

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

**VOLUME 25, NUMBER 2
MARCH 2025**

POSSUMHAW HOLLY BERRIES • PAUL KNUDSEN PHOTO

March Zoom Meeting



Read more about this program on page 5

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85214198514>

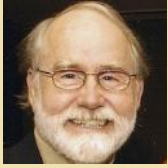
**For assistance accessing the meeting, contact Frank Keeney,
webmaster@acctexas.org**

6:30 pm social time and equipment check, 7 pm presentation

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From the President **Dick Schoech**



Getting in Touch with Nature

As the world becomes more complex and stressful, getting in touch with nature becomes more important for one's well-being and for nature itself. Here are some suggestions.

- Take off your shoes and focus all of your senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) as your bare feet connect with the earth and slowly move you forward on a mindful walk.
- Play with your sense of balance by standing or hopping on one foot.
- Find a spot where you can sit quietly and open your senses to your surroundings. Maybe your porch, your yard, a neighborhood park bench, or any quiet spot where you can be one with nature.
- Totally relax and feel all of your body weight press into the ground.
- Close your eyes and listen to identify all of the sounds around you.
- Listen for birds and try to tell what they're communicating. *
- Focus on the simple things in nature that fascinated you as a child. When is the last time you admired a sunset or the night sky constellations?
- Hike to a creek to appreciate a babbling brook and let the sounds and smells sink in.
- Observe nature's beauty and power like sunrises, sunsets, waterfalls, or a windy hilltop.
- Admire the sky, especially when it's full of clouds. Glory in the images the clouds present.
- Use your phone camera to capture a slice of nature, then blow it up to see what your naked eye missed.
- On a rainy day, hear, feel, and smell the rain like you did as a kid. You might even find yourself stomping in a water puddle.
- Find an interesting tree and study it to discover its life story.
- Invite a child to walk with you on a bioblitz where you identify all of the insects, birds, plants, and animals around you.
- Thank everyone who worked hard to make it possible for you to savor your next meal.
- Volunteer to help nature by picking up trash anywhere you walk.

continued on page 4



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

- Read indigenous people's stories to learn how they interact with nature. One example, from the Amazon region of Ecuador:

*Waorani like to walk. When we need to think, we head off walking in the forest. When we want to express our emotions, we walk and sing: Our songs, too, are fruits of the forest. Wherever we walk, we are in communication with everything around us. We know the plants and the birds in the way city dwellers know the names of streets and the logos of stores. But streets do not breathe, and stores do not take flight. The forest is our grocer, our pharmacy, our hardware store, our theater, our gym, our park. We cultivate our small orchards and walk the forest to hunt and to gather food, medicine, tools, and beauty and art supplies.***

This list contains just a few suggestions. Any place or action in nature will educate you and provide peace and solace if you give it time. You also can share your experiences with an accompanying friend to gain a new perspective.

Further reading

*What's Really Going On at Your Bird Feeder? Watch for These Clues

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/power-struggles-are-playing-out-at-your-feeder-heres-what-to-look-for/?utm_campaign=Lab%20eNews%202024&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz--JGtbQWsW7ld-cVQVYanHPhnyAsJiOc1-gEwWTHs9qtLjzcx4xGtJkxmtZ9_SdZI7N-Y2aQd-ChqtTVUD1pQMdlL1fFg&hsmi=348464727&utm_content=348425044&utm_source=hs_email

*When Rocks Speak, What Do They Tell Us?

https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2024-4-winter/books/marcia-bjornerud-when-rocks-speak-what-do-they-tell-us?suppress=true&utm_source=greenlife&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter

**Nemonte Nenquimo on Respecting the Amazon and What is owed to the Planet

<https://time.com/6958832/earth-awards-2024-nemonte-nenquimo/>

I asked ChatGPT for a picture of someone feeling at one with nature. It replied, "Here's an image of someone feeling at one with nature, radiating peace and connection. Let me know if you'd like any tweaks!"



Our March Program

Symbiosis in Your Backyard: Insects, Trees, and the Link Between Them

Kimberlee Peterson, Woodland Ecologist
Texas A&M Forest Service

Kimberlee Peterson will address the relationships between insects and trees – the good, the bad, and the “well, it depends.” She’ll talk about how our perception of what is around us can vary depending on goals and objectives for our forest areas.

Kimberlee grew up in the South Arlington/Mansfield area and earned a B.S. in wildlife, sustainability, and ecosystems sciences, followed by an M.S. in agriculture and natural resources, at Tarleton State University. She has been with the Texas A&M System for seven years, the first four at AgriLife Research exploring native seed and prairie restoration and more recently as a woodland ecologist with the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Is It Past 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 issue for information on submitting your 2025 dues.**

Through with writing checks? Pay your dues via credit card or PayPal.

