



# STEC NEWSLETTER



Explore • Protect • Educate

STEC Newsletter Editor -Edward Meza

2024 Year Review Edition

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## Review of 2024 Happenings at the STEC

This edition of the STEC Newsletter is dedicated to the South Texas Ecotourism Center's accomplishments, events, programs, and projects in 2024. We will share information, and images of 2024 and promote events and programs scheduled for 2025.



STEC's first Market Day in October. Attracted about 300 visitors. (photo taken by Angel Martinez)

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.



# ANCIENT LANDSCAPES

OF SOUTH TEXAS: HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT



Community Historical Archaeology  
Project with Schools (CHAPS)



A CHAPS Program Geoheritage Documentary Film Special Showing at  
the South Texas Ecotourism Center

Thursday, January 30, 2025 @ 5:30 pm Reception to follow

As part of the STEC Winter Speaker Series, the South Texas Ecotourism Center will host a showing of the *Ancient Landscapes of South Texas: Hiding in Plain Sight* award-winning documentary film on Thursday evening, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. The film was produced by the CHAPS Program at UTRGV and highlights millions of years of Lower Rio Grande Valley history that include volcanic eruptions, 27-million-year-old petrified logs, 43-million-year-old giant oyster shells, and projectile points crafted by humans for over 15,000 years. The film also illuminates the unique landscape of our region and helps curious minds to understand the natural processes that formed South Texas. The producers of this film will be on hand to introduce the film and provide their unique insight into the inspiration behind this project and their overall goal to promote the largely overlooked geological and cultural history of the LRGV. A reception will follow.

The CHAPS team has also installed a compact display of geological materials and stone artifacts in the STEC lobby that are highlighted in this Geoheritage project.

For more information regarding the Ancient Landscapes initiative or the CHAPS Program, visit our websites [www.utrgv.edu/ancient-landscapes-southtexas](http://www.utrgv.edu/ancient-landscapes-southtexas) and [www.utrgv.edu/chaps](http://www.utrgv.edu/chaps) or send an email to [CHAPS@utrgv.edu](mailto:CHAPS@utrgv.edu).



# Winter Speaker Series 2025

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Refreshments Served ~ Free Admission

## January 23: **Augusto Sanchez Gonzalez —Water Conservation**



Mr. Sanchez Gonzalez is a Water Resources Engineer and is the Natural Resources Coordinator for Cameron County as the Floodplain Manager. He implements coastal shoreline management strategies in South Padre Island and manages a variety of drainage and flood Protection projects. Prior to joining the County, he worked at UTRGV Civil Engineering Department as an instructor and watershed manager for the Lower Laguna Madre/Brownsville Ship Channel Watershed and at TAMU-Kingsville as a Research Engineer implementing and promoting the adoption of Low Impact Development/Green Infrastructure strategies across the LRGV. He is a founding board member of the LRGV Stormwater Taskforce and the Lower Laguna Made Estuary Partnership.

## January 30th: **CHAPS - Juan L. Gonzalez, Christopher Miller, Russell Skowronek & Roseann Bacha-Garza**



The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) is an area encompassing the 5 southernmost counties in Texas often associated with poverty, narcotrafficking and illegal border crossings. To fuel positive publicity, educate residents, and attract visitors to the LRGV, the CHAPS Program at UTRGV developed “The Ancient Landscapes of South Texas” trail as a Geoheritage tourism initiative. The trail highlights the rich, largely overlooked geologic and natural/cultural history of the LRGV along a 40-mile-wide corridor, from the mouth of the Rio Grande at the Gulf of Mexico to the city of Laredo, a distance over 200 miles. While some of these sites have been popular natural attractions for years, the majority are unknown even to local residents; hence the subtitle

## February 6th: **Dr. Erin Easton of UTRGV—Ship to Shore satellite presentation during an Antarctica Expedition. Schmidt Ocean Institute and UTRGV.**



Schmidt Ocean Institute Ship-to-Shore Connection is a free, immersive learning experience. A “Virtual Field Trip” where learners are taken on a tour of the ship, main science deck and dive in Antarctica. Attendees can directly engage with scientists and crew on board. Dr. Erin E. Easton is an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). She has a BS in Biology fro 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.

