



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park  
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## Big Bend National Park News Release

### BEST LIGHTING PRACTICES PROTECT THE NIGHT SKY AT BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

Big Bend National Park has recently completed the first phase of a grant-funded partnership project called Best Lighting Practices to improve exterior lighting throughout the park. The first phase includes dramatic improvements to the exterior lighting at the Panther Junction Visitor Center and the Panther Junction Service Station.

The work has been accomplished through grants from the National Parks Foundation, the Friends of Big Bend National Park, Forever Resorts, Inc., and park staff. These grants intend to improve Best Lighting Practices throughout the National Park Service, and Big Bend National Park is the first park to receive the benefits of this grant. The goals of the project include reducing night sky light pollution, reducing electrical energy consumption, and providing adequate lighting.

The newly installed night sky-friendly lighting at the Panther Junction's visitor center entrance has reduced lighting from 480 Watts to less than 14 Watts. At the same time, the new lighting allows the visitor to easily access the after-hours maps and information available at the visitor center entrance. The next phase of the project will be the Chisos Basin developed area, including the lodge and restaurant facilities.

Big Bend National Park has among the darkest and most dramatic night sky vistas in the lower 48 states, and is an excellent place for astronomers of all experience levels to enjoy the night sky. In addition, many visitors to the park enjoy the increased visibility of the night sky as a resource and experience in and of itself. With the newly installed lighting this important resource will remain available and more accessible for years to follow.

Big Bend National Park Superintendent Bill Wellman stated, "I am extremely pleased with the partnership and partners who came together to improve this important park resource. I also wish to thank our park's maintenance employees, who provided expertise and services that helped this project become a reality."

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