



National Park Service
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Big Bend National Park News Release

BEST LIGHTING PRACTICES PARTNERSHIP EXTENDS LIGHTING BENEFITS AT BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

Big Bend National Park recently completed the first phase of a partnership project to improve exterior lighting throughout the park. The first phase accomplishments included dramatic improvements to the exterior lighting at the Panther Junction Visitor Center and the Panther Junction Service Station.

This partnership has been accomplished through the efforts and donations of Musco Lighting Inc. and through grants from the National Parks Foundation, the Friends of Big Bend National Park, Forever Resorts, Inc., and park staff assistance. These efforts intend to improve Night Sky Lighting throughout the National Park Service, and Big Bend National Park is the first park to receive the benefits of this grant. The basic goals of the Night Sky Project include reducing night sky light pollution, reducing electrical energy consumption, and providing adequate lighting.

Additionally, Best Lighting Practices seeks to provide for nine good lighting practices. These are to

- 1) Appropriately render the target area for the intended purpose(s).
- 2) Create safe environments
- 3) Mitigate the impact of lighting on the night sky.
- 4) Minimize spill and Glare
- 5) Control the impact of lighting on ecological issues such as plants, animals, geology, etc...
- 6) Curtail the impact of lighting on historic and cultural resources such as historic documents
- 7) Minimize the costs of procurement
- 8) Save energy through the use of efficient light sources and fixtures as well as through the use of proper controls
- 9) Lessen maintenance costs.

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. When the larger compound's overall lighting is considered at Panther Junction Main Headquarters and the nearby service station the total wattage savings are from a former high 2,238 watts down to 112 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 while also allowing park staff to access the parking areas and building entrances.

The next phases of the project will be the Chisos Basin developed area, interior lighting improvements to the Panther Junction visitor center exhibits and the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center exhibits. These phases will also include the Chisos Basin Lodge and restaurant facilities.

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

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 night sky 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 first phase results of the partnership and with the 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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