## February 20th: **Roberto Gaitan—The Laguna Madre: Five Unique Plant**

### **Communities Serving Our Wildlife**



Roberto Gaitan is a native Texas, born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley. He left south Texas after high school to attend college and returned almost three decades became a High School Science Teacher and a Texas Master Naturalist in 2014. It is then that Roberto discovered the uniqueness of his backyard and the peril of our native species and native habitat. Roberto served as President of the Rio Grande Valley Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist for three years. He is also a board member of the Friends of Estero Llano Grande State Park, board member of the Native Plant Project group, and recently became President of the organization he helped establish, the Rio Grande Valley Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

## 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.

# Meditation & Yoga



**Monday & Wednesday**

10 am to 11:00 am

# Strength & Toning

**Tuesday & Thursday**

10 am to 11:00 am **FREE**



# Educational Lab of the STEC

Our educational lab is used for classes, hands on activities and includes displays, an aquarium and microscopes for visitors to use.



When visiting the STEC, explore the wonders of the natural world specifically of South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley by visiting our educational lab! Microscopes and viewing lenses are available to observe natural items. Come see our specimen collection and observe our aquarium with native fish found from our pond. Our hands on activities are perfect for all ages. Pick up a copy of our STEC Activity Booklet and partake in our native sculpture scavenger hunt.

**Matthew Schalk**  
Educator/Ecosystem Specialist  
(956) 772-0219



Add us on Facebook:  
South Texas Ecotourism Center



Follow us on Instagram:  
STEC\_LVTX

**WEBPAGE:**

**[www.stec-lv.org](http://www.stec-lv.org)**



# Coffee with the Birds

## Everyday 9 am to 11 am

Serving *Tree Frog Coffee*

locally roasted in Bayview, Texas

Eco-friendly



Stock photo

**Vermilion Fly Catcher** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)  
The male Vermilion Flycatcher is a brilliant red bird that hunts flying insects from shrub tops and fences. Females are subtle gray-brown birds with a warm salmon-red blush to the underparts. Though they barely reach the southwestern U.S., this species is common all the way through Central America and much of South America.



Stock photo

**Hooded Oriole** (*Icterus cucullatus*)  
Hooded Orioles are fairly large songbirds with longer and more delicate bodies than other orioles. They also have long rounded tails and longish necks.



Stock photo

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) The painted bunting is a species of bird in the cardinal family, Cardinalidae. It is native to North America. The bright plumage of the male only comes in the second year of life; in the first year they can only be distinguished from the female by close inspection.

## Migratory Birds AT THE STEC

# NOTES FROM THE BACK PERCH - BROWN PELICANS

By Marilyn Lorenz

photos by Chuck Lorenz

You see them flying in formation up and down the beach, patrolling our shoreline, no wonder a group of pelicans flying is called a squadron. They may also be called a pod or even a brief. These are our own Brown Pelicans (*pelicanus occidentalis*) found on the shorelines from the mid-Atlantic to the Gulf; they are strictly salt-water birds. Easy to differentiate from the American White Pelicans they have a range of brown to gray-brown plumage, but the White Pelicans are completely white except for black tips to their wings.

With a 6-1/2 foot wing span and that famous bill pouch, properly called gular, they are hard to miss. They eat only fish and they are spectacular catchers of fish. They fly high over the water until they spot a likely meal below, then dive down, head first, into the sea headfirst, sending up a huge splash. A large amount of water is included with the catch but this is easily drained out leaving only the fish in the large, flexible pouch. Small fish are easily swallowed but a large one requires some maneuvering. The lower jaw has an adjustable hinge and is able to stretch out allowing the fish, no matter how large, to slide down the throat. A critical part of the swallow is that the fish must be positioned head first so as to allow it to slide down smoothly. The caveat is that gulls, those unabashed thieves, will actually sometimes perch on the pelican's head and attempt to steal the fish while the successful fisherman is draining the water out of his pouch. *Note: The large Russian pelicans that live in the parks alongside the Thames River in London, England have been known to grab and eat gulls and pigeons that carelessly come too close.*

Pelicans nest on small, unoccupied islands in the Gulf and Laguna Madre and will build nests either in trees or on the ground. They lay up to three eggs which take 38 days to hatch and it will be another eighty days before the chicks are ready to start out on their own. They keep the eggs warm and protected from predators by standing on them. Occasionally a quick take-off can break an egg. This was the problem when DDT use thinned the eggshells of fish-eating birds, so many eggs were destroyed that the species was in danger of extinction.

No longer on the Endangered Species list, pelicans were one of the birds that was nearly extirpated by the pesticides DDT and endrin. Kevin Kaufman wrote in *Kingbird Highway* of how excited he was to see a Brown Pelican on our Texas coast and how sad he was to think that it might be one of the last of these magnificent birds to still be alive. We very nearly lost them all. Happily, they are now doing quite well and should be with us for many years to come. (see photos on next page)

photos by Chuck Lorenz



**Brown Pelican**



**Brown Pelican**



**Brown Pelican**



# Schedule Your School and Organizations Tours Now



Look out boardwalk.



