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MAY 2022

We promote the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education.

FROM THE CEO

Water Sustains All

NEAL WILKINS

Water sustains all.

Thales of Miletus
Greek Mathematician
600 B.C.

In times of good rain, the native rangelands of the San Antonio Viejo Ranch are incredibly productive. Without rain, the land can be unforgiving – and these unforgiving times seem to be most of the time – and the least forgiving factor is the scarcity of permanent surface water.

For more than two centuries, to mitigate this scarcity, those that survived here did so by tapping into the area’s reserves of underground water. The land here is blessed with a series of shallow aquifers. As such, East Foundation ranches have close to 200 water wells, each providing water that would otherwise limit the land’s ability to produce cattle and wildlife. Here are a few historical notes that emphasize the importance of water sources in the early history of the area.

LOS NORIAS DE SAN ANTONIO

In 1806, surveyor Jose Antonio de la Garza, working on behalf of the Spanish officials in Mier, traversed the land grant to be called *San Antonio Viejo*. Included in his notes were stark observations on the lack of suitable water across the land in question. Garza did find one small laguna he called *San Antonio*. On later maps this same laguna was called *La Guajalote* – “the turkey.”

Most notably, in the 19th century, La Guajalote was one of the few areas of surface water mapped between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River. Despite Garza’s inspection, he could not have known about the vast groundwater resources that would one day support a thriving community. Nor could he have known of the innovations that would be used to access such water.

On July 30, 1805 – in the year prior to Garza’s survey – the Spanish Crown granted the San Antonio Viejo to Francisco Xavier Vela. The San Antonio Viejo was one of a handful of early Spanish Land

Grants in the Wild Horse Desert of South Texas. When land was granted by the Spanish Crown, the distance measurements were in varas (about 33 inches) and area was measured in leagues. Each league was 5,000 varas squared, making an area of 4,428 acres. The four leagues making up the San Antonio Viejo were thus equal to 17,713 acres.

Spain’s colonial goals were to settle this part of Texas with tough ranching communities that could buffer the Spanish centers of Monterrey and Saltillo from incursion by hostile natives. The San Antonio Viejo was one of a handful of four-sitio grants between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. And location of an existing water source was a requirement for a rancher to petition the local Spanish officials for title to the adjoining land.

Note: For some historical perspective, in the same year of this land grant Thomas Jefferson was U.S. President and Lewis and Clark were on their three-year expedition westward across



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LOCATIONS

Hebbronville

310 East Galbraith Street
Hebbronville, Texas 78361

San Antonio Viejo Ranch
474 East Ranch Road
Hebbronville, Texas 78361

El Sauz Ranch
37216 Highway 186
Port Mansfield, Texas 78598

San Antonio
200 Concord Plaza Drive, Suite 410
San Antonio, Texas 78216
(210) 447-0126

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Water con't.

the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase. But the San Antonio Viejo was, of course, still part of Spain at the time.

Over the decades that followed, the community of San Antonio Viejo grew nearby to La Guajalote and served as a station along the major trade route to Mier through Roma and Rio Grande City. The community was sometimes referenced as los Norias de San Antonio – the San Antonio Wells. This in reference to the series of hand-dug wells that were built by early settlers – many of which are still apparent on the ranch.

Robert E. Lee, in 1850 wrote of setting camp near the San Antonio Wells as he was traveling from Ringgold Barracks along the border. By then Texas had joined the U.S., and the San Antonio Viejo was a military camp, as well as a center of commerce and a waystation for travel between commercial centers of Corpus Christi, San Antonio to the north and Mexico to the south.

In August of 1867, Land Surveyor Martin Van Merick of Starr County surveyed the San Antonio Viejo Land Grant. Here is a sample of his field notes:

Field notes of a survey of (4) four leagues of land called San Antonio, made for the heirs of Francisco Xavier Vela, being the quantity of land to which they are entitled by virtue of a grant from the State of Tamaulipas to Francisco Xavier Vela dated July 30th, 1805. Said survey is in Starr County situated at the San Antonio Wells on the road from Rio Grande City to Laredo about 45 miles North from Rio Grande City.

Then, as is now, water wells were essential for the community and the productivity of the land.

OLD MAPS

In East Foundation's archives, we hold an old map, drawn on vellum. The map was prepared by T.D. Crothers, and dated March 1900. Scaled at 2,000 varas to the inch, the Crothers' map represented more than 75,000 acres. Crothers was focused on what was then the Randado properties in what was, in 1900, Starr County (present day Jim Hogg County).

