

The McCormick in McCormick Park



The Preserve at McCormick Park was once part of the original 130 acre McCormick Farms, owned by the McCormick family since the mid 1850's. The original 130 acres belonged to W.W. "Mack" McCormick's great-grandfather, S.C.H. Witten. It is believed that Mr. Witten was given the land as payment for survey work that he performed in the area.

"Mack" McCormick was brought to Eules in 1900 in a covered wagon from Santa Anna, Texas when he was a tiny baby. His parents were W.L. and Jenetta McCormick. One-half of the original 130 acres was given to Jenetta McCormick by her grandfather, Mr. Witten and the McCormick's purchased the other half. In the early 1900's, the 130 acres was used primarily for farming and it had a small house on it. Even in those days, many people in the area raised produce for the Dallas market. Their principal crops were watermelons, cantaloupes and tomatoes. The produce was gathered late in the afternoon and hauled in a wagon to Dallas that night to be sold at the market by early the next morning.



"Mack" McCormick once told a story that when he was a young boy, his parents found themselves in quite a calamity. In the early years, farmers didn't just go buy a packet of seed; you saved seed from one year to the next or bought them in bulk form. One year, the McCormick's bought bulk cantaloupe seed...or so they thought, for planting. If you've ever noticed, cantaloupe and cucumber seed look a lot alike. Instead of planting cantaloupe seed, the McCormick's actually planted cucumber seed. Needless to say, there was no market for cucumbers in that day in time and the McCormick's later declared that it was their worst year for farming.

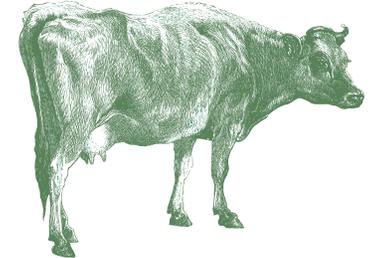
In 1925, Jenetta McCormick died and left the property to "Mack" McCormick and his brother. "Mack" McCormick later bought his brother's share and his dad, W.L. McCormick moved back close to Santa Anna, to the town of Trickhorn. Later, "Mack" McCormick rented the property to Jessie Driskill and his family. The Driskill's lived on it for many years, in fact it became known as the Driskill place.



The Driskill's continued farming the land until people in the area began to have small dairies. The Driskill's decided to change directions and began using the land to run a small dairy; so the land was used for grazing and growing hay.

In 1928, "Mack" McCormick and his fiancé, Willie Mae Ward went to the State Fair in Dallas and brought back some pecan trees that they had purchased at one of the booths. They planted the trees on the farm and some of the original trees are still alive and thriving on the property today.

In 1948, "Mack" and Willie Mae McCormick moved back to their farm in Eules where they raised cattle and continued growing hay for a few years. After realizing that there was no money to be made in the cattle and hay business, the McCormick's decided to sell the remaining livestock and just kept the property mowed. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts camped on the property quite often throughout the late 1940's and 1950's and that's when the property got its official name of "The McCormick Farm".



The adjoining park, McCormick Park, was dedicated to the City of Eules in 1984 by the Crow Development Company which bought most of the McCormick farm. Michael Crow and David Bagwell hosted a picnic for the neighborhood families. City staff, members of the Eules City Council and several other dignitaries was present at the dedication including Tom Vandergriff, our Congressman at that time. As Willie Mae McCormick stated, "It was a great day for me and Mack".

The approximately 27 acres that now makes up the Preserve at McCormick Park was donated to the City of Eules by Mr. Terry Sandlin, President of Terry Sandlin Homes. The City of Eules would like to thank Mr. Terry Sandlin and the McCormick family for making this an extra special park and for helping make Eules such a great place to live and play! ★



Eules: A Rich Natural History



Once a rural area thriving on agricultural practices such as cotton, peach, corn farming, and cattle ranching, Eules, located in the Cross Timbers Region, is an area that was thickly-wooded with Post and Blackjack Oaks and a mixture of prairies. The Cross Timbers Region is an area that covers portions of Kansas, Oklahoma and north central Texas. It also served as a north-south travel corridor for Native Americans so that they could remain hidden on

their journey. For settlers, the Cross Timbers Region was a landmark that signaled the beginnings of Indian Territories and the western frontier.