Multipurpose Room.



Outdoor Classroom

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 60 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.

## Plan your Special Occasion at the STEC

### RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES AT STEC



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

CALL (956) 772-0210 FOR INFORMATION

### Beautiful , Unique and Affordable Venue!

- WEDDINGS
- BIRTHDAY PARTIES
- ANNIVERSARIES
- GRADUATION PARTIES
- CORPORATE MEETINGS
- ANNUAL MEETINGS
- CHRISTMAS PARTIES
- BUSINESS MEETINGS
- ENGAGEMENTS

Group Size: Multipurpose Room: 60 Amphitheater : 150 Outdoor Classroom: 46 Bird Archway: 10 Viewing Boardwalk Outlook 20

# Event Calendar - January through March 2025

- Jan 14 SPI Chamber of Commerce Member Event 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. South Padre Island (outreach)
- Jan 15: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Jan 16: Space X Launch Viewing at the STEC 4 p.m. Donations Accepted.
- Jan 21: Welcome Back Winter Texan Expo McAllen Convention Center. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (outreach)
- Jan 22: Welcome Back Winter Texan Expo Brownsville Event Center. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (outreach)
- Jan 22: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Jan 23: Winter Speaker Series—"Water Conservation in the Valley" Augusto Sanchez 5:30 –7:00 p.m. Free
- Jan 24: Cara Cara Advisory Board Meeting . 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.. Private
- Jan 25: Bayview Condo HOA Annual Meeting 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Private
- Jan 25: Bertha Cabeza Middle School Health Fair San Benito 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (outreach)
- Jan 25: Laguna Vista Library Presentation 11 a. m. (outreach)
- Jan 28: Orange Grove RV Park Presentation 8:30 a.m. to noon Edinburg (outreach)
- Jan 29: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Jan 30 : Winter Speaker Series –Ancient Landscapes Exhibit Opening. Film Showing 5:30 to 8 p.m. Free Admission
- Feb 1 : Resaca de la Palma State Park 16th Anniversary. Brownsville 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (outreach)
- Feb 4 ,5: & 6: USFW Meeting 9 a.m. to Noon. Private
- Feb 5: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Feb 5: Lower Coast Survey Meeting. UTRGV Brownsville 9 a.m. Private
- Feb 6: Winter Speaker Series –Dr. Erin Easton . Satellite program in Antarctica 5:30 to 7 p.m. Free Admission
- Feb 6,7 & 8: WOW South Padre Island 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (outreach)
- Feb 7: Garriga 5th Graders 55 tour. Alyssa. 10 a.m.
- Feb 12: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Feb 19: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Feb 20: Winter Speaker Series—"5 Unique Plant Communities" Robert Gaitan 5:30 –7:00 p.m. Free
- Feb 26: RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalists training. 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Private
- Mar 2: Ocelot Days. Gladys Porter Zoon. Brownsville. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (outreach)
- Mar 4: GLO Educational Workshop. 9 a.m. to noon. Private

## Texas Nature Book Club Meetings

3rd Tuesdays at noon at the STEC.

Open to the public.

# Where to purchase Native Plants in the Valley!

## RGV Native Plant Resources

(Updated 2024)

### Harlingen

Grimsell Seed Company (956) 423-0370

Heep's Nursery, Mike Heep (956) 457-6834

Stuart Place Nursery (956) 428-4439

Wild August Nursery (956) 535-2117

### La Joya

Perez Ranch Nursery (956) 580-8915

### Mission

Oleander Nursery (956) 607-3304

National Butterfly Center (956) 583-5400

### Rio Grande City

Rancho Lomita Nursery (956) 486-2576

### San Benito

River Oks Nursery (956) 399-4078

### Weslaco

Valley Nature Center (956) 969-2475

### Alamo

Mid Valley Garden and Pond (956) 650-0581

Kautsch True Value (956) 787-2721

### Other resources:

**Rio Grande Valley Pollinator Project:** resources, information, presentations, classes etc.

[rgvpollinatorproject@gmail.com](mailto:rgvpollinatorproject@gmail.com)

**Native Plant Project::** resources, guides, handbooks, plant listings, etc. <https://>

### Penitas

Native Trees Nursery (956) 890-5316

### La Feria

Los Ebanos Farms (956) 565-2993

### Donna

South Texas Palms (956) 605-7266

### McAllen

Southern Landscapes (956) 618-1899

### Brownsville

Southmost Preserve -[Marco.ruiz@tnc.org](mailto:Marco.ruiz@tnc.org)