This was a great historical map – and it covered much of what eventually became the northern 1/3 of the East Foundation's San Antonio Viejo Ranch. In making the map, Crothers mainly used the boundaries of the original Mexican Land Grants of El Randado, Las Moritas, La Noria de Santo Domingo, and Santo Domingo de Arriba. However, the northern half of the original La Noria de Santo Domingo had since become part of the Jesus Maria Ranch, and that land was designated as such on the map.

The Jesus Maria was further separated into three pastures, one being the Coloraditas. Several decades after Crothers made his map, the 10,000-acre Coloraditas pasture became part of the San Pablo Ranch owned by Tom East's brother Arthur, and his wife Sarita Kenedy East. After the passing of Sarita Kennedy East in 1961, the Coloraditas pasture belonged to the Lytton family, and then it was eventually purchased by Robert C. East. After at least four ownership transfers, the Coloraditas pasture is now part of the San Antonio Viejo ranch.

OLD WATER WELLS

T.D. Crothers' map shows two water wells in the Coloraditas pasture – these are named *Coloraditas* and *San Rafael*. Both of these wells, over 115 years later, are still operating and they still go by the same names. Additional water wells – five in all –



Old hand-dug wells, such as this example at the old Ramirez well, were essential for the community at San Antonio Viejo. Many of these same sites still support productive water wells important for both cattle and wildlife.

have been added over time. But the two original wells remain important water sources for that pasture.

Surrounding the Coloraditas windmill is a waterlot of several acres with a gate that was put in place while the land was still part of the San Pablo Ranch. The gate itself has the Laurel Leaf brand on it. According to Jane Patie's description of the Leonard Stiles Brand Collection, the Laurel Leaf brand was originally registered in 1868 in

Nueces County by Mifflin Kenedy. After several transactions, and including at one time being owned by Henrietta King, the brand fell into the possession of Sarita Kenedy East and was used at the San Pablo Ranch.

This issue of East Foundation's newsletter is devoted to the importance of water to our ranchlands. Water indeed sustains all. And this is nowhere more apparent than rangelands of the Wild Horse Desert.

SCIENCE AT WORK

Surveys Show Even Water-Dependent Birds Can Thrive in South Texas

JAMES POWELL

Perhaps surprising to visitors, but not to those in the know, the diverse arid and semi-arid habitats found across South Texas are among the most species rich in the United States – notably for birds. This is doubly surprising when bird counts and birder observations record healthy and abundant populations of waterfowl and other water-dependent birds even on South Texas rangeland that is not typically associated with waterbirds, or with reliably available surface water.

Fortunately for South Texas birders, waterfowlers, and others with an interest, the region falls within the migratory corridors of many species of waterfowl and other waterbirds and provides a year-round home to some unique "local" species, such as the Black-bellied Whistling duck, which makes effective use of the infrequent but important ponds and small lakes on the landscape. On Foundation ranches, bird species are diverse and can be abundant, but two specifically, El Sauz and Santa Rosa, provide permanent and/or

occasional habitat for waterfowl and other water-dependent species.

El Sauz, situated on the coast near the internationally important birding region of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, is characterized, in part, by a stretch of undeveloped coastline along the Laguna Madre that includes marshes and tidal flats, as well as small ponds and lakes (presas and lagunas) that hold water seasonally, and sometimes semi-permanently.

For perspective as to the ranch's habitat suitability for birds, the nearby Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge boasts more species of recorded birds (417) than at any other national refuge in the United States. According to the Laguna Atascosa website, "In November alone, when peak use occurs, more than 250,000 ducks depend on the refuge, and it is estimated that 80% of the North American population of Redhead ducks winter in this area."

The small water-filled depressions on the El Sauz landscape seasonally host significant populations of

migratory waterfowl such as Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Redhead, the ubiquitous American Coot, and an occasional Cinnamon Teal or Roseate Spoonbill, according to past Avian Surveys conducted seasonally in the Fall and Winter by expert birder Thomas Langschied on behalf of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) at Texas A&M University, Kingsville. Tom now works for the King Ranch, but ranch bird surveys have continued utilizing graduate students on the El Sauz, Santa Rosa, and San Antonio Viejo through 2021, resulting in robust survey data.

Unique to Foundation ranches, El Sauz surveys also showed the ranch provides a home for many coastal occurring species such as the Herring Gull, Royal Tern, Brown Pelican, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, as well as a variety of herons, plovers, curlews, yellowlegs, and other coastal Texas shorebirds.

