

Fredericksburg Nature Notes



Newsletter of the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center

July, 2025 Volume 6 Number 7

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

Facebook@fredericksburgnaturecenter

Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

Our focus as a nature organization and in this newsletter has centered on extolling the virtues and beauty of Nature while encouraging people to preserve our biophilic connection. This past week, Nature displayed its other destructive side, ravaging the magical Guadalupe River valley, while taking the precious lives of too many. The valley will no doubt demonstrate resilience on its time scale, while Humans will struggle to do the same. A much better writer than I would labor to express the emotional turmoil of it all, and the best writer would know that there are no words.

At the nature center, we did suffer some minor trail damage and will close the Live Oak trail across the creek for a couple of weeks. Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville endured significant flooding that will require substantial funds to repair, so see the enclosed flyer if you want to find out how to support their recovery effort.

For a diversion from the grief, our summer programs continue with *StoryTime* every Tuesday, a new *StoryWalk* installation, and *Bugs in the Backyard* coming in August. Even after experiencing her ravages, a hike in Nature always helps too.

Happy Nature Trails!

Lonnie

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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

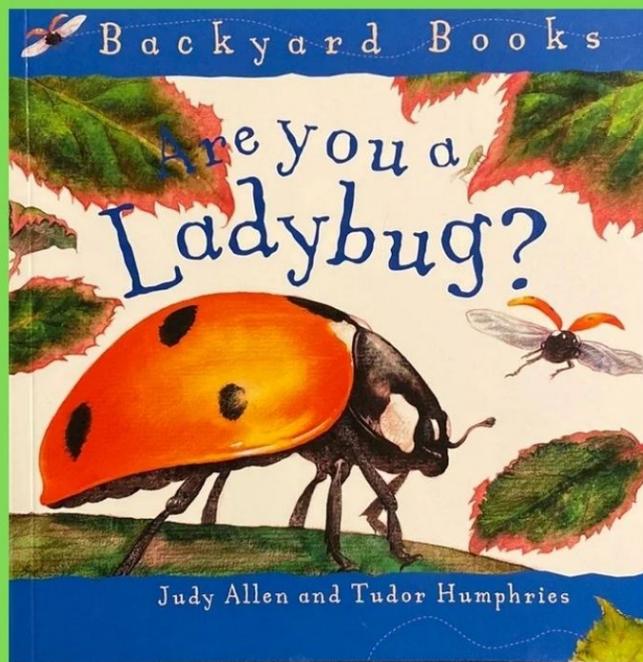
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! Each Tuesday from June 10 to July 29, 2025, from 10:15 to 11:00 a.m., Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center will once again host Storytime at the Park. The event will take place under the live oaks adjacent to the Pollinator Garden at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. Each Tuesday, 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



*Discover the Fascinating World of Insects in Your Landscape
as Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center presents:*

BUGS in the Backyard!

Thursday, August 7, 2025

10:00 - 12:00 P.M.

**Texas AgriLife Extension Office
38 Business Court - Fredericksburg**

This program will provide practical knowledge for gardeners, homeowners, and anyone curious about insect life in their environment. In addition to ID techniques, you will learn how to manage insects--or when to let them be for the benefit of your landscape.

RSVP to Gracie at gwaggener@flow-apps.com

Approved for 2 Hours of Texas Master Naturalist AT Credit



Molly Keck

**Integrated Pest Management
Program Specialist and Board-
Certified Entomologist with Texas
A&M AgriLife Extension**

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

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

Dinosaur Lady Introduces the Dinosaurs of Texas



Run Sophia, run!!!



Paul Person, the "Dino Wrangler," & B.K. Bones show Sophia that T. Rex's can be ok despite their voracious appetite.



**Playing
What's this Bone?**

Photos by Patti Guin

On June 28th, Bethany Burke, aka B.K. Bones or the Dinosaur Lady, shared her passion & knowledge about the Dinosaurs of Texas. The audience of adults & children were enthralled with the topic & entertained with the likes of Paul Person, the "Dino Wrangler." All had fun, and somewhere in Fredericksburg, there is an aspiring paleontologist walking around.



B.K. Bones cuddles Stegosaurus friend, Rufus.



