

# SCOUTER Magazine Presents Rio Grande Council's Laguna Station

**EVERY YEAR**, thousands of high school and college students flock to the gulf shore paradise of South Padre Island during Spring Break. Located at the very southern tip of Texas, on the warm, sandy shores of the Gulf of Mexico, South Padre Island attracts anyone seeking surf, sandy beaches, sailing, gulf-fishing, a suntan, or even just plain fun!

Amidst this tourist mecca, those same gulf paradise experiences now await any Scout troop that wishes to turn its next long-term camp into an oceanside adventure. The Rio Grande Council, based in Harlingen, Texas, operates the Laguna Madre High Adventure Station, and offers 11 months of program to the Scouting community. While most of the activity occurs between June and August, short-term weekend programs are available in the spring and fall.

The base is just 13 miles from the mouth of the Rio Grande river— the border between Mexico and the United States. Laguna Station itself is on a peninsula that overlooks the Brazos Santiago Pass, the Gulf of Mexico, and Laguna Madre

("mother lagoon" *en español*). This wonderful location offers plenty of opportunity for fishing in the bay waters, rolling surf, a remarkable array of marine life, and enough sea shells for everyone to leave with a pocketful!

However, Station Director Glenn Harrison explains that the land acreage of the island base is *not* what's important; it's the program! Laguna Station was created to serve an ever growing demand for ocean aquatics adventures in Scouting. Fishing trips, aircraft carriers, SCUBA certifications, sailing trips, sea kayak touring, and much more have helped earn Laguna a reputation that is rivaling that of BSA's famed Florida National High Adventure Seabase! All of this program is brought to Scouting by a staff that includes a full time director, part-time marine biologist and over 30 high school and college-aged staffers. Local fishermen also work with the Station staff to create a meaningful experience for each Scout by sharing their careful skills and knowledge of the local ecosystem.

Much of the activity focuses on deep-sea aquatics and the abundance of marine life. Fishing and sailing excursions of up to ten days are launched from Laguna Station, on sailboats as large as 52 feet. The ten day excursions stop off at Port Mansfield and Corpus Christi, and include a visit to the Aircraft Carrier U.S.S. Lexington, and the Texas State Aquarium. Six-to-ten day SCUBA certifications— which climax with open-water dives in the Gulf of Mexico— are available to Scouts 14 years and older; snorkeling is available to all Scouts.

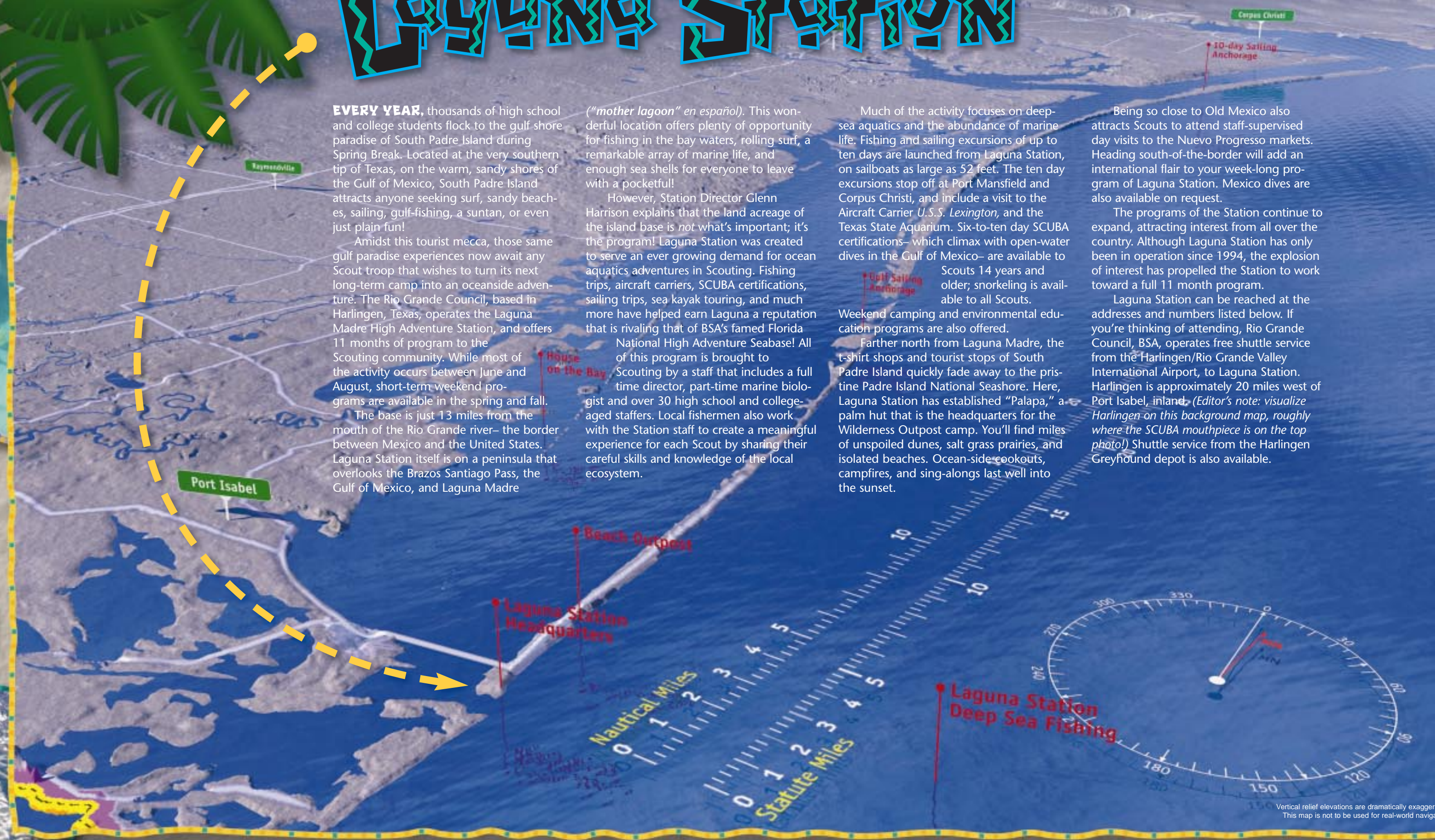
Weekend camping and environmental education programs are also offered.

