



STEC Newsletter Editor -Edward Meza AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2023

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Fall Speakers Series 2023

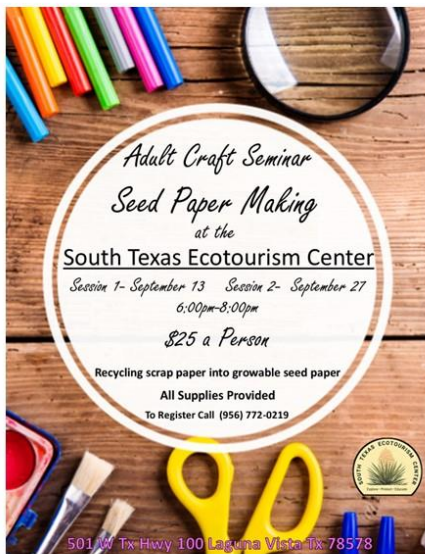
The South Texas Ecotourism Center is excited to announce the Fall Speakers Series lineup for 2023. We have a variety of topics on nature themed presentations including the South Texas Ocelots, Fall Migration, Gator Talk, Coral Communities of the Gulf of Mexico, Scat and Tracks for Wildlife Identification and more. List of speakers on Page 4. Call Shannon at (956) 772-0219 for more information.



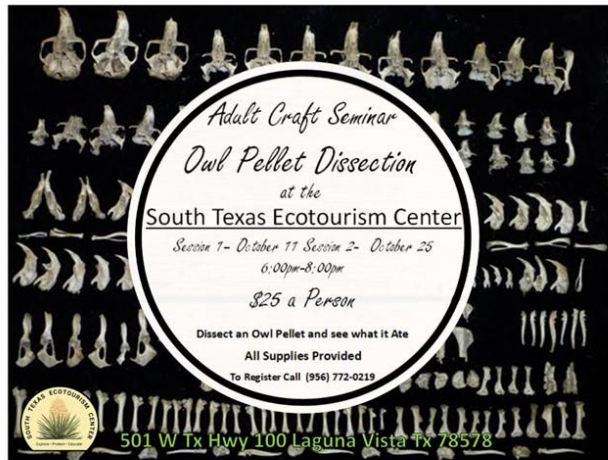
The South Texas Ecotourism Center is a Cameron County operated nature museum and information center dedicated to the education and preservation of South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley's six ecosystems. The Center offers outdoor exhibits with interpretive panels with QR codes, sculpture of native animals, over 48,000 native plants, a look out pavilion with two telescopes and binoculars to view the wildlife at the Center and at the Bahia Grande Unit of the Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge. The Center has brochures on south Texas and Valley nature centers and parks. The Center is located at 501 State Highway 100 in Laguna Vista, Texas. Open 7 days a week from 8 am to 5 pm. Free Admission. (956) 772-0210.

South Texas Ecotourism Center Adult Classes 2023

We will begin offering Adult classes on Wednesdays starting on September 13th. The adult classes are \$25 per adult with the exception of the last class in December which is \$35. Classes include paper making, dissecting an owl pellet, leaf printing and a perfumery class. The classes will be fun and interesting and you will take home your project. **To register and for more information on the STEC Adult Project Classes call Shannon at (956) 772-0219.**



September 13 & September 27



October 11 & October 25



November 8 & November 22



December 13th

Event Calendar - August to December 2023

August 24: Speaker Series: Sophia Garza, Intern at Palo Alto -Scat and Track Wildlife Identity 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

August 27: Kids Summer Program: Up Cycle and Recycle Art 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

September 7: Speakers Series: Augusto Sanchez – Sustainable Building and water collection 5:30 to 7:00 pm

September 13: Adult Fall Seminar - Seed Paper Making \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

September 21: Speakers Series: Marilyn Lorenz – Fall Migration 5:30 to 7:00 pm

September 22: STEC Fall Equinox Celebration 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

September 27: Adult Fall Seminar - Seed Paper Making \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

October 5: Speakers Series: Jake Reinbolt Gator Talk 5:30 to 7:00 pm

October 11: Adult Fall Seminar - Owl Pellet Dissection \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

October 19: Speakers Series: Dr. Shari Wilcox – South Texas Ocelots 5:30 to 7:00 pm

October 25: Adult Fall Seminar - Owl Pellet Dissection \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

October 27: STEC Halloween Festival 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

October 28: Participating with the SPI Birding Center Monarch Festival. 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

November 2: Speakers Series: Dr. Erin Easton – Corl Communities of the South Pacific and Gulf of Mexico 5:30 to 7:00 pm

November 8: Adult Fall Seminar Leaf Printing \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

November 11 & 12: Participating with an educational booth at the Worlds Birding Festival in Harlingen.