Renew or join [here](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=JN2N25FEK2ZWL)*

* https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=JN2N25FEK2ZWL

In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

Climate Change Edition

“**Glacial Melting Is Accelerating**, Driving Sea Level Rise and Depleting Freshwater,” reads one headline; “Melting Glaciers Caused Almost 2 cm of Sea Level Rise This Century, Study Reveals,” the BBC announced. New research led by scientists at the University of Zürich and the University of Edinburgh shows the world’s glaciers have been losing 273 billion tons of ice mass annually, causing oceans to rise by nearly a millimeter per year, and the process has been accelerating in recent years. The 273 billion tons of ice lost in a single year “corresponds to the [water] consumption of the entire global population in 30 years, assuming 3 litres per person per day”, a scientist told BBC News.

So far this century, glaciers have lost approximately 5% of their total volume. Regional losses were highly variable; the Antarctic and subantarctic islands lost 2% of their volume but central Europe’s glaciers lost 39%. Collectively, since the turn of the century they have lost more than 6,500 billion tons — or 5% — of their ice, causing an 18 mm (almost 2 cm or 0.7 in) rise in global sea levels. [[theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/19/](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/19/)]

The scientists used several methods to measure glacial ice loss, from the traditional method of manually comparing the amount of snow that accumulates on top of a glacier against the amount of water melting off of it, to much more advanced methods using satellites. One method, **photogrammetry**, created 3D models of the glaciers over time from repeated satellite photos. The researchers also used radar and laser ranging instruments from NASA’s Ice, Cloud and Land Elevation Satellites (ICESat and ICESat-2) and the European Space Agency’s CryoSat-2 missions to measure changes in surface topography in a process called **altimetry**, which “combined with estimates of

the snow density change [were used] to estimate the glacier’s total mass change.” In addition, **changes in Earth’s gravitational field** using data from NASA’s Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) and its successor, GRACE-FO, allowed the researchers to estimate glacial mass changes over wide areas.

“Sea level rise affects all of us,” a study author said. “Most of the world’s population lives near water, whether it’s rivers or coasts, and so starting to lose coastline, as it moves further inland based on sea level rise, is going to affect a lot of people. There’s regions in the South Pacific where many people live on low-lying islands, and it’s going to take a massive humanitarian effort to deal with what is going to be a humanitarian crisis as we start losing places that are habitable just due to sea level rise,” he said. “We will directly notice the melting of these glaciers. Because they are located where many people live, it will affect drinking water supplies, in particular in South America and Asia. And the risk of flooding after the melt season also poses a danger,” said another researcher.



Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger



Frostweed!

Can't get enough.

Thank you,
Ann Knudsen

**Visit ACC's
Facebook page
and
Discussion Group**

Happy Bits Part One

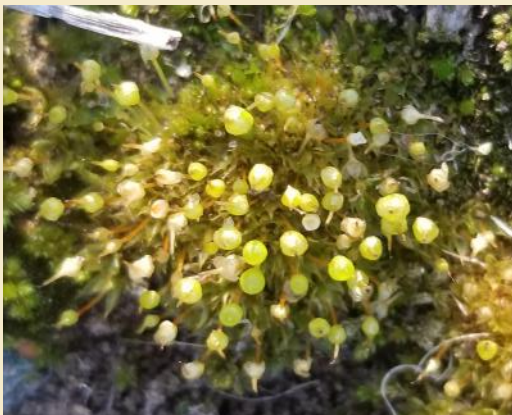


It's the Johnson Creek Rapids, and somehow that poor, beat-up stream takes on a little hint of glamour right at this spot. Be sure to get the sun just right, ignore the trash and the privet, and you will like it.



Sea oats.

Happy Bits Part Two



These tiny green spheres look like they might be moss capsules that will mature and release spores at some point.

There's more on mosses on page 9, but this is just too hard to resist.

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



ACC Trees

ACC Heritage Trees

From Raul Lyubeemitz: So it is perhaps true that you threaten us with the ignominious end of OUR Heritage Trees? And do we count for nothing? You think this is right merely because you stare out a dirty window for hours, then move words around for minutes until you somehow think people will be impressed with your newsletter skills? Ha! Stop pretending for a moment only and admire this fine old pecan resigned to life in a humble setting. Why should we care? Of course this is obvious. Just open your eyes and see how it has been hacked and hacked again over decades by persons ordered to keep this tree on its side of that puny fence. Do you not understand that this is our first two-dimensional ACC Heritage Tree? Of course the ramifications are overwhelming. Somewhere near the intersection of bonsai, origami, and quantum mechanics, the tree defies arboreal morphology and persists. More than that, it prevails! You tree philistine, be quiet now about abandoning heritage trees and try to open your eyes for whatever next month may bring.



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Hey, they put this stinky oily stuff all over a big parking lot a few months ago, then bits started to come loose, and lately there's something like moss growing in the cracks. Moss looks fragile to me, so what's it doing in this harsh, ugly habitat?