The Santa Rosa Ranch, which lies inland from the Gulf Coast but is relatively close to Baffin Bay and its

Surveys con't.

inland-reaching, tidally influenced waterways, is characterized by soils and hydrology favorable for moving and holding surface and subsurface water and features semi-permanent and seasonal wetland habitat that hosts populations of resident and migratory waterfowl including the Black-bellied Whistling Duck, the Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and several other migratory waterfowl.

Both ranches are rich in bird life, and new species continue to be found. During the last Langschied survey El Sauz was found to host 261 (any bird species) observed bird species, and Santa Rosa tallied 167 species. In total, 70 water-dependent species have been observed during the surveys through 2021. Of note in the surveys, the Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and Green-winged Teal were observed even on the San Antonio Viejo, which is characterized by little available surface water, excepting water tanks and occasional standing water after rain events.

The surveys on the Foundation ranches indicate the potential exists for beneficial waterfowl and shorebird surveys, research, and wetland habitat work (particularly on the Santa Rosa) to better capture, retain, and manage water for the benefit of South Texas waterfowl and other species. The Foundation will continue to explore options for future research and projects related to waterfowl and other water-dependent species.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE



CALLIE JO SWAIM

Callie Jo Swaim was one of our Ranch Management Interns this spring at the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

Callie is originally from New Mexico and her family has ranched cattle there for four generations. In December of 2021, she graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management. In her free time, Callie enjoys outdoor activities like hunting or fishing with her family and friends and travelling.

In her own words:

“This internship has been so awesome, and I’ve gotten to do a little bit of everything that has to do with ranch management. From riding around or sitting down for lessons with our managers and professionals in the field to pulling windmills with the working crew. The thing I enjoy most about working for the Foundation is the quality of people that are affiliated with it. There is so much to learn from everyone, and land stewardship and conservation are such a priority in all practices.

During my internship I participated in range vegetation monitoring to estimate forage production and see what’s growing in the pastures. I helped with education and outreach when schools came out to learn about conservation practices in ranching and wildlife. I participated in cattle workings by feeding, checking body condition and fecal scores, sorting, branding, doctoring, and palpating. I assisted with welding, fence building, water-line installation, and the care and maintenance of ranch infrastructure. We even got to take business and accounting lessons, as well as learn how to effectively manage people.

The Foundation works hard to promote agriculture and wildlife management by doing what’s best for the land and native ecosystems. This is such an important thing to teach young minds and I’m proud to be a part of an organization that does that.”



FROM THE RANCH

The Most Vital Resource

GARRETT STRIBLING

The Texas Sand Sheet is a unique ecological region for a variety of reasons. One of the most impactful –from a livestock perspective – is access to water, or the lack thereof. This attribute poses management constraints as the Sand Sheet is notorious for having extraordinarily little surface water aside from scattered wet weather presas and lagunas, which cannot be consistently relied upon.

Fortunately, groundwater is plentiful, and the development of this resource has allowed us to continue cattle operations across all our ranches and this “control” on water distribution provides additional advantages.

Historically, windmills were the only source, besides hand dug wells, which were able to provide livestock with water. Presently, along with utilizing a large number of windmills, we use solar powered wells to pump water which has improved the consistency of the water supply.

Water storage capacity is an important consideration as windmills break down or have reduced output due to wind conditions, or the well produces at a low volume and needs additional supply to keep up with the intake requirements of specific herds. We utilize large concrete cisterns to store thousands of gallons of water and mitigate waste.

This allows a low producing windmill or well to accumulate stored water over time and retain that capacity for later use. From this stored capacity we can utilize gravity and booster pumps to move water to areas throughout

the ranches where development of a well is less cost efficient. These areas would be underutilized by cattle due to the inaccessibility of water; however, by piping water and strategically placing troughs, we can increase the total acres utilized for grazing.

Grazing distribution is directly influenced by proximity to water sources. Areas close to water sources will be grazed harder than those farther away. Cattle typically do not like to travel more than a mile between water sources but will if necessary. Therefore, to prevent overgrazing and ensure proper forage utilization, a patchwork system of water troughs has been developed over time to meet the water requirements for both livestock and wildlife.

With control of the water system, ranches have utilized this resource to facilitate the gathering of cattle. Whereas areas in other parts of the state and country would gather cattle from a large pasture horseback, the dense brush in South Texas has made that practice exceedingly difficult and, in some cases, infeasible.

