ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POST OAK

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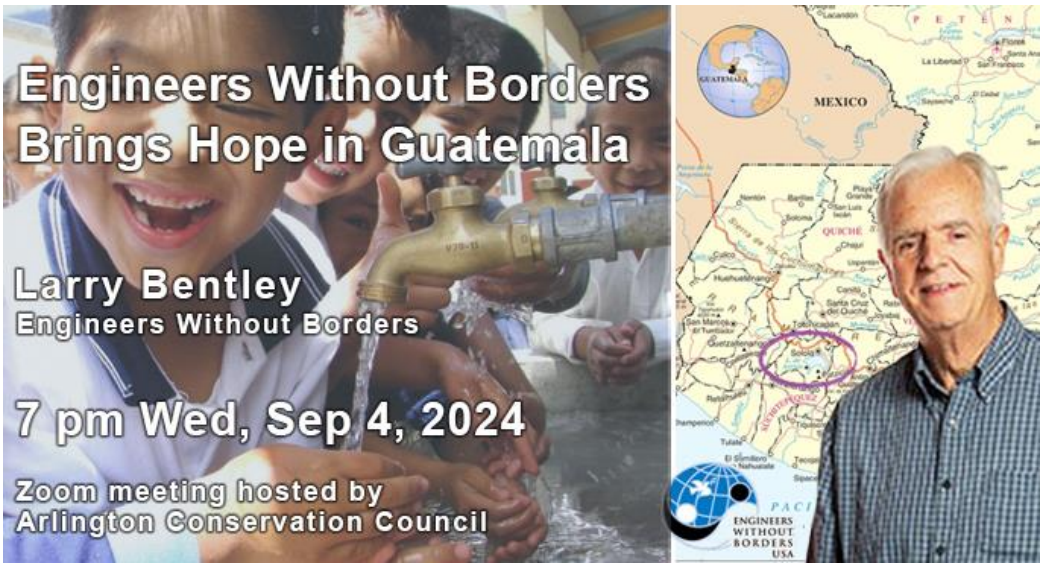
GRAY FOX • VETERANS PARK • MARIAN HILER PHOTO

September Zoom Meeting



Did you miss this great talk?
Watch it any time in the next few days by clicking on this link.

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From the President Dick Schoech

What is a Natural Area?

Environmentalists talk a lot about natural areas but rarely say what they are. A good definition can help guide volunteers' work in Arlington parks. Some say a natural area exists if you leave a space to nature and do little else. The west side of River Legacy Park was neglected for years and now is solid privet. No one would call it a natural area.

Others may say a natural area is one maintained to appear like it did before the park was established. But how do we know what a park looked like then? Failing memories, historic pictures, and Google satellite views are our only clues. They rarely provide a reasonable plan for what a park can look like today. Still others say a natural area has native wildflowers that visitors can admire and enjoy, but does showcasing someone's favorite native plants sound natural?

Lacking a satisfying definition of a natural area, I consulted the folks with FAUNA (Friends of Arlington's Unique Natural Areas) for appropriate terminology. Their responses here are edited, but I can email full statements to anyone. Just ask.

Carol Marcotte defines a natural area as a public or private expanse of land or water with unique features of scientific or educational interest that has retained or re-established its natural character. The natural features may involve biodiversity, geological formations, or characteristics that preserve historical or cultural value.

David Hopman focused on the functions of natural areas which are places for social interaction, psychological renewal, recreation, and education. They provide ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, air and water purification, and large-scale nutrient cycling. Natural areas also provide ecological services like critical habitats for birds, mammals, pollinators, and other native species. Preserving and restoring natural areas helps mitigate long-term urban, suburban, and regional stressors, thereby creating a green corridor of

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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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From the President continued from page 3

both natural land and recreational areas that improves the quality of life, well-being, and enjoyment of residents.

Grace Darling made an important distinction between a natural area and a preserve. Like a nature preserve, a natural area is a site (terrestrial or aquatic) of special biodiversity significance due to the presence of rare species, unique natural communities, important animal assemblages, or other ecological features. Unlike preserves, where people are simply visitors and land impact and types of activities are highly restricted, natural areas may limit access to some or all of its habitats, and low-impact recreational activities may be allowed only at a safe distance from environmentally sensitive plant or animal communities.

We can conclude that activities in a natural area should reflect visitor needs — education, research, socialization, historical preservation, mental health, enjoyment — while factoring in the geographical area's history and societal values such as sheltering animal and other species that live there without human involvement.

Blackland Prairie Preserve one year ago. Many drying seedheads, of course, but still lots of developing plants with late-season flowers yet to come.

Our September program

The 115 families living in La Fe community of Sololá department in southwestern Guatemala — a cloud forest settlement at 8,700 feet — toiled for years under a very limiting agreement with nearby villages that gave them access to potable water only one day a week.

The La Fe leaders reached out for help from the Milwaukee professional chapter of Engineers Without Borders-USA. Its engineers designed and installed a system — it connects to a spring — involving conduction lines, suction tank and pumping, distribution/storage tank, and distribution lines to 120 tap stands within the community. The project vastly improved the lives of about 600 residents. It makes for quite a tale — perfect for the next ACC meeting.

