Welcome to Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. Over 800,000 acres await your exploration and enjoyment. From an elevation of less than 2,000 feet along the Rio Grande to nearly 8,000 feet in the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend includes massive canyons, vast desert expanses, forested mountains, and an ever-changing river. Here you can explore one of the last remaining wild corners of the United States.

A Big Bend experience is not solely the result of the efforts of the National Park Service. Many individuals and organizations partner with the park to provide park visitors a quality experience. They all work hard and play a role in the park operation.

The park recognizes in this issue of the Paisano a few of our partners, but even so, this issue can’t recognize them all. From larger organizations like Big Bend Natural History Association, Friends of Big Bend, and Forever Resorts, to the scientists who research the park, and individual volunteers who give of their personal time, the millions of visitors who have come to the park since the 1940s have all had their experience shaped by our partners. Partners care about Big Bend, share a vision, and work together to support the mission of the National Park Service and Big Bend National Park.

This issue of the Paisano is dedicated to our partners and explores a few of the ways they have contributed to your visit today.

Superintendent’s Message
As Big Bend’s superintendent, I want to recognize the work of all of our park partners and commend them for their service. They have done so much that a list of all their contributions is more that can be chronicled in the Paisano. A national park, particularly one the size and complexity of Big Bend, takes the work of many people to be successfully managed. During your time here, perhaps take a moment or two to consider how partners have influenced your visit. Some partners raise funds for park efforts, others volunteer their time, yet others provide services that we all need in this remote corner of Texas. These people all have something in common; they share a dedication to Big Bend’s mission. Perhaps you are considering becoming a park partner yourself. I look forward to continuing to work with all of Big Bend’s partners into the future and developing new relationships as the world around us evolves. The 21st century presents many challenges and we, along with our partners, will find solutions. Big Bend National Park would not be the same if it were not for our many partners.

Superintendent William E. Wellman
Big Bend and the Border

At once a stone’s throw and a world away, a visit to Boquillas, Mexico, was once part of the Big Bend experience.

Viewing the sunset against the Sierra del Carmen mountains is a signature Big Bend experience, underlined by the irony that the mountains aren’t a part of the National Park; in fact, they aren’t even located in the United States. In addition to defining the curve that forms the Big Bend, the Rio Grande also serves as the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. Throughout much of its history the border along the Rio Grande has often been fluid, allowing people of both countries to come and go as needed. However, the border is an artificial boundary imposed on the natural environment, and as such is subject to political and social pressures that continue to evolve.

Increased border restrictions have led to a number of important changes that affect the international boundary in Big Bend. A visit to Big Bend is a wonderful experience to learn about the park’s history and to experience a wide variety of natural history and recreation options. The park’s border with Mexico is part of our shared landscape and a chance to experience and learn about our neighbors. A few simple steps can help keep the park safe for everyone who is here.

Crossings Remain Closed

As a result of a 2002 U.S. Customs and Border Protection decision, there are still no authorized crossings in Big Bend National Park. Crossing at Boquillas, Santa Elena, or other locations along the Rio Grande is prohibited. The closest legal ports of entry are Del Rio and Presidio, Texas. Perhaps a legal port of entry will be established in the park in the years to come. Meanwhile, the U.S. Attorney’s Office has indicated that it will prosecute any criminal violations regarding any illegal crossings. If you enter the United States at any point within Big Bend National Park, you may be liable for a fine of not more than $5,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

When Visiting A Border Park

Big Bend National Park shares the border with Mexico for 18 miles. This is a remote region. Visitors should be aware that drug smuggling routes pass through the park.

Each year hundreds of people travel north through the park seeking to enter the United States. It is possible you could encounter an individual or small group trying to walk through the park with little or no water. Please do not stop, but instead, note your location and immediately call 911 or contact a ranger as soon as possible. Lack of water is a life-threatening emergency in the desert.

Fees: Your Dollars at Work

Why Do Parks Charge A Fee?

Much of the funding for Big Bend and other national parks comes from American taxpayers. However, protecting this land and ensuring that you have a safe, enjoyable and educational experience costs more than tax base provides. Therefore, the U.S. Congress determined that people who use federal lands should pay fees to help offset the difference.

Where Does Your Money Go?

Twenty percent of the money collected from entrance and camping fees is redistributed to units of the National Park System that do not charge fees to assist in their upkeep and to upgrade those areas. Eighty percent of the money collected here stays in Big Bend National Park.

How Is Your Money Used?

Your entrance and campground fees help Big Bend National Park complete important projects that directly benefit you and other park visitors.

Recent Projects at Big Bend Made Possible By Your Fees:

• Major expansion of the Panther Junction visitor center
• Caitlín historic district exhibits
• Emory Peak Trail rehabilitation project to reduce erosion

Current Projects:

• North Rosillos/Harte Ranch wayside exhibit
• Backcountry campsite construction

Border Merchants

Mexican Nationals may approach you from across the river to sell souvenir items (walking sticks, bracelets, crafts, etc.). If you agree to look at or purchase their items and the Mexicans cross the river, they may be arrested for being in the U.S. illegally. They will be held until deported back to Mexico through Presidio (100 miles away). Mexican merchants will be arrested for illegal commercial operations which may result in a fine and/or additional incarceration while awaiting adjudication prior to deportation.

Items purchased will be considered contraband and seized by officers when encountered. Rocks, minerals, archeological items, etc. cannot be purchased, imported, or possessed in the national park.

In addition, illegal trade impacts the resources of the park in a number of negative ways, including the creation of social trails that crush plants along the river and cause erosion of riverbanks, and an increase in garbage and contaminants along the Rio Grande watershed. Supporting this illegal activity contributes to continued damage of the natural resources along the Rio Grande, and jeopardizes the possibility of reopening the crossings in the future.

Sotol walking sticks and other handcrafted items made in Boquillas, Mexico can now be purchased legally at a number of sales outlets inside and outside of the park.

Entrance Fees at Big Bend National Park

| Single Person Noncommercial Vehicle | $20 (valid for 7 days) |
| Single person entry on foot, bike, motorcycle, commercial vehicle, etc. | $10 per person (valid for 7 days) |
| Big Bend Annual Pass | $40 (valid for one year from month of purchase) |
| Interagency Annual Pass | $80 (This pass will be valid for one year from month of purchase for entrance fees to federal public land fee areas) |

All currently valid passes will be accepted until expired, including the Golden Eagle Pass, Golden Age Passport, and Golden Access Passport.
The Big Bend Natural History Association (BBNHA) was established in 1969 as a private, non-profit organization. The Association’s goal is to educate the public and increase their understanding and appreciation of the Big Bend area and what it represents in terms of our historical and natural heritage. BBNHA champions the mission of the National Park Service of interpreting the scenic, scientific, and historic values of Big Bend and encourages research related to those values. The Association conducts seminars and publishes, prints, or otherwise provides books, maps, and interpretive materials on the Big Bend region. Proceeds fund exhibits, films, interpretive programs, seminars, museum activities, and research.

For those who prefer to shop in person, or during your visit, BBNHA operates sales outlets at Amistad National Recreation Area in Del Rio, Texas, and in Big Bend National Park Visitor Centers at the Chisos Basin, Panther Junction, Persimmon Gap, Castolon, and Rio Grande Village.

When preparing for a future visit, or remembering a previous trip, BBNHA offers both phone and internet sales. Phone orders can be placed during business hours seven days a week by calling 432 477-2236. Please remember a previous trip, BBNHA offers both phone and internet sales. Phone orders can be placed during business hours seven days a week by calling 432 477-2236. Please browse through our online store at www.bigbendbookstore.org

You can enjoy safe, secure shopping in the comfort of your home. We offer many categories, authors, subjects, and titles.

Ongoing BBNHA projects include:

- Publish trail guides, brochures and the this newspaper
- Provide annual grants for research projects and administer grants and gifts received for the park
- Support the park’s volunteer, Junior Ranger, and educational outreach programs

Join us and support your park!

- Become a member and create a lasting relationship with Big Bend National Park.
- Do more with your dues!
  - Purchase a dual annual membership in both BBNHA and the Friends of Big Bend National Park for only $100.
- Member Benefits
  - Membership benefits include a 15% discount in BBNHA bookstores; a 10% discount on most seminars; a subscription to the Big Bend Paisano; a current Big Bend calendar; discounts at many other association bookstores in other national park sites; and the opportunity to support scientific, educational and research programs in Big Bend.
- Annual Dues
  - Name _____________________________
  - Individual $50
  - Associate $100
  - Corporate $200
  - Joint (W/ FBBNP) $100
- Life Membership
  - Individual/Family $500
  - Corporate $1000
  - Benefactor $2500
  - Renewal
  - New Member
  - Address _____________________________
  - City _____________________________ State ________ Zip ________
  - Card Number _____________________________ Exp. Date ________
  - Signature _____________________________
  - Make checks payable to BBNHA or charge to: Visa Mastercard Discover
- Get In On the $30-Per-Plate Fund-raiser
  - Big Bend custom license plates are now available for your car, truck or motorcycle from the state of Texas and most of the cost will be used to help preserve and protect Big Bend National Park, one of the world’s last great wildernesses. It may be the most fulfilling contribution you’ll ever make.

