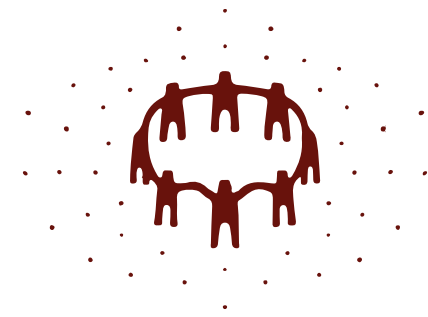




PATHWAYS

T E X A N

DATES
BELONGS TO
TRAVELING WITH:



Hello friends!

We begin this journey across South Texas for the upcoming total eclipse eager to mend our attention and ready to repair our capacity for presence and enchantment. We've been caught up with big moves, shifts in work, time with family, and the grief of a world at war with itself. You know it well. It can be hard to pause and revel in awe or sit in satisfaction with the weight we're carrying.

This celestial event provides an opportunity to experience lightness and resurrect the wildness within us. Being in a relationship with our world isn't just about navigating physical terrain; it's about cultivating deep, reciprocal listening. It's involves seeing the land as more than just a backdrop or a resource, but as a friend experiencing life along with us; witnessing the joy, laughter, loss, and renewal as we do.

This returning force wells up from deep inside us and propels us through our lives. We seek it in our quiet thoughts walking among the trees or mingling with kindred spirits we can't help but be drawn to.

A friendship is built on time, togetherness, and touch. From this foundation, we can rediscover the changing rhythms and wisdom of the Earth and ourselves. The ecosystems we spend time in will help us feel at home again before a new season of growth begins. Like meeting a friend after an overdue reunion, we will soon see each other in a new light.

M & M

Route

The map illustrates a travel route starting in **El Paso**, Texas, and ending in **San Antonio**, Texas. The route is highlighted with a thick black line and directional arrows. Key stops along the way include **Ciudad Juárez** (in Chihuahua), **Marfa**, **Terlingua** (near Big Bend National Park), **Del Rio**, and **San Antonio**. The route crosses the state boundaries of Texas, Chihuahua, and Coahuila. Major highways are shown as orange lines with route numbers. A north arrow is positioned in the bottom right corner of the map.

A Travelers Blessing

We head into these lands as humble visitors
May we arrive with reverence
May our footsteps be gentle
May we embrace each fleeting moment

As we enter canyons carved by time's patient hands
May we awaken to the eternal beauty of our planet
May we be find solace in the desert sands
May we gain strength from the mountain peaks
And awaken to the beauty before us

As we pay respects to all who have protected these grounds
May we be protected and held as well
May we find peace and attune to ourselves
May we carry the lessons we find far and wide