A commercial pilot and Georgia Tech graduate (B.S., aeronautical engineering), Larry retired after 35-plus years in the telecommunications industry, where he specialized in project management for AC/DC power systems, generators, switch gear and UPS systems. He received the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Conservation Design award in 1984.

He has used his expertise to assist communities in 20 developing countries, with missions to refugee camps in Nepal, Uganda, and Ethiopia; evaluating hospital electrical systems in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis; and repairing water wells in Ethiopia during a drought.

Larry won EWB's Founder Award in 2014 and currently serves on the organization's standing content committees for energy and water.

Zoom Webinar from Liveable Arlington Ranjana Bhandari

Health Risks from Exposure to Fracking
Dr. Anne Epstein MD FACP

Zoom Webinar

Find this talk here

Host: Liveable Arlington
Registration link: https://tinyurl.com/FrackingHealthRSVP

Please join Liveable Arlington on **Saturday, September 7th, 2024, at 3 PM** (CDT) for a Zoom presentation and discussion on **"Health Risks from Exposure to Fracking."** Dr. Epstein's presentation will touch on *health impacts for children and families who live in the midst of dense oil and gas development*.

About the Speaker
Dr. Anne Epstein is a practicing physician in Lubbock, TX. She is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Sleep Medicine and is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and a Clinical Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Epstein has been Chair of the Lubbock City Board of Health, Chair of the Board of Health Fracking Committee, and was appointed to the Lubbock Oil and Gas Citizen Advisory Committee. Since 2016, she has written 2 review articles and co-authored a 3rd article on the health risks of fracking which were published in the scientific literature.

Ranjana Bhandari, Executive Director | (She/Her)

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Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger

Passing by Johnson Creek north of the Parks Mall.

Yes, that's really Johnson Creek.

Makes me grateful for what's left.

Visit ACC's Facebook page and Arlington Conservation Council Discussion Group

Step into My Parlor

The home of a funnel web spider in Veterans Park from Marian Hiler. We don't see the mostly flat web sheet here, but this is a great look at the tube where the spider often waits for prey to step on the sheet.

A burning blister beetle

Be Sure to Eat Those Healthy Greens

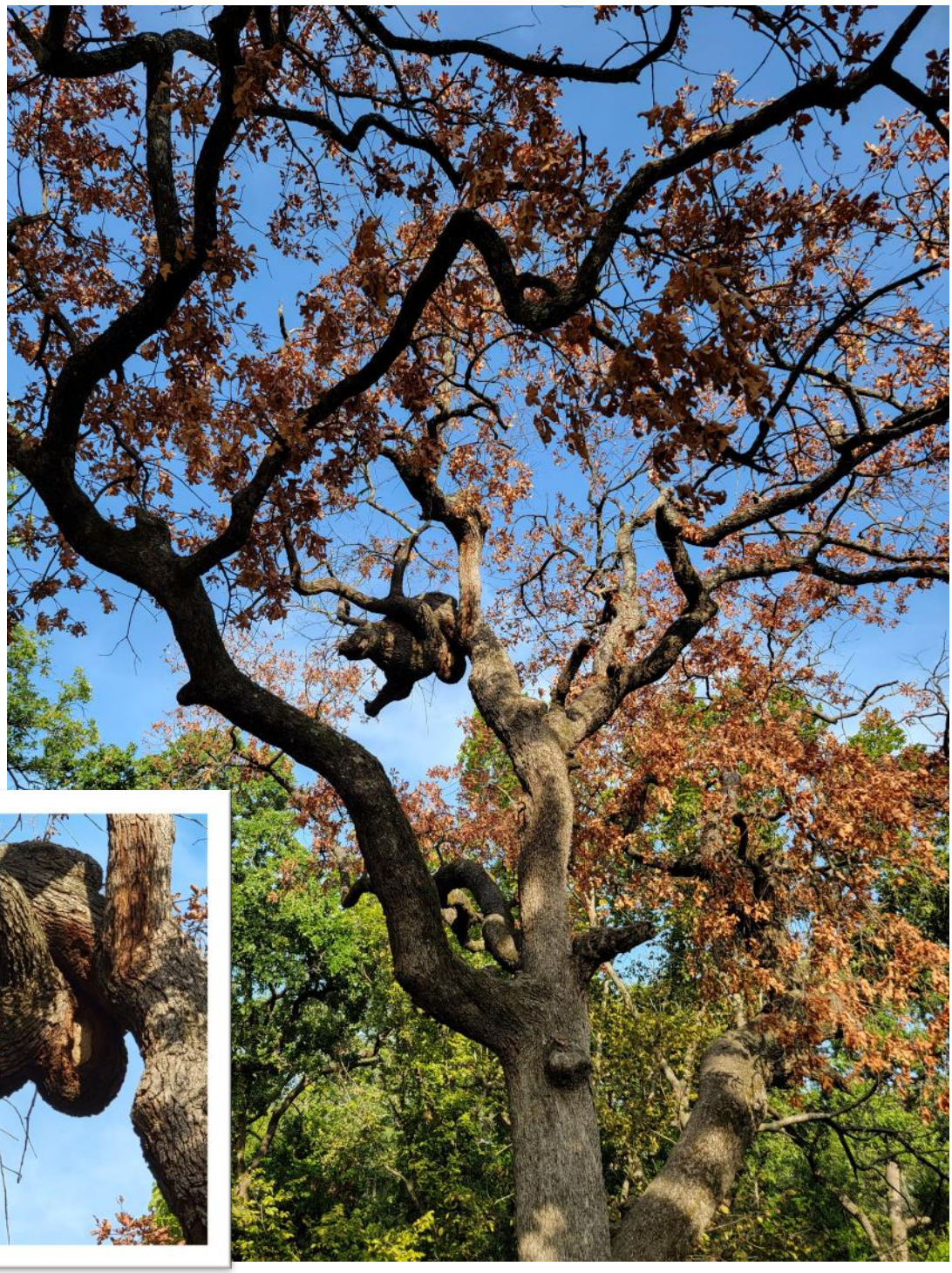
If you happen to obsess about how hard it can be to grow milkweeds, it's a treat to wander in a grassland where they're growing without human intervention. But then you come upon a Two-striped grasshopper eating milkweed leaves and you want to squash it. But you just have to walk away.