Friends of Big Bend

Founded in 1996, the Friends of Big Bend National Park is a private not-for-profit organization with a mission to support, promote, and raise funds for Big Bend National Park in partnership with the National Park Service and other supporters who value the unique qualities of this national resource on the Rio Grande. The Friends of Big Bend National Park has funded a range of critical projects, including wildlife research programs, the purchase of equipment to monitor air and water quality, and the construction and renovation of Park infrastructure.

The Friends of Big Bend National Park host a yearly membership event and in-park tour, which is an excellent opportunity to get to know the board of directors governing the organization and perhaps even to get more involved with the group. Also, several fund-raising events occur in the major Texas cities throughout the year and are another opportunity to get involved and help with the mission of the Friends Group. The group’s website is a great place to look for upcoming events and current happenings.

Volunteers in the Park

Volunteers are a valuable and valued part of our operation and our community. Last year over 200 volunteers contributed approximately 45,000 hours of service to Big Bend National Park. Some service groups come for a few days, other volunteers stay for months. Some are students; others are retirees looking for adventure during their “golden years.”

Most of these volunteers work in visitor centers and as campground hosts; however, volunteers also help in science and resource management, maintenance, and administration. Regardless of age or background, these folks share a desire to make a positive contribution to the preservation and management of Big Bend National Park.

Honor Roll

Join us in thanking the following individuals and organizations who have recently donated 100 or more hours in volunteer service to Big Bend:

- Steve Eheman
- Tina Eheman
- Barney Ghim
- Paula Jamps
- Jan Bargon
- Michelle Casen
- Patricia Wheelless
- Barbara Holliday
- Christine Harris
- Debbie Ambrose
- Reine Worsie
- Elaine and John Jonker
- Ron and Jane Payne
- Ted and Maryann Rowan
- Bob and Ruthie Henderson
- Margaret and Phil Hodgens
- Roy Ellis
- Aletha and Kenny Ellis
- Linda and Kem Sutton
- Mike and Nancy Cae
- Pat and Marshall McCall
- Carol and Don O’Brien
- Mark Kirtley
- Bob and Kay Foster
- Linda Richardson
- Jerry Turner
- Elton and Esther Horn
- Jim and Ginny Herrick
- Richard McAway
- Howard Gunther
- Ann Rappo
- Paul Bloom
- Ed Navarro
- Danny and Diane Edwards
- Jenny Krouse
- James Evens
- Angie Dean
- Ben Weilson
- Millywaya Wilson
- Elliot Luttrell-Williams
- Catherine Tennial
- Chris Cartrill
- Elena Cervellone
- Sam Beasley
- Natalie Craig

The Big Bend Paisano 3
News Briefs

Sublett Fire and Gila Smokejumpers

On the afternoon of May 20th at 5:00 PM lightning ignited a wildfire 3 miles west of Castolon and south of the road to Santa Elena Canyon. The fire ended up burning over 100 acres within the historic Sublett Farming District along the river. The fire was allowed to burn within defined boundaries, and cultural sites in those areas were carefully cleared so that no impact occurred. Benefits of this fire included removing vegetation, such as invasive and exotic species of saltcedar and giant river cane, from the former Sublett farmland. Due to the beneficial nature of the fire, it was watched carefully but allowed to burn until it finally burned out during a rainstorm in early June. The Sublett fire also permitted an historic training event. The very first smokejumpers to jump from a plane into a fire zone in the history of the state of Texas happened in the park during this fire. The smoke jumpers were dispatched from Silver City, New Mexico, on May 30, 2010. A total of five smokejumpers landed safely at approximately 9:15 AM on May 30th in the vicinity of the Sublett Fire. The five smokejumpers jumped from a vintage DC-3 that was built in 1946 and maintained by the US Forest Service. The Gila Smokejumpers have worked from Silver City, New Mexico, since 1954 as part of a seasonal crew made up of jumpers from bases throughout the western United States. This jump also has the distinction of being the most southern fire jump ever made in the U.S. The park has entered a new era in fire management, using a natural and healthy force to help park environments such as the river riparian corridor to recover from overgrowth that has negatively impacted park resources. Rangers will also be burning exotic cacti and saltcedar along the river to allow the river to flow more naturally and help reestablish animal habitat.

Big Bend National Park Assists with the Gulf Oil Spill Emergency

When it was clear that oil from the Deepwater Horizon’s broken wellhead would hit national parks along the Gulf Coast, NPS Director Jon Jarvis sent out a call to all national park staff members to recruit those with expert skills who could assist. Two Big Bend employees, biologist Raymond Skiles and chief of interpretation David Elkowitz, asked if they could help. Big Bend superintendent Bill Willman agreed, and sent Skiles and Elkowitz to Gulf Islands National Seashore, along the Florida and Mississippi coast. Gulf Islands is home to many sensitive animals that could be severely impacted by the spilled oil. People all across the country were concerned about the park and its wildlife and had many questions that needed answers. While much attention has been paid to the heroic efforts of those who toiled to clean oil from sea birds and other animals, one of the lesser known but critical functions in an emergency is that of a public information officer. The job of the PIO is to share accurate information, correct misinformation, and stop rumors. Skiles and Elkowitz arrived and put themselves through a crash course learning everything they could about the park and other nearby affected areas, got to know the various government entities such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and their various roles, where the oil was, and how it was impacting the region. They organized that information and made sure that it was shared with the public. They talked with work crews and concerned local citizens, answered phone calls, and gave interviews to members of the news media. When an emergency like the oil spill impacts the lives and livelihoods of so many, it is easy to overlook those who ensure that information is available. Most people can think of an emergency they have been involved with and how important it was to know accurate information about what was going on. Skiles and Elkowitz worked hard to share that information and help people understand the emergency. Along with many other PIOs, Big Bend staff members were able to help ensure that as many people as possible knew what was happening to a precious national park resource. They worked 10-14 hours each day, for 14 straight days, without a single day off until they were relieved by a fresh crew of PIOs.

New Picnic Area at the Fossil Bone Exhibit

Friends of Big Bend National Park raised $35,000 to create a much-needed picnic area between Panther Junction and Persimmon Gap. The money came from the special Big Bend state license plate available through the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles. The funding bought materials, paid for the slab pour, the ramada structure, and labor. Additional friends funding was spent on further plans for the area. In the future, the site will have a new and improved fossil bone exhibit. The NPS will pay for a new restroom at the site as well, as there is no bathroom between Panther Junction and Persimmon Gap.

Patio Improvement at the Chisos Mountains Lodge

Forever Resorts, LLC, has made a major improvement to the outdoor dining experience at the Chisos Mountains Lodge. The scenic lodge was constructed in the 1960s, and in recent years the original concrete patio had cracked and shifted, creating a tripping hazard. A new patio has been poured, which also removed some stairs that presented an obstacle for mobility-impaired visitors. New low walls around the patio were covered by stonework in the style of the historic 1930s cabins built by the CCC. The improvements were funded by Forever Resorts, LLC.

A great place for a picnic and a view toward the Chisos and a chance to explore the earth’s past.

Teacher - Ranger - Teacher: Exceptional Partners for Unique Needs

For the past two summers, Big Bend TRT Molly McCormick and Jane Dignan explored the resources, the people and events that shaped BBNP. They hiked, drove, or flew over and through the Chihuahuan Desert and Chisos Mountains; boated on the Rio Grande; and discovered the natural, historical and educational opportunities found at BBNP. They shared their experiences by presenting educational outreach programs in the park and surrounding local communities. They created and presented programs to young people for the Marathon Library Summer reading program, the San Vicente ISD summer enrichment program, and at the Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University. The ideals and knowledge they learned as rangers will then be presented throughout the school year and during National Park Week when they will don their NPS ranger uniforms to present programs at their school and community.

Molly and Jane note that their experiences as TRTs have greatly enriched their personal and professional lives. Molly agreed with Jane: “What we have gained through this experience will be multiplied in our classrooms ten times over. Our national parks can offer a life-changing experience and it is our job to share that with our students.”

Students at Delta Academy do not get to take field trips; they live a regimented lifestyle and have visiting hours. Delta Academy is a juvenile detention center school in El Paso and Jane Dignan is the science teacher there. In a recent interview, Jane noted, “My students’ lives are in some form of turmoil and it is my job to create an atmosphere in which they become engaged in learning rather than dwelling on their own personal troubles. It is a real challenge at times. I took a flight over Big Bend National Park with the park pilot and took a lot of pictures from the plane. These aerial photographs form the basis of my national park study. They live a regimented lifestyle and visit our parks as a way to escape their daily routine.”

While national parks offer access to the powerful ideas, values, and meanings associated with the cultural, natural, and historical heritage of the United States, and as such offer an unparalleled educational opportunity, not everyone can visit our parks. One popular NPS sponsored program which brings the national parks to the classroom is called Teacher Ranger Teachers (TRTs). School teachers are offered a chance to learn about the National Park Service and national parks through firsthand experience working as national park rangers. TRTs then take this knowledge back to the community and classroom to share with their students and teacher colleagues.

A great place for dinner and one of the best views in Texas.