Having cattle congregate at water sources provides the opportunity to gather cattle no matter the brush density. We have water lots constructed at every water source across the ranches which not only allows us to trap cattle for workings, but also influence grazing distributions by strategically closing off sources to drift cattle

to other areas of the pasture and/or close to the working pens.

Water is the most vital resource in agricultural production and, in the environment that we operate in, its scarcity has led to innovations that have allowed both the cattle and producers to adapt and thrive.



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Looking out on the South Texas landscape you'll likely see Aermotor windmills like the one pictured above. Their widespread use in arid regions has made them a quintessential image of the American West.

Upcoming Events

MAY 16-17

Witte Museum Conference on Texas and Texas Trailblazers Awards in San Antonio, Texas

MAY 25

Lone Star Land Steward Awards in Austin, Texas

MAY 26

Deep in the Heart Ocelot Benefit Showing in San Antonio, Texas

JUNE 7-8

Board of Directors and Investment Committee Meeting in San Antonio

JUNE 25-29

South Texas Ranch Brigade in Freer, Texas

JUNE 29

Annual Safety Meeting with Texas Mutual at San Antonio Viejo Ranch

JULY 8-13

Wildlife Conservation Camp at Tennessee Colony

JULY 14-17

Texas Wildlife Association 37th Annual Wildlife Convention and Private Lands Summit at the JW Marriott in San Antonio, Texas

ALUMNI PROFILE



ALEXIS PENCE

Alexis grew up in Southern California and graduated in 2018 with a B.S. in Mathematics and Environmental Science from the University of Redlands. During her undergraduate studies, she minored in Spatial Studies and Human/Animal studies. Alexis focused much of her work on mammalian species, researching marine mammals and rodents prior to starting her M.S. degree. Alexis completed her M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at Texas A&M University in 2020.

Her thesis work focused on the interactions between small mammal community structure and cattle grazing on East Foundation's San Antonio Viejo ranch. Small mammals are often considered keystone species due to their contributions to ecosystems; therefore, understanding their communities plays a vital role in supporting many other animal populations. This project sheds new light on how private land management practices can support these crucial wildlife communities.

Alexis is now a Research Associate at Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute. Her work for the institute focuses on

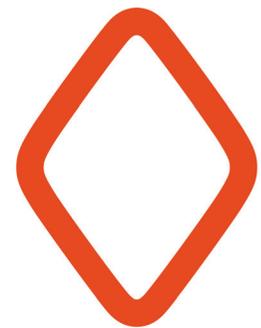
ecological monitoring of military lands where her primary role is to conduct spatial analyses for various projects.

In her own words:

"I will always be thankful for the opportunity to study on East Foundation's properties which was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. By the end of my project, I had walked hundreds of miles of what felt like mostly untouched wilderness of the south Texas region.

Through the cactus, rattlesnakes, and everything else South Texas has to offer, I gained a special love and understanding for this native habitat.

East Foundation's dedication to private land stewardship is exemplary. Their commitment to understanding even the smallest animal communities supports future management efforts throughout the region."



EMPLOYEE PROFILE



DARIAN POLES

Darian Poles was one of our Ranch Management Interns this spring at the San Antonio Viejo Ranch.

Originally from Hume, Virginia, Darian is a fourth generation Virginian. Before he arrived at the East Foundation, he worked at a cattle ranch in the Sandhills of Nebraska and cowboied in Montana as well as in Florida. Darian graduated in December with an Agribusiness degree from Delaware Valley in Pennsylvania. In his free time, he enjoys weightlifting, going to the gym, and getting a good workout in. Darian enjoys trying new restaurants and was able to try a lot of new places even in rural South Texas.

In his own words:

“As a Ranch Management Intern, we would process and brand cattle. We also spent time with different East Foundation staff learning how and why they make certain decisions. One thing I really enjoyed was working with everyone on the ranch. They were incredibly supportive and wanted us to learn as much as we could. I really enjoyed learning how to palpate cattle. The cattle operations in South

Texas are vastly different than what I’m used to, so I enjoyed the challenge of trying to adapt to the way they did things.

Ever since I was a little kid, I would watch western TV shows and dream of being a cowboy. Once I realized that becoming a rancher or cowboy was possible, I started traveling around and working anywhere I could. I’ve had the opportunity to cowboy in Montana, Nebraska, and Florida. I’ve always wanted to work in Texas and sure enough, I got this opportunity at the East Foundation. I have worked on a couple of operations and learned a lot, but this internship was different. I knew a little bit of the “how” and at the East Foundation I learned the “why” which really started bringing everything together for me. It gave me a better understanding of what a Ranch Manager does.”



