



# El Llanero

## *Sibley Bug Camp Resumes this Summer*

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The very popular Sibley *Summer Bug Camp* returns this summer for 3-four day sessions. The camp is designed for kids going into the 4th through 6th grades. Each session will be held on Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon each day and is reserved for up to 15 students per session. The session fee is \$50 and sessions are as follows:

Session 1: June 7-10, Session 2: July 12-15, and Session 3: August 9-12. Interested parties can call the Sibley Nature Center at (432) 684-6827 for more information and registration (ask for Michael Nickell) or by utilizing the

Sibley website for information at: [www.sibleynaturecenter.org](http://www.sibleynaturecenter.org).

The camp presents an introductory field and lab class to entomology and arthropod biology. Topics will include, but not be limited to, insect/human relations, insect anatomy and physiology, behavior and ecology, development and metamorphosis, and taxonomy and classification. Insects can be observed more readily than large animals which tend to be more secretive. The study of insects can also be a good natural introduction to using the scientific method. Most invertebrates are not harmful



to humans and many are very beneficial to us. Careful observations by amateurs have increased our knowledge of invertebrate life history far beyond that of professional scientists!

### Special points of interest:

- Bug Camp is back!
- Multiple memberships
- New construction ready
- Rededication event
- New programming

## *Three Memberships for the Price of One!*

Please keep in mind that your Sibley Nature Membership can include, if you so desire, access to the Sibley Camera Club and the Permian Basin Outing Club, all at no additional cost to you. The camera club meets the second Thursday of each month at the Sibley Nature

Center at 6 p.m. Members include those that are brand new to cameras and the art of photography all the way to professional photographers. This is a great way to learn new techniques and share your art with fellow members. The Permian Basin Outing Club

plans monthly trips to state and National Parks, ranches, and other areas to participate in backpacking, canoeing, camping, photography, and other outdoor "adventure sports." Simply let us know if you wish to participate in these other clubs!



**Andy Wilkinson from Lubbock entertaining under Sibley's new Outdoor Teaching Pavilion**

## *Rededication Event*

We deeply appreciate the wonderful turnout for the members and donors event on May 21st. It was a great pleasure for the board of directors and staff to show off the results of the fundraising and construction of the last three years! On Saturday, May 22nd, we estimated over 800 people attended the wide array of events. We were superbly pleased with the diversity of the crowd and thrilled by the many compliments received

both days. Many people described the changes as "spiffy" - it has become a favorite word at Sibley! The new entryway with its colonnade of the "Icons of the Llano Estacado" by our incredible staff artist, Michael Nickell, have garnered "beaucoup" accolades. We deeply appreciate the continued support of our members and donors for this very worthwhile project. All of the plant materials should be completed

in the next few weeks. Make plans now to come by and see the completed project!

## *Have you seen the new construction?*

**"The poetry of the earth is never dead."  
-John Keats**

Wow! The staff is so excited! For the school week after the rededication events, school groups streamed through the building, so we got to try out new patterns of presentations. The wonderful new icons in the entryway and the new signage outside focuses on the 8 major habitats helping introduce the students to their visit. After they have been on the trail, the new teaching pavilion and fire pit sitting area has become a great place to wrap up their visit. Discussions are underway for evening events at the pavilion so look for email notices! The new trails allow two groups doing outside projects at once.

There is still work to be done. The playa filled with heavy May rains so signage and

seating has to be completed at the pavilion next to the pond. Eagle Scouts will be doing a project in the playa, removing the visible remains of the old pond liner, mulching bare areas, and shaping some of the soil around the pond. Hopefully by the end of the year, the area will look natural again!

Up around the building a tremendous amount of landscaping remains to be done. Some of the landscaping projects will be done by Sibley members (and Master Naturalists volunteers). That work includes collecting seeds, taking cuttings, and attempting to transplant specific plants from specific habitats as each habitat garden is developed. The landscaping contractor is

putting in the framework for the gardens, however, some of the plants needed are not currently available through any grower. Some landscaping rocks and seating rocks also will be placed as the landscape framework is installed. Four more interpretive signs are due soon, too. Have you seen the new signs already installed—they have lots of colorful photos!

The wildlife viewing room, with its prairie dog air conditioning has proven to stay pleasantly cool, even on hot afternoons. Permanent water will be a feature and in the future we plan to have a game camera focused on the water and linked to the Sibley website so it can be viewed in real time.



**Enjoying the view from the new Wildlife Viewing Room**

## New Programs

On Monday mornings at 9 a.m. Sibley staff will lead short walks for parents and their children on the new Sibley Nature Trail and grounds. Sibley members attend for free! On Friday mornings at 9 a.m. Sibley staff will lead short walks for senior citizens and if transport is needed by folks with walkers or wheelchairs, the walks will include our new 6-passenger electric cart (donated by ConocoPhillips) that will be available by the

middle of June. The weekly walks will begin on Monday, June 7th.

On another note, the Llano Estacado chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists will be keeping the building open on Saturdays again beginning this weekend.

We hope that you will make every effort to partake in these

new opportunities and see our new facilities and experience our new services!



## Educational Importance of the Center

In 2010 our website usage has doubled from 2009 figures. Part of the increase may be due to our Facebook page where over 800 people have been “friended.” Another part of the increase may be due to the weekly e-newsletters we send to teachers (from MISD and other schools) that focus on “urban forest” ecology and often provide links to material on the website that can be used

in activities at school. We can always tell when a teacher has followed our instructions and showed selected Sibley website material (especially the Virtual Trails) - the students often shout out—“that is the \_\_\_\_” because they saw its image on the website. The utilization of modern technology has exponentially increased the number of “educational moments” - in the last year we have had over

1,5000,000 audience “moments” (from usage of website, to comments on Facebook, from ur column in the Midland Reporter Telegram, and to our hundreds of presentations.) We are making a big difference in helping the people of this region become more knowledgeable about their OWN home!

“To me a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug.  
- Helen Keller



Rededication Event—all photos courtesy of Annette Moellering



A Sibley “table decoration”



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