

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

**VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3
MARCH 2022**

BLACKLAND PRAIRIE SITE • PHOTO BY GUY RANDOM

March Zoom Meeting



**Liveable Arlington:
Grassroots Environmental
Campaigns**

Ranjana Bhandari
Liveable Arlington

7 pm, Wed, Mar 2, 2022

Zoom meeting hosted by
Arlington Conservation Council

More Information at <http://www.acctexas.org/meetings>

Join Zoom meeting with this link

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89949190891>

630 p.m. Wednesday social time and equipment check
7 p.m. presentation

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From the President **Dick Schoech**



The secret power of gifts

Writings on how to live an eco-friendly lifestyle often focus on actions like recycling, harvesting rainwater, using renewable energy, and buying local. Underlying these actions is a mindset that can guide us in making sustainable decisions.

Let's view nature as a gift, which was the practice of the native inhabitants of North Texas and Oklahoma, who lived in harmony with nature for years. Robin Kimmerer beautifully describes this perspective in the "Gift of Strawberries" chapter of her book *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*.

Kimmerer explains that a gift arrives through no action of our own. We cannot deserve a gift or earn it. Gifts come with no strings but with a responsibility to give back or share when the gift is no longer needed. The more a gift is shared, the more prized it becomes.

In a gift economy, goods and services such as food and land are not purchased or earned but received as gifts from Mother Earth. Purchase economies, in contrast, result in you owning something with no obligation to know or thank the source. A purchased item is yours to do whatever you want with it. People in purchase economies can buy almost anything and later throw it in the trash without feeling guilty.

Chief Seattle's [unforgettable speech](#) and the 1626 Native Americans' sale of Manhattan to Dutch settlers for \$24 worth of beads and trinkets are legendary examples of viewing land as a gift from nature, as opposed to land as something to be owned. In a purchase economy, we can buy as much land as we can afford, then fence it, plow it, frack it. Our purchase economy has taken the concept of purchased land to the extreme where a landowner can shoot trespassers with no repercussions. Concepts such as trespassing do not exist where land is considered nature's gift for all to enjoy.

Exchanges in village markets not totally steeped in the economic model may still retain a gift perspective by the vendor and buyer

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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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P.O. Box 216
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John Darling, editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Annabelle Corboy,
Michael Golden, Grace Darling,
John Darling, John Dycus,
Jim Frisinger, Carol Marcotte,
Donna Piercy, Guy Random,
Dick Schoech, Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

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

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger



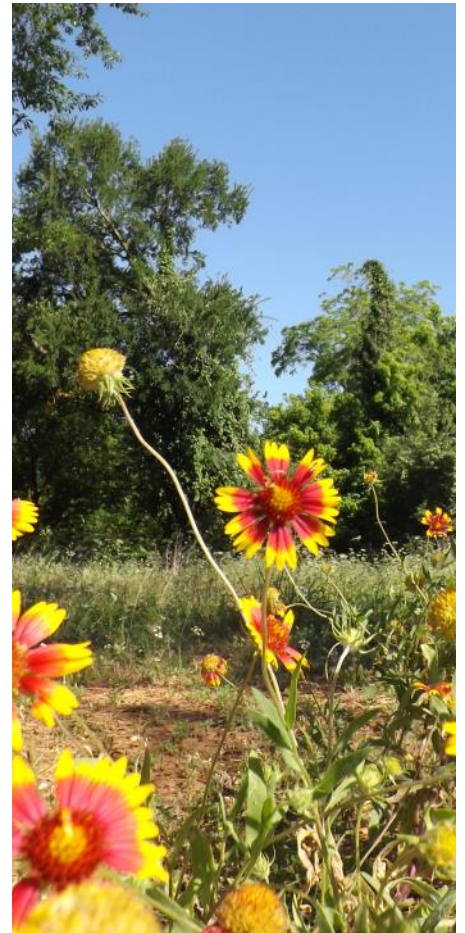
Jumping spider occupies bucket lid.

Need that lid a lot.

Can't do it.

Who's in charge here?

visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org



*Wishful thinking on a cold, gray day.
Firewheel in Julia Burgen Park.*

Hog Heaven?



A friend of a friend was walking a dog at River Legacy recently when she had a very close encounter with a wild pig family. In her case, it was the best possible kind: The mother and her two piglets ignored her and the dog completely. It doesn't always work like that. Here's [a slightly odd piece](#) from *Newsweek* with advice that sounds good.

Pernicious Plastic



Just when we think our recycling carts are perfect, we learn a new thing. Arlington wants just 1, 2, and 5 plastics. Other types usually cost more to sort and bail than they are worth. *Left*, Two big #2s in back, orange juice is #1, and two #5s flanking the OJ. A lot of unloved plastic is headed for the landfill.

