



# Informal Science Education Association of Texas 2024 Annual Conference



---

## Under the ISEA: Discovering the Depths of Informal Education



Corpus Christi, TX  
February 14-16

Howdy! ISEA welcomes you to Corpus Christi! This annual conference brings together attendees from all over the state to explore current informal education movements. We look forward to sharing science stories with friends old and new!

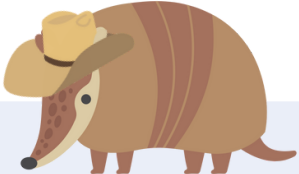
#ISEATX2024    @TexasInformalScience  
texasinformalscience@gmail.com

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

## WEDNESDAY, FEB 14

1:00-3:00 p.m.	Pre-Conference Activities*
5:30-6:00 p.m.	ISEA 101: Newcomers Unite at the Aquarium
5:30-8:30 p.m.	Opening Event at the Aquarium
	Register & Pick Up Badge at Opening Event
8:30-11:00 p.m.	Informal Fun

## THURSDAY, FEB 15

8:00 a.m.	Registration & Badge Pickup	
8:15 a.m.	Coffee Service	
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Keynote	
9:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions & Panel	
12:05-1:05 p.m.	Lunch Break	
4:30-5:45 p.m.	Free Time	
6:00-8:30 p.m.	Evening Event at Museum of Science & History	
8:30 - 11:00 p.m.	Informal Fun	

## FRIDAY, FEB 16

Begins at 8:15 a.m.	Silent Auction Item Pickup & Coffee Service
9:00-9:55 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions
10:05-11:10 a.m.	Closing Keynote
11:15-12:00 p.m.	ISEA Business Meeting

\*Pre-registration required.

# KEYNOTES

**KEISHA BAHR**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15 - 8:30 A.M.**



Dr. Keisha Bahr is a coral reef ecologist and an Assistant Professor of Marine Biology at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. With a profound passion for the oceans and a deep concern for the deteriorating state of coral reefs, Dr. Bahr has dedicated her career to studying these fragile ecosystems and advocating for their conservation. She is on a mission to revolutionize science communication and informal education, recognizing their pivotal role in preserving and managing coral reef ecosystems.

**JACE TUNNELL**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16 - 10:05 A.M.**



Jace Tunnell serves as the Director of Community Engagement at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. He is the creator of Nurdle Patrol, a citizen science initiative dedicated to monitoring global plastic pellet concentrations. Through this project, Jace aims to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of oceanic plastic pollution and advocate for policy changes based on concrete data.

# CONFERENCE SITES



## TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM

2710 N Shoreline Boulevard, Corpus Christi  
Parking: Two lots off of Surfside Blvd (refer to map  
at end of program)

\*\* Shuttles will be provided to and from the Omni  
hotel for opening dinner at the Aquarium on  
Wednesday.\*\*



## CORPUS CHRISTI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY

1900 N Chaparral St, Corpus Christi, TX 78401

\*\*Shuttles will be provided to and from the Omni  
hotel for dinner at the museum on Thursday. \*\*



Join Rigor on a fun, interactive scavenger  
hunt throughout conference via the  
Goosechase app! Join for free by  
downloading the Goosechase app and  
plugging in the ISEA join code.



SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT THE  
LINK BELOW TO CONNECT WITH  
CONFERENCE RESOURCES!

[linktr.ee/iseatx](https://linktr.ee/iseatx)



# SILENT AUCTION & RAFFLE

Support ISEA this year through our silent auction and raffle! To participate, visit the website or QR code below, or download the free PayBee app. Preview items on Feb. 13. Silent auction opens for bidding on Feb. 13 at 5:00 p.m. and closes on Feb. 15 at 8:00 p.m. Close out your wins at pickup on Feb. 16. Raffle winners will be announced throughout the conference (details for each raffle item below)!

This year's raffle items include:

- Mortimer (\$10/ticket) - 1 winner, announced at ISEA board meeting on Friday
- Snorkel with Sharks (\$20/ticket) - 4 winners, announced at Thursday evening event
- Feed the Flamingos (\$5/ticket) - 8 winners, announced at Wednesday evening event
- Board Basket: "Life is a Beach" theme (\$10/ticket) - 1 winner, announced at ISEA board meeting on Friday



[PayBee QR & Link](https://paybee.io/@isea)  
[paybee.io/@isea](https://paybee.io/@isea)



## WHO ARE RIGOR & MORTIMER?



In 2012, at the ISEA annual conference, two mysterious nameless strangers appeared. No one knows where they came from, or if they do they are not telling! ISEA'ers quickly adopted the pair as official mascots and held a naming contest. Alas, Mortimer (the frog) disappeared for some time while Rigor (the armadillo) was rescued from the Johnson City jail so that he could return to each ISEA annual conference. He returns each year to chronicle his adventures promoting informal science education around the state. During the conference, attendees vie for the privilege of hosting Rigor for the coming year. In a strange series of events, Mortimer has found his way back to ISEA and is available for hosting this year too!

**Win the chance to host ISEA mascot, Mortimer, by entering the raffle!**  
**\$10 per ticket. Rigor is a silent auction item.**

# WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

## Pre-Conference Field Trips

1:00-3:00 p.m.

### Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve & Learning Center

2446 N. Oso Parkway, Corpus Christi, TX

The Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve is a part of the Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation Department. The Preserve serves as the hub for the city's nature educational and recreational programming, with 162 acres of coastal habitat and a small Learning Center. Join the staff to tour the center, trails, and learn more about the programs held there. This tour will discuss signage and highlight the walking trails, playground, and other features.



### CCA Marine Development Center

4300 Waldron Road, Corpus Christi, TX

Join us on a tour of the TPWD CCA Marine Development Center in Corpus Christi. This is the first state-operated hatchery and visitor center, and is one of the best kept secrets in Texas. The hatchery produces juvenile (30 millimeter) red drum and spotted seatrout for releasing into Texas bays for stock enhancement. A tour guide will provide information on the history of the hatchery and current aquaculture techniques used to rear red drum and spotted seatrout.



# WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

## **ISEA 101 - Newcomers Unite! 5:30-6:00 p.m.**

### TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM - CANOPY OUTSIDE CITGO SKYLINE

Join Josh Sendejar, ISEA Board Member, for an introduction to ISEA and what to expect at this year's conference.

## **Opening Event & Registration 5:30-8:30 p.m.**

### TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM - CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

*Shuttles provided from Omni hotel and back*

Dive into the conference at our opening dinner & event at the Aquarium! Dinner will include chicken & beef tacos with rice, beans, and cinnamon churro bites for dessert. Buy a raffle ticket at check-in for a chance to win a live flamingo encounter during the event! Registration & badge pickup will be available.

## **Informal Fun 8:30 - 11:00 p.m.**

### OMNI HOTEL - TOPSIDER LOUNGE

Join the ISEA Board for some informal fun after the opening event! Groups will be meeting up for game night at the Omni Hotel's Topsider Lounge and heading out for refreshments at the following local venues:

Executive Surf Club - 306 N Chaparral St  
Bar Under the Sun - 702 N Chaparral St



# THURSDAY SCHEDULE

**Registration & Badge Pickup** **8:00 a.m.**

TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM - CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

**Coffee Service** **8:15-8:30 a.m.**

TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM - CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

**Welcome & Opening Keynote** **8:30-9:30 a.m.**

TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM - CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

This opening session features a welcome by Nicole Gaertner, ISEA Board President and a presentation by keynote Dr. Keisha Bahr, TX A&M Corpus Christi, entitled "Beyond the Classroom: How Informal Education can Catalyze STEM Education."

**Concurrent Sessions** **9:45-10:45 a.m.**

(3 OPTIONS)

## **1. Engaging K-12 Homeschool Students in Informal STEM**

Located in the heart of the Hill Country in Johnson City, Texas, the Science Mill offers a monthly Homeschool Day program that services K-12 homeschooled students and their families. This program includes floor activities, learning labs, and a STEM Research Project Experience for 3-12 students.

**Presenter: John Espinoza, Science Mill**

**Location: Flint Hills Room**



## Concurrent Sessions

9:45 - 10:45 a.m.

(3 OPTIONS, OPTION 1 ON PREVIOUS PAGE)

### 2. TEKS Made Easy

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards might seem like a puzzle, especially if you didn't go to school for education. Let's unravel the mystery behind TEKS and break down the essential elements of these standards in a way that's accessible and easy to understand for everyone.

**Presenter:** Rebecca Millet, STARBASE Austin

**Location:** WROC - Rescue Center

### 3. Teaching Science Concepts with Creative Gameplay

Let's apply play and games to science learning! Imagine a group of students learning through play - Pollination via Archery; or Ecosystems via RPGs. In this session, you'll learn how creative gameplay can capture the focus of your audience and interpret your lessons in fun, unique ways.

