



PHOTO BY JEFFREY HESTER

BEHIND THE GATES

BY JEFFREY HESTER

The *Behind the Gates* program by the East Foundation offers a rare glimpse into one of Texas' most expansive and ecologically significant regions. Spanning over 217,000 acres in South Texas, the East Foundation is dedicated to preserving the region's natural resources, researching sustainable land practices, and educating future generations about responsible land stewardship. This program reflects these core values, providing hands-on learning experiences in conservation, ranching, and ecological management.

The Behind the Gates program is an outreach initiative that opens the doors to the East Foundation's private lands. By invitation, students, educators,

and conservationists can access the unique habitats and working landscapes that the East Foundation carefully manages for wildlife and livestock. The program's core mission is to deepen public understanding of South Texas's ranching heritage, biodiversity, and the symbiotic relationship between humans and the land.

Behind the Gates is as much about education as it is about conservation.



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Participants engage directly with East Foundation staff, scientists, and biologists to study topics ranging from habitat preservation to animal migration patterns and ecosystem health. They also gain insights into the foundation's conservation practices, which align with maintaining productive ranching operations while preserving wildlife habitats—a balance crucial to the ecological resilience of the region.



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