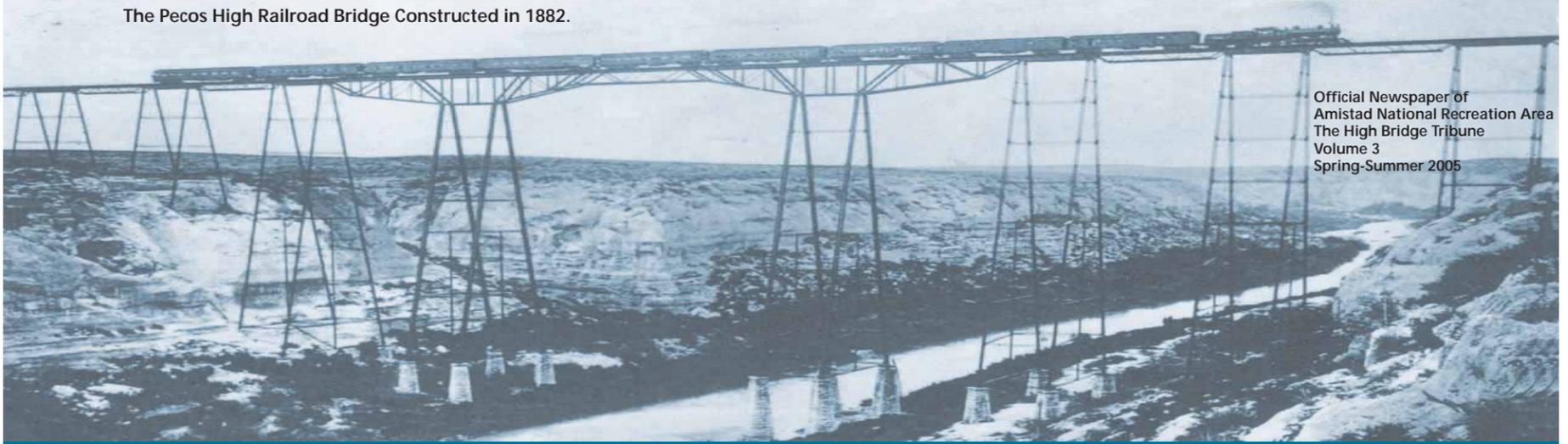




The Pecos High Railroad Bridge Constructed in 1882.



Official Newspaper of
Amistad National Recreation Area
The High Bridge Tribune
Volume 3
Spring-Summer 2005

A Chihuahuan Desert Paradise

A splash of blue stands out against limestone cliffs. The honking of a



PECOS RIVER ARM OF LAKE AMISTAD

great blue heron, interspersed with the descending trill of a canyon wren, can be heard off in the distance. This landscape, which at times appears stark and desolate, comes alive with color after a rainstorm. Amistad National Recreation Area (NRA) is a land of contrasts...and of hidden treasures. The same water that draws people to boat and fish today, sustained over 300

generations of hunters and gatherers. They left behind a record of their existence through colorful rock art panels, bits of tools, and fibers preserved for thousands of years by the arid desert climate.

Situated on the United States-Mexico Border, Amistad NRA is known primarily for excellent year round, water-based recreation including: boating, fishing, swimming, scuba diving and water-skiing. Amistad NRA also pro-



PITAYA CACTUS

vides opportunities for picnicking, camping and hunting. The reservoir, at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Devils rivers, was created by Amistad Dam in 1969. In addition to excellent recreation, this area is rich in archeology and rock art, and contains a wide variety of plant and animal life. So whether you come to boat, to ponder ancient mysteries, or to listen to bird song and watch the desert bloom, Amistad has something for you.

Please visit Amistad NRA's official web page: www.nps.gov/amis

Amistad International Reservoir

At water conservation elevation 1117 ft. above sea level:

- 64,860 surface acres
- 851 miles of shoreline (547 in the U.S.)
- Rio Grande arm- 74 miles
- Pecos River arm- 14 miles
- Devils River arm- 25 miles



AMISTAD DAM - EAGLES

FAST FACTS

Amistad National Recreation Area

- Established November 28, 1990
- 57,292 acres of land and water
- 2004 visitation - 1,446,901

Amistad Dam

- Completed September 8, 1969.
- 6.06 miles long .
- (1.81 miles are in the U.S.)
- 254 feet above river bed.

National Parks Look for Public Input

Park-goers can keep up with Amistad National Recreation Area by checking out our projects at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. This Web site gives you the inside track on park developments.

The new site opens the door to PEPC Planning, Environment and Public Comment. PEPC is an online collaborative tool that provides you with unprecedented, easy access to documents used in developing and tracking

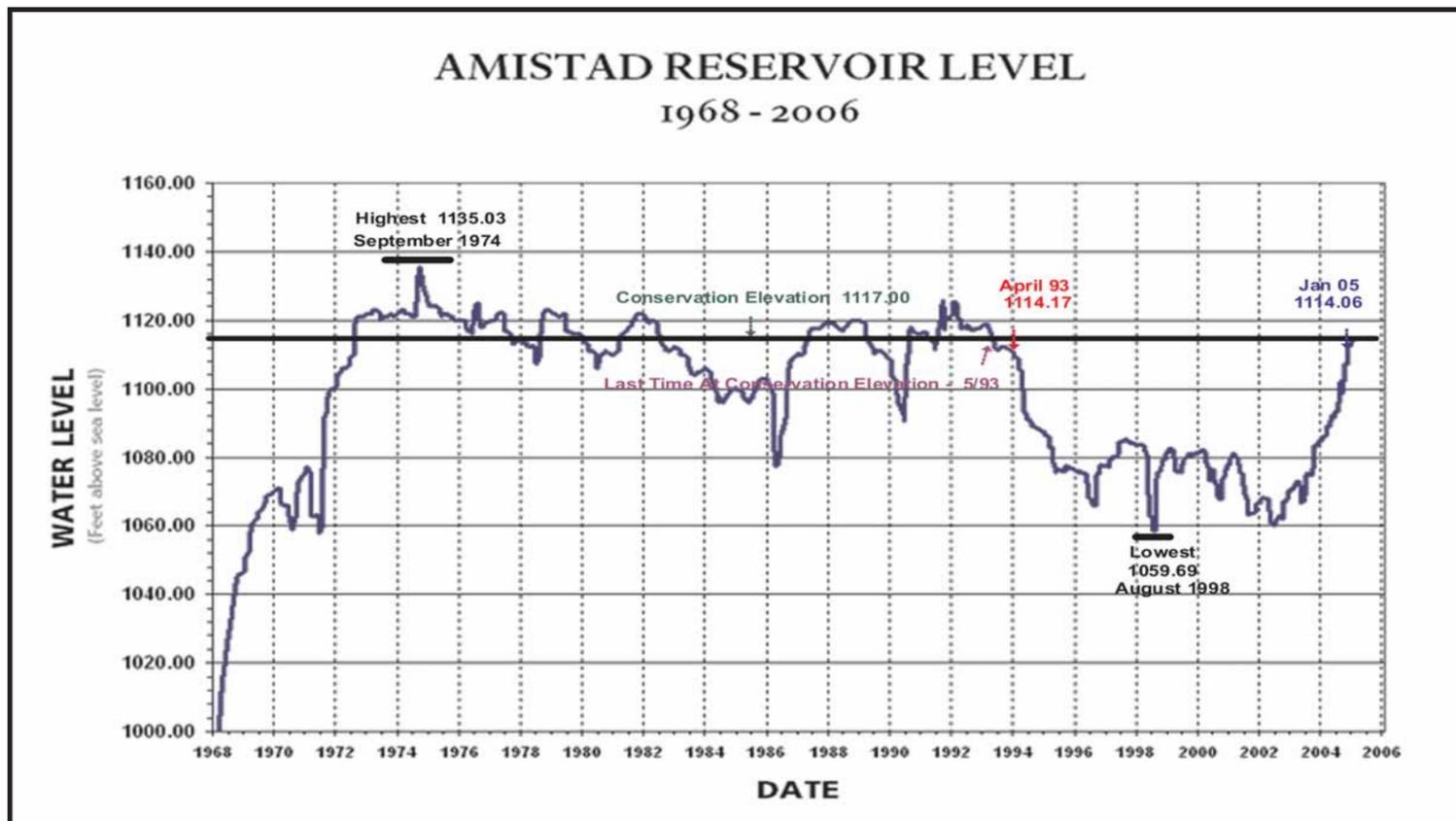
projects within the National Park Service. It also allows you to tell us what you think about the various projects planned for Amistad NRA.

