

Official Newspaper of
Amistad National Recreation Area
The High Bridge Tribune
Volume 2, No. 1
Summer 2004

A Chihuahuan Desert Paradise

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



DEVILS 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.



GREAT BLUE HERON

Amistad NRA also provides 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 home page:
<http://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 - AERIAL VIEW

FAST FACTS

Amistad National Recreation Area

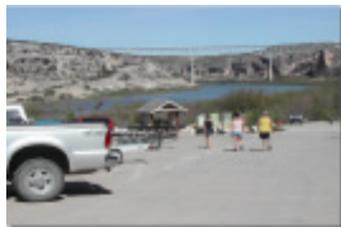
- Established November 28, 1990
- 57,292 acres of land and water
- 2003 visitation - 1,152,768

Amistad Dam

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

Visitors Happy With Lake Amistad Conditions

Businesses and agencies at Amistad Reservoir, Del Rio, TX, have noted a high level of visitor enthusiasm for lake conditions and recreational opportunities. Joe Valdez, Dockmaster at Forever Resorts Lake Amistad Marina, commented, "Visitors are very happy with the water level and lake conditions. This week, in fact, anglers have been raving about the excellent fishing. Almost every first-time visitor to the lake is surprised how nice the lake is and tells me they'll be coming back."



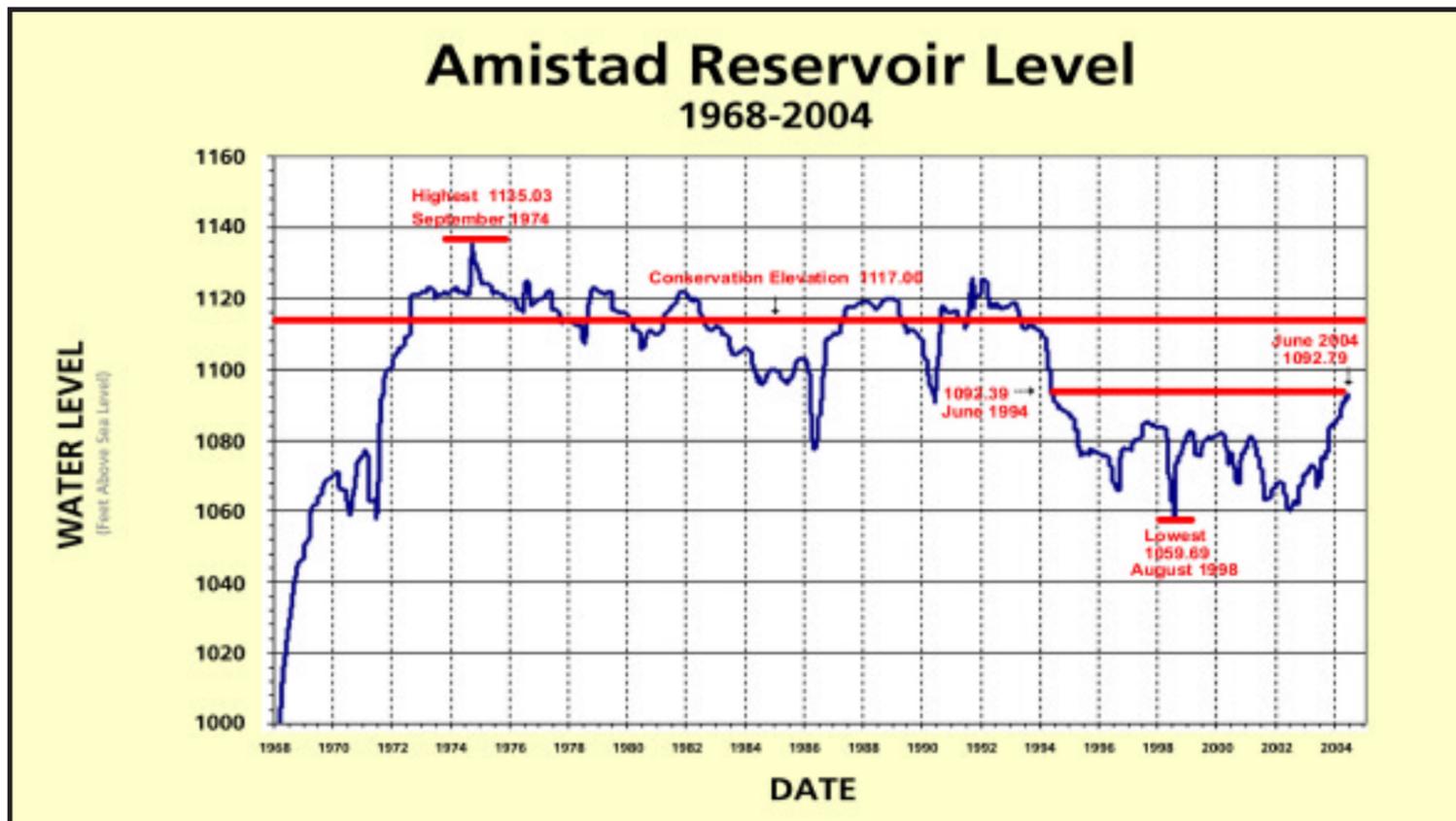
PECOS RIVER LAUNCH RAMP

The National Park Service, which manages Amistad National Recreation Area, believes that visitation has increased due to the current condi-

tions of the reservoir. Alan Cox, Superintendent of Amistad NRA, explained, "In May, the water was up over 25 feet from that time last year, and visitation also showed more than a 20 percent increase."

Staff at the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), the agency that operates Amistad Dam, commented on recent conditions. "I believe short-term trends should keep lake levels fairly constant. Both Falcon

and Amistad Reservoirs are at their highest in about ten years. Amistad Reservoir has maintained its current level due to lower releases than in recent years. Rainfall downstream in the Rio Grande Valley has lowered demand," said Ken Breiten, Amistad Dam Project Manager for the U.S. Section of the of the IBWC-owned dam. ✦



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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.

Superintendent: Alan Cox
Produced by: Annmarie Mikelski

Contributors to this newspaper:

- Dr. Carolyn Boyd John Little
- Lisa Evans Vanessa Sanchez
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National Park Service
United States Department of Interior

Amistad Continues to Plan For the Future

Dear Friends of Amistad NRA:

As most of you know, we have been working on a General Management Plan (GMP) for Amistad National Recreation Area. This plan will describe a vision for the park's future and define the general framework to guide long-term park management decision-making.

