

JANUARY-
FEBRUARY
2005

Special January Meeting Annual Potluck Brunch and Planning Session

Topic:

Environmental priorities for our city and how Arlington Conservation Council can help us meet them.

Speakers:

Everyone with something to say.

Materials & Methods:

Bring your ideas and a brunch item; we'll provide the drinks.

When:

Saturday, January 15, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm.

Where:

**Epworth United Methodist Church,
1400 S. Cooper Street**

Looking Back at 2004

Last year's introduction to this list still applies, so here it is again: ACC can be hard to define. Is it an odd sort of garden club? A mini-Sierra Club bounded by our city limits? A collection of people who can't abide litter and wasted recyclables? Or is it something more perhaps, a group defined by the diverse environmental interests and concerns of its members? A while back someone described us as a group devoted to quality of life issues. That'll do until we hear something better.

The list below omits one big activity: the constant work by volunteers at **the Molly Hollar Wildscape** at Veterans Park. Something good is happening there all the time to restore and enhance that precious bit of Arlington's natural heritage.

January: President **Marian Hiler** reviewed the year and looked ahead during the annual planning meeting, which attracted a good-sized crowd whose many opinions contributed to shaping our plans and activities.

February: New York Avenue Prairie Workday. **Jan Miller** organized our first workday here; it's basically a matter of removing everything that doesn't belong in our only never-plowed piece of Blackland Prairie.

March: Arlington's 3rd annual Litter Challenge. We worked along Pioneer Parkway and tied for second place in our category.

New York Avenue Prairie Workday. We returned for more hacking and hauling.

April: **John Dycus**, our Wildscape Update reporter, was inducted into the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association's Hall of Fame. We like him a lot, too.

New York Avenue Prairie Workday. Back again for more woody plant removal.

Earth Day at UTA. A beautiful day for talking to students, networking with other exhibitors, and collecting soy-based plates and utensils to compost at UTA's fledgling compost site.

Walk on the Wild Side. For the fourth year in a row, about 80 third-graders from Wimbish Elementary School picnicked, threw seed balls at designated places, played environmental games, explored the park, and learned how to keep a journal. And a bunch of us, hammered into shape by **Jean-Marie Smith**, worked hard to keep up.

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From the President Marian Hiler



A heavily wooded rugged terrain rich with wildlife and water features plus a terrific view could become part of Arlington's park system as the Southwest

Nature Preserve. The Parks Bond Steering Committee voted to include its acquisition in the Committee's recommendations for the 2005 Parks Bond projects and the City Council has approved it.

Neil Strassman, staff writer for the Star-Telegram, described this wooded area in his "Woodland Sanctuary" story in the January 1 issue of the Star-Telegram: "The property, which borders Kennedale, has a 5-acre lake, three ponds and pockets of the Cross Timbers forest thick with post oaks, blackjack oaks and red cedars. Years ago, some local residents called the area Kennedale Mountain." Julia Burgen told him it is one of the last undisturbed pieces of the Woodbine sandstone formation in Arlington. Pete Jamieson, Parks and Recreation Director, told Strassman, "It is an opportunity to preserve and protect an environmentally sensitive area with diverse topography and water features.

Development would require extensive grading and significant deforestation".

There are two hurdles to overcome to make this a reality. The first is a successful purchase negotiation by the Trust for Public Lands with the owner who is planning to develop the property. It was recently platted as residential. If this hurdle is cleared, the Trust would hold the property for the citizens of Arlington in anticipation of making the next hurdle, passing of the May 7 Parks Bond election.

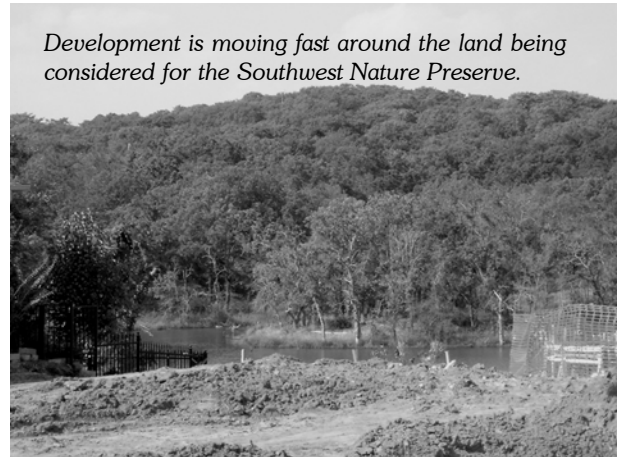
The 2005 parks bond will be only \$13,600,000, with the Southwest Nature Preserve acquisition making up almost 20% of the total. The candidate projects that will make up the rest of the bond funding have been under review by the Parks Bond Steering Committee with a recommended list to be presented at a public hearing on January 11. The committee's starting point was a larger list of priority recommendations provided by the Parks and Recreation Department staff. Recommendations were dependent on factors such as availability of other funding and park density for the section of town.

