

# A DIFFERENT Camping Experience



A beautiful campground is located on the South Llano River. Those who travel to the facility can enjoy a variety of activities from tubing, kayaking, hiking or observing the abundant wildlife and bird populations. The place sounds like it must be a national park or famous campground, but it is not. It is the Texas Tech University campus located in Junction, Texas. Junction facilitates students who attend every year for intersession courses.

Intersession is a short break between the traditional, standard academic terms during which students can take short, accelerated classes or complete other academic work.

This year, intersession classes began on May 15 and concluded on May 30. This year's intersession offered 18 courses taught by 10 of Texas Tech's most qualified professors.

A new course, Forest and Rangeland Insect Diversity, was offered by the Department of Natural

Resources Management this year and was taught by a new member of the NRM department.

Robin Verble-Pearson, Ph.D., is currently the fire ecology professor in the department but used her interest in insects to teach students in May.

"People who haven't done a lot of bug collecting have a hard time understanding, but it's really fun," Verble-Pearson said.

Verble-Pearson said besides catching bugs for her personal collections, she was also looking forward to something else.

"It's a nice mini vacation," Verble-Pearson said chucking.

The new course offering is an alternative for some NRM students to receive credits they need while learning about new insects. However, some NRM students chose to take other courses during intersession in order to fulfill their course requirements.



Alisa Chandler, a natural resources management major from Kaufman, Texas, said she took Mammalogy during intersession in Junction so she can graduate in August, but she also heard from former students that it was a great alternative to a course offered during a regular semester.

"People said it was a great hands-on experience and [had] a lot of great reviews about intersession in Junction," Chandler said. "They say you learn a lot."

Even though Chandler said she was excited to attend intersession, she did have some apprehensions when it came to the teaching of the curriculum.

"Someone told me that all animals killed must be properly gutted and cleaned before the end of the day," Chandler said, cringing. "That's a lot to ask from a city girl like myself, when the only creatures I kill are spiders, and even then, it takes a lot of working up to do it."

Chandler's apprehension seemed to fade away when she began to talk to Janay Alberg, a senior wildlife biology major from Bedford, Texas, about her familiarity with intersession.

Alberg took Herpetology last year at Junction during intersession and said she plans to take Mammalogy this year during intersession because she has great memories from the year before.

"The best thing about my intersession at Junction was getting to spend most of my time outside getting hands-on experience catching and handling reptiles and amphibians," Alberg said. "One of my most exciting moments was catching a rattlesnake as my first catch in Junction."

Even though Alberg brags about her experience at Junction to other students, she is honest when she explains there were some things that could have been better.

"The worst thing about it was sharing one room with tons of other girls," Alberg said, laughing. "But it wasn't even really that bad since very little time was spent in there."

The rooms Alberg described are referred to as study units in Junction. According to the website, they are lodge-style rooms consisting of bunk beds, dressers with storage and mirrors. They also include two bath facilities and a classroom.

Alberg considered this crowded because each unit houses an optimum of 24 persons (2 wings of 12).

Some students, like Alberg, choose to return to Junction a second year chasing a great moment that occurred the previous year. Alberg said her class caught a water moccasin last year. When they brought it back to the classroom it threw up a water snake that was longer than itself.

"I felt so privileged to be someone to experience that," Alberg said excitedly. "Our professor, who has been a herpetologist for years and seen all kinds of things, was calling his colleagues and telling everyone how crazy it was. It was a pretty impressive thing to see."

The different camping experience not only provides college credit, but provides memories that students will cherish for the rest of their lives. **T**

## Junction Intersession 2013 Courses

- Herpetology
- Field Ecology
- Field Ichthyology
- Forest & Rangeland Insect Diversity
- Rhetoric in Western Thought
- Creative Writing- Poetry
- Field Geography
- Photography
- Mammalogy
- Ornithology

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