EN ROUTE

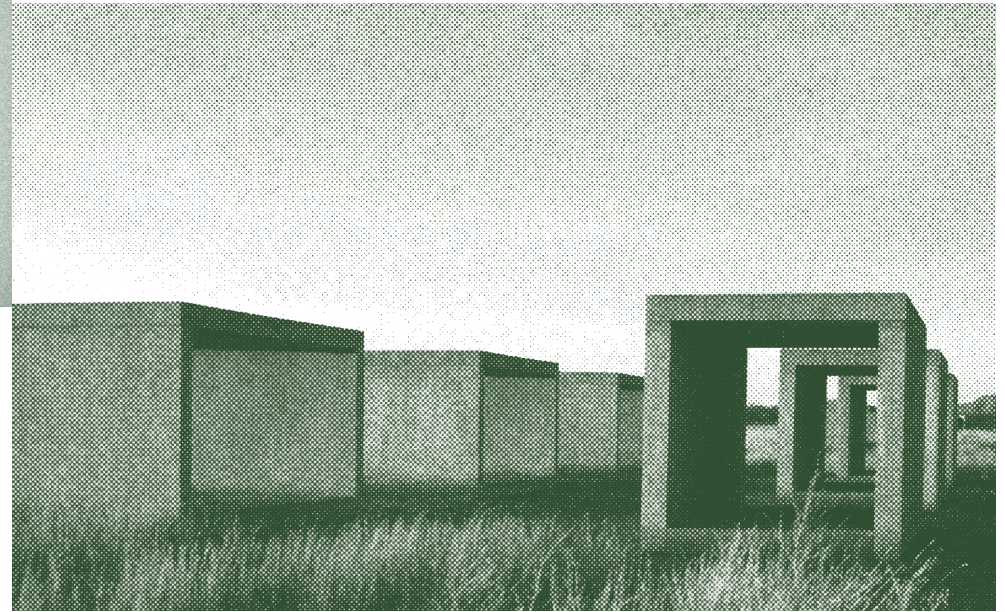
El Paso → Terlingua

This field guide serves as a companion for exploration. As we head to the southern tip of Texas, we encounter the Rio Grande River, a defining feature along the US-Mexico border, carving canyons like Santa Elena. It forms a significant portion of the order between the United States and Mexico then flows through Big Bend National Park providing a lifeline for diverse ecosystems within the park. We will also pass the Rio Grande Rift, a geological rift zone that has influenced the formation of the park's diverse terrain.

Terlingua, our first waypoint, was historically a mining town and now serves as a gateway to the park for visitors. The physical barriers and increased law enforcement nearby the Mexico-United States border have disrupted wildlife migration patterns, fragmented habitats, and obstructed free movement for both humans and other species within the region. Water diversion for agricultural, industrial, and urban use upstream has also impacted ecosystems within the park.

A cultural stop on our way there is the city of **Marfa**. It has humble origins as a railroad water stop before becoming an infamous art mecca nestled in the Chihuahuan Desert.

It's a perfect example of the interplay between recent interventions (art installations and architectural designs by a new class of investors drawn to the town's remote beauty) in quiet opposition to the legacy of Marfa's ecological and cultural heritage (indigenous boulder glyphs and long time residents committed to preventing exploitation for the sake of economic development). This dynamic is not unique to Marfa, but reflects the broader struggle over the use and meaning of land in the American West and globally.



Artwork by Donald Judd at the Chinati Foundation

Safety and Stewardship

- Be prepared for heat, humidity, and sudden rainstorms. Carry water, sunscreen, hats, and protective clothing.
- Water scarcity is a concern in many parts of Texas. Use water sparingly and with intention. Consider taking only what you need
- Be aware of local wildlife, including snakes and insects. Respect their habitats and nesting areas by keeping a safe distance.
- Carry emergency supplies such as first aid kits, flashlights, and extra food and water.
- “Leave No Trace” by minimizing your impact. Pack out all trash and leave natural areas as you found them.

WAYPOINT

Big Bend

The forces that have shaped the land breathe loudly in the Chihuahuan Desert. Southern Texas is a region known for its diverse ecosystems, rugged beauty, and soon, a captivating celestial event.

Nestled in this expanse lies **Big Bend National Park**, a haven for resilient flora and fauna. In the center of the park rise the Chisos Mountains. A lush island amidst a sea of desert, they are biologically isolated making them a unique ecosystem. The Rio Grande and Rio Conchos are the major instruments that have carved and created much of the landscape we see today.

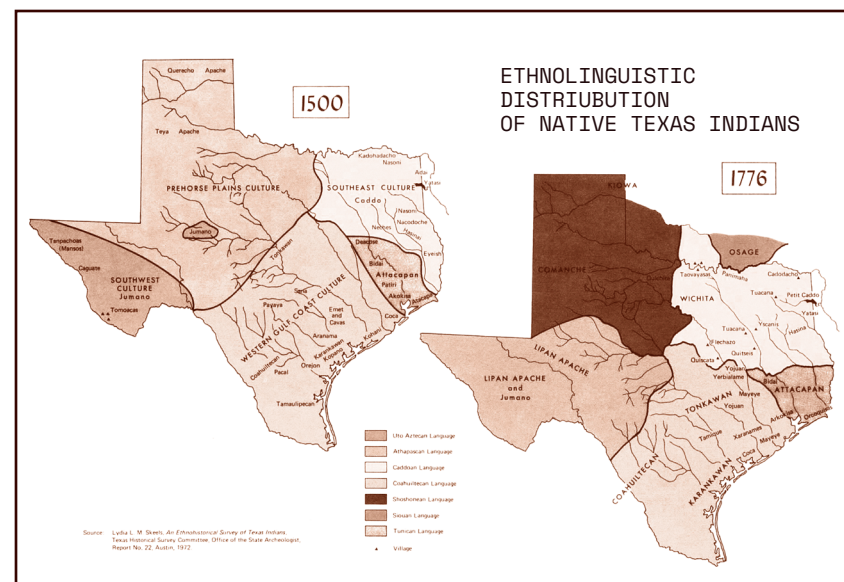
In more recent times, humans have become the dominant force in shaping the land, from the trails created by indigenous communities to the widespread development by modern Texans.