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

ACC Heritage Trees

ACC Heritage Trees

From Dick Schoech: The amazing Gorilla Tree (my name for it) in Randol Mill Park has died and may be cut down or deteriorate soon. If anyone wants to see it before it changes shape or is removed, the tree is on the east side of the creek a little north of Joanne Stewart's bench (which is close to the sidewalk and has a marker) but south of the pond bridge.



We're Still Doing Something Big

The ACC-UTA Endowment — established to support future environmentalists, promote environmental integrity and strengthen climate resilience — is a success!

Thanks to you, it has awarded a scholarship each of the last two years. Watch one awardee's presentation of his research here.

And it is getting bigger. This year it will award a $1,000 scholarship and a $3,000 research grant.

Please help the endowment make an even greater impact benefitting even more students. Keep it growing.

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ACC-UTA Endowment

For good.

Forever.

Donate here.

We're Still Doing Something Big continued from page 9

Here's the latest on our educational effort

Architecture major Knowme Tasfia has accepted the ACC endowment's Summer 2024 research award.

Research Project:
Knowme is passionate about building resilient and environmentally conscious communities and studies sustainable urban planning. Her project is focused on creating child-friendly communities amid the busy landscapes of metropolitan places through the study of the complex, vital roles that nonprofits play in both influencing urban landscaping and advancing children's well-being in the City of Dallas. Such child-friendly communities will promote the preservation of urban ecosystems and biodiversity through the conservation of green spaces, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and nature-centric design.

With the help of the ACC award, Knowme plans to diversify her interdisciplinary research in natural resource conservation and hopes to assist the City of Arlington in the larger conversation on sustainable urban planning and environmental preservation. She acknowledges the award as a catalyst for networking and collaboration, which will provide further opportunities to work with a larger variety of stakeholders, establish alliances, and promote collaborative effort toward the creation of a sustainable future. She hopes to make a real impact on Arlington's physical landscape by promoting a culture of environmental stewardship among its citizens through research projects that prioritize the preservation of natural resources, the advancement of sustainable practices, and the improvement of urban green spaces. She wants to create a connection between academics and practice by actively participating in local communities, advocating sustainable policies, and sharing research findings.

ACC-UTA Endowment
For good.
Forever.
Donate here.

Same Sponsor, New Owners **Marian Hiler**

Wild Birds Unlimited has been a faithful ACC sponsor since 2018. Last year, even as they were selling the business, outgoing owner Peggy Parson generously renewed WBU's sponsorship. This past month, new owners Chris and Sherri Williams carried on that support, renewing for another year.

When I visited their store on Randol Mill, Sherri told me about their game plan to increase WBU's involvement in the community. During their first year of ownership, the Williamses not only continued the existing WBU collaboration with River Legacy of regular bird seed donations, they added participation in the park's 2024 Earth Day celebration, donations of feeders for their Science Center bird blind, and will be joining in River Legacy's Sep 14 W.A.T.E.R. Festival.

The Williamses intend to continue to grow their collaboration with River Legacy as they plan to expand to other parks in Arlington, beginning with the Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve, having started discussions with the Friends group. "And then after that, we'll take it from there. Maybe get involved in another park." Their game plan also includes free programs at libraries, participation in festivals and the 4th of July parade.

Nature education is vital to Sherri, recognizing its role in mental health. "It's important to me to try to educate young and old about nature. We like to encourage people to take their kids out into nature

even if it's just for a few minutes. Take them out into your backyard. Get them away from the devices and everything. Go back outside. I'm also really into conservation as well because we have seen a decline in the songbirds and the butterflies and the fireflies. One at a time we can make a difference that way."

The Williamses are certainly doing their part to make a difference.

Question Corner John Darling

Q: Hey, I found this old milk jug that's falling apart. Sure, it looks bad, but it's obviously going away. For now it's just litter, but give it a while and it'll be gone. So what's the big deal? Looks like just more treehugger angst to me.

A: IT'S NEVER REALLY GONE, DUMMY! It gets smaller and smaller and ends up in everything from earthworms to robins to **breast milk**. Give it a while? How about 200 to 450 years? And even then it's still with us. You want some environmental nightmare material that might, just might, shake you out of your ignorant complacency? Just have a long look at **this hideous website**. Do I sound a little harsh? Should I cut you slack for being a regular schlub stumbling through life? No, wake up! Next!

