



Nature Trail Improvement Project Close!

Fundraising for the \$1,027,000 Sibley Nature Trail Improvement Project is almost complete. Through the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations, we are within \$49,000 of completing all fundraising for the project....and we're pretty sure we know where that's coming from. We will be absolutely sure by mid-September. As you will remember, the plans are to add new habitats, construct an additional room to the Learning Center that overlooks an outdoor Wildlife Feeding Area, construction of new water features and an outdoor Teaching Pavilion complete with a fire circle for evening programs, an historical representation of early ranch living,

complete with a windmill, a completely new entry into Sibley called "Icons of the Llano Estacado, and many other new features. If all falls into place as expected construction should begin in December or January of 2009 and be completed within a year. Much of the funding was derived from a \$500,000 matching grant from the State of Texas. The remainder of the funding has been the result of the generous donations of individuals, corporations and foundations. We are very grateful to everyone that has supported this very worthwhile project. If you're not familiar with the project, please feel free to

come by the Sibley Nature Center and take a look at our plans!

Thousands of students and their teachers and untold thousands of the general public visit the Sibley Nature Center annually at little or no cost to the visitors. The crowning jewel of their visits is the Nature Trail. The completion of this project will provide a much richer experience for the many individuals and groups that utilize the Sibley Nature Center. Thank you again to every supporter!



Permian Basin Outing Club

As a continual reminder, we would like to remind every Sibley member that you are entitled to join Sibley's outdoor club at no additional cost to you. When someone joins the outdoor club they are automatically enrolled into the Sibley Nature Center.

However, if someone joins the Sibley Nature Center we give them the choice of joining the outdoor club....(not everyone is interested in the "high adventure" scheduled monthly for the club. A monthly "e-newsletter" is sent to club members and the group takes monthly

trips to backpack, canoe, cave, rappel, etc. The club plans trips that are usually geared for any age or ability. We currently have over 100 members that enjoy the monthly activities. Let me know if you're interested at:

richard@sibleynaturecenter.org

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- *Sibley Nature Trail soon to be revamped*
- *The Sibley Academy will soon be up and running!*
- *Collaborations with the Eaton-Hill Wildlife Sanctuary*
- *Volunteers needed!*

The Sibley Academy

This fall will mark the next semester for the Sibley Academy. The academy features a series of lectures, field trips, and classes covering everything from the flora, fauna, human and natural history of the Llano Estacado to dinosaurs, art classes, outdoor education programs, and the use of digital cameras. We experimented with the Academy in early 2008 and were encouraged with the interest of both Sibley members and non-members alike. Sibley members will, as usual, receive a discount for classes that they sign up for. We are still working on putting together the classes and the schedule and attempting to find a better way to “get out the word.” We will announce when and where to find the classes, schedules, fees, etc. The former classes featured a series of talks from

Burr about “all things Llano Estacado” which encouraged participants to get out of doors and experience nature. Michael Nickell and Ronna Porter offered several art classes and Richard Galle offered a successful class on the use of digital cameras and Photoshop techniques. In addition, Ethel Matthews taught a fascinating class on natural dyes. Students went out on the Nature Trail and gathered plants that were later boiled and rendered into dyes for cloth...much as our ancestors did many years ago. Many of these classes will be repeated and we hope to develop new classes designed to interest a broad spectrum of students. If you have an idea for a class or would like to teach a class, please let us know. Email: richard@sibleynaturecenter.org or call us at 684-6827.



Sibley Store

Well, we’re finally getting organized for the Sibley Store. Most successful museums and nature centers feature a gift center, both to provide a variety of gifts and to help support the organizations. We have recently ordered and received quite a collection of posters, toys, and Sibley shirts. We are also “reorganizing” our lobby area to provide space for the store. We hope to have the store estab-

lished well before Christmas so if you want to shop for some unusual items for friends, relatives, or for yourself while supporting the Sibley Nature Center then check us out. We’ll promote the store upon its completion but we have items now if you have an interest in nature products,

books, shirts, etc....and, as always, we would appreciate any input from our members regarding store items. Remember, all proceeds go toward the operations of the Sibley Nature Center so that we can continue offering programs and services.

“Now there is one outstandingly important fact regarding Spaceship Earth, and that is that no instruction book came with it.”
- Buckminster Fuller

Volunteers

One of the current weaknesses of the Sibley Nature Center is our inability to keep our doors open on weekends. With a very small staff who already work many weekends, we have been unable to extend hours of the organization for the many potential visitors that would like to come to our center. Therefore, we are looking for a few volunteers that would be willing to spend a few Saturday hours at the center to welcome visitors and

answer the phone. We already have a few volunteers that have gone through a short training and will begin this process soon. We hope to keep the center open the entire day on Saturdays and may someday soon extend our weekly hours. As it currently stands, the only people that can visit the center are students that attend on scheduled trips, retirees, and those few that have complete control of their daily work schedules. The board

and staff of the Sibley Nature Center are very sensitive to the fact that we are excluding a potentially large portion of our community through our limited operating hours. If you feel that you would be interested in volunteering a few hours a month, even if it is a “split shift” or with a “team staff” approach, we would love to hear from you. We will soon be establishing the new hours and we need a large pool of volunteers!

Teacher Workshops

Last year the Sibley Nature Center became certified to offer workshops for teacher required continuing education classes. Since that time we have offered two very successful workshops attended by almost 70 teachers from Region 18 and Region 17. The first of these workshops was at Mott Creek Ranch in the Texas panhandle. The multi-day workshop featured experiences in the flora, fauna, human and natural history, archeology, paleontology, and geology of the area. The class was well attended and the evaluations that we received from the participants were outstanding. The center then offered a workshop at our facility featuring archeology, the use of photo essays and the web, dinosaurs, and the space program. At both workshops Rick Day and Charles Hemann, teachers

for the Andrews Independent School District, and Sibley's own staff provided the leadership. High marks from the teacher evaluations has inspired us to provide additional opportunities for the teachers in our area. We see this as an extension of what the Sibley Nature Center has become.....a center for teaching area students about the unique area in which we all live. Through working with teachers we are able to capacity build by reaching many



more students than we would normally see in a year!

Eaton-Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

For some time now, staff at the Sibley Nature Center has been working with the Eaton-Hill Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonora, Texas to help them with development of their center. The center is located above the city of Sonora on Eaton Hill and features a beautiful 34-acre nature trail. The center also has a small house that will eventually become a learning center. The center is fortunate in being located right off of Interstate-10. Burr Williams

has worked with the Eaton-Hill staff in helping them lay out their trail and providing ideas for programming. Richard Galle just came back from the center where he provided a workshop on strategic planning and fundraising as well as working with them on budgeting.

"Study nature, lover nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you." - Frank Lloyd Wright

The Sibley Nature Center has been blessed recently with major growth and is more than willing to share its experience with up and coming centers that are dedicated to like purposes. If you have the opportunity and are in the Sonora area, give the Eaton-Hill center a visit!

Volunteers Frank Gray and Larry Hall

We've recognized two of our volunteers, Frank Gray and Larry Hall before but we wanted to, once again, give them the kudos that they both richly deserve. Frank and Larry, without fail, are here at the Sibley Nature Center every Monday morning, regardless of weather, through rain, wind, and snow to clean and maintain Sibley's nature trail. In addition, Frank and Larry are willing and able to do any construction work, weed

abatement, trail development, and any other task that we ask of them. We've never seen Frank and Larry without smiles and a "can-do" attitude.

Frank and Larry worked together for years as engineers and made a decision to continue giving to the community through various volunteering opportunities. They provide a service

that would otherwise suffer. Frank and Larry not only volunteer but are involved in many other Sibley programs, as well. Organizations such as ours could not function without the invaluable service of volunteers like Frank and Larry.

Thank you gentlemen!

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SIBLEY
NATURE CENTER**

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