

11-11-11

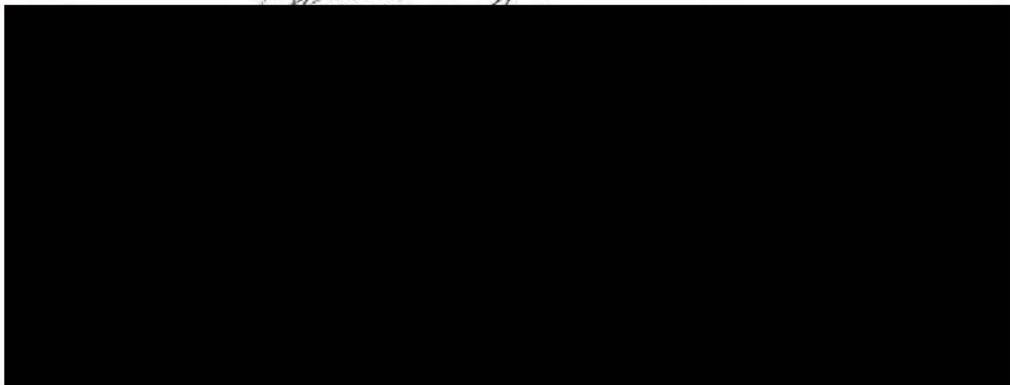
Veteran's Day

Secretary Ken Salazar:

Re: Big Bend National Park

You are not a true American—
if you cross the border at
Big Bend National Park. Of course,
you want to hand over to Mexico
everything. Where is your
patriotism??

Sincerely,



2011 NOV 25 PM 3:01

RECEIVED

507088



**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Secretarial Correspondence Transmittal**

Date ES Received: 01/03/2011

ES Tracking #: ESO-00024577

Date Forwarded for Signature: 01/03/2011

To: Feinstein, Dianne; Moran, James; Simpson, Michael; Alexander, Lamar

From: Salazar, Kenneth L.

Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Subject: Recreation Fee Program Submission #210 for approval of Recreation Fee 20% Project Construct Rio Grande River Crossing Facility in Boquillas Canyon in Big Bend National Park

Response Summary: 4 letters to the Chairman and Ranking members on the Appropriation committees informing them of the use of Recreation Fee funding to construct a new boarder crossing within Big Bend National Park.

Lead Response Office: NPS

Response Writer: NPS

Surnaming Office

Approved By

Date Approved

FWP

Sobeck

12/17/2010

NPS

Wenk

12/17/2010

PMB

Suh

12/21/2010

Sol

Gary

12/27/2010

Deputy Secretary

Chief of Staff

Deputy Chief of Staff

Carole O'Neil

1-4-11

Associate Deputy Secretary

Senior Advisor

Ken Lane

1/5/11

Executive Secretariat

SSS

1/4/11

Secretary

SIGMAC:

Other (NOT SECRETARY): _____

COMMENTS:



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

JAN 19 2011

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson:

This letter is to provide notification for the use of \$4.1 million in National Park Service Recreation Fee funding to construct a new border crossing facility within Big Bend National Park in Texas. The site will be in Boquillas Canyon on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. The crossing is intended to facilitate opportunities for visitors, scientists and researchers to cross the river into Mexico. This will replace the crossing that was closed in 2002.

The Department of the Interior and the Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico are committed to strengthening cooperation in the Big Bend/ Rio Bravo Region of Texas, Chihuahua, and Coahuila. Presidents Obama and Calderon support this cooperation and issued a joint statement in May of 2010 that encourages that the two countries "preserve this region of extraordinary biological diversity."

Interior is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security to reestablish a border rowboat crossing by Spring, 2012. Connecting the protected areas of the region for staff, researchers, and park visitors and eliminating the 11 hours of travel time between the official points of entry will allow for greater cooperation between the parks.

