



**SIERRA  
CLUB**

## Hike and Camp with the Dallas Sierra Club at Big Bend National Park Feb. 15-19, 2024



**The Big Bend** of Texas has been shaped by eruptions, folds, faults, wind, water, and human management into a fabric of scrubby desert, forested mountains, canyons, pinnacles, and pour-offs. The region and the national park take their names from the giant curve the Rio Grande makes as it flows south, east, and north around the land.

Climate and vegetation in the park vary dramatically with elevations from 7,825 feet at Emory Peak to 1,680 feet on the Rio Grande. Remnant ponderosa pines, Douglas firs, aspens, maples, and oaks can be found at elevations above 6,000 feet. As elevations decrease, forests yield to junipers, then to desert plant communities of agave, yucca, sotol, ocotillo, mesquite, creosote and cactus. The park's mammal community includes mountain lions, foxes, bobcats, bears, javelinas, mule deer, and white tail deer. For more information about the park, visit <http://www.nps.gov/bibe>.

**The 2024 Outing:** The Dallas Group of Sierra Club has a long history of outings to hike, camp, and backpack in the Big Bend. This year's outing offers a choice of three trip itineraries. Two include backpacking. One offers day hikes that return to the same camp each night. Choose your preferred itineraries when you register. For trips 1 and 2, hikers should arrive after 1:00 p.m. and before dark on Thursday, February 15 at the Chisos Basin Group Campground, sites Q and R. For trip 3, hikers should arrive after 1:00 p.m. and before dark on Wednesday, February 14 at the Chisos Basin Group Campground, site R. Each trip itinerary has limits for number of participants and/or tents. Early registration is advised.

## Trip 1: The High Chisos

This itinerary is suitable for experienced and beginner backpackers in good physical condition. Contact the trip leader about questions and concerns.

- Thursday, Feb. 15: Arrive before dark to camp at Chisos Basin Group Campsites Q.
- Friday, Feb. 16: Backpack into the Chisos Mountains along the Laguna Meadows and Colima trails to set a camp for two nights at Colima #1 backcountry site (5 miles). In the afternoon we will hike to Boot Creek to get water (1 mile).
- Saturday, Feb. 17: Day hike a loop of 8 miles to the South Rim of the Chisos Mountains for a panorama of the Chihuahuan desert far below and the mountains in Mexico, returning to camp via the Boot Canyon Trail and the Southwest Rim Trail.
- Sunday, Feb. 18: Break camp in the morning to backpack 5 miles via the Pinnacles Trail to the Chisos Basin Group Camp. Drop packs midway at Toll Mountain Pass for an optional day hike to Emory Peak (4 miles round-trip). Dinner at the Chisos Mountains Lodge is an option.
- Monday, Feb. 19: Break camp to travel home.

**Leader: Lynn Marple**, [mlmarple@gmail.com](mailto:mlmarple@gmail.com), 972-345-5528

## Trip 2: Day Hiking and Exploring Big Bend

This itinerary is ideal for people in good condition who would like to day hike in different areas of Big Bend National Park. Contact the trip leader about questions and concerns. This trip will give you the opportunity to explore more of Big Bend National Park than any of the other trips but will require a bit of driving.

- Thursday, Feb. 15: Arrive before dark to camp at Chisos Basin Group Campsites Q and R.
- Friday, Feb. 16: We will leave the group camp site after breakfast and drive to Rio Grande Village at the far eastern end of the park – about 30 miles. From there, we will day hike to the famous Hot Springs area. The day hike is a 6 miles round trip with very little elevation gain/loss. At the Hot Springs, we can soak in the spring and explore the historic buildings. If time permits, we may also take a short hike into the mouth of Boquillas Canyon before returning to our camp.
- Saturday, Feb. 17: This is our hard day. We will day hike to the South Rim of the Chisos Mountains. This is considered by most experts as the best hike in Texas. You'll enjoy fantastic views of Big Bend and the mountains of Mexico. The total hike is about 12 miles with about 2,000 feet of elevation gain/loss, but there are some options for a shorter hike for anyone not up to this length of hike.
- Sunday, Feb. 18: On our last full day, we will drive the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive to visit the western part of the park. Our first stop will be an easy 4-mile day hike to visit the top of Burro Mesa Pour-off. After our hike, we will continue driving south to visit the Castolon historic area followed by a visit to the mouth of Santa Elena Canyon. We will then return to our group campsite in the Chisos. This day has about 90 miles of driving.
- Monday, Feb. 19: Break camp to travel home.