Park Rangers Jane Dignan and Molly McCormick

4 The Big Bend Paisano
The Diablo Program is an important example of cooperation over our border.

Jim Kitchen, Fire Management

Fire! The park is burning. Careless cooking, burning toilet paper, or lightning could have started the blaze. The flames might be approaching the Chisos Mountains Lodge, a busy trail, or a campground. Fire-trained rangers have been called to the scene, but they won’t be enough to work around the clock and contain a large-scale fire. Alpine, the closest city one hundred miles away, only has a small volunteer fire crew. The nearest national parks are hundreds of miles away. Who can the park call for reinforcements?

The call goes to an unlikely place: a village even more remote than we are. It is a place where dogs walk across dusty streets and power lines have yet to reach. The closest firefighters are not in our county, but in Mexico. Our neighboring communities of Boquillas, San Vicente, and Santa Elena, Mexico, are home to a crew of highly skilled men known as Los Diablos—those who can walk into the fires of hell and not be burned.

This unique international agreement began twenty years ago. The initial idea was to develop a local source of firefighters who would always be ready to help fight fire in this remote park. After navigating the governmental policies involved with bringing fire crews from other nations to the United States as it is done when other countries provide fire crews for fires in the US, this dream became a reality. In 1990, the first crew of Diablos trained side by side with park personnel and earned their red cards, a certification for being wildland firefighters. Once trained as firefighters, the Diablos can be a part of a twenty-person crew. This crew includes one of Big Bend’s bilingual firefighting staff who serves as the crew boss. Under him are three squad bosses (either another Big Bend fire fighter or a bilingual Diablo), who in turn are responsible for leading a squad of four to five men. Squads from the Diablos crew are sent to work on different parts of a fire: some use chainsaws to create a fire break, while others might work the actual fireline, together working in coordination to contain or manage a fire.

The Diablos are trained to help Big Bend with more than just fires. Through funding from the Rio Grande Institute, they have additionally helped the park by treating natural areas that are being taken over by invasive plants such as the tamarisk tree, and chainsawing, burning and spreading herbicide on both sides of the river.

Being a Diablo has also given many of these men opportunities and experiences they otherwise might not have known. Since 2001, the Diablos have been able to work outside of Big Bend’s boundaries, being sent to help fires not just in other parts of Texas, but also in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, California, Oregon, Washington, and even helping in Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina. They have seen moose, mountains, and giant forests, experienced escalators, and flown in airplanes.

The Diablo program provides clear benefit for both sides of the river. Big Bend has a crew of hard-working local men who can help in an emergency. The Diablos, in return, can earn more pay from one fire season than from a year of work in Mexico. In their remote villages, it is not uncommon to earn about a dollar a day at jobs like construction. Just one twenty day hitch working on a fire,
The Civilian Conservation Corps Partnership
Faces of the young men who developed the Chisos Basin for you

Development of the Chisos Basin took place from the mid 1930s until 1941. Many of the men photographed here found themselves enlisted in the US Army at the advent of World War II, which ended the CCC period.
How many Big Bend factoids have you learned today? That there are 20-30 bears that call the park home? That 60 species of reptiles occur here? These and many other commonly asked questions would not have good answers if left only to our small Science and Resource Management (SCRM) staff. Working with many research cooperators allows all groups involved to leverage resources, enhance research and increase understanding of the park's natural and cultural resources.

When the National Park Service (NPS) was created, the driving force was to protect grand scenic vistas and places where vacationers could rejuvenate their souls. Over time, however, it became clear that there was more to these protected areas than the obvious beauty evident to any park visitor. Understanding what's 'under the hood' is critical to maintaining the integrity of these protected areas for future generations—the mission entrusted to the NPS when it was created by Congress in 1916. As the NPS explores science-based issues, bringing in outside expertise, funding, and people power is an important way for parks to accomplish their resource-preservation mandate.

Universities, non-profits, federal and state agencies—many different groups are involved with projects here in Big Bend. And the subjects aren't just charismatic species like bears and lions. Nearly 100 research permits are issued each year by the park's Science and Resource Management Division, covering a wide range of topics: plants, mammals, reptiles, insects, fossils, air quality, water quality/quantity, freshwater organisms, historic and prehistoric archaeological sites...the list goes on and on!

It is significant that most of these studies are proposed and conducted by independent researchers and not specifically recruited by park managers. Many scientists look to public lands, and national parks in particular, as preferred locations for conducting their research. The relatively long conservation history of parks, in addition to the fact that public land is often much easier to access for scientific research than privately held properties, makes places like Big Bend magnets for scientific work.

One excellent example of how partnerships can become win-win situations for many different groups is a long-term focus on the endangered Mexican long-nosed bat, *Leptonycteris nivalis*. Mexican long-nosed bats are not insectivores like Big Bend's 21 other bat species, they are nectar-feeders, using their pointy noses and long tongues to lick nectar from deep, tubular-shaped flowers. For most of the year *L. nivalis* live further south in Mexico, but in the spring females begin a long migration north, arriving here just as century-plant agaves begin to bloom. Their nectar and pollen are high-quality food sources, providing much-needed nutrients to the pregnant and lactating mothers. Eventually they settle into communal maternity caves where the young, only one per female per year, are raised. Once weaned, the juvenile bats and their mothers leave the maternity cave and continue the journey, following the century plant blooms through western Texas and New Mexico, eventually traveling back south deeper into Mexico where the flowers of tropical trees and columnar cacti await. The only known maternity colony in the United States is here in Big Bend National Park; the roost and yearly population numbers have been monitored annually since 1988 when the bat was listed as a federally endangered species.

Despite years of observation, not much is actually known about the foraging habits or migratory corridors of this species, nor about the total population size. Dr. Loren Ammerman and her colleagues from Angelo State University have long conducted the annual monitoring and related ecological studies, new data from their work may overturn long-held assumptions related to the bats' dietary requirements and exactly how and where the young are born and raised. With basic biology still somewhat of a mystery, one sad fact seems to be that known populations of *L. nivalis* are declining.

Overharvesting of Mexican agave species for alcohol production and incidental mortality related to the frequent destruction of communally-roosting vampire bats are suggested as contributing factors to the shrinking numbers. But what happens between southeastern Mexico and western Texas? Are there other roost sites, other colonies where more bats might be found? Why even ask? Apart from the inherent value of biodiversity for its own sake, the bats are a critical pollinator of the agaves that grace our mountain hillshades and that underpin the economically important industry surrounding tequila/mescal/pulque production and exportation.

In order to fill in some of the gaps in knowledge, the non-profit organization Bat Conservation International (BCI) was recruited by BBNP to help conduct a multi-year study in both the U.S. and Mexico, with the goal of identifying other colonial roost sites in the region. BCI brought international work experience, a proven track record for good field work and logistical coordination, and their extensive knowledge of bat biology and regional natural history. Funding was secured from NPS sources, with BBNP directly contributing an invaluable network of local contacts, on-site knowledge of the study area, and aerial agave surveys, helping to narrow the search area for BCI ground crews who are essentially looking for needles in a vast desert haystack. Partnerships are not limited to north of the border—Mexican private landowners, federally protected areas, and universities all have representatives working with Big Bend and BCI staff towards a successful field season.

The partners involved, from BBNP to Angelo State and BCI, believe that these kinds of collaboration are invaluable. "We wouldn't have a hope of achieving our resource preservation requirements without partners," says BBNP Wildlife Biologist Howard. BCI biologist Dr. Christina Weise feels that working with BBNP specifically, and on public lands in general, are vital for the success of her organization's research and conservation agenda: "The ability to access populations and habitats at a landscape level, the local knowledge and baseline information that park staff provide, not to mention funding—these partnerships are critical, especially in Texas where there is little public land, and private property access is often difficult for scientists to obtain."

One bonus for the BCI group was that they were able to test out new technology during the Mexican long-nose project. NOAA recently developed vehicle-mounted radar stations that are primarily meant for mobile weather data collection. An interesting side-note is that the radar can also pick up swarms of biological activity, including insects and colonial bats as they emerge at dusk from their caves. After NOAA staff member Dr. Kenneth Howard contacted BCI about a bat emergence location recorded by one of their fixed-radar weather stations, Howard and Weise realized that the new mobile radar stations could be a valuable tool to search out new bat colonies. The Big Bend project was a perfect fit for a field test. Although no new bat colonies were discovered this season, valuable data was gained from tracking (and losing) individuals foraging across Big Bend's topographically complex landscape. Often research reveals more questions than answers, but it is important to know what should be asked rather than not know at all.

From a young age we all learn the benefits of "playing nice with others." Those lessons can develop into strategic ways to enrich life's possibilities. National Parks are no different than anything else in the web of life. Even though the land may be 'protected' it will only be a spot on a map if the larger picture isn't considered and the cookie-cutter parcel is left in a vacuum. A lot of work goes into learning the facts behind the factoids; the partnerships underlying that work enrich us all.