The crossing facilities will accommodate visitors coming into the United States. The Department of Homeland Security will designate the crossing as a remote, automated Port of Entry. Certain facility requirements are needed and include a safe room for equipment, two remote entry stations, an information desk, public restrooms and building support areas. The project will include the extension of potable water service to the area from Rio Grande Village, located in Big Bend National Park, a distance of about 5,200 feet. It will also include sanitary sewer service with a septic tank and leach field, connection to the existing electrical grid, generator back up, a parking area for 20 cars and three recreational vehicles, and graveling of an existing two-lane road for a distance of about 350 yards. An existing access trail to the River will also be improved with widening, grading, and surfacing.

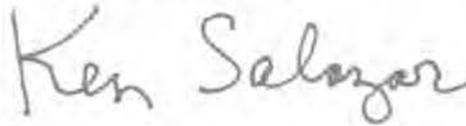
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National Park Service and is unobligated. It is funded from the 20 percent portion that is used for national priorities and allocated at the discretion of the Director of the National Park Service, consistent with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Enclosed is a project data sheet that provides specifics about the project. This letter is being submitted in accordance with the arrangements the Department of the Interior has with the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and we plan to proceed with this project unless we hear from you within 30 days of your receipt of this letter. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Similar letters are being sent to the Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate; the Honorable James Moran, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives; and the Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on interior, Environment and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely".

Ken Salazar

Enclosure



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

JAN 19 2011

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Alexander:

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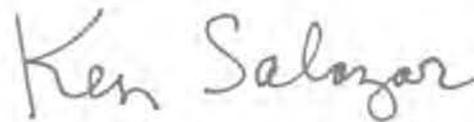
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JAN 19 2011

The Honorable James P. Moran
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Moran:

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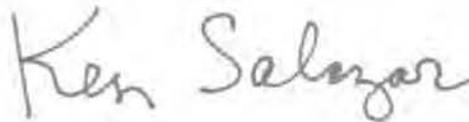
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Committee on Appropriations
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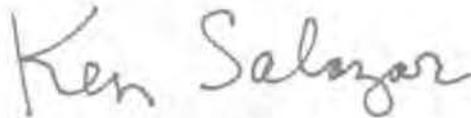
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Ken Salazar

Enclosure



Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>

Re: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Rio Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

1 message

Faeth, Lori <lori_faeth@ios.doi.gov>

Sat, Apr 11, 2015 at 8:42 PM

To: "Kershaw, Jessica" <jessica_kershaw@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: "Beyer, Emily" <emily_beyer@ios.doi.gov>, "Androff, Blake" <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov>, Press_Review <press_review@ios.doi.gov>, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov>, Gavin Shire <gavin_shire@fws.gov>, Michael Bean <Michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>, "Padilla, Joan" <Joan_Padilla@ios.doi.gov>, Craig Dorsett <Craig_dorsett@ios.doi.gov>, Ethan Taylor <ethan_taylor@ios.doi.gov>, Jonathan Jarvis <Jon_jarvis@nps.gov>, Margaret O'Dell <Peggy_ODell@nps.gov>, April Slayton <april_slayton@nps.gov>, Roberta D'Amico <Roberta_DAmico@nps.gov>, david elkowitz <David_Elkowitz@nps.gov>

Thanks Jessica.

The event(s) went GREAT! Such a good and important message about how a border should be operated, conservation, economic development and the amazing partnership we have with Mexico to preserve 3 million acres of desert plus an important part of a critical river that is the boundary between our nations. The Secretary did an amazing job and took the time to shake hands with a lot of folks including all of the fire fighting crew members.'

Plus, what better way to cross an international border than by row boat???

Wildflowers - amazing. Folks who have lived in the region for decades have never seen them like this. The Park wanted to shine,

Thanks to everyone who worked really hard to make this event a success.

On Sat, Apr 11, 2015 at 3:27 PM, Kershaw, Jessica <jessica_kershaw@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

News West TV: U.S. and Mexico Officials Signed the Wildfire Protection Agreement as a Collaboration Effort

Posted: Apr 10, 2015 10:21 PM EDT

Updated: Apr 10, 2015 11:38 PM EDT



By Zora Asberry

NewsWest 9

BOQUILLAS, MEX - The United States and Mexican officials are working together to fight wildfires. They signed an agreement Friday, called the Wildfire Protection Agreement, that will allow the partnership to bring both sides of the border together to help prevent and manage wildfires that can be very dangerous the environment of the Big Bend-Rio Bravo region.