November 16: Speakers Series: Andy Handcock –Environmental Artist and Bird Boxes 5:30 to 7:00 pm

November 22: Adult Fall Seminar Leaf Printing \$25 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

November 26: Grandparents Day at STEC 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

November 30: Speakers Series: Javi Gonzalez of SPI Birding Center –Christmas Bird County 5:30 to 7:00 pm

December 7: STEC Christmas Event

December 13: Adult Fall Seminar Perfumery Class \$35 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

December 14: Speakers Series: TBA 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Every Tuesday 11 am to 1 pm: Film and a Picnic. Bring your Lunch and watch a film on a South Texas Nature or Wildlife Center. Free.

Every Tuesday 10 am to 11am. Texas Master Naturalist Book Club meeting when space is available. 5 to 10 people. Open to the public.

Every Monday and Wednesday 10 am to 11 am. Tuesday and Thursdays. University of Houston & Tu Salud Si Cuenta Health Classes –

yoga, meditation, walking, and muscle tone. 5 to 15 people. Open and free to the public. Use of different areas in the Center. Indoors and Outdoors when available.

Everyday 9:00 to 11:00 am. Breakfast with the Birds. Bring your breakfast and have a cup of coffee. We will supply the coffee while supplies last. Enjoy your breakfast and coffee while listening and observing the native birds. Free.

Be sure to log on to our Webpage: www.stec-lv.org It has been updated!



Fall Speaker Series 2023

August 10th to November 30th 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.



August 10th Edward Pro Meza—The South Texas Ecotourism Center



Edward Pro Meza graduated with a B.S. from Texas A & M University in College Station in Wildlife & Fisheries Studies with a Minor in Museum Studies. Meza has worked in museums for nearly 35 years from the Red River to the Rio Grande River and also worked as City Manager for Port Isabel and Laguna Vista combined for 12 years. Meza currently serves as Executive Director of the South Texas Ecotourism Center.

August 24th Sofia Garza - Using Scat and Tracks to Identify Native Animals



Sofia is a nature enthusiast from South Texas. She is an Environmental major at UTRGV who found an interest in interpretation during her Al Henry Internship with Resaca De La Palma Texas State Park. She is currently serving as a Community Volunteer Ambassador at Palo Alto National Historical Park. She is part of the 2023 class of the Rio Grande Valley Chapter.

September 7th Augusto Sanchez - Sustainable Building and Water Collection



Natural Resources Coordinator Department of Transportation for Cameron County

September 21st Marilyn Lorenz— Fall Bird Migration



Marilyn has been a Texas Master Naturalist since 2015 and is a regular nature guide leader at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center and does turtle patrols at Sea Turtle Inc. She has done many presentations in the Valley using her husband Chuck's photos and also writes articles for various local newspapers. She was always an outdoor girl fascinated by the nature to be seen all around and constantly bringing home unexpected guests in the form of baby bunnies, turtles, frogs, slow moving snakes, and the occasional preying mantis egg mass. But flying objects were the most interesting and butterflies and birds were always of high interest.

October 5th Jake Reinbolt - Gator Talk



Jacob Reinbolt graduated from Southern Illinois University with a degree in Wildlife Biology and Conservation. After interning with Gator Country in Natchitoches Louisiana, he was hired on full-time and eventually transferred to the South Padre Island Birding, Nature Center, and Alligator Sanctuary to continue his work. A lifelong love for animals most people might consider grotesque or "scary" manifested into a career educating the public about these magnificent creatures. Reinbolt also supervises the SPI Gator Rescue program which serves to provide sanctuary to nuisance and injured alligators.

October 19th Dr. Shari Wilcox - South Texas Ocelots

Dr. Sharon Wilcox serves as the Senior Texas Representative for the environmental nonprofit organization Defenders of Wildlife. She has dedicated her efforts to the study, conservation and restoration of the native wild cats that call the U.S.-Mexico borderlands home, including the jaguar, jaguarundi, and ocelot. She leads Defenders' ocelot conservation program in the Rio Grande Valley.



November 2nd Dr. Erin Easton—Coral Communities of the South Pacific and Gulf of Mexico

Dr. Erin E. Easton is an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). She has a BS in Biology from Indiana University and a MS and PhD in Oceanography from Florida State University. Dr. Easton's Benthic Ecology and Evolution Lab at UTRGV explores the biodiversity and evolution of marine organisms that live in or on the seafloor from the coast to the deep sea. Of particular interest are the deep coral communities of the South Pacific and Gulf of Mexico.



