

NOVEMBER 2022

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

FROM THE CEO

Partnerships with Universities

NEAL WILKINS

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.”

Mark Twain

At East Foundation, we talk a lot about partnerships – so much so that we run the risk of forgetting what a real partnership is, and what it isn’t. This is not unusual – there are lots of groups that claim they have tight partnerships with other organizations. Often, this simply means they sometimes work together to reach a common interest – let’s call this *collaboration*.

All partners collaborate, but not all collaborators are partners. Real *partnerships* are an agreement to share resources and responsibilities. Partners also agree to work toward a specific common goal. Now, this doesn’t mean that partners cannot disagree with one another – it’s just that they agree on how they work together and on their commitment to reaching an outcome.

Okay. Now that we have that out of the way, let’s talk about some special partnerships that we have at East Foundation – those being our partnerships with universities. We work closely with Texas A&M University-Kingsville through the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) and the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management (KRIRM). We also work with Texas A&M University through the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management (RWFM) and Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute (NRI) – these are a lot of acronyms, but it is important that we keep them straight.

Only through our partnerships with these universities can we fully meet our mission. East Foundation’s science program relies on graduate researchers to bring innovation and creativity to our efforts toward solving problems involving ranch productivity, rangeland health, and wildlife conservation.

Our current efforts include 10 graduate researchers who work

closely with East Foundation’s science team to address our research priorities. They are all enrolled in Master’s or PhD programs and are supervised by professors at Texas A&M or Texas A&M-Kingsville. These students were recruited from universities across the country – Auburn, University of Georgia, Princeton, Kansas State, Colorado State, Unity College (Maine), Georgia, Texas Tech, and Ohio State.

These young scientists will soon join the other 36 scientists that have earned degrees while working on East Foundation ranches. These alumni are now in the professional work force throughout the nation – they now work for state and federal agencies, universities, consulting firms, foundations, and private landowners. Through these university graduate programs, we are meeting parts of our mission by training future professionals and contributing to the science that drives conservation and land management decisions.



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Hebbronville

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San Antonio Viejo Ranch
474 East Ranch Road
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El Sauz Ranch
37216 Highway 186
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200 Concord Plaza Drive, Suite 410
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Partnerships con't.

Why does this matter? Well, while these students do their field research, they are exposed to the real-world challenge of managing resources across a working landscape. Most other graduate students don't live on a ranch, like the San Antonio Viejo or El Sauz, while they do their work. These do – and they witness first-hand the day-to-day cadence of a working cattle ranch.

The work they do is directly related to the influence of grazing, fire, hunting, and drought – those things that determine rangeland productivity and ranch profitability. Some are engaged in work that will have an impact on policies that will be decided in Austin or Washington, D.C.

As these young professionals move into their next stage in life, our goal is that their time as a graduate student with East Foundation will shape their career.

What makes this possible are the strong partnerships we have with CKWRI, NRI, KRIRM, and RWF. We have a shared goal for creating a strong group of future professionals who understand not only the science behind land management and conservation, but also have an appreciation for ranching and private land stewardship.

You can read about some of our graduate students on our [website](#) and you can check out some of their work [here](#).



Students come from all over the nation to participate in our research projects. The work they do is directly related to the influence of grazing, fire, hunting, and drought and the data they collect helps our team determine how we manage our lands for the most effective rangeland productivity and ranch profitability.

Deer Captures with Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute

LANDON SCHOFIELD

Quality partnerships are a critical component in working towards the Foundation's mission of promoting the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education. Through our collaborative approach to science, these partnerships take the form of working relationships with universities, faculty members, graduate and undergraduate students, state and federal agencies, and area landowners.

A major project led by the East Foundation in conjunction with one such partner, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI), is known as the 'deer capture project.' Since 2011, students, faculty, agency professionals, and volunteers from around the state and country have traveled to South Texas to assist with our annual deer captures which are conducted across East Foundation ranches. Through the decade-long project, nearly 1,800 students from more than 15 universities have assisted in the captures and data collection of over 3,700 deer.

