

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION ANNUAL PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS



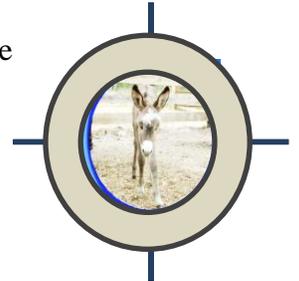
By [Marjorie Farabee](#)



Earlier this year, I made a trip to Big Bend Ranch State Park and Big Bend National Park to investigate the ecosystems of these parks with Craig Downer a well-known wildlife ecologist. Our purpose was to investigate stories from locals who insisted that the shooting of burros had not been halted after "burrogate". After 71 burros were inhumanely gunned down in 2007, it was widely believed that the shootings had stopped.



Unfortunately, we discovered since that at least 46 more of these remarkable animals have also been *wasted*.



Why do I use the word wasted?

Several reasons.



Firstly, promoting the burros positively is a win, win, win for the parks image, the local economy, and the burros.

After meeting with several parks directors here in Austin, I made a decision then to find solutions that would benefit all involved. Since that time I put together a team of professional people to research and develop the solutions we all need to move forward in a mutually beneficial manner.



The dedication of these people who sincerely want to preserve, protect, and promote burros in the Chihuahuan Biosphere has been truly inspiring. We CAN find solutions that will put the park's image in a positive light, preserve the historic and cultural heritage of the region, and will add to the economic wellbeing of the local businesses whom benefit from the tourism dollars these widely loved animals generate. Most importantly, mutual cooperation allows our National Heritage Species to maintain its presence in the ecosystem that it has called home for centuries. It is important to note that the heritage of Texas is equally enriched by the contribution of the wild burros.



The Wild Burro Protection League is a consortium of individuals, businesses, animal advocacy groups, and scientists who have been working diligently on this issue. We sincerely hope that our most supportive partners will be TPWD, and both the Big Bend Parks. We are dedicated to working cooperatively while independently funding this community wide effort and hope that TPWD will support our applications for this very reasonable effort to end the park's present zero tolerance policy for burros. Clearly, the locals do not want them shot while they peacefully graze in their ancestral home.



With the help we have garnered and the additional financial support we have cultivated, our goal is to assist in the development of a strong community-supported program. The Wild Burro Protection League envisions a partnership with the parks that puts emphasis on our common goals. We want to conserve the land, and its diverse inhabitants, including bighorn sheep. We want to have the park work with us on studies to determine actual conflicts, and find creative non-lethal ways to mitigate those conflicts. The Wild Burro Protection League will help with those efforts through grants and other funding.



We would like to put emphasis on studies at this time to determine fact from single study on the burro. It is a startling oversight considering the importance of this animal's presence to the fabric of this park as a long standing resident, and the burros' standing as a beloved National Heritage Species. Moreover, it is clear that **without** appropriate investigation, reporting that the animal causes damage is thus nothing more than **OPINION**. Without scientific data to back TPWD's claims of damage, it is clear that TPWD's zero tolerance policy toward burros needs to stop. The Wild Burro Protection League is receiving pleas from around the world to find solutions. We are looking to our future partners at Texas Parks and Wildlife for a cooperative and mutually beneficial effort toward solutions.



Local businesses from the towns surrounding the park are growing in awareness about what is happening to animals that represent the culture of their little towns. The burros are a part of the tourist appeal, and they are concerned at the thought of losing them. They would be listed as partners in our efforts to save the burros too. Businesses such as Mi Tesora, Jackassic Park, Emily's "Nice Bread" Bakeria, Refresco, Front St. Books, Rachael's Art Studio, Red Horse Nation, Johnson's Feed, Kiowa Gallery, Ivey's Emporium, The Apache Trading Post, Gallery on the Square, Catchlight gallery, Marfa Public Radio, The Big Bend Sentinel, The Famous Burro restaurant, and many others including members of the Chambers of Commerce in Alpine.



The Wild Burro Protection League is looking forward to working with our future partners at TPWD as we cooperate in finding reasonable solutions that will benefit the many over the few, keeping land stewardship and community involvement, foremost in all of our future efforts to save our national heritage species the burro.

Please do not continue to waste this naturally occurring resource with which the parks have been blessed.

Cultivate the burro culture and develop strategies with us that will be a win for us all.

