



Big Bend National Park © NPS

## FACT SHEET

### *National Parks in Texas*

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument •  
Amistad National Recreation Area • Big Bend National Park •  
Big Thicket National Preserve • Chamizal National Memorial  
• El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail •  
Fort Davis National Historic Site • Guadalupe Mountains  
National Park • Lake Meredith National Recreation Area •  
Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park • Padre Island  
National Seashore • Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic  
Site • Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River • San Antonio  
Missions National Historical Park

History abounds in the national parks of Texas. Artifacts from pre-Columbian days up to the home of Lyndon B. Johnson trace the history of the people who have called Texas home. Not to be left out are the impressive natural features – the Rio Grande, Guadalupe Peak, the Padre Islands – throughout Texas.

**Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument** - 1965. For more than 10,000 years, pre-Columbian Indians dug agatized dolomite from quarries here to make projectile points, knives, and other tools.

**Amistad National Recreation Area** -

archaeology and rock art, and contains a wide variety of plant and animal life.

**Big Bend National Park** - Authorized in 1935. Situated on the boundary with Mexico along the Rio Grande, it is a place where countries and cultures meet. It is also a place that merges natural environments, from desert to mountains. The park includes more than 801,000 acres of west Texas in the place where the Rio Grande makes a sharp turn – the Big Bend.

**Big Thicket National Preserve** Authorized in 1974, this was the first preserve in the National Park System. A convergence of ecosystems occurred here during the last Ice Age. It brought together in one geographical location the eastern hardwood forests, the gulf coastal plains, and the Midwest prairies.

**Chamizal National Memorial** -

dispute between the United States and Mexico. Far more than



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### El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail -

San Juan de Los Caballeros (1598-1600); San Gabriel (1600-1609); and Santa Fe (1610-1821). The national historic trail extends 404 miles from El Paso, Texas, to San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico.

**Fort Davis National Historic Site** - Authorized in 1961. One of America's best surviving examples of a frontier military post in the Southwest. From 1854 to 1891, Fort Davis was strategically located to protect emigrants, mail coaches, and freight wagons on the San Antonio-El Paso Road and the Chihuahua Trail, and to control activities on the southern stem of the Great Comanche War Trail and Mescalero Apache war trails. The 24th and 25th U.S. Infantry and 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry, all-black regiments established after the Civil War, were stationed at this post.

### Guadalupe Mountains National Park -

stone fossil reef. Other significant park features include: Guadalupe Peak, highest point in Texas at 8,749 feet; El Capitan, a massive limestone formation; McKittrick Canyon, with its unique flora and fauna; and the "Bowl," located in a high country conifer forest.

### Lake Meredith National Recreation Area

### Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park

### Padre Island National Seashore -

### Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site -

### Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

the Rio Grande from the Coahuila/Chihuahua, Mexico, state border upstream from Mariscal Canyon to the Terrell/Val Verde County line in Texas downstream. The Wild and Scenic River designation extends for 196 miles along the river's course.

- Four Spanish frontier missions, part of a colonization system that stretched across the Spanish Southwest in the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries, are preserved here. They include Missions San Jose, San Juan, Espada, and Concepcion. The park, containing many cultural sites along with some natural areas, was established in 1978. The park covers about 819 acres.

### *Key Issues Facing National Parks in Texas*

shortfall now estimated at \$750 million annually. In addition, several billion dollars are needed to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings, and repair the extensive backlog of maintenance projects. Many park friends in Congress have spent years highlighting the fiscal crisis in America's national parks. The Administration and Congress responded in fiscal year 2008 with a \$122 million increase in the budget for park operations. This is a strong first step in our parks and improving the experiences of visitors. The FY 2008 budget also launched the National Park Centennial Challenge, which will help restore the parks for their 100th birthday and for generations to come. In addition to the operational shortfall, the National Park Service has a \$1.9 billion land acquisition backlog consisting of over 11,000 tracts of land and covering more than 1.8 million acres. In many instances, failure to



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from \$130 million five years ago, to only \$21 million in the fiscal year 2009 request.

- Funding and staffing shortfalls limit cultural and natural resources research and protection projects at Big Thicket National Preserve. The units of the preserve are surrounded by privately held lands, opening the door to urban encroachment and habitat fragmentation.
- As a border park, Big Bend National Park faces issues with illegal immigration and drug smuggling. Visitors are told to be on the lookout for any activity that might be illegal and face the threat of fines for assisting, or appearing to assist, any illegal activities.
- Near and distant air pollution sources are negatively affecting Big Bend National Park. Power plants, oil production facilities, and smelters in both the U.S. and Mexico are limiting visibility, polluting the water, and damaging native plant populations.
- Of the world's seven species of sea turtles, five are found in the Gulf of Mexico and have had documented nests at Padre Island National Seashore. Decades of human activity in the area led to a drastic drop in the sea turtle population, resulting in all five species being listed as threat-

ened or endangered. A project started nearly 30 years ago has shown positive results, with record numbers of nests being found on Padre Island.

- Palo Alto Battlefield, despite being located on the U.S. border, had its only law enforcement officer transferred out of the park in January 2006. As a result, park rangers must stretch their resources to try to ensure that the border remains protected.

*Park Visitation in Texas*

*Budget Information*

*Contact Information*

NPS Unit	FY03 Enacted	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Enacted	FY07 Enacted	FY08 Enacted	FY 09 Requested	% Change FY07-08	% Change FY08-09	
<b>All Texas parks</b>						<b>\$31,128</b>	<b>\$33,426</b>	<b>\$37,553</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>



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