The **Jumano** once made their life along the Rio Grande's valleys and thrived in the river floodplains of Western Texas. They became an important middleman in the trade of goods between the Caddo tribes

of east Texas and Pueblo people. The tribe began to decline with the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s and then fully disintegrating as many fled south into Mexico or became part of the encroaching Apache(Inde) Tribes.

Plains Indians such as the **Apache** moved south from Canada and acquired horses which allowed them to expand into rival areas. They farmed crops of corn, beans, and squash and moved nomadically following bison. Another powerful plains tribe, the Comanche would move into western Texas in the 1740s challenging the Apaches, eventually causing the tribe to split.

The **Comanches** were great horsemen, owning three times more horses than any other tribe. Horses were of vital importance to the Comanche and they were important to their control of large amounts of Texas and fierce resistance to European and eventually American encroachment.



Tips for Visiting

- Check the weather forecasts, road conditions, and trail closures before you go. Stop by Visitor Centers for fresh updates.
- Most of Big Bend is located in a desert environment, so staying hydrated is essential. Carry plenty of water with you at all times and wear sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses to protect yourself from the strong sun.
- Respect the park's flora and fauna by staying on designated trails, and properly disposing of waste. Avoid feeding wildlife and be mindful of your impact.
- The park is also quite remote so download offline maps in case you lose cell service. Bring emergency supplies like food, water, a first-aid kit, a map, and a flashlight just in case.
- Enjoy the incredibly clear night skies and stunning stargazing opportunities. Consider a ranger-led stargazing program and stay up late to catch the best view.

River Floodplain

ELEVATION

1200 - 1800 ft.

The floodplain of the Rio Grande makes it an interesting riparian ecosystem. Arroyos, or dry waterways, are a common feature of this landscape, which seasonally fill with water or flood during heavy rain.

The Rio Grande Village Nature Trail offers access to the most accessible floodplain units, harboring an incredible diversity of plants. Among them are some of the largest in the ecosystem, such as the *Lanceleaf Cottonwood*. Mesic soils nurture abundant *Willows*, alongside well-known shrubs like *Screwbean (Tornillo)*(2) and *Honey Mesquite* (1).

Springtime in this region offers a unique opportunity to witness the blossoms of many regional wildflowers and cacti. In the moister soils, you can spot *Globemallow* (7) and its cup-shaped orange-whitish flowers. In more open areas along the floodplain, clusters of flowering *Desert Bailey* (5), also known as the desert Sunflower, can be found.

The *Engelmann Prickly Pear* (8), *Tasajillo (Christmas Cactus)* (3), *Blind Prickly Pear*, *Brown-flowered*

Cactus, and the *Strawberry Cactus* are among the cacti commonly found in this ecosystem.

While most animals in the area are nocturnal, the abundance of water attracts a diverse array of creatures. During the day, keep an eye out for *Tri-Colored Herons* (4) near the ponds of the Rio Grande. At dusk or night, watch for some of the region's more elusive residents, such as the *American Badger* and the rare *Spotted Skunk* (6), easily identifiable by its striking pattern.



Shrub Desert

ELEVATION

1800 - 3500 ft.