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
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Hours 10 - 6 Mon – Sat,
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Tree cholla

The Page with No Name

IVAN QUERIDO'S REAL HERITAGE TREE

The ACC editorial board continues to indulge Mr. Querido's quixotic quest for something only he understands. Why? Let's call it our contribution to misguided inclusiveness or perhaps nostalgia for adolescent rebellion. At any rate, here he is again: Look, it's the sad end of the South Cooper Whataburger Tree, and we oughta be paying attention to this poor stick. As a sapling in a beat-up pasture it might have enjoyed the street when it was a quiet two-lane with miles of empty space between Dream City and tiny Mansfield.Now its best hope is to become mulch heaped up around some stupid exotic ornamental. Makes ya think, I guess.

Great blue heron. Marian Hiler photo.

Make a Wish and Expect a Miracle! Carrie Donovan

Did you know that **Friends of O.S. Gray Natural Area** funded its own study of the property in 2012? The result is a manual over 100 pages long! The infrastructure consulting firm Halff prepared "O.S. Gray Natural Area Vegetation Management Guidelines" for us and for Arlington Parks & Rec. By the way, FOSGNA is an all-volunteer group, informally organized in 2010, that helps maintain and enhance biodiversity in our own little slice of heaven at 2021 W. Abram St. For more, go here.

Every year our Friends steering committee makes a list of things we want to accomplish, and that list keeps growing. Our priority has always been to remove invasive species that threaten native plants, especially our beloved state tree, the pecan.

A group of cheerful, friendly young men from **Treehugger Tree Service** came to our rescue Aug. 9, toiling 26 hours to remove invasive Bradford pear trees. Owner Ryan Elliott spearheaded his crew, and they performed magic on that very hot day. Many Master Naturalists and others have worked, for free, planting, making trails, cleaning trash, planning special events, and creating nature cards, but this is the first time a local company has donated time and effort to remove invasive trees.

Thank you, Ryan, and your Treehugger guys for making wishes come true. Thank you for being sensitive to our trees at OSGNA and for helping us stay focused on our mission to attack invasive plants. Thank you for improving the quality of life in Arlington, Texas. Sending lots of hugs back to each one of you!

Another facet of our mission — see the sign that greets visitors near the playground — is "to celebrate important local history of the past century, most prominently the life's work of O.S. Gray, Sr." The park commemorates the accomplishments of Arlington resident and renowned horticulturist Oscar Somers Gray, Sr. He used the eastern portion of our O.S. Gray Natural Area as a production tree nursery and experimental laboratory for developing six new pecan varieties. (Mr. Gray's generous donation to the Arlington Men's Garden Club in the 1980s also provided the seed for many recent windfalls.)

And now, 47 years after his death, the land he lovingly tended continues to delight townsfolk and visitors. We hope he would be pleased.

The crew from Treehugger Tree Service

Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

Bluebird Breeding Report

Randol Mill Park has had a very successful 2024 breeding season.

There are 14 nesting boxes in the park, and some, of course, are more successful than others. We know this because we monitored them twice a week for 25 weeks in the spring and summer of 2024.

This is the first year we had three different species taking up residence in the bluebird boxes. When those other species are breeding in the boxes, the bluebirds lose space and resources they need to nest successfully. That's bad, but on the other hand, we all love the wrens that use the boxes, and some of us love the invasive nonnative English sparrows and even the cowbirds that are nest parasites. With luck, the bluebirds will find another cavity nesting opportunity, like a hole in a snag. However, we do not monitor those other cavity nests. Our numbers aren't perfect; Mother Nature has her own breeding ideas each year.

For more information, review "From the President" in the July/August issue of the *ACC Post Oak*.

Here is the breakdown of the 2024 RMP bluebird breeding season:

Bluebird eggs laid = 89	Cowbird eggs laid = 6	Wren eggs laid = 7	English sparrow eggs laid = 10
Bluebirds hatched = 61	Cowbirds hatched = 1	Wrens hatched = 0	English sparrows hatched = 0
Bluebirds fledged = 48	Cowbirds fledged = 1	Wrens fledged = 0	English sparrows fledged = 4

Remember, monitoring nest boxes is NOT an exact science. These final numbers do not all jibe. Weather, predator invasion and other species competitor conditions influence the nesting box outcome.
To review our detailed recording logs, refer to Dick Schoech, Jamie Brunner, Amy Richards or Carol Marcotte. We are happy to share the monitor logs, address your questions, and consider your comments.

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Recent bluebird fledglings at Randol Mill Park. Amy Richards photos.

Randol Mill Park continued from page 15

Trail Mulching

Yes, it's hot outside, but the maintenance of the Wildflower Trail in RMP must go on.

Rob Ryman *(right and below)* and Carol Marcotte mulched trails in the early mornings to beat the heat.

Park visitors (and their pets) are enjoying the maintenance and erosion control.

The mulch and tools were provided by Arlington Parks & Recreation Department. Thank you!

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Randol Mill Park continued from page 16

Boulders for Erosion Control

Parks Department recently moved boulders into the RMP pond area for erosion control. They positioned the rocks into the gullies on the east side.

