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Visit Big Bend Tourism Survey Report

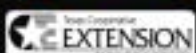
- An Investigation of Visitors to Big Bend Area -

Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences

Texas Cooperative Extension

Texas A&M University

Sponsored by Visit Big Bend Tourism Council





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Visit Big Bend Tourism Council

“Visit Big Bend” Visitor Survey 2003-2004

Final report prepared for the
Visit Big Bend Tourism Council

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was developed by Texas Cooperative Extension's, Department of Recreation, Park, & Tourism Sciences (RPTS) and was sponsored by Visit Big Bend Tourism Council (VBBTC). The purpose of this research was to provide visitor information that the "Visit Big Bend Tourism Council" could use to better understand visitation in order to better manage and market. The purpose of the study was to determine the characteristics, preferences and activities of visitors to the Big Bend destination area. Objectives of the study were as follows.

- Determine where visitors are coming from and how long they stay.
- Determine if visitors differ depending on time of year.
- Determine why visitors come and what they do in the Big Bend.
- Determine what information sources they use to plan a trip.
- Determine what the visitation patterns are over time among visitors.
- Determine how visitors feel about services in the area.
- Determine travel patterns related to highways and gateway communities in the Big Bend.
- Determine on what and where visitors spend money while in the Big Bend area.

To understand if visitor characteristics were related to the season of visit, there were a total of six sampling periods, one each in the months of April, June, August, October, December 2003, and March 2004 were used. Eight hundred and ninety one visitors to the Big Bend area were approached on-site about completing a survey and 828 chose to participate. This yielded a response rate for the on-site survey of 93%. Among those 828 respondents, 693 indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up survey that was used to gather more detailed information about the visitor experience. The total number of follow-up survey participants was 477, for a response rate of 69%.

Key Results

- Most visitors are from the U.S., with only 3.1% being international. Of the visitors from the U.S., the largest proportion (76%) was from Texas. Of visitors from Texas, 34% were from four major cities (Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio). There appeared to be important target areas in the Great Lakes region and New England that provide a high proportion of out of state visits. Florida, and California were also home to relatively large proportions of out of state visitors.
- Ninety four percent of all the visitors stayed at least one night with 66% staying two to four nights.
- Thirty nine percent stayed at least one night in the National Park, followed by 23% in Marathon, Study Butte (15%), Alpine (14%), and Terlingua (12%).
- Highway 385 from/to Ft. Stockton, and 118 from/to Ft. Davis are the primary travel routes into and out of the region. Almost 20% of all visitors used Highway 385 to enter *and* exit the area.
- Marathon was the most popular gateway community with 60% passing through and Big Bend National Park was the most popular stopping point (74% of the sample).
- Over 30% of the visitors contacted on-site in Marathon and Alpine did not travel into the south part of the county on this visit.
- The benefits they received related first to experiencing nature, followed by being away to relax and to learn about the Big Bend area. Open-ended responses indicated that the natural beauty, solitude/remoteness and low level of commercialization in the area were things most liked.
- Winter visitors stayed longer than those in other seasons and were more family and friends oriented while fall visitors were less inclined to be active.

- Summer and winter visitors tended to have higher levels of past visits than the other two seasons.
- Spring and fall visitors were least likely to want to visit in other seasons while summer visitors were amenable to visits any season.
- Day hiking, star gazing, wildlife viewing, and visiting historic sites are the top four activities respondents participated in. Back road driving/jeep touring ranked the sixth with about one quarter of those enlisting a guide service. Ten percent participated in boating/river running with over half using a guide.
- Half of all the follow-up respondents had visited the “Visit Big Bend” website, and thought it was useful. Based on zip code information, hits on that site appear to represent where actual visits originate. There appeared to be a higher ratio of visitors to site hits for cities out of state and Texas cities closer to the area.
- Visitors (especially spring breakers) scored accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.), recreational opportunities and information available about the area as important items, but the accommodations performed below the average for services overall. Food services scored as lower in importance but also performed lower than any other service. Helpfulness of locals and security/safety were rated as performing well.
- Respondents were not willing to see much expansion of services in the area. However, spring breakers wanted to see them expanded (mean =3.1: “somewhat”) more than visitors from other times (mean=2.8; less than “somewhat”).
- Respondents scored their experience as well worth their time and money.
- Most respondents were “likely” to “very likely” to revisit the area.

Key Recommendations

Create a tourism plan for the Big Bend region that sets goals, actions and priorities based on this report and other information available. Develop a standardized visitor survey to administer regularly at businesses.

Take advantage of high visitor pass through traffic in Marathon and create a regional visitor center at Highways 385 and 90 to better orient visitors on experiences and services both inside and outside Big Bend National Park

Continue to develop and enhance the Visit Big Bend Web Site, as it appears to be an important source of information for current visitors. Develop materials specific to foreign and out-of-state visitors.

Develop partnerships among businesses to package experiences aimed at the 40 to 60 age group. These visitors seem to want experiences that are family oriented, provide moderate activity and involve learning.

There appears to be interest in the Big Bend experience in the Great Lakes and New England regions. Consider reaching out to those markets.

Develop advertising information that encourages current spring and fall visitors to come back in shoulder or off seasons. Educate Texas visitors about the seasonal virtues of the western desert climate compared to other Texas climates (e.g., Houston). Coordinate efforts to stay in touch with current visitors (customers) to develop a clientele of repeat visitors more interested in coming at many times of the year.

Work to enhance accommodation and food service offerings without creating a more “commercial” atmosphere.

Consider enhancing visitor opportunities related to historical/cultural attractions, stargazing and trail activities, especially outside the national park.

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Introduction

This report was developed by Texas Cooperative Extension's, Department of Recreation, Park, & Tourism Sciences (RPTS) and was sponsored by Visit Big Bend Tourism Council (VBBTC). The purpose of this research was to provide visitor information that the "Visit Big Bend Tourism Council" could use to better understand visitation in order to better manage and market. The purpose of the study was to determine the characteristics, preferences and activities of visitors to the Big Bend destination area. Objectives of the study were as follows.

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- Determine on what and where visitors spend money while in the Big Bend area.

Achieving these objectives was intended to offer information that could then be used to make suggestions related to managing and marketing the Big Bend area.

This report is organized into seven parts; the introduction, methods, results, discussion of the results, recommendations, references, and appendix. The introduction provides a brief background of the study and the organization of the report. The second part describes methods used to complete the study. The results portion provides summary information for each question in the questionnaires. The next two parts discuss the results and provide marketing implications based on the results. The appendix includes copies of the questionnaires and additional tables.

Methods

Questionnaire Design and Administration

The questionnaire for this visitor survey was designed using a standard format that has been developed in previous visitor survey projects (Appendix I). Some of the questions were comparable with the questions in other visitor survey questionnaires. Other questions were developed for this study after consultation with the council members. Two questionnaires were developed; one for on-site interviews and one as a follow-up. The on-site form was used to collect information on travel patterns and activity participation and perceptions about seasonal visitation. The follow-up survey questionnaire was divided into three sections; activities and information, travel experience, and personal characteristics.

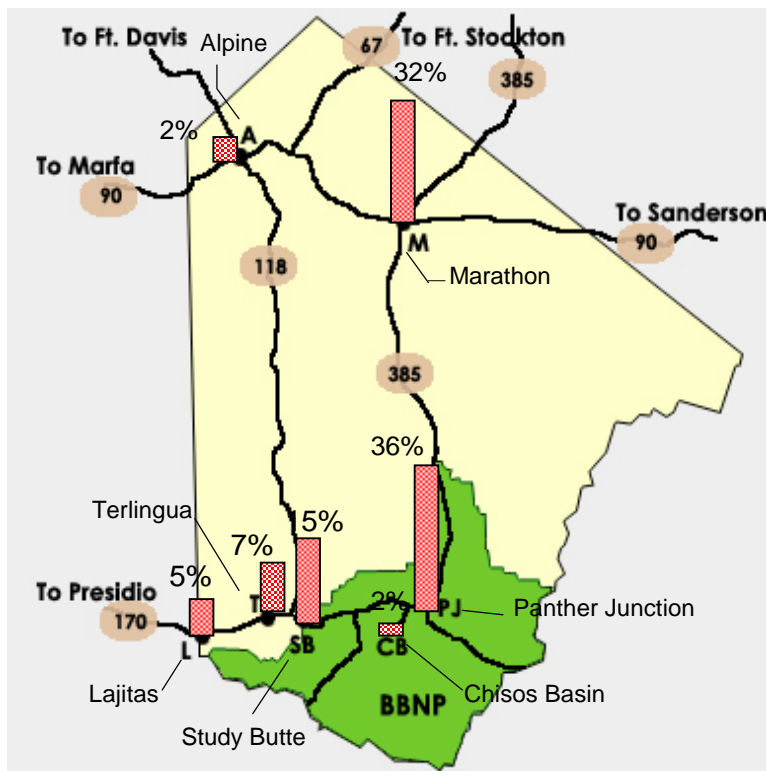
Sampling Process

To better understand if visitor characteristics were related to the season of visit, there were a total of six sampling periods, one each in the months of April, June, August, October, December 2003, and March 2004. These time periods were selected in consultation with VBBTC members in order to best represent the seasonal characteristics of the area. Sampling periods were combined to represent seasons examined in this study: Spring (March, April), Summer (June, August), Fall (October), and Winter (December).

Table 1. Summary of response rates for both on-site and follow-up surveys

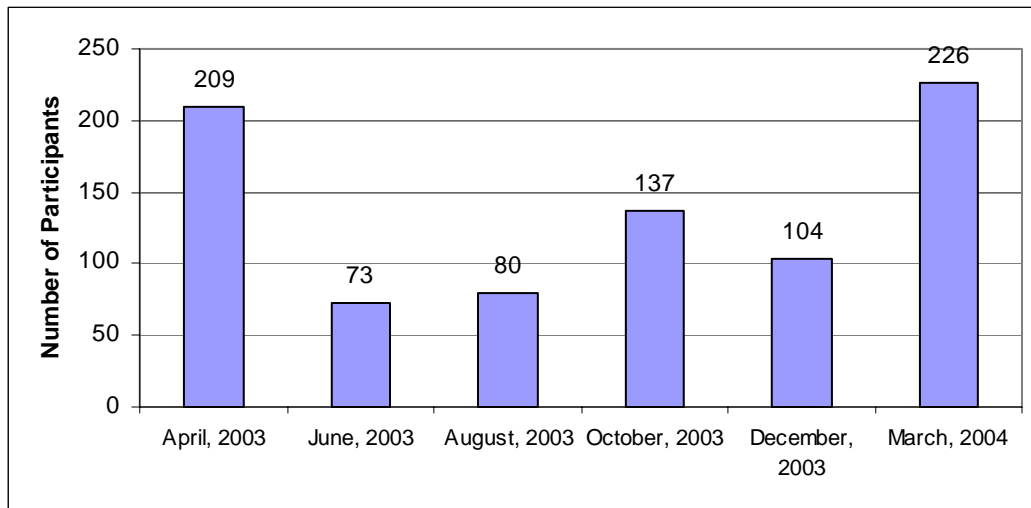
Total contacts: 891	Mail outs	Email	Both	Total
# of people who agreed to participate in on-site survey	828			
Response rate for on-site survey	93%			
# of people who agreed to participate in the follow-up survey	211	346	136	693
% of total agreed	30	50	20	100.0
Actual # of people who completed the follow-up survey	135	245	97 (33M, 64E)	
	168	259		
% of actual respondents	35	65		
Response rate for follow-up survey	69%			

Figure 1. Percentages of on-site interviews conducted



* The area was defined as Brewster County which includes Alpine, the Big Bend National Park, Lajitas, Marathon, Study Butte, and Terlingua.

Figure 2. Number of on-site interviews of visitors to the Big Bend area



On-site interviews took place in Big Bend National Park and in its gateway communities of Marathon, Study Butte, Terlingua, Lajitas and Alpine (Figure 1). With the help of local residents and VBBTC members, specific intercept points were selected to provide a good cross section of visitors to the area. Personnel from Texas A&M University were stationed at 1) Marathon’s Gage Hotel and along the “main street” corridor, 2) Panther Junction and Chisos Basin visitor centers in Big Bend National Park, 3) Study Butte businesses at the intersection of RR 170 and TX 118, 4) Terlingua’s “porch”, 5) The Lajitas Resort and 6) The Museum of the Big Bend in Alpine. Interviews were conducted in 2003 on the Fridays through Sundays of April 11-13, June 20-22, August 15-17, October 17-19, and on Sundays through Tuesdays of December 27-29, and March 14-16, (2004). Figure 2 indicates the number of on-site surveys conducted during each of the six sampling periods. The pattern of Figure 1 closely reflects, in relative magnitude, data published for visitation to Big Bend National Park in 2003 (<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/stats/>) indicating that the seasons of use as sampled are representative in a way that is proportional to visitation in the region.

Eight hundred and ninety one visitors to the Big Bend area were approached about completing the on-site survey. Visitors were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate in the interview. If visitors agreed, an interview, lasting approximately three minutes was conducted to gather base information and request cooperation with the follow-up survey. Sixty-three chose not to participate on-site, leaving 828 who participated and provided useable information. The response rate for the on-site survey was 93%.

Among those 828 respondents, 693 indicated a willingness to participate in a follow-up survey either by email or regular mail. An inducement was offered to encourage cooperation in the follow up survey. Those who participated had a chance to win a travel package worth \$500 to the Big Bend area. Those who agreed were asked for an address in order to mail them the survey. The follow-up survey was sent an average of one week after the interview. Two methods were used to administer the follow-up survey depending on what the respondent requested. First, a traditional mail questionnaire was sent and respondents were encouraged to complete and return the form in a preaddressed postage paid envelope. Two weeks following the first mailing a reminder note with a replacement questionnaire was mailed to the participants who had not yet sent the survey back. Second, an on-line survey was available for use. If this method was chosen the respondent was sent an email approximately one week after the on-site interview with instructions for how to log on and complete the survey. A reminder email was sent about two weeks later. The total number of follow-up survey participants was 477, for a response rate of 69% (Table 1).

Data Organization and Analysis

On-site interview data were collected using personal digital assistants (PDA). These data were directly downloaded to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). On-line follow-up information was directly transferred into Microsoft Access and was later exported to SPSS. Data provided on the paper version were transposed and entered into SPSS. In order to accomplish the study objectives, all analyses in this study were conducted using SPSS, Microsoft Excel, and ArcMap software.

Missing Data and Reporting Items

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions. Unanswered questions resulted in missing data that caused the number in the sample to vary some from item to item. These create small data inconsistencies as the number of respondents to different questions can differ by as many as 20 individuals. The sample sizes achieved represent an error rate of two to four percent.

RESULTS

Non-Response Bias Between Surveys

Gender was recorded by interviewers on-site and was also reported in the follow-up portion. Table 2 indicates that the percentages of males and females in each portion of the survey were not significantly different. Interviewers also estimated each interviewee's age during the on-site survey. In the follow-up survey, respondents were asked to provide their age. Figure 3 indicates that the follow-up sample was representative of the on-site sample in terms of age. These results provide some confidence that the respondents to the follow up survey, though lower in their response rate, were not different from those contacted on-site in terms of basic demographic characteristics.

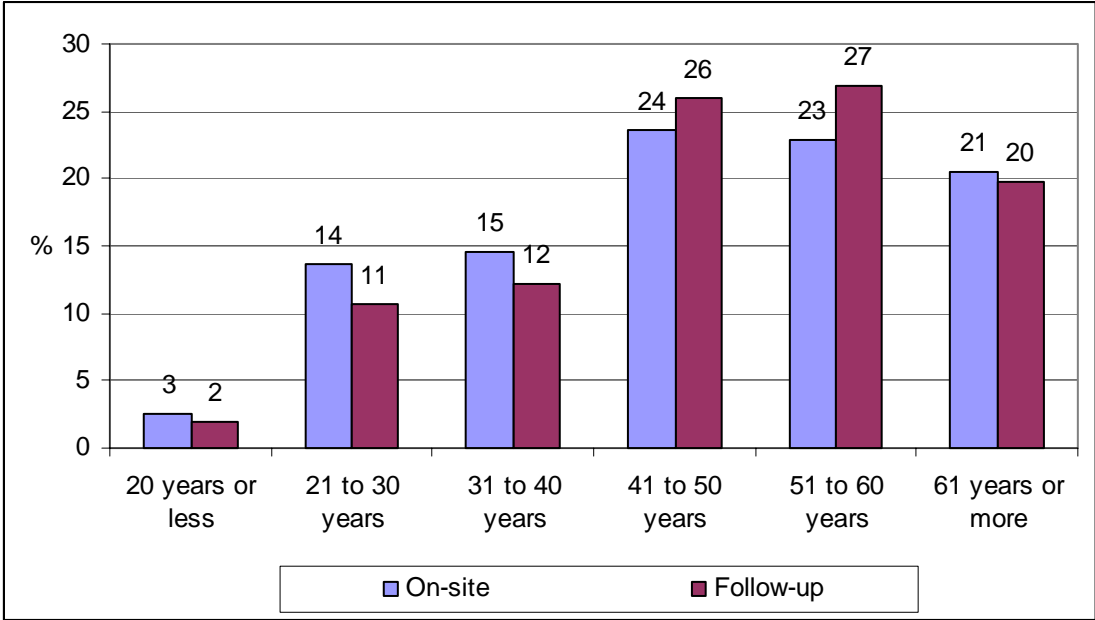
Table 2. Gender of on-site and follow-up respondents

Gender	n	Female	Male
		%	%
On-site	828	43	57
Follow-up	460	44	56

Basic Characteristics of Visitors to the Big Bend Region

The surveyors estimated interviewee's age during the on-site interview. The on-site participants' estimated age ranged from 20s to 60 and over. On the follow-up survey, respondents were asked to give us their age. Follow-up respondents' average age was 48 years and 10 months (Table 2 and figure 3). Before jumping into the other onsite data we need to paint a more complete picture of who the visitors are demographically (gender, education, income, employment, race and where they are from, counties, states and cities in Texas).

Figure 3. Percentages of respondents by age categories for both on-site interviewer estimates and as reported by respondents in the follow-up survey.

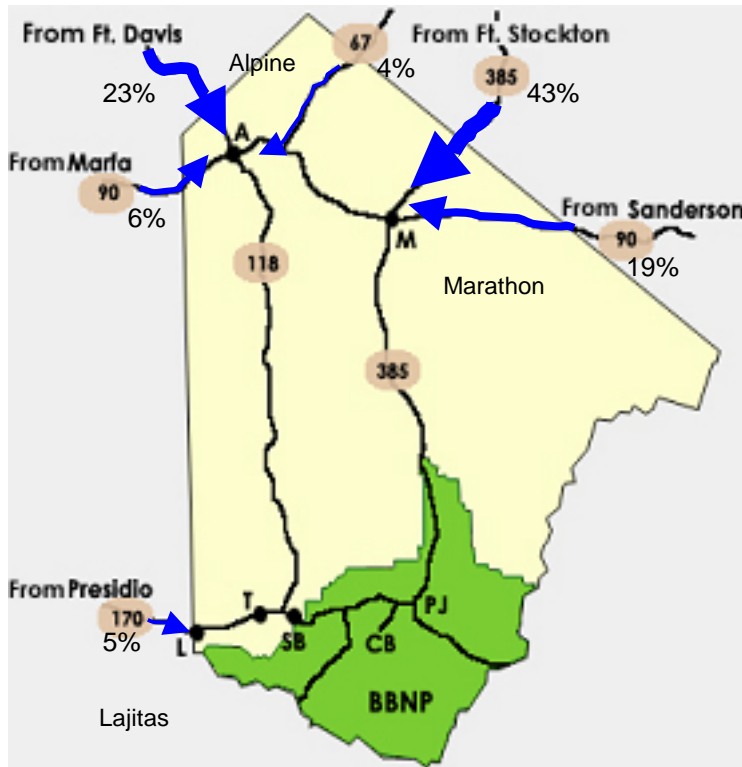


PART I. Travel and Activity Information from the On-site Survey

Travel Information

Roadways used by visitors to access the area

Figure 4-a. Roads used by visitors to enter the Big Bend area



Respondents were asked which road they took to enter and exit the Big Bend area. Highway 385 from Ft. Stockton was the most frequently used road (43% of all in bound travel) for entering the Big Bend area, followed by Highway 118 from Ft. Davis, and Highway 90 from Sanderson (Figure 4-a). Highway 67 from Ft. Stockton and RR 170 from Presidio were the roads used least (4 and 5% each).

Figure 4-b. Percentages of visitors who used different roads to enter the Big Bend area.

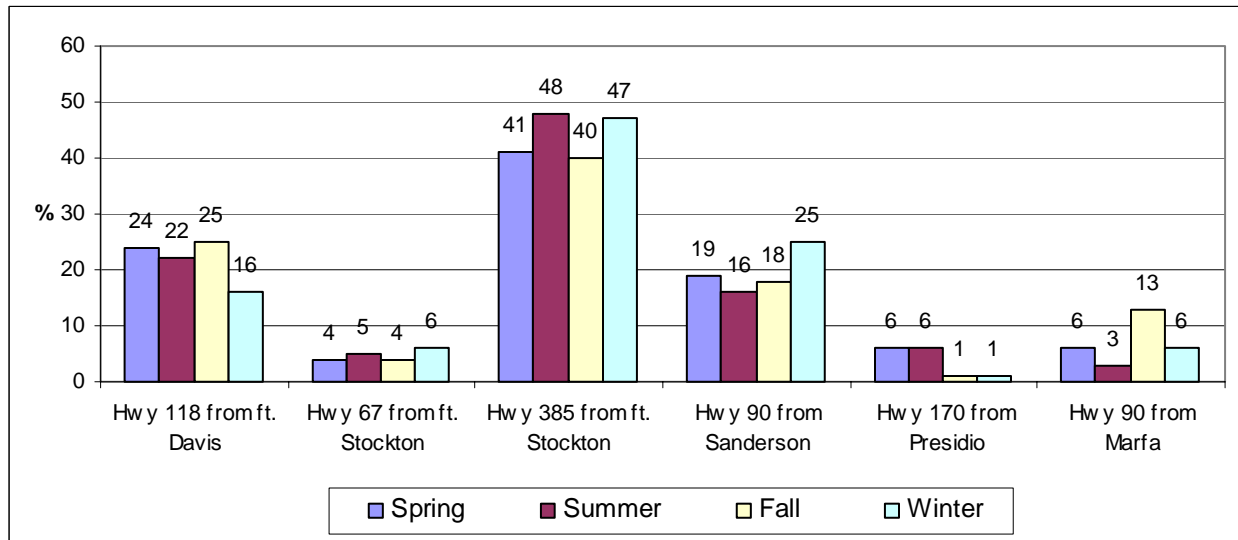
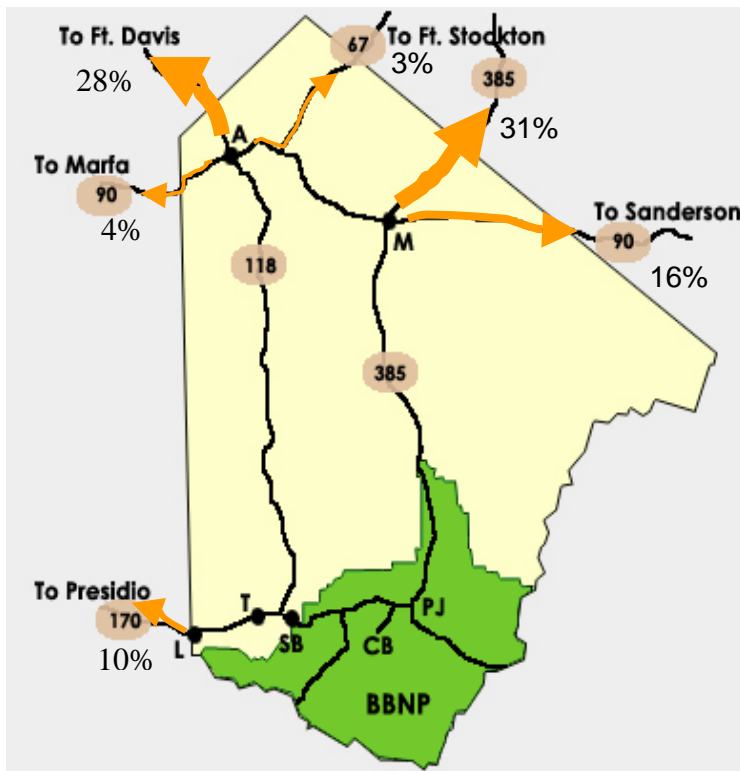


Figure 5-a. Roads used by visitors to exit the Big Bend area



As with entry, Highway 385 to Ft. Stockton was the most frequently used (30%) road to exit the area, followed by Highway 118 to Ft. Davis (27%), and Highway 90 to Sanderson (16%) (Figure 5-a). Highway 67 to Ft. Stockton and 90 to Marfa were minimally used to exit the area (3% and 4%, respectively). This is consistent by season (Figure 5-b), except for a slightly higher usage of highway 118 from Ft. Davis in the winter. Highways 385 from Ft. Stockton, 90 from Sanderson and Marfa were used more as entrance roads. Highways 118 to Ft. Davis, 170 to Presidio were more often used as exit roads (Figure 6).

