

WELDER NOW MONTHLY WELDER WILDLIFE UPDATES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2025

WELDER FUN FACT >

HISTORY

- The first graduate student, Dr. Thad Box, completed his degree in 1957. His M.S. thesis was "Vegetational analyses and the determination of range condition classes on selected areas of the Welder Wildlife Refuge." He conducted this research while attending Texas A&M University, College Station.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES >

EDUCATION

- Youth Wildflower Workshop (March 21)
- Wildflower Workshop (April 4)
- Beth Hudson Group (April 15th)
- Birdiest Festival Birding Tour (April 25-26)
- State Wildlife Contest (FFA) (April 28)

RESEARCH

- MAPS training and events begin in May

VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE DAYS

- March 22, 2025
- April 12, 2025

TOURS

- Volunteers are able to lead tours after completing tour training. Fill out an application today!



JUST COMPLETED

- Dormitory Remodel Repainting of the Exterior
- Dormitory Remodel Repainting of the Living Room

PROJECTS >

IN PROGRESS

- Uploading our Rangeland Curriculum to PocketLab with the Updated 2024 TEKS
- Dormitory Remodel Phase 2, Rooms 1-4
- Dormitory Remodel Kitchen and Laundry Room
- 2024 Annual Report



OUR VOLUNTEERS >

We often hear that it takes a village to make great things happen, and our team of volunteers is the heart and soul of our village. Your unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed. Each and every one of you has played a crucial role in our success, and for that, we are profoundly grateful. You've given your time and energy, often going above and beyond to support our cause. Thank you for being the backbone of our community, for believing in our mission, and for the countless ways you have made a difference.

THANK YOU TO OUR JANUARY VOLUNTEERS

Philip Woods

Albert Flores

John Failla

Brock Minton

Amber Brown

Taylor Abshier

NUMBERS REACHED THIS MONTH >

EVENTS ATTENDED/HOSTED IN JANUARY

- January 17-19th: Annual Youth Hunt with TYHP
- January 21-24th: Gulf Coast Joint Venture Waterfowl Science Team
- January 25th: Sharp Shooter Foto Workshop



TOTAL NUMBERS REACHED IN JANUARY

- At the Foundation
 - 26 people



UPCOMING EVENTS >

FEBRUARY - MAY

- March 21st
 - Youth Wildflower Workshop
- April 4th
 - Adult Wildflower Workshop
- April 25-26th
 - Birdiest Festival Birding Tours through the Botanical Gardens



EDUCATION EVENTS >

A WORD FROM OUR EDUCATOR - TAYLOR ZAMORA

My name is Taylor Zamora and I am the newest member of the education team at the Welder Wildlife Foundation. Conservation is vital because it helps protect the habitats and survival of countless wildlife species, ensuring that they thrive for generations to come. Being a conservation educator is meaningful because it empowers others to protect wildlife and understand their role in preserving the natural world for future generations. Hoping to spark interests that can lead to future careers and passions in this field.

FEBRUARY - MAY

- February 6th
 - Sinton ISD Career Day (outreach)
- February 7th
 - Carroll HS Biology Class Outreach
- February 19-21st
 - Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society
- February 22nd
 - Mid-Coast Master Naturalist
- March 5-6th
 - Sinton ISD Outreach Event
- March 6th
 - Mireles Elementary Science Spectacular
- March 27th
 - Coliad ISD Field Day
- April 11th
 - Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular
- April 15th
 - Beth Hudson Group
- April 28th
 - State Wildlife Contest
- May 16th
 - Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular

WHAT WAS FUN FOR YOU?



ABIGAIL MIGL (12 YEARS OLD)

"It was a great experience going out here and being able to experience and learn new skills with the animals and meeting new people. My favorite part of the hunt was seeing the land and learning about the animals."

-Abigail Migl



WHY WE DO YOUTH HUNTS?

PARTNERED WITH TEXAS YOUTH HUNTING PROGRAM

The Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation works with the Texas Youth Hunting Program to give new hunters a deeper understanding of the importance of hunting when it comes to wildlife conservation, as well as teaching and enforcing safe, legal, and ethical hunting methods. The Welder volunteers helped hunters with shooting skills on the range, processing game, and tracking game.



WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS!





NICK'S JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: What do you get when you put
three ducks into a box?

A: **A box of Quackers!!**

WHO IS UNO? >



Uno is a 3-year-old Savannah Monitor (*Varanus exanthematicus*) that came to us from former educator Drake Rangel. He spends his days in the Education Center basking and eating eggs-a difficult life...we know. We hope to get him comfortable enough to be handled and teach the importance of reptiles and amphibians, and their unique adaptations within their environment (he's adjusting quite well).

Uno has become an important part of the Welder family and will be sharing some neat herpetology facts with you every month, here in the Welder Now newsletter. If you're visiting the refuge, make to stop by and say hello!

RESEARCH : SPOTLIGHT ON A WELDER FELLOW >



CAMRYN M. KIEL, PH.D.



Effects of Prescribed Fire on the Texas Tortoise (*Gopherus Berlandieri*)

Prescribed fire has become a popular land management tool to create variety in vegetation, which may benefit wildlife species that utilize multiple cover types. One such wildlife species is the state-threatened Texas tortoise (*Gopherus berlandieri*), a slow-moving, long-lived ectotherm in southern Texas. The body of literature examining the effects of fire on herpetofauna is growing; however, we found no such data for Texas tortoises. This study assesses the vegetation tortoises use in southern Texas coastal rangelands, as well as the effects of prescribed fire on their movement, thermal ecology, and survival through fires. On the East Foundation's El Sauz Ranch in Willacy County, we affixed tortoises with GPS loggers, radio transmitters, and temperature loggers to monitor these variables through prescribed fires from 2022-2024. This property employs a prescribed fire regime with pastures assigned to summer burns, winter burns, or no burns (control) at varying burn frequencies. We also monitored tortoises before and after fires to quantify fire-induced mortality. We collected data across seasons to determine if the season of fire plays a role. Preliminary analyses show that Texas tortoises use a variety of vegetation types throughout the year, which denotes the importance of heterogeneity for their conservation. Additionally, winter fires may also have a lower risk of fire-caused mortality. This study was designed to inform land managers of prescribed fire practices that mitigate tortoise mortality through maintaining vegetation structure that suits their activity and thermal needs.

Texas A&M University

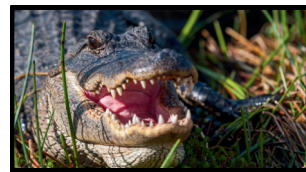
Major Co-Advisor: Toby J. Hibbitts, Ph.D.

Major Co-Advisor: Andrea Montalvo, Ph.D.



UNOS CORNER >

American Alligators use 'brumation' that acts like hibernation but for cold blooded animals. This is done when they go into 'gator-holes', normally underwater dens, for hours to months. When they are in these dens, they slow down their metabolism to conserve energy when food is scarce, and the temperatures drop. They often only leave their snouts protruding the surface to allow them to breathe.



WELDER CALENDAR >



OFFERED INSIDE

We are now featuring our NEW Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation Calendar. All images inside were taken on the Refuge by Bill and Sharon Draker. Contact us at aarredondo@welderwildlife.org to get ahold of our limited supply!

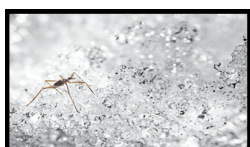


RON'S INSECT FACT >



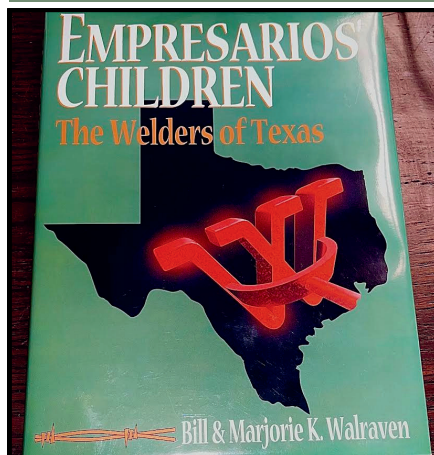
SNOW FLIES

These wingless, flightless insects are unique in that survive temperatures 20 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Unlike most insects they go out and move in the zone between the ground and the snowpack. Occasionally they go to the snow surface to feed or mate. A protein in their bodies serves as antifreeze to keep them alive.



Welder Now | Volume 2, Issue 1

LEARN ABOUT OUR HISTORY



EMPRESARIOS' CHILDREN

Author: Bill and Marjorie K. Walraven

Price: \$75

Summary: "One of the oldest and largest ranching operations in Texas, the Welder Ranches have had a remarkably low profile. Welders or Welder ancestors survived Indian raids, wars, plagues, elopements, assassinations, and the terrible Galveston hurricane of 1900, but even family members were unaware of their heritage."

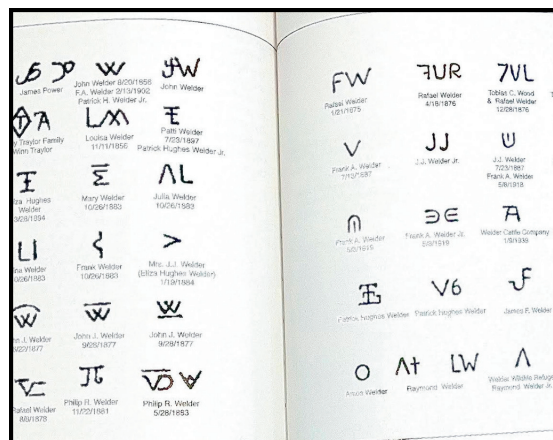
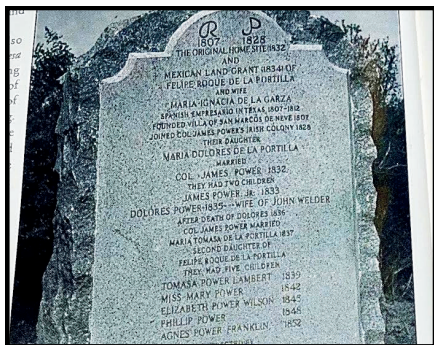
Purpose: "Patrick Hughes Welder Jr. proposed this history of his family. As a descendent of Spanish, German, and Irish colonizers, he has been determined to preserve his heritage, much of which has been unknown to family members. A rancher, oilman, banker, and an original Trustee of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, he has a profound interest in the land his family has husbanded so many years."

Quotes:

"Loyalist families were fleeing, as afraid of the Texian raiders as the Texian civilians were of the Guardes." (page 51)

"Later in the day Weather Bureau began warning residents within three blocks of the coast to evacuate. Few heeded the warning." (page 177)

"Although Raymond was spared, the flu would bring great sorrow to the Welders." (page 203)



CONTACT INFORMATION >

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