"People lead such busy lives," said Superintendent Alan Cox. "This Web site will help our visitors and others interested in Amistad NRA to keep abreast of park issues and provide a quick, easy method for them to tell us what they think. This input is invaluable in guiding our decision-making."

Park projects can be as routine as trail rehabilitation and utility location, and as rare as a new visitor's center or the relocation of a historic building. Users will find it easy to access several types of public documents, including Environmental Assessments (EA), Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and General Management Plans (GMP). You can also use this site to comment on parks managed by the National Park Service nationwide. The Web site also makes the public comment pro-

cess more efficient, making the most of tax dollars. Public comments entered through the Web site are saved directly to a database, saving the park staff from hours of data entry. The system will also save staff from hours of copying and e-mailing various public documents.

"It's great to have an easy-to-use system that is so beneficial to both the public and the staff," said Superintendent Cox.



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The High Bridge Tribune



Vol 3, Spring-Summer 2005

The High Bridge Tribune: the official newspaper of Amistad National Recreation Area. The Pecos Railroad High Bridge is symbolic of the long span of human history represented at Amistad NRA. The high bridge (pictured above and on front cover) was built in 1892 for the Southern Transcontinental Railway; the current bridge was finished in 1944. (Visit the following website for photos of the High Bridge construction: <http://bridges.lib.lehigh.edu/books/book1631.html>)

Superintendent: Alan Cox
Produced by: Anmarie Mikelski

Contributors to this newspaper:

- Mark Morgan Gary Kinsey
- Lisa Evans Jo Ann Kinsey
- Eric Finkelstein Rick Slade
- Joe Labadie Blake Trester
- Nancy Blanton

Big Bend Natural History Association

Mike Boren - BBNHA Executive Director

Amistad National Recreation Area
 4121 Veterans Blvd.
 Del Rio, TX 78840

830-775-7491 phone
 830-778-9248 fax

amis_interpretation@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/amis

National Park Service
 United States Department of the Interior
www.nps.gov

A Letter From the Superintendent

Dear Amistad NRA Visitor:

My staff and I welcome you to one of the finest recreation areas in the National Park system. We're proud of the work we've accomplished the last few years at Amistad National Recreation Area. We invite you to take full advantage of the many recreational and educational opportunities we offer.

Amistad NRA supports the local community beyond providing extraordinary recreational and educational services- the park also creates jobs and income that benefit the entire Del Rio area. We've just completed a study detailing the park's economic contributions to the region. I'd like to summarize some of these contributions:

- ✓ Park operations directly create 53 jobs and pump \$3.52 million annually into the local economy.
- ✓ Nearly 1.4 million annual park visitors support another 468 jobs and add more than \$29 million to local economic activity.
- ✓ Seventy percent of visitors are from out-of-the-area, bringing in 'new' money to the local economy. Non-local day-users spend between \$33

and \$213 per day. About 80% of all fishing tournament participants are from out-of-town; they spend the highest amounts.

Del Rio is a great place to live and work. We are proud to be helping our friends and neighbors and thank you for your support of the local community. Please see our website under "Management Documents" for a full copy of the report.

Feel free to contact me with your comments and suggestions. We take your input seriously- we want your stay to be as safe and enjoyable as possible.

Alan W. Cox
 Superintendent
 Amistad National Recreation Area



Take Pride In America



Left to Right: Debbie Morgan, Patrick Woods, Kimberly Woods, Al Kay, John Little, Rick Slade, Karen Gleason, Mark Morgan, Joe Labadie, Lara Kay, Carolyn Todd, Jodi Ney, Damon Stone, Joshua Ney

After nearly 200 hours of back-breaking work, Parida Cave is once again presentable and available to the public. Much of the work was accomplished by a dozen or so dedicated volunteers - among them were pilots and their spouses from Laughlin Air Force Base, college students, local teachers and several Student Conservation Corps members.

Park Archeologist Joe Labadie, who planned both the 1988 and 2004 Parida Cave projects, noted "Once again, volunteers have made a significant contribution to our park and have accomplished a Herculean task that was beyond the meager resources of the park. We are indeed fortunate to have a local community that is willing to pitch in and make their park all that it can be."



Parade of Lights Festival on Lake Amistad



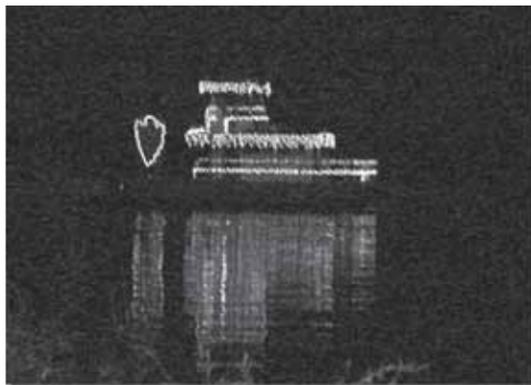
DECORATED HOUSEBOAT

The Parade of Lights Festival on December 11, 2004 was the first one of its kind to be held in over a decade. The last event was held in 1993 when the reservoir storage was as full as it is currently. A ten year drought had lowered the water levels nearly 60 feet below conservation

pool elevation of 1117 ft. above sea level. Prior to the parade, Steve Billingsly put on a show for spectators with his jet boat spraying water upwards then back down in an arc.

