



NOW IS THE TIME... FOR WILDERNESS IN BIG BEND

You have the opportunity to encourage the designation of 596,215 acres of wilderness within Big Bend National Park!

Established in 1944, our beloved 801,163-acre park is the 15th largest in the national park system – yet none of it carries the name of “wilderness”. “Wilderness” affords the highest level of protection for public lands.

In 1978, President Carter transmitted to Congress the National Park Service (NPS) proposal to designate wilderness within Big Bend. Since then, **no Congressional action has been taken in 30 years.** The big news is that the 2009 re-study by NPS has identified 596,215.2 acres eligible for wilderness and 13,215.8 acres as potential wilderness – even more than in 1978! Although

the NPS has managed the lands as if they were wilderness, the formal designation as wilderness would cement their protected status.

Besides being an economic engine for surrounding rural counties, Big Bend is a refuge harboring 75 species of mammals, 67 species of reptiles and amphibians, over 450 bird species, and 1,295 species of plants.



WHAT YOU CAN DO---

Send an e-mail letter or a fax to **Congressman** **Ciro Rodriguez**, whose district includes Big Bend National Park. Ask him to introduce a resolution designating 596,215.2 acres of Big Bend as wilderness and 13,215.8 acres as potential wilderness, per the National Park Service 2009 re-study.



Points you can note:

1. If you are a constituent, be sure to state this in your e-mail. If you aren't, state why Big Bend National Park is important to you. Note that his action would benefit all Texans and all Americans.
2. No action has been taken on the National Park Service recommendation to create wilderness in 30 years. Now it is time to act on the 2009 re-study of Big Bend wilderness.
3. Although the lands in question are being managed as wilderness, formal designation as such would provide the highest level of protection permanently.
4. Wilderness will assure the highest quality habitat for wildlife and protected species. Several species in Big Bend National Park are federally protected, including the black-capped vireo, Mexican long-nosed bat, Big Bend gambusia, and Chisos hedgehog cactus. After a 40-year absence, black bears have re-established a foothold in the park after migrating from northern Mexico.
5. Thank Congressman Rodriguez for his introduction and support of the Trans-Border Peace Park (H.Res.695) and suggest that designation of wilderness in BBNP is another step in providing high quality recreation and wildlife habitat.

Send your e-mail to Congressman Rodriguez to the attention of Ms. Robin Lloyd, the Legislative Assistant for environmental issues, at **Robin.Lloyd@mail.house.gov** . You can fax a letter to his Washington, D.C. office at 202-225-2237 or San Antonio at 210-923-8447.

If you have any questions, please contact the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter office at 512-477-1729 or Evelyn Merz at 713-644-8228 or elmerz@hal-pc.org .

Drawings of black bear and prickly pear by Robert Savannah, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service