In an age of virtual classrooms and online degrees, the deer capture project provides up-and-coming wildlife professionals with critical hands-on experiences needed to acquire wildlife positions or thrive in graduate school. Students gain experience in animal handling techniques, data collection, collecting and storing of biological samples, and other field methods.



East Foundation range and wildlife biologist, Landon Schofield, instructs students on white-tailed deer handling and release as part of East Foundation annual deer captures.

These data also allow the East Foundation and research partners to answer important questions relevant to South Texas landowners including responses to environmental variation, assessment of stress levels, quantifying population performance, and evaluation of forage preferences.

Through these partnerships, students learn from and network with faculty, wildlife professionals, and current leaders in the field.

One such faculty partner is Dr. Michael Cherry of CKWRI, who is a primary investigator on the 'deer capture project' and notes,

"Every year, this program provides training to dozens of college students, professional wildlife biologists, and veterinarians. It provides graduate students the unique opportunity to use long term ecological data to explore what environmental factors influence deer population performance, but also gives them the opportunity to manage a large field operation, teach, and mentor undergraduates from numerous universities. This partnership is training the future leaders in conservation, providing invaluable continuing education to professionals, and facilitates the exchange of knowledge between the partners.

This program meets the needs for experiential learning for many universities and there really are no other programs like it in the country.

We at CKWRI are incredibly proud to be a part of such an impactful partnership."

Through our current and future partnerships, we are providing the next generation of science-minded managers and management-minded scientists with a deeper appreciation for land stewardship in South Texas and beyond.



Students from Texas Tech University learn how to measure antlers of a captured white-tailed deer as part of East Foundation annual deer captures.

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER 6-10

The Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Spokane, Washington

Tyler Campbell won the Jim McDonough Award and Lindsay Martinez was awarded the Ronald F. Labisky Graduate Fellowship in Wildlife Policy.

Landon Schofield and Masi Mejia participated in the “Parenthood in the Field: Challenges and Advice for Raising Your Own Brood” panel.

NOVEMBER 19

East Foundation Holiday Celebration in San Antonio, Texas

DECEMBER 7

Investment Committee Meeting in San Antonio, Texas

JANUARY 15-17

Board of Directors Meeting in Hebronville, Texas

ALUMNI PROFILE



MEGAN GRANGER

Megan was born in Denton, Texas, and grew up moving to new places around Texas and southern Louisiana. Her passion for the outdoors and animals started at a young age and ultimately led her to pursue a career in the wildlife field. She graduated with a B.S. in Range and Wildlife Management in 2019 from Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK). As an undergraduate, Megan worked as a technician on several research projects on East Foundation ranches including work on ocelots, white-tailed deer, and nilgai. This path led her to pursue her M.S. degree in Range and Wildlife Management from TAMUK and continue to conduct research with the East Foundation.

Megan graduated with her M.S. degree in 2021. Her thesis focused on population demographics of nilgai in South Texas. The project shed new light on nilgai population growth in this region by analyzing species reproductive capabilities and establishing age classes based on tooth eruption and wear patterns of female nilgai. The project also evaluated and quantified habitat characteristics where nilgai were

observed on the El Sauz Ranch. Megan is now a Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife stationed in San Saba County, Texas.

In her own words:

“The East Foundation provided me with so many unique opportunities to gain knowledge and experience throughout my time as a student at TAMUK. These large South Texas ranches provide a one-of-a-kind opportunity to study a wide diversity of wildlife and habitat types. The East Foundation has always been dedicated to learning new things about this environment and communicating those findings to landowners so that this knowledge can be applied to the real world. I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in numerous research projects on these ranches and develop a wide range of skills that have helped me succeed in both my academic and professional careers in the wildlife field.”



FROM THE FIELD

Range Ecology Technicians and Wildlife Management Internship

ANDREA MONTALVO

The East Foundation's science team hired eight technicians this fall to assist with research projects across the ranches. In September, we welcomed three range ecology technicians and a wildlife intern that work together on range sampling inside and outside of the Coloraditas Grazing Research and Demonstration Area (CGRDA), a large-scale grazing study on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch. The forage standing crop data they collect helps the East Foundation reassess annual cattle stocking rates in each grazing treatment of the CGRDA. Additionally, the crew collectively helps with all five deer captures where they assist with safely transporting and releasing deer and measuring and collecting data on all individuals.