There were seven decorated boats that had entered the festival; Forever Resorts, Southwinds (USAF) Marina, Del Tex RV and Automotive Repair Center, Del Rio Chamber of Commerce, two private boats piloted by Dennis Anderson, Curtis and Phyllis Hall,

and Amistad NRA's own "Knotty Buoy" was decked out with rows of lights and a lighted NPS arrowhead. The parade started at nightfall from the docks at Lake Amistad Resort and Marina. Led by the Star of Bethlehem on Anderson's boat, the lighted fleet proceeded past Governors Landing up to the Amistad Dam, and then back to the marina dock. There were many spectators looking on and the viewpoint areas were overflowing



NPS BOAT - THE KNOTTY BUOY

with cars and people. The International Boundary- and Water Commission had allowed folks to go



FLEET OF LIGHTED BOATS

out on top of the dam for a great view of the boats. They even turned out all the lights for better viewing.

All future parades will be held on the second Saturday in December. If you wish to participate in the Parade of Lights 2005 please contact :

Barbara Plyler at 830-775-9715 or
 Mark Morgan at 830-775-7492 x 234

Tips for Visiting Ciudad Acuña, Mexico

- * Bring personal ID and keep it with you because you will need it to reenter the U.S.
- * Bringing weapons, ammunition and drugs into Mexico is a federal offense.
- * If you are unsure of what not to bring call the Mexican Consulate 830-775-2352.
- * Check with your insurance company to see if you need to buy Mexican insurance.
- * You may park near the U.S. Port of Entry and walk to Mexico, it's 3/4 mile each way.
- * U.S. Dollars are accepted at most stores. Some businesses will take credit cards.
- * Declare **ALL** purchases when reentering the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco are taxed.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Val Verde County Sheriff: 911 or (830) 774-7513
- Ambulance: 911 or (830) 775-1111
- Diablo East Ranger Station: Intermittently Staffed (830) 775-6722
- Rough Canyon Ranger Station: Intermittently Staffed (830) 775-1911
- Pecos Ranger Station: Intermittently Staffed (432) 292-4544
- Amistad Visitor Information Center - 7 Days - 8 am-5 pm, (830) 775-7491

Annual Lake Clean Up



ATTENTION SCOUTS, FISHING CLUBS, BIOLOGY CLUBS, AND ANY INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS: COME JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL LAKE CLEAN UP 2005!

All are invited to help keep Lake Amistad beautiful. The lake clean-up the two previous years have proven to be very successful. In 2003, 120 participants removed two tons of trash. The 2004 lake clean up had 78 participants who hauled out two thousand pounds of trash, including 21 tires. Come help us make the Annual Lake Amistad Clean Up 2005 the best one ever. Take pride in your National Recreation Area.

For more information call the Del Rio Chamber of Commerce (830-775-3551) or the National Park Service (830-775-7491) and sign up today.

Amistad NRA Fees

Park User Fees	Regular	Golden Age/Access
Entrance Fee	None	None
Daily Boat Use (24 hours)	\$4.00	\$2.00
3 Day Boat Use (72 hours)	\$10.00	\$5.00
Annual Boat Use Full Year	\$40.00	\$20.00
Camping Spur 406	\$4.00/night/site	\$2.00/night /site
Camping San Pedro	\$4.00/night/site	\$2.00/night/site
Camping Governors Landing	\$8.00/night/site	\$4.00/night/site
Camping 277 North	\$4.00/night/site	\$2.00/night/site
Group Camp Sites San Pedro, 277 North, Rock Quarry	\$2/person/night 15 person minimum	\$1/person/night 15 person minimum



Park Passports

The **NATIONAL PARKS PASS** is a real bargain for the frequent visitor to National Park Service units. The pass is only \$50 and provides free entrance to its holder and everyone in the vehicle for one full year from the date of purchase. Not all parks have an entrance fee, but most of them do, including some entrance fees up to \$20. The pass is only good for entrance and does not include any user fees such as parking, camping, boat launching, etc.



A handy booklet on the units of the National Park system is included with the purchase of a National Parks Pass.

Anyone may purchase a National Parks Pass; however, it may not be used for commercial purposes. See the individual park for commercial vehicle entrance fees.

A **GOLDEN EAGLE UPGRADE** hologram can be purchased for \$15 and placed on the National Parks Pass to cover entrance into other federal lands, such as National Forests, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife areas.

PARK SPECIFIC PASS

Some parks may have an individual annual pass for entrance to that park only. This is great if you live near a National Park and enjoy visiting it often. The cost is less than a National Parks Pass, but can only be used at the park in which you purchased it.

The **GOLDEN ACCESS PASSPORT** is free of charge to U.S. citizens who are permanently disabled or blind. A Golden Access Passport admits its holder into all National Park Service units and many other federal fee areas for the lifetime of the holder. Other federal fee areas include those managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Entrance is also permitted to everyone

in the pass holder's vehicle. The pass holder may also be entitled to 50% off all user fees such as camping, launching, and parking. Where there is an individual fee, such as a cave tour, then only the pass holder is entitled to 50% off. Everyone with him/her must pay full price. The passport must be obtained in person along with proof of disability, and it is nontransferable.

The **GOLDEN AGE PASSPORT** is a lifetime entrance permit for U.S. citizens 62 years of age and older. This pass allows its holder the same benefits as the Golden Access. The Golden Age Passport must be obtained in person with proof of age. There is a one-time fee of \$10 for this pass to cover administrative costs. It is nontransferable.



Volunteer

Amistad National Recreation Area has a variety of volunteer positions available each fall/winter season. Our greatest need is for Campground Hosts and Visitor Center Volunteers. We have 4 campgrounds that require hosts; however only one has full hookups (for the host only) and it is the easiest to fill. The other 3 have sewer only and are great for campers with solar panels. We prefer long-term commitments for these positions. The term can be October-March continuous, or we can break it up into two 3 month positions from Oct-Nov-Dec and Jan-Feb-March.

We have a new Visitor Information Center 5 miles west of our headquarters building on Hwy 90. We need volunteers to staff the information desk, sell passports, boat permits, hunting permits and books, issue parking permits, and give quality information to our park visitors. We can accept applications for Visitor Information Assistants for the Visitor Information Center year-round however, we prefer long-term commitments of at least 3 months for these positions. We offer a full hook-up site with a view of the lake in exchange for 32 work hours per week.

Other volunteer opportunities that occur on a less frequent basis are archeology assistants, natural resource management assistants, park maintenance assistants, and environmental education assistants. If you have any interest in one of these fields, and can volunteer with us long-term, please send us your application or resume (**with references**).



Mail your application to:

Amistad National Recreation Area
4121 Veterans Blvd.
Del Rio, TX 78840.

Attn: Volunteer Coordinator

or

Email:

amis_interpretation@nps.gov

or

Apply online at:

www.volunteer.gov/gov



We look forward to your applications.

NOTE: We cannot consider anyone without their own accommodations and vehicle. We have no volunteer housing, no vehicles to spare, and no stipends.

Park Activities



Amistad National Recreation Area offers water-based recreation and protects our natural and cultural heritage. Amistad (Spanish for friendship) Dam, built by the United States and Mexico in 1969, forms International Amistad Reservoir on the Rio Grande, Pecos, and Devils rivers. Buoys mark the US/Mexico border along the Rio Grande arm of the lake. Enjoy your visit to Amistad NRA!