With your help, we are now much closer to realizing that vision. Using the many ideas, comments, and concerns that you expressed in response to our first newsletter, combined with input from NPS staff and other federal, state, and local agencies, we have developed a preliminary alternative vision of the future for Amistad NRA. We have prepared a newsletter that describes this

alternative vision and summarizes the existing management strategy. Based on your response to this alternative management strategy, the planning team will move ahead with the development of the draft GMP for the park.

We believe that the management alternative described in the newsletter incorporates all the ideas expressed for the park's future and addresses the issues we must deal with in order to realize that future. We are confident that this alternative is a comprehensive, achievable, sustainable, course of action for the future of Amistad NRA.

We look forward to your input. Please contact us if you would like a copy of our planning newsletter. Thank you in

advance for your continued input and assistance in the development of the park's general management plan.

Sincerely,

Alan W. Cox
Superintendent
Amistad National Recreation Area



New Visitor Information Center at Amistad

January 2004 marked a milestone in Amistad National Recreation Area's history. For the first time in the 38-year history of the recreation area, the park has a high quality visitor center located near Lake Amistad.

The Visitor Information Center is on US Highway 90 near Blackbrush boat ramp, across from the Three Rivers RV Park. It is open 8am to 5pm seven days a week, except for January 1, Thanksgiving Day, and December 25. The new facility has extensive exhibits, an expanded Big Bend Natural History Association sales area, and an audio visual theater. Formal and informal programs are offered in the theater.

A variety of videos are available for free viewing, and evening programs are scheduled on a regular basis.

With the larger space, the park was able to expand the Big Bend Natural History Association (BBNHA) sales selection. BBNHA is the not-for-profit cooperating association authorized to sell educational items and donate proceeds to the park. All proceeds are used to improve the park's educational programs and assist in publishing educational and informational materials.

There are currently almost 300 different sales items available, many of them hard-to-find books and materials

on area natural and cultural history. In an earlier incarnation, the building was a boat dealership. Contractors and park staff remodeled the facility to accommodate both a visitor area and offices for the Maintenance and Education and Resource Management Divisions. Other administrative staff remain in the headquarters building closer to Del Rio.