This year's crew are recent graduates of three universities: Texas A&M University, Louisiana State University, and Pennsylvania State University. Their diversity in education and skills have come together to provide a great learning experience for the entire crew.



The range technicians and wildlife intern Csanyi Matusicky, Rachel Patterson (wildlife intern), Kevin Lovasik, and Justin Hoover (left to right) pose for a picture after a day in the field.

For example, our Range Ecology Crew Lead, Csanyi Matusicky, is a botanist in training with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Her employer graciously allowed her time to work with East as a remote learning experience, and the crew benefited greatly from her plant identification skills and ability to teach and inspire others to be passionate about plants.

In October we welcomed four quail technicians to work on the ongoing quail harvest study taking place on Buena Vista, Santa Rosa, and Ranchito. This study, led by Dr. Abraham Woodard, is empirically testing the 20% harvest recommendation of a pre-hunting season northern bobwhite population to maintain sustainability into the reproductive season. Prior to hunting season, these technicians work to trap northern bobwhites on all three ranches as well as control sites on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch. They also participate in pre-harvest population surveys for bobwhites and will eventually be present on all research-focused quail hunts to collect harvest data through the end of the 2022-2023 hunting season. This year's crew are recent graduates of four universities: Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Texas A&M International University, Tarleton State University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



The quail technicians, Cameron Bright, Aiden Tautges, Amanda Montemayor, and Catalina Berry (left to right) dissect northern bobwhite heads for parasites with Andrea Montalvo (far right).

We are proud of the opportunities provided to young professionals in the range and wildlife field and look forward to seeing where their careers take them!



FROM THE RANCH

Ranch Management Internship

GARRETT STRIBLING

Hands-on experience is a vital part of professional development for anyone entering the workforce, but sometimes securing that experience can be challenging. With the fragmentation and loss of working lands (farms, ranches, and forests) across the country, it is becoming more difficult for young people with an interest in production agricultural to find opportunities to receive hands-on training. The industry already is seeing a labor shortage across all sectors and if we do not place an emphasis on training and development of individuals who have a passion for the business, we will only exacerbate the issue.



Students like Callie Jo Swaim, pictured here on the far left, work along side our cattle crew in the field assisting with brandings, weanings, and shipping, in addition to many other duties on the ranch.

At the East Foundation, we have developed a comprehensive ranch management internship program with the goal of helping individuals who have a passion for ranching take that next step in furthering their career. We typically take three interns a year, split between the spring and summer. These individuals are usually pursuing a degree in Animal Science,

Rangeland Ecology, Wildlife Sciences, or are recent graduates and have come from universities from across the country.

This internship is intentionally comprehensive, as ranch management is a complex business, and we try to expose our interns to every aspect of it. We do require our interns to have basic cattle working experience for safety reasons because we throw them into daily operations from the time they arrive. Depending on the season, our interns will assist with brandings, weanings, pregnancy checking, and shipping yearlings. When not actively working cattle, our interns will work directly with myself, our Ranch Operations Manager, and our Unit Foremen discussing a multitude of topics including grazing systems, genetic selection, disease surveillance, brush management, and supplementation strategies, to name a few.

We also utilize a classroom setting to dive deeper into certain topics. These include marketing and risk management, applied nutrition, advanced genetic and reproductive technologies,

managerial accounting, and range management. Based on the intern cohort's specific background, we will tailor these activities to help expand their knowledge base. These have proved beneficial and a welcome break from the hustle of daily operations. Between cattle workings and these learning experiences, we keep our interns occupied, but there are other

activities that are vital to operations. We try to instill in them that a good manager needs to understand every person's job in the operation, and to accomplish this, they will perform every job. We will send them with the windmill crew to repair windmills and solar wells, the fencing crew to fix fence and repair working pens, and with our tractor and loader operators maintaining roads and right-a-ways.

Understanding operations is vital for any individual wanting to pursue a career in ranching. But to be successful, you need to be involved in all aspects of the business and understand how all the pieces fit together. Our goal at the East Foundation is to give our interns the experience and skills needed to be future leaders in the ranching industry.



