

Dear Cathy,

*Below is our latest **newsletter**, Please feel free to share it!*

SORRY this is late, thing's just kept changing



September 2023

Newsletter

friends of
LAGUNA ATASCOSA
national wildlife refuge

IN THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming events
Exclusive member only refuge tour
Wildlife watching tips
Creature feature

Looking to replace a couple that had to cancel! position available ASAP

Click the image for details





Positions open for the Nature Store & the
Wild Friends Storytime Fridays & Saturdays
URGENT REPLY NOW

EMAIL Amanda De Leon: director@flanwr.org

Inspiring People. Inspiring Friends.



This month, our inspiring Friend is Betsy Hosick, who is our Friends volunteer and who also volunteers for Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center. We've had the pleasure of having Betsy as one of our local volunteers that assists the refuge year-round. Betsy has been instrumental in leading the Naturally Native Garden Team and works behind the scenes maintaining and beautifying the Visitor Center garden grounds on a weekly basis. Betsy is passionate about gardening and interacting with visitors at the refuge, but she also plays another major role by helping to run and operate the Nature Store. Betsy assists with all Nature Store merchandise and orders, Nature Store weekly sales, and helping to assist the Friends prepare for their monthly events. Betsy is also a Texas Master Naturalist and helps to provide major outreach and service dedicated to our local community. Awesome work, and way to go, Betsy, our Friend! We are so lucky to have you!

Amanda De Leon

Executive Director

September Events Lineup

September Events

Sept 7 2p-14p Friends Science Series
Nature Journaling

Sept 8 8a-10a VOLUNTEER
Join the Naturally Native Garden Team

Sept 9 10:30a-11:30a Wild Friends Storytime
The Gullywasher @ Laguna Public Library

Sept 23 9a-12p VOLUNTEER
NPLD Clean up at Laguna Atascosa NWR

Sept 30 8a-10a Bike the Bahia

Sept 30 5p-7p Exclusive Member only
Habitat Tour on Bahia Grande

REGISTER flanwr.org/eventCalendar

Brought to you by
by FRIENDS of Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge



**WALK
FOR THE
WILD
2023**

team
LAGUNA ATASCOSA

Registration Opens September 1st
for both on-site or virtual

OCTOBER 14, 2023
LAGUNA ATASCOSA
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

8:00am 5k walk - animal costumes encouraged!
selfie wall & finish line photo ops
games & prizes
FAMILIES WELCOME

Can't make it? Virtually walk 5k anywhere in nature
during October 7-14.
Tell us about it, share it on social media and come get
your **FINISHER** sticker!



That's a Wrap!

Friends Science Series Workshop: Family Fish Camp

August 26th at Bahia Grande

*Stay tuned for the next Family Fish Camp!
Space limited, registration required.*



