years living on the edge of
masses of Texas lantana. Nice.



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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Has anybody mentioned that the newsletter seems tilted heavily toward the negative? Don't you think we would be helped in these hard times by a more positive newsletter?

A: I agree, mostly. But just to begin, please note the very positive photo on the right of something I believe to be a happy flower. After 20 years of playing editor, it's hard to fight negativity, but I'm trying for a positive issue this month. It feels irresponsible to ignore all the bad, but I suppose we're overdue and hope you like it. I do rely on the regular submissions from the wildscape, Blackland Prairie and Southwest Nature Preserve to

continued on page 7



The *Post Oak* will not knowingly accept sponsors who are deceptive, misleading or expressly incompatible with its mission. The *Post Oak* does not endorse, advocate or guarantee any offer, viewpoint or representation made by its sponsors.



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



GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

John DYCUS

3607 Shady Park Drive
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 277-2138
john@cdycus.com

Remodeling General Contracting

SCHWETTMANN CONSTRUCTION CO.

Marvin Schwettmann Cell 817-229-6688
Brian Schwettmann Cell 817-475-9201
Lynn Schwettmann Cell 817-988-7078

Shop 3646 Garner Pantego, TX 76013
817-460-3856
Fax 817-583-6266

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

Paul Krudsen's
ArlingtonNOW.com
Event Photography

Portfolio_Studio@yahoo.com
817.265.4441

Herb 'n Health
Natural Foods Market & Herb Shoppe

3759 E. Lancaster St. Ft. Worth, TX 76103
Karen Foley 817-535-1152

DAN HILER
817 460-TREE

ARBOR
TREE SERVICE INC

PRUNING REMOVAL FREE BIDS

SHANE GOETZ Law Office of

1304 West Abram Street
Arlington, Texas 76013

shane@goetzlaw.com
Local: 817-274-2905
Metro: 817-265-2902
Fax: 817-861-8909
www.shanegoetzlaw.com

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

mima

civil engineering surveying landscape architecture planning

mimatexas.com
817-489-1671

From the President continued from page 3

to be as bad as the old one. System change by environmentalists can be difficult since they're usually working from outside the system with low power and resources.

I think history supports an approach for groups like ACC forming a change coalition that works with the existing power structure. First step: agree upon a goal, for example, healthy air quality for all citizens. Then develop strategies on how to reach that goal. Some of these strategies may work, others will not. So, the key to change success is measurement and widespread communication — is each strategy achieving its goal, or do some need to be redesigned? This change process may seem simplistic, but consider the problems mentioned above. Few have agreed upon societal goals and measurements of how well current strategies are achieving these goals. We all want justice, clean water and air, great health care and education, and fire-resistant forest management, but little agreement exists on

measures that help us improve successful strategies and change failing ones.

A good example of this system change approach comes from Downwinders at Risk, UT Dallas and PurpleAir.³ To support advocacy for cleaner air, a well-defined and agreed upon goal, the groups are adding 30 stationary monitors to the 20 DFW government monitors.⁴ Also, citizen scientists and advocates are being trained how to use additional portable monitors to detect dirty-air hot spots. Next year, data from over 100 monitors will be continuously communicated on an easy-to-use web map with real-time updating so everyone can know the air quality where they are at the moment.⁵ It will be interesting to see how just this improved measurement strategy improves DFW air quality.

System changes for environmental groups outside the power structure will be part of the new normal. They will emerge through developing agreement on environmental

goals and communicating measures of progress toward goal achievement.

Environmental organizations need to be flexible to focus quickly on change opportunities and adjust to new measurement and communication technologies such as Zoom and other social media. It's hard work, but change to the new normal in environmental quality and sustainability will not be easy.

References

1. <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6461/120>
2. <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article244850337.html>
3. <https://www2.purpleair.com/>
4. <https://www.greensourcedfw.org/articles/portable-air-monitors-offer-latest-tool-north-texas-activists>
5. <https://www.sharedairdfw.com/>



Question Corner continued from page 5

help all of us feel better about Arlington's environment. For that matter, even when our ACC president focuses on problems, he finds balance in constructive ideas that we can appreciate.

