

The Prairie Dog

Newsletter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas

Spring 2005 Vol. 18, No. 2



June 17-19, 2005

NPAT Third Biennial Prairies and Savannahs Conference

Native Grasslands and Water: A NATURAL PARTNERSHIP

See Registration Form Page 8

Baylor University Sciences Building, Baylor University, Waco Texas

HIGHLIGHTS!

Half-day Friday Workshops

How to Recognize High Quality Prairie Remnants

Prairie Plant ID

Prescription Burning

Prairie & Creek Restoration

Conference Topics

Good Land Stewardship and its Watershed Benefits

Sunday Field Trips

To nearby High Quality Tallgrass Prairies



BENEFITS OF THE CONFERENCE

- * Learning about and appreciating the value of well-managed native grasslands for retaining watershed moisture, improving water quality and increasing water quality in waterways.
- * Understanding the natural and human-caused processes that affect those waterways
- * Feeling empowered to observe our lands and waterways with new eyes
- * Acting on what we see.

The registration table will be open at 8:00 AM on Friday and Saturday. Friday morning workshops begin at 9 AM. These include "How to Recognize Tallgrass Prairie Remnants" with Mike Williams and "Identification of Prairie and Mesic/Wetland Plants" with Dr. Stephan Hatch (TAMU). Friday afternoon workshops begin at 1:30 PM. These include "Restoration of Healthy Grasslands and Riparian Areas" with Steve Nelle and "Prescribed Burning" with Dr. Butch Taylor.

The Saturday, June 18th Conference starts at 8:30 AM at the Baylor University Sciences Building. Prof. Fred Smeins (TAMU) will keynote the conference, speaking on "Why Practice Good Land Stewardship?" Presenters include The Hon. E.G. Rod Pittman, Chairman of the Texas Water Development Board, David Langford (Texas Wildlife Assoc.) speaking on "Water, Land Stewardship and the Texas Legislature", Nikki Dictson (TAMU Ag. Extension Program) on "Healthy Watersheds - Healthy Grasslands." Dr. Allen Rasmussen, TAMU Kingsville on "Ecological Economics and Intrinsic Values of Well-Managed Native Grasslands", Prof. Ron Sosebee (Texas Tech) on "How Grasses Grow and Their Response to Defoliation" and Jennifer Ellis (National Wildlife Fed.) on "Water Resource Management and Wildlife." Jason Hardin (Audubon Texas) will speak on "Texas Quail Conservation", Dr. Bill Eikenhorst on "Landowner's Prairie Restoration Project", Jim Eidson (The Nature Conservancy) on "Prairie Wetland Restoration," and Dr. Bryan Brooks, (Baylor U.) on "Environmental Research at Baylor". At 5 PM Nora Schell will lead a **Tour of the City of Waco Wetlands Project**, followed by our **Conference Banquet**.

Sunday, June 19th Field Trips begin at 8 AM. These include Bob and Mickey Burtleson's restored prairie, in Temple, TX, Plants of Mother Neff State Park, near the town of Moody in Coryell County, and a Tour of Riesel Prairie and a Prairie Conservation Easement, both of which are SE of Waco in Falls County.

**WHO WE ARE AND
WHAT WE DO**

NPAT's purpose is to promote conservation of Texas prairies. We are interested laypeople and professionals. Our members join:

- to learn how to recognize prairies
- to encourage conservation of prairies
- to restore and manage prairies
- to study and visit prairies
- to meet other people who love prairies!

The Prairie Dog is published quarterly. Submit articles to

INTERIM EDITOR Linda Knowles
281-558-3710 DknowlesPE@aol.com

NPAT is supported entirely by volunteers. Material appearing in the *The Prairie Dog* may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission of the editor or the Board of Directors.

Newsletter Deadlines

Deadlines for submission of all material for inclusion in *The Prairie Dog* as follows:

Winter Issue: January 15
Spring Issue: April 15
Summer Issue: August 1
Fall Issue: October 1

Photos, field trip and work project reports and prairie status reports welcomed. *Send them in!*

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**Check the
Expiration DATE**

**Has your membership expired?
Use the form on the back page
to mail in your renewal!
We need you, Please Renew!**

**Join NPAT's
e-mail network**
**SEND EMAIL ADDRESSES TO
GEORGIA PRAKASH,
Membership Chair. We will send
NPAT event updates by e-mail to
members. Contact Georgia Prakash
at prakash2@airmail.net**

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Suzanne & Stephen Tuttle
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Rusty Yates