Ecologically, the Cross Timbers Region serves as habitat for large populations of mammals and birds. Much of this can be attributed to the area's combination of ecological characteristics provided by heavily forested areas and prairies. The area continues to provide wildlife with an adequate water supply through creek and streams. The availability of water has been enhanced by the development of constructed lakes, ponds, and stock tanks for wildlife water supplies and agricultural uses.

The evolution of this settling process has resulted in vast changes in the Cross Timbers and Prairies Region over the past 150 years and today we see a much different region manifested by changes in land use, demographics, and infrastructure. The impact of ecosystem fragmentation on wildlife and wildlife habitat has become a significant factor in many parts



of the Cross Timbers and Prairies. Land ownership size continues to diminish as larger ranches and land holdings are divided, sold, and developed for different uses. Human population growth and occupation of rural areas continues to grow. Commercial construction, water development on streams, rural subdivisions, and vegetation control projects near urban areas often contribute to the displacement or elimination of many of our wildlife and habitat resources. That trend will likely continue into the 21st century.

Lessons learned from changes in land uses over the past 150 years tell us that this land is productive, environmentally diverse, and ecologically fragile. The changing demographics of Texas will place added demands on it as our population expands.



Wildlife habitat will continue to be altered to accommodate urban sprawl and development and alternative land uses. The future availability of habitat for wildlife will in large part be determined by the commitment of individual landowners and the degree of cooperation they foster with their neighbors to provide for and sustain these resources. There are tremendous opportunities at hand for landowners who have a vision for ecosystem management and who will become involved in the management of our shared wildlife resources of the Cross Timbers and Prairie Region of Texas. ★

Many state and federal agencies offer assistance programs to help landowners manage their wildlife and habitat resources. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Private Lands and Habitat Program has a staff of regional technical guidance wildlife biologists and other district wildlife biologists who are available upon written request to help landowners develop management plans to address their long term goals and objectives for habitat enhancement and wildlife management. For more information, contact Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd. Austin, TX 78744.



What is an Urban Forest?



An urban forest can be defined as the aggregate of all vegetation and green spaces within communities that provide benefits vital to enriching the quality of life. Properly cared for and well-managed urban forests can provide benefits that far exceed their management costs. Urban forests can also bring communities of people together and form connections between humans and the urban flora and fauna.

Additionally, urban forests are an integral part of large cities, rural areas, streets, backyards, parks, and open spaces. The economic and ecological benefits of an urban forest are intricately tied together, as one might imagine. Properly planted trees and other urban vegetation can reduce heating and cooling costs, intercept and store rainwater, improve air quality, and increase property values and local tax bases.



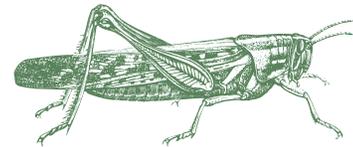
Furthermore, urban forests provide shade, beauty and habitat for urban wildlife. Even after they are pruned or removed their leaves, branches, and wood continue to provide benefits to communities as important components of the urban waste stream, often recycled or converted to other products.

Simply stated, urban forestry is the planning, management, and research of urban forests. As cities continue to grow, increasing numbers of people will choose to live, work, and play in urban forests, making the field of urban forestry critical for healthy and sustainable living.

Urban forestry embraces concepts and tenets of other specialized fields, such as soil science, hydrology, forestry, meteorology, arboriculture and many others. Reduced to its essence, urban forestry is the management of trees and related vegetation in an urban ecosystem to provide optimal benefits on a sustainable basis recognizing the inherent limitations.



Urban forestry, like tradition forestry emphasizes management at the ecosystem level rather than the individual elements of the entire forest, seeing the forest rather than just the trees, so to speak. An ecosystem, simply stated, is a set of plants, animals, insects, microorganisms and people, interacting and functioning under the existing biotic and abiotic conditions to sustain an equilibrium of life. The urban forest is an integral part of the larger, regional ecosystem. Urban and rural ecosystems, each distinctly different, interact, overlap and join to form regional ecosystems.



A gradient extends from the urban to the suburban to the urban rural intermix to the rural, to the developing forests and wildlands. Each ecosystem, regardless of size, is linked to adjacent ecosystems, which are in turn linked, thus forming the global ecosystem.



People and their influences dominate the urban forest. The urban forest ecosystem consists of the engineered (built) environment, such as roads, utilities, transportation corridors, buildings, homes, paved areas, storm water facilities, and planted trees and vegetation. It also includes remnants of the original natural forest ecosystem. Canopy cover increases from the urban center outward. At the city center, people are abundant and trees relatively scarce. As you move outward, tree numbers increase while the number of people decreases.