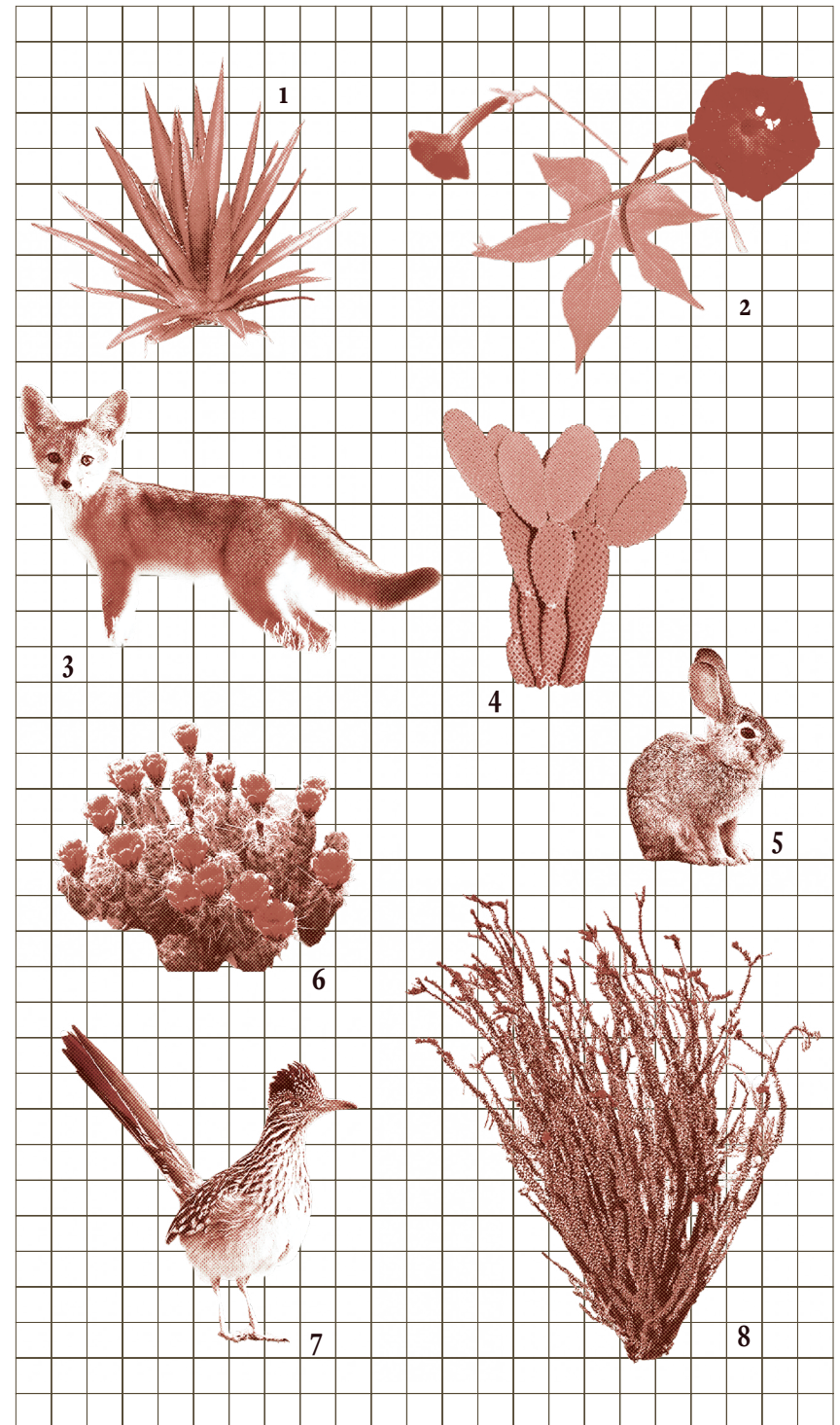
The Chihuahuan Desert is astonishingly biodiverse, hosting more cacti species than any other area in the world. This region boasts the quintessential desert landscape, with widely spaced, relatively low-growing plants and a plethora of succulents species that cover approximately 49% of the park.

Trees and shrubs are scattered throughout the arid parts of the park and include the *Lechuguilla* (1), *Candelilla*, and the iconic *Ocotillo* (8), often referred to as the “coachwhip” due to its resemblance to bundled buggy whips. During particularly wet summers, the rare but stunning twining *Scarlet Morning Glory* (2) may be seen growing on low shrubs near the common *Creosote Bush*.

The most recognizable plants in this area are the *Blind Prickly Pear* (4), *Pencil Cholla*, and *Strawberry Cacti* (6). Rare cacti that prefer the open desert flats are the endemic *Chisos Pitaya*, which often grows near living or dead *Lechuguilla*.

This harsh yet delicate desert shrubland provides refuge for a range of resilient animals. *Coyotes* roam the night, their haunting cries occasionally piercing the silence. *Kit foxes* (3), small desert dwellers, may be spotted during the day near water sources. Another desert icon, the *Roadrunner* (7), is often seen chasing lizards and small prey across open areas. *Desert Cottontail Rabbits* (5), *Bobcats*, and *Kangaroo Rats* also move between the desert environment and the grasslands.

