

Big Bend

Ranger Programs

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River



August 21 - September 3, 2016

Monday, August 22

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Building the Big Bend” Geology doesn’t have to be a quagmire of cryptic terms. Join Ranger J. Fenstermacher to learn some basic concepts and the events that have shaped the Big Bend. If you’re curious about how the Chisos Basin formed or the history behind some of its conspicuous formations, be sure to go along. Meet at the Chisos Basin trailhead. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. Wheelchair accessible. 1/3 mile walk. 1 hour.

Tuesday, August 23

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Blurred Horizons” As one looks across the vistas of Big Bend, both physical horizons and cultural horizons meet. Are the views we see today the same as they were 1000 years ago, or 10,000 years ago? Join Ranger B. Frohbieter for a discussion of Big Bend’s changing climates, changing inhabitants, and a window into the vistas of the past. Meet at the Chisos Basin Trailhead. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. Wheelchair accessible. 1/3 mile. 45 minutes.

Thursday, August 25 – Founder’s Day

1-3 pm and 4-5 pm - “Happy Birthday National Park Service!” Today is the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service. Join park staff and volunteers to celebrate the Centennial with free birthday cake in the Panther Junction Headquarters Community Room from 1-3 pm or on the Chisos Mountains Lodge patio from 4-5 pm.

8:30 PM Evening Program – “Looking Forward” Many things have changed since the creation of the National Park Service one hundred years ago, yet the future remains as uncertain today as it was in 1916, and probably more so. Join Ranger B. Frohbieter for a brief look at where we’ve been as an organization, where we hope to go in the future, and the challenges to be met in our next century of stewardship. Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Wheelchair accessible. Bring a flashlight. 1 hour.

Friday, August 26

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Strategies for Survival” Our local environment may seem a less than ideal place to call home, but organisms – from ants to bears, even lichens – have developed creative ways to survive. Join Ranger J. Fenstermacher to learn about nature’s perspective on the secrets to survival. Meet at the Window View trailhead in the Chisos Basin. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. 1/3 mile walk. 1 hour.

8:30 PM Evening Program – “Find Your Park in Big Bend” As one of 59 national parks and 411 national park units, Big Bend National Park offers spectacular opportunities for recreation, education, and discovery. Join Ranger M. Lavender to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service by exploring the uniqueness of Big Bend and “Find Your Park!” Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Wheelchair accessible. Bring a flashlight. 45 minutes.

Saturday, August 27

7:00 AM Program – “Sunrise Walk to Balanced Rock” Early morning in Big Bend can be peaceful and colorful. Join Ranger B. Frohbieter for an easy morning hike to the beautiful Balanced Rock. Meet at the trailhead on Grapevine Hills Road. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. 2 miles roundtrip. 1.5 hours.

9:30-11:30 AM Special Activity – “Touch Table of Discoveries” Stop by the Chisos Basin Visitor Center front patio anytime during this timeframe for a chance to explore a Touch Table full of interesting and curious Big Bend objects. Get your hands in the sand to uncover fossils, hold a puma/mountain lion skull, compare a bear paw to your foot, and more!

Sunday, August 28

9:30-11:30 AM Special Activity – “Touch Table of Discoveries” Stop by the Panther Junction Visitor Center front patio anytime during this timeframe for a chance to explore a Touch Table full of interesting and curious Big Bend objects. Get your hands in the sand to uncover fossils, hold a puma/mountain lion skull, compare a bear paw to your foot, and more!

9:30 AM Guided Walk - “History Beneath Your Feet” Big Bend is rich with history, including the very trails we hike on. Join Ranger A. Marini to learn more about what the Civilian Conservation Corps built and how we maintain these hiking trails using similar tools and construction methods. Meet at the Lost Mine trailhead. Bring water, a hat, and wear good hiking shoes. 1.5 miles. 1 hour.

Friday, September 2

9:30 AM Program – “The Desert: It Wants to Kill You” Big Bend can be a dangerous place to visit, but don’t let that scare you from exploring the park and having fun. Join Ranger A. Marini to learn about the dangers of the desert and what you can do to stay safe and keep the park wild. Meet at the patio outside the Chisos Mountains Lodge. Wheelchair accessible. 1 hour.

Saturday, September 3

9:30 AM Program – “Bear Country” Whether you are staying at the Lodge, camping, or hiking in the Chisos Mountains or foothills you are in *Bear Country*. Join Ranger M. Lavender to learn more about how to enjoy Bear Country safely and agreeably with the unique population of Mexican black bears that make Big Bend home. Meet at the patio outside the Chisos Mountains Lodge. 45 minutes.