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Texas A&M Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management

In 2020, Texas A&M University reorganized two former natural resource focused departments, Ecosystem Science and Management (ESSM) and Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences (WFSC), into the [Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management](#) (RWFM).



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management

This “new” partner, with long-standing faculty and student relationships with the East Foundation, is striving to improve the stewardship of natural resources on private rangelands. Department Head Dr. Roel Lopez is taking this unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rethink how teaching, research and extension programs are delivered, ensuring RWFM’s work is relevant to the natural resource stewards of today and being nimble as new management challenges emerge in the future.

RWFM faculty and staff are working diligently to develop new courses for both undergraduate and graduate programs and new faculty are set to join the ranks this coming summer and fall. Improvements to research facilities managed by the department are also underway, to enhance the department’s programs and field training, increasing experiential learning opportunities. If you are interested in learning more about RWFM check out their [website](#), connect with them on social media, and sign up for their quarterly newsletters [here](#).

RAINFALL REPORT

With Less Water, Water Less

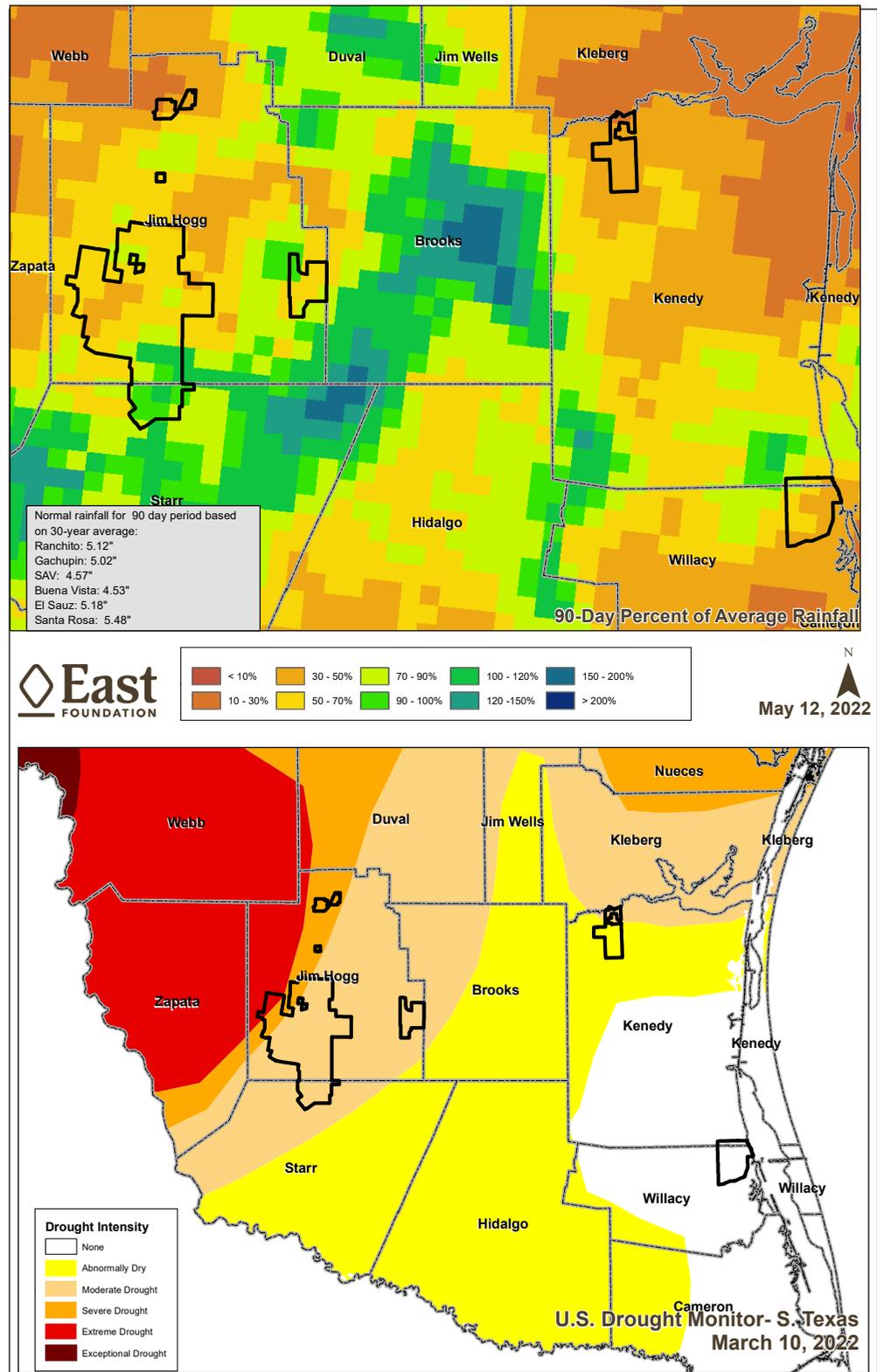
ALLIE BIEDENHARN

With increasingly more of South Texas slipping into drought, everyone is praying and doing rain dances in hopes of a downpour. Unfortunately, La Niña is predicted to continue through to the fall. La Niña weather patterns leave the southwest region of the U.S. drier and warmer than average. She does, however, sometimes enhance tropical activity from the Atlantic, which can give some relief to the harsh drought.

The San Antonio Viejo Ranch has received less rainfall this spring than usual. It is important that we monitor the short-term range conditions to plan and adjust as rangelands can quickly deteriorate in South Texas. San Antonio Viejo remains in a moderate drought; however, some portions are slipping into severe and extreme drought conditions.

The El Sauz Ranch on the coast has received about half of the normal rainfall amount in the last three months yet remains in good condition. Santa Rosa, on the north end of Kenedy County, has received less than half of the normal rainfall amount, only about one to three inches in the past three months and has fallen into abnormally dry conditions.

For more information on drought and other weather events or to view information specific to your part of the state please visit: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>.



Ranch Water

TREY DYER & TODD SNELGROVE

Tequila. Lime juice. Topo Chico. Those are the three ingredients that make the trendy adult cocktail known as “Ranch Water.” However, part of managing the East Foundation’s 217,000 acres of land includes providing a different type of ranch water for residents and guests. Depending on the location of the ranches, this water can come from either municipal systems or water wells.

