



February 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to the Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FSANA) 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. Going forward, we aim to bring you this newsletter quarterly in 2017. Please also check our website, www.fosana.org, for periodic updates.

Board of Directors Update

As we begin a new year, we would like to thank our members for their continued support. We also invite those who enjoy the natural areas to become members. The Friends promote stewardship of our natural areas and support natural areas education programs. Your membership helps fund the many educational and habitat preservation programs carried out in the natural areas. Visit our [Support](#) page to join or donate online. In this issue, we also highlight the fruits of volunteers' efforts in the natural areas in 2016. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated. A big thank you from the Board to the volunteers generously giving back to the natural areas.



*Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), a common (and sublime!) sight in the natural areas*

habitat for wildlife. A summary of the considerable work done by volunteers at Friedrich Wilderness Park (FWP) and Crownridge Canyon Natural Area (CCNA) during 2016 is provided here.

- *Stewardship volunteer time logged:* 660 volunteer hours
- *Trail maintenance:* 4.25 mi debarbing, adding and clearing drains, & trimming vegetation
- *Tree protection:* Repairing and building wire and brush exclosures & installing bark protection for a total of 81 exclosures many of which protect more than one deciduous tree (seedling/sapling/root/sprout); 11 bark protectors (on escarpment black cherry trees)
- *Avian surveys:* Hiking in difficult terrain, using GPS to navigate as well as to document endangered golden-cheeked warblers and black-capped vireos, largely by song only
- *Invasive species removal:* Hand-pulling herbaceous species like malta star thistle and musk thistle. Also grubbing out woody species like *Nandina*
- *Landscape maintenance:* Pulling weeds, trimming plants, and planting seeds in parking lot beds, picnic areas, trail heads, wildflower berms, and other landscaped areas
- *Savanna restoration:* Pulling invasives, lopping small junipers
- *Unauthorized fire rings, trails, and other features:* Removing, dispersing rocks, logs, etc. Blocking take off points, and leafing over, or otherwise covering trails

Education

There are many opportunities for young and old alike to learn about the plants and animals in our parks. These programs are supported by many volunteers who work with staff; a summary of the 2016 accomplishments of the Education team is provided below.

- *Education volunteer time logged:* Nearly 500 volunteer hours
- *Starting Out Wild:* Over 220 volunteer hours dedicated to this program. Children 1-3 years are exposed to nature through lively nature walks, classroom activities, and stories.
- *Growing Up Wild:* Approximately 84 volunteer hours given to this program. Children 3-7 are exposed to nature through nature walks and activities.
- *Guided hikes* (school hikes & First Saturday): Approximately 110 volunteer hours dedicated to guided hikes.
- *Community outreach:* Approximately 52 volunteer hours dedicated to outreach. Helps us take our message to the broader community, and volunteers support events such as Kids to Parks Day, Bat Loco Festival, Hoot and Harvest Festival, the San Antonio Native Festival at Land Heritage Institute, and Science in the Park.

Finally, new Tai Chi classes were added to our program offerings beginning in June. Now offered every first Sunday (weather permitting) of the month, Shiva encourages seniors and others to connect with nature through gentle exercise for relaxation, health, and wellness.

Natural Areas Stewardship Update

Jayne Neal, Park Naturalist, Dept. of Parks & Recreation, City of San Antonio

The arts and sciences have collaborated nicely over the years in the naming of groups of organisms. Perhaps you have heard of a murder of crows, a parliament of owls, or an ostentation of peacocks. Recently, several of the COSA Natural Areas have hosted worms of American robins. What an appropriate way to refer to a species of bird so often regarded as a harbinger of spring! While robins typically do not nest in San Antonio, they do migrate through here, and when they do, it is hard not to be cheered by their various calls, their bright red breasts, and their habit of sometimes eating berries to the point of intoxication. A few other fun facts about American robins, courtesy of [the Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#):

- *Robins eat different types of food depending on the time of day: more earthworms in the morning and more fruit later in the day.*
- *Because the robin forages largely on lawns, it is vulnerable to pesticide poisoning and can be an important indicator of chemical pollution.*

An American Robin can produce three successful broods in one year. On average, though, only 40 percent of nests successfully produce young. Only 25 percent of those fledged young survive to November. From that point on, about half of the robins alive in any year will make it to the next.

- *Despite the fact that a lucky robin can live to be 14 years old, the entire population turns over on average every six years.*

Volunteer Opportunities

For your opportunity to see worms of robins and experience other natural wonders, join us for our February land management and trail maintenance activities. Please bring leather work gloves and dress appropriately for the weather. Contact Jayne Neal (jayne.neal@sanantonio.gov, 210.207.3785) with questions.

- Feb 2, 8-11:30 am, Friedrich, 21395 Milsa. Meet in the Admin./Classroom bldg.
- Feb 9, 8-11:30 a.m., Friedrich, 21395 Milsa. West entrance off Heuermann. This entrance is not open to the public, so if this is your first time going to this gate, please contact Jayne for directions.
- Feb 16, 8-11:30 a.m., Friedrich, 21395 Milsa. West entrance off Heuermann. This west entrance is not open to the public, so if this is your first time going to this gate, please contact Jayne for directions.
- Feb 23, 8-11:30 a.m., Crownridge Canyon, 7222 Luskey. Meet in the parking lot.

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 latest updates and more activities, please see the calendar on the FSANA website

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