

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3

APRIL 2025



VIRGINIA OPOSSUM • NANCY AMOS PHOTO

April Zoom Meeting



Read more about this program on page 5

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87276968089>

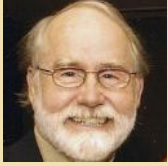
**For assistance accessing the meeting, contact Frank Keeney,
webmaster@acctexas.org**

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

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From the President **Dick Schoech**



Beneath Our Feet, Fungi Are Busy Making Survival Decisions

Growing up, I thought what I walked on was just dirt. Plants grew out of it, but nothing under my feet was alive and moving except worms and a few bugs. I agreed with W.B. Logan's 1995 book, *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*. But as I grew older, I continued to discover that nature is not always as we see it.

Scientific analysis continues to reveal many marvelous things that are redefining nature. The word dirt now colloquially refers to the top layer of soil, while soil is known as a living system teeming with life due to the presence of bacteria, fungi, and other microorganisms. We now know that more microbes exist in a single teaspoon of soil than there are people on Earth.

Since 1986, DNA analysis has pointed to how inadequate and sometimes wrong previous nature observations can be. Many plants assigned to a family hierarchy based on observation had to be reassigned to a different hierarchy based on DNA analysis. Also, what visually may look like many individual plants beneath our feet can be one big plant that communicates using an underground network of fungi called mycorrhizae. This network allows plants to share water, carbon, and nutrients, and can even signal warnings of insect infestations or diseases. In every forest trees that are not too damaged are connected through this underground fungal network. Harm to one tree will trigger reactions in nearby trees, even trees of different species. Plants also can detect sounds in their environment and react to insect activity and water flow.

Recent research reveals that 80 percent of the world's plants rely on fungal networks to survive. These mycorrhizal-root networks can learn and use their knowledge to optimize their survival. With filaments thinner than hair, the fungi receive carbon to grow their networks and capture 13 billion tons of atmospheric carbon dioxide — one-third of fossil-fuel emissions worldwide. These fungi make uncannily smart choices, even without a brain or central nervous

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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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From the President continued from page 3

system. Using imaging robots to track fungal networks, scientists discovered they are living algorithms that reward efficiency as they build the most lucrative pathway possible for the lowest construction cost.

Evolutionary biologist Toby Kiers, director of the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks, reports that fungi are super clever beings able to evaluate their environment precisely as they constantly adapt their trade routes. They're involved in considerable decision-making.*

Search the web to discover more amazing facts about nature. If in my lifetime we can discover that soil is alive, can learn, and optimize its actions, what new research tools and marvelous discoveries are in our future?

Our growing knowledge of how nature works should caution against its destruction and the devaluing of scientific research. As human populations dramatically increase, species whose worth has not been analyzed with the latest scientific tools are going extinct. Science itself is under attack. The Endangered Species Act, which is designed to save biodiversity on earth, is itself now threatened. Lee Zeldin, Donald Trump's new administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, reframed its 1970 mission from "protect human health and the environment by establishing and enforcing environmental protection standards, conducting environmental research, and providing assistance to others combatting environmental pollution" to "lowering the cost of buying a car, heating a home and running a business." [NYT 3-12-25]

It would be nice if we, our leaders in particular, had as much intelligence as mycorrhizal-root networks and would promote new scientific research to help us discover the knowledge beneath our feet that will help our planet survive.

Further reading

* Underground fungal networks are "living algorithms" that quietly help regulate Earth's climate. Now scientists know what makes them so efficient. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/01/science/climate-mycorrhizal-fungus-networks.html?smid=nytcore-android-share>



Our April Program

Tarantulas: They're Awesome. Ooh, Tell Us More *Erika Swyryn*

Tarantulas are large, long-lived arachnids, popular as pets, known for their size (from fingernail to dinner plate), and unique defenses like urticating (nettle-like) hairs and venom. Erika Swyryn knows all about tarantulas and the native Texas species you can find in your own backyard. She likes talking about them. All you have to do is ask. Or come to the next ACC meeting.

Erika earned a B.S. in biology at UTA. Being a nature lover, she was delighted to become an active member of both Texas Master Gardeners and Texas Master Naturalists. She acquired her first tarantula during the pandemic and fell in love with these often misunderstood and feared creatures. That colony of one spider quickly turned into over 100 that have joined her extensive crew of animals at home. Turns out she has prepared talks for people of all ages on insects and pollinators, pollinator gardening, tarantulas, and backyard chickens.

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)*

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Liveable Arlington

“The American Dream City” Pledges to Become Local Residents’ Nightmare



On February 25, the Arlington City Council once again turned its back on residents and voted for the final approval of TotalEnergies’ new Maverick drill site next to an early childhood learning center. The site, located in East Arlington, is also near three schools and adjacent to the existing AC360 drill site.

The February meeting marked the final council votes for the site’s approval. In January, the council chambers were packed with a standing room only crowd for the first vote.

Prior to the votes, Liveable Arlington had knocked on more than 400 neighborhood doors in the months before the hearing. We found overwhelming opposition to the drill site among residents.

Every parent and staff member from the neighboring preschool submitted letters in opposition through us. We also submitted an opposition petition signed by more than 500 Arlington residents, including almost one hundred residents from the immediate neighborhood. Scores of residents also sent letters of opposition to the council.

Liveable Arlington [submitted demographic data](#) showing disproportionate harm to young children in a community of color. We also sent relevant [public health research and drilling pollution](#) information to the council.

We delivered messages from preschool and neighborhood children asking for clean air and for the site not to be approved to the Council before the hearing.

Just as they did at the January meeting, local residents and even school children, many from the immediate neighborhood, asked Council to not subject their families to pollution from more drilling.

Twenty-six people spoke and 28 people registered as non-speakers in opposition for the first vote. 20 people spoke in opposition and another 34 registered in opposition for the second and final vote.

In the end, the council voted unanimously to approve the permit. Once again, the mayor and members gave the excuse that they could not do anything to stop the permit, citing prior Texas legislation passed in 2015 – HB40.

However, facts fly in the face of the claims made by council. **In 2020, and again in 2022, the council disapproved permits to expand the AC360 drill site next to Maverick – the city was never sued by Total.**

HB 40 specifically states that a city can regulate fire and emergency response, traffic, lights, noise, and **create reasonable setbacks**. Other N. Texas cities have drilling setbacks of 1000 feet or more from homes, daycares, and schools. Arlington’s setback is only 600 feet, and is almost always reduced to as little as 300 feet. The city can do more to establish setbacks that are more protective of human health.