LAMPASAS CUT PLAINS PRAIRIE TOUR

May 14th
9 am – 1 pm

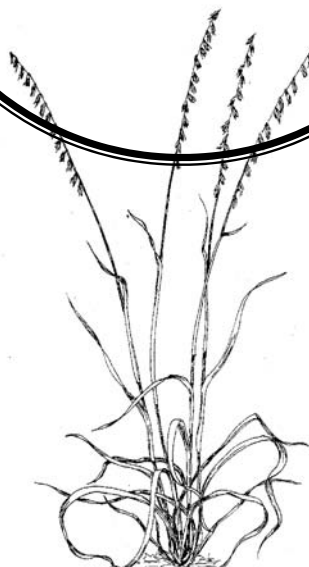
Jeff Quayle will sponsor and lead a tour of Chuck Snakard's property in Somervell County west of Glen Rose. Chuck owns 340 acres of Lampasas Cut Plains prairie with seasonal creeks and canyons. He is actively managing it with prescribed fires and management of habitat typical for Golden Cheeked Warblers and Black Capped Vireos. He is a NPAT life member and NAPA holds a conservation easement on his property.

The property is about 9 miles west of Glen Rose off Highway 377 near Chalk Mountain. Property is a conservation easement held by the Natural Areas Preservation Association (NAPA) with Walnut, Pecan, Hackberry, Burr oak, Juniper, Red oak, Shin oak, Little Bluestem, Big Bluestem, Indiangrass and Side Oats Grama. Both Golden-cheeked warblers and Black-capped vireos nest in the vicinity.

For more information, directions and to confirm timing, contact NPAT Board Member Jeff Quayle at s-quaylei@ev1.net

NPAT WEBSITE
WWW.TEXASPRAIRIE.ORG

If you have any comments or suggestions for the webmaster, or have difficulty opening the web site, contact Scott Lenharth, webmaster, at slenhart@texas.net



Sideoats
Grama

Prairie Work Projects

Maddin Prairie - 1,114 acres, 15 minutes southeast of Colorado City, one hour north of San Angelo, in Mitchell County.

Riesel Prairie - 5 beautiful tallgrass prairie acres near Riesel, Texas southeast of Waco in Falls County.

Peters Prairie - 4 beautiful tallgrass prairie acres in Collin County (North of Dallas), about 9 miles north of Farmersville.

Want to adopt a Prairie? Call John Pickett at 254-897-3646, jdpick@charter.net for more information.

Ask to be notified of future prairie restoration projects. *What kind of activities restore prairies?* Restoration activities may include invasives removal (carefully timed mowing, burning, selective poisoning, grubbing, hand weeding), increasing biodiversity (collecting seeds & plants, planting), watering freshly planted prairie plants, collecting data, and more. ***Your presence is needed!***

Conservation Update

Visit the Website of the American Farmland Trust <http://www.farmland.org/>
American Farmland Trust, 1200 18th Street NW Washington, D.C. 20036
202.331.7300 fax: 202.659.8339 info@farmland.org **From their website:**

TAKE ACTION: Defend a Valuable Tool for Conservation The Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) has issued a report recommending changes to the tax code that, if adopted, would largely dismantle the federal tax incentives for agricultural and other easements. If your Member of Congress sits on either the Senate Finance Committee or the House Ways and Means Committee, please urge the Member to reject the JCT recommendations and support sensible reforms without harming tax incentives that have been so effective for decades.

American Farmland Trust is supporting a program to preserve Texas' farmland and ranchland. More details at <http://www.texasfrpc.org/>

Texas leads the Nation in the amount of farmland converted to development on an annual basis. According to Texas A&M, more than 2.2 million acres of rural land were converted to urban uses between 1982 and 1997, and the annual rate of conversion was nearly 30 percent higher than in the previous 10 years. Right now we have a great opportunity before us to reverse this trend and to help protect Texas' valuable and celebrated agricultural landscapes!

