



## Next 2010 class lesson is planned

■ The class visits Monahans Draw in Odessa on Saturday, June 12. Wear shoes to go through water and bring bug and sun protection. At 8 a.m. we will meet at the parking lot next to the trout pond south of the interstate and west of the Crane highway. Take the County Road West exit (coming from Midland), turn left under the underpass, then turn left onto the access road, and drive back east until you cross the draw again, and see the parking lot on the right.

We will return to the parking lot around 11:30 or noon, then go to eat lunch at El Primo Burritos located on south Crane. Go north on Crane from the interstate. It is about six blocks past Clements and is on the right side. After lunch all who need to attend the training on how to keep the Sibley Nature Center open this summer will receive training back at Sibley beginning at 2 p.m.

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Please send your stories and jpeg photos to [cherrytree@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherrytree@sbcglobal.net) for the next newsletter. The newsletter is edited by Barbara Cherry.

## It was a chilly day in May

### *Members gather at Wight Ranch to explore alkaline soil region*

Grabbing earmuffs, hats, jackets, and more layers of jackets, the Master Naturalists resembled a gathering more appropriate for February rather than early May. We met near Grand Falls at the Schuyler Wight Ranch to study the alkaline soil region.

Tucked in to a mesquite brush ranch area was a spring-fed pool system which supported animals and plants friendly to the salty region. Some salt crystals were formed from evaporation and were found on the ground. (No one threw any over their left shoulders.)

Red-winged blackbirds and ducks let us know the water was near, and the cattails and bulrushes grabbed attention, too. Of course, the two small boats let us know the water was deep enough to have fun in.

Members found evidence of Indians. We found an arrowhead, burned rocks, and debiture.

Animals we saw or found evidence of included lizards, funnel spider webs, and pocket gopher mounds. It

was cold, so snakes stayed home.

We saw pickleweed, heliotrope, of course mesquite, allthorn, prickly pear cactus, and lote, and even one flower that Burr had not seen before, and another he had only seen twice before.

The Wights cooked up hamburgers for the group, and this also included two other groups from the area who were invited for the day. Members sat at picnic tables and visited.

Then we split up and explored some more for a couple of hours.

And although the signs going up to the ranch area read, "Road cloozed," "Road closeded," and "Road closed," we thank the Wights for opening the road for us on this day.



Dave Taylor photographs a caterpillar that Slim holds. Steve Shaw and Lynn Fisher look on.

## Time passages . . .

### *Recording volunteer hours is essential part of being a Master Naturalist; June 21 is the quarter deadline*

#### **From Sammy Hunnicutt**

The State is now requiring that each Master Naturalist chapter report hours for each calendar quarter. Time for this quarter must be in no later than June 21. If the time is not turned in by then, the person's time will not count. The final two weeks of the last month of a quarter will carry over into the following quarter.

Because there was a problem getting most of the membership to turn in their hours electronically, we are going to a paper

copy. Each member will need to print off and fill out the paper form and turn it in to Burr

Williams at the Sibley Nature Center. Sammy Hunnicutt will pick them up and update the spreadsheet for the state report.



Volunteers help shoppers at the Sibley Plant Sale.

Time sheets from each member will be kept on file. It is extremely important that the membership fills out and turns in their time sheets on time for them to get credit for training and volunteer hours. Sept. 20 is the deadline for the third quarter and Dec. 20 for the fourth quarter.

## State guidelines tell what is expected for certification

#### From the Texas Master Naturalist Chapter Guidelines

The Requirement Section on page 3: <http://agrilifeweb.tamu.edu/masternaturalist/files/2010/02/ChapMgtGuidelines.3.16.pdf>

*To become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a trainee must complete the following:*

- *The state committee approved curriculum with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction.*
- *Obtain a minimum of 8 contact hours of approved advanced training.*
- *Complete a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service.*

*Volunteers have a maximum of 15 months in their first year to complete the above requirements to receive their first certification as a Master Naturalist. A chapter may allow participants to begin earning volunteer service hours once they begin the Texas Master Naturalist training. Once the volunteer has completed all the requirements they shall receive a state certificate (MKT- 3338) and color dragonfly.*

*To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete a minimum of 8 hours of advanced training per year and provide a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service per year coordinated through their local chapter.*

# How do you figure out how hours count?

## *Explanation covers how time is figured*

**Initial training** is how we begin. The 40 hours of initial training hours are those hours from class time on Saturdays. The trip to Santa Rosa Springs for example.