A: Don't be misled by the delicate appearance. That moss is just doing what it has done for over 400 million years, colonizing mean places by secreting chemicals that break down rock and in the process create happier habitats other plants can use. The worst thing about mosses is their annoying life cycle. Check out a moss life cycle video and you'll see. But just for mild green fun, go [here](#) and see an easy video. And try [this](#) for serious facts, including a little on living in dry places. Next!



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Jack-o'-lantern mushroom. Dick Schoech photo.

GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

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On a
Liveable Planet



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The Page with No Name

Report from the field

Ivan Querido

So now Querido thinks we'll care if he's more pitiful than usual? Look, see him down there crouched by the fountain in Post Oak Plaza. And what's that? Overflowing garbage bags? Okay, that's it. Call Custodial for the mess. And get Security to haul him out of here right now. Where? Anyplace in the landfill.

"Bruno, you again? Hey, let me go, I'm not getting in that van. All right, at least listen. It's trash, litter on steroids everywhere I look, and I don't get it and I can't take it anymore. I don't throw trash everywhere and people who still talk to me say they don't. So who are these bums? And what's wrong with them? Yesterday, I walked a new path in a park, and that new path exposed piles of trash that had been hidden. And of course some of it is plastic falling into tiny pieces. I just can't stand it!"



SPIDER

As I sat attentively
Listening to the speaker of the day
Talk about a life that was not frightening,

I noticed on the shiny floor
Beside his foot
A tiny spider
Barely bigger than a bean
But black as soot.

It wandered slow across the wood
Apparently in search of food,
Oblivious to the room so full of humans.

I could not keep myself from wondering
If the spider did not see
That the massive fabric pier
Next to its octuple of eyes

Was in fact a leg
That with a single careless movement
Could squash it flatter than a leaf,
Too fast for grief.

With my cane
I gently nudged the spider,
Hoping to divert its path
Into a safer arc;

But it refused to harken
To my hint and wandered
Farther into jeopardy,
Aiming down the aisle
Between other human legs.

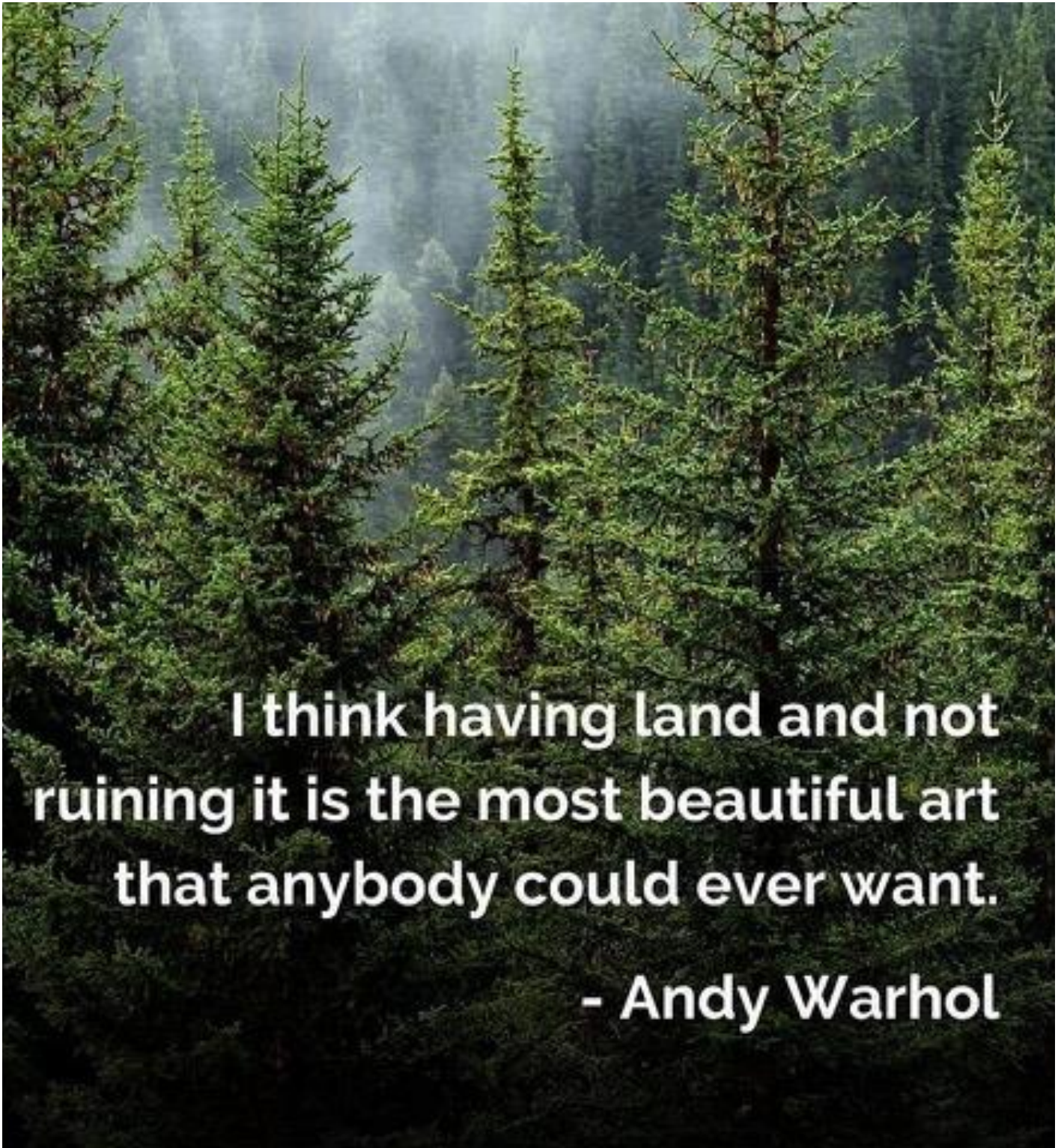
Then fate delivered safety;
Its route brought it to the door
And thence into the nearby kitchen

