

WELDER NOW MONTHLY WELDER WILDLIFE UPDATES

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, JANUARY 2025

WELDER FUN FACT >

HISTORY

- The Foundation was established in 1954, and sits on an original land grant from 1834 to Felipe Roque De la Portilla. It was passed down to John Welder when he married Dolores De la Portilla. He then accumulated a total of **100,000** acres in South Texas through the purchase of land grants.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES >

EDUCATION

- Annual Youth Hunt (January 17-19)
- Youth Wildflower Workshop (March 21)
- Wildflower Workshop (April 4)
- Birdiest Festival Birding Tour (April 25-26)
- State Wildlife Contest (FFA) (April 28)

RESEARCH

- MAPS training and events begin in May

VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE DAYS

- February 15, 2025
- March 22, 2025
- April 12, 2025

TOURS

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



JUST COMPLETED

- Administration Building Foundation Leveling
- Dormitory Foundation Leveling
- Dormitory Remodel Phase 1, Rooms 5-8
- PaleoPit was Completed and Cleaned Up
- First Youth Photography Workshop Series with Sharp Shooter Foto

PROJECTS >

IN PROGRESS

- Uploading our Rangeland Curriculum to PocketLab with the Updated 2024 TEKS
- Dormitory Remodel Phase 2, Rooms 1-4



OUR VOLUNTEERS >

- Our volunteers are a very active, dedicated, and hard-working group of individuals who participate in and assist with many of the Foundation's activities. These amazing individuals work with us to create and lead education and outreach programs, keep our trails clear of brush and other debris, assist staff with wildlife monitoring, and assist with office and collections duties among other things. We greatly appreciate their hard work and dedication to our mission! Volunteers may apply at any time during the year. We would like to begin hosting several volunteer training programs throughout the year again. These trainings will likely be held in conjunction with a pot-luck luncheon or some other sort of fun-filled activity. This is a good time to meet and get to know other WWF volunteers and staff. If you are interested in becoming a Welder Volunteer, please fill out an application found on our website, and either email it to our Education Manager, Angie Arredondo, or return it by mail.

THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

Bill Burge	Steven Schwietz	Michael Tewes
Amber Higginbotham	Yvette Stewart	Jane Wicker
Lawrence Jordan	Paul Swacina	Judith Williamson
Brennan Riley	Christina Tewes	

NUMBERS REACHED THIS MONTH >

EVENTS ATTENDED/HOSTED IN DECEMBER

- December 6-8th: Sharpshooters overnight Photography Workshop at the Foundation.
- December 11-13th: Texas Children in Nature Network in Waco, Texas.
- December 14th: Sharp Shooter Foto Workshop at the Foundation.
- December 14th: Goose Island Christmas in the Park in Rockport, Texas.
- December 16th: Christmas Bird Count at the Foundation.



TOTAL NUMBERS REACHED IN DECEMBER

- At outreach events
 - 169 people
- At the Foundation
 - 40 people

ANNUAL NUMBERS REACHED FOR 2024

- 5,428 People



UPCOMING EVENTS >

JANUARY - APRIL

- January 17-19th
 - Welder Wildlife Foundation Annual Youth Hunt
- January 25th, February 8th, March 1st, March 13th - 17th
 - Sharp Shooter Foto Youth Workshop Series
- 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 - ANGIE ARREDONDO

We're excited to present to you our first-of-many Welder Now newsletters! With the addition of wonderful new staff, the Foundation is growing and reaching more and more people every day. Welder Now will be delivered monthly thanks to our Education Team, and we hope you enjoy the many issues to come. Be on the lookout for new developments on the Refuge, and please reach out if you would like more information on any of the items presented in the newsletter. Thank you all for being a big part of our Welder Family and sharing our passion for Conservation, Education, and Research...till next time!

JANUARY - APRIL

- February 19-21
 - Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society
- March 12th
 - Goliad ISD Field Day
- April 10
 - Gulf Coast Prairies Practitioner's Forum
- April 11th
 - Kostoryz Elementary Science Spectacular
- April 15th
 - Beth Hudson Group
- April 28th
 - State Wildlife Contest

FROM THE CEO >



DR. DALE JAMES

Dear Foundation Friends, Supporters and Volunteers,

We truly believe that effective communication works for those who work at it and without it we cannot have a long-lasting relationship with all of you that believe in our conservation mission. The *Welder Now* newsletter is one of many communication tools that we will use to engage with you and inform you of our upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, as well as provide insight into our mission areas of conservation education, research and land stewardship. We hope that you enjoy hearing more about our activities and welcome any feedback, especially in areas that you would like to hear more about.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dale".

NICK'S JOKE OF THE MONTH



Q : Where do rabbits eat for breakfast?

A: **IHOP!!**

RESEARCH : SPOTLIGHT ON A WELDER FELLOW >



DUSTON R. DUFFIE, PH.D.

Nonnative and invasive plants are considered a conservation threat to native ecosystems. As ecosystems are invaded, invasive plants can replace native plant species resulting in changes in the vegetative structure and biodiversity of an area. The objectives of our study are to determine if vegetative invasions and subsequent changes in vegetation structure influence community composition, species abundance, and habitat associations of herpetofauna and mammals. To meet these objectives, we surveyed the herpetofauna and mammal communities at the Welder Wildlife Refuge. We surveyed herpetofauna and small mammal communities at six plots at varying levels of plant invasion. Additionally, we established 24 remote camera stations across the Refuge to monitor medium and large-sized mammal communities. We completed fieldwork in August 2024. We documented 31 reptile species, 12 amphibian species, and 11 small mammal species in our six survey plots. Our remote cameras have detected 21 mammal species, including the plains spotted skunk (*Spilogale interrupta*), a species of conservation concern. From our preliminary results monitoring small mammal and herpetofauna communities, we learned that habitat specialists are more likely to be negatively impacted by plant invasion; whereas, generalist species are either unaffected or increased in abundance at sites with high density of invasive plants. We expect medium and large-sized mammals to similarly respond to increasing density of invasive plants because plant invasion alters habitat availability, which affects specialist species and prey availability. Our study will provide information on managing invasive vegetation to maintain animal populations, species diversity, community composition, and ecological function.

INVASIVE VEGETATION IMPACTS ON HERPETEOFAUNA AND MAMMAL POPULATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

Texas A&M University - Kingsville

Co-Advisor: Cord B. Eversole, Ph.D.

Co-Advisor: Scott E. Henke, Ph.D.



CONTACT INFORMATION >

📞 Office Phone: (361) 364-2643

✉ Email: aarredondo@welderwildlife.org

🌐 Website: www.welderwildlife.org

📍 Physical Address: P.O. Box 1400 Sinton, TX 78387