

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

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October Meeting **Kennedale's Urban Bird Treaty**

Rachel Roberts,
Planner for City of Kennedale

Wednesday, October 10, 7 pm
Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)



The Urban Bird Treaty/Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds is a US Fish and Wildlife grant program that works with cities to promote conservation of migratory birds through education, conservation and habitat improvement. Rachel will tell us how Kennedale was awarded the US Fish and Wildlife Service grant (one of only 2 cities in Texas and less than 20 across the US). She'll talk about Kennedale's accomplishments as well as adaptations needed to reach the program's goals — and how this information might help other groups learn from their experience.

Bring something for the raffle.

Bits & Pieces

Unlikely Lizard

Nothing exotic, we're just overdue for tiny, furry and darn cute, so it's time for the Northern pygmy mouse, a basically tropical creature whose northern range ends in Texas. It's

a typical rodent life: you grow to about 4 inches, live about 23 weeks, and everything wants to eat you. That's it.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Nature teaches more than she preaches. There are no sermons in stones. It is easier to get a spark out of a stone than a moral.

John Burroughs

Fall Feeling

Even before the recent spate of coldness, tiny hints of fall were popping up: A sumac sort of thing at SW Nature Preserve decided to show off, perhaps forgetting the price for letting your chloroplasts expire.



Pilot Shuttle Project Could Link UTA to TRE

In the Oct 7 Star-Telegram there's word of a city-UTA project that could run buses from the university to the train next fall, possibly with a few stops in between. It's not an actual transit system, but future projects could be huge. Considerations include Arlington as a possible stop for a Houston-to-Dallas bullet train, and some sort of rail service stretching from the Highlands to DFW.

For now though, it's a matter of working toward the shuttle and learning about the demand. We can still be the biggest city without a transit system. (We're number 1!)

From the President Grace Darling

Around Arlington

First, the good news: The city has found some cash lying around to restore the Fielder House Museum to its former glory. You may know that the Arlington Historical Society manages the property for the city, and you've probably noticed the mid-century and later room additions and modifications that detract from the overall impression of a graceful old building. Well, after years of asking, the AHS finally persuaded our council members of the symbolic importance of preserving this bit of city history, and a team of historical architects has come up with a plan to erase those jarring features, turn back the clock on the building, and recreate the beauty of the original design. The restoration plan was guided by photographs and descriptions found in the archives of the museum and is as



faithful as possible to the aesthetics of the house and garden when first built in 1914. Demolition and construction will begin soon, and the restoration is expected to be finished in time to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the reborn museum.

If you approve of this decision by your city leaders, please let them know with a

note, email, or phone call. We are always quick to express our displeasure with some of their actions, and this is a rare opportunity to praise them and thank them when they do something right. Besides, evidence of community support will help with grant applications for outside funding, which in turn will ease the burden on us taxpayers.

Now for the not-so-good news: While the Fielder House reconstruction is underway, ACC will need a new home. Thanks to the generosity of Geraldine Mills, Museum Director, we have been using various rooms for our board and general meetings for several years, but now they have to vacate and so do we. We welcome all suggestions for a meeting venue in 2013-14; please contact any board member with your ideas.

THE POST OAK

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Photos by Wesley Miller



There are people who think of the prairie as boring, and it is hard not to pity them.

Candace Savage
Prairie: A Natural History



Wildscape Update **John Dycus**



The Molly Hollar Wildscape is alive with the change of seasons. Hummingbird bush, a.k.a. Mexican flame, received no supplemental watering but continues to bloom

and attract hummingbirds. Those resplendent summer reliables rock rose and Turks cap are blending with fall bloomers. Fall obedient plant is blooming, too, as are wild onion, autumn sage, frostweed and cowpen daisies.

The fall blooming aster will soon put forth its showy purple display. Even with no rain, the horseherb is spreading into a grassy area near the vehicular bridge. Did

you think anything could compete with Bermuda grass? Nature prevails. By the back entrance, volunteers have nearly finished planting coralberry, Turks cap, horseherb and frostweed. Visitors know they're entering a more tranquil world when they leave the manicured city park for the sights and sounds of the wildscape.

Since the entry areas and sidewalks have the most use, October's work plan emphasizes replacing trees and filling in any vegetation gaps in these high-visibility areas. The city repaired the fountain in the original wildscape area, and the dripping water attracts birds and other wildlife. A landscaping re-do of the pond area is another priority.

Back on the tarmac, seven wildscapers assisted Molly at the Ecofest booth downtown. Numerous individuals stopped to explore the benefits of native habitats. Children were particularly interested. Molly even got a chance to visit with some old friends.

The weekend before, on a damp Saturday, free-spending gardeners couldn't resist the 52 species of native plants grown organically at the greenhouse by wildscape volunteers. Despite the rain, people seeking hardy plants flocked to the annual sale for native ground covers, shrubs, perennials, vines and trees. Final tallies are not yet in, but the sale appears to have been another resounding success.



Photovoltaics **Danny Kocurek**

When we built our house a few years ago, we included about every sustainable feature we could think of and we have greatly enjoyed the lower electric and water bills over the years. We chose not to install a photovoltaic or solar electric system at the time due to the low return on investment, but planned to keep an eye on prices in the future.