Educating urban residents about the benefits of trees and the need to support long term and appropriate management practices is one of the most important and difficult tasks that urban foresters face. Only with public support can urban forestry continue to grow and achieve its goal of sustainability. This means reaching people by providing the appropriate message in an effective way. Most importantly, it means educating our future generations in schools from kindergarten all the way through college. ★

Excerpts taken from the Center for Urban Forest Research and from "What is Urban Forestry Anyway?" written by John Melvin, CDF Urban and Community Forestry.



Ponds, Lakes and Those Who Live Here



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A pond is a body of water shallow enough to support rooted plants. Many times plants grow all the way across a shallow pond. Water temperature is fairly even from top to bottom and changes with air temperature. There is a little wave action and the bottom is usually covered with mud. Plants can, and often do, grow along the pond edge. The amount of dissolved oxygen may vary greatly during the day. In really cold places, the entire pond can freeze solid.

A lake is bigger than a pond, and is too deep to support rooted plants except near the shore. Some lakes are big enough for waves to be produced. Water temperatures in lakes during the summer months are not uniform from top to bottom. Three distinct layers develop: The top layer stays warm, the middle layer drops dramatically and the bottom layer is the coldest. Since light does not penetrate to the bottom, photosynthesis is limited to the top layer. Because of the warmer waters and more plentiful food supply, almost all creatures spend the summer months in the upper layer. During spring and fall the lake temperature is more uniform. Fish and other animals are found throughout the layers of the lake. Even in cold climates, most lakes are large enough so that they don't freeze solid, unlike ponds. During the winter months some creatures hibernate in the bottom mud. Some fish continue to feed, but less actively. A layer of ice can develop on the top of lakes during winter. The ice blocks out sunlight and can prevent photosynthesis. Without photosynthesis, oxygen levels drop and some plants and animals may die. This is called "winterkill."

Aquatic Plants:

In aquatic environments such as a river, a pond or a stream, live a wealth of plants and animals which are adapted for life in a watery environment. Each aquatic community has a variety of plants which provide shelter and food for many of the animals living in the community, and add oxygen to the water. Some of these plants grow along the water's edge, such as *Saururus cernuus* (Lizard's Tail), *Hibiscus moscheutos* (Rose Mallow) and *Cephalanthus occidentalis* (Buttonbrush).



Plants that grow out of water are called emergents. Some emergents identified at this location include *Pontederia cordata* (Pickerelweed), *Eleocharis* spp. (spikerush) and *Humencallis liriosme* (spiderlily).

Other aquatic plants have adapted so that their leaves float on the surface of the water. These plants, such as *Nymphaea odorata* (Fragrant water lily), tend to occur in ponds and in backwaters of streams and rivers where there is little or no current.

Submergents, a third group of plants grow completely submerged under the surface of the water. An example of this group would include *Sagittaria platyphylla* (Arrowhead).

Aquatic Critters:

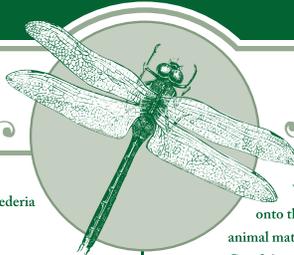
Many of the animals which live in aquatic ecosystems rely on the plants for food. There are many insects living in and around bodies of water. Some of these insects live their adult lives as flying insects, like the dragonfly, but their larval stages are spent in the water. The dragonfly is a common sight around bodies of water in the warmer months. They eat mosquitoes and are eaten by a wide variety of birds, amphibians, spiders, other insects and even bats.

The largest of the water insects is the giant water bug, which can reach a size of close to 3 inches in length and is brown. The giant water bug is a predator, feeding on insect larvae, tadpoles, and small frogs and fish. They have a strong bite.

The water scorpion is found in ponds and other still waters. They can be found hanging in the vegetation near the surface. Like the giant water bug, they are predators with front legs designed for grasping prey.

Water boatmen are the most common of the aquatic bugs. They are identified by their oarlike hind legs which they use to propel themselves through the water. They occur in the vegetation and on the bottom of ponds, where they eat small water organisms, algae, plankton and detritus. They dive underwater with a film of air covering their body, so they can breathe. This enables them to stay underwater for a long period of time. They can also fly.