Lake use permits, hunting permits and park passes can be obtained at the Visitor Information Center.

Fishing Tournament and other "special use" permits must still be obtained at NPS Headquarters. †

PWC Use at Amistad NRA



As of May 27, 2004, personal watercraft are again allowed at Amistad National Recreation Area. Personal watercraft (PWC) are the small one or two-person craft such as Ski-dos and Waverunners. PWCs had been prohibited at Amistad since November 2002 due to a national lawsuit involving all National Park Service sites that had PWC use.

Since Amistad NRA includes only the United States portion of Amistad Reservoir, the earlier ban did not affect the Mexican portion of the reservoir. To comply with the lawsuit, the National Park Service wrote a special regulation permitting the watercraft after determining that PWC use at Amistad NRA is appropriate and consistent with the park's mission, resources and values, and other visitor activities.

PWCs must have a daily or annual lake use permit, available at automated machines within the park or at the park Visitor Information Center. The park Superintendent may temporarily limit or restrict PWC use in specific areas for safety or resource protection purposes. Limited areas closed to PWC use within the park include:

- ▷ The water area extending 1000 feet out from the concrete portion of Amistad Dam.
- ▷ Seminole Canyon, starting ½ mile from the mouth of the Rio Grande; and Hidden Cave Cove and Painted Canyon on the Rio Grande where marked by buoys.
- ▷ Landing on any island posted as closed.
- ▷ Government coves at Diablo East and Rough Canyon.

Amistad NRA Superintendent Alan Cox said, "We're glad PWCs are allowed back on the reservoir, but we caution users to ride safely. With increasing water levels, waves are larger than many boaters are used to."

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 - 8-5, (830) 775-7491

Annual Lake Clean Up



Come join us for the 2005 Annual Lake Clean Up! Fishing Clubs, Scout Troops and all public are invited to help keep Lake Amistad beautiful. For more information call 830-775-7491.

2003-04 Hunting Statistics

White-tailed Deer Total Hunter Days: 2,443 Total Harvested: 94	Dove Total Hunter Days: 245 Total Harvested: 487
Hunt Area 1: 632 Hunter Days, 28 Harvested	Duck Total Hunter Days: 48 Total Harvested: 57
Hunt Area 2: 997 Hunter Days, 42 Harvested	Mouflon Sheep Total Hunter Days: 420 Total Harvested: 44
Hunt Area 3: 268 Hunter Days, 3 Harvested	Quail: Total Hunter Days: 43 Total Harvested: 28
Hunt Area 4: 254 Hunter Days, 8 Harvested	
Hunt Area 5: 492 Hunter Days, 13 Harvested	

Volunteer Recognition



John and Kay Tiff are awarded for their time and efforts.

In May, the staff at Amistad National Recreation Area held a farewell luncheon for John and Kay Tiff to recognize their tremendous accomplishments as park volunteers.

John Tiff is a retired Museum Curator from Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site near Johnson City, TX. Kay Tiff is a retired librarian. Together they took on the daunting task of archiving park records, a project that has been long overdue at Amistad NRA.

John and Kay scanned and digitized over 35 gigabytes worth of old photos and newspaper clippings from the building of Amistad Dam. They worked on this project 4 days a week from January through May.

This is the fourth winter the Tiffs have spent volunteering at Amistad NRA. In previous years they helped label and archive native American artifacts that

were recovered during a field school held at Amistad NRA in 1999 by the Texas Archeological Society, and they have also helped as visitor information assistants at the front desk.

John and Kay have logged over 2,000 volunteer hours each while working for Amistad National Recreation Area, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan, and Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming.

They left the park with these nice words. "We had such a nice luncheon. Thanks to all of you for a wonderful party and of course, for the great jackets. Moments like that one will be in our memories forever. You all are the best. We will miss you all more than you can ever know."

We'll miss you too John and Kay, and we hope to see you again next year! ☺

Parida Cave Rehab Project



PARIDA CAVE TRAIL SIGN

Due to drought and low water levels, Parida Cave has been inaccessible by boat for nearly a decade. Once a popular spot to visit while boating on the Rio Grande Arm of Lake Amistad, the site is now hidden behind vegetation, the trails are eroded, and the interpretive signs are barely legible. Happily, the lake is now at a level that allows visitors to again access this wonderful place containing Native American rock art from over 4,000 years ago, and Amistad NRA would like to rehabilitate it. The park is seeking twenty to twenty five volunteers (15 yrs and over) to assist with this project.

We will be cutting and removing

vegetation, leveling trails, and replacing rubber mats and signs. For more information call 830-775-7491. ✦



Volunteering at Amistad



Tucked out from a hard day's work of archaeological digs, cleaning the ever beautiful Panther Cave, or just exploring the terrain of Amistad National Recreation Area, one can usually find SCAs Brian Box, Mayra Carbajal, Steven Lee, and myself, dead asleep on the boat and car ride back to the office. It's not always physically demanding work here at Amistad; we get our fair share of work within the office as well. It helps make for a well rounded schedule and keeps us on our toes and ready for whatever is assigned to us by the Amistad staff. All in all, if asked, each SCA member here will tell you in her/his own words just what it means to be able to have the privilege of working with the National Park Service.

We've had a wonderful time here at Amistad National Recreation Area, and the fun doesn't end here. Some of us will continue our work far into the winter months as well. It has been a great experience so far, and the most rewarding gift to all of us has been the knowledge which NPS employees have shared with us. All were very eager to assist us in learning what they have learned, and now we would like to share with others as well. It is a good feeling to be a part of that. Many thanks to the Student Conservation Association for giving us the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful organization! - Vanessa Sanchez, SCA

Contact SCA for educational job opportunities at a park near you!
<http://www.sca-inc.org>

Interested in volunteering at Amistad National Recreation Area? Fill out an application and send it to: Amistad National Recreation Area, HCR 3 Box 5J, Del Rio, TX 78840
ATTN: Volunteer Coordinator or email to: Amis_Interpretation@nps.gov

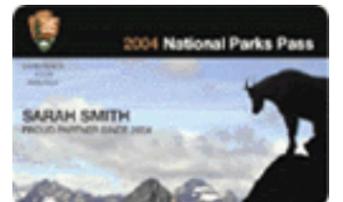


Amistad NRA Fees

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 physically 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.



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, for RVs or tents, shoreline camping available.

277 NORTH

Open depending on lake level
17 Sites, for RVs or tents, shoreline camping available.
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.

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 regulations 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 8-3 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.



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.

Amistad NRA hunting permits are \$20, and 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).

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, 2005. 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.



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 830-775-5971

Authorized Fishing Guides

Glen McGonagill (830) 775-6720 Herschel Black (830) 775-3639 Jerry Black (432) 292-4710

Gene Peil (830) 775-7243 Don "Ray" Hanselman (830) 774-1857 "Mike" Fambro (432) 292-4638

Charlie Rumfield (830) 774-3484

Pecos Jack Tours

Canoe & Kayak Tours on the Devils, Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers. Call 832-276-6885.



PROGRAMS

COWBOY COFFEE

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 **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 8am. 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**.

Sept 18, 2004 - Oct 16, 2004 - Nov 20, 2004
Dec 18, 2004 - Jan 15, 2005, - Feb 19, 2005
Mar 19, 2005 - Apr 16, 2005 - May 21, 2005

