

2019-2020

UTRGV College of Sciences

Community Engaged

Scholarship and Learning

Faculty Development

Workshops



Kickoff Weekend Retreat

October 25-27, 2019

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley[™]
.....
College of Sciences



Dear faculty members and family,

Enclosed in this booklet, you will find a guide to a selected and informative history of the Rio Grande valley that explores its landscape and other sites.

The following objectives will be implemented within the tour: (1) gain familiarity with geographical sites of historical and economic significance; (2) be able to understand how history and culture play a role in the shaping region that affects both UTRGV students and communities. (3) provide an assets-based perspective of history and culture of the Rio Grande Valley.

The purpose of this experience is to interact with the history, culture and communities of the Rio Grande Valley. We want you to enjoy the Valley as you build your career as a faculty member at UTRGV and believe that gaining an understanding of context and geography will help in building a positive and joyful professional and personal experience.

This initiative is made possible through funding from the National Science Foundation - HSI Improving Undergraduate STEM Education Program.

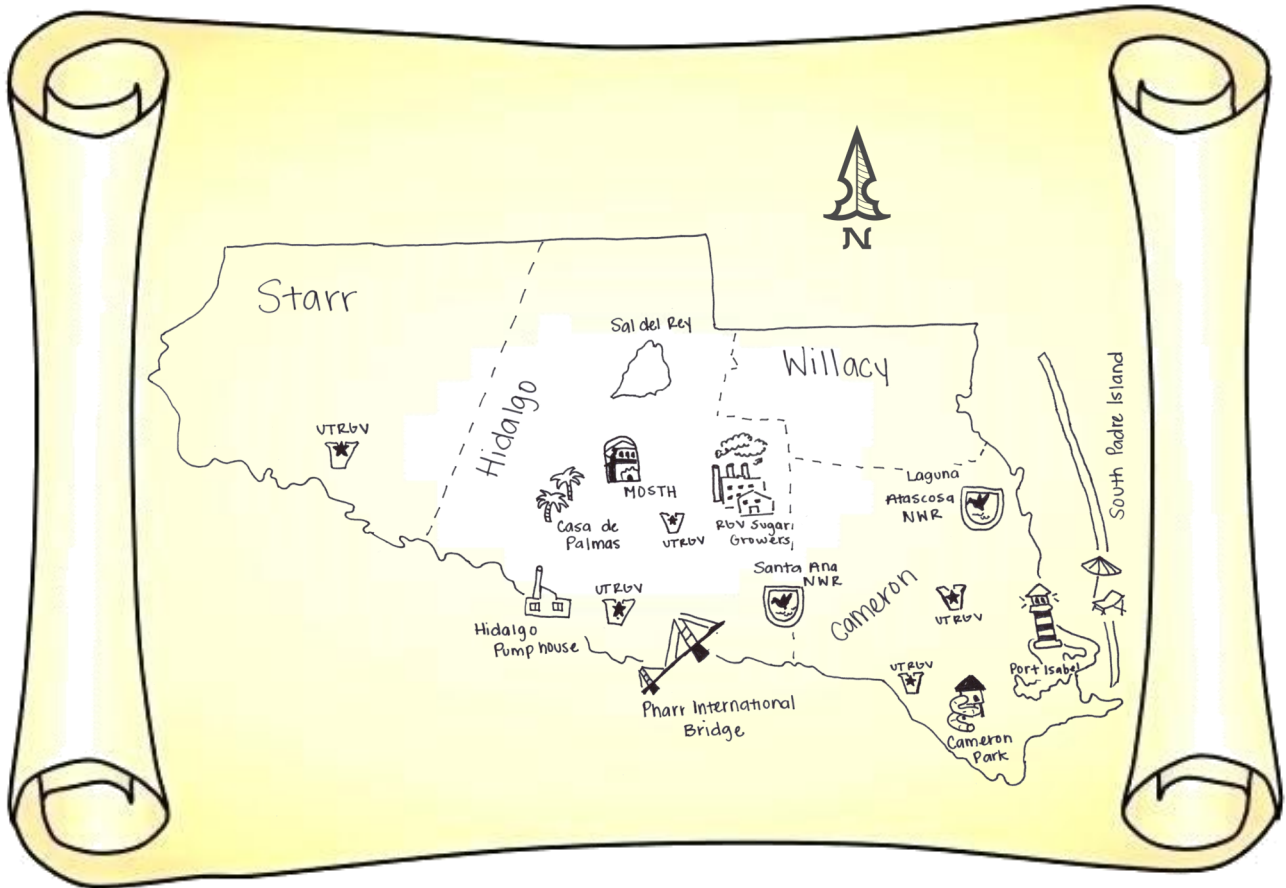


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Itinerary - Friday

October 25, 2019

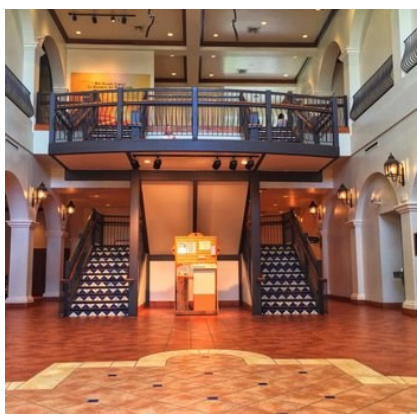


6:45 a.m.	Brownsville Campus Pick Up at Parking Lot B1
6:45-8 a.m.	Travel
8 a.m.	Edinburg Campus Pick Up at Parking Lot E13
8-8:15 a.m.	Travel
8:15-9:30 a.m.	<i>Museum of South Texas History</i> 200 N. Closner Blvd., Edinburg
9:45-10:30 a.m.	Travel
10:30-11:30 a.m.	<i>La Sal Del Rey</i> TX-186, Linn, TX
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Travel
12:30-2 p.m.	Lunch at <i>Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge</i> NWR 3325 Green Jay, Alamo, TX
2:15-2:45 p.m.	Travel
3-4:45 p.m.	<i>Old Hidalgo Pumphouse Museum</i> 902 S. 2nd St., Hidalgo, TX
4:45-5:30 p.m.	Travel
5:30 p.m.	Overnight Accommodations: Casa De Palmas Hotel 101 N. Main St., McAllen, TX
6 p.m.	Dinner at Food Truck Court (walking distance from hotel)

Museum of South Texas History



The history of South Texas runs deep and wide, challenging the best of institutions to explore the region's entire dramatic arc. Edinburg's Museum of South Texas History succeeds in mastering the challenge by educating and entertaining all at once, preserving and exhibiting a significant span of our Rio Grande Valley heritage through its creative museum experience. Begin with mammoth bones and conclude with Tejano tunes in this expansive edifice to our South Texas legacy. With over 22,000-square feet of exhibition space, the museum can afford to spread out, filling walls, display cases, and dioramas with authentic and replica artifacts from the past. The museum blends South Texas and northern Mexico together under one roof, exploring centuries of interconnectivity between the two regions. The museum's premiere exhibition, "Rio Grande Legacy," guides visitors through time using state-of-the-art multimedia, combining sights and sounds to create a totally immersive experience. Two film theaters, one within the bow of a steamboat and the other inside a packing shed beyond a train station (all replicas, of course), conclude the two-part exhibition, an interpretive presentation that provides a world-class experience inside one of our best Rio Grande Valley museums.