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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: So I was watching birds the other day with some very nice people from East Texas. They talked so sadly about their efforts to grow the dogwoods of their youth in Arlington that I wished for something helpful to say. What would you tell them? And try to rise above yourself — they deserve better.

A: Okay, they're nice folks, and lots of people think that dogwood is the country's most beautiful flowering tree. But if you have drunk the native plant Kool-Aid and live here, then it's hard to just jump in and start talking about careful tree and site selection, combined with doing things to the soil to fool the tree into thinking it will be happy for 80 years. On top of that, it's easy to read about how powdery mildew and spot anthracnose have devastated huge numbers of dogwoods that live (or used to live) where they're supposed to. I really think the kindest thing is to suggest substitutes. My favorite by far is Mexican plum. Tough as nails, great aromatic flowers that are good for bees and other pollinators, even a larval host for tiger swallowtails.



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Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
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More thoughts of sun and spring warmth.
Englemann daisy in Julia Burgen park.



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LIVEABLE ARLINGTON

Working Toward a Healthy Community
On a
Liveable Planet



Connect with us at
<https://www.liveablearlington.org>
info@liveablearlington.org

From the President continued from page 3



African vendor with the beaded hanging I treasure.



Ghanaian market wood carver holding a statue of his African childhood teacher in Dutch attire.

getting to know each other. In my travels in Peru, a vendor often wanted to exchange something I valued, such as a nice pen, as partial payment for something homemade. In Africa, I always took pictures of the vendor displaying a proud look while holding a homemade item. In Palestine one vendor refused to sell me an item because I said I did not have time to barter about the exorbitant price he was asking.

We can all look at nature's offerings as gifts requiring gratitude and reciprocity rather than something everyone possesses and can discard with no obligations to the source. At this point the gift perspective becomes a new normal — part of our sustainable lifestyle.

Our home, the land it sits on, the native plants that originally covered it, the birds and other animals that visit day and night — almost everything can be seen as a gift. We can consider precious water as a gift that is not to be wasted or sold in polluting plastic bottles. We can buy organic vegetables that were raised without poisoning the earth and its pollinators with pesticides and herbicides.

“When all the world is a commodity, how poor we grow,” Kemmerer writes. “When all the world is a gift in motion, how wealthy we become.”

P.S. If you have a concept or perspective that supports your sustainable lifestyle, share it as a gift message to me at

PresMsg@acctexas.org.



Street market in Cuzco, Peru.

Our March Speaker continued from page 2

Liveable Arlington executive director Ranjana Bhandari is a longtime Arlington resident who was a stay-at-home mother when natural gas drilling arrived in Arlington. She founded Liveable Arlington in January 2015 over concerns about the detrimental effects of pollution from gas drilling and its role in accelerating the climate crisis.

Ranjana is on the board of Earthworks, a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting communities from the adverse health impacts of energy development. She also serves as a member of Arlington's Citizens' Environmental Committee. She holds a master's in economics from Brown University.

Her talk will highlight her group's efforts, including the recent 23-month-long campaign to stop the permitting of gas wells next to an East Arlington preschool that ended with a permit denial last month.



**No dues from you yet?
You like chainsaws with post oaks?
Or maybe forgot?***

It's Time to Pay Your Dues

Make us bigger so we can be better.

ACC's size is important when voicing members' environmental interests.

See the last page of this newsletter for information on submitting your 2022 dues.

Through with writing checks? You can now pay your dues via PayPal.

[Paypal or credit card HERE](#)

***You don't like haiku?
Dues help Haiku Relief Fund.
More dues, less haiku.**

My Nature Notebook

Just look at these flowers!

My grown-up friend, Dick, got a new camera, so he's taking pictures of everything — even this weed. Dick says it's a henbit, and the creepy old editor says it's a winter annual that starts in the fall and dies when it gets warm in the spring. Anyway, they both say bees and bumble bees and butterflies get food here in early spring so we have to leave henbit alone. And I promised I would.



Native Plants at Lake Arlington

From a city website: Arlington Water Utilities and Tarrant Regional Water District are working with local conservation stakeholders and community groups to restore native prairie and wildflowers to 2.75 acres of land adjacent to the Lake Arlington Dam. This gated area will also feature demonstration garden beds with native plants and a gathering area for gardening classes, field trips, and other community events. Interested in getting involved? Email [Traci Peterson, Arlington Water Utilities Communications Coordinator, at traci.peterson@arlingtontx.gov](mailto:traci.peterson@arlingtontx.gov).

No recent development information has been made available, but as far as we know, this big project is progressing. If it goes well, we can hope for a significant contribution to the welfare of pollinators and the creation of a place where environmental education may flourish in the near future. The images below show the project's location close to the southeastern end of the dam. We also see views of the area looking west toward the lake. More details will follow as soon as we receive them.



