



February 2019 Newsletter

Welcome to the Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FOSANA) e-newsletter! We share natural areas news, the Friends' efforts, and opportunities to get involved in volunteering or educational programs at San Antonio's natural areas parks. Please check our website, www.fosana.org, for periodic updates and program information.

Feral Hogs: A Problem for Nature and a Problem for People

When walking on park trails, you may often see whole sections of soil that have been dug up. Although these areas may remind you of a tilled garden, they are actually signs of the negative impact of feral hogs, a destructive species that has increased in numbers in the last decade. Wild hogs, also known as wild boar, razorback, piney woods rooter, and Russian or Eurasian boars, are descendants of domestic pigs that were first introduced to North America as a food source in the 1500s by early explorers and settlers. Some escaped or were released by owners and are now considered an invasive species as they have continued to increase their distribution in North America.

Wild hogs have been featured in [news reports](#) of damage to San Antonio homeowners' properties. Moreover, the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) (USDA) notes that they cause severe damage to natural resources. The effects of feral hogs cascade throughout the ecosystem, affecting not only common flora and fauna, but also endangered species.

Below are some of the devastating effects on our own natural systems:

1. They compete with wildlife for food and habitat and they prey on small birds, reptiles, and mammals.
2. Hogs dig up tree roots, trample the ground, and create erosion channels, disturbance that affects entry of water into soils, aquifer recharge, and nutrient cycling. Their digging can destabilize wetlands, springs, and creeks. The fecal material of hogs near creeks and rivers can also contaminate water and increase the risk of disease for humans, wildlife, and livestock.
3. Wild hogs contribute to the spread of invasive plants by spreading seeds on their coats. Moreover, feral hog digs and wallows create disturbed areas, easy places for invasive plants to colonize.
4. Feral hogs negatively impact forests and woodlands not only by digging but also by eating acorns, nuts, grasses, forbs, fruit, and seeds. Feral hog activity thus can destroy seedlings and saplings, limit new tree growth, and alter the canopy composition. For example, think of the detrimental effect that feral hogs have on an endangered species like the golden-cheeked warbler, a songbird that depends on canopy cover.

The City of San Antonio [Animal Care Services](#) has suggestions for homeowners on how to control feral hogs. While hogs will generally avoid people, they should be giving adequate space when encountered, as should all wild animals.



Feral hog rooting damage at Crownridge Canyon Natural Area

Upcoming Natural Areas Events

- **Starting Out Wild: Living in a Tree (ages 1-3)**
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, February 1 & 15 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Discover the many animals that make trees their home! While some build nests, others live in holes or even in a tree's trunk! Most classes take place outdoors and indoors. RSVP required. Visit fosana.org to reserve your spot. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, or \$6 per family. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov.
- **Drop in Family Fun: Wonderfully Wild**
 - 10:00-12:00 a.m. | Saturday, February 2 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Southern Wildlife Rehabilitation will be on site with their education ambassador animals to discuss animal adaptations and other fun facts. No reservations needed.
- **Vermicomposting for Beginners** (recommended ages: 5 & up)
 - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, February 9 | Friedrich Wilderness Park (ages 6 & up)
Learn how you can recycle your kitchen scraps into excellent soil for your plants—Mother Nature's perfect recycling plan! Create a bucket worm bin system for indoor use and train your red wiggler worms to do the work. Fee covers all supplies, including red wiggler worms and small storage. One set of materials per family. Visit fosana.org to reserve your spot.
- **Growing Up Wild: What Lives in a Tree?** (ages 4-7)
 - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Wednesday, February 20 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Discover the many animals that make trees their home! Growing Up Wild builds on a child's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Activities are designed to provide an early foundation and appreciation of nature.

All Programs (unless otherwise noted): RSVP required. Suggested donation: \$3 per person,

or \$6 per family. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov.

Are you connected to San Antonio Natural Areas on social media?

You can like us on [Facebook](#).
Find us on [Instagram](#) @sanaturalareas.

Are you a member of Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FoSANA)?

Please support FoSANA on the preservation and educational outreach of natural areas around San Antonio by joining or renewing your membership [online](#) today.

Your membership this year will help us continue to

- offer over 400 environmental programs for families and adults at the Natural Areas.
- serve over 14,000 families and adults through education and outreach programs.
- coordinate over 400 volunteer programs and 7,500 volunteer hours supported trail maintenance, habitat conservation and restoration, and native landscapes and gardens.

Plus, when you renew your membership, you'll receive our monthly newsletter that provides updates on natural areas happenings and timely information on upcoming events.

Should you need any assistance or have any questions or comments about your membership, please feel free to email us at friendsofsanaturalareas@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
FoSANA Board

Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas is dedicated to promoting stewardship of San Antonio's Natural Areas, and to the understanding and appreciation of nature through educational and scientific programs.

For the latest updates and more activities, please see the calendar on the FOSANA website.

[Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas Website](#)