**Leader: Arthur Kuehne**, [arthur@akuehne.com](mailto:arthur@akuehne.com), 214-608-3210.



## Trip 3: Outer Loop Hike

This strenuous but rewarding hike offers a variety of biomes that define Big Bend - from steep, rocky climbs through the forested Chisos Mountains to cactus-dodging treks across gently rolling, unshaded desert. A high level of fitness and the ability to bear the weight of four or more liters of water at a time are musts.

- Wednesday, Feb. 14: Arrive in the afternoon at Group Campsite R. Some of us will drive to Homer Wilson Ranch to cache water for use later during our hike.
- Thursday, Feb. 15: From the Basin trailhead, hike into the Chisos Mountains via the Pinnacles Trail to Boot Spring. After loading up on water, hike the Juniper Canyon Trail to our dry campsite near Upper Juniper Springs. Total of 6.4 miles, 1,800' ascent, 1,700' descent.
- Friday, Feb. 16: Continue down the Juniper Canyon Trail and along the Dodson Trail to camp at Fresno Creek. Total of 9.2 miles for the day. 1,700' descent, 900' ascent.
- Saturday, Feb. 17: Hike the Dodson Trail. We will stop at the Homer Wilson Ranch, pick up cached water and continue another two miles up the Blue Creek Trail to camp in a dry wash. Total of 8 miles. 2,000' descent, 1,800' ascent.
- Sunday, Feb. 18: Continue hiking northeast and make the steep climb back into the high country, then trek down the Laguna Trail to return to the basin campground, group site R. Total 7.2 miles. About 2000' ascent, 1300' descent. In all, we will have hiked 30.8 miles and gained a cumulative 6,500 feet of elevation.
- Monday, Feb. 19: Drive home.

**Leader: Clay Morton, [claymorton@ymail.com](mailto:claymorton@ymail.com)** (yes, ymail, not gmail.), 214-914-4780

**To register:** Read this trip description in its entirety. Hikers will arrive at the park by car or carpool. A participation fee of \$100 per person will cover campground and backcountry camping fees and expenses for outings leader training. This fee is non-refundable. Participants will pay their own recreational user fee of \$30 per vehicle upon park entry unless presenting a valid National Parks user pass. Most passes are valid for all car occupants. If the Sierra Club must cancel the outing, its financial responsibility is to refund the fee paid to the Dallas Sierra Club, but not payments for airfare or other expenses. Mail a check or money order payable to "**Dallas Sierra Club**" to **Jim Robarge, 2615 Woodside Drive, Highland Village, TX 75077**. You may complete the three forms listed below and send them as a PDF to [robargeDSC@gmail.com](mailto:robargeDSC@gmail.com). This works best by downloading your file to your computer. Then use Adobe Acrobat to view and fill the forms. Photos of the forms are not acceptable. Alternatively, you may enclose printed copies of your forms with your check. We'll reserve your place on a trip only when payment and each of these three forms has been completed and received:

- 1) Trip Preference form posted at the end of this trip description.
- 2) Participation Agreement posted at the end of this trip description.
- 3) Medical Form posted at the end of this trip description.

**Gear:** Each person is responsible for bringing personal gear and food. Sharing a tent or other gear with a friend is fine. A basic gear list follows. We encourage calling leaders with gear questions. If your loaded pack exceeds 25 to 30 pounds before you add water (2.2 pounds per liter), lighten your load!