Park projects fall into 3 categories – Acquisition, Development, and Renovation. The other acquisitions being considered are for linear parks in the Bowman Branch and the Rush Creek floodplains and for neighborhood parks

in the Rush Creek and Johnson Station neighborhoods.

Types of development being looked at are city, various neighborhood and community parks, and linear park trails. These parks either have not been developed at all or are awaiting the next phase. Did you know that one mile of trail costs about \$1 million? Renovation includes taking care of what we already have, things such as parking lots and roadways, irrigation systems, restroom construction, and updating playground

Development is moving fast around the land being considered for the Southwest Nature Preserve.



equipment in the city's many parks.

I encourage you to attend the January 11 public meeting that will be held at the Bob Duncan Community Center at 6:00 pm. It will give you the opportunity to review the recommended project list, ask questions, and voice any concerns or alternatives you may have.

See you at the planning meeting on Saturday, January 15.

THE POST OAK

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All Memberships Expired January 31st

We don't want to lose you, but this will be your last issue of the Post Oak if you haven't renewed your membership. Please don't put it off. If you want a better Arlington, renew today—and consider giving a gift membership to anyone you know who values the quality of life in our city. We're only limited by the number of concerned people who realize that we can work together to make real changes. The bigger we are, the better the changes will be.

Looking Back *continued from page 1*

May: Sanitary Landfill field trip. Landfill boss **Allen Jones** gave us the deluxe tour, highlighting the many advanced environmental features of our landfill.

Spring Native Plant Sale. It was cold and nasty but lots of plants were sold. As always, the profits flow back into the Molly Hollar Wildscape.

Coppell Community Garden field trip. **Stephen Smith's** been agitating for a community garden, and ACC members made the trek to Coppell to see their remarkable gardens in operation.

Environmental Garden at Vandergriff Park. Very wet and very cold. Some natives got planted anyway, in the first phase of something that could eventually be wonderful.

Award Winner. Former ACC president and longtime mainstay **Bonnie Bowman** received the Texas League of Women Voters Excellence in Environmental Awareness Award in Austin. And what a good idea that was.

New York Avenue Prairie Workday. Beginning to think that Jan Miller was traumatized by a tree in childhood. And the odd thing is that people keep coming out to help her in this vendetta.

Arlington Community Fair. We presented our display and talked to lots of people attending this event at Meadowbrook Park.

June: Natural Urban Living Garden Show. Again this year Arlington Organic Garden Club invited ACC to participate, and we set up our display at their great event.

July: The monthly meeting was our second midyear brunch, review, and discussion session. We ate and talked (and ate).

Arlington Fourth of July Parade. We captured a lot of recyclables again, and this was our first attempt to enter a float in the parade—a big success and we won a prize!

September: Landfill to be leased. The rumors are true, and the city hopes to solve some of its financial problems by leasing our fine landfill. Will its recycling opportunities survive the process?

Trinity Trash Bash. We got lots of litter along the creek in Bob Cooke Park. Another trashy success for ACC.

Johnson Creek Field Trip. Concerned about the possibly disastrous effects of Cowboy Stadium development near Johnson Creek, we wandered along the banks and learned just how much great habitat still remains in the area.

October: Good Garage Sale. Once again **Dale Denton** hosted a successful ACC garage sale at his prime location.

Arlington's First Smart Yard Contest. No surprise here when several ACC members received honors in a contest that seemed made just for us.

Best Native Plant Sale Yet. The fall native plant sale broke all records and made the Wildscape very, very happy.

New York Avenue Prairie Workday. Following a summer break more woody carnage was scheduled.

November: City Council Makes Great Choice. Council members voted to name a stretch of park land along Johnson Creek in honor of **Julia Burgen**. Couldn't be a better choice.