Figure 5-b. Percentages of visitors who used different roads to exit the Big Bend area.

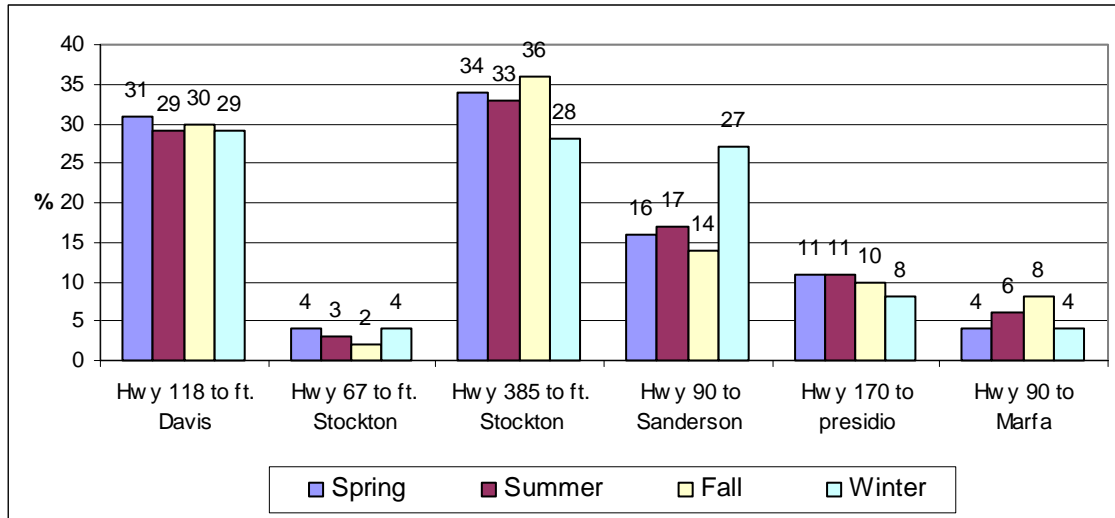


Figure 6. Entry and exit roads used by visitors to the Big Bend area.

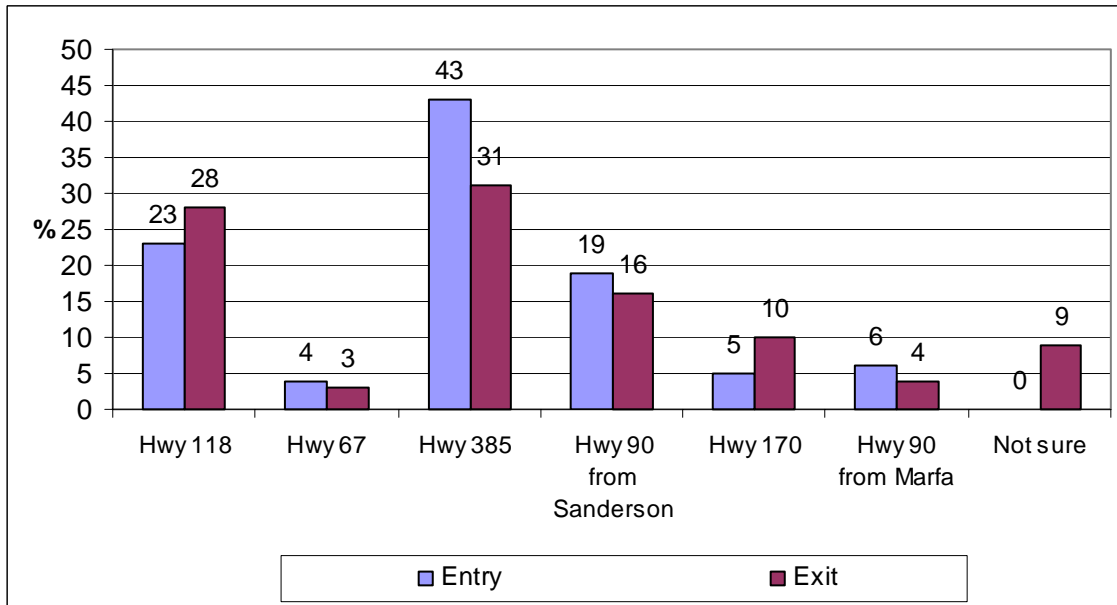


Table 3. Combinations of entry and exit roads used by visitors to the Big Bend area.

Exit Entry	118 to Ft Davis	67 to Ft Stockton	385 to Ft Stockton	90 to Sanderson	170 to Presidio	90 to Marfa	Total
hwy 118 from Ft Davis	76	3	52	15	20	7	185
hwy 67 from Ft Stockton	6	9	9	5	2	1	35
hwy 385 from Ft Stockton	91	9	143	41	23	7	346
hwy 90 from Sanderson	28	5	21	50	23	12	157
hwy 170 from Presidio	11	1	13	3	6	1	38
hwy 90 from Marfa	9	0	10	13	3	11	53
Total	225	28	248	127	78	39	825
% who used the same road for entry and exit	9.2	1.1	17.3	6.1	.7	1.3	35.8

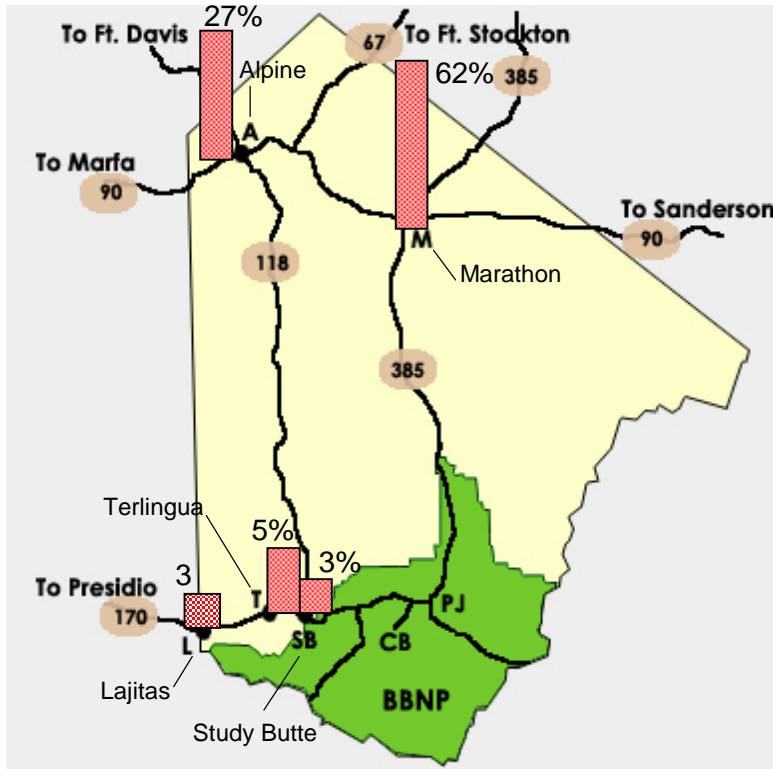
Two hundred and ninety five respondents out of 825 (35.8%) came in and out of the Big Bend on the same road (Table 3). One hundred forty three (17.3%) took highway 385 and 76 (9.2%) took highway 118 as both their entry and exit roads. One hundred forty three (17.3%) used the combination of highway 118 and highway 385 to come and go from the area. Visitors were also asked to indicate the sites where they stopped in the Big Bend area on this trip. Seventy four percent of all the respondents who visited the area stopped at Big Bend National Park (Table 4). On average, it was their second stop. Forty seven percent of respondents stopped in Marathon at some time during their trip with 33 % making it their first stop in the area. Twenty percent of visitors stopped in Lajitas. Those who visited Lajitas did so after making an average of two other stops. This was not surprising given Lajitas was the place most remote from popular access through Marathon and Alpine. Of the 280 (34% of total) interviews completed in Marathon and Alpine 94 (34%) did not travel south of Highway 90 during their visit.

Table 4. Percentages of visitors who stopped at each location in the Big Bend area

Other Stops	(n=828)	Percent	Mean*
Big Bend NP	613	73.9	2.0
Marathon	387	46.7	1.5
Study Butte	201	24.2	2.3
Alpine	200	24.1	1.8
Terlingua	193	23.3	2.7
Lajitas	169	20.4	2.9
Others	152	18.3	2.6

* nth stop made during the trip. For example, visitors' second stopping location was Big Bend NP, on average.

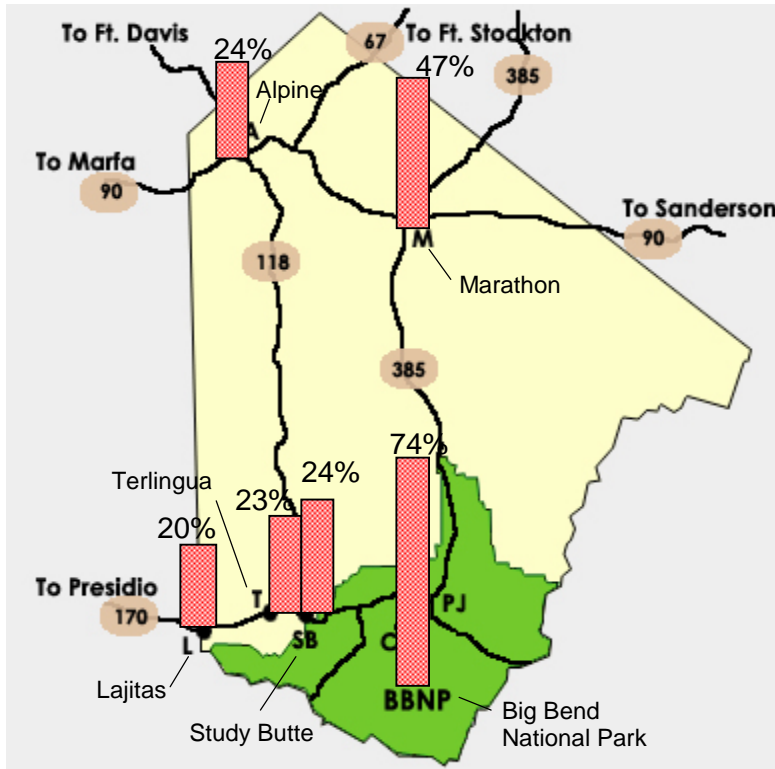
Figure 7. Towns through which respondents entered the Big Bend area



Over 60% of all the respondents passed through Marathon to enter the Big Bend area (Figure 7), followed by Alpine (27%). There were no significant seasonal differences in the towns visitors passed through to enter the Big Bend area.

Visitors were asked where they stopped within the area (Figure 8). Big Bend National Park was the primary destination point with 74% of all interviewees indicating that they stopped there. This number rises to 84% when only people who went south of Highway 90 are included.

Figure 8. Percentages of visitors who stopped at key points in the Big Bend area.



Visitors' points of origin

Respondents were asked for their home zip code. If they were not from the United States, they gave us their country of origin. The largest proportions of United States visitors (62%) were from Texas (Table 5-a), and 65% were from Texas and its neighboring states (Figure 9-a). Large states of Florida, New York and California contributed a total of 8% of visitors. Another 9% of visitors were from the Great Lakes region (6 states of MN, WI, MI, IL, OH, PA). The New England region (without NY) provided 4% of the visitors in our sample. There were also 4% international visitors to the area (Table 5-b). Nineteen foreign visitors out of 30 (63%) were from European countries. Only forty-eight (5%) of visitors in the sample originated from within 200 miles of Big Bend National Park. Three hundred and ninety nine (48%) visitors came from within 500 miles of Big Bend National Park while 195 visitors (24%) came from over 1,000 miles away.

Within Texas 7% of visitors were from Austin, 7% from Dallas/Ft Worth, 8% from Houston, and 10% were from San Antonio. Over all, 41% were from the five major Texas cities and their vicinities.

Table 5-a. States where respondents visiting the Big Bend area traveled from

State	Frequency	Percent	State	Frequency	Percent
Texas	490	62.0	Mississippi	6	0.8
Florida	34	4.3	Massachusetts	5	0.6
Minnesota	20	2.5	South Carolina	4	0.5
New York	18	2.3	Virginia	4	0.5
California	16	2.0	New Jersey	4	0.5
New Mexico	13	1.6	Georgia	3	0.4
Washington	13	1.6	Tennessee	3	0.4
Alabama	12	1.5	Vermont	3	0.4
Michigan	11	1.4	Colorado	3	0.4
Wisconsin	11	1.4	West Virginia	3	0.4
Maryland	11	1.4	Wyoming	3	0.4
Pennsylvania	11	1.4	Kansas	2	0.3
Oklahoma	10	1.3	Kentucky	2	0.3
South Dakota	10	1.3	Nebraska	2	0.3
North Carolina	9	1.1	Alaska	2	0.3
Arizona	8	1.0	Arkansas	2	0.3
Louisiana	8	1.0	Hawaii	2	0.3
Missouri	7	0.9	Iowa	2	0.3
Ohio	7	0.9	Montana	1	0.1
Illinois	7	0.9	Maine	1	0.1
Connecticut	6	0.8	New Hampshire	1	0.1
Total				790	100.0

Table 5-b. Where respondents visiting the Big Bend area traveled from - foreign visitors

Frequency		Frequency	
Europe		America	
Austria	1	Canada	5
Belgium	1	Mexico	1
Denmark	2	Asia	
Germany	2	Japan	2
Holland	3	Taiwan	2
Italy	1	Africa	
Scotland	1	South Africa	1
Slovenia	1	Total	30 (4%)
Sweden	1		
Swiss	2		
UK	4		

Figure 9-a. Numbers of visitors to the Big Bend area by state.

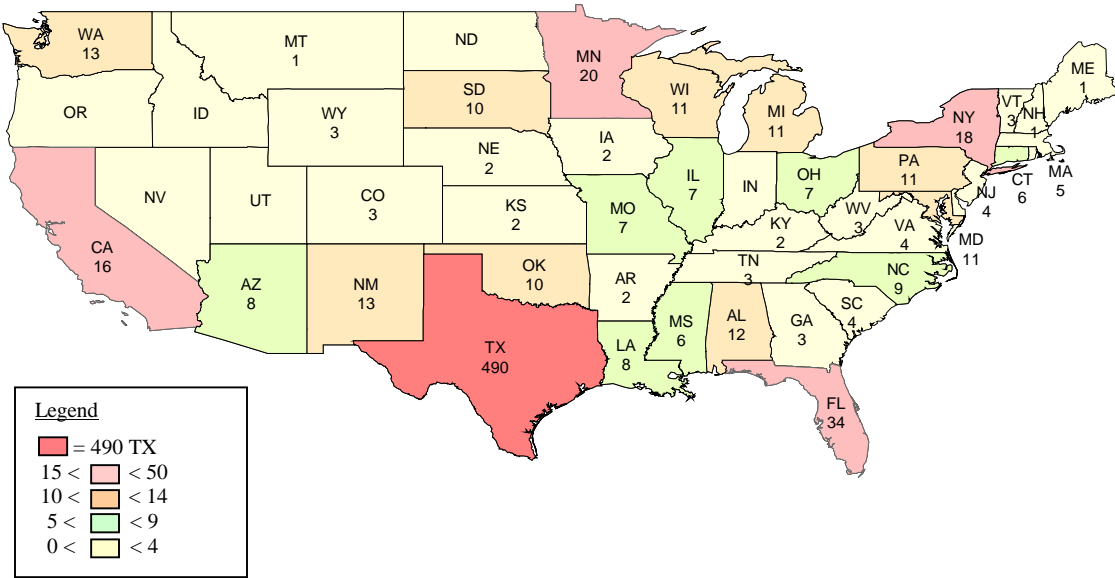


Figure 9-b. Zip codes of origin for U.S. visitors to the Big Bend

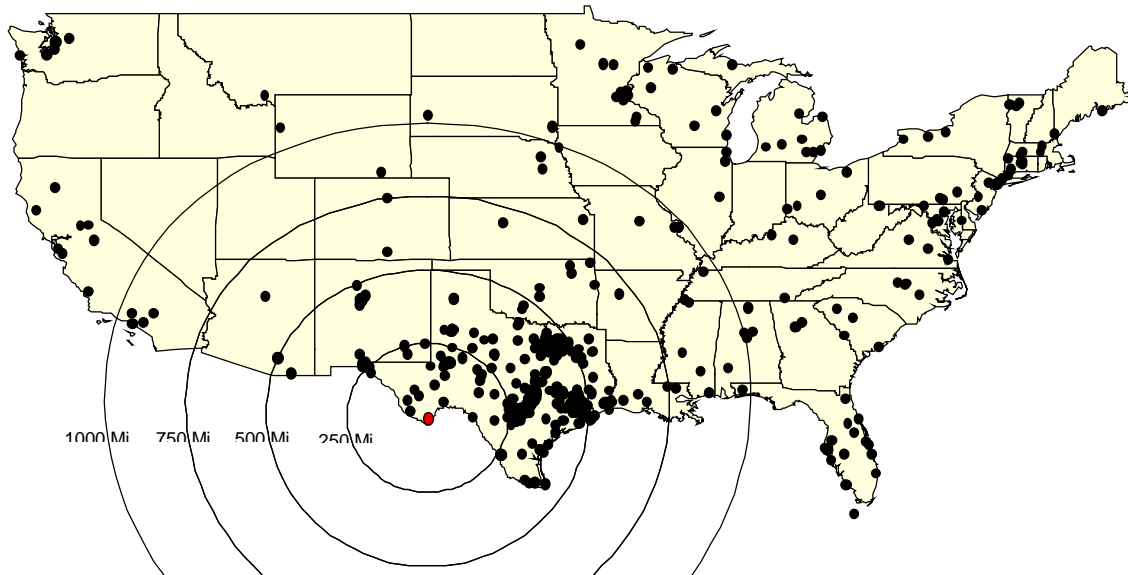
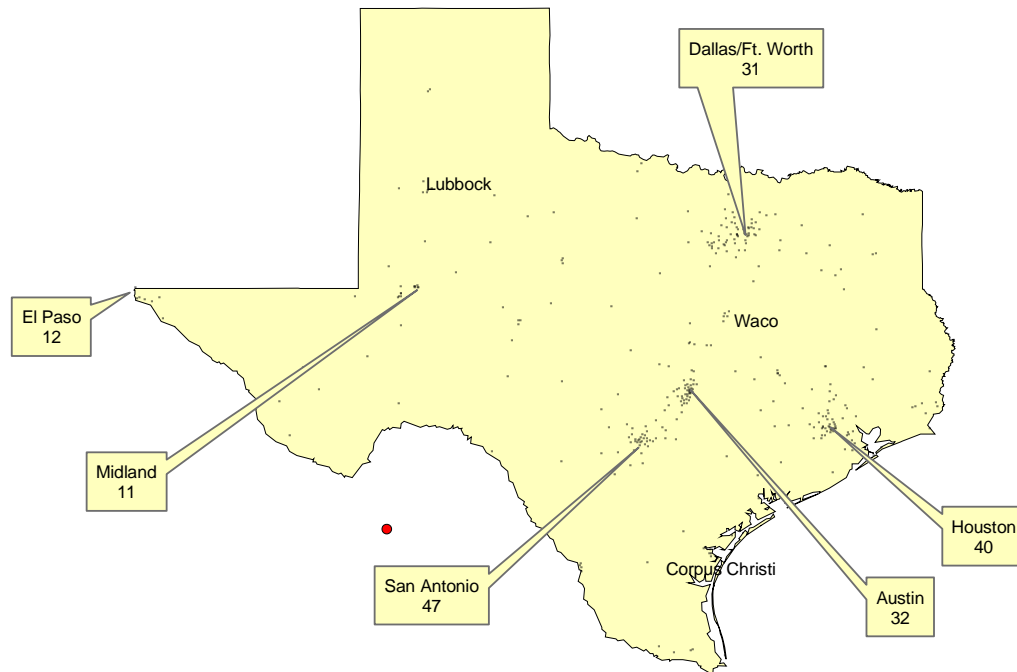


Figure 9-c. Zip codes of origin for Texans who visited the Big Bend



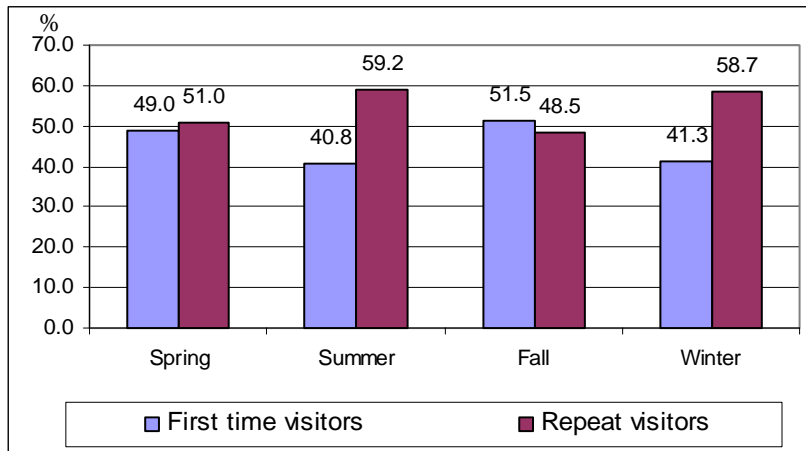
Past Visitation and This Stay

Visitors were asked how many previous visits they had made to the Big Bend, what kind of transportation they used to visit the area, number of nights they spent and where.