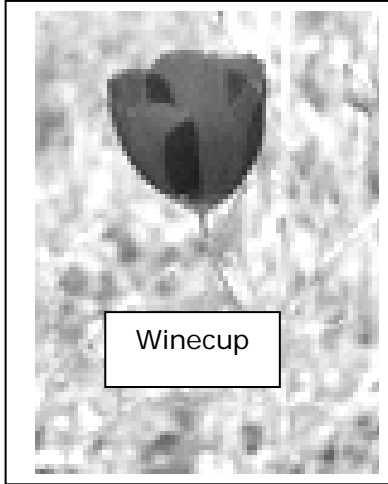
Working with Texas farm, ranch and conservation organizations, American Farmland Trust has launched a campaign to conserve our most productive and important ranch and farm lands, and to preserve Texas' unique heritage. With the help of Representative Charlie Geren and Senator Mike Jackson, legislation has been filed that will establish a statewide purchase of development rights program, which 24 other states already have. Under this program, landowners voluntarily sell conservation easements, or the rights to develop the land – land which then stays in open space for the benefit of water, wildlife, native habitat and agriculture! We need your help to turn this good idea into good public policy. We will only be successful if we can show the broad support of Texans throughout the state. Without this valuable land protection option, Texas will continue to see its precious rural lands fragmented and developed.

Trust For Public Land Visit the Trust For Public Land Website at <http://www.tpl.org> Information at the website includes details about Federal Programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, Coastal Programs, and Transportation Enhancements. The TPL website also has a Washington Watch section, with updates on Federal Tax Law (current legislation may seriously impact conservation easements.)

For More Information, Check the Environmental Defense website at <http://www.environmentaldefense.org>

NPAT Sponsors Fieldtrip to Grayson County Remnant Prairies

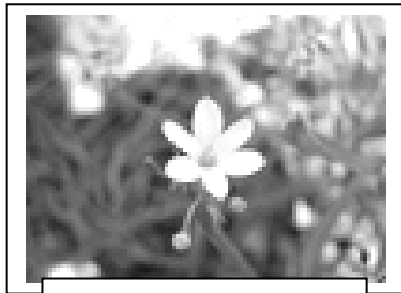
as reported by Jeff Quayle, photos by Jeff Quayle



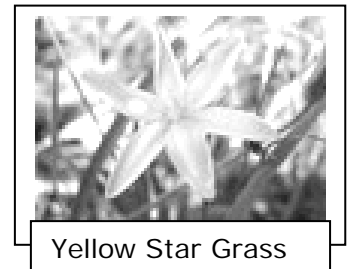
Winecup

On Saturday, April 16th several members, including life members Shirley Lusk, Hugh Garnett and Brian Rowe, visited several remnant blackland prairies in the Sherman, Pottsboro and Denison area of Grayson County in North Central Texas. Led by board member Jeff Quayle, these were prairies that had been surveyed by NPAT in the past, as part of their ongoing prairie surveys. We saw examples of Blackland prairies, sand prairies and limestone outcrops on Goodland limestone. Highlighted grasses included Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), Gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) and Canada Wildrye (*Elymus canadensis*).

Forbs and other species included Plains Winecup (*Callirhoe alcaoides*), Prairie Groundsel (*Packera plattensis*), False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicarpus*), Wild Blue Indigo (*Baptisia australis* var. *minor*), Plains Wild Indigo (*Baptisia bracteata*), Yellow Bush Pea (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*), Yellow Star Grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), Small Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula* var. *australis*), Prairie Blue-Eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium campestre*) and Marbleseed (*Onosmodium bejariense*).



Blue Eyed Grass (White Form)



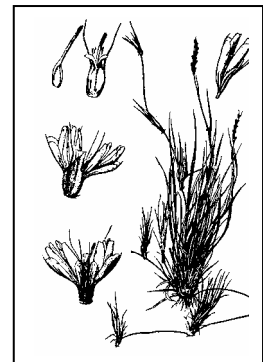
Yellow Star Grass

Forbs and other species included Plains Winecup (*Callirhoe alcaoides*), Prairie Groundsel (*Packera plattensis*), False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicarpus*), Wild Blue Indigo (*Baptisia australis* var. *minor*), Plains Wild Indigo (*Baptisia bracteata*), Yellow Bush Pea (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*), Yellow Star Grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), Small Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula* var. *australis*), Prairie Blue-Eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium campestre*) and Marbleseed (*Onosmodium bejariense*).

NPAT BOOTH REPORT

At the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Spring Garden Festival and Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 9th, NPAT ran the Prairie Expert booth and answered questions about prairies, native grasses, and other native plants. We also had an NPAT display at the booth and handed out many NPAT brochures.

Curly Mesquite



BILL AIMS TO MAINTAIN BRUSH CONTROL: Measure would help rivers get more water

By TIM EATON Scripps Howard Austin Bureau April 6, 2005 Contact Tim Eaton at (512) 334-6642 or eatont@scripps.com. Do not reprint this article without the express written permission of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times <http://www.caller.com> and Tom Eaton. Copyright 2005, Caller.com. All Rights Reserved.