Walk on the Wildside. All the elementary classes—84 kids—from the nearby Montessori Academy got the Wildscape treatment and seemed to love it.

December: We appeared at the NE Branch of the Library and spread the word some more.

Holiday Meeting. Gifts and good things to eat.

Improved Tree Ordinance Tops Wish List for 2005 Grace Darling

Why have a tree ordinance? What should a tree ordinance require? Are conservation overlay zones necessary? What incentives or penalties should be used to try to preserve trees in a community? What land uses should the ordinance cover? How to ensure compliance? Who would fund it? These and other questions were the subject of the January 3 meeting of the League of Women



Voters of Arlington, and naturally several ACC members turned up to join the discussion. Led by ACC's **Joanne Stewart**, LWVA has collected data on Arlington's tree ordinance and how it compares with that of other cities. Aably assisted by **John Davis**, Urban Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife, the group met to devise a framework for their consensus model tree ordinance. Our comments will be collated with those of other municipalities around the state and used to draft a position statement for LWV-Texas, to be issued in February, that complements the League's national policy regarding the protection of natural resources. Now try to imagine an ACC delegation marching on city hall, waving papers in the air and demanding a revised, stronger tree ordinance for Arlington—ah, bliss. Stay tuned.

"Our society is based on the continued wellbeing of our native plant and animal species. We cannot have one without the other."

John Davis, January 2005

Wildscape Update John Dycus



Good news, death-to-privet pals. You have pretty much cut, chopped, shredded and in all ways abhorred the wily weed into oblivion at the Molly Hollar Wildscape. Thanks to

the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department, especially **Jay Falgout** and **Martin Sanchez**, the blasting of the privet by APARD workers is off to a roaring start.

The first day they cleared almost all of an entire section with the help of super wildscape volunteer **Anne Alderfer**.

Anne worked alongside the parks crew on the coldest, windiest day you can imagine, wielding the team's heaviest flora yanker to pull the monsters from the muddy ground. After getting well warmed up and uprooting lots of the big privets, Anne gave a gigantic pull on the weed wrench handle and landed on her backside in the mud. Unfazed, she jumped up and went back to work with co-supervisor **Molly Hollar**, who was pulling up 6-inch baby privets.

At the end of the day, Anne was one exhausted volunteer—but three days later, she was at it again! Bypassing the small, easy privet, she attacked the straggler villain vines from the parking lot to the pavilion boardwalk. Using that same Desert Storm weed wrench, she eradicated all remaining privet in the area. The APRD privet brigade will resume operation January 4, from 7:00 am until about 3:00 pm, and will stick with it each Tuesday until the privet is no more. That could be as early as March or April, depending on how the weather cooperates.

Back at the greenhouse, thousands of baby plants are popping out of their seeds or sprouting roots on their cuttings. About 20 varieties of native perennials, including columbines, fall

asters, butterfly weeds, purple cone-flower, mealy blue sage, winecups and blackfoot daisies, will be transplanted into the wildscape or sold at the wildscape annual plant sale. In the ground cover section, frogfruit, golden groundsel, horseherb, wood violets and others are vining like crazy as they race to be the first to cover their pots. Not to be outdone, the shrubs and trees are the highest as they reach for the sun. Turk's cap, flame acanthus, lantana, salvia greggii and esperanza are stretching skyward, trying to catch up with the Mexican buckeyes, Carolina buckthorns



and roughleaf dogwoods.

While the volunteers got a little time off during the holidays, the plants continued to grow and need water. On the last greenhouse workday of the year, volunteers uncoiled the hose in the greenhouse only to find ... no water! It had been turned off temporarily due to a broken main. Greenhouse volunteers **Glenn Troutman** and **Harry Arber** saved the day by repeatedly hauling water from the armory in Harry's pickup and then hand-sprinkling the entire greenhouse until the thousands of plants had been nourished.

All went well until Christmas Eve morning when loyal propagation volunteer **Gailon Hardin**, bundled up against the cold, tried to climb the tall stockade fence at the greenhouse (the gate refused to open) so she could water again. Balanced precariously, scarf flying

in the wind, she desperately needed a ladder, which soon arrived with another volunteer. **Heather Dowell**, the city's splendid greenhouse liaison, was called long distance via cellphone to try to ensure that the water had been turned back on. In the end, Gailon's efforts were for nought, since the water was still off. The watering eventually happened on December 27. The plants were stressed but will recover.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

THE MOLLY HOLLAR WILDSCAPE AT VETERANS PARK

Monthly Workday Saturday, February 5

Time: 9:00 am – noon; refreshments will be provided.