Where, hopefully,
It found a host of insects
More suitable to greet
Than a size 12 brogan would have been.

©2025 John I. Blair, 1/26/2025

Not Exactly Arlington

But that's all right. It won't hurt us to look beyond our city limits now and then. Thanks, Josephine Keeney.



**I think having land and not
ruining it is the most beautiful art
that anybody could ever want.**

- Andy Warhol

My Nature Notebook

Spring cleaning—Nope

Me and Stupid were soooo bored and Dad said why don't you go in and help your mother? Well, cause she sent us out here to help you clean up all the bushes and stuff. Can we use the leaf blower? PLEASE? No! And I'm about done so why don't you go clean up Mr. Cranky's flower beds? They're a huge mess and have been all winter. So we just got going and the Creepy Old Guy caught us again. He must lie in wait like a boa constructor but anyway he started yelling again of course. This time it was Leave all that dead stuff alone! It's somebody's winter house! So I said but nobody could fit in there and he said sure they can, all this stuff and the dead leaves too are just right for moths, butterflies, some of the bees and wasps and a big bunch of others that we really, really need. Now go home. I mean it.



Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

The fight against privet and other invasives in Randol Mill Park continues through the winter months. Dick Schoech, Ann Hawkins and Carol Marcotte continue to battle these terrible invasive weeds.

continued on page 14

Below left, Dick Schoech. Right, Ann Hawkins.



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department stocked Randol Mill Park pond again this year with over 1,000 Rainbow trout. Area anglers responded, converging on the pond with hook, line, and sinker. Frigid temperatures did not stop them. The trout are also a food source for the pond's resident fish, turtles, and birds. Carol Marcotte photo.



Randol Mill Park continued from page 13

Dick Schoech, Charles and Amy Richards, and Carol Marcotte enjoyed the first warm day on Sunday to move Bluebird nest boxes. Relocating the underused boxes may increase the possibility of birds nesting in them.

The days are getting warmer and Daylight Saving Time begins March 9, 2025. More daylight for a successful nesting season.

From left, Charles Richards, Dick Schoech, and Amy Richards relocate a Bluebird nest box.



Below, Kate Spina is a volunteer at Randol Mill Park. As a National Honor Society member, she is required to Complete at least 25 community or school service hours before April 15, 2025. Kate is a high school senior and secretary for the NHS at her school. She is also in the top 5% of her class of about 600. She can choose her volunteer area, and Kate has chosen Randol Mill Park for the past few semesters. Thank you, Kate. If you have or know anyone who needs to perform volunteer service, we hope you remember Randol Mill Park.



Water in Texas Grace Darling

Proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir, 2/28/25 Update

"The proposed massive Marvin Nichols dam and reservoir in Northeast Texas is a prime example of the unnecessary reliance on new reservoirs and pipelines instead of water conservation."

TexasLivingWaters.org, 2025

The North Texas [Region C] and Northeast Texas [Region D] regional water planning groups are in conflict over the Marvin Nichols Reservoir project, which would flood approximately 67,390 acres in the Sulphur River basin in Titus, Red River, and Franklin counties north of Mount Pleasant. Existing landcover within this reservoir site is dominated by largely contiguous bottomland hardwood forest (39%) — considered "Priority 1 bottomland hardwoods of high value to key waterfowl species" (USFWS, 1985) — with sizeable areas of upland deciduous forest (20%) and grassland (9%). Marsh, swamp, and open water total about 13% of the reservoir area.

Region C supports building the reservoir and since 1968 has included it as a feasible strategy in its plan to the Texas Water Development Board. Supporters say it's needed to provide for the future water needs of the Dallas metro area.

