



upstream

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CIBOLO CENTER FOR CONSERVATION

AUTUMN + WINTER 2020

*for the love
of nature*

LIVING INTO OUR CALLING

THE CIBOLO NATURE CENTER & FARM IS NOW THE CIBOLO CENTER FOR CONSERVATION • NEW NAME, SAME MISSION

Thanks to friends like you, we have come a long, long way, and together we can build a future with pristine lands and waters for the wildlife and people that depend on them.

Dear Friends,

When we started our work over thirty years ago with a handful of friends, our goal was to clean up and protect a stretch of the Cibolo Creek, a life source of our community.

We were known then as the *Cibolo Wilderness Trail*. As time went by, we realized that the land and water we protected was really a part of something much larger and greater, and our goals grew. In 1992 we built our first building and changed our name to the Cibolo Nature Center. We started our education programs, our citizen science research, and stewardship of Cibolo lands.

We learned that water really does flow downstream and that to preserve Cibolo Creek, we must connect our efforts to a much larger watershed. Over time, our organization has become a primary steward of the Upper Cibolo Watershed, spanning more than twenty miles of waterways and providing over one million gallons per day into critical aquifer recharge.

In 2007 we purchased the Herff Farm to further protect this fragile watershed. We then changed our name to the *Cibolo Nature Center & Farm*. For the last thirteen years we have worked to take this old abandoned farm and turn it into a public space that builds community through events, education and research. We also started a Nature Preschool and are nearing completion of the new campus on the Herff Farm.

Over recent years, we have come to realize that we are much more than a nature center or a farm, and we want a name to reflect that. Our research has become internationally recognized, our educational programming reaches tens of thousands of children and adults each year, our regional conservation efforts are recognized statewide, and our civic engagement is making a significant impact on the future landscape of our growing community.



It's time once again for a new name and a new brand. We are now the *Cibolo Center for Conservation!*



Our work will be conducted at the Cibolo Nature Center and Herff Farm campuses, and we will expand access to other private lands in the region. Our new preschool at Herff Farm—The Nest Nature School will open in the spring of 2021. We hope to fill it with many little fledglings that will have the extraordinary experience of a deep connection to nature.

for the love of nature™

Thanks to friends like you, we have come a long, long way, and together we can build a future with pristine lands and waters for the wildlife and people that depend on them. With you, our future is bright.

Thank you for your care and commitment ... for all these years!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carolyn Chipman Evans
Founder and Chief Executive Officer



Children Need Nature and Nature Needs Children

BY MARGARET LAMAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's been a year of innovation here at the Cibolo Center for Conservation to connect children and families to the wonders of nature. With the challenges that this year has brought to families in our region, we have kept our hearts and trails open to the community. Our education team has created new programs and new ways of delivering education to keep our kids happy and learning outdoors.

Because children in our communities spent the spring semester at home and learning from screens, when summer approached, we were more committed than ever to getting our children outdoors in nature learning and playing under the cypress canopy with friends. We offered twelve camps with a long list of COVID-19 health and safety protocols. The children came to us ready to play and had a great time fishing, exploring our ecosystems, learning about nature, and of course, lots of splashing in the Cibolo Creek. Mid-way through the summer, we made the tough decision to cancel camps, so our education team sprung into action to keep the spirit of

INTRODUCING THE NEST NATURE SCHOOL



NEW CAMPUS GRAND OPENING FALL 2021

At the Nest Nature School we are fostering strong bodies, inquisitive minds, & wild hearts.

Immersed in nature, we teach the whole child for excellence in learning academically, socially, physically, and spiritually. Now in our fifth year, we are expanding our campus! Get on the waiting list or come take a tour! For more information visit cibolo.org or contact us: sarahm@cibolo.org or **830-388-7686**.



outdoor time in nature alive—with Camp in a Box! Each camper got a box chock full of activities like building a worm farm, making a birding station, tracking animals, and growing microgreens.