The last mayor and council crafted and passed improvements to Arlington’s gas drilling ordinance that regulated noise, notice, dust, required fewer polluting rigs,

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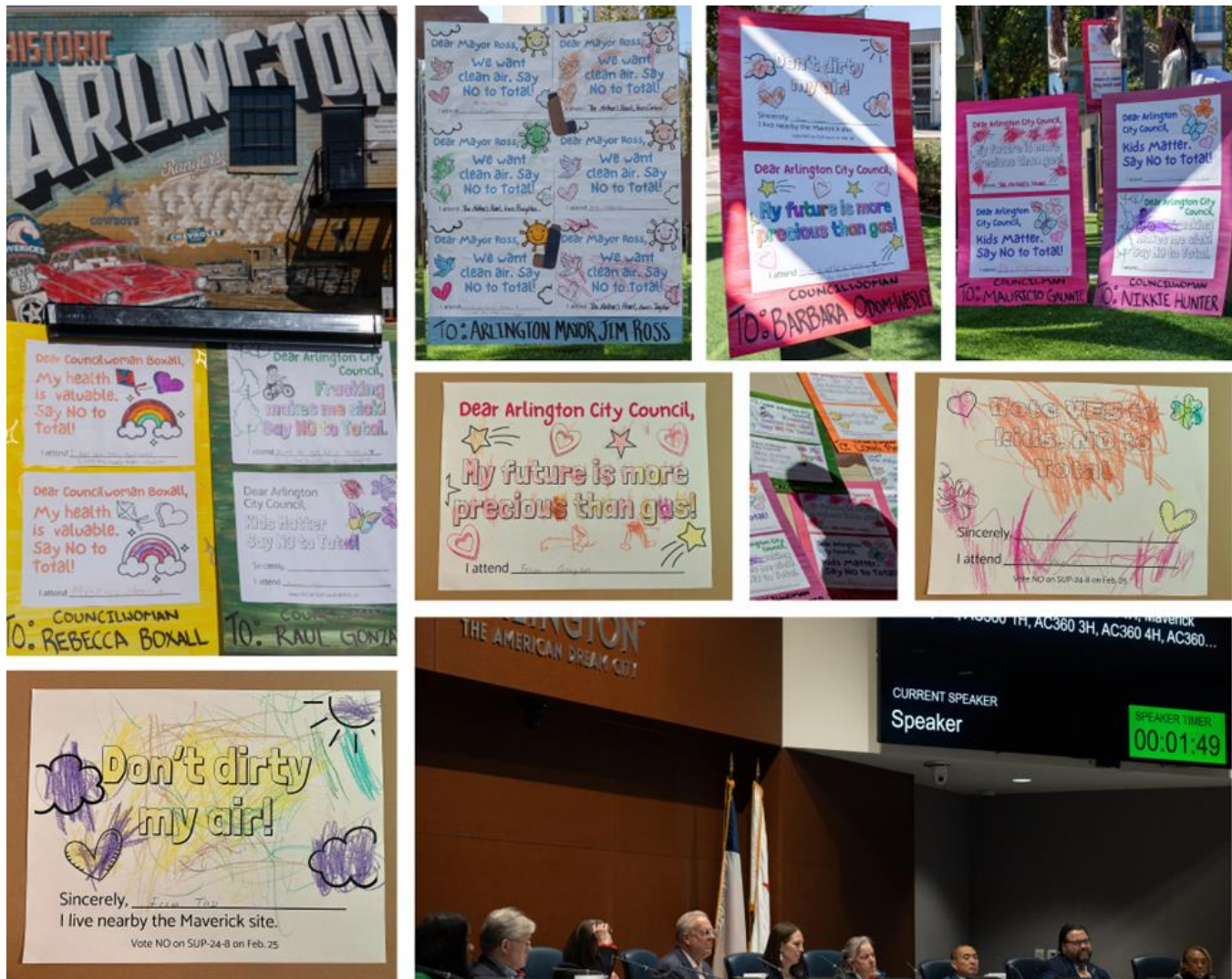
Liveable continued from page 6

and improved setbacks, in 2018-19 and again in 2021. Those improvements have been ignored, [violated](#), and not been enforced since the fall of 2021.

Community members and our organization have repeatedly asked the city to monitor pollution at drill sites. According to a [Reveal report](#), at least five N. Texas cities including Grand Prairie and Denton hire independent firms to monitor drill site pollution. Yet Arlington continues to claim that the state bars them from monitoring fracking pollution.

Liveable and other groups also pointed out that other false claims from council members had been made including that Dallas had been sued due to HB 40. “Let’s be clear,” stated Rita Beving, representing the nonprofit group Public Citizen: “The city of Dallas was sued years ago due to a city manager making a [bad faith deal with a driller](#) who purchased numerous leases based on the assurance from her that their permit would be approved. It was not approved in the end by the Dallas council and therefore the driller sued to recoup their losses. It had nothing to do with HB 40.”