**Presenter:** August Vandiver & Katie Boughal, Delores Fenwick Nature Center

**Location:** Citgo Skyline Room

## Concurrent Sessions

10:55 - 11:55 a.m.

(2 OPTIONS)

### 1. Authority of the Resource: An Alternative to Rules

Authority of the Resource (ART) is a tool to curb bad behavior when "a rule is a rule" is ineffective. ART uses a place's resources as a teaching tools to help visitors understand how their actions can have negative impacts. Participants will learn how to use ART at their informal education sites.

**Presenter:** Danielle Gay, Texas State University

**Location:** Flint Hills Room



## Concurrent Sessions

10:55 - 11:55 a.m.

(2 OPTIONS, OPTION 1 ON PREVIOUS PAGE)

### 2. Proving Your Program Works (while staying sane)

There's a lot of qualitative joy in informal education. But how do we convince leadership to keep funding your program? How to combine qualitative and quantitative data? Learn how the Water4Otter program has grown since 2014, and how the program tracks results and communicates its value.

**Presenter:** Adam Niederpruem, Happy Camper Productions

**Location:** Citgo Skyline Room

## Lunch Break

12:05-1:05 p.m.

### CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

Relax and network with fellow informal educators or peruse the silent auction (QR code and link to the right). Lunch will feature a salad and sandwich buffet.

*Please note: Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available only for attendees who indicated dietary needs on their registration form.*



PayBee QR & Link:  
[paybee.io/@isea](https://paybee.io/@isea)

## Panel

1:15-2:15 p.m.

### CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

#### The Magic of Collaboration

Collaboration and partnerships are crucial for many of our projects and programs. Join us for a panel discussion on what to look for in a good partnership, examples of what great collaborations can accomplish, and how to sustain partnerships.

**Panelists:** Kelly Drinnen, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary; Marisa Oliva, Texas Children in Nature Network; Sarah Coles, Texas Children in Nature Network; Sara Jose, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

**Moderator:** Tiara Chapman, ISEA Board Member

(3 OPTIONS)

## **1. Probing the Depths of a Strange New Planet**

Scientists have discovered over 5000 planets orbiting stars in our Galaxy. Is there life on those planets? Through hands-on activities, participants will get a feel for the nature of life on other planets, and ideas for types of missions that may be used to investigate those planets.

**Presenter:** Judy Meyer, McDonald Observatory

**Location:** Flint Hills Room

## **2. Let's Talk WILD: Culture & Investigation**

Are first impressions lasting? How are turkeys tied to American history? What is the story of deer scat from an investigation? Join us using fun and thoughtful Project WILD activities. We will demonstrate how you can use effective low and mid stakes writing to conduct investigations that you can take back to your learning center or classroom. Whether you know Project WILD or not, these activities will have you talking turkey, dropping in on deer and we hope to make a great first impression!

**Presenters:** Stephanie Hurst & Nicki Sohn, *Cleveland Middle School*

**Location:** WROC - Rescue Center

## **3. Empowering Education with Artificial Intelligence**

Explore the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence in informal education during this engaging session. From interactive discussions to hands-on demonstrations, participants will delve into real-world applications of AI, discovering innovative ways to enhance learning experiences.

**Presenter:** Cosette De Ferrari, Texas State Aquarium

**Location:** Citgo Skyline Room



(2 OPTIONS)

## **1. Developing a Scientific Identity through Research Rangers**

Learn how to develop and implement a template-based outdoor science activity you can customize to your site! These activities specialize in building the scientific identity of participants, integrate cultural connections, and highlight scientists in action. Attendees will leave this workshop with examples and tools in place ready for implementation!

**Presenter:** Carolyn Jess, Hannah Baratang, Brady Pringle, Jill Zipperer, Raylee Schobel, & Dr. Kristy L. Daniel, Texas State University

**Location:** Flint Hills Room

## **2. PBS SciGirls STEM in National Parks & Beyond**

Play in a Wetland Band. Be a Defense Designer. Join a STEM Search Party. Access free Million Girls Moonshot and Texas Girls Collaborative Project resources and explore hands-on STEM and citizen science activities from SciGirls in the National Parks, season 7 of the Emmy-Award-winning PBS program.

**Presenter:** Tricia Berry, Texas Girls Collaborative Project

**Location:** Citgo Skyline Room



# Posters

## MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE

The following posters will be available for viewing throughout the closing dinner & science show on Thursday night.

"Lavaca Bay Marsh Ecosystem Assessment"

**Presenter: Robinson McMillan**

**Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies**

"Student Engagement, Perceived Costs of Belonging in Biology, and Instructor Fidelity to Instruction"

**Presenters: Amandeep Kaur, Dr. Kristy Daniel, & Carrie Jo Bucklin**

**Texas State University**

"Understudied Gems: Floral Diversity of the Ingleside Sandsheet Ponds"

**Presenters: Bria Marty & Shawn McCracken**

**Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi**

"Planning Outdoor Programming for Kids Who Don't Like to be Outside"

**Presenter: Mark Broughton**

**Dallas ISD STEM Environmental Education Center**

"Modeling Minds: Fostering Scientific Inquiry through Diverse Models in Science Education"

**Presenters: Fahadul Alam & Dr. Kristy Daniel**

**Texas State University**



## **Posters cont.**

### **MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE**

The following posters will be available for viewing throughout the closing dinner & science show on Thursday night.

"Dark Skies: Education and Outreach"

**Presenter: Ryan Cantrell**

**McDonald Observatory**

"Drawing as a Generative Learning Activity: A Case Study on a Nature Journaling Class"

**Presenters: Hannah Baratang & Dr. Kristy Daniel**

**Texas State University**

"We're Ready for Science! The Best of Friends: Biology & Art "

**Presenter: Elizabeth K. Perry, PhD**

**Rochester Institute of Technology**

"Eye Tracking: Interpreting Phylogenetic Tree"

**Presenters: Mallika Saha, Dr. Daniel Ferguson, & Dr. Kristy L. Daniel**

**Texas State University**

"Engage, Empower, Educate: A Coral Reef Curriculum Integrating Virtual and Hands-On Learning"

**Presenter: Alexandra Good**

**Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi**



# Dinner & Science Show

6:00-8:30 p.m.

## CORPUS CHRISTI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & HISTORY

*Shuttles provided from the Omni hotel and back*

Enjoy a night out at the museum! Explore the halls of the Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History, from the history of the Coastal Bend to some scaly friends and exotic gems, there is something for everyone. Dinner will include light appetizers for the poster session, beef & chicken fajitas with rice and beans, and an assortment of desserts. The museum will put on a science show for conference guests during dinner!

## Don't forget to bid for your favorite auction items!

Thursday night is the last chance to enter the raffle or bid on silent auction to support the scholarship fund. Enter or bid by 8:00 p.m.

- Mortimer (\$10/ticket)
- Snorkel with Sharks at Aquarium (\$20/ticket)
- Feed the Flamingos at Aquarium (\$5/ticket)
- Board Basket: "Life is a Beach" theme (\$10/ticket)



[PayBee QR & Link](#)

[paybee.io/@isea](https://paybee.io/@isea)



# FRIDAY SCHEDULE

## Coffee Service & Auction Pickup

8:15 a.m.

### CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

Thank you for supporting the ISEA Annual Conference Scholarship Fund! Close out your win with the committee from 8:15-9:00 a.m. and 12:00-12:30 p.m.

## Concurrent Sessions

9:00-9:55 a.m.

(2 OPTIONS)

### 1. Birds of a Feather Flocking Together for Action

Participants will be encouraged to discuss ways to collaborate with environmental, youth, and higher education groups within their local community. There is a disconnect between planning for economic development, recreation, and conservation needs with integration of resiliency principles.

**Presenter:** Katie Doyle, Dr. Dara Orbach, & Dr. Larisa Ford  
*Flour Bluff ISD*

**Location:** Flint Hills Room

### 2. Managing & Motivating Part-Time Staff

Explore ways to manage the onboarding process, techniques to support recruitment, strategies to help with training, and tips for infusing your culture across multiple sites.

**Presenter:** Morgan Stinnett, Girlstart

**Location:** Citgo Skyline Room



## Closing Keynote - Jace Tunnell

10:05 a.m.

### CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

Close out the conference with a special presentation entitled "Beachcombing the Beaches of the Coastal Bend" by keynote Jace Tunnell with the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies.

## ISEA Business Meeting

11:15-11:45 a.m.

### CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

Attendees are invited to this session, as registering for conference makes you an official ISEA Member! Learn about membership, running for the ISEA Board, and the 2025 annual conference. Plus, raffle winners will be announced! Who will host Rigor and Mortimer for the year?!

---

Thank You to our Sponsors for ISEA 2024!



# Texas State Aquarium - Facility Map



PARKING ENTRANCE

CITGO SKYLINE ROOM

FLINT HILLS ROOM  
(1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

ENTRANCE

PARKING

PARKING ENTRANCE

RESCUE CENTER

WROC ROOM

Texas State Aquarium