Now we need some *rain* to see if the positions of the rock should be tweaked. Thank you, APRD for doing this big, heavy job!

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Randol Mill Park continued from page 17

The Latest Privet Removal

Let the sunshine in!

Dick Schoech worked on freeing up a Post oak by removing the surrounding privet.

Left, Dick Schoech removes invasive privet. *Right,* After the job, Dick really did let the sunshine in.

Noted in Passing

Always something to see in the park, and you never really know what's next. Maybe a Cooper's hawk *(left)* or an American bumblebee in a Purple bindweed flower.

My Nature Notebook

The Worst Kiddie Meal Ever!

Me and Stupid were just playing around in the Creepy Old Guy's yard and we found this wasp dragging a caterpillar around. I got bored because the caterpillar didn't do anything but Stupid went running to the COG and after he hollered at us he said didn't you know the *Datana perspicua* can't move because the *Ammophila procera* paralyzed it? Look, see where the mother wasp is opening that hole in the ground and pulling the caterpillar inside. The mother will lay an egg on it and the baby wasp will eat the caterpillar. WHAT?? While it's still alive and can't move?? That's too gross!! No, it's practical. Maybe you should ask your mother if she'll make you some. They taste pretty bad, but they never spoil.

Social Media? Yup.

Be sure to visit

ACC's Facebook page
and
Arlington Conservation Council
Discussion Group

We'll be watching.
Actually, we won't.

Molly Hollar Wildscape Bluebird Report

Carol Marcotte

The wildscape has four bluebird nest boxes that are monitored twice a week from March to August. Two boxes are active, and the other two had ants or wasps intermittently throughout the season.

Here is the summary of the 2024 bluebird breeding season:

Bluebird eggs laid = 15
Bluebirds fledged = 6

The Molly Hollar Wildscape is a relatively small public space, but it's still hard to know why eggs or hatchlings disappear from the nest. An unsuccessful outcome is heartbreaking.

The monitor logs are always available for you to examine.

Jane Oosterhuis Marian Hiler

Happy Trails, Sweet Jane

Jane Oosterhuis made her retirement official last month. She's moved westward, trading in her garden home for a high-rise view of Trinity Park and the river. Recently, friends and fans, of whom there are many, celebrated her birthday, her new adventure, and the wonderfulness of this special lady on a hot August evening at beautiful Knapp Heritage Park, one of her favorite places to work.

Jane met most of these people through all the fortunate places and organizations she has generously given her time and energy to. Friendships started forming back in 2007 when she moved to this area from back east not long after her husband passed away. (Note: She grew up in Oklahoma then moved to Pennsylvania and Maryland after getting married.) On her arrival, she wanted to learn about Texas native plants and their seasons. Plus, she wanted to make friends. Based on her prior years of volunteering, she knew that was the means to meet both needs. And boy was she successful at getting what she wanted.

Early on, she met Josephine Keeney at an Arlington Organic Garden Club meeting. Josephine introduced Jane to the Fielder House pollinator garden. And so, her native plant education and making friends began. Eventually, the Pollinator Garden Team evolved with Josephine's guidance to include the Knapp Heritage Park, O.S. Gray Natural Area, Randol Mill Park and River Legacy Parks. Each week, you could count on Jane in her signature apron and floppy hat to be working away at one the pollinator gardens. Josephine also brought Jane to the Molly Hollar Wildscape, where she not only helped maintain the gardens, but she also served as secretary on the Friends of the Molly Hollar Wildscape board.

Jane preparing the ground to plant violets for winter

I could go on and on about other good deeds of Jane's that I am aware of, but the editor has limited my word count. All her friends and acquaintances already know how Jane is driven to help people, whether by maintaining public native gardens, educating young and old about nature, or helping folks in great need through NU2U of Arlington Urban Ministries.

Jane has logged over 5,000 volunteer hours with the Master Naturalist program since she was certified in 2010. The program had a profound impact on her. "Master Naturalists really opens your eyes. You see the world, how everything is so connected. Every little part is important. If we could just get more people educated. But one thing is positive, more people are coming out and spending more time in nature since COVID."

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Jane continued from page 22

Just a portion of Jane's many fans who attended her August birthday/retirement party.

On her last wildscape workday, I told her a lot of people are going to miss her. "I know," she replied. "Well, I'm trying to show you what I do. You know, my secrets. I like to share. If I know something I try to help people."

That's our Jane.

Josephine Keeney

We met while on a quest to make a better world. A world of beautiful gardens where plants serve the need of food for wildlife and for humans, for cooling shade and clean air and water. A world where there is no waste and there is food for everyone, where plants are composted and used to feed the earth. A world of no plastic dumps, where everything is used, where people stop to think about all that they do. We worked together for many years through heat, cold, and rain, and with the help of our friends we did many good things. Through all this time you have been my friend, and I will miss you every day.

Carrie Donovan

Jane has been one of the most dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers at O.S. Gray Natural Area. She, along with Josephine Keeney, would work her garden magic at OSGNA, tenderly nurturing the wildflower beds. Thanks to these lovely nature ladies, the wildflower project at OSGNA flourishes. They have created and sustained not just a heaven on earth and a haven for

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Volunteers pausing for a moment in the Fielder House pollinator garden. From left, Charley Amos, Josephine Keeney, Susie Wheeler, Ramona Gratton, Kay Dansby, and Jane.

