



STEC Newsletter Editor -Edward Meza MAY, JUNE, JULY 2023

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### STEC Summer Camp 2023

The South Texas Ecotourism Center will be offering a month long Spring Break Camp for kids 7 to 11 years of age starting on June 5th and ending on June 29th. Kids will enjoy hands on activities, tours, lessons, snacks and documentaries. Team building, birding, field research, lab activities and arts and crafts will keep the kids involved. \$50 per week or \$150 for all four weeks. Call Shannon at (956) 772-0219 for registration and information. (Flyer on page 2)




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 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 Summer Camp 2023

This year's STEC Summer Camp will be a wonderful nature experience for students 7 to 11 years of age. You can have your child participate in one, two, three weeks or all month. You get a \$50 discount if you register for all four weeks. Each week is individually planned so your child will get a complete experience with each week. The focus is on our six (6) ecosystems we have exhibited at the center. There will be birding, lab activities, field research, team building, arts & crafts and snacks.

Registration will be open all month. This year's summer camp is sponsored in part by the [Blue Marlin Supermarket in South Padre Island](#). Contact the Center at (956) 772-0210. for more information.



## SOUTH TEXAS ECOTOURISM CENTER SUMER CAMP 2023 JUNE 5TH—29TH

9am—12pm (Noon)  
Kids Ages 7-11

\*Must be 7 at the start of Camp\*

**\$50.00 A WEEK OR \$150 FOR THE MONTH**

**Week 1 June 5-8**

**Week 2 June 12—15**

**Week 3 June 19— 22**

**Week 4 June 26— 29**

**TO REGISTER COME INTO THE  
SOUTH TEXAS ECOTOURISM CENTER**



**6 ECOSYSTEMS**

**BIRDING**

**LAB ACTIVITIES**

**FIELD RESEARCH**

**TEAM BUILDING**

**ARTS & CRAFTS**



501 W Tx Hwy 100 Laguna Vista Tx 78578

# 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

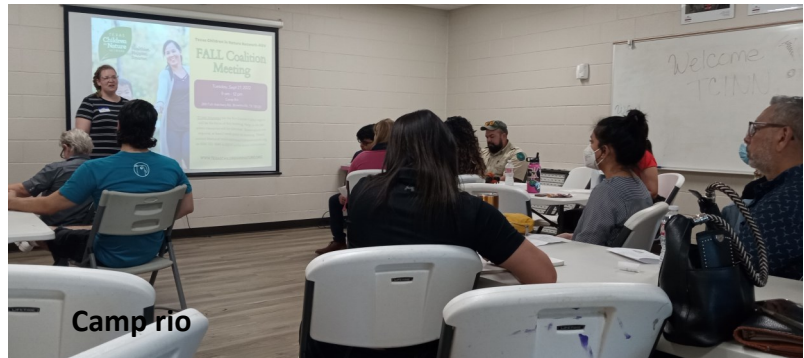


- MEETING ROOM
- OVERLOOK RAMP
- OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
- BIRD BLINDS
- AMPHITHEATER

CALL (956) 772-0210 FOR INFORMATION

# STEC Collaborations with Other Groups and Institutions

The South Texas Ecotourism Center collaborates with other institutions in helping to promote its mission and goals to other communities and groups. Staff and volunteers participate with other events and celebrations by setting up an information and education booth with items relating to the Center and setting up at places such as the Brownsville Zoo, the Palo Alto National Battle Field, the SPI Birding Center, SPI Convention and Visitors Bureau, various schools in the Valley, regional museums and RV Parks. We welcome other institutions that share a common goal to have their meetings at the multi-purpose room including the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Corporation, Cara Cara Trails, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge, the Point Isabel Independent School District, the Town of Laguna Vista, the Houston School of Medicine and UTRGV, the Cameron County Extension Bureau, the Texas Master Naturalists, and other organizations who promote ecosystem preservation and education. Working and collaboration with the community is one of our major goals.



# RGV Pollinator Project

The **RGV Pollinator Project** is led by a group of Texas Master Naturalists which include Chery Brummett, Alicia Cavazos, and Susan Upton whose goal is to help bring back the Monarch Butterflies to the Valley by germinating and planting the native Zizote Milkweed into the existing pollinator gardens at STEC and other butterfly gardens in the Rio Grande Valley. STEC Staff will work with them in the preparation of the plantings. Working together to discuss the focus and direction of the RGV Pollinator Project will better the goals and programs that the two entities share together. We look forward to have the native Zizote Milkweed grow at the STEC for the betterment and survival of the beautiful Monarch Butterfly.

We look forward to working together with the RGV Pollinator program to make a difference for the RGV pollinators!



Zizote Milkweed

# Father's Day

at

The South Texas  
Ecotourism Center

501 W-TX Hwy 100 Laguna  
Vista Tx

Sunday June 18th

10 am - 2 pm

- Father's Day Scavenger Hunt
- Survival Bracelet Craft
- **Meat & Cheese Plates**
- Refreshments



# Seed Paper Made In House from Recycled Paper



STEC Ecosystem Specialist/Educator Mary Shannon McGinley– White has been recycling left over paper that is not used by the Center and recycling it into seed pulp paper. This paper is used for art, letter writing and for journals. The recycled paper is shredded, then soaked and then blended into a pulp. Small seeds, leaves, etc. are added into the pulp as well as color dye. Then it is poured into a frame that has screen. The result is a soft, thick paper that can be reused. The seed themselves can still germinate after the papermaking process and they can sprout when the paper is planted in the soil. Packets of the paper are available for sale at the main office.



# 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=1nYAKQvCibQxoSQkTPFEMjYXPLBuEEp0&usp=sharing>

VISITATION:	February	2240
	March	2024
	April	2189
	May	1499



**EXPLORE, PROTECT, EDUCATE**

WWW.STEC-LV.ORG    WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/STECLV    (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**

**Jeremy Christensen,  
Office Specialist/Educator**

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

**Pablo Medrano, Ecotourism  
Specialist/ Educator**

**Jose Angel Martinez,  
Maintenance Specialist**



# Wildlife That Has Been Seen by Staff & Visitors

Staff and Visitors have seen an array of wildlife at the STEC including Texas Diamond Back Rattlesnakes, Texas Long tailed Weasel, Cotton Rat, south plains wood rat, bobcat, nilgai, all kinds of birds, reptiles, insects and plants.



Killdeer eggs



Tropical King Bird



Nilgai



Killdeer



Texas Long Tailed Weasel



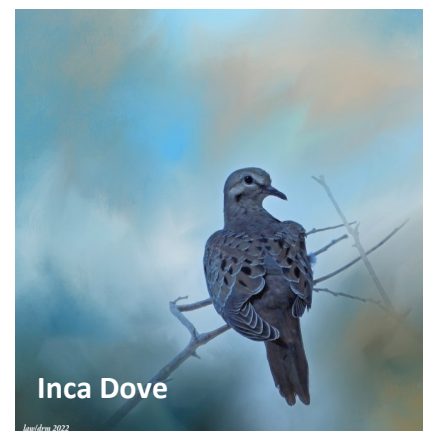
Jackrabbit



Texas Diamond Back Rattlesnake



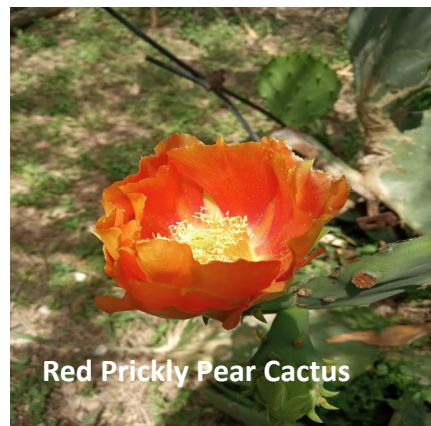
CaraCara



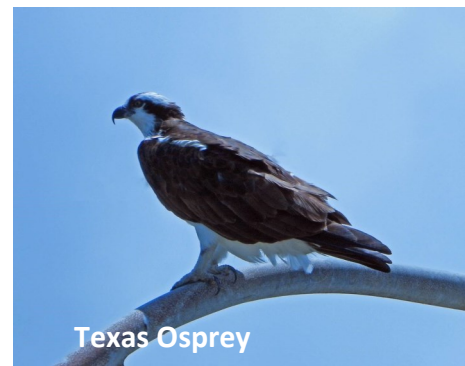
Inca Dove



Black Winged Kite



Red Prickly Pear Cactus



Texas Osprey

## 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.



## San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum Shares Artwork with STEC

The San Benito Cultural Arts Department is partnering with STEC in sharing exhibit pieces that reflect the Centers goals. The Center is showing the “Recent Works” by nationally renowned artist Danville Chadbourne whose colorful exhibition is inspired by nature. It explores how the artist transforms organic materials, found objects and wood-work into poetic, and mesmerizing works of art. The exhibit bridges ecology and art, and is in dialogue with the Rio Grande Valley’s biodiversity and natural resources. One of the San Benito Cultural Arts Department continued missions is to create a collaborative environment that promotes, encourages, and shares the narratives of our region. Danville Chadbourne’s work adds to the conversation and inspires us to be more curious, and observant of the natural world around us - perhaps it will reveal aspects of ourselves. One of his pieces titled “The Self Selecting Hypothesis” which is made of ceramic, acrylic paint, and Aspen and Ligustrum wood will be shown until July 28th. You can view the rest of his work at the San Benito Cultural Center at 250 E. Heywood St. San Benito, Texas. (956) 281-0810.



**SAN BENITO**  
**CULTURAL HERITAGE MUSEUM**  
250 E. HEYWOOD ST., SAN BENITO, TX