November 16th Andy Hancock - Environmental Art and Bird Boxes

Andy Hancock has been an artist using natural and recycled materials for 30 years and worked in 10 countries. His passions locally are the Art of building sandcastles with science, container home design and carving Texas hardwoods using a chainsaw. His larger pieces around the world use standing dead trees that are transformed from loved ones into landmarks. Andy's work can be seen all over South Padre Island where he created the Sea Ranch Dolphins amongst other large scale art that continues to excite tourists as they follow the art trail.



November 30th Javi Gonzalez - Christmas Bird Count

Javier Gonzalez grew up birding in the Rio Grande Valley and is the Naturalist Educator at the South Padre Island Birding Nature Center & Alligator Sanctuary. He enjoys all things nature, but has a special interest in the birds of the Lower Laguna Madre and the Texas Gulf Coast. He has a passion for promoting coastal bird conservation and awareness through birding. He is also the compiler for the annual "Coastal Tip Christmas Bird Count" happening in December each year.



Sign up to Volunteer at the STEC!

We welcome and appreciate volunteers at the STEC. We have volunteer opportunities for welcoming the public, working in the gardens and exhibits, school tours, and during special events. Hours are flexible. We are open 7 days a week from 8 am to 5 pm. Call (956) 772-0210 for more information and to sign up.



Breakfast with the Birds
at
The South Texas Ecotourism Center

Everyday 9am-11am



We have the Coffee and the Birds
you bring your Breakfast
Come Enjoy the Morning at the Center while
listening and observing the native birds

 South Texas
Ecotourism Center

Film and a Picnic
Every Tuesday 11am-1pm

Bring your lunch and watch
a film about a
South Texas Nature
or Wildlife Center.

Past Events.....

Summer Kids Program

The South Texas Ecotourism Center offered a kids summer program on Sundays for the entire month of August. Classes consisted of making natural slime out of aloe and natural dyes, a bottle ecosystem, dissecting owl pellets, producing natural dyes, sun printing with leaves and recycle art.



Moth Night

We thank Camille Rich and Cat Traylor for bringing their Moth Show to the STEC. We had a wonderful evening with food, films, moth attracting exhibits and night hiking throughout the Center looking for moths and other critters. The program was to document the various kinds of moths found in the Valley in various locations.



Schedule Your School and Organizations Tours Now

We recommend that you start scheduling your classes or organizations for touring the South Texas Ecotourism Center at least two weeks prior to your touring date. Please call (956) 772-0210 to reserve your date. Tours are free and last up to one and a half hours depending on the size of the group. If you would like to have your lunch at the Center, we have a multipurpose room that can accommodate 70 people to eat comfortably. Please let us know at the time of your scheduling if you need to use the multipurpose room. We will divide the students up depending on the size of the group and one group will view the short film, the others tour the educational lab and the rest divided throughout the Center's exhibits.



Look out boardwalk.



Multipurpose Room.



Outdoor Classroom

RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES AT STEC



- MEETING ROOM
- OVERLOOK RAMP
- OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
- BIRD BLINDS
- AMPHITHEATER

CALL (956) 772-0210 FOR INFORMATION

South Texas Ecotourism Center

Autumn Equinox Celebration

★ Yoga & Meditation Sessions
★ Holistic Shop Vendors
★ Live Music & Entertainment
★ Sunset Ritual
★ Seasonal Crafts

Friday September 22
5:30pm-7:00pm



501 W Tx Hwy 100 Laguna Vista Tx 78578
(956) 772-0210

Triangular Cactus Blooming at Ag/ Beneficial Gardens



FREE EVENT

TRICK OR TREAT?

**SOUTH TEXAS
ECOTOURISM CENTER**
HALLOWEEN
Party

FRIDAY OCTOBER 27

6PM-8PM

Costume Contest Holiday Photo Op

Trick or Treat Trails

Ghost Stories



501 W Tx Hwy 100 Laguna Vista 78578

Grandparents Day Sunday November 26th 10 am –3 pm

Come join us on the Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend at the STEC. We will be presenting Grandparents Day with Photo Ops, STEC Family Activity Folder, Nature Craft and Refreshments on Sunday November 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fun for the entire family. Free.