August Gardening Day



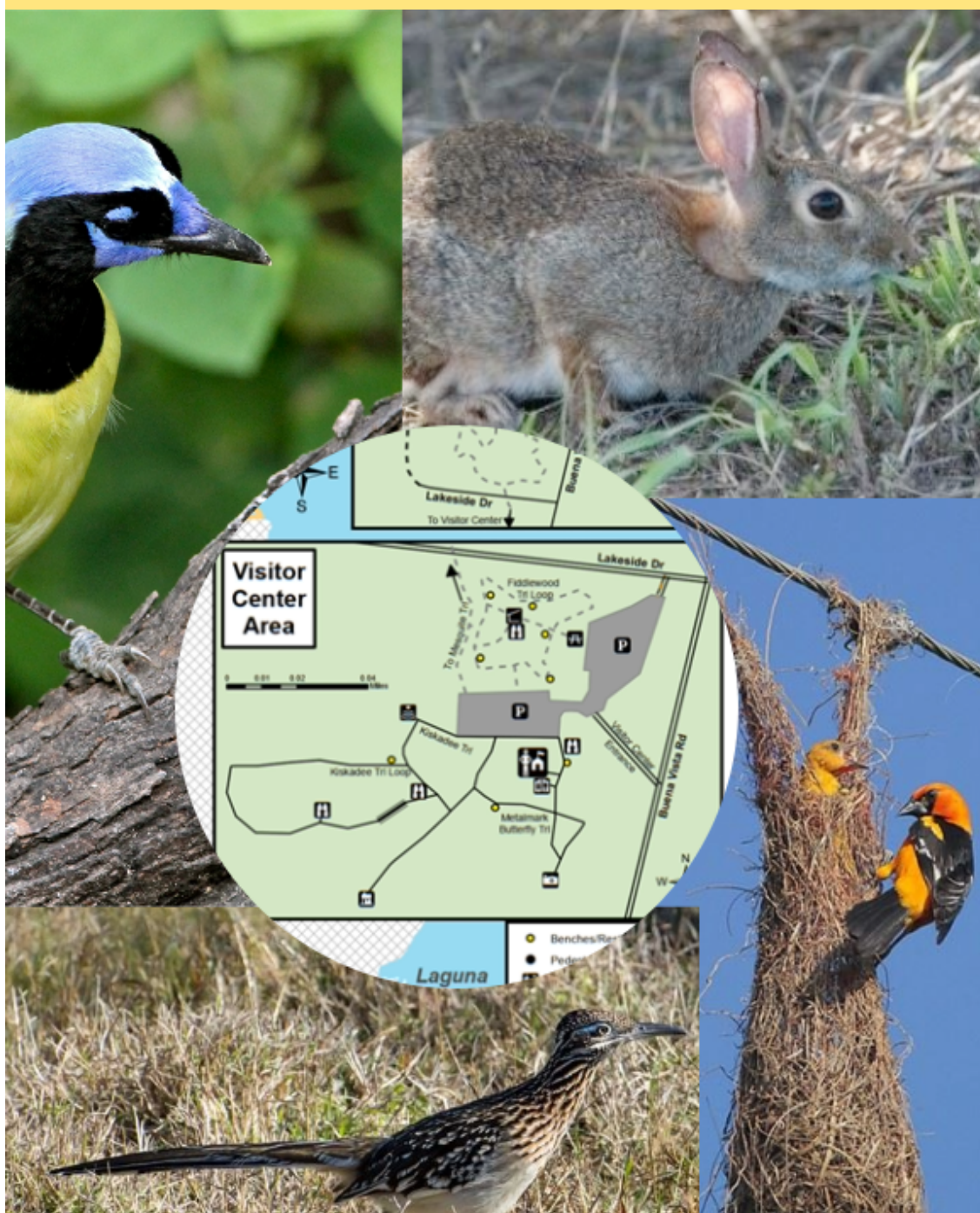
The Heartbeat - Youth Spotlight



Our featured heartbeat this month is Trinity Escalante who joins us frequently with her family to participate in our Friends and refuge events. Trinity was able to catch an outstanding number of fish at the last Family Fish Camp! The Friends are passionate about creating connections through dialogue and educational outreach to help tap into the energy and potential of the youth who will be the next generation to carry the legacy forward. Great job, Trinity! We are excited for the next fishing event!

Buena Vista Moments

The refuge is open 365 days a year from sunrise to sunset. Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge is a premiere bird-watching destination with more recorded species of birds than any other refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. On delightful mornings drives into the refuge, you can see many birds perched along Buena Vista road. Before arriving to the Visitor Center, you can see rabbits, roadrunners crisscrossing the road, coyotes, javelina, and whitetail deer who leap into the thornscrub as you drive on forward along Buena Vista road. You don't have to hike or bike to get to see and appreciate so much of the wildlife that appears in the morning at Laguna Atascosa during ***Buena Vista Moments***.





A Refresher: Wildlife Watching Tips



LAGUNA ATASCOSA
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
IS HOME TO AN INCREDIBLY
DIVERSE HABITAT WITH OVER

417 BIRDS
130 BUTTERFLIES
45 MAMMALS
44 REPTILES
450 PLANTS

- Dawn and dusk are the best times to see wildlife.
 - During the summer, little is moving on hot afternoons or on windy days.
 - Observe from the sidelines. Leave abandoned young animals. A parent is probably close by waiting for you to leave. Don't offer snacks as your lunch could disrupt wild digestive systems.
 - Cars make good observation blinds. Drive slowly, stopping to scan places wildlife might hide. Use binoculars or a long lens for a closer look.
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- Try sitting quietly in one good location. Let wildlife get used to your presence. Many animals that have hidden will reappear once they think you are gone. Walk quietly in designated areas, being aware of sounds and smells. Often you will hear more than you see.
 - Teach children quiet observation. Other wildlife watchers will appreciate your consideration.
 - Look for animal signs. Tracks, scat, feathers, and nests left behind often tell interesting stories.

Bringing Together Veterans at the Laguna Madre Veteran Fest

August 31st

Port Isabel Event & Cultural Center

This August, Laguna Madre area veterans were able to learn about services that are available to them without having to travel outside their community. The event was able to successfully bring together veterans, active-duty military and their families who live in Port Isabel, South Padre Island, Laguna Heights and Laguna Vista as well as to give Laguna Madre area veterans an opportunity to network with one another and to learn about what resources are available to them. The Friends of Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge was able to promote the America the Beautiful - National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Military Pass at the Laguna Madre Veteran Fest. This free Military Lifetime pass covers entrance to all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges, National Park Service sites, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation sites, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sites. The Military Pass is available for registration and pick up at the Visitor Center for current U.S. military members and their dependents in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Reserve, and includes National Guard members. Veteran ID card and driver's license required for verification.

Military Lifetime Pass

Cost: Free

Available for:

- Gold Star Families with a valid Gold Star Family Voucher
- US military veterans with a valid, veteran ID





Creature Feature
The American Alligator



Reptiles have scales or plates and their toes generally have claws. The young are born live or hatch from eggs on land. Their scaly body allows them to live away from water, but like amphibians, they have little control over their body temperature and seek environments that can cool or warm them. The American Alligator (*alligator mississippiensis*) inhabits bodies of fresh and brackish water. They swim with only their eyes and their nose above water, appearing as a submerged log. They are very vocal and adults have a deep throaty roar while juveniles yip and grunt. The American Alligator burrows into mud to escape drought conditions or winter cold. They possess a highly variable carnivorous diet that includes fish, snakes, turtles, amphibians, small mammals, and birds. The next time you are at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, check out Gator Pond where you will often see some alligators in their natural habitat. When accessing Gator Pond from the Osprey Overlook parking area, the first .3 miles of the trail are paved. It follows the shoreline of Laguna Atascosa lake, leading to a viewing platform on Gator Pond that will host alligators during wet years. Gator Pond Trail continues as a dirt trail for another 3 miles through prairie and ends at FM106.



Nature Quote Chronicles

September's Inspirational Quote:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead



OPERATIONAL HOURS

The Visitor's Center has new summer hours.
We are open Wed-Sat from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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

Nature Store
Wednesday - 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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