AUSTIN - Now that the Senate has introduced its major water bill of the session, lawmakers will have to continue their push to save brush control programs.

The agreement to allow printing of this article in this newsletter did not include permission to post this information on the internet. Contact Tim Eaton for more information about this article.



PUBLICATIONS

Prairie Conservation: Preserving North America's Most Endangered Ecosystem

Fred B. Samson (Editor), Fritz L. Knopf (Editor), Foreword by E. Benjamin Nelson

Prairie Birds: Fragile Splendor in the Great Plains Paul A. Johnsgard

The Elemental Prairie: Sixty Tallgrass Plants John Madson, George Olson (Illustrator)

Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie: An Ethnobotanical Guide Kelly Kindscher

Recovering the Prairie Robert F. Sayre

Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie John Madson, Dycie Madson (Illust)

Prairie Wildflowers Dee Strickler, Zoe Strickler-Wilson (Illustrator)

Creating the Prairie Xeriscape: Low Maintenance, Water-Efficient Gardening Sara Williams

Land of Grass and Sky: A Naturalist's Prairie Journey Mary Taylor Taylor Young

Grassland: The History, Biology, Politics, and Promise of the American Prairie Richard Manning

Prairie Melissa S. Cole, Pat Leeson (Photographer), Tom Leeson (Photographer)

Gardening with Prairie Plants: How to Create Beautiful Native Landscapes Sally Wasowski, Andy Wasowski (Photographer)

Prairie Dogs Marybeth Lorbiecki, Wayne Ford (Illustrator)

A Practical Guide to Prairie Reconstruction Carl Kurtz

One Day in the Prairie by Jean Craighead George, Bob Marstall and Richard Cowdrey (Illust)

A Tallgrass Prairie Alphabet Claudia McGehee

Prairie in My Pocket Arthur K. Drackley, Willard Drackley (Illustrator)

Available online at <http://tcebookstore.org>: **KNOW YOUR GRASSES**, Item No. B-182 and Publication L-5456, "Restoring Native Grasslands"

Color photos of **GRASSES** can be found at
<http://www.noble.org/Ag/Forage/KnowYourGrasses.pdf>

Member News and Reports:

Prairie Restoration: Have you restored (or preserved) or are you hoping to restore a prairie on your property? Tell us about it.

Native Prairies List: NPAT is building an inventory of native prairies; NPAT or other preservation organizations' holdings or easements in Texas. Jim Varnum, jevvarnum@aol.com, has started a list of Native Prairies in the DFW Metroplex. Efforts are ongoing to list prairies, and to establish listing criteria.

"Native Grasslands and Water Resources – A Natural Partnership"

NPAT Third Biennial Prairies and Savannahs Conference, Baylor University, Waco Texas
June 17-19, 2005

Additional Lodging at www.waco-texas.com .

Best Western, (across the street from Baylor University), 254-753-0316, \$78.00, 2 full beds.

Rodeway Inn, IH 35, 254-662-3320, \$79.00, 2 full beds.

Motel 6, S IH 35, 254-662-4622, \$39.00, 2 full beds.

Super 8 Motel, S IH 35, 254-754-1023, \$49.00, 1 bed, \$59.00, 2 full beds.

The registration table will be open at 8:00 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Workshops run concurrently, lasting two to three hours.

Friday, June 17, 2005 Workshops

9:00 a.m. (Select one workshop).

How to Recognize Tallgrass Prairie Remnants _____ @ \$20.00 _____

Prairie and Mesic/Wetland Plant ID (non-woody plants) _____ @ \$20.00 _____

12:00-1:30 p.m. (Lunch on your own)

1:30 p.m. (Select one Workshop).

Restoration of Healthy Grasslands and Riparian Areas _____ @ \$20.00 _____

Prescribed Burning _____ @ \$20.00 _____

Saturday, June 18, 2005 (Topics, beginning at 8:30 a.m.)

Keynote: Why Practice Good Land Stewardship?

Texas Water Development Board

Water, Land Stewardship and the Texas Legislature

Healthy Watersheds-Healthy Grasslands

Ecological Economics and Intrinsic Values of Well-managed
Native Grasslands

How Grasses Grow and Their Response to Defoliation

Water Resource Management and Wildlife

Texas Quail Conservation Initiative

Landowner's Prairie Restoration Project

Prairie Wetland Restoration

Environmental Research at Baylor

Tour of City of Waco Wetlands Project

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!

