

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POST OAK

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THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMON YARROW AT BLACKLAND PRAIRIE • GUY RANDOM PHOTO

June Zoom Meeting

Partnerships, Trees, and Water Quality: Riparian Restoration on Wilson Creek

David Cowan

North Texas Municipal Water District

Mac Martin

Texas A&M Forest Service

7 pm Wed, Jun 1, 2022

Zoom meeting hosted by

Arlington Conservation Council

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

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From the President **Dick Schoech**



Impressions from an SW Texas Trip

Recent birding hikes at Big Bend National Park, Fort Davis, and Lake Balmorhea resulted in wonderful bird sightings but also disturbing impressions of how things are in Southwest Texas.

Most of Southwest Texas is a tinderbox



With the exception of thunderstorms as we entered the Big Bend Chisos Mountains, most days were hot, dry, and windy. The Rio Grande — the Big River — was dry in some places. Grasses were golden yellow with shrubs and scrub trees like mesquite the only visible green. One farm owner described residents as fearing what could happen if a wildfire was started by lightning, a house electrical



Yellow grass at the foot of the Pinnacles

problem, or a careless camper. A North Dakota fire captain was in Big Bend examining how to protect people and property in case of fire. For the Chisos Basin, which has only one road in and out, the conclusion was to evacuate everyone to the central parking lot and set backfires.

problem, or a careless camper. A North Dakota fire captain was in Big Bend examining how to protect people and property in case of fire. For the Chisos Basin, which has only one road in and out, the conclusion was to evacuate everyone to the central parking lot and set backfires.

Wildlife seems to be suffering the most

The little rain that fell ran off roads, so the greenest forbs were roadside. We saw wildlife close to the road including pronghorn, raccoons, and javelinas. This situation combined with winding mountain roads and 75-80 m.p.h. speed limits on straightaways resulted in substantial roadkill, especially at night. We saw carcasses

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ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service, and advocacy for a sustainable future

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Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
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Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger



Green milkweed at UT Arlington cut to the ground very early last fall.

Back now and a lot bigger than last year.

It's a relief.

visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org

Springtime Ritual



Students left their dorms last week. Makes you think more about trash and look at sad things on the Internet: "The world generates at least 3.5 million tons of plastic and other solid waste a day, 10 times the amount a century ago." We're first, at 4.4 pounds per person per day (2018). For more [read this](#).



Mexican buckeye

Bold Jumper



This bold jumping spider caught the attention of Dick Schoech the other day, and he sent it in. Now all we need is a reason to have it. Well, it has eight eyes, and you can see two of them just above those bright green jaws. Good enough.

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Use the application form
on the back page.**



Question Corner John Darling

Q: I don't know why you're always bashing Neil Sperry. I hear he's a very nice man who donates to charity and really knows a lot about plants. I bet you don't know half as much. Are you just petty and jealous?

A: Petty, sure. But look here, whenever he writes about native plants, Mr. Sperry builds straw men just so he can knock them down. Like when he says don't plant natives because those that do well in one part of the state will fail here. He has used that at least four or five times since I started counting. It's insulting; native plant people start with some appreciation of their ecoregion and the plants that have adapted to it over thousands of years. They may bring in a few tough natives from nearby regions that are known to thrive here, but even the Garden Guru has

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Skeleton-leaf goldeneye craves the drought and would prefer more sun.



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Our June Zoom Program

Partnerships, Trees, and Water Quality: Riparian Restoration on Wilson Creek

On Texas Arbor Day weekend, Nov. 6-7, over 120 volunteers gathered on the banks of Wilson Creek in McKinney to protect water quality and strengthen the environment. They planted over 1,600 flood-adapted native trees to reduce erosion and mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff into Lavon Lake, the primary water source for 2 million North Texans.

It was the kind of occasion that energizes environment-focused professionals like David Cowan and Mac Martin. With it as an example, they will share a hopeful tale of vision, sweat equity and public/private partnerships at the next ACC Zoomer, 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 1.

David is the watershed manager for the North Texas Municipal Water District. A graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University (BS biology, MS aquatic science), David has 30 years' experience in watershed protection as a fisheries biologist, laboratory technician, and coordinator at the federal, regional, and local level. He currently leads source water and watershed protection efforts to safeguard the district's water supplies and aquatic resources. NTMWD is a regional wholesale provider of water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal services for 2+ million residents across 10 counties spanning 2,200 square miles.

