

E1 Llano

Plant Sale...and other ramblings...

Inside this issue:

Plant sale coming up	1
Summer camps	1
Nature trail update	2
Llano Estacado Institute	2
Sibley's national recognition	3
ConocoPhillips grant	3

Special points of interest:

- Summer camps are being planned for Sibley
- ConocoPhillips grant allows for technology purchases
- Plant sales planned

Members of the plant buyers club were notified of the plant list and over a dozen folks preordered. All Sibley members are eligible for the plant buyers club and may become a member simply by contacting Burr at 684-6827. Another sale will be held on May 2nd so there will be another opportunity to preorder. The board of directors have all chipped in \$50 to enable the staff to offer a contest in the Midland Reporter Telegram where three lucky people can win \$400, \$200, or \$150 worth of plants. Details of the contest are in the March 25th issue of the MRT. New members of the Sibley Nature Center from March 23rd until May 2nd will receive three seed packets from the Native American Seeds Company of Junction, Texas.

Mark Webb, Sibley's contract horticulturalist, and members of the propagation group have produced over 300 plants for

the plant sale. Members of the propagation group were able to keep (for free) some of the plants they produced. This group will meet several times in April to start plants for the May 2nd sale—just call the Sibley Nature Center if you would like to join this group.

Native plant gardeners honor their regional ecosystems by growing the most beautiful plants of their area. Gardening is a way to enrich your life. Learn the names of the creatures and learn of the interrelationships that tie the garden together. A garden is much more exciting than anything on television. A gardener is active both physically and mentally.

Insects and other wildlife that are attracted to a garden can be fascinating as well as beautiful. Watching the behavior of a male hummingbird swooping to

impress a female, or watching two male butterflies do a circle battle, or any of the thousands of magical natural happenings is a major part of the enjoyment of gardening. A person connects with the natural world in a myriad of life affirming ways. Watching wildlife in a garden is a delight.

One's heart leaps in joyous admiration when watching a hummingbird pluck a spider web for its nest, or when a skink slinks out of a rock wall crevice, or a box turtle wrestles a hornworm off its host plant. There is a world of neighbors in the backyard, dozens of life forms living out intricate lives. A gardener participates in a world that is much greater than the constructs of a man.

Summer Camps and Summer Intern

This summer the Sibley Nature Center will have three summer camps. The Junior Master Gardener "Desert Bloomers" will meet each Tuesday and Thursday in June and July. Sibley curator Michael Nickell will continue his bug camp of last year and hopes to have three sessions. Sibley has also arranged for a

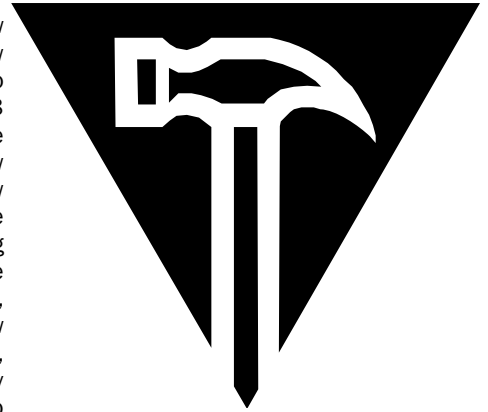
summer intern to present four weeks of another camp titled "Minorities in Science." Daisy Dominguez, who graduated from Odessa schools, comes to us from Texas Tech Honor College's Natural History and Humanities program under the leadership of Dr. Susan Tomlinson. Daisy will be spending several weeks at

the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York before coming to us. The Cary Institute's program mission is dedicated to the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge about ecological systems through scientific research and in writing and exhibits.

The Sibley Nature Trail

It seems like we've been talking about this for a long time, and we have, but if all goes as planned, actual groundbreaking for the \$1.27 million dollar Sibley Nature Trail improvements project will see dust flying before the summer newsletter is released in June. All monies have been raised and the final reviews of the drawings are taking place in Austin as we "go to press" with this newsletter. As a reminder, the new trail elements will include a wildlife feeding station, a new room added to the Learning Center facility to overlook the area, an outdoor teaching pavilion complete with a fire circle for night programs, an acequia (water

feature), many new trail shelters, new habitats to complete the 8 habitats of the region, new gardens, a new entryway into the building featuring the "Icons of the Llano Estacado", many new interpretive signs, and many, many new features to provide a richer experience for visitors of the center. Construction should be complete within a year and probably sooner. A grand opening will be planned upon completion of the project.



The Sibley Nature Trail Improvements are upon us!

This project was made possible by the generous support of several foundations, the State of Texas, and our membership.

"Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain." - Henry David Thoreau



Region 18 teachers at Sandhills—photos by Michael Nickell

The Institute of the Llano Estacado

Sibley staff (and others) have presented two teacher in-services—one at Castle Gap and another on a ranch near the Monahans Sandhills State Park. The Sibley Nature Center has partnered with the Region 18 Education Service Center, who brings their Technology on Wheels bus to the site. The bus is filled with computers, digital video and still cameras, an array of

probes, and a satellite dish. Region 18 is the only Education Service Center in the state of Texas to own such a bus, and the Sibley Nature Center is the only nature center in the nation to have such a partnership. Teachers listen to talks about the ecology and history of the sites, then perform activities that will eventually be turned into teaching modules for

teachers throughout the region. In the future, the partners plan to broadcast directly into the classrooms in the region where students will be able to interact with the people in the field. The modules will be on the Region 18 website and small sections of the videos will be on the Sibley website. Future in-services are being planned on a continuing basis.

Sibley continues to gain attention in the naturalist/interpretation field

In February, Executive Director Burr Williams gave two speeches at the Texas Academy of Sciences meeting in Junction, Texas. One of the speeches featured the Sibley website and our series of e-newsletters. At the conference, Dr. Christine Moseley of the University of San Antonio requested William's Powerpoint presentation for use in her environmental education classes.

In May, Williams travels to Montreal, Canada to speak at the World Environmental Education Conference. One presentation will again be on the Sibley website and the

other presentation will be about regionalized storytelling. We take historical characters and develop stories about what they might have done while in specific habitats of the region. (Many of our stories are on the Sibley website.)

Burr also reviewed 13 abstracts for the North American Association of Environmental Educators annual meeting to be held in Portland, Oregon in October. He also has submitted an abstract for a speech about the website at the meeting but has not yet been notified if it was accepted. He also joined the group's non formal

educators commission and is up for election as the president of the group.

Williams is also on the abstract selection committee for the Texas Association of Environmental Educators annual meeting in October. Williams also joined the National Association for Interpreters and its Nature Center Directors and Administration Section and is contributing articles for the newsletters of both groups.



Region 18 Technology photos by Michael Nickell



"What is a weed?" A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

ConocoPhillips grant

Through the generosity of the ConocoPhillips the Sibley Nature Center recently received a grant of \$5,100 to purchase several "technology" items to better serve our visitors. With the funds the center will purchase a burrowing endoscope, a device to place down the underground burrow of spiders, owls, snakes, and other burrowing and underground dwellers and

record for future playback the actions of the creatures. Additionally, the center will be purchasing an on-line weather station to be placed near the nature trail and an on-line camera that will monitor the new wildlife feeding area attached to the nature trail. Finally, we will be purchasing a field microscope complete with a camera lucida for microscopic drawing and a digital camera attachment for

photographing specimens. The Sibley Nature Center deeply appreciates the generosity of the ConocoPhillips company in its continuing support of the programs and services of the Sibley Nature Center. Without the support of companies such as ConocoPhillips, the center would be unable to provide for the these very worthwhile services.

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THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SIBLEY NATURE

