

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



East Foundation and the Witte Museum Seek Applicants for the 2024 Land Stewardship Ambassadors Cohort

San Antonio, TX – September 28, 2023 – The Witte Museum has partnered with East Foundation to deploy our fifth cohort of Land Stewardship Ambassadors (LSA). LSA is a 10-week program that raises awareness of land stewardship principles, promotes civic engagement, and inspires students to obtain careers that support land stewardship. Through interactive experiences, career exploration and the study of stewardship, the Land Stewardship Ambassadors Program teaches students how to be a voice for Texas.

“We are excited to engage the next generation of land stewards through this program,” said Masi Mejia, educator for East Foundation and LSA instructor. “We are looking for students interested in the environment, ranching, veterinary science, politics, and economics, as everything we do daily ties back to the land. Students who have taken part in this program have pursued degrees related to the field of natural resources and have been awarded scholarships ranging from \$500-\$40,000, in addition to the \$400 stipend they receive from this program.”

Each year, The Witte Museum and East Foundation select three groups of 15 high school students from Bexar, Cameron, and Webb counties interested in the environment, the outdoors, and developing personal leadership skills. They complete assignments and participate in two-hour sessions each week that dive into topics such as the history of conservation, principles of wildlife management, managing our watersheds, human dimensions of land stewardship, the role politics play in natural resource management, the economic engine of natural resource management, and the importance of gender and ethnic diversity within user groups.

At the end of the semester-long program, students give a public presentation about a topic related to land stewardship. Students who complete the 10-session program earn a \$400 stipend. *Students must take part in seven of the eight initial sessions, the two overnight sessions, and complete all reading and writing assignments to qualify for the \$400 stipend. There is no cost for the student to participate; all course materials, transportation, food, and lodging for overnight trips are provided.* The Land Stewardship Ambassadors program is generously supported by SWBC, the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation, and the Wheeler Foundation.

Central meeting locations for the 15 students chosen from each county will meet in their respective counties as follows: the Bexar County cohort meets at the Witte Museum in San

Antonio; the Cameron County cohort meets at Camp Rio at Historic Lula Sams in Brownsville; and the Webb County cohort will meet at Falcon Bank in Laredo. The application is now open and can be found at the link provided below. The application deadline will close on October 15, 2023. LSA is a reading and writing intensive course. Semifinalists will take part in a Zoom interview the week of October 25 - November 17, 2023. Finalists will be notified on November 20, 2023. On December 10, 2023, a mandatory student-parent informational meeting will be held to prepare for the Spring 2024 semester.

For more information on the Land Stewardship Ambassadors program, please contact Tina Buford, East Foundation Director of Education, at 956-793-0785 or tbuford@eastfoundation.net.

The application for LSA can be found at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSciFQF_Z_n2YH_eozlIXsxXDE_O3FZoFXcTaPNIPGpsadjZg/viewform

About East Foundation

East Foundation is a South Texas ranching operation and an officially designated Agricultural Research Organization with a mission to promote the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education. We manage over 217,000 acres of native South Texas rangeland, operated as six working cattle ranches in Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, and Willacy counties. The lands were bestowed to the Foundation through the generous gift of the East family in 2007. To honor their legacy, we uphold their vision and values that were established more than a century ago.

About Witte Museum

Founded in 1926, the Witte Museum is where nature, science, and culture meet. Located on the banks of the San Antonio River in Brackenridge Park, the Witte Museum inspires people to shape the future of Texas through transformative and relevant experiences in nature, science, and culture. As San Antonio's most-visited museum, the Witte reaches a diverse audience of hundreds of thousands from within Bexar County and beyond.

For more information on our work, visit www.eastfoundation.net

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