Mac is the partnership coordinator for the Texas A&M Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program. He is passionate about connecting nontraditional partners to natural resources and helping them understand the overwhelming benefits trees and forests provide. A graduate of the University of Georgia (BS in forest resources), he focuses on flood mitigation, water quality, urban heat island reduction, and expanding Texas' urban forest canopy.

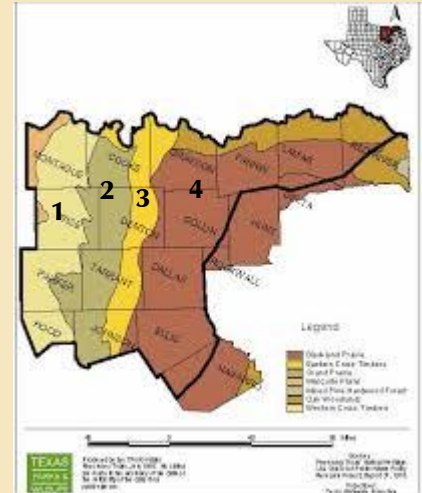


Wilson Creek

Question Corner continued from page 5

recommended Texas sage, a native desert shrub that normally lives several hundred miles away. He ignores his own advice when it suits him.

In his May 20 *Star-Telegram* column, Mr. Sperry advises us on how to “Create a natural landscape that looks like North Texas.” But it’s hard to read with a straight face, given his past eagerness to recommend exotics of every description, not to mention how often he prescribes unnatural chemicals (some devastating to soil and aquatic organisms). And he begins with an odd claim: We in North Central Texas live in what was the Grand Prairie. Really? First, it’s hard to define North Central Texas, but if we use the local Council of Governments map and then try for a good definition of Grand Prairie, we still can’t believe what he wrote. Mr. Sperry lives in McKinney. That’s on the former Blackland Prairie. And although some of us live far to the west of McKinney on what Texas Parks & Wildlife is calling Grand Prairie, many of us are living in the remnants of Eastern and Western Cross Timbers.



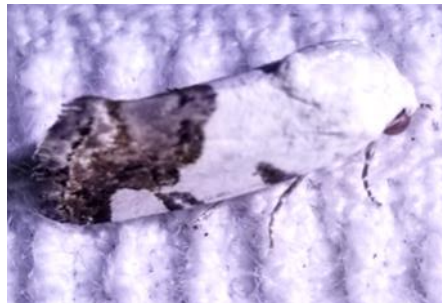
1. Western Cross Timbers,
2. Grand Prairie, 3. Eastern Cross
Timbers, 4. Blackland Prairie

Although he’s on a former prairie, the Guru tells us he lives in a forest that he replants as old trees die to keep it from looking like a prairie. And lots of prairie dwellers do that. East Arlington is full of trees; the quickest way to know they’re living in a prairie is to note the absence of post oaks. Mr. Sperry replants with three species of trees in his natural landscape that TPW doesn’t list as native to his prairie. No big thing: If you don’t burn or run bison (or maybe goats) on your prairie, you’ll eventually live in a wooded place. But if he’s telling us about his natural landscape, you’d think he would replant with trees native to his piece of former prairie.

Okay, maybe this time it’s a petty complaint. But can Neil Sperry be forgiven for all those exotic plant recommendations and the fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, and fertilizers that he tells us to use so we can sustain those plants in places where they were never meant to grow? Next!

A May Moth Moment

Over 50 species have been drawn to a UV light shining on the side of a carport in central Arlington since May began. Here are three that will fit in this space: Zebra conchylodes moth, Four-patched bird-dropping moth, Grape plume moth



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



From the President continued from page 3



Bed of the Rio Grande



Black-throated sparrow



With my new pal, Smokey

of deer, skunks, rabbits, vultures, and many unrecognizable critters. We did not see bears or mountain lions, but the lodge restaurant where water was available in the brush outside had an almost daily sighting of deer and bears along with an occasional mountain lion. The usual Big Bend area birds were admired: the black-throated sparrow, cactus wren, canyon towhee, yellow-throated chat, and rufous-crowned sparrow. Audubon Texas was there surveying wildlife, and another group was counting the declining Colima warblers.

Humans were suffering as well

Park rangers reported two hiker deaths and 40 rescues and assists in the first four months of 2022. This was a dramatic increase from past years. Especially problematic were trails that were much easier to descend, making the climb back usually later in the day especially problematic for those not acclimated to local conditions.

