

**ARLINGTON  
CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL**

# POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES  
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1

**JANUARY 2011**

**Special meeting day,  
time, & place**

[www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org](http://www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org)

## January Meeting

### Annual Potluck and Business Meeting

Don't miss this look at the  
new year's opportunities,  
a bit of business,  
whatever's on your mind,  
— and food, too

Saturday, January 15, 10:00 am - noon  
The Montessori Academy of Arlington  
3428 W. Arkansas Lane

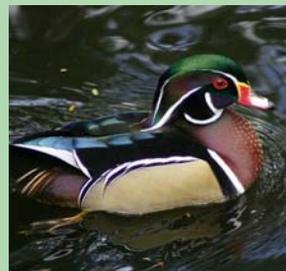


**Don't Forget!  
Bring Food and Ideas**

## Bits & Pieces

### Winter Special: Duck Daze

We're up to our elbows in winter ducks at the Village Creek Drying Beds. There were something like 18 species and over 2500 individuals found during the Christmas Bird Count. Here are some of them; how many can you identify?



### Today's Inspirational Moment



I've made an odd discovery.  
Every time I talk to a savant  
I feel quite sure that happiness  
is no longer a possibility.  
Yet when I talk with my  
gardener, I'm convinced of the  
opposite.

*Bertrand Russell*

# From the President Jo Ann Duman

Happy New Year! What can we do to make 2011 the best year ever? One thing I am going to do is volunteer more of my time. I know many of you are already so generous with your time that I could never match your efforts. But I recently learned even a few hours can fill a need.

At the January ACC Board meeting we discussed donations to the Montessori Academy and the Arlington Historical Society for their gracious hospitality to ACC. The Academy is letting us use their facility again for the potluck brunch on Saturday, January 15. AHS allows us to meet in the Fielder House Museum for both our regular monthly programs and the board meetings. In past years ACC expressed its appreciation with a monetary donation to Montessori Academy and by handling the recycling for AHS during and after the Front Street Festival every September. Since this year's festival was rained out, the Board discussed giving AHS funds instead.

Some of our board members who are better connected with each of our hosts explained that what both institutions need instead is time and labor. For the Academy, ACC will repeat the cleanup and gardening effort of past years when spring brings warmer weather. For AHS, I'm sure Geraldine will give us a list of chores from which any of us can choose.

The Board is eager to hear your ideas during our brunch on what you would like ACC to do for you this year. So many of you are already busy with the Wildscape, teaching composting classes, the gardening at Fielder House, city boards and committees, and your neighborhood associations, that we wonder how you squeeze in the park cleanups and Walks for Parks that ACC has taken on in past years. I will put in a few more hours myself as part of my new year's resolution to help ACC support what you tell us you want. See you

Saturday. If you can't make brunch, you can always email or phone a board member. The contact info is always on the last page of the *Post Oak*.

It's time to pay dues. Send in the form on the back page, or pay Saturday at the brunch. As always, thanks for all you do.



**THE POST OAK**

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**Join us today!**  
**Use the handy application form on the back page**

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

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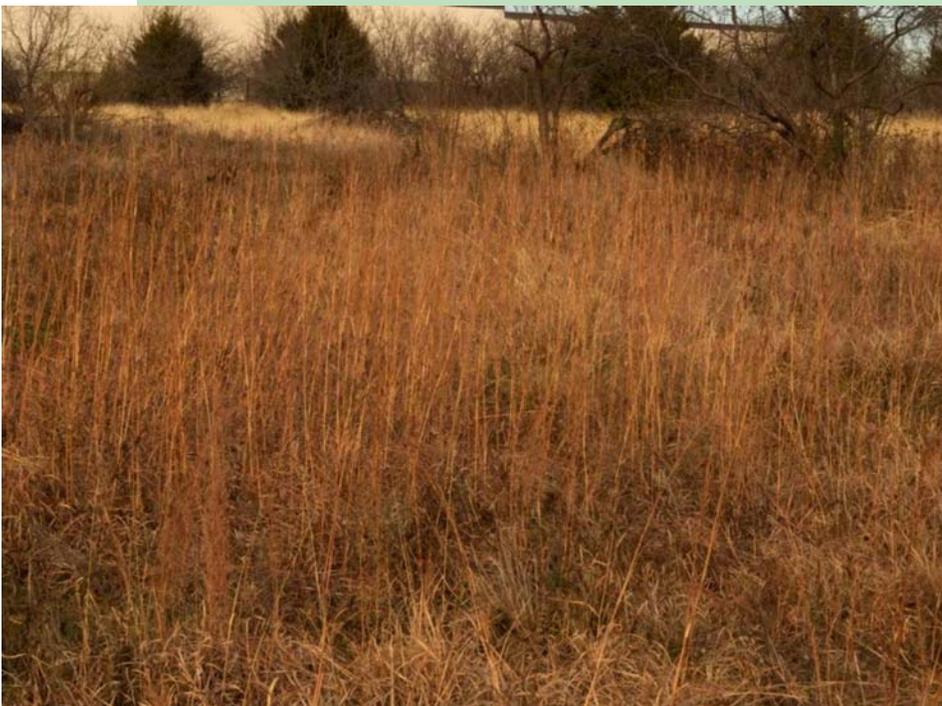
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**New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park** Photos by Wesley Miller