In Northeast Texas, opponents have cited environmental, land rights, and economic concerns over the proposed reservoir. Last week, the Region D water planning group unanimously approved its Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) for the 2026 Region D Water Plan, emphatically opposing the inclusion of Marvin Nichols Reservoir in any regional plan or the State Water Plan. From the IPP: "The proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir would inundate vast amounts of agricultural and timber lands in Northeast Texas. In addition, this project will

require very substantial acreage to be removed from production for mitigation of this project. ... It is not possible to find that this project protects the agricultural and natural resources of the State when so much agricultural/timber land will be inundated and when it is not known how much additional acreage will be required, the location of that acreage, or the type of acreage that will be taken for mitigation." Further, it asks "that Region C seek other more viable measures to meet any future water needs including, but not limited to, additional conservation reuse, reduction of water losses, and reallocation of abundant resources currently available (Toledo Bend, Texoma, and other existing reservoirs).

This declared conflict between adjacent regions' water plans triggers action by the TWDB, but the resolution process is uncharted and the outcome anybody's guess. Stay tuned.



The Sulphur River in the area of the proposed reservoir.

It's Dues Time! Guilty? Look on the Back Page

**Why join ACC?
Their stuff is
free.**

**Sure, the educational
meetings and the news-
letters are free. But are
you missing a big point?
(See below.)**



Big Point (or two): If ACC is bigger, we carry more weight when we try to influence our city council in matters we care about. Also, you will just feel better as an environmentalist in hostile territory when you have committed to a group of like-minded individuals (actual fact).

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marian Hiler

North Prairie installation

February brought more extremely cold days, but fortunately, this being Texas, it sprinkled in a few glorious ones as well allowing us to continue planting in the new prairie area. The Texas Grassman John Snowden provided even more varieties of rescued plants including [Scribner's Rosette Grass](#), [Splitbeard Bluestem](#), [Longspike Silver Bluestem](#), [Leavenworth's Sedge](#), [Bigtop Lovegrass](#), [Purple Lovegrass](#), [Tall Dropseed](#), and [Texas Bluegrass](#). He said the season to rescue grasses is near the end of their dormancy so if transplanted any later they are less likely to survive. He plans to make one more rescue run for the March First Saturday workday. John is excited about the project, looking forward to a working prairie demonstration area in another 4 – 5 years. He says this spring we should start seeing growth in the hundreds of plants already installed.

Project lead Ann Knudsen invited Suzanne Tuttle to visit the prairie-in-progress. Suzanne, another local prairie maven and former manager at Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, shares John's excitement for the prairie project. She had a brilliant recommendation to install a rainwater harvesting system on the amphitheater. Besides capturing the rain to water the new plants, it would mitigate the heavy erosion caused by the force of the rain pouring from the amphitheater roof.

For those who may remember, the initial plan — as reported in the October 2024 Post Oak — was to spread 8 inches of mulch over the prairie-to-be, leaving it there for a full year before planting. Indeed, about a third of the area has already been covered with wood chips by our very hard-working volunteers. You may wonder now why plans have changed. An important factor in the altered schedule was the availability of enough plants for a project of this size; plants that might not be available later due to ongoing development in the rescue area adding urgency to their collection.

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Marylee Thomason, Patsy Miller, and Melanie Harris plant Leavenworth's Sedge behind the amphitheater. Marian Hiler photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 16, continued on page 18



Above, Sideoats grama are planted at the hilltop where the soil is drier. Marian Hiler photo. Below, Volunteers hard at work on sideoats grama. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 17, continued on page 19



Above, Texas Grassman John Snowden discusses the day's plan with Ann Knudsen. Marian Hiler photo.

Below, Suzanne Tuttle (center) discusses her initial thoughts on the prairie with Christine Brinson and Ann Knudsen. Marian Hiler photo.



Above, Marylee Thomason and Kendall Anderson harvest inland sea oats seeds to plant in the prairie shaded areas. Marian Hiler photo.

Below, Paola Sampaio and Josh Parkerson go after the never-ending supply of cats-ear. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 19

First Saturday mini-classes

At the **February 1** mini-class, Montana Williams, APRD arborist, reported on the Arlington Parks & Recreation Volunteer Program, in particular the opportunities available and what was accomplished by volunteers last year. The program had 541 registered volunteers who provided 29,000 hours of service in 2024 with almost 2,300 worked at the wildscape or the greenhouse. (A big thanks to our greenhouse volunteer Kay Sekio for diligently tracking and reporting our volunteer hours.) Montana emphasized the importance of volunteers registering and tracking hours to aid in pursuing grants and determining staffing needs.

The **March 1** mini-class will be "Exciting Tools for Involving Others in Nature". First, Walk on the Wildside coordinator Marylee Thomason will demonstrate how to use an EnviroScape model to engage children and adults on the importance of keeping our watershed free of pollutants. Next, Master Naturalist and birding tour guide Charley Amos will show us how to properly use binoculars and pass that knowledge on to others.