- **Tent, sleeping bag, sleep pad:** A backpacker needs a lightweight tent, a sleeping bag, and an air mattress or sleep pad. The function of the air mattress is to insulate you from cold ground.
- **Backpack:** For Trips 2 or 3, you'll need a backpack for all your gear, food and water. For day hikes, you might offload your pack or most of its gear into your tent or the bear boxes by most camps and at the trailhead for Emory Peak. Consider adding a lightweight rucksack for water and essentials on day hikes.
- **Food:** The food you pack, and carry depends on your trip's daily itinerary and your taste. Most hikers prepare a hot meal in the early evening. Dehydrated foods requiring only boiling water and a short wait for rehydration are available at outing stores, but good and less expensive meal alternatives are available from grocery stores. Hikers generally bring a no-cook meal for lunch. Some will eat a quick cooked breakfast; others a no-cook breakfast. Bring snacks for the trail. There is a camp store in the Chisos Basin (0.6 mile from the Q-R campsites). If near the Chisos Basin Lodge or campsites Q-R, you can supplement your food with cold drinks and packaged snacks and sandwiches from the store during operating hours. Ground fires and wood fires are prohibited in BBNP. Charcoal fires are allowed in the grills provided at group campsites, but we recommend cooking with tiny, canned fuel stoves because they don't emit smoke or embers.
- **Water:** Water from the visitor centers and group campgrounds needs no treatment. Except from those sources water for drinking must be treated by tablets, filtration, or boiling. Ask your trip leader's recommendation regarding how much water capacity to bring and how much to carry each day.
- **Clothing:** Layers are key to comfort, given the range of possible weather conditions. Five layers for your torso are recommended (including a rain/wind shell), two layers for your legs. (One layer could be rain pants, which double as thermal protection.) Denim become chilly and heavy when wet and should be avoided. Wear tested boots or trail runners and two layers of socks (thin sock on the inside to preclude blisters). Bring gloves and a cap to keep your head warm at night. Don't forget a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen for UV protection.
- **Other stuff:** Don't forget a headlamp or flashlight and personal health and first aid items. Bring or share a lightweight garden trowel and tissue for personal waste disposal plus a zip-lock bag for used tissues. That's right—pack out the paper!

**Bears:** Common in the 1900s, black bears disappeared from the Big Bend until they re-colonized in the late 1980s. They don't completely hibernate in the Big Bend but spend most of the winter in dens. Mothers give birth to cubs in February. Sites where Trips 1 and 3 will camp have metal bear-proof boxes for food storage. Take precautions to avoid losing your food to bears, deer or smaller critters:

- Store food and items that smell in the bear boxes. Otherwise, always keep those items on your person, in your control.
- Don't eat in your tent or store food or items with food spills in your tent.
- Prepare meals away from your sleeping area.
- Disperse cooking water over a wide area, away from camp.
- Store trash in your food bag (within a separate plastic bag).
- Pack out all leftover food and trash.

**Maps:** Maps of Big Bend National Park are available at [www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/maps.htm](http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/maps.htm), including an excellent printable map of trails and camps in the Chisos Mountains and a map of the Chisos Basin and Rio Grande Village. A paper map of the whole park with topography is National Geographic Trails Illustrated Map 225, available online and at stores for \$14.95.

**Leave No Trace:** Leave-no-trace wilderness ethics are expected of all participants. All trash must be packed out; human waste buried and used toilet paper packed out. (Bring a zip-lock bag.) Pets, firearms and smoking are not allowed.

**Medical:** Our leaders have trained for wilderness first aid, but they are not medical professionals. Participants are encouraged to bring first aid supplies for personal use and to inform leaders about a medical condition such as diabetes, heart problems or allergic reactions that could require emergency treatment. Tell the leader where you store vital medications you could need. Medical information you provide may be shared with medical professionals who treat you in the event of injury or sickness.

**Group = Safety:** Participants who leave the led group without leader consent will be asked to sign out of the trip and will no longer be part of the outing. If you leave the outing, don't hike alone and always hike on a trail. Most deaths in wild areas occur when a solo hiker becomes incapacitated before being found. When leaving camp, especially at night, be careful to not get disoriented.

**Minors:** Minors may participate with leader consent if always accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

**California Seller of Travel Law:** Because the Sierra Club is a California nonprofit corporation and California has a "Seller of Travel" law; we're required to post this notice: **CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.** Okay, we've complied.

# Trip Preference Form, Big Bend 2024

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter "1" by your top choice of trip itineraries. Enter "2" by your second choice. If we cannot grant your first or second choice, we will contact you to ask whether you would accept a third choice.

Trips	Your Choices, Ranked
Trip 1: High Chisos	_____
Trip 2: Day Hiking and Exploring Big Bend	_____
Trip 3: Outer Loop Hike	_____

## Previous experience questions:

We want you to enjoy your outing experience. Sharing some information about your previous hiking and camping experiences could help us better advise you about the outing.

- Have you been on another overnight outing with the Dallas Sierra Club? ☐yes ☐no
- If yes, where was the trip, in what year, and who was your trip leader, if you remember.
- If no, where and when have you hiked and camped recently?

## Transportation questions:

- Do you have transportation from your home to Big Bend National Park? ☐yes ☐no
- Would you like us to identify you as seeking a ride and sharing expenses? ☐yes ☐no
- If driving, would you like us to identify you to prospective riders? ☐yes ☐no

Sierra Club leaders are prohibited from assigning rides to Sierra Club outings. Any arrangement of a carpool is strictly up to the driver and riders. Being listed as a prospective driver or rider does not obligate you to offer or accept. Listings will include name, email, phone, and city or neighborhood of residence. Notify Jim Robarge, [robargeDSC@gmail.com](mailto:robargeDSC@gmail.com), 972-505-9567, to be added or removed from the carpool information list.

# Participant Agreement



## Instructions for Completing this Form

- Please print and mail this form to the trip leader or other Sierra Club representative with your physical signature. If you choose to complete the form on your computer, you must still print and sign before mailing.
- Please complete and sign both the Participant Agreement on p. 2 and the Supplemental Release Regarding COVID-19 on p. 3.
- Minor participants (those under 18 years old) must complete the form with a parent/legal guardian.

**IMPORTANT: This agreement affects your legal rights. By signing it, you are agreeing to (among other things) assume risks, release claims, waive rights, and indemnify Sierra Club from harm.**

**1. Definitions.** The following capitalized terms have the following meanings when used herein:

**A. "Sierra Club"** means Sierra Club and its officers, directors, representatives, employees, agents, chapters, volunteers, leaders, and affiliates;

**B. "Activities"** means any program, event, and/or activity offered by and/or on behalf of Sierra Club;

**C. "Participant,"** who is identified at the bottom of this agreement, is either (i) me or (ii) as applicable, a person for whom I am legally authorized to make decisions and who is referred to herein as "Minor Participant";

**D. "Risks"** means any risk associated, either directly or indirectly, with Participant's presence at and/or participation in any Activities;

**E. "Damages"** means any injury, damage, sickness, death, and/or any other loss, whether physical, emotional, financial, or otherwise, caused in whole or in part by Participant, Sierra Club, and/or any third parties in connection with any Activities;

**F. "Claims"** means any action, cause of action, claim, controversy, promise, agreement, damage, judgment, cost, expense, and/or liability of whatever nature, in law or in equity, whether known or unknown, whether contingent or liquidated, and whether based in statute, contract, tort, or otherwise; and

**G. "Released Parties"** means Sierra Club and any Sierra Club successor, assign, sponsor, advertiser, inspector, contractor, consultant, and/or any other person or entity that takes any action on Sierra Club's behalf in connection with any Activities.

**2. Participation.** I (or Minor Participant, if any): (a) agree that my participation in any Activities will be subject to the terms herein; and (b) can and will participate in any Activities in a constructive manner without causing Damages.

