Dear Friends,

change is in the air at the Nature Center. After 23 years of service to the City of Fort Worth and Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, with 11 as manager, I am retiring effective July 1. My successor will be a familiar name and face to many of you. Rob Denkhaus, who has been serving as the Nature Center’s natural resource manager for the past 11 years, took the helm on June 11 to allow for a few weeks of overlap and transition.

In reflecting on my 23 years here, I’m amazed when I realize how much has changed.

In 1993 when I started full time, I had no desktop computer, no email, and no cell phone. I carried a pager and handheld radio, and when the pager buzzed, I either had to hurry back to my desk to return a call or stop at a pay phone, which was once as common a sight as Starbucks stores are now. I may work more efficiently and productively now by some measures, but it’s also gotten harder to really focus on the task at hand, especially during those increasingly rare times when I’m out in the field.

Twenty-three years is a long enough time span to see the results of some of the projects on which I worked at the park in the 1990s and early 2000s. Landscape restoration sites such as the Alice Ashley Savanna, Demonstration Prairie, and Deermouse Prairie, where we sowed seed, removed invasive plants, and conducted prescribed burns, are maturing beautifully, which gives me a lot of satisfaction for a job well done. I’m also quite pleased with the ongoing evolution and success of the Texas Master Naturalist™ program, in which Nature Center staff continues to play a major role.

I’m proud that during my tenure, staff size has doubled from five to ten full-time professionals, and our profile has risen substantially in the community, thanks in large part to the tireless work of the staff and the incredible support of the wonderful Friends of the Nature Center. We celebrated our 50th anniversary in style with multiple events in 2014 and have received several notable awards, including recognition as a Lone Star Land Steward by the Texas Parks and

continued on page 9
LOCATION:
Four miles west of loop I-820 on Jacksboro Highway (Texas 199).

HOURS:
HARDWICKE INTERPRETIVE CENTER:
Daily: 9 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

REFUGE:
Refuge hours
October 1 — April 30
8:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m. daily
May 1 — September 30
Mon. — Fri. 7:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.
Sat. — Sun. 7:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

GATE FEES:
Non-members:
Adults (13-64) - $5
Seniors (65+) - $3
Children (3-12 yrs) - $2
Under 3 years — Free
Active/retired military with valid ID and their families — $1 discount per person.

Please call 817-392-7410 with any additional questions.

FORT WORTH NATURE CENTER & REFUGE

Suzanne Tuttle  FWNCR Manager

HARDWICKE INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Michael Perez  Education Program Manager
Laura Veloz  Naturalist/Volunteer Coord.
Elizabeth Bittner  Naturalist/Education Programming
Chad Etheridge  Water Programs Coordinator
Troy Mullens  Weekend Naturalist
Sheila Johnson  Education Naturalist

REFUGE/NATURAL RESOURCE

Rob Denkhaus  Natural Resource Manager
Michelle Villafranca  Natural Resource Specialist
Nicholas Griffin  Natural Resource Technician
Nic Martinez  Natural Resource Technician

CUSTOMER SERVICE/GATE

Ann Hamman  Office Manager
Nina Francis  Customer Service Assistants
Susie Harrison
DeeAnn McGinnis

FORT WORTH NATURE CENTER:
www.fwnaturecenter.org

BLUESTEM NEWS:
Sharon McKone  Editor-in-Chief
Rosemarie Hayward  Layout & Graphics

FONC BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Chris Smith, President
Lynda Gearheart, VP/President-Elect
Marty Leonard, Past President
Mark Jones, Treasurer
Michelle Schneider, Recording Secretary
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Staff:
Laura Wood, Executive Director
Lucinda Lewis, Bookkeeper

P & R Advisory Board Rep.:
Chase Dustin, ex officio

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Chase Dustin, ex officio
I want to thank the Friends of the Nature Center for giving me the honor, privilege, and sometimes challenge of serving as president for the past two years. Thanks should be extended as well to my “friends” on the board of directors and the Nature Center staff, whose dedication and hard work have allowed us to accomplish great endeavors. Together, we have made a lot of improvements, raised some money, celebrated our 50th, and recently had a fun and successful Buffalo Boogie.