As predicted, prices have come down significantly over the last few years and when Oncor announced a new round of incentives, we jumped on it. We had been in communication with Jim Duncan, the owner of North Texas

Renewable Energy, for a while and signed a contract over the summer. As luck would have it, the installation fell on the hottest days of August, but Jim and his crew literally sweated it out and we started making our own electricity.

For those who are unfamiliar with how the system works, the panels are tied into the electrical line coming into your house. Any electricity produced by the panels is first used to supply your house. If it is not enough, you use electricity from your electric company. If the panels are supplying more electricity than your house needs, the excess is fed back into the grid and credited to your account.

Not all electric providers will pay you for electricity that you send to the grid. Most don't even say thanks. Some will buy it back at a fraction of the cost at which they sell it to you. We went with Green Mountain because they buy back at the same rate they sell it.

Our first electric bill after the installation was a little under \$9. We are happy with the way things worked out. The Oncor incentive came out to \$11,000 in savings. Although the payback period is probably still close to 10 years, we figure electricity is not going to get any cheaper and it is a good move financially as well as sustainably.

Ecofest

We were there again this year, doing our bit for the environment, especially for sustainable plumbing. And best of all, we were right next to the Wildscape booth.



In an effort to increase our visibility and make the Arlington Conservation Council more accessible online, there is now a direct link to our Facebook site. You will find a Facebook link on the left side of all of the pages in our website. The site has been set up for public viewing, so you do not need a Facebook account to view our page; simply click on the link.

Our Facebook page is filled with photos, events, meeting information and interesting facts that allow more people to be able to explore our organization and share that content with friends.

Frenk Keeney, ACC Webmaster

Left: photos courtesy of Paul Knudsen and Dick Schoech.



Thanks to Last Month's Speaker

Thanks to Julie Thibodeaux, Social Media Editor of Green Source DFW, for her presentation last month. Julie's topic was "Strategies to publicize the works of organizations helping to make our world more green," and she made this large subject clear and quite interesting while taking time to answer all our questions. Learn more by searching for Green Source DFW, and at the Web site you can sign up for email notices that show just how well they're fulfilling their mission.

(Dick Schoech and Julie Thibodeaux at the September meeting.)

Texas Forest Service Drought Survey From Texas A&M Forest Service Web site

Sept. 25, 2012 — College Station

A Texas A&M Forest Service survey of hundreds of forested plots scattered across the state shows 301 million trees were killed as a result of the devastating 2011 drought.

The number was determined by a study of both on-the-ground tree health assessments collected during a three-month period earlier this year and satellite imagery from before and after the drought.

The findings fall right in the middle of original estimates gathered last fall that indicated roughly 100 million to 500 million trees had died as a result of the drought.

“The drought produced traumatic results, especially for individual landowners. But the good news is the forest is resilient. When a dead tree falls over, a young, new tree eventually will grow back in its place,” said Burl Carraway, department head for the Texas A&M Forest Service Sustainable Forestry department. “Tree death is a natural forest process. We just had more last year than previous years.”

The findings represent the number of trees in rural, forested areas that died as a direct result of the drought, as well as those that succumbed to insect infestation or disease because they were drought-stressed.

The figure does not include trees in cities and towns. Another 5.6 million trees in urban areas — along streets and in yards and parks — also died as a result of the drought, according to a study done earlier this year by the Texas A&M Forest Service Urban Forestry program.

The drought assessment of rural, forested areas was done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis program and the Texas A&M University Ecosystem Science and Management Department.

As part of the analysis, the state was divided into 10 sections: Panhandle, Trans Pecos, North, Central, South and the Brazos Valley, as well as four East Texas regions. (See map.)

Some forested areas suffered worse than others. The Brazos Valley region was hit the hardest, losing almost 10 percent of its trees on forested land. North Texas and western Northeast Texas suffered similar fates, losing 8.3 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively.

Trees in far East Texas seemed to fare the best with just 1.3 percent of trees succumbing to the drought in eastern Southeast Texas and just 3.9 percent dying in eastern Northeast Texas.

“So what’s the fate of these trees? The vast majority are going to stand out there — until they eventually fall to the ground,” Texas A&M Forest Service Analyst Chris Edgar said, stressing that standing, dead trees located near homes or recreation areas should be removed.

Edgar estimated that an existing 272 million standing dead trees already littered the landscape before the drought. That number is expected to double now, which will produce both positive and negative effects.

The standing, dead trees will provide additional habitats for insects, birds and wildlife. Fallen trees will do the same, while also adding structure to the forest floor which helps prevent soil erosion.

Conversely, they’ll also begin to release their stored carbon back into the atmosphere and could become potential hazards during times of high winds and dangerous fire conditions.



Region	Live trees prior to the drought (million trees)	Drought-related mortality (million trees)	Drought-related mortality (percentage)
Southeast - East	597.1	7.5	1.3
Southeast - West	289.7	18.8	6.5
Northeast - East	356.0	13.9	3.9
Northeast - West	309.4	25.3	8.2
North	370.5	30.9	8.3
Brazos Valley	256.4	24.9	9.7
South	431.2	31.7	7.4
Central	1,540.0	102.3	6.6
Panhandle	556.3	33.1	6.0
Trans-Pecos	163.4	12.2	7.5
Total	4,869.9	300.6	6.2

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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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, October 10
7:00 pm

Rachel Roberts
Kennedale's Urban Bird Treaty