

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 5

MAY 2011

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

May Meeting

Arlington's Reclaimed Water Project

**Darryl Westbrook
Water Utilities Assistant Director
for Business Services**

**Wednesday, May 11, 7 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)**



**Come learn how we're helping meet
our water needs by pumping highly
treated wastewater to sites for land-
scape irrigation.**

**Remember to bring
something for the raffle**

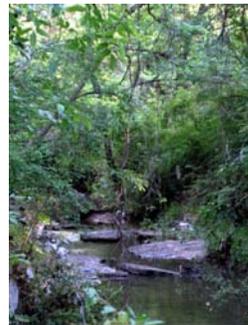
Bits & Pieces

Woodland Beauty

It's a shame that we just don't see Ring-necked snakes, probably because they're uncommon and hiding, waiting for nightfall to search for small prey. When alarmed, they coil the tail, raise it toward the threat, and may even feign death.



Today's Inspirational Moment



You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters.
St. Bernard

Galls for All

You need to take a look at the May issue of our local Native Plant Society newsletter. Gifted entomological enthusiast Joann Karges has written a captivating piece on galls that reveals the remarkable ecological complexities of these common objects. Find it at txnativeplants.org under the Newsletters tab.



We're all okay, really.



Don't worry your pretty little heads: Our friends at Chesapeake Energy will fix its 1800 gas wells after a small amount of gas escaped after a power outage in Arlington on April 11. (From the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, posted May 3.)

23 Days John Darling



There's something appealing about a little dirt track that winds up the hill at the Southwest Nature Preserve. Must be, because I can't stop taking its picture. Sometimes I skip it when the leaves are gone, perhaps because all the mystery has fallen with the leaves.

It must be the mystery of all those hidden spots: so easy to imagine them filled with creatures day and night, intent on making more of themselves, eating, and not being eaten, interacting in such complex ways with each other and with all those plants. The birds too, not quite

seen but heard so clearly, all hidden there, with luck safe and secure.

Above, you see a little seasonal change, from about three weeks in April. We're losing sky, and the Mexican plums have given way to the Rough-leaved dogwood. The mystery is back.

THE POST OAK

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

April was another near perfect workday, with Jack and Jim from APRD to double-team the trees and brush: One cut using the chain saw and the other immediately applied herbicide to prevent regrowth. There were great volunteers, Danny Kocurek and Wes Miller, but just not enough: YOU are needed!

Mark your calendar for 3rd Saturdays at NYABP — the next one is May 21.

Bring hand saws, loppers, etc. if you have them. Please wear sturdy soled shoes/boots and long pants, and don't forget the sunscreen and water (refills available). Cameras, bird/plant guides and most especially, invite a friend. An RSVP is appreciated (in case of inclement weather, etc.) but not required: prairie@arlingtonconservationcouncil.org.

For map and directions: Search Mapquest or Google maps for 4907 New York Avenue, Arlington, TX 76018.



Chris Helzer has a very interesting and beautiful blog on prairies and restoration management; see below for the link. He's a program manager for The Nature Conservancy in eastern Nebraska's Platte River valley. Here's something from his December 2010 post: Relying on idealistic visions of what prairies should look like ("The Problem with Calendar Prairies") creates an unrealistic image of what prairies really are. Prairies evolved as dynamic natural communities that changed in appearance from day to day and year to year.

Rather than selling the public and ourselves on the idea that prairies should consistently look like showy flower gardens, we should celebrate and facilitate their changeable nature. Real prairies are much more interesting (and valuable) than flower gardens anyway. <http://prairieecologist.com/2010/12/29/the-problem-with-calendar-prairies/>



Prairie Stewards
Restoration Workday
Saturday, May 21, 2011
9 am – noon
Be there!



Wildscape Update John Dycus Photos by Diane Kunde



No hemming or possumhawing around, April is unequivocally the grand month of birth and rebirth in the wildscape. Soon will come hot and dry,

with weeding, mulching and watering atop the agenda, so April is always the last chance to install the hundreds of plants that Josephine Keeney’s greenhouse team has nurtured over the winter.

The volunteers this year did not disappoint (they never do), planting with cheerful abandon a double armload of fragrant sumac (to shade out pesky bermuda grass), 50 small post oak trees, rock rose, fall aster, fragrant phlox, wild foxglove and more. Students from Fort Worth Country Day School, longtime wildscape volunteers, planted about 30 chinquapin and burr oaks.

Some of the plants were rescued from a prairie area slated for development.

The post oaks came from Callie Mitchell’s wooded backyard in north Arlington; volunteers dug them up and potted them, then tended them in the greenhouse until they were ready to hit the earth.

Wildscape namesake Molly Hollar says it’s so important to preserve post oaks, the state’s prolific indigenous tree, because they are endangered from development, overwatering and a fungus that hasn’t reached Arlington yet, but likely will.

Molly also was heard talking with some young disc golfers who stopped to ask how they could volunteer. She emphasized four of her favorite words: restoration, wildlife habitat and sustainability.

Back at the greenhouse, plants have been donated to the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department (“our great allies and friends,” to quote Molly) for the xeriscape in Veterans Park and the new all-native landscaping scheme at city hall.



Planting at the Wildscape: Joe Martinez (left) and Jane Oosterhuis



Planting at the Wildscape: Dorothy Hildebrand (left) and Jane Oosterhuis



Barnett Shale Gas Production Jan Miller

Legislative update

As another lopsided session of the Texas legislature screeches to a stop, environmental issues are taking a beating. Apparently, Sunset Review of TCEQ and TRRC will yield little.

In early May, a story broke about State Rep. Stephani Carter's blockage of House bill 3792 that would have protected municipal interests and her support for another bill, HB3105, which will make it easier for the industry to sue municipalities that decline gas permits.

NCTCA broke the story of her standing within the top 10 legislators for gas industry campaign contributions despite being a freshman legislator.

The gas industry is loading the bases for a push into Dallas county and increased state-wide power over individuals and municipalities. If you're concerned, check the status of municipal candidates up for a vote next week, and be sure to contact your state legislators.

A Hidden Gem

You can get seriously lost in a marvelous forest just north of Pioneer Parkway and east of Cooper Street. It's Rock Creek, whose charm is sadly diminished by years of trash.



Thanks to Our Last Speaker



At our April meeting Master Naturalist Marilyn Sallee treated us to a comprehensive presentation on selection, planting, and care of appropriate trees for our area. There's a lot to this, and even some of us who thought we knew the topic came away, not only inspired, but also loaded with new information. Above, Carrie Donovan (left) talks with Marilyn.

Arlington is Tree City Community — Again

From the city's e-Arlington Newsletter, April 1:

Arlington is a Tree City Community. For the 12th Time the city has been recognized by the nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community and has achieved the Growth Award for the seventh consecutive year. "Arlington's dedication to improving our urban forest with unique programs like LEAF, Super Grow and Plant 2,010 All Star Trees in 100 Days all contribute toward economic development, storm water reduction, beautification and energy conservation." said Gary Packan, assistant director of Arlington Parks and Recreation Department.



Prairie Fest 2011

Once again ACC volunteers staffed a booth and spread the word at this bigger-than-ever environmental celebration. Maybe the best news: our canopy didn't quite blow down in the traditional gale. Above, Grace Darling (left) and Jan Miller. Below, Danny Kocurek.



Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

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New member

Renewing member

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, May 11
 7 pm

Darryl Westbrook
***Arlington's Reclaimed
 Water Project***



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