

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2010

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

April Meeting

Arlington's Commercial Sustainability Program

Tim Yatko
City of Arlington
Commercial Recycling Coordinator

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

Don't miss this chance to hear how the city is continuing to improve commercial recycling. Tim will also discuss other recent environmental issues, including water, residential recycling, and grant funding.

Remember to bring something for the raffle

Bits & Pieces

Just Passing Through

It's about time for one of the country's most striking birds to migrate through Arlington. We only see the Yellow-headed blackbird briefly in the spring and fall, and it nests in marshes well to our north.

If you get a chance, look for this beautiful blackbird from now through early May as it pauses at the Village Creek drying beds.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Most people are on the world, not in it – have no conscious sympathy or relationship to anything about them – undiffused, separate, and rigidly alone like marbles of polished stone, touching but separate.

John Muir

Spring Wonder

Every spring Crossvine puts on a grand display of red and yellow flowers that attract hummingbirds and make us very happy. It's evergreen, loves full sun, and doesn't want much water. What's not to like?



Habitat Update

Last gasp for the former stretch of dense brush and scruffy trees by the Johnson Creek Crossing apartments on Pecan Street: a new UTA parking lot now fills the old weedy field on the left and many of the new apartment trees are dead.

From the President Jo Ann Duman

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus is making record profits this year, in contrast to most businesses. Advance ticket sales are way down, but walk-up sales are quadruple those of past years. Why? The CEO said the recession is causing more people to stay close to home, and they are waiting until they are sure they have the money and time on the day of the show. What does this mean to ACC members and other environmental enthusiasts?

We can expect visits to local events, including those with an environmental focus, to draw larger crowds. Your help at ACC booths for Prairie Fest (April 24) and other events throughout the year, at the children's tours of the Molly Hollar Wildscape, at our friends at River Legacy's Earth Day (April 17) and their other festivals can have a bigger payoff in the number of people you can influence. Let's share our enthusiasm for the natural values and places in our

region by supporting these outreach efforts. When you get an e-mail or phone call about volunteering for an hour or two, please accept.

It seems we are overwhelmed by meetings on critical matters right now. The city of Arlington hosted a by-invitation Round Table for local organizations at a March 24 meeting on the Lake Arlington Master Plan and a March 31 public meeting on the Crystal Canyon Nature Preserve Master Plan. On the afternoons of those same days, the Planning and Zoning Commission held workdays on revising city requirements for gas drilling (and I suspect they really meant to say they are addressing all aspects and phases of gas well development and operations). I greatly appreciate dedicated ACC members like Grace Darling who attended the Lake Arlington and P&Z meetings and reported on them to the rest of us. If you can attend future meetings like

these, please do so. ACC members have to speak for the environment in Arlington, or I fear those values will not be raised.



THE POST OAK

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Thanks A.C.C. for working to conserve Arlington's natural resources.

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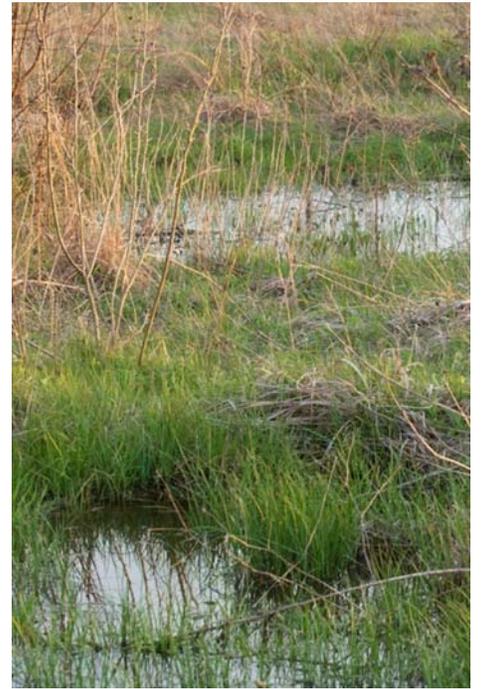


The workday on March 20 was a freeze-out, followed by more snow! The following Saturday the weather was windy but much nicer and Boy Scout Troop 615 had

a workday with a great bunch of young men practicing their axe, saw and lopping skills on a variety of trees.