In either instance, the East Foundation ensures that it provides the highest quality water possible. Jason Haynes, Facilities and Logistics Manager, has recently earned a TCEQ Class D Water Operator’s license. One of the systems that Jason oversees is the water supply for the San Antonio Viejo Headquarters. This system is supplied by three separate water wells that all feed into two Reverse Osmosis systems. The result is a quality of water higher than that found in most municipalities.

At East Foundation’s El Sauz Ranch in Willacy County, water is provided by the Port Mansfield Public Utilities District. However, because the location of the ranch is “upstream” from the Port Mansfield water tower, the ranch has to provide its own means of pressurizing the water to our facilities. This has been accomplished by utilizing a large storage tank and a Grundfos constant-pressure pump.

As is the case throughout South Texas, providing adequate, high-quality drinking water is never without challenges. Through technology, training, and good management practices, the East Foundation can meet these challenges and continue to deliver

the highest quality product available. ¡Salud!

INNOVATIONS IN WATER CAPTURE — WHAT’S OVER THE HORIZON?

Technology innovation has been a hallmark of water capture for thousands of years. People first harnessed wind in Persia to pump water and grind grain between 500 and 900 B.C. The use of windmills spread from Persia to the surrounding areas in the Middle East and was used extensively in food production. Eventually, around 1,000 A.D., wind power spread north to European countries such as The Netherlands, which adapted windmills for irrigation and to drain lowlands in the Rhine River Delta.

Early settlers in the Wild Horse Desert discovered water just under the surface of this semi-arid landscape. They accessed this water by hand-digging 30 to 40 feet deep. Their remnants can still be found on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch along an old army road to Fort Ringgold near Rio Grande City. In the 1850’s, Daniel Halladay and John Burnham established the U.S. Wind Engine Company to manufacture the windmills designed to pump ground water. The invention of steel blades in the late 1880’s made windmills more efficient and affordable leading to the proliferation of more than six million windmills across the United States over the next 100 years.

Since their widespread adoption in the Wild Horse Desert windmills have provided a means to capture groundwater and sustain life for

people, livestock, and wildlife alike for decades—some producing in the same location for nearly 100 years. Windmills still provide water to significant portions of our ranches. For years they have been the only option in remote areas of the San Antonio Viejo or Buena Vista ranches where electricity is not available. Until recently, few options were available to replace windmills as it is cost prohibitive to run miles of electric lines for a small number of electric pumps.