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**NATIVE AMERICAN SEED
NATIVE PRAIRIES ASSOCIATION
OF TEXAS
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS
TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION**

Check the NPAT web site www.texasprairie.org for updates!

Current NPAT Members (Check mailing label on The Prairie Dog) _____ @ \$60.00 _____

Non-member, (fee includes one year NPAT membership) _____ @ \$80.00 _____

Late Registration Fee postmarked after June 1, 2005 _____ @ \$ 5.00 _____

Lunch at Baylor _____ Vegetarian Preference _____

7:00 p.m. Banquet catered by Rusty Star BBQ of Waco _____ Vegetarian Preference _____

Sunday, June 19, 2005 (Concurrent field trips 8:00 a.m. to noon)

Bob and Mickey Burluson's restored prairie, Temple, TX _____ @ \$10.00 _____

Plants of Mother Neff State Park, near the town of Moody in Coryell County _____ @ \$10.00 _____

Riesel Prairie donated to NPAT by Paul & Virginia Mezynski, Riesel, TX _____ @ \$10.00 _____

SATURDAY LUNCH AND BANQUET INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION TOTAL _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Make a check payable to the Native Prairies Association of Texas, and mail it with a completed copy of this form to:

Georgia Prakash, 1905 William Brewster, Irving, Texas 75061.

Native Prairies Association of Texas
Third Biennial Prairies and Savannahs Conference

June 17-19, 2005

Baylor University, Waco, Texas

REGISTER BEFORE JUNE 1ST AND AVOID THE LATE FEE!

Directions to Baylor University:

From I 35 (from north or south) take the University Parks exit. Go east on University Parks toward the Baylor campus. Turn south (left) on Bagby Avenue. Turn right on Speight Avenue. Feel free to park in Student or Faculty/Staff parking spaces.

Directions to Baylor University Sciences Building:

Registration will be available within the atrium of the Baylor University Sciences Building near the entrance closest to Waco Creek. This entrance may be found by following the "lazy river" outside of the Baylor Sciences Building, or by entering the Sciences Building and walking the length of the Atrium. NPAT signs will guide registrants to the registration table.

For more information contact John Pickett at jdpick@charter.net or 254-897-3646.
Native Prairies Association of Texas
P. O. Box 210
Georgetown, Texas 78627

Conference Sponsored by

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY www.baylor.edu

BLUESTEM ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS pat@merkord.com

NATIVE AMERICAN SEED www.seedsource.com

NATIVE PRAIRIES ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS www.texasprairie.org

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS www.npsot.org

TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION www.texas-wildlife.org

TALLGRASS PRAIRIE REMNANT PRESERVATION

Do you own a high quality tallgrass prairie remnant? NPAT may be willing to accept a conservation easement on the remnant. If you are interested, contact Jim Varnum jevvarnum@aol.com (North of Waco) or Marcia Hermann maradan@isp.com (South of Waco) for more information.

REPORTS FROM THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE (LTA)

Subject: [LTA] Senate Finance Committee Hearing Update and Upcoming Events

To all leaders in conservation: April 4, 2005, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on issues related to charities. The committee discussed broad issues of abuses and reform. The Chief of Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation testified that the law should encourage charitable donations of cash, and discourage donations of property, including land and easements.

The good news is that a number of Senators challenged the JCT's approach. Many thanks to everyone who has helped their Senators understand the cost to conservation of the JCT's proposals!

Finance Committee Ranking Member Max Baucus (D-MT) directly addressed conservation donations in his opening statement, saying that "I am concerned that their [the JCT's] proposal on land conservation may have gone too far. While I want to make sure that scams in the land preservation field are addressed, I also want to ensure that farmers and ranchers in Montana can continue to get a fair deduction for donating easements that protect valuable open space." (View the statement at <http://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/statements/040505mb.pdf>.)

Senators Schumer (D-NY), Jeffords (I-VT), Santorum (R-PA), Bunning (R-KY), Wyden (D-OR), and Rockefeller (D-WV) also challenged the JCT's approach to donations of property. Senator Jeffords made a very strong statement supporting conservation tax incentives, available at http://jeffords.senate.gov/~jeffords/press/05/04/040505conservation_tax.html. If you are a constituent, please thank these Senators for their support!

IRS Commissioner Mark Everson testified that the IRS, too, believes that there are significant abuses of conservation donations. He said the IRS is completing 50 donor audits, several exempt organization audits, and pre-audit review of 400 open-space easements, to be followed by a similar review of 700 facade easements.