Thanks to ACC member Barbara Fleischman, who with her husband Jim and son Edward are all active in this troop, for organizing this event. There wasn't a lot blooming yet, but promises of things to come:

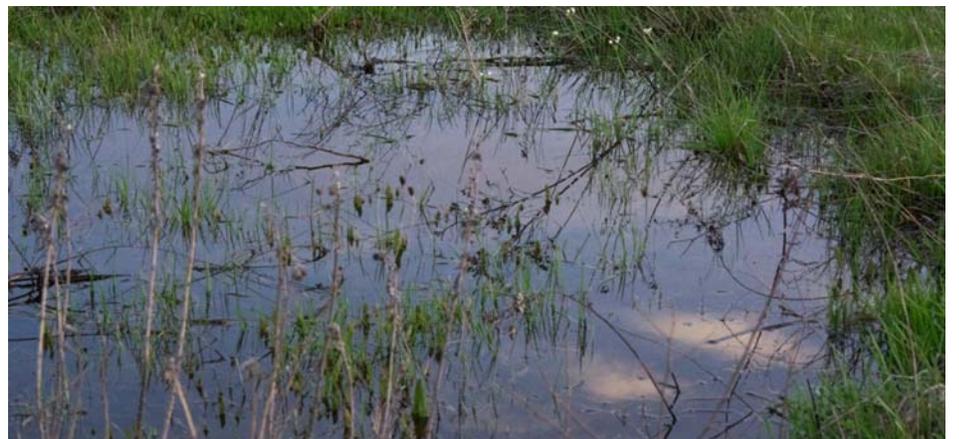
- showers of anemones in hues from pink to lavender to blue...and of course white
- brilliant yellow punctuations of prairie groundsel
- chorus of excited cricket frogs (even at mid-day)
- leaves and sheaths for spiderworts, prairie celestials, etc.
- bird songs and butterflies on the wing



In honor of Earth Day: Take a deep breath, and don't forget to thank a plant for the oxygen...step away from the electronics...go outside, maybe even to a park or a natural area, and watch, listen, maybe touch (careful, it's Texas). Then, as poet Mary Oliver writes in "Sometimes"

Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.

It's spring. Hope you find something worth noticing, nurturing, and maybe even celebrating. Now, get out there....



Wildscape Update **John Dycus**



The wildscape is abuzz with bees on the blooming Mexican plum and with volunteer activity. Apparently the word is out — this is the place to go for getting that merit

badge or Eagle Scout project done.

Two new entrance arbors are in place, thanks to a team of Boy Scouts directed by Patrick Fike earning his Eagle. One is at the far north end by the prosaic “erosion area,” and the other complements the LTV bridge at the northeast edge. The arbors soon will sport signage welcoming visitors.

Not to be outdone by the boys, not-too-dainty Daisy Girl Scout Troop 1618 planted a Mexican plum tree under the direction of Callie Miller and Peggy Quinn. This is how you repopulate the volunteer pool. You grow ‘em.



Speaking of volunteers, a bunch turned out for first Saturday and helped with the restoration of the pocket prairie. It has been neglected while newer areas were tended, but with the advice of Bluestem Nursery’s John Snowden, who always shows up with grasses in hand, the prairie is looking more like it should.

NPSOT chapter president Dawn Hancock taught the mini-class and had everyone seeing native plants from a different angle, the way indigenous and pioneer people used them, as medicine, food, jewelry and clothing.

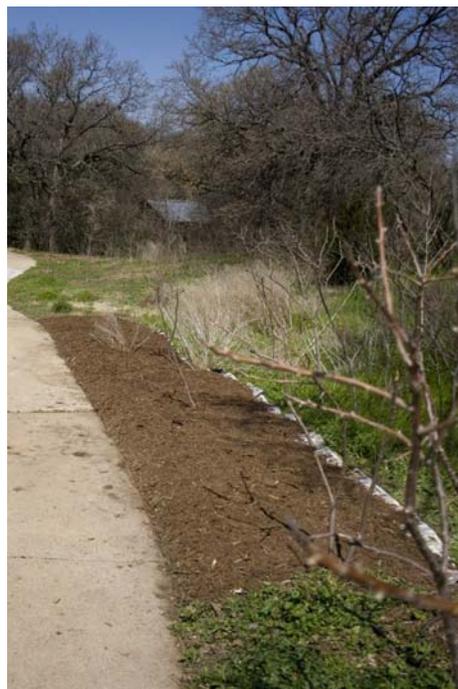
Another neglected area, by the west-end sidewalk just north of the butterfly garden, had been taken over by Bermuda



grass, so Josephine Keeney and her troop of volunteers took arms against it. As they put down a thick layer of newspaper and then mulch, curious passers-by asked why. Josephine obliged with the answer. Another educational opportunity created: Get rid of Bermuda and plant native flowers, such as winecup, pink evening primrose, zexmenia, Texas lantana, fall aster and flame acanthus.

Better to be overrun by students and their teachers than Bermuda grass.

Eighty attentive Goodman Elementary School third-graders enjoyed a “Walk on the Wildside” field trip March 24, and another is planned for Rankin Elementary School second-graders April 15. The Goodman kids learned about erosion, the post oak woodlands (yea!), invasive



plants (boo!), butterflies, critters, flower parts and the like. As much fun as the youngsters had, the volunteer big kids conducting the tour enjoyed the morning even more.

Volunteers have also been busy at the compost site, where LaVonne Nowlin is the new instructor, replacing Don Graves, who has retired. LaVonne, with her bright, friendly attitude is excited to begin teaching about the black gold of gardening.



Indoors, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Jessica Alderson and Brett Johnson are teaching how to create and give an effective PowerPoint presentation. Several presentations should be ready soon for civic groups and garden clubs on the benefits of native plants and wildscaping.

As you’re in your garden, mulling what needs to happen next, remember the plant sale Saturday, May 8. Watch for info at www.thewildscape.org. Meanwhile, come out and enjoy the blossoms and fragrance of the wildscape. After this dark, wet winter, you earned it.

Mini-class schedule:

May 1

Conserving Water in Your Landscape

Dottie Woodson, AgriLife Extension program specialist

June 5

Native Groundcovers

Suzanne Tuttle, Fort Worth Nature Center

100 Post Oaks John Darling

Sometime in the summer of 2000, ACC held a little evening trip to Founders Park, and I found myself learning that there are people who can't wander in a park without stopping to pick up trash. As the walk ended, then-president Mitch Moyes surprised me by asking if I would become the newsletter editor. After much hesitation I agreed.

Of course I never imagined that over nine years later I'd be staring out the window and wishing that I were bird watching at the drying beds instead of fiddling with the 100th issue of our newsletter.

Fiddling at the last minute, that is, and not for the first time, but that's not the point. Or maybe it is: An organized editor would have studied those 100 issues and produced a list of environmental highlights reported in over 800 pages. But no, you haven't had that kind of editor. In case you haven't noticed, yours

is the kind who usually forgets his own deadline, then throws himself on the mercy of a very small group of priceless contributors.

You probably don't need a commemorative list anyway: You've watched and worried and occasionally celebrated; you've seen city government soar and plummet; you've signed those cards at council meetings, cut back salvias, enjoyed the speakers at our meetings, or loved getting through to kids at the wildscape.

Selfishly, I think the most important thing you've done is this: I don't feel like such an alien in Arlington because you've made it so clear that I'm not the only environmental obsessive in this often



infuriating town. Maybe it's something primitive at work here, but knowing that others share my values has made a big difference. As a fundamentally slothful guy, surely I wouldn't have bothered with 100 newsletters if you hadn't been here. Thanks.

Native

Plant Sale

At Randol Mill Park Greenhouse
Benefitting The Wildscape

Saturday, May 8
10:00 - 2:00

Organically grown –
Most from local seed & cuttings-
For plants better adapted to our
local climate and rainfall.



Prices:
Quarts – \$4
Gallons - \$7
Trees - \$15 & up

Check www.thewildscape.org
For plant list

Bill McKibben at UTA Marianne Herrmann

We were excited to attend a lecture by famous environmental author Bill McKibben at UTA on March 10. He came here in conjunction with UTA's this year's One Book, *Deep Economy, the Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, but his talk was primarily concerned with global warming. He was one of the first to recognize this developing problem in 1989, when he wrote his first book, *The End of Nature*, about climate change. He has written many more books and has also become probably the greatest activist and organizer against global warming.

Last year he built up tremendous momentum for climate solutions with his organization, 350.org, which culminated in a global day of rallies on October 24. This day turned out to be the most widespread day of climate action in the planet's history according to CNN, with

5200 actions in 181 countries. The organization is called 350.org, meaning that we have to get CO₂ in the atmosphere back to 350 ppm to avoid unstoppable climate change. In Copenhagen this translated into 117 countries, most of the world's nations, supporting this tough target. But this did not result in victory, because the biggest polluter nations would not go along.

Now there is a new slogan for 2010: "Get To Work." On 10/10 a Global Work Party will occur. People in every corner of the world will organize to work on a local project to make us more sustainable — including putting up solar panels, making buildings more energy-efficient, planting trees, launching local gardens.