LAKE ARLINGTON NATIVE PLANT AND POLLINATOR GARDEN

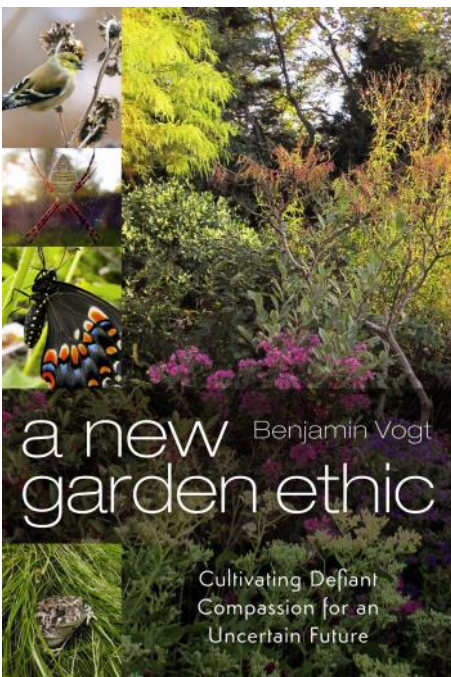
VIEW FROM CENTRAL GARDEN
OUT TOWARDS LAKE

A Book and a Bug

Lots of us can't stop thinking about how much we need native plants, and some of us realize how late we are in figuring this out. How so many of the people we look up to have known this for years and are actively doing something about it. Latecomers might be guilty of finding someone interesting who is already old news to many.

A possible recent example is Benjamin Vogt, who runs Monarch Gardens in Nebraska and has a [website](#) filled with thoughts and facts that look good from here. He offers a newsletter and an archive of articles that make for easy, enjoyable reading. One that works very well is "[How to pass weed inspection.](#)" We haven't heard about these often toxic encounters for a while, but we all know they can be devastating. Vogt details an approach that is kinder and gentler than most, and there is value in that.

He has written a book, *A New Garden Ethic*, and you will find an extended excerpt [here](#) that demonstrates Vogt's skill in conveying the huge importance of this seemingly simple topic.



PILLBUG

A curious crustacean the pillbug,
Hinged at the fringe of its multiple body plates,
Depending for its DNA survival
On conniving into an armored ball.

The pillbug, a strategic analog
To armadillos, can curl up even tighter,
Winning "roly poly" as its popular cognomen,
(Sounding, as a consequence, quite cute).

Well, cute they're not, exactly, but
At least there's not much harm in pillbugs
(Unless you are a strawberry fanatic,
In which case you hate them).

I, however, have memories alternative
Of pillbugs from my childhood
For I tortured them 'most every day,
To satisfy my sweet sadistic bent.

So though I fear the thought of pillbug karma
Is fanciful, yet they stand for me
As exemplars of innocence invertebrate
Run afoul of bloodyminded vertebrate intent.

©2003 John I. Blair



We're Doing Something Big



**ACC has established an endowment with UTA
to aid future environmentalists***

**The first \$10,000 will be matched 3 to 1. Donate \$100,
and like magic you have given \$400.**

Thermometer stuck.

Green part ought to grow quickly.

Endowment should bloom.

Learn more and donate [here](#)

***ACC has created, with UTA, a funding source for
student grants and scholarships in support of
environmental integrity and climate resilience.**

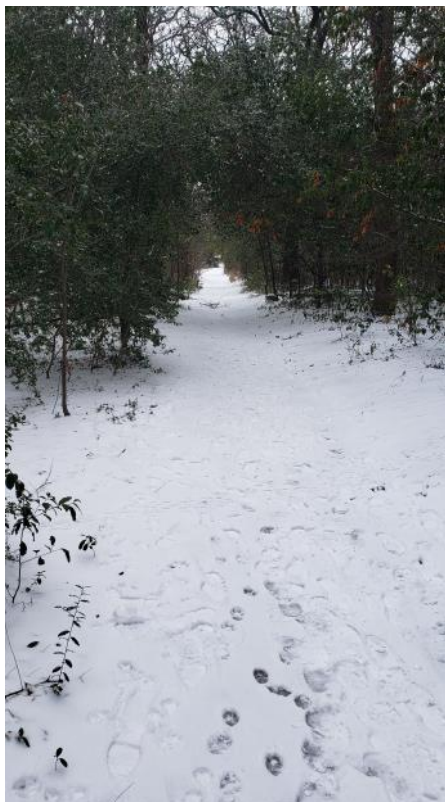


Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

On Saturday, Feb. 19, Texas Eco Alliance, an environmental volunteer group, gathered their troops to pick up litter from the pond and creek in Randol Mill Park. You can find out more about this worthwhile group [here](#) and at [this FaceBook page](#). You can also contact them via email at MeleahSmith@texasecoalliance.com or TexasEcoAlliance@gmail.com. Thank you, Texas Eco Alliance, for ALL you do — especially in Randol Mill Park!