Sally Jewell, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, said, "It will be nice to sign a new agreement, that updates the agreement from 1999, that will take us beyond 10 miles or 16 kilometers to cross our border and in to both countries as we fight the wildlife fires that are going to be getting hotter, dryer, and more dangerous in this time of a changing climate."

With such a long area of border shared between Mexico and the U.S., it was time to make a change.

Will Hurd, U.S. Representative, District 23, said, "We share over 2,000 together and fires know no boundary. And in having agreements in place, in advance, so that we can make sure that we stop these no matter where the fires stops and that we pool our resources in order to preserve our areas protect our citizens and protect the bio diversity that's here i this region."

U.S. Secretary Jewell and Juan Jose Guerra Abud, the Mexican Environment and Natural Resources Secretary along with other U.S.-Mexico officials came together to sign the Wildfire Agreement as another step in preserving the Big Bend-Rio Bravo region.

Now that the agreement has been signed, officials from the United States and Mexico look forward to cooperating with one another to protect regions landscape and people on both sides of the border.

On Saturday, April 11, 2015, Beyer, Emily <emily_beyer@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/article/Border-crossing-reopening-invigorates-Mexico-town-6192793.php>

Border crossing reopening invigorates Mexico town

Mexican village just across from Big Bend sees tourism rise

By Melissa Aguilar April 10, 2015 Updated: April 10, 2015 9:36pm

Thanks Blake. Sounds like the Wildland fire signing ceremony will take place!

Sent from my iPhone



Photo: Melissa Aguilar

Image 1 of 9

Adrian Valdez rows across the Rio Grande to Boquillas, Mexico.

IMAGE 1 OF 9

Adrian Valdez rows across the Rio Grande to Boquillas, Mexico.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK - Fortunes have changed in Boquillas del Carmen, Mexico, a tiny little village just a stone's throw over the Rio Grande River from Big Bend National Park.

It's been two years since the popular crossing from the park to Boquillas reopened to tourists. Friday, both sides celebrated the cooperation it took to get the crossing back open. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and her Mexican counterpart, Juan José Guerra Abud, Mexico's secretary of the environment and natural resources, flew in for twin ceremonies on both sides of the border.

"We have the opportunity with Boquillas to encourage thoughtful ecological tourism," Jewell said.

The border crossing closed in 2002, just eight months after 9/11, cutting off the remote town from its livelihood - U.S. park visitors who wanted to cross the Rio Grande for a couple of dollars and get a taste of Mexico.

Lucia Orosco Oreste, 27, who runs Boquillas Restaurant, smiled wide when asked what the reopening has done for the town. "We have business. We have money now," she said. "Life has changed a lot. We are very content." Her husband, Adrian Valdez, rows the small ferry boat across the Rio Grande. They and their two children have lived in Boquillas all their lives.

Orosco and many of the women in the town sell embroidered and quilted bags, as well as animal sculptures shaped out of copper wire and beads.

Many Boquillas residents left when the border closed and they couldn't make a living. Now they are coming back. There were 90 residents two years ago; now there are 140. Before, there was only an elementary school. Now a secondary school has opened.

In addition to improving conditions in Boquillas, the two governments are collaborating on environmental issues in Big Bend and Mexico's adjacent Rio Bravo region.

"The park is a symbol for what the border can be - a place that brings us together, not one that divides us," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Earl Wayne, who also took part in the ceremonies. After the event at Big Bend's new Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry building, the celebration moved across the river to Boquillas.

Jewell called Big Bend and Rio Bravo one of the most bio-diverse areas in the world.

"Butterflies, reptiles, flowers, plants, birds - they don't know of this artificial boundary."

She quoted President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1944 wrote to Mexican President Avila Camacho: "I do not believe that this undertaking in the Big Bend will be complete until the entire park area in this region on both sides of the Rio Grande forms one great international park."

The visiting dignitaries witnessed Big Bend at its best. The desert is in full bloom this month. Bluebonnets, mallow, asters, yucca, ocotillo and prickly pear blossoms line the roads.