**Advanced training** is 8 hours of training above and beyond the required 40 hours of training required to become a Certified Master Naturalist. All members must complete 8 hours of advanced training annually. Advanced training is specialized training, such as Dr. McGookey's presentation at the March chapter meeting. Another example would be a special presentation at the Sibley Nature Center on an approved topic. Notices of advanced training opportunities are always sent out in advance to all members.

**Volunteer hours** are just that. From the Texas Master Naturalist Chapter Management Guideline document: **Mission.** *To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.* Volunteer opportunities must be approved by the officers and board beforehand. All volunteer opportunities will be made known to the chapter membership well in advance. Travel time to and from volunteer opportunities is counted as long as the travel time is not greater than the actual time spent at the volunteer activity. Service time as a chapter officer, board member, committee chairperson, or committee member is counted toward each person's volunteer hours.

All members are encouraged to bring forth ideas for volunteer opportunities. If you know of, or think of an opportunity then contact one of the chapter officers or Burr Williams. The officers will review the suggestion and decide if it is within the guidelines as an acceptable volunteer service project. Some of the volunteer opportunities that exist now include the following::

**Assisting at Sibley Nature Center:** Photo essaying, managing the center on a Saturday, special projects – assisting at Sibley as directed by Burr Williams or other staff members.

**Assisting at the following State Parks:** Big Spring State Park, Monahans State Park, Colorado City State Park. Please note that any volunteer work at any of the State Parks needs to be coordinated through the park manager and the chapter board.

**Working at I-20 Pond:** Generally, trail maintenance.

**Assisting the Midland Naturalists with the following:** Audubon Christmas Bird Counts (Big Spring, Midland, and Robert Lee), Big Day Bird Count, Butterfly Counts

**Assisting at Carver Elementary School's Biodiversity Project** which is coordinated through Emmy Ulmschneider.

**Assisting with the project at Tahoka Lake** which is coordinated through Burr Williams.

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Vice President Nathan Taylor volunteers outside at the re-opening.



President Chris Cherry and Barbara Cherry welcome people on Friday of the reopening. Rocks held down papers against the wind.



Steve Shaw and Burr Williams talk with a visitor at the re-opening of the Sibley Nature Center.

Taffy Armstrong smiles next to the sign advertising the re-opening activities and displaying some of Michael Nickell's artwork.



**Photos by  
Annette  
Moellering**

# Confused about a volunteer opportunity?

## *Use these comparisons to judge!*

The following is an explanation of unacceptable, better, and best examples of volunteer opportunities.

**Unaccepted:** Being “on call” as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization

**Better:** Actually performing a wildlife rescue event for a partnering organization of the local chapter

**Unaccepted:** Planting exotic plants at a local school

**Better:** Planting native plants or a wildscape at a local school

**Best:** Leading fifth graders and staff in implementing a native plant garden/wildscape at a local school



Sibley guests get a lift during the re-opening of the center in May.  
Photo by Annette Moelling

**Unaccepted:** Cleaning the elephant cage at a zoo

**Better:** Caring for the Prairie Chicken area at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local chapter

**Best:** Leading interpretive programs about Prairie Chickens at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local chapter

**Unaccepted:** Maintenance at a private native plant nursery

**Better:** Maintenance of a demonstration

garden at a park/nature center or being part of a native plant propagation team for the city’s botanical garden

**Best:** Holding a workshop on how to install and maintain a wildscape or other similar type of native habitat

**Unaccepted:** Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land

**Better:** Conducting wildlife management practices/activities on public land

**Best:** Teaching/assisting landowners to develop their own wildlife management plans that the landowner would carry out

**(No Unaccepted) Better:** Conducting endangered species surveys; developing nature trails or habitat brush piles at a local park/nature center which is in a partnership with your local chapter.

**Best:** Maintaining a nature classroom/training area for that same partner who also allows the chapter to keep an office and/or hold chapter meetings in this same space.

