



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

Big Bend National Park
PO Box 129
Big Bend National Park, TX

432 477-1108 phone
432 477-1175 fax

Big Bend National Park

Primary Interpretive Themes

Primary Interpretive Themes for Big Bend National Park and Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

Interpretive themes convey park significance. Primary interpretive themes are the key ideas through which the park's nationally significant resource values are conveyed to the public. They connect park resources to the larger ideas, meaning, and values of which they are a part. They are the building blocks — the core content — on which the interpretive program is based. Each primary theme may connect to a number of specific stories or subthemes. These elements are helpful in designing individual services, ensuring that the main aspects of primary themes are addressed.

A—The convergence of desert, mountain, and river ecosystems in Big Bend National Park supports a remarkable diversity of life and provides abundant opportunities to experience and learn about the natural world.

B—Big Bend's rugged and remote wilderness, spectacular river canyons, vast expanses, panoramic vistas, dark night skies, and proximity to Mexico provide outstanding recreational opportunities, and inspire wonder, reflection, and rejuvenation.

C—For thousands of years, the Big Bend region has been a focus of human activity—bringing people together from all directions, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in conflict.

D—Survival strategies and adaptations of living things in the Chihuahuan Desert are as wondrous as the environment is extreme—often defying our expectations about the ability of life to thrive in such conditions.

E—Abundant fossils in Big Bend National Park, including some found nowhere else in the world, record the existence and demise of dinosaurs and the flourishing of mammals, enabling us to ponder evolution and our own impermanence in the world.

F—Diverse, well-exposed, and accessible geologic features enable us to learn about the processes that shaped, and continue to shape, the Earth and influence its inhabitants.