

Austin Water – Center for Environmental Research



Austin Water – The University of Texas – Texas A&M University
A Partnership for Urban Ecology and Sustainability: Community, Education, Research
located at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant
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The CER Lunchtime Lectures 2017

By Dr. Kevin M. Anderson, AW Center for Environmental Research

Understanding Urban Nature: Ecology, Culture, and the American City

The 2017 Lunchtime Lectures will explore the complex relationship between the city and nature in America. Our American narrative of nature celebrates wilderness or “pristine nature” and rural or “pastoral nature” in contrast to the degradation of urban landscapes. However, we are now predominately a country of urbanites who have only recreational contact with wilderness or pastoral nature. To compensate for our urban “nature deficit”, we have incorporated “green space” into our cities - preserves, parks, farms, and gardens - to allow for contact with officially sanctioned approximations of wild and pastoral nature in the urban landscape. The urban nature that lives outside of these green spaces (or that “invasively” assaults them) is seen as a “degraded” type of nature. The resulting warlike narrative sets good nature that obeys its role in the American city against bad nature which has its own cosmopolitan plan for urban landscapes. The writer John Tallmadge describes urban nature as “just too mixed up, chaotic, and confused to fit our established notions of beauty and value in nature...Maybe it’s not really nature at all, not a real ecosystem, just a bunch of weeds and exotics mixed up with human junk.” Ecologists are called on to mediate and to assess whether it is a real ecosystem, and thereby add another chapter to the narrative entitled “urban ecology” in which science measures ecological cycles and ecosystem function in the city. The 2017 Lunchtime Lectures are an attempt to disentangle this complex story of ecology, culture, and the American City and, perhaps, to help you have a better understanding of urban nature. Join us on this exploration of urban nature!

Perspectives on Urban Nature

January	Varieties of Possibility: Perspectives on Nature and the City
February	Urban Wild: Wilderness, Wildness, and the American City
March	Urban Pastoral: Farms, Gardens, and Parkland in the City
April	The Elemental City: Cycles, Services, and Urban Ecology

The Nature of Cities – Urban Natural History and Ecology

May	Nature in the City: Urban Habitats and the Degradation Myth
June	The Aquatic City: The Ecology of Urban Waterways
July	The Terrestrial City: Greenspace and the Urban Forest
August	The Subterranean City: Soil and the Urban Microcosmos
September	The Aerial City: Urban Birds, Bats, and Denizens of the Sky

The Proper Place of Urban Nature

October	Nature Out of Place: Invasive Species, Novel Ecosystems, and Urban Ecology
November	Design with Nature: Urban Planning, Management, and the Sustainability Myth
December	Encounters with Urban Nature: Ecology, the City, and the Arts

Time: Noon to 1pm

Free and Open to the Public – bring a lunch and learn

Locations and Day of the Month –

Every 2nd Wednesday – Senior Activity Center-Lamar (SAC-Lamar) at 2874 Shoal Crest Ave, South Room

Every 3rd Tuesday - Austin Water Center for Environmental Research (CER) at Hornsby Bend

Every 3rd Thursday - One Texas Center (OTC) at 505 Barton Springs Road and South First Street, Room 325

The CER Lunchtime Lectures 2017 Schedule by Location - Time: Noon to 1pm

Perspectives on Urban Nature [January – April]

January Lecture – Varieties of Possibility: Perspectives on Nature and the City	Jan 11 SAC Jan 17 CER Jan 19 OTC
February Lecture - Urban Wild: Wilderness, Wildness, and the American City	Feb 8 SAC Feb 21 CER Feb 16 OTC
March Lecture - Urban Pastoral: Farms, Gardens, and Parkland in the City	Mar 8 SAC Mar 21 CER (changed for SXSW)Mar 9 OTC
April Lecture - The Elemental City: Cycles, Services, and Urban Ecology	Apr 12 SAC Apr 18 CER Apr 20 OTC

The Nature of Cities – Urban Natural History and Ecology [May - September]

May Lecture - Nature in the City: Urban Habitats and the Degradation Myth	May 10 SAC May 16 CER May 18 OTC
June Lecture - The Aquatic City: The Ecology of Urban Waterways	June 14 SAC June 15 OTC June 20 CER
July Lecture - The Terrestrial City: Greenspace and the Urban Forest	July 12 SAC July 18 CER July 20 OTC
August Lecture - The Subterranean City: Soil and the Urban Microcosmos	Aug 9 SAC Aug 15 CER Aug 17 OTC
September Lecture - The Aerial City: Urban Birds, Bats, and Denizens of the Sky	Sept 13 SAC Sept 19 CER Sept 21 OTC

The Proper Place of Urban Nature [October – December]

October Lecture - Nature Out of Place: Invasive Species, Novel Ecosystems, and Urban Ecology	Oct 11 SAC Oct 17 CER Oct 19 OTC
November Lecture - Design with Nature: Urban Planning, Management, and the Sustainability Myth	Nov 8 SAC Nov 21 CER Nov 16 OTC
December Lecture - Encounters with Urban Nature: Ecology, the City, and the Arts	Dec 13 SAC Dec 19 CER Dec 21 OTC

SAC - Senior Activity Center-Lamar - 2874 Shoal Crest Ave, South Room at 29th and Lamar

CER - Austin Water Center for Environmental Research – 2210 South FM 973 at Hornsby Bend

OTC - One Texas Center - 505 Barton Springs Road, Room 325 at South First Street