If you would like to see what research is going on in the park, consult a list of proposals desired for Big Bend, and browse scientific projects happening in national parks across the country at http://www.nps.gov/bibe/parkmgmt/research.htm
One Day
The visitor centers at Persimmon Gap, Panther Junction, and the Chisos Basin are excellent places to begin your visit. Park staff can answer your questions, and exhibits provide additional orientation. If time allows, drive to the Chisos Basin to take in spectacular views of the Chisos Mountains. Walk the 0.3-mile self-guiding Window View Trail to get a feel for the mountain scenery and one of the best sunset views in the park.

A trip along the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive will give you a taste of the Chihuahuan Desert and will lead you to the Rio Grande. This drive highlights the geologic wonder and complexity that the Big Bend is famous for. There are many scenic overlooks and exhibits along the way. Sotol Vista, Mule Ear Overlook, and Tuff Canyon are all worthwhile stops. The short walks to the Sam Nail Ranch, Homer Wilson (Blue Creek) Ranch, and a visit to the Castolon Historic District will give you a glimpse into Big Bend’s past.

A highlight is the short walk into Boquillas Canyon—one of Big Bend’s most scenic spots. Travel to the end of the Boquillas Road near Rio Grande Village to access the trailhead. The trail affords a good view of the small Mexican village of Boquillas, thought to be named for the small cave-like holes in the cliff that look like little mouths (‘bocas’ in Spanish). Perhaps you will see Singing Victor standing on a sandbar, known to regale rafters with song. Just remember that it is illegal to purchase items from Mexican nationals or cross the river.

Three Days
With three days to spend in the park, you can explore the major roads more thoroughly and still have time for hiking. In the Basin area, consider hiking the Window Trail (5 miles round trip) or the Lost Mine Trail (4.8 miles round trip); consult the Hiker’s Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park, for sale in park visitor centers, for trail descriptions.

In addition to the Basin and Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive (see suggestions for “one day”) you can drive to Rio Grande Village, perhaps stopping at Dugout Wells along the way to walk the short Chihuahuan Desert Nature Trail. Many visitors are unaware that there is an enjoyable three-mile trail from Daniel’s Ranch to the Hot Springs. It follows the river. Alternately, the historic Hot Springs can be reached via an improved dirt road (not recommended for ‘dooley’ pickups or RVs).

The famous Balanced Rock can be found at the end of the Grapevine Hills Trail. A 15-minute drive down the Grapevine Hills dirt road will take you to the trailhead. While mostly easy, there is a steep section at the end where the balanced rock is located. A good time for pictures is the early morning or late afternoon.

One Week
With a week or more to spend in Big Bend, endless possibilities are open to you. You’ll have plenty of time to explore the roads mentioned in the previous sections, and will also have time to drive some of the “primitive” dirt roads. For these, you’ll need a high clearance or four-wheel drive vehicle. Always check at visitor centers for current road conditions, and carry appropriate gear.

The River Road, Glenn Springs Road, and Old Ore Road are some of the more popular primitive roads. A visit to Ernst Tinaja near the south end of the Old Ore Road is a Big Bend highlight. The Pine Canyon Trail, located at the end of the primitive Pine Canyon Road, is an excellent hike to experience firsthand the transition from desert to mountains.

If you don’t have high clearance or four-wheel drive, improved dirt roads such as the Old Maverick Road, Dagger Flat, and Grapevine Hills will get you “off the beaten path.” Hike the Chimneys Trail or Grapevine Hills Trail for a closer look at the desert environment.

If you’d like to explore the Chisos Mountains, trails to Root Canyon, Emory Peak, and the South rim offer good views of the park and take you into another world which seems far removed from the desert. There are plenty of opportunities for overnight backpacking along these trails. A backcountry use permit is required and can be obtained at park visitor centers.

Floating the Rio Grande
If you have the time and a spirit of adventure, you may want to consider a river trip. Some of the park’s canyons from the middle of the Rio Grande is both fascinating and gratifying. There are many possibilities, from half-day floats to extended seven-day excursions. Park Rangers can recommend a trip that meets your abilities and interests. Outfitters and equipment rental companies are listed on page 16. See “Backcountry Planning” on page 14 for additional information.

Backcountry roads
If you have a high-clearance or four wheel drive vehicle, Big Bend’s backcountry roads call for further exploration. There are over 200 miles of dirt roads in the park. Improved dirt roads like the Dagger Flat and Grapevine Hills roads are usually in good condition and accessible to normal passenger vehicles, except following rainstorms. Unimproved dirt roads, such as the Old Maverick Road, Old Ore Road, or the River Road, generally require high-clearance vehicles and/or four wheel drive. Always check current road conditions at a visitor center before traveling any of the park’s primitive roads. Standard backcountry road conditions are listed on page 14.

Enjoying Your Visit
No matter how limited your time in Big Bend, remember that you will enjoy the park more if you stop your car and explore on foot. That doesn’t mean that you have to hike miles on steep grades; there are many short, easy walks and roadside exhibits where you can stretch your legs and enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of the Chihuahuan Desert.

Hiker’s guides and road guides are available at visitor centers throughout the park, and they offer more detailed information about Big Bend’s trails and roads. Attending ranger-led walks and evening programs are also good ways to learn more about Big Bend. Check at the visitor centers and park bulletin boards for current activities.

Remember, you will NOT be able to see everything on this trip. You will probably enjoy the park more if you choose a few spots and explore them thoroughly to get a taste of what Big Bend has to offer. Then, come back again sometime to see the rest!
Take a Day Hike on Big Bend Trails

From the 7,832 foot (2,387 m) summit of Emory Peak, to the banks of the meandering Rio Grande, visitors will find over 200 miles of hiking trails in Big Bend National Park. Trails range from strenuous primitive routes through rugged desert backcountry to short handicapped-accessible pathways. Whatever your style of hiking, you can find it in abundance in Big Bend.

On this page are descriptions of some of the most popular easy and moderate hiking trails, divided by the geographic areas of the park. Most of these trails are perfect for shorter day hikes of up to several hours.

### The Chisos Mountains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Trailhead Location</th>
<th>Round Trip (mi/km)</th>
<th>Elevation (ft/m)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Window View</td>
<td>Chisos Basin Trailhead (near the Basin Stone)</td>
<td>0.3/0.5</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>Easy. Level, paved, handicapped accessible. Great mountain views. The best place in the Basin to catch sunset through the Window.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Mine</td>
<td>Basin Road mile 5 at the pass</td>
<td>4.8/7.7</td>
<td>1100/335</td>
<td>Moderate but steep. Provides excellent mountain and desert views. For those who want a shorter hike, 1 mile down this trail is a great view to the southeast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Window</td>
<td>Chisos Basin Trailhead or Basin Campground</td>
<td>5.6/9.0</td>
<td>980/299</td>
<td>Moderate with steep return. Descends to the top of the Window overlook. Great scenery and wildlife viewing. For a shorter hike, start at the Basin campground.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smoking is prohibited on all trails in the Chisos Mountains.

### Westside — Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Trailhead Location</th>
<th>Round Trip (mi/km)</th>
<th>Elevation (ft/m)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Elena Canyon</td>
<td>Ross Maxwell Drive 8 miles west of Castleton</td>
<td>1.62/6</td>
<td>850/26</td>
<td>Easy. Cressis river sand and rocks, including wading Terlingua Creek. Switchbacks ascend and then the trail gradually drops back to the river in the canyon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chimneys</td>
<td>Ross Maxwell Drive mile 13</td>
<td>4.8/7.7</td>
<td>400/122</td>
<td>Moderate due to length. Flat and scenic desert trail to rock formations. Look for rock art. No shade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mule Ears Spring</td>
<td>Ross Maxwell Drive mile 15</td>
<td>3.8/6.1</td>
<td>20/6</td>
<td>Moderate. A beautiful desert hike to a small spring. Spectacular geology and mountain/desert views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Burro Mesa Pouroff</td>
<td>Ross Maxwell Drive mile 6</td>
<td>3.65/5.75</td>
<td>300/91</td>
<td>Moderate. Walk in the wash downstream through two canyons to reach the upper lip of a waterfall that is wet only after rain. Do not take this trail when storms are likely due to a lack of escape routes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking for more hikes and information?

For information on longer, more challenging routes, or to plan an extended backpacking trip, stop by any park visitor center. A large selection of maps and guides are available and park rangers can assist you with trip preparations and backcountry permits. Visitor center bookstores carry a large selection of maps and guides. Below are a number of items that can assist in planning your Big Bend adventure.

- **Hiker’s Guide to Big Bend National Park**
  - Updated in 2005. Covers all major trails in the park, from short self-guiding nature trails to strenuous backpacking routes. $1.95

- **Guide to backpacking roads**
  - Updated in 2004. Detailed mileage logs of Old Ore Road, Glenn Spring Road and River Road. Good descriptions of historic sites and scenery. $1.95

- **Chisos Mountains Trails Map**
  - A topographic map that includes all trails in the Chisos Mountains. Includes trail lengths and descriptions. 99¢

- **A canyon float trip reveals hidden parts of the park.**

Once in a Lifetime

Santa Elena Canyon Float Trips

Distance: 19 river miles (30.4 km)

By Park Ranger Bob Smith

Before becoming a Park Ranger, I was a commercial boatman for three years with one of the local outfitters in Terlingua. I had been guiding whitewater rivers in Colorado and Utah for several years before ever putting oar to water here. I had heard about the magnificent canyons of Big Bend from other boatmen, but was not prepared for what I saw and felt once I arrived. In Colorado and Utah, whitewater rafting is fast, noisy, and filled with white-knuckle excitement. There was little time for “looking,” since the water moves much faster. The difference between those rivers and the Rio Grande is striking.

