

Fredericksburg Nature Notes



Newsletter of the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center

June, 2025 Volume 6 Number 6

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

Facebook@fredericksburgnaturecenter

Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

June at FNC will feature two great children's educational opportunities. Our StoryTime program for preschoolers which occurs every Tuesday combines nature and reading in the park designed to promote a healthy, nature-based environment for learning. Slightly older children will enjoy our Dinosaurs of Texas program featuring the entertaining Dinosaur Lady, BK Bones. Find more information on pages 3 and 4, and plan to separate your kids from their screens for some excellent and fun learning.

Continuing the focus on children's health and nature-based learning environments, the "15 Reasons to Bring a Child to FNC" segment features only a sampler of the extensive scientific studies focusing on how immersion in nature can promote children's cognitive development and emotional and physical well-being. The human species evolved over thousands of year wholly immersed in a natural environment whose principles are embedded in our DNA, and yet that connection is eroding in modern times, particularly in our children. More nature and less screen-time could be a simple anti-dote for many of the ills that our kids suffer today. Our *A Vision Worth Growing Campaign* emphasizes the creation of nature-based environments and educational programming that ensure that our next generation won't be the "last child in the woods."

In the meantime, bring your child, come early, and take a hike at FNC for a dose of shinrin-yoku. Look it up.

Happy Nature Trails!

Lonnie

In this Issue:

- Volunteer Opportunities w/ FFNC
- Upcoming Programs— StoryTime & Dinosaurs of Texas
- *The Buzz In Your Garden!* By Rebecca Stapleton
- Dragonflies @ FNC
- Flutterin' on Blue Mistflower
- Interesting June Flora
- 15 Reasons to Bring a Child to FNC





OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

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

Volunteer with FFNC

Fun Tuesdays at FNC

Typical tasks involve **gardening skills** and **trail improvement and maintenance projects**, 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—10:30am .

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

Other Volunteer Opportunities that don't require physical labor:

- **Social Media** — Assist with maintaining & posting content on Facebook & other media
- **Newsletter**—write articles, editing and production
- **Website**—content management, website maintenance
- **Membership management**—recruitment and support
- **Programs**—Assist with planning and organizing workshops and children's activities
- **Fundraising**

**For more information, contact Lonnie Childs at
lonniechilds@utexas.edu**

*Our projects are approved for service hours by the Hill Country
Master Naturalist chapter.*



SUMMER STORYTIME AT THE PARK

BEGINS TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

Sponsored by:

Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center

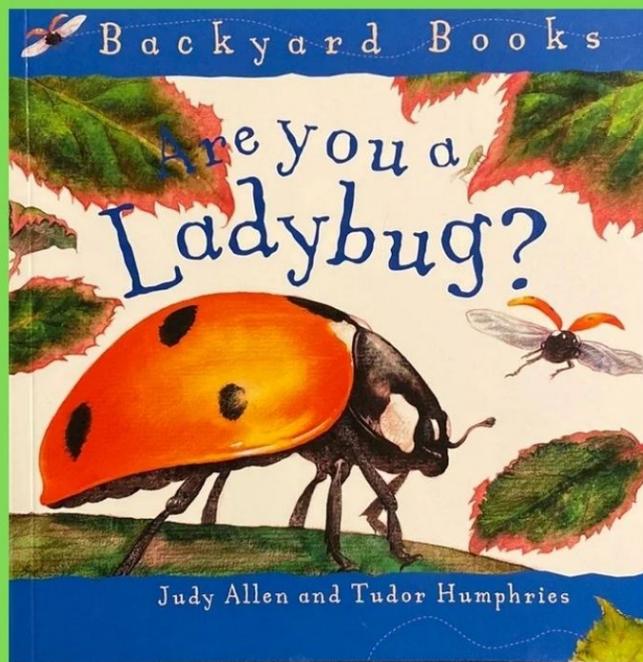
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Each Tuesday from June 10 to July 29, 2025, from 10:15 to 11:00 a.m., Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center will once again host Storytime at the Park. The event will take place under the live oaks adjacent to the Pollinator Garden at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. Each Tuesday, volunteers will engage and delight children in the reading of a nature-themed storybook. Following the reading, children will participate in a hands-on activity related to the content of the book. RSVP to gwaggener@flow-apps.com.

BOOK OF THE WEEK - TUESDAY, JUNE 17TH

ARE YOU A LADYBUG?



ACTIVITY: PAINTED ROCK LADYBUGS



**Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center
Presents:**

DINOSAURS

of Texas!

**Featuring The Dinosaur Lady - B. K. Bones
a/k/a Paleontologist Bethany Burke**

Saturday, June 28th

10:00 - 11:00 A.M.

**Pioneer Pavilion Event Center
Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park**



**Attention all School-
Age Children Grades
1-6!!**

You Don't Want to Miss This Fantastic Dinosaur Show!!