This action will be used to send a message to our leaders: "We're working, what about you?" If we can do all this, why can't you pass a global warming treaty?

Arlington Planning & Zoning: Gas Wells Grace Darling

The Arlington Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session of March 24 dealt with Arlington's mineral rights ordinance. (See the PowerPoint presentation at the city's Web site. Go to <http://www.arlingtontx.gov/planning/pdf/GasWells/PZ3242010WorkSessionGasWellPresentation.pdf>)

To set the scene, Roger Venables presented an overview of the considerable impact of gas extraction on the city's finances. Currently the city collects about \$0.75M in royalties per month, and from 2006 to date the city has collected \$70M from gas well operations. As a result of gas wells, the business property tax collected went from \$2M in 2007 to \$22+M in 2009. Pipeline licensing fees have netted an

additional \$3.2M to date.

A comparison study shows that drill sites have the highest tax value per acre compared to other land uses such as retail/commercial or multifamily residential. This is true of all municipalities in the Barnett Shale.

The scope of the discussion was limited to the processes of Notification, Petition, and Timeline regarding gas well drilling applications and permits. It seems likely that the initial notification radius for a gas well SUP (Specific Use Permit) will be increased to 600' following a recommendation by staff. Other changes in the ordinance may include setback reduction requests introduced at the time of the SUP, platting requirements for the

entire property under SUP, and lifespan of the permits.

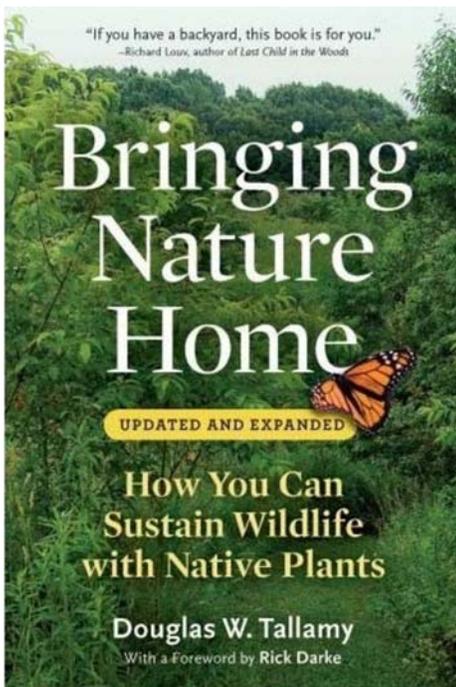
A staff member from the city's Planning & Development Department made it clear that P&Z does not plan to address environmental issues since that is the responsibility of EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Some ACC members who had hoped for a meaningful revision of the natural gas extraction ordinance, with modifications designed to address known problems with toxic emissions and leakage, are bitterly disappointed. "It's a complete whitewash," says one. "Council is just paying lip service to the issues of contamination of our soil and water, not to mention air pollution, from gas wells in Arlington."

Book Review: An essential book on native plant gardens Marilyn Sallee

Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants

By Douglas W. Tallamy, Timber Press, 2009



This is not really a "new" book; the original draft was published a few years ago. But the lessons it advocates are becoming ever more essential for a sustainable existence on planet Earth. This newly updated version encompasses more diversity across the U.S. with an expanded resource section and more photos.

Tallamy, an entomologist, looks at the importance of those native plants on the entire complex web of ecology, from the insects that eat them or breed on them to the humans who have the most impact on those native plants. Especially helpful is his scientific thinking regarding the impact a small urban or suburban garden can have in maintaining that diversity.

His slow but sure conversion of the landscape from whatever you have to start with to a wildlife friendly, bio-diverse sustainable ecosystem speaks to us all. His definition of the "best" native plants — those that sustain the most diverse populations of other species — gives us a whole new measure of the importance of natives.

Read sample chapters online at <http://books.google.com/books> and search for "Bringing Nature Home". Also look on Amazon.com for index and covers. The 2009 paperback can be purchased online for about \$12. Well worth having in your home library.

Listen to a 25-minute interview with the author on KERA radio:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104447716>

You can click on the "Listen Here" button to hear it on your computer or download the mp3 file for your iPod.

Short article about why you should garden with natives:

<http://bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/gardening-for-life>

Previous lectures Tallamy has given on native plants:

<http://bringingnaturehome.net/lectures/schedule/aggregator/previous>

Note: This review originally appeared in the April 2010 North Central Chapter NPSOT newsletter.

