Environmental Impacts of the Border Wall

A presentation to the IBWC Citizens Forum

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Types of Impacts

- Impacts to wildlife:
  - Disturbance
  - Habitat Loss and fragmentation
  - Blockage of movement
  - Recipe for extinction

- Drying of springs, wetlands and aquifers

- Increased flooding and erosion
The Border Wall Before Trump

~354 miles of “pedestrian fencing”  ~300 miles of vehicle barriers
Border Wall Contracts Awarded under Trump Administration

- 13 contracts (new 18’-30’ fencing)
- $4.4 billion
- 344 miles
Border Wall Update:
Department of Homeland Security Waivers April 23, 2019

April 23 DHS Waivers

- El Paso Segment 1
- El Paso Segment 2
- Yuma New Wall Segment 1
- Yuma New Wall Segment 2
- Yuma Replacement Wall Segment 1
- Yuma Replacement Wall Segment 2


© Defenders of Wildlife 2019
Impacts to wildlife: disturbance and habitat loss
Impacts to wildlife: movement blocked
## Overall Ranking of States for Biodiversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NatureServe, 2002. States of the Union: Ranking America’s Biodiversity*
Affected species
Sonoran Pronghorn

- Highly endangered:
  - 160 animals in U.S.
  - 240 animals in Mexico

- Border wall will:
  - divide population
  - prevent access to water sources
Mexican gray wolf

- Highly endangered:
  - ~131 wolves in U.S.
  - ~30 wolves in Mexico
  - Inbred due to low founding numbers

- Border Wall will:
  - Prevent interbreeding and gene flow
MALE MEXICAN WOLF’S JOURNEY ACROSS BORDER, 2017

- Pedestrian
- Vehicle
- Santa Teresa Wall

Spends day at Organ Mtns.-Desert Peaks Natl. Mon.

Crosses into U.S. from Chihuahua about 150 miles south on Jan. 21

Crosses back to Mexico at Ciudad Juárez through gap in fence on Jan. 24

Returns to mountains of Chihuahua after journey of nearly 600 miles

Source: Mexican Wolf Binational Recovery Team
Jaguars
Levee Walls: Death Traps for Wildlife
Springs and wetlands

- Water wells drilled to make concrete footings, dust control
- ~0.5 million gallons/mile
- ~50 million gallons in AZ

Quitobaquito Springs—a UNESCO World Heritage Site
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, AZ
San Pedro River National Conservation Area, AZ
San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, AZ
Animas Valley, NM
Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, TX
Increased Flooding and Erosion
Nogales 2008

- 2 deaths
- $8 million in damage
"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall have the authority to waive all legal requirements such Secretary, in such Secretary's sole discretion, determines necessary to ensure expeditious construction of the barriers and roads under this section."

--REAL ID Act of 2005

Waiver Authority

- Used 5 times by Bush
- To date, used 15 times by Trump—51 federal laws waived
Questions?