

## 2024 Horned Lizard Conservation Conference September 28, 2024

By Lynn Seman



The highly anticipated “in-person” 2024 HLCS Conference took place on September 28, 2024, at the Phoenix Zoo. The attendees of the conference included 45 individuals from United States, Mexico, and Canada. Attendees were provided a light breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks. HLCS treasurer, Ryan Zach arranged for “behind the scenes” tours of the zoo’s reptile exhibit during breaktime.

Speakers presented on a variety of horned lizard species and topics. HLCS President, Cheryl Jenkins started the conference with an introduction and welcome statement at 9:00 am. The speakers included:

Brian K. Sullivan, Professor Emeritus and adjunct curator in Herpetology, ASU – “Natural History of the Regal Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma solare*)”

Ed Allen, Professor Emeritus, Texas Tech University – “Observations on Texas Horned Lizards and Red Harvester Ants, Dickens County, TX, 1997-2024”

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hornedlizard/](http://www.facebook.com/hornedlizard/)

Facebook member page: [www.facebook.com/groups/HLCsmembers](http://www.facebook.com/groups/HLCsmembers)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/hornedlizardconservation/](http://www.instagram.com/hornedlizardconservation/)

YouTube channel: Horned Lizard Conservation Society

Rachel Pikstein, MS Environmental Ecologist, Herpetologist, and PhD student at Loma Linda University – “First Occurrence of Horned Lizard and Burrowing Owl over wintering Cohabitation within an Artificial Burrow System, built for Ecological Restoration”

Shana Fredlake, Dallas Zoo Lead Zoologist, HLCS Secretary – “Reintroducing Texas Horned Lizards: Dallas Zoo’s Strategies for Successful Wild Release”

Thomas R. Van Devender, Director of Biodiversity Programs, Greater Good Charities, “Over a Century of Searching for an Enigmatic Endemic Camaleón”

Dean A. Williams, Department of Biology, Texas Christian University – “Urban Ecology and Conservation of Texas Horned Lizards (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) Living in Small Towns”

Chris Bagley and Gren with Chiron K9 (*Phrynosoma* detecting canine team) – Chris gave an overview of their work and provided a wonderful demonstration of Gren’s detection capabilities.

Craig Fischer, San Diego State University/Uc Davis JDPE – “Flat-tailed Horned Lizards: Research and Management Perspectives by Craig Fischer”

Anthony Pawlicki, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Arizona – “Reproductive Ecology of the Flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*) in Southwestern Arizona”

Byron Wusstig, Senior Animal Keeper-Ectotherms, Los Angeles Zoo – “Husbandry and Reproduction of *Phrynosoma asio* at the Los Angeles Zoo”

Posters from the following projects were on display and the researchers were available to discuss their work and answer questions throughout the day.

Paulina Gamboa – Diet Variation of *Phrynosoma solare* in Communities of Hermosillo and Moctezuma, Sonora, and Its Relationship with Ants (*Phrynosoma solare*). Paulina Gamboa, Universidad de la Sierra, Moctezuma, Sonora.

Leah Carpenter - Pairing Animal-borne Biologgers with AI tools to Reveal Fine-Scale Movement Data and Thermal Preferences of the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma mcallii*. Leah Carpenter, San Diego State University, San Diego California

Kira Gangbin - Using targeted poisoning of red imported fire ants to improve Texas horned lizard (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) habitat. Kira Gangbin, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX

Sara L. Ashpole & Jenna Bower (not-present) - Reintroduction of the extirpated Pygmy Short-horned lizard (*Phrynosoma douglassi*) to the indigenous territory of the Syilx People of the Okanagan Nation, Canada Sara L. Ashpole & Jenna Bower, Sara L. Ashpole, PhD, R. Sheldon and Virginia H. Johnson Professorship in the Sciences, Associate Professor Environmental Studies | Director Living Laboratory, St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY.