Table 6. The number of previous visits respondents had made to the Big Bend area in the past

# of times visited before this trip	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	# of times visited before this trip	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	388	46.9	46.9	16-20	16	1.9	92.0
1	151	18.3	65.2	21-25	23	2.8	94.8
2	51	6.2	71.4	26-30	21	2.5	97.3
3	28	3.4	74.8	31-35	2	.2	97.5
4	22	2.7	77.5	40	1	.1	97.6
5	24	2.9	80.4	45	1	.1	97.7
6	15	1.8	82.2	50	12	1.4	99.1
7	11	1.3	83.5	60	2	.2	99.3
8	9	1.1	84.6	100	4	.5	99.8
9	2	0.2	84.8	Total	828	100.0	
10	21	2.5	87.3	Mean	5.0		
11-15	23	2.8	90.1	S.D.	11.6		

Figure 10. Percentages of repeat and first time visitors to the Big Bend area by season



On average, respondents had visited the area five times before this trip. However, 47% were first time visitors and another 18% had only visited once before (Table 6). Among the repeat visitors (n=440), 34% were second time visitors, while 15% had visited the area more than 20 times. The information in Figure 10 indicates that visitors in the summer and winter, the “off-seasons,” were more likely than spring and fall visitors to have come before. This suggests that the familiarity of repeat visitors may lead to willingness or even a preference for characteristics found in the off seasons.

Visitors were also asked about their stay in the area including how many nights and where they stayed. The nights spent ranged from 0 to 90 (Table 7-a). Ninety four percent of all respondents stayed at least one night in the area. Most (63%) stayed two to four nights. On average, visitors spent four nights in the area.

Table 7-a. Number of nights respondents spent in the Big Bend area on this trip

# of nights spent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	# of nights spent	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	46	5.6	5.6	13	1	0.1	97.3
1	74	9.0	14.6	14	12	1.5	98.8
2	202	24.5	39.1	25	1	0.1	98.9
3	182	22.1	61.2	30	1	0.1	99.0
4	137	16.6	77.8	31	2	0.2	99.2
5	62	7.5	85.3	40	1	0.1	99.3
6	44	5.3	90.6	42	1	0.1	99.4
7	27	3.3	93.9	75	2	0.2	99.6
8	13	1.6	95.5	90	2	0.2	99.8
9	4	0.5	96.0	Total	828	100.0	
10	6	0.7	96.7	Mean	4.0		
11	1	0.1	96.8	Median	3.0		
12	3	0.4	97.2	S.D.	6.53		

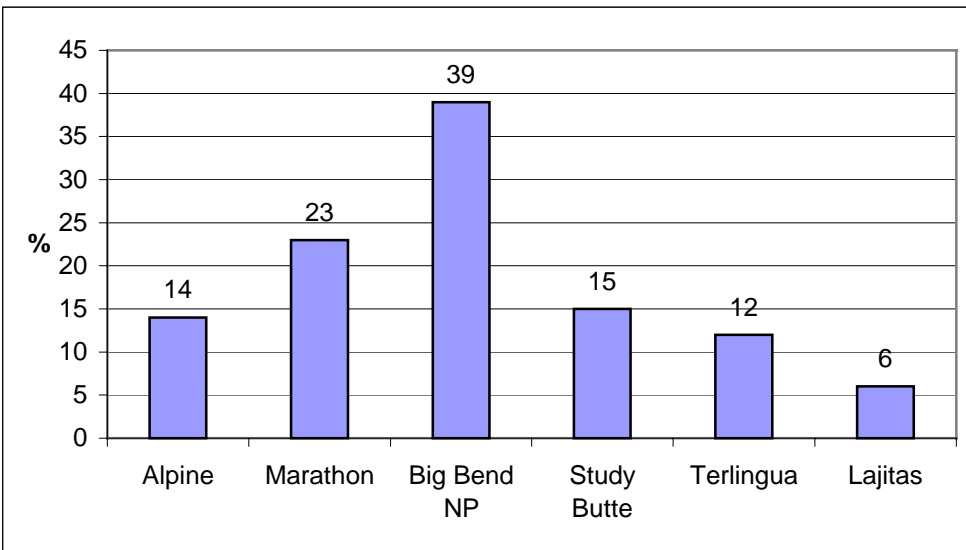
There were fairly large differences in the time visitors spent depending on the season. Respondents visiting in winter tended to spend more nights in the area (approximately five nights), while summer visitors spent only three nights (Table 7-b). Spring and fall visitors spent approximately four nights when they visited.

Table 7-b. Mean number of nights visitors spent in the Big Bend area on this trip by season.

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Mean ¹	3.9	3.0	4.3	5.1
Median	3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0

¹ Statistically different at the .00 level of significance.

Figure 11-a. Percentages of visitors who stayed at least one night in primary lodging areas in the Big Bend.



Three hundred twenty one visitors out of 829 (39%) stayed at least one night in the National Park, followed by 188 visitors in Marathon (23%), 128 in Study Butte (15%), 113 in Alpine (14%), and 102 in Terlingua (12%) (Figure 11-a). There were 6% who stayed overnight at Lajitas. By season the trend is similar except in the fall when the national park picks up a proportionally higher amount of visitors staying a night there (Figure 11-a).

Figure 11-b. Percentages of visitors who spent at least one night in key lodging areas on this trip to the Big Bend area by season.

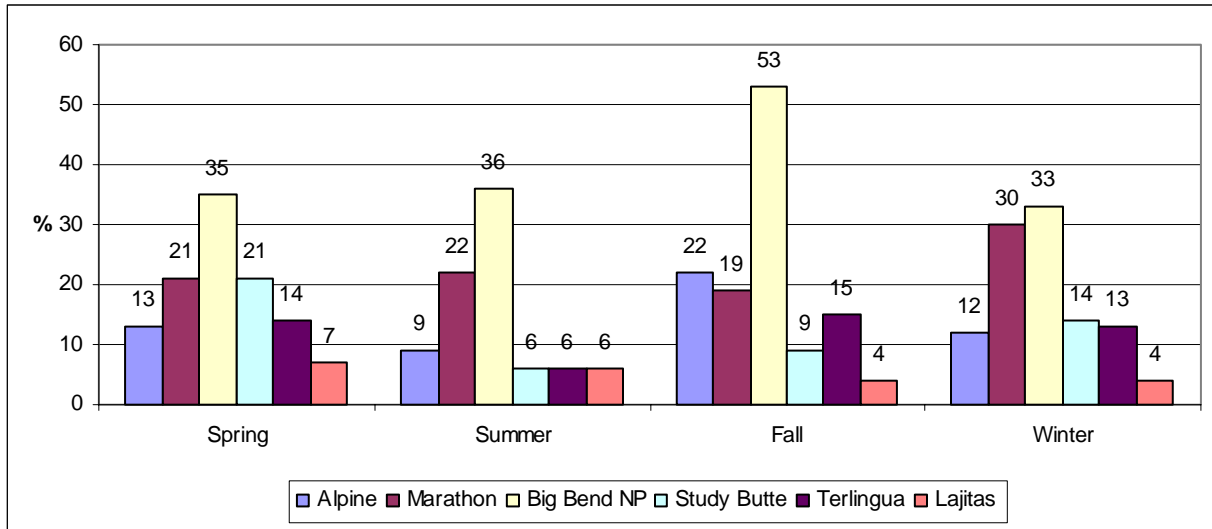


Table 8-a. Reasons respondents gave for making this trip to the Big Bend area.

	Frequency	Percent
Take vacation	236	27.4
See this part of Texas	205	23.8
A specific recreation activity	150	17.4
Get away	85	9.9
Be with family or friends	66	7.7
Attend a specific event	37	4.3
See specific features of land	28	3.2
Other	55	6.4
Total	862	100.0

* Other: Gage Hotel, passing by, reputation, saw in magazine, etc.

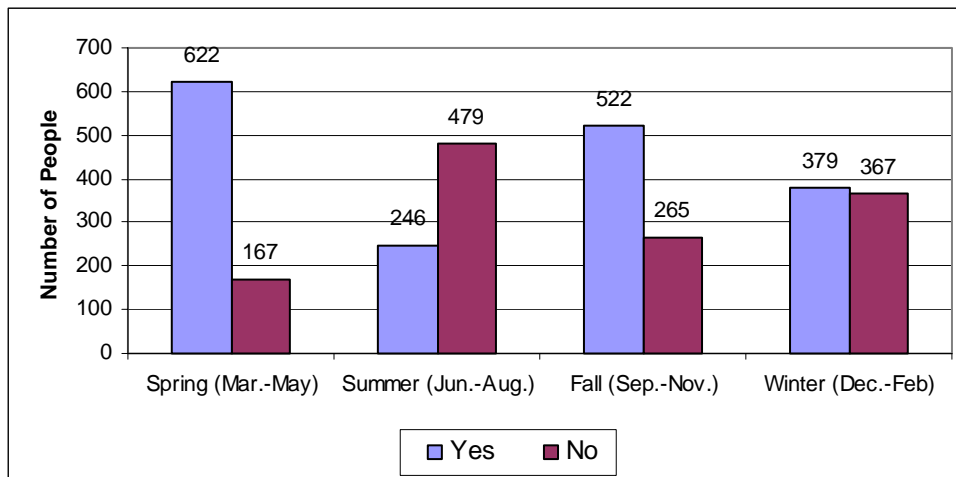
Table 8-b. Reasons respondents gave for making this trip to the Big Bend area

	Spring		Summer		Fall		Winter	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Take Vacation	66	29.3	59	38.6	25	18.4	44	42.3
See this part of Texas	59	26.2	19	12.4	29	21.3	20	19.2
Get away	19	8.4	22	14.4	18	13.2	16	15.4
Be with family & friends	18	8.0	18	11.8	10	7.4	8	7.7
A specific recreation activity	34	15.1	15	9.8	10	7.4	13	12.5
See specific features of land	13	5.8	3	2.0	4	2.9	1	1.0
Attend a special event	3	1.3	7	4.6	24	17.6	0	0.0
Other	13	5.8	10	6.5	16	11.8	2	1.9
Total	225	100.0	153	100.0	136	100.0	104	100.0

Twenty seven percent of all the respondents reported “vacation” as the primary reason for visiting the area while 24% came to see this part of Texas, 17% came for specific recreational activities, 10% came just to get away, and 8% came to be with their family or friends (Table 8-a).

There were no major seasonal differences in reasons for coming (Table 8-b). To “take vacation” ranked the first in spring, summer and winter (29, 39 and 42%, respectively), while to “see this part of Texas” ranked the first in fall (21%). Summer respondents appeared to differ in that a lower percentage came to see this part of Texas. They were also the most experienced group by season and thus the desire to see a new part of Texas may have been less important. Fall respondents were more likely than other seasonal groups to be attending an event of some kind. Spring and winter respondents were most likely to say they came to engage in a specific recreational activity (e.g., motorcycle touring, river running, backpacking).

Figure 12-a. The willingness of respondents to visit the Big Bend during different seasons of the year



When asked to speculate about times they would visit the Big Bend, 75% of all respondents indicated a willingness to visit the area in spring, making it the season perceived most favorably overall (Figure 12-a). Fall was also perceived as a good time to visit by the majority. Summer on the other hand was seen as least attractive and winter was evenly split. Figure 12-b indicates that visitors of all past experience levels were

most favorable toward spring for possible future visits but that people with over 5 visits became more to favorable toward summer and winter as a time to come. Figure 12-c provides information about how visitors in a certain season felt about visiting across all seasons. For example, in each case they were most favorable to the season they were currently visiting in. Summer visitors were most likely to feel that all four seasons were times they would visit while fall and spring visitors were more extreme in their perceptions. Visitors in spring, fall and winter were considerably more likely to perceive summer as a time they would not come to the Big Bend.

Figure 12-b. The willingness of respondents to visit the Big Bend during different seasons by number of past visits

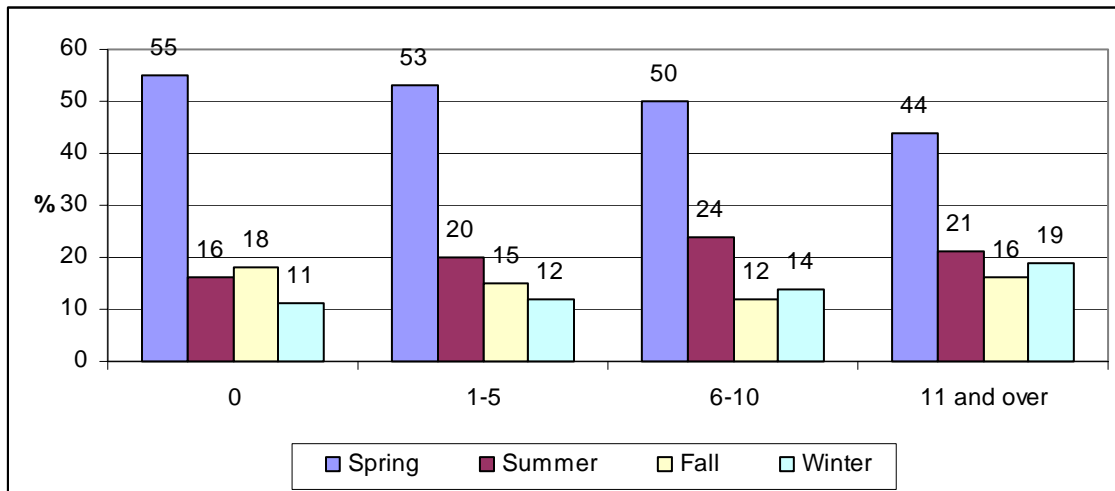


Figure 12-c. Percentages of respondents willing to visit the Big Bend area in seasons of the year by the season in which they were interviewed

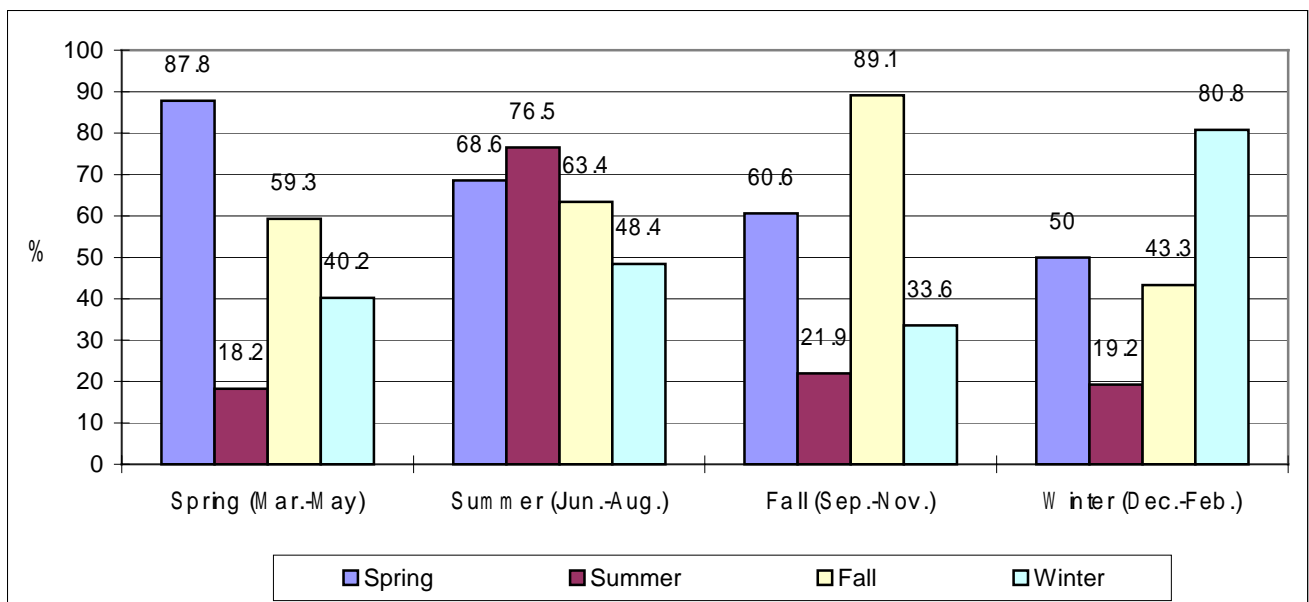


Table 9. The activities respondents engaged in on their own or with a guide while in the Big Bend area

	Frequency (%)			Percent (N=829)
	On their own	With a guide	Both	
Day hiking	531 (98.3)	7 (1.3)	2 (.4)	65.1
Star gazing	468 (96.1)	18 (3.7)	1 (.2)	58.7
Wildlife viewing	406 (97.6)	7 (1.7)	3 (.7)	50.2
Visit historic sites	370 (98.9)	1 (.3)	3 (.8)	45.1
Car camping (Rving)	196 (98.5)	3 (1.5)	0	24.0
Back road driving/jeep touring	150 (78.5)	34 (17.8)	7 (3.7)	23.0
Backpacking	97 (99.0)	1 (1.0)	0	11.8
Boating/River running	37 (44.6)	39 (47.0)	7 (8.4)	10.0
Horseback riding	18 (30.5)	36 (61.0)	5 (8.5)	7.1
Motorcycle tour on road	46 (97.9)	1 (2.1)	0	5.7
Mountain biking	40 (95.2)	2 (4.8)	0	5.1
Motorcycling/ATV off road	35 (100.0)	0	0	4.2
Hunting	7 (70.0)	2 (20.0)	1 (10.0)	1.2
Other activities (shopping, arts, etc.)	90 (94.7)	5 (5.3)	0	11.5

Table 10. summarizes activities visitors participated in on this visit to Big Bend area. Day hiking ranked the first (65.1%), followed by star gazing (58.7%), wildlife viewing (50.2%), and visiting historic sites (45.1%). Back road driving/jeep touring ranked the sixth (23.0%), and 41 individuals (21.5%) have done it with guide. 10.0% participated in boating/river running, and a little more than half of them (55.4%) involved guide. Also, 69.5% of who participated in horseback riding involved guide. Following are some other facts obtained from this analysis.

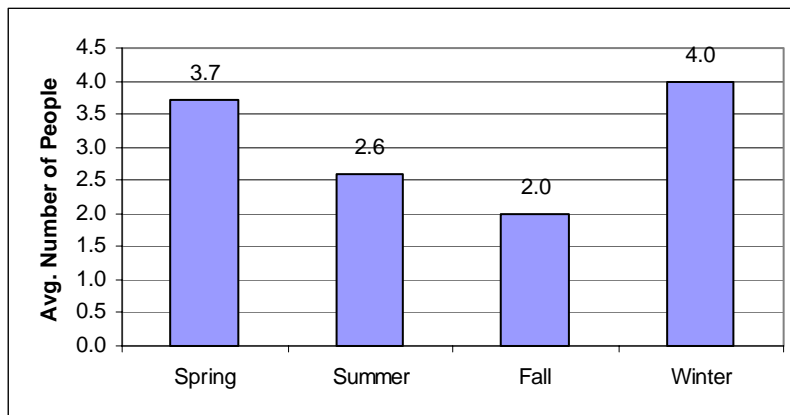
- More than 20% of those who were surveyed in Panther Junction & Chisos Basin participated in back road driving/jeep touring
- More than 40% of those who were surveyed in Study Butte participated in back road driving/jeep touring, and about 20% participated in boating/river running
- Those who were surveyed in Lajitas have a tendency to participate in activities with guides. Twenty seven percent participated in horseback riding, mostly with guide, 14% participated in back road driving/jeep touring mostly with guide, and 14% participated in boating/river running with guide

Visitors tended to travel to the Big Bend area in groups of family or friends. Seven hundred and fifty six individuals (91.3%) traveled with their family or friends, while only 47 respondents (5.7%) traveled alone. 1.5% traveled within a club or organization and 1.3% traveled with business associates.

Table 10. Groups size for visitors traveling to the Big Bend area

	n	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
# of people in a group	728	1	30	3.5	3.2
Season					
Spring	364	1	30	3.7	3.3
Summer	127	1	10	2.6	1.5
Fall	137	1	3	2.0	.2
Winter	101	1	25	4.0	.37

Figure 13. Average number of people in a group by season



There was a wide variety on the size of groups. Table 9 indicates that number of people in a group ranged from 1 to 30 people. The average group size was 3.5 people. Spring and winter visitors average group size was largest, at or about 4. Fall visitors traveled in the smallest groups (mean=2), and summer visitor groups fell in between a mean group size of 2.6 (Figure 13).

PART II. Results of the Follow-up Survey

This portion of the results contains information gathered from the follow-up survey. Returning from the intercept survey trip, the researcher spent the first week inputting and organizing data. Two forms of surveys, an on-line and a paper form, were used. Three on-line survey rounds and two rounds of paper form were sent out as needed for each sampling period. Overall, 693 people were contacted, and 477 responded to this survey for a response rate of 69%.

Demographic Characteristics

Respondents to this follow-up portion of the survey were 56% male and had an average age of 48 years. Neither of these characteristics was significantly different from the same characteristics for the on-site respondents indicating a low potential for bias due to the lower response rate for this portion of the study.

The sample was largely white/Caucasian, well educated and had a relatively high income level (Tables 10-12). Winter visitors tended to have a slightly higher income level than other times of the year.

Table 11. Race

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
White, not of Hispanic origin	410	91.3	91.3
Hispanic or Latino	19	4.3	95.6
Asian	6	1.3	96.9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6	1.3	98.2
Black or African American	3	0.7	98.9
Other	5	1.1	100.0
Total	449	100.0	

Table 12. Education

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade school	6	1.4	1.4
Some high school	4	0.9	2.3
High school graduate	27	6.1	8.4
Some college	91	20.5	28.9
College Graduate	135	30.2	59.1
Some graduate school	41	9.2	68.3
Completed graduate school	136	30.4	98.7
Other	6	1.3	100.0
Total	444	100.0	
Median	College Graduate		

Table 13-a. Income of visitors to the Big Bend area

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under \$25,000	25	6.5	6.5
\$25,000 to \$34,999	31	8.1	14.6
\$35,000 to \$44,999	29	7.6	22.2
\$45,000 to \$54,999	40	10.2	32.4
\$55,000 to \$64,999	29	7.6	40.0
\$65,000 to \$74,999	30	7.8	47.8
\$75,000 to \$84,999	32	8.1	55.9
\$85,000 to \$94,999	31	8.1	64.0
\$95,000 to \$104,999	27	7.0	71.0
\$105,000 to \$114,999	22	5.7	76.7
\$115,000 to \$124,999	19	5.0	81.7
\$125,000 or over	70	18.3	100.0
Total	383	100.0	
Median	\$75,000 to \$84,999		

Table 13-b. Percentage of respondents in different income categories by season

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Under \$25,000	7.8	5.7	10.0	0.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.7	13.6	11.7	2.1
\$35,000 to \$44,999	6.3	10.2	8.3	6.4
\$45,000 to \$54,999	10.4	10.2	6.7	14.9
\$55,000 to \$64,999	8.9	8.0	5.0	4.3
\$65,000 to \$74,999	7.8	6.8	10.0	6.4
\$75,000 to \$84,999	7.8	11.4	6.7	6.4
\$85,000 to \$94,999	7.3	4.5	10.0	14.9
\$95,000 to \$104,999	8.3	5.7	6.7	6.4
\$105,000 to \$114,999	5.7	5.7	3.3	8.5
\$115,000 to \$124,999	3.1	3.4	10.0	8.5
\$125,000 or over	20.8	14.8	11.7	21.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median	\$75,000 to \$84,999	\$65,000 to \$74,999	\$65,000 to \$74,999	\$85,000 to \$94,999

Table 14. Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Management, Professional	185	40.5	40.5
Retired	90	19.6	60.1
Sales and office	61	13.4	73.5
Student	25	5.5	79.0
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	24	5.3	84.3
Service	18	4.0	88.3
House wife	16	3.5	91.8
Self employed	14	3.1	94.9
Farming, fishing, forestry	4	0.9	95.8
Production, transportation, and material moving	3	0.7	96.5
Other	16	3.5	100.0
Total	454	100.0	

Table 15. Employment

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Working full-time	263	57.3	57.3
Retired	90	19.4	76.7
Semi-retired	28	5.9	82.6
Student	25	5.4	88.0
Working Part-time	20	4.4	92.4
Not-working	19	4.1	96.5
Other	16	3.5	100.0
Total	461	100.0	

Table 16. Home Country

	Frequency	Percent
USA	445	96.9
Canada	5	1.1
Germany	2	0.4
UK	2	0.4
Austria	1	0.2
Belgium	1	0.2
Denmark	1	0.2
Mexico	1	0.2
South Africa	1	0.2

Activities Visitors Participated in during Their Trip to the Big Bend Area

Respondents indicated a very similar pattern of activity participation in this portion of the survey. General sightseeing, hiking, historic/cultural attractions and wildlife viewing were the most popular types of activities. Among some of the more focused (more equipment, skill required) activities back road driving, camping, backpacking and boating were common. Activity frequency was spread evenly across seasons for visiting historic/cultural, hiking and sightseeing but backpacking and river boating were more popular in spring and less so in fall. Over 50% of the respondents said there were activities they wanted to participate in, but could not. Summer visitors responded yes to this question more than the visitors from other seasons (Figure 14). Respondents most often wanted to participate in Rafting/Canoeing/kayaking (43%), followed by day hiking (20%), horseback riding (13%), Back road driving/jeep touring (7.5%), and visiting other places such as Santa Helena Canyon, Boquillas, Big Bend Ranch State Park, local Mexican villages, or McDonald Observatory. The reasons for not participating in those activities include 1) not enough time, 2) financial reasons, 3) weather, 4) low water level (Rafting/Canoeing/kayaking), 5) lack of proper equipment, and 6) not able to make reservation (Table 17).

Table 17. Activities respondents participated during their trip to the Big Bend area

(n=477)	Frequency	Percent
General sightseeing	412	87.0
Day hiking	318	67.1
Visiting historic/cultural attractions	307	65.0
Wildlife viewing (includes birding)	233	49.5
Back road driving/jeep touring	164	34.4
Car camping (includes Rving)	123	25.5
Backpacking	47	10.0
Rafting/canoeing	48	10.0
Motorcycling	40	8.3
Horseback riding	29	6.2
Mountain biking	19	4.0
Hunting	2	0.4
Others (based on open ended response)		
Photographing	7	1.5
Stargazing	5	1.1
Research, Geology	4	0.8
Shopping	4	0.8
Visiting other places (Boquillas, Blue Mountain Vineyard, McDonald Observatory)	4	0.8
Scenic driving	3	0.6
Swimming, Fishing	3	0.6
Arts and gallery	2	0.4
Caving, Fossil hunting	2	0.4
Eating, Night Life/Bars	2	0.4
Enjoying hot spring	2	0.4
Gage Hotel	2	0.4
Popup camping	2	0.4
Visiting Family/friends	2	0.4
Enjoying the outdoors	1	0.2

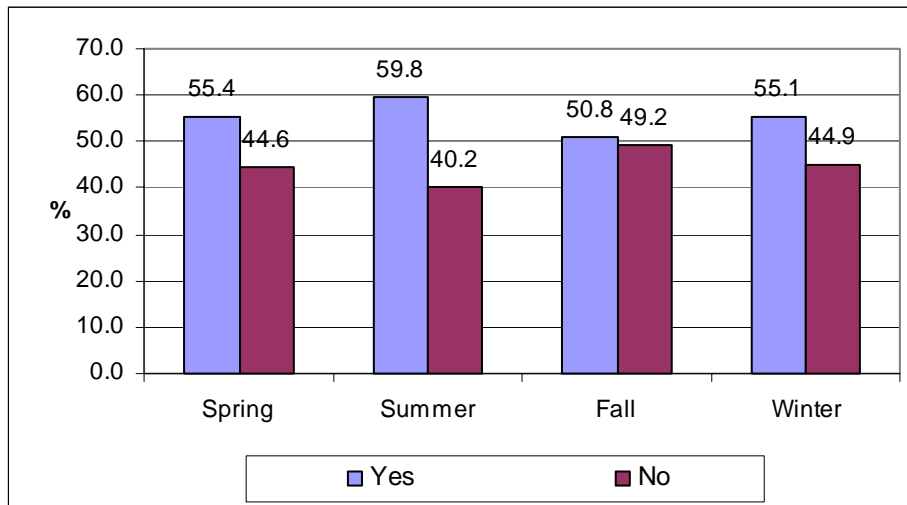
Table 18. Top eight activities that respondents indicated they wanted to participate in but did not and why (based on open ended responses)

Activities	Reason	Frequency	Frequency
Rafting/Canoeing/kayaking	(Thought) Water level too low	26	104
	Lack of proper equipment	1	
	Too cold	2	
	Didn't have time	32	
	Too expensive	5	
	Too tired	1	
	Concerned about safety	1	
	Already booked up	3	
	Had a pet with us	1	
	Wife didn't like it	1	
	No reason	31	
Day hiking	Didn't have time	28	47
	Weather (Too hot, Too cold, T-storm)	3	
	Too many people (No place to park)	2	
	No former knowledge or map	1	
	Closed due to rain	3	
	Health related reason	1	
	Pets not allowed	1	
	Wife didn't like it	1	
	No reason	7	
Horseback riding	Didn't have time	13	31
	Too expensive	4	
	Not available in the park	3	
	Health related reason	1	
	Pets not allowed	1	
	No reason	9	
Back road driving/jeep touring	Didn't bring my SUV (No equipment)	4	18
	Roads were closed	1	
	Didn't have time	7	
	Booked up	1	
	Rains made the road too muddy	1	
	No reason	4	
Visiting other places (Santa Helena Canyon, Boquillas, State Park, local Mexican villages, McDonald Observatory, etc.)	Closed	5	18
	Didn't have time	3	
	No reason	9	
	Parts of the ranch were inaccessible due to rain	1	
Backpacking	Lack of proper equipment	2	16
	Not enough time	8	
	No reason	6	

Table 18. Top eight activities that respondents indicated they wanted to participate in but did not and why (based on open ended responses) – continued

Activities	Reason	Frequency	Frequency
Camping	Weather conditions	2	14
	Campground full, crowded	4	
	Too many javelinas that were fighting	1	
	Not enough time	4	
	Wife didn't like it	1	
	No reason	2	
Mountain Biking	Didn't have time	5	10
	Lack of proper equipment	1	
	No former knowledge or map	1	
	No reason	3	

Figure 14. Were there activities you wanted to participate in but didn't? – by season



Visitors were also asked about the sources of information they used to plan their trip to the area. Almost half of all respondents used common forms of information including word or mouth and their own past experiences. A large percentage also used the Internet and park visitor centers to access information. Of much less use were chambers of commerce and TV or radio. A number of respondents filled in specific types of guidebooks related to activities like hiking or driving tours as “other” sources. Tables 19 and 20 and Figure 15 provide information specific to the usefulness of the Visit Big Bend Web Site. Almost 50% of respondents said they used the web site in their planning and, on average, found the site “useful.” The patterns of hits and actual visits, based on zip codes, were similar (Figure 15). Table 20 indicates that proportions of actual visits to hits seemed to be higher for out of state cities and Texas cities closer to the Big Bend (e.g., El Paso).

Table 19-a. Information used to plan this trip to Big Bend area

Source of information (n=477)	Frequency	Percent	Usefulness (Mean score)*
Personal knowledge/previous experience	229	48.2	3.98
Family or friends/word of mouth	228	48.2	3.92
Internet/website	223	46.9	3.89
National or State Park Visitor Center	214	45.2	3.88
Texas Travel Guide Book	139	28.8	3.26
Brochures found at local businesses	108	22.4	2.88
Newspaper/Magazine article/ads	104	22.0	2.99
Chamber of commerce/Visitor center	50	10.6	2.41
Signs/billboards	31	6.5	1.64
Radio/TV	22	4.7	1.73
Other sources	59	12.5	

* Mean scores based on a 5-point Likert scale where 1=Not at all useful, 3=somewhat useful, and 5=very useful.

Table 19-b. Information used to plan the trip – Other sources

Other Sources:	Frequency
Area guide Books (e.g. a book by Jim Glenddenning, Backpacking BB, Christian Tours, Hiking Big Bend NP, Desert Travel, Falcon's Guide to Hiking Big Bend, Lonely Planet Texas, Mobil Travel Guide, National Geographic's Driving Guide)	32
AAA	7
National Park Guide Book (Fordo's National Parks, National Geographic, National Parks)	4
Motorcycle Rally information, Trailer Life R.V. Directory	2
rafting company (Rio Grande adventures)	1
Gage Hotel reputation	1
General atlas/maps (Adventure Cycling Southern Ties Bike Map, Great Texas Birding Trail Maps)	7
Sierra Club seminar	2
Elderhostel Program	1

Table 20. Visitor use of the “Visit Big Bend” website to help plan their trip.

	Frequency	Percent	How useful? (Mean score)*
Yes	233	49.7	4.09
No	236	50.3	
Total	469	100.0	

* The mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, where 1=Not at all useful, 3=somewhat useful, and 5=Very useful.

Figure 15. Location of Actual visitors and people who visited the VisitBigBend.com web site

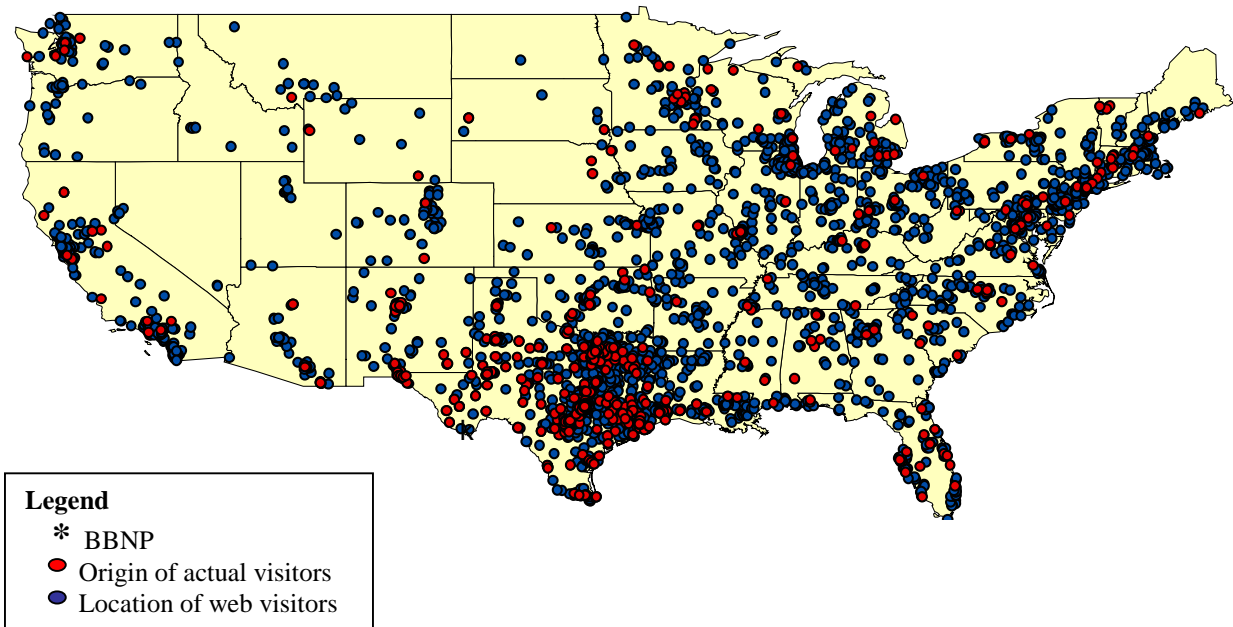


Table 21. Location of Visit Big Bend.com hits and actual visits to the Big Bend for select cities in the U.S.

State	City	# of Total hits	# and (%) of Actual visits
TX	San Antonio	423	47 (11)
	Houston	890	40 (4)
	Austin	869	32 (4)
	Dallas	292	17(6)
	Fort Worth	193	14(7)
	El Paso	79	12(15)
	Midland	84	11(13)
AZ	Tucson	15	3(20)
MN	Minneapolis	25	8(32)
MN	Saint Paul	11	3(27)
MO	Saint Louis	16	5(31)
NM	Albuquerque	33	4(12)
NY	New York	29	8(28)

Rating Services and Benefits of the Experience

Visitors were asked to score how important six basic services were when they travel and how well each performed during this trip. Table 21-a indicates that based on numeric scores all six items performed well overall. Figure 16-a provides a more specific way of evaluating all six items together. The “crosshairs” are set at the mean values for each scale and then each item is plotted. The result suggests that A – accommodations and B – food services were of greater concern than the other four. While accommodation scored above the average in importance it was below average in performance, food service was lower in both importance and performance. The next portion of the analysis indicated that these two items may be of greater concern in the spring than at other times (Table 21-b, Figure 16-b).

Table 22-a. Visitor scores for the importance and performance of six basic services in the Big Bend area

	Importance*	Performance*
A - Accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.)	4.05	4.20
B - Food service (Restaurants)	3.26	4.00
C - Recreational opportunities	3.92	4.50
D - Helpfulness of locals	3.50	4.36
E - Information available about the area	3.99	4.36
F - Security/safety	3.66	4.39
Mean	3.73	4.30

* The importance, performance mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, where 1=Not at all important and Poor, 3=Somewhat important and Average, and 5=Very important and Excellent.

Figure 16-a. Importance-Performance analysis of six service items

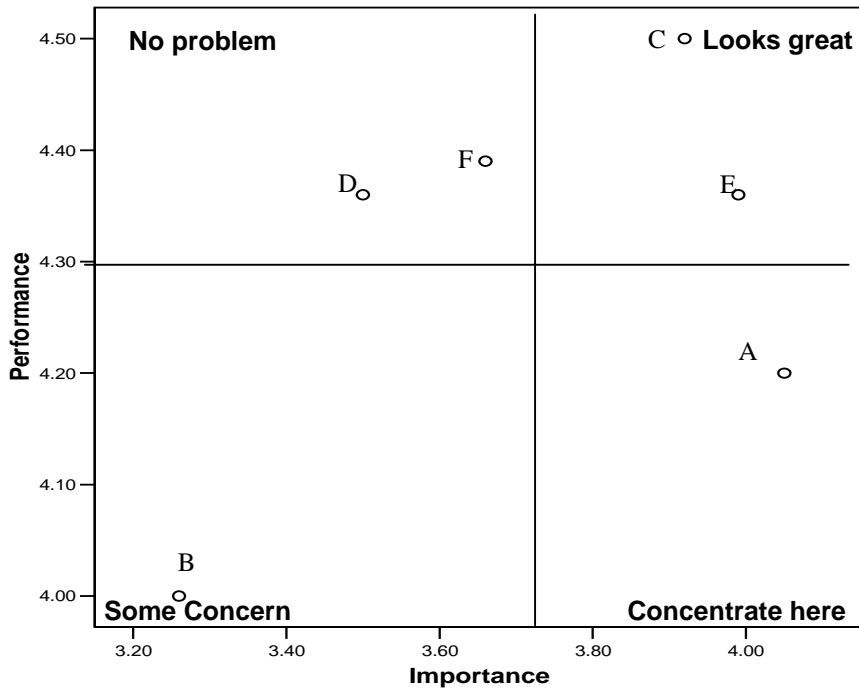


Table 22-b. How important are the following items to you and how did they perform according to your expectation?

	Spring Break		Other Times	
	Importance	Performance	Importance	Performance
A - Accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.)	4.00	3.91	4.08	4.30
B - Food service (Restaurants)	3.16	3.80	3.30	4.06
C - Recreational opportunities	4.07	4.40	3.85	4.54
D - Helpfulness of locals	3.50	4.25	3.50	4.40
E - Information available about the area	4.03	4.31	3.97	4.39
F - Security/safety	3.81	4.36	3.61	4.40
Mean	3.76	4.17	3.72	4.35

* The importance, performance mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, where 1=Not at all important and Poor, 3=Somewhat important and Average, and 5=Very important and Excellent.

Figure 16-b. Importance-Performance analysis of service for both spring break and non-spring break visitors to Big Bend area.

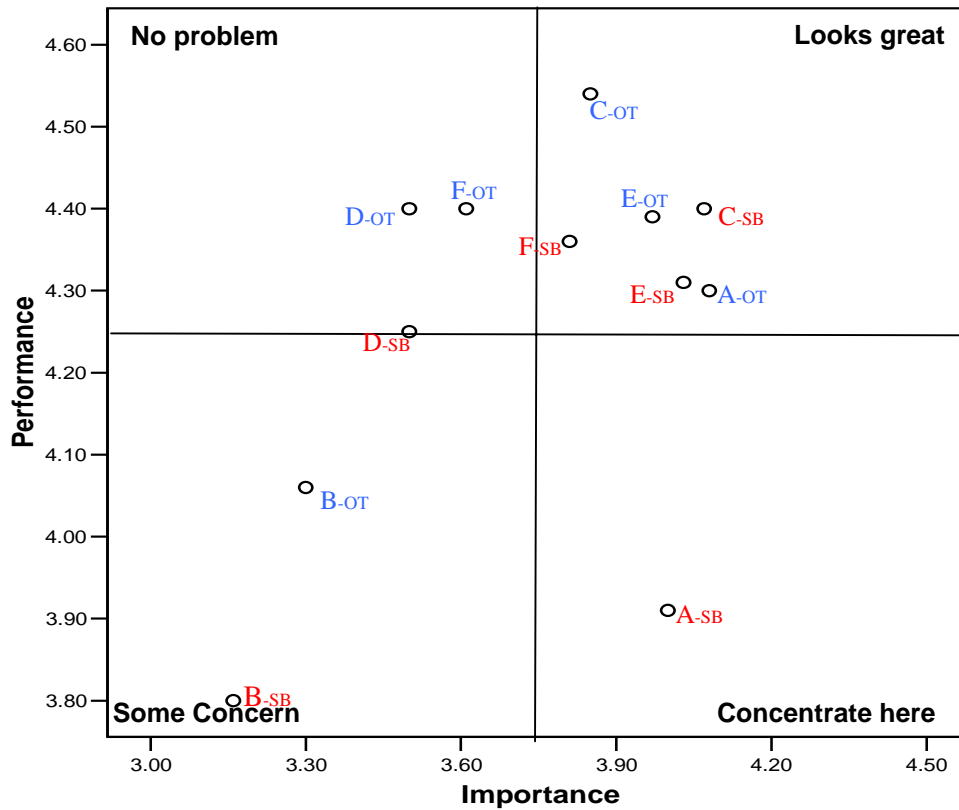


Table 23. Visitors’ feelings about the expansion of services in the Big Bend area

	n	Mean*	S.D.
How much would you be willing to see services expanded?	466	2.85	1.31
How much would you be willing to see services expanded? (Spring)	120	3.05	1.30
How much would you be willing to see services expanded? (Other)	341	2.79	1.31

* The mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, where 1=Not at all, 3=Somewhat, and 5=Very much.

Overall, respondents were willing to see services expanded “somewhat” (mean=2.85). However, spring visitors were more willing (mean=3.05) to see expanded services than visitors from other times of the year (mean=2.79). Overall visitors appear to have been very satisfied with their experience on this trip as evidenced by responses to a question asking about whether this trip was worth the time and money invested. The overall mean score of 4.6 out of 5 indicates they felt it was “very much” worth both (Table 23). Figure 17 indicates that fall visitors scored slightly higher on this “worth” item.

Table 24. Visitor’s perceived worth of their trip to the Big Bend

	n	Mean	S.D.
How much was this experience worth your time & expense?	470	4.58	.70
How much was this experience worth your time & expense? (Spring break)	122	4.56	.74
How much was this experience worth your time & expense? (Other times)	343	4.59	.69

* The importance, performance mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, 1=Not at all, 3=Somewhat, and 5=Very much.

Figure 17. Visitor’s perceived worth of their trip to the Big Bend - by season

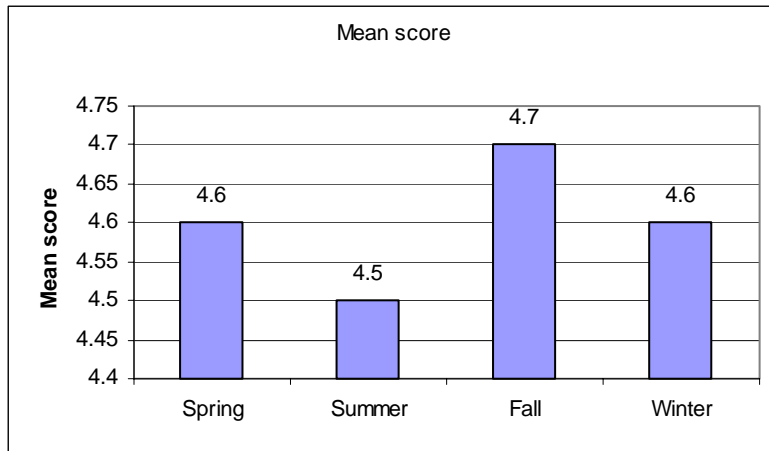
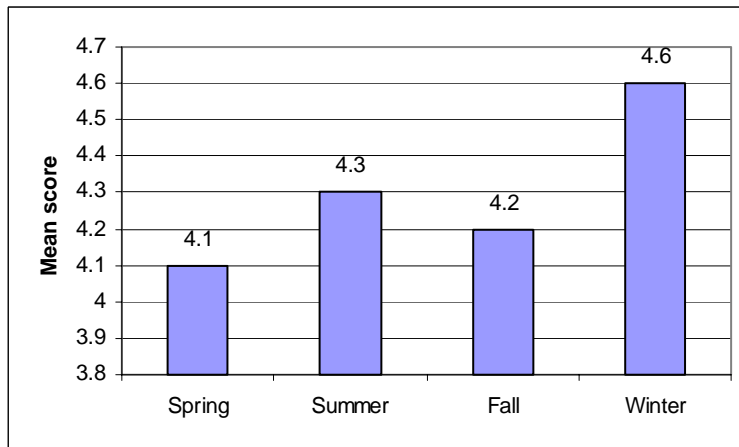


Figure 18. How likely are you to revisit the Big Bend area?