A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.  
*Aldo Leopold*



## Curse You, H. Hoyle Sink

*Editor's note: Almost every time we're working at the New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park, it seems that someone mentions the scourge of K.R. bluestem there. At the October meeting, David Hopman mentioned that this terribly invasive grass had somehow appeared among the natives in his green roof project. So, for the uninitiated, what is this terrible grass, and how did it get here?*

*Thanks to Wesley Miller, here's a bit of background from the Reverchon Newsletter:*

One of the unfortunate beneficiaries of a dry summer followed by quick and ample rains was the explosion of K.R. bluestem across the Texas landscape. More than 90 percent of the grass seen in the photo (right) is K.R. or King Ranch bluestem. No grass was quicker to take advantage of the rainfall and produce a seed crop than the exotic invasive King Ranch bluestem, which is one of the first Old World bluestems brought into the United States. This photo was taken on the Gary Ranch, just west of Georgetown, Texas, on Nov. 19, 2009. If you drive anywhere in Texas, you will see very

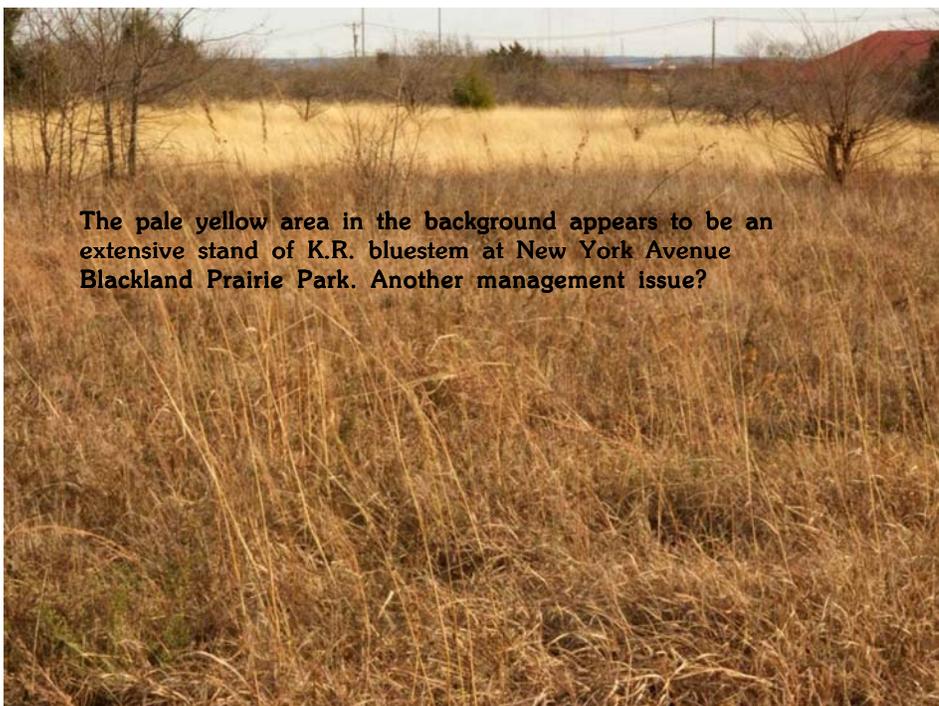


similar scenes where introduced exotic grasses have taken over the landscape. History of K.R. bluestem

From *Grass Varieties in the United States*, the material now known as King Ranch bluestem was received in 1917 at

AES, Berkeley, CA from H. Hoyle Sink, American consul, Amoy, China. In 1949, given the name Texas yellow beardgrass and released for certification in Texas by Texas AES. All material furnished by Texas AES to individuals or substations since 1941 originated from this source. Since original Chinese material had been grown at substation 3, Angleton, Texas as early as 1924, there is little reason to suppose that King Ranch is any other than a Chinese accession that found its way from Angleton to King Ranch sometime during 1924-1937. Material now generally in use was first noticed on the King Ranch in 1937.

K.R. bluestem is a warm-season, deep-rooted bunchgrass that is adapted to most soil types in Texas. The lower stems and leaves often lay flat just above the ground turning upright at a node. Livestock are able to consume all of the upright growth, yet the plant maintains enough leaf material to continue photosynthesis even during severe overgrazing that causes many natives to wither and die. A tougher adversary for native Texas plants would be hard to find in the state.



**The pale yellow area in the background appears to be an extensive stand of K.R. bluestem at New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park. Another management issue?**

## Thanks

Who really knows what's escaping from that mess of pipes and things at the Arlington gas well below? We can't see anything, of course, but thanks to Dr Melanie Sattler, our November speaker, we know a lot more about the possibilities. Emotions run high around urban gas drilling, so it was particularly valuable to hear a calm, objective description of local emissions research.



## Computer Roundup Captures E-waste



On November 13, city staffers once again gave us the opportunity to safely recycle our electronic waste, and it looked like we took full advantage of this enlightened service.

Mixed feelings here: On the one hand, the frantic pace of electronic obsolescence is always shocking; on the other, safe recycling is critical to keep the many toxic components out of the environment. Thanks to our city for taking the lead once again.



## Proposed Changes to ACC Bylaws **Danny Kocurek**

The ACC Board of Directors is proposing changes to the ACC Bylaws to be voted on at the annual meeting. These are best described as updates since there are no significant structural changes to the organization. Here is a summary of the major changes.

- Director terms are now 2 years instead of 1, in order to provide continuity.
- Director terms are staggered so that about half come up for reelection every year also in order to provide continuity.

- Officer terms are 1 year.
- There are no term limits.
- Family memberships now have 2 votes instead of 1.
- Board members are required to attend 75% of the meetings each calendar year.
- The position of 2nd VP has been removed with the approval of Roy, who is serving in that position.
- The telephone committee has been changed to the networking committee.

- Committee chairs are appointed by the President; the other members are chosen by the chair, and there is a minimum of 3 people on each committee.

If you have any questions about the changes, please ask. The entire new document can be found at the yahoo website, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/arlingtonconservationcouncil/>

## Nominating Committee Report

Many of you already know that we vote for a slate of proposed board members at the annual business meeting. Then, at the February board meeting, board members decide who will fill the various offices. It's the job of the Nominating Committee to identify members willing to serve on the board, and this year committee members included Jo Ann Duman, John Dycus, Josephine Keeney.

They've come up with the following slate of people who have agreed to serve on the ACC Board if elected for 2011: Grace Darling, John Darling, Heather Dowell, Jo Ann Duman, John Dycus, Marianne Hermann, Marian Hiler, Frank Keeney, Josephine Keeney, Danny Kocurek, Roy Miliner, Jan Miller, Callie Mitchell.

## Southwest Nature Preserve: Great Backyard Bird Count Jan Miller

Join us for the 5th year of celebrating Southwest Nature Preserve and participating in the national Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). SWNP will be one of many events in the DFW area, or you can count at home.

The Preserve count will be held on Saturday, February 19 from 9:00 am until noon. Meet at northwest gate on Bowman Springs Rd.

Participate in the annual GBBC event by walking trails through post oak woodlands, savannahs, grasslands and around 4 ponds. A wide variety of birds is usually reported at this 58-acre city park and designated natural area. Up to 30 species have been counted per event, with a total of more than 70 species over previous 4 years. All skill levels are welcome.

Bring binoculars or bird guides if you have them and a camera if you're

participating in the GBBC national photo contest. Dress for the weather, plus sturdy shoes/boots. Note: This park has no improvements (no paved parking, water or restrooms) but is just 1/2 mile from the bustle of I-20 and Green Oaks Blvd.

Contact Jan Miller at [jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net) for more information and directions; RSVP is appreciated but not required.

The GBBC program is organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society which tally winter bird count data from "citizen science" volunteers across the US and Canada. Some of the questions they hope to answer are:



- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
- Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?

Count data from SWNP are especially important since the natural area park is a rare remnant of eastern crosstimbres habitat, though increasingly surrounded by urbanization.

For full details about the GBBC program, or to see data from previous years, see [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/) There's also a photography contest each year and the impressive photos are on-line.

This year, GBBC dates are Friday, February 18 through Monday, February 21. You can be a novice or a pro, count from home or away, one day or all 4, but please plan to join us at Southwest Nature Preserve on February 19.



- How will this winter's snow and cold temperatures influence bird populations?
- Where are winter finches and other "irruptive" species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds' migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases affecting birds in different regions?

## Eco-Park at UTA Takes Shape



It's a first for Arlington, thanks to UTA's commitment to sustainability. A futuristic park running along the west side of Center Street and ending at Mitchell is one of a handful of projects in the Sustainable Sites Initiative. As such, it includes many native plants, permeable paving, and is designed to capture large quantities of rainwater runoff from nearby buildings now under construction.



### 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

First-year member \$10.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Supporting \$40.00

Sponsor \$100.00

Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New member

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**Don't Forget!**

Saturday, January 15  
10:00 am - noon

**Annual Potluck  
and  
Business Meeting**



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