




Rewilding the Wall



Corridors and Carnivores in the Borderland
Chihuahuan Desert Conference
Jon Rezendes
16 November 2023

Who is this guy?

Then:

- B.S., International Relations, United States Military Academy
- Infantry platoon leader during OEF X-XI, 101st Airborne Division
- Ranger Instructor, Florida Phase of US Army Ranger School
- Rifle Company and HHC Commander, 1st Armored Division

Now:

- Six years with a decarbonization software company
- Conservation advocate, regular contributor to Rewilding Earth
- Member of the Board of Directors, Frontera Land Alliance and Texas Lobo Coalition



Some smug captain, Ft. Bliss, circa 2016

What is 'Rewilding?'

"Rewilding is comprehensive, often large-scale, conservation effort focused on restoring sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem health by protecting core wild/wilderness areas, providing connectivity between such areas, and protecting or reintroducing apex predators and highly interactive species (keystone species)."

- The Rewilding Institute, founded by Dave Foreman

Remember, the 3 C's:

CORES



C: Allie Banting, Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative



C: NPS

CORRIDORS

CARNIVORES



Legend

New Border Wall System  Existing Barrier 



A Continental-Scale Challenge

C: Customs and Border Patrol, updated July 2023

Technology as a Key Puzzle Piece

Optimized artificial intelligence with human quick-reaction forces offer a wall-less alternative to illegal crossing detection and mitigation



C: CBP, Agent Dustin Smith

Carnivores of the Borderland

Black Bears at Big Bend

Bears radiating north from protected areas in Mexico offer proof that life always finds a way



C: National Park Conservation Association, 46TRAVELS



C: National Park Service

Jaguars of the Madrean Sky Islands

Preserving areas for solitary carnivores with massive home ranges protects entire ecosystems while offering ecotourism opportunity



C: USFWS



C: Sky Island Alliance

Ocelots in the Rio Grande Valley

Ocelots isolated north of the Rio Grande risk a major decline in genetic diversity similar to Florida's panther (puma)



C: Texas Public Radio, David Martin Davies



C: USFWS

12/5/2020 12:43 AM



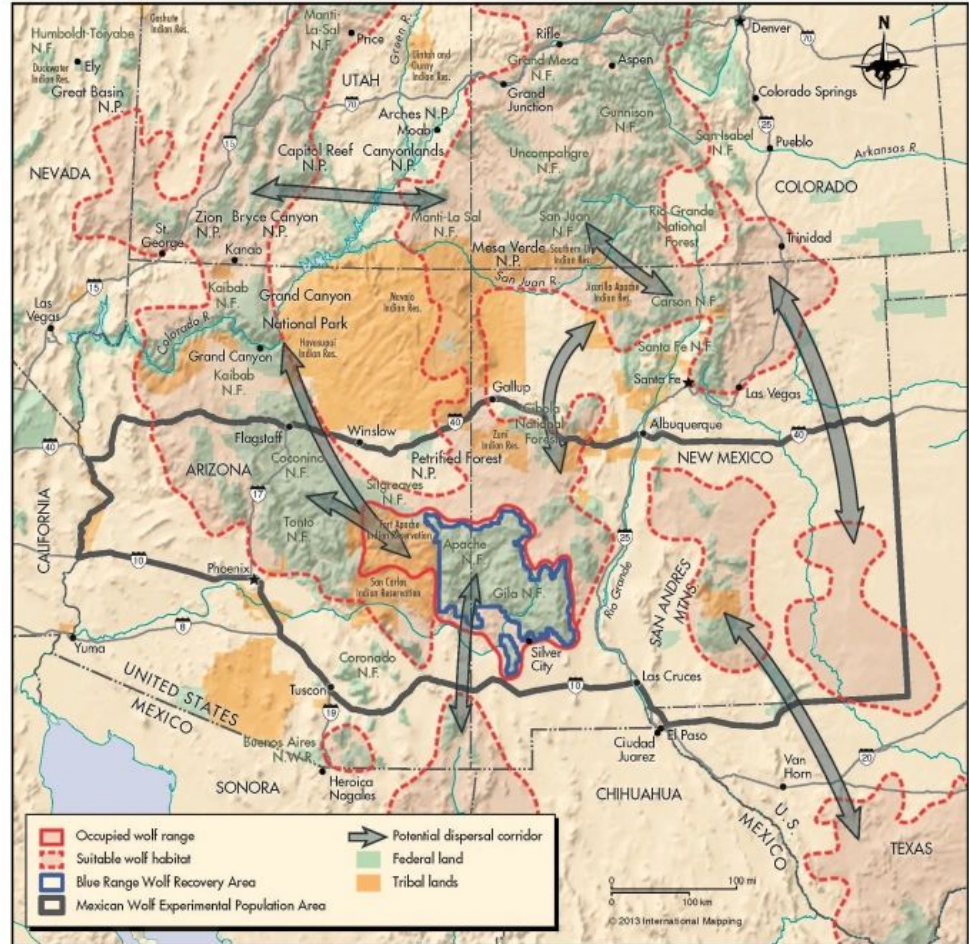
Mexican Gray Wolves of the Chihuahuan Desert