**3. Logistics.** I will accurately complete any required forms and abide (and cause Minor Participant, if any, to abide) by all laws, rules, and policies applicable to any Activities. Prior to any Activities, I will be familiar with, and shall have accepted, the associated Risks and will have made any inquiry necessary to fully understand those Risks. Sierra Club may in its sole discretion dismiss me (or Minor Participant, if any) from any Activities for any or no reason. I will be fully responsible for any and all costs, including without limitation travel expenses, associated with my dismissal or departure (or the dismissal or departure of Minor Participant, if any) from any Activities for any reason.

**4. Understanding the Risks.** I confirm all of the following:

**A.** Unplanned or unexpected situations may arise in the course of any Activities, Risks are inherent in all Activities and may not be obvious, and Activities and Risks may cause Damages;

**B.** A few, non-exhaustive examples of Risks include: acts of nature or other matters outside Sierra Club's control; facilities and/or equipment failures; itinerary changes and/or cancellations; transportation issues; problems associated with locations, wildlife, vegetation, and/or lack of access to medical care, AND NEGLIGENCE by Sierra Club or others. There are many potential Risks that are not listed here; and

**C.** I understand all Risks, whether or not they have been communicated to me (and/or to Minor Participant, if any); and I have had adequate opportunity to seek any information necessary to properly evaluate all Risks.

**5. Assumption of Risks.** I confirm my (and Minor Participant's, if any) assumption of all Risks, whether known or not and whether identified or not, and my acceptance of all materials, equipment, and facilities associated with the Risks and/or the Activities in an "AS IS" condition. I accept that I (and Minor Participant, if any) may sustain Damages, including Damages that could be caused by Sierra Club, third parties, and/or me (or Minor Participant, if any).

**6. Release.** I (and Minor Participant, if any) release each and all of the Released Parties from any Claims that I (and Minor Participant, if any) ever had, now have, or may have in the future, for any reason, and that arise out of and/or relate in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, to any Activities (including without limitation travel to or from any Activities), even when any such Claims result from the

NEGLIGENCE of any Released Party.

**7. Waiver.** Regarding the release above, I waive all rights that I (and Minor Participant, if any) may have now or in the future under Cal. Civil Code § 1542 stating: "A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE CREDITOR OR THE RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY."

**8. No Third Party Lawsuits.** I (and Minor Participant, if any) will not participate in, either directly or indirectly, or cause any third party to initiate, any litigation against any Released Party regarding any Claims associated directly or indirectly with involvement by me (or Minor Participant, if any) in any Activities (the "Third Party Claims").

**9. Indemnification.** I will indemnify, hold harmless, and defend each Released Party from and against any and all Third Party Claims (including without limitation attorney's fees).

**10. No Warranties.** No information related to any Activities and/or Risks and communicated to me (and/or to Minor Participant, if any) in any manner, including without limitation difficulty ratings, safety or risk evaluations, equipment recommendations, or participant assessments, shall be construed as a Sierra Club warranty or representation of any kind. Sierra Club has given no warranty, express or implied, regarding the Activities, the Risks, and/or any Damages except as stated herein or in another writing signed by a Sierra Club officer (each, a "Warranty"). In signing this agreement, I have not relied on any statement not set forth herein or in any Warranty.

**11. Amendment and Interpretation.** This agreement may not be amended except in writing signed by a Sierra Club officer and is intended to be interpreted and enforced to the greatest extent allowed by law. If any provision herein is deemed unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall still be enforced. This agreement is binding upon any personal representative, successor, heir, or assign of Participant (and Minor Participant, if any).

**12. Dispute Resolution.** Any dispute relating to or arising from the enforcement and/or interpretation of this agreement, and/or any Activities (each, a "Dispute") shall be governed by California law without reference to its conflicts of laws rules and shall be resolved exclusively in the state courts existing in Alameda County, California. Before initiating any legal proceeding against Sierra Club in connection with any Dispute, I agree to first inform Sierra Club's general counsel in writing of the Dispute's factual and legal basis and to give Sierra Club thirty (30) days to respond.

