



### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Coastal Naturalist Training Offered for Red Tide Monitoring**

A Red Tide monitoring training will be held at the UTPA Coastal Studies Lab on South Padre Island in Isla Blanca Park at 3 PM, Tuesday, July 26th. We will have live samples of red tide cells, *Karenia brevis* for viewing through a microscope. Students will learn the history of Texas red tides and how to sample, count and identify red tide cells. No red tide has been reported in Texas this year and this training will prepare responders should we have a red tide.

This certification will also serve as one of three required trainings to qualify as a Texas Coastal Naturalist, is a new program to certify volunteer first responders in the Laguna Madre area to respond to natural occurrences such as cold stun events for sea turtles, harmful algal blooms, marine mammal strandings, oiled bird events and any other natural emergencies on the coast requiring volunteer response. Last winter, Texas Coastal Naturalists assisted in rescuing over one thousand cold stunned green sea turtles in the Laguna Madre after a cold snap.

The Texas Coastal Naturalist program provides a volunteer base for the UT Pan Am Coastal Studies Lab, Sea Turtle Inc., and the Cameron County Extension Service. The Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalist sponsors the program which is supported by the Texas Sea Grant, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Harmful Algal Bloom Work Group and Ocean Trust of Texas.

Cost for the training is \$10 payable to the Rio Grande Valley Chapter Texas Master Naturalist. The cost covers the three trainings required to be certified as a Texas Coastal Naturalist. You also become eligible to qualify as a Red Tide Ranger after completing a sampling regime should a red tide occur. If you are already a Coastal Naturalist or Red Tide Ranger, you are invited to take this as a refresher course free of charge. To register for the workshop please call the Cameron County Extension Office at: 956-361-8236.

For further info call Tony Reisinger, County Extension Agent Coastal & Marine Resources at 956-493-8129.