The shrub lands are full of a variety of reptiles and insects, ranging from the more common *Texas Banded Gecko* to the more elusive *Black-tailed Rattlesnake* and *Tarantula*. Look for *Banded Geckos* scurrying across roads in the evening.



Sotol-Grassland

ELEVATION

3200-5500ft

The Grasslands, situated just above the desert, make up another 49% of the park. A distinct Sotol-Grassland belt encircles the Chisos Mountains carrying slightly more precipitation and a higher elevation which creates a dynamic landscape bursting with diversity.

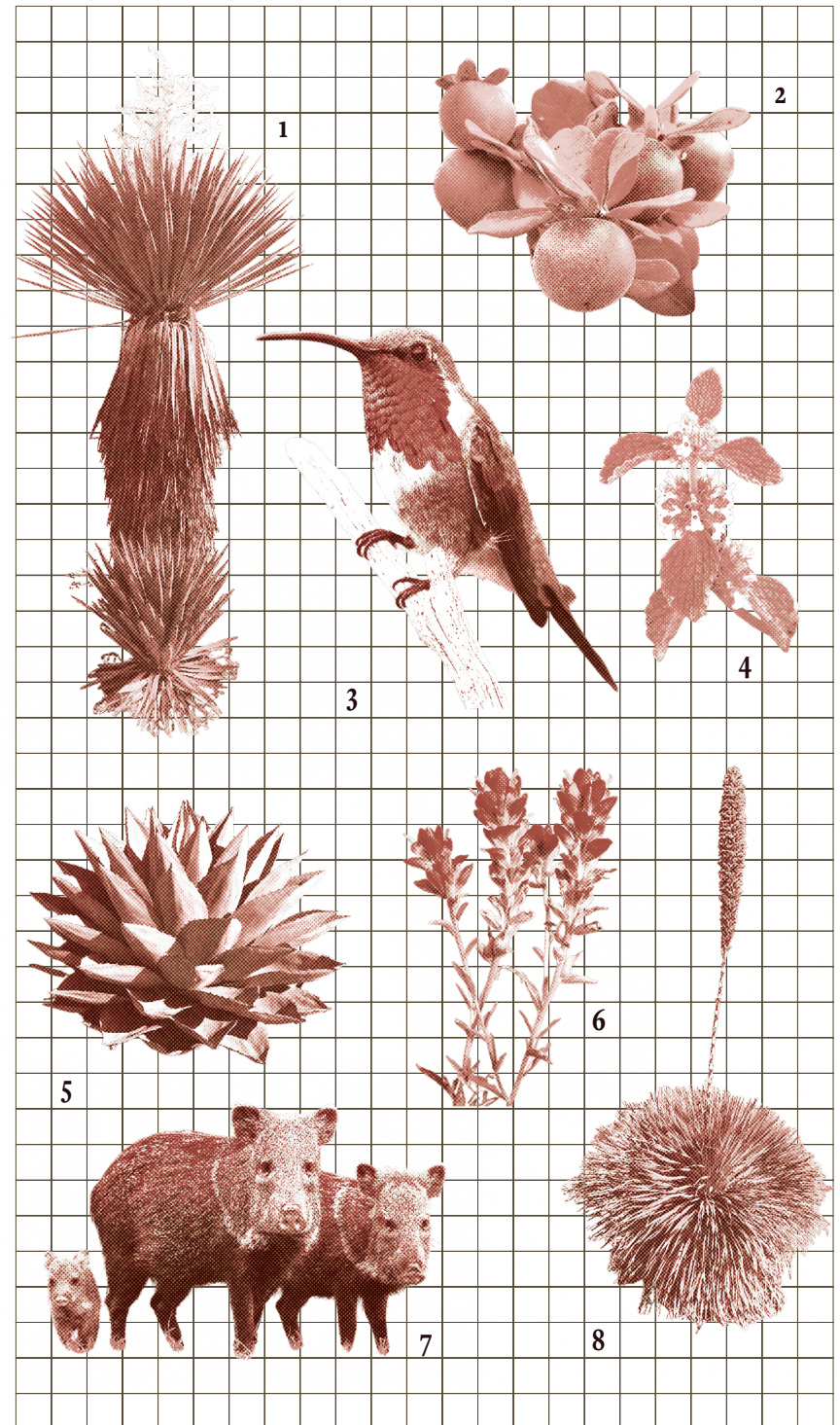
Among the most captivating features of this region are the *Giant Dagger Yuccas* (1). These plants, adorned with yellow plumes in spring, stand as a testament to life's resilience even in the harshest conditions. Adding to the area's vibrancy are the *Texas Persimmon* (2) and the *Hackberry* (*Granjeno*), small trees bearing delicious fruit that serve as vital food sources for birds and animals throughout spring and summer.

Sotol (8) is a landmark succulent plant that can grow up to 15 feet tall and is used for making traditional Mexican alcoholic beverages. The *Harvard Agave* (5), or Century Plant, grows in the open hillsides and flats, towering up to 30 feet and boasting a lifespan of over 20 years.

The wildflowers in this area are breathtaking. *New Mexico Verbena* is a lovely purple flower that blooms in the spring, while *Bracted Paintbrush* (6) adds a bright red

color to the landscape. *Common Horehound* (4) from the mint family is a minty-smelling plant here that can be used in herbal teas and applications. *Tobosa grass* and *Chino Grama* are abundant grass species that can be seen in the high plains and foothills.

This area is also a haven for numerous animal species, including *Mule Deer*, *Javelinas* (*Collared Peccaries*) (7), *Pronghorn Antelope*, *Lucifer Hummingbird* (3), and *Varied Bunting*. Javelinas are North America's only native pig and can often be seen traveling in small groups as they forage roots, fruits, and small animals with their adorable snouts. Despite their poor sight, their curious nature sometimes makes them approachable.



Chisos Mountains

ELEVATION

3700 - 7800 ft

The Chisos Mountains ecosystem stands out as one of the most captivating and surprising within the park. It is located above the grasslands and extends to the tops of the nearby peaks. Despite only comprising about 2% of the park's ecosystems, it is home to some of the largest plants due to the abundant moisture at higher elevations.

Coniferous and broadleaf species govern the vegetation here, with towering trees and shrubs like *Mexican Pinyon* (3), *Ponderosa Pine* (5), and *Arizona Cypress* gracing the landscape. *The Weeping Juniper*, with its drooping foliage and peeling bark, is found nowhere else in the United States. *Mountain Sage* (8) is another beautiful plant endemic to the Chisos that attracts many hummingbirds visiting the region.