CAMPING

The National Park Service operates four campgrounds. All sites are primitive with no hook-ups, and feature grills, vault toilets, and covered picnic tables. Only Governors Landing has potable water. All sites are first-come, first-served. Reservations are not available except for Group Campsites. A dump station is located at Diablo East.

SAN PEDRO

Open all year
35 Sites with long, flat spaces, suitable for RVs or tents. Also, 5 tent-only sites.
Camp Hosts on-site in the winter months.

GOVERNORS LANDING

Open all year
15 Sites, suitable for RVs less than 28 feet or tents.
Camp Hosts on-site in the winter months.

SPUR 406

Open all year
8 Sites, suitable for RVs or tents.

277 NORTH

Open all year
17 Sites, suitable for RVs or tents. Camp Hosts on-site in the winter months.

GROUP CAMPSITES

Located at San Pedro, 277 North and Rock Quarry. All are primitive group sites and have covered picnic tables and a fire ring. Sites may be reserved up to three months in advance.

Privately owned campgrounds and RV parks with hookups are also available in the Del Rio area.



FISHING

CAST A LINE

The beautiful blue water of Lake Amistad provides excellent fishing and attracts many anglers to Amistad NRA.

BANK FISHING

You can fish from the shoreline anywhere outside of harbors and designated swim areas. Courtesy fishing docks are located at Governors Landing, Rough Canyon and at 277 South and Blackbrush Point.

WHAT TO FISH FOR

Some of the favorite catches at Lake Amistad are Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Striped Bass, Channel Catfish, and Black Crappie.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Texas fishing license requirements apply when fishing on the U.S. side of Lake Amistad. When in Mexican waters, you must adhere to Mexican fishing regulations, which differ considerably from Texas in terms of size and catch limits. The Mexican border is indicated by numbered buoys running along the main channel of the Rio Grande.

NOTE: Amistad Marine on Hwy 90W is now selling Mexican fishing licenses and boat permits. 830-775-0878. Mexican fishing licenses and boat permits are also available from the SAGARPA office in Ciudad Acuña at 380 Zapata, two blocks east of Blvd Guerrero (turn at the Chevy dealer). Office

hours are 8 am-3 pm Monday- Friday. The phone number in Acuña is 877-2-58-14 and 877-2-62-38.

NOTE: Mexican law strictly prohibits possession of guns, ammunition, and illegal drugs. Anyone caught in Mexican waters with contraband will receive a mandatory prison sentence and a substantial fine.



SCUBA DIVING

Amistad's exceptionally clear water makes it an excellent place for scuba diving. A dive cove is located at Diablo East. Depending on lake levels there are several submerged ranch houses to explore. Check with a park ranger or at park headquarters before you dive, and pick up a copy of "Dive Amistad Safely." Use your dive flag, know your safe limits and never dive alone. Don't try scuba diving without training.



SWIMMING

Swimming at Amistad is a great way to escape the desert heat. Unsupervised swim areas are located at Governors Landing and at Diablo East. You may swim in other areas of the lake as well, except in harbors and around docks. Water temperatures range from 54 degrees in winter months to 86 degrees late in summer.

SWIM SAFE!

- ◆ There are no lifeguards on duty; all swimming is at your own risk.
- ◆ Stay within reach of children.
- ◆ Never swim alone.
- ◆ Diving from the cliffs is extremely dangerous and is not recommended at any time.
- ◆ If you swim from a boat, make sure the boat is anchored and the engine is turned off.
- ◆ Never start a boat engine while swimmers are in the water.
- ◆ It is recommended that small children and non-swimmers wear Coast Guard approved life jackets; some areas in Lake Amistad have sudden drop offs into deeper water.

REMEMBER: Water activities and alcohol do not mix. Many drownings are alcohol-related and can be prevented by not drinking alcoholic beverages before or during water sports.



PICNICKING

Relax and enjoy lake side views at any of Amistad NRA's eight picnic areas. Each area is equipped with covered picnic tables, grills, and vault toilets. Group picnic shelters are available by reservation only.



MARINAS

Boat Rentals

Lake Amistad Resort & Marina	830-774-4157
Rough Canyon Marina & Store	830-775-8779
Air Force (Southwinds) Marina	830-775-7800
Ruthie's Rentals - Rough Canyon	830-774-5377

Authorized Fishing Guides

Herschel Black (830) 775-3639	Jerry Black (432) 292-4710	Glen McGonagill (830) 775-6720
Charlie Rumfield (830) 774-3484	Gene Peil (830) 775-7243	Mike Fambro (432) 292-4638

Pecos Jack Tours

Canoe & Kayak Tours	Lake Amistad - Devils River
832-276-6885	Pecos River - Rio Grande



HUNTING

Unlike many National Park Service areas, Amistad's enabling legislation allows limited hunting. Archery and small-game shotgun hunting is permitted on about 2,200 acres of federal land in five hunt areas. Texas hunting regulations and seasons along with Amistad's regulations are used to manage hunting.

Free permits are available IN PERSON only at the Visitor Information Center with the following documentation:

- Texas Hunting License
- Drivers License
- Hunter Education Card (if born after September 1, 1971) or state deferral.

While hunting, hunters must have the permit in their possession, must fill in the Hunter Data Sheet daily, and return the form by March 15. Failure to comply will result in loss of future hunting privileges.

More information and maps are available at the visitor information center and on our web site: www.nps.gov/amis.



PROGRAMS

COFFEE WITH A RANGER

An informal talk with an NPS ranger or other guest is held every Thursday morning at 10 AM from January through March. The programs are rotated among 3 of Amistad NRA's campgrounds; Governors Landing, San Pedro and 277 North, and are held at the Campground Host's site. Cowboy Coffee talks are open to the public and are **free** of charge. Bring your favorite mug, a comfortable chair, and lots of questions!

EVENING PROGRAMS

Every third Saturday of the month an evening program will be held in the theater at the Visitor Information Center on HWY 90 W across from the Three Rivers RV Park. The **free** programs begin at 7:30 pm and cover a variety of subjects presented by experts in their respective fields. Contact the park for a schedule.

BIRD WALKS

A guided bird walk is offered every third Saturday of the month from September to May. We meet at Amistad NRA Visitor Information Center on Hwy 90 W at 8:00 am. From there we carpool to the Rio Grande below Amistad Dam. Bring binoculars, birding books, checklists, drinking water, snacks, and wear sturdy shoes. Bird walks are **free**.

DATES:

Jan 15, 2005	Feb 19, 2005	Mar 19, 2005
Apr 16, 2005	May 21, 2005	Sep 17, 2005
Oct 15, 2005	Nov 19, 2005	Dec 17, 2005

SUGGESTED BIRDING AND WILDLIFE VIEWING LOCATIONS

AMISTAD NRA

Spur 454: San Pedro Campground - Good for desert birds; very good for migrating and wintering sparrows. Good for butterflies in season.