Whirligig beetles are easily identified by their habit of circling rapidly on the surface of the water, usually in groups. They are capable of diving underwater if threatened. Each eye is divided into two parts, one for viewing things above water, the other for seeing underwater.



Whirligig beetles feed on insects which have fallen onto the water surface and also scavenge on dead plant and animal matter.

Crayfish are part of a group of animals called crustaceans, which have hard outer shells or exoskeletons. They have two pair of antennae and generally breathe through gills. Other examples of crustaceans include: shrimp, crab, and lobster. Crayfish, which look like little lobsters, have five pairs of legs, with the front pair modified as claws with pincers. They use these pincers for feeding and defense. They occur in ponds, rivers and streams, and even wet meadows. Crustaceans are omnivores, feeding on plants, as well as both living and dead animals. They take shelter under stones or debris in the water and use their tails to propel themselves backwards away from danger.

Snails belong to the group of animals called mollusks, which also includes clams and mussels. Mollusks have soft bodies, often enclosed within a hard shell. Snails have a "foot" on the underside that helps them to move around. They occur in most any freshwater ecosystem and are particularly common in areas with hard water, which may be rich in calcium. The snails use the calcium to build their shells.

Scuds are tiny light-colored crustaceans of the amphipod group, which are flattened laterally, from side to side. They occur on the bottom of a variety of aquatic ecosystems or in the vegetation & swim on their sides. Scuds feed on dead plant & animal matter and are, therefore, scavengers.

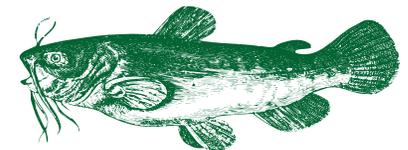
Leeches are a member of the annelid or segmented worms group, a group which also includes earthworms. Although some species are blood-suckers, most are carnivores which feed on other aquatic organisms. A few species are scavengers. They are good swimmers and usually occur in vegetation and bottom areas of warm shallow water. They are nocturnal and seek dark areas during the daylight.

Fish are vertebrates, along with amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Fish are easily recognized by having fins, no legs, breathing by means of gills and, generally, as having scales. Bluegill are part of the sunfish family, along with bass.

Smallmouth bass inhabit pools in clear cool streams. They generally stay in one pool year round, never ranging more than half a mile from that pool. They do not tolerate silty or turbid waters. Smallmouth bass are predators, eating minnows, insects and small crayfish.



Spotted bass, unlike smallmouth bass, can be found in warm, turbid waters. They move from small streams with high water in the spring to larger streams and rivers in the fall. Spotted bass feed on larval stages of aquatic insects and small crustaceans and fish.



Catfish are characteristic of large streams. During the day, adults are found in deep water, submerged under logs or other cover. At night they feed in shallow pools. You can recognize the catfish from its "whisker" barbels that are used to taste and touch its food. They eat insects, fish, crayfish, mollusks, and sometimes plant material.

The minnow family is the largest of all the fish families. They tend to be small fish, but can reach up to 14 inches in length. Minnows are found mostly in unpolluted streams. Some are carnivorous while others eat only plant material. They are an important food for other fish.

Snakes are legless reptiles. Some species of water snakes may be seen basking in the sun on logs, branches or stones at the water's edge. If alarmed, they will quickly glide into the water. Water snakes feed on frogs, salamanders, small turtles, and invertebrates.

Turtles, another reptile, are often found along the water's edge basking in the sun on logs and stones. If interrupted, they will quickly disappear into the water. They eat algae and other aquatic plants, carrion (dead animals), and live animals like crayfish, fish, snails and insects.

Frogs are a member of the amphibian group. They lay their eggs in the water, and the eggs hatch into tadpoles. A tadpole is the larval stage, and will eventually change into what we know as frogs. Tadpoles breathe with gills, lack nostrils, and have eyes on the sides of their head. They eat algae. Once a tadpole's legs begin to develop, nostrils appear, and they begin to develop lungs for breathing to replace the gills. Jaws form, their eyes elevate to the top of the head, and the tail shortens and disappears. Once the frog fully develops it lives on a diet of insects that it captures with its long sticky tongue. Bullfrogs, which are quite large, can eat most anything that it can handle like crayfish, small frogs, birds, snakes, and even small mammals.

These are just a few plants and animals that you will find in an aquatic ecosystem. Each of these organisms plays a particular role in its community. Please respect our nature preserve. ★

