



October 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.

The Essential Life Beneath Us

As we walk on park trails, there are myriad small creatures that we may not always see but that are a vital part of the ecology of the environment. They include isopods, karst invertebrates, bacteria, fungi, [protozoa, nematodes, worms, mollusks, and arthropods](#).

Roly polies, or pillbugs, are isopods and, as crustaceans, are closely related to shrimp. They may roll up into small balls when disturbed and hence their name. Pillbugs [often bury themselves several inches beneath the soil surface to avoid hot, dry conditions](#). However, as gardeners know, pillbugs in moist conditions can be a pest, feeding on small plants and new transplants. Thankfully, there are many organic ways to [manage them in the garden](#). While pillbugs are [sometimes called doodlebugs](#), this is inaccurate; doodlebugs are actually antlion larvae.

Sowbugs are sometimes also mistaken for pillbugs. Sowbugs can be distinguished from pillbugs by their lighter color, two tail extensions, and they do not roll into a ball. However, like pillbugs, sowbugs [scavenge for organic debris](#).



[Bart Drees, Texas A&M University](#)

Another curious group of creatures living beneath us are daddy long legs or harvestmen, members of the order Opiliones. Though harvestmen are in the class Arachnida, they are not spiders, who they resemble because of the four pairs of long, delicate legs. However, harvestmen do not spin webs or build nests, and they lack venom glands and silk glands. Unlike spiders that have six or eight eyes, harvestmen only have

one pair of eyes. Harvestmen have a pair of scent glands that emit two different kinds of secretions. One has a distinct foul smell to warn predators. The second kind of secretion is used to lay a trail, [which may be followed by other harvestmen](#). Eating a wide variety of food, including insects, fecal matter, and fungi, harvestmen are harmless to humans though they may look vicious with their long legs.

One species, Cokendolpher cave harvestman (*Texella cokendolpheri*) is one of nine species on the US Fish & Wildlife Service [endangered species list](#) of karst invertebrates, and is endemic to Texas. Harvestmen were first described by the Robber Baron cave in Alamo Heights, but are also known to occur in other Hill Country caves. The rapid development occurring in Bexar County can affect the habitat of this and other species by altering drainage patterns, increasing pollution, negatively impacting native plant and animal communities, changing nutrient flow, and introducing competition from invasive species.



[Photograph by Dr. Jean Krejca](#) of *Texella tuberculata*
(from a cave in Government Canyon State Natural Area)

Native isopods, karst invertebrates, bacteria, fungi—they all help maintain the integrity of our ecosystem. Without them, who knows the extent of trash that would build up, water that would be blocked up, or just how drastically life would be changed? Far better for all of us to respect, honor and protect native diversity, even when we cannot see it.

Upcoming Events

October

- **Growing Up Wild: Looking at Leaves** (ages 4-7)
 - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Wednesday, October 2 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn to identify leaves by the shapes, sizes, and colors. 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.
- **Starting Out Wild: Clever Spiders** (ages 1-3)
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, October 4 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn all about spiders through stories, songs, and hands-on fun! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child.
- **Poetry in the Park: Monarch Migration** (Recommended: ages 10 & up)
 - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, October 12 | Crownridge Canyon Natural Area
Gemini Ink returns to the great outdoors for a brisk fall event! Learn about the cultural significance of the monarch migration while enjoying the sights and sounds of Crownridge Canyon with experimental poet and songwriter Amalia Ortiz sharing examples of her work with us along the way.
- **Butterfly Walk at Friedrich Wilderness Park**
 - 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Sunday, October 13 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Take a walk with Naturalist Patty Pasztor and discover the diversity of South Texas butterflies while learning how to identify important nectar and larval host plants.

Sponsored by Latino Outdoors.

- **Growing Up Wild: Looking at Leaves** (ages 4-7)
 - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Thursday, October 17 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn to identify leaves by the shapes, sizes, and colors. 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.

- **Starting Out Wild: Clever Spiders** (ages 1-3)
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, October 18 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn all about spiders through stories, songs, and hands-on fun! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child. Most classes take place outdoors.

- **Nature Picture Book Picnic** (Recommended ages: 5-8)
 - 10:00-11:30 a.m. | Saturday, October 19 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Bring a snack and join us for a picture book picnic with children's author Catherine Stier. We'll begin at the outdoor classroom with a nature picture book storytime. Then we'll head on a brief walk through Friedrich Park, seeking inspiration to create our own picture books about the natural world. Next, we'll write and illustrate our own story or informational book about animals, flowers, trees or anything in nature (additional nature-themed picture books will be available for parent/children to browse that day). Finally, we'll munch on the snacks we packed while sharing the books we wrote that day. Take the book you created home to remember your special day at the park. Catherine Stier is a Texas Master Naturalist and the author of IF I WERE A PARK RANGER and several other award-winning children's picture books.

- **Bat Walk at Medina River Natural Area**
 - 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. | Friday, October 25 | Medina River Natural Area
Enjoy an interactive bat experience organized by San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department at the beautiful Medina River Natural Area. The event combines a bat walk with Park Naturalists, a craft activity, and live bats presented by Southern Wildlife Rehabilitation. Using an echo meter, families will identify bats by their call. Meet at the pavilion. Crafts and live bats: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Bat Walk: 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. FREE

- **Art in the Park at Elmendorf Lake Park**
 - 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. | Saturday, October 26 | Elmendorf Lake Park
Drop in and participate in hands-on art activities inspired by nature and the outdoors. Enjoy a special printmaking activity, paint on amate (bark) paper, paint with cochineal, and make a clay pinch pot. No reservations needed. FREE.

All programs (unless otherwise noted): RSVP required. Visit fosana.org to reserve your spot. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, \$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.

Membership Update

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](#)
