

# Fredericksburg Nature Notes



## Newsletter of the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center

July, 2024 Volume 5 Number 7

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

### Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

With all the soul searching and thought provoking sessions that attended our efforts to determine what was the purpose and motivation to initiate our Interpretive Center project came the realization that it was time to re-visit the Mission Statement of FFNC and to create a Vision Statement describing our hoped for future. Along with that impetus evolved the need to develop Themes that encapsulate the core drivers behind our project that will hopefully resonate with the community.

Our new Mission Statement: ***Promoting the preservation of our Texas Hill Country ecosystems through education and experiences.*** A Mission Statement reveals what we do as an organization as well as how we do it. Our statement is meant to express our aim to teach people about nature and give them experiences that will increase their understanding of nature resulting in an appreciation and passion for their natural surroundings. Ideally, the culmination of this educational journey will be that they will realize that it is vitally important to preserve our beautiful natural resources for future generations.

Our new Vision Statement: ***To create a community of Land Stewards to protect our natural resources into the future.*** What does the future look like if we are successful? We will have spawned a community of people dedicated to environmental preservation who will further proliferate our message, and most importantly, we will have inspired our Youth to become the land stewards of tomorrow.

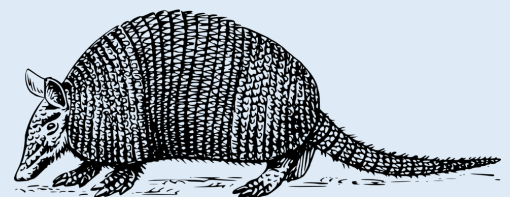
Project Themes: ***Community, Education, and Nature.*** These ideas represent our intent to create a facility that is community oriented and focused on environmental learning, specifically for our youth. We believe that these concepts will both communicate our intent and ring true with community values. Please consider joining us as we move forward towards achieving our vision.

**Happy Nature Trails!**

*Lonnie*

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# Snakes Alive!

Sponsored By:

**Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center**

**Friday, July 19, 2024 - 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.**

**AgriLife Extension Office**

**38 Business Court - Fredericksburg**

**Guest Speaker: Kory Perlichek**  
**Texas Parks & Wildlife**

**RSVP to: [gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com)**

**Approved for 1.5 hours of TMN Advanced Training Credit**

**Snakes Alive!** What a great SUMMER NATURE SERIES program the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center has lined up for you.

**Kory Perlichek**, Veteran Wildlife Biologist of 19 years for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and well-known speaker on snakes, will present a program that is geared towards both adults and children. His talk will focus on snake safety and identification, and YOU GUESSED IT - He is bringing LIVE SNAKES!! AND the audience will be able to handle them (they are non-venomous, of course). Immediately following Kory's presentation, any young person in attendance (or young at heart) will be able to make their own snake to take home.

**Hurry up and reserve your spot for this educational and fun summer nature series workshop program by emailing Gracie at [gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com)**



*"Not all classrooms have four walls."*

Margaret McMillan

## New Summer Programming for our Youth



FREDERICKSBURG  
NATURE CENTER

# Summer Story Time

Join us for a half hour of fun for littles where we will dive into nature stories, followed by crafts, games, and/or exploring

**TUESDAYS 9:45-10:15AM**  
**LOCATED AT THE POLLINATOR GARDEN**  
**● LADY BIRD JOHNSON MUNICIPAL PARK (NEXT TO THE POOL)**

*Great for kids of all ages*

98282.02 **\*\*Meet under the big trees next to Pollinator Garden**

For those of you with children looking for a FREE summer activity, **SUMMER STORY TIME AT FNC** is your opportunity. Nature topics will be featured via stories followed by hands-on activities led by FFNC volunteers. If you have older children in swim lessons and need an activity to occupy their younger siblings, here is a chance for them to have fun while engaging in an educational endeavor. Bring them over to the large shade trees adjacent to the Pollinator Garden next to the swimming pool to learn more about the wonders of Mother Nature! No reservation required. Walk-ins welcome.





## OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Promoting the preservation of our Texas Hill Country ecosystems through education and experiences.*

## Check Out Our New Pollinator Exhibit



Photo by Lonnie Childs

We recently installed a new “Varrobook”™ style exhibit at the Pollinator Garden which enlightens the reader on what/who are pollinators, their importance, and other related information.

The exhibit was designed and installed by **Scott Clarke of Clarke Designs** and made possible by a generous grant from the **Community Foundation of the Hill Country**.

The innovative design conveys educational material via text but also provides a tactile experience for children and adults via the flipbook feature and the spinning cubes on the edges. This exhibit provides a preview of the style of exhibits planned for our new Interpretive Center. Check it out now!





