



March 2020 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 **Big Give** is a **24-hour** day of giving that will take place **Midnight-Midnight | March 26, 2020**

DO YOU LOVE SAN ANTONIO'S NATURAL AREA PARKS?

ASK friends and family who enjoy and appreciate the parks to contribute to Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas. FOSANA, a nonprofit, uses your donations to support environmental education, stewardship, and preservation.

CREATE momentum before March 26. Share the FOSANA Big Give page on social media and tell your community why the Natural Areas are important to you.

ACQUIRE sponsors for matching gifts or incentives. The Big Give is a great opportunity to entice donors to have a bigger impact on our organization by offering matching donations!

FOSANA.ORG

#BigGive2020





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

The FoSANA Board has been blessed to have many dedicated members over the past 20 years. They have included many Master Naturalists, but also individuals with formal training in Botany, Zoology, Environmental Planning, Economics, Accounting, and Law.

But Time has taken a toll. Our Board is now small—**we are looking for dedicated individuals to contribute to our mission.**

What do we do? We raise money through membership fees and donations, and work closely with San Antonio Parks' Natural Areas staff to invest that money in:

- Bus Reimbursement funds to eliminate barriers for schools visiting the SA Natural Areas
- Monthly Early Childhood Education Programs such as Starting Out Wild and Growing Up Wild
- Guest Speakers to provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers
- Building Natural Areas facilities
- Improvement of Natural Areas Trails through grant acquisition
- Publicizing Parks' events
- Maintaining our Website, fosana.org to facilitate communication with our citizens

Would YOU like to make contributions to these services ?

- We need individuals who have special interests and skills in
 - Accounting
 - Advertising & Marketing/Social Media
 - Community Outreach
 - Educational Program Support
 - Environmental Grant Writing
 - Natural Area Improvement

Board Members must invest one night a month in oversight and planning and some weekends or weekdays in support of Natural Area programs. These activities occur primarily in San Antonio's northwest Natural Areas.

If you are serious and want to make a contribution, please contact us at <https://fosana.org> or <https://fosana.org/contact/>. Under the Contact tab you will find our mailing address or you may use the provided E-Mail Form. Let us know your area of interest and/or expertise and ask any questions you may have. We will answer every inquiry.

We Serve our Natural Areas – You can too.

UPCOMING MARCH EVENTS

- **Drop in: Nature Picture Book with author Catherine Stier** (all ages)
 - 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. | Saturday, March 7 | Friedrich Wilderness ParkInspired by the park's natural beauty, kids can create their own nature-themed, illustrated picture books at this drop-by event. We'll have all materials available in the pavilion, as well as a selection of nature picture books about bats, armadillos and other wildlife for families to share together. Award-winning children's author Catherine Stier will present a lively story time featuring her book IF I WERE A PARK RANGER and a Master Naturalist will lead two brief

guided hikes to spark ideas for your own title. Bring a snack or lunch to enjoy at the picnic area and take the book you created home to remember your special day at the park! FREE. No reservations needed

- **Author presentation: 11:00 a.m.**
- **Guided Hikes: 10:15 am & 11:30 a.m.**

- **Growing Up Wild: Seed Need** (ages 4-7)
 - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Thursday, March 12 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Explore seeds as food for people and animals, and learn how animals spread seeds! Growing Up Wild builds on a child's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. RSVP required.

- **Photography Walkabout** (Ages 13 & up)
 - 9:30 am-2:30 p.m. | Saturday, March 14 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
 - Connect with nature and sharpen your photography skills. Led by local photographer Nancy Cavender-Garcia, this class is designed for beginners and advanced photographers and combines photographic instruction with an informative in-the-field nature photography session. Workshop includes boxed lunch. Suggested donation: \$15. For additional details, questions, or to register, email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov

- **Starting Out Wild: Seeds We Need!** (ages 1-3)
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, March 20 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn about seeds we eat 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. RSVP required.

- **Native Plant Walk with Botanist Bill Carr**
 - 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, March 21 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Enjoy a guided hike with Bill Carr of Acme Botanical, and learn more about native plants of the Texas Hill Country. The walk will include uneven surfaces—be sure to adequately prepare with sturdy shoes and plenty of water. RSVP required.

All programs (unless otherwise noted): 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.

"Bee" Not Afraid

Our first introduction to bees often happens at a flower when we are warned to be careful, because the bees might sting us. Truth is, what we perceive as aggression and danger is just bees going about their business, getting sustenance and helping people.

Humans typically associate bees with honey production, and according to [University of Texas](https://www.utmsi.edu/) researchers, "six out of 20,000 bee species that are native to the Americas also produce honey." However, the real essence of bees' contribution to our food supply is their role in pollination. UT estimates that "every third morsel of our food in American diets comes from some pollination activities."

Bee foraging behavior explains how they manage to get what they need AND help humans in the process. Foraging bees collect both pollen and nectar. Just as some humans eat all kinds of food, some bees (those considered generalists) get their pollen and/or nectar from many different kinds of plants. Others, however, are specialists and get their sustenance from a narrow group of plants. Here's where it gets really interesting, and where humans can help bees.

A review in [Scientific American](https://www.scientificamerican.com/) discusses how the anatomy of bees is adapted to benefit them and flowers:

"In bumblebees and honeybees, stiff bristles on the hind legs form a basket into which pollen is placed. If one is going to visit flowers for their pollen it makes sense to also collect their nectar, for this is a great source of sugar to sustain flight. Nectar is expensive for plants to produce, and therefore many flowers evolved over time to hide their nectar, ensuring that only the insects most likely to provide them with a reliable pollen delivery service can reach it. Many bees evolved longer and longer tongues to make it easier for them to reach nectar hidden within flowers; some now have tongues longer than their bodies." This kind of co-evolution is one of the amazing "miracles" of life!

One more element of specialization is how important it is to native bees for there to be plenty of native plants. UT researchers note that "[native plants are essential for native bee larvae](#) who digest their pollen readily. Adult native bees prefer to feed from native flowers over non-natives. Bee life cycles are also synchronized with wildflowers, shrubs and trees that flower during their foraging

season.” So you can do your part to help our native bees by landscaping with native plants.

“[Nativescaping](#)” also helps birds, including songbirds. As you might guess, birds feed on the fruits and/or flowers of native plants. If you decide to augment native plant foods with store bought seed and/or mixed sugar water, there are things you should do to assure that you are not hurting the birds or the bees. The [FeederWatch program of The Cornell Lab](#) has more information on maintaining an environment that is safe for birds.

So there you have it: the birds and the bees: nothing to fear!



Bee on Kidneywood, *Eysenhardtia texana*



Bee on Gay feather, *Liatris elegans*

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**](#)