Mini-classes are held in the compost area and begin about 11:30 as the workday volunteers put away the day's tools.

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At the mini-class, Montana Williams talks about the many volunteer opportunities in Arlington. Marian Hiler photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 20

Volunteer Opportunities

9:00 – noon Wednesdays and first Saturdays

All are welcome, no experience necessary. Members of ecology and garden groups can receive credit hours.

For more information contact info@thewildscape.org

The extremely low temperatures in February didn't faze these hardy Texas natives shown shortly after the long freeze.

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Below, Agarita flower buds peek through its sharp leaves. Marian Hiler photo.

Right, Autumn Sage in front of Lindheimer's Muhly. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 21, continued on page 23



Above, A thick patch of Pink Evening Primrose. Ann Knudsen photo.

Below, Coral Honeysuckle. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 22, continued on page 24

Left, Smooth Blue Aster. Ann Knudsen photo. Right, Englemann's Daisy returns for the spring. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 23, continued on page 25

Left, Prairie Phlox emerges between the stone edging. Ann Knudsen photo. *Right*, The distinctive white edges of new Bluebonnet leaves. Ann Knudsen photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 24

Below, A western view through the woodland area on a crisp late afternoon. Ann Knudsen photo.



Social Media? Yup.

**Be sure to visit
ACC's Facebook page
(847 followers)
and
Discussion Group
(144 members)**



What do you want to talk about today?

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve

Review: Winter Tree ID Walk with Suzanne Tuttle

February 2nd, a lovely afternoon to be outside. Suzanne led us on a walk down the boardwalk and then on the yellow trail toward the north prairie, then up to the Bluff Overlook. This walk focused on the woody plants of the Eastern Cross Timbers and how to recognize them in winter. One of the tips that Suzanne shared is to start with the easy stuff. Are there still a few lingering leaves on the tree, or even ones starting to bud out already? How about remaining berries, galls, or nut husks? If the tree is somewhat isolated, are there leaves or nuts on the ground underneath it? But if none of those are present, there's still a lot to learn from the tree. We noted the different growth habits, bark, twigs, buds and leaf scars that help to identify trees in winter. And a new word for me - *marcescence* is when a plant keeps its dead leaves through winter and into spring, instead of shedding them in the fall.

We had a total of 23 attendees. Two of our attendees picked up trash along the way - trail angels are what we call the preserve visitors who see a need and fix it.

This always-popular event is provided by Suzanne Tuttle, plant ecologist and retired manager of Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Fort Worth Chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas.

Suzanne mentioned Mary Curry and her "First Wednesday" walks in the LBJ Grasslands. Mary has conducted plant, bird, and GIS mapping surveys as a volunteer and contractor with the U.S. Forest Service on the LBJ/Caddo National Grasslands. She founded the monthly "First Wednesday" nature walks at the LBJ National Grasslands in 2004. The purpose of the walks is to "enjoy the outdoors and study what crosses our paths." People can find her blog at <https://lookingout.net/>. To get on the First Wednesday notification list, email her at mac@lookingout.net.

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Left, Suzanne Tuttle, center, points out winter tree characteristics.

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 27

Great Backyard Bird Count 2025 Jim Frisinger

On Feb. 15, the Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve hosted its 18th Great Backyard Bird Count to contribute our data as citizen scientists. Our checklists provide an avian population snapshot for researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society and Birds Canada. It helps them learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them.

While February can be a tough month for birds, Feb. 15 was a one-day respite from the recent cold snap with 49 degrees at the start. Two new species were counted: a Brown thrasher and a Great horned owl. Records were set for Carolina wrens (9) and Northern shovelers (30). No hawks or vultures were spotted, as light winds and the heavy fog dampened the updrafts they like.

The final tally was 205 birds counted and 41 different species, both above average over the 18 years.

According to this year's preliminary tally, 7,970 species have been recorded worldwide. That's good news: it's already 50 higher than a year ago. The data are reported on eBird, the world's largest biodiversity-related participatory science project. Last year 642,003 citizen scientists from 210 countries joined the count.



Bird count officials. *From left, Jim Frisinger, Annabelle Corboy.* Jan Miller photo

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Participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 15 at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve. Denise Pederson photo.

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 28

January Third Saturday Volunteer Event



Left, A polyphemus moth cocoon, near the Jan. 18 Third Saturday work site, showed there is a lot to see even midwinter at the preserve. This giant silk moth, with a wingspan of six inches, requires a large cocoon to complete its life cycle. Elm and willows are among its caterpillar preferences at the preserve, but no adults have been recorded here. Jim Frisinger photo.

Volunteers finished delivering decomposed granite to two of the pedestrian bridges built last spring by our friends at South-Point Constructors.

Clearing brush, small trees and low limbs on the North Prairie kept us all busy.