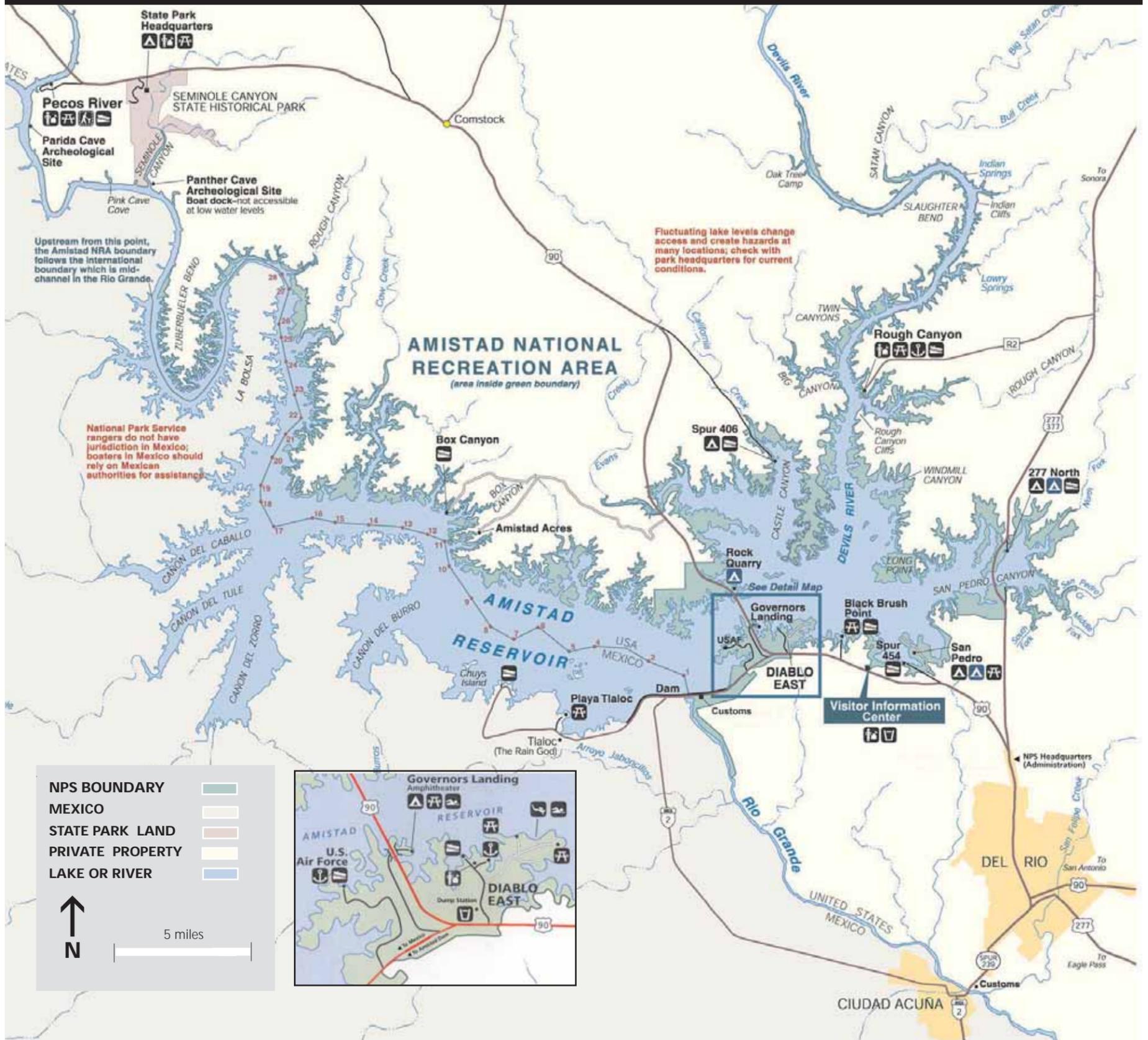
Spur 406: Good for desert birds; in summer use spotting scope for interior least terns over Lake Amistad. Good butterflies in season.

Hunt Area 1: Great for desert birds. Check with Amistad NRA for hunting status.

Rio Grande Below Amistad Dam: Very good for riparian birds. Open by guided tour only. See bird walk schedule above.

(cont. on page 5)

Map of Amistad National Recreation Area



BIRDWATCHING (cont. from page 4)

DEL RIO

Duck Ponds - Cienegas Rd: Good for aquatic birds.

River Road: (follow Vega Verde Road past gravel pits to dead end) Good for riparian birds.

Laguna de Plata: (on Garza Lane) Good for wintering waterfowl and winter grassland sparrows.

San Felipe Creek: Good for riparian birds, and green and ringed kingfisher.

South Del Rio near Winery: (Valenti St. and River St. off Nicholson, and Guyer Lane off Qualia Drive) Good for migrating warblers.

TRAILS & RAILS PROGRAM

The National Park Service has teamed up with Amtrak to provide educational programs onboard the Amtrak passenger train. Park staff and volunteers explain the fascinating natural and cultural history along the rail route through

southwest Texas. The volunteers bring alive historical figures such as Judge Roy Bean and events such as the construction of the second transcontinental railroad.



but the National Park Service will accommodate groups with advance notice. Given advance notice, the Trails & Rails program can be held regardless of arrival time into Del Rio.

RESERVATIONS:

To make a reservation on Amtrak, call 1-800-USA RAIL (1-800-872-7245). You will make your reservation for the Sunset Limited, and you do not have to mention the Trails & Rails program. Our program is presented onboard regularly scheduled Amtrak passenger trains. The National Park Service is not involved with Amtrak prices, reservations, etc.

TRIPS:

Del Rio to Sanderson trip: You will need to have someone shuttle you/your group back to Del Rio from Sanderson. On your way back you can visit the Terrell County Museum in Sanderson, stop by the Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center in Langtry, and check out Seminole Canyon State Historical Park.

Del Rio to Alpine trip: If you choose to go all the way to Alpine and take the eastbound Sunset Limited back that night, plan on an extended layover in Alpine. Depending on the timing of the trains (westbound and eastbound), you may have from 5 to 10 hours in the Alpine area. If that is the case, you

may want to rent a car and drive to Fort Davis, the McDonald Observatory, Marfa or Big Bend National Park. Just be back in time for the eastbound Sunset Limited.

To check on the train's arrival status into Alpine, call **1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245)**.

Amistad NRA is currently seeking volunteers to assist with the Trails and Rails program. If you are interested, please call Lisa Evans at 830-775-7491 ext. 223, or email: lisa_evans@nps.gov.



INFORMATION

Amistad NRA's Visitor Information Center is located 10 miles west of Del Rio on Hwy 90 West, and is open 7 days a week, 8 am - 5 pm, closed Thanksgiving Day, December 25 and January 1. The center has various interactive displays, a theater to watch a short film on the recreation area, an information desk, and a full book store and lounge area.

The book store is stocked by Big Bend Natural History Association and has many great titles and fun things for sale. You can purchase field guides, books on Texas history, rock art, Texas Indians, borderland history, maps, star charts, wildlife posters, puzzles, childrens books and much, much more!

