

OCTOBER 2009

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

October Meeting

Marketing the Environment: Fostering Sustainable Behavior

Bonnie Bowman,
President of the Tarrant Coalition for
Environmental Awareness

Wednesday, October 14, 7:00 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)

Bonnie is a past president of ACC and founder of RUFF, which achieved its goal of a dog park in Arlington. She continues her concern for animals, native plants, air quality and the whole of our environment with her Meetup Group for the Sierra Club and leading TCEA, among other activities that benefit from her energy and experience.

Remember to bring
something for the raffle

Bits & Pieces

Best Mushroom Name? Earthstar!

This just in from the wildscape: All the recent rains have produced bunches of mushrooms, including this probable false earthstar, whose arms open with high humidity. This strategy increases survival chances for the spores released from the central puffball, especially when pelted by raindrops.



Today's Inspirational Moment



The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: "What good is it?"
Aldo Leopold, *Round River*

Winter Texan

The hoary bat is the most widely distributed bat in the US but seems to be a rather rare migrant here. Many may migrate together and spend the winter in coastal areas. Apparently they attack moths in flight from the rear, severing the body from the head and wings, which drop to the ground. A nice trick.



From the Star-Telegram

Among Arlington's recently issued bonds is \$4.5 million for building an 11,000-square-foot airport terminal to replace the one built in 1982. The new terminal is set to open before the 2011 Super Bowl. Some of the cost will be paid for by a \$600,000 state grant and interest earned from the airport's natural gas revenue.

That's great for all those harried executives and rich football freaks, but 1982? They really don't build 'em like they used to. The good news: it's set to be LEED certified.

From the President John Darling



Recently, city council member Sheri Capehart hosted a meeting to address residents' concerns about the proposed expansion of Bowman Springs Road and the impact on the Southwest Nature Preserve.

Although city staff took pains to explain how the preliminary plans would minimize the loss of preserve property, several of our members began to question the basic idea: Why expand the road at all? Later, several members produced the letter below. We made copies for the mayor, council members, and several other city officials and delivered them to city hall. As of October 11, no response or acknowledgement has been received. It is believed that further action on this project awaits the results of a traffic study. Here's the letter:

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

On behalf of Arlington Conservation Council, its board of directors and members, we would like you to reconsider the proposed expansion of Bowman Springs Road. We believe there are important reasons to stop any further work on this misbegotten project.

The first issue of concern is the lack of benefit to Arlington. The Bowman Springs expansion would extend from the bridge over I-20 to the intersection with Pennsylvania Avenue at the Arlington-Kennedale border and would expand the current 2-lane road into a 4-lane artery with a turn lane. Although there is one neighborhood at its southern reach, the traffic flow to and from Arlington appears to be insignificant (this is based on observers' reports only, because no traffic study has been conducted). And these

residents already have three easy points of access to Little Road.

Note that the Bowman Springs bridge over I-20 is only 2 lanes wide and there is no direct access to I-20 in either direction: Eastbound traffic must stay on the access road for a mile or so to Little Road, then jog back north to enter the interstate; westbound traffic feeds into Loop 820. In fact, coming from Fort Worth there is no exit onto Bowman Springs, which can only be approached from westbound I-20 by the above-mentioned 2-lane bridge. So where is the traffic demand for the roadway expansion coming from, and where will it go once it reaches the I-20-Bowman Springs bottleneck?

According to reports from the City of Arlington and Tarrant County, there is no anticipated funding to replace the

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THE POST OAK

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park



It's a great time to enjoy our only prairie remnant, especially if you like yellow. Most of this month's photos — and all of the good ones — come from Wesley Miller (left), who put down his camera long enough to work on the south gate. Please join him and others on the 24th to help keep our prairie from becoming a raggedy woodland.



Next Prairie Workday: Saturday October 24, 9:00 am – noon

We'll cut small trees and brush, so please bring loppers and hand saws if you can. Gloves, boots (or sturdy-soled shoes), long sleeves and pants are recommended. Water will be provided, but please bring your own container if you can. Please RSVP to jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net, for directions, late info on weather, etc.



Wildscape Update *John Dycus*



Dedicated volunteers are planting hundreds more plants, complementing the dazzling butterflies, hummingbirds, songbirds, lizards, mushrooms, showy American beautyberries and all the fall wildflowers — mealy blue sage, cowpen daisy,



zexmenia, lantana, turk’s cap, wild ageratum, blackfoot daisy, cenizo, obedient plant, kidneywood — suddenly thriving in the rain and cooler weather. The stone bridge area has been



replanted after repairs were made to the bridge and more stone and boulders added.

The native plant sale raised \$3,000 Sept. 26, and a good time was had by all, with the Arlington Parks and



Recreation Department donating trees to sell, plant expert Lucy Harrell and her business partner, Michele Cravens, being on hand to answer questions, and the city’s water conservation specialist, Dustan Compton, bringing the stream trailer (everyone enjoyed playing with the “soil” and learning about the importance of the watershed). John Snowden, owner of Bluestem Nursery,



answered grass questions; photographer and great wildscape friend Loreen Smith donated beautiful CDs with slide shows of sunflowers and dragonflies set to music; Texas Parks and Wildlife urban biologist Jessica Alderson provided handouts; and Josephine Keeney and her propagation team of 20 greenhouse volunteers tied it all together.

Three shifts of three volunteers each staffed the wildscape display at the inaugural Ecofest, Sept. 19. Hooray for



Heather Dowell and her team (the Dowellettes) and all who had the vision and energy to pull this off. It was another step in the slow but rewarding process of civic realization.

The wildscape keeps attracting attention from greater distances. Thirty people from the Texas Travel Industry Association in the hill country took a



tour Sept. 27, with Ann Knudsen leading groups and volunteers Peggy Quinn, Rosalie Rogers, Callie Mitchell, Ann Mayo and Hester Schwarzer assisting. The visitors had lots of questions and seemed inspired to start their own wildscapes at home. The group donated \$100 to the cause. Other comings and goings: Ann Knudsen, Hester and Molly Hollar will attend the NPSOT symposium in Wichita Falls, Oct. 15. The St Maria Goretti Garden Club will tour the wildscape Oct. 21, followed by the Argyle Garden Club on Oct. 27.

Wildscape Update continued from page 4

Texas AgriLife agent and Master Gardener Steve Chaney had all the answers about drip irrigation for some 20 wildscape volunteers who met Sept. 12 at Mijo's since it was raining and they couldn't go outside and play in the dirt. Instead they made seed balls with inland sea oats and learned how do-it-yourself drip irrigation can decrease water use by 50 percent.



Hester Schwarzer, Molly Hollar, and Dawn Hancock and Gailon Hardin with NPSOT attended the plant conservation conference Sept. 16-18 at the Wildflower Center in Austin. The keynote speaker from Texas Parks and Wildlife discussed the effect of climate change on native plants and the wildlife dependent on those plants. Some plants and wildlife are moving north, but not always in sync, leaving the wildlife without. Grasslands are more affected than forests, resulting in more drought and wildfires. ...

As a memorial for Jim Kunde, wildscape volunteers will plant native trees, shrubs and wildflowers near a bench given by his family to Village Creek Linear Park, near his and Diana's home, where they often enjoyed birdwatching.

Wildscape Mini-class schedule:

November 7
"No Child Left Inside"
Heather Dowell, urban forestry
land manager, APRD

January 9
"The Importance of Backyard
Wildscapes"
Jessica Alderson, urban biolo-
gist, TPWD

Longtime ACC Member Receives BRIT Award from the BRIT Web site

Each year, the Botanical Research Institute of Texas honors educators for their commitment to excellence in science teaching. Carrie Donovan, science teacher at Goodman Elementary School in Arlington, Texas, received the 2009 Wendy Owsley Garrett Science Teacher Award at the BRIT Board of Directors meeting on August 20, 2009.

Carrie has been teaching for 16 years. In her present position, Carrie is the science laboratory teacher at her school, teaching science to students in grades 1 through 6. Over the course of a year, Carrie instills a love of learning in the lives of over 400 children. Carrie uses science as a common language to teach vocabulary and critical thinking skills.

Her first encounter with BRIT Education was a workshop on schoolyard habitats in 1999, when a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife allowed BRIT to host a group of local teachers at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin where they were inspired to use the outdoors as a classroom. Creating a schoolyard habitat was Carrie's dream, and she began taking her students



outdoors to observe nature. Her love of science grew as she took part in a number of other BRIT workshops through the years.

When BRIT Education announced a partnership with REAL School Gardens to deliver professional development conferences, Carrie attended and enjoyed learning from other teachers who shared her interests. From that experience, Carrie

learned about grant opportunities with REAL School Gardens for schools wanting to install outdoor classrooms. While teaching at Wimbish Elementary School, she applied for a grant for her school and was awarded funds to build an outdoor classroom. Fortunately, when she moved to Goodman Elementary, a garden was already established.

Carrie commented that she now feels empowered to follow her passion of teaching science outdoors to children surrounded by nature. Her students keep journals to record and think about their outdoor experiences, and she believes those journals have been her greatest assessment tool, allowing her to follow the children's comprehension of science vocabulary and topics by reading their comments and observations.

When asked how BRIT influenced her teaching, Carrie explained, "I learned to collaborate with other teachers and professionals that share the same passion for kids to learn in the outdoors. I felt empowered from the wealth of knowledge that I attained from the BRIT workshops, and I couldn't wait to share with my students."

Meatless Monday from <http://www.meatlessmonday.com/>

Editor's note: An ACC member recently recommended the Meatless Monday Web site and is hoping to get something started here, possibly in the schools. The campaign makes sense environmentally, and it also looks like a natural fit for UTA, where there's increasing emphasis on sustainability. What do you think?

Why Meatless?

Going meatless once a week may reduce your risk of chronic preventable conditions like cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. It can also help reduce your carbon footprint and save precious resources like fresh water and fossil fuel.

Read about these benefits below. But keep in mind that just going meatless is not enough. That's why we give you the information you need to add healthy, environmentally friendly meat-free alternatives to your diet each week.