continued on page 8



Liveable continued from page 7

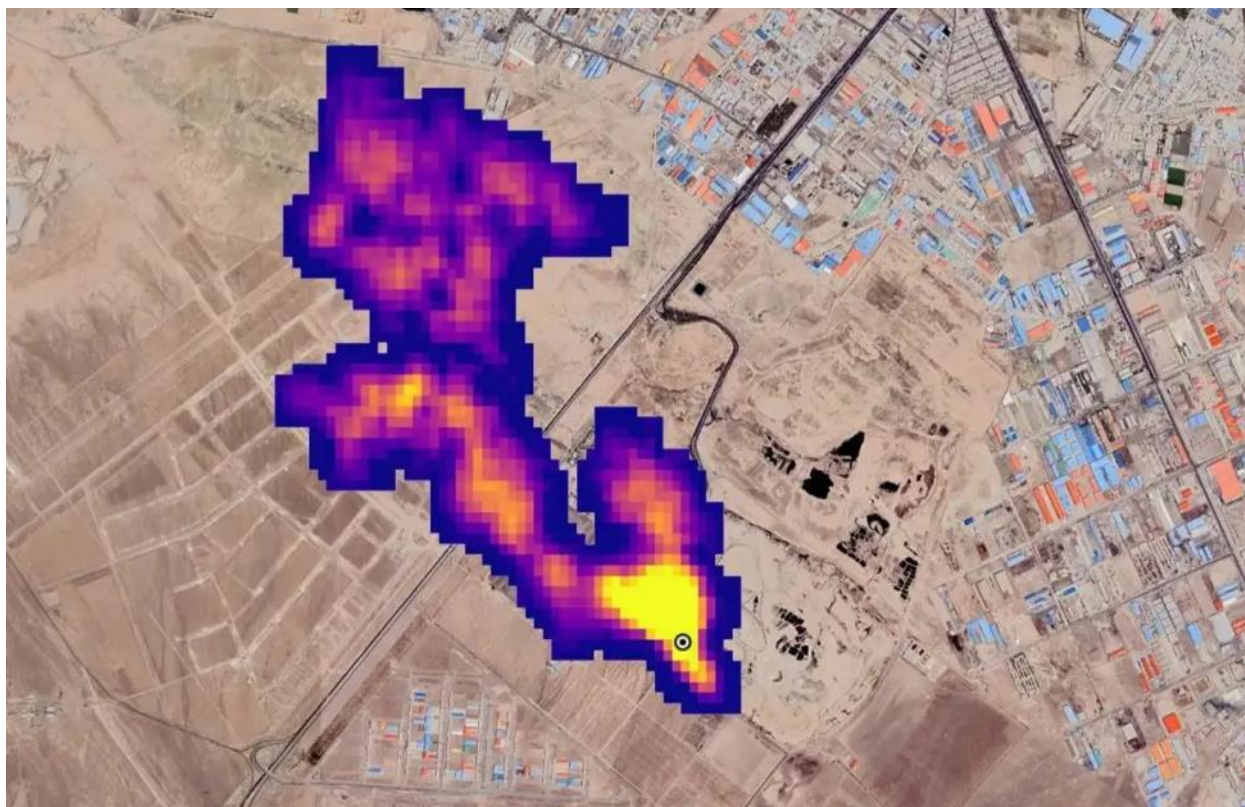
Despite public pleas and these facts, “America’s Dream City” continues to hide behind these excuses to favor a French company over their own residents. However, both [national](#) and [international media](#) have picked up on what is happening in Arlington with French energy giant Total, now the largest exporter of LNG from the U.S. [Read more](#) on how the city of Arlington is making a name for itself as one of the largest urban fracked areas in the country.

A [new study](#) published this month in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, has found that children living in upstream oil and natural gas (O&G) areas may be at increased risk for acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL). The study finds that **Colorado children living within 8 miles of O&G well sites are at increased risk for ALL; children within 3 miles bearing the greatest risk.**

“This study reinforces the concern that **oil and gas development in close proximity to homes may contribute to health risks for children,**” said Prof. Lisa McKenzie, PhD, MPH, and study co-author from the Colorado School of Public Health. “It is likely that **current setback regulations are not sufficient to protect public health,** and policymakers should **reconsider existing standards not just in Colorado, but also in other states** where oil and natural gas activity is prevalent.

Meanwhile, **Total has started drilling more gas wells, less than 450 feet from a preschool, in neighboring Kennedale.** Parents were not notified.

continued on page 9



Satellite image of methane leaking from a gas well.

Liveable continued from page 8

GROW SOUTHEAST VOLUNTEER DAY with Liveable Arlington

An initiative by



Liveable Arlington

Help us address food
insecurity in East Fort Worth
during this hands-on
community farming session

Saturday, April 19th } 10 AM -
12 PM

Tabor Farms

3400 Village Creek Rd, Fort Worth



Sign up to
volunteer



or go to tinyurl.com/Farm-O419

Questions? Email engage@liveablearlington.org

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger



Commercial
Landscaping 101

Your clients will
appreciate an efficient
watering system.

Maybe more than all
those messy plants.

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

No More Mulch, Methane Instead



Once there was a big local
educational place that was
always trimming its trees.
For years, it paid people
to make the branches into
chips for mulching its
planting beds. Sounds
smart, but for some time
now the branches just go
into a dumpster. Why?



Mexican buckeye.

Residential Real Estate



We've been going on and
on about leaving your
gardens messy so tiny
creatures can have winter
homes. Finally, it's time to
verify this as a garden gets
cleaned up. So split an old
sunflower stem and you'll
see: discolored pith,
disturbed, missing, and
some little holes. Homes!

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



ACC Trees

ACC Heritage Trees

From Stanford Stomate, Associate Editor, Heritage Tree Department: You will, of course, not be impressed by this month's selection despite the qualities that make it worthy of your consideration.

One summer not long ago I noticed a very large Eve's necklace downtown that was already in decline. I worried over its leafless twigs through the fall and winter, hoping it would undergo a spring revival. But no, that summer was its last. However, a vigorous offspring nearby caught my eye. Sadly, it was thriving in a poor spot and fell victim to harsh treatment. But look here and be encouraged by its persistence. In a way, that-once fine Eve's necklace lives on, at least for now.

Do you have a tree story? Send it in, or this could be our last heritage tree.



Question Corner John Darling

Q: You're gonna think this is all too cute for a hard-boiled guy, but look, there's a bunny in my yard and it turns out I don't even know the simplest things about this adorable creature. Like, is this the same one from last summer? So when I thought of simple, well you know. So what can you tell me?

A. Don't you guys have Internet? Can't you spell Eastern cottontail? Okay then, [here's an easy one](#) that covers all the rabbits and hares in Texas. But don't read the part about 85% mortality. On the other hand, they breed like rabbits, with maybe 15 to 20 young per year. Is yours the one from last year? They can manage 3-4 years, but most live less than a year. I did hear your yard is a real mess, so maybe yours won the habitat sweepstakes when it found your place. Just don't give it a name, okay? Next!



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Redbud.

GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

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LIVEABLE ARLINGTON

Working Toward a Healthy Community
On a
Liveable Planet

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

The Page with No Name

Report from the field

Ivan Querido

Okay, new business: About the Post Oak staff retreat in the Bahamas, how do we exclude Querido without another one of his famous meltdowns? Remember, he ruined it last year when he attacked the concierge for not recycling, and we simply cannot have a repeat. Suggestions?“ Do the suits think I don’t hear every pathetic word? Retreat? More like cowardice in the face of free-for-all fracking. I suggest they put on orange vests and pick up trash around the Jerry Jones Carbuncle. Or maybe better, they heave themselves out of their ergonomic wonderland and go find a proper Heritage Tree for next time. Did you see this month’s pathetic decapitated mess? Good trees are still somehow everywhere. Look at this parking lot cedar! Why don’t they open their beady eyes, take some shots, and send them in? And why don’t you? Meltdown! What meltdown?



GREEN SONG

Much has been sung
Of new flowers in Spring,
Bright reds, pinks, blues.
But these are just grace notes;
The fundamental melody
Is in the key of green.

After autumn’s golden hymn
Black winter can be borne
Only with bells and carols.
But, in March first one,
Then thousands, millions
Of buds, sprouts, leaves
Transpose the tune.

That’s when we really know
That Spring is here,
That life had never gone
But just lay hidden,
Waiting to be warm,
Waiting to perform
The symphony of green again.

©2004 John I. Blair

In Case You Missed It Grace Darling



Texas Runs on Water. Texas water systems lose at least 572,000 acre-feet per year — about 51 gallons of water per service connection — every day. That's enough water to meet the total annual municipal needs of Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Laredo, and Lubbock combined. [Texas Living Waters 2022 Hidden Reservoirs Report] The Texas Legislature is considering several key pieces of legislation this session that could reshape our water future: SB 7 (Perry, R-Lubbock) and HB 16 (Harris, R-Palestine) provide a designated, ongoing funding stream for the Texas Water Fund. Both bills focus on increasing state investment in water infrastructure, ensuring aging pipes and treatment facilities get necessary upgrades.



But cities should take a proactive approach to water management, too. By integrating natural solutions like wetlands, green infrastructure, and community

engagement, Dallas is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable water planning. The proposed **Dallas Water Commons** envisions an approximately 17-acre urban wetland park in the heart of Dallas. The project aims to improve city stormwater management, enhance water quality, and create a natural park directly south of downtown to help mitigate extreme weather.

The Texas Water Foundation says that half of Texas' projected water supply will have to come from conservation, efficiency, and reuse. Smart use of water is our collective responsibility. Every person needs safe, clean water to survive. Every business, school, and home requires water to function. We should applaud the bipartisan policy decisions in discussions at the Capitol and recognize that the cheapest and most sustainable water is the water we don't waste. [Melanie Ferguson, Op-Ed, DMN 3-22-25].



Trump Signs Executive Order Handing U.S. Public Forests Over to Private Logging Industry. The order encouraging the [immediate expansion of American timber production](#) seeks to erode Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection rules in favor of the expansion of tree felling across

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In Case You Missed It continued from page 14

280 million acres of United States national [forests](#), as well as other public lands, for timber, reported The Guardian. “This Trump executive order is the most blatant attempt in American history by a president to hand over federal public lands to the logging industry,” said [wildfire](#) scientist Chad Hanson with the John Muir Project. “What’s worse, the executive order is built on a lie, as Trump falsely claims that more logging will curb wildfires and protect communities, while the overwhelming weight of evidence shows exactly the opposite.” The order goes as far as setting an annual target for the amount of timber offered for sale, along with other measures, which could lead to [widespread clear-cutting](#), a press release from Earthjustice said. [EcoWatch.com, 3-5-25]



Supreme Court Weakens Rules on Discharging Raw Sewage Into U.S. Water Supplies, read the headline. In a case involving San Francisco suing the EPA after the city was found to have violated the terms of a permit for the discharge of wastewater pollution into the Pacific Ocean, the U.S. Supreme Court voted five to four to weaken rules that govern how much pollution is discharged into the country’s water supply — thus undermining the 1972 Clean Water Act. The justices ruled that generic prohibitions against violations of water quality standards cannot be imposed by the EPA. The opinion by Justice Samuel Alito said the EPA would be blocked from issuing “end result” permits —

those that put the permittee in charge of [surface water](#) quality, The Guardian reported. [EcoWatch, 3-4-25]



The transition to cleaner vehicles is progressing in Europe, where **49% of new city buses across EU countries in 2024 were “zero-emission” models** instead of fossil fuel-powered vehicles. For 2024, battery-electric buses made up 46% of new EU buses, while fuel-cell models made up 3%, a faster increase than expected. In June 2024, T&E estimated that the rate of clean vehicle adoption for city buses would reach 100% zero emissions in the sector by 2027. Based on the 2024 results, “At this growth rate, city buses are on track to reach fully ZE sales by 2027.” [EcoWatch, 3-4-25]

Oysters to the Rescue. Mississippi’s oyster population has been devastated over the past two decades due to both natural and manmade disasters, but ninth-grader Demi Johnson is helping turn the tide. Recognized by the National Geographic Society, she’s grown 1,000+ oysters, each with the potential to spawn millions more — a huge win for marine ecosystems! “I think the coolest thing I’ve learned is that oysters actually serve as a filter in the water. I did not know that. And they actually can

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In Case You Missed It continued from page 15

serve as a home to over 300 species in the water,” said Johnson. [<https://www.wlox.com/2024/05/30/gulfport-teen-receives-national-geographic-award-plan-save-mississippi-oyster-reef-population/>]



New York City was once the oyster capital of the world; the bivalves were so abundant in the 19th century they were sold from street carts, like hot dogs and halal food are today. After a century of over harvesting and pollution, the city’s oysters reefs—once numbering 220,000—nearly disappeared entirely from New York Harbor, one of the world’s largest natural harbors. Now, the city’s [Billion Oyster Project](#) is reintroducing 100 million oysters per year in the harbor, and with the help of students, volunteers, and local communities, the non-profit plans to restore one billion oysters by 2035.

An adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day; one billion can filter the entire harbor in three days. Oysters also [sequester carbon](#) in a way that’s cost-effective and energy efficient, helping fight the climate change contributing to destructive floods.

The city’s bivalves are also being used in another coastal resiliency project, [Living Breakwaters](#), to shore up the disappearing coastline of Staten Island. In partnership with [Billion Oyster Project](#), the

project is building half-mile-long partially submerged breakwaters, strategically covered in recycled oyster reefs that will mitigate flooding and erosion while providing new habitat for hundreds of marine species. [<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/billion-oyster-reef-restoration-floods-climate-change>]

Locations of 52 U.S. cryptocurrency mining operations, as of January 2024



As a vehicle for Texas to invest public dollars, there are **many reasons not to support cryptocurrency** in any way. Here are three. One, bitcoin’s volatility makes it an unacceptable risk for the people’s money. Two, bitcoin is the currency of choice for criminals worldwide, including terrorists. Crypto was created to keep payments secret, and that includes hiding payments for crimes from law enforcement. We don’t want to support criminal endeavors. Three, crypto mining is incredibly data-intensive and an enormous waste of energy. Approximately 2% of the U.S. electricity consumption is burned on crypto mining globally each year. Processing these criminal payments burns 160 terawatt hours, enough to power 200 million or more homes for a year. We could be powering every home in the U.S. annually, with electricity to spare, if we used crypto mining electricity for home energy instead. Say NO to crypto. [Jerry D Andrews, Letter, DMN, 3-28-25]

My Nature Notebook

Dog vomit! It's back!

Our favorite slime mold is grosser than ever. But now we're sad because in one day it changed from the best slime ever to scrambled eggs and then to all dried out and boring. And then the Creepy Old Guy made it even worse with one of his lectures. He says it's eating funguses and bacteria that are eating Dad's wood chips and we should like all that recycling. And then when it's dried out it's full of spores (We like spores!) that blow around and turn into new baby dog vomit (puppy vomit?). That's okay but we want more right now.



Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

**The 2025 bluebird breeding season has officially begun.
Randol Mill Park is off to a GREAT start!
Of the 14 nest boxes, 10 boxes have nests started.
Here is Box 6 with an adult female incubating egg(s).
Yippee! More to come.**

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Randol Mill Park continued from page 18

On March 1, the Neighbors of Randol Mill Park held its annual spring cleanup of the park, pond, and creek.

We enjoyed a good turnout. Over 11 volunteers picked up six extra large bags of trash from the creek area, two bags from the pond, and one bag from the park. This year's "special finds" were an automobile fender, shopping cart, and large wet blankets. Most everything else was plastic and styrofoam. Thank you, Arlington Parks & Rec, for the use of the grabbers and trash bags. And thank you, Beverly Windsor, for the donuts!



A few of the cleanup volunteers: *Above from left, Bob Marcotte, Jim Roe. Below, the Martinez family, Charles Richards.*



Bob Findlay Linear Park Vicki G. Dixon



Initial meeting of the planning group on Feb. 27: *From left*, Linda Armstrong, Paul Scudder, Vicki Dixon, Steve Dixon, Carol Marcotte, Dick Schoech. Carol and Dick have shared their knowledge to help us get started. We hope to have more residents involved soon.

A few local residents are developing a Friends of the Park group for the Bob Findlay Linear Park along Village Creek. This group will work with the City of Arlington to identify problems in the park and develop solutions while involving interested local residents.

To generate interest and involvement, the group intends to replant the flower bed at the Bob Findlay Linear Park with perennial Texas native plants to create a butterfly garden. The flower bed is scheduled to be replanted by the city this spring. The group is in contact with a representative from the Parks and Recreation Department who will assist in ordering the plants. To ensure the best native species adapted to the space are installed, the group consulted with local Master Gardener Josephine Keeney who provided a plant list (*See next page.*). We plan to plant on May 16 and 17 and will notify nearby residents to encourage them to participate.

A group website is being developed to enhance communication and for notification of future events. In the interim, if anyone is interested in learning more about or participating in developing this Friends of the Park group, they can send an email to FriendsOfFindlayLinearPark@gmail.com or contact Vicki Dixon, vgdixon@swbell.net or 817-690-8564.

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Bob Findlay Linear Park continued from page 20

List of Plants for the Pollinator Garden

Small Flowering Trees

Mexican Plum, *Prunus mexicana*

Texas Redbud, *Cercis canadensis* ssp. *texensis*

Mexican Buckeye, *Ungnadia speciosa*

Toothache Tree, *Zanthoxylum hirsutum*

Hop Tree, *Ptelea trifoliata*

Evergreen Trees

Yaupon Holly, *Ilex vomitoria*

Texas Mountain Laurel, *Sophora secundiflora*

Carolina Cherry Laurel, *Prunus caroliniana*

Large Shrubs

American Beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*

Kidneywood, *Eysenhardtia texana*

Texas Sage, *Leucophyllum frutescens*

Medium Shrubs

Flame Acanthus, *Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*

Texas Lantana, *Lantana urticoides*

Turkscap, *Malvaviscus arboreus* var. *drummondii*

Autumn Sage, *Salvia greggii*

White Mistflower, *Ageratina havanensis*

Perennials

Greggs Mistflower, *Conoclinium greggii*

Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*

Scarlet sage, *Salvia coccinea*

Purple Fall aster, *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*

Canada Goldenrod, *Solidago canadensis*

Mealy blue sage, *Salvia farinacea*

Rock Rose, *Pavonia lasiopetala*

Cowpen daisy, *Verbesina encelioides* (Annual)

Groundcovers

Winecup, *Callirhoe involucrata*

Golden Groundsel, *Packera obovata*

White Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*

Prairie Phlox, *Phlox pilosa*

Zexmenia, *Wedelia acapulcensis* var. *hispida*

16 March, 2025, Josephine Keeny

Site of the future pollinator garden in Bob Findlay Linear Park.



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 commit to a group of like-minded individuals (actual fact).

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marian Hiler

New home for the greenhouse crew coming soon

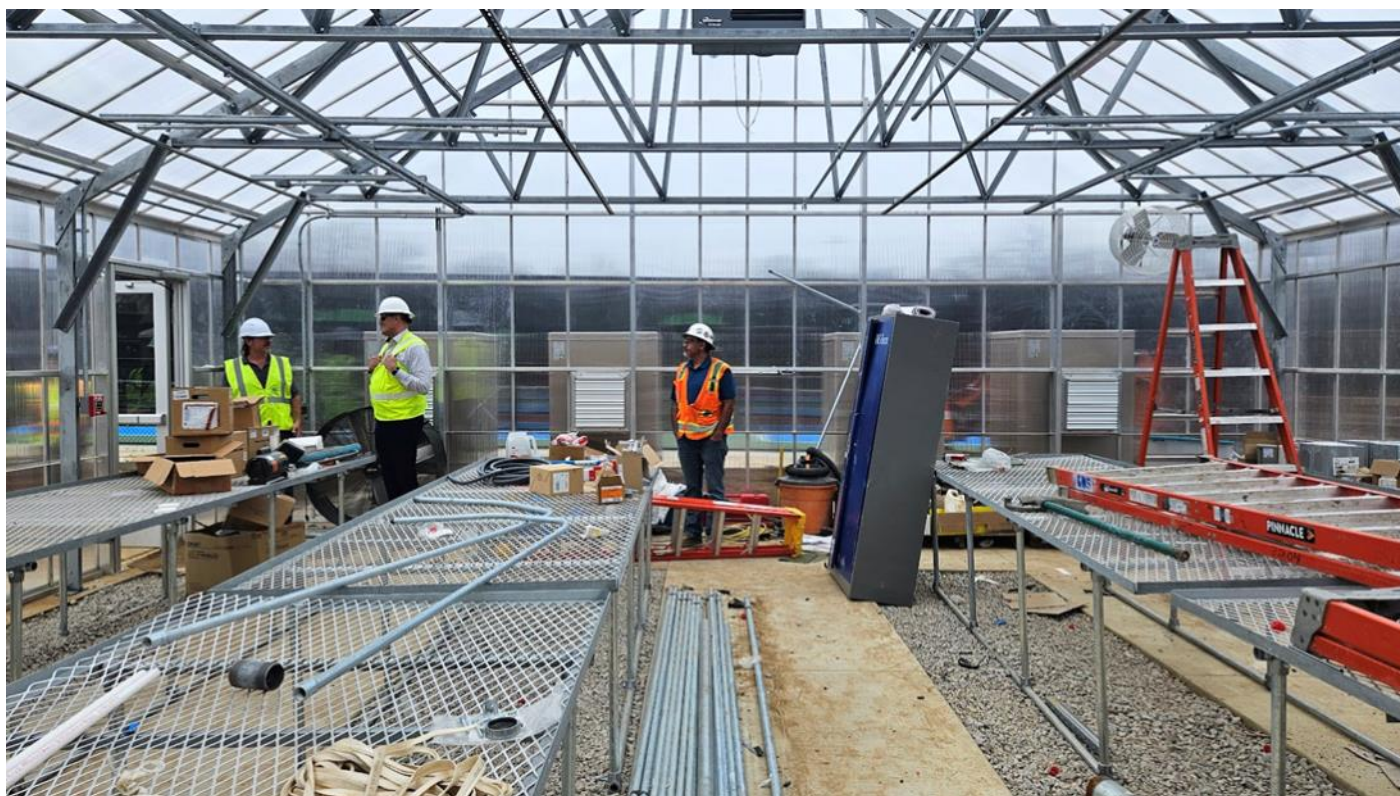
The hardworking wildscape greenhouse crew has been propagating plants at the Randol Mill Park greenhouse facilities for over 25 years, even after the larger greenhouse had to be razed for safety reasons in 2023. Despite the smaller accommodations, the crew continues to maintain the same production level. The city plans to eventually remove the remaining smaller greenhouse, but the crew won't be left in the lurch. Thanks to the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Arlington, the propagators will be moving to new propagating digs at the soon-to-open ACTIV Center in West Arlington (grand opening March 26). The Friends of the Molly Hollar Wildscape signed a formal agreement with APRD to lease the greenhouse at the center on an annual basis. This makes it possible for the wildscape volunteers to continue growing native plants to be installed and maintained at various Arlington parks, natural areas and other public places at no cost.