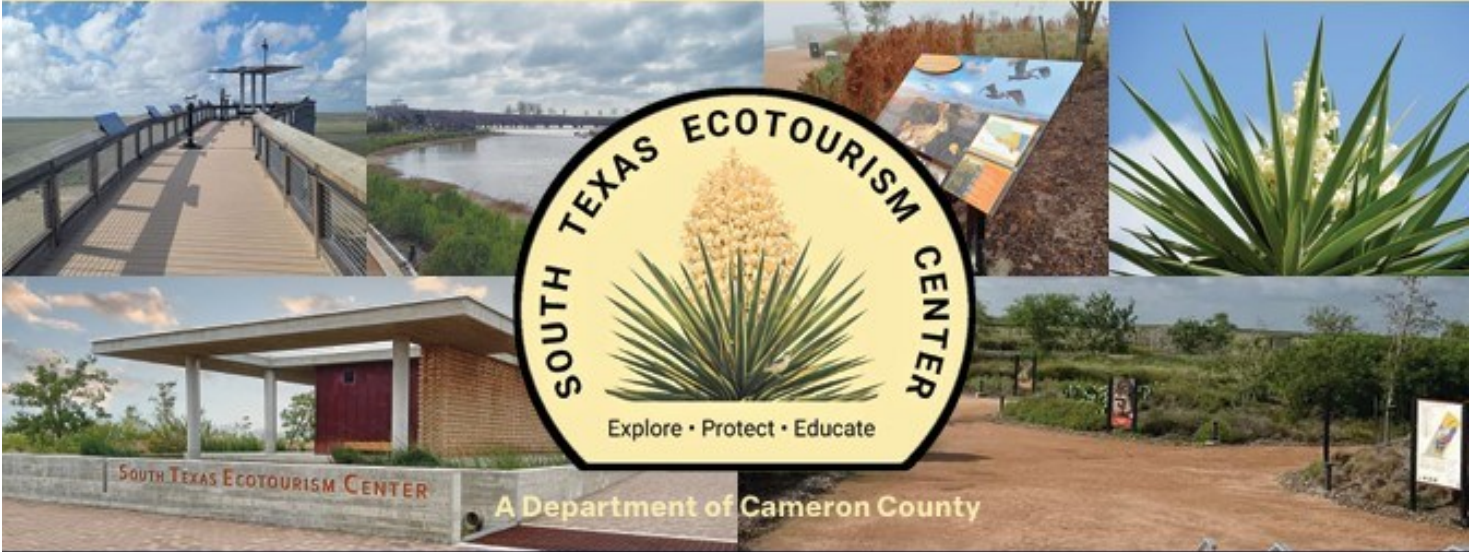
### Laguna Vista

South Texas Ecotourism Center (956) 772-8q 210



# EXPLORE, PROTECT, EDUCATE

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



Outdoor Exhibits • Wildlife Sculptures • 48,000 Native Plants • Amphitheater • Meeting Room • Outdoor Classroom • WiFi • Rentals

OPEN DAILY 8AM – 5PM • FREE ADMISSION

501 W STATE HWY 100 • LAGUNA VISTA, TX

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

Jonathan Wood  
"Raptor Project"

29th Annual  
**WINTER WILDLIFE EXPO**  
Feb. 6th-8th 2025  
at  
South Padre Island  
BIRDING, NATURE CENTER & ALLIGATOR SANCTUARY  
6801 Padre Blvd.

-Feb 3rd-5th-  
**PRE-EXPO Field Trips**  
**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**RAPTOR SHOWS**  
**EXHIBITORS &**  
**MUCH MORE!!**

**Admission**  
\$10 per day

**SATURDAY**  
**Family Day**  
FREE ADMISSION for  
kids 15 & under!

Scan QR code for more information or  
visit: [spibirding.org/WWE](http://spibirding.org/WWE)

The South Texas Ecotourism Center will be participating at the 29th Annual Winter Wildlife Expo Feb. 6 to 8th at the SPI Birding Center and Alligator Sanctuary. We will have an educational booth at the event which is one of our many outreach programs we participate with. We invite volunteers to help with the booth. Please call at (956)772-0210.

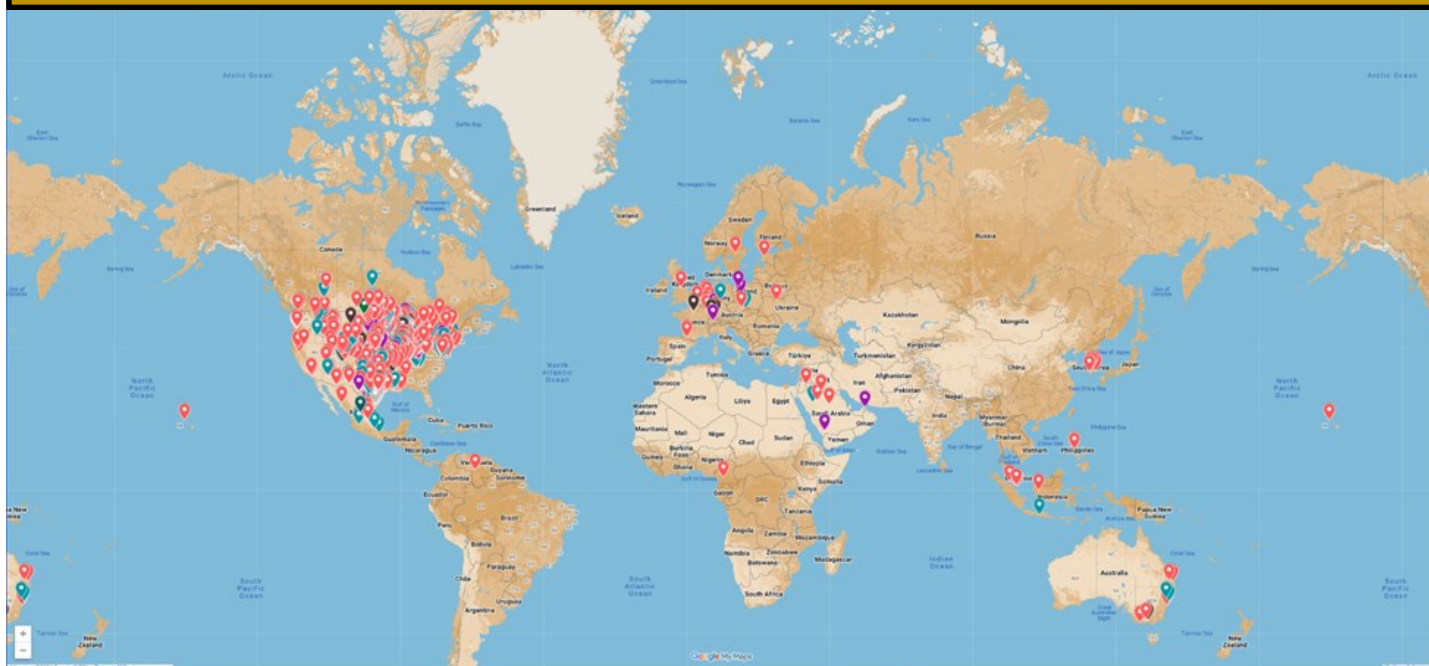
# STEC Visitor Attendance Increases

Attendance has increased since the STEC opened its doors to the public on February 22, 2022 with increased advertising, marketing, and outreach programs. We increased our marketing with additional ads to social media. We participate with many of the valley based festivals and started presenting our Speaker Series on Facebook Live which has tripled the participation from the public. The English and Spanish Television Stations have been very supportive of the STEC. Space X launchings have increased attendance also. Overall there is much more public awareness of the STEC as a destination.

## Attendance at the South Texas Ecotourism Center increases every year:

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| <b>2022</b> | <b>8,023</b>  |
| <b>2023</b> | <b>20,068</b> |
| <b>2024</b> | <b>34,597</b> |

### Visitors from all over the World



# Welcome our new Educator/Ecosystem Specialist



## Matthew Schalk

"As a born and raised Rio Grande Valley resident, I've always had an appreciation for the unique & diverse ecosystems and wildlife that the Valley harbors. I've spent a large part of my life around nature or working with wildlife. Both in my free time, and while working with Grace Heritage Ranch or the Gladys Porter Zoo.

Now, I'm very excited for my new future with the STEC. I hope to be able to teach our visitors all about our natural marvels and to also learn, myself, along the way."



Frog Fruit ( *Phyla nodiflora* ) Photo: Ed Meza



Horse Crier ( *Echinocactus Texensis* ) Photo: Ed Meza

## STEC Staff:

**Edward P. Meza, Director**

**Matthew Schalk, Educator/  
Ecosystem Specialist**

**Pablo Medrano, Office Specialist/  
Educator**

**Jose Angel Martinez,  
Maintenance Specialist/Educator**

**Roman C. Martinez,  
Maintenance Worker**

# Educational Tour of the King Ranch



Photo: Janice Travis, King Ranch Staff

On Friday, August 2nd, STEC staff and volunteers took an educational excursion to the historic King Ranch in Kingsville where they learned about the Ranch's native grass and plant conservation program, the history and operation of the ranch, the gift shop and about the history of the Nilgai. This tour was very beneficial to our staff and volunteers. We had King Ranch staff present us with talks about the Nilgai, about their native plant and conservation program, and how they operated their gift shop, Speakers included Janice Travis, Tour Supervisor and Jimmy McBee, Assistant Area Manager /Wildlife and SCHS biologist. Our tour guide Marlett Bahn was excellent. For more information on the King Ranch. Log on to <https://king-ranch.com>

Photo starting from left back row:

Pablo Medrano, Office Specialist/ Educator; Sofia Garza, Ecosystem Specialist/ Educator; Mari Galvan, Community Outreach Coordinator,Pct.3; Norma Tovar, Vol.; Marilyn Lorenz, Vol.; Duanne Rasmussen, Vol.; Edward Meza, STEC Director; Angel Martinez, Maintenance Specialist/Educator; Front Row: Sharon McGinley, Vol.; Becky Tovar, Vol.; Elma Arredondo, Volunteer.

## Future Educational Tours for our Volunteers

One of the incentives of volunteering at the STEC is having the opportunity to travel to other nature sites that share the same goals of native plant and animal conservation and education. By having our volunteers and staff exposed to other sites will prepare us with increased knowledge and appreciation of our environment and location here in South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.

### Future Volunteer Tours Planned for 2025:

- Nature Conservancy/Sabal Palm Sanctuary/Montezuma Cypress Park-Southmost
- Quinta Mazatlan/ McAllen Nature Center/Edinburg Scenic Wetlands & World Birding
- And many others... South Texas is rich with Nature Centers and Sites

# STEC Volunteers are Greatly Appreciated



Without the generosity and time that our volunteers donate to our Center, the STEC could not operate as successful as it does. Our volunteers help with our special events, work on the gardens, promote the STEC with outreach programs, help with both our Spring and Summer camps and Speaker Series and greet visitors. We had an appreciation dinner for those who volunteered for 2024 and each were given a Certificate of Appreciation and a custom lanyard.

The volunteers as a whole generously donated 2391 hours for the year. According to the Independent Sector and the University of Maryland's Do-Good Institute they estimated that the current national value of a volunteer's time is to be \$33.49 per hour.

With that being said, STEC Volunteers contributed to Cameron County \$80,074.59 worth of services to the STEC and to our community. Job will done!

Thank you Volunteers!



# STEC 2024—Educational Programs

STEC continued our popular STEC Speaker Series, Spring Break and Summer Camps, Seasonal Events, Film Presentations, school tours & more.

**South Texas Ecotourism Center Summer Camp 2024 June 3th-27th**  
 9am-12pm (New)  
 Kids Ages 7-11  
 \*Must be 7 at the start of Camp\*  
**\$50.00 a Week or \$150 for the Month**

Week 1 June 3-6 Water  
 Week 2 June 10-13 Reptiles  
 Week 3 June 17-20 Insects & Arachnids  
 Week 4 June 24-27 Native Animals

5 Ecosystems  
 Birding  
 Lab Activities  
 Team Building  
 Arts & Crafts

Registration Form online at [STEC-lv.org](http://STEC-lv.org)  
 To Register Visit the Lobby at the South Texas Ecotourism Center

**"MARKET DAY"**  
 Sat., Sept. 21, 2024 10am-2pm

MUSIC FOOD

South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 501 W. STATE HWY 100  
 LAGUNA VISTA, TX  
 956-772-0210

NATURE RELATED INFO BOOTH

**Register Now!**  
 South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 2024 Spring Break Camp

Nature Walks  
 Lab Activities  
 Birding

Arts & Crafts  
 Team Games  
 Scavenger Hunt

Learn about Native Plants, Birds, Wildlife, Ecosystems, and MORE!

Monday March 11- Thursday March 14  
 9 am to 12 noon  
 Ages 7-11 \*Must be 7 at start of Camp\*  
**\$50.00 a Child**

Call (956) 772-0210 for Registration and More Information  
 Visit us at [www.stec-lv.org](http://www.stec-lv.org) or in person at 501 W. State Hwy 100 Laguna Vista

**Christmas at the STEC**  
 Thursday, December 5, 2024  
 6 to 8 p.m. FREE

For More Information call (956) 772-0210  
 501 W. State Hwy 100, Laguna Vista, TX  
[www.stec-lv.org](http://www.stec-lv.org)

Food, Music, Vendors, Crafts

**Winter Speaker Series 2024-25**  
 December to February 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

December 12th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 December 19th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 December 26th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 January 2nd: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 January 9th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 January 16th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 January 23rd: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 January 30th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 February 6th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 February 13th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 February 20th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**  
 February 27th: **Mr. Beer - History of Beer**

**CINCO DE MAYO**  
 South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 Friday May 3rd 6:00pm-8:00pm  
 Free Event

STEC-lv.org 501 W. State Hwy 100 Laguna Vista TX 78128 (956) 772-0210

**Meditation & Yoga**  
 Monday & Wednesday  
 10 am to 11:00 am

**Strength & Toning**  
 Tuesday & Thursday  
 10 am to 11:00 am FREE

**Coffee with the Birds**  
 Everyday 9 am to 11 am

Serving Tree Frog Coffee  
 Locally roasted in Bayview, Texas  
 Eco-friendly

Christian Concert ~ Thursday, May 9th

INDIANA BIBLE COLLEGE  
**CHORALE**  
 at 7 p.m. at the STEC  
 FREE ADMISSION

501 W. State Highway 100, Laguna Vista, Texas (956) 772-0210

**OCT. 31 6-8PM STEC HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL**  
 JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FRIGHTFUL FUN, TRICK OR TREAT TRAILS, HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES, AND FABULOUS COSTUME CONTEST

TRICK OR TREAT

South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 501 W. STATE HWY 100  
 LAGUNA VISTA, TX 78128  
 956-772-0210

Movie Premiere  
**"ONE REFUGE, ONE CAMERA, SEASONS OF LAGUNA"**  
 Richard Moore  
 Sat., November 16th~ 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

**WELCOME RIDERS!!**  
**RIDE FOR ROTARY 2024**

Rotary CARACARA

**Youth craft workshop Presents owl Pellets**  
 Thursday August 25th  
 9am-10am  
 Snacks provided  
**\$5 fee**  
 Come dissect owl pellets and learn about owls!

South Texas Ecotourism Center 501 W. State Hwy 100, Laguna Vista, Texas 78578 (956)772-0210

**Winter-Texan Appreciation Party**  
 South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 Saturday February 24th All Day  
 Movie Showing - Drop on the Hour 12:00pm  
 Free Popcorn & Craft Activity

South Texas Ecotourism Center  
**Mother's Day Celebration**  
 Sunday May 12th 10:00am-2:00pm

**Youth Craft Workshop presents Clay Creations**  
 August 8th 9AM-10AM  
 Snacks Provided  
**\$5 Fee**  
 Join us in making figures out of air dry clay.  
 Participants will take home their creations!

501 W. State Hwy 100, Laguna Vista, Texas 78578 (956) 772-0210 [www.stec-lv.org](http://www.stec-lv.org)

**CELEBRATING SEPTEMBER NATIONAL YOGA MONTH FREE EVENT!**

Join Us for a Kid's Yoga Flow Session  
**SUNDAY • September 22, 2024 2:00pm-3:00pm**  
 South Texas Ecotourism Center  
 501W TX-100 Laguna Vista, Texas

Certified instructor Isabel Jensen will present an interactive yoga session designed for kids and families to explore mindfulness, breath, movement, relaxation, and FUN.

SPONSORED BY:  
 • GAMECREATIVE ART  
 • MATH AVAILABLE  
 • REFRESHMENTS  
 THE LIGHTHOUSE

**TEXAS Arbor Day 2024 NOVEMBER 1st**  
 Tree Texas Well

# STEC 2024 –Promotion & Advertising

We increased our marketing and advertising through more outreach programs, advertising, Facebook live, television stations, etc.

**Coastal Expo**  
Thursday, December 12th and Friday, December 13th, 2024  
Pharr Natatorium  
3001 N. Cage Blvd. Pharr, Texas 78777  
Exhibitor registration is now open!  
Use the QR code below to open the registration survey.

**HELLO WINGS**  
A Celebration of monarch migration across South Padre Island  
Flutter on over and witness a spectacle of nature!  
**FREE ADMISSION DAY!**  
Native Plant Sale  
Vendors  
Live Music  
Butterfly Garden Tour  
Costume Contest  
Face Painting & Much More!  
SUNDAY OCTOBER 27TH 11AM - 5PM  
South Padre Island

**Rio Grande Valley BIRDING FESTIVAL**  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS  
November 6-10, 2024  
Field Trips | Seminars | Kids Activities  
Free Family Fun  
Live Birds of Prey | Trade Show  
701 HARLINGEN HEIGHTS DRIVE - HARLINGEN, TEXAS

**A Christmas Drone Story II: The 12 Days of Christmas**  
Valley Symphony Orchestra + Chorus  
SPECIAL MEDICAL SEATING  
Kid Zone  
Pictures with Santa  
Food  
Saturday, December 7 5 to 8 p.m.  
For Ticket Info: (956) 356-6277; (956) 454-6358; (956) 827-8349

**Boo-tanical**  
2ND ANNUAL CAMERON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS  
Fall Festival & Plant Sale  
OCTOBER 12, 2024  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
COSTUMES ENCOURAGED  
PLANT CLINIC | GARDEN VENDORS | EDUCATION BOOTHS  
KIDS ACTIVITIES | COSTUMES | BUTTERFLY GARDENING  
NATIVE PLANTS | VEGETABLE GARDENING | TERRARIUMS  
GARDEN BENCHES | WOODWORK ITEMS | BIRDHOUSES  
NATURE JEWELRY | BIRDHOUSE ART | POTTERY | PLANT TAGS  
GARDEN ART | DECORATIVE PLANTERS | PLANT WALK  
CUPCAKES | FOOD VENDORS | FAMILY FUN | PHOTO OPS  
COFFEE | CANDY | FALL DECOR | HERBS | BAKED GOODS  
EDUCATION GARDEN  
1390 W. EXPRESSWAY 83  
SAN BENITO, TX 78586  
RAIN OR SHINE | BRING YOUR WAGON

**TEXAN by NATURE**  
Certified

**CARACARA**  
Join us to celebrate National Trails Day  
Saturday, June 1st, 2024  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
Free entry  
Free parking

**South Texas Ecotourism Center Presentation**  
WEDNESDAY JUNE 12 & FRIDAY JUNE 21  
10:30 - 11:30 AM  
LAGUNA VISTA LIBRARY  
1500 Palm Blvd., Laguna Vista, TX 78122  
Explore | Protect | Educate

**South Texas Ecotourism Center Earth Day**  
Native Animal Bone and Hides Displays  
Paper Bird Feeder Activity  
Free Admission  
Free Native Plants and Native Seed Pack (One per family)  
White Supplies Last

**Monarch N-Milkweed FAIR**  
All proceeds support our community efforts  
May 18, 2024  
8:00 am - 9:00 am  
South Texas Ecotourism Center  
518 W. State Hwy 100  
Laguna Vista, Texas 78126  
Support Texas Monarch Flagship in Fall & Spring

**EXPLORE, PROTECT, EDUCATE**  
Preserving the Unique Ecosystems of South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley  
OPEN DAILY 8AM - 5PM • FREE ADMISSION  
501 W. STATE HWY 100 • LAGUNA VISTA, TX  
WWW.STEC-LV.ORG • FACEBOOK.COM/STEC LV • (956) 772-0210

**Solar Eclipse Viewing**  
South Texas Ecotourism Center  
April 8th 1pm-3pm  
Free Eclipse Glasses  
\*While Supplies Last

**SPRING PLANT SALE**  
Saturday, April 13, 2024  
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM  
Education Garden  
1590 W Expressway 83  
San Benito, TX 78586  
BRING YOUR OWN WAGON

**Coastal Current Farm Fresh**  
September 20-26, 2024  
Calendar of Events • Tide Guide • Puzzles • Horoscopes & More Inside.

**Winter Texan Appreciation Day! Matinee Movie**  
Deep in the Heart: A Texas Wildlife Story  
Saturday, February 24, 2024  
2:00pm  
South Texas Ecotourism Center  
501 W. State Highway 100, Laguna Vista

**28th Annual WINTER WILDLIFE EXPO**  
FEBRUARY 9TH-11TH 2024  
Guest Speakers  
Field Trips  
Raptor Shows  
Exhibitors  
Vendors & Much More!  
SUNDAY FAMILY DAY  
Kids 5yr. old & under  
FREE ADMISSION  
SCOTT HARRIS

**Ecotourism center hosts its first Market Day Saturday**  
The center's first Market Day is a vibrant celebration of local products and community spirit. The event features a variety of vendors offering fresh produce, handmade goods, and local crafts. Visitors can enjoy live music, educational displays, and a chance to support local businesses. The market is held in the center's outdoor courtyard, providing a pleasant setting for families and individuals alike. Proceeds from the market will be used to support the center's conservation efforts and educational programs.

# STEC 2024—Photo Memories

