WELDER NOW

VOL. 2, ISSUE 10

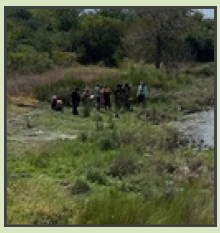




Fun Facts from the Welder Wildlife Foundation Scrapbooks

Skunks and Opossums

CCC-T reported on July 17, 1960, that Dr. Clarence Cottam and his wife, who lived on-site at the Welder Wildlife Foundation, regularly fed skunks beneath their kitchen window and took the opportunity to closely observe their behavior. Their observations suggested that skunks appeared to maintain a social "pecking order," with individual animals displaying different levels of dominance and access to the available food. Interestingly, the Cottams noted that skunks seemed more willing to share food with opossums than with other skunks, providing an early informal observation of social interactions between these two common nocturnal species.



List of Volunteers - September

Thank you to our volunteers for helping with the Sinton High School Aquatics class visit!

— Phil Woods
— Jeremy Miller

Farewell Jorge

The Welder Wildlife Foundation was honored to have Jorge Avila join us as an apprentice this past year. Jorge quickly became an invaluable part of our team, always willing to lend a helping hand, learn something new, and take on whatever challenge came his way. From learning bird calls and conservation practices to maintaining the property and tackling plumbing repairs, Jorge embraced every opportunity to grow and contribute. His time at the Foundation gave him the chance to work alongside both our land stewardship programs and education team, gaining experience in everything from wildlife conservation to the importance of fire ecology. As Jorge moves on to the next chapter of his career as a field biologist in the Valley, we are grateful for the time, hard work, and personality he shared with the Welder Wildlife Foundation. We wish him all the best in this next adventure and look forward to seeing where his passion for conservation takes him.



Events Attended/Hosted

Who have we reached this month?

At Outreach Events
- **207** people

At the Foundation
- **111** people

- September 10 - Girl Scout Troop 9243 Tour
- September 11 - Sinton High School Outreach Visit
- September 12 - Barecky Family Private Tour
- September 16 - Sinton High School Aquatic Class
- September 17 - Homeschool Group Tour
- September 19 - HummerBird Festival Tour
- September 23 - Homeschool Co-Op Outreach Visit
- September 25 - Celebration of Flight Festival at Corpus Christi HawkWatch
- September 29 - Public Tour

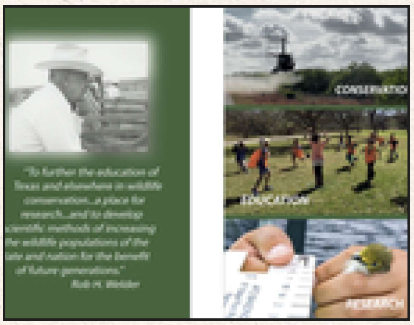


CELEBRATION OF FLIGHT FESTIVAL

Projects

Upcoming:

- Education Trailer
- Herbicide Spray



Volunteer Opportunities

Education: Fall Outreach & Tours

Workday: Refuge Maintenance

Collections: Organizing

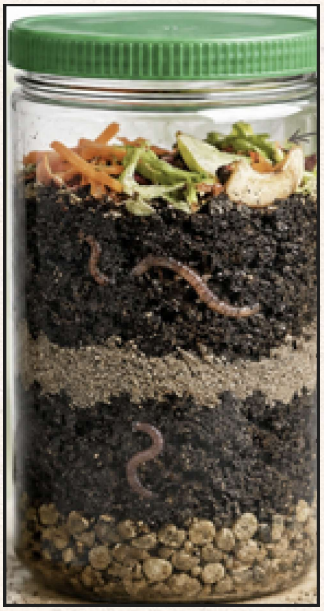
Join our Volunteer Team!

Education Team

Monthly Outdoor Family Activity

MAKE A WORMERY

- Find your container. Use a clear jar or plastic bottle so you can see inside.
- Add the first layer. Pour in a layer of small rocks or gravel (about 1 inch) for drainage.
- Add soil and sand. Add a few inches of potting soil, then a thin layer of sand. Repeat to create 2-3 layers.
- Add the worms. Gently place a few earthworms on top of the soil.
- Add food scraps. Place small pieces of fruit or veggie scraps on the surface.
- Cover the outside. Wrap the jar with dark paper or cloth and secure it with a rubber band. This keeps it cool and damp.



WELDER INSECT FACT - TEXAS LEAFCUTTER ANT

Texas leafcutter ants are amazing farmers because they cut leaves and bring them back to their nests to grow a special fungus for food! These tiny ants can carry pieces of leaves that are much heavier than their own bodies. Leafcutter ants also live in huge underground colonies with thousands of ants working together like a team!



Reptile Facts

Uno's Corner - Western Ribbon Snake

The western ribbon snake is a slender snake that can often be found near ponds, streams, wetlands, and other watery places. It has a long, thin body with bright stripes that help it blend into grasses and plants. These snakes are excellent swimmers and eat small animals such as frogs, tadpoles, fish, and insects. When frightened, a western ribbon snake can quickly dart into the water or hide in nearby vegetation to escape!





Joke of the Month

Q: What do you call a group of musical whales?

A: An Orca-stra!!

Check out our Handouts

2026 Calendar

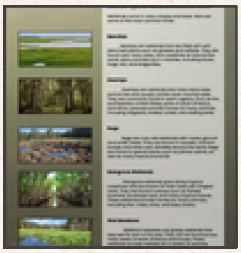


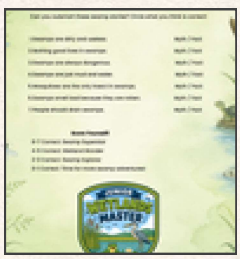


2026 Summer Activity Book









Explore the amazing world of wetlands in this summer's Nature Nook Activity Book! Journey through the wetlands of the Welder Wildlife Refuge and discover fascinating wetland habitats from around the globe. Meet incredible animals and plants that call these watery ecosystems home, challenge yourself with fun games and activities, and test your knowledge with a wetland quiz. Don't miss this issue's Welder Tales story, where you'll dive into the history of the Welder family and learn how ranching first became part of their legacy. Adventure, discovery, and learning await on every page!

Research



Spotlight on a Past Welder Fellow

Dustin Hollowell, M.S.

AN EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE CHANGES OF MULE DEER HABITAT IN THE TRANS-PECOS REGION OF TEXAS

Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) populations throughout the western United States have experienced unprecedented declines. Desert mule deer were once common in most mountain ranges throughout the Trans-Pecos region of Texas, but desert mule deer have shown a decline over the past 20 years. Previous research has suggested that the declines are likely an indirect result of prolonged drought, however, little information exists on the causative factors leading to the decline. Because mule deer populations have declined at the landscape level, I initiated a study to evaluate region-wide declines of desert mule deer in the Trans-Pecos region. The objective was to evaluate habitat changes (e.g., brush encroachment, habitat fragmentation, land-use patterns) relative to trends of desert mule deer populations. Change detection was performed on remotely sensed imagery for the 9-county region of the Trans-Pecos for periods corresponding to changes in mule deer abundance: mid-1980s, mid-1990s, and mid-2000s. The relationship between changes in landscape features and mule deer populations were evaluated at herd unit and region wide scales. Changes observed over longer temporal intervals (10 years) were not related to mule deer populations. When observed on a 2-year time interval, negative correlations were found between change in the negative direction and population trends. The results of this project may help resource managers as well as landowners better understand relationships between mule deer populations and landscape-level changes in habitat.

Barecky Family Private Tour







HummerBird Festival Tour





Sinton High School Aquatics Class





Girl Scout Troop 9243 Visit









CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Phone: (361) 364-2643

Email: swood@welderwildlife.org

Website: www.welderwildlife.org