You will not be able to get rid of me completely as I want to stay involved and helpful. I hope I will continue to see some of our visions become reality.

Kari Landry and Laura Harrison are both retiring from the board in July. On behalf of the board, thank you for your service to FONC and the Nature Center. Kari first got involved with the Nature Center after she and her husband, Todd, moved nearby. We nabbed her as soon as we could, and she gave her all to the membership committee and several events during her time on the board. She has been a most welcome addition, and we are sorry to lose her.

Laura Harrison, daughter of long-time respected member Murray James, has made her own lasting mark on the Nature Center. She has known the Nature Center all her life but has been involved more recently in a number of areas, most significantly as treasurer and head of the finance committee. Somehow, that seems to be a position that is hard to fill, but Laura jumped right in and took on the responsibility. She has helped keep us financially sound and on track in spite of many requests and challenges. We will miss Kari and Laura and wish them the best in their post-FONC lives.

The main thrust of my column is to recognize and say thanks to our retiring manager, Suzanne Tuttle. Suzanne has worked at the Nature Center for 23 years, as manager for 11. I would like to take a little credit for her outstanding stewardship of our precious resource since I was on the search committee when she became manager. However, all the credit goes to Suzanne for her leadership of the staff and also with FONC. Her knowledge and history of the Nature Center is going to be greatly missed, but she assures us she will still be around as a volunteer. She attended many of our meetings and, in spite of our many demands on her time, always came through with whatever was needed. To say we will miss her is an understatement, but we will always remember her loyalty and caring for a place she loves and treasures. Our mission to preserve, protect, and conserve in perpetuity has undoubtedly been what Suzanne has provided, and we will always be grateful to her and for her. Her legacy will live on.

Marty Leonard
FONC President
I
n 1993, Suzanne Tuttle started her first year at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge as a park naturalist, having earned two degrees, one in biology and one in horticulture. That year also marked my junior year of college, majoring in public relations and journalism.

Because one of my courses required the publication of three feature stories, I turned to one of my favorite places for material: the Nature Center. That’s when I first met Suzanne. “Come on out this week, Chris, and we’ll have plenty of material for you to write about,” she said to this novice writer in her customarily encouraging manner.

It was a sunny Saturday and the first day of Operation Earth, a project to encourage volunteer outdoor participation. Suzanne was leading a number of youths in clearing scraggy trees and invasive shrubs taking over part of the prairie and discouraging animals like the red-tailed fox from making a home. I watched her sweat while clearing brush and heard her patiently answer numerous questions, explaining the marking patterns found on an ornate turtle they ran across, pointing out a nearby armadillo den, and identifying a variety of cacti. Clearly, here was an enthusiastic woman who had great knowledge about the outdoor environment and wasn’t afraid of hard work.

This was Suzanne in her element, teaching children and college students (like me) alike. I remember leaving the interview with a comment: “Suzanne, you have one of the best jobs in the world.” Her response: “You are so right, Chris. I am very fortunate.” She added, “My dad and uncle would take my sisters and me to the Nature Center in the ‘60s, and so it’s kind of come full circle for me to come back and actually work here.”

Flash forward more than two decades. Suzanne was promoted to natural resource manager and eventually became Nature Center manager. She evolved into a beloved manager and mentor, excelled as a city administrator, and led stewardship of this wild, beautiful place into a growing destination. My own interest in the Nature Center grew, leading me to volunteer for a few years and eventually serve on the Friends board, becoming president-elect in 2014.

Life has a funny way of bringing people like Suzanne and me together, working in support of a place we both hold dear. Every now and then, I still tell her that she has one of the best jobs in the world, and she still says in reply: “You are so right, Chris. I am very fortunate.” Always, Suzanne is telling the Nature Center story. For a 50th anniversary commemorative video, she described why people need to experience the Nature Center. “You can really feel like you are out in the wilderness,” she said, smiling. “All you can hear are birds calling and armadillos rustling in the leaves.”

This year, Suzanne Tuttle retires after nearly 24 years of service to the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. The well wishes and tributes are already starting to pour in. Her list of accomplishments is long, too long to list here. Suffice to say, she leaves on a high note. Finally, while we all love Suzanne and have benefitted from her leadership, how lucky I am to have had the privilege to watch her, work alongside her, and admire her as life has brought us both full circle.