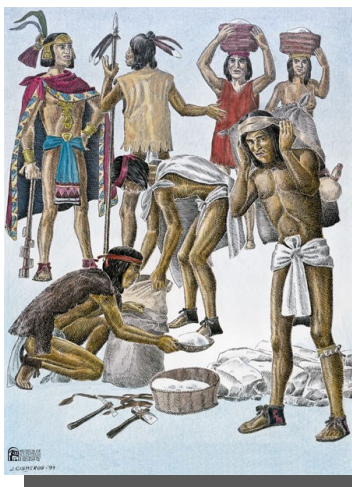
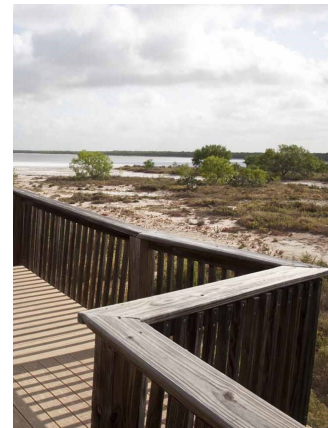


La Sal Del Rey



This lake’s seemingly endless supply of salt—estimated at four million tons—has been harvested for centuries by Native Americans and later by Spanish explorers and settlers, who utilized it for personal use and trade. Traveled by traders and harvesters, a well-worn route known as the salt trail crossed the Rio Grande at an ancient ford at the present-day site of Los Ebanos Ferry.

In 1798, La Sal del Rey and nearby La Sal Vieja were granted to Spanish army Capt. Juan Jose Ballí, father of Rosa Hinojosa de Ballí, who became known as the first “cattle queen” of Texas. The lake was named La Sal del Rey, or “the King’s Salt,” to honor the King of Spain, who held the mineral rights and received a 20-percent tax on all harvests. In 1866, disputes over rights to the salt deposit spurred a Texas constitutional amendment that granted mineral rights to the landowner instead of the government.



REFLECTION: Introspective and Personalized



Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge



Established in 1943 for the protection of migratory birds, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge happens to be positioned along an east-west and north-south juncture of two major migratory routes for many species of birds. It is also at the northern-most point for many species whose range extends south into Central and South America. The refuge is right in the middle of all this biological diversity, which is what makes this 2,088 acre parcel the 'jewel of the National

Wildlife Refuge System.' Though small in size, Santa Ana offers visitors an opportunity to see birds, butterflies and many other species not found anywhere else in the United States beyond deep South Texas.



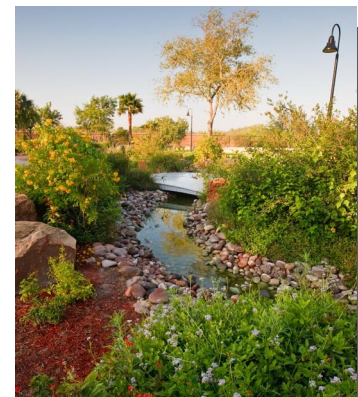
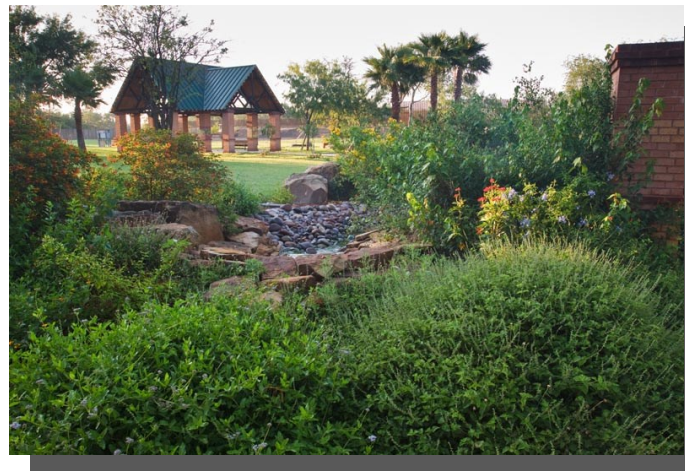
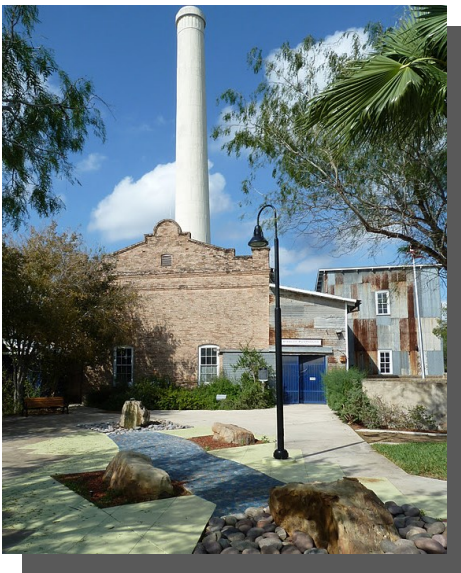
Old Hidalgo Pumphouse Museum and World Birding Center



The Hidalgo Pumphouse, built for commercial-scale irrigation in 1909, drew water from the Rio Grande and channeled it to thousands of crop-laden acres nearby. The pumphouse, operated first by steam before coal and electricity followed, performed its duties until 1983 when an all-electric pumphouse was installed downstream.

Today, the Hidalgo Pumphouse has been restored as a museum and its surrounding grounds serve as one of the World Birding Center sites. Visitors may tour the pumphouse and marvel at the enormous machinery that once powered the pumps. Interpretive text and images explain the pumphouse system in terms easy to understand. The network of smokestacks, pumps, gates, intake pipes, and boilers were originally built alongside the Rio Grande but a flood in 1933 changed the river's course by about a half-mile, leaving the pumphouse high and dry. Engineers dug a channel from the river's new course back to the pumphouse in order for the water to reach the intake pipes.

Today, the lake-like channel makes an ideal habitat for spotting some of the Valley's subtropical birds; or for enjoying something that requires perhaps a little less energy—like an afternoon nap.





Itinerary - Saturday

October 26, 2019



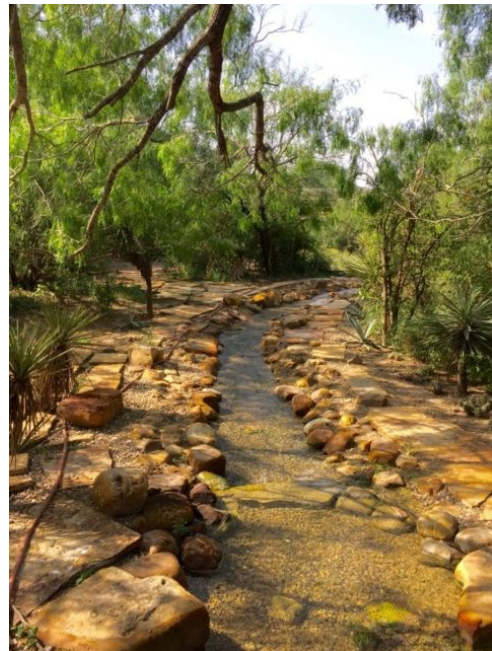
7:00-7:45 a.m.	Breakfast at Casa De Palmas Hotel
8 a.m.	Meet for departure at Casa De Palmas Hotel Lobby 101 N. Main St., McAllen, TX
8:15-8:30 a.m.	Travel
8:30-9:30 a.m.	<i>Quinta Mazatlán</i> 600 Sunset Dr., McAllen, TX
9:45-10:30 a.m.	Travel
10:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	<i>Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, Inc. - Sugar Mill</i> Highway 107, Santa Rosa, TX
11:45 p.m.-12:30 p.m.	Travel
12:30-2:30 p.m.	<i>Proyecto Juan Diego/Cameron Park Tour (Lunch and dialogue w/community members & students)</i> 3910 Paredes Line RD, Brownsville, TX
2:45-3:30 p.m.	Travel
3:30-4:15 p.m.	<i>Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge</i> 22688 Buena Vista Blvd, Los Fresnos, TX
4:15-5:00 p.m.	Travel
5:00-6:30 p.m.	Dinner at <i>Pelican Station</i> 201 Garcia St., Port Isabel, TX
6:30-6:45 p.m.	Travel
6:45 p.m.	<i>La Quinta Inn and Suites (Check in)</i> Overnight Accommodations 7000 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, TX

Quinta Mazatlan



The stunning adobe mansion in McAllen known as Quinta Mazatlan almost didn't make it into the current century. Built in 1935 as a luxurious private residence, the Quinta is a classic example of the Spanish Revival style of architecture. At 10,000-square feet, it's also considered one of the largest adobe structures in the state. The mansion and surrounding 20-acre estate of manicured gardens and native Tamaulipan thornscrub habitat served as an ideal urban sanctuary in downtown McAllen.