Climate change problems were everywhere

The star party presenter at the McDonald Observatory, which has one of the darkest night skies in the U.S., pointed out a brighter area of night sky caused by fracking rig lights in the Permian Basin. Negotiations with energy companies had reduced the light pollution but did not solve it. Blown tires were everywhere, and a 16-wheeler blew a tire in a flurry of rubber right in front of us. Sights that brought hope were fields of solar panels, ridges full of wind turbines, and huge greenhouses providing vegetables more sustainably than raising cattle.

Is DFW headed for some of the same problems?

Driving back, a noticeable change occurred around Stephenville with vegetation and crops becoming much greener as we approached the Metroplex. Showers are predicted in Arlington for about a week into the future. But according to Ted Ryan, ACC's February speaker, a North Texas drought is imminent. This trip reinforced how dramatic an impact climate change probably will have on our way of life. And Arlington has yet to produce a plan to address climate change.

My Nature Notebook

Fun with flowers

There was this vine and I didn't care. But then I saw its flowers, and they were fuzzy and mostly dumb-looking so that was okay. And they smelled kind of rotten with lots of tiny flies going in. I saw that creepy old guy again and he said inside the flower there are little hairs that trap the flies until they get covered with pollen and finally the hairs let the flies escape and they take the pollen to another dumb-looking flower and they get trapped again and make baby vines or something. Stupid flies.

*Wooly
Dutchman's
pipevine*



Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

We have a pair of hybrid Muscovy ducks nesting near the pond. We first noticed the nest on April 28 when it already contained six eggs, and now there are more than 20. Incubation is 30-35 days, so we might see ducklings before the end of May. Because this species hybridizes so easily, it can be difficult for beginning bird-watchers to identify Muscovy ducks. For more information, [look here](#).

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From upper left, female and male Muscovy ducks. Female on nest. The nest on April 28. Over 20 eggs last week.

Below, a few of the native flowers now blooming in the pond triangle garden: purple coneflower, zexmenia, pink skullcap.



Randol Mill Park continued from page 11

Bluebird nest monitoring update: We now have 11 bluebird nest boxes throughout the park. The locations of boxes with active nests are not disclosed to the public. Nest monitors are trained to minimize disturbance, and they log activity into nestwatch.org on a regular basis. Bird lovers are asked to observe boxes from a distance because too much disruption may increase the chance of parents abandoning the nest.

Below, nestlings in one of our nest boxes and a recent fledgling.



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

The Metric System and Celsius Celsius [= centigrade] temperature is part of the *metric system* of measurement, first developed in 18th century France. Like Celsius, other metric units — such as kilometers, grams and liters — are based on multiples of 10. The metric system was established as an international standard of measurement in 1875 for most European countries and their colonies and Celsius became the official temperature scale for most of the world. The only exceptions to the quick adoption of metric scales, and thus Celsius, were English-speaking countries that used the *imperial system*, such as the United Kingdom, India, and South Africa. These countries used Fahrenheit, an imperial unit of temperature. The relationship between Celsius, C, and Fahrenheit, F, temperatures is given by the following formula:

$$F = 1.8C + 32$$

Today, only three countries do not use the metric system: the United States, Liberia and Burma. And most countries worldwide — including non-metric Liberia and Myanmar — use Celsius as their official temperature scale. Only a few countries use Fahrenheit as their official scale: the United States, Belize, Palau, the Bahamas, and



the Cayman Islands. [<https://sciencing.com/celsius-vs-centigrade-7246502.html>; with thanks to John Blair for the idea.]

A Bold Vision for Funding Wildlife Conservation.

A 2018 report, *Reversing America's Wildlife Crisis: Securing the Future of Our Fish and Wildlife* — a collaboration among the National Wildlife Federation, American Fisheries Society, and The Wildlife Society — celebrates the extraordinary diversity of U.S. wildlife while calling attention to the severe declines affecting many of the nation's species: More than one-third of America's wildlife species are at increased risk of extinction. More than 150 U.S. species already have gone extinct. Nearly 500 additional species have not been seen in recent

Recovering America's Wildlife Act is:

Good for wildlife.
Good for business.
Good for Texans.



decades and are regarded as possibly extinct. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2021 (H.R. 2773) now making its way through the House of Representatives will provide states, territories, and tribes with \$1.39 billion annually to catalyze proactive, on-the-ground, collaborative efforts to restore essential habitat and implement key conservation strategies, as described in each state's wildlife action plan. Key provisions of the law include:

- Dedicate \$1.39 billion per year to recover wildlife species at risk.
- Spending from the bill will be guided by federally approved state wildlife action plans.*

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In Case You Missed It continued from page 13

- To date, state agencies have identified 12,000 species of wildlife and plants in need of conservation assistance.**
- Tribal Nations will receive \$97.5 million annually to fund proactive wildlife conservation efforts on tens of millions of acres of land.
- At least 15% of the resources are to be used to recover species listed as threatened or endangered.