Chris Smith
FONC President-Elect

“Coming Full Circle

“To complete a cycle of transition, returning to where one started after gaining experience or exploring other things.” – Wiktionary definition of full circle

(L to R) John Lampe, Wayne Clark, and Suzanne Tuttle in the early 1990s.
Photo by FWNCR Staff
Well Wishers

“Throughout her tenure, Suzanne has exhibited a compassionate commitment to the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. She consistently undertook her responsibilities with utmost integrity and the highest ethics. Her focus was always on the long-term best interests of the Nature Center. She had a great deal of respect and appreciation for the Friends and volunteers who gave their time and talents in support of this natural treasure. She was always a great counsel to me on various matters ranging from land stewardship to wildlife management. To paraphrase Charles Goodnight, Suzanne ‘never shirked a duty…splendid behavior.’ I consider it an honor and blessing to have been able to work alongside her during her illustrious career.”

Richard Zavala, Director
Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department

“I’ve known and worked with Suzanne for 19 years. She has combined the knowledge of the ecologist, the passion of the educator, and the sensibility of the administrator in such a way as to always provide the maximum benefit to the Nature Center.”

Rob Denkhaus, Natural Resource Manager
Nature Center Staff

“Suzanne has a passion for knowledge and what transpires in the natural world. She is excited to be able to impart that knowledge to others and truly cares about those who cross her path. As one who took the Nature Center to another level during her tenure as manager, Suzanne believed in doing what was best for the Nature Center. She has been a true asset and has left her imprint on this place we call the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.”

Anne Hamman, Customer Service Supervisor
Nature Center Staff

“During the years I have worked with Suzanne, she has taught me much about the ecology of North Central Texas. She has been the keeper of the history of this park and has generously shared stories to preserve the connection between the early days of the Nature Center up to the present. During her tenure, the Nature Center is closer to seeing the Boardwalk and Cross Timbers levee projects become a reality, among many other endeavors. Reflecting on the 50-year anniversary of the park, which we celebrated under Suzanne’s leadership, I thank her for laying the groundwork for the next 50 years.”

Michelle Villafranca, Natural Resource Specialist
Nature Center Staff

“Suzanne, congratulations on your upcoming retirement. You have proven to be a major asset to the Nature Center and the staff you have cultivated over the years. The Nature Center has been home to me for many years, and you have performed superbly as you ran it. Through my time, you have come along with me on many personal highlights, such as my wedding and birth of my children, and have checked on us as a family. This is a testament of your involvement and support for your employees and how that support does not stop at 5 p.m. or the weekends. I will miss your leadership, smile, and laugh on an everyday basis. Enjoy your well-deserved infinite amount of ‘Use it or Use it’ hours.”

Michael Perez, Education Program Manager
Nature Center Staff

“When I think of Suzanne, I think of a master juggler. I’ve watched her over the years manage many disparate entities, people, and organizations, balancing the needs of the city with grace and aplomb. She’s had to wear so many hats and has done so tremendously well in my opinion. I honestly don’t know when she sleeps! It’s been an honor to work closely with her and call her a friend.”

Laura Wood, Executive Director
Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center

Pointing to harvester ants.
Photo by FWNCR Staff

July—September 2016
3rd Quarter Edition
I am pleased to announce the selection of Robert (Rob) Denkhaus as the next manager for the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.

Rob succeeds Suzanne Tuttle, who retired at the end of June 2016 after 11 excellent years as manager.

Rob retains a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He joined the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge staff in 1997 as a program naturalist, soon became education supervisor, and, in 2006, became natural resource manager. Rob’s accomplishments at the Nature Center range from originating the popular Canoe Fest and Bison Feeding Hay Ride programs to guiding the Nature Center’s feral hog control program from concept to an internationally recognized model for effective and humane control of invasive species. Rob has been an instructor for the Texas Master Naturalist™ program since 1998 and is a frequent presenter at local, state, and national conferences featuring diverse subjects such as feral hog control, bison management, alligator management, and urban wildlife biology.

