

The Border Wall

Impacts to Biodiversity and the Environment




MARCH 10, 2019

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RIO GRANDE INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTER**


Who are we?



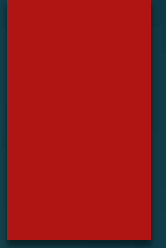
- ▶ Established in 1994
- ▶ Laredo's only environmental organization
- ▶ Advocate on behalf of the river and environment
- ▶ Educate the community



**What percentage
of our drinking water
comes from the river?**



100%



The River

The Rio Grande ranks
as 1 of the 10 Most Endangered Rivers
in the world.

- *World Wildlife Fund*

The River

Why?

- 1) Insufficient Water Supply
- 2) Pollution

The River

It's the only source of drinking water for 6 million people.

The River

It creates vital habitat for many species of wildlife.

More than **400 species** of fish and wildlife depend on the river. Many are in danger of extinction.

The Southern Border

The US-MEXICO border is 1,954 miles long.

The Rio Grande forms about 1,240 miles of that border
between Texas and Mexico.

Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Watershed Map



Quick Facts

Watershed basin:
335,000 sq. miles

River length:
1,990 miles

Three U.S. states:

- Colorado
- New Mexico
- Texas

Five Mexican states:

- Durango
- Chihuahua
- Coahuila
- Nuevo Leon
- Tamaulipas

***Millions of people
depend on it.***

The National Emergency Declaration

On Feb. 15, 2019,

President Donald Trump declared a national emergency
along the Southern Border.

The current situation at the southern border presents a border security and humanitarian crisis that threatens core national security interests and constitutes a national emergency.

The southern border is a major entry point for criminals, gang members, and illicit narcotics.

I hereby declare that this emergency requires use of the Armed Forces and, in accordance with ... the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1631), that the construction authority ... is invoked and made available ... to the Secretary of Defense and ...to the Secretaries of the military departments.

“We’re Next”

Rep. Cuellar’s office informed us on Feb. 15, that the national emergency declaration would provide billions of dollars to construct 130 miles of Wall:

- Through all of Laredo
- Through all of Webb County
- Through a large portion of Zapata County (San Ygnacio to Webb Co.)

The Data



Crime data from the FBI and Laredo PD show that Laredo, and other border cities, are among the safest in the nation – averaging half the homicide rate as other cities their size.

More than 90% of illegal drugs are entering through the legal Ports of Entry, and the majority of illegal apprehensions are requesting asylum many at the Ports of Entry.

The Wall



More than 650 miles of barriers already exist along the U.S.-Mexico border.

- Cuts through sensitive ecosystems
- Fragments habitat and disrupts animal migration
- Causes catastrophic flooding, and
- Divides human communities and tribal nations.

- *Center for Biological Diversity*

'A symbolic boundary'

"The border between Mexico and the United States is not just a line on a map," wrote sociologist Douglas Massey in [a 2016 essay](#).

"Rather, in the American imagination, it has become a symbolic boundary between the United States and a threatening world.

It is not just *a* border but *the* border, and its enforcement has become a central means by which politicians signal their concern for citizens' safety and security in a hostile world."

The Wall

Rare and important eco-systems exist along the U.S.-Mexico border - desert, canyons, forests, wetlands, salt marshes, national parks, national wildlife refuges.

Their biodiversity would be severely impacted by the construction of the border wall.

Animals have evolved over thousands of years to migrate freely across these lands. The Wall would stop all species in their tracks.

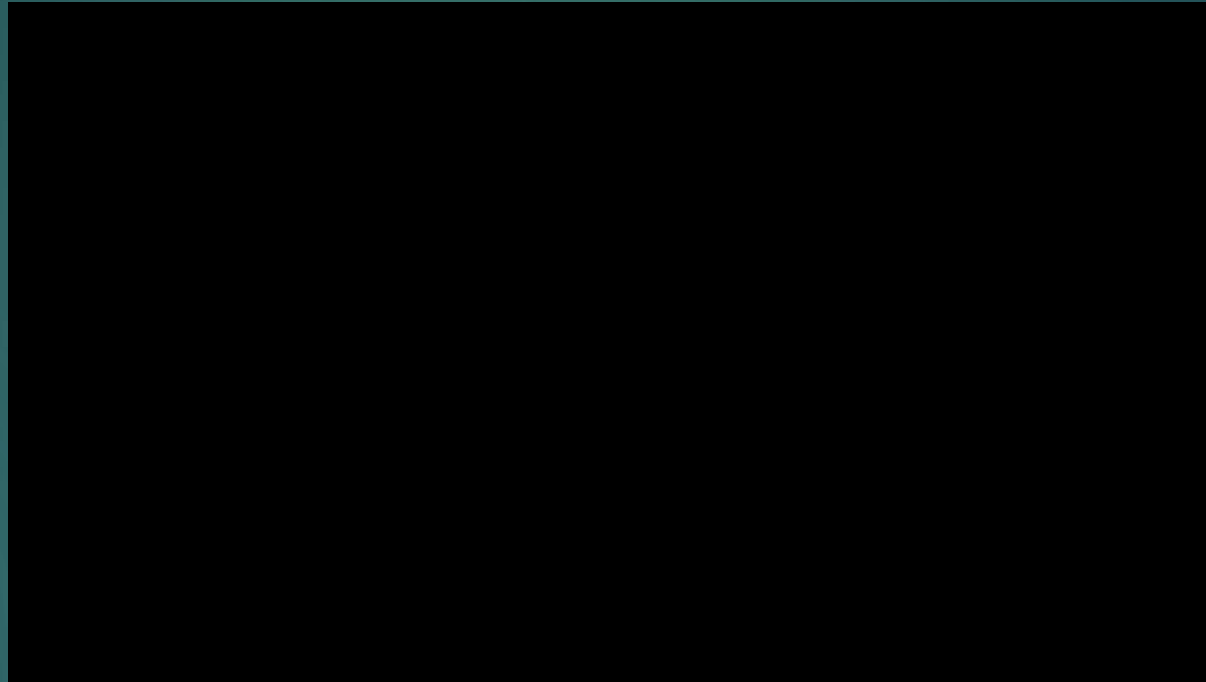
The Wall

Construction of a Wall through Laredo, Webb County, and Zapata County will create a profound change to our landscape, skyline, river ecology and cultural heritage.

We must have smarter border protection and conserve our river and country's natural heritage.

UT College of Natural Sciences

Proposed Border Wall Will Harm Texas Plants and Animals, Scientists Say



- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it6O3Pf4jFQ#action=share>
- ▶ <https://cns.utexas.edu/news/proposed-border-wall-will-harm-texas-plants-and-animals-scientists-say>

The Wall

- ▶ The Fence/the Wall is a huge barrier to the normal movement of water.
- ▶ After a border wall was constructed in 2008 in parts of Arizona, monsoon floodwaters built up behind the wall and poured into the Mexican city of Nogales.

The Wall

- ▶ CBP officials say that they conduct research and surveys before construction to "identify and avoid or mitigate potential impacts to sensitive locations."
- ▶ In 2005, however, Congress allowed DHS to waive dozens of federal laws – including the critical National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - to expedite construction of a barrier along the Southern Border.

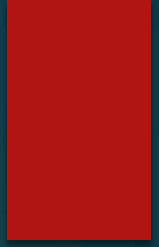
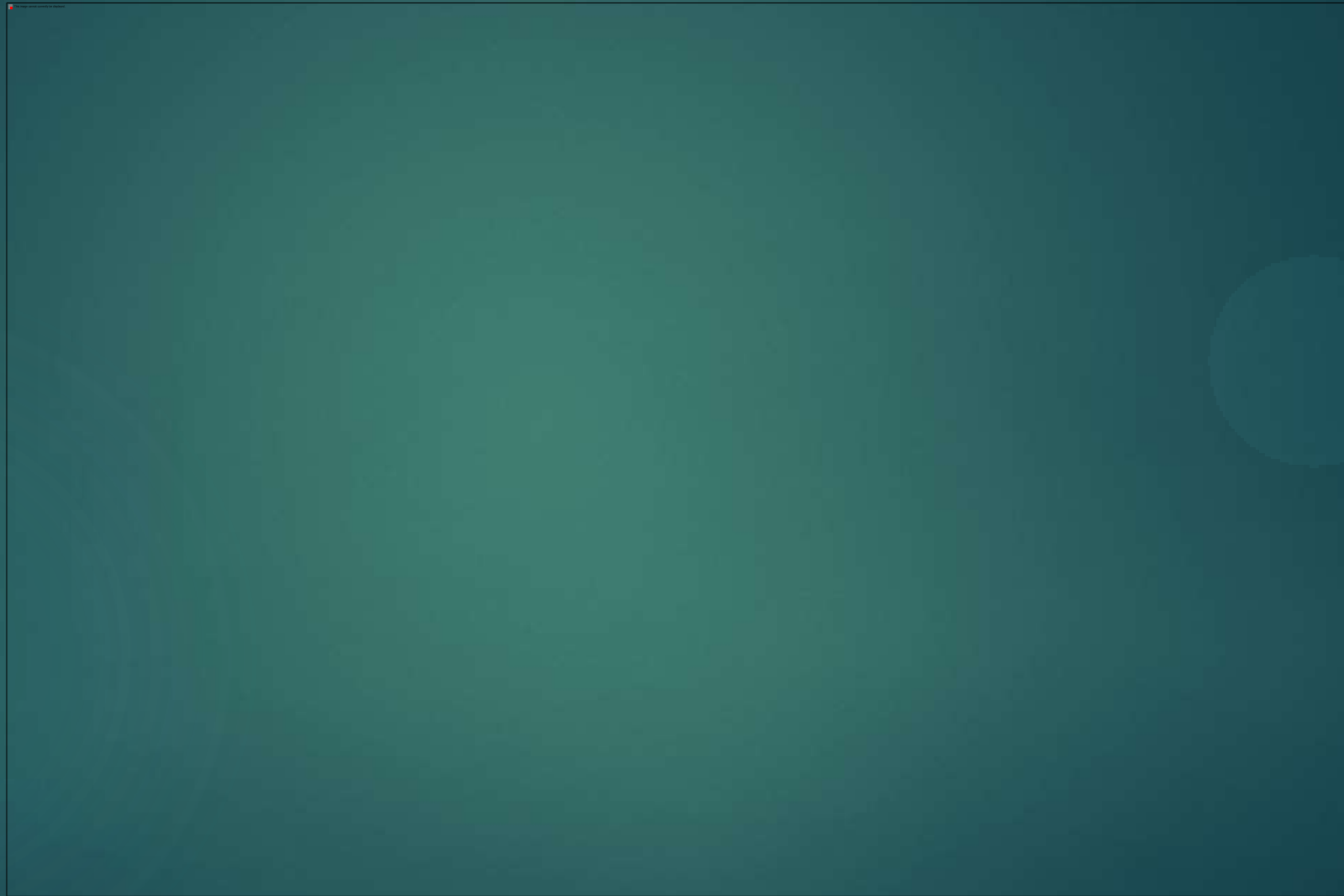
Flood plain - near Nogales, AZ



San Luis, AZ



near Tijuana



The Waivers

- ▶ 1. National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]
- ▶ 2. Endangered Species Act
- ▶ 3. Clean Water Act
- ▶ 4. National Historic Preservation Act
- ▶ 5. Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- ▶ 6. Clean Air Act
- ▶ 7. Archeological Resources Protection Act
- ▶ 8. Safe Drinking Water Act
- ▶ 9. Noise Control Act
- ▶ 10. Solid Waste Disposal Act

The Waivers – cont'd

- ▶ 11. Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- ▶ 12. Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
- ▶ 13. Antiquities Act
- ▶ 14. Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act
- ▶ 15. Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- ▶ 16. Farmland Protection Policy Act
- ▶ 17. Coastal Zone Management Act
- ▶ 18. Wilderness Act
- ▶ 19. Federal Land Policy and Management Act
- ▶ 20. National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act

The Waivers – cont'd

- ▶ 21. Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956
- ▶ 22. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- ▶ 23. Administrative Procedure Act
- ▶ 24. Otay Mountain Wilderness Act of 1999
- ▶ 25. California Desert Protection Act [Sections 102(29) and 103 of Title I]
- ▶ 26. National Park Service Organic Act
- ▶ 27. National Park Service General Authorities Act
- ▶ 28. National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 [Sections 401(7), 403, and 404]
- ▶ 29. Arizona Desert Wilderness Act [Sections 301(a)-(f)]
- ▶ 30. Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899

The Waivers – cont'd

- ▶ 31. Eagle Protection Act
- ▶ 32. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- ▶ 33. American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- ▶ 34. Religious Freedom Restoration Act
- ▶ 35. National Forest Management Act of 1976
- ▶ 36. Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960
- ▶ 37. Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999
- ▶ 38. Sikes Act
- ▶ 39. Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988
- ▶ 40. Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977

The Waivers – cont'd

- ▶ 41.Migratory Bird Conservation Act
- ▶ 42.Paleontological Resources Preservation Act
- ▶ 43.Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988
- ▶ 44.National Trails System Act
- ▶ 45.National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997
- ▶ 46.Reclamation Project Act of 1939 [Section 10]
- ▶ 47.Wild Horse and Burro Act
- ▶ 48.An Act of Oct 30, 2000, Pub. L. 106-398, 1, 114 Stat. 1654

Ay Mariposa Films



▶ <https://www.aymariposafilm.com/>

▶ `<iframe src="https://player.vimeo.com/video/318897818" width="640" height="360" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

The River and the Wall



▶ <http://theriverandthewall.com/>

▶ <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=river+and+the+wall+trailer&view=detail&mid=67B4E1427798BD6AF67267B4E1427798BD6AF672&FORM=VIRE>













#wherestheemergency

#cualemergencia

JOIN US

Press Conference

This Thursday, MARCH 14

10:30 am

Tres Laredos Park (*near Bridge I*)



Thank you