

Trails

Alamito Creek Preserve Trip Report

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- Alamito Creek trip windy by wonderful
- Prepare for April's trip to Independence Creek
- Schedule change
- Movies at Sibley?
- Trip pics
- Trail Grand Opening

A mess of us (good 'ol West Texas term) found our way down to the Alamito Creek Preserve last weekend and, except for the wind, the weather was outstanding. Alamito Creek Preserve is now the property of and managed by our friend and fellow PBOC member's Trans-Pecos Water and Land Trust Executive Director, David Crum.

All of us, which included members of the Tierra Grande Master Naturalists class as well as several of Sibley's own Llano Estacado Chapter of the Master Naturalists group, and PBOC members, arrived at our campsite on Friday night. David had arranged for a water analysis class to be taught to the Master Naturalists in addition to the PBOC activity. The wind prevented us from having a campfire but David had prepared tables and chairs under a shelter where many of us gathered both Friday and Saturday nights to have supper and visit. My friend Rick Gray arrived a little later on Friday night. He drove all the way from San Antonio for the event! On Saturday morning, I transported several members in the back of my pickup and were accompanied by several other vehicles to the "T" down a creek bed to Alamito Creek. After about a quarter-mile hike we arrive at a continuous line of pools lined with some of the largest, and healthiest continuous grove of cottonwood trees that you'll find in the state. These pools are present year-round and I've been told that in the rainy season, Alamito Creek will



Alamito Creek—pic by Richard

easily run continuously from bank to bank. Birds were abundant (and this is early!) and we found deer tracks, cougar tracks, and unfortunately feral hog tracks everywhere. The current plan is to install a couple of game cameras along the trails to try to capture cougar images! Brandon Hawkins (Pup) had already gone down the trail before the rest of us got there (the boy can cover some ground!) We walked for some time and saw awesome country. I encouraged everyone to take time later in the weekend and drive down to the bridge crossing Alamito and walk back the other direction to see even deeper pools and eye popping trees. After our short hike we came back to camp for lunch. The water analysis workshop continued so after lunch Brandon, Don Moore, Rick Gray and I decided to go to the bridge and walk back into

the creek to see the "real water." We spent a good deal of time trekking the creek and finally turned back to take a trip to the La Junta Heritage Center land near Presidio (Brandon and several UTPB grad and undergrad students are doing some work there for us in May). We stopped in Presidio for a sit-down meal and then made our way to the La Junta site. The La Junta de los Rios site is very historic and is where the Rio Grande and the Rio Conchos out of Mexico come together. We spent time at the site, looking at the historic cemetery and adobe buildings. Steven Shafersman and Gae and their guests showed up later and we all toured the site and talked about the incredible history that took place where we were standing. Great day! We returned to Alamito Creek for supper and another great night of conversation. A few members left for home on Saturday but most stayed. On Sunday, David and Kay, Hiram and Liz Sibley, Rick Gray and I went to the old Kennedy ranch house for a picnic lunch and tour. Liz had prepared delicious sandwiches of artichoke hearts, red bell peppers, and guacamole. Great meal and great company....well, David was there but you can't expect perfection! By the time that I hauled Rick back to his Jeep for his return to San Antonio, camp was pretty much empty. We all had a great weekend!

April 16-18 Outing Club Trip to Independence Creek

It seems that creeks are becoming a theme for our club! We just came back from a wonderful trip to Alamito Creek and our next trip, scheduled for the weekend of April 16-18 promises to offer great spring weather and more awesome scenery. For those of you that have never been in this part of the country, you're in for a treat. Our trip leader (and club President) Sean Patty has been planning this trip for some time and we'd love to see a big turnout. Independence Creek Preserve falls under the jurisdiction of the Nature Conservancy of Texas. In 1992 the Chandler family and the Nature Conservancy of Texas came together

to protect 702 acres of Independence Creek through a conservation easement. Then, in 2000-2001, the Nature Conservancy purchased an additional 19,740 acre preserve adjacent to the 702 acre Chandler property, all along the Pecos River, to create the Independence Creek Preserve. When I was with the Midland YMCA, we had many of our staff retreats at the Chandler Ranch site and I can tell you, it is a beautiful area! I know that Sean will have much more information for you at the April PBOC meeting. I just talked to Sean and he will need a head count by the time of the meeting so start thinking about this trip

now! The Preserve is just south of Sheffield, which is relatively close to the Midland/Odessa area so not a long, long drive. There are numerous activities that you can engage in but if you're into photography and/or wildlife...this is the trip for you. The area is kid friendly too so perfect for families. I could tell you so much more but you might want to check out this website:

www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/texas/preserves/art25186.html

for pictures and much more information on the area. Hope to see you at the meeting and the trip!