Among the reasons to support this bill:

1. Help protect wildlife for future generations
2. Put people to work, creating more than 100,000 jobs annually
3. Fund tribal wildlife conservation programs
4. Make communities more resilient
5. Provide additional funding for endangered species
6. Diversify the funding stream
7. Provide an opportunity for the parties to reach across the aisle

*See *Texas Conservation Action Plan* (2012) and Tarrant County's Cross Timbers Handbook [here](#).

**Find a list of species in greatest conservation need in Texas [here](#).

Overcrowding Is Changing the Soul of U.S. National Parks. Visitors have flooded national parks as COVID-19 regulations eased throughout the U.S. Rangers, locals, and tourists



offer these comments: “I worry about the park getting so crowded that they will have to make appointments to go in.” “Sometimes the litter is horrible because people just don’t care.” “The thing I remember most is feeling a sense of solitude, just enjoying the quiet and how crisp the air was. It’s still breathtaking now, but that sense of solitude is not as apparent any more. There are always people in front and behind you on the trails, and if you don’t go fast enough they’ll pass you by.” “Every summer, we will have an altercation between a bison and a visitor, and that’s usually because the bison has been around people all day and that one last person gets a little too close.” “We’ve seen a whole bunch of people new to experiencing outdoors, so there’s a big education component that’s landed on us. We definitely want people to enjoy the outdoors, but we want to make sure they’re

not writing on the rocks . . . the amount of graffiti is very, very different from two years ago. It’s a little heartbreaking.” “People come to the park to practice their culture, and that is something that is near and dear to all of us who have the privilege to work here. You have to understand something before you can help preserve it and treat it with respect.” “Something needs to be done. We can’t keep growing the visitor population. It’s just not sustainable.” [*The Guardian*, 10 Sep 2021].



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason



Stripping seeds from annual rye at the north gate needed many hands. It's always fun to work together to talk movies, TV shows, NPR enlightenment and to kid each other at any opportunity. From left, Joe Martinez, Robin Agee, Virginia Newton, Ann Knudsen, Jane Oosterhuis, Marylee Thomason and Karen Hill.

This month's highlights:

Story #1

Josephine Keeney and Jane Oosterhuis were bemoaning a large ant mound at the entrance to the butterfly garden and plotting the ants' demise.

"If they're fire ants, we should kill them. They wiped out the species of ants that horned toads relied on for food. Those lizards almost went extinct." – Ann Knudsen

Story #2

Thanks to John Snowden for his donation of 300 Texas sedge

plants in 4-inch pots and 15 roughleaf sunflowers in 1-gallon pots. Within 10 minutes the planting crew were unloading trays in the Twin Oaks area. But this was only half a load. The



Carol Marcotte has the smooth moves as she gives the fall aster a haircut.

balance will be delivered when John deems the plants ready for outside living.

We were fortunate to claim two new volunteers: Rebecca Hill and Virginia Newton, Marylee Thomason's sister in town for a visit.

This project exhausted everyone. As Rebecca lay on the ground gathering the strength to walk home, we assured her that this was unusually intense. She promised to give us another chance.

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Wildscape Update continued from page 15

Story #3

Ava Hinson, a senior at Dallas Baptist University (environmental science major, biology minor), gave the First Saturday lesson, "Mosquitoes on My Mind." Ava has an associate's degree in computer science and hopes to pursue environmental remediation as a career.

The Hinson family house has a pond and an area that frequently floods. Both attract mosquitoes. To combat the flying vampires, Ava's mother put out canisters of Spartan Mosquito Pro Tech. No one has been bitten in two years. Pro Tech attracts mosquitoes to a solution of sugar and yeast. They take the bait, which is not toxic, and continue to pollinate flowers and be eaten by bats, lizards, frogs and fish with no detrimental effect. But the mosquitoes cannot release the gas created by the yeast, so they grow into a big donut and eventually burst.

Replace the contents every two months with a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon salt and 1 teaspoon yeast. Spartan Mosquito Pro Tech is carried locally at Handley Feed and online from various sources. Worth a try, for the environmentally conscious.



From left, Rebecca Hill, Virginia Newton and Patsy Miller practice their landscaping skills with 15 pots of roughleaf sunflowers.