Now with the school semester in full swing again, we are working directly with our partner schools to get creative when field trips are on hold. We are offering virtual field trips to Title I schools in San Antonio ISD and Northside ISD with videos, hands-on activities and live support from our educators. And we are developing new programs for outdoor science and service learning with our partners at Boerne ISD.

Families who decided to homeschool this year have new options at the Cibolo, too. They can take a farm-to-market course at Herff Farm where kids learn to grow their own food and sell products at our Farmers Market. Or homeschool kids can dive deeply into science and ecology at the Cibolo Nature Center campus.

One thing we know for sure is that kids need nature. Their wellbeing depends on it. And we also know that with love and commitment from our children, the future of the Cibolo and the natural world that we cherish will be in good hands.



Outdoor Learning

We deliver quality education for all ages immersed in nature.

OUTDOOR LEARNING GOALS FOR 2021:

- Open the Nest Nature School with high quality early childhood educators.
- Establish the Nest Nature School as a leading early childhood education facility in the greater San Antonio region.
- Build new partnerships to provide equitable access to nature for children with limited nearby parks and green spaces.
- Create deeper environmental engagement for teens & young adults, including mentorship for career pathways.
- Provide programs for adults that advance wellness in nature, managing land for wildlife, gardening and sustainable living.





Community Connections

We create community experiences in beautiful, natural places that foster a sense of belonging and enhanced quality of life.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS GOALS FOR 2021:

- Bring people together in open-air settings for safe interpersonal connection at the Cibolo Nature Center and Herff Farm campuses.
- Create immersive nature experiences to promote physical, emotional, social and spiritual health.
- Promote an ethic of love, care and protection of the Cibolo's land, water and wildlife in all visitors to our campuses.
- Ensure that the Cibolo campuses are inclusive community public spaces where all feel welcomed and engaged.
- Restore and improve the trail system at the Cibolo Nature Center to prepare for the growing demand for green space and nature in the community.



Farmers Market at Herff Farm Remains Committed to Community



The Farmers Market takes place every Saturday at Herff Farm from 9am-1pm 33 Herff Rd, Boerne, TX

BY MAURA BOBBITT, FARM PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

All Texans are well acquainted with Farm to Market roads. These are the roads we drive to get to our favorite secret swimming holes, and the roads Texans meander along every year to see the wildflowers that have popped up from spring rains.

Historically, however, these roads were built to connect farmers and ranchers to their communities, an undertaking that our Farmers Market at Herff Farm continues today.

Today, the vendors of our Farmers Market come from all over the Hill Country and greater San Antonio area, driving along those same Farm to Market roads to Herff Farm. Vendors come from Mountain Home, Center Point, Kerrville, and elsewhere in the Hill Country to sell their goods.

You can buy seafood straight from Scott Thibodeaux of Wahoo's Seafood, for example. He sells fresh Red Snapper, scallops, lump crab and other delights. Fidel and Diana Moreno at Quantum Coffee—both full-time teachers—roast their own coffee locally at The Point. Azza Mohammed from ZooZoo's Sweet Treats used to own an Italian food business in Cairo, and she makes the best baklava around. Keith Amelung of Have Spade Will Travel has interesting varieties of vegetables, pollinator plants,

and even trees, and is always a fascinating source of horticultural information. You can find locally grown produce and value-added products from Michelle Steubing of Betsy Blue Farm.

Of course, cooler temperatures also mean changing seasonal produce. Fall and winter vegetables in Central Texas include kale, spinach, radishes, carrots, beets, Swiss chard, cabbage, and cauliflower. In our Teaching Garden at Herff Farm, we'll be harvesting the last of our tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant as we start to transition into the winter wonderland of leafy greens.

Boerne has long been a gateway to the Hill Country from San Antonio, and the location of our Farmers Market harkens back to a time when it was even more rural. Our market takes place on the historic Herff Farm with vendors' tents

set up beneath sprawling Live Oaks, with a nineteenth century German farmhouse as a backdrop.