Above, Texas Eco Alliance volunteers at work in the park. Below, a park trail after the snow on Feb. 4, and the same trail in normal times.



Meleah Smith, left, Founder of Texas Eco Alliance, Brittany Wilson, Secretary/Sustainability Director

Dick Schoech and Carol Marcotte, not pictured, recently planted some donated cedar sedge behind Joanne Stewart's park bench in Randol Mill Park. The sedge was donated by Kathleen Darling.



Randol Mill Park continued from page 12

Rare Southern Shield Fern found in Randol Mill Park Dick Schoech

We like it when our favorite parks have something rare in their natural areas. At River Legacy, it is the devil's cigar mushroom, which was recently named the state mushroom. At Tandy Hills, it is the trout lily, honored by an annual walk for admirers that was virtual last December but still attracted 150 people. At Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve, it is the meadow of Glen Rose yuccas that has its own walk for enthusiasts and is listed in *Rare Plants of Texas*.

Now Randol Mill Park has its own rare plant, the beautiful southern shield fern, *Thelypteris kunthii*. While removing privet, we noticed Jeff Quayle, a fellow Master Naturalist and expert on rare plants, walking the RMP natural area and looking for the rare fern. Although common in East Texas, it is rare this far west. Sightings include Dallas (5 locations), Denton (1 location), Parker (1 location), Tarrant (2 locations), and Wise counties (1 location).

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [describes the shield fern](#) as follows: The gracefully arching fronds of this perennial fern are lime to medium-green in color and grow 2½-3 ft. high by 8-12 in. wide. The fronds reach in all directions from clusters of stalks occurring at intervals along the rhizome. The foliage is almost twice cut and the pinnae taper to a point. The species takes on a bronze cast as winter approaches. It's a low-maintenance groundcover fern for shady moist areas that adds texture to a garden throughout the year and is great for wetland and water garden habitat.



Southern shield fern. Photo provided by Jeff Quayle.

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Great news! After years of cajoling, Ann Knudsen has persuaded park operations manager Michael Debrecht to install a drip irrigation test in the wildscape's upper north section. This will be much more efficient for getting moisture deep in the soil and will relieve someone from hose duty.

If this proves to be the money-saving investment we expect, Mr. Debrecht just might agree to extend drip irrigation to other parts of the wildscape. Stay tuned.

To understand how the long-suffering vault tools came to be cleaned and sharpened, you have to know that Bob Siglin was a

nurse at all levels. He likes things clean and neat. So it didn't take him long to bring his equipment from home and spruce up the tools.

How did we take it? We were so stunned that we fainted dead away, which is why not a single person was standing for this picture except Bob. No, he doesn't make house calls. I've already asked.

After a long day of weeding and cutting, we finally agreed to the break that Joe Martinez insisted on. Justification: It was his birthday! When we were all seated, Joe stood up and made a brief introduction. His wife, Norma, had wanted to buy a



Joe Martinez presents Carol Marcotte with the first piece of birthday cinnamon roll.

cake, but since just the two of them are at home to eat it, they settled on a tray of sinfully delicious cinnamon rolls.

Joe gave each of us half and distributed the morsels with great fanfare. No one in our health-conscious tribe accepted a second piece, but oh, it was good! Psst, you didn't want to know this, but they're two for one at Costco.

It's February in the wildscape. Time to celebrate Molly Hollar by holding a privet pull party. What's wrong with privet? EVERYTHING.

It's invasive and propagates by seed and root. It's evergreen, so it sucks up water and nutrients all year long. It grows in light or



Bob Siglin in the vault with our organized, like-new collection of tools.

continued on page 15

Wildscape Update continued from page 14

shade and so densely that it blocks the sun from other foliage, including small native trees. You might think that it being pretty with a delicious-smelling flower perfect for luring bees and butterflies would make it a keeper. You would be wrong. Its greatest sin is depriving our post oaks of water, and since it prefers riparian habitats, it shades out their developing acorns.

Will we go to great lengths, even risk a tumble into the creek, to eradicate it? Absolutely.

Throughout our region, in parks and other untended areas, post oaks enrich soils over time. Their leaf litter and rotting wood tend to stay in place better than that of other trees in the Eastern Cross Timbers. This combination of decomposing material and the post oak's diffuse root system contributes to healthy soil, retains water, and lessens runoff.