Dotting the landscape of the East Foundation ranches are windmills that provide drinking water for people, livestock, and wildlife. In addition, because many of the windmills have been on the ranches for so long they also have names and serve as landmarks to guide folks in the right direction.

Solar systems became widely available in the early 2000’s but quickly gained a reputation as being expensive, inefficient, and unreliable. This changed in the last 10 years as technological advancements drove prices down significantly and made them more efficient and capable of producing electricity on overcast days or in partial shade. Innovations such as this have enabled us to start replacing older, high-maintenance windmills with solar solutions—even in high volume applications where

one well can now service multiple locations through a network of pipelines and storage.

What's over the horizon for water capture on East Foundation ranches? Water treatment and rainwater harvesting.

Advances in water treatment and filtration systems have the potential to open access to vast pools of "salty" or brackish groundwater. We are currently using a similar system to deliver high-quality drinking water for residents and guests at our San Antonio Viejo headquarters. As this technology matures and becomes more affordable, we will assess opportunities to produce

water at the volumes required by a large herd of livestock.

Rainwater harvesting—capturing run-off from roof tops—may represent the most viable solution in the near term. This concept had been well established in arid, remote settings with the advent of "water-guzzlers" for wildlife. A "roof" captures rain and funnels it into a storage tank where it is gravity fed to troughs. Depending on the size of the roof and tank and how much rainfall you receive, this type of system can capture thousands of gallons per year. When paired with existing roof surfaces and storage, rainwater harvesting represents a

viable solution to enhance livestock water supplies.

For example, at our Casa Rojo working pens we have a shade structure with about 1,500 square feet of roof surface. In an average year, this surface alone has the potential to capture over 20,000 gallons—or enough water to sustain 50 cows for a month. The key is developing or utilizing existing sufficient storage. As with other technologies, we will evaluate its efficacy at scale and determine whether it is an economically viable solution for providing a portion of our ranch water needs.

SECURITY REPORT

A New Sheriff in Town

MATT ROBINSON

I'm retiring again! Richard Douglas will be the new Security Manager. His number is (361) 806-6642. After 31 years as a Game Warden and nine years as Security Manager, I am backing away. I have worked every Thanksgiving Day except for one since 1982. I may get to take Thanksgiving off this year.

I found the hardest part of being responsible for stopping or curtailing illegal activity is fighting the arms of my recliner. During the day, it is easy to be gung-ho and make plans to catch all of the bad guys in the night. When 10:00 p.m. rolls around, you are full from a nice supper, your daughter, granddaughter, or dog is curled up in your lap sound asleep, it's cold, windy, and dark outside... somehow the recliner's arms get you in a bear hug and it is really hard to get up and do your job. Over the years I have caught and fought and chased bad guys through cold and heat and stickers.

However, the hardest fight I have ever had was fighting the arms of that damn recliner. Did I mention Richard Douglas' phone number is (361) 806-6642? I am going to take some time off to rejuvenate. After a little rejuvenation, I will take a position with East Foundation in a less taxing position. I will take a job replacing light bulbs and sharpening pencils with a touch of security work to help Richard on rare occasions. So, I will still be around to aggravate as many people as possible. Just not on holidays, weekends or after hours. Did I mention Richard Douglas' phone number is (361) 806-6642?

On a parting note, I would like to, just for fun, share a letter I wrote to my granddaughter a few years ago. She is a senior in high school now and I have missed most of her life because of what I perceived as dedication to the job. I am going to try and do better now.

Did I mention Richard Douglas' phone number is (361) 806-6642?

Dear Emily.

I was talking to your mom on the phone a few days ago and she said you might like to receive a letter in the mail and hear from Papaw. Well, I had a funny thing happen to me recently that I thought that you might like to hear about. Being a Game Warden, sometimes my job requires me to help wild animals. I was travelling down Highway 285 toward Falfurrias, when I noticed a buzzard that seemed to be in distress. Now normally I don't really care about buzzards, and they usually can take care of themselves, but this one had a unique look, so I stopped to see what was wrong.

Normal buzzards don't have teeth, but this one had a whole set. Grandpa Bill, being a dentist, may be able to explain to you about

buzzard teeth. It is the first set I have ever seen. These teeth stuck out so bad that he could probably eat the corn off a cob through a King Ranch fence. Probably from sucking his thumb too much when he was little! I asked the buzzard what his problem was because he looked like he just felt terrible. Normally I don't talk to buzzards because they say bad words and don't smell very good. I wasn't sure he would understand me because I haven't spoken buzzard in a good while.