Overall, respondents were likely to revisit the area (mean=4.2 of a possible 5) but intentions to revisit were statistically different by season (Figure 18). That is, winter visitors were more likely to consider coming back (mean=4.6) than spring visitors (mean=4.1). While this difference is not great it does indicate that winter visitors are somewhat more interested in returning or are possibly more committed to the area than people visiting in spring.

Respondents were asked to score a series of items commonly used to gauge the benefits people receive from outdoor recreation and tourism trips. The results are presented in Table 24 and indicate that what people most received from their trip was related to experiencing nature and relaxing in solitude. Groups of these items were then used to measure four basic benefits visitors received in varying degrees: *experiencing nature and solitude*, *physical activity*, *excitement and leaning*, and *relationships with others*. Additional analysis compared visitors among the four seasons on each of these benefits. Visitors received similar amounts of the *experiencing nature* and *excitement and leaning* benefits across all seasons meaning that these two benefits may be universal to the Big Bend experience. On the other hand, winter visitors scored significantly higher on the *relationships with others* benefit indicating that this opportunity to spend time with family and friends was a more important component of their experience than it was for other seasonal groups. Fall visitors scored lower on the *physical activity* benefit compared the other three groups suggesting that they were less into aspects of exercise and physical exertion.

Table 25. Benefits respondents obtained from this trip to the Big Bend

	n	Mean*	S.D.
Experience the beauty of nature.	472	4.81	.52
Be in a natural place.	471	4.50	.83
Experience an undeveloped environment.	470	4.40	.91
Rest and relax.	469	4.24	.98
Experience something new and different.	469	4.09	1.03
Learn about the desert environment.	471	4.02	1.09
Experience some solitude.	469	3.98	1.18
Learn more about nature.	471	3.98	1.02
Get some exercise.	471	3.95	1.15
Be physically active.	470	3.94	1.14
Be with others who enjoy things that I enjoy.	471	3.89	1.26
Be close to friends or family.	470	3.79	1.62
Have some excitement.	468	3.77	1.12
Meet new people.	468	3.03	1.31
Develop skills.	466	2.48	1.27

*The mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale, where 1=Not at all agree, 3=somewhat agree, and 5=Strongly agree.

See appendix for items that formed the four measured used in further analysis described above.

Visitors were asked “what do you like most about the Big Bend area?” and “what do you like least about the Big Bend area?” as open-ended questions. The most frequent comments are summarized in the tables below. The majority of things that people volunteered about what they liked were related to the primary benefit received as measured by the scale items above. Hundreds of responses referred to the natural beauty of the place, the vastness of the landscape, the solitude and remoteness it afforded and the low level of development and commercialization.

What people liked least was juxtaposed to an extent in that the number one response was “remoteness” referring primarily to the distances that they traveled to get there. Beyond that, the two service types, accommodations and food services, that scored lowest in the I-P analysis were also mentioned here as dislikes.

Table 26. What did you like most about the Big Bend area?

(n=477)	Frequency	Percent
The beauty of the area/scenic	136	28.6
Vastness of the vistas/scale/open spaces/landscape	82	17.2
Uniqueness of the area (Desert and mountains; river and canyons)	74	15.6
Solitude/isolated	73	15.4
The natural scene/primitive (raw, rugged, unspoiled, pristine)	69	14.5
Variety of natural habitats/Wildlife (Birds, cactus)	56	11.8
Undeveloped (Not commercialized yet, no commercialism)	52	10.9
Not crowded/no traffic	42	8.8
Remoteness	39	8.2
Opportunities for outdoor activities (back road driving, hiking trails, camping, etc.)	35	7.4
Peaceful and relaxing, quietness	34	7.2

Table 27. What did you like least about the Big Bend area?

(n=477)	Frequency
Distance (Long way, remoteness)/Difficult to access	52
Lack of good accommodations or options/service	50
Lack of campsites	3
Lack of shower facility at the camp ground (long line)	11
Lack of parking in the campground	2
Restaurant-service & quality	27
The lack of restaurants	21
Too few "local color" restaurants	1
Weather	33
Development of surrounding areas/commercialization of Lajitas. The devastation of its natural beauty, and culture by disrespectful development (Lajitas).	20
Borders being closed	18
OVERRATED (gas price, Terlingua, Lajitas)	11
Crowding	11
Spring break-too crowded	9
Poor condition of restroom facilities (restroom facilities limited)	10
Lack of water in the Rio Grande	10
Air/Water pollution (Mexico's smoke)	9

Travel Expenditures

The economic impact of tourism on the area is important to the region and the state as a whole. Each respondent was asked to list the estimated total expenditures his or her travel group made for each category in the area. The categories include 1) Hotel, motels, cabins, B&B, etc., 2) Camping fees and charges, 3) Restaurants & Bars, 4) Gas and oil (auto, RV, etc.), 5) Other transportation expenses (excluding airfare), 6) Admissions, recreation, entertainment fees, and 7) All other purchases (Souvenirs, film, books, etc.). Results are presented in Table 27 and in Figures 20-a and 20-b. Over half of all respondents spent less than \$500 during their stay while one fifth spent more than \$1,000. The average visitor expenditure during the

visit was \$730. Average amount spent inside the park was \$163 (22%) while \$567 (78%) was spent outside (Figure 19). The same trend in spending can be seen in Figure but these data also show which categories were largest and smallest in terms of dollars spent. The services that visitors were most critical of, accommodation and food services, were also those they invested the most in during their stay.

Table 28. Total expenditures in and around the area

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No money spent	34	7.3	7.3
\$1-500	232	48.6	55.9
\$501-1000	105	21.9	77.8
\$1001-1500	49	10.3	88.1
\$1501-2000	16	3.4	91.5
\$2001-2500	21	4.5	96.0
\$2501-3000	8	1.7	97.7
\$3001-3500	3	0.6	98.3
\$3501-4000	3	0.6	99.0
\$4001-4500	1	0.1	99.1
\$4501-5000	2	0.3	99.4
\$5000 or more	3	0.6	100.0
Total	477	100.0	
Mean \$ 728.27			

Figure 19. Proportions of average visitors expenditures inside and outside of Big Bend National Park

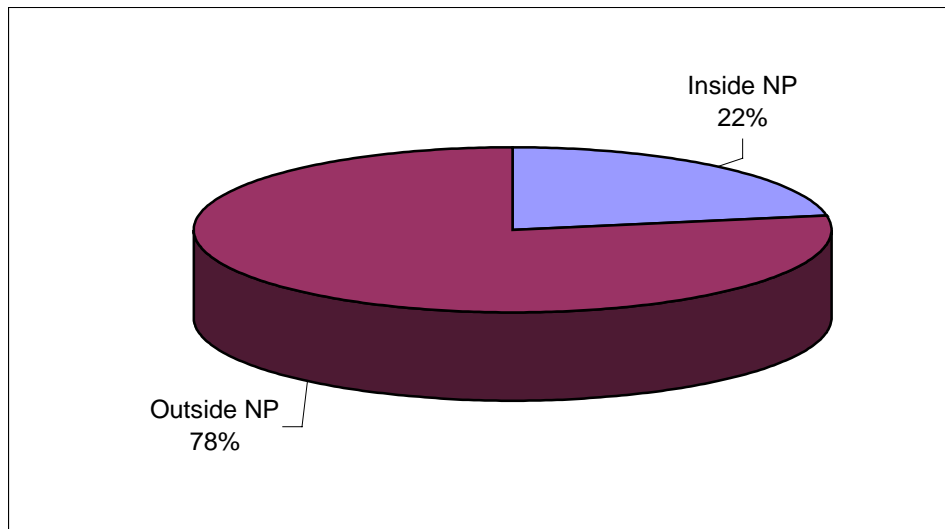
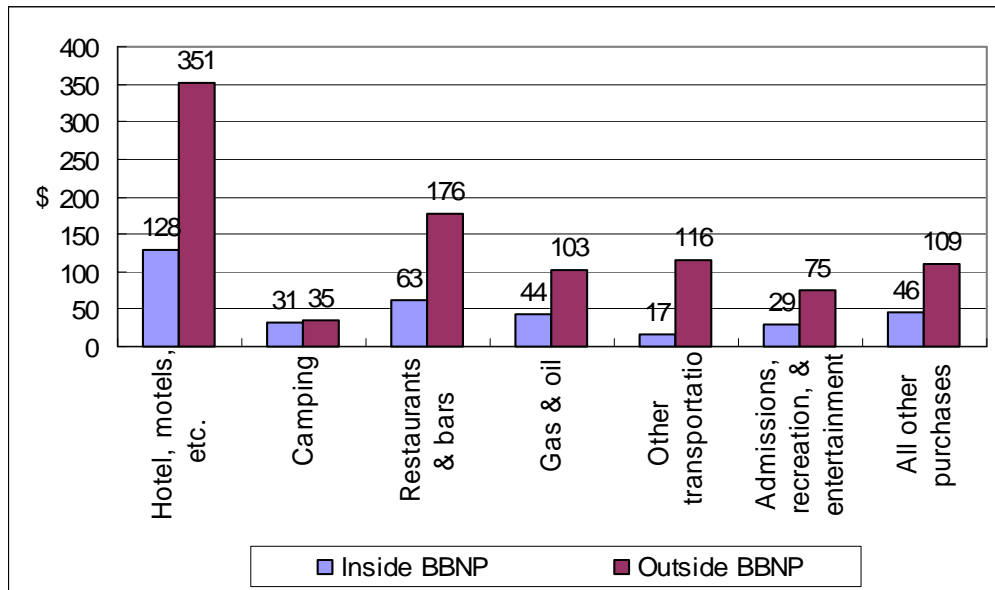


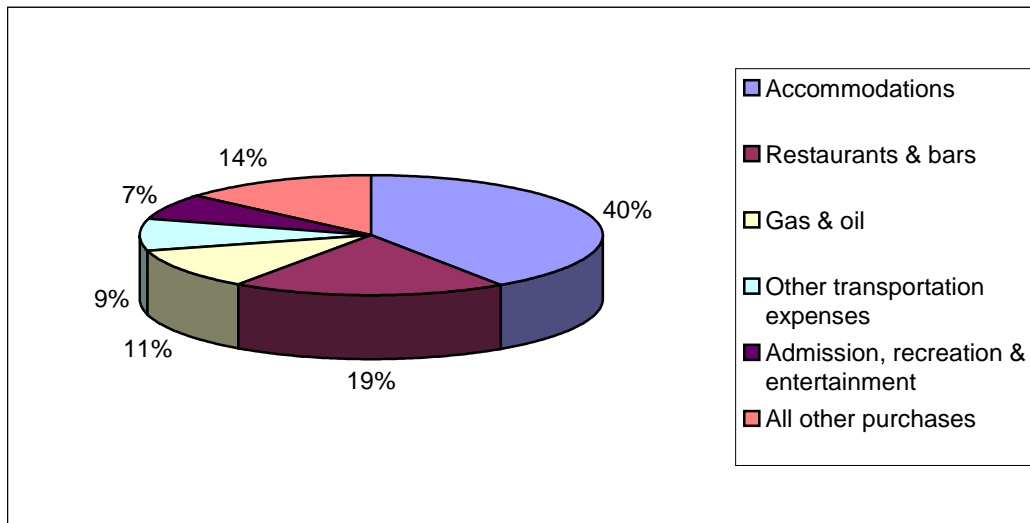
Figure 20-a. Estimated average amount spent around Big Bend area



* The area outside is defined here as the area in and around the communities of Alpine, Marathon, Study Butte, Terlingua and Lajitas, and business associated with them.

** All the categories significantly different in .00 level by location of spending.

Figure 20-b. Percentages of expenditures for visitors to the Big Bend by spending category



RESULTS SUMMARY

Study Objectives

- Determine where visitors are coming from and how long they stay.
- Determine if visitors differ depending on time of year.
- Determine why visitors come and what they do in the Big Bend.
- Determine what information sources they use to plan a trip.
- Determine what the visitation patterns are over time among visitors.
- Determine how visitors feel about services in the area.
- Determine travel patterns related to highways and gateway communities in the Big Bend.
- Determine on what and where visitors spend money while in the Big Bend area.

The following summarizes highlights from the results that were related to the objectives of the study

- What are the demographic characteristics of Big Bend visitors?
 - The visitors to the Big Bend area were almost evenly divided between men and women, were generally middle-aged (48 years old on average), well-educated, white not of Hispanic origin, and had a relatively high income. Winter respondents generally were associated with higher income brackets.
 - More than half of the visitors were full-time employees and almost 20% were retired. Of the visitors who were employed, more than 40% were professionals or in management positions.
- Where are visitors coming from and how long did they stay?
 - Most are from the U.S., with only 3.1% being international. Of the visitors from the U.S., the largest proportions (76%) are from Texas. Half of all visitors came from within a distance of 520 miles from the Big Bend National Park. Of visitors from Texas, 34% were from four major cities (Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio). There appeared to be important target areas in the Great Lakes region and New England that provide a high proportion of out of state visits. Florida, and California were also home to relatively large proportions of out of state visitors.
 - Ninety four percent of all the visitors stayed at least one night with 66% staying two to four nights.
 - Thirty nine percent stayed at least one night in the National Park, followed by 23% in Marathon, Study Butte (15%), Alpine (14%), and Terlingua (12%).
- Why do they come?
 - Twenty seven percent of all the visitors came for a vacation, 24% came to see this part of Texas, 17% for specific recreational activities, and 10% come just to get away from the routine. The benefits they received related first to experiencing nature, followed by being away to relax and to learn about the Big Bend area. Open-ended responses indicated that the natural beauty, solitude/remoteness and low level of commercialization in the area were things most liked.

Do visitors differ by time of year?

- Winter visitors stayed longer than those in other seasons and were more family and friends oriented while fall visitors were less inclined to be active.
- Summer and winter visitors tended to have higher levels of past visits than the other two seasons.
- Spring and fall visitors were least likely to want to visit in other seasons while summer visitors were amenable to visits any season.

What are visitors travel patterns in the Big Bend area?

- Highway 385 from/to Ft. Stockton, and 118 from/to Ft. Davis are the primary travel routes into and out of the region. Almost 20% of all visitors used Highway 385 to enter *and* exit the area.
- Marathon was the most popular gateway community to the area and Big Bend National Park was the most popular stopping point (74% of the sample).
- Over 30% of the visitors contacted on-site in Marathon and Alpine did not travel into the south part of the county on this visit.

What did visitors do in the area?

- Day hiking, star gazing, wildlife viewing, and visiting historic sites are the top four activities respondents participated in. Back road driving/jeep touring ranked the sixth with about one quarter of those enlisting a guide service. Ten percent participated in boating/river running with over half using a guide.
- Those surveyed in Lajitas had a tendency to participate with guides more often than others. Twenty seven percent participated in horseback riding, mostly with guide, 14% participated in back road driving/jeep touring mostly with guide, and 14% participated in boating/river running with guide.
- Over half of all respondents said there was at least one activity that they wanted to participate in but could not. Respondents were most constrained in participating in Rafting/Canoeing/kayaking (43%) day hiking (20%), horseback riding (13%), and Back road driving/jeep touring (8%). Lack of time and low water levels (for boating) were mentioned most often as reason for not participating.

What information did visitors use to plan their trip?

- Most respondents obtained information on the area through personal knowledge/previous experience, and from family or friends through word of mouth. However a large number also obtained information from the Internet, and from a National or State Park Visitor Center.
- Half of all the follow-up respondents had visited the “Visit Big Bend” website, and thought it was useful. Based on zip code information, hits on that site appear to represent where actual visits originate. There appeared to be a higher ratio of visitors to site hits for cities out of state and Texas cities closer to the area.

- How did visitors rate services?

- Visitors (especially spring breakers) scored accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.), recreational opportunities and information available about the area as important items, but the accommodations performed below the average for all services. Food services scored as lower in importance but also performed below average. Helpfulness of locals and security/safety were rated to be performing well.
- Although helpfulness of locals was rated less important, spring visitors also scored it as not performing well.

- Are additional services needed?

- Respondents were not willing to see much expansion of services in the area. However, spring breakers wanted to see them expanded (mean =3.1: “somewhat”) more than visitors from other times (mean=2.8; less than “somewhat”).

- Was their experience worth their time & expense? Will they come back?

- Respondents scored their experience as well worth their time and money.
- Most respondents were likely to very likely to revisit the area.

How did visitors spend their money?

- The average visitor expenditure during the visit was \$728.27 and they spent about 22% of that inside the National Park.
- Accommodation made up the largest proportion of the visitor's expenses (40%) followed by food (19%), gas and oil (12%).
- Spring visitors spent more than visitors from other times of year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A conventional definition of marketing is to make goods and services to suit the needs and wants of a user. Recent trends show expansion from the conventional marketing mix of price, product, promotion and place, to include people, programming and partnerships. The "people" element suggests that equal attention should be focused on the experiences behind the settings themselves, and that ultimately tourists are in search of intangibles where focus is on the actual experiences they can take home from visits. The "programming" element focuses on how the products and experiences can be better packaged for the visitors. In addition, packaging can involve putting together a mix of products and experiences by linking a number of attractions or activities together. This type of programming is often accomplished through partnerships. Finally, the "partnership" element is linked to collaboration and network development. It is emerging as almost standard practice within tourism management to involve some sort of partnership agreement between different entities (Fyall, Gerrod, and Leask 2003). The following recommendations are based on the results from the survey and current trends in marketing practice.

Create a Tourism Plan for the Region

The information in this document is most useful as base line information about visitors to the Big Bend. The recommendations made below would be best carried out after local interests have had a chance to review this report and then meet to chart a course. There are likely many ideas based on these results that local knowledge could develop and place into a strategy that would best serve the area. A tourism master planning process would first serve to set goals for the region. These results could then be used to determine what could/should be done, how and when based on goals developed by different types of people, all with interests in how the region changes in the future.

The People

Improvement of overall quality:

For a destination, tourists' quality perceptions are thought to reflect the total trip experience and all factors of the destination have an impact on its image. This highlights the need to ensure overall quality of the destination products and services.

Customer service is central to the satisfaction level of tourism services. In a customer contact business such as tourism, managers need to be aware of the most commonly measured elements that determine service quality. From the result of two questions in the survey (I-P analysis and "What did you like least about the Big Bend area?"), improving service quality in food services and accommodations appeared to be important for visitors. While scores on both were generally good, there lower than average "performance" indicates where improvements could contribute to overall quality and satisfaction. For example, the south county area might be well served by some upper-middle range accommodation that offers a level of quality somewhat lower than the Lajitas Resort but with different amenities than other accommodation in the area. However, it

would be prudent to avoid franchise development as this could hurt the remote and low-level commercial image that many visitors find attractive.

Another way to enhance service would be to offer education programs for frontline employees (front desk person, waitresses, guides, etc.) such as “Texas Friendly.” This could provide staff with opportunities for training to upgrade their interpersonal, communications, interpretative and other professional skills. A quality management committee could also be established to launch a system that would monitor service performance and customer complaints by use of regular visitor surveys. Offer initiatives for those who meet standards to enhance employee satisfaction. These are central in managing the service encounter with tourists, and at an operational level will determine how customer expectations and needs are met.

Personal selling (relationship marketing):

Personal selling can engender loyalty and repeat visitation. Use a strategic tool to tie in customers and achieve customer retention through database technology. This strategy is especially good for destinations like the Big Bend area where the percentage of repeat visitors is high (53% in this study) and the visitors have a generally positive image of the place. Identify, maintain, and build a network with individual customers and continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefits through interactive, individualized, and value added contacts over a long period of time. If loyalty and repeat visitation are to be achieved, an ongoing dialogue with people who have visited is needed. Efforts are needed to deliver value to tourists that motivate them to stay in the relationship. An example might be occasional mailings to announce incentives related to pricing or innovative trip options. These visitors represent a loyal segment that is most likely to use the area in new ways and across multiple seasons. The data reported here indicated that repeat visitors perceived many times of year as appropriate for visits.

Promotion

Creating public awareness and demand for the product (the Big Bend experience) involves commitment to promotion and advertising. Be aware of the importance of word of mouth, brochures, www, and interpretation for promoting business.

Use of Information Technology

Rapid technological change can be enhanced through the use of Information Technology (IT, hereafter). At an individual business level, IT is the main driver of change. It can provide up-to-date, managed customer data, and the scope to search for and select a wide range of products and experiences. IT enables businesses to respond to the demand for more up-to-date information and tailor-made products.

Fifty percent visitors to the Big Bend area used the Internet to plan for their trip, most used the visitbigbend.com web site specifically, and indicated it was useful. In the future, the Web will play an even bigger role in advertising. It is recommended that more investment be made in on-line advertising. The cost-effectiveness of this medium could allow a reach into niche markets that have not been targeted in the past. Adding downloadable travel guides to the site in different languages such as German, Spanish, French, Japanese, etc., could make the area more appealing to international visitors and provide them with immediate travel-planning materials.

Data also indicated key regions in the Great Lakes and New England as well as states like Florida and New Mexico that might be targeted through a variety of advertising media, including the Internet. Relatively high proportions of visitors are currently coming from these areas providing word of mouth and past experience opportunities from which to build a larger clientele.

While the current web site (visitbigbend.com) provides a regional perspective and offers one stop shopping, additional materials that provide a closer look at activities and guide services (e.g., streaming video of interviews and trips) would serve to pique customer interest. The addition of interactive and multimedia travel-planning elements like the current clickable map could also enhance interest.

Expand the Website to include a pressroom and make information easier to access. The pressroom is designed for media professionals to gather information about new attractions and events in Texas and to provide high-resolution images for publication.

Enhance the Gateway

Marathon is a key gateway to the Big Bend with as much as 60% of the visitor population passing through on Highways 385 and 90 as they enter the region. Marathon presents an opportunity to make initial contacts with visitors and provide a variety of information on everything from accommodations to events and guide services. Visitor centers were seen as a useful planning tool by respondents and Marathon could be an excellent location for a Visit Big Bend Visitor Center that can distribute a wide variety of information and sell local products.