River Legacy Earth Day **Hypermiling** Danny Kocurek **More Earth Day**

April 17 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

River Legacy's first Earth Day festival is a family-friendly event that will feature nature walks, guest speakers, live animal observations, story times, and a variety of children's activities. Come and learn easy things you can do to be green. Free. Donations are accepted. Call 817.860.6752 or visit www.riverlegacy.org

Schedule:

Guided nature walks: 10:30 am, 1:30 pm
Animal observations: 12:30 pm, 2:30 pm
Speakers: 11 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm
Story time: 11:30 am

Children's activities:

Eco-pots
Pond sampling
Log exploration
Bird friend pledge cards
Create personal water meters
Face painting
Endangered species musical chairs

Demonstrations/Information:

Rain barrel display
Wildcare wildlife rehabilitation
Master Composter demonstrations
Edible natives
General Motors "green" car display

How far can you go?

I started experimenting with hypermiling about a year ago after reading an article about people getting extraordinary gas mileage by adjusting the way they drive. Within a month I was getting 4 more miles per gallon of gas. Depending on your enthusiasm, there are many ways to improve your gas mileage.

The essence of hypermiling is to not touch the brakes unless absolutely necessary. Braking is what kills your gas mileage. Coasting as far as you can by planning ahead is where most people



make improvements. The moment you see a red light ahead, you remove your foot from the accelerator and start coasting. Perfection is achieved when your car coasts to your stopping location without needing to use the brakes. If you drive the same route frequently you can even predict when the lights are going to change and make adjustments before it happens.

Idling is also a killer for mileage. There is an old urban legend that cars use a tremendous amount of gas when being started and, therefore, it is not cost effective to turn off your car when waiting at long lights or train crossings. The truth is, after about 7 seconds of idling, most cars are using more gas than they would if they had been turned off and restarted. Almost all hybrid vehicles automatically turn off the gas engine when idling. If you suspect you will be idling more than 7 seconds, turn off your engine. This also reduces emissions.

There are lots of things that should be obvious, like not carrying heavy loads or leaving a roof rack on when not needed. Keeping your tires at the recommended

Saturday April 17

9:00 am – 7:00 pm
Live Green Expo
Plano Centre
livegreenexpo.net

Sunday April 18

11:00 am – 5:00 pm
The Urban Coop Tour - "Peep at the Coops"
apeepatthecoops.blogspot.com

Sunday April 18

Noon – 5:00 pm
Oak Cliff Earth Day
Lake Cliff Park, Zang at Colorado
oakcliffearthday.com

Thursday April 22

10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Dallas EarthFest
Pegasus Plaza & AT&T Plaza
GreenDallas.net/EarthFest2010.html

Saturday April 24

10:00 am – 8:00 pm
5th Annual Prairie Fest
Tandy Hills Park, Fort Worth
www.tandyhills.org
Wildflower walks, music, art, food, all solar power
Join us at the ACC booth

WHERE DOES KARMA BEGIN?

Every time I nix a bug,
A mental calculus:
What's my karma standing now?
And will the gods book terms
By size or species?
I do my best

To make amends.
By finch feeding,
Toad tending;
But how can sunflower seeds
Fix a stomped roach
Or hooked worm?

Genocentric arrogance
Pervades my DNA;
Yet we do appear
The only kind that cares
Or counts the cost
When killing's in the mix.

2009 John I. Blair
First published in PencilStubs.com

pressure and keeping your engine tuned up are also well known ways to increase your mileage. Although cars get their optimal mileage at different speeds, most mileage diminishes when traveling above 50 miles per hour. Running the air conditioner also takes a tremendous toll on mileage.

As with anything, some people take hypermiling to extremes. Tricks like turning the engine off and coasting to a stop every time and taking corners at high speed in order to avoid braking do increase gas mileage but not everyone feels comfortable doing this. Using advanced techniques, hypermilers have gotten 60 miles per gallon from non-hybrid cars and close to 100 miles per gallon from hybrid vehicles. Your mileage may vary.

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

Name _____
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 Telephone _____
 E-mail _____

Please circle membership category.

First-year member \$10.00
 Individual \$15.00
 Family \$25.00 New member
 Supporting \$40.00
 Sponsor \$100.00 Renewing member
 Lifetime individual \$250.00
 Other \$ _____

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, April 14
 7:00 pm

Tim Yatko
Arlington's Commercial
Sustainability Program

Be sure to visit us at
arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED