



## New Projects!

In July member Sonya Fitzgerald organized the first meeting of the Sibley Nature Center Photography Club, with 18 people attending. Fifteen attended in August. Members of the club share knowledge, photos, and go on expeditions together, including joining trips by the Llano Estacado chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists and the Permian Basin Outing Club, two other affiliate organizations of Sibley. Digital photography is exciting! Join in! They meet every first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at Sibley.

This fall the Propagators Group will again meet. Contact Burr at 684-6827 to have your name added to the email list. Meetings will be announced later this

week. This group plants seeds, takes cuttings, and separate clumps of many species of plants. Members of this group receive free plants in exchange for their volunteer work. If you have native and adapted plants in your garden, consider donating seeds and cuttings to the group, as well as joining. Material produced will be sold in the Spring Garden Sales in April and May, (there will also be a sale at the Grand Rededication when the construction project is completed on our Nature Trail). If you have experience in putting on a great event, contact Burr. We will need volunteers to help make the event happen in April or May! The staff of the Center has also joined the friends groups of both the Big Spring and Monahans State

Parks. We are helping lay out new hiking trails in Monahans and are helping create a website for the Big Spring park. The Llano Estacado chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists are also helping-if you have not yet joined the chapter, consider joining the 2010 class.

We have also joined Facebook. We post two photos a day along with about 50 words of text. Over 150 people a month are now "friends," many of whom add comments about their own experiences with flora and fauna.

Finally, we have begun a weekly one page e-newsletter to MISD teachers, featuring a different local organism each week.

## Ken Burn's—The National Parks

The Sibley Nature Center is proud to be one of the sponsors of the new PBS documentary, The National Parks: America's Best Idea. As a sponsor, we have been offered by the local PBS affiliate, a screening of the series.

This is longer than the teaser that has been airing on PBS and additional comments will be provided by Daphne Dowdy, the local PBS affiliate manager. This will be a Sibley members only presentation and will be

held at Sibley on Thursday evening, September 24th at 6:30 here at Sibley. We hope that you will choose to join us on that date! The Ken Burns series promises to be one of his best documentaries ever and we are proud to be involved!

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### Special points of interest:

- *It was a busy summer!*
- *A simplified membership policy*
- *The Trail Improvement Project is up and running!*
- *Sibley volunteer serves in Afghanistan*
- *Ken Burn's new documentary preview*

## Nature Trail Improvements Update

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Construction has finally begun on Sibley's \$1,000,000+ Nature Trail Capital Improvements Project! All funds have been raised and construction began in earnest in August. The Center's pond was recently drained and will soon be deepened, widened, and lined so that we can support more aquatic wildlife and present a cleaner, clearer pond. We have also begun construction on the Wildlife Viewing Room on the east side of the building, we have laid out where 1,500 feet of new trail will be constructed, and the new parking area north of the building has begun construction. As the trail is laid out new trail shelters will be established. Staffer Michael Nickell is working on the artwork for the new "Icons of the Llano Estacado" displays that will be featured at the new entryway

of the Center. Soon construction will begin on the outdoor teaching pavilion which will feature a fire circle for upcoming evening events. Also included for the project will be an acequia, a Spanish term for a water feature, new habitat construction, new interpretive signage, gardens, a wildlife feeding station, and many other new displays and features, all to make the Sibley experience more memorable. We are expecting to have the entire project completed by springtime next year! We will plan a grand opening for that time. We encourage you to come by (please watch out for the large yellow machines!) and watch the progress of the project. As members of the Sibley Nature Center, this is your project too!



**Dozer working on Sibley's Pond**

## New Sibley Membership policies

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In a continuing effort to streamline our efforts to save operating funds, the Sibley Nature Center board of directors has decided to streamline the Sibley membership management operations. To that end, all Sibley memberships will come due during annually during the month of December. It is important to note that this, in no way, effects membership prices, it simply saves the

Center undue mailings and time spent managing our growing membership roles. We cannot express enough how much our members mean to us and what value we place on your continues support. The membership at Sibley has more than doubled in the last few years and, though memberships represent only a small percentage of the Center's total operating budget, the support and encouragement of our members is worth millions. We hope

that you value your membership as much! We will send notices to all members in late November or early December with pro-rated dues, a return address, what amount you donated last, etc. We hope that you will embrace this new policy. It will save the association time and funds in the future and allow us to put those funds to good use to further our mission.

## How to Use the Sibley Website

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Occasionally we get an email about how the photographs on the website seem to be hard to find. We examine the region via the eight major habitats-alkali soil, playas, draws, canyons and breaks, urban forest, shallow gravel soils with Chihuahuan Desert shrubs or buffalo grass, sand dunes, the prairie to mesquite brushland. If you are trying to find an organism you have discovered, click on "Habitats" and then choose the proper

habitat. The "Virtual Trails" (photo essays of what you will see on the Sibley trails) are in the prairie to mesquite brushland habitat. You can also use the website search engine. Typing a common name, mesquite for example, will result in every photo and essay that mentions the species. Try this very simple method. We believe that you will be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is to do research on our website.



## The Permian Basin Outing Club

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The Permian Basin Outing Club has had another great year of trips, with three more trips to go! We've been to the Davis Mountains, Big Bend National Park, several private ranches, Cloudcroft, New Mexico, Lake Amistad, and a lot of other great places. We're still looking forward to a trip to the Davis Mountain's Buffalo Trail Boy Scout Ranch this month, the Guadalupe Mountains Dog Canyon in October, and Big Bend Ranch State Park in November...all followed up with a PBOC Christmas party in early December.

The club is open to all Sibley Nature Center members and, except for trip expenses, doesn't cost another penny to participate. Sibley membership includes

membership to the club when members indicate their desire to be a participant. We automatically make each Outing Club member a member of Sibley but give Sibley members the option to participate in the Club. The outdoor club takes trips each month except December and activities include backpacking, canoe/kayaking, car camping, caving, and many other outdoor activities. We always go to locations that are great for photography and for just enjoying the outdoors. If you have an interest in this club, simply call us at the Sibley Nature Center or email us at: [richard@sibleynaturecenter.org](mailto:richard@sibleynaturecenter.org). We'll be happy to put you on the roster. You'll get information about each trip, meeting times/dates and a monthly newsletter. We're also on the Sibley website. Join us!

*"Now there is one outstandingly important fact about Spaceship Earth, and that is that no instruction book came with it." - Buckminster Fuller*

## Volunteer Story

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Chris Cherry has been a volunteer at the Sibley Nature Center for several years now. Chris recently retired from the Midland Police Department, stepping away from a long career in law enforcement with sheriff departments, the MPD, and the United State Border Patrol and served time as a United States Marine. Yet, Chris wasn't done! He recently returned from a year-long stint in Afghanistan where he was involved with

training the Afghan police with their long-standing struggle with the Taliban. Chris has proven to be a loyal volunteer not only to the Sibley Nature Center but has served our country, as well. We want to thank Chris for his time here at Sibley and for his years of providing protection of our country's borders and our proud heritage as a free country. Thank you Chris!



## Plant Propagation Workshop To Be Announced

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As mentioned earlier, a Plant Propagation Workshop will soon be announced at Sibley. For those of you who don't know what plant propagation consists of, it is the method of creating new plants through seed, cuttings, and division. Participants help Sibley grow plants to stock the greenhouse and will be allowed to keep some of their "creations" for their own gardens and use. The workshop will be led by Sibley Horticulturalist and

staffer Mark Webb. Mark has years of experience in the art of propagation and has taught this class for Sibley in the past. Participants always enjoy the class and walk away with new insights into growing plants for their home landscape. If you're interested in this workshop, call the Sibley Nature Center at 684-6827. The class will take place some time in October.



**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SIBLEY  
NATURE CENTER**

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## Successful Summer

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This summer was the busiest ever at the Center. Our Texas Tech intern, Daisy Dominguez presented three minority camps, two at Sibley and one at Casa de Amigos (and she also installed a vegetable garden there!) We also had an intern, Jean-Baptiste Ristori who hailed from a small city near Bordeaux, France, who found us on the internet and spent almost two months with us. Michael Nickell also presented three Bug Camps this summer. The Junior Master Gardener Camp ran all summer every Tuesday and Thursday. The Sibley staff also presented 102 programs this summer, all told, 25 above the previous high. A total of 1,741 people attended these programs (of these 448 were drop-ins, a new summer high, as well.)

The Center presented a teacher field workshop to employees of Region 18. Staff made two trips to the Chihuahuan Desert Research Center south of Alpine

for presentations. Sibley also hosted the Travel and Tourism Committee of the Midland Chamber of Commerce. We also hosted several traveling biologists, including a researcher from the Texas Nature Conservancy seeking spot-tailed lesser earless lizards, a botanist from the Lady Bird Wildflower Center, and two biologists from Texas Parks and Wildlife seeking toads. They also presented an advanced training for our Master Naturalist group.

Volunteers have scanned hundreds of articles from over 60 years of the "Phalarope," the newsletter of the Midland Naturalists, for eventual placement on the Sibley Nature Center website. Volunteers have also contributed hundreds of hours out in the field photographing. Our three library volunteers have finished 99.9 percent of the work on cataloguing Sibley's library. Volunteers have also manned the

building every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Larry Hall and Frank Gray are still volunteering every Monday to pick up trash, mow, and prune the trails, and other works too. We are deeply appreciative of everybody's hard work.