

El Llanero

Winter 2010

4th Grade Playa Program

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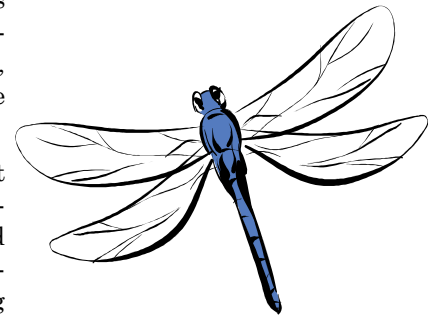
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This fall 17 Midland schools sent their 4th graders to the Sibley Nature Center. Each group spent the visit at Sibley's playa. Students were divided into two groups, each with a different assignment. One group sought to collect a different plant species for each child. The students then took notes on its name (either Latin name, Spanish common name, or a common English name), its adaptation to the playa habitat and at least one of its ecological connections (what insect, mammal, or bird uses it and how, including human uses). The other group investigated the vegetation and

soil litter to collect at least one insect in a small vial. The students wrote down the name of each. The groups then switched and when both activities were completed, the students were gathered together for Michael Nickell to give detailed instructions to draw both specimens. Afterwards, the insects were released.

Sibley staff will visit 17 schools in February of 2011 and work with the students in developing a 250 word narrative about their visit to Sibley. Some of the schools created bulletin boards of their visit so all of the grade lev-

els could learn a little bit about what lives at a playa and how organisms adapt to its unique conditions.



Special points of interest:

- * Sibley promotes outdoor activities for children
- * Nature Art classes expand at Sibley
- * Activity dates for Master Naturalist Class of 2011 announced

Membership renewals

Sibley Nature Center membership renewals continue at the Center. The board of directors of the Center enacted a new membership policy some time ago that enables staff to better organize and maintain memberships by

having all memberships due at the end of each year. Renewals are coming in at a good pace but we wanted to remind everyone that membership at the Sibley Nature Center is an important way to support the Center and its many pro-

grams and services and to remind all members that the basic membership also includes, at the option of the member, participation in the Sibley Camera club and Sibley's outdoor program, the Permian Basin Outing Club!

Master Naturalist class 2011

The Llano Estacado chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists will begin its 2011 class in January. The class will take 8 field trips during the year, visiting each of the 8 major habitats of the Llano Estacado. Class members are encouraged to take along a digital camera and to share the photos with the Sibley Nature Center. The cost of the class is \$75. New class members are required to have 40 hours of instruction (over 60 are offered) and provide 50 hours of volunteer time (and photography time aside from field trips is accepted, as

well as helping at Sibley's plant sales, keeping Sibley open on Saturdays, doing other work for Sibley, volunteering at Monahans and Big Spring State Parks, at Carver Elementary's Diversity Garden, going on Bird and Butterfly Counts sponsored by the Midland Naturalists, and doing work at the I-20 preserve). Eight hours of advanced training is required, as well.



Orientation will be at 9 a.m. on January 15th and last until noon. Most of the field trips are on private ranches within 150 miles of Midland.

Registration for this program is open now!

Children in Nature Conference—Austin, Texas, December 3-4

Sibley Executive Director Burr Williams was one of 240 people invited to Austin for the Children in Nature Conference. Representatives of many nonprofit organizations with the mission of getting kids outside and educated about their surroundings met with Texas Education Agency representatives, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials, politicians and members of the medical community including Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, chief medical officer of Blue-Cross. The group worked long hours on action plans for the strategic plan to further the goal of getting children involved outdoors. The group also attended many exciting talks about what is already being done and Williams returned excited about new possibilities for the Sibley Nature Center.

Three items stood out. By 2010 the new science of TEKS guidelines of the Texas Education Agency will require up to 60 percent of science study time should be carried out out-of-doors. Dr. Christine Moseley of the University of Texas at San Antonio is correlating

the TEKS guidelines with the North American Association of Environmental Educators Guidelines for environmental education. With Sibley's many years of experience in

"All men by nature desire knowledge." - Aristotle

doing just that, Williams predicts that an increased demand for our services will occur. With such powerful justification for our mission, it makes the success of Sibley even more important to ensure!