My first trip through Santa Elena was for training, but it actually changed my view of river travel. The first thing I noticed was the quiet. It was so quiet it was loud. It was also much slower, so one had time to take in the surrounding country. As a guide, I actually had time to talk with my guests, to weave stories of the natural and cultural history of the Big Bend. It was at that point I also realized that commercial outfitters are partners with the National Park Service in nurturing the appreciation of Big Bend.

As interpretive Park Rangers, we present naturalist programs multiple times a week, but time in the field can be rather limited. Law enforcement rangers are often visible in the front country but still cannot be everywhere at once. Resource managers are out in the field often, but have limited visitor contact. In this respect, the outfitters shine as park partners. They are there on a daily basis.

The guides are able to provide resource interpretation on river trips that last from several hours to more than a week, a luxury of time that park rangers are unable to match. Outfitters are also extra eyes and ears, spotting problems that can be reported and dealt with quickly, or even finding new discoveries of significant resources. Our current partners also assist park staff with search and rescue operations, medical events, and emergency medical training. The partnership we have with the local outfitters not only benefits the park itself, but also extends the available activities our visitors can choose to participate in while here and enhance their appreciation of Big Bend National Park.

One of the most exciting, most sublime, activities a visitor can do while here is a river trip. For the visitor it may be a once in a lifetime experience. Chances are, though, they will return. Outfitters provide a service to those visitors who either lack the equipment or the skills to explore a portion of the park they might not otherwise see. They give folks an opportunity to find their special place in the Big Bend. For me, on the river, it is always Santa Elena...
Hello Darkness My Old Friend

Borrowing a line from Simon and Garfunkel, dark night skies are now darker in Big Bend due to the installation of low power, less intense lighting in several areas of the park. From an aesthetic point of view, less invasive light intruding on the landscape means more stars! For the skywatcher this is a big plus. Big Bend has one of the darkest night skies in the lower 48 states, something that we are extremely proud of and carefully guard. The reason for such dark skies is rather simple: not many people. The closest major metropolitan areas are Midland-Odessa and El Paso-Juarez, which are over 240 miles away. This natural darkness greatly enhances the ability of the casual sky observer to see many more stars with the naked eye. Both amateur and professional astronomers take advantage of this, the University of Texas McDonald observatory is located in the Davis Mountains not far from here, and many astronomy groups come to Big Bend for viewing trips as well.

For many visitors, the lack of artificial light and the abundant stars visible without a telescope is just right for them. The places where they are from most likely have considerable light pollution, reducing the number of visible stars by half or more. Big Bend night skies, undiminished by light pollution, offer a clean unobstructed view of the heavens. A simple pair of binoculars will allow more details to be seen without the expense of a telescope. For visitors that want to get off the beaten path, the many backcountry campsites along the paved and unpaved roads offer excellent isolated viewing platforms for night sky observation.

The internet offers a good planning guide for timing a visit to specific celestial events. One might want to plan a trip for a specific meteor shower, eclipse, or even a predicted comet. Pianetary observation is also enhanced here due to the lack of ambient artificial light. Predictions and celestial calendars are abundant with a simple web search.

As time goes on and cities get larger, light pollution will continue to increase and dark night skies will become even more precious. Many national parks, including Big Bend, are reducing light pollution and offering education as to the value of dark night skies. It is a resource that not many thought about until recently. Many cities are also making inroads into reducing light pollution by installing guards to keep light from straying upwards and using less intensive light to reduce power consumption.

The value we place on dark night skies from an aesthetic point of view is becoming more evident by the way society is reacting to light pollution. Scientific research is also finding that artificial light has detrimental effects on the natural world as well. Steps taken to reduce light pollution can have a positive influence on everything from salamanders to birds to moths and bats. The efforts to reduce light pollution can’t help but benefit the planet.

Hopefully, the relatively unimpared planet on the natural world as well. Steps taken to reduce light pollution can’t help but benefit the planet. Hopefully, the relatively unimpared night skies of Big Bend will be there for all visitors to enjoy and appreciate for centuries to come.

Emily Peak, April 15, 2007, near local midnight. This 360-degree photo shows the Milky Way skirting the entire horizon. The Zodiacal band and gegenschein glows are visible, which are reflections of sunlight from interstellar dust. The small bright spots on the horizon line are fan-off cities such as El Paso, TX and Chihuahua City, MX, whose lights are only visible due to this time exposure photo. The park radio tower is on the right.

The vermillion flycatcher provides a splash of red in a park landscape famous for its subtle color palette. The vermillion flycatcher offers a splash of red in a park landscape famous for its subtle color palette.
There really are no problem animals—only problem people. Carelessness can kill. Don’t be responsible for the death of a wild animal. Your actions affect both Big Bend’s wildlife and future park visitors. With your help, wildlife and humans CAN live safely together in Big Bend National Park.

**Mountain Lions**
Solitary and secretive, the mountain lion is Big Bend’s top predator, and is vital in maintaining the park’s biological diversity. Everywhere you go in Big Bend, you are in the territory of at least one lion. From mountain to desert, biologists estimate that the park has a stable population of approximately two dozen lions. Within the delicate habitats of the Chihuahuan Desert, mountain lions help balance herbivores and vegetation. Research shows that these large predators help keep deer and javelina within the limits of their food resources. Without lions, the complex network of life in Big Bend would certainly be changed.

Each year, an average of 150 sightings of mountain lions are reported by the visiting public within Big Bend National Park. While over 60 percent of these sightings were along park roadways, encounters along trails have also occurred. Mountain lions live throughout the park, including the Chisos Mountains, where they sometimes use man-made trails. The best plan of action is for you to be aware of your surroundings. Watch children closely; never let them run ahead of you. Avoid hiking alone or at dusk and dawn.

A free brochure with more information about mountain lions is available at all visitor centers.

**Javelinas**
For many visitors to Big Bend National Park, seeing a javelina (pronounced hav-uh-LEE-nut) is a new experience. These curious creatures, also known as collared peccaries, are only found in the United States in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. They are covered with black, bristly hairs and generally weigh between 40 and 60 pounds. They usually travel in groups called bands that consist of 10-25 individuals. Peccaries have a highly developed sense of smell, but very poor vision. Physically, javelinas resemble pigs, but in reality, they are not closely related to pigs at all and have been genetically distinct from them for millions of years.

A javelina’s diet includes prickly pear cactus, grasses, mesquite beans, piñon pine nuts, fruits, berries, and seeds. Unfortunately however, many javelinas now include human food as part of their diet.

Every year we are seeing more and more campsites in the park raided by javelina. Although normally not aggressive, they can be when food is involved. Protect yourselves and the javelina by properly storing all your food inside a vehicle or in the food storage lockers provided in the campgrounds. Do not leave coolers or food boxes unattended on picnic tables or in a tent. Flatten tents when you are away from your campsite. It is important that javelinas and all park animals eat their natural food sources to stay healthy and safe. With your help, these unique animals can continue to thrive and thrill park visitors for years to come.

**Black Bears**
The return of black bears to Big Bend National Park is a success story for both the bears and the park. Native to the Chisos Mountains, bears disappeared from this area by the 1940s. After an absence of nearly fifty years, bears began returning to the park from Mexico in the late 1980s. Today, wildlife biologists estimate that between 15-20 black bears may live in the park.

Black bears are omnivorous; their normal diet is comprised of large amounts of nuts, fruits, sotol and yucca hearts, and smaller quantities of small mammals, reptiles, and carrion. Bears normally avoid humans, but bears that learn to get food from human sources often become aggressive in their attempts to get more “people” food. Rangers may have to kill bears that lose their fear of people and endanger humans in their attempts to get our food.

Big Bend has made it easy to keep edible items away from bears. Campers at the Chisos Basin Campground, at High Chisos backpacking sites, and at some primitive roadside campsites will find bearproof storage lockers for storing all edibles. Hard-sided vehicles are also suitable for storing edible items. All dumpsters throughout the park are bearproof, as well.

A free brochure with more information about black bears is available at all visitor centers.
Information and Services

Ranger Programs
Join a park ranger for a guided hike, evening slide show, talk, or workshop on Big Bend's natural and cultural history. These free programs are offered most days. Consult the Interpretive Activities Schedule posted on visitor center and campground bulletin boards for more information.

Camper Stores
Forever Reserves LLC operates camper stores ear-round at three locations in the park: Castolon, the Chisos Basin, and Rio Grande Village. Groceries, camping supplies and souvenirs are available in all locations. The gas station at Panther Junction also has a limited selection of groceries.

Banking
There are NO banking facilities in Big Bend National Park. ATMs are located in the park at the Chisos Mountains Lodge and the Rio Grande Village Store. The nearest bank is located in Study Butte, 26 miles west of park headquarters. Most stores accept major credit cards; however, some local services accept only cash. It is advisable to have small bills ($1, $5, $10, $20) since larger bills are often difficult to change.

Gas Stations
Gasoline is available at two locations in the park operated by Forever Reserves LLC. The Panther Junction station offers gas and diesel. The gas station at Rio Grande Village offers unleaded fuel and propane.

Post Office
A full-service Post Office is located at the Panther Junction headquarters, across the porch from the visitor center entrance. A mail drop is also available in front of the Chisos Basin store. Open M-F daily 8am - 6pm and 8am-4pm except federal holidays.

WiFi/Public Phones
Wireless internet is available at the Chisos Mountains Lodge and the Rio Grande Village Store. Public phones are located at visitor centers, campgrounds, camper stores, and the Chisos Mountains Lodge.

Camping

Tent Camping
The National Park Service operates campgrounds at Rio Grande Village, the Chisos Basin, and Castolon. The cost is $4.00 per night for a site. Campsite fees can be paid in cash, personal checks, or credit card. Campers are also available at primitive backcountry campsites in the Chisos Mountains and along backcountry roads. High-clearance or 4-wheel drive vehicles are necessary to reach most road sites. Backcountry permits are required and can be obtained in person at park visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance (see page 14).

Camping areas are often full during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, as well as during spring break in March or April.

Trailers & RVs
All park campgrounds can accommodate trailers and RVs, but vehicle lengths have a great deal to do with safely reaching the campground and finding a suitable space. The only hookups available in Big Bend National Park are at Rio Grande Village in the 25-site, Rio Grande Village RV Park operated by Forever Reserves LLC. Although there is no size restriction, your vehicle must be equipped with water and electrical hookups as well as a three-inch sewer connection. Register at the store. No advance reservations.

Near the RV park is the 100-site Rio Grande Village Campground operated by the National Park Service. Water, flush toilets, and a dump station are available. Set in a large grove of cottonwoods, the campground is adjacent to the Rio Grande. Many of the sites are pull-throughs. Generator use is limited from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm daily. A no-generator use area is also designated.

The 60-site Chisos Basin Campground is rugged and hilly. The sites are small and most are not suited to recreational vehicles or trailers. The road to the Basin is steep and curvy, especially at Panther Pass—the road’s highest point. The road into the campground is a 15 percent grade. Trailers longer than 20 feet and RVs longer than 24 feet are not recommended.

Cottonwood Campground, near Castolon, offers pit toilets and portable water, but no hookups or dump station. Cottonwood is a NO-generator campground. Big Bend’s unpaved roads are generally unsuitable for RVs and trailers. Overnight camping in any primitive site requires a backcountry permit, which can be obtained in person at park visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance (see page 14 for more information).

No Fires
Ground fires and wood fires are prohibited throughout the park. Use only gas stoves or charcoal within a BBQ grill. Pack out all evidence of use, including ash. In the backcountry, charcoal fires are only allowed at roadside campsites and are prohibited in the High Chisos or zone camping areas.

Showers and Laundry
Public showers and laundry facilities are located at the Rio Grande Village store.

Cell Phones
Limited cell phone coverage is available in the Big Bend area. Do not depend on your phone to work in the Chisos Basin or remote portions of the park.

Recycling
Please use the recycling cans provided in campgrounds, around stores, and near visitor centers. On average, the park recycles around 100,000 pounds of material each year. Every pound of material that can be recycled means one less pound buried in the park landfill. Please recycle!

Information and Services

Developed Campgrounds at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elevation (ft/meters)</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Nightly Fee</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Registration</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chisos Basin</td>
<td>5,401 / 1,646</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$14.00*</td>
<td>Flush toilets, dump station</td>
<td>Self-pay station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottonwood</td>
<td>2,169 / 661</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$14.00*</td>
<td>Pit toilets, no generator use allowed</td>
<td>Self-pay station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande Village</td>
<td>1,850 / 564</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>$14.00*</td>
<td>Flush toilets, dump station</td>
<td>Self-pay station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande Village RV</td>
<td>1,850 / 564</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$27.00 and up</td>
<td>Full hookups</td>
<td>RGV Camper Store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $7.00 with an eligible Federal Recreation Pass

Accessibility
All visitor centers are accessible. Wheelchair accessible campfires and restrooms are located in the Chisos Basin and Rio Grande Village Campgrounds. The Chisos Mountains Lodge restaurant is accessible, as are some motel rooms. A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf is available at park headquarters. Employees with sign language abilities may be available. Some ranger-led programs are also accessible. The Window View Trail is paved and fairly level. A brochure on accessibility is available at all visitor centers.

12 The Big Bend Paisano
**Pets in the Park**

**Pets in a Wilderness Park**

Having a pet with you will limit your activities and explorations in the park. In addition, desert temperatures and predators are a serious threat to your pet’s well being. Please keep in mind the following points when bringing a pet to the park:

- A National Park is a refuge for the animals and plants living within it. Even if your pet doesn’t chase animals, dogs present the image and scent of a historical predator. The result is stress on native wildlife.

- Keep your pet on a leash no longer than six feet in length (or in a cage at all times). Pets are not allowed on park trails, or anywhere off established roadsides. Pets may not be left unattended in the park.

- Pet etiquette and park regulations require that you always clean up after your pet and dispose of waste in trash receptacles.

- Predator such as coyote, copotes, javelina, and mountain lions CAN and DO kill pets here. Even large dogs cannot defend themselves against such predators.

Remember, desert heat is deadly. Do NOT leave your pet alone in a vehicle. Pets are not allowed on trails, off roads or on the main roads.

**Kennels**

The following kennel and veterinary services operate in the greater Big Bend area:

- **Alpine Veterinary Clinic**
  Alpine, Texas
  (432) 837-3888

- **Alpine Small Animal Clinic**
  Alpine, Texas
  (432) 837-5416

**Kensons**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite when leaving;

- Dispose of Waste Properly
  Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 150 feet away from water, toilet, and campsites. Cover and disguise the cat-hole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

- Leave What You Find
  Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, wildflowers and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

- Minimize Campfire Impacts
  Campfires are not allowed in Big Bend National Park. In order to cook foods you may use a backpacking stove, portable fuel stove or the barbecue grills in your campsite.

- Respect Wildlife
  Observe Big Bend’s wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Pets are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets should be on leash and under supervision at all times.

- Be Considerate of Other Visitors
  Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature’s sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

**Leaves No Trace in Big Bend**

**Recommendations**

- Be Safe
  Be sure to talk to your children about safe behavior before you begin hiking or exploring the park. Require children to walk with adults, rather than by themselves. Keep all your children with you and stand as a group. Desert vegetation can be sharp, have a first aid kit and tweezers handy. Please see pages 11 and 15 for additional safety information.

- Hike a Trail
  Many park trails are suitable for families. Consult the listing of Easy and Moderate Hikes on page 9. For children in strollers, consider the Window View Trail, a paved ¼-mile loop trail that begins at the Chisos Basin trailhead. Remember to watch children closely and never let them run ahead or lag behind.

- Swim in the Rio Grande
  If you really want to swim, Balmorhea State Park (about a three-hour drive north of Big Bend) boasts the “world’s largest spring-fed swimming pool.” Contact Balmorhea State Park at 432 375-2370 for more information.

- Become a Junior Ranger!
  Learn desert secrets, identify the parts of a cactus, and discover what javelina eat! The Big Bend Junior Ranger program is designed for kids of all ages. Through activities, games, and puzzles, kids can have fun as they learn about the park. They can also earn a badge or patch, a bookmark, and a certificate.

- Is there any place to swim in the park?
  Big Bend is a desert park; water is a precious commodity here and often difficult to find. Swimming in the Rio Grande is not recommended. See page 15 for important water safety information.

- Get kids involved in ranger-led programs. These include guided hikes, slide programs, bird walks, and explorations of various park features. Check the schedule at any visitor center to make sure you take advantage of all the available programs. Stop by any visitor center for further suggestions.

- Explore!
  Big Bend’s habitats range from the Chihuahuan Desert to the Rio Grande to the Chisos Mountains, and all are rich with plants, animals, and stories of human history, giving children plenty of opportunity to explore.

- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

- Plan ahead and prepare.
  Plan big and think small. Plan on high desert temperatures in the summer with little to no shade, in the winter freezing temperatures are possible in the Chisos Mountains. Schedule your visit to avoid peak season. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
  Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, and gravel. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 yards from springs, creek beds, and tinajas. Good campsites are found, not made. While on the trail, walk in single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Keep campsites small. Focus on areas where vegetation is absent.

- Leave What You Find
  Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, wildflowers and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

- Minimize Campfire Impacts
  Campfires are not allowed in Big Bend National Park. In order to cook foods you may use a backpacking stove, portable fuel stove or the barbecue grills in your campsite.

- Respect Wildlife
  Observe Big Bend’s wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Pets are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets should be on leash and under supervision at all times.

- Be Considerate of Other Visitors
  Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature’s sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

- Leave No Trace in Big Bend

- It’s not just about today—do your part to maintain the resources of Big Bend exactly as you see them so that future visitors can do the same.

- The Big Bend Paisano 13
Backcountry Planning

Getting a Permit
A permit is required for all river use, horse use, and overnight backcountry camping, and can be obtained in person only, up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Permits can be written for as many as fourteen (14) consecutive nights in the backcountry. Park staff can assist you with trip planning based on your needs and current trail conditions. Permits can be obtained at all visitor centers during normal operating hours.

Overnight Use Fee
A $25.00 per night fee is required for all overnight backcountry use permits, including multi-day river trips, and overnight backcountry camping. This fee is payable when the permit is issued, and all fees collected go to projects to improve or protect the backcountry experience, including hardening/improving river access points, backcountry campsites maintenance, and trail maintenance.

Plan Ahead
Detailed information on backcountry campsites in the Chisos Mountains and along the backcountry roads is available on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/bibe. A wide variety of maps, books, hiking guides and river guides is available for purchase at park visitor centers. If you would like to order them in advance of your trip, call the Big Bend Natural History Association at 432-477-2396 or visit their online bookstore at www.bigbendbookstore.org.

Backcountry Water
The dry desert air quickly uses up the body’s water reserves. Each hiker should carry and drink a minimum of one gallon of water for each day they are in the backcountry. Spigots for drinking water are available at all visitor centers. Big Bend is a desert environment. Springs and rianas (depressions in rock where water collects) are rare and often unreliable. Water should be filtered. Every gallon removed from backcountry water sources is one less for the wildlife which depend on them. Please carry enough water to supply your own needs—don’t risk your life by depending on desert springs. Caching water is recommended for extended hiking trips in the desert.

Horses
Visitors are welcome to bring and use their horses in the park. A stock-use permit is required and may be obtained in person at any of the park’s visitor centers up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Every horse user should obtain a copy of the regulations regarding use of horses in the park.

While horses are not permitted on paved roads or road shoulders, all gravel roads are open to horses. Cross-country travel is permitted in the park, except in the Chisos Mountains. The Chisos Mountain and Burro Mesa trails are day-use only.

Backcountry Roads
For those who wish to camp in the backcountry without having to backpack, Big Bend offers over seventy primitive campsites along backcountry roads. While some sites are accessible to most vehicles, a high clearance or/and low tire drive vehicle is necessary to reach others. Other than a nice view, isolation, and a flat gravel space, these sites offer no amenities and no shade. A backcountry permit is required to use these sites.

Floating the Rio Grande
The Rio Grande flows the southern boundary of Big Bend National Park for 8 miles. In this distance it has carved three major canyons, Santa Elena, Mariscal, and Boquillas, which have rapids varying in difficulty from Class I to Class IV. Between the canyons, the river is generally slower-paced. The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River extends downstream beyond the park boundary for an additional 127 miles.

If you plan to take a river trip in Big Bend National Park, you may bring your own equipment, or you can hire a guide service. Three local companies (see page 16 for telephone numbers) provide guide service in the park—you may reserve a trip by contacting them directly. If you plan to use your own equipment, you must obtain a permit at a park visitor center. Stop by the Panther Junction Visitor Center for your own equipment, or you can hire a guide service.

Permits for the Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River may be obtained at the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center. Permits for floating Santa Elena Canyon may be obtained at the Barton Warnock Center in Lajitas. However, we encourage all parties to get their permits at a park visitor center when possible, to obtain the most up-to-date river information and conditions.

Plan Ahead
Detailed information on backcountry campsites in the Chisos Mountains and along the backcountry roads is available on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/bibe. A wide variety of maps, books, hiking guides and river guides is available for purchase at park visitor centers. If you would like to order them in advance of your trip, call the Big Bend Natural History Association at 432-477-2396 or visit their online bookstore at www.bigbendbookstore.org.

Backcountry Regulations
Groundfires and woodfires are prohibited. Use only gas stoves or charcoal within a BBQ grill. Pack out all evidence of use. Smoking is prohibited on all Chisos Mountains trails.

Pack out all trash
Help preserve the park’s natural beauty by packing out all trash including cigarette butts and toilet paper.

No pets on trails or in the backcountry.
Pets may harm or be harmed by wildlife, and can attract predators.

Do not cut switchbacks on trails.
Although cross-country hiking is allowed, help prevent trail erosion by staying on marked trails.

Collecting any natural or historical feature or object is prohibited.
Leave park features intact for others to enjoy.

Contaminating natural water sources and their surroundings is prohibited. Camp at least 100 yards from any water source.

Desert water sources and springs are fragile and vital for the plants and animals that depend on them for survival. Soaps, oils, skin lotions, and food residues from bathing and washing can seriously impact water quality. Minimize your impact to areas surrounding springs, seeps, and other temporal water sources.

Camp within designated sites.
When camping in a designated site prevent resource damage by camping within the outline created by rocks, logs, or natural features.

Generator use is not permitted in backcountry campsites.
Natural quiet is a protected resource; help preserve a quiet wilderness experience.

In open zones, camp at least 1/2 mile and out of sight from any road and at least 100 yards from any trail, historical structure, archeological site, dry wash, or cliff edge.

Minimize your impact to the natural landscape.

Bury human waste at least 6 inches deep. Pack out toilet paper.
Human waste is unsightly and unsanitary. Carry a digging trowel. Locate latrines 1/4 mile from any water source and well away from camp.

Motorized vehicles and bicycles are permitted only on designated public roads.
Off-road vehicle travel causes visual and environmental damage.

Do not feed wildlife.
Feeding wildlife is illegal, it often results in having to destroy the animal. Keep food, ice chests and coolers in a hard-sided vehicle or food storage locker where provided. Remember that when people leave open food containers and trash laying around the site they are inadvertently feeding animals, so keep trash contained in vehicles or bear boxes.

Hiking & Backpacking
Big Bend National Park offers over 200 miles of hiking trails in the Chisos Mountains and desert terrain. A permit is required for all overnight trips in the backcountry. Decide how much distance you want to cover and how much time you have. Desert hiking can be unpleasant or deadly in hotter months.

In the Chisos Mountains, the Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Base Canyon/Southwest Rim junction are closed during the peregrine falcon nesting season (February 1 - May 31).

Zone camping permits are available for those who wish to camp outside of the Chisos Mountains. The park is divided into a number of zones ranging from areas along popular trails to extremely isolated areas.

Standard Backcountry Road Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road Name</th>
<th>Open To:</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croton Spring</td>
<td>All Vehicles</td>
<td>Slippery mud after rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagger Flat</td>
<td>All Vehicles</td>
<td>Bumpy but ok for cars; very sandy near end of rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Springs</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>Narrow road; no RVs, Trailers or wide vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine Hills</td>
<td>All Vehicles</td>
<td>Usually passable for all vehicles to trailhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Springs</td>
<td>All Vehicles</td>
<td>Narrow road; no RVs, Trailers or wide vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Rosillos</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>Deep ruts and sand, little-traveled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniper Canyon</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>High-clearance vehicles only; rough, rocky, &amp; slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Maverick</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>Rough; often impassable after heavy rains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Ore</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>High-clearance vehicles only; 4x4 recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint Gap</td>
<td>All Vehicles</td>
<td>High-clearance past PG 3 campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Canyon</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>High-clearance vehicles only; rough, rocky, &amp; slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Road East</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>High-clearance vehicles only; 4x4 recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Road West</td>
<td>High Clearance</td>
<td>High-clearance vehicles only; 4x4 recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Gap</td>
<td>4x4HC only</td>
<td>4x4 required never maintained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Always inquire at a visitor center regarding updated road conditions before heading out, and be prepared for all weather conditions (such as heavy, or any road may cease road conditions to deteriorate. Remember: all vehicles must be street legal and stay on established roads.

The Big Bend Paisano 14
Safety is Your Responsibility

Big Bend is unfamiliar country to most visitors yet it need not be dangerous. Whether hiking the highcountry, rafting the Rio Grande, observing wildlife, or simply driving the scenic roads of this wilderness park, let safety be your constant companion. Spend a moment reviewing these common safety concerns so that you may have an enjoyable visit.

Big Bend is wild country. In fact, many people visit precisely because it is so remote and rugged. But remember, as you enjoy the splendor of this great wilderness area, to make safety a priority. By giving forethought to your actions you can have a safe, exciting, and rewarding experience in Big Bend National Park.

Driving
Of the few accidental deaths in Big Bend that occur some years, most result from car accidents. Drive within the speed limit, 45 mph maximum in the park, and watch for javelina, deer, and rabbits grazing along road shoulders, especially at night. Federal regulations require that all occupants of a vehicle wear seat belts while in a national park. Remember, too, that you share the road with bicyclists and pedestrians. Some park roads, such as the road into the Chisos Basin, are steep and winding and require extra caution. The Basin Road is not recommended for RVs over 24 feet or trailers over 20 feet. Finally, always select a designated driver before drinking alcoholic beverages.

Hiking
Exploring this desert and mountain country on foot requires both mental and physical preparation. Trails vary from well maintained in the Chisos to primitive and barely visible in the desert. Plan hikes within your ability. Take along a map and compass and know how to use them. Flash floods may occur following thunderstorms so avoid narrow canyons or dry washes. Stay low and avoid ridges during thunderstorms. Carry a first aid kit and a first aid kit. Let someone know where you’re going and when you expect to return. If you get hurt or lost, stay in one place to conserve water and energy.

Fire
Fire danger is always an important safety consideration in Big Bend. Wood or ground fires are not permitted in the park, and you must exercise caution in the use of gas stoves, charcoal grills, and cigarettes. During drought conditions some restrictions may apply to the use of these heat sources. Check with a ranger for the latest information about fire safety in the park. Smoking is prohibited on all trails in the Chisos Mountains.

Poisonous Animals
Venomous snakes, scorpions, spiders, and centipedes are all active during the warmer months. Wear shoes or boots at night instead of sandals. Inspect shoes and sleeping bags or bedding before using and always carry a first aid kit. While snake bites are rare, they usually occur below the knee or elbow. Pay attention to where you walk and place your hands.

Desert Wildlife
Black bears, javelinas, skunks, coyotes, and raccoons frequent Big Bend’s campgrounds. Although they sometimes appear tame, all of the animals in the park are wild, and could pose a threat to your health and safety if you attempt to approach or feed them. Never feed any of Big Bend’s wildlife. To prevent these creatures from becoming accustomed to people, store all food, coolers, cooking utensils, and toiletries in a hard-sided vehicle, preferably in the trunk of your car. Food storage lockers are available for hikers and campers in the Chisos Mountains. Dispose of garbage properly in the special animal-proof dumpsters and trash cans provided.

Remember to report all bear or mountain lion sightings to a ranger.

Weather
Elevational differences in Big Bend mean that temperatures can be vastly different in different areas of the park. The lower areas along the Rio Grande are very hot during the summer months, while the Chisos Mountains are considerably cooler. Winter weather generally occurs between November and February, with temperatures dropping dramatically as cold fronts move through the area. Between June and October thunderstorms and flash floods may occur. Bring clothing for both warm and cool weather, as well as rain gear, when visiting Big Bend any time of the year.

Summer and Fall
Temperatures along the river tend to be the warmest in the park. Plan your activities with the weather in mind, visit the river in the morning, and always carry plenty of water. Higher elevations in the Chisos Mountains lead to lower temperatures. July brings thunderstorms, precipitation can liven up the landscape, but rains can reap havoc on the primitive roads throughout the park.

Weather and Climate

In all seasons, whether walking, backpacking, or day hiking, follow these tips to conserve your internal water reserves:

REDUCE YOUR ACTIVITY
During the hottest days, generally from May through August, avoid hiking in the lower elevations during the heat of the day—generally from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

FIND SHADE
Shade in the desert means the difference between excessive heat gains from the radiant sun and sheer comfort. In an emergency, a person resting in the shade will survive longer than someone exposed to the sun.

DRINK YOUR WATER
Don’t try to conserve the drinking water you have. Whether standing in the heat, or hiking the South Rim Trail, you must drink plenty of cool, clear water. Carry plenty of drinking water— at least 1 gallon per person per day. Filtered or bottled water is essential. Eat a salty snack every time you take a drink of water.

REDUCE ALCOHOL & CAFFEINE INTAKE
Water is the best remedy for dehydration and loosenedness. The diuretic effects of caffeine and alcohol can result in an accelerated loss of body water.

PROTECT YOUR BODY
Our sensitive skin burns easily; it needs shade, sunscreen, sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and proper footwear. Diabetics are at risk of burns, so keep your clothing on. Wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting, lightweight cottons.

ALL SPRING WATER MUST BE TREATED: BOIL IT OR USE PURIFICATION TABLETS

How Hot Is It?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature (°F)</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in December</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in January</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in February</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in March</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in April</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in May</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in June</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in July</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in August</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in September</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in October</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in November</th>
<th>Average Max/Min in December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79/79</td>
<td>86/70</td>
<td>91/68</td>
<td>96/74</td>
<td>96/71</td>
<td>91/68</td>
<td>87/69</td>
<td>83/68</td>
<td>76/63</td>
<td>73/60</td>
<td>69/56</td>
<td>66/46</td>
<td>70/57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average High/Low

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature (°F)</th>
<th>Average Rainfall (in)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>61/35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>66/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>77/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>81/52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>88/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>94/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>93/68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>91/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>86/62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>79/63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>66/42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>62/36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Avg.</td>
<td>79/47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survive the Sun

Temperature in the Chisos Basin vary 5-10 degrees below those readings, while daytime temperatures along the Rio Grande average 5-10 degrees warmer.
Rio Grande Village 1850ft  564m

Services inside the Park

EMERGENCY  Call 911

National Park Service  General Information  432 477-2251

Big Bend Natural History Association  Booksales & Seminars  432 477-2236

Visitor Centers
Castolon  432 477-2666
Chisos Basin  432 477-2264
Panther Junction  432 477-1158
Persimmon Gap  432 477-2393
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2271

U.S. Post Office  Panther Junction  432 477-2238

Lodging / Restaurant
Chisos Mountains Lodge  432 477-2291

Park Gasoline Service  Panther Junction (diesel)  432 477-2294
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2293

Campground Stores
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2293
Chisos Basin  432 477-2291
Castolon  432 477-2222

Services outside the Park

Lodging
Lajitas  Lajitas Resort  837 525-4827

Marathon
Gage Hotel  432 386-4205
Marathon Motel  432 386-4241
Eve’s Garden  432 386-4165

Study Butte/Terlingua area
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Easter Egg Valley Motel  432 371-2254
El Dorado Motel  432 371-2211
Longhorn Ranch Hotel  432 371-2541
Ten Bits Ranch  866 371-3110

Camping
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Big Bend Ranch State Park  432-424-3327
Big Bend Travel Park  432 371-2290
Heath Canyon Ranch  432 376-2235
Longhorn Ranch  432 371-2541
Stillwell’s Trailer Camp  432 376-2244
Study Butte RV Park  432 371-2468

Convenience Stores/Gasoline
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Cottonwood General Store  432 371-3315
Study Butte Store  432 371-2231
Stillwell Store & Station  432 376-2244
Terlingua Store  432 371-2487

Medical Services
Terlingua Fire and EMS  911
Big Bend Medical Center  432 837-3447

Banks
Quicksilver Bank/ ATM  432 371-2211

Float Trip Outfitters/Rentals/Guide Services
Big Bend River Tours  800 545-4240
Desert Sports  888 989-6900
Far Flung Outdoor Center  800 839-7238

Horseback Riding
Big Bend Stables  800 887-4331
Lajitas Livery  432 424-3238

Area Phone Numbers

Services inside the Park

EMERGENCY  Call 911

National Park Service  General Information  432 477-2251

Big Bend Natural History Association  Booksales & Seminars  432 477-2236

Visitor Centers
Castolon  432 477-2666
Chisos Basin  432 477-2264
Panther Junction  432 477-1158
Persimmon Gap  432 477-2393
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2271

U.S. Post Office  Panther Junction  432 477-2238

Lodging / Restaurant
Chisos Mountains Lodge  432 477-2291

Park Gasoline Service  Panther Junction (diesel)  432 477-2294
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2293

Campground Stores
Rio Grande Village  432 477-2293
Chisos Basin  432 477-2291
Castolon  432 477-2222

Services outside the Park

Lodging
Lajitas  Lajitas Resort  837 525-4827

Marathon
Gage Hotel  432 386-4205
Marathon Motel  432 386-4241
Eve’s Garden  432 386-4165

Study Butte/Terlingua area
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Easter Egg Valley Motel  432 371-2254
El Dorado Motel  432 371-2211
Longhorn Ranch Hotel  432 371-2541
Ten Bits Ranch  866 371-3110

Camping
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Big Bend Ranch State Park  432-424-3327
Big Bend Travel Park  432 371-2290
Heath Canyon Ranch  432 376-2235
Longhorn Ranch  432 371-2541
Stillwell’s Trailer Camp  432 376-2244
Study Butte RV Park  432 371-2468

Convenience Stores/Gasoline
Big Bend Motor Inn  800 848-2363
Cottonwood General Store  432 371-3315
Study Butte Store  432 371-2231
Stillwell Store & Station  432 376-2244
Terlingua Store  432 371-2487

Medical Services
Terlingua Fire and EMS  911
Big Bend Medical Center  432 837-3447

Banks
Quicksilver Bank/ATM  432 371-2211

Float Trip Outfitters/Rentals/Guide Services
Big Bend River Tours  800 545-4240
Desert Sports  888 989-6900
Far Flung Outdoor Center  800 839-7238

Horseback Riding
Big Bend Stables  800 887-4331
Lajitas Livery  432 424-3238

The facilities and services listed here are located within the greater Big Bend area, and vary from 30 to 100 miles from Big Bend National Park. The communities of Terlingua/Study Butte (30 miles west) and Marathon (70 miles north) offer basic services, including gas stations, restaurants, lodging, and campgrounds. Alpine, 100 miles to the northwest of the park, offers the greatest number of services.

This listing of local services is a courtesy to our visitors and implies no endorsement by the National Park Service or Big Bend National Park.

For a more detailed park map refer to the Map & Guide brochure.