



BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK

BIG BEND RANCH ADVENTURE AND LONGHORN RANCH



Legend

- Campsite
- Group Campsite
- Equestrian Staging Campsite
- Campground
- River Access
- Trailheads
- Backcountry Ranger Residence
- 2WD High Clearance
- 4-Wheel Drive
- 4-Wheel Drive - Unmaintained
- County
- Graded
- Highway
- Closed Road
- Looked Gate
- Route of Road

2015 March 21 thru 28th

Great adventure and an opportunity to enjoy the Big Bend Ranch State Park! Plus equal in color and scenic beauty; the Longhorn Ranch! The splendor of the vistas, the colors, the mountains, the trails; this is one of the excellent places to visit and enjoy “wheeling” Jeep style in the world!! If given the opportunity again, I would not hesitate to say YES!!

We had an excellent guides and trail advisors in Geoff and Rosie, with support from Jack and Connie and Steve and Sue, plus their family, Kate, Elissa and Aaron. Andrea was accompanied by her brother Rodger II and yours truly, (Andrea’s) Dad. The group was “muy simpatico y amistad,” which made the travel pass pleasantly and meals at night entertaining. One additional fact, “nothing broke”! No axles, no tires punctured; nothing! Can you believe?!

We started March 22nd at Big Bend with a run from the Saucedo Ranger Station along the main park road to “Paso al Solitario”, traveled around the “Solitario” stopping at an a Uranium mine to “charge our batteries” and rest. We returned to the Saucedo Station at dusk. My favorite journey was Frisco Canyon; very scenic with a lot of color. We stopped at a shallow cave, near the river, called “Manos Arriba”, named for the hand prints of ancient people living in the cave. Many cooking fires had blackened the ceiling of the cave and ancient people touched the ceiling with their hands. The chemicals on their skin changed the black soot to white silhouettes of their hand prints, thereby leaving human evidence of their presents. Also we saw many cooking “pots”. Holes carved into the rock, near the cave, where the people cooked local tubers, plants and small animals. The Frisco Canyon trail ends at the remnants of the Crawford-Smith Ranch headquarters. Many adobe and metal laminate structures, only partly in tact, that speak of the lives of people, long gone from this place, that made me think of the difficulties and struggles of labor and love for the land that was necessary to survive in a place with limited amounts of water and so very, very remote from civilization. They had courage and stamina to live here!

We worked many more trails on the east side of the park; did some walking on paths and in general had a great time before traveling to the Longhorn Ranch on Thursday.

The Longhorn Ranch is different in its geologic features and equally as beautiful as the park. We “wheeled” high and low on many trails discovering petrified wood, mines from which mercury is extracted, interesting plants and rocks and generally had a great time! Again, nothing broke on the Jeeps!!

I recommend this trip to all who enjoy the stark beauty of West Texas desert landscape and wheeling. Rodger