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The new greenhouse is almost ready for its first occupants. Marian Hiler photo.



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The greenhouse interior has some final details in work. Ann Knudsen photo.



Hester Schwarzer and Josephine Keeney are ready to check out their new work home. Dana Austin photo.



Venera Flores-Stafford, APRD assistant director, in the blue hat, discusses the greenhouse with Frank and Josephine Keeney and Joe Martinez. APRD director James Orloski is on the far right. Ann Knudsen photo.

Wildscape Update

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The formal agreement between the wildscape volunteers and APRD is signed. *From left, Ann Knudsen, Hester Schwarzer, Frank Keeney, and Montana Williams; James Orloski stands in back. Dana Austin photo.*



Venera Flores-Stafford, APRD assistant director, in the blue hat, discusses the greenhouse with wildscape volunteers. APRD director James Orloski is on her left. Marian Hiler photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 25

North Prairie installation

The warmer, brighter spring days enticed a larger than usual group of volunteers to our workdays. So many on one recent day (around twenty), that a number of volunteers were able to meet John Snowden at a rescue site while several stayed behind to make a dent on removing henbit, sticky weed and other noxious weeds that seemingly popped up overnight. Primarily Texas wintergrass (*Nassella leucotricha*) and Scribner's rosette grass (*Dichanthelium oligosanthes*) were collected during the last rescue of prairie grasses for this season.

Back at the north prairie, John worked with the prairie installers to create a colorful focal point at the southwest corner for passersby and pollinators alike to enjoy. He delivered pots of Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Mealy blue sage (*Salvia farinacea*), Four-nerve daisy (*Tetrameuris scaposa*), and Western rough goldenrod (*Solidago radula*) for the spot. Rough goldenrod is a shorter, better behaved, less aggressive species than the more common tall goldenrod.

The warmer, brighter days are also waking up the dormant grasses we've been installing these past months. Little new green leaves are peeking through the brown tops of last year's growth, rewarding the labor of our committed volunteers.

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Above, John Snowden demonstrates how to dig up a plant. *From left*, Rick Vividor, Dana Austin, Doug Land, and Doug's niece Hannah. Marian Hiler photo. *Right*, Doug Land and Rick Vividor enjoy rescuing grasses. Ann Knudsen photo. *Below*, The rescue site's rolling terrain didn't slow down the volunteers. Marian Hiler photo. *Right*, Dana Austin and Ann Knudsen dig up Texas wintergrass. Marian Hiler photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 26 continued on page 28



Above left, John Snowden shows off a great two-fer find of Texas winter grass and Scribner's rosette in one dig. Marian Hiler photo. *Right*, Rick Vividor unloads the many pots of Little bluestem that John Snowden delivered. Marian Hiler photo. *Below*, Volunteers plant Little bluestem around the outer edge of a pollinator focal point. Marian Hiler photo.



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Left above, Rick Vividor and Joe Martinez plant more grasses in the prairie. Ann Knudsen photo.

Below, Melanie Harris and Cindy Underwood plant a Western rough goldenrod. Ann Knudsen photo.



Above, Liz van Eyssen and Josh Parkerson plant Little bluestem. Ann Knudsen photo.

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Project lead Ann Knudsen's enthusiasm and dedication bring her to the prairie site, usually alone, on many unscheduled workdays to help it get established. *Here, left, Ann prepares one of many spots for Mealy blue sage. Marian Hiler photo. Right, Ann weeds the bane of the prairie, Bermuda grass, trying to regain its hold. Marian Hiler photo.*



Below, All those little mounds of divots and chips will have grasses emerging from them in the next few weeks. Marian Hiler photo.



Wildscape Update continued from page 29, continued on page 31



Above, Volunteers also take care of the Butterfly Garden. Below, They remove cool weather weeds from the Butterfly Garden. Marian Hiler photos.



Robin Agee and Lynn Chen remove a bunch of sticky weed along the sidewalk beds. Ann Knudsen photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 30

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

First Saturday mini-classes

The **March 1** mini-class was a double-feature presentation: "Exciting Tools for Involving Others in Nature." First up, wildscape volunteer and Enviroscape veteran Marylee Thomason, using said model, demonstrated how to help kids understand the ways our daily activities can contribute to polluting our creeks and lakes.

Coincidentally, as if on cue, a family with two young daughters stopped by just as Marylee started her demo. The girls were fully engaged as Marylee had them role-play as "bad guys" who litter and pollute. The girls then brought the "rain" down upon the town and watched it wash the litter into the waterways contaminating drinking water sources.