The information center has all National Park Passports for sale, and annual or daily boat permits (see page 3 for info on passports and permits).

Learn About Amistad NRA's Cultural

Amistad National Recreation Area

Amistad National Recreation Area has developed two major rock art sites for public visitation, Parida Cave and Panther Cave (which is jointly managed with Seminole Canyon State Historical Park). Both sites were developed years ago and are intended to provide boaters with educational opportunities that complement recreational activities. In recent years, however, a prolonged regional drought had lowered lake levels by nearly 60 vertical feet. As a result, there were times when both Parida and Panther Caves were closed to boaters because of dangerous river conditions on the upper part of the reservoir. Fortunately, rising lake levels mean that both sites are again accessible to the public.

Panther Cave is the region's most famous pictograph site. The rear wall of the shelter is literally covered, from floor to ceiling, with hundreds of individual motifs collectively forming an uninterrupted panel more than 80 feet in length. The site's namesake, a giant red painted mountain lion or panther, is almost 9 feet long from nose to the tip of the tail. Visitors to Panther Cave climb a 60-foot steel staircase up to the rockshelter which is protected by a tall metal fence. Adjacent to the protective fence is an elevated catwalk that limits where visitors can go, thus reducing potential damage to vegetation. The steel fence and other major improvements were completed in 1996 by the NPS and were designed in such a way as to maximize photographic vantage points.

Parida Cave offers an amazing array of pictographs and a spectacular view of the Rio Grande. The site is located on the Rio Grande about 1.5 miles downstream from the NPS Pecos River boat ramp adjacent to the U.S. Highway 90 bridge. Parida Cave, once known as Painted Cave Station, was a welcome stop for travelers riding on the Southern Pacific's transcontinental railroad that began service through the region in 1883. By 1892, the trains adopted a newer, shorter route through the region; yet by this time travelers had already painted graffiti over and adjacent to the prehistoric pictographs at the site.

At both sites, unobtrusive interpretive panels provide visitors with information about the pictographs, the prehistoric cultures that once lived in the reservoir basin, and the need to protect and preserve Panther and Parida Caves, as well as the many other sites in the region. With both sites once again accessible by boat, the park hopes to see increased visitation to these unique resources.

The taking of any artifacts or deliberate destruction of any cultural or natural resource on federal or state lands is against the law and punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Coming in October: 5th Annual Val Verde County Archeology Fair.
Dates to be announced. Call 830-775-7491 x 223.

Seminole Canyon SP & HS

Seminole Canyon State Park & Historic Site offers rock art connoisseurs the most complete venue in the region and features a bookstore, campground, interpretive center, and guided tours to sites. Located 42 miles west of Del Rio on U.S. Highway 90, the park has 31 campsites (22 sites with full hook-ups) and collects a \$2.00 per person (over age 12) entrance fee.

At 10:00 am and 3:00 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, the park offers guided tours to several large pictograph sites in Seminole Canyon for a \$5.00 tour fee (plus the standard \$2.00 park entrance fee). Additional guided tours to remote sites in the park are offered on an irregular basis with advance registration and a nominal fee. These tours include the Presa Canyon tour, which requires about 8 hours of very strenuous hiking and climbing but offers the rare opportunity to visit seven of the park's pictograph sites normally closed to the public.

Another is the Upper Canyon tour, which takes about two hours of moderate hiking, and includes stops at two pictograph sites and several 19th century railroad sites. Those planning a trip to Seminole Canyon State Park & Historic Site should check out their web site at: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/seminole.

The Rock Art Foundation

In addition to the state and national parks in the region, the Rock Art Foundation is a private foundation that offers opportunities for visiting additional sites in the region which are not on public lands. Membership in this organization also provides opportunities for a wide range of educational activities, as well as field trips that can be found nowhere else in the region.

The Rock Art Foundation (RAF) was established by renowned photographer Jim Zingtraff. The RAF sponsors numerous activities for its members, including field schools, conservation and research projects, and an annual rendezvous. It manages the Galloway White Shaman Preserve, adjacent to the Pecos River near Seminole Canyon State Park & Historic Site, and also offers regular field trips to some of the region's most famous rock art sites. The RAF recently produced a CD-ROM featuring Lower Pecos Region pictographs. The RAF web site is among the best pictorial presentations on regional rock art available anywhere on the Internet. Visit their web site at www.rockart.org.

Texas Beyond History - Before Amistad

The outstanding preservation conditions and concentration of world-class rock art sets the Lower Pecos apart from all other regions of North America.

A new section has been added to the existing Lower Pecos exhibit on Texas Beyond History (TBH), the public education service web site published by the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) in partnership with 10 other organizations having a vested interest in the cultural heritage of Texas.

Before Amistad (<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/pecos/before.html>) tells the story of the archeological and paleoenvironmental research that took place in southwestern Texas in advance of the 1969 completion of Amistad International Reservoir.

The addition is sponsored by the Amistad National Recreation Area, National Park Service (ANRA-NPS), a partner in TBH. Steve Black (TBH) wrote the section, aided by Vaughn Bryant (Anthropology Department, Texas A&M, a TBH partner) and Joe Labadie (NPS).



Paddling to Rock Art and Historic Sites

Lake Amistad is a canoeing and kayaking paradise. Amistad NRA has both open space and steeply walled canyons, which makes it a great place for paddling your canoe or kayak. The park boundary extends 74 miles up the Rio Grande, 25 miles up the Devils River and 14 miles up the Pecos River. Protected coves provide superb fishing and ideal camping spots. Amistad is an international reservoir-the United States-Mexico border is marked by buoys that follow the historic channel of the Rio Grande. Amistad NRA does not require a lake use permit for non-motorized craft under 14 ft. in length, but if you plan to paddle onto the Mexican side be sure to have a Mexican boating permit. A Mexican fishing permit is also required if you plan to fish on the Mexican side.

The possibilities for destinations are endless; however, some of our staff and volunteers have taken the guesswork out of places to paddle on the lake, and have mapped out some trails for you to enjoy. Mentioned here is just a very brief summary of these trips. You can get more detailed information and maps from our Visitor Information Center on Hwy 90 W., or you can print them out yourself from our web site: www.nps.gov/amis.

PADDLE TRAIL 5 - Parida Cave

This trip starts at the Pecos boat ramp, goes to the Rio Grande and then to Parida Cave, 3 miles total distance. This trail is short but it certainly packs a lot of adventure! It's a great day trip that can be done in 3 around hours. There is a walking trail inside Parida Cave with interpretive signs to read, and some beautiful Lower Pecos River style rock art to view.

PADDLE TRAIL 6 - Panther Cave

Paddle 6 miles beyond Parida Cave to Seminole Canyon and then to the boat dock for accessing Panther Cave. There are stairs leading to the rock shelter, and inside the shelter is a magnificent panel of rock art that was painted over

4,000 years ago. This is a very long day trip and should only be attempted by experienced paddlers.

PADDLE TRAIL 7 - Pecos Railroad Bridge

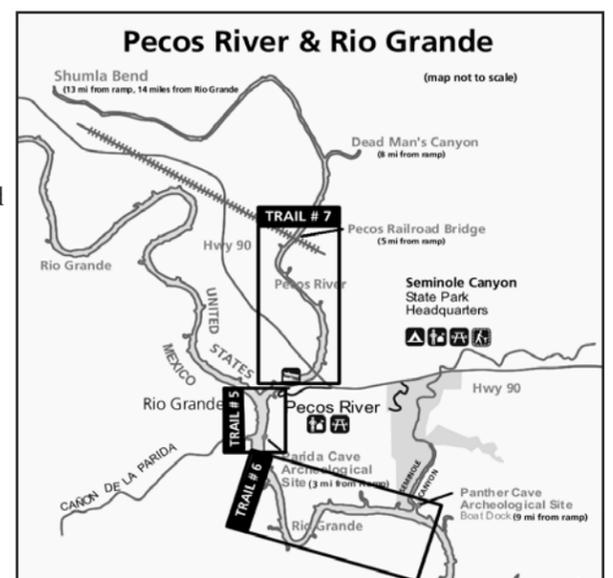
Launch at the Pecos boat ramp and head up river about 5 miles and you will come to the railroad bridge, or "Pecos High Bridge" as it was known in early days. This is an excellent trip to do in one or two days. Camp overnight and enjoy the starry sky while listening for trains and watching them go by.

Regardless of which trip you elect to take, you will no doubt be pleased with the scenery at Amistad NRA.

Take plenty of drinking water, and bring some snacks or pack a lunch to go. If you do not own a canoe or kayak, you can rent one, or book a guided trip.

Ruthie's Rentals
Hwy 277 N, RR 2
Rough Canyon
830-774-5377

Pecos Jack Tours
34 ft. canoes seat up to 14 people. Day trips, week-long trips, rock art tours.
Reservations or info call 832-276-6885.
pecosjack@villadelrio.com





Removal Of Mouflon Sheep From Amistad National Recreation Area

In 2004, Amistad National Recreation Area, Texas, initiated an effort to remove more than 2,000 exotic mouflon sheep (*Ovis musimon*) from a large tract of the park designated for the recreational hunting of whitetail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and other native species. In cooperation with neighboring landowners and a group of wild-game trappers, the park started trapping sheep in May and had successfully removed more than 1,300 sheep by the end of July, when increasing summer temperatures brought activities to a temporary halt. Thanks in part to abundant summer rains, the benefits of this effort are already evident in the rejuvenation of the shrubs, forbs, and grasses that provide shelter and nutrition to a variety of native wildlife.

Mouflon sheep were first documented in the park during the mid-1970s when a single breeding pair entered the park from a neighboring ranch. The population steadily increased over the next 20 years, reaching over 400 individuals by the mid-1990s. In recent years, population growth accelerated, creating a number of critical resource management issues. Because mouflon travel in large herds, their grazing and browsing effects are concentrated and particularly stressful on the area's thin soils and limited vegetation. In documenting the impacts of the sheep, the park's resource management staff determined that they were out competing

whitetail deer for food, leading to a gradual reduction in the area's deer population.

During the project's planning phase, park staff involved adjacent landowners and residents of a nearby housing development in the process, which has proved critical to the project's success. Access to adjacent properties has allowed the trappers to pursue all of the sheep, not just those found within park boundaries. The trapping has been accomplished using net guns fired from a helicopter, which has minimized landscape impacts but disrupted the local soundscape. Without the full support and understanding of nearby residents, conflicts would have been inevitable. As work resumed in the fall, all parties remained united behind the goal of eradicating the sheep and allowing the restoration of a natural landscape.

Contact: Rick Slade
rick_slade@nps.gov
Chief of Education and
Resource Management,
Amistad NRA



Sul Ross Grad Student Has More Than A "PHEW!" Close Skunk Encounters

By Nancy Blanton, Sul Ross State University News Writer

The Animal Planet network may not be ready for a show called "Skunk Hunter," but Sul Ross State University Biology graduate student Matt Bahm would be a viable candidate for the host. Bahm, of Kaw City, OK., gained plenty of aromatic on-the-job experience during his graduate thesis research conducted last summer at Amistad National Recreation Area near Del Rio. He not only learned something about skunks, but through his experiences at Lake Amistad, he also learned something about himself as well. "I learned that my emphasis on my doctoral studies is going to focus on grassland restoration and how the animals adapt to restored systems. No more mammal surveys," he said. Bahm's graduate research project was conducting a mammal survey of Lake Amistad NRA, on behalf of the National Park Service, the first such survey undertaken in several years.

On the way, Bahm had his share of (mis)adventures that go hand-in-hand with field research. He gave a public presentation of his experiences in an interpretive talk at Amistad NRA Visitor Center in June. One of the more memorable incidences was shopping for groceries outside of the store, due to having received the "Pepe LePew" treatment. "It was a little local store and they couldn't let me in because I smelled so bad from being sprayed. I had to stand outside and tell the clerk on the inside what I needed and he'd get it together for me," Bahm said.

Bahm collected his research data for periods at Lake Amistad each season for a year, but stayed in the field continuously during the summer of 2003. As an aspiring biologist, he joyfully experienced the outdoor west Texas rough country - heat, humidity, mud, thorns, scrapes and scratches, cactus, snakes, bugs, sunburn, and rocks - along with a few unpredictable four and two-legged animals thrown in.

Besides skunks, Bahm saw rats, bats, ringtails, raccoons, badgers, armadillos, white-tailed deer, and "many, many jackrabbits" in the rugged limestone cliffs and banks that surround the lake. He saw one coyote, and did not see any large cats such as a bobcat or mountain lion, but, he added, it doesn't mean they aren't out there. One of his best catches was the ferret-like, spotted skunk. "The spotted skunk is a different species of skunk. They're much smaller than most other kinds of skunk, and they are unusual," he said. "It was really exciting to have seen one." Bahm's study concluded that four non-native (exotic) species of animals were established at Lake Amistad since the last NPS mammal survey. Making their appearance these days at the NRA are feral pigs, feral cats, and two goat/sheep

species, muflon and audad. The survey Bahm completed earned him the recognition of Sul Ross professors as Outstanding Biology Graduate Student for 2004. "I don't think anyone else before me had actually documented the appearance of these species at Lake Amistad," he said.

Assisting Bahm in his project was a variety of park service volunteers. One volunteer accompanying Bahm on his daily rounds to check live trap locations became dizzy and overheated, exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion. Bahm sought assistance by returning to a ranger station. The delay threw him off schedule, but the live traps still needed to be checked and reset late into the day. "I really liked working with the NPS people and the locals. In the summer there were a lot of boaters on the lake, campers and hikers. It's a popular place during that time of year."

During nights out camping close to the international border, between the shores of the lake, Bahm said he did not see any illegal aliens crossing into the United States. Although, when the Border Patrol found Bahm they told him that his campsites were at places known as popular thoroughfares for illegals. "Most of the time the Border Patrol would just ask me a few questions, the usual, and when they realized who I was and what I was doing, they left me alone."

Bahm mentioned that occasionally he found his live traps and equipment sabotaged by vandals. He took the damage in stride, not really knowing if the destruction was due to mischief or protest. He accepted that not everybody understands or agrees with the purpose of his work. Nor was it all a summer of lantern light and mosquito bites for Bahm; he was able to go into Del Rio once a week for supplies or once in a while, make a sojourn to Acuña in Mexico for a little relaxation.

The often isolated lifestyle of a field biologist seems to suit Bahm just fine. He is already anxious for graduation in August and getting back out in the field beginning his doctoral studies in September at South Dakota State University, Brookings.

"In that area there are projects in the restoration of portions of land back to natural prairie grasslands. I want to learn how to best restore animal habitats through the structuring of the vegetation. This means, for me, more of a focus on plant ecosystems, especially grasses," he said. In South Dakota, Bahm expects the tables to be turned for once. There, he's not going to go looking for skunks, the skunks will have to hunt him.



Matt Bahm weighing a wood rat for his mammal survey at Amistad NRA.

Boating Safety



Each year, tens of thousands of visitors come to Amistad to enjoy boating, fishing, and other water sports. The National Park Service is committed to ensuring that their visit is safe and enjoyable. You can help protect yourself and other lake users by knowing and obeying state and federal boating laws.

LAKE USE PERMITS

- ◆ A valid Amistad lake use permit is required for motorized vessels of any length and for non-motorized vessels 14 feet or longer. Lake use permits can be obtained from machines at Diablo East, Rough Canyon, and the NPS Visitor Information Center on Highway 90 West.
- ◆ Annual and daily lake use permits are available. If you purchase an annual permit from a machine, you must exchange the receipt and obtain a sticker from the Visitor Information Center, Diablo East Marina, or Rough Canyon Marina. Attach the sticker to the port (left) side of your vessel near the registration numbers. Annual permits are valid for one year from the month in which they were purchased.

REQUIRED SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs):

- ◆ All vessels must have one Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or V wearable PFD for each person on board. Check the labels inside your PFDs if you are not sure what type they are. PFDs must be in good condition, readily accessible, and the correct size for the people on board.
- ◆ All children under 13 years of age must wear their PFDs while the vessel is underway.
- ◆ All vessels over 16 feet in length (except canoes and kayaks), are required to have one Coast Guard approved Type IV throwable PFD on board.

Audible Warning Device:

- ◆ All vessels must have a functioning horn, whistle, or other adequate sound-producing device on board.

Required Lights:

- ◆ All vessels operated between sunset and sunrise, or in periods of low visibility, must display a white light visible from 360 degrees around. In addition, power driven vessels must display red and green navigation lights while underway between sunset and sunrise, or during low visibility.
- ◆ If you plan to launch your boat before dawn, remember to turn on your lights until sunrise.

Fire Extinguishers:

- ◆ All vessels with permanently installed fuel tanks are required to carry a functional "B" or "B,C" fire extinguisher on board.
- ◆ Extinguishers must be charged and in good working condition.
- ◆ If you are not sure whether you are required to carry a fire extinguisher, play it safe and carry one anyway.

BOATING RULES

Obey Buoys and Other Markers:

- ◆ Cut your throttle to idle speed in no-wake zones in harbors. No-wake zones were established to protect docked boats from damage. Remember, you are legally responsible for any damage caused by your wake. These areas are marked by orange and white buoys with a circle and the words "flat wake" or "no wake."
- ◆ Respect closures. Some areas of the lake are closed to protect swimmers, divers, and wildlife. These areas are marked with signs and/or orange and white buoys with a crossed diamond.
- ◆ Do not attach your vessel to buoys or other navigation aids. Doing so is illegal, as it may cause buoys to move, endangering other boaters.

Watch For Hazards:

- ◆ The lake level is constantly fluctuating, exposing or concealing rocks and shallow areas. If you are unfamiliar with an area, or water levels have changed since you were last there, slow down and keep an

eye out for underwater hazards. It is impossible for the National Park Service to mark every rock and obstacle in the water; you are responsible for operating carefully and avoiding accidents.

- ◆ Be especially careful beyond buoy #28 on the Rio Grande, and near Indian Springs on the Devils River. Shallow areas and rocks have caused accidents in these areas.
- ◆ Some hazards are marked by orange or orange and white buoys with a diamond symbol.

Check Weather Reports:

- ◆ Weather conditions can change rapidly on Lake Amistad. Check weather reports before you leave the dock, and tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Get off the water as soon as possible if high winds, large waves, or storms develop.

Follow the "Rules Of The Road:"

- ◆ When meeting another boat head-on, keep to the right.
- ◆ When crossing the path of other vessels, yield to vessels ahead and to the right of you.
- ◆ When passing another vessel from behind, stay clear and pass on the safest side.
- ◆ Remember that non-motorized vessels always have right-of-way over motorized vessels.

Water Skiing and Wakeboarding:

- ◆ You must have a second person in the boat as observer. A rear view mirror is not sufficient according to federal law.
- ◆ Persons being towed must wear a Coast Guard approved PFD.
- ◆ You may not tow a skier or wakeboarder within 500 feet of a harbor, a swimming beach, or a mooring area, or within 100 feet of a person swimming, fishing, or diving. No one may be towed between sunset and sunrise.

Join Big Bend Natural History Association

Yes!

Please enroll me as a member of BBNHA

ANNUAL DUES

___ Individual (\$25) ___ Associate (\$50)
___ Corporate (\$100)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

___ Individual or Family (\$250)
___ Corporate (\$500)
___ Benefactor (\$1,000)

___ New Member ___ Renewal

Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____

Address _____

City _____ State/ZIP _____

Make check payable to BBNHA or charge to:

___ Visa ___ Mastercard ___ Discover

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

DETACH AND MAIL TO:

BBNHA, P.O. Box 196
Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834
Telephone: (432) 477-2236
e-mail: bibe_bbnha@nps.gov

Please accept our invitation to join Big Bend Natural History Association

The Association's goal is to educate the public and increase their understanding and appreciation of the Big Bend Area and what it represents in terms of our historical and natural heritage. You can be an important part of this effort when you become a member.

BBNHA was founded in 1956 to aid educational, historical, and scientific programs for the benefit of Big Bend NP, Amistad NRA, and their visitors.

Your benefits as a member:

- A 15% discount on items sold by BBNHA.
- A 10% discount on most seminars.
- Current Big Bend calendar.
- Discounts at many other association book stores in visitor centers at other national park sites.
- Opportunity to support scientific, educational, and historical programs in Big Bend NP and Amistad NRA.

Past and present projects include:

- Operate book sales outlets in Big Bend National Park and Amistad National Recreation Area.
- Publish trail guides and brochures and assist with the publication of The High Bridge Tribune.
- Sponsor an on-going Seminar program.
- Provide annual grants for research projects and administer grants and gifts received for the park.
- Support the parks' volunteer and educational outreach programs.