Rob began his transition as Nature Center manager June 11, 2016, and will assume full responsibility July 1, 2016.

Please join me in congratulating Rob on his well-deserved promotion to Nature Center manager.

Reginald Hurd
Assistant Director – Recreation
Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department

UPCOMING FONC-SPONSORED ECOTOURISM TRIPS

(Trips and dates are tentative)

January 6 – 8, 2017—Annual Whooping Crane Trip

August 25 – 29, 2017—Big Bend National Park

November 11 – 19, 2017—Costa Rica
Birds, sea turtles, whales, cloud forests, tropical rain and dry forests, mountains, volcanos, sea shores, monkeys, sloths, and more

Watch your email and future newsletters for more information!
Marty Leonard loves to watch birds. It’s one of many reasons she has been deeply involved with the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. Audubon Texas recently honored her for her many contributions to the Nature Center and beyond.

Marty is one of four women who received the 2016 Terry Hershey Award from Audubon’s Texas Women in Conservation program. The other honorees are Janice Bezanson, executive director of Texas Conservation Alliance; Deborah Clark, co-owner of the Birdwell and Clark Ranch in Henrietta; and Ann Hamilton, Houston conservation philanthropist. The award is named for Terry Hershey, who has contributed to significant conservation projects in Houston, Texas, and nationally for more than 50 years.

“We’re thrilled to honor Marty Leonard and these outstanding Texas conservationists,” says Brian Trusty, executive director of Audubon Texas. “They exemplify the very best in Texas conservation leadership.”

As a relative newcomer to Fort Worth, I had heard about Marty Leonard but had never met her. I got that chance when I produced a video about her for the awards program, which took place in Fort Worth in early March. I interviewed several people about her accomplishments.

Mayor Betsy Price talked to me about the Leonard family’s legacy of supporting the Fort Worth community for several generations. Todd Landry, CEO at Lena Pope, gushed about her more than 55-year service on the board of directors and her support for the children’s nature garden at Lena Pope’s early childhood center. Suzanne Tuttle at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge told me she is one of the most deeply committed volunteers they’ve ever had. Brian Trusty explained that the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center may not have gotten off the ground without Leonard’s early support. And because of her deep commitment to water conservation, Marty even ran for the Tarrant County Regional Water District Board, a post to which she was re-elected in 2015.

I finally met her in person at the Nature Center, where a video crew and I followed her and Nature Center manager Suzanne Tuttle around as they did some birding, one of Marty’s favorite pastimes. Her knowledge of birds and bird calls is impressive. When we ventured into a more remote part of the park to view the regional champion green ash tree for the North Central Texas region, we had to hike in on a little-used trail. On our way back, Marty casually picked up the occasional discarded bottle or can, leaving the trail cleaner than she found it. “That’s just the way she is,” Suzanne said with a smile.

I ran into Marty Leonard again recently, finding her in the thick of things at the Nature Center’s Buffalo Boogie on May 7. With a big smile and a sparkle in her piercing blue eyes, she greeted volunteers and visitors, helping organize medals for the awards program and making sure everything ran smoothly. Events like Buffalo Boogie depend on the energy of volunteers, exemplified by Marty as she cheered on the runners as they took off and then again as they crossed the finish line.

Congratulations to Marty Leonard for a well-deserved honor!


Lydia Saldaña
This spring’s rains have caused significant flooding at the Nature Center, leading to setbacks for the Nature Center’s two large projects: replacing the Lotus Marsh Boardwalk and repairing the Cross Timbers Levee. Boardwalk replacement looked to be on track early in the year as the contractors, the Fain Group, installed a coffer dam and pumps to remove water from the project area. Hundreds of fish were stranded as the water level dropped within the dammed area, but many were saved as Nature Center Technicians Nic Martinez and Nick Griffin slogged through the mud to move them back to safety.

Just as the Fain crew was completing installation of a rock access “road” across the project site, the rains came, and the water began to rise. All equipment was removed from the site before the water could rise above the coffer dam and flood the site, but the Fain Group suffered a multiple-week delay. By the first week of May, water levels had fallen to the point that coffer dam damage could be assessed and repaired, and the contractors returned, removing the water and preparing to install the piers for the new boardwalk.