Jane continued from page 23

Jane at the Knapp Heritage Park entrance.

The pollinator crew at Knapp Heritage Park. From left, Kay Dansby, Jane, Josephine Keeney, Denise Pederson, Ramona Gratton, and Phyl Baloga.

pollinators, but also a natural environment where all people can marvel at nature's beauty. Jane is an amazing person and friend! We will truly miss her!

Dana Austin

I feel fortunate to have had Jane as a friend for the past three years. We share a Maryland connection, both of us having lived there many years. She has taught me many things including plant care, enjoying the creatures that live in the habitats we create, which plants to avoid in a suburban yard, and how to

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Resting by the Randol Mill pollinator garden near the greenhouse are Jane, Kay Dansby, Phyl Baloga, Dana Austin, Ramona Gratton, Dick Schoech, Josephine Keeney, and Denise Pederson.

Jane continued from page 24

Workers in front of the River Legacy Science Center. From left, Dick Schoech, Jane, Kay Dansby, Josephine Keeney, Susie Wheeler, Dana Austin, and Charley Amos.

clean and care for my tools. Jane has generously given me many plants from her yard. Each one is special to me. I am grateful to have met Jane, who I consider to be a loving mentor.

Jane and Josephine placing limbs on a pathway slope to discourage climbers.

Best buds Josephine and Jane.

Ann Knudsen

The first thing you discover about Jane is her passion for protecting our environment. No doubt that is why she volunteers at so many native plant gardens. Jane doesn't just talk the talk; she walks the walk. In everything she does she considers whether it's good for the planet. Can it be done without potentially harming the environment? Then that is the way it should be done. At our wildscape breaks, Jane would often bring environmental news articles that started great conversations about good environmental practices.

For all the years I have known her, she has been a dedicated and loyal volunteer, willing to do whatever is asked of her. She has pitched in to help for practically every special event we've had at the wildscape.

We will miss her, not just for the work she has put in, but for her friendship — and also her persimmon bread. We love you, Jane!

continued on page 26

Jane continued from page 25

The pathway needs clearing? Jane's right there.

Carole Marcotte

Jane Oosterhuis was the first welcoming volunteer I met at the Molly Hollar Wildscape in 2014. We've been friends ever since. She took me under her wing, introducing me to all the other volunteers and to the wildscape. Jane boldly taught me how to care for native plants in her meticulous fashion.

Josephine, Jane, and Kay Sekio don't let a little rain get in the way of working the Fielder House plant sale.

Jane generously shares her expertise, knowledge and plants from her yard with others. She loves to share nature's findings from her yard, recently bringing a skull for us to examine. She is a member of The Xerces Society, Sierra Club Foundation and National Wildlife Federation, Native Plant Society, Arlington Conservation Council, and Arlington Organic Garden Club.

She maintains gardens at her church and at the front gate of her neighborhood. Jane is the ultimate example of a Texas Master Naturalist.

Marylee Thomason

Jane may not consider herself famous, but she is.

She is famous for being reliable; always there on time or early for the wildscape workdays. When we worked together at the Fielder House, it was the same. When she came, she went right to work. Sometimes it was weeding or trimming, and other times it was observing the gardens and making suggestions as to what needed to be done in a particular area.

She is famous for taking the best minutes at the board meetings, making sure to have the details right. Everyone counted on her for accuracy and maintaining the history because she kept copies, in order and on hand.

Jane was always very generous with her extensive knowledge of native plants. Not in a didactic way, but just with simple suggestions such as this or that

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Jane continued from page 26

Sign committee members Ann Knudsen and Jane looking over the kiosks and signs as they prepare to design the content of new interpretive signs.

needed to be cut back to encourage more blooms. Her plant generosity extended to sharing plants from her own home garden. Over the years, Jane has given me dozens of plants that she knew would fit the spot I needed to fill. I know she shared with others.

She was thoughtful and generous with other things too. She often brought something from her garden or her collection that would be of interest to the students I teach at Merryhill. Posters, chrysalises, pretty stones, butterfly wings, lizard carcasses; lots of things she found and brought to me.

We will miss you, Jane. Fortunately, we know where you will be living and how to get there. So this is good-bye with all the good wishes that go with it. AND the expectation that we will see you often at your place and ours.

Kate McGee, pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church

Jane transformed our flower beds from heavy hedges that required a lot of water to a flowering Texas native xeriscape. She has dedicated not only her intelligence and vision but so many hours watering, pruning, planting, picking out boulders, and taking care of multiple native gardens on our grounds. I often sit at my desk and look out the window in wonder as I admire the stunning beauty of the flourishing Texas plants or see the giant butterflies who come to visit.

In addition to the beauty and visual gift of the gardens, the life that she has brought to the outside of our building now reflects the variety and beauty of the people within. We are so grateful for the way that Jane has lived out her discipleship by stewarding God's good creation. She has been such a wonderful disciple in many ways at WPC, and we are going to miss her so very much.

Jane marvels at another fascinating creature. This time it's a swallowtail caterpillar.