FARMERS MARKET AT HERFF FARM

Every Saturday, the metal gate of Herff Farm is thrown open for the community to come explore 60+ acres of lovingly managed Hill Country land while they buy products directly from local farmers, ranchers and crafters.

Everyone is welcome to explore the trail that hugs the 20-acre Pollinator Meadow, eventually leading down to the Cibolo Creek. Families can stroll through the recently constructed Children's Garden and meet the contented chickens that are lucky enough to call Herff Farm their home.

The feeling of community at the Farmers Market has never been stronger. During the spring and summer months this year, the Farmers Market worked quickly to adapt to COVID-19 by developing an online system for ordering goods with curbside pickup. It was met with an outpouring of support from the Boerne community, and cars drove up to the barn to have their trunks loaded with local produce, bread, eggs, plants, and more.

Now that the market and vendors are back at Herff Farm, community members are enjoying the wide-open spaces and are showing appreciation for the farmers and growers who have continued to provide for the community during uncertain times, driving along those same Farm to Market roads that were built to keep us connected.

The Farmers Market at Herff Farm is generously sponsored by Frost Bank.

Putting Research into Action to Inform the Future of Water

BY BEN ELDREDGE, DIRECTOR OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Moving forward as the Cibolo Center for Conservation, we certainly stand on decades of conservation work, but our work has just begun. Kendall County is currently the fifth fastest growing county in the United States. This implies more roadways and utilities, as well as threats to open lands, wildlife habitats, and the sustainability of our water supply.

Where will the water come from to serve all of the growth in Boerne and the surrounding area?

This same question is being asked in so many of our treasured Texas Hill Country communities, and the Cibolo Center for Conservation has placed a laser focus on this issue.

WATER RESEARCH

For over 32 years, the Cibolo Land & Water Initiative has focused on the protection of water quality and biodiversity throughout the Upper Cibolo Watershed, providing stewardship, education, research and leadership. This work is urgently important because Cibolo Creek provides over one million gallons per day into both the Trinity and Edwards aquifers, which are the predominant sources of drinking water for the greater San Antonio region. Our longstanding

Kendall County is the fifth fastest growing county in the United States ... that will affect our future roadways, utilities, open lands, wildlife habitat, and, perhaps most importantly—our water.

research monitoring water quality and quantity, as well as biological indicators of stream health, provide the data we use to inform and support the city, county and private landowners seeking to protect our water sources.

CREATING AN INTERNET OF WATER

We stand on the principle that water data must be the driver of decisions that ensure the sustainability of our regional water supplies. However, water data is often fragmented and not easily accessible to those who need it to inform practices and policies. To ensure that our community has the information it needs to drive decisions about water, the Cibolo Center for Conservation launched the Boerne Internet of Water initiative in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin and Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions. This initiative will create a Kendall County water data hub and public dashboard that will allow community stakeholders at all levels to access water data to inform decisions for years to come. The Cibolo is currently facilitating community focus groups to ensure that the voices of many stakeholders are feeding into the goals of the Internet of Water initiative and the City of Boerne Water Committee.

With this momentum, we are ideally positioned to evolve Boerne into a rural community conservation model that embraces innovative solutions to protect water and our other natural resources that support an enhanced quality of life for people across the Texas Hill Country.

UPDATE ON WILDLIFE FIELD RESEARCH

This year our citizen science and Wildlife Field Research programs were somewhat limited by the pandemic, however we have not stopped collecting data to continue the monitoring we have been doing for over twenty years. From water quality to winter prairie bird surveys, we are working diligently to keep volunteers safe, yet continue our vital mission of deepening our understanding of our local environment.

For upcoming opportunities, keep an eye on the website for updates to the 2021 research calendar. And to learn more about our Citizen Science and Wildlife Field Research projects, visit cibolo.org



Field researchers identify grasses and forbs at the Cibolo.



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Applied Research

We put research into action to conserve land, water and wildlife for a sustainable future.