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Marylee Thomason with Laurie Hathaway's assistance helps the eager participants bring on the rain. Robin Agee photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 31

Also on March 1, Master Naturalist and birding tour guide Charley Amos gave hands-on instructions for showing children how to use binoculars providing detailed steps for adjusting binoculars to individual eye focus. One hint particularly appreciated is to first set your naked eye on a bird that you want to look at more closely. Then, keeping your eyes on it, raise your binoculars to your eyes while keeping your sight focused on the bird. This tip makes it much easier to find your target.

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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Charley Amos shows the group how to focus on a bird with a pair of binoculars. Marian Hiler photo.

Wildscape Update continued from page 32

Don't miss the next Wildscape Bioblitz!

It's coming on Saturday, April 19 9 am— 12 pm

Meet in the south parking lot to join us in taking inventory of the many wonderful plants and animal species to be discovered in the wildscape. We'll be using the nature app iNaturalist to upload photos and sound recordings. Though it's called a blitz you can enjoy your walk at your own pace.



Molly Hollar Wildscape BioBlitz

**Saturday
April 19, 2025
9am-12pm**

**2866 Spanish Trail
(South Parking Lot)
Arlington TX 76016**

**Come take a stroll through
the wildscape and help to
identify plants and animals
using your smartphone.**

**Capture the data in
iNaturalist.**



**Download the app from
your app store.**

**Meet at the compost
area for a quick
introduction before you
begin your walk.**

**Experts will be available
for assistance if needed.**

Citizen Science | Environmental Education | Fun Outdoors

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

Remembering Bob Brennan at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve

On March 15th, family members and friends of Bob and Bonnie Brennan gathered to dedicate a memorial in their name and to celebrate Bob and Bonnie and their love and generosity to the Preserve. Bob's love of photography presented a unique and invaluable legacy of the Preserve. He created a historical pictorial record - pictures of pre-preserve days, every event that occurred during its creation, and the finished first-ever natural preserve in Arlington.

The dedication was the culmination of a joint project with the Brennan family, APRD and the Friends of Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve, represented by Laura Capik. The bench was donated by the Brennan family, the trail marker by the Friends of SCNP, and the final design and installation by the Parks Department.

After Bob's retirement, he took up photography, focusing on Arlington's parks and outdoor events. His generous donation of those photographs to the City of Arlington will be treasured by the citizens for years to come.

After Laura welcomed all, Devin Steward, Park Operations Manager, Zack Brennan (grandson), and Paula Waters (daughter) spoke to the group about how much the preserve meant to Bob and his family and how gratifying it has been to see that his work is valued by the Arlington community.

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The family at the memorial bench. Michael Smith photo.

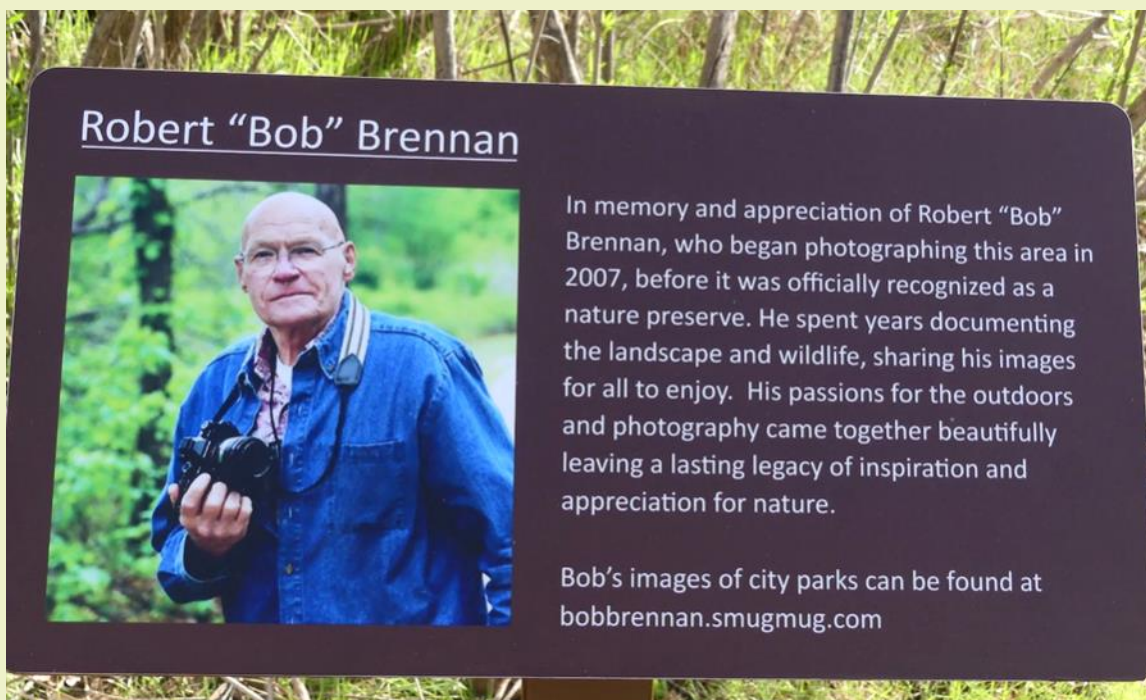
SCNP continued from page 35, continued on page 37

Remembering Bob Brennan at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve



Above, Laura Capik spoke to the family of Bob's love for the preserve.

Below, The marker in Bob's memory. Michael Smith photos.



SCNP continued from page 36**Merryhill's Kids on a Cloudy Day** Michael Smith

I liked the kids from the day I had taken a few snakes to talk to them at their school about the ecological value of snakes and how to be safe around them. I mentioned to the teachers at [Merryhill School](#), and to Marylee Thomason, who had arranged all this, that I'd love to show the kids around at Sheri Capehart Nature Preserve. We had a chance to do that on March 3rd.

The first couple of days of March were sunny and warm, and then a front came through with rain the night before our walk. At 9:00 am on the 3rd it was 63 degrees, a little breezy, and cloudy. I tested some trails; going to the north pond was not going to work because of mud. We could still walk the sandy trail up to the bluff, and we could visit the south pond because of the boardwalk.

But much that lives at the preserve was dug in and sheltering. The butterflies were nowhere to be seen and the turtles were probably staying underwater. The birds were going to help — down at the south pond I recorded calls of Blue jays, a Lincoln's sparrow, a Song sparrow, Northern cardinals, an American robin, and a Red-bellied woodpecker. And they continued to be heard from time to time after the kids arrived.

We talked with the kids about what to expect, and one boy asked with a note of nervousness whether we might find Brown recluse spiders. As a recovering arachnophobe myself, I could empathize with what he was feeling. I said it was possible, but really you'd have to handle them or press against them to get bitten out here. The reassuring general rule about just about everything at the preserve is, watch from a little distance and everything will be fine.