Seasonality Strategy:

The significance of visitor attractions in local, regional and even national tourism economies has been well documented. Climate is one of the factors that affects the economics of tourism but cannot be controlled. The Big Bend area is at the mercy of the seasonal nature of climate or more importantly people's perceptions of climate.

- Perceptions of climate may be changeable through targeted advertising with visitors in peak seasons to tout the climate and beauty of the area in other seasons. East and south Texans may be especially open to this message as Big Bend's summer climate is often more mild than that of Dallas or Houston.
- Diversify by developing corporate hospitality, meetings and small functions markets. Have a greater sensitivity to the needs of increasingly disparate market sectors and target under-represented social groups or those who are less bound by the traditional holiday calendar in off peak seasons.
- Concentrate on offering additional product benefits in off peak periods.
- Events strategy: Stage additional ad hoc events such as seasonally themed horticultural shows, vehicle rallies, food and drink demonstrations, craft fairs, antiques fairs, farmer's markets, etc.. Such events have the advantage of utilizing otherwise unemployed space and human task force. Promote the area as filming locations, host seminars and extended hospitality events. Results indicated that motorcycle rallies over fall weekends brought visitors to the area, as did at least one Land Rover event, and the Terlingua Chili Cook Off is a long standing example of this strategy.
- Caution: be conscious that many off peak and shoulder season visitors are visiting specifically to avoid what they perceive as crowds during the peak seasons like spring. Through their ongoing relationship with the area they have learned to "cope" with crowding by visiting at a time when visitor density is lowest. Changing patterns of visitation to bring in larger number of summer visitors, for example, may "displace" visitors with a long history.

Enhance Relationships with the Local Community

Maintaining and enhancing good relationships within the community and region is a good way to promote business. People living in the area will refer clients. Local residents and businesses like to recommend

places that are an asset to the community. “Good word of mouth” is the single best and most affordable form of advertising and if the customers believe you are offering a quality service, they will recommend you. Supporting community programs is a good idea. Become a member of the chambers of commerce, Better Business Bureau, and visitor bureau. Become active in civic and environmental groups. Work within existing community, regional and state environmental agencies or groups to help promote the development of nature-based tourism. Send news releases to area newspapers and radio and television stations and make them aware of current environmental events and activities.

Programming

Nature tourism providers are typically conscientious and incorporate resource conservation into their business practices. This also creates opportunities to market resource protection as something the visitor is contributing to when doing business with a given company. This should include focusing on the importance of the conservation of both natural and cultural resources and enabling a greater harmony between human activities and nature. Let the customer know what is being done to protect and care for the resource.

The Big Bend visitors in this study wanted current service to be expanded to some degree, but did not want the area to be commercialized or for the unique west Texas atmosphere and “local color” to deteriorate. There is no easy formula to achieve balance between upgraded service and keeping the character that both locals and visitors appreciate. However, many the primary activities that people said they participate in can be enhanced through new facilities or programming without major change in the look and feel of the area. Especially outside the national park, trail based activities like hiking, mountain biking, and ATV or motorcycle riding can be enhanced through the development of new trails designed for multiple single uses that provide for a variety of lengths and skill levels. Information (e.g., maps) about these facilities should also be developed and available for distribution. This has already been done in the Lajitas area in conjunction with racing events that help promote this as a destination for such use.

Visiting historic/cultural sites and stargazing were also very popular activities with visitors. Identifying sites outside the national park and developing interpretive materials (self guided brochures, signage, guided talks) about cultural and natural history should be well received. Even existing sites like the Terlingua Ghost Town would benefit from added interpretive materials about the abandoned mine shafts, and dwellings. Recent history about the economies evolution into nature-based tourism (e.g., river running) might be told near existing facilities like The Boat House restaurant. The Big Bend area has some of the darkest skies in the U.S. as evidenced by making it the site of the McDonald Observatory. There may be a market for small scale stargazing venues away for the McDonald Observatory.

Partnership and Packaging

Tourists require accommodations, food and beverages, transportation, and information. It is almost impossible for a single small business to effectively provide all of the essential elements. Literature on tourism marketing has focused on the rising importance of business alliances. Identify additional local experiences that could be packaged with your product. For example, develop packages of activities that are attractive to the major age group of 40 to 60 year olds. On the whole this group appreciates time with family, moderate activity and exercise benefits and opportunities to learn about the place (both the culture and natural environments)

Obtain attractive and affordable cooperative advertising and marketing opportunities to reach domestic and international customers. Add an Internet cooperative advertising program that will allow increased visibility on existing Texas travel websites and buy into banner ads that are placed on major internet travel sites and search engines. This new cooperative program can be your most affordable way to gain exposure to the on-line customer.

Continue to Gather Visitor Information

The region would benefit from a periodic (e.g., every two years) or an ongoing survey that asks visitors basic questions about their stay and quality of services. This should be a standard type of form, implemented among all types of businesses across the entire region. This would require a systematic collection of the surveys and management of the data but would create valuable information to look at visitor trends over time. A partnership with Texas A&M University, Sul Ross University or another research entity might be established to assist with data management and periodic report writing. This information would also provide a strong base for regular updates in a tourism plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study took place over many months and there were many people involved in helping to make it possible. The Visit Big Bend Tourism Council funded the study and many members of that group were very helpful with logistical support. In particular Michael Davidson and Greg Henington assisted the research team with everything from accommodations to transportation. Data for this study could not have been collected without the cooperation of businesses in Marathon, Study Butte, Terlinga, Lajitas and Alpine who allowed us access to their customers. We also thank the staff at Panther Junction Visitor Center in Big Bend National Park for allowing us to intercept visitors at their front door.

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Appendix I.

Cover letter
Questionnaires

March 26, 2004

Dear Participants

You were contacted by one of the surveyors from Texas A&M University during your recent trip to the Big Bend area. We appreciate your willingness to participate in the study. We believe it is especially important to understand what you have experienced on this trip to help the park and surrounding businesses plan for the future.

Please assist us by completing the survey and returning it as soon as possible. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. Upon receiving your completed survey, we will automatically enter you in a drawing for a vacation package to the Big Bend region valued at over \$500 (includes accommodation, meals, river trip and jeep touring).

If you have any questions, please call or email using the contact information at the bottom of the page. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas A & M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through Dr. Murl E. Bailey, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at 979-845-8585.

Again, we thank you very much for your willingness to assist us with this research.

Sincerely,

Scott Shafer
Associate Professor

Andy Skadberg
Assistant Professor

Minsun Doh
Research Assistant

2261 Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-2261
979-845-5419
mdohrpts@tamu.edu

On-site Contact Form

Date ____/____/____ Time ____:____ am pm

Location MR PJ SB TR LA AP

Survey # _____

What is your home zip code? _____

Where highway did you use to enter and on which do you plan to leave the area?

Enter	Leave
_____ 118 from Ft. Davis	_____
_____ 67 from Ft. Stockton	_____
_____ 385 from Ft. Stockton	_____
_____ 90 from Sanderson	_____
_____ 170 from Presidio	_____
_____ 90 from Marfa	_____
_____ Other	_____
_____ Not sure	_____

On the map place a number by each stop already made or intending to make in the approximate order.



About how many times have you visited the Big Bend area before this trip? _____ times

Would you consider visiting this area at other times of the year?	Yes
Spring (March – May)	_____
Summer (June – August)	_____
Fall (September- November)	_____
Winter (December –February)	_____

What is the main reason for taking this trip to our area? _____

Did you: _____ drive all the way from home _____ Combine flying and driving _____ Combine train and driving _____ Other

How long will you spend in the Big Bend, Brewster Co. area (refer them to map region if needed)?

_____ Nights (Skip below if did/will not stay any nights)

Please tell us where you stayed/will stay overnight while you were/are in the Big Bend area.

_____ Alpine	_____ Marathon
_____ Big Bend National Park	_____ Study Butte
_____ Lajitas	_____ Terlingua
_____ Other (Please specify):	_____

What activities have you (or do you plan to) participate in while here?

on your own with guide

Car Camping	_____	_____
Backpacking	_____	_____
Day Hiking	_____	_____
Horseback riding	_____	_____
Hunting	_____	_____
Wildlife viewing	_____	_____
Backroad driving/Jeep touring	_____	_____
Mountain Biking	_____	_____
Motorcycle/ATV off road	_____	_____
Motorcycle tour on road	_____	_____
Boating/river running	_____	_____
Visiting Historic/cultural attractions	_____	_____
Star gazing	_____	_____
Other (Please specify)	_____	_____

Are you traveling:

_____ Alone
 _____ Family/Friends
 _____ Business Associates
 _____ Club or Organized group (educational institutions, tour groups, etc.)
 _____ Other (Please specify):

Thank You Very Much! We request that you complete a short questionnaire after you return home. It will help us understand more detail about your trip. You would also have a chance to win a 2-night complimentary trip to the Big Bend area upon completing the home survey.

_____ No – They do not want to participate in the home survey

_____ Yes - How would you like the questionnaire delivered?

Send

to: Home ___ Email ___
Home address:

G = M F
A = 1 2 3 4 5 6

Group size =

E Mail address:

Follow-up Survey Form

**The Big Bend of Texas
Visitor Survey**



This survey is being conducted to obtain opinion about current visitor management in Big Bend area. Your assistance in completing this survey is crucial for success of this study. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey.

In cooperation with and sponsored by
Visit Big Bend Tourism Council and
Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences,
Texas A&M University



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 148 COLLEGE STATION TX
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

MINSUN DOH
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION PARK & TOURISM SERVICES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
2261 TAMU
COLLEGE STATION TX 77843-9988

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



Dear Big Bend Area Visitor

Thank you very much for choosing to participate in the Big Bend visitor survey. You are one of only a few visitors in the Big Bend area who have been asked to participate in this survey, so your responses are especially important. Our goal is to use this information to improve opportunities for visitors to the Big Bend area. This is an excellent opportunity to voice your opinions on current services and management in Big Bend.

A person who visited the Big Bend area recently and was contacted by a representative of the research team should answer the survey.

Please remember that there are no wrong responses to the questions and that your honest and thoughtful answers are appreciated.

Please contact us if you have any questions or problems related to the survey. Our contact details are shown below. When you have completed the survey, please return your completed questionnaire by folding it in half to show the return address and tap close.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

Dr. Scott Shafer Associate Professor Andy Skudsborg Assistant Professor Mianan Doh Research Assistant

Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University
2261 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2261
TEL: (979) 845-5419, FAX: (979) 845-0871
E-MAIL: msdoh@rpts.tamu.edu

Section 1. Activities and Information

1. We asked you on-site about activities you had or would participate in while in the Big Bend area. Please tell us here all activities you did participate in (Mark all that apply).

- Car Camping
- Backpacking
- Day Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting
- Wildlife viewing
- Other (Please specify): _____
- Backroad driving/loop touring
- Mountain Biking
- Rafting/canoeing
- Visiting Historic/cultural attractions
- General sightseeing
- Motorcycling

7. Were there activities you wanted to participate in but didn't? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please tell us what activity and why: _____

2. Please indicate the information you used to plan your trip in the Big Bend area and, if used, how useful it was. First mark if used to the left. If used, please rate level of usefulness to the right.

	Not at all	Somewhat	Very useful		
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal knowledge/previous experience	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Family or friends/word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet/website	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of commerce visitor center	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> National or State Park visitor center	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Brochures found at local businesses	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/Magazine article/ads	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Signs/billboards	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio/TV	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Travel Guide Book	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Other sources (please specify): _____	1	2	3	4	5

3. Did you go to the Visit Big Bend website as a part of planning this trip? Not at all ___ Yes ___ No ___

If Yes, how useful was it in planning this trip? Not at all ___ Somewhat ___ Very useful ___

3. How likely are you to take another trip to the Big Bend area in the future?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5
Somewhat
Very likely

Section 2. Your Travel Experience

4. Below are items that might influence your travel experiences. Please rate (1 to 5) how important they were when planning your visit to the Big Bend area.

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very important		
Accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Food services (Restaurants)	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Helpfulness of locals	1	2	3	4	5
Information available about the area	1	2	3	4	5
Security/Safety	1	2	3	4	5

5. Below are the same items that you rated in terms of importance. Now, please rate how you feel they performed during your visit to the Big Bend area. Mark N/A if the item did not apply to this trip.

	Poor	Average	Excellent	N/A		
Accommodation (Hotel, Campground, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	?
Food services (Restaurants)	1	2	3	4	5	?
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	?
Helpfulness of locals	1	2	3	4	5	?
Information available about the area	1	2	3	4	5	?
Security/Safety	1	2	3	4	5	?

6. How much would you like to see services in the Big Bend area expand?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5
Some
Very much

7. How much was this experience worth your time and expense?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5
Somewhat
Very much

8. What do you like most about the Big Bend area?

The trip allowed me to:	Not at all	Somewhat	Yes, a lot		
Be close to friends or family.	1	2	3	4	5
Get some exercise.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience the beauty of nature.	1	2	3	4	5
Meet new people.	1	2	3	4	5
Have some excitement.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience an undeveloped environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Rest and relax.	1	2	3	4	5
Learn more about nature.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience some solitude.	1	2	3	4	5
Do with others who enjoy things that I enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5
Develop skills.	1	2	3	4	5
Be in a natural place.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience something new and different.	1	2	3	4	5
Learn about the desert environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Be physically active.	1	2	3	4	5

9. What do you like least about the Big Bend area?

10. Please list the estimated total expenditures that your immediate travel group made for the items listed below both inside and outside Big Bend National Park.

	Inside Big Bend NP	Outside Big Bend NP*
Hotel, motels, cabins, B&B, etc.	\$ _____	\$ _____
Camping fees and charges	\$ _____	\$ _____
Restaurants & Bars	\$ _____	\$ _____
Gas and oil (auto, RV, etc.)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Other transportation expenses (excluding airfare)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Admissions, recreation, entertainment fees	\$ _____	\$ _____
All other purchases (Souvenirs, film, books, etc.)	\$ _____	\$ _____

* The area outside is defined here as the area in and around the communities of Alpine, Marathon, Study Butte, Terlingua and Lajitas, and business associated with them.

Section 3. Personal Characteristics

11. What is your gender? Female Male

12. What is your age? _____ years

13. What is your home country? _____
If you are from the U.S., what is your home Zip code? _____

14. Which best describes your current employment status? (Please check one)

- Working full-time Semi-retired
 Working Part-time Retired
 Not-working Student
 Other (Please specify: _____)

15. What is your occupation? (What you do, not for whom you work)

16. What category best describes your annual household income?

Under \$25,000 \$75,000 to \$84,999
 \$25,000 to \$34,999 \$85,000 to \$94,999
 \$35,000 to \$44,999 \$95,000 to \$104,999
 \$45,000 to \$54,999 \$105,000 to \$114,999
 \$55,000 to \$64,999 \$115,000 to \$124,999
 \$65,000 to \$74,999 \$125,000 or over

17. What is your level of Education? (Check highest level completed)

- Grade school College Graduate
 Some High School Some Graduate School
 High School Graduate Completed Graduate School
 Some College Other: _____

18. Which of the following do you consider yourself?

- Asian Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 Black or African American White, not of Hispanic origin
 Hispanic or Latino (of any race) Some other race

19. May we contact you in six months for a brief follow up survey? Yes No

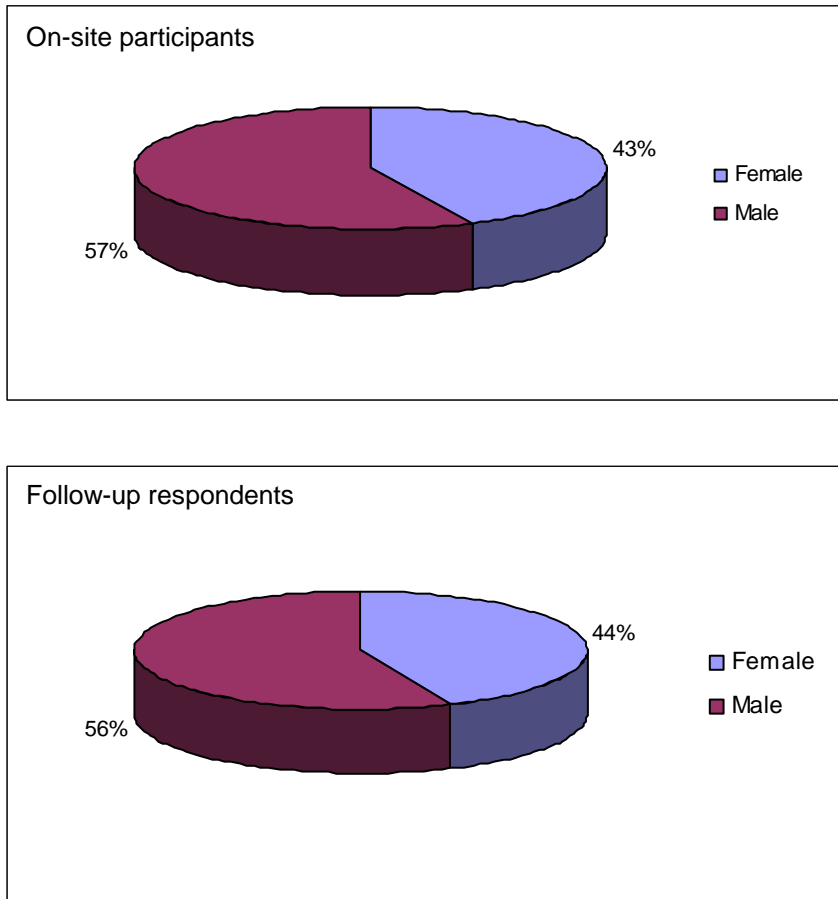
Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Please return this survey by folding it in half to show the return address, and attaching the enclosed stickers to close the folded side.

You will be automatically included in our drawing for a complimentary trip to Big Bend area (accommodation and river tour package worth \$500 for 2 nights) once you return this survey. Your name and address will only be used for drawing purposes.

Appendix II.
Additional Tables and Figures

Figure . Gender of the respondents



Female to male ratio of the participants is 1:1.3 (rounded) for both samples (Figure 3).

Figure. Principal Component Analysis of Benefits Items.

The trip allowed me to:	Factor Loading	% of Variance	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: Passive experience, serene, calm, just being there, experience of nature		36.1	.71
Experience the beauty of nature.	.68		
Experience an undeveloped environment.	.61		
Rest and relax.	.58		
Experience some solitude.	.53		
Be in a natural place.	.73		
Factor 2: Activities, active, educational		10.0	.79
Have some excitement.	.51		
Learn more about nature	.69		
Develop skills	.63		
Experience something new and different.	.59		
Learn about the desert environment.	.73		
Factor 3: Interpersonal relationship		7.5	.61
Be close to friends or family.	.76		
Meet new people.	.60		
Be with others who enjoy things that I enjoy	.75		
Factor 4: Physical		7.3	.84
Get some exercise	.85		
Be physically active	.83		
Total Variance Explained		60.9	

Table 27-c. Benefits respondents obtained from this trip – By season

	Spring Break		Other Times	
	N	Mean*	N	Mean*
Factor 1: Passive experience, serene, calm, just being there, experience of nature				
Experience the beauty of nature.	122	4.80	345	4.78
Experience an undeveloped environment.	120	4.37	345	4.37
Rest and relax.	119	4.22	345	4.21
Experience some solitude.	119	3.95	345	3.99
Be in a natural place.	121	4.50	345	4.47
Mean		4.37		4.36
Factor 2: Activities, active, educational				
Have some excitement.	118	3.81	345	3.73
Learn more about nature.	121	4.05	345	3.97
Develop skills.	117	2.56	345	2.43
Experience something new and different.	119	4.19	345	4.05
Learn about the desert environment.	121	4.09	345	4.01
Mean		3.74		3.64
Factor 3: Interpersonal relationship				
Be close to friends or family.	121	4.06	345	3.58

Meet new people.	118	3.09	345	2.95
Be with others who enjoy things that I enjoy.	121	3.99	345	3.83
Mean		3.71		3.45
Factor 4: Physical				
Get some exercise.	121	4.27	345	3.86
Be physically active.	120	4.19	345	3.90
Mean		4.23		3.88

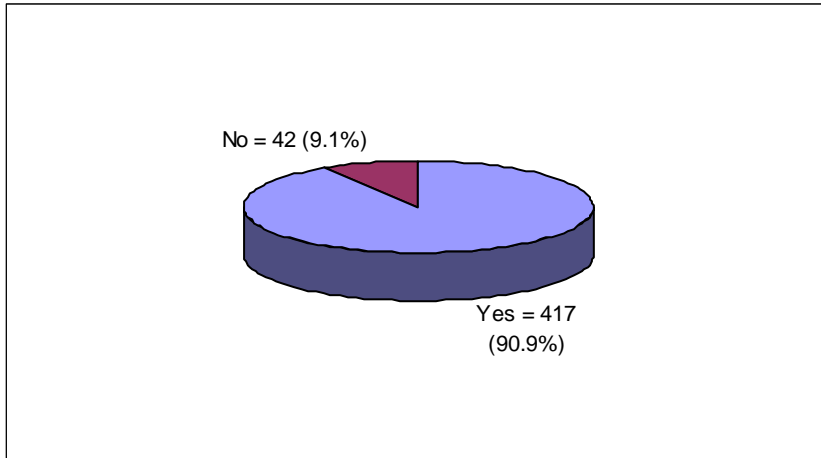
* The mean score is based on 5-point Likert type scale.

There were no seasonal differences in this variable.

Table. What did you like most about the Big Bend area? (Other categories)

	Frequency
The whole experience (everything!)	7
The Chisos Basin	7
The stars at night	6
Great learning opportunities	6
Historical hotels (Gage Hotel)	6
Pace of life (laid back)	4
A National Park with a different environment	3
Good roads for bikes/motorcycle/back road driving	3
Variety of things to see	2
Opportunity to get close to my family and friends	2
The clean, fresh air as well as the altitude	2
Mexican culture	2
Clean, well-kept camping areas	2
Hiking trail	2
Photographic opportunities	2
Art in Marfa & Marathon	2
Windmills in operation	1
Hot springs	1
Santa Elena Canyon	1
Signage	1
Lack of chain restaurants and hotels	1

Figure 24. Willingness to participate in another follow up survey



Four hundred and seventeen individuals (90.9%) of all the follow-up respondents were willing to participate in another follow-up survey, if necessary.

Table. What did you like most about the Big Bend area?

April Visitors	Remoteness and vastness
	The beauty and solitude
	The wide open spaces, the vastness of the vistas (did I say that?) the incredible variety of plant life and the down home hospitality of everyone I come in contact with here. I live in Alpine because of the beauty of this area. Have you ever seen Casa Gra
	The solitude and views
	The solitude, the natural scene, the great primitive camp sites...you name it, I love it!
	The area is very peaceful and relaxing. The hiking was fun.
	We loved the solitude and the beauty of the area. We would love to go back.
	Every time we return, the landscape is different - lighting, mood, weather, desert life ... it's really incredible. We ride motorcycles, and there is virtually no traffic, so it's relatively safe in that regard - plus the view is awesome ... We meet some r
	Photo opportunities in a variety of settlements.
	trails at the Window, Rio Grande Village, and at Boquillas
	Natural, scenic environment.
	desert/mountain scenery; river and canyons
	The wide expanses that are not developed.
	Nature, wildlife
	Undeveloped
	Huge scale, raw and rugged character
	Variety of natural habitats and hiking/nature viewing opportunities
	The Big Bend area is different than the part of Texas I live in and I enjoyed the wonderful cool mornings and evenings. I usually have aches and pains at home, no aches and pains there except when hiking. The people I met were so friendly and helpful.
	Its unique quality and vastness.
	Beauty and variety of environment

Lack of people. Desert plants. Warm weather.
Relatively isolated primitive campsites.
The uniqueness
The beauty of the desert, mountains, and blooming cactus
Chinati
It's out and away from all the chaos of everyday life. A place to go that one can decompress from the normal hectic day to day of life in the city.
Drive from Presidio to Study Butte, Closed Canyon,
Historical sites (i.e. Indian Lodge, and Gage Hotel), and the rugged, isolated scenery of West Texas.
THE UNDEVELOPED ASPECT OF THE REGION.
The non-crowded park and roads, the magnificent scenery and the great floral display in the desert.
We enjoyed the mountains, canyons, the desert, cactus was blooming, also the animals.
The paramount views and space of the area. Openness. Great expanse of the area. Good upkeep of major roadways conducive for traveling by motorcycle - user friendly.
The Chisos mountain range and the hike along the Rio Grande into that little area between the cliffs
It is a large, undeveloped, lightly populated, uncrowded area. Very quiet, dark skies, few airplane overflights. Rare in this day and age. The size of the NP allows the desert environment to be preserved and maintained, allowing for excellent wildlife/bi
The beauty, culture, desert, history
the beauty of the desert; the fact that it is underdeveloped
The solitude
THE BEAUTY OF NATURE
It was so amazing to leave the city life and experience nature and the beauties it holds. I felt like I was truly on holiday and away from the crowds of people.
Emory Peak, the Chisos
Solitude, scenery, desert landscapes
Natural Beauty, cleanliness
The different terrain.
Coming from New York City, we were impressed with the unsurpassed beauty of the environment and the lack of overcrowding and overdevelopment. It felt like the people living in the area and running the Big Bend National Park understood the unique appeal of
the lack of development
The mountain hiking trails, beautiful views
There weren't any one or two things.
Beauty and variety.
Size and diversity of the undeveloped desert environment.
Big Bend is a very remote place. Very few people visit the area and that is important to me because this type of place is getting harder to find. I would hate to see it more developed and ruin the pristine nature.
Opportunity for birding and experiencing a relatively unspoiled natural environment. At the time of year we visited it was wonderfully uncrowded!
The landscapes
Undeveloped desert landscape and wildlife
The vast open spaces
Being on mountain-bike from EL-PASO to AUSTIN it was a very pleasant difference from the prairie. Also being able to camp in Chisos Basin and having stores and restaurants.
Natural beauty
I like the landscape and the loneliness; also that it is very quiet.

interesting wildlife and geology
The scenery
The River
The majestic scenery = wildflowers, wildlife, hot springs,
THE DESERT AND SOLITUDE; THE BACK ROADS ARE GREAT.
Riding and looking
NOT YET SPOILED BY OVERDEVELOPMENT AND OVERPOPULATION
Solitude, remoteness, harsh beauty
desert landscape
no crowd
We go early spring-late fall. Quiet dark nights, close to god & nature
Remote areas
Chisos Mountains
The undevelopment of area
Wide-open spaces, sunsets, solitude, climate, no mosquitoes!
Mostly undeveloped
The diverse terrain contains in this one national park. Awesome!
It was not overly crowded
The naked raw beauty of the area
Being able to enjoy pristine and undeveloped habitat
Big
Mountain
The scenery was absolutely awesome. No matter where we went. The wild animals
Wilderness camping
Nature & its surroundings
Natural beauty, signage, road conditions
Its magnificent scenery
The natural wonders
The scenic beauty & birds
Birds, hikes
Remote, primitive, surrounded by 1940s Texas in a natural condition. Marathon, Marfa, Presidio are true historic gems.
The natural, undeveloped environment and historical significance. Geological and anthropological fascination.
We were there in April-desert in bloom!
The remoteness
Quiet and uncrowded
The climate & desert beauty!
unspoiled habitat
unspoiled area
Natural, untouched land which allow animal life to survive unharmed. The beautiful mountains enjoy Jehovah's God beautiful creation picturesque.
Quiet and relaxing atmosphere
Marfa, Ft. Davis, Observatory, Expansiveness of PK. Uncrowdedness, Rio Grande Area, history
Expansive natural beauty
Desert environment
The mountains-hiking-the variety of things to see
Cactuses, mountains, Santa Elena Canyon
Remoteness, scenery
Scenic area and environment
Guadalupe mountains-Davis mountains-BB Scenic drive
Mountains around basin-Two deep canyons
Geologically unique place

	The natural beauty and the fact that it was not commercialized
	Primitive camping, quiet, scenery, hiking trails, wildlife, natural undeveloped environment, history, geology, wildflowers/cactus, windmills in operation
	No commercialism, mostly undisturbed environment. During off season not many people. Diversity. Geology, solitude, quietness. No light pollution
	Natural beauty
	Beauty of the landscape
	remoteness
	Diversity of environment. Mountains & desert
	Beautiful & huge. My first mountain experience
	biology & geology
	beauty, nature, wonderful country
	cactus blooming-unusual environment
	no traffic, good roads
June Visitors	The opportunity for varied outdoor activities, camping, hiking, canoeing etc in a beautiful setting.
	The lightning storms at night were awesome, I have storm chased for years and never seen so much lightning in such a short time.
	Wide open spaces, the clean highways, the unpredictable weather, the local characters, the desert, the whole thing.
	The solitude and relatively virgin territory
	Beauty, remoteness
	Open Spaces and Great Scenery
	The beautiful mountains, the birds, the weather.
	Rugged beauty and peacefulness
	The surroundings, solitude, and getting back to nature. Big Bend set tone for life. The park gives me the opportunity to get close to my family and friends, and get away from the hustle of just making a living. What a great place!!!
	The undeveloped environment
	The Basin. Cooler and hiking.
	We come from Central Texas, the Hill Country. Big Bend gave us the opportunity to see a different type of country.
	Its beauty and desolation
	Beauty of the mountains
	Seeing the plant and animal life that can live in that environment and learning about what special things they do to adapt (e.g., the century plant).
	OPEN SPACES
	The mountains were beautiful and awesome. The terrain was different in different areas.
	The different landscapes. Rock formations, some areas very green, some not.
	The peace and quiet is something I truly enjoyed. Getting out to enjoy nature was beautiful too.
	DESERT SOLITUDE LACK OF CROWDS, HIKING, SCENERY, HISTORY, DRY, HEAT
	Getting away from crowds and being in a spacious natural environment
	SCENERY, HISTORY
	1. The remoteness and beauty of the desert 2. No traffic problems 3. Cool night temperatures
	The most gorgeous thunderstorms in Texas and the village of Boquillas and all the friendly people that live there.
	Its beauty and friendly people
	The remoteness, the friendly and informational people.
	The hiking views, the chef @ the lodge and friendly people of Study Butte and Alpine.
	I liked all of the turnouts on the roads so I could pull off and take pictures without worrying about disturbing the environment or being hit by other cars

	Enjoyed whole park
	NATURAL BEAUTY, PLAN TO WRITE ABOUT THE PARK IN MY TRAVEL NEWSLETTER (SKAYCTRAVEL)
	Beauty of the mountains and surrounding area. The solitude.
	Remoteness, multi environments desert, mountain, etc. Not commercialized - no McDonalds, no billboards
	The fact that you could see forever.
	It is really beautiful. It is amazing to see how much life there can be in an area that is classified as "desert".
	Solitude, Desert Environment, Not many people.
	Beauty. Solitude. Quiet. Clean Air. No traffic.
	The bird watching opportunities, the weather.
	Chisos Basin
	The desert environment and hiking trail.
	Natural beauty
	Sightseeing nature and seeing roadrunners "beep-beep"
	Chisos basin area, primordial aspect of area.
	Views
	Backpacking in the back country
	The wide open spaces. The difference between the desert and going into the basin.
	Wide open spaces, interesting locals-it's like going back in time. It's simple.
	Roads were great
	Scenery
	I enjoy staying at the Gage hotel and then hiking in the basin and to the south rim.
	Scenery
August Visitors	Rest and Relaxation
	The natural beauty, the weather, my family.
	Open space, dark skies with bright stars.
	The vastness and the ability to see something different every time.
	Desert environment, art in Marfa, bird watching, relief from Austin heat, historic buildings and sites in Fort Davis area, good bookstores in Marfa and Marathon
	It doesn't matter how blue I am when I go to the BB. I am cured when I leave there. I feel new. There is something there that touches my sole. I have been over 50 times in the last 35 years I would like my ashes spread over the window.
	The solitude.
	THE VIEW
	Seclusion and the locals
	Outdoor-ness just being in nature and all that it offers.
	pretty, isolated, nice people, close to Mexico
	Lack of humans
	open space and few people
	The rugged mountains
	The wide-open expanse of the landscape.
	Remoteness, also the political, natural, and cultural experience.
	I love the great wide open spaces. The mountains, the colors, the wildlife, and the remoteness of the area. It was a great sense of getting back to nature.
	The beauty of it.
	wide open spaces, not overdeveloped
	The native plants, animals and the entire environment.
	My heart is happy there.
	Landscape, natural environment.
	I love the geographic differences between the different parts of the park
	It's natural beauty, the protection of native animals, it's majestic mountains, & it's peacefulness and closeness to nature.

	I like the climate, the friendly people, the wide open spaces, and the cultural attractions that have been developed. The Gage hotel, for example, is beautiful now.
	I have been spending 1 to 2 weeks in the Bend each year for the past 20 years. I Hike in solitude and find it renewing to body and spirit. The change from hostile desert to evergreen mountains in just a ten minute drive is wonderful and diverse.
	the scenic canyons, wide open mountain and desert scenery, beautiful vistas, animals in the wild, Rio Grande River, unusual rock formations
	It is an incredible piece of desert - and it's so comforting to know that nature - on a large scale - is protected We need more big wilderness
	The natural unspoiled beauty of the park. The restaurant in the basin.
	Hiking, birding and camping. books available at visitor center
	It's a catharsis to drive out to the physical beauty of the desert. We love to spend time "alone" on the river but then to contrast that with the comfort of staying at the Gage Hotel in Marathon and eating at their wonderful restaurant. We've made this
	Climate, scenery
	Natural area, natural beauty. Share with my kids.
	Undeveloped, wide open spaces, quietness!
	Open spaces, no crowds, beautiful scenery, little traffic, small towns
	The countryside
	The beauty of the nature
	The beauty
	Open spaces
	The natural beauty of the isolation if you want it- a wonderful get away
	Solitude
	We have stayed at the Gage hotel several times and really enjoyed it
	Beauty of the landscape, solitude, memories of fun times with my family since I was a kid
	Open space, scenes beauty
	Vast beauty, hiking available trails, animals, insects, plants, mountainscape
	Peace, quiet, relaxing atmosphere
October Visitors	Natural settings, big sky and mountains
	The beautiful terrain and peacefulness.
	The view of the mountains and being able to see for miles and miles. We also enjoyed the clean, fresh air as well as the altitude. The people were very friendly and happy to have us there.
	Serenity
	It is so different from other National Parks we have been to.
	Beauty of the mountains and the ability to walk trails to get close to nature.
	Beauty of nature and opportunity to experience it first hand
	Historic hotels
	The scenery, peace, and quiet! I am glad it is not overdeveloped like some of the national parks in the US.
	Interesting small towns, beauty of the park, learning about the flora and environment, history of region
	The beauty/ruggedness, it was a very bruising and joyful ride on our Harley.
	The isolation and natural beauty, lack of chain restaurants and hotels
	Learning about nature, and seeing the beauty of the Big Bend area
	The solitude and the natural beauty.
	Solitude and stark contrast to my daily environment of Houston Texas. No traffic jams. Plenty of time and nature to enjoy.
	Serenity, solitude, quietness, relaxed-pace atmosphere.
	THE MAJESTIC BEAUTY OF THE MOUNTAINS
	1) The exceptional wide diversity of flora, fauna, geology, and climate. 2) The rugged unforgiving expanse of the desert 3) The spring fed oasis's at the end of long hot dusty trails 4) The view of the heavens on a moonless night 4) Waking up to cool, bri

	The natural beauty and the relative closeness of the park to home.
	McDonald Observatory
	The Chisos mountain trails. The Santa Elena trails also looked very interesting, but we could not use them because of road closures.
	The beautiful landscapes and the undeveloped land that lets you appreciate nature.
	The NATIONAL PARK.
	The wide open and remote feeling of the landscape
	Laid back attitude and the solitude, please don't let any more development there!!!
	It's the only part of Texas that I haven't seen.....the scenery was incredible. Texas is my " Out of Africa."
	Mountains, natural beauty, weather, birding, pace of life, historic hotels in Marathon and Fort Davis.
	Solitude
	Getting away from developed areas, enjoying areas that are still rugged and left alone, absence of cell phone towers.
	The hiking trails were good. The views were beautiful and the diverse landscape was interesting.
	The natural beauty.
	Natural beauty
	The scenery is wonderful.
	Geology and interpretive displays and markers
	different landscape and geology, remote primitive camping in Big Bend NP
	totally different from what i see everyday
	landscape of desert & mountain & river; darkness of the night; solitude; undeveloped areas
	It's unspoiled nature.
	I enjoy being in the trans-Pecos region in general. I prefer the level of development that currently exists - not too much of it. I enjoy how clearly I can see the stars and learning about them at the Star Parties. I enjoy the trail system - how many ther
	The isolation and beautiful vistas, different eco systems there.
	The feeling of solitude and the natural beauty of the park
	The roads and scenery.
	Nature
	Mountain environment, fall weather, hiking opportunities
	Sights
	Remote, quiet, not seeing buildings. The amazement of wildlife surviving in the rough environment
	Rugged beauty and solitude
	The natural beauty-local plants-wildlife
	Remote, very different
	The mountains, desert, animals, plants, quiet, remoteness, solitude
	Remote desert beauty, good roads in the park but not too much traffic
	Not too many people. The solitude
	Beauty of nature
	Openness, beauty, solitude
	The beauty, remoteness and the RV campground & stores
	The varying natural beauty
	Beauty of the mountains and vegetation
	Natural beauty & remoteness
	The beauty & solitude. The sky day & night
	Back road, sunset, NP, photographic opportunities
	The recreational activities & remoteness of the area
December	The varied environments
Visitors	The awesome views, animals, terrain...the WHOLE experience
	The drive and the scenery

The rugged beauty and (mostly) unspoiled landscape of the Big Bend area never ceases to amaze and please. We hope that this will stay constant and we always hope it can remain unchanged.
Sheer beauty. I love undeveloped areas.
The views from the South Rim Trail were absolutely amazing. Trails were very well kept and the backcountry sites were in great condition.
Natural and pollution-free environment. Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas were uncrowded. The vistas were beautiful.
Remoteness, physical beauty, uncrowded, good roads for bikes
The isolation, the wide-openness, the weather (especially in December), and most of all, the hot springs!
The variety of environments. the lack of development
It's beauty.
The physical beauty, the ruggedness, the solitude.
Mountains in Texas! Scenery, the colors, patterns and textures of the desert are incredible. This was a Texas Rovers Club event, with 8 families in 8 Land Rovers.
It is mainly untouched and has a great natural beauty
The solitude, peace/quiet, beauty, not many tourists...
Pristine beauty, great bird watching opportunities, quiet, away from lights & traffic
The scenery was awesome. Great volunteers, retired people. the different environments observed.
The beauty of the land, solitude, physical challenge of hiking, etc.
Remoteness makes it unlikely to be crowded or overly commercial. Unique landscape and climate.
the pristine environment, the rugged landscape, nature at its best, the big sky day and night, tranquil settings, the open road, the silhouette of the trains on the landscape, regional architecture, regional landmarks, the total lack of commercialization,
beauty, closeness to nature, solitude
Its splendor and beauty. High accolades to park to friendly and knowledgeable park personnel.
Well I go out ride dirt bikes, I have been going out there over twenty years for this but like ever wear else it is getting harder to do.
Absence of crowds, laid-back atmosphere.
The scenery
The unique vegetation, the backcountry car campsites, the combination of desert and mountains.
The solitude, the wildness, the natural beauty
Pristine and secluded nature
The beauty.
The big bend area was beautiful and secluded. There are many hiking trails and things to see.
Beauty & primitive nature. The feeling that we are experiencing the last frontier. My great grandfather, Jessie Parker, is buried in the BB Park
Natural beauty
Quiet, beautiful, not crowded
Quiet, scenery
Solitude, unique flora & fauna, the Rio Grande, incredibly friendly locals!
Solitude, scenery
Wonderful roads, clean restrooms, secure environment, beauty, isolation
The stark desert environment of the valley with the mountains, clear air, night skies, sunsets
Natural beauty
Walking and seeing the different area & taking pictures
The window
Beauty
BBNP

	Open spaces, outstanding scenery
	Scenery
	It's remoteness & lack of development in BB state park
	Remote nature, quiet, scenic, dramatic landscape
	December riding, as a cyclist
	It is a desert, remote, and usually not overly visited. However, the latter is becoming less true.
	The unique biology and geology of the area.
	Primitive
March Visitors	The scenery is spectacularly beautiful
	Beauty of nature and the hikes
	The quiet and peace.
	It is just beautiful and the wild flowers were great.
	Varied landscape and vegetation
	A new National Park with a different environment.
	The ability to get away from people and the diverse bat community that I am monitoring as part of a research project
	The beauty, peacefulness, cost. Everything!
	The undeveloped surrounding areas of the park & in the park, the uncrowdedness of the park.
	Large expanses of untouched land. Back road driving area. Beautiful scenery.
	1) The people! 2) the stark natural beauty of the desert and the mountains
	It was a wonderful experience.
	Awesome scenery...stark, rugged beauty... appreciating the variety of life in such a harsh environment (desert in particular)... contrast between the Chisos and the desert floor
	Hiking in interesting places and enjoying scenic areas
	The beautiful and very surreal natural beauty. The peace and solitude
	Big and empty and beautiful.
	It's pretty unspoiled---good trail system, not a lot of people use it.
	The unique beauty of the area.
	I like the desert terrain and the mountainous areas combined to create a unique environment. I like the mingling of the oaks and the conifers in the basin. I like being able to look over vast expansion of land. I am intrigued by the history area.
	Remoteness, Totally different environment compared to Waco Texas, Different flora and fauna, History of the area, like living in the last century ,
	The enormity of it all. The vastness that creates solitude. The history.
	The natural beauty. We had never been to West Texas to explore and found so much to do and see!
	Just seeing God's creation
	The hiking trails - the scenery.
	The beautiful scenery, and the huge amount of activities available to participate in.
	SOLITUDE, WILDLIFE
	Lack of overdevelopment; the ability to be in a beautiful, isolated area that is not overrun with people
	Quiet, not overdeveloped. Small towns.
	It is beautiful, remote, not overly developed, full of friendly, interesting people, and feels like home. Mountains, hiking, inaccessibility. Always something new to explore and learn.
	The lack of development combined with access to necessities.
	Its vastness and solitude
	Beauty, solitude, unspoiled nature. Camping at Big Bend Ranch was superlative. Only a few campsites, very far apart, one group per campsite.
	We loved the beautiful desert and mountains.
Its vast open landscape and diversity; how harsh life can be there.	

<p>We love the desert. The stark, uncompromising environment is inspiring and lovely. We love how clean and well kept the camping areas are, and how well marked the hikes are. This is a spectacular park.</p>
<p>Unspoiled area. I think this is under change with the number of visitors I saw while I was in B Bend</p>
<p>The stark beauty.</p>
<p>I like the solitude and undeveloped landscape. I also like the desert environment and enjoy seeing wildlife and unspoiled nature.</p>
<p>Being able to hike in the natural surroundings away from the traffic and congestion of the city.</p>
<p>Climate and isolation</p>
<p>The wide-open spaces. Variety of vegetation and wild life.</p>
<p>The beauty, vastness, cleanness. spiritual</p>
<p>That it is still remote and natural.</p>
<p>The mountain roads for motorcycling.</p>
<p>Serenity</p>
<p>I live in the northeast and enjoy going to a wilderness area that is not only a much different natural environment than where I live, but also warm in March instead of cold and snowy!</p>
<p>Beauty, remoteness, aroma of the desert, not too many people, solitude</p>
<p>Desert and mountain terrain with abundant wildflowers and wildlife.</p>
<p>Solitude</p>
<p>The diversity of the beauty there</p>
<p>Free backcountry camping with our dogs and mountain bikes in a National Park</p>
<p>The stars at night were awesome. I loved the solitude and Cat Tail Falls.</p>
<p>The natural beauty of the land and the fact that not many people are there.</p>
<p>Undeveloped solitude & beauty</p>
<p>The austere beauty</p>
<p>The diverse terrain, mtns, desert, plants, wide expanse</p>
<p>We enjoy the beauty and the solitude.</p>
<p>The vast expanse of nature, the beautiful skies, the quiet.</p>
<p>The scenic views. Learning about cactus.</p>
<p>The beauty of nature!!</p>
<p>EVERYTHING</p>
<p>River Road , beauty</p>
<p>Its natural beauty, warm in the spring, the river, hiking, motorcycling opportunities</p>
<p>STAR GAZING!!!!!!</p>
<p>I like the fact that it is not very developed. It is a very beautiful natural area in Texas that is not very commercialized.</p>
<p>Landscape</p>
<p>National Park</p>
<p>The ability to camp alone and the learning about the vegetation</p>
<p>The beauty of the desert and the openness of the place. It is a geologic marvel I had always wanted to visit.</p>
<p>Hiking trails, sunsets, nature</p>
<p>Roads in good shape. The quality of service & information provided by the volunteers at the basin visitor center was top notch and really made our trip!</p>
<p>Natural beauty</p>
<p>The natural and clean surroundings</p>
<p>Seeing the heart of west Texas</p>
<p>Beautiful country, peaceful, relaxing and not over crowded</p>
<p>Scenery</p>
<p>Remote natural setting with outdoor activities</p>
<p>Very different from what I expected</p>

Everything
The beauty of the underdevelopment & the sunsets
Nature in the area, beauty of mountains & valleys
The mountain
Scenery, mountains, solitude
Remote area
Beauty of nature
The ability to explore most anywhere and not to be confined to a trail, fascinating geology
Remoteness, natural beauty, variety of flora and fauna, Mexican culture
Its beauty
The magnificence and beauty of the topography
Open space
The majestic view
How different it is from my regular environment
Natural beauty, hiking opportunities
Scenery, isolated, chance to get away
Opportunity to get away from crowds on back road
Beautiful country
The laid back atmosphere
Star light theater
Its beauty
Scenery, undeveloped area
Remoteness, undeveloped, great hiking!
Sights
Mountains, history, Chinati Foundation
Mountains
The wildness of the region. It's a unique area for Texas
Hiking trails were wonderful
Very well preserved/protected
Remoteness
Beauty, hiking, nature
The vastness, solitude, nature
The spectacular and varying scenery
Remoteness & natural desert beauty
Beautiful scenery
The preservation of the environment & the opportunity to experience it without too much modernization

Table. What did you like least about the Big Bend area?