Reserve your seat today by emailing Gracie at
gwaggener@flow-apps.com



OUR VISION STATEMENT:

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

Summer StoryTime at FNC 2025 Has Begun!



Storytime 2025 kicked off on Tuesday, June 17, under the shade trees at the Pollinator Garden with Katie Collins reading *Are You a Ladybug?* The reading was followed by the children painting their own Ladybug rocks to take home in remembrance. Hopefully, they learned to love those insects and not run from them in terror!

StoryTime happens every Tuesday through the end of July. Bring your kids out for a morning in the park.



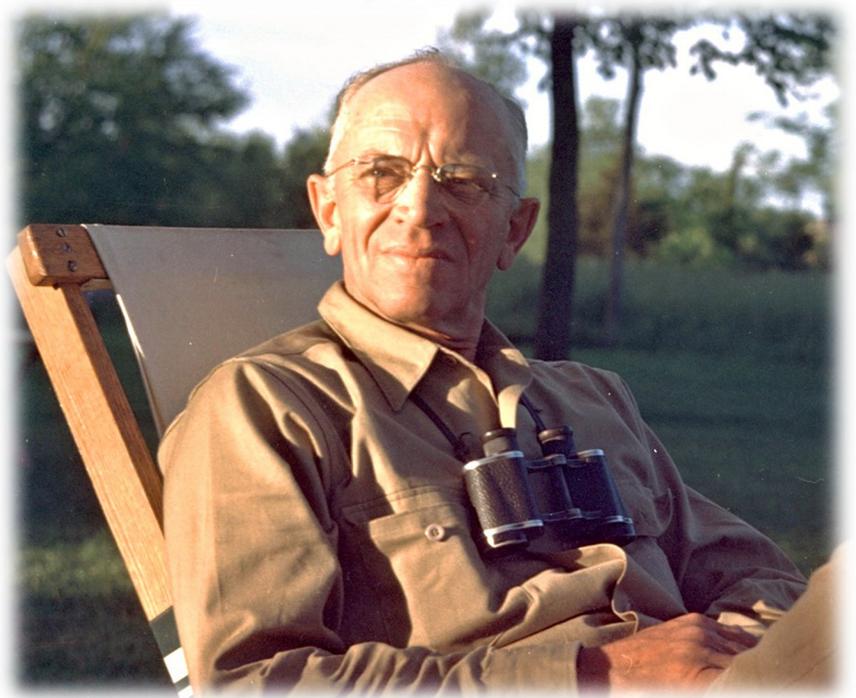
Photos by Lonnie Childs

Leopold Lives on!



Steve Nelle details the versatile roles that Leopold achieved. Photo by Lonnie Childs

On June 7th, attendees were treated to a presentation by Steve Nelle that featured excerpts from his book, *Lessons from Leopold, Learning from the Land*. The referenced lessons mostly derive from Aldo Leopold's seminal book, *A Sand County Almanac*, which offered a new concept of land ethics. Both books are highly recommended for those searching for an enlightened approach to land management and how to apply Leopold's ideas.



Aldo Leopold
Courtesy of Sand County Foundation

Leopold Benches



"I seat myself on a bench, facing the white wake of the morning star. I set the pot beside me. I extract a cup from my shirt front, hoping none will notice its informal mode of transport. I get out my watch, pour coffee, and lay notebook on knee."

Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac

**Take a seat
& relax.....**



Above: Our new hand-crafted Leopold Bench is now installed at the Pollinator Garden. The shaded bench provides a bench eye view of the garden & its pollinating denizens. Enjoy a moment of repose, guaranteed to elevate your observational skills & lower your blood pressure.

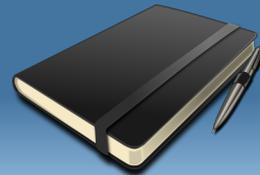
Right: Tom Hynes, our master carpenter who built the benches, shares the joy experienced by Sandi Kennedy who won this bench via silent auction at the June 7th program. Thanks Sandi & Tom!

Rumor has it that there may be another bench for sale in the future. Stay tuned.



Photos by Lonnie Childs

The Buzz In Your Garden!



Big and colorful, this fuzzy looking “Teddy Bear” of a bee can be seen flying from flower to flower, buzzing loudly in the garden. Meet the Sonoran Bumblebee! Soft, velvety black with bright yellow fur on the front and back of the thorax, broken by a black band of fur between the wings, it is one of the largest of our native bees, with Carpenter Bees being the largest.

All bees will sting when threatened, but the Sonoran Bumblebee is considered to be non aggressive and will rarely sting unless they are defending their nest or being mishandled. They are perfectly safe to quietly observe their activities at a close distance.