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A cloudy day for the Merryhill School walk. Michael Smith photo.



Samantha is a fan of mosses. Marylee Thomason photo.

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We started at 10:00 am, walking up the south face of "Kennedale Mountain" and noticing how the sandstone that's below the surface wears down and creates the beautiful, soft sand in the trails there. We noticed the thorny stalks of prickly ash and I told the kids why it's also known as "toothache tree." Up on the bluff, we talked about lichen, and Marylee described how a fungus and an alga work together to create the cool blue-gray ruffles that live on many of the tree branches. We also touched on the history of the place. Laura Capik (Friends of SCNP Vice-President) mentioned how Caddo people once lived here as well as members of the Comanche people, and the bluff appears to have been used as a lookout and as a place to burn signal fires when needed.

We came back down and I asked, "who wants to see a pond?" All the kids called out "yeah!", and so we headed for the south pond. The kids looked for fish in the water, but while somebody may have gotten a glimpse of a sunfish, mostly they stayed in deeper water. The turtles, too, were nowhere to be seen. On a sunny day, we would probably have seen several of them, pulled up on pieces of wood and basking in the sun. We talked about the fish we weren't seeing, and mentioned a few birds, too. I said we had a belted kingfisher that we often saw, with their big heads and mohawk crests. I wish we had seen him today. At the end, everyone sat around the picnic tables to do a little journaling. At each table I asked what they would remember today or what they had liked. They also let me have a look at some of their writing and drawing. A few drew fish. One boy showed me a spider he had drawn. A girl said she would recall the spikey plants, remembering that discussion of prickly ash. Samantha had been delighted at the mosses she had seen and told me about a moss she had bought that was not very green right now, so she was worried about it. Isn't that delightful, the range of things in nature that capture kids' attention? I love mosses, too, with the beautiful green colors and velvety clusters of leaflike structures. Clumps of mosses among rocks can take us to miniature worlds as we look at (or touch) them.

I hope to see those kids again some time — come back when the Texas spiny lizards are hanging out on tree trunks and dragonflies are hovering over the pond!

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Michael with a few of the Merryhill kids.

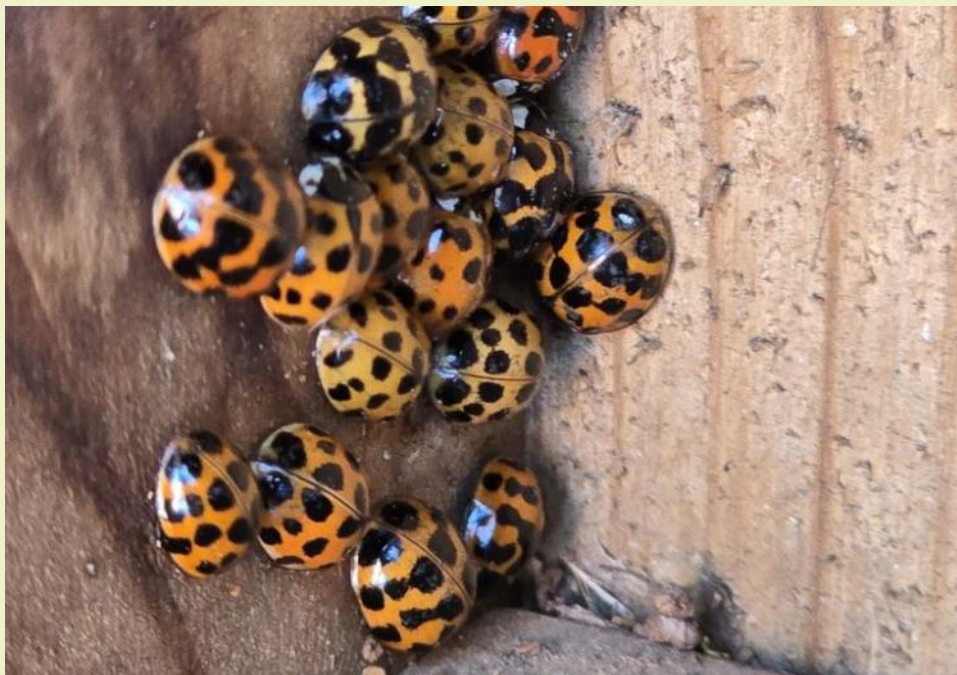
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SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species February 2025



Red Imported Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta*) – sambiology, American Winter Ant (*Prenolepis imparis*) - ben_b41, Wilman Lovegrass (*Eragrostis superba*) - sambiology, Engelmann Daisy (*Engelmannia peristenia*) - sam_dragon-moore

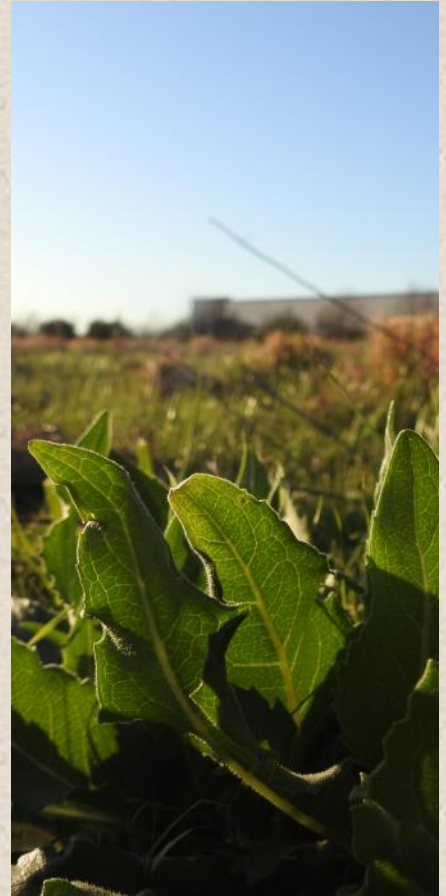


SCNP continued from page 39**SCNP iNaturalist Observations and Species February 2025**

*Above, Asian Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*) – kimberlietx*

*Below, Texas Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus olivaceus*) – sambiology*



Blackland Prairie Preserve Guy Random

*Breaking news this month!
Green everywhere, but low
and wishing for rain.
Still, spring's happening —
That small patch of bluebonnets
and a fine puffball.*



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Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

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First-year member \$10

Address _____

Individual \$15

New Member ☐

Family \$25

Phone _____

Supporting \$40

Renewing member ☐

Email _____

Sponsor \$100

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POST OAK

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



See page 5 for more on this meeting.