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy

Coming Up

Third Saturday Volunteer Day

starting again on September 21, 9 am – noon

The Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve schedule a once-a-month volunteer day on the third Saturday of the month. We tackle a wide variety of needs for the preserve. These include brush clearing, seeding, trail maintenance, transplanting, and trash pickup. Volunteers get to learn in depth about the preserve and its goals while contributing to sustaining and improving this treasured ecosystem.

Bring gloves, appropriate apparel and suntan lotion/bug repellent as needed. Meet in the parking lot.

Review: August 10, Know Your Nature Neighbors – Feathers, Scales, and Funnels Along Trails

Almost every month, we take a walk at the preserve along with whoever signs up to come along with us to get to "know our nature neighbors." The idea is to notice, talk about, and document the oaks, yuccas, wildflowers, dragonflies, turtles, herons, and anything else. August 10th was the fifth walk we have offered and it proved that each walk is unique and wonderful. It's never boring!

We had so much fun that we ran a little overtime, ending at about 10:30 am. There's just so much to see, and I hope you'll consider coming along on the next one. Highlights included a Rough green snake, a Green heron, and the always green Glen Rose Yucca.

For a full description of what the group saw and learned, see Michael Smith's blog post on our new website, https://www.friendsofscnp.org/2024/08/10/feathers-scales-and-funnels-along-trails/

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Review: July 24 Blacklighting – A National Moth Week Event

"Moth Night", Arlington's 3rd annual celebration of National Moth Week, was a great success at SCNP. Sam Kieschnick (Urban Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife) and Melissa Walker (Environmental Education Specialist, Arlington Public Works) organized the event and provided at least eight stations with lights and backdrops for attracting and observing moths, and so much more. SCNP was a great location as the different stations represented aquatic areas, upland sites and areas with and away from artificial light, and therefore attracted a wide range of critters.

Urban Wildlife Biologist Sam Kieschnick (green shirt) with moth enthusiasts.

Almost 50 human participants ranged from families with young children to neighbors, friends, Master Naturalists and iNaturalist enthusiasts, all eager to make the next discovery. Many of the finds were photographed, finding their way to immortality as iNaturalist observations, providing new insights into the biodiversity of a place that we only thought we knew.

In a few hours, early one night, here's what we found:

Moth Night iNaturalist statistics:

- 909 observations (one of those was #20,000 for SCNP), representing 339 species by 19 observers
- 220 of those species were new finds at SCNP

For more about moths and National Moth Week (July 20-28), go to **nationalmothweek.org**.

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Left, Jalisco petrophila. *Right,* Moonseed moth.

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Please visit the new Friends of SCNP website

friendsofscnp.org

We've been building a new website for the Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve. Our new website is intended to complement the other ways we share what is going on at SCNP — mainly Facebook and this newsletter. In addition to basic information about SCNP, some of the key features include the history of the preserve, a citizen science page, a list of upcoming events, and access to previous newsletters. We also have a blog with stories from our friends in nature, especially the nature at SCNP. For an example, please check out a recent blog post from a guest poster, Rosealin Delgado, about her friendly encounter with a coachwhip here. With the new website, we also have new email addresses for our primary contact (info@friendsofscnp.org) and for the newsletter (newsletter@friendsofscnp.org) and events (events@friendsofscnp.org).

But the website is not done yet, so please send us your comments and suggestions. You can contact us at info@friendsofscnp.org.

And thank you to Frank Keeney who created our first website and has taught and guided us through the myriad technical and creative aspects of building and maintaining a website. We wouldn't be here without him!

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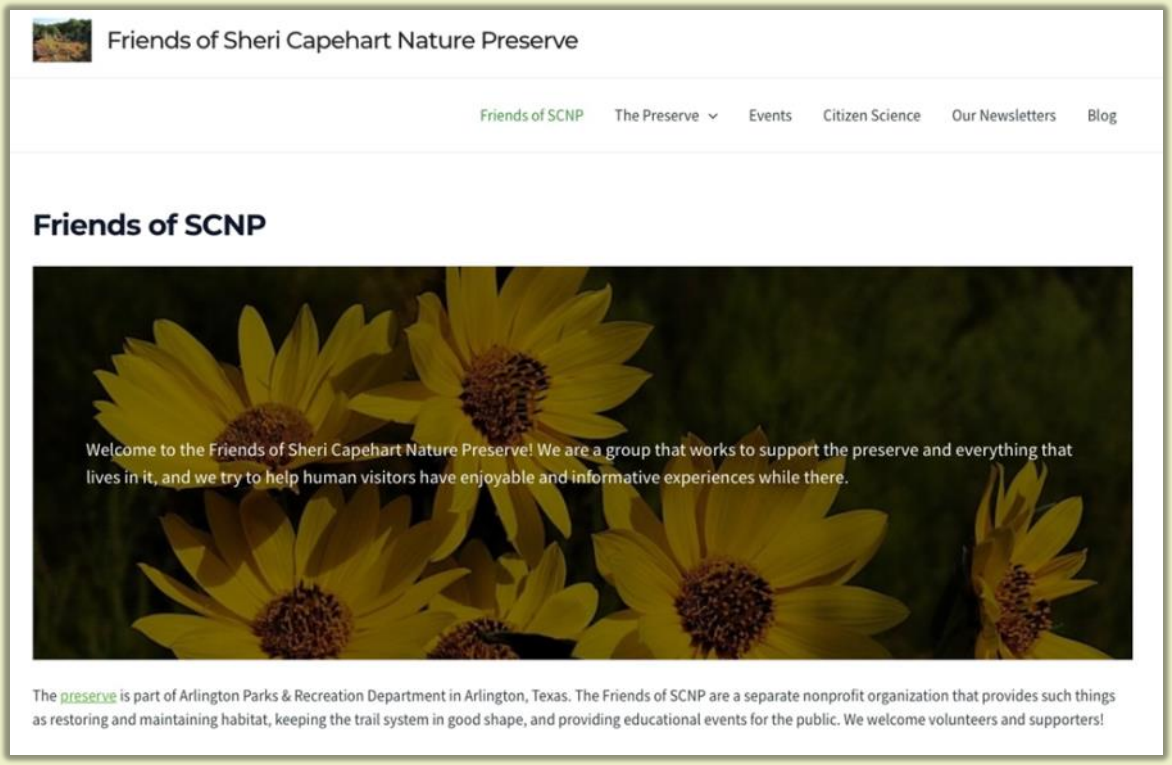

