

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 3

JUNE 2003

June Meeting

TOPIC: The Cast Iron Forest:
A Natural and Cultural History
of the North American Cross
Timbers

SPEAKER: Richard V. Francaviglia, PhD,
Professor of History and
Director of the Center for
Greater Southwestern Studies
and the History of Cartogra-
phy at the University of Texas
at Arlington

WHEN: Wednesday, June 11, 7:00 pm

WHERE: First United Methodist Church,
313 N. Center at Division.
(Enter through north door.)

**Remember to bring
something for the raffle!**

Miscellaneous

City News

Arlington Water Utilities recognized by the state.

Someone at the 2025 planning meetings wanted us to specify clean water as a goal. Seems like we've had that for quite a while already, and it turns out that our water people have been recognized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for "...an outstanding level of compliance in monthly monitoring related to the 'Total Coliform Rule.'" Arlington Water Utilities samples and tests 180 sites a month, and "...since 1974 have never had unsafe levels of coliform [bacteria].

City considers purchase of a compressed natural gas fueling facility.

City officials have recommended that we purchase a CNG fueling facility for filling up our Handitran vehicles. There's no CNG place closer than Fort Worth or Irving right now, so having one of our own seems a lot more efficient.

Volunteers Needed

July 4th Parade recycling effort. This will be a cool, refreshing event, honest. And if you have a pickup, we promise to like you a lot. If not, that's okay too. Call Stephen Smith (817-275-7469) or John Darling (817-274-1077).

AOGC Natural Urban Living Garden Show, June 21.

We had fun last year at this great show, and we need people to staff our display and (especially) to hand out membership forms. If you can help any time between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, call either of the numbers above.

Summer Social & Midyear Review

On Saturday, July 19, from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm we will start something new: a rerun of our January brunch meeting. Plan now to be there.

Thanks, Marian

ACC President Marian Hiler has brought us to the attention of the Northrop Grumman people who commemorate National Volunteer Week. They've given us a donation and a Community Service Award. Thanks to NG, and to Marian, of course.

From the President Marian Hiler



Please save Saturday morning, July 19 for the ACC Summer Social and midyear review, which will take place at the Epworth United Method-

ist Church. Instead of the regular general meeting format for July, we are planning a potluck brunch and plenty of time to catch up on the goings on of your fellow members. As Julia Burgen said so well, we need opportunities to get together with others who have similar environmental values. So often we feel like the proverbial lone voice in the wilderness, so it's nice to be reminded we aren't the only ones out there. I will also present a brief report on the first half of the year, reviewing our accomplishments and what's in the works for the rest of the year and beyond. And, as always, the Board and I look forward to any feedback or inputs you may want to give us. The potlucks have always had a great turnout and if the July event is no exception, it will surely become an annual event. Do you think all that great

food may be a major factor?

“When you have people together who believe in something very strongly - whether it's religion or politics or unions - things happen.”

Cesar Chavez

ACC has been a parks partner long before the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department made it an official program earlier this year. Our members have been working regularly at the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park since it was created in 1994. This May, we officially adopted it through the Adopt-A-Park Program. In return for some additional paperwork to report the workdays, ACC will be able to receive more visibility. After completion of 48 volunteer event hours, ACC will be listed on the Parks and Recreation website as an official park adopter. After 96 hours, ACC's name will be placed on an Adopt-A-Park plaque in the Molly Hollar Wildscape and will be recognized once a year in a newspaper advertisement.

Speaking of more visibility for ACC, new member Linda Yarbrough is jumping right into the thick of things. She brings her experience as an animal rights advocate on how to successfully put those issues before the public eye.

She will be getting together with the Board at our May Board meeting to discuss several ideas on how we can get more publicity and exposure for ACC.

Dale Denton is also helping out to get ACC noticed. He agreed to be the ACC webmaster and just recently gained control access to the website. Dale is currently becoming familiar with the behind-the-scenes aspect of the site and is gathering recent information and photographs. In the coming weeks, be sure to check out arlingtonconservationcouncil.org to see how it's developing.

Volunteer Opportunities: If you were hoping to be the ACC historian but were afraid someone beat you to it, not to worry. That job is still open, so be sure to contact any board member if you want to take it on. For those of you who have ACC-related newspaper clippings, flyers, photos and the like please let me know if I may make copies of them for the scrapbooks.

We also need someone to be the Refreshments Chair for the monthly general meetings if we are still to have edible treats at those meetings. Again, please let a board member know if you are willing and able.