Students who are interested in the Ranch Management Internship can apply for the spring semester through December 15, 2022. See details on our [website](#).

EMPLOYEE PROFILE



DYLAN DURBIN

Dylan Durbin was born in McAllen, Texas. He grew up in the little town of Lasara, about 12 miles west of Raymondville, Texas, on a family farm and small cattle operation.

Before joining us at the East Foundation, Dylan worked for the Bar Z Ranch in Brady, Texas. He has a background in wind turbine construction and the gas pipeline industry, and also spent many years running his own cattle alongside his father and uncle.

As a Unit Foreman for the Foundation, Dylan oversees cattle health and manages grazing in specific pastures in addition to daily tasks like checking fence lines, water troughs, and cattle movement.

Over the last month and a half, Dylan has enjoyed getting to know all his coworkers, from the office in San Antonio to the personnel at the ranches. We are glad to welcome him and help him get settled into his new role here at the Foundation.

Dylan lives on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch with his wife and children.



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RAINFALL REPORT

A Land of Eternal Drought

TODD SNELGROVE

Reflecting on major droughts in the 1920s and 1930s, the Texas state meteorologist at the time; Isaac Klein, reportedly said, “Texas is a land of eternal drought, interrupted occasionally by biblical floods.” With that thought in mind, one would expect some form of drought to be the norm for South Texas.

Over the past 12 months, we have received what could be characterized as “near normal” rainfall across East Foundation ranches. A summary of rainfall compared to the norm is below:

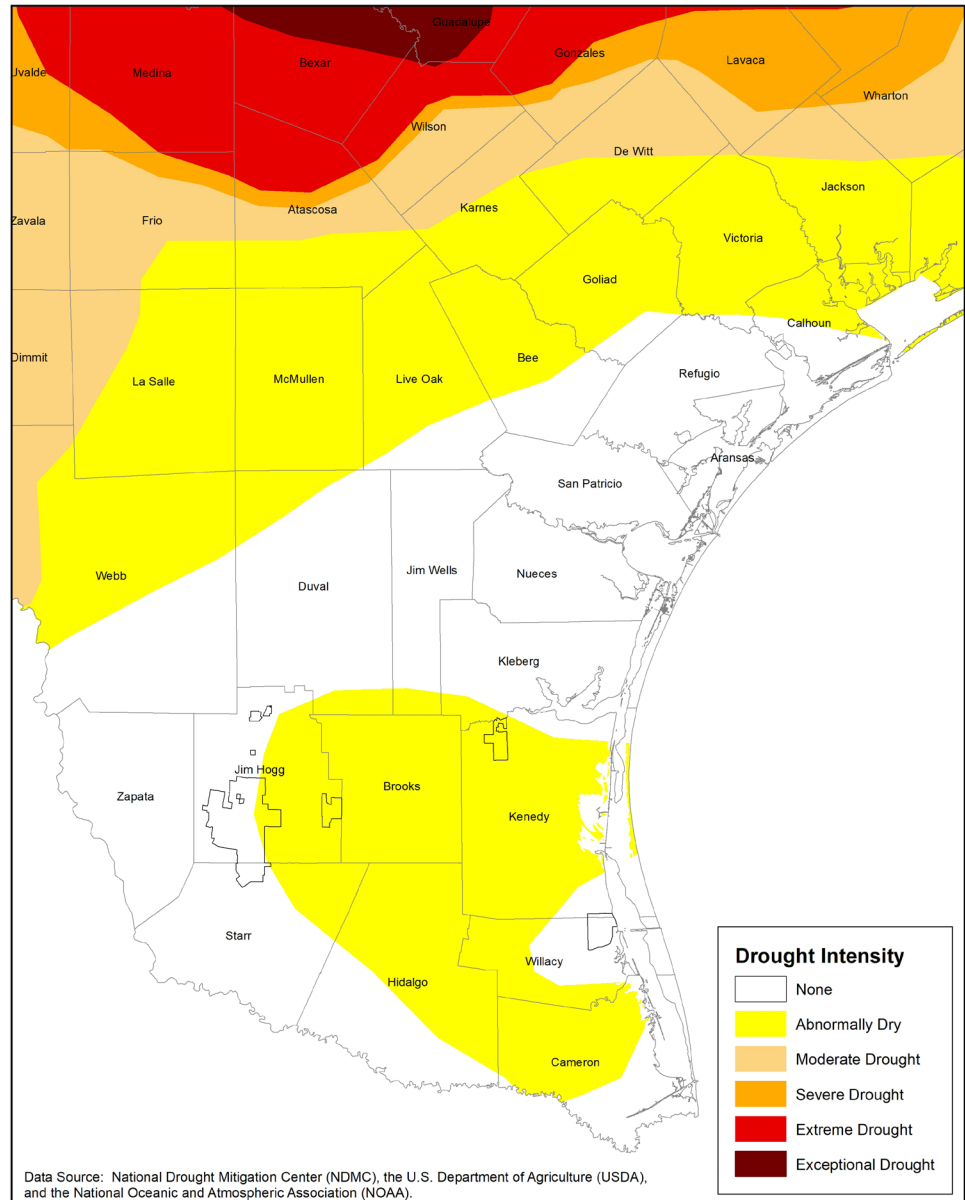
- San Antonio Viejo – Headquarters: 78.4%
- San Antonio Viejo – Casa Verde: 115%
- Buena Vista: 99.9%
- El Sauz: 93.3%
- Santa Rosa: 83.4%
- Ranchito: 82.4%