APPLIED RESEARCH GOALS FOR 2021:

- Establish a Boerne/Kendall County Water Dashboard to promote sound decision-making about water driven by data.
- Provide a model for natural resource stewardship in the Texas Hill Country by managing our campuses in accordance with the Cibolo Land Management Plan.
- Contribute to the science at all levels—local, regional, state, national and international—through citizen science projects.
- Protect the Upper Cibolo Watershed and other natural resources in the region by providing research and conservation education to decision-makers, landowners and other stakeholders.
- Establish Boerne/Kendall County as a model resilient city with conservation-minded policies and practices that secure a sustainable future.

For the love of nature

BY LEIGH OWEN, V.P. OF DEVELOPMENT

Love. It is such a simple word, but one with a world of power to connect us all together in good times and hard times. The love of nature is the thread that connects our community of friends, like you, who helps the new Cibolo Center for Conservation grow and thrive. While our name has changed, the heart of who we are remains.

Now more than ever, your support is needed to build the capacity of the Cibolo to continue conserving, connecting and educating the more than 100,000 children, adults and families we serve in our community, all for the love of nature.

For 2020 and beyond, we are committed to continuing to bring people and nature together, and we can't do so without your support.

Help us keep growing with a year-end gift.

Your support is an investment in the people we serve and our precious land, water, wildlife.

We are truly better together.

SUPPORT THE CIBOLO CENTER FOR CONSERVATION AND SHOW YOUR LOVE OF NATURE

DONATION

- Enclosed envelope
- Online at cibolo.org
- Set up an auto monthly gift online at cibolo.org

OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

- IRA Distribution
- Name the Cibolo in your will or estate and join the Heirloom Society

WISH LIST

- iPads (new or refurbished)
- Chainsaw
- Blower and weed eater (battery-powered)
- Outdoor heaters

YOUR YEAR-END GIFT WILL SUPPORT:

- Scholarships for children and Title I schools to participate in outdoor education programs
- The Nest Nature School classroom and campus expansion
- Land and wildlife management of our 160 acres of the Cibolo Nature Center and Herff Farm
- Nature Center trail improvements and maintenance
- Conservation in action and applied research projects including the Internet of Water in partnership with Duke University and UT Austin

Contact Leigh Owen to learn more or share your interest in supporting at 830-388-7676 or leigh@cibolo.org



News & Happenings

CELEBRATE THE CIBOLO PICNIC AT THE FARM

Thank you to the friends and sponsors who helped make this lovely event at the Herff Farm a beautiful success.

WILL SMITH AMPHITHEATER RIBBON CUTTING

In October, Susan Naylor generously named our new amphitheater in memory of her late son, Will Smith, and helped us celebrate the opening of the beautiful new space at the Herff Farm.

THANKS FOR GIVING AND STEWARDSHIP AWARDS

Special thanks to all of the volunteers who passionately dedicate so much to the Cibolo. We are proud to especially acknowledge the contributions of our Stewardship Award recipients this year, including Ben Smith, John Freud, Sarah Lindauer, Jerry Knippa, Marilyn Tremper and the Cibolo Interns.

DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

Register at cibolo.org

Farmers Market and Yoga
Dec. 5 & Dec. 12

Backyard Chickens Workshop
Dec. 2

Fire Ecology & Prescribed Burn Workshop
Dec. 3 & 5

Winter Prairie Bird Workshop
Dec. 10

Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop with Rufus Stephens (3 part series)
Starts Jan. 9

Oak Wilt Workshop with Texas A&M Forest Service
Jan 30

Friends of the Cibolo Wilderness
140 City Park Rd.
Boerne, TX 78006



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us with a year-
end gift today.

Give online today at cibolo.org
Or mail checks to:
Cibolo Center For Conservation
140 City Park Road
Boerne, Texas 78006



The Cibolo Center for Conservation transforms lives through the love of nature, welcoming guests into a beautiful natural setting for nature education, enriching community experiences, and participatory environmental research. Timeless themes like water conservation, land stewardship, care for wildlife, sustainability, and the celebration of harvest remind guests of their shared humanity, resulting in gratitude, love, and a community of belonging.