

ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 5

MAY 2010

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

May Meeting

Water Conservation in Arlington

Dustan Compton
Arlington Water Utilities
Commercial Recycling Coordinator

Wednesday, May 12, 7:00 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)



Remember to bring
something for the raffle

Bits & Pieces

Rarely Seen, Probably Here

The nocturnal Lesser siren lurks in the muddy bottoms of slow-moving streams, ponds, ditches, and even temporary pools. This odd salamander can reach over 2 feet, may be the top predator in its habitat, and can withstand long dry periods encased in a cocoon. Is it in Arlington? Maybe, but it's tough to find.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth.

*Albert Schweitzer,
quoted in James
Brabazon, Albert
Schweitzer*

East Texas in Arlington

Ah, spring in East Texas, where the farkleberries are blooming like crazy and Nuttall's false indigo (*right*) still looks great. But this is also happening at Arlington's Southwest Nature Preserve, far to the west of their normal range.

Now's a great time to see them — and so much more.



Be Very Afraid

In February, Governor Perry made Texas safer by killing a coyote while jogging with his dog. He said, "Either me or the dog are in imminent danger. I did the appropriate thing and sent it to where coyotes go."

Thanks, Gov. Dunno about your pooch, but you were pretty darn safe unless you were under 5 years old.

Calendar of Events

Happening now:

How To Get a Free Low-flow Showerhead

Visit the Water South Service Center at 1100 SW Green Oaks Blvd. or the Customer Service Center in City Hall at 101 W. Abram St. to receive a high-efficiency showerhead. Customers must bring their old showerhead in order to receive a free replacement. Limit one showerhead per household. According to Water Utilities, high-efficiency showerheads can help reduce energy and water usage by as much as 20 percent.

May 19, 6:30 pm: Clean Air Meetup – Tom “Smitty” Smith of Public Citizen, speaker. REI store, 4515 LBJ Freeway (on service road between Midway and Marsh), Dallas.

May 21: Bike to Work Day

May 25, 7:00 pm: TRA Region C Water Plan Public Hearing

You can access the draft plan at regioncwater.org, then tell the officials responsible how you feel about it. Bob Duncan Center, Vandergriff Park, Arlington.

June 12: Runoff election, Arlington City Council Place 6 and Tarrant County College Board of Trustees, District 5

June 24, 6:00 – 8:00 pm: Make a Rain Barrel class, by Dustan Compton of Arlington’s Water Dept. The cost of the class is \$40 and you leave with a rain barrel that is ready to harvest water from your downspout. The class is limited to 30 participants and you must RSVP to Dustan.Compton@arlingtontx.gov before sending payment. Southwest Branch Library, 3311 SW Green Oaks Blvd.

September 18: EcoFest – organized by the City of Arlington At the Levitt Pavilion. Details to follow as date nears.

Thanks, Tim

Last month Tim Yatko gave us an excellent talk on improvements to Arlington’s commercial recycling program and answered every possible question we could think of.



THE POST OAK

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Thanks to everyone who helped ACC at Prairie Fest this year.



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

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park



It's the best time of year for the small but precious piece of the prairie that once dominated much of Arlington. Spring growth is rampant after a cold, wet winter, and you won't have to look hard to enjoy its many colors and textures. Thanks once again to Wesley Miller for his fine photographs.



Wildscape Update John Dycus



Spring is such an exciting time. Not only does the flora come back to life, but people come back to life too. Wildscape volunteers are weeding, planting and mulching like mad.

The grandson of ACC president Jo Ann Duman brought out his Webelo buddy and their parents to help transfer soil to a new bed. They amazed wildscape namesake Molly Hollar with how hard they worked and how much they accomplished.



A gregarious faction from Advocates for Special People enjoyed the outdoors by weeding and spreading mulch on paths. This was one of the happiest groups ever seen loading up wheelbarrows and carting them from the far south end of the park all the way to the north end and down steep hills. They had such a good time that this will be a regular event.



Several regular volunteers led small groups of Master Gardener interns on a tour. Many of these new MGs seem eager to learn more about native plants and

promise to return to do their volunteer hours at the wildscape.

Callie Mitchell and Molly took the show on the road to the Southwest Library for the Learn and Grow event. Using two bright green anoles as bait, they attracted children of all ages to their table. The kids got a kick watching the little lizards and doing nature rubbings, while the adults latched on to Callie's and Molly's knowledge.

Students from UTA for their Big Event volunteer day came out April 24 and joined a large contingent from Martin High School. More mulching, planting and weeding!

All of this weeding is critical this year, as the abundance of winter precipitation gave a tendril up to the wretched vetch, chickweed and bedstraw. Additional volunteers every Wednesday afternoon are trying to get this unsightly crop under control.

But along with these noxious plants we have the wonderful blooms of spring, the rusty blackhaw, cross vine, coral



honeysuckle and pink evening primrose. And with the new colors and scents come butterflies, hummingbirds and songbirds. So the work hardly seems like work.

It's a lot to take in, but third- and second-graders from Goodman and Rankin elementary schools did just that recently (see next page), as the students learned about the natural environment from a battalion of volunteers on a "Walk on the Wildside" field trip.