Farther north from Laguna Madre, the t-shirt shops and tourist stops of South Padre Island quickly fade away to the pristine Padre Island National Seashore. Here, Laguna Station has established "Palapa," a palm hut that is the headquarters for the Wilderness Outpost camp. You'll find miles of unspoiled dunes, salt grass prairies, and isolated beaches. Ocean-side cookouts, campfires, and sing-alongs last well into the sunset.

Being so close to Old Mexico also attracts Scouts to attend staff-supervised day visits to the Nuevo Progreso markets. Heading south-of-the-border will add an international flair to your week-long program of Laguna Station. Mexico dives are also available on request.

The programs of the Station continue to expand, attracting interest from all over the country. Although Laguna Station has only been in operation since 1994, the explosion of interest has propelled the Station to work toward a full 11 month program.

Laguna Station can be reached at the addresses and numbers listed below. If you're thinking of attending, Rio Grande Council, BSA, operates free shuttle service from the Harlingen/Rio Grande Valley International Airport, to Laguna Station. Harlingen is approximately 20 miles west of Port Isabel, inland. (*Editor's note: visualize Harlingen on this background map, roughly where the SCUBA mouthpiece is on the top photo!*) Shuttle service from the Harlingen Greyhound depot is also available.



Vertical relief elevations are dramatically exaggerated. This map is not to be used for real-world navigation.

## Exciting Programs at Laguna High Adventure Station!

**5-DAY SAILING ADVENTURE**  
Sail on a 52' boat! Ply the waters of Laguna Madre and the Gulf of Mexico in a 52' sailing vessel! You'll cook full meals in the self-contained galley, bunk below decks, and go fishing and snorkeling on the north end of the island!

**10-DAY SAILING ADVENTURE**  
Go even further! A MUST for the more adventurous sailor! You'll log over 200 miles, visit the Texas State Aquarium and the USS Lexington Aircraft Carrier, and still have plenty of time for deep-sea trolling, snorkeling, and wide-open sailing.

**GULF FISHING ADVENTURE**  
Cast your line in the shallow waters of Laguna Madre one day, surf-fish the next, then drop bait from the pier at House on the Bay! It all culminates with a deep-sea fishing trip for king mackerel, dorado, and other blue-water species.

Laguna Station can answer any questions you have about fees, camping season, and additional program offerings. Contact Laguna at any of the numbers and addresses below:

**LAGUNA STATION**  
P. O. BOX 2424 • HARLINGEN, TEXAS 78550  
OFFICE: 956/ 423-0250 • FAX: 956/ 421-4950  
<http://members.aol.com/lagunabs>

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