Big Bend usually gets 350,000 visitors a year. "But we're way ahead of that (pace) this year, probably due to the rain, good weather and low gas prices," said David Elkowitz, the national park's chief of interpretation. He also credits social media, since the park has increased Wi-Fi availability.

Adelaide Leavens of Fort Worth was one of the Big Bend supporters who worked to get the crossing back. "I was devastated at the closing," she said. "The crossing was so innocuous."

Leavens first visited with her husband years ago. "I fell in love with the park. I love Mexico. I love the simplicity of the border crossing here."

<http://www.chron.com/life/travel/article/Big-Bend-border-crossing-reopens-6192146.php>

RELATED

Federal funds available for humanitarian aid along border



Where and how to capture a majestic view of planets, stars



Chinati Hot Springs is a rugged oasis in Big Bend



Big Bend well worth the drive west

US & WORLD

Funeral set for black driver fatally shot by white officer

 **Diontre Moore, of North Charleston, S.C., center, lights a candle during a rally in North Charleston, S.C. on Friday, April 10, 2015 protesting the fatal police shooting of Walter Scott. Scott was killed by a police officer after a traffic stop on Saturday. Officer Michael Slager has been fired and charged with murder.**

Rubio presidential run will begin scramble to fill his seat

Man charged with threat to kill Boehner has hearing set

Robbers elude police in wild, fatal San Francisco chase

10 deputies on leave after California horse

chase beating

In this frame from video provided by KNBC-TV, officers beat and kick a man Thursday, April 9, 2015, near Apple Valley, Calif. A Southern California sheriff on Thursday ordered an immediate investigation after deputies were recorded beating and kicking a man who fled in a car and on horseback. MANDATORY CREDIT

Re-opened border crossing, Big Bend supporters boost fortunes in Boquillas

By Melissa Aguilar | April 10, 2015 | Updated: April 10, 2015 5:54pm

Comments 1 | E-mail | Print | 0



Photo By Melissa Aguilar/Houston Chronicle

The desert is in bloom in Big Bend National Park.

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Levens first visited with her husband years ago. "I fell in love with the park. I love Mexico. I love the simplicity of the border crossing here."

1 of 12



Related Stories

Beautiful photos of Big Bend

National Park

<http://www.newswest9.com/story/28776084/us-and-mexico-officials-signed-the-wildfire-protection-agreement-as-a-collaboration-effort>

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Posted: Apr 10, 2015 10:21 PM EDT
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By Zora Asberry
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On Apr 7, 2015, at 9:47 PM, "Androff, Blake" <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

Attached and copied below is a draft press release that DOI will issue on Friday in conjunction with the event in Big Bend National Park and Mexico.

Given the time it takes for these binational joint press releases to be approved, please send me **(DO NOT REPLY ALL)** any suggested edits by COB on Wednesday, April 8, 2015.

Note that the wildfire protection agreement language has been added since an earlier version was circulated for internal review.

Thanks!

Best,

Blake

—

Blake Androff
Director of Communications
U.S. Department of the Interior
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April 10, 2015

Contacts: Jessica Kershaw (Interior), Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

MEXICO CONTACT

Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

Sign U.S.-Mexico Wildfire Protection Agreement

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK— Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Mexican Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Juan José Guerra Abud today celebrated the two-year anniversary of the Boquillas Port of Entry (POE) as well as the ongoing binational conservation initiatives in the region. The POE facilitates coordination between the two countries in the protection and preservation of the Big Bend/Río Bravo region – North America's largest and most diverse desert ecosystem.

Jewell and Guerra in Boquillas, Mexico today also signed a U.S.-Mexico Wildfire Protection Agreement to expand collaboration and cooperation across both countries on fire prevention and suppression efforts. Wildland fire is a common occurrence along the border.

"As neighbors and partners protecting this diverse and ecologically rich region, the United States and Mexico share a continuing commitment toward fulfilling a conservation vision President Roosevelt and President Camacho proposed over sixty years ago," said Secretary Jewell. "With the support of Secretary Guerra and our counterparts in Mexico, we celebrate the latest steps in the long and productive history of bilateral cooperation in the conservation of natural and cultural resources between the United States and Mexico."