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Andrew Gottscho (not present) - Comparing phylogeographic patterns of fringe-toed lizards (*Uma*) and Flat-tailed horned lizards (*Phrynosoma mcallii*) across a fragmented Colorado Desert landscape Andrew Gottscho, Ph.D. Research Associate, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC

Faith Schenk and Ezekiel Newlin - First Occurrence of a Horned Lizard Successfully Overwintering in an Artificially Constructed Owl Burrow; *Phrynosoma solare* Faith Schenk and Ezekiel Newlin; Grand Canyon University and Pikstein Laboratory NPO

The HLCS Store, managed by Lee Seman, was set up for attendees to browse during breaks and most attendees were able to walk away with new horned lizard merchandise. HLCS store brought in around \$1,500 in purchases. A “Silent Auction” was on display with donated items from artists such as Melissa Kohout, and donations from members such as Wade C. Sherbrooke, Leslie Nossaman, and Horned Lizard Creations. The Silent Auction brought in around \$300. A portion of the proceeds from the sales goes to support HLCS programs and helps to make these events possible.

The beautiful Horned Lizard display cases (made by the late Larry Wisdom) were enjoyed by all as were the 3D printed set of horned lizard skulls, made by James V. West. A huge thank you goes to Cecilia Aguilar Morales, who provided social media posts for the event with photos and graphics. HLCS President Cheryl Jenkins emceed the event while she and her son also filmed the sessions which will be added to the HLCS YouTube channel. HLCS Director-at-large, Dalton Neuharth, took care of the technical assistance for the presentations, and HLCS Membership Officer, Lynn Seman, set up registration. HLCS Treasurer, Ryan Zach, set up the venue and arranged the wonderful list of speakers along with HLCS Secretary, Shana Fredlake.

HLCS appreciates the support, the donations, the conference attendees, and all the HLCS members who made this event possible as well as the Phoenix Zoo who provided a wonderful venue for this meeting and conference.

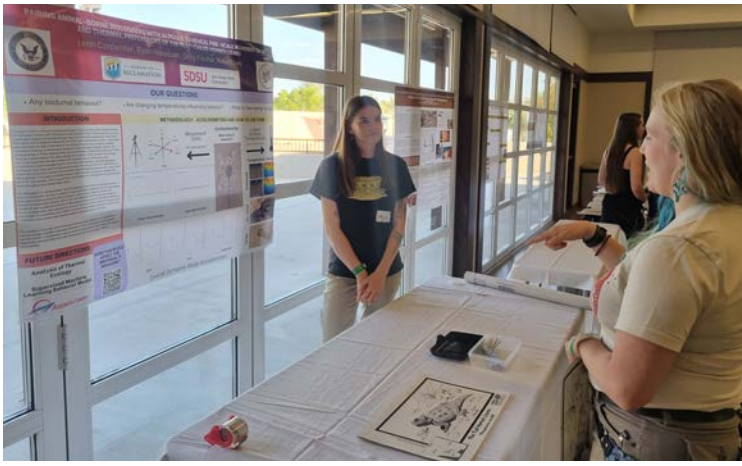


Chris Bagley demonstrates Gren’s detection capabilities.



Good dog, Gren.

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Leah Carpenter discussing her work with the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard.



Paulina Gamboa with her poster on the diet variation of *P. solare*.



Lynn and Lee Seman selling HLCS merchandise and generating funds for horned lizard conservation.



Brian Sullivan presenting the natural history of the Regal Horned Lizard.

## HLCS 2025 Grant Applications

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society annually sponsors research that has direct conservation applications.

We will be offering grants again in 2025. In the past, priority has been given to projects that have direct conservation implications, including public education.

To access the Society grant application information go to:  
<http://www.hornedlizards.org/grant-application.html>

To apply, send a proposal detailing the goal of the study, the rationale for it including relevance to conservation of horned lizards, and how your work would benefit from this opportunity. The proposal may not exceed 1000 words. Also include a preliminary budget with any other funding sources available or received for your project. In addition, send a short resume or CV (up to 3 pages) for the lead applicant and have a single letter of reference sent to the HLCS email: [hornedlizardinfo@gmail.com](mailto:hornedlizardinfo@gmail.com). The deadline is January 15, 2025. The decision will be announced by March 1, 2025.