With the tremendous interest show by members of the medical community at the conference, Williams believes Sibley should seek new partners within that community and develop new programs. Williams has queried "marathonkids.org" about developing a Midland chapter of their program. Kids K through 5th grade that sign up are asked to walk, run, and bike at

least 26 miles in a few months time, as well as participate in other activities. **Please ask your physician if they would be interested in forming a coalition of West Texas physicians to promote children's outdoor activities, and if they are interested, to please email Burr Williams at:**

bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org. Other "health" suggestions that could align with goals similar to Marathonkids include a ride-a-bike-to-school program (with specific things to look for along the way...birds, wildflowers, and more).

The third item of interest at the conference was the incredible interest in creating habitat outdoor labs at schools. Austin ISD has received well over a million dollars to develop habitat gardens/labs for every school in the district. Besides its use during school hours, programs will be developed for latchkey kids after school and to serve as neighborhood education centers for urban wildlife and gardening, as well.

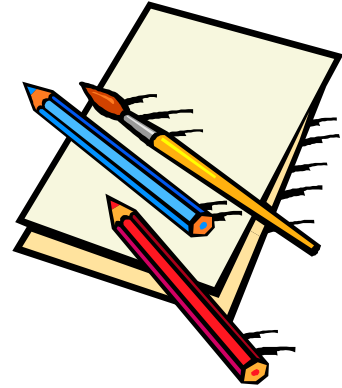
Nature Art Classes at the Sibley Nature Center

Starting on Saturday, January 16, 2011, Sibley Museum Specialist Michael Nickell will begin offering a series of fundamental drawing courses with emphasis toward nature drawing and journaling. Each course is scheduled to be five weeks in length on Saturdays from 12 noon to 2 p.m. for Pencil Drawing I. (The Pencil Drawing II class will resume the same days from 2 to 4 p.m.). The beginning courses will include Pencil Drawing I, Pencil Drawing II, Light on Form, Composition, and Color Theory, and must be taken in sequence. For those who complete all five fundamental courses, other advanced courses will be offered and might include Nature Drawing, Pen and Ink Drawing, Colored Pencil Drawing, Textures from Nature, Drawing Animals, Drawing and Painting Animal Details, Botanical Illustration, and Scientific Illustration. The cost of tuition for each course will be \$50 for Sibley members and \$80 for non-members. (Single membership at Sibley are \$25 a year).

Mr. Nickell has been a professional practicing scientific illustrator and nature artist for over 30 years. His clientele has included National Geographic, Texas Parks and Wildlife, the Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock Lake Landmark, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Oklahoma, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Square House Museum, Encyclopedia Britannica, and others. His work is also in numerous private collections.

For more information, call Michael W. Nickell at the Sibley Nature Center at (432) 684-6827 or email him at:

Michael@sibleynaturecenter.org. There will be a minimum of five per class and a maximum of 15. The minimum age to take the classes is 14. No prior experience in art is necessary for Pencil Drawing I, but willingness to work, study, and try new things is paramount!



"I don't like formal gardens. I like wild nature. It's just the wilderness instinct in me, I guess."
Walt Disney

Outdoor club resumes in January

The Permian Basin Outing Club, sponsored by the Sibley Nature Center, has completed its fifth year at Sibley and thirtieth year of existence, and celebrated the year recently at the club's annual Christmas party. The club has developed its 2011 calendar of events which includes several backpacking events, water themed trips, and even a weekend trip to



Midland's Summer Mummers! To be a part of this active group only requires a membership to the Sibley Nature Center and an enthusiasm for the outdoors and outdoor adventure! The club schedules events for each month of the

year and distributes a monthly newsletter to its members. If you have an interest in joining the club, please contact the Sibley Nature Center. Each trip is designed to accommodate all skill levels and ages though some activities require some degree of exertion. All Sibley members are welcome to become a member of this active club!

We're on the web at:
www.sibleynaturecenter.org



Happy Holidays!

Sibley Nature Center
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