Just downstream from the boardwalk project, the Cross Timbers Levee fared no better as flood waters topped the levee yet again. Since project planning was initiated in 2014, it seems the levee has been underwater more often than it has been exposed. Flood-induced erosion has modified the area numerous times, requiring new site surveys and additional soil compaction testing. Freese and Nichols, Inc., the project’s engineers and planners, is currently trying to schedule the next round of surveying and testing.

Winter and spring flooding have led us to look forward to the hot, dry months of summer so these projects can move forward unabated. Hopefully, Mother Nature will look kindly on us.
Canoe Fest Is Back!

For an unfortunate amount of time, Canoe Fest at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge became Canoe Rest. With the lack of rain over the past few years, we experienced tough times, which forced us to temporarily postpone this program. Drought conditions settled in, and the sun soaked up the remaining water faster than you can say, “Marco! Polo!” Spring changed this trend with high amounts of rain. The river is at its full capacity, and we are ready to resume Canoe Fest. You can take advantage of this program every 3rd Sunday of the month from noon – 4 p.m. We will provide the paddles, personal flotation devices, and canoes. This event is first-come, first-served. Floating down the West Fork of the Trinity will provide you with opportunities to see aquatic birds and beaver lodges and experience the tranquility that comes with being on the water. For questions regarding Canoe Fest, please call the Hardwicke Interpretive Center at (817) 392-7410.

Michael Perez
Education Program Manager

Seasons...continued from page 1

Wildlife Department in 2009 and designation as a Lone Star Legacy Park in 2015 and Frontline Park in 2016 (see the article on page 12).

Of course, challenges remain and will always be with us. We can’t control the weather or the changing climate, which at times has kept large areas of the park underwater for months or dried out to a crispy brown. Finding adequate funding to make our big ideas happen will also continue to be a challenge, with so many other worthy projects in the pipeline all around the city. However, I have complete confidence in the ability of Rob and his staff members to carry us forward to even greater accomplishments.

We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Rick Pratt, Tom Wood, John Karges, Wayne Clark, and Roy Wilson set the stage for me, and I hope I’ve done right by them. I thank them for their guidance and am most grateful that I have had such a wonderful group of co-workers and park supporters lifting me up. I think a quote from the wise Chinese philosopher Confucius best sums up my feelings about my tenure: “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” I hope you will have the opportunity to experience that same level of joy.

Suzanne Tuttle
Nature Center Manager

Nature Center visitors enjoy a Canoe Fest paddle on a beautiful day.
Photo by FWNCR Staff
Summer Learning at the Nature Center

Still looking for something for your kids to do this summer? The Nature Center will be offering Summer Natural History Adventures during July and the first week of August for children entering kindergarten through 8th grade, with the exception of children entering 1st grade. Our 1st graders have already had their fun in the sun during June investigating historical sites preserved in the Nature Center and exploring their artistic skills with the inspiration of nature. July kicks off with our special outdoor skills camp for 7th and 8th graders. This experience includes an overnight stay at the park, canoeing, orienteering, and other camping activities. Sessions for 2nd through 6th grade will focus on reptiles, flying animals, conservation at the Nature Center, caring for our education animals, and more depending on the child’s age and interests. Registration is ongoing. Please see our website at http://www.fwnaturecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SNHABrochure2016.pdf for a full Summer Natural History Adventures brochure or call 817-392-7410 to register.

The Nature Center is also proud to host the Trinity Rivers Institute for its annual Waters to the Sea: Trinity River training program this summer in both June and July. This program assists educators in upper elementary schools and middle schools with teaching topics related to our local river systems. Hands-on, field-based activities are combined with multimedia learning to ensure students understand the importance of protecting our watersheds and how they can have a direct impact on damaging or protecting one of our most valuable resources. The workshop also introduces educators to the new Texas Aquatic Science Curriculum with Texas Parks and Wildlife. The Nature Center has proven to be the perfect location for this program in the past due to our ready access to the West Fork of the Trinity River and the diversity of plants and wildlife that can be observed alongside this critical ecosystem.