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Below, Jim Frisinger, background, and Jan Miller clear a tree line to allow prairie plants to spread to maintain a healthy savanna ecosystem. Jim Domke photo.



Above, Ann Serrano pushes a load of deconstructed granite on the Yellow Trail curved bridge. Jim Domke photo.
Below, Dana Austin, loppers aloft, helps clear a low limb on a tree line in the North Prairie, Jim Frisinger photo.



Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 29

February Third Saturday Volunteer Event



From left, Denise Pederson and Josh Parkerson re-install a bluebird box on the North Prairie during the February Third Saturday Volunteer Event.

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Below from left, Robbie Crawford and David Haury clear woody plants to help establish the “hidden meadow” — a pocket prairie separated by a tree line from the North Prairie complex on Feb. 15.



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Bat Monitoring at SCNP Jim Frisinger

We now know a little bit more about local bats. Six locations were selected across Tarrant and Parker counties to monitor bats last May and June, including one at the South Pond at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve. The monitors recorded bat activity for one week at a time, Monday to Friday.

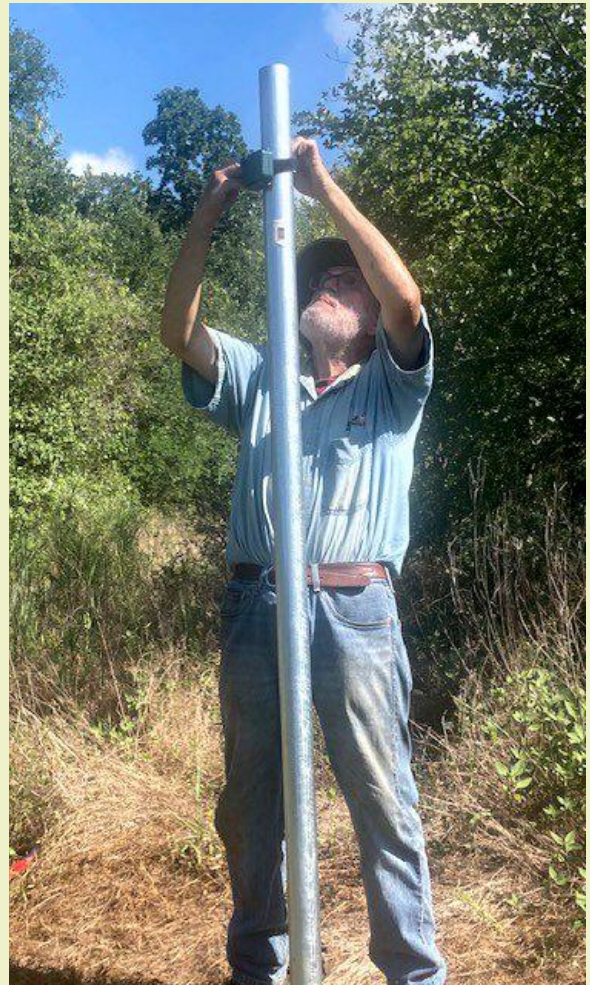
Texas Nature Trackers at the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department reached out to Texas Master Naturalist chapters across the state this year to be the citizen foot soldiers to carry out the program. It's part of a continental monitoring effort, the North American Bat Monitoring Program, to assess the population of bats in the face of White Nose Syndrome, habitat loss, climate change and other factors.

The Texas Bat Acoustic Monitoring Project used AudioMoth Acoustic Recorders to detect the more than 30 bat species known to be in Texas. Of those, eight species are believed to be in the counties covered by the Cross Timbers Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists, and three of those are Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Results of the monitors, including the one at Sheri Capehart, are now in.

It is "highly likely" that the genus of Hairy Bats — *Lasiurus* spp. — was detected at Sheri Capehart. The "likely" species within the genus are the Eastern Red Bat, *Lasiurus borealis* and the Hoary Bat, *Lasiurus cinereus*. In addition, it is "possible" that the Seminole Bat, *Lasiurus seminolus*, was detected.

These three species are known to be in the area. The task force will be upgrading with better monitors this year, the SM4 — described as the "Cadillac of bat monitors." With an extra device, the crew plans to double the sites monitored, according to Tina Olivas, Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Chapter coordinator for the project.

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Jim Frisinger installing the original bat monitor at the South Pond on June 28 of last year. Tina Olivas photo.

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Know Your Nature Neighbors Michael Smith

1/25/25 Combs and Galls But No Wasps

We had a walk today that was so good that we wanted to go on and on. There were seven people, not counting me, and we had a partly cloudy and somewhat breezy day, with the temperature in the 50s, fairly mild for midwinter. Three of the folks were not very familiar with the preserve, while several of us (including Jan Miller, Jim Domke, and Karen Harden) were active in Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve and/or the Native Plant Society of Texas.