April Visitors	Time required to get there
	The time it takes to get there.
	The smoke from that coal fired plant across the river.
	The smog
	We can't enjoy the Mexican side anymore. Hard to believe there's a border in all this beauty.
	The slow drive from the entrance to the main visitor center.
	We wished that we could have crossed the border in Terlingua or Lajitas.
	Unfortunately, it's 10 hours away, but worth the time to get there. Our restaurant experiences this last time there was at best marginal. I certainly expect exceptional dining fare if I am paying "exceptional" prices for my food. I also don't appreciate p
	No special complaints.

Nearly impossible to get a room at the Chisos Basin.
Cannot stay in/near the park unless plan well in advance and get into Chisos Lodge.
The food services available.
Nothing
Out of area of cell phone
Motorcycles, mobile homes, etc
Poor hotel/motel options
It was a little too cool at one point to enjoy some activities I had planned.
Can not think of anything.
Lack of emergency communication device in the guest rooms and lack of literature and of rangers' knowledge about off-road jeep trips
RV generators in some campgrounds. Lack of ability to cross into Mexico within Big Bend during our trip.
Limited ability to take a shower. The area could use more shower facilities, and better maintained (there was a broken door latch on a men's shower; could not purchase additional time on a woman's shower). We would be willing to pay quite a bit more
nothing
Since there weren't kitchens in the cabins, I would have liked to have more variety for places to eat.
Getting too popular.
Can't think of a thing.
We really did not find anything about the area we did not like. Just that we found some items more interesting.
Overdevelopment in Lajitas.
TOO MUCH DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA
We stayed in the Rio Grande camp ground, the spaces for trailers are plenty wide but the campground is too narrow, difficult to park and exit.
Nothing to complain!
All the driving. Too spread out. There should be more opportunity to stay in the park. Change the cancellation policy so that people don't reserve a year in advance and cancel so late that most other folks can't use their spot.
I despise billboards/highway signs. For me, they are a blight upon the natural scenic beauty of the area. I boycott businesses that advertise that way as much as I can. Ticky tacky businesses and their ticky tacky signs/advertising decor at the park entrance.
We like it all
Unimpressive accommodations that were very expensive for what we received (i.e. Big Bend Motor Hotel...just a cut above a dump)
LIKED IT ALL
To be honest there is nothing I have to complain about I love nature and have no problem with getting a little dirty and not staying in a five star hotel. I loved it and I loved being in the middle of no where.
Inconvenience of getting fresh groceries
Closing of Boquillas crossing.
Lack of lodging outside the park and secluded lodging in the park.
Heat
We are vegetarians, so food options in convenience stores seemed particularly limited to us. When we were near small towns with Mexican restaurants, we did OK. But when we had to buy supplies for day-long hikes or to make suppers, it was tough.
The closed borders

Hard to get a room in the park. Would like accommodations where you could cook your own food. We stayed in Terlingua and it is a long drive to the mountain trailhead from Terlingua. However, we will be back. We are already calling the Chisos Mountain I
There wasn't any one of two things.
Questionnaires, driving distances
Few food facilities in park.
The pollution that hazes the sky and too many people that don't appreciate the experience of solitude and bring their noise and disrespect of nature with them.
Impossible to say. Our expectations were met. There was nothing we had hoped for that was not fulfilled (except that we were a couple of weeks too early to see a Colima warbler!!).
Limited choices of eating establishments
Too many big RV's
Need better food services in the park.
More off-road mountain-bike tracks
Only one showering facility
The Alpine Hike started farther than it used to.
The time it takes to get there from Corpus Christi
Difficulty in getting there
I LOVE BIG BEND!!!!
THE FULL HOOK UP SITES AT RIO GRANDE VILLAGE DOES NOT HAVE PICNIC TABLES. IT FORCES INDIVIDUALS INSIDE WHEN MOST WOULD RATHER BE OUTSIDE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
Historical Places
THE TENDENCY ALREADY TO "CIVILIZE" THIS AREA
Services at park centers (Basin, Rio Grande Village) could be more complete. Noise making vehicles should be assigned to a single remote area
A long way from home
Nothing to mention
Mexico's smoke
Speeding on park roads
Heat!
Showers available at campgrounds, even if they were pay.
Lack of variety in the food store area.
Falling & breaking my left foot on the Rio Grande village nature trail. Lack of showers in the basin campgrounds
Hot, dry
Heat
It was all great!
We needed kennel service
Heat in dining room. Need more supervision in salad bar in evenings. Less gift items when entering lobby. A bit of TV. Nature is great. Don't put too many buses which come for over 25 passengers. Improve food a bit.
Lack of full hook-ups at campgrounds
Heat
Accommodations & food
We were disappointed that we could not cross the border into Mexico from the park
No water in river
No easy access from Dallas. 600 mi. drive or fly to Midland & rent a car.
Long way between assisting facilities.
Too many cops.
The remoteness. Difficult to get to, long drive
No good place to walk the river

	The distance from other parts of Texas
	I like every thing I've seen if there were better stand or rest room then that would take away the natural effect.
	The trailer PK in the BB campground.
	Lack of security in parking areas
	Lack of nice accommodations outside the park
	Restrictions on visiting local Mexican villages
	Wasteland-no rainfall
	Unpaved roads-no facilities at hot springs-Grumpy store clerk.
	Summer heat
	Poorly vented pit toilets, question able water quality of the Rio Grande
	Crowds during spring break & thanksgiving. People leaving litter behind.
	Heat
	It's a long way from home!
	Snakes & mosquitoes
	Some of state & national park rangers who are not typical of the citizens of West Texas. Unfriendly, lacking in knowledge & courtesy!
	Heat
	Gas prices
	Price of gas too high
June Visitors	Nothing to mention
	The distance it takes to get to everything.
	Sometimes the locals are not very interested in helping travelers
	The development that's occurred over the last 15 years
	The heat !! vested in June
	Heat
	Restaurants close early in the evening.
	It is all good, this was my second trip and I will return again this summer, before school starts.
	The development of surrounding areas
	The lack of RV support in the basin (no elec./ water).
	The temperature. It was hot!
	The influx of developers
	Fear of snakes, bears, mountain lions
	The accommodations at Chisos Lodge.
	Unable to cross in to Mexico. The commercialization of Lajitas. Unable to camp at Lajitas without a 100000.00 Plus rig. I will not go there again.
	Nothing, just not enough time to really enjoy it fully.
	Too much driving, to hot, restaurants always running out of food, and mostly the rude office manager at Big Bend Motor Inn.
	HEAT. LACK OF NICER CAMPGROUNDS IN B.B.N.PARK
	The sad condition of the river and the deterioration of visibility
	MEXICO UNAVAILABLE
	Lack of water in Rio Grande river, high daytime temperatures
	The lack of restaurants in the area and the lack places for social gathering.
	Food at Chisos mountain lodge in bb Nat'l park
	That I couldn't go on all the roads because of my car. However, I think its good in a way, so not so many people can go everywhere. Cuts down on tourism to remote areas.
	The heat AND HIGH GAS PRICES
	Man, it was hot.
	ACCOMODATION / FOOD
	It just takes so long to drive there.

	Not enough showers that work. Went in July no place to escape that was air conditioned. No place to get a beer at the end of a busy hike .. or not advertised if one exists.
	Nothing. The experience was 100% positive.
	That it is so far away from Ohio.
	Grocery selection.
	The restaurants close too early.
	The Rio's dry spell
	Not enough vehicle rental places. Need more food places (stores, restaurants)
	Traveling time & lack of information
	Came in summer-would prefer to return in fall or spring.
	Heat
	Lack of information on river water levels. Hard to get prior to entering park.
	The worsening amount of air pollution. When I first came to BB in 1984, you could see the mountains closely. Now they are always in hays. I love the park just the way it is, if only the pollution problem could be solved.
	Long distance between attractions
	Grandson did not enjoy at all. Be cut off from the telephone, TV, radio. He also would like a Swimming pool.
	Don't want to surprise a black bear with a cub while hiking.
	Not enough accommodations and food inside
August Visitors	Not enough wildlife to see.
	Mostly that everything closes by 10pm.
	Nothing.
	The heat.
	Good food and coffee were hard to find (except in Marathon and Marfa); state park staff wasn't very knowledgeable - mostly because so much is done by volunteer groups and there appears to be no coordination with staff; how ugly Fort Stockton is;
	The park rangers' attitude and the closing of Boquillas.
	The presence of so much law enforcement. With the advent of "Homeland Security," Boquillas, Mexico, which used to be a big attraction for me (How can you deny 3 burritos for a dollar or a Carta Blanca for a dollar?), is now practically inaccessible.
	Lack of eating establishments
	Nothing... it was all great
	They need more full hook ups for RVs
	I wish Rio Grande access was easier to get to.
	The time and distance to get there.
	Lack of good accommodations and food in park. The accommodations are poorly maintained, the food is awful and the reservation system is extremely unfair... call and try your luck. There needs to be a systematic overhaul of the park accommodations
	We were planning to go into Mexico & didn't realize until we were there closest crossover point was Presidio, so we rearranged our trip due to time and financial constraints.
	Can't think of anything. I love the bend/
	The sites.
	There is nothing I dislike about the Big Bend.
	Potential pollution from neighboring manuf.
	The travel distance between camp sites and activities.
	Nothing.
	The drive to get there.
	Hot

	The restaurant food has not improved from "very mediocre--just bad" since I experienced it on a visit there in 1976.
	It is too far from San Antonio, my home.
	The growing number of visitors without any respect for their place in nature-leaving trash and bottles along trails-etc
	The back roads were too rough for driving and the summertime heat
	It's in Texas, a revolting state where people say "Negro" and elected George Bush governor
	We felt that if something would happen to us or our car it would take weeks to find us, especially since no cell phone is available. We felt insecure especially in remote areas.
	More variety of foods at 'grocery/supply' stores
	This year we made the mistake of spending the first night in Lajitas. The bizarre "resort" was full of snooty people who "don't get" the beauty of Big Bend as is and are trying to turn it into something else. Also it would be great if the water level in
	Development
	I don't know
	Increased motor vehicle access esp. ATVs and motorcycles
	Heat
	There are more & more people camping to the area
	Heat
	Gage hotel has all that we need to relax so there's no complains here
	Heat and the distance we must drive to get here. But this is not exactly a dislike about Big Bend
	Heat
	Not being able to build a fire even in raised bbq pits
	Limited restaurants
October Visitors	So far can't think of a thing
	Some of the roads and hotels
	It is such a long drive down there, but it is do-able from Ft. Stockton, where we live.
	I like everything.
	Travel distance and high cost of gasoline/diesel fuel.
	Lack of accommodation options in the park
	Not enough shopping
	Gravel on the paved roads and gravel drives in town. These are difficult for touring motorcycles.....but we got by without any accidents. We really don't expect not to find these things in remote environments.
	Lodging was adequate, but the food service and quality was poor. I think the park should upgrade the lodging & restaurant service. A large lodge, fireplace, gathering place is badly needed.
	The food.
	Lack of cell phone service a little creepy
	Would have liked more restaurants or more expanded shopping areas
	Places like Lajitas that cater to rich people and destroy the environment.
	Speed limit in off peak season remains 45 mph. We drove in from Marathon and it took up a lot of our recreational time getting to our hiking destinations. Would like to have seasonal changes to adjust to the flow of traffic. For example, during peak park
	Insufficient quantity of hotel accommodations.
	NOTHING
	1)The large number of individuals that have found out about Big Bend - I remember being able to go for days on the back roads without seeing anyone 2) The small but increasing number of individuals that display no apparent concept about adequate preparation
	The lack of challenging 4x4 trails.

	High gas prices in the area
	Lack of wireless and cell phone service
	The website could have provided more information about trails, which would have helped in planning. At the visitor's center we were given a very useful guide to planning 1-day, 3-day, or weeklong visits. We never saw this same information on the website
	Not being able to cross into Mexico in the park.
	5-6 hour drive from the nearest airport.
	The development in Lajitas!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
	It's approximately 108 miles from Alpine where our RV trailer was parked.
	That it's more than 500 miles from where I live.
	I wish there was a good restaurant in the park. It would be nice to have a great meal after a full day of hiking.
	That guy who ruined Lajitas, Mexico's Smoke and Haze
	Boquillas canyon and the service in the restaurant.
	The quality of food at the Chisos Basin Lodge, and the lack of care in cleaning the lodge rooms.
	Driving distances between towns/park (but what can one do about that?)
	The butthead who runs the Overland Trails campground in Ft. Davis. I will never go back to Ft. Davis.
	Lack of showers in campgrounds
	Too far away from home - very remote location geographically
	I can't think of a single thing unless it is the tightening of the border that prevents our visiting the small village across the river in Mexico
	Not much, I take it as I find it. Would like more water in the river and to be able to cross to Mexico, but that's out of your hands.
	Having to leave
	The distance from my current home.
	The lack of showers in the basin
	Steve Smith
	Hotel accommodations could have been better
	Travel time to get there
	Bikers-their bikes are loud and their presence is threatening
	The remote location. The driving distance. But this is also what makes the BB area wonderful.
	Somewhat desolate but good on a short stay
	The development in Lajitas! Their waste of water and outrageous prices!
	Lack of information about road conditions, lack of information about area hotels, jeep rentals, restaurants
	What they have done to Lajitas!
	Leaving
	Poor condition of restroom facilities at Chisos basin
	Not being able to visit Boquillas, Mexico anymore
	Parking in the campground
	Lack of facilities
	The price of fuel
	Having javelinas in our tent
	Not enough camping sites
	Not enough good accommodations & restaurants
	No cell phone service
December Visitors	I think Terlingua and Lajitas are WAY overrated
	Not enough water in the river
	The very thing that appeals- it's isolation. We do not live close enough.
	I can't think of a thing.

Except for the Gage Hotel, poor food.
The fact that the paranoia police have restricted travel to Boquillas and Santa Elena
The travel time it takes to get there. The food in the lodge
The haze.
Lack of resources, the distance, the unavailability of camping etc. during peak times, ie. Spring break, Christmas, thanksgiving.
If I come down again, it won't be to the National Park, I like a challenging off road trail and the back roads of the NP are to sedate and limited to excite me. I would need to find trails, maybe on a ranch that I could have some fun on. The potential i
Mmmm??
Not many places to stay
It would have been nice to get a shower, and since we don't have much in the way of refrigeration, a better fresh food selection in the stores would be nice, but otherwise a great place to visit.
The absolutely worst campground on the Loop that we have ever seen in a National Park. Crowded, not supervised, dirty, people not following directions, yuk. and we are very liberal people, honestly.
Not able to visit Mexico anymore.
Trend towards catering to high-income tourists. Some accommodations and restaurants are becoming very pricey. Some area gift shops remind me of the Galleria! Oh yeah, the new golf course!!!
What's not to like?? For my wife and me, it's an opportunity to visit the past during a simpler life with unfettered surroundings and genuine people.
The Chisos Basin lodge has deteriorated over the past couple years (cleanliness of rooms, poor restaurant services, etc.) and we very much hope for improvement in this area.
There is not a least. We didn't like the amount of driving involved but consider it an acceptable tradeoff for the park's vastness.
How commercial it is getting.
How long you have to drive to get anywhere. an hour at the least
The four wheel drive roads were too easy.
I can't think of anything I DON'T like.
Restaurant was very bad - bad food and service
Long drive.
It is a like and a dislike about the area, which is it is secluded. When arriving at night there is very little out there. Especially if you had encountered car problems. It is wonderful to have such open spaces and now that I have been there I would f
Development at Lajitas is ruining charm of the area. Many changes due to growth of area.
Too cold at time of visit
Stores too far apart
Driving with all of the RVs on the road
Too far away, poor quality restaurants
Lack of good quality accommodation similar to villas at gage hotel & more cottage for rental rather than motel type accommodation
Air pollution
Camp fires not allowed
How far it is to drive from the B&B in Marathon to different sites in BB.
The difficulty of feeding a vegetarian
Too cold one day. Would like to visit in early fall
Lack of restaurant/café choices, especially at lunchtime in marathon, Tx.
Difficulty in getting into campground.
Dust
Mobile homes & the current status of the Lajitas area

	Inappropriately designed lodge for the setting. Lack of imaginatively designed Accommodation.
	No beer & clothing required to the hot springs
	The number of other folks around, the fact we could not cross over to Mexico, and that the Hot Springs is silting in without maintenance.
	The crowding of available facilities during peak usage times.
	Growing lack of visibility over long distances
March Visitors	Quality of restaurant food.
	Only one shower facility...long line
	Nothing I can think of.
	Nothing. I love the country.
	Closest location for crossing into Mexico was too far away
	We liked everything
	The busy times, like Spring Break, when you can't get away from people
	Not enough shopping opportunities and restaurants. Maybe accessibility.
	"River rats." Lack of decent accommodations and restaurants near the park.
	There is not anything I don't like. The Big Bend is heaven on earth. Although I have been a tourist many times, we recently purchased a vacation home in Marathon, so many of my responses are atypical of those of a tourist. We often hike and pursue other
	The 8-hour drive to get there! The lack of close medical care is a bit disconcerting, especially when doing off-trail backpacking...
	Difficulty in finding accommodations
	The long drive from major cities
	The original managers of our hotel getting fired, we missed them.
	The Chisos Basin area gets so crowded
	The lack of accommodations closer to the park.
	Nothing
	Everything in Marathon closes too early. difficult to get Gasoline after hours--It would be good if a station had an after hours credit card pay-at-the-pump.
	Too few "local color" restaurants. No cellular phone signal.
	We liked it all.
	Too crowded, needs more camping areas inside the park
	Nothing
	How far everything is spread apart.
	Speed limit makes it hard to get around the whole park, although I understand why it is so low.
	This was our second visit during Spring Break. The park and the surrounding towns are very poorly equipped to handle the influx of visitors. Unless reservations are made FAR in advance at the parks, the area hotels and motels were generally substandard.
	Attempts at inappropriate development (Lajitas) and the borders being closed now.
	Inability to make reservations.
	The very reasons I like it also lead it to have limitations: FEW nice hotels, restaurants, medical facilities, increased prices of gasoline, etc.
	The RV park didn't have a site for us upon arrival even though we had reservations. Longhorn Ranch RV park was not very nice about it. She treated us like it was our problem and that she did nothing wrong by giving away the 2 sites that we had reserved
	The hot summers.
There is NOTHING we don't like! Next time we bring our canoe and the next time after that we hope for horses.	
Too many wild pigs around. They need to be hunted or removed from the camping areas.	

Rio Grande Village didn't have full hookups for RV's.
It's too far away from my home (500 miles). Lack of water.
We could not get cell phone coverage anywhere in the area.
Nothing
Amount of people on the trails.
Lack of hotel and eating establishments.
Nothing
This year we picked a week that turned out to be spring vacation for Texas schools so the area was too crowded. We couldn't get a camp site and the trails had too many people on them.
The heat in summer.. Rest of year it's wonderful
Difficulty in getting nice overnight accommodations. I stayed at the Chisos Mining Company Motel - very, very basic.
Nothing
It's a bit big and people have tried to solve this problem by building so many roads, thus bringing in so many cars. If you don't have too much time to spend there, then you're sort of forced to travel by car.
The heat in the summer and the distance it takes to get there from our home
Lack of fresh fruits and vegetables
I did not like the Elephant Tusk campsite. I wish the park ranger had told me before hand how far away from the main road it really was. I'd rather have stayed in Glenn Springs and it was available, but since I had a 4x4 the ranger asked me to stay in E
It is so far from our home!
Development in Lajitas
That eventually, I have to go back home...
The distance from Houston.
Human trash out in the park
Had to drive so far into Big Bend park to get to a ranger station..... to pay \$15 to talk to a ranger... to find out there was no activities for us to day there, but hike... to drive right out.... to neighboring town to check on horse back riding.
Nothing
RESTAURANT SERVICE
Distance to towns
Need more gasoline service, more food service--
Ha-ha... too far from Austin...
I do not like the camping areas at the National Park. I wish the sites were more spread apart from each other.
Expensive gas, limited campground
Lack of hotel and restaurant options
Going at spring break and it being so busy. We had four groups of people try to camp on the site we had reserved.
The lack of adequate number of hotel rooms in the park. We were driving 3-4 hrs a day just to get to the places we wanted to visit in Big Bend because we had to stay in Marathon
Restroom facilities limited
Too many activities in the basin for the amount of parking. Not enough covered tables in the park and on roadside. The visitors center close early & it is still daylight & we are still traveling in the park & need info.
Lack of camp ground for RVs.
The amount of people
Hwy 90 from del Rio to marathon is a rather intimidating stretch of road
Isolation
The hostile nature of the environment. Lack of water
Hard to get a campsite. But the pit toilets are the 'pits.'

Want better roads to explore without having a SUV
No portables on trail hikes
Not enough RV/camper sites with bathrooms & showers
The desert, personal preference and the driving to get there
State park, facilities, restrooms
Not enough camping grounds, spaces
The grocery stores. You have to go to alpine.
Crowd at spring break
The devastation of its natural beauty, culture, and desert way of life by Mr. Smith's disrespectful development. He defies nature, destroys cultural heritage of the area (Lajitas)
It was really cold at night in the Basin
Very far hotel accommodations
Becoming too commercial
Food services & accommodations
Park campgrounds were full and adjacent private campground left a lot to be desired
Not enough campsites in the park
Have a sign at each park entrance showing current conditions-such as Santa Helena canyon is open or closed-condition of river for floating-list any back (4x4) roads that are closed.
No swimming
The change in camping facilities within the park-no over flow, very difficult to get definite reservations. I liked it better when it was first come first served. I also didn't like the new border crossing regulations.
The restaurant at Lahaista Cabillo. They were out of soup, out of cheese, etc.
Too dry, no water
The terrible slow service in many restaurants even the one in the national park
Crowds during spring break.
Need more restaurants
Too many things not open for business
The amount of driving it takes to travel
Needs a grocery store, something larger than the 2 convenience marts in Study Butte
Not enough campsites, but I think we just came at wrong time of year
Far away
Camp ground needs more sites with elec. & water & reservability. Need paved roads out to some of the best locations-like Mariscal canyon
The crowds at spring break. The lead time for reservation for the park hotel
The crowds around the basin area
Motel accommodations in Terlingua. Lack of good restaurants & waitresses at restaurant
Not enough restaurants
The javelinas at the Rio Grande campsite