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Trails Update Jan Miller

Thanks to volunteer Rudy Arnold, erosion damage from spring rains plus exuberant plant growth are being held in check at SCNP.

In Texas, rain is (almost) always welcome, but this past spring was exceptional, resulting in badly eroded trails from heavy downpours. Then plants surged to life, growing into and over trails. (Note: Watch out for Poison ivy in unaccustomed areas.)

Rudy has repaired washed-out trails, adding water bars and smoothing out rutted areas. Many of them present an extra challenge as they're routed up steep slopes that erode easily with rain or foot traffic, and even worse, sandy soils (common here) are more easily eroded than clays or loamy soils. In these areas, Rudy works to direct drainage away from trails, diverting it to the side or adding water bars to slow its speed and potential for damage.

Trail corridors have had to be re-established by trimming at ground level and above to keep plants from blocking them, so Rudy has added saw, trimmer, and loppers to his tools. Trails now have a couple of feet clearance on each side.

You can help too! Please: 1) Stay on marked trails. 2) If a trail is blocked (downed tree, etc.) please retrace your steps rather than going off-trail. And, please **email us** so we can clear it ASAP. 3) Even if muddy, please stay on marked trails, don't widen the path. Or stay on concrete walkways and postpone your trek for a drier time.

Why does it matter? Every square foot that's lost or fragmented due to a rogue/social trail or a trail widened by foot traffic or erosion is compromised or lost as wildlife habitat. Nature needs our attention. Thanks!

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Above, Blue Trail. *Left,* before Rudy's work. *Right,* after. *Below,* Four shots of Yellow Trail. *Left,* before. *Right,* after.

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SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species July 2024

July was indeed special, much thanks to "Moth Night"! Not only did the number of observations (far) exceed 20,000, but the total number of species grew by 220 species and now approaches 2000!

Total June Observations: Observations: 183, Species, 128, Observers, 10.

Total July Observations: Observations: 1034, Species, 403, Observers, 24.

Total Species count at SCNP is now 1967! (That's 220 more than June, at 1747.)

Above, Coralberry *(Symphyotrichium orbiculatus)* – chanderdavis, Maximillian sunflower (*Helianthus maximilliani*) - kmcourtney, Gray fox (Urocyon cinereoargenteus) - chandlerdavis
Below, Striped bark scorpion *(Centruroides vittatus)* - galactic_bug_man, Aztec spurthroated grasshopper *(Aidemona azteca)* - Brentano, Rough greensnake (*Opheodrys aestivus*) - summervillenature

Blackland Prairie Preserve Guy Random

You're right, it's still June.
on this page. Blame vacation
for all this fake news.
But still, not too bad.
Two milkweeds, nice ironweed.
It's good to look back.

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 _____

Address _____

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Phone _____

Email _____

First-year member $10

Individual $15

Family $25

Supporting $40

Sponsor $100

Lifetime Individual $250

Other $_____

New Member ☐

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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**. 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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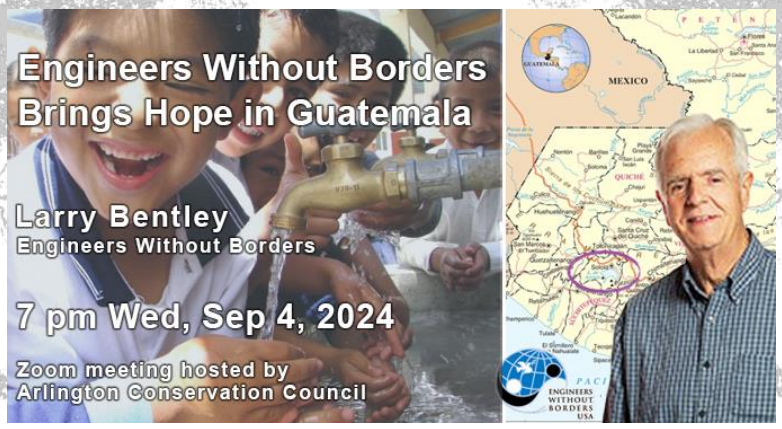
Our September Zoom Meeting



See page 7 for more on this presentation.