Photo by Lonnie Childs

Sonoran Bumblebees are very beneficial pollinators in the garden and will visit a variety of flowers, ornamentals as well as natives, searching for nectar and collecting pollen. They will sonicate or “buzz” flowers to remove the pollen. The female bites into the anther, curling her body around the flower using her wings to create a loud buzzing like a tuning fork vibrating to shake out the pollen. The pollen is collected for food to feed the larvae. Unlike Honey Bees, the Sonoran Bumblebee only makes enough honey to feed the colony, storing the honey and pollen in small, lumpy shaped wax cells.

Colonies are started in late summer to early autumn with a single Queen establishing her nest. She will mate with males patrolling their territories. The males are only present for a short time before they die. The Queen cares for her first few offspring, working hard to forage pollen and nectar for them until they become adults. The adult offspring will then take over tending to the colony, allowing the Queen to resume her job of producing eggs.

The Queen will live for about a year. At the end of the year, a new Virgin Queen will leave the nest and mate with wandering males. She will stay dormant, resting up until the beginning of nesting season when the cycle begins again.

Sonoran Bee

Bombus sonorus



Rebecca Stapleton

Colorful and one of the largest of the bumblebee species, it visits a broad range of flowers both native and ornamental. They build their new colonies in the fall. The queen establishes the nest. The queen and the colony live for about one year. New virgin queens leave the nest by the end of the year, mate with wandering males and will go dormant until the beginning of the nesting season. Important pollinators in the garden, it is crucial to not use pesticides in and around the garden.

Illustration by Rebecca Stapleton

Dragonflies @ FNC



Above: Eastern or Common Pondhawk Female (*Erythemis simplicicollis*) is a common dragonfly of ponds & still waters. The males have blue abdomens. It is an agile, swift-flying predator, able to catch damselflies and other insect prey on the wing.

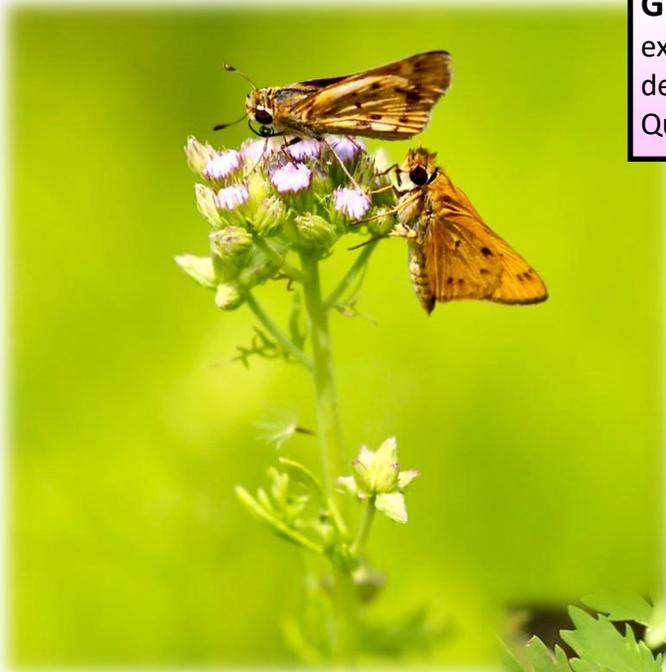


Swift Setwing (*Dythemis velox*) often perch with their wings held forward as if ready to strike, but the real purpose of the posture is not understood.

FNC has catalogued over 50 Odonates (Dragonflies & Damselflies). An excellent site to view them is along Live Oak Creek below the dam. Although they are ferocious predators, they do not bite or pose a threat to people.

Flutterin' on Blue Mistflower

Gregg's Mistflower (*Conoclinium greggii*) is an excellent xeric native plant to add to your pollinator garden for nectaring. It attracts very impressive numbers of Queen butterflies in the Fall & other butterflies also.



Fiery Skipper

Hylephila phyleus



Gulf Fritillary Pair

Dione vanillae



Queen Pair

Danaus gilippus

Some Interesting June Flora



Photo by Phil Stapleton

Black Elderberry *Sambucus nigra*

Is a shrub growing in the rich, moist soils long Live Oak Creek. The flowers will produce a bunch of black berries that can be used to make wine, jelly & pies while serving as a food source for birds & mammals. The berries are currently used to produce a syrup reported to boost the immune system, but be aware that the bark, twigs, & leaves & even the raw berries can be mildly toxic to ingest.

Roughstem Rosinweed

Silphium radula

An emerging flower.



Photo by Lonnie Childs



Photo by Lonnie Childs

American Basswood or Linden Tree

Tilia americana

FNC hosts a large specimen with sprouts hidden along the trail adjacent to Love Oak Lake & Waypoint #7. The distribution for this species is the eastern half of the US with Texas populations mostly in east Texas, although there is a disjunct population in the Balcones Canyonlands of central Texas making our little population special. Basswoods enjoy the richer, moist soils of bottomlands & can grow to 100ft tall, making them specimen trees in a landscape. Their wood is useful for carving & musical instruments while their flowers produce a light, sweet honey that is highly prized.

