

FY18 IDA Annual Report Big Bend National Park

**Submitted by Daphne Sewing, Interpretation Operations Supervisor
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General

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Site visitation for Big Bend during FY18 was 436,158. Approximately 322 visitors enjoyed night sky and astronomy programs.

Lighting

No new lighting projects were completed this year. No new territory was added to the existing park. Efforts continue to educate park residents to utilize appropriate light fixtures and turn off outside lights.

Sky Quality

No night sky quality data was collected.

Conservation/Research

No research involving night skies was conducted during this fiscal year.

Planned Programs

Big Bend is planning to increase the number of astronomy programs offered throughout FY18. Additional partnership opportunities with Big Bend Ranch State Park (currently seeking IDA designation) and McDonald Observatory are being explored with the goal of increasing programs in the regional area. A night sky program was conducted in cooperation with the Big Bend Conservancy on September 28; over 70 people attended.

Outreach

Outreach efforts during FY18 included participation in a night sky event sponsored by Big Bend Ranch State Park; hiring an astronomy volunteer to assist with our program beginning October, 2018; and discussions with Big Bend Ranch State Park to conduct a co-facilitated night sky program in the Terlingua community.

Media Relations

The news media frequently mentions the park's dark night skies in their accounts of Big Bend experiences. Night sky photos are often posted on social media by visitors for others to enjoy.