April PBOC Meeting

The April meeting of the Permian Basin Outing Club will take place on Tuesday, April 13th at 6 p.m. at Murray's Deli at 3211 West Wadley here in Midland. Sean Patty will take a nose count (or an ear count and divide by two) for all of you that plan to go on the trip to Independence Creek Preserve on the April 16-18 weekend.

As always, I encourage you to come to the meeting to experience fine food and even finer company (insert snicker here). This is a great opportunity to introduce potential new members to the club, as well. You don't have to be going on the trip to attend the meeting! I always remind you of this but the real purpose is to fill up space on

this particular column. It's difficult sometimes! Let's see, if Sean was going to do an ear count and divide by two....and let's say that Vincent Van Gogh showed up at the meeting, would Sean have to divide by 1 and a really large fraction? See, Van Gogh cut off his ear to impress a girl and....well I've filled up this column....

"I expected times like this...but I never thought they'd be so bad, so long, and so frequent."

Devil's River Trip Change

Due to a scheduling problem, the Devil's River trip will be replaced by a yet-to-be-determined trip in mid-May. We had two trips planned, almost back-to-back, the April 16th trip to Independence Creek date that was established *after* our calendar planning meeting last December, and the Devil's River trip, that was planned at that December meeting. Our

trip leader to Devil's River had a scheduling problem and we felt that the two trips were too close to each other followed by a great expanse of time before the June trip...so it seemed wise to even out the trips and overcome the problem with the schedule by simply replacing the Devil's River trip with another, later trip. I think that there is tremendous interest in going

to the Devil's River so we will plan that for later. Meanwhile keep your eyes and ears open for the announcement of the replacement trip for mid-May. If you have any good ideas for that trip, let us know. We're probably looking at the weekend of May 14-16. We try to stay away from calendar changes but sometimes these things just happen.

Sibley Grand Opening....can you help us?

Construction on the \$1,000,000+ improvements to the Sibley Nature Center Trail and building is nearing completion. The current plan is to have a grand opening on May 21st for Sibley members (you folks) and the donors of the project. Then on Saturday, May 22nd there will be a general public unveiling of the improvements. All of you, as Sibley and PBOC members will receive an invitation to the event. Why am I telling you this now, you ask? Well, we are thinking that we may want to spruce the trail and surroundings up just prior to the event...clean up the trail, spruce up the pond area, etc. and I was hoping, if indeed this becomes the plan,

that some or all of you will volunteer to help us prepare for the event. I know that graduation ceremonies are

and pitch in I'd love to hear from you. We were talking the other day about getting the club involved in "public service" efforts on a volunteer basis, i.e. helping build trail at the Nature Conservancy area at Mt. Livermore in the Davis Mts., helping at the Alamito Creek Preserve and the La Junta Heritage Center, etc. The fun thing about these projects is that they're outdoors and, in most cases, in very scenic areas. The Sibley Nature Trail may not be Yellowstone but the cause is just. So think about it and let me know!



being planned around this time of year but if you are willing to roll up your sleeves

PBOC Movie Night?

We have had at least one event in the recent past for the PBOC that included watching a movie in the Sibley Auditorium. Sammy Hunnicutt and I...and a few others were talking about how much fun that was and were considering repeating the event on a somewhat regular basis. As luck would have it, we have written a grant for and received said grant for the purchase of a new high-definition digital

projector, surround sound system, DVD player, etc. With a little luck, that system should be in soon and with even greater luck, I'll have it installed in a timely fashion. We thought that a movie night at Sibley might be a great way to test the system and incorporate the movie with an outing club event. We planned this a couple of years ago when we showed the Kevin Costner movie *Fandango* which was filmed

entirely in the Davis Mountains and surrounding area. We wanted everyone to watch the movie, then we would give everyone a GPS unit, teach them how to use it, and have a "scavenger hunt" on an outing club trip. The previous trip failed because of bad weather but we thought that we might try again. An outdoor skill set combined with an outing club trip and a night at the movies...with popcorn.

"I want either less corruption or more opportunity to participate in it."



Tree grove at Alamito Creek Preserve—pic by Richard

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
PERMIAN BASIN OUTING
CLUB

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Don Moore and Rick Gray—pic by Richard



The Crums and the Sibleys....and some crochety old cowboy looking dude—photo by Rick Gray



I would have let the ladies sit up front but David!..... photo by Rick Gray



Crums, Sibleys, and ol crochety guy again—photo by Rick Gray



Guess where? Alamito again—photo by either Richard or Rick Gray...I don't know, we both took the same shot....



Looking back at the Creek from high point—photo by Richard