With several ranches receiving 15 to 20% less rainfall than normal, one might question that characterization.

In this case, timing was everything. The last 12 months were characterized by periods of extremely dry conditions marked by timely rain events in May and June and again in August, September, and October.

This brings us to where we are today. According to the most recent U.S. Drought monitor our ranches are Abnormally Dry – not a whole lot different than where we were last November. To me, that sounds just about normal for “a land of eternal drought.”

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>.



U.S. Drought Monitor - S. Texas

November 15, 2022



EMPLOYEE PROFILE



CLAUDIA CARDONA

Claudia Delfina Cardona is a writer, artist, and educator born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. She comes from a family of artists and writers. Claudia received her B.A. from St. Mary's University in English Communication Arts and her MFA in Creative Writing from Texas State University. Claudia is the author of *What Remains*, winner of the 2020 Host Publications Chapbook Award. She is the co-founder of Infrarrealista Review, a literary organization that publishes Texan writers and provides youth creative writing workshops. Claudia's poems can be found in *Tinderbox*, *Apogee*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Juke Joint*, *Bodega Mag*, *Salt Hill Journal*, *wildness*, and more. In 2021, she was the inaugural fellow of Macmillan's Editorial Fellowship program.

Before working at the East Foundation, Claudia was an English teacher at McCollum High School in San Antonio. At the East Foundation, Claudia works as an Administrative Assistant. She assists with day-to-day tasks, meetings, and events in the office. What she loves most about working for the East Foundation is being a

part of our incredible team of hardworking people. As a teacher herself, she also appreciates how the East Foundation's education program works to connect students to the land.

In her free time, Cardona writes poems, makes zines (a small circulation of self-published work with texts and images), watches foreign films, illustrates, and occasionally DJs around San Antonio. She recently designed and published her father's poetry collection, *Amapolasong*, through Infrarrealista Review.



EDUCATION INSIGHTS

Land Stewardship as Legacy Behind the Gates

October 2022

CLAUDIA CARDONA

South Texan eighth graders spill out of the buses at the San Antonio Viejo (SAV) Ranch. It's October 17th, 2022, 9:31 AM. The students flock towards the Education Pavilion to figure out what station they are going to first.

It is day four of Behind the Gates, a week-long event at the SAV Ranch. Behind the Gates is an opportunity for students from Brooks, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kleberg, Starr, Webb, and Zapata counties to experience and learn about the nature, wildlife, and ranches of South Texas. As a new employee at East Foundation, I had heard a lot of talk from coworkers about Behind the Gates, but I didn't know what to expect.

I tagged along with our finance team including Nicolas Rangel, Margarita Deleon, and Carrie Gomez, to help out with Behind the Gates. We assisted Elisa Velador, the Texas Wildlife Association and East Foundation educator, by collecting waivers and handing out laminated schedules to the teachers. As a former public educator, I was elated to be around teachers and students again. I approached two instructors from Veterans middle school, handed them the day's schedule, and led their group of students to Station 2, where the Foundation's Dr. Andrea Montalvo asked the students questions about the circle of life. A couple of proud students shouted out, "predators and prey!" as they filled out their assignment booklets.

Legacy con't.

Insect sounds punctuate Dr. Montalvo's sentences while wind blows through the canopy. Montalvo directs the students to a patch of grass, where the students put themselves in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Underneath a bright, cloudless sky, Dr. Montalvo passes out cards of plants and animals, while mesquite trees surround us. She asks, "Are there any plants around here?" while students hold out their hands, eager for the navy ball of yarn that Andrea is going to toss them. At the end of the activity, the students have created a web of blue yarn between them, signifying their interconnectedness. Shortly after, Elisa Velador's air horn signals students to rotate stations.



Eric Garza, pictured here on the far left, shows off skins and skulls to students from counties surrounding San Antonio Viejo. We rely on partners, like Eric, to help us educate hundreds of students during our Behind the Gates events.

At Station 3, Eric Garza, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) Biologist, displays various types of animal skulls found in South Texas. He holds the skins and skulls up one by one while students guess what type of animal it is. Garza holds up the fur of a possum, or tlacuache, as the Valley students point out, and asks the students to guess what this tlacuache eats. Students shout out their guesses, one of them jokingly shouts, "chicle!" meaning gum in Spanish. There's something special about watching these eighth

graders gaze in awe at these furs and skulls of South Texas animals, some familiar and some unfamiliar to them. Moments like this remind me of what I loved about teaching high schoolers – to see their minds in action.

I wander to Station 1, where Molli Foxley discusses the sizes of SAV's pastures, while Dr. Montalvo holds up a map of the ranch. Foxley is a Unit Foreman for the East Foundation, and works extensively with the cattle at the ranch. At her station, Foxley explains the size and type of cattle at the ranch in terms of Chick-fil-A cows versus Whataburger cows, an apt and accessible description that gets the students to nod their heads in understanding. As Dr. Montalvo holds up the cow poster, Foxley describes all the uses of a cow – cosmetics, deodorant, paint, chewing gum, and of course meat and leather. I watched the students look at each other with expressions of intrigue when Foxley mentioned chewing gum. As a land steward herself, Foxley emphasizes how important it is to steward the land by picking up trash and conserving water. She adds that cattle have the most important job, the coolest job – aside from teachers! – Foxley adds.

On the opposite side of the caliche road, students in maroon polo shirts run to a patch of brush, looking for a cattle GPS, part of their station's activity about new ranch technology. When they find what they are looking for, they are elated, jumping with excitement. Another airhorn sounds off and groups of students line up at the pavilion for their sandwiches and chips, as chatter abounds.

Back at Station 4, students from Zapata Middle School listen to Lindsey Martinez and Aiden

Branney describe a variety of cats, with emphasis on the ocelot. They show off the skulls that are lined up on the table, ranging from sabertooths to ocelots, jaguarundi, and house cats. Martinez holds up the skulls one by one while students take guesses about what type of cat it is.

At another station, a little further off from the others, students from Veterans middle school line up in two rows and run towards each other. The instructor points to one row representing deer and the other row representing their limited resources. The students filled with excitement as the deer group charges towards the resources, racing to see who will get there first. Several of these students are wearing school shirts that say, Some have a story...we have a LEGACY! Their shirts remind me of what comes up over and over again in these stations' lessons: we all have a responsibility to take care of the lands of South Texas. We need to make sure we do our part and steward the land. At every station I attended, it was clear that each instructor wanted students to take away this message of stewardship and I hope some of them do. I hope not only that the students are reminded of the land's importance, but everyone else in attendance too. I walked away from Behind the Gates feeling indebted for the lands of Texas and reminded of how necessary it is to steward these lands in any manner I can. I am grateful for the opportunity to witness the East Foundation's dedication to land stewardship in action.

EDUCATION INSIGHTS

Behind the Gates October 2022 at San Antonio Viejo

PHOTOS BY EMILY STRIBLING





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