Senators Grassley and Baucus and Commissioner Everson have access to tax return information that we do not -- and it is clear that they are seeing real abuses that will precipitate action.

The Land Trust Alliance continues to discuss potential reforms with the Senate Finance Committee staff. Their concerns include not only the valuation of donations of conservation easements and property, but also the conservation purpose of easement donations, the handling of amendments, the verification of easement holders' ability to monitor and enforce their easements, and the potential need for a more formalized accreditation program.

On the Horizon In the coming weeks, LTA will advance discussions with the Senate Finance Committee concerning reforms, and keep you up to date. We are also preparing for another Senate Finance Committee hearing in May on land transactions. We continue to work with our media and lobbying team, and to coordinate action by a large coalition of our land trust members, sportsmen's and wildlife conservation groups, and agricultural interests to promote reasonable reforms and advance conservation tax incentives.

Continued on Page 11

Senate Finance Committee Hearing Update and Upcoming Events,

Continued from page 10

Your Next Steps

- Continue to **ask your Senators and Representative to support reasonable reforms** and reject the JCT's proposals; see our Web site (www.lta.org/publicpolicy/ppc.htm).
- Place an **opinion editorial or letter to the editor** in your local paper, and build public support for the value of private lands conservation in your community.
- **Stay engaged!** Email ProtectPrivateConservation@lta.org with any questions.

Thank you for all you have done so far, and keep up the good work--you are making a difference!

For More Information

LTA's Protect Private Conservation site www.lta.org/publicpolicy/ppc.htm

Three recent Washington Post articles

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28415-2005Apr5.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26324-2005Apr4.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26388-2005Apr4.html>

Senate Finance Committee testimony <http://www.finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearing030505.htm>

Independent Sector Panel on the Nonprofit Sector site <http://www.nonprofitpanel.org>

Russell Shay, Director of Public Policy, Land Trust Alliance 1331 H Street, NW Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005 ProtectPrivateConservation@lta.org

Land Trust Concerns Move from Joint Committee on Taxation to Reform Legislation and Accreditation

We are making good progress in educating Congress about the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) proposals to slash the tax deductions for donations of conservation easements or land.

At an April 5 hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, several senators voiced concerns about cutting the tax deductions for conservation. Last Tuesday, the counsel for the Senate Finance Committee told me that the staff does not plan to include the cuts in their charity reform legislation. Last Friday, I was invited to the White House along with 25 other charity leaders to discuss the JCT proposals with President Bush's policy advisors. They assured me that the President did not want Congress to adopt these proposals.

We are not yet out of danger. The White House staff told me that the JCT proposals could still move forward because of the high regard that both the House and Senate have for the JCT. The House will hold hearings on charity reforms on April 20 that will include testimony by the JCT staff. The Senate still plans to hold a hearing on land conservation abuses in late May after it releases the results of its 18-month investigation. A series of negative hearings and headlines will set the stage for Congress to move reform legislation and could also create a climate where some version of the JCT proposals springs back to life. We need to remain vigilant. *Continued on Page 12*

Land Trust Concerns Move from Joint Committee on Taxation to Reform Legislation and Accreditation, *Continued from page 11*

At this point, I am more worried about reform legislation than the JCT proposals. When we meet members of Congress to voice our opposition to the JCT proposals, they often say, "We understand what you are against, but what are you for?" Over the next month, land trusts will need to decide what reform legislation we will actively support.

We have recently heard some proposals from Congress that would be devastating for land conservation. For example, Senate Finance Committee staff has proposed limiting conservation easements to government-approved conservation projects and requiring local government conservation boards to review and approve all easements. LTA responded that this approach would bring political interference into what is essentially a private charitable gift, and it appears that they are responding to our concerns.

The Senate Finance Committee is also considering a wide range of new regulations on appraisal standards, limits on conflicts of interest, requirements that land trusts demonstrate the capacity to monitor and defend conservation easements, and imposing unrelated business income tax on all sales of land. While we have access to decision makers and have been invited to comment on some proposals under consideration, LTA certainly does not have the power to dictate the results. We will keep you informed as we learn more about what will be in the proposed legislation and how we should respond.

Last month, the Senate Finance Committee staff gave me a draft position paper calling for the federal government to mandate accreditation for land trusts under the direction of the Commissioner of the IRS. Under this proposal, any land trusts that did not qualify for this accreditation within 18 months would not be eligible for tax deductions. LTA finds this proposal particularly troubling and we have vigorously voiced our objections to the Finance Committee staff. We think that if there is going to be an accreditation program, it should be designed by and managed by the land trust community - not the federal government.