SUGGESTED BIRDING/ WILDLIFE VIEWING LOCATIONS

AMISTAD NRA

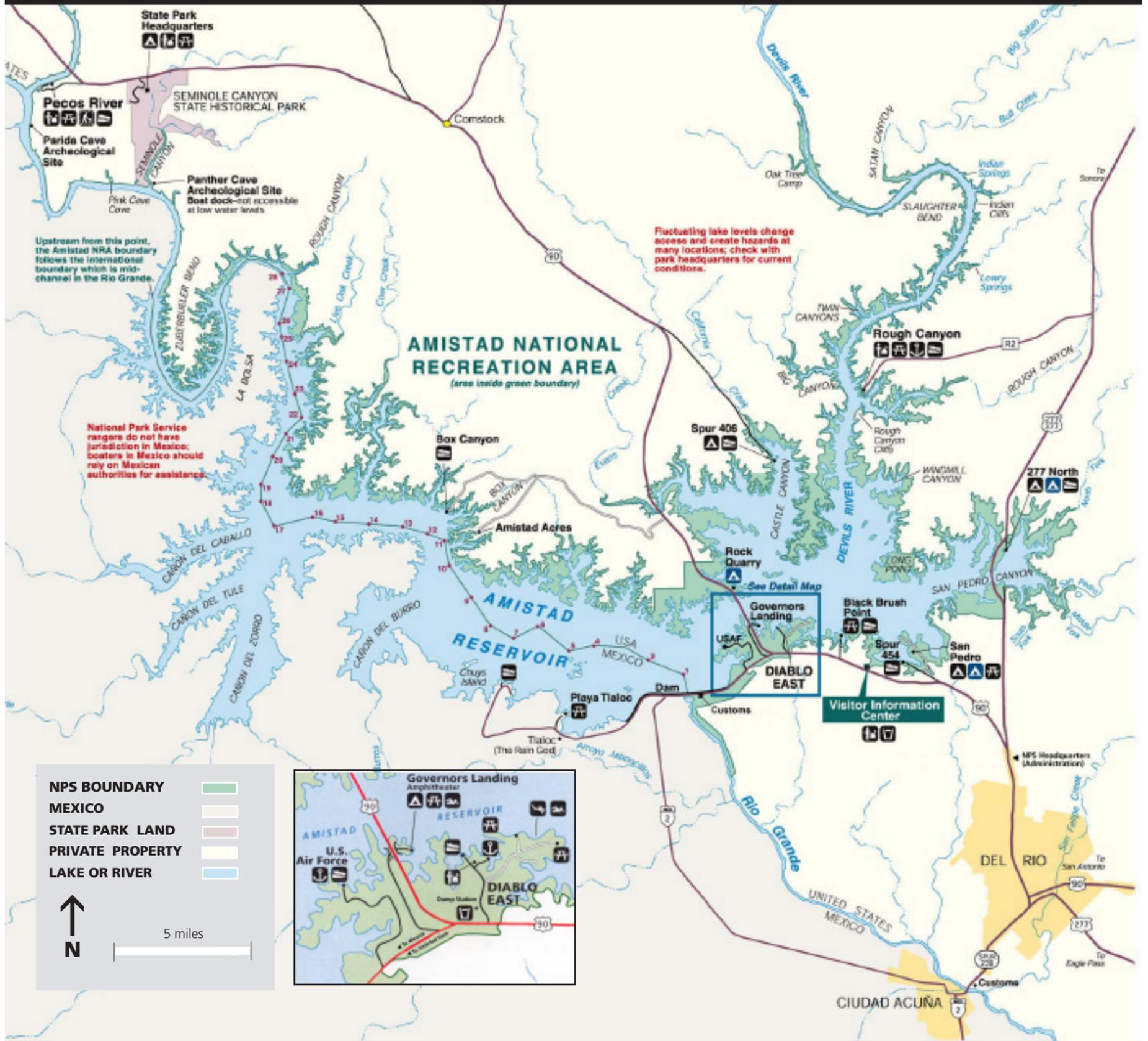
Spur 454: San Pedro Campground - Good for desert birds; very good for migrating and wintering sparrows. Good for butterflies in season.

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.

Map of Amistad National Recreation Area



BIRDWATCHING (cont.)

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. They bring alive historical figures such as Judge Roy Bean and events such as the construction of the second

transcontinental railroad. Amistad's Trails & Rails program is offered on the westbound Sunset Limited Amtrak most Tuesdays and Saturdays. The program depends on the time the train arrives into Del Rio, 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.



transcontinental railroad. Amistad's Trails & Rails program is offered on the westbound Sunset Limited Amtrak most Tuesdays and Saturdays. The program depends on the time the train arrives into Del Rio, 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 new 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 and 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 Archeology of the Lower Pecos Through ...

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.

Seminole Canyon State Historical Park

Seminole Canyon State Historical Park 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 hookups) and collects a \$2.00 per person (over age 12) entrance fee.

At 10:00am and 3:00pm, Wednesday through Sunday, the park offers guided tours to several large pictograph sites in Seminole Canyon for a \$3.00 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 Historical Park 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, there are two private foundations that offer opportunities for visiting additional sites in the region which are not on public lands. Membership in either of these organizations 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 Historical Park, 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 website is among the best pictorial presentations on regional rock art available anywhere on the Internet. Visit their web site at www.rockart.org. *

4th Annual Val Verde County Archeology Fair

Archeology is the way we learn about past cultures by studying what they left behind. Texas' rich cultural diversity is represented by hundreds of thousands of archeological and historic sites. Texas Archeology Month, celebrated annually in October, is a time for Texans to become aware of our rich heritage and the need for its preservation.

As in the three previous years, special demonstrations and activities are planned for the 4th Annual Val Verde County Archeology Fair sponsored by Amistad NRA and the Whitehead Memorial Museum. The Archeology Fair is scheduled for Friday, October 15 and Saturday, October 16 and will include exhibits, demonstrations and hands-on and interactive activities.

Come see a field camp of the 3rd Cavalry from Fort Davis National Historical Park, watch a blacksmith working with metal, paint your own pictographs (rock art) and painted pebbles and throw a spear using an atlatl (a prehistoric spear throwing device). Listen to stories and learn how to make wooden flutes, practice grinding corn with a stone metate and mano, and make an adobe brick. Try your hand at making pinch and coil pottery, watch as flintknappers demonstrate how to make stone tools and learn about frontier life with a Park Ranger from Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.

This year the Archeology Fair has been expanded to two days - Friday, October 15 will be open to school groups only and Saturday, October 16 will be open to the public. The Archeology Fair will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Whitehead Memorial Museum, 1308 S. Main Street, and will include activities for all ages. Admission will be \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children and covers both the Archeology Fair and the museum exhibits.

We invite you to come celebrate Texas Archeology Month and learn about the rich history of southwest Texas. For more information, call 830-775-7491 ext. 223. *

Flintknapping

4th Annual Val Verde County Archeology Fair 2004

Atlatl Throwing

Native American Dance

Amistad

Adobe Brick Making
Painted Pebbles
Rock Art Painting
3rd Cavalry Ft. Davis
Pottery Making
Corn Grinding
Storytelling
Flute Making
...and more!

October 15 - school groups only
October 16 - Open to public
Whitehead Memorial Museum
1308 South Main Street
Del Rio, TX 78840
830-775-7491 x 223

Blacksmithing Demonstrations

... Amistad National Recreation Area and Park Partners

Shumla School

The Shumla School has created a living museum 60 miles west of Del Rio that offers people of all ages and backgrounds an experience of enrichment and discovery in one of the most spectacular landscapes in Texas. This experiential education center is situated along the Pecos River on 1600 acres of land provided by a local ranching family. Programs conducted at the School focus upon the cultural and ecological resources present in this archeological heartland of Texas.



In the region surrounding the Shumla School there are more than two hundred rockshelters, most of which contain well-preserved archeological deposits. Many of these rockshelters house elaborately painted murals that are over four thousands years-old. The broad expanse of undeveloped land surrounding the school makes this site

well suited for instruction and innovative studies in archeology, ecology, natural history, prehistoric lifeways, and art.

The Shumla School offers youth and adult education programs of international caliber at the School's educational center, where a learning-by-doing philosophy prevails. The educational programs foster an experience of discovery in which there is no segregation between research and the communication of results, between teaching and learning. Through interactive education that bridges the arts and sciences, the Shumla School offers the best possible opportunity to include students, artists, teachers, researchers, and the general public in the

process of piecing together an understanding of past and contemporary cultures.

Youth Programs: "Pecos River Kids"

Pecos River Kids offers a wide range of camp experiences for public and private schools and youth based organizations that engage student's minds and hands through real-world investigations that are inquiry-based, interdisciplinary, and supportive of a standards-based curriculum. Environmental and cultural education ties in such topics as history, geography, art, archeology, cultural anthropology, mapping, geology, biology, chemistry, ecology, and meteorology. University professors, college interns, and teachers from the local school system mentor student participants. Pecos River Kids promotes survival skills, problem-solving, self-esteem and community building, teamwork, improved academic performance, and mentoring.



Adult Programs: "Shumla Adventure Camps"

Shumla Adventures offers a wide range of programs of varying durations to people of all ages. Each program is an occasion to step away from urban lifestyles and experience first-hand how people for millennia have met the challenges of survival. Programs incorporate innovative studies in archeology, ecology, natural history, prehistoric lifeways, botany, and art and are taught by experts renowned in their field of study.

Shumla School is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, publicly supported organization. To learn more about the Shumla School and its programs, please visit www.shumla.org or call 432-292-4848. ✨

Tips For Photographing the National Parks

You'd be hard pressed to find better locations to photograph nature than in America's National Parks.



SCALING FOR SIZE COMPARISON

Whether you shoot with film or digital cameras, there are some basic guidelines that can help you improve your photos.

Equipment: Know your equipment. Understanding how to properly use all your camera's features will enable you to expand your capabilities.

► Learn how to shoot in the manual mode (if possible) to increase your control over the final image. Many people use only the program mode which limits their creative control to some degree.

► Use a tripod whenever possible. Using a tripod can mean the difference between a tack sharp image and a blurred discard. An alternative would be to use higher speed film - today's 200-400 speed films have noticeably finer grain than those offered in the past - but as a rule, the slower speed films offer finer grain.



FILL-FLASH - OVERCAST

A general rule of thumb: Don't exceed your shutter speed by your focal length without a tripod, for example; if you are using a 200 mm lens then be sure your shutter speed is at least 1/200th second or faster; otherwise, use a tripod to prevent blurring. Try using a polarizing filter to eliminate reflections, intensify colors, and to deepen blue skies.



CLOSE UP - OVERCAST

► Try placing the horizon on one of the two imaginary horizontal lines to emphasize either the landscape or the sky. A common tendency is to place the horizon dead center, giving both the sky and landscape equal emphasis, which can

Composition: There are a few generally accepted guidelines that can improve or enhance the most commonly taken photographs.

The rule of thirds: Imagine the frame of the photograph split up into equally sized segments by two vertical lines and two horizontal lines.

► Try placing the horizon on one of the two imaginary horizontal lines to emphasize either the landscape or the sky. A common tendency is to place the horizon dead center, giving both the sky and landscape equal emphasis, which can

confuse the viewer trying to recognize the main subject.

► Try placing the main subject at one of the intersections of the vertical and horizontal lines to create more drama, rather than placing it dead center in the middle of the frame.

► Try using lines in the landscape to lead the viewer's eye through the photograph, and to the main subject. Diagonal, converging, and "S" shaped lines have strong graphic qualities.

► Try framing the scene both vertically and horizontally to see what you prefer.

► Try different perspectives other than eye level (i.e. ground level, kneeling, etc.).

► Try to avoid including too much blank featureless area in the photograph.

► Try using fill-flash to highlight your foreground subject or to bring out details in dark or shadowed areas.

► Try to eliminate unrelated or extraneous objects from within the frame - more is not always better. Simple compositions seem to have more visual impact than busy or cluttered ones.

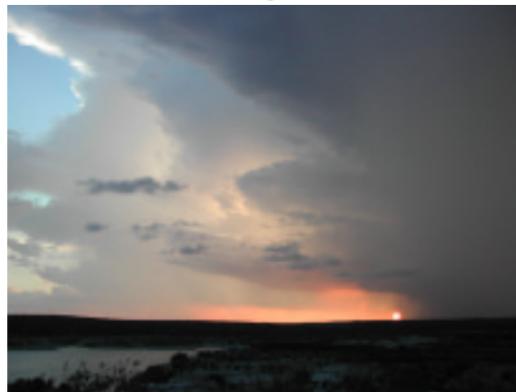
► Try including the Moon in the photograph.

► Get in close for an interesting perspective of plants, flowers, and insects.



INCLEMENT WEATHER - STORM APPROACHING

Weather: Take advantage of inclement weather conditions for unique images (i.e. clearing storms, rainbows, fog, unusual cloud formations, etc.). Beware of lightning!



INCLEMENT WEATHER - STORM CLEARING light accentuates the details of the landscape, and the atmosphere filters the sun's light, casting a warmer, softer color on your subjects.

► On overcast days try focusing on macros (i.e. close ups of plants, flowers, insects, etc.). The diffused light helps to decrease contrast and improve overall color saturation.

► On sunny days try photographing within an hour of sunrise and sunset. The low angle

Remember - Safety first! No photograph is worth risking your life, nor is it worth disturbing or endangering the park's wildlife, habitat, or the health of the ecosystem. Check with park staff for any special regulations or restrictions. 📷

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. These 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 new 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 Our Family

Please accept our Invitation to join the 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 bookstores 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

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: (915) 477-2236

e-mail: bibe_bbnha@nps.gov