"Today, the Governments of Mexico and the United States, celebrate our continuing commitment to transboundary cooperation," said Secretary Guerra. "The Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Initiative is a model envisioned by our Presidents; it is a dream shared by many past generations; and a legacy for present and future ones. In sum, it is an example of the best our governments and people can pursue through cooperation and joint work."

"When you come to an area as remote and as beautiful as Big Bend, it truly changes your perception of what a border is and what a border can be," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Anthony Wayne. "There is a line – the river in this case – that politically marks the boundaries of our two countries. But for a tourist, for a park ranger, for a conservationist, and for anyone who has visited this spectacular place, one thing is clear: what we share here – the seamless flow of nature across both banks of the river – is far stronger and far more enduring than what divides us."

In 2011, the United States and Mexico agreed to a binational conservation initiative and working plan to continue coordination in the protection and preservation of the Big Bend/Río Bravo region.

As part of these efforts, the two countries established the international Port of Entry facility at Boquillas Crossing within Big Bend National Park. Opened on April 10, 2013, it provides an entry point between both countries for visitors and scientists. Travel across the border is primarily by rowboat.

Home to 446 species of birds, 3,600 species of insects, more than 1,300 plants, and 75 species of mammals, the Big Bend region of Texas and the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Coahuila provide a unique opportunity for scientists, natural resource managers, and park staff to collaborate in areas that will benefit the people, the landscapes, and the wildlife on both sides of the border.

Steps taken since the binational conservation initiative include cooperation by the Los Diablos Fire Crew and CONANP/CONAFOR fire brigades, and the National Park Service removal of more than 20 miles of invasive river cane from the Río Grande.

Big Bend, Maderas del Carmen, and Santa Elena Canyon protected areas, through their sister park relationship, continue to implement annual work plans that contribute to resource conservation, staff training, and improved binational coordination along a shared boundary.

The Science and Resource Management Division at Big Bend National Park, in conjunction with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sul Ross State University, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and partner agencies in Mexico have been engaged in a multi-faceted conservation program for the Big Bend region and corresponding Monumento Río Bravo del Norte stretch of the Río Grande and its tributaries.

In the late 1930s, President Roosevelt began exploring options with Mexico for the designation of an international park in the Big Bend Region of Texas and Mexican states of Chihuahua and Coahuila. Over fifty years later, Mexico established Canon de Santa Elena in Chihuahua and Maderas del Carmen in Coahuila protected areas. In June 2009, Mexico designated Ocampo Natural Protected Area, filling the gap and forming a contiguous set of protected areas across from Big Bend National Park.

The National Park Service manages 250 miles of the Big Bend Reach and the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas manages nearly 300 miles through the Monumento Natural Río Bravo del Norte. Conservation efforts include the establishment of ecological monitoring protocols, tributary assessment and reforestation, a study of transboundary aquifers, and exotic plant management.

For photos from today's events, please click, [HERE](#).

###

<04-10-15 Binational Press Release on POE - DRAFT v1.docx>

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Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>

Re: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

1 message

Kershaw, Jessica <jessica_kershaw@ios.doi.gov>

Sat, Apr 11, 2015 at 3:27 PM

To: "Beyer, Emily" <emily_beyer@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: Lori Faeth <lori_faeth@ios.doi.gov>, "Androff, Blake" <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov>, Press_Review <press_review@ios.doi.gov>, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov>, Gavin Shire <gavin_shire@fws.gov>, Michael Bean <Michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>, "Padilla, Joan" <Joan_Padilla@ios.doi.gov>, Craig Dorsett <Craig_dorsett@ios.doi.gov>, Ethan Taylor <ethan_taylor@ios.doi.gov>, Jonathan Jarvis <Jon_jarvis@nps.gov>, Margaret O'Dell <Peggy_O'Dell@nps.gov>, April Slayton <april_slayton@nps.gov>, Roberta D'Amico <Roberta_D'Amico@nps.gov>, david elkowitz <David_Elkowitz@nps.gov>

News West TV: U.S. and Mexico Officials Signed the Wildfire Protection Agreement as a Collaboration Effort

Posted: Apr 10, 2015 10:21 PM EDT

Updated: Apr 10, 2015 11:38 PM EDT



By Zora Asberry
NewsWest 9

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Will Hurd, U.S. Representative, District 23, said, "We share over 2,000 together and fires know no boundary. And in having agreements in place, in advance, so that we can make sure that we stop these no matter where the fires stops and that we pool our resources in order to preserve our areas protect our citizens and protect the bio diversity that's here in this region."