From my discussions with the Finance Committee staff, I believe that they will withdraw this proposal if they believe that private accreditation can work. I also believe that we can convince Congress to forgo new regulations if we can demonstrate that the private sector has a more efficient way to solve these problems.

When we started discussions about accreditation, our primary goal was to find a way to recognize land trusts as they made progress in implementing Land Trust Standards and Practices. We were concerned about the long-term viability of conservation easements and worried about the emergence of "rogue land trusts" that threatened the reputation of legitimate charities. But now our deliberations about accreditation are taking place in a politically charged environment.

We want to establish a positive response to the problems that may be headlined at the Senate hearings in May. To help further this goal, LTA is issuing a press release today announcing a \$1 million grant from the Doris Duke Foundation to help design a training and accreditation program for land trusts. The press release makes it clear that we are in the middle of a public comment period, and that final approval for the program will not be until September. We need your help to design the best approach to accreditation, so please comment (<http://survey.lta.org>) on the proposed accreditation program before May 9. *Continued on page 13*

Continued from page 12

So far, 80 percent of land trusts responding believe the accreditation would be helpful in ensuring public trust in land trusts.

Here is what you can do to prepare for the hearings and the debate on reform legislation:

1. Visit your Representative and Senators and educate them on the benefits that your land trust brings to the people in their home district. Inform them of the pending hearings and your support for reasonable reforms.
2. Get positive stories on your land conservation projects in the local press and send a copy to your elected officials, and to LTA.
3. Contribute funds to the Conservation Defense Fund to help LTA represent your interests in Washington. We need to be prepared to sustain a campaign for two years, to overcome the negative publicity and guard against legislative attacks.

Thank you for your leadership to help land trusts address this challenge and prepare for the future.

Rand Wentworth, Land Trust Alliance 1331 H St, NW Washington, DC 20005-4734
Phone 202-638-4725 Fax 202-638-4730 <http://www.lta.org>

NPAT and Master Naturalists: **Could your Master Naturalist Chapter Help?**

Peters Prairie Work Projects In 2002 the NPAT bought a 4-acre native prairie remnant in eastern Collin County for the purpose of preserving it from cultivation and development forever. Prairies do not take care of themselves and, if not properly maintained, will (a) revert back to a woodland and/or (b) be overtaken by invasive plant species. NPAT is undertaking a maintenance effort on the Peters Prairie (as well as other prairies in Texas). NPAT is a statewide organization, but does not have local chapters. Accordingly, **NPAT desires to involve local NPAT members, members of sister organizations like Texas Master Naturalist program, and the Public in its efforts.** In 2002 the North Texas Chapter of Master Naturalists (NTCMN) created a chapter project to assist NPAT. NTCMN assist in planning and oversight of the project, conduct plant ID surveys before and after maintenance steps (burning, grazing, etc.) to ascertain the recovery and resilience of plants due to the maintenance, provide hands-on assistance to NPAT (invasive plant control, removing woody species, prescribed burns, fence maintenance, etc). and document the project in words and graphics (photos) to prepare news articles, slide or Power Point programs, etc. *Information submitted by James Alderson*

Learn more about Texas Master Naturalists at
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/volunteer/txmasnat

Native Prairies Association of Texas

2005 Calendar of Events

Notes: For additional information please see the web sites or e-mail Jim Varnum at jevvarnum@aol.com. Please send notices of events of interest to prairie enthusiasts.