I won't dismiss your question. Many (too many?) of my choices are colored by unhappy biases. Maybe part of that is appropriate. Julia Burgen, who was instrumental in the revival of ACC, once remarked that we are a council because we were originally set up to represent people with very different environmental concerns. If we're doing it right, our members' interests include everything from air quality to mass transit to native plants, sustainable building and much more. In such a list it's too easy to find bad news and even easier to fill spaces in a newsletter. And (muttering in the background) maybe I think that only proofreaders will see it anyway. I was wrong here, at least about last month's t-shirt piece. (Note to Tim: I couldn't go through with composting the shirt — I dug it up and threw it in the wash. So that was fake news.)

Maybe this business of tone could be helped by a little clear thinking about the newsletter's function. Before I took the job, it looked pretty simple. That was before computers took over everything and the newsletter was the only place to advertise meetings. Over 20 years ago, Dale Denton, your last serious editor, produced a hard-copy version with a meeting reminder and reports on local matters arranged by topics like air quality and water. I recall liking it but don't remember any particular tone, just feeling informed about things important to me. Two decades later, we don't need a newsletter to tell us about our meetings — or really about most other things.

So what does that leave for the *Post Oak* now? Meeting reminders, sure, but you're learning about them in other ways. If we strip away every extraneous thing, including negativity, we can have the meeting reminder, Blackland Prairie photos, reports from the wildscape, Southwest Nature Preserve and maybe a couple more.

Should that be it? I wish there were a way to know. Tell me if you feel like it, and I will listen. You can be sure that if the ACC multitudes rise up and demand a smaller, happier newsletter, I will comply.

I leave you with a favorite photo. This Maximillian sunflower had a bad break but bounced back. Let's say there's a message here. Or just a positive heliotropic response?



Miscellaneous

Less Plastic in Your Stuff

Marian Hiler

If you want less plastic packaging — and of course you do — then when it comes to household products a good option for you may very well be [Grove Collaborative](#). They sell non-toxic, sustainable and cruelty-free personal care and cleaning products for your home. For example, their bamboo paper towels and toilet paper are packaged in cardboard boxes, not shrink wrap.

As of Jan. 1, 2020, Grove Collaborative adopted being plastic neutral. This means they are offsetting the volume of the plastic they ship by collecting the equivalent volume of ocean-bound plastic through a partnership with [Plastic Bank](#). They also are committing to collaborating with their third-party brands to change their packaging to offer more sustainable and plastic-free solutions:

“At Grove, we feel that our industry needs to commit to more lasting change and move out of plastic entirely. Even recycled plastic can cause or contribute to plastic pollution, and all plastic never really goes ‘away’ but rather degrades into harmful microplastics that pollute soil, wildlife and have even been found in plants.”

OCTOBER SUNSHINE

The old familiar sunshine
My foe in summer
Fills the window now
With welcome warmth.

Above the treetops
A clear blue sky
Glowing like no sapphire
Ever dreamt of.

Cardinals, finches, chickadees
Flash from branch to branch,
Festooning the feeders,
Fattening up for frosty nights.

Brightening our urban yard
Autumn blooms draw butterflies . . .
Mistflowers, Mexican petunias,
Creamy orange lantanas.

These are the days when faith returns
That She who puts us all to bed
For our reluctant winter nap
Is still to be trusted, still to be loved.

©2011 John I. Blair



Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte



Above, Dredging of the pond is complete. The project started Oct. 1, 2019, and now all the equipment, fencing, silt and pond islands are gone. We have to wonder how long will it take for the pond to recover from this 12-month surgery (project). The work is done in time for fall bird migration, and we can already anticipate searching for birds there during the Great Backyard Bird Count next February.

Below, The park is overgrown with bastard cabbage (*Rapistrum rugosum*). This yellow flowering annual is on the Texas invasives list (TexasInvasives.org). Though efforts to clear it from the park are underway, given its huge numbers, it may take years to eradicate. Along with bastard cabbage is great ragweed and privet, all spreading, taking over the wildscape and wooded areas. A lot of work lies ahead.