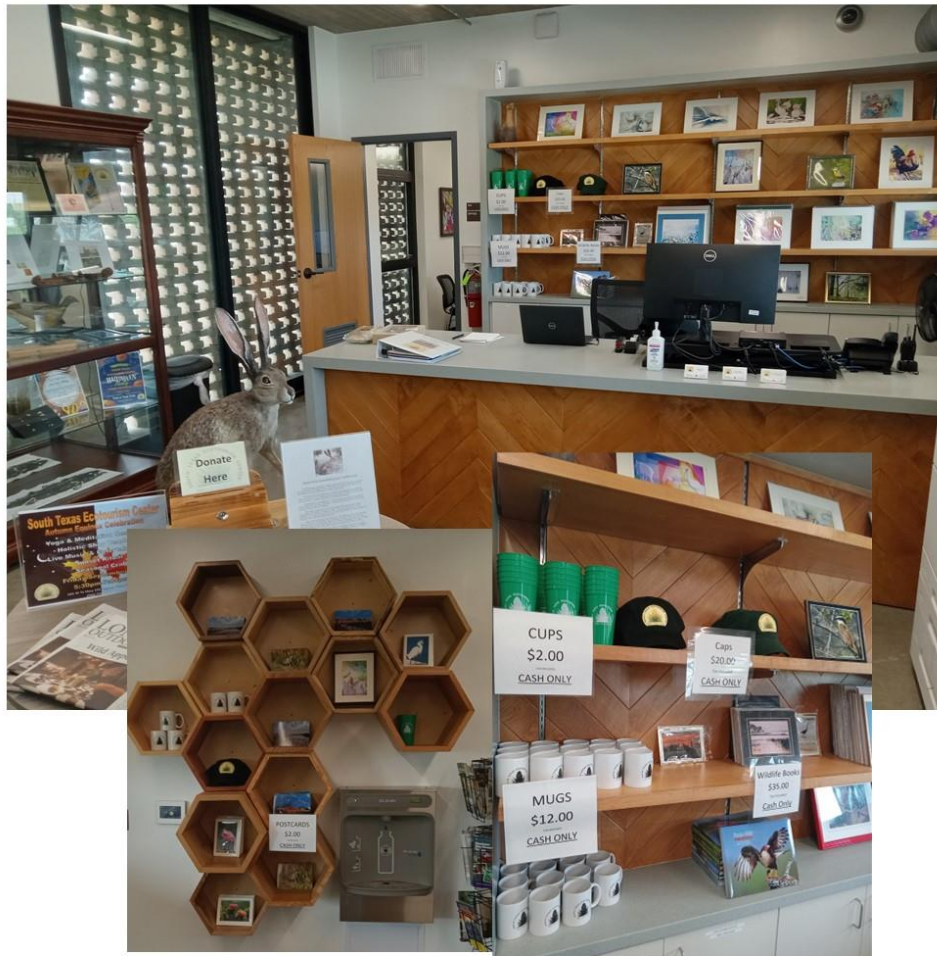
Grandparents Day
at the
South Texas Ecotourism Center
Sunday November 26th 10am-3pm
Grandparent & Grandchild Photo Op
STEC Family Activity Folder
Nature Craft

501 w Tx-Hwy 100 Laguna Vista Tx 78578



STEC Gift Shop

While visiting the STEC, stop by our gift shop. We have t-shirts, caps, cups, glasses, post-cards, art work, and books.



Add us on Facebook:
South Texas Ecotourism Center



Follow us on Instagram:
STEC_LvTX

WEBPAGE:

www.stec-lv.org

STEC Visitors Come from All Over the World

Our Center receives visitors from all over the world including Germany, Italy, France, Slavia, Australia, South Korea, Paraguay (South America), Mexico, Canada, and from all 50 states in the United States.

Log into the following link to see the points in the world the visitors come from on the map.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nYAKQvClbQxoSQkTPFEMjYXPLBuEEp0&usp=sharing>

VISITATION:	June	1570
	July	1055
	Aug	716



EXPLORE, PROTECT, EDUCATE

WWW.STEC-LV.ORG WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/STEC LV (956) 772-0210

Outdoor Hands On Exhibits ; Wildlife Sculptures; 48K native plants; Amphitheatre; Meeting Room; Outdoor Class Room; Wifi , Rentals






A Department of Cameron County




OPEN DAILY 8AM-5PM FREE ADMISSION

501 W. STATE HWY 100, LAGUNA VISTA, TEXAS

Preserving the Unique Ecosystems of South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley

STEC Staff:

Edward P. Meza, Director

**Mary Shannon McGinley-
White, Ecotourism Specialist/
Educator**

**Pablo Medrano, Ecotourism
Specialist/ Educator**

**Jose Angel Martinez,
Maintenance Specialist**