Health Benefits

- **REDUCE RISK OF HEART DISEASE.** Beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds

contain little to no saturated fats. Reducing your intake of saturated fats can help keep your cholesterol low and reduce your risk of heart disease.

- **MAINTAIN HEALTHY WEIGHT.** A plant-based diet is a great source of fiber, which is absent in animal products. Foods rich in fiber make you feel full with fewer calories, resulting in lower calorie intake and less overeating. On average, Americans get less than half the recommended daily quantity of fiber.
- **IMPROVE OVERALL QUALITY OF DIET.** Consuming dry beans or peas results in higher intakes of fiber, protein, folate, zinc, iron and magnesium with lower intakes of saturated fat and total fat.

Environmental Benefits

- **REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT.** The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization estimates the meat industry generates

nearly one-fifth of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions that are accelerating climate change worldwide . . . far more than transportation. And annual worldwide demand for meat continues to grow. Reining in meat consumption once a week can help slow this trend.

- **MINIMIZE WATER USAGE.** The water needs of livestock are tremendous, far above those of vegetables or grains. An estimated 1,800 to 2,500 gallons of water go into a single pound of beef. Soy tofu produced in California requires 220 gallons of water per pound.
- **HELP REDUCE FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCE.** On average, about 40 calories of fossil fuel energy go into every calorie of feed lot beef in the U.S. Compare this to the 2.2 calories of fossil fuel energy needed to produce one calorie of plant-based protein. Moderating meat consumption is a great way to cut fossil fuel demand.



Thanks to Our September Speaker

Dr Ken Morgan, right, director of TCU's Energy Institute, discussed local geology and earthquakes at our meeting last month.



ACC at Ecofest



We had a great batch of volunteers helping at Arlington's first Ecofest on September 19. We talked to lots of interested people and were impressed by the number and variety of participating vendors and groups. We're already looking forward to next year. Heather Dowell, from Arlington Parks & Rec, must be a born organizer; she should be congratulated for doing a remarkable job.



Front Street Festival



The sixth annual Front Street Festival at Knapp Heritage Park downtown drew a steady crowd on September 26, and ACC was there again, spreading the word and generally having a fine time on a beautiful day. Once again we were asked to recycle cans and bottles, and we collected a lot, thanks to the loan of several recycling bins from UTA.

From the President continued from page 2

current 2-lane bridge over I-20 to match the would-be 5-lane expansion. With the current backlog in TxDOT projects, if this bridge is ever expanded it will probably not happen for decades. It is unclear to us why the engineering plan calls for a major 5-lane artery to connect a 2-lane bridge to a proposed redesigned roadway in an adjoining city which would offer no access to Arlington residences or businesses. We see no advantage to the sparse Arlington traffic in this western boundary.

Since the only benefit in this plan appears to be to Kennedale rather than Arlington, it is a major concern that all of the land required for the roadway expansion would be coming from the Arlington side. From our perspective, it appears that Arlington would provide a service to Kennedale while receiving nothing in return. This is especially worrisome given the land that would be sacrificed by our city for the road expansion, all of which would be taken from the Southwest Nature Preserve.

The Southwest Nature Preserve was purchased by the City of Arlington with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land. The SWNP is a rare natural resource. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, "few large tracts of

undisturbed woodlands remain in the East Cross Timbers, which is perhaps the most fragmented vegetative region in Texas." While it was originally acquired as a prime example of Cross Timbers woodlands, SWNP has been shown to be that and more. Several plant species usually found in east Texas have been recorded at SWNP, re-marking the western extreme of their zones. The preserve is also home to diverse populations of animals. Expansion of Bowman Springs would take up to 2 acres off the western edge of the 58-acre preserve, adversely impacting the steep escarpment, a pond, and a creek running along this sector. This damage would most likely be unacceptable to the Trust for Public Land, as it is to all who value our natural heritage, and may negatively affect future partnerships with TPL. It is definitely opposed by the individuals and groups who have worked so hard to preserve this small corner of natural Arlington. As John Sawhill, past president of the Nature Conservancy, so poignantly said, "In the end, we are defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy."

It is troubling to learn that the Bowman Springs redesign was not recommended by the most recent Citizens Bond Committee, yet \$3M for the project was

somehow included in the bond package that was approved by voters in 2008. It is alarming that this turkey rose to the top of the priority list, in view of the tremendous backlog of city road projects that cannot be funded at present. While we have great respect for members of the Department of Public Works who have clearly put in a great deal of effort to mitigate the damage that would be caused by the Bowman Springs road expansion, we in ACC strongly and unanimously believe the best option for the city is to cancel it.

There is no clear benefit to the citizens of Arlington to justify the cost of the project and its resultant damage to the Southwest Nature Preserve. We urge Council to act immediately to stop this terrible waste of our natural and financial resources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
John Darling
President
Arlington Conservation Council

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Please circle membership category.

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Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ _____

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
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Don't Forget!

Wednesday October 14
7:00 pm

Bonnie Bowman
*Marketing
the Environment*

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