POST OAK

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It's a Guy Thing

Or is it? Not really, it seems, when the topic is alternative-fuel vehicles. At the last general meeting Nan Miller from NTCOG and Steve Elms from Tarrant County College gave us the latest on this increasingly important topic. And Nan brought an electric Toyota SUV so we could kick the tires and ride around the block. And we did—at length. So for all our preoccupation with native plants and things, it looks like the key to a fine meeting is a cool car. Go figure.



Another Side of the Wild Side

They came, they saw, they had to draw. The Wimbish students' field trip featured a journaling segment at the tin-roof pavilion with Anita Garmon and John Dycus, Anita leading discussion on the cocoon-stage butterfly in the jar there on the bench and John trying to morph third-grader energies into a notebook record of the day's high points.

Most of the students depicted their morning in pictures rather than words. One particularly talented student, Joshua Harris, rendered a spring bouquet that Anita brought with impressive detail. Others drew spiders, an owl, ferns. A girl drew what resembled poison ivy, then quickly replied (to the even quicker question) that she had merely seen it, not plucked it and was taking it home for her little brother to enjoy.

Success in this exercise may hinge on organization. Get the kids seated as soon as possible and close together to facilitate instructions. Have the props near the entrance. Expect paragraphs, but be pleased with pictures. Collect the pencils when it's over.

"Plan ahead, then work that woodsy plan," John said. "Hope the students enjoyed their outing as much as we did."



Stephen Smith (right, relatively tall) hopes to slow the eager Walkers on the Wild Side with predictable results. No doubt they were in a hurry to write pithy paragraphs as part of the journaling exercise. (Is journaling really a word?)

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.
Edmund Burke

Big Things from Small Beginnings?

On May 27 the first compost bin got going on a vacant UTA lot. It's a tiny start considering how much yard waste all those UTA acres could produce. But it's a start, and a very interesting one at that. This bin contains the recyclable trays and eating utensils used at the Earth Day event, so we have a little experiment in the works. Will the stuff really decompose completely? Stay tuned for updates.



Wildscape Update Gita Mani



What's in bloom?

At the Molly Hollar Wildscape, dusty purple spires of mealy blue sage wave hello from the bed at the top of the hill leading to the big

bridge. A closer look reveals five-petaled lavender flowers of silver-leaf nightshade and fuchsia-hued salvia blooms as well. Following its brilliant yellow display, the coreopsis holds the promise of more flowers once the spent blooms are cut back.

Between the sidewalk and the pavilion, you'll find purple coneflowers and Texas dandelions. The dense foliage and compact flowers of the low, creeping frog fruit growing there demonstrate its suitability for use as a low-maintenance ground cover. Fragrant prairie roses bloom next to the big bridge.

Highlights of Wildscape Goings-On

With privet and wild carrot running amuck, weeding is a big part of wildscape workdays. Mike Warren brought several kids from Tarrant County Juvenile Services to remove privet.

On a recent Wednesday, the rain made it easier for Molly Hollar and Ann Trenton to pull wild carrot in the area opposite the bioswale. Wayne Halliburton weeded, pulled privet and mulched. Weeding was also the focus of the May 3 workday. Bernardo has been working on removing poison ivy to keep the work areas safe.

On a recent Wednesday, several volunteers/Master Gardeners including Gailon Hardin, Mary Turner and Ann Trenton pulled up little privet (8-10" tall) using weed wrenches and golden claw weeders. There was enough rain to bring

plenty of weeds to the area between the sidewalk and the creek but not enough for the plants that need to grow. This translates to volunteers having to spend extra time helping water. Plants opposite the bioswale need mulching until they grow bigger and are able to fend for themselves a little better.

A good part of the trail is under control and the rough-leaf dogwoods protected, thanks to additional used railroad ties sent by Linda Williams.



The native plant sale attracted lots of customers, many of whom wanted information and got it from the enthusiastic volunteers. There was a lot of rapid thumbing through the various native plant books in search of answers to the hard questions.

Outside labor was paid to have them put in and anchored in place.

Ellen Baskerville is working with the sign committee to make new signs for kiosks around the wildscape. Signs will enhance public awareness of native landscaping and critter-friendly backyard habitats. Thanks, Ellen!

Native Plant Sale

The native plant sale on May 10 was a success with a good volunteer turnout and over \$2,000 in sales. A wide variety of flowering plants, grasses and groundcovers were available thanks to

the continued efforts of the plant propagation group and the generous donation of plants and grasses by John Snowden, owner of Bluestem Nursery. Volunteers were on hand to answer questions about the plants. Pretty labels made by Gail Hollar adorned brown paper bags containing lyre-leaf sage and coreopsis seed balls for sale. Shoppers could also buy leather hair ornaments shaped like butterflies, dragonflies and trees. Books on Texas wildscapes and

landscaping with native plants were available at lower-than-bookstore prices. All plant sale proceeds benefit wildscape projects such as the imminent vandal proofing of the birdbath near the pavilion. If you missed the plant sale and would like to buy native plants or seed balls, call Molly Hollar at 817-860-5580.

Anne and Randy Alderfer went to Molly's house early on the morning of the sale to load their capacious trailer with plants and grasses, reducing the number of trips back and forth. They stayed until the end of the day to load and return the unsold inventory to Molly's house. Couple of years

back, Randy captained the team that built the pavilion. Anne is a regular at plant propagation at Molly's and Wednesday workdays at the wildscape. Thanks, Randy and Anne! Jean-Marie Smith cheerfully totted up shoppers' purchases, making sure volunteers got the generous 25% discount. Several volunteers committed the entire day to the plant sale and their gift of time and energy is much appreciated!

While the plant sale was on, Pat Lovejoy, Ann Trenton and Kay Seiko did a lot of weeding at the top of the hill

continued on page 5

Wildscape Update *continued from page 4*

near the compost area. Jennifer Hiler, Ashleigh Barnett and Reagan DuBois soldiered on through—you guessed it—privet pulling.

Native Plant Propagation Workshop

Reid Lewis will conduct this workshop at Sweet Briar Nursery in Belton on Sunday, June 8. Reid is a native plant maverick and horticultural director of Temple College. If you'd like to participate, call Molly at 817-860-5580 for details.

Native Plant Propagation at Molly Hollar's

About a half-dozen people meet at Molly's house every Friday morning and propagate plants from seed and cuttings. With a shaded patio at the edge of a lake, Molly's house is a cool, friendly place to work. Tea, coffee, snacks and camaraderie are wonderful extras. Call Molly at 817-860-5580 if you'd like to join.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park

Next Saturday workday: June 7

Time: 9 am – noon, refreshments will be provided.

The focus will be on weeding, mulching, eradicating privet and cutting back the coreopsis.

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.

Wednesday Workdays: Ann Trenton and Molly Hollar can be found at the wildscape every Wednesday morning from 9 am until noon doing whatever is most needed at the time. Extra help is always appreciated and you are welcome to join them.

Thanks

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

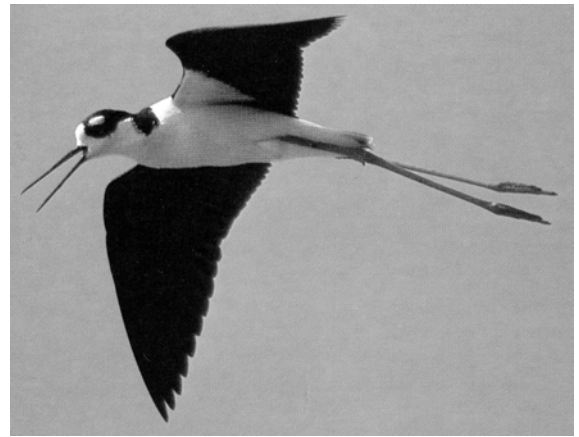
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Animal Awareness *John Darling*



Black-necked stilts have been hanging around the drying beds in far north Arlington (okay, far east Fort Worth) for the past several weeks. That's a fine thing in itself, because this is a striking relative of the plovers and sandpipers. The black and white plumage makes this bird stand out, but the greatest part is the bright pink legs that appear to be about 9 feet long.

On May 25, She Who Must Go Birdwatching murmured "Stop the car, you fool! That stilt is sitting on a nest!" Sure enough, that's what it looked like—a stilt hunkered down on a little floating mess with pink legs sticking out in all directions. My little list of Tarrant County birds indicates that this species nests occasionally here.

For most birdwatchers, anything even slightly out of the ordinary makes it all the more interesting, and here's something unusual happening right in our own backyard.



Of course you don't have to take our word for it; shown above is undeniable photographic evidence. Not only are the probable nest and stilt marked for your viewing convenience, but also there are several additional features, including power lines, a big ugly structure of some sort, and a portion of a rearview mirror. I guess nature photography just comes naturally to some people, especially us.

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 \$12.00

Address _____

Student \$6.00

Family \$18.00

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Supporting \$24.00

E-mail _____

Organization/Business \$36.00

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216.
ACC is a non-profit, tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization.

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Don't forget!

At the May meeting Dr Richard Francaviglia will present *The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers*.
Don't miss it!