



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

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## **Stewarding Our Aquifer Field Day at Wildcat Bluff Nature Center, to Rehydrate the High Plains**

Wildcat Bluff Nature Center is home to an active collaboration to learn, educate, and demonstrate landscape rehydration techniques on representative rangeland in the Texas Panhandle. The Nature Center merged with the Don Harrington Discovery Center in 2021 to expand its focus on environmental science and conservation. The Texas Panhandle's semi-arid climate has long struggled with drought, worsened by human impact. Once sustained by aquifer discharge, West Amarillo Creek dried up in the 1970s due to land use changes.

Ogallala Life Conservation Inc. started the program early last year, and recently completed a second year's primary work session, installing more natural infrastructure along West Amarillo Creek, and some agroforestry experiments on Mariposa Trails and the Tascosa Wetlands Complex. The intent is to slow, spread, and sink stormwater and recover watershed function.

Additional work was undertaken at Mission Ranch near River Road High School, along a stretch of East Amarillo Creek that stays wet. They installed a few Beaver Dam Analogs, essentially human-built beaver dams, and some Post Assisted Log Structures, also intended to improve groundwater recharge and mitigate flooding & drought.

"Water scarcity is a pressing issue for our community," said Wendy Taylor, CEO of the Discovery Center Collective. "Through our partnership with Ogallala Life, we aim to test and implement sustainable water conservation methods that could make a meaningful impact—not just for Wildcat Bluff, but as a model for the entire region."

"I'm proud of what we're doing," says Will Masters with Ogallala Life. "It offers hope for a healthy & happy future, which relies on access to freshwater. A few years ago, we found a lot of inspiration in the work of the Mulloon Institute of New South Wales in Australia, which helped popularize landscape rehydration."

The Mulloon Institute is a non-profit, research, education and advocacy organization that was established in 2011 by Founders Tony Coote AM and his wife, Toni Coote. They are recognized globally as demonstrators of sustainable agriculture and environmental regeneration through landscape rehydration and restoration. They work to create healthier landscapes that are resilient to climate extremes and changes, benefiting the environment, farming and supporting communities.

Their environmental engineer, Erin, is traveling to the High Plains in early April to visit some of our area's rangelands and watersheds, and to see some of the recent work of Ogallala Life and friends at Wildcat Bluff Nature Center.

Ogallala Commons is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides leadership and education to reinvigorate communities and the commonwealth in the Great Plains Region. To correspond with Erin's visit, Ogallala Commons has agreed to help put on a Stewarding Our Aquifer Field Day to be held at Wildcat Bluff Nature Center, 2301 N. Soncy, Amarillo, TX this April 9th from 9:00am to 2:30 pm.

The interested public and especially farmers, ranchers, Master Naturalists, agency personnel, and educators are invited to attend. The purpose of the educational event is to provide information about management practices that can reduce groundwater depletion in the region, improve recharge of the Ogallala Aquifer, as well as assist in the transition from irrigated agriculture to rainfed agriculture.

Doors open at 9:00 am. Will Masters of Ogallala Life and Environmental Educator at Wildcat Bluff will give a brief talk and look at some maps. Then, Mulloon Institute's Erin Healy will present on her experiences and expertise in the flow of water through drylands, and Mulloon's recent work and lessons learned.

This talk will be followed with a visit to upper W. Amarillo Creek at Wildcat Bluff, to see some of the latest landscape rehydration works. Then, the group will reassemble for lunch and fellowship. Around 1:15pm, the group will caravan to Mission Ranch, about 15 minutes E of Wildcat, and visit E. Amarillo Creek, viewing some of the work within an wet and flowing watershed.

Registration for the event is \$30 per person (which includes the cost of lunch and snacks). To register and pay online, please click on this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/ogallala-commons-40336713233>

Otherwise, please contact Darryl Birkenfeld, Deputy Director, Ogallala Commons to register for the event ([darryl@ogallalacommons.org](mailto:darryl@ogallalacommons.org) or by phone at 806-945-2255). Registration can be paid at the door.

The SOA Field Day is sponsored by Ogallala Commons, Ogallala Life, Wildcat Bluff Discovery Center with special thanks due the Tecovas Foundation.

"We're making real progress, but restoration isn't a one-and-done project," said Will Masters, co-founder of Ogallala Life. "We need time, patience, and continued community involvement to support this land's recovery."

Community members interested in volunteering can contact the Discovery Center Collective's Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@dhdc.org](mailto:volunteers@dhdc.org) or sign up via Hands On Amarillo. Donations to support the project can be made at [www.wildcatbluff.org](http://www.wildcatbluff.org).

Follow Wildcat Bluff Nature Center on Instagram and Facebook for updates on the project and upcoming events. Learn more about Mulloon Institute by visiting their website or following them on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

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*The **Don Harrington Discovery Center** is a hands-on science center that makes science exciting, relevant, and interesting to all types of learners by providing interactive exhibits and programs that actively engage children, adolescents, and their families.*

***Wildcat Bluff Nature Center** is the secondary site of the Discovery Center Collective that fosters awareness, understanding, and appreciation of nature within the Texas Panhandle and to encourage education in the natural sciences from a current and historical perspective.*

*A 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution funded by admissions, memberships, and community support, The Discovery Center and Wildcat Bluff stimulate imagination, inquisitiveness, and innovative thinking by partnering with donors to create quality programming and exhibits. Visit [www.dhdc.org](http://www.dhdc.org) for more information about memberships, exhibits, and shows.*

#### Collaborators:

