

# A Border Wall Does Not Belong in Big Bend National Park

*Pro-Park. Pro-Security. Non-Partisan. Now and Forever.*



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## Key Message: Strong Border Security and Strong Conservation Can & Do Coexist Here

- Border security is a **widely shared value**, strongly supported by [Keep Big Bend Wild](http://keepbigbendwild.org).
- The question is **not whether to secure the border**, but **how to do so in a way that protects one of America's most iconic national parks** and Texas' largest state park, just upriver.
- Big Bend National Park represents a **national treasure**. Decisions about security infrastructure should reflect its ecological, cultural, and economic importance, as well as border security.



Boquillas Canyon © James H. Evans

- Border security professionals, led by a bipartisan group of West Texas Sheriffs, strongly support a secure border but publicly oppose building a wall in this area. **Intrusive physical barriers and new roads are not needed to secure the border here.**
- While specific design plans for the so-called “Smart Wall” have not been released, and probably will not be prior to construction, **permanent physical barriers in the national and state parks would irreparably degrade, if not destroy, the wild character** of these remote parks, and **disconnect the “Big Bend” of the Rio Grande from the park** that bears its name.
- **While the latest map published by Homeland Security no longer shows a physical wall in the national or state parks, it now shows extensive vehicle barriers and new patrol roads. There's no indication this is a final decision** – or that technological alternatives will be designed in collaboration with land managers and sheriffs to minimize impacts on these important places. **We need to keep the pressure up!**

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## Existing Border Security in Big Bend Is Effective Without a Wall

- The NPS and US Border Patrol have a **long history of close, effective cooperation** in the Big Bend region.
- Joint patrols, aerial and electronic surveillance, and coordinated response strategies **already provide robust border security in this area** without the need for permanent physical barriers.
- Border Patrol leadership has repeatedly noted that **terrain, remoteness, and natural barriers** make **technological surveillance** more appropriate here than a permanent border wall.
- **Migrant crossings in the Big Bend sector, and especially in the national park, are by far the lowest** of any section of the border, raising questions about whether a wall here would meaningfully improve security.

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## A Wall Would Permanently Damage What Makes Big Bend Valuable

- Big Bend is defined by its **vast, uninterrupted landscapes, dark skies, and sense of wildness**—qualities that cannot be restored once disrupted.
- A border wall would fragment habitat for species such as **black bears, mountain lions, and migratory birds**, many of which rely on cross-border movement for survival.
- The Rio Grande corridor is a **critical ecological artery**, and a wall would sever natural processes that have shaped the region for millennia, and increase damage from flooding.
- Construction would require **roads, staging areas, lighting, heavy equipment**, and possibly borrow pits, power lines, and **construction camps** for years, causing long-term scars beyond the footprint of the wall itself.

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## A Wall Here Would Be Costly and Inefficient

- The Big Bend region's remoteness, **rugged mountains, deep canyons, and river floodplains** make construction extremely expensive and logistically challenging.
- Flooding events along the Rio Grande have historically **destroyed or damaged river-side infrastructure**, requiring costly repairs and creating safety hazards.
- Given the low crossing numbers, the **cost-benefit ratio** of a wall in this location is especially poor compared to other security investments.

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## Local Communities and Visitors Would Bear the Burden

- Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park draw visitors from around the world, supporting **gateway communities** such as Terlingua, Study Butte, Marathon, and Alpine.
- A wall would diminish the parks' appeal, severely harming **local tourism economies** that rely on their wild, open character and recreation on the Rio Grande.
- There is limited water, power, and landfill capacity, as well as grocery stores and medical facilities, making the support of a 300-500 person construction camp **an almost impossible burden for the area** to handle.
- Residents and visitors alike value Big Bend as a place of **solitude, natural beauty, and freedom**—qualities incompatible with industrial-scale border infrastructure.

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## The Decision Should Reflect Texas Pride and National Values

- National parks are protected for the benefit of the American people because they represent **the best of America's natural and cultural heritage**.
- Big Bend – "**Texas' Gift to the Nation**" – is one of the most remote, pristine, and ecologically significant parks in the national park system. **Protecting it is a national responsibility**, not just a regional preference.
- **Security and conservation are not competing goals**; thoughtful coordination can uphold both.

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## Your Voice Matters

- **Decision-makers respond when they hear from enough of the people they represent.**
- **Call** the office of your US Senators and House member in their DC offices, and if you vote in Texas, call Governor Abbott and your state legislators. [5Calls.Org](https://www.5calls.org) makes it easy. Search for the "Big Bend" script. Call daily, or as often as you can!
- **Sign the petition** at [change.org](https://change.org). Search for "Big Bend".
- **Speak up** at public meetings or virtual town halls.
- **Share information** with friends, neighbors, and community groups.
- **Post and repost media coverage and your thoughtful opinion** on social media.
- Short, respectful messages are powerful. **Avoid partisan rhetoric.**
- You don't need to be an expert—just **speak from your experience, your values, and your heart.**
- **Support Keep Big Bend Wild** and allied groups, as there are many working to stop the wall at Big Bend.

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## Stopping the Wall Cannot be the End of Our Work

- The **best way to ensure the still-undeveloped portions of this extraordinary landscape (more than 4/5 of the park) are protected for future generations would be to give them the highest level of protection for public lands we can -- federal wilderness designation.**
- Wilderness would preserve the park's wild character while **not impacting any existing uses or developments.**
- While DHS can still waive the protections of other federal laws, the **higher profile would make it much more difficult for a future Administration to defy the will of the public.**
- A wilderness law *may* include a provision to **prevent a physical wall from ever being built in the national park.**
- Republican and Democratic Presidents since Richard Nixon have recommended wilderness for Big Bend, and it's time for Congress to finally act.
- **Keep Big Bend Wild exists to protect Big Bend National Park's wild character now, and for future generations.** Please **support our efforts; it's free**, although we appreciate tax-deductible donations that will further this important work.

