

# The Borderlands Conservation and Security Act



## **H.R. 2593 PROVIDES FOR EFFECTIVE SECURITY WHILE PROTECTING BORDERLAND WILDLIFE, HABITAT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

**Border security includes conservation.** America's border with Mexico includes national parks, forests, monuments, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. Nearly one-quarter of the 1,950 mile U.S.-Mexico border lies within public lands. This includes hundreds of miles within the National Park system alone, running through such national treasures as Big Bend National Park and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Many imperiled species depend upon borderland habitat for their continued existence. In Arizona alone, the Border Patrol estimates that 39 species protected or proposed to be protected under the Endangered Species Act are already being affected by its operations. Much of this country's most spectacular wildlife, including jaguars, wolves, and

hundreds of bird species, depend upon protected public lands along the border for migration corridors between countries.

Illegal border crossings and enforcement activities along the border are placing a tremendous burden on federal land management agencies and causing long-term damage to natural and cultural resources. And, the recently enacted Secure Fence Act would require the construction of a double-layer, reinforced walls along large sections of the southern border, stretching from just outside San Diego all the way to Brownsville, Texas, less than 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The effects of large scale border wall construction on wildlife, clean water, clean air, and human health and safety could be serious and lasting, especially since the REAL ID Act, passed in 2005, allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive all laws, including laws designed to protect wildlife, clean water, clean air, cultural resources, and human health and safety, among others.

**H.R. 2593, the Borderlands Conservation and Security Act, takes a common-sense approach to border policy.** Specifically, H.R. 2593 would:

- Provide experts at the Department of Homeland Security with the ability to decide whether walls, vehicle barriers, or virtual fences would be most effective in securing the border.
- Give land management agencies and local, state, and tribal officials a voice in border construction and decision-making.
- Require compliance with federal, state, and local laws meant to protect clean air, clean water, wildlife, culture, health and safety, and quality of life for people in border communities.
- Fund initiatives that help mitigate damage to Borderland wildlife and resources.



Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Public Lands in the American Southwest

