



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
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Big Bend National Park News Release

MULTIPLE RESCUES AND A FATALITY IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

On Thursday, June 10, 2009, Big Bend National Park authorities received a visitor report of a group of people needing emergency medical attention in the Dugout Wells area. National Park EMT's, and a Border Patrol EMT stationed within the park, responded to Dugout Wells and provided emergency care for a group of illegal immigrants who had been travelling in the over 100 degree temperatures for two days. Two people were transported by CareStar helicopter to hospital facilities. Others in the group were provided care on-scene and taken into custody. It is believed that this group's trip originated from El Salvador.

On this same day, a visitor was overcome by heat on the Old Ore Terminal Trail in the Rio Grande Village area and was rescued by park rangers. A third person working as part of a research trip on the Lower Canyons required helicopter evacuation after being bitten by a poisonous snake during this same evening. A Border patrol helicopter assisted with this evacuation, as well as with one of the heat related emergency transports.

Additionally, one of the people at Dugout Wells reported that a member of their group was unable to reach Dugout Wells and was in need of care. Rangers and Border Patrol began a search and found the man already deceased. There was no identification found and it is believed the deceased could be a Mexican national. Because of the possibility that the individual was a citizen of Mexico, officials are in contact with the Mexican Consulate.

The summer months with the often high temperatures and rough terrain of the park can combine to make the lower desert a very difficult environment for the unprepared, for those without adequate water and supplies, or those trying to cross the park illegally. Summertime is, however, an excellent time for park visitors to enjoy the higher and cooler Chisos Mountains which have numerous trails and abundant shade. Also, auto touring is enjoyable on the lower desert roads or hiking before the midday heat.

Big Bend National Park's staff is saddened by the loss of life that occurred this past week. The park staff wishes to thank the U.S. Border Patrol for both their on-scene care and helicopter usage with the multi-events. In addition, a thank you for the National Park Rangers who provided emergency care that led to the life saving rescues of two individuals at Dugout Wells.

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