**13. Federal Land Agencies.** If a court of competent jurisdiction determines that an agency rule prevents me from agreeing to any clause herein, that clause shall not be enforced.

**14. Medical Care.** In connection with any Activities, I authorize Sierra Club to obtain, provide, and/or authorize medical care, treatment, and transportation to a medical facility for me (or Minor Participant, if any) if I cannot do so, and I will pay all associated costs. I authorize the release to any third parties of my (or Minor Participant's, if any) medical records and personal information, if necessary or useful for treatment, referral, billing, or insurance purposes.

**15. Publicity Permission (Optional).** I am aware that staff or others sometimes capture photographs, quotes, or other impressions or recordings of participants and share them with Sierra Club for use in a variety of ways, such as (but not limited to) in the newsletters, web pages, or social media of Sierra Club or its allies. I (and Minor Participant, if any) agree not to restrict or condition such use in any way, unless I've indicated otherwise near my signature.

**I CONFIRM THAT I (OR MINOR PARTICIPANT, IF ANY) AM VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATING IN ONE OR MORE ACTIVITIES WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE RISKS. ON MY BEHALF (AND ON BEHALF OF MINOR PARTICIPANT, IF ANY), I FULLY ASSUME AND ACCEPT ALL RISKS (KNOWN OR UNKNOWN, IDENTIFIED OR NOT) ASSOCIATED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY WITH THE ACTIVITIES AND POTENTIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION AS MAY BE CAUSED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY ANY SIERRA CLUB NEGLIGENCE, THE NEGLIGENCE OF OTHERS, AND/OR ANY CONDUCT BY ME (AND/OR MINOR PARTICIPANT, IF ANY).**

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**Participant (and Parent of a Minor Participant), please sign and date below:**

**Participant print name:**

**Date:**

**Participant signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or Legal Guardian of a Minor:** I, as a parent or guardian of the below named minor, hereby give my permission for my child or ward to participate in the trip and further agree, individually and on behalf of my child or ward, to the terms above.

**Name of minor:**

**Parent or Legal Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**





# Medical Form: Local Outings

## General Information

Full name:		Phone:	
Age:	Date of birth:	Address:	
I identify my gender as:		City:	State: ZIP:
Emergency Contact:		Phone:	

## Allergies

Include allergies to food, insect bites and stings, medicines, animals, and the environment (dust, pollen, etc). Use a separate sheet if needed.

Select if no allergies

Allergy	Reaction	Medication required (e.g. epipen, antihistamine)	Is your allergy serious or life-threatening? How so?
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## Medications

Please list all prescriptions, over the counter, natural medications, medical marijuana and inhalers you are currently taking. Include prescription medications taken for episodic or emergency use. Note if this is a recent change in dosage or prescription. Use a separate sheet if needed.

Select if no medications

Medication name	Dosage	Frequency	Current side effects	Reason for taking (symptom/condition)
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## General Medical History

Are there any conditions      Yes      No  
or limitations (mental,  
emotional, or physical)  
that may affect your  
participation on this trip?  
If yes, please explain.

Have you been fully vaccinated for COVID-19, including the waiting period?      Yes      No

Have you tested positive or experienced any covid symptoms in the past 2-14 days?

Symptoms include (from CDC):

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Yes      No

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## Participant (and Parent of a Minor Participant), please sign and date below:

I certify that the information provided above is true, complete, and accurate. Other than any limitations described in this form, or any other information I have provided, I agree I (or my child) can participate in all trip activities. I agree to contact the Sierra Club promptly to provide additional information if my (or my child's) medical or health condition changes before the start of (or during) the trip. I acknowledge that falsifying or providing inaccurate or incomplete medical information can create serious risks to me (or my child) or to others and may result in dismissal from the trip.

**Participant signature:**

**Print name:**

**Date:**

**Parent or Legal Guardian signature**  
(if participant is a minor):

**Print name:**

**Date:**