Elizabeth Bittner
Education Naturalist
Photo Archival Storage Program Underway

We need your Nature Center photos! Photos provide valuable information about the people and events that contribute to an organization’s history. In the past year, an effort has been underway by the Friends of the Nature Center’s PR committee to establish a method to store photos of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.

Several weeks prior to the April 14 board meeting, PR Committee Chair Chris Smith and I were engaged in a conversation during which the FONC’s need for a photographic image archival system emerged. On learning that our son, Mike, has been helpful to my wife and me in arranging and storing travel images, Chris inquired if he may be interested in assuming that responsibility for the FONC. Mike agreed to institute a system in which Nature Center and FONC images could be deposited, cataloged, reviewed, and retrieved for future use by anyone with password authority.

We are inviting interested participants to send Mike their images for storage processing. Photos in any format may be sent by either electronic or U.S. mail as follows: Mike Shepherd, 3216 Preston Hollow Road, Fort Worth, TX 76109-2051, or e-mail at rmshepherd@gmail.com. Please include the following information with your photo: location, date, short description of photo contents (include names of any people in the photo), and name and contact information of photographer. Questions may be addressed to either Mike or Chris.

FONC members take many great photos. We appreciate your participation in the effort to record the history of the FONC and the Nature Center.

Cathy Mueller
Chair, FONC PR Committee
Rick Shepherd
Past President
The Nature Center staff is pleased to announce that the park has been recognized with state and national awards this year. The Texas Recreation and Park Society designated the Nature Center as a Lone Star Legacy Park at its state meeting in Galveston in March. A Lone Star Legacy Park is one that holds special prominence in the local community and the state. To qualify for consideration, the park must have endured the test of time and become iconic to those who have visited, played, and rested on its grounds. Nominated parks must be at least 50 years old and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The property represents distinctive design and/or construction.
- The park is associated with historic events or sites.
- The park is associated with events specific to the local community/state.
- The park is home to unique natural features.

The Nature Center joins the Fort Worth Botanic Garden as the second Lone Star Legacy Park for the city. The park was also chosen as a Frontline Park for 2016 by the City Parks Alliance (CPA), an independent, nationwide non-profit membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks. The Frontline Parks program promotes inspiring examples of urban park excellence, innovation, and stewardship across the country.

The Nature Center will be featured on CPA’s homepage for the month of October 2016 (http://www.cityparksalliance.org/index.php). Each Frontline Park story will show how parks and their stewards are in the forefront of creating healthier, more sustainable cities and how these park projects are succeeding in tough economic times.

Suzanne Tuttle
Nature Center Manager
American Bison Named National Mammal

The bison has been an American icon for centuries. In April, Congress voted to memorialize this national treasure through passage of the National Bison Legacy Act, naming the American bison as the United States’ national mammal. According to an announcement from the National Bison Association, the National Bison Legacy Act is the culmination of four years of effort by the Vote Bison Coalition, a group of more than 60 interested organizations, tribes, and businesses led by the Inter Tribal Buffalo Council, National Bison Association, and Wildlife Conservation Society. The group’s goal has been to officially commemorate the ecological, cultural, historical, and economic contribution of bison.

The Nature Center is home to one of the few bison herds in the U.S. The bison are located in pastures with roadside access from roughly mid-March through mid-October and may be viewable from the road during those months. Plan to come to the Nature Center soon to see this natural – and local – treasure!

Stop by the Nature Center to check out our bison herd. Photo by FWNCR Staff

Trails & Treats is SKULLking Toward Us

It’s not too soon to get out your calendar and set a reminder for Trails & Treats 2016. All of your favorite activities, from hiking the trails for treats to kids’ activities and games, will be available. We encourage you to save the date of October 27, 2016, and join us in this FREE and fun event for your family. If you have not visited the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, this will be a great opportunity to come and check us out. As usual, we want your kids to dress up and show off their costumes. If you are interested in helping or have questions about our event, please call us at (817) 392-7410.

“Sullivan” from Monsters, Inc. tests his skill at ring toss. Photo by Daryl and Brandon Marling
As I registered to participate in the 2016 Buffalo Boogie, memories of past Buffalo Boogie events rushed through my head. After all, this was about the 10th time I was signing up to participate.

My children had grown up participating in the event. Some years, it was just me or me and my husband, but, rain or shine, we participated in Buffalo Boogie every year. It was an event that had become a family tradition.

Although I am not much of an athlete, I sometimes participate in 5K events to raise funds for special causes and stay in shape. What I have found by participating in these events is a feeling of accomplishment at having completed an event and raising funds for something special.

When I registered for my first Buffalo Boogie, I was fairly new to the Fort Worth area and was trying to find activities for the entire family. I came across a flyer for Buffalo Boogie and remember thinking this event had something for all of us. I looked forward to running the 5K on the Nature Center grounds. My husband and kids couldn’t wait to see the buffalo. In addition, we could enjoy vendors, food, and music. An added bonus was seeing (and petting) all the dogs who participated in the event.

Buffalo Boogie has enriched my life in a myriad of ways:

- **Really enjoying a 5K.** Running a 5K is hard – at least for me. I usually appreciate the end result but don’t look forward to it. This is one race I anticipate every year. The event is on a mostly shaded and paved track. You can hear the birds sing and see the trees and lake while you walk or run. It is just a fantastic location for a race.

- **Awareness of a valuable natural resource in the Fort Worth area.** There is no question that North Texas is growing. To find areas of quiet solitude is getting more difficult. Since I became aware of the Nature Center, I’ve visited several times to hike and take photos. Sometimes, I bring family or friends or go on my own to enjoy nature and think.

- **Developing relationships.** When we first started participating in the 5K event, we didn’t know many people in the area. During the first few races, I saw people I knew from work or professional associations. It was an opportunity to get to know people outside the professional environment.

- **Building a family tradition.** Since that first race we attended several years ago, we haven’t missed a Buffalo Boogie. It’s something we make certain is marked on our calendar.

- **Education on North Texas wildlife and plant life.** Since I didn’t grow up in North Texas, Buffalo Boogie introduced me to the interesting species of wildlife and plant life native to this area.

- **An opportunity to get involved.** Because of our participation in Buffalo Boogie, I joined the Friends of the Nature Center and now serve on the FONC board and PR committee. I get to work with some great people and support the Nature Center all year long.

When I think back on the day I registered to participate in my first Buffalo Boogie, I had no idea I was signing up for so much more than just a one-time event. More than 10 years later, I can say it was a decision that truly changed my life for the better.

*Cathy Mueller*

FONC Board Member
The Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge and Friends of the Nature Center wish to extend our sincere thanks to the following sponsors, vendors, and volunteers for their donations of money, goods, time, talent, and parking lots for this year’s Buffalo Boogie. This year’s run was a great success. We could not have done it without you!

Buffalo Boogie 2016 Acknowledgements

Armstrong Foundation
Tom Armstrong
Brian Barnard & Lauren Munselle – Haynes and Boone, LLP
Claudia Blalock
Botanic Research Institute of Texas
Robert Briggs
Kate & Lane Britain
Shannon Bull – Texas Custom Sportswear
Lon Burnam
Dave & Mary Burris
Cabela’s
Camp Gladiator
Caple-Shaw Industries, Inc.
Caricatures by Amy Gorman & Joe Myers
Debra Carroll
Louise Britt Carvey
CCC Legacy Chapter 123
Theresa Chenoweth
Chiro – Now
Cam & Judith Coberly
Costco Warehouse #1173
Costco Wholesale
Evelyn Crochets
Cross Timbers Texas Master Naturalists™
Gale Cupp
Wilson & Julia Daggs
Eddie Owens Trucking
Falconry – Bob Smith
Carol Feyen
First Baptist Church of Lakeside
FONC Gift Shop & Memberships
Fort Worth Audubon Society
Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge
G’s Brunch Truck
Lynda Gearheart
Charlie Geren
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Health Source Chiropractic of Saginaw
The Indian Oaks
J&B Erectors, Inc.
Gail James – Wild Bird Center of Fort Worth
Murray James
Lakeside Church of God
Marty Leonard
Marsha McLaughlin
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The Miles Foundation Community Fund
Mo the Bison – PlainsCapital Bank
Molyneaux Foundation
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Morningstar Partners – Tim Petrus
Morris Foundation
Fulton & Trina Murray
National Audubon Society, Inc.
Native Plant Society of Texas – North Central Chapter
Nature’s Designs (Jewelry)
The Orchard Event Venue & Retreat
Eddie & Jodelle Owens – Eddie Owens Trucking
Path to Wellness Chiropractic
Laura Penn
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Carol Wood
Laura Wood

