

Fredericksburg Nature Notes



Newsletter of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center

March, 2022 Volume 3 Number 3

<http://fredericksburgNaturecenter.com>

Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

No matter what Punxsutawney Phil suggested last month, our central Texas spring has been delayed, likely because of the cool February temperatures and the lack of substantial rainfall since last October. Our Purple Martins finally arrived in early March several weeks late. I will boldly predict that the Bluebonnet crop will be little to none. Those early rosettes that did appear in October have languished all winter thirsting for rain. From our Spring clarion species, Redbuds that tried to bud in late February were thwarted by the freezes, and the grape Kool-aid aroma of the Mountain Laurels is yet to be prevalent. Spring's delay will only make us appreciate it so much more when it unfolds in a renewal of nature and its human denizens.

Spring has already generated a flurry of activity around FNC and within our organization. Our volunteers are readying the gardens for the Spring bloom. We have a renewal of our educational programs with Lee Haile appearing on April 2nd and a guided tour on April 23rd. We will also be hosting the Hill Country Master Naturalist class on April 12th for a tour, so our volunteers are in high gear in preparation.

We are very thankful for receipt of a \$300 seed grant from the Wildflower Center in partnership with Native American Seed which will fund re-seeding our Butterfly Bench pocket prairie with grasses and flowers.

The newsletter is a bit shortened this month but will resume in full next month. Our feature story writer called in sick at the last minute! We are always looking for article submissions by guest writers, so get out the quill and ink, and get to work!

Finally, thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships or donated to the Bill Lindemann Capital Fund. Your support makes all of our work possible—a big thanks!

Happy Nature Trails!

Lonnie

In this issue:

- Volunteer Activities
- Nature Series Programs
- Observations Along the Trail
- Bird Happenings





OUR MISSION STATEMENT: “To enhance, protect and interpret the natural ecosystems of the Texas hill country while providing educational and quality of life opportunities for members of the community and visitors”

Spring Cleaning at the Gardens

It's time to clip back the dead material on native perennials and grasses and shape your shrubs and small trees. Our expert team of gardeners has been working their magic at the Pollinator Garden and Butterfly Habitat in anticipation of the spring bloom.



“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

Margaret Atwood

Patti Guin (L) and Trudy Eberhardt (R)
give the Lindheimer Muhly
grass a haircut.

Gracie Waggener (L) and Jane Crone (R)
manicuring the Pollinator Garden beds.



Tuesday Fundays at FNC are always on! We gather every **Tuesday at 8:30am** near Pavilion #1 to split up into work parties on the trails, gardens, or the Bird Blind. Typical tasks involve gardening skills and trail maintenance, but no experience is necessary. Use it as a learning opportunity. Work in whatever area you choose for as long as you choose. We work some and have a lot of fun outside in the beauty of nature. It's good exercise for the body and great therapy for the soul.

Contact Gracie Waggener at gwaggener@flow-apps.com to receive a weekly email notification.



"In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught."
Baba Dioum

FFNC Program Spring Kickoff

April 2, Saturday, at 6pm

Tatsch House, Lady Bird Johnson Park

Lee Haile, Troubadour and Storyteller

Treat yourself to entertainment by storyteller and Master Naturalist, Lee Haile, touching on life in the Hill Country and the critters who inhabit it..

- **Adults only please.**
- **Space is limited and pre-registration is required.**
- **Please contact Laura Grant at elle1980@hotmail.com to sign up.**
- **Please bring a lawn chair and refreshments of your choice**
- **Note that this is an outside program, weather permitting.**
- **Free with donations accepted**



Lee Haile

Save the Date! April 23, Saturday, Guided Tour of FNC Trails and Gardens
Look for more details in the April newsletter on how to register.

Nature's News of the Weird

Fish Chatting About Sex and Food

Right Click [here](#) & Open Link



"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

Rachel Carson

Observations Along the Trail

Photo by Dot Maginot



The banks of Live Oak Creek adjacent to our trails are luxuriously lined by prized native grasses like **Switchgrass** or **Giant Sedge (aka Sawgrass)**. These grasses/sedges anchor the creek banks and mark it as a healthy riparian zone able to withstand floods while holding the soil bank. Standing up in the foreground with rusty brown coloring is **Bushy Bluestem**, another valued wetland grass. **The lesson—Don't mow down those creek-side grasses.**

Finally a Spring bloom! With a cooler than normal February and no significant rain since October, the Spring flowers are late or not blooming at all. This lone flower is our common **Yellow Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis dillenii*)**. It may be common, but it's welcome!



Photo by Dot Maginot

Photo by Lonnie Childs



The **Purple Martins (*Progne subis*)** have finally returned a couple of weeks late. Check them out at our birdhouses located near the parking lot.



**"Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth."
Henry David Thoreau**

Bird Happenings at FNC



Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) Our elegant year-round resident stalks its prey and then makes a deadly jab with its spear like bill. Great Egrets were hunted nearly to extinction for their plumes in the late nineteenth century, sparking conservation movements and some of the first laws to protect birds. The Great Egret is the symbol of the National Audubon Society. The size, white feathers, black legs and yellow bill help identify it.



Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) This semi-resident pair just re-appeared at the lake after a winter absence. They do not migrate north but might have moved slightly north during the fall molt or simply camped out at a nearby location. We have a gaggle of 25 that lives year-round east of Fredericksburg. This species are rowdy "honkers" which sometimes resembles a barking dog.

To hear their vocal display, Right Click [Here](#), and Open Hyperlink.

All photos by Dot Maginot



"Birds have always had the ability to bring me out of a dark space and provide relief in bad times."

Jason Ward

Bird Happenings at FNC



Ruby Crowned Kinglet male (*Corthylio calendula*) recently spotted on Vista Loop Trail.

Photo courtesy of Wolf River Conservancy



A pair of **Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*)** glided over our Tuesday work party recently. Work benefits at FNC!

Photo courtesy of Ecobirder

Bird Lover Tip of the Month

Lights Out Texas! The bird spring migration has begun and will last from March 1 to June 15 with the most critical period being April 22 to May 12. I don't believe that I have to argue the ecological benefits of birds nor highlight the immense joy and beauty that they have provided human culture through the ages.

Yet our highly illuminated modern civilization negatively affects their migration. Excessive artificial light at night (ALAN) disorients birds during migration. Bright lights at night on buildings attract birds like porch lights attract moths, which can result in fatal collisions.

What can you do to help?

1. Turn off all non-essential lights from 11:00pm to 6:00am during this period.
2. Install Dark Sky friendly lighting when possible.
3. For essential security and safety lighting, use dark skies friendly lighting practices that will lessen their impact.

For more information on how to do this and other related topics. go to

<https://texanbynature.org/projects/lights-out-texas/>

As Willie Nelson likes to croon, "Turn out the lights...". Save the Birds Please!



"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous."

Aristotle



Photo by Lonnie Childs

**It's dues time!
Please consider
continuing to support FFNC.
Got to our website
& click on "Membership."
Join & become a Member
or donate to the
Bill Lindemann Capital Fund.**

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Go to <http://fredericksburgNaturecenter.com/membership> for more information

Comments, questions, or future newsletter submissions can be sent to
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