## OUR VISION:

*To create a community of Land Stewards to protect our natural resources into the future.*

## FFNC Volunteers at Work



Photo by Lonnie Childs

**Gracie Waggener, Nanyc Person, Deb Youngblood, & Sandi Kennedy are the garden artists at the Pollinator Garden, persevering despite the July heat. THANKS!**

### Fun Tuesdays at FNC

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. If you would like to join us at the park, we would love to have you!

**Work sessions are typically scheduled for Tuesdays at 8:30am. We shorten our work period in summer to avoid heat exhaustion!**

Contact Gracie Waggener at [gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com) to receive a weekly email notification about scheduled work tasks for the coming week.







*"There is no Wi-Fi in the forest, but I promise you will find a better connection."*  
Ralph Smart

## FFNC at the Bank



Our banking partners at **First United Bank** graciously have allowed us to setup an exhibit featuring our organization in their lobby for the month of July. In addition to presenting information about our ongoing activities, the exhibit showcases our plans for a future Interpretive Center and is an opportunity to view the site plan, building layout, and renderings of the facility. Check it out!

Photos by Lonnie Childs



## Blumen at the Pollinator Garten



Roughstem Rosinweed  
*Silphium radula*  
& Bumblebee



Texas Greeneyes Bud  
*Berlandiera betonicifolia*

Texas Greeneyes  
*Berlandiera betonicifolia*  
&  
Lindheimer's Morning Glory  
*Ipomoea lindheimeri*



**"In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they're still beautiful."**

**Alice Walker**

## Our Legacy Oaks Tell a Tale



Our legacy Plateau Live Oaks (*Quercus fusiformis*) at the entrance kiosk are estimated to be 100+ years old & were declared drought stressed but otherwise healthy in a recent arborist check-up. The gnarled trunk of the grand dame tree suggests many stories. How many faces & creatures can you find?



Photos by Lonnie Childs

### Live Oak Facts:

- > Plateau Live Oaks were once considered a sub-species of *Q. virginianus* inhabiting coastal Tx
- > Is smaller but more drought tolerant than its coastal cousin
- > Can live to be 100's of yrs. & reach 50 ft tall
- > Grows from Okla. through central Tx to north Mexico
- > Susceptible to Oak Wilt
- > Is "tardily deciduous"
- > An important canopy tree supporting wildlife



## Blumen at the Butterfly Habitat



### Turk's Cap or Manzanillo (Little Apple)

#### *Malaviscus arboreus* var. *drummondii*

The genus name comes from the Latin words *malva* (=mallow) & *viscidus* (=sticky) referencing the sap produced by genus members (i.e. "sticky mallows").

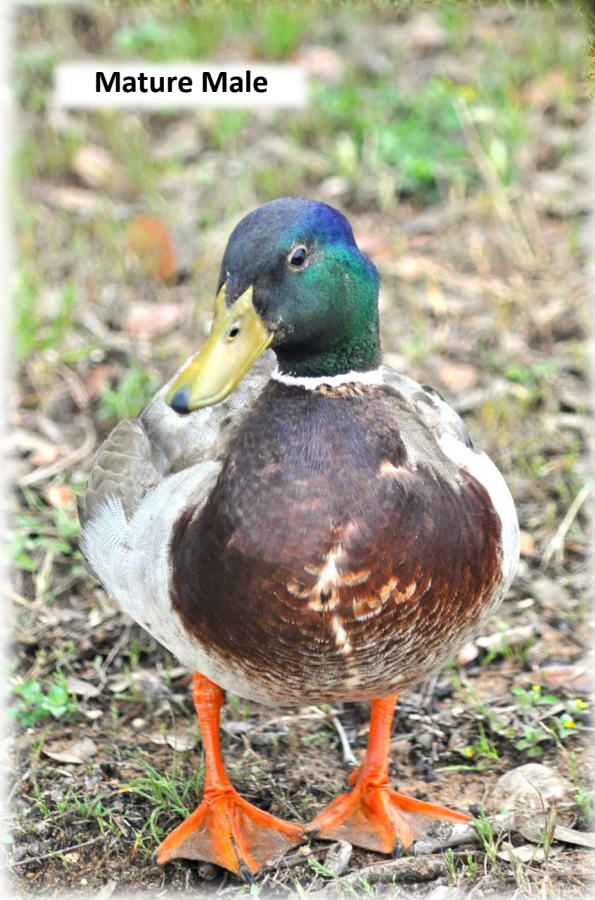
The species name of *arboreus* refers to its tree-like form. It is a spreading perennial growing to 10 ft along streams & the edges of woods, preferring partial shade and dry to moist, well-drained soils. Turk's Cap is an excellent nectar plant in your garden for hummingbirds, butterflies, & moths, & its edible fruits (Little Apples) are eaten by birds & mammals. Both fruits & flowers may also be enjoyed by humans.







**Immature Male**



**Mature Male**

### **Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*)**

As the most familiar of all ducks, Mallards occur throughout North America & Eurasia in domestic ponds and parks as well as wild wetlands and estuaries. Mallards have long been hunted as a food source, and almost all domestic ducks derive from this species. Mallards are particularly known for hybridizing with other ducks thus producing many of the everpresent "mongrel" ducks that are confusing to identify. Mallards are known as strong fliers and have been clocked flying 55mph. Mallards migrate north for the summer & return to the southern US & northern Mexico for the winter.



## Painted Ladies are World Travelers & Ants are Surgeons!



**Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)** is one of the most widespread of all butterflies, found on every continent except Antarctica. Until recent evidence proved otherwise, they were thought not to be found in South America. They are one of our most common butterfly species at FNC.

In North America, Painted Ladies do engage in erratic migrations precipitated by weather or climatic events.

In Europe, they annually migrate from North Africa & the Mediterranean area to Britain and northern Europe involving six successive generations, much like our Monarchs. Scientists were puzzled about whether there was a return migration by their offspring & only recently discovered that they do return south at an altitude of 9,000 ft, which is why their reverse migration was not readily evident .

And now, Painted Ladies have been recently found in South America! Read all about this recent discovery. Right click [HERE](#) & Open Link



Photos by Bill Lindemann

Thanks to Errol Candy for these stories!

## Nature's News of the Weird

**Ants Perform Amputations to Save their Colony Members**  
Read all about it. Right Click [HERE](#) & Open HyperLink



**"Each species is a masterpiece, a creation assembled with extreme care and genius."**  
**E. O. Wilson**

## **The State Mammal Gets a New Name**      **by Lonnie Childs**

Do you know what the Texas state mammal is? Of course! It is the armor wearing, Lone Star swilling, dinosaur mimicking, garden pil-laging, oddly cute little mammal known as the **Armadillo**, previously classified as *Dasyus novemcinctus var. mexicanus* by taxonomists. New DNA and morphological analysis now suggests that armadillos inhabiting the US deserve their own species classification, and thus a new name is respectfully in order.



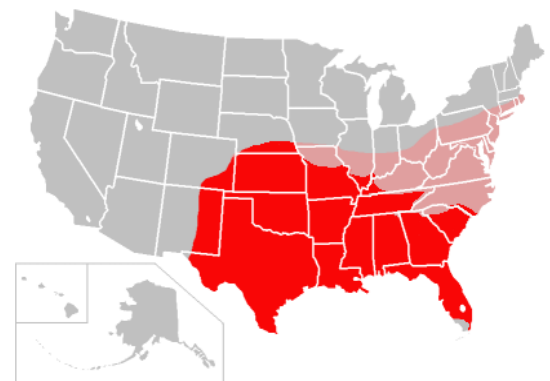
**Photo by Lonnie Childs**

The genus name, *Dasyus*, is thought to be derived from a Greek word for hare or rabbit

which was applied to the armadillo because the Aztec word for armadillo meant turtle-rabbit. It appears that trying to comparatively name this odd little armored animal proved to be a challenge for the Aztecs. The previous species name, *novemcinctus*, refers to the nine movable bands on the middle portion of their shell or carapace. Their common name, armadillo, is derived from a Spanish word meaning "little armored one".

**Armadillos are Mammals** and are included in the Order *Xenarthra* which also incorporates Anteaters and Sloths—all animals with poorly developed teeth and limited mobility. The ancestral armadillos first entered North America about three million years ago when the Panamanian land bridge appeared. About two million years ago, a rhinoceros-sized relative lived in South America. Smaller cousins lived as far north as Canada, but all species disappeared in North America during the ice ages. An existing giant armadillo in South America weighs as much as 120 lbs.

**Return of the 'Dillo.** With warmer climate, the armadillos eventually returned. At the dawn of the 20th century, the nine-banded armadillo was present in Texas. By the 1930's, they were in Louisiana and by 1954 they had crossed the Mississippi River heading east. In the 1950's, they were introduced into Florida and began heading north. Today, armadillos occur throughout the South from Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas through Missouri, eastern Tennessee and into South Carolina. Their northern migration is limited by their intolerance of cold temperatures (<36deg F.), but as average temperatures rise, armadillos may continue their move northward.



**The current (circa 2009–2010) range (shaded red), and predicted future range (shaded pink) of the nine-banded armadillo in the USA .** Wikipedia





**"Armadillos make affectionate pets, if you need affection that much."  
Will Cuppy**

## **The State Mammal Gets a New Name by Lonnie Childs**

**And now for the name change.** *D. novemcinctus* was traditionally thought to be one species inhabiting the green area from Argentina to the central US. Recent studies using DNA analysis and studies of physical specimens in museums resulted in the conclusion that this widespread species actually consisted of four distinct species which are nearly indistinguishable from each other in the field. Three sub-species had previously been described and were promoted to full species status via this analysis. The fourth recognized species was a brand new species never before described known as *Dasypus guianensis* which inhabits the Guiana Shield area in northeastern South America.

So what does that mean for our Texas armadillo? Its' new scientific name will now be *Dasypus mexicanus* with a suggested common name of the Mexican long-nosed armadillo. In tribute to the great respect that we have showered on the unsightly little critter in Texas, scientists might have considered a species name of *texasensis*. As to that long-winded suggestion for a common name, we'll probably just stick with armadilla or better yet 'dillo.



**Traditional range of  
*D. novemcinctus*  
Wikipedia**

### **FUN FACTS ABOUT ARMADILLOS**

- Armadillos produce 1 litter annually of identical quadruplets.
- The armadillo's omnivorous diet varies by season & availability & consists mainly of invertebrates, other small animals, but also fruit, seeds and other vegetable matter. They are opportunistic eaters!
- Armadillos occupy a range of 1.5-22 acres & will have 5-10 burrows dug or borrowed of 3-4ft in length for refuge.
- Armadillos can cross water by either swimming in a dog-paddle motion with their buoyancy aided by ingesting air into the stomach or walking on the bottom while holding their breath.
- Armadillos only tolerate temperatures between 36-85deg F. During winter months they are active during the warmer part of the day while during the hot summer, activity shifts to the cooler night. While they can remain in their burrows for several days, they do not store food or accumulate large stores of body fat & must eventually forage.

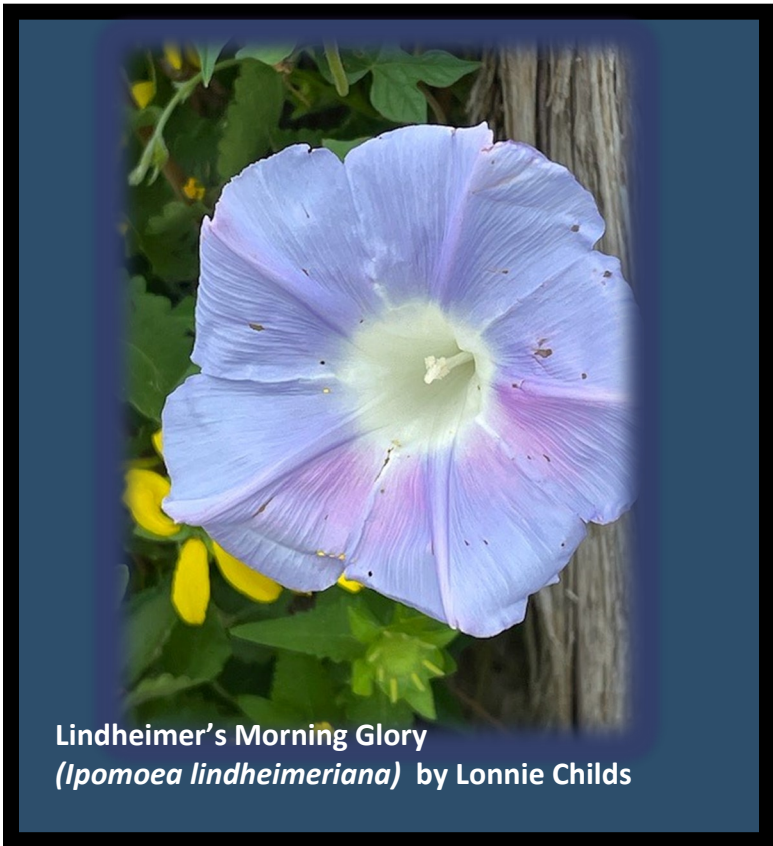
Source: *Nine-banded Armadillos* by Michael T. Mengak, University of Georgia



Armadillos may stand on their hind-legs to sniff the air which is their most reliable sense. Their hearing is fair but their eyesight is poor.  
Photo by Gigrantula



*"The poetry of the earth is never dead."*  
John Keats



Lindheimer's Morning Glory  
(*Ipomoea lindheimeriana*) by Lonnie Childs

**Support FNC in 2024!**

Please consider becoming a Member of FFNC.  
Our operations are funded by membership fees & donations.

Donate to the Bill Lindemann Capital Fund  
which will fund our future Interpretive Center project.

Go to <https://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com/>

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Comments, questions, or future newsletter submissions can be sent to Lonnie Childs, Newsletter Editor, at [lonniechilds@utexas.edu](mailto:lonniechilds@utexas.edu)