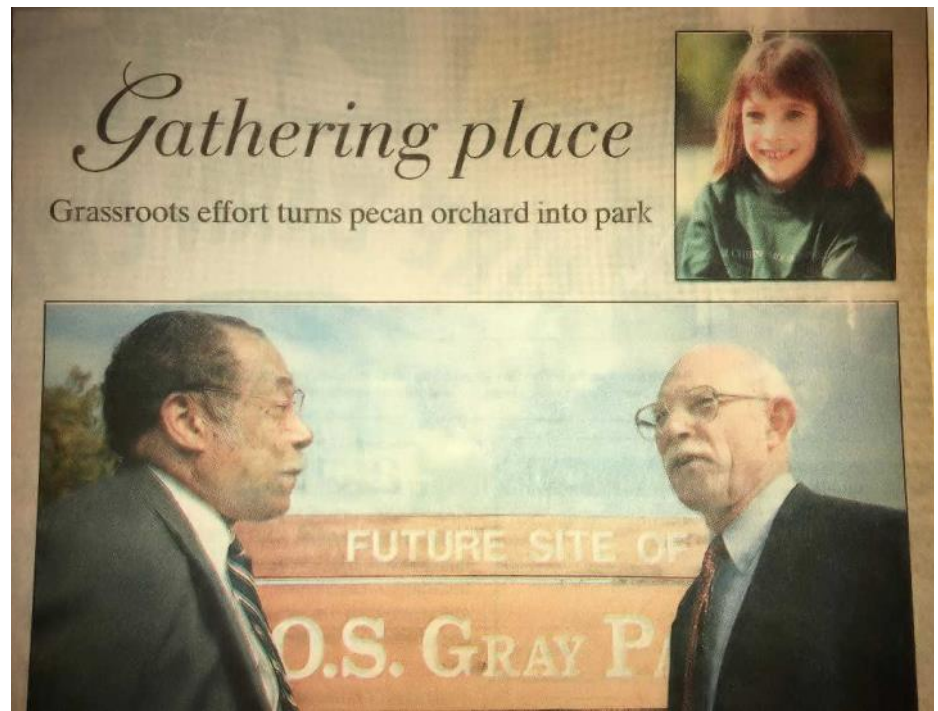
How a Little Girl Made a City Park Carrie Donovan

This is the first of several articles about O.S. Gray Natural Area and the Friends of O.S. Gray Natural Area. Oct. 2 is the 10th anniversary of both the park's dedication and the beginning of the Friends. I'm writing today to tell how O.S. Gray Natural Area in Arlington came to be.

Back in the early '90s my husband and I along with our three young children, ages 6, 4 and 3, would sojourn to the former O.S. Gray nursery on Norwood Lane most Sunday mornings. Our kids called these trips Our Greatest Adventure!

Our Greatest Adventure was blanketed with wildflowers, native grasses, rows of tall sunflowers, and oak and pecan trees. A place where our kids could roam and feel as if they were out in the country while in the heart of the city. The property was bordered by a creek where we would find beaver tracks and see the tree stumps that the beavers left behind. The kids collected leaves, rocks, sticks, and filled their pockets with pecans from the trees left over from the nursery. They watched birds and chased butterflies, collected bugs, leaves, and flowers — all part of Our Greatest Adventure!

As time passed, our lives got busy with work and kid and school activities. So much so that Our Greatest Adventure was being pulled away but not forgotten, especially by our 4-year-old daughter, Annie. Any time we would drive by the nursery she



From the Arlington Metro Star-Telegram Nov. 9, 1997: Annie Donovan, 9 years old at the time. Now she's 32. She was our inspiration.