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Now that the agreement has been signed, officials from the United States and Mexico look forward to cooperating with one another to protect regions landscape and people on both sides of the border.

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By Melissa Aguilar April 10, 2015 Updated: April 10, 2015 9:36pm

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Sent from my iPhone

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Thanks!

Best,



Photo: Melissa Aguilar

Image1of9

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IMAGE 1 OF 9

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Lucia Orosco Oreste, 27, who runs Boquillas Restaurant, smiled wide when asked what the reopening has done for the town. "We have business. We have money now," she said. "Life has changed a lot. We are very content." Her husband, Adrian Valdez, rows the small ferry boat across the Rio Grande. They and their two children have lived in Boquillas all their lives.

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In addition to improving conditions in Boquillas, the two governments are collaborating on environmental issues in Big Bend and Mexico's adjacent Rio Bravo region.

"The park is a symbol for what the border can be - a place that brings us together, not one that divides us," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Earl Wayne, who also took part in the ceremonies. After the event at Big Bend's new Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry building, the celebration moved across the river to Boquillas.

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By Melissa Aguilar | April 10, 2015 | Updated: April 10, 2015 5:54pm

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Photo By Melissa Aguilar/Houston Chronicle

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Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>

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1 message

Beyer, Emily <emily_beyer@ios.doi.gov>

Sat, Apr 11, 2015 at 10:40 AM

To: Lori Faeth <lori_faeth@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: "Androff, Blake" <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov>, Press_Review <press_review@ios.doi.gov>, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov>, Gavin Shire <gavin_shire@fws.gov>, Michael Bean <Michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>, "Padilla, Joan" <Joan_Padilla@ios.doi.gov>, Craig Dorsett <Craig_dorsett@ios.doi.gov>, Ethan Taylor <ethan_taylor@ios.doi.gov>, Jonathan Jarvis <Jon_jarvis@nps.gov>, Margaret O'Dell <Peggy_O'Dell@nps.gov>, April Slayton <april_slayton@nps.gov>, Roberta D'Amico <Roberta_D'Amico@nps.gov>, david elkowitz <David_Elkowitz@nps.gov>

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The desert is in bloom in Big Bend National Park.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK – Fortunes have changed in Boquillas del Camen, Mexico, a tiny little village just a stone's throw over the Rio Grande River from Big Bend National Park.

It's been two years since the popular crossing from the park to Boquillas reopened to tourists. Friday, both sides celebrated the cooperation it took to get the crossing back open. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and her Mexican counterpart, Juan José Guerra Abud, Mexico's secretary of the environment and natural resources, flew in for twin ceremonies on both sides of the border.

"We have the opportunity with Boquillas to encourage thoughtful ecological tourism," Jewell said. Closed in 2002, just eight months after 9/11, the remote town was cut off from its livelihood – U.S. park visitors who wanted to cross the Rio Grande for a couple of dollars and get a taste of primitive Mexico.

Lucia Orosco Oreste, 27, who runs Boquillas Restaurant, smiled wide when asked what the reopening has done for the town. "We have business. We have money now," she said. "Life has changed a lot. We are very content." Her husband, Adrian Valdez, rows the small ferry boat across the Rio Grande. They and their two children have lived in Boquillas all their lives.

Orosco and many of the women in the town sell embroidered and quilted bags, as well as animals shaped out of copper wire and beads.

Many Boquillas residents left when they couldn't make a living. Now they are coming back. There were 90 residents two years ago; now there are 140. Before, there was only an elementary school. Now a secondary school as opened.

In addition to improving conditions in Boquillas, the two governments are collaborating on environmental issues in Big Bend and Mexico's adjacent Rio Bravo region.

"The park is a symbol for what the border can be – a place that brings us together, not one that divides us," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Earl Wayne, who also took part in the ceremonies. After the event at Big Bend's new Boquillas Crossing building, the celebration moved across the river to Boquillas.

Jewell called Big Bend and Rio Bravo one of the most biodiverse areas in the world. "Butterflies, reptiles, flowers, plants, birds – they don't know of this artificial boundary."

She quoted President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1944 wrote to the Mexican president Avila Camacho: "I do not believe that this undertaking in the Big Bend will be complete until the entire park area in this region on both sides of the Rio Grande forms one great international park."

1 of 12



The visiting dignitaries witnessed Big Bend at its best. The desert is in full bloom. Bluebonnets, mallow, asters, yucca, ocotillo and prickly pear blossoms line the roads.

Big Bend usually gets 350,000 visitors a year. "But we're way ahead of that [pace] this year, probably due to the rain, good weather and low gas prices," said David Elkowitz, Big Bend's Chief of Interpretation. He also credits social media, since the park has increased Wi-Fi availability.

Adelaide Leavens of Fort Worth was one of the Big Bend supporters who worked to get the crossing back. "I was devastated at the closing," she said. "The crossing was so innocuous."

Related Stories

Beautiful photos of Big Bend

National Park

Levens first visited with her husband years ago. "I fell in love with the park. I love Mexico. I love the simplicity of the border crossing here."

<http://www.newswest9.com/story/28776084/us-and-mexico-officials-signed-the-wildfire-protection-agreement-as-a-collaboration-effort>

U.S. and Mexico Officials Signed the Wildfire Protection Agreement as a Collaboration Effort

Posted: Apr 10, 2015 10:21 PM EDT
Updated: Apr 10, 2015 11:38 PM EDT

By Zora Asberry
NewsWest 9

BOQUILLAS, MEX - The United States and Mexican officials are working together to fight wildfires. They signed an agreement Friday, called the Wildfire Protection Agreement, that will allow the partnership to bring both sides of the border together to help prevent and manage wildfires that can be very dangerous the environment of the Big Bend-Rio Bravo region.

Sally Jewell, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, said, "It will be nice to sign a new agreement, that updates the agreement from



1999, that will take us beyond 10 miles or 16 kilometers to cross our border and in to both countries as we fight the wildlife fires that are going to be getting hotter, dryer, and more dangerous in this time of a changing climate."

With such a long area of border shared between Mexico and the U.S., it was time to make a change.

Will Hurd, U.S. Representative, District 23, said, "We share over 2,000 together and fires know no boundary. And in having agreements in place, in advance, so that we can make sure that we stop these no matter where the fires stop and that we pool our resources in order to preserve our areas protect our citizens and protect the bio diversity that's here in this region."

U.S. Secretary Jewell and Juan Jose Guerra Abud, the Mexican Environment and Natural Resources Secretary along with other U.S.-Mexico officials came together to sign the Wildfire Agreement as another step in preserving the Big Bend-Río Bravo region.

Now that the agreement has been signed, officials from the United States and Mexico look forward to cooperating with one another to protect regions landscape and people on both sides of the border.

—
Blake Androff
Director of Communications
U.S. Department of the Interior
Office: (202) 208-6416 | Cell: (202) 725-7435

April 10, 2015

Contacts: Jessica Kershaw (Interior), Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

MEXICO CONTACT

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Sign U.S.-Mexico Wildfire Protection Agreement

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Jewell and Guerra in Boquillas, Mexico today also signed a U.S.-Mexico Wildfire Protection Agreement to expand collaboration and cooperation across both countries on fire prevention and suppression efforts. Wildland fire is a common occurrence along the border.

"As neighbors and partners protecting this diverse and ecologically rich region, the United States and Mexico share a continuing commitment toward fulfilling a conservation vision President Roosevelt and President Camacho proposed over sixty years ago," said Secretary Jewell. "With the support of Secretary Guerra and our counterparts in Mexico, we celebrate the latest steps in the long and productive history of bilateral cooperation in the conservation of natural and cultural resources between the United States and Mexico."