Date	Event	Location	Remarks
2005			
May 7	NPAT spring visit to Falls County conservation easements	Falls Co.	Marcia Hermann and Jim Varnum
May 14	NPAT field trip to 340-acre Lampasas Cut Plains prairie	west of Glen Rose, Somervell Co.	See details below.
May 19-21	Southwest Land Trust Conference (10th Annual)	Ft. Lewis College, The Center of Southwest Studies. Durango, CO	Pam Nichols 970-245-5811 southwest@lta.org
May 21	Clymer Meadow Wildflower Tour (9:30 – 4:00)	TNC Clymer Meadow Preserve, Hunt Co.	See details below.
May 21	Transect Monitoring and Workshop on Evaluating Range Health	Judith Sear Property, Cleburne, Johnson Co.	See details below.
May 22	Wild flowers Galore – wildflower walk	Breckinridge Park, Richardson, Collin Co.	See details below.
June 17-19	NPAT Biennial Conference "Native Grasslands and Water: a Natural Partnership"	Baylor University, Waco.	Jim Varnum, 972 / 243-4098, jevvarnum@aol.com
June 17	2005 NPAT board meeting #3	during the Biennial conference, Waco	See details below.
September 24	2005 NPAT workday at Maddin Ranch Preserve	near Colorado City, Mitchell County.	Jim Varnum, 972 / 243-4098, jevvarnum@aol.com
September 25	2005 NPAT board meeting #4	Colorado City, Mitchell County	
October 8	NPAT fall visit to Falls County conservation easements	Falls Co.	Marcia Hermann and Jim Varnum
October 14-17	Land Trust Alliance Rally	Madison, WI	
October 15	Fall Prairie Tour led by Jim & Stephanie Varnum	Clymer Meadow and other locations	See details below.
2006			
January 21-22, 2006	2006 NPAT board meeting #1 and retreat.	Cedar Ridge Preserve, Dallas	

NPAT 2005 Calendar, Continued

May 14. Fieldtrip to Lampasas Cut Plains prairie, west of Glen Rose, Somervell County. Sponsored by and led by Jeff Quayle. This is a tour of Chuck Snakard's 340-acre Lampasas Cut Plains prairie. See description page 3. For information, directions and to RSVP, contact Jeff Quayle at s-quaylei@ev1.net or 817 / 738-1322.

May 21. Clymer Meadow Wildflower Tour. Clymer Meadow Preserve, Hunt Co. Sponsored by the Texas Nature Conservancy. Led by Jim Eidson of TNC. Tour also visits Parkhill Prairie and Paul Matthews Prairie in Hunt and Collin Co. 9:30 - 4:00. Meet at Clymer Meadow Preserve. Bring water and lunch. Free. For information, directions and to register, contact Jim Eidson at 903 / 568-4139 or jeidson@tnc.org. Also visit web site <http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/texas/>.

May 21. Transect Monitoring and Workshop on Evaluating Range Health. Near Cleburne, Johnson Co. Sponsored by NPAT. This is a workshop to teach and use the NRCS monitoring techniques for prairie evaluation. Instructor is Jeff Quayle of NPAT. Limited to 15 people. RSVP to Jeff Quayle at s-quaylei@ev1.net or 817 / 738-1322.

May 22. Wild Flowers Galore. Breckinridge Park, Richardson, Collin Co. By late May, summer wildflowers become intermixed with spring ones. Enjoy spectacular displays of wildflowers in the fields of Breckinridge Park. 2:00 – 3:30. Led by Jim Varnum of NPAT and Nancy Lee. For information, directions and to RSVP, contact the Jim at 972 / 243-4098 or jevarnum@aol.com.

June 17-19. NPAT Biennial Conference "Native Grasslands and Water: a Natural Partnership". At Baylor University, Waco. Friday: workshops, Saturday, presentations, Sunday: field trips. More information forthcoming. Meanwhile, contact Jim Varnum at 972 / 243-4098 or jevarnum@aol.com.

October 15. Fall Prairie Tour. Clymer Meadow Preserve and nearby locations in Hunt and Collin Co. Sponsored and led by Jim and Stephanie Varnum. Time 10:00 – 2:00. Meets at Clymer Meadow Preserve, Hunt Co. For information, directions and to RSVP, contact the Varnums at 972 / 243-4098, 214-543-0748 or jevarnum@aol.com.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

Contact Temporary Editor Linda Knowles 281-558-3710, DknowlesPE@aol.com if you have questions about this position. Contact John Pickett jdpick@charter.net if you know of someone who would be willing to serve as Editor of the Native Prairies Assoc. of Texas' *Prairie Dog*. Thank you!



BECOME A MEMBER of the **Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT)**

MEMBERSHIP AND INFORMATION FORM

Use this form to request information or to join NPAT. If you are joining, please mail a check to:

The Native Prairies Association of Texas
P.O. Box 210
Georgetown TX 78627-0210

Membership categories are: \$350 Life, \$35 Group, \$30 Family, \$20 Individual, \$10 Student.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home/Office Phone _____ E-mail Address: _____

I'm particularly interested in prairies because: _____

Life Memberships are put into the NPAT Endowment Fund. Please consider adding an extra \$5 or \$10 to your membership dues. It really helps us out! <http://www.texasprairie.org>

Native Prairies Association of Texas
P.O. Box 210
Georgetown, Texas 78627
<http://www.texasprairie.org>

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