

Summary: Scott Solomon, Formicidae (Ants)

Dr. Scott Solomon of Rice University has a long history of collaboration with the Big Thicket National Preserve and then with the Thicket of Diversity. He has coordinated mini-bioblitzes through environmental classes for many years and been the recipient of several BTA research grants using Park Partnership and TCEQ funds. In 2019, Solomon received a significant National Science Foundation grant to study *Hymenoptera*- Ants. This project uses past ToD research to facilitate comparative studies on ants Pre and Post Hurricane Harvey. Kountze High School assisted with the collection of ants.

In 2013, \$2759 was awarded for “Student investigation of biological diversity in the Big Thicket.” A No-Cost Agreement in January 2014 extended the award. All funds have been expended.

In 2014, Solomon received approval for \$5978.57 for “Ant community dynamics in the Big Thicket National Preserve.” He co-collaborated with Dr. Tom Miller, also of Rice University. A No-Cost Agreement was signed in April 2017. The project was finalized in October 2018. Outreach included 3 theses, a poster, and presentations at a Science Café and Kountze High School.

All BTA ToD projects were completed, and financial records were in order. As of July 2020, the Taxa Tally for Ants had not been updated. Only the research by Dr. JoVonn Hill was reflected in the numbers. Dr. Solomon’s research had not been added.

In 2019, Dr. Solomon received a significant award from the National Science Foundation. He is using past ToD research to facilitate comparative studies on Hymenoptera- Ants Pre and Post Hurricane Harvey. Kountze High School assisted in the collection of ants. Dr. Scott has served for numerous years as a member of the Thicket of Diversity Committee. He was featured as the guest speaker for Big Thicket Day 2024 in Beaumont hosted by the Big Thicket Association.

In 2026, ToD Chair Mary C. Johnston and Intern Natalia Doiron tackled a review of all documents and data. Natalia merged the Hill and Solomon data. As a result, the Taxa Tally totals were changed. The total number of species is now 60 with 13 New to the State. The total number of specimens collected is inaccurate due to the addition of student collections. Furthermore, species identified during many of Solomon’s Rice University environmental courses were not added to the Tally as they represent student surveys and may not be accurately identified or have the needed data points.

In 2026, Dr. Solomon extended his research horizons from ants to outer space with publication of a new book, *Becoming Martian How Living in Space Will Change our Bodies and Minds*.

Solomon’s service to the ToD is sincerely appreciated.

Updated by Mary C. Johnston, March 25, 2026