# 2024 Ol Rip Fest in Eastland, Texas

Each year on the first Saturday of October, HLCS has a booth at the Annual Ripfest Event in Eastland, TX. Ripfest is a small-town festival that began around the most famous horned lizard in the country. You can read the whole story about Old Rip here on the Eastland County Chamber of Commerce website: <https://www.eastlandchamber.com/history/>.



The weather was perfect for the event with a slight breeze and temperature in the 70 to 80s for the day! Leslie Nossaman (HLCS Newsletter Editor/webmaster), Shana Fredlake (HLCS Secretary), Lee Seman (HLCS Store Manager), and Lynn Seman (HLCS

Membership Officer) were at the booth to talk to the public about horned lizard conservation. The booth also offered many items from the HLCS store for sale to the public. New t-shirt colors were available with the HLCS logo as well as many "horned lizard" jewelry items which are also popular at Ripfest.



An anonymous horned lizard helping us at the booth -we never got his name!.



Leslie Nossaman showing Calvin Coolidge a horned lizard (model). The real Calvin Coolidge asked to meet Old Rip in Washington and did!



Lee Seman and Shana Fredlake selling our merchandise to raise funds and talking to people about horned lizard conservation.

The vendor booth brought in over \$1,000 in sales for the organization to help support HLCS programs and grants and was a record for sales! Hundreds of people, including former President Calvin Coolidge (see photo\*) stopped by the booth to learn more about current research, talk about "horny toads", and to buy some horned lizard "swag". The day was a wonderful celebration of this Texas legend and another opportunity to share our love of horned lizards with the public. Can't wait till next year! 🦎

# President's Message

by Cheryl Jenkins

As 2024 winds down, I find myself reflecting on my past four years on the HLCS Board of Directors. It was a time of many challenges with the ongoing pandemic, but through it all, our commitment to horned lizard conservation continued to adapt and thrive.

Over the last four years, we have provided funding for 18 horned lizard conservation projects, some for multiple years. We raised money, attended educational events (virtually and in person), continued our annual horned lizard bio blitz, and successfully held our 2024 in-person HLCS conference.

As my time as President comes to an end, I look forward to continuing to support the HLCS as a representative in California and (hopefully) as part of the board. None of our programs, or the Society as a whole, could function without our wonderful board of directors, members, volunteers, donors, and grant recipients. I am so grateful to all of you and encourage you to keep doing the good work!

The HLCS Board elections are happening this month! We are seeking to fill President Elect, Secretary, Director at Large, and Treasurer positions. If you are interested in being part of the HLCS Board, please reach out for more information. It has been a fun and fulfilling role for me these past four years and I look forward to welcoming the next generation of horned lizard enthusiasts to the board.

The window to apply to our 2025 HLCS Grant Program will begin in December 2024, so get those applications ready! We do offer grant funding to projects associated with and outside of academia, so if you have a project involving horned lizard conservation, please consider applying for a grant. You can find the forms and directions on our website. Please reach out if you have any questions about the grant program.

As always, if you know of any upcoming events that might benefit from having an HLCS educational booth or sponsored field trip, or if you are interested in volunteering at any events, please let us know.

Enjoy the rest of 2024!

*Thank you, Cheryl, for your leadership on the Board for 4 years and expanding our programs, managing through the aftereffects of the pandemic, ensuring we had an amazing conference, and keeping the focus on the mission of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society. You have made a big difference!*





**Return Service Requested**

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PLEASE JOIN US! Students/Seniors: \$10; Regular: \$25; Contributing: \$50; Lifetime: \$300

Families: \$25 for the first person and \$10 for each additional member

HLCS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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