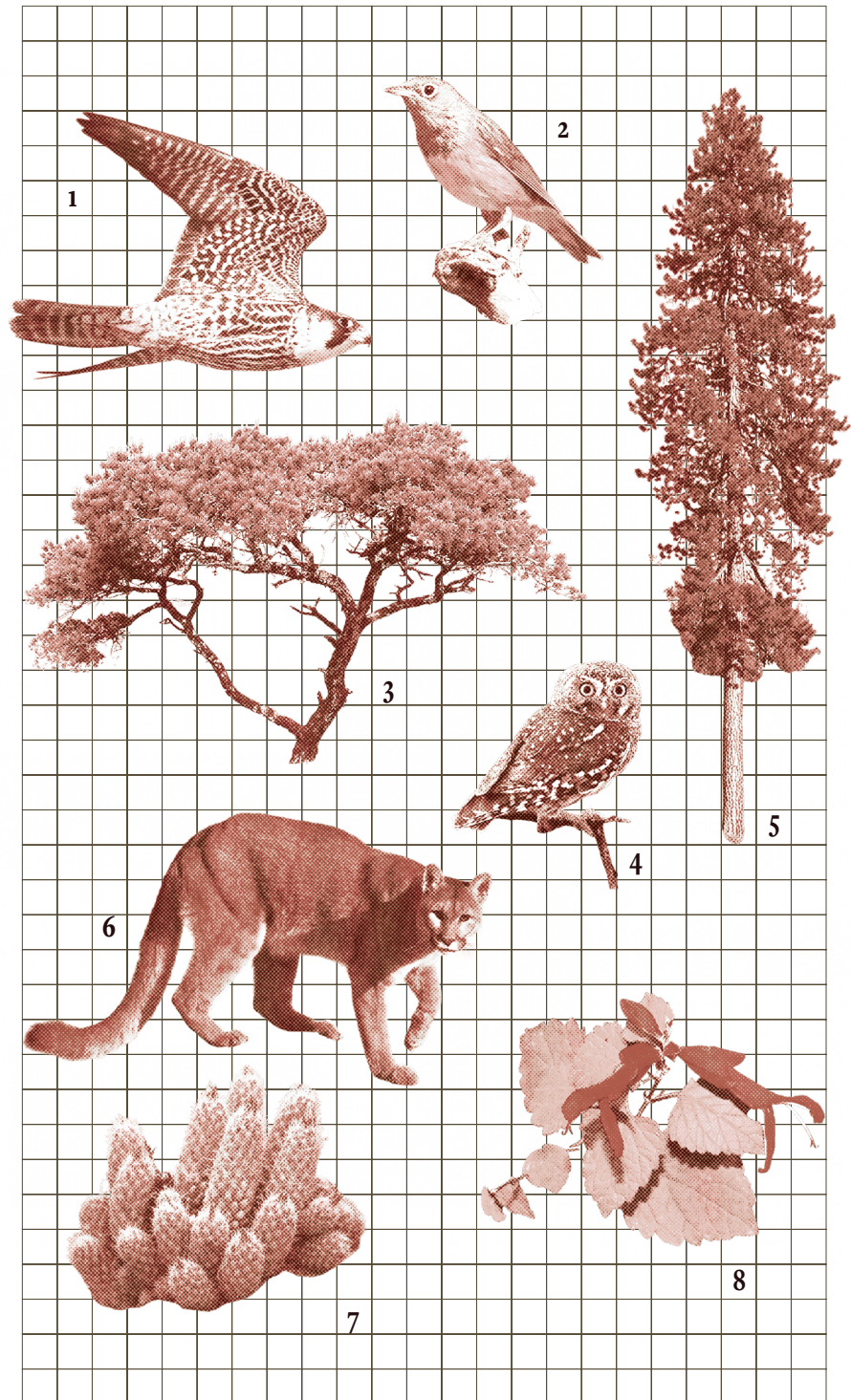
The vibrant array of wildflowers includes the *Woolly Loco*, *Longspur Columbine*, and *Evening Primrose* — a favorite of bees, moths, and hummingbirds — adding splashes of color to the landscape.

Cacti here such as the *Dark-Spined* and *Chisos Prickly Pears* can be easily identified by their paddle-shaped leaves and sharp spines. The *Biscuit Cactus* is often found growing

on the slopes of Mount Emory among woodland litter with bright yellow flowers. Meanwhile, the *Mountain Cob Cactus* (7), with its cylindrical shape adorned with small, red spines, thrives in rocky areas.

The mountain woodlands are home to animals adapted to the cool, moist environment. These include the *Sierra v Carmen Whitetail Deer* and *Mule Deer*. The largest cat in the region, the *Mountain Lion* (6), is a rare predator that prefers stalking these cooler highlands. They are an important factor in maintaining the ecological balance of the region, helping keep deer and small grazer populations in check.

Many birds can also be seen soaring and nesting at higher elevations. Look for *Peregrine Falcons* (1) that can dive at speeds up to 240 miles per hour to catch prey. Listen for the iconic call of the *Colima Warbler* (2) when hiking in the mountains. The tiny *Elf Owls* (4), the world's smallest owl, also make their home in hollowed trees but can be hard to spot.



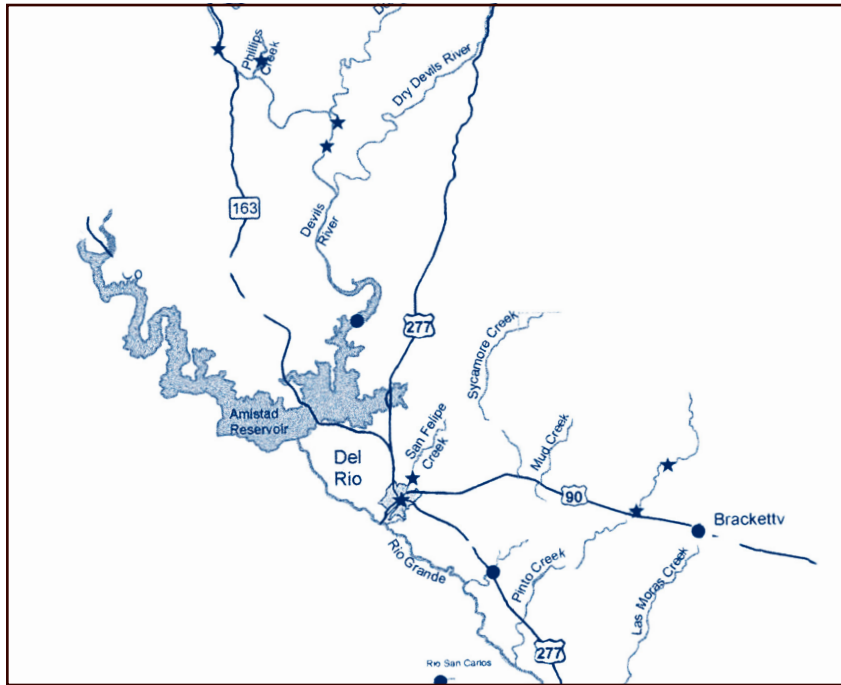
Observations

WAYPOINT

Devils River

Our next waypoint is Devils River. It is possibly one the hardest regions to reach in Texas, making it one of the most pristine natural areas in Texas. A true gem of the Lone Star State, the river is known for its crystal-clear waters, towering limestone cliffs, and abundant wildlife.

The river flows underground for roughly 20 miles of its 90 mile journey. As it flows underground, the fine limestone and gravel act as a filter, creating the iconic clear blue water. This distance and the 22-mile road that leads there have made it a refuge, and a perfect place to stargaze. Along its banks, we will observe the eclipse.



EVENT

Solar Eclipse

The total solar eclipse of 2024 will be occurring during a super-moon as the moon will be in perigee, the closest it can be to the earth.

Fear and uncertainty surround eclipses because they were historically such mysterious events often attributed to mythical creatures. The sudden darkening of the sky during a solar eclipse or the reddening of the moon during a lunar eclipse evoked unease.

There is also a clarity and harmony that arises. A spectacle like this shared with all life on Earth arrests our attention and relinquishes our sense of control.

One Ojibway (Wisconsin) story tells of this sacred motion and the how the sun never ceases to offer its light and life to us. It is during this moment that the moon provides the sun the opportunity to rest. It stands as a reminder to never take any aspect of this world for granted and to slow one's thoughts in reference of the Creation.

The totality will last for 4 minutes and 28 seconds as the sun and moon unite. Visibility will begin in the Pacific Ocean, passing through

northern Mexico into Texas and up through Maine before ending in the Atlantic.

In the darkness of the eclipse and the shadow it leaves behind, the light within you might shine brighter. The effects of an eclipse can linger and the time that follows can be ideal for connecting with your inner guidance. Reflect on what you want to bring into your life. Nurture your mind, body, and heart to welcome these insights with strength.

Eclipse Starts	12:10:55 PM CDT	Glasses on
Total Eclipse Starts	1:28:25 PM CDT	
Maximum Eclipse	1:30:08 PM CDT	Duration: 2h 40m
Total Eclipse End	1:31:53 PM CDT	
Eclipse End	2:51:33 PM CDT	Back to life

Eclipse Safety

- View the Sun through eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer during the partial eclipse phases before and after totality.
- You can view the eclipse directly without proper eye protection only when the Moon completely obscures the Sun's bright face - during the brief and spectacular period known as totality. (You'll know it's safe when you can no longer see any part of the Sun through eclipse glasses or a solar viewer.)
- As soon as you see even a little bit of the bright Sun reappear after totality, immediately put your eclipse glasses back on or use a handheld solar viewer to look at the Sun.

MEDITATION

Embracing Transformation

Take a few deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth

With each breath, imagine releasing any tension or worries you may be holding onto

Allow yourself to fully relax and become present in this moment

Acknowledge the profound transformation taking place both within and around you

Visualize yourself standing under the night sky, bathed in the soft glow of the moon

Imagine a beam of silver light enveloping you in its gentle embrace

Consider the changes you wish to make, embracing and making space for the emotions that arise

Express gratitude for your journey and relay your trust in life's timing