B.K. Bones exudes a message of love those dinosaurs



B.K. Bones introduces a T. Rex skull

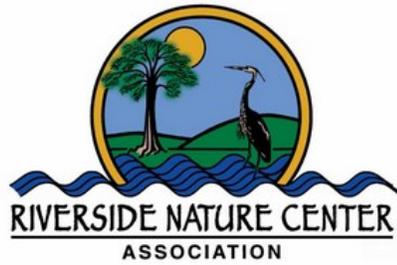
Trail Damage at FNC

July 2-4 delivered almost 6 inches of rain to the FNC area with 4+ inches of that falling on the Fourth in a short period of time. Live Oak Creek rose about 10 feet above the pedestrian bridge and inflicted some damage to the Live Oak Wilderness Trail. Considerable debris was deposited along the trail, but because we allow the riparian to exist in its natural state, the vegetation and soil bank held its place mostly.

We have closed the trail for a short period until the creek flow subsides and for clean up activities. Because of the volume of debris deposited, we will allow most of it to decompose via natural processes which will add organic material to the underlying soil bank. Some may find the debris unsightly, but the area will serve as a living example of a riparian area healing itself.



Photos by Lonnie Childs



We May Be Down But We're Not Out

Our community has suffered a tremendous and tragic blow. So many lives are lost. Folks have lost property or experienced serious damage. Our beautiful river corridor will be forever changed. As will we all.

Please know **Riverside Nature** Center Board of Directors and Staff are keeping each of you in our hearts.



The Nature Center was Hit Hard

Nothing on the property escaped the flood. Every building was inundated with water. Fortunately, the main visitor center took on less than the 3 feet of water that impacted both the Nature Lab and Lawson Store. The perimeter fence was damaged as was the retaining wall. The ac system in the main building is inoperable. Much of our educational materials and equipment were destroyed or unsalvageable. It will take some time before we are fully back on track. **We will be closed through July 19th. All events have been canceled.**

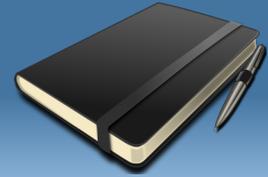
Your Donation Is Greatly Needed Now

*To those who have graciously and generously donated, THANK YOU!!!
We are estimating, at this time, our loss is in the range of \$500,000.
Please help us in our recovery.*

[Donate Here](#)



Lessons from My Garden



In my backyard, I have a small garden. It was part of my assignment and stewardship project to finish the requirements for my Nature Journal Educator certification. With the help of my husband, I removed the ornamental, invasive plants put in by the past homeowners, replaced them with native pollinator plants, and sowed some seeds collected from another pollinator garden.

Digging was difficult, and every inch of my back was screaming at me! I didn't start it until October into early November. I was told that it was still ok to plant, because our Central Texas weather wasn't very harsh. It was sparse, but you could see the potential for a full pollinator garden.

Winter came mercilessly. We had several hard freezes! Each time, I covered my plantings as best I could, fretting over the low temps, afraid that I would lose it all and have to start over in the spring.

Spring came, and I only lost one or two plants to winter. I replaced them with the hope that everything would happily grow. Now we're into a hot summer and a four year drought that won't go away. Still, I tend it - I watch and I wait.

My garden is full of flowers, blooming to provide for butterflies, bees and humming-birds. It also provides for me! It brings a sense of calm in an otherwise chaotic world and helps me to stay grounded.

It was just a stewardship project assignment to obtain a certification, but the lessons learned from this little garden are priceless. It taught me perseverance, patience, and faith that everything was going to be alright. It showed me what resilience looks like and helped me understand that everything unfolds when it's ready and in its own time.



Photo by Rebecca Stapleton

Blumen Asters at the Garten



Top:	Englemann's Daisy <i>Engelmannia peristenia</i>
Middle:	Texas Green-eyes <i>Berlandiera betonicifolia</i>
Bottom:	Common Sunflower <i>Helianthus annuus</i>

Asters (*Asteraceae*),

aka Composites or Sunflowers is a family of flowering plants that consist of over 32,000 known species, making it one of the largest botanical families, rivaled only by the Orchids. Their geographic distribution ranges from subpolar to tropical regions in a wide variety of habitats, but they mostly occur in hot desert and cold or hot semi-desert climates.