Jane Oosterhuis and Carol Marcotte start the daylong project of planting 300 4-inch pots of Texas sedge. They were soon joined by seven additional eager volunteers. It was the fastest and most furious planting here ever.

Blackland Prairie Site Guy Random



Drought? Not here, but thanks for asking. We've finally gotten our color back, and we're doing fine. Unless maybe you want one of those flashy prairies full of gaudy color. It's just so easy being green.



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy and Jim Frisinger

May 1 Workday Jim Frisinger

The May 1 workday at the North Prairie restoration area combined debris removal and transplanting. "Staff archaeologist" Karen Shumard discovered a label in wallboard debris we were bagging. The brand turns out to be eminently recyclable — it's crumbled concrete — and will probably be reused elsewhere for trail maintenance or erosion control.

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Clockwise from upper left:

Jim Domke works his magic transplanting a coralberry from nearby to a spot under a giant post oak at the prairie restoration project.

Photo by Jim Frisinger.

Volunteer Master Naturalist Morgan Chivers shows off his tool-hauling technique. Photo by Jim Frisinger.

Taylor Thorns, Karen Shumard, Morgan Chivers, and Jim Frisinger bag debris at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve. Photo by Jim Domke.

Aged post oaks, cleared of invasive understory trees, are now surrounded by newly planted Eastern Cross Timbers prairie species. Photo by Jim Frisinger.



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 18

Milkweed Transplanting and More Jim Frisinger

Milkweed transplanting continues for at least the fourth year at the preserve. Kennedale rancher Kim Courtney again donated milkweed from her pasture. Constant annual transplanting has established several small colonies at the preserve's Pollinator Meadow to boost its monarch butterfly habitat. *From left: Milkweed harvesting at Kim Courtney's Kennedale ranch. Cattle take an active interest in the process. Survivors of previous year's milkweed transplanting efforts are now vigorous and flowering at the preserve's Pollinator Meadow.*



Below left, A Glen Rose yucca in bloom in the North Prairie colony, which now has about 55 plants. Yucca necopina occurs in only a half dozen counties in Texas and is in decline due to urbanization and ranching practices. It is found throughout the preserve, with the largest colony in the northeast corner's Glen Rose Yucca Meadow.

Right, Volunteer Rudy Arnold rehabs the main trail entrance at the Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve, which is subject to periodic erosion.

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Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 19

iNaturalist City Nature Challenge

April 29 to May 2 at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy

This was the 7th year for the City Nature Challenge. Gone are the days when the Dallas/Fort Worth area finished first in Observations (23,957) in 2017. Back then there were 16 cities, and only in the U.S. In 2022, 445 cities participated, and the challenge has become more of a global bioblitz than a fierce competition. To see some of the amazing shots of rare or endangered species, go to the City Nature Challenge website – www.citynaturechallenge.org.

As for SCNP, we collected a total of 428 Observations (Research Grade), 196 Species, 91 Identifiers, by 10 Observers. There were actually 550 Observations made at SCNP during that time, but not all were identified as **Research Grade** before the end of the challenge and so didn't count for the CNC.

One of the treats of looking through the Observations is noting who came out, took some photos, and posted them on iNat. Herewith, a list of each of the 10 Observers along with the number of Observations made. We selected one photo for each of the top nine Observers (*see next page*).

Kreichy	1
Drawntoscales	11
Dsimmonds	12
Lulubelle	25
Joshmols	29
Cindylcobb5	37
Elizrose	47
Brentano	67
Charley	76
Sambiology	123

This year Dallas/Fort Worth came in 4th in Observations with 42,398, 5th in Species with 3,417, and 8th in Observers, so we still are one of the stars. La Paz, Bolivia, is the champion in all three categories.

From the archives:

Participants prepare for the preserve's first City Nature Challenge in 2017.



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 20

iNaturalist City Nature Challenge Annabelle Corboy



Texas Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus olivaceus*) – drawntoscales, Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*) – dsimmonds, Cobaea Beardtongue (*Penstemon cobaea*) – lulubelle



Trailing Ratany (*Krameria lanceolata*) – joshmols, Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) – cindylcobb5
Texas Flower Scarab (*Trichiotinus texanus*) – elizrose



Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Brentano, Engelmann Daisy (*Engelmannia peristenia*) – charley
Comanche Harvester Ant (*Pogonomyrmex Comanche*) – sambiology

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POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
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June Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, June 1, 7 pm

Partnerships, Trees, and Water Quality:
Riparian Restoration on Wilson Creek

David Cowan and Mac Martin