Pencils and journals in hand, the Goodman third-graders took notes and drew pictures to illustrate what they learned about erosion, the Cast Iron Forest, invasive plants and why flowers are for more than looking and smelling

pretty. They used binoculars to observe birds, held and gathered small critters, and were captivated by the amazing life cycle of the butterfly.

Goodman science teacher Carrie Donovan reported that her students hit the library to find out more of what they learned at the wildscape and were giving her lessons on why thoughtful people hate privet. She was very impressed and pleased at their experience.

Likewise, Rankin lead teacher Jaime Rojas said his teachers were pleased and eager to return next year. In spite of apprehension from a few volunteers, this younger group got a lot more out of the trip than a break from the classroom.

In the wildscape's own classroom, APRD's Heather Dowell gave a first-Saturday lesson at the pavilion on how to transform a city. She presented the mini-class with a preliminary glimpse at the new booklet for recommended (mostly native) plants for Arlington, the landscape design of almost entirely native plants for City Hall, the changes in median design for new areas to be installed with prairie plants and native turf grasses, and so much more. She and her staff are saving the city money and helping its citizens breathe better with cleaner air.



Mini-class schedule:

June 5

Native Groundcovers

Suzanne Tuttle,
Fort Worth Nature Center

July 10

Preserving the Post Oak Woodland

Steve Chaney,
AgriLife Extension Agent

Walk on the Wildside Ann Knudsen



A village of volunteers came to the Wildcape twice within a month's time to help with tours and activities for Walk on the Wildside. Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Arlington Conservation Council, and NPSOT arrived eagerly to share their knowledge and enthusiasm.



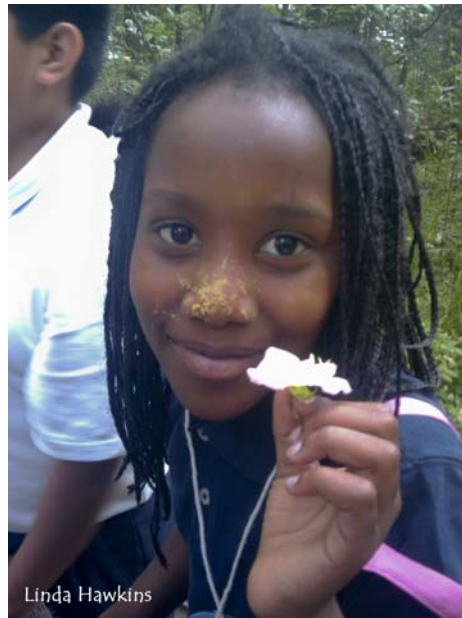
On March 24, third graders from Goodman Elementary stepped off the buses with journals and pencils in hand. And Rankin Elementary second graders took their turn a few short weeks later on April 15. They took notes and drew pictures to remind them of the many lessons and tons of fun they had on this field trip.

They learned how man does damage to the natural environment by worsening erosion and bringing invasives. John Bridges did an excellent job demonstrat-



ing, using the students to represent plants, how invasives crowd out native plants. The first few "plants" had plenty of room waving their arms about, giggling. Then more "plants" came in pushing and squirming. The point got across to the adults, as well.

They were surprised to learn that the post oak woodlands were so dense when pioneers arrived that it was dubbed the Cast Iron Forest. Master Gardener Linda Mitchell used a cast iron skillet to get them to remember that point and used other great visuals for the different layers of the forest, a can of peas for the



canopy and a storybook and a student to show understory.

Dawn Hancock enthralled the students at the critter station. Students got to be up close and personal with not only lady bugs, but a baby rat snake, an anole, mosquito larvae, earthworms, pillbugs and more, learning the important roles all of these have to our world. Many students were so excited they sought out more little critters to add to the collection.

Kids laughed at the volunteers as they demonstrated pollination by smelling a flower deeply and coming away with a yellow nose, then had to try it themselves. By taking apart their own flower and seeing its different parts, they learned



flowers were not just for looking and smelling pretty, but are essential to make new plants.

Josephine Keeney captured their attention with beautiful butterflies at her station. Students learned about the butterfly life cycle and the amazing process of metamorphosis and held a chrysalis in their hands.

Attentive ears listened for differences in bird songs and used binoculars to get a closer look. They came away from this station more aware of what is flying over their heads and singing in the trees.

And of course, they all learned to use native plants to reverse some of the destruction, add beauty, and feed and provide habitat for wildlife. Many went home eager to encourage their parents to plant something they had seen during their experience.

The Walk on the Wildside educates not only the students, but also the adults that come with them and the many volunteers who make the event possible. The children and their teachers became aware of native plants and their value. Many volunteers asked questions about them, about what to plant in shade, in sun, or for attracting wildlife. With this event we educate the young and the adults. And as a side benefit, everyone has lots of fun.



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 _____

Address _____

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 \$ _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Contributions and dues are not tax-deductible. **Please add \$5.00 if you want a paper copy of the newsletter mailed to you.**

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THE POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, May 12
7:00 pm

Dustan Compton
Water Conservation
in Arlington

Be sure to visit us at
arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED