

Dear Cathy,

Below is our latest [newsletter](#), Please feel free to share it!

Visit the Nature Store @ Visitor Center for new merch!



**August 2023**

**Newsletter**

friends of  
LAGUNA ATASCOSA  
national wildlife refuge

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Upcoming events

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# AUGUST EVENTS

with your Friends

BECOME A FRIEND  
and enjoy  
exclusive events  
and get  
together!

## Events

Aug 5 - Wild Friends Storytime  
11 a.m.-12 p.m. Visitor Center

Aug 10 - Let's Go To the  
Movies  
A South Texas Treasure. With  
special guest Richard Moore.  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Visitor  
Center

Aug 30 - Wild Friends Storytime  
5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Laguna  
Vista Library

## SAVE THE DATE!

**NPLD Cleanup at  
Laguna Atascosa  
Sat, Sept.23 9:00am**

**WALK FOR THE  
WILD with TEAM  
LAGUNA ATASCOSA  
Sat, Oct.14 8:00am**

<https://flanwr.org/eventCalendar>

Register at: [www.flanwr.org/eventcalendar](http://www.flanwr.org/eventcalendar)

*Inspiring People. Inspiring Friends.*



By Amanda De Leon

This month, our inspiring Friend is Greg Fink, who is our Friends volunteer and also a Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center volunteer. As the Executive Director of the Friends, I've had the absolute pleasure of working with Greg on a weekly basis every Friday at the Laguna Atascosa Visitor Center. Greg is originally from Leavenworth, Kansas, and currently lives in Laguna Vista. He has been a volunteer for the Friends and for the Refuge for three months now. The National Wildlife Refuges offer many opportunities for public use which provide a wide variety of great outdoor experiences. Together, they are known as the Big Six, and they stand tall as a cornerstone of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. The Big Six includes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

Out of the Big Six, Greg personally enjoys partaking in wildlife observation, environmental education, interpretation, and fishing. Greg stated that his favorite thing to do while volunteering at the Refuge is feeding the birds at all of the feeding stations that are located around the Visitor Center. He stated that he has the great opportunity to provide the birds wild bird seed as well as the citrus that they very much enjoy. Greg's other volunteer gig when he is not volunteering at Laguna Atascosa is at Sea Turtle, Inc. He is very passionate about volunteering during the sea turtle patrol season, prepping food for the turtles on Mondays and Tuesdays, and educating visitors about wildlife. Greg enjoys the conservation aspect of when he is volunteering with us, and when asked about what his favorite local animal was, he quickly responded, "the ocelot!" Greg stated that he has a love for cats, even house cats, and that he finds the ocelot to be such a fascinating creature. He also mentioned that he couldn't forget about his sea turtles and gave a shout out to Allison which is his favorite Atlantic Green Sea Turtle who resides permanently at Sea Turtle Inc, and who has one of the first successful sea turtle prosthetic devices in the world. Greg is an outstanding volunteer, and you can also catch him behind the scenes working hard and diligently beautifying Laguna Atascosa's Visitor Center trails, feeding stations, and water features. Awesome work, and way to go, Greg, our Friend!

**That's a Wrap!**

**10th Anniversary of**  
**Latino Conservation Week**

July 15th - July 23rd

***Celebrating our culture *afuera y en el refugio!****



The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Latino Conservation Week has wrapped, and it was a week focused on providing opportunities for Latinos to come together and demonstrate their passion for the outdoors. The week also provided a chance to shine a spotlight on the Latino support for conservation and stewardship of our refuge and for our local wildlife. Check out our lineup of activities that were offered to help foster that connection and provide a pulse for Latino Conservation and representation at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.



## ***En Español***

La Semana de la Conservación Latina también ha resultado en una cobertura más amplia del papel latino en la conservación en los medios de comunicación tanto en inglés como en español. Ha llevado al reconocimiento por parte de los funcionarios electos locales, estatales y nacionales del importante papel que desempeñan los latinos como administradores. La Semana de la Conservación Latina ha enfatizado la pasión de la comunidad latina por el aire libre.











## The Heartbeat: Youth Spotlight







**Name:** Andrew Bryant

**City:** Jackson, Mississippi

**Favorite animal he saw while visiting LANWR:**

**Crested Caracara at Gator Pond Trail**

**[Hall of Fame sighting at the Refuge:](#)**

**A brief sighting of a Blue Grosbeak on the last Friday that he visited. Also, the yellow-billed cuckoo was a lifer for him, and he was able to see it easily while hanging out in the Visitor Center and looking through the window at the feeding station.**

The youth not only represent our future, but they are one of society's main agents of



change and progress. The youth will have a great effect on wildlife conservation and endangered species conservation which is at the heart of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Creating connections through dialogue and educational outreach help to tap into the energy and potential of the youth who will be the next generation to carry the legacy forward. Our featured Heartbeat this month is a very talented young birder who visited us all the way from Jackson, Mississippi. Andrew Bryant had various family members bring him to Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge several times throughout the week that they were vacationing in South Texas. Andrew also joined us for Latino Conservation week activities and brought his uncle and little cousin to the Refuge, and they were all able to participate in our Gyoatoku Fish Printing event that we hosted. Andrew also graciously brought the Friends of Laguna Atascosa a lot of citrus to feed the birds. We watched, talked, and laughed together while we viewed the green jays and chachalacas quickly devour their favorite morning snack at the Visitor Center feeding stations.

## **"A Special Insider's View"**

### **Ocelot Monitoring at UTRGV**

This month, myself and the Board Members of Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge had the pleasure of meeting Jamie Langbein and Madison Nadler who are two essential UTRGV MS Students of Ocelot Research. They shared with us that for over five years, master's students in Dr. Richard Kline's lab at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) have been monitoring the effectiveness of wildlife mitigation structures in preventing wildlife-vehicle collisions along two highways in Cameron County. The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) installed wildlife crossings, wildlife guards, exclusionary fencing, and wildlife exits along State Highway 100 (SH100) in response to ocelot mortalities from vehicle collisions, and wildlife crossings along nearby Farm-to-Market 106(FM106) a few years later.

SH100 was monitored for five years from 2018 to 2023 and FM106 for just over two years from 2019 to 2022. During this time, thousands of animals have utilized the wildlife crossings to successfully cross from one side of the road to the other, including the endangered ocelot. We have seen over 50 species of mammals, ground-dwelling birds, and herpetofauna (amphibian and reptile) on our cameras, including ocelots, Texas indigo snakes, Texas tortoises, and one mountain lion.

TXDOT has funded the entire project, including all research and monitoring of the structures, and education costs of students who have worked on the project. To date, Dr. Kline has had ten students successfully complete their thesis related to this long-term monitoring project and has several more finishing in the next couple years. Previous theses can be found on UTRGV's website or on ProQuest and several scientific publications are expected to be available in the next few years.



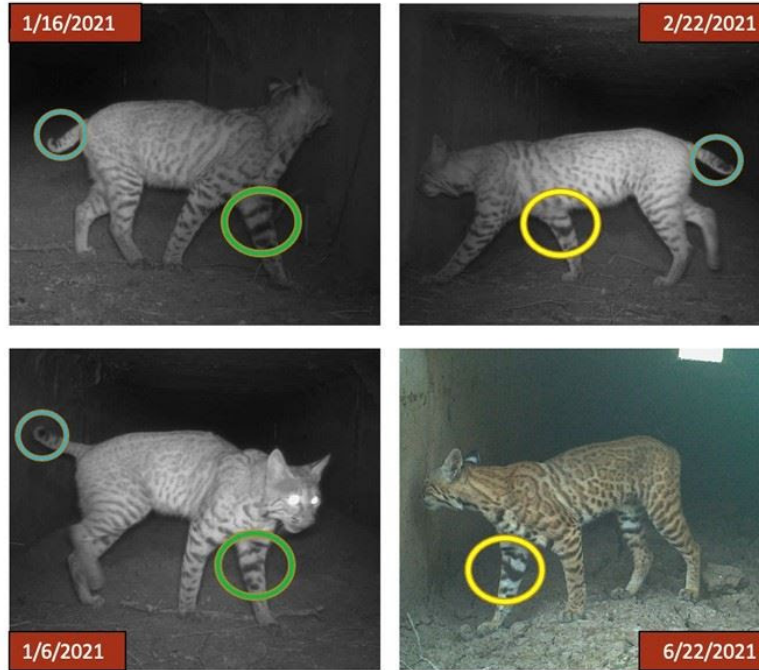
Picture provided by UTRGV MS Ocelot Research Program.

## **Creature Feature**



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Bobcats, like their cat cousins ocelots, tigers, and jaguars, can be identified using the spot patterns on their coats. Not only does this allow researchers to track individual animals over time and space, but it is a monitoring method that is easier for researchers to carry out and is far less stressful on the individual animals. Thanks to funding from the Texas Department of Transportation, students from UTRGV in Dr. Richard Kline's lab are using unique coat patterns to identify animals and map their movements through the habitat surrounding Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. This will help inform future management and wildlife-related conservation measures for bobcats and ocelots and help protect all species that call Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge home.



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Picture provided by UTRGV MS Ocelot Research Program.

## Nature Quote Chronicles

This Month's Inspiring Quote:

And I dream of the vast deserts, the forests, and all of the wilderness of our continent, wild places we should protect as a precious heritage for our children and for our children's children. We must never forget that it is our duty to protect this environment.

-Nelson Mandela



### Wild Friends Storytime at Laguna Vista Public Library

Featuring Children's Bilingual Book,  
"Senorita Mariposa"

The youth actively participated in a Science Lesson on the Life Cycle of a Butterfly, and created their very own personalized chrysalis to adult stage butterfly activity and craft.

## Looking Ahead

We are pleased to announce the new hours of operation, effective **August 1<sup>st</sup>**.

Come stop by our Visitor Center and the Nature Store for some cool exhibits and some tasteful souvenirs!

### OPERATIONAL HOURS

The Visitors Center has new summer hours.  
It will now be open Tue-Sat from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Visitor's Center**  
Tuesday - Saturday  
7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Nature Store**  
Tuesday - Saturday  
7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Refuge Access**  
Sunday - Saturday  
Sunrise to Sunset

## **SUPPORT US**

[Save Texas Ocelots](#)  
[License Plates](#)



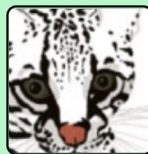
Get Yours Today!

## **The Nature Store**



GO SHOPPING!

[Adopt an Ocelot](#)



Adopt Here!





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D. A. Martinez

Friends of  
Laguna Atascosa  
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