



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
P.O. Box 129
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 21, 2009

David Elkowitz
432-477-1108

Big Bend National Park News Release

NEW RIO GRANDE VILLAGE BIRDING PLATFORM

Members of Big Bend National Park's maintenance crew recently completed installation of a new birding platform at the Rio Grande Village Beaver Pond. The new platform is a fixed 20'x20' floating dock with a gangway access from the shore. It is the first in a two-phase process to restore access to the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail that was interrupted after the September 2008 Rio Grande flood event.

The new viewing platform offers great pond views and opportunities to enjoy birding and wildlife viewing at the Rio Grande Village Beaver Pond. The pond is located at the south side of the Rio Grande Village campground and can be accessed by following the outer campground loop road and parking along the far outside south loop of the Class A campground. A sign along the loop directs visitors to the Nature Trail and viewing platform.

This is the first phase of the Rio Grande Village Nature Walk repairs. The park is still working on and planning for the second phase to restore the permanent connection to the existing nature trail. This trail culminates with great views of the Rio Grande and Boquillas, Mexico, from a hilltop summit. Currently, visitors are able to access this trail by using an alternate route that is available on the north side of the campground and along the paved road past the campground entrance. Ask at any park visitor center for details and directions.

The park's maintenance crew has also completed work at nearby Hot Springs Historic Site, which was also impacted by the flood waters of 2008. A bridge damaged by the flood has been replaced. The crew has removed debris, mud, and vegetation along the trail to the Hot Springs, as well as making significant improvements to the dirt road access. Also completed is a new trailhead allowing visitors to easily find and access the Langford home site on the bluffs overlooking Hot Springs. The home site trail is now marked and starts at the newly restored walkway just beyond the Hot Springs Trail parking lot. This trail is one mile in length, and leads to the bluffs overlooking the Rio Grande and then back to the Hot Springs on the river. The views of the Sierra del Carmen and Rio Grande from this trail are spectacular.

Park Superintendent William Wellman stated, "The completion of the new Rio Grande Nature Trail Platform is a milestone in the park's flood cleanup efforts, and provides park visitors with the opportunity to once again access the unique riparian habitat found at the beaver pond. In addition, with the recent completion of the cleanup at Hot Springs, the park's efforts at restoring and improving flood damaged areas are nearing completion."

--END--

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.