Well, he understood me and said his name was Buford and he had a terrible problem. He said every morning he liked to fly over Highway 285 to look for breakfast. He said he could usually find the best 'possum pancakes in the area there because there is a lot of large truck traffic on this road. This makes the pancakes very flat like he likes them. He said he found several squashed skunk soufflés, but that is not proper food for breakfast. Well, it was getting late in the morning, and he finally found a 'possum pancake. He was so hungry that he ate too fast and got an upset stomach and also got pancake stuck between his teeth.

Buzzards usually have upset stomachs because they don't eat vegetables, so the upset stomach problem was not really a problem, he was just complaining. The pancake stuck in the teeth was a real problem. I stood real close to Buford so I could get a good look at Buzzard Buford's Buck Teeth and see if I could help. I told Buford that I wasn't too sure what to do about a buck-toothed buzzard with 'possum pancake stuck in his teeth. But I had a good friend who was a dentist, and I would give him a call on the phone to see if he had any ideas on how to handle this situation.

I called your Grandpa Bill because I knew he had some experience working on buzzard teeth being he

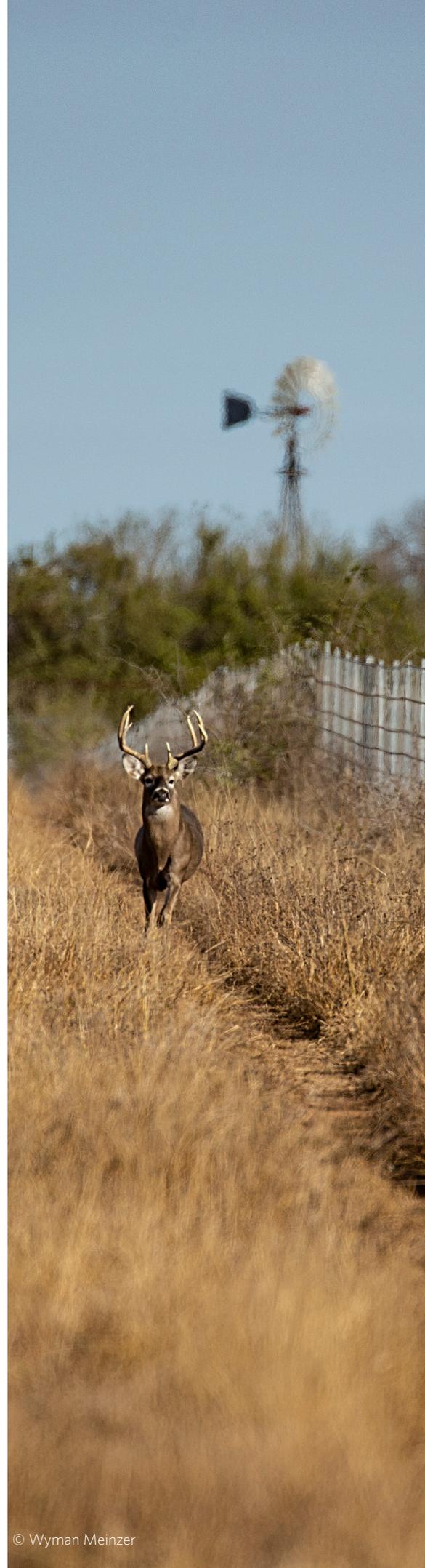
worked on your dad's teeth before. Grandpa Bill asked me if I carried any dental floss. I was embarrassed to say that I don't ever have any with me, so I told him I had used the last of it on a similar case with a horny toad. Grandpa Bill said dental floss is always the best, but he had another idea. He told me to hop the fence into the Ranch, break off a mesquite thorn and use it like a toothpick. That Grandpa Bill is a smart dentist. I got that mesquite thorn and picked that 'possum pancake right out of Buzzard Buford's buck teeth. Buford was so happy he started saying bad words like buzzards do when they are happy. I told him I was glad to help him, but I was going to have to leave because I don't like to listen to buck-toothed buzzards saying bad words.

Be a good girl.

Love,
Papaw

I hope to continue to see everyone, and everyone is still welcome to call me anytime, day or night or holidays.

Did I mention Richard Douglas' phone number is (361) 806-6642?





 **East**
FOUNDATION

200 Concord Plaza Drive
Suite 410
San Antonio, Texas 78216



eastfoundation.net