

**Visitor Services Project**  
**Big Bend National Park**

**Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Big Bend National Park during April 3-9, 1992. A total of 512 questionnaires were distributed and 460 returned, a 90% response rate.
- This report profiles Big Bend visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Visitors were often families (62%) and in groups of two (60%). Forty-four percent of visitors were 56-70 years old; 20% were aged 41-55. Most (60%) were first time visitors to Big Bend.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 10% of the visitation, with 48% of the international visitors from Germany. Americans came from Texas (65%), with smaller numbers from many other states.
- Most visitors (73%) spent more than one day at Big Bend. Most visitors viewed scenery (98%), visited the visitor center(s) (88%) and went dayhiking (53%). Panther Junction Visitor Center was the most visited park site (87%), followed by the Chisos Basin (80%), Santa Elena Canyon (68%) and Rio Grande Village (62%).
- Visitors most often used maps, advice from friends and relatives, and travel guides/tour books as sources of information about the park. Many reasons brought visitors to the park, but most often identified was the scenic views/drives (96%).
- The most used visitor services were the park brochure/map and visitor center personnel. The park brochure/map, visitor center personnel and safety information brochures were the most important services, according to visitors. Visitor center sales publications and ranger/volunteer-led programs received the highest quality ratings.
- The most used maintenance services/facilities were highway directional signs and restrooms. These two services were also rated most important. The highest quality services were trails and highway directional signs.
- Inside the park, the average visitor group expenditure was \$117 for this visit; the average per capita expenditure was \$43. Outside the park, the average visitor group expenditure for this visit was \$274; the average per capita expenditure was \$104.
- Most visitors (76%) stayed one or two nights in Big Bend, with the largest proportion camping without hookups (40%).
- Visitors made many additional comments.

<p>For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199 or call (208) 885-7129.</p>
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