July—September 2016
3rd Quarter Edition
Earth Day BioBlitz at Tandy Hills Natural Area

Nature Center staff celebrated Earth Day (as well as several days leading up to it and the day after) participating in the Tandy Hills Natural Area (THNA) BioBlitz. The BioBlitz, an event organized to raise awareness of biodiversity and the THNA host area, was the result of a partnership between the Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area, Texas Wesleyan University, Teaming with Wildlife: True to Texas, Texas Nature Trackers Program, and City of Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department, which includes the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. Financial support for the event was provided by a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s (TPWD) Conservation License Plate Grant program and a myriad of local sponsors.

Experts in the identification of a vast array of plants and animals came together to search the hills that are the area’s namesake. These experts represented a variety of prestigious local and statewide organizations, including TPWD, Texas Christian University, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, Weatherford College, Cross-timbers Connection, DFW Herpetological Society, Fort Worth Audubon Society, Native Prairie Association of Texas, Native Plant Society of Texas, The Nature Conservancy, Cross Timbers and North Texas Chapters of the Texas Master Naturalists™, and more. These experts were accompanied by hundreds of enthusiastic novices eager to see and learn more about the diversity of THNA.

Using iNaturalist (www.inaturalist.org) to log species observations, these amateur and professional naturalists collected more than 3,200 observations of a whopping 627 species using a wide variety of methods. Insects were collected by means of sweep nets and pitfall traps (for ants). Trail cameras documented bird and mammal species presence. Cover boards provided refuge for reptiles and a variety of invertebrates. High-tech acoustic monitors were used to document bat species, and mist nets captured and tagged birds and bats. Additional data continues to be added to the project as the experts complete analysis of their finds. We hope to reach 4,000 total observations by the time all the data has been entered.

The success, both in terms of data collection and public engagement, of the THNA BioBlitz means it will be repeated, and plans are already being developed to conduct a BioBlitz at the Nature Center in the near future. Be on the lookout for details on how you can be involved in these fun, educational, and exciting events!

Rob Denkhaus
Natural Resource Manager
Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge

2016 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Saturday July 9, 11:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Hardwicke Interpretive Center
Murray A. James Auditorium
9601 Fossil Ridge Road
Fort Worth, TX 76135

Join us for this “drinks and snacks” meeting, say goodbye to Suzanne, meet the new Board, and receive the FONC’s “State of the Union”

Please RSVP to FONC OFFICE by Noon, July 8, 2016
817.392.7410
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ANTS

Ants. We see them almost everywhere – on the go, on trees, in our yards, on the ground, and even in our houses. Ant scientists, or myrmecologists, estimate thousands of different kinds of ants exist, with maybe more yet to be discovered.

So what makes ants so interesting? Besides being small, ants, like bees and termites, belong to a group of very social insects that work, live, and depend on all other members of their colony to survive. An ant colony is mostly composed of female workers, whose responsibilities vary from searching for food and taking care of offspring to defending the nest from possible predators. But most of the activity in the colony revolves around one single ant – the queen, whose main job is to lay eggs while her children make sure everything is provided to her.

An ant’s colony might have a few dozen to thousands of ants living and moving in a labyrinth of rooms, so communication is highly important for their survival. The ant’s main sensing organ is its antenna. It is used predominantly for smelling, tasting, and touching as well as picking up information about temperature, moisture/humidity, and texture. With the help of antennas, ants can smell the chemicals called pheromones that other ants leave on the trail to follow.

An ant’s world might be small, but it’s full of fascinating facts. Ants are also fun to watch. Just remember, ants can either bite or sting to protect themselves or their nest.

A-maze. Can you guide these working ants to the queen?
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