15 Reasons to Bring a Child to Fredericksburg Nature Center

1. "Statistics reveal that children spend an average of **44 hours per week engaged with a screen** with only an average of **10 minutes daily spent outside.**"
2. "More than 100 million people in the United States – including 28 million children, don't have access to a park within a 10-minute walk from home." <https://10minutewalk.org/>
3. In nature based environments, "**Children often reported joy, wellbeing, and enthusiasm... children demonstrated a strong sense of comfort and self-confidence with the nature-based environment.**"
Moore, D., Morrissey, A.-M., and Robertson, N. (2019). *Early Child Dev. Care*
4. "...playing in nature-based environments not only supports young children's **healthy physical development** (e.g., physical activity and motor development), but might also support their **social-emotional, motor, and cognitive development.**" *Nature play in early childhood education: A systematic review and meta ethnography of qualitative research*; Prins, der Wilt, der Veen, Hovinga
5. "Children with exposure to more greenspace often demonstrate **fewer behavioral problems.**"
"Greenspace exposure and children behavior: A systematic review"; Sakhvidi, et al
- 6) "An arts-in-nature program helps children **connect with nature** and appreciate nature's contribution to their own wellbeing." *Eco-capabilities: Arts-in-nature for supporting nature visibilisation and wellbeing in children*; Walshe, et al
7. "Childhood exposure to blue space may support **pro-environmental behaviors** in adulthood."
From childhood blue space exposure to adult environmentalism: The role of nature connectedness and nature contact; Stehl, et al
8. "Children with a strong connection to nature have **higher social emotional learning skills** than those with a weaker connection to nature." *Connection to nature is associated with social-emotional learning of children*; Lanza, et al
9. "Exposure to nature can **enhance cognitive functioning** in children and adolescents."
Effects of nature (greenspace) on cognitive functioning in school children and adolescents: a systematic review; Vella-Brodrick
10. "...early nature exposure can contribute to **later-life mental health.**" *Life course nature exposure and mental health outcomes: A systematic review and future directions*; Li, et al
11. "Green space exposure during the early years is positively linked to **healthy child development.**"
Green space and early childhood development: A systematic review; Islam, et al
12. "Children with greater exposure to nature demonstrate **higher levels of self-regulation.**"
A dose of nature: Two three-level meta-analyses of the beneficial effects of exposure to nature on children's self-regulation; Weeland, et al
13. "Immersive nature-experiences are linked to **positive changes in children's mental, physical, and social health.**" *Mental, physical and social health benefits of immersive nature-experiences for children and adolescents: A systematic review and quality assessment of the evidence*; Mygind, et al
14. "Children with better access to public parks and recreation programs are **less likely to have significant increases in BMI over time.**" *Childhood obesity & proximity to urban parks & recreational resources:...*; Wolch, et al
15. "...exposure to green space is associated with **lower rates of obesity in children and adults.**"
Risks & Benefits of Green Spaces for Children: A ... Study of Associations with Sedentary Behavior, Obesity, Asthma, & Allergy; Davvand, et al

Source: Children and Nature Network <https://research.childrenandnature.org/research/>

Promoting Children's Health

Inspiring the Land Stewards of Tomorrow



A Vision Worth Growing Campaign



Find out more about our plans for a future Interpretive Center founded on the themes of **Nature, Youth, Education, & Community** with a focus on developing tomorrow's Land Stewards and promoting the health of our children. See how you can support the **A Vision Worth Growing Campaign** by Right Clicking [Here](#).





Humans in Nature

"Biophilia...is the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms."

Edward O. Wilson

"Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health."

Richard Louv



"Reconnection to the natural world is fundamental to human health, well-being, spirit, and survival."

Richard Louv

Support FNC in 2025!

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

Donate to the
A Vision Worth Growing Campaign
(Bill Lindemann Capital Fund)
which will fund our future Interpretive Center project.

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



Find the latest news about FFNC at
[Facebook@fredericksburgnaturecenter](https://www.facebook.com/fredericksburgnaturecenter)

Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center Board of Directors

Lonnie Childs—President	Paul Person—Vice-president	Carl Luckenbach - Treasurer
Gracie Waggener—Secretary	Jane Crone	Trudy Eberhardt
Laura Grant	Billy Guin	Dave Oelrich
		Mary Ellen Terell
Andrea Schmidt, Dir. Fbg. Parks & Recreation, ex officio		

Thanks to our supporters and the City of Fredericksburg
for your continued support of the
Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center!

A 501(c)(3) corporation

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

Comments, questions, or future newsletter submissions can be sent to
Lonnie Childs, Newsletter Editor, at lonniechilds@utexas.edu