Below, Mayor Elzie Odom and Dr. Jack Gray, son of O.S. Gray

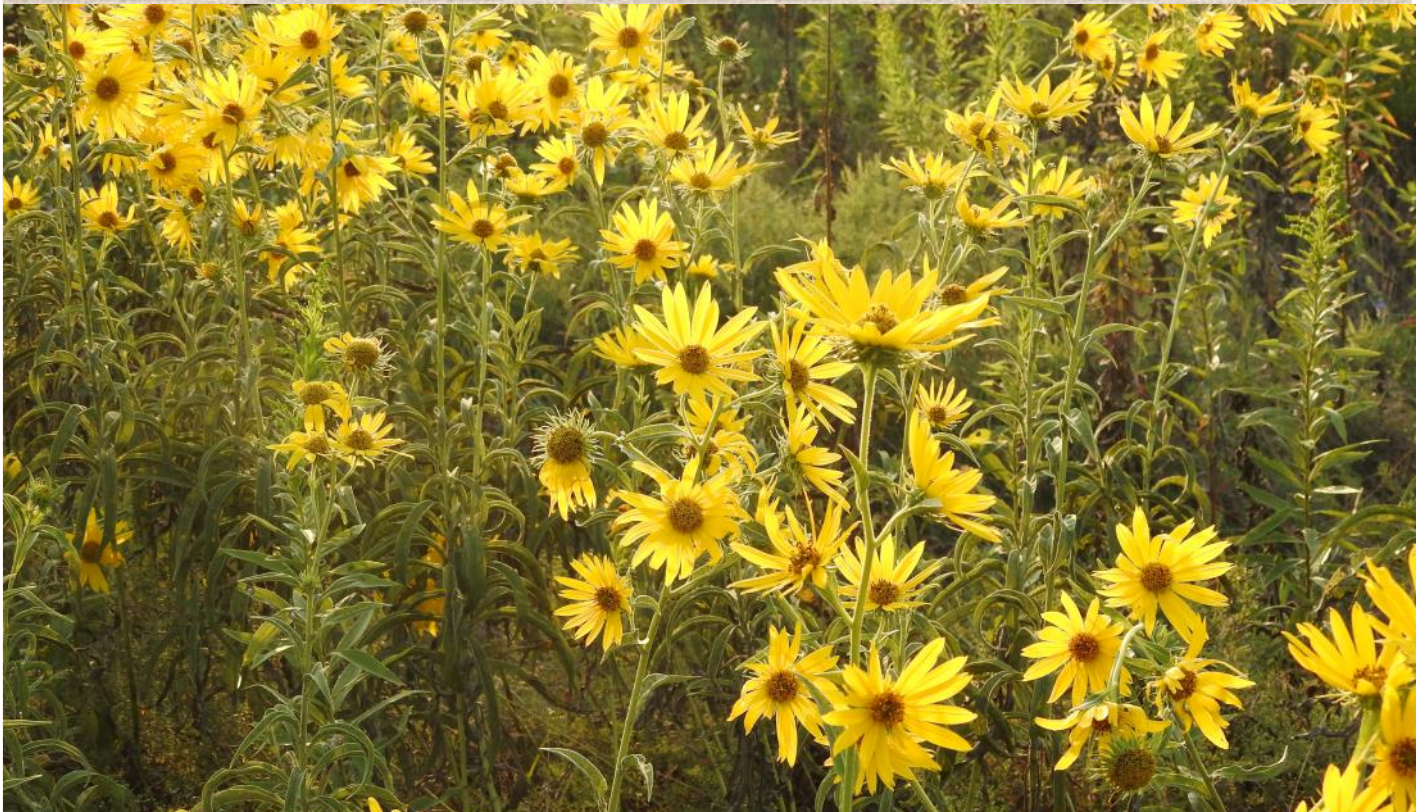
would ask, "When is Our Greatest Adventure going to be a park?" She would ask day in and day out to the point that I ran out of excuses beyond, "I don't know." Finally, inspired by Annie's question, I picked up the phone and called the Arlington Parks & Recreation Department and asked Annie's big question, "When is the parcel of land on Norwood Lane going to be a city park?" The answer was, "It's not." However, I was informed that the city was putting together a parks bond package and that I could attend the Parks Board meeting where the bond package was being finalized. This was in August 1996.

I attended the meeting along with a neighbor, and we asked if they would include the former O.S. Gray nursery in the bond package. Since the package was all but finalized the answer was no, except for one board member, Lisann Peters. She asked that it be added, and the board, after much discussion, agreed. Then it went on to the city council where we had to lobby for the next three months to get the council to add it to the package.

Upon returning home that night with news of our success in getting Our Greatest Adventure added to the list of potential park projects, our inspiration, Annie, whooped with joy!

To be continued next month.

Blackland Prairie Site Photos by Guy Random



Brought to you by the color yellow. You are welcome.



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Two great accomplishments benefited the wildscape in September — removing the winter honeysuckle at pathway north and path to the vault, and the annual native plant sale. Both were very successful.

Fifteen years ago Rosa Finsley suggested putting a winter honeysuckle in the corner behind the wooden kiosk, believing it was a native plant. Then research revealed its alien past, and it's invasive to boot. Over the years it had expanded to cover the entire corner and was stealthily moving toward the no horse bridge.

Joe Martinez put himself in charge of rooting it out. Marylee

Thomason, who is on the short side, did the initial cutting near the base, making room for Joe to move in with more muscle.

Just as the pile of branches on the sidewalk was threatening to topple, Eric Strickland showed up. Not knowing exactly what the task entailed, he agreed to haul the branches and place them on the lower trail in the eroded areas. It's a long trek, but Eric dragged at least five loads over hill and dale to the lower trail and purposefully arranged them.

When Joe suggested that we inspect his work to see that the branches were in the right place, Eric assured him in no uncertain

terms: "They are in the right place." End of discussion (with smiles all around).

Ann asked if we were painting the stumps to kill the roots. Joe, who had positioned himself as project boss, asked Josephine Keeney to bring over our expert painter, Jane Oosterhuis. Eric suggested that we paint them red, yellow and blue. Marylee retrieved some spray paint from the shed, and that's just what we did. Joe sent a picture to Ann Knudsen. We all got a big laugh out of her imagined reaction.

Jane, a versatile sort, next took to pruning trees and cutting and painting privet she found hidden

continued on page 13



Joe Martinez cutting down the invasive winter honeysuckle bush (beautiful but had to go), to be replaced by a native elbow bush.



Joe Martinez (left) and Eric Strickland vanquished the alien invasive!



Eric Strickland with a bundle of winter honeysuckle branches headed for the lower trail slope erosion areas.

Wildscape Update continued from page 12



From left, Ramona Gratton cutting recalcitrant roots while Joe Martinez and Eric Strickland leverage the stumps out with privet pullers. Eric: "Joe, will you put your foot in the clamp so I can see if it works?"



Painted stumps. Ann wanted the stumps painted with vine and stump killer, but we chose to misunderstand and laughed to ourselves about the look on her face when she saw them.



Jane Oosterhuis ferreting out privet that was previously hidden by the overgrown winter honeysuckle.

behind the former honeysuckle bush. Her pruning disturbed a spunky rough green snake, which landed in Eric's hands and was relocated by Marylee.

The project made great progress and lots of fun. The next occupant of that space will be an elbow bush, which we know is native.

As for the plant sale, our major yearly fundraiser, Team Wildscape went from \$0 to \$4,723.01 in five hours. Josephine and Frank Keeney deserve many rounds of applause for their leadership and organization.



Rough green snake disturbed by Jane trimming its tree.

Kay Sekio gets honorable mention for her excellent suggestions for ways to reduce the inventory of less popular plants and to provide safe ways to make purchases based on the Master Gardeners method.

Frank posted a signup sheet with 100 time slots available for Saturday, Sept. 26, to allow 10 people into the shopping area for half an hour at a time. By midnight there was one time slot left. You knew it would go, and it did.

Thanks to the hard-working crew of volunteers, who spent Friday

continued on page 14

Wildscape Update continued from page 13



*What is that plant below the sign?
"I'll give you a hint," gatekeeper Joe Martinez said as he did his best pigeon imitation, flapping his wings and coo-cooing. Most people got it!*

morning putting identification sticks in pots, putting out plants and setting up the butterfly garden and the cashier areas. Josephine said it best in her email:

Dear Friends,

We must have been bitten by the native plant conservation bug because we work and work and we owe it all to Molly.

Our sale was amazing in spite of COVID19. We pulled it all together and have very good results, it was the second highest in our recent history with over \$4,000!

Everyone worked so hard and did a wonderful job so let us congratulate

ourselves and get back to work. A lot remains to be done.

*Thank you so very much again.
Your very tired friend,
Josephine Keeney*

Friday and Saturday volunteers who made the sale successful:

Friday setup

Gailon Hardin
Josephine Keeney
Ann Knudsen
Danny Kocurek
Joe Martinez
Jane Oosterhuis
Dick Schoech
Hester Schwarzer
Kay Sekio
Marylee Thomason
Glenn Troutman

Saturday sale

Gailon Hardin
Marian Hiler
Frank Keeney
Josephine Keeney
Ann Knudsen
Carol Marcotte
Jane Oosterhuis
Hester Schwarzer
Kay Sekio
Marylee Thomason
Glenn Troutman



Man buying large agave. We were thrilled. Hope it didn't show.

The final word goes to Molly Hollar (as it often does, and should), who texted, "Sounds like the very best super native plant sale ever!! The privet pullers are fabulous!! So exciting to see such enthusiastic workers making such a highly successful plant sale!!!" Followed by 19 emojis.



Tired but happy sale volunteers, from left:

Front row: Carol Marcotte, Frank Keeney, Marian Hiler, Hester Schwarzer

Standing: Gailon Hardin, Ann Knudsen, Glenn Troutman, Jane Oosterhuis, Marylee Thomason, Joe Martinez, Josephine Keeney, Kay Sekio

A Little Backyard Nature

We can talk about the [environmental value of opossums](#) all we want, and then there's this charmer from Gyde Martin. She noticed him on a chilly morning, and he quickly became Petie. Here's hoping we can all start our days with somebody like Petie — and with possum-shaped holes in our trees.



Southwest Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy, Jan Miller, Michael Smith

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.

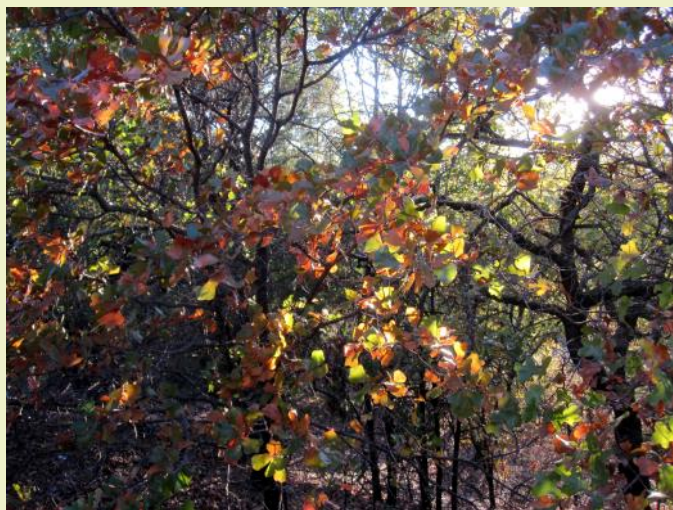
Friends meetings, programs and activities continue to be on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We miss you and hope we can see you in person soon. Take care!

Saturday, Oct. 31

7th Anniversary Celebration

Join us online to celebrate our 7th anniversary on Saturday, Oct. 31. This year we're planning two Facebook Live events: The first will be a daytime nature walk with Jim Frisinger, highlighting fall changes at the Caddo Oak and Yucca Meadow areas and, if time permits, the microhabitats atop Kenne-dale Mountain. The other walk will be after dark, with Meghan Cassidy and Michael Smith looking for creatures of the night, like spiders and, well, it's Halloween, who knows what could be about?

Please watch for times to be announced on our Facebook page and by email (sign up by sending a request to info@swnp.org). We hope you'll join us!



Fall is for Planting at the Pollinator Meadow



Temperatures are milder, there's been rain, and we're making plans for seeding wildflowers at the Pollinator Meadow. The area has been mowed, hopefully vanquishing the giant ragweed and discouraging the field ragweed and Johnson grass, so that the wildflower seeds will have a better chance of success. Native grasses are already rebounding after mowing! We've got the seeds, hoping for a bit more rain — and YOU! Could you help sow seeds? It's a natural for a socially distanced activity and we'll plan for a Saturday. Please watch for a date/time on Facebook and by email (sign up with a request to info@swnp.org).

NOTE: Our Friends of SWNP website is temporarily down. If you have any questions about SWNP or our activities, contact us by email. Thank you!

continued on page 17

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 16

Michael Smith's weekly herp & nature monitoring surveys offer side opportunities for litter pickup, including a sign from the preserve's pre-dedication days. *Right, Jim Domke with litter at SWNP on Oct 1. Photo by Michael Smith.*

Meghan Cassidy has prepared a trifold brochure about the spiders of SWNP! We hope to get it electronically reproduced for our Friends Facebook page.



Recently, Michelle Villafranca brought a group of Master Naturalists (the fall class) to SWNP, and she, Ann Mayo, Meghan Cassidy and Michael Smith took small groups around the preserve. Participants were masked and avoided contact with each other.

continued on page 18



Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 17

Fall DFW Socially Distant BioBlitz

In case you missed it, there was a Fall DFW Socially Distant BioBlitz using iNaturalist, Sept. 6-12. But whether you missed it entirely or were one of the participants who met every one of Sam Kieschnick's daily challenges, you will enjoy seeing the results. (Sam is one of Texas Parks & Wildlife's Urban Biologists in our area.) Here's the background:

This BioBlitz was a local-scale city nature challenge, just in the DFW area, with the six local Master Naturalist chapter areas competing against each other (in a friendly way, of course). Any iNaturalist observations made in these areas during this time were added to the project.

Here are some of Sam Kieschnick's notes on the results, with a little plug for Southwest Nature Preserve:

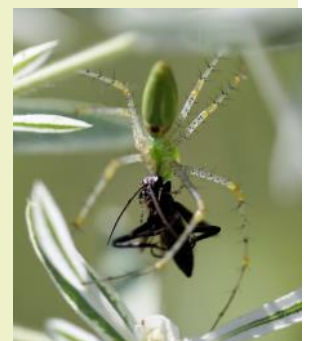
An amazing number of people participated in this BioBlitz from Sunday, Sept 6 through Saturday, Sept 12. During this time, around 35,000 observations of 2700 species were made by 1136 citizen scientists. <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem> Just to put this in perspective, in 2019 at the same time, 3600 observations of 960 species were made by 600 citizen scientists. And for SWNP, the numbers were equally impressive: 340 observations, 172 species, and 11 citizen scientists. And in the same period last year: 11 observations, 10 species, and three observers. The SWNP observer with the most observations was Charley Amos with 88!

Any iNaturalist Observations made during this time were automatically added to one of six projects, one for each of the DFW chapters of the Texas Master Naturalists. Cross Timbers Chapter came in 2nd in all three categories (most observations, most species, and most participants). That's a tribute to the enthusiasm of our local naturalists.

Each day Sam set a challenge to motivate participants to look for behaviors, multiple species, reproductive structures of plants. Here is Sam's discussion of some of those who met the challenges, followed by more thoughts from Sam about the reach and value of iNaturalist to conservation minded folks. What follows are excerpts. For Sam's entire writeup, with links to the iNaturalist observations plus many more examples, click on the link here: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem/journal>

On Sunday, the challenge was to watch a spider catch prey. Ideally, you spent a bit of time watching the behavior of various spiders – some are active hunters (jumping spiders) whereas others are more passive and patient hunters (orb weavers). *Right, green lynx spider with prey*

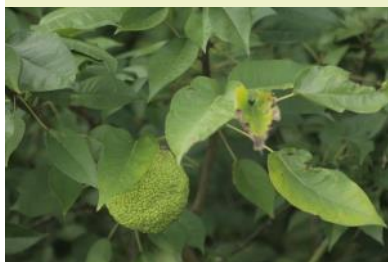
On Monday, I was hoping to see some roots of invasive plants! As expected, to see the roots of plants, you have to yank it up! I save the term "invasive" for the non-native and aggressive plants. Just because a plant is "weedy" doesn't mean it's non-native. Ragweed is native!



continued on page 19

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 18

Invasive species roots: Quihoui privet – best time to yank up privet is after a rain. *Right, an extracted privet with satisfied removal specialist*



Tuesday was all about botanical terminology! Dioecious plants are plants that have just one kind of flower – either male or female. Here is an example: *Left, Osage orange female*
I also asked for a monoecious plant with imperfect flowers. These plants have both male and female flowers, but they're separate. Here is an example: *Lower left, ragweed.*



Getting up a bit early was the goal on Wednesday.

I was pleasantly surprised to see quite a few observations come in around 6:45 – 7:00 am!

Sunrise moths: *Right, Five-spotted hawkmoth*



Thursday came with a bit of rain, so the challenge was a bit more “challenging!” Frogs and toads were the target organisms with bonus points for tadpoles. The spots where I had seen tadpoles before were now more “flowing streams” instead of little puddles! Nonetheless, quite a few toads and frogs were documented.

Left, American bullfrog:

6 species of frogs/toads observed today: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2020-09-10&place_id=any&project_id=fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem&subview=grid&taxon_id=20979&verifiable=any&view=species

Friday was all about pollination! We are fortunate to have quite a few species that pollinate here in DFW. Some are native and some are introduced. Both are providing a tremendous service to the propagation of plants. *Right, non-native bee*

Left, natives like Megachile



70 species of bees, wasps, and ants (Hymenoptera) were documented on this one day in the project: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2020-09-11&place_id=any&project_id=fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem&subview=grid&taxon_id=47201&verifiable=any&view=species

www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2020-09-11&place_id=any&project_id=fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem&subview=grid&taxon_id=47201&verifiable=any&view=species

continued on page 20

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 19

Saturday - Finding a bird nest out of season can be a challenge. On the last day of the BioBlitz, that was the task. It was neat to see some old bird nests recorded. *Right, vireo nest*

Another fairly interesting part of a large project like this is the new documentation for the area. Sometimes, it's something like a county record, but in these cases, it was a new record for the entire DFW metroplex! Here are just a couple of them:



Left, New dragonfly species for DFW (Two-striped Forceptail).

Right, New weevil – only seen in the Lower Rio Grande Valley before (Acamptus texanus).

And here are a couple of state records from our event on iNaturalist! *From left, New beetle on iNaturalist for Texas (Eulimnichus ater). Another new springtail for Texas (Vitronura giselae).*

There were so many interesting observations... It's hard to narrow it down to just a few... Nonetheless, here are some of the neat ones that were observed: Migrating warblers were moving through the metroplex during this week as well. Here are a couple of those birds plus a nice bobcat photo. *Below from left, Canada warbler, Mourning warbler, bobcat*



continued on page 21

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 20

One of the most valuable things that people did was to ID their observations. I can't emphasize the importance of this enough... When you add an ID or a comment on an observation, this engages the observer and starts up a positive feedback loop. It can be the kind of encouragement that a new (or regular) citizen scientist needs to keep him/her engaged and involved. There is fear of being wrong when we ID, so I tell others that when we add an ID, it's starting a conversation. "I think it may be this species..." or "it's a type of this kind of organism..." is a crucial step to learning for both the observer and identifier. Being wrong is an ok part of this process too!

I strongly encourage you to try to ID observations for others. It's a wonderful chance to learn and engage new and regular citizen scientists. It starts a positive feedback loop that is rewarding to both the observer and identifier. Here is the link for ID'ing recent observations in DFW: https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/identify?quality_grade=needs_id%2Cresearch&place_id=57484

Around 900 other naturalists from around the world ID'ed observations made in this project: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fall-socially-distant-bioblitz-dfw-urban-ecosystem?tab=identifiers>

Here are some of the experts who chimed in on observations:

Lupoli Roland – French entomologist specializing in stink bugs

Roman Romanov – Russian botanist specializing in aquatic plants

Michal Sloviak – Slovakian mammalogist specializing in carnivores

Dan Kluza – New Zealand invasive species biologist specializing in moths

Matthew Pintar – Florida ecologist specializing in aquatic beetles

Radek Walkowiak – Polish botanist specializing in ferns

Nick Block – Prof of biology at Stonehill College, MA specializing in Lepidoptera

Susan Hewitt – Malacologist New York specializing in snails and bivalves

Chris Cohen – PhD East Carolina University specializing in robber flies

Clint Perkins – Texas Tech Mammalogist

Blaine Mathison – Parasitologist specializing in click beetles

Barbara Wilson – botanist in Oregon specializing in sedges



I like to spend a bit of time on relevancy of doing something like this. What is the meaning of 35,000 observations of bugs, birds, and bees and why should we care?

continued on page 22

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 21

First and foremost, this BioBlitz was about engagement. To make an observation, you have to be engaged with nature, even if just for a moment. You have to be in the presence of that plant or bird or beetle to take a photo or sound recording. We all need to do this more often! The second part of engagement is that with the naturalist community. As you upload an observation to iNaturalist, you share that with other naturalists around the world and start a conversation. Each data point (observation) provides evidence that the organism existed in space and in time. Who knows what questions the collection of data will address?!? There is scientific merit in this engagement.

Secondly, iNaturalist is a learning tool. What's in a name? Well, when you learn a name of an organism, you get the password to learning more about it. It's like getting the key into the room of knowledge. Fortunately for us in the DFW metroplex, we have mansions of rooms of knowledge — there is a tremendous amount of biodiversity here! You could spend several lifetimes studying just the biodiversity in the urban ecosystem of DFW. One of the first steps of appreciation is learning the names of our natural neighbors.

Finally, for me, iNaturalist is a tool of policy change. After a successful BioBlitz like this, we have more evidence of not just the biodiversity here but also the growing number of naturalists who seek out this biodiversity. As public land managers recognize this, real changes can and do happen! This collection of data points and engagement of naturalists is used as a tool of meaningful change. As I talk to a city council, park board, or anyone interested, I bring this with me. It's meaningful.



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? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Contributions and dues are tax-deductible. ACC is a nonprofit, tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization. If you cannot pay, let any board member know. The newsletter is available via email and the ACC website.

President Dick Schoech
Vice President Wayne Halliburton
Interim Secretary Grace Darling

Treasurer Marian Hiler
Program Coordinator Grace Darling
Webmaster Frank Keeney

Editor John Darling
Board Members Mike Kolanko,
Nicholas Kocurek (student member)

POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

