

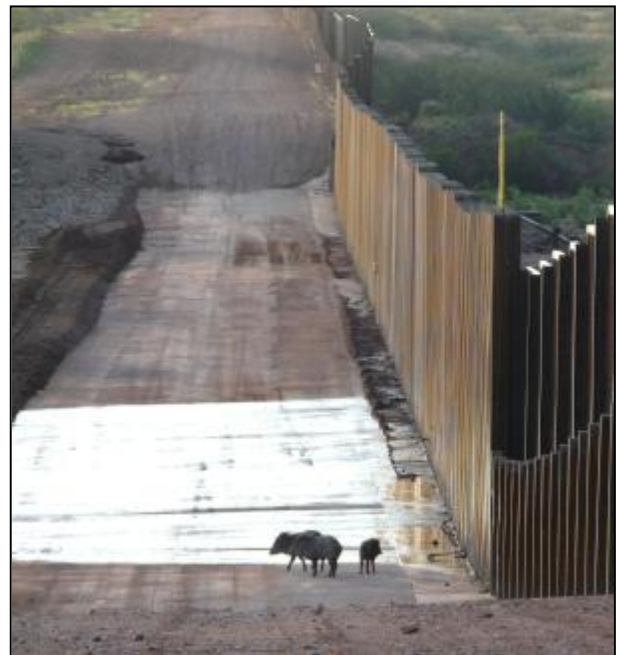
DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE BORDER WALL

While most of the border wall has not been in place very long, on-the-ground damage to public lands, tribal lands and private property has already been identified by federal, state and tribal agencies and citizens. The types of environmental damage anticipated and, in some instances, already documented from border wall and road construction include:

- Blocking wildlife corridors, fragmenting habitat and restricting access to water sources
- Significant new flooding, erosion, and sedimentation problems
- Ground disturbance resulting in the introduction and spread of exotic species
- Disturbance, displacement and mortality to wildlife from artificial night lighting, increased vehicular access, and walls shifting migrant traffic patterns and enforcement activities
- Air and water pollution and effects on microclimate
- Difficulties accessing areas for agricultural practices, fire management and habitat restoration
- Disturbance to cultural and historic sites, including the desecration of Native American graves

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area:

The San Pedro is one of the last-free flowing rivers in the Southwest and one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America. An environmental assessment for wall construction across this fragile conservation area denied public comment and claimed a “finding of no significant impact”. This, despite the assessment’s finding that the wall across the desert washes feeding the river was anticipated to increase erosion and sedimentation, and could even cause the entire riverbed to laterally shift, with disastrous consequences for its cottonwood-willow riparian forests and the hundreds of species of fish, mammals, plants, and birds harbored there. Defenders of Wildlife filed for a temporary restraining order that temporarily halted wall construction in this conservation area. DHS responded by waiving 19 laws to complete the wall. Since the wall was constructed, accelerated erosion has been documented, and wildlife such as mule deer and javelina have been photographed approaching the wall, unable to access habitat in Mexico. Wall and road construction also resulted in the disturbance of historic sites and archeological resources, including the alarming desecration of 69 Native American burial sites.

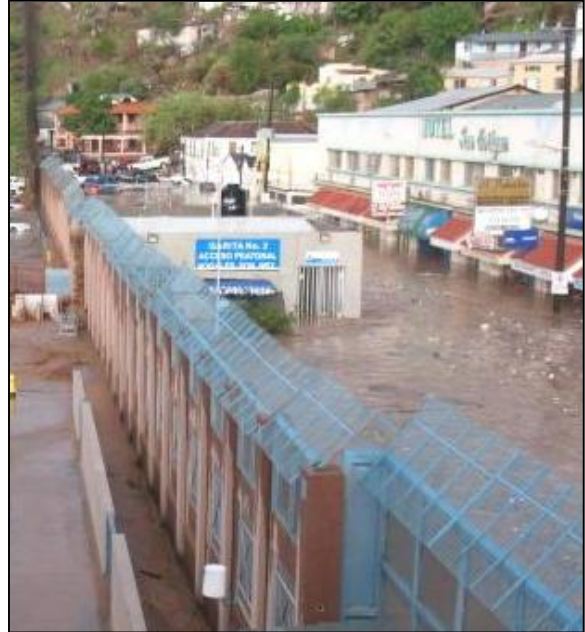


Javelina and other wildlife are blocked by the border wall. Photo: Matt Clark / Defenders of Wildlife

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument: In 2008, DHS built a five mile-long wall on the southern boundary of this National Park Service unit and designated wilderness area. The wall and patrol road were constructed up and over Monument Hill, a steep mountain that harbors habitat for the sensitive Sonoran desert tortoise. The wall also cut off southern access to Quito Boquito, a rare desert spring that provides reliable water to wildlife in one of the most arid regions of the country. On July 12, 2008, a monsoon storm delivered 1–2 inches of rain in 1.5 hours in southern Arizona. The wall impeded and redirected flash floodwaters, causing natural resource and property damage. A report issued by the National Park Service found that the wall did not meet hydrologic performance standards or standards established by the “finding of no significant impact”. The report documented the wall had caused accelerated erosion and scour, and predicted the wall and patrol road would cause increased sedimentation and water retention -- resulting in changes in vegetation, and alteration of channel morphology and floodplain function.

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Nogales: The same July 12, 2008 storm noted above also dumped heavy rains in the border town of Nogales. Prior to the storm, and unbeknownst to Mexican officials, the US Border Patrol had constructed a barrier in an underground cross-border drainage tunnel. This barrier, which was later found to be erroneously located on the Mexican side of the border, caught debris and blocked floodwaters, causing extensive flooding in Mexico and killing two people. Surface floodwaters were trapped on the Mexican side by a concrete-reinforced border wall, exacerbating the extent of the flooding. \$8 Million in infrastructure and property damage occurred as a result of these poorly planned border barriers.



Wall-induced floods devastate Nogales, Mexico.

Otay Mountain Wilderness Area: The wall is currently being constructed in this wilderness area designated by Congress to protect a unique ecosystem, including the only known stand of Tecate cypress. The work includes extensive drilling and blasting on steep slopes to clear 530,000 cubic yards of rock. The area is so steep that a Border Patrol spokesperson said 3 years ago that, “. . . at the Otay mountain range, you simply don’t need a fence. It’s such harsh terrain it’s difficult to walk, let alone drive.” Indeed, recent citizens who went on site had to crawl on their hands and knees to traverse some slopes and found significant erosion and sedimentation caused by roads and walls.

Friendship Park: This park, dedicated in 1971 by first lady Patricia Nixon to honor friendship between the U.S. and Mexico, has been an important place for a variety of peaceful religious, recreational and cultural activities. It has been completely closed to public access. Construction here and in adjacent canyons is creating a large sediment source on the edge of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, a Ramsar designated wetland of international importance. The California State Water Resources Control Board has expressed deep concern for the lack of erosion control measures and storm water pollution protection, poorly designed roads and lack of a post construction maintenance plan.

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park: This 372 acre park was given to the City of El Paso as compensation for a Corps of Engineers project. The wall now divides the park from the river floodway, preventing wildlife from reaching the river, fragmenting populations, and isolating wetlands.

Rio Grande Valley Texas Homeowners: In Texas, the border wall is being constructed 1-2 miles north of the Rio Grande River. DHS has sued over 100 private property owners and municipalities in condemnation proceedings. Landowners have not been told whether and how they could access their own property. Construction has proceeded so hastily that in one case, engineers had no idea that a home with family living in it existed on the south side of the wall and denied them access to it when they were going home. Another homeowner awoke to find her backyard hurricane fencing gone and the wall going up with no prior notice. Farmers fear they will be prevented or hampered from irrigating their fields.

Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary: A 557 acre preserve managed by the National Audubon Society protects remnant groves of native Sabal palm that line the banks of the Rio Grande outside of Brownsville, Texas. Exotic birds like the green jay and chachalaca and rare mammals, such as some of America’s estimated 100 remaining ocelots, live here and in a nearby property managed by The Nature Conservancy. Plans call for both properties to be walled off. These and other natural jewels strung along the banks of the Rio Grande have stimulated tourism in the Rio Grande Valley’s economy, bringing over one hundred thousand birders a year and over 2,5000 jobs. Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary anticipates having to close the facility and has already severely cut operating hours in the wake of reduced donations due to this anticipated eventuality.