To plan this particular “Know Your Nature Neighbors” walk, I initially planned for us to watch for insects and talk about the ability many of them have to survive cold weather. Shorter days and colder weather triggers diapause in many of them, slowing their activities and cueing them either to burrow into protected places or migrate. But on our warm winter days, we often see grasshoppers, a few butterflies, and some dragonflies. We have had a couple of very cold spells, so maybe they are burrowed deep or, in some cases, killed off. We did not find insects today.

We did, however, find a paper “nest” that our familiar paper wasps make. Lifting a large piece of fallen wood, I uncovered the comb hanging from the underside of the wood by the pedicel (like a stem stuck to the wood). An older one was nearby, half-buried in soil. So often we see “wasp nests” under the eaves of our houses or hanging from the branches of trees, but our social wasps may make a colony under an overhanging rock or, in this case, in a partly hollow log. Nobody was home, but had I turned the piece of wood last summer I probably would have regretted it. I teach young naturalists never to put fingers or hands under things where they cannot see, and this was one more reason. Many of our wasps — like the big red and black ones or the red wasps — will tolerate our presence up to a point, but if you use your hand to disturb a nest, prepare to be stung!

A little farther up the trail, looking at the blackjack oaks near the top of “Kennedale Mountain,” we found more evidence of wasp activity. On a small oak branch there was something resembling a stringy dead flower, dry and gray. We already had found a small, rounded gall on an oak leaf, and Jan identified this as a sort of gall, produced when something (usually a small species of wasp laying an egg) disturbs the tissues of the plant. This causes those tissues to swell and form galls of various sizes and shapes. The egg develops and the larva feeds on plant tissues until it matures



Michael Smith addresses the group at the top of “Kennedale Mountain.” Jim Domke photo.



Leafy oak gall. Karen Harden photo.

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Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 32

and emerges from the gall. This is a simplified description of an interesting subject - for more information about these tiny wasps, read Eric Eaton's excellent account of the natural history of wasps in [*Wasps: The Astonishing Diversity of a Misunderstood Insect*](#).

That was it for insect or spider observations on our walk, but there were plenty of great conversations about plants. We took a good look at mosses and a liverwort plant among the rocks of the bluff, and we talked about the farkelberry (aka sparkleberry) that grows there, even though it's outside of the area where it typically lives, east of here.

We also talked about the exotic and invasive plants that threaten the preserve. In places, Chinese privet grows, and left unchecked it would take over much of the preserve. The ornamental plant Nandina also does not belong in the wild here, and its bright red berries are toxic to wildlife. We cut off clusters of these berries and put them in the trash. You **cannot** just drop them on the ground, as they might grow into more of them.

We saw plenty of the beneficial native coralberry plants. We saw green leaves from new growth of the native Englemann's daisy which will produce yellow flowers and frilly, fern-like leaves in the coming year. We talked about our Glen Rose yuccas, a species that loves deep sandy soil and is found only in a small part of North and Central Texas.

The enormous Caddo oak was on part of our route, following the blue loop trail. We saw much of the preserve and had a great time, and I'm grateful to everyone who walked with us. Ultimately it was a little after 12:00 noon when we returned to the parking lot. If you're reading this and considering coming along on a walk, please know that we will check with everyone before running overtime, and we can stick with the time limit if anyone needs us to. But today we had such a good time, and everyone was ready to walk a little farther, so we did.

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The group pauses to learn about one of the local inhabitants. Jim Domke photo.

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SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species January 2025

Annabelle Corboy

Getting off to a slow start, our counts for January: 60 Observations, 49 Species, 8 Observers. We now have 22,221 Observations with 2,013 Species at SCNP.

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From left, Gulf Fritillary (*Dione vanilla*) – charley, Hemisphaeric Liverwort (*Reboulia hemisphaerica*) – drawntoscales



From left, Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta ssp. elegans*) – charley, Pale Cow-hair Moss (*Ditrichum pallidum*) – Postoak

Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve continued from page 34

SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species January 2025



From left,
Maritime
Bluestem
(*Andropogon
tenuispathus*) –
charley,
Pretty
Ruffle
(*Parmotrema
austrosinense*) –
charley



From left,
Western Soap-
berry (*Sapindus
drummondii*) –
charley,
Witches Broom
of
Hackberry
(Mite *Aceria
celtis*) – Postoak



Blackland Prairie Preserve Guy Random

*Yes, it's all so fake.
Early March shots from years past.
Guy's been sick; stayed home
Staring through windows,
Wanting to be happy outside,
Catching the new spring.*



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Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216
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Our March Zoom Meeting

**Symbiosis in Your Backyard:
Insects, Trees and the Link
Between Them**

Kimberlee Peterson
Woodland Ecologist
Texas A&M Forest Service

7 pm Wed, Mar 5, 2025

Zoom meeting hosted by
Arlington Conservation Council



See page 5 for more on this meeting.