Asters were originally known as Composites due to the composite structure of their flowers known as *capitulas* which include a head composed of both ray and disc flowers enclosed by a whorl of protective involucre bracts.

Asteraceae is an economically important family, providing food staples, garden plants, and herbal medicines.

Wikipedia

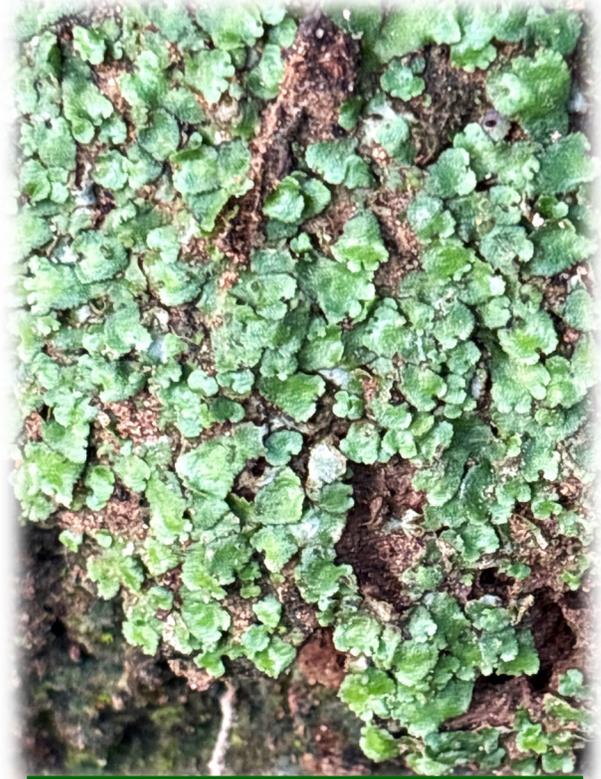


Photos by Lonnie Childs

Unusual Flora at FNC



Purple-stem Cliffbrake (top) adjacent to Hemispheric Liverworts



Hemisphaeric Liverworts
Reboulia hemisphaerica



Purple-stem Cliffbrake
Pellaea atropurpurea

When walking the **Live Oak Wilderness Trail**, as you descend the stairs near the Cactus Garden to hike creekside, slow down & pay attention to the vegetation growing along the steep embankment. The cooler temperatures, moister environment, & lack of deer access supports some interesting flora. Observe!

Cliffbrakes are Ferns in the *Pteridaceae* (Maidenhair Fern Family) and can be found along the referenced trail. Since Cliffbrakes do not exhibit the typical “ferny” leaf, most people would not associate this species with ferns.

The origins of **Ferns** can be traced to the fossil record that dates to 360mya. Ferns differ from Angiosperms (flowering plants) in that they do not produce seeds, but rather their complicated life cycle utilizes swimming sperm & spores to reproduce.

Liverworts were once referred to as Fern allies, since their taxonomy was unclear. They are now classified uniquely as *Hepaticophyta* & informally referred to as *Bryophytes*. Like Ferns, they are non-vascular plants that require water to reproduce via spores. They prefer steep embankments where the competition is lessened.

Cardinal Courtship @ FNC



A juvenile male Cardinal above worries that his love interest seems to be more interested in another suitor—a Black Metal Ornamental Bird.



Photos by Phil Stapleton

Hoverin' & Buzzin' at the Garten



Widow Skimmer

Libellula luctuosa

(left & below)

The logo species for FNC gets its name from the mournful colors of its wings & its skimming behavior. Mosquitos are a significant part of its diet.

Insect Factoids:

- 1) Insects are the largest animal group comprising 75-90% of all species.
- 2) There are 1.5m named species & 91k live in the US. Scientists estimate that there may be 10m species on Earth.
- 3) Insects have existed for 350m yrs.
- 4) They are the sole food source for many amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.
- 5) **Scientific studies indicate that insects are disappearing at an alarming rate.**



Scolid Blue-winged Wasp

Aka Two-spotted Wasp

Scolia dubia Could be found recently nectaring in numbers on the Kidney-wood at the Pollinator Garden. They are parasitoid on beetles in that the females burrow into the ground searching for larval grubs in which to lay their eggs.

Photos by Phil Stapleton

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](#).





In Memoriam
To the Lives Lost
And the Families who Grieve.

Photo by Phil Stapleton

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
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