**Unaccepted:** Receiving service credit for time spent serving as a board or committee member for another natural resource/environmental organization NOT in partnership with your local Texas Master Naturalist Chapter.

**Better:** Receiving up to a set limit of service credit (e.g. 10 hours per year as set by your local chapter) for serving as a board or committee member for another natural resource/environmental organization that is ALSO a partner with your local chapter, providing the chapter shares resources such as meeting space at little or no cost.

**Best:** Receiving service credit for time spent serving as a board or committee member for a natural resource/environmental organization in partnership with your local chapter and because the organization invited you to serve and represent your local Master Naturalist Chapter in this capacity

**Unaccepted:** Monarch butterfly monitoring in Colorado

**Better:** Monarch monitoring in Texas

**Best:** Monarch monitoring within your local chapter’s area

# A glimpse at the re-opening weekend of the Sibley Nature Center reveals multiple points of interest

These photos are by Annette Moellering from the Sibley Nature Center's re-opening in May. The dancers are demonstrating the Mexican Folklorico style of dance. The snake exhibit interested the children.

Annette also saw the bird exhibit by the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Lubbock. There they take in wildlife and bring them back to health. If they are able, they release them into nature again, but if not, they keep them there and use them for 'show and tell' and just give them a great home.

The speaker told about this Great Horned Owl which was taken from a lady who stole it out of a nest. She took it home and fed it cooked meat. It never developed to its potential size, so, this owl has a home at the center forever.

Also, the little Screech Owl was brought to them with a bad eye. They had to operate on it and removed the one eye to save the other. It too has a home there forever.



**Photos by  
Annette  
Moellering**

Screech owl and Great Horned Owl



## Bits and Pieces

*Check out this information for opportunities*

### *Vote on Master Naturalist Program to become a National Model*

The following is condensed from Michelle M. Haggerty at the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Master Naturalist Program Coordinator and was sent to the chapter president.

Each member may vote for the Texas Master Naturalist program to become part of a national plan that will be developed. Friends and colleagues may vote and promote the idea as well.

A national dialogue about conservation in America has been launched to learn about some of the smart, creative ways communities are conserving natural areas and natural resources. The premise is that these ideas can be “voted” on or “promoted” and possibly selected as national models for the country to adopt through the recent “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative” and the national plan that will be developed.

The Master Naturalist program has been added as one of the ideas to promote nationally, using statistics and information from the Texas Master Naturalist Program in the categories of Reconnect with the Outdoors, and Public Lands Conservation.

You may visit the following website to vote and promote the Master Naturalist Program Ideas as an idea or program that every state in the nation should have: <http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/>

Create your own log in and password in the upper right hand of the page. Then search “Master Naturalist” and click the “promote” words and/or add a comment if you like.

You may read more about the national initiative at <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/>.

### Quarterly Meeting date

*Bring your volunteer hours*

We have set the date for our quarterly meeting for Tuesday, June 15, at 7 p.m.

We will use the new Sibley facilities to barbecue (bring your own to throw on the grill) and to socialize, a short business meeting, and then adjourn to the theater to check out the new system with an advanced training video.

### Urban tree inventory needs volunteers

The following is condensed from Randy Myers, Urban Forester, City Of Midland. His email is [rmyers@midlandtexas.gov](mailto:rmyers@midlandtexas.gov)

We have finalized a date for the tree Inventory: July 26, 27, and 28. There will be 7 to 10 foresters, and we will need 1 or 2 people to go around with each of them to take measurements or to write down information. We would love to have all the help we can, so if you know anyone else who might be interested please let us know. Thank you so much for your help.

### Keeping Sibley open on Saturdays still needs volunteers; training is June 12

Training day for Saturdays at Sibley is June 12, after the field trip, at 2 p.m. Trainin is at the Sibley Nature Center.

Also, if you can help, the following dates are still not filled for Saturdays at Sibley: June 26, July 3, July 10, July 31, Aug. 14, Aug. 28. Please email Susan Taylor at [sixtaylors@lyntegar.com](mailto:sixtaylors@lyntegar.com) if you can fill in for one of the Saturdays. Thanks!