Lobos face pressure, fear, and inconsistent protection interrupted by the most contiguous sections of border wall



C: Defenders of Wildlife

The Southwest



C: Defenders of Wildlife

Mountain Lions in El Paso y Ciudad Juárez

Humans have coexisted with mountain lions in the region since the Pleistocene but development and the border wall threaten their natural radiation



C: TPWD



C: TPWD



MOUNTAIN LION PAW PRINT AND BIRD'S HEAD AT TRANSMOUNTAIN GAP SITE

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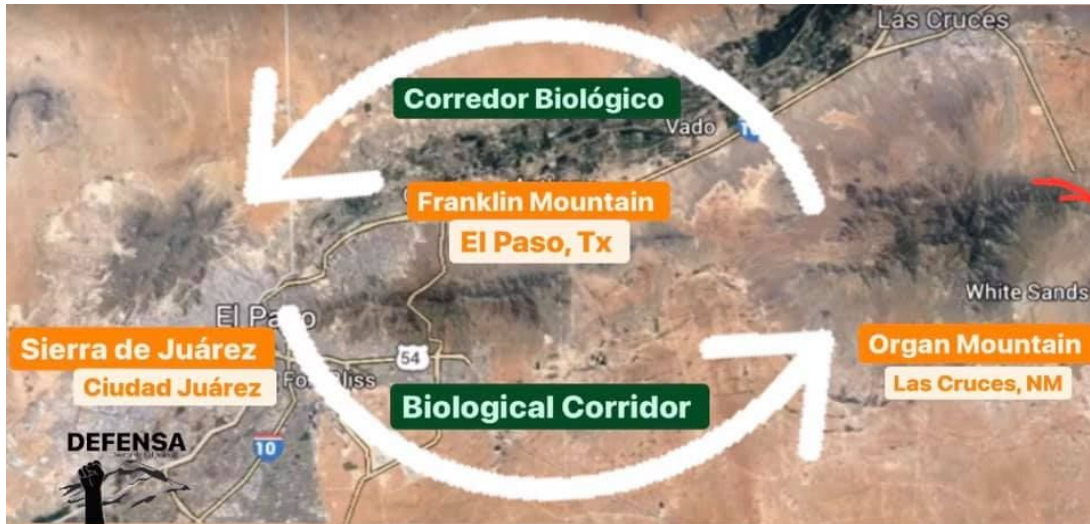
C: Jeanette Narvaez, Green Hope Project

Reconnecting Our Sierras / Reconectando Nuestras Sierras



Conservation without Borders

For the quality of life of all people and wildlife



C: Sierra de Juárez Colectivo



C: Sierra de Juárez Colectivo

A Few of the Many Organizations Making an Impact



National:

- The Nature Conservancy
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Defenders of Wildlife
- World Wildlife Foundation

Carnivores:

- Texas Lobo Coalition
- Texas Native Cats
- Texans for Mountain Lions
- Panthera
- The Mountain Lion Foundation

Local:

- The Frontera Land Alliance
- Sierra de Juárez Colectivo
- Friends of the Rio Bosque
- El Paso Chapter of the Audubon Society
- Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club
- Juárez Limpio
- Keystone Heritage Park
- Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition

Regional:

- Keep Big Bend Wild
- Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition
- Sky Island Alliance



Thank you!