



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Ryan Greenfeld
Sr. Comm. & P.R. Coordinator, BPUB
rgreenfeld@brownsville-pub.com
(956) 983-6271

BPUB Launches Junior Resaca Explorers Program at Gladys Porter Zoo

BROWNSVILLE, Texas – The Brownsville Public Utilities Board (BPUB), in partnership with the Gladys Porter Zoo, recently launched its Junior Resaca Explorers program to educate Brownsville students about resacas and the wildlife that live in them.

The Junior Resaca Explorers program targets Brownsville students in grades 2-4. It teaches children what resacas are and the native wildlife that can be found in them. In addition, there is a focus on BPUB's Resaca Restoration Project. The idea is to reach these students while they are still young and can spread awareness and take that knowledge with them as they get older.

BPUB personnel have already been visiting Brownsville-area schools to make them aware of this new educational opportunity. As part of this outreach, students are prepared for their Zoo visit and made aware of the city's resaca system. One of the ways this is done is through playing Resaca Loteria. The game is played just like traditional loteria or bingo, but the images have been replaced with ones associated with Brownsville resacas and the Resaca Restoration Project, like the dredger, as well as various birds, fish and other animals.

The schools are provided with activity books that students complete in teams as well as teacher books with answers and additional facts. Schools are also given certificates of completion to be handed out once students finish the activity book. Approximately 600 students have already completed the Junior Resaca Explorers program and received their certificates.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to teach the children in our community about this special resource in our city. Our resacas are such an important part of our culture here, and this program will help empower the younger generation to protect these important waterways for the future," says BPUB General Manager & CEO John. S. Bruciak.

The curriculum is built around the signs, exhibits and various features at the Gladys Porter Zoo. Using this approach allowed the program to leverage an existing infrastructure and bring more

The Brownsville Public Utilities Board is a full-service, locally- owned and operated utility providing electric, water, and wastewater services. It has over 500 dedicated and responsive employees that provide reliable utility services to the City of Brownsville and the surrounding area.

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attention to the learning materials at the Zoo. Many of the activities also put a spotlight on an often overlooked aspect of the Gladys Porter Zoo: birding. The facility is a showcase for native and migratory birds that use the resaca that flows through the Zoo as a home or rest spot.

“Resacas are a very important resource to Gladys Porter Zoo and Brownsville. We are thrilled to partner with Brownsville Public Utilities Board to educate students about this vital resource,” says Dr. Patrick M. Burchfield, Zoo Director.

One of the newest features at Gladys Porter Zoo, the Russell Aquatic Ecology Center, provides an intimate look at the fish that are native to the Rio Grande Valley and can be found in Brownsville’s resacas.

The partnership between BPUB and Gladys Porter Zoo is expected to continue through the summer as the Junior Resaca Explorers program continues to educate more students. There are plans to make the Junior Resacas Explorers program available to the general public.

If you are interested in learning more about the Junior Resaca Explorers or what to find out how you can participate, contact BPUB at 956-983-6462.

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