

CARL KIEKE

Learning to take care of the land

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I have always been a lover of nature. I enjoy just sitting and watching what happens, listening to birds sing, watching the weather.

For that reason, maybe I'm a bit more attuned to stories in the media about how man keeps encroaching on the habitat for animals. Roads and power lines through untouched forests, drilling or building in new areas, places being trashed and, in some cases, then abandoned.

Most youth groups have a component for nature study. They learn about how animals live, what they need for food and shelter and, most importantly, what humans should and should not do while enjoying nature. Frequently they do small or large service projects to enhance nature, providing food sources or homes for various animals. For example, bat houses were recently installed at Lake Kirby as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Humans keep moving out into nature to "get away." But where can wildlife go to get away? They are being pushed into smaller and smaller areas, often divided up into small, distant patches. Often that doesn't leave enough territory for them to survive. Some adapt; others die out.

There is good news on some fronts. Some landowners are reshaping their land into something close to what it was like before agriculture and grazing took over. Over the years, humans have learned a lot of methods to prevent erosion. We are only now discovering better ways to operate profitably while also allowing room for our wild friends to survive.

I am also a member of Master Naturalists, a statewide group dedicated to research and preservation of wild areas and educating the general population on the need for them. Joining such a group could be one way you can get involved. Supporting your youths when they participate in such activities would be another.

Our wild areas are shrinking. Will you step out of your comfort zone and help preserve what we have left?

Deadlines

Thursday for “Halloween at Pandora’s Mansion,” virtual event for Girl Scouts. Oct. 18, 19 and 20 for different ages, kindergarten through fifth grade. \$20; register for appropriate age at www.gs-top.org.

Upcoming events

“New Leader Learning Path” for Girl Scout adult leaders, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday; virtual event (will be repeated 6:30-8:30 p.m. Oct. 19). No cost, but must register at www.gs-top.org seven days prior to event.

Haunted Forest (Cub Scout/Scouts BSA family camp), Oct. 22-24, Camp Tonkawa. Must sign up by Sunday. \$20 per person; \$25 after Friday (under age 5 free). Fee includes all meals Saturday. 325-677-2688 or philipridley@yahoo.com or robert.goodson@scouting.org.

Girl Scouts at Buffalo Gap Historical Village scarecrow festival, 3-5 p.m. Oct. 23. \$10 per girl, including non-Scouts. Deadline has passed; check for availability. www.gs-top.org under “Events.”

Learn about Girl Scouts and how to join each Thursday at 7 p.m. Join virtually at gs-top.org. Click on “Advanced search”, then the “Virtual join events” tab. Registration information is under “Join events for girls.”

Girl Scout Animal Dance Party or Robot Building Party, two virtual activities, available at gs-top.org (under Virtual Join Events) or gsctx.org (under the Join tab).

Tot Spot, for children ages 3-5 (and an adult), 9:30 a.m. first Thursday and Friday of each month, The Grace Museum, 102 Cypress St. (Check at www.thegracemuseum.org under “Events and classes” for holiday scheduling.) Free for museum members, \$5 for non-members. Reservations required; 325-673-4587 or thegracemuseum.org.

Closings/cancellations

Girl Scout facilities in Central Texas Council, including Brownwood office, available by appointment only. Staff working remotely; curbside service available at council offices. www.gsctx.org or 800-733-0011.

Girl Scout office in Abilene, and all Texas Oklahoma Plains council facilities closed until further notice. Curbside pickup available; in-person shopping (by appointment only) also available. customer care@gs-top.org or 800-582-7272.

Contact Carl Kieke at 325-673-3552; or kiekec@suddenlink.net. Deadline is Monday for publication the following Monday.