

# Trails

April 2010

## Independence Creek was great, despite the low turnout.....

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### Special points of interest:

- Independence Creek trip was lightly attended but a delight to all that attended
- May event rescheduled

Well, we had around 18 sign up for Independence Creek and four of us showed up—Sean Patty, the very capable trip captain, his two boys, Sam and Zach, and yours truly. I'm only going to mention this once so as not to grind it in too deeply: the weather was beautiful while we were there. We could only surmise that everyone bowed out on us because of the lousy weather in Midland but remember, south of Sheffield is quite a ways south of Midland/Odessa. We were grateful for sundown on Friday just to cool things down a bit. Sean, Sam, Zach and I sat around Sean's Coleman lantern for a long time Friday night (our version of a campfire....though they allowed us to build a campfire if we wanted one....but it was too warm...) and visited for a long time about astronomy, telescopes, fishing, Indians that lived in the area, and how beautiful the place was! In the 27 years of the Permian Basin Outing Club, I've only been to one place that could compare to Independence Creek and that was the Pecos Wilderness near Santa Fe, New Mexico. The historic buildings (complete with restrooms) was surrounded by oaks and what could only be described as a golf course lawn area.

I got to the site early on Friday to get the orientation provided by Corbin, the Preserve Manager. He and I got into his big diesel pickup and drove all over the place. He even offered the "bunkhouse" to us if the weather got bad...and bunkhouse didn't serve as a very good description, the place was beautiful, complete with kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, etc. He said that it would accommodate around 18. He then took me to many of the alternate campsites near Independence Creek and others on the other side of the road. All were heavily treed and absolutely gorgeous. The highlight of the tour was the "Oak Mott".....an area of thousand-year-old oak trees arranged in a circle. I don't know how to describe it. I told Corbin that most things could be somewhat captured with photographs but there was no way to convey this site. Sean agreed when we went to the site on Saturday. To get on with the trip report—Sean and his boys showed up at about 6:30 p.m. on Friday and I showed him all of the areas that were open to us to camp (we had the whole place to ourselves) and he decided to camp on the "lawn" at the first lake's

edge so that bathrooms were nearby for the boys and they had easy access to the lake for fishing. The first lake was one of two large lakes surrounded by various ponds, all surrounded by smaller ponds and all supplied by Caroline's Spring, which fed the lakes at 3,000 to 4,000 gallons a minute. We fished, visited, had dinner, and generally had a great evening of star-gazing and solving the world's problems. When Sean and the boys went to bed I decided to make my camp about 4 miles away at Site 14, near Independence Creek. I have to admit, I was tired but after I set up my camp I took out my lawn chair and sat in the total silence at camp for another hour or so...it was incredible.... On Saturday morning I drove back to the second lake and pulled out my fishing gear. I managed to catch about 15 large-mouth bass in about 20 minutes. Most were small except for a couple of 2 pounders. I eventually walked over to Sean's camp where the boys were fishing and the 3 of us fished on for some time. We had some lunch and decided to go exploring. I showed Sean and his boys all of the areas that Corbin had showed me, including a really neat Indian site

(cont. on pg 2)

## Independence Creek trip report cont...

that held a lot of art and odd "has marks"....a LOT of hash marks. I really couldn't wait for Sean and the boys to see the Oak Mott so we went there. Sean agreed that there was no way to describe this area. All of the trees radiated out of a central area and the limbs were entangled making all sorts of "frames" for photography (which Sibley staffer Michael Nickell, when viewing some of my pictures later, said might have been done by the Indians!) We traveled from one spot to another and lingered at the prettier sites. We eventually ended

up at Independence Creek near my campsite. We thought that this would be a great place just to lounge around, take pictures, and let the boys swim (I know, I said that I wouldn't harp on it but *it was THAT warm*). The limestone cliffs that lined the creek was filled with birds of all sort and mammal tracks were all over the place. We stayed at the spot for quite a long time, reluctant to leave the beautiful scenery...but more awaited us. We explored many of the other camping area and eventually, toward the end of the afternoon, made our way back to the lakes for

more fishing. I changed the boys lures to larger bait and they took advantage of the spot that I had found that morning...and started hitting some of the larger bass. Sean and I ended up sitting on the tailgate of my truck just to watch the fun. Towards the end of the day, I reluctantly decided to head back to "civilization" to try to catch up on work that I had to do at Sibley to prepare for the upcoming grand opening. The last time that I looked in my rear view mirror, I could see the boys wielding their fishing gear and Sean wielding his camera. I can only imagine what a great replay of Friday night that

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### May 15th event

Since the May event to the Devil's River fell through and after talking to our club president, Sean, we have decided to have our first "movie night" at the Sibley Nature Center. The new high definition video and sound system has been installed at the Sibley Auditorium so we decided to have a relaxing afternoon/evening at

Sibley, bar-b-que outside and watch a movie. I'll let you know what time in a future email. Keep in mind that this is the weekend before Sibley's grand opening for the new renovations at Sibley so we may schedule a "work day"



at Sibley to get everyone to help us clean up the trail, spruce up the area, etc. We'll follow that with a cookout and a movie using the new audio/visual system. Note too, that this won't require our usual meeting at Murray's.



**Panorama of “one way” to get to Independence Creek (drove out of my way to get this one) - photo by Richard**



**Zach swimming on Saturday...oh I promised not to drill home how warm it was didn't I? - photo by Richard**



**Caroline's Spring (that feeds the lakes) - photo by Richard**

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**Our facility—photo by Richard**



**Sean plying his trade—photo by Richard**



**Kind of a pretty Friday afternoon—First Lake—photo by Richard**



**The Newsletter of the  
Permian basin Outing Club**

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