Work will move to the greenhouse if it's too cold or windy at the wildscape. If you'd like to volunteer, please call Molly at 817-860-5580 or 817-319-6924 (cell). E-mail her at mahollar@earthlink.net.

Weekly Workdays

Tuesdays, 9:00 am – noon. Call Molly at 817-860-5580 if you plan to attend.

Directions: Veterans Park is at the corner of Arkansas Lane and Spanish Trail. Parking for the wildscape is at the second entrance, off Spanish Trail south of Arkansas Lane.

PLANT PROPAGATION AT RANDOL MILL PARK GREENHOUSE

Fridays, 9:00 am – noon. Call Molly at 817-860-5580 if you'd like to participate. The team will continue making cuttings and starting seed.

Directions: 1901 West Randol Mill Road, 0.4 miles west of Fielder on the north side of Randol Mill Road. Enter the park and stay on the road around and past the swimming pool. You can't miss the greenhouse.

2004 Speakers

We're grateful to all the committed speakers who gave up their time to make our meetings so valuable last year:

Landscape Ordinances - Kevin Charles, City of Arlington Landscape Administrator

How to Clear the Air over DFW - Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of Public Citizen's Texas Office

Habitat Restoration for Endangered Species: The Black-capped Vireo in Dallas County - Dr Marcy Brown Marsden, Department of Biology, University of Dallas

It's 7:00 pm. Do you know what your kids breathed today? - Marti Van Ravenswaay, Tarrant County Commissioner

Grassroots Organization - Eleanor Whitmore, Program Director, North Texas Branch, Texas Campaign for the Environment

Metroplex Air Quality Issues - Wendi Hammond, Executive Director of Blue Skies Alliance

Things You Can Do to Improve Air Quality - Sam Adamie, Environmental Specialist, Tarrant County Public Health Department

Curbside Recycling in Arlington - Cheri Reynolds, Recycling representative, Abitibi Consolidated

Preserving Open Space on Private Lands - David H. Behm, Executive Director, Connemara Conservancy Foundation

Another Air Quality Hearing Marianne Herrmann



A hearing was held in Arlington on January 3rd by the TCEQ regarding long awaited revisions to the DFW Clean Air Plan, called State Implementation Plan or SIP. There were about ten speakers, all of them in opposition to the proposal. Several spoke about the health implications for themselves and their children. Speakers included a representative of all the counties in the area, the Sierra Club, Blue Skies Alliance, Downwinders at Risk, Burlington Northern Railroad, and Morris Meyer, former candidate for US Congress. Unfortunately the public was informed of the hearing at the last minute and the time, Monday at 5.30 p.m, made it impossible for many more people to attend.

The other news is that Blue Skies Alliance sued the EPA in the fall and sent a strong message to the state that North Texans demand clean air now.

Our area has been without a valid Clean Air Plan for too long. The State's air quality planning for the DFW region is woefully behind the federally required timeline. These delays have prolonged human suffering and caused premature deaths. TCEQ should make up for past inaction, but what is proposed falls far

short of what is needed. The revised SIP should require greater emissions reductions to address all sources of pollution, especially from the Midlothian cement kilns and regional power plant and other sources. Contact me at ulmar@airmail.net if you want to help.

Thanks To Shane Goetz for supporting our efforts. If you'd like to help ACC and publicize your business, call any board member for details.

METRO 817/265-2902
LOCAL 817/274-2905

THE LAW OFFICE OF SHANE GOETZ

715 WEST ABRAM ST. ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013

WalMart Case Coming Soon

The WalMart zoning case comes to the Planning and Zoning Commission on Wednesday, January 12, at 5:30 pm. The proposed site is heavily wooded and near the potential Southwest Nature Preserve.

Both WeCAN (west Arlington) and SWAT (southwest Arlington) citizen groups are involved in the case. Michael Talambas with SWAT and Glenn Troutman with WeCAN have suggested bringing in ACC for site plan discussions because of all the trees, plus joining forces with as many groups as possible.

What do you think? Should ACC become involved, and if so, how? If you're interested, contact John Darling at the address listed on the back cover.

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

Please circle membership category.

Name _____

Individual/Family \$24.00

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How did you hear about us? _____

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