But none of that appeared to matter to developers as the property hit the auction block in the mid-1990s. Slated for demolition, the Quinta appeared to be headed for the history books. But concerned citizens of McAllen encouraged the city to intervene and today, under the care of the McAllen Parks and Recreation Department, Quinta Mazatlan shines like the city's crown jewel. Part environmental education center, part reception facility for business, special events, and entertainment, and surviving entirely intact, the Quinta is a restoration success story. It also provides the ideal urban birding site for the Rio Grande Valley's renowned World Birding Center. The birds love it, and no doubt so will you.



QUINTA MAZATLAN

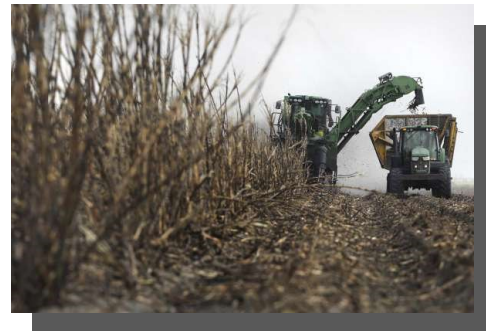
Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, Inc.



Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers (RGVSG), Inc. is a member-owned cooperative comprised of over 126 growers in a three-county area. Together, members produce more than 1.5 million tons of sugar cane each year, yielding nearly 160,000 tons of raw sugar and 60,000 tons of molasses. RGVSG is one of the top 10 producers of raw sugar in the United States.

RGVSG employs up to 500 workers in a normal producing year, which culminates with a harvesting period from October to April. Annual payroll of the cooperative exceeds \$12 million, with an annual operating budget of more than \$32 million.

In Texas, where more than 8,000 jobs rely on a strong U.S. sweetener industry, RGVSG alone accounts for up to 11 percent of the total gross revenues produced by Valley agriculture every year. Member growers utilize over 40,000 acres of rich South Texas farmland in the cultivation of sugar cane crops.



Proyecto Juan Diego/Cameron Park Tour



WHO WE ARE

Our story began in 2003, when Sister Phylis Peters, Daughter of Charity, founded the project. Proyecto Juan Diego was granted a 501(c)(3) status in that same year. She had spent ten years in Ethiopia and when she returned she wanted to dedicate her work to the most impoverished, within the Hispanic community and in an interdenominational setting. In 2004, a year after its foundation, a survey of about 800 families was done to ascertain the needs of Cameron Park. Today, Proyecto Juan Diego's operations have grown immensely to over 30 employees and continue to serve an increasing number of less fortunate families in surrounding communities and neighboring cities.



**PROYECTO
JUAN DIEGO**

Educating, Engaging & Empowering Families for the Future.

OUR MISSION

To Empower low-income families to be healthy and self-sufficient community members through educational programs, family activities and preventative health services.

WHAT WE DO:

- **EDUCATE**
From after school programs to GED and citizenship classes, our education classes cater to individuals in all age groups including children, youth, adults & elderly.
- **ENGAGE**
Our youth coordinator organizes and involves youth participation in civic engagement & community service events that benefit our youth and their communities.
- **EMPOWER**
Our organization's end goal is to 'EMPOWER' each and every individual that participates in our programs by helping them become self-sufficient community members.



Laguna Atascosa national Wildlife Refuge



Here, the endangered ocelot silently hunts within the brushlands, white-tailed deer browse on a banquet of plants, aplomado falcons soar above the grasslands and nearly half of all the bird species found in the continental United States rest, feed, nest or migrate on this landscape.

The refuge was established in 1946 to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and other migratory birds, principally redhead ducks. Today, there is an expanded emphasis that includes endangered species conservation and management for shorebirds. The refuge is a premiere bird-watching destination with more recorded species of birds than any other refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The largest population in the United States of ocelots calls the refuge home, making it the center for conservation and recovery efforts for this endangered cat.



Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge encompasses more than 97,000 acres, a portion of which are open to the public for wildlife related activities like wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, photography and environmental education.





Itinerary - Sunday

October 27, 2019



8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast at La Quinta Inn
9:00 a.m.	Meet for departure at La Quinta Inn 7000 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, TX
9:15 - 9:30 a.m.	Travel
9:30 -10:15 a.m.	<i>SPI World Birding Center</i> 6801 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, TX
10:15 -10:30 a.m.	Travel
10:30 -11:30 a.m.	<i>Sea Turtle Inc.</i> 6617 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Travel
12:30 p.m.	Brownsville Campus Drop-Off at Parking Lot B1
12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Travel
2:00 p.m.	Edinburg Campus Drop-Off at Parking Lot E13

South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center



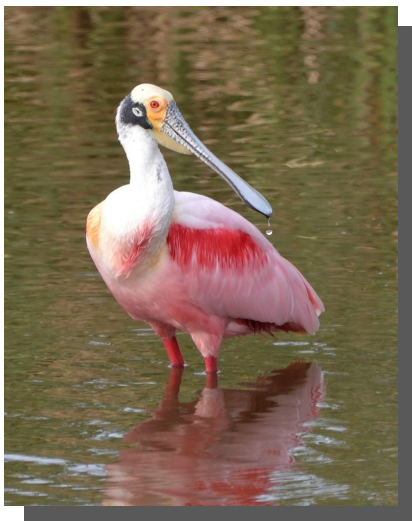
We are the Rio Grande Valley's premier destination for birdwatching. Our unique location on South Padre Island is the perfect place to observe the birds, butterflies and natural wildlife in coastal South Texas. Visit us on South Padre Island, walk the bayfront boardwalks, take a birding tour and explore the natural life of the Rio Grande Valley.

A slender thread of land between the shallow Laguna Madre and the rolling Gulf of Mexico, South Padre Island anchors the World Birding Center with nature adventures in every season. South Padre Island is a crucial first landfall – a lifesaver – for birds making an arduous cross-Gulf migration from Southern Mexico and northern Central America.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center is to educate the public about birds of South Padre Island and its environs: the flora, fauna and the natural environment of South Padre Island, the Laguna Madre Coastal area, with an emphasis on conservation and environmental awareness.

We are a non-profit organization created by the Town of South Padre Island's Economic Development Corporation in response to the researched desires of our residents and visitors.



Sea Turtle Inc.



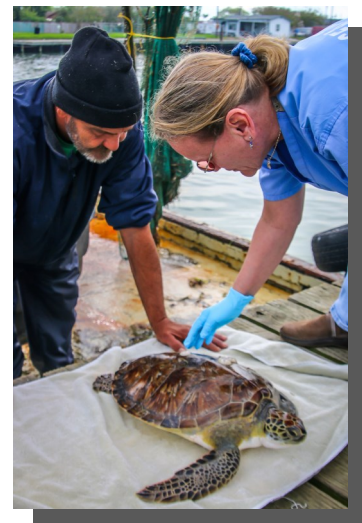
OUR MISSION

At Sea Turtle, Inc. our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release injured sea turtles; educate the public; and assist with conservation efforts for all marine turtle species.

OUR HISTORY

Sea Turtle, Inc. was founded in 1977 by Ila Fox Loetscher, better known as “The Turtle Lady of South Padre Island.” In 1999, Sea Turtle, Inc. moved from Ila’s backyard into its current location at 6617 Padre Blvd.

Originally this organization was formed to aid in the protection and recovery of the endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtle. Our mission has since expanded into three parts: Education, Rehabilitation, and Conservation. Today, Sea Turtle, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit that is funded through public donations and on-site gift shop sales. We do not receive any government funding.





The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley™