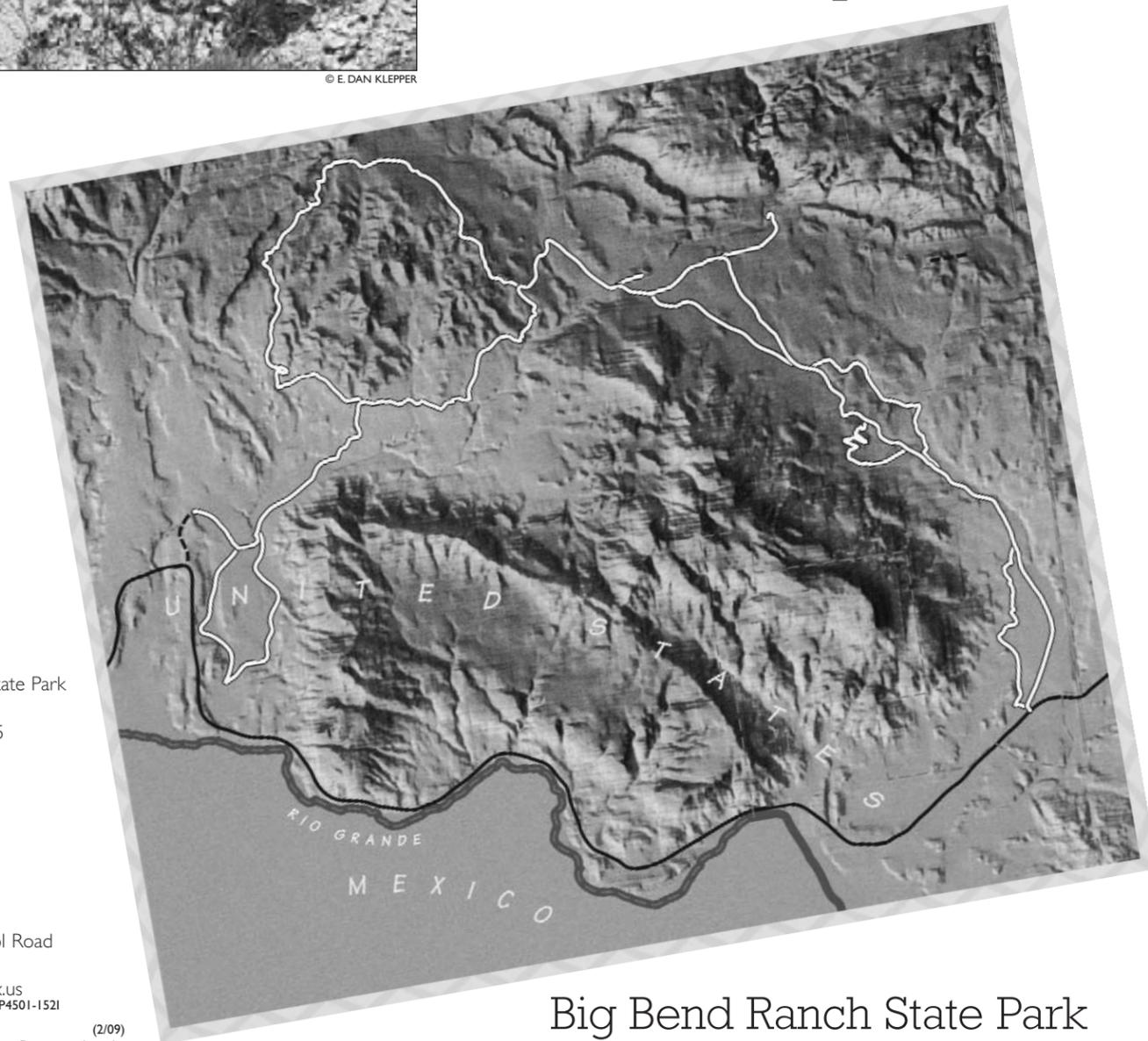




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TEXAS
PARKS &
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The Contrabando Multi-Use Trail System



Big Bend Ranch State Park
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TEXAS
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Big Bend Ranch State Park

The Contrabando Multi-Use Trail System is composed of 25 miles of interconnecting wagon paths and single-track trails. In the early 1890s the East Main Trail was part of the supply and stage route that connected Lajitas and the Terlingua Mining District to the Marfa Railhead of the Southern Pacific Railroad located 80 miles to the north. This route also connected several ranches and homesteads in the area. From the 1890s to the 1950s, prospectors blazed many of the trails in this area in search of cinnabar. The West Main Trail at one time was known as the Treasure Trail that connected Lajitas to Presidio. Legend has it that the Spanish Conquistadores buried treasure along this route to keep the Native Americans from taking back the bounty obtained during their explorations.

Today the Contrabando Trail offers the modern-day adventurer a chance to experience the rugged beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert. The trail offers dramatic vistas—from the Rio Grande River corridor to hidden canyons. The geology and landscape are constantly changing, and you will find several historical points of interest along the trail. While using the trails please remain conscientious, helping us protect our natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders share the Contrabando Trail System. Some special considerations must be observed in order for all users to enjoy the trail. We ask your help in observing the following:

ALL TRAIL USERS

- Obtain day-use permits and camping permits at Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center, Fort Leaton State Historic Site or any of the Big Bend Ranch State Park visitor's centers.
- Always let park personnel know when you are going to be on the trail and when you expect to be off.
- Yield the trail as follows: Hikers and mountain bikers yield to horsebackriders; mountain bikers yield to hikers.
- Be self-sufficient; carry at least one gallon of water per person per day, and carry food, and sun protection. First-aid kits are recommended.
- Check weather reports for hazardous conditions before taking to the trail; thunderstorms and flash floods can appear rapidly without warning.
- Practice "leave no trace" skills and ethics. Pack out what you pack in; take only pictures, and leave only foot prints.
- Dogs and pets are allowed only within 1/4 mile from the trail head, for their own safety and to protect the wildlife. Keep pets on a leash not more than 6 feet in length. Pick up after your pet—feces can spread diseases and viruses to wildlife.
- Natural water sources are fragile ecological zones in the desert. Keep equestrian stock away from all water holes and seep springs. Use buckets to water your animals. Since lotions and oils on your skin will dramatically affect aquatic life, do not bathe in natural water sources. Always filter and/or treat drinking water.
- Leave the two designated backcountry camping areas as clean as, or cleaner than you found them. Camp stoves are permitted, but ground fires are disallowed due to wildfire danger. Be careful not to leave food behind; doing so can artificially attract unwanted insects and wild animals. Toss grey water away from your camping area. If you cannot pack it out, dispose of all human waste by digging a "cat hole" 6 to 8 inches deep, 300 feet from the trail or camping area and 300 feet from any water source. Pack toilet paper out.

- Help us preserve the rich heritage of historic ruins by staying off of walls and foundations. Look, but leave artifacts where you find them. If you notice any looting or vandalism of a historic site, please report it to a park ranger or the nearest visitor center.
- There are several private land in-holdings within the state park; you may be trespassing on private property if you travel beyond designated trails.

MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- Always wear a helmet while riding.
- Remember to yield right-of-way to horses and hikers.
- Always stay on the trail. Do not shortcut switchbacks or ride around water bars.
- Be kind to our trails by controlling your speed and not skidding. Avoid riding on muddy trails.
- Safety comes first. If necessary, walk your bike over rough terrain.

HORSEBACK RIDERS

- Each horse must have a completed VS Form 10-11 (Texas Animal Health Commission) showing that the horse has tested negative for an official Equine Infectious Anemia test within the previous 12 months.
- A \$2-per-day permit is required of each horse, which may be obtained at the Barton Warnock Center.
- Be kind to our trails. Always stay on the trail; do not shortcut switchbacks, and avoid riding when trails are muddy.
- Use weed-free hay and restrict animals from browsing on the vegetation.
- Use a bucket for watering. Protect our fragile water sources by not letting horses drink directly from springs or watering holes.
- Use hobbles; horses tied to trees or shrubs can damage the vegetation.
- Be considerate of hikers and mountain bikers by scattering manure off and away from the trail, and at least 300 feet from a campsite.