"Today, the Governments of Mexico and the United States, celebrate our continuing commitment to transboundary cooperation," said Secretary Guerra. "The Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Initiative is a model envisioned by our Presidents; it is a dream shared by many past generations; and a legacy for present and future ones. In sum, it is an example of the best our governments and people can pursue through cooperation and joint work."

"When you come to an area as remote and as beautiful as Big Bend, it truly changes your perception of what a border is and what a border can be," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Anthony Wayne. "There is a line – the river in this case – that politically marks the boundaries of our two countries. But for a tourist, for a park ranger, for a conservationist, and for anyone who has visited this spectacular place, one thing is clear: what we share here – the seamless flow of nature across both banks of the river – is far stronger and far more enduring than what divides us."

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<04-10-15 Binational Press Release on POE - DRAFT v1.docx>

Emily Beyer
Deputy Press Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Office: (202) 208-5205 | Cell: (202) 568-0168
emily_beyer@ios.doi.gov



Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>

Fwd: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

1 message

Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>
To: Michael Bean <michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>

Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 12:12 PM

FYI, my suggestions.

—— Forwarded message ——

From: **Padilla, Joan** <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>
Date: Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 11:58 AM
Subject: Re: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry
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1 message

Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>
To: Francisco Carrillo <Francisco_Carrillo@ios.doi.gov>

Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 12:10 PM

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Date: Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 11:58 AM
Subject: Re: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry
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Re: For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

1 message

Lori Faeth <lori_faeth@ios.doi.gov>

Wed, Apr 8, 2015 at 10:09 AM

To: "Androff, Blake" <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: Press_Review <press_review@ios.doi.gov>, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov>, Gavin Shire <gavin_shire@fws.gov>, Michael Bean <Michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>, "Padilla, Joan" <Joan_Padilla@ios.doi.gov>, Craig Dorsett <Craig_dorsett@ios.doi.gov>, Ethan Taylor <ethan_taylor@ios.doi.gov>, Jonathan Jarvis <Jon_jarvis@nps.gov>, Margaret O'Dell <Peggy_O'Dell@nps.gov>, April Slayton <april_slayton@nps.gov>, Roberta D'Amico <Roberta_D'Amico@nps.gov>, david elkowitz <David_Elkowitz@nps.gov>

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Sent from my iPhone

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<04-10-15 Binational Press Release on POE - DRAFT v1.docx>



Padilla, Joan <joan_padilla@ios.doi.gov>

For Review: Secretaries Jewell, Guerra Celebrate the Big Bend/Río Bravo Conservation Partnership, Anniversary of Boquillas Point of Entry

1 message

Androff, Blake <blake_androff@ios.doi.gov>

Tue, Apr 7, 2015 at 10:47 PM

To: Press_Review <press_review@ios.doi.gov>, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov>, Gavin Shire <gavin_shire@fws.gov>, Michael Bean <Michael_bean@ios.doi.gov>, "Padilla, Joan" <Joan_Padilla@ios.doi.gov>, Craig Dorsett <Craig_dorsett@ios.doi.gov>, Lori Faeth <Lori_Faeth@ios.doi.gov>, Ethan Taylor <ethan_taylor@ios.doi.gov>, Jonathan Jarvis <Jon_jarvis@nps.gov>, Margaret O'Dell <Peggy_O'Dell@nps.gov>, April Slayton <april_slayton@nps.gov>, Roberta D'Amico <Roberta_D'Amico@nps.gov>, david elkowitz <David_Elkowitz@nps.gov>

Attached and copied below is a draft press release that DOI will issue on Friday in conjunction with the event in Big Bend National Park and Mexico.

Given the time it takes for these binational joint press releases to be approved, please send me **DO NOT REPLY ALL** any suggested edits by COB on Wednesday, April 8, 2015.

Note that the wildfire protection agreement language has been added since an earlier version was circulated for internal review.

Thanks!

Best,

Blake

—
Blake Androff

Director of Communications

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office: (202) 208-6416 | Cell: (202) 725-7435

April 10, 2015

Contacts: Jessica Kershaw (Interior), Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

MEXICO CONTACT

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**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

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News Release

April 10, 2015

Contacts: Jessica Kershaw (Interior), Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

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