For the homeowner the mighty post oak has great value. Lawns that contain only post oaks and St. Augustine or Bermuda grass are well known for requiring less water, less fertilizer, and having fewer fungus issues and other disease problems. And because post oaks have very little exterior sap, biting insects just aren't that interested in them.

continued on page 16



From left, Josephine Keeney peeking around the vines; Ramona Gratton, Joe Martinez and Dana Austin at the edge of the creek; Carol Marcotte waving with enthusiasm; and Marylee Thomason about to join Dana on the cliff.



Carol Marcotte, left, and Jane Oosterhuis getting close enough to pick out every tiny seedling and poison anything large enough to withstand pulling.
Photos by Ann Knudsen.

Wildscape Update continued from page 15

Post oaks hold the soil with a widespread small-diameter root system. The roots heave less on house foundations. The canopy shades the house all summer.

The post oak is known for surviving winter ice and wind storms better than any other tree species in its range. Its canopy allows wind and ice to pass through easily, with less limb breakage.

To preserve these magnificent trees, wildscape volunteers venture into the underbrush and risk poison ivy rashes and briar scratches. And we enjoy it.

Happy birthday, Molly!



Marylee Thomason and Dana Austin sitting carefully, to avoid slip sliding into the muddy waters. Joe Martinez with the big loppers taking out the offending trees. Photo by Ann Knudsen.

The Unprecedented Fundraising Haiku Contest

Yes, four of you were brave and talented enough to accept the challenge. Here you are, each of you moved to poetically support ACC's cause — to support students who may someday help our suffering world.

Donations to ACC endowment
Help students and the planet
Make me feel good
Dick Schoech

The Earth calls for help
Endowment is one answer
Now is time to act
Donna Piercy

Make a difference.
Give a hand to the future,
And donate today.
Annabelle Corboy

Where does your heart lie?
With a healthy natural world?
Be honest. Be generous.
Marylee Thomason

Help plant a tiny seed
Create opportunities
Be someone's hero
Marylee Thomason

Are you a gambler?
Endowment is a good bet.
Small change for big results.
Marylee Thomason

Editor's note:
Modern haiku rules
Say counting is old-fashioned.
No more 5 – 7 – 5!

Another editor's note:
Still, page 11
Is where you ought to focus.
The future starts there.

Last editor's note:
No high pressure here.
Only grown-up reminders
That you can help now.

Bad Bits, Good Bard

Look away if you must, but please take the time to read these links:

Top: When it comes to waste, [we're #1](#).

Middle: From Randol Mill Park, [death by plastic](#).

Bottom: Casual toxic campus waste, but here's a little [encouraging news](#).



VERTEBRATE CHAUVINISM

Last night, without a thought
I leapt to save a life.

Spooking around the dishwasher,
A gecko was at hazard from the cat
(Who was, as always, eager
To check out anything that moves
And is smaller than himself).
I grabbed before I really saw
Just what I had at hand.
After unsuccessful tries
To pick him up, I convinced
The gecko my soft skin
Was safer than the hard floor,
Then cupped him gently to the door,
Prized it open and dropped the beast
Outside on the porch mat,
Confused, but in one piece.

This morning, in the car
I bashed a buzzing mosquito
On the dash, and kept on driving,
Again without a thought.

©2003 John I. Blair

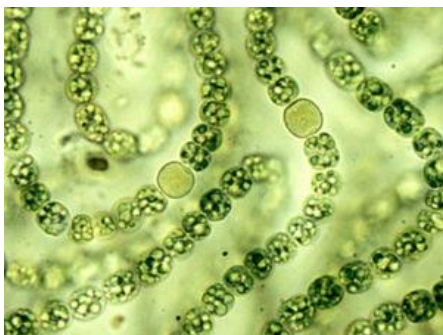
Dangerous Waters? Grace Darling

Annotated from various sources; see references

Blue-green algae are also called cyanobacteria because they are biologically similar to bacteria in many ways. As single cells, large colonies and filaments, blue-green algae grow in a wide variety of conditions and can become dominant in nutrient-rich water bodies. One characteristic of cyanobacteria is their ability to form blooms so thick it appears that blue-green paint covers the surface of the water.*

The EPA describes toxic algae blooms as harmful to the environment, animals and humans. Ingesting these toxins can cause liver and kidney damage, and recreational exposure can lead to gastrointestinal issues, rashes and fever-like symptoms. You can also be exposed to toxic algae even when blooms are not visible.

Two genera of cyanobacteria found in Texas, *Anabaena* and *Microcystis*, can produce toxins that are poisonous to fish and



wildlife that drink water contaminated with the toxins. In Utah, toxin-producing cyanobacteria of the genera *Microcoleus*, *Tychonema*, and *Nostoc* have been found in the Virgin River watershed. Although in other parts of the world there are documented cases of blue-green algal toxins harming humans who drink poorly treated water, there have been no credible reports of children getting sick from wading or swimming in contaminated water bodies. Several high-profile dog deaths at Lady Bird Lake in 2019 and February 2021, as well as a pet fatality at Zion National Park in 2020, however, raised questions about the prevalence of and risks associated with cyanotoxins. As a result, Zion NP issued a health advisory for the North Fork of the Virgin River to avoid all contact with

the water. Here's what we know so far:

- Not all algae are toxic, and you can't always tell if algae are toxic by looking at them.
- If they are toxic, it doesn't mean they are toxic all the time. It depends on nutrient levels, temperature and water flow.
- There are different kinds of toxic algae, but blue-green algae are the most common.
- Children and dogs are especially vulnerable to cyanotoxins as it is difficult to control how they interact with potentially toxic algal mats.
- Symptoms of cyanotoxin poisoning may include a skin rash, salivation, drowsiness, tingling, burning, numbness, pain, incoherent speech,

continued on page 19

Dangerous Waters? continued from page 18

seizures, vomiting, and diarrhea.

- The continued use of fertilizers, which through runoff can spark blooms, will contribute to more frequent algal blooms.
- Climate change, which is expected to cause hotter drought conditions in the future, will also increase the frequency of inland blooms. According to one study, most bodies of water in the U.S. can experience at least one week's worth of harmful algae blooms per year, but in the coming decades that average is expected to triple.
- The American southeastern states could lose millions of dollars if these blooms force authorities to cut off access to lakes and parks used for recreation.
- Many factors affect the alga deadliness, from its concentration to how much is ingested, which makes it hard to determine when it becomes a public health issue.
- Cities are ill-equipped to respond, especially because a bloom can appear in a matter of days and go undetected until reported to the authorities.

Is blue-green algae affecting a water body near you? To find out, contact the controlling authority of that water body. To find the

controlling authority for lakes in Texas visit the [Lake Finder](#) page. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department responds to harmful algal blooms when there have been impacts to fish or wildlife, but does not conduct regular water quality testing or monitoring of water bodies. Any ongoing water quality testing or monitoring is conducted by the governing water-controlling authority that manages a particular area.

*A bit of paleohistory: When Earth was formed 4.5 billion years ago (BYA), its atmosphere consisted of carbon dioxide, methane, and water vapor. Living organisms whose metabolism was anaerobic, involving the use of minerals present in the ocean to generate energy, first appeared around 3.8BYA. However, around 2.7BYA a peculiar group of microbes known as cyanobacteria evolved that were capable of photosynthesis — that is, they could generate energy from sunlight by oxidizing water as a fuel source. Significantly, the byproduct of photosynthesis happened to be oxygen. Over many millions of years, the accumulated oxygen in seawater started escaping into the atmosphere, where it eventually became a major component: the

“Great Oxidation Event,” occurring 2.4–2.1BYA.

Sources:

Karacostas C: Toxic algae blooms that kill dogs are becoming more common. And climate change is making it worse, scientists say. *The Texas Tribune*, Nov 14, 2019.

Zion National Park: Toxic cyanobacteria bloom in the Virgin River and the streams of Zion National Park. *NPS* Dec 29, 2021.

Stokstad E: Mysterious eagle killer identified. A new species of cyanobacteria that lives on invasive waterweed produces an unusual neurotoxin. *Sciencemag.org*, Mar 26, 2021.

Aiyer K: The great oxidation event: How cyanobacteria changed life. *Am Soc Microbiol, ASM.org*, Feb 18, 2022.



In Case You Missed It – Energy Edition Grace Darling

The International Energy Agency said this week that emissions of planet warming **methane** from oil, gas, and coal production are 70% higher than the official figures provided by governments worldwide. Methane accounts for almost a third of the documented temperature increase since the start of the industrial revolution, and bringing down methane emissions is seen as a crucial and relatively easy way to limit further warming. The volume of methane leaked by the energy sector last year amounted to about 180 billion cubic meters of natural gas; if all leaks were plugged, the methane captured would be enough to supply all of Europe's power, according to the report. [*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 2/25/22.]

Never one to miss an opportunity to make a buck, the US fossil fuel industry has jumped on Russia's invasion of Ukraine to argue for more drilling. The American Petroleum Institute has called for looser regulation and drilling on public lands and US waters "to ensure energy security." The API, which represents oil giants including Exxon, Chevron, and Shell, has pressured the Biden administration to "allow an



expansion of drilling and to drop regulations that impede new gas pipelines in order to help reduce fuel costs for Americans and support European countries that have seen gas costs spiral due to concerns over supply from Russia, which provides Europe with around a third of its gas." But Europe does not want that kind of help: The European bloc is thrashing out a plan for a long-term shift away from dependence on the fluctuating fossil fuel markets, with Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, outlining the need for "strategic independence on energy." Europe is "**doubling down on renewables**", she added. [*The Guardian*, 2/26/22.]

The Ukrainian invasion "is a war underwritten by oil and gas, a war whose most crucial weapon may be oil and gas, a war we can't fully engage because we

remain dependent on oil and gas. If you want to stand with the brave people of Ukraine, you need to find a way to stand against oil and gas," says **Bill McKibben**. "Russia has a pathetic economy — 60% of its exports are oil and gas and control of oil and gas supplies is their main weapon. Time and again, they have threatened to turn off the flow of hydrocarbons to western Europe, and Putin is counting on the rising price of keeping houses warm, when Europe will have no choice but to fold. Domestically, if you're an apologist for fascism, high gas prices are your first go-to move. So now is the moment to remind ourselves that, in the last decade, scientists and engineers have dropped the cost of solar and wind power by an order of magnitude, to the point where it is some of the cheapest power on Earth. The best reason to deploy it immediately is to ward off the existential crisis that is climate change, and the second best is to stop the killing of nine million people annually who die from breathing in the particulates that fossil fuel combustion produces. But the third best reason — and perhaps the most plausible for rousing our leaders to action — is that it dramatically reduces the power of autocrats, dictators, and thugs." [*The Guardian*, 2/25/22)

Blackland Prairie Site Guy Random



What? Too cold? Too gray? Maybe that's why they call it late February. You must know that to every thing there is a season, and not all seasons are created equal. Wait for spring: tornadoes and big photosynthesis!



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy and Jim Frisinger

Friends of SCNP Monthly Meeting

Free and open to the public

Tuesday, March 15, 7 – 8 pm

How to Help with Fear of Animals and Nature

Michael Smith

**West Arlington Police Service Center Community Room
2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington, TX 76013**

Parking is available in front of the building via Ron McAndrew Drive

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

Don't Fear the Creeper

We humans come fully equipped to respond to nature with wonder, gratitude, amazement — and sometimes with fear and revulsion. Our brain and body can warn us of danger, but if that alarm system over-reacts, we may come to fear things that are not really dangerous. That is especially true for spiders and snakes, but we can become afraid of lots of things in nature.

In our March program, Michael Smith will talk about how those fears can get started and how we can decrease fears of things in nature. Is the fear of creepy-crawlies mostly inherited or learned from experience? Is my fear of spiders arachnophobia? Most importantly, what can we do to become less afraid? Michael will draw on his career as a Psychological Associate to give some answers.

He will bring a friendly, crawly friend or two, which will be safely tucked away and out of sight until the end of the program. If you are afraid of snakes and want to join the discussion, please join us, and if you need to step out before the small, harmless snake joins us, that's fine. No one will be expected to do anything they would rather not do.

The rationale for what's called "exposure therapy" is that gradually confronting what we fear in a safe context lessens the fear. So come hear the facts, join the discussion, and stay for the animal ambassador if you like.

See Michael's article in GreenSource DFW for more about this topic:

<https://greensourcedfw.org/articles/critter-related-phobias-can-keep-us-enjoying-nature>



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 22

The Great Backyard Bird Count Jim Frisinger

Ten participants tallied 35 species and 185 birds during the Feb. 19 Great Backyard Bird Count at the preserve. A highlight was the Western meadowlark ID'd for the first time in the 15 years of the count at the preserve.

Record numbers of turkey vultures, white-winged doves and red-winged blackbirds were also counted. Sadly, no yellow-rumped warblers were spotted this year for the first time.

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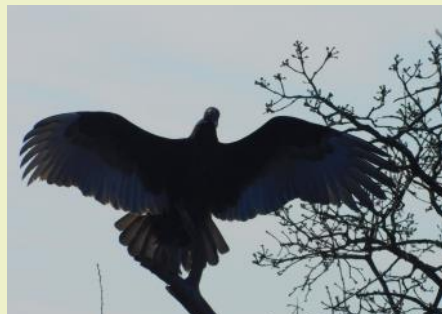
Left, Cyndi Golden points to a bird on Boulder Hill.

Right, Tallying up the bird count at the end of the morning.

From left, Kathy Draves, Jim Frisinger, and Laura Capik. (photos by Michael Golden)



Carolina wren (photo by Annabelle Corboy), turkey vulture (photo by Jim Frisinger), ruby-crowned kinglet (photo by Annabelle Corboy)



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 23

More Prairie Progress Jim Frisinger

North Prairie restoration efforts are building toward a mid-March planting date with final preparations under way. This month, two debris piles were finally removed, the soil redistributed, the trash disposed of, and concrete moved to a new site to slow erosion in a nearby swale. Four wheelbarrow loads of metal were salvaged and recycled at a local junkyard for a return of \$11 to the Friends of the SCNP!



Above, Our Sunday gang readies to tackle a big debris pile. From left, Josh Frisinger, Pat Hluchanek, Carol Marcotte, Jim Domke, Mike Sudhalter and Sami Cline. Below left, Annabelle Corboy and Lynn Healy mark plots with flags for March plantings. Below center, A load of recyclable metals. Below right, Morgan Chivers and Josh Frisinger haul away a concrete slab to help slow erosion in a nearby swale. Photos by Jim Frisinger.



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 ☐
Email _____	Sponsor \$100	
	Lifetime Individual \$250	
	Other \$ _____	

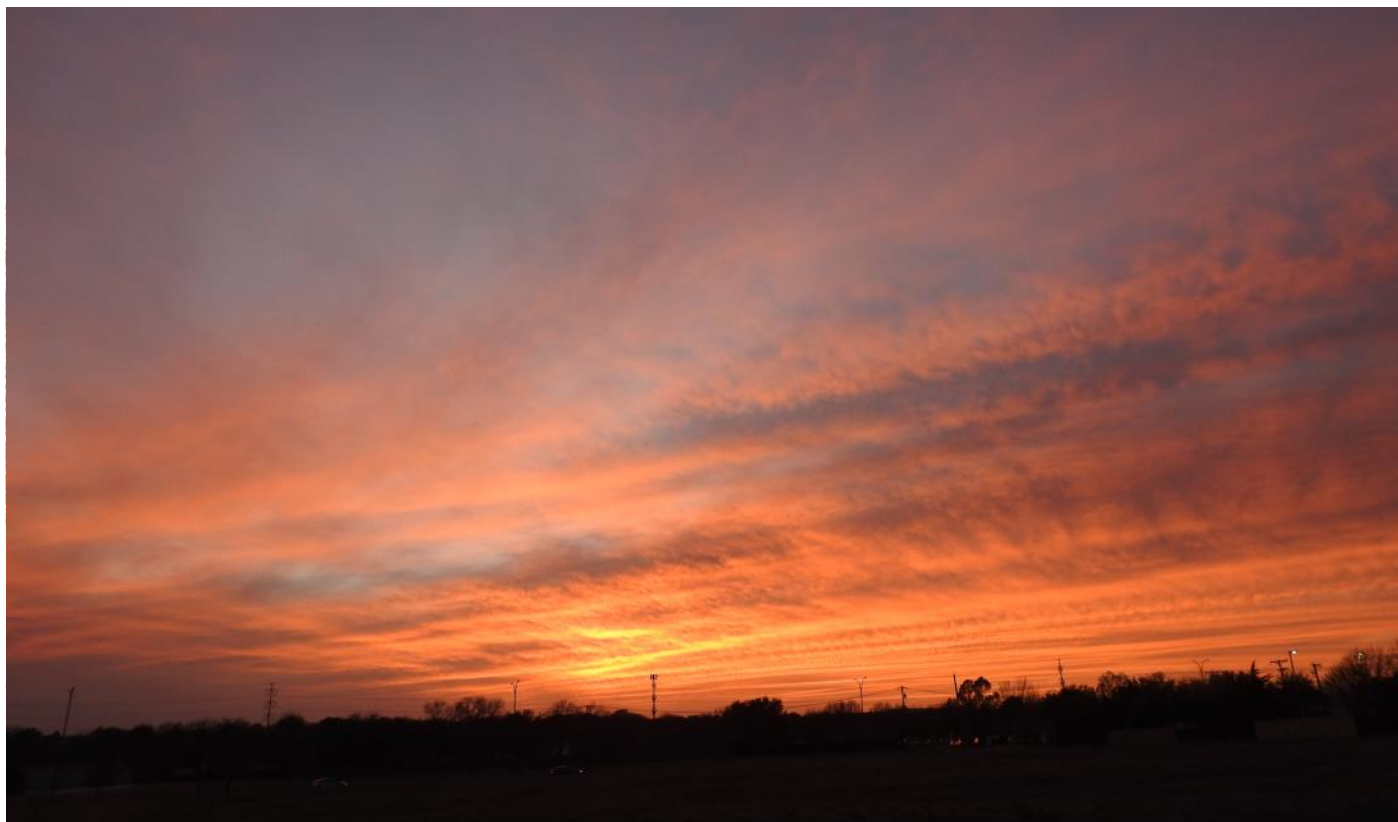
How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Or pay via PayPal or credit card here: paypal.me/ACCtexas. 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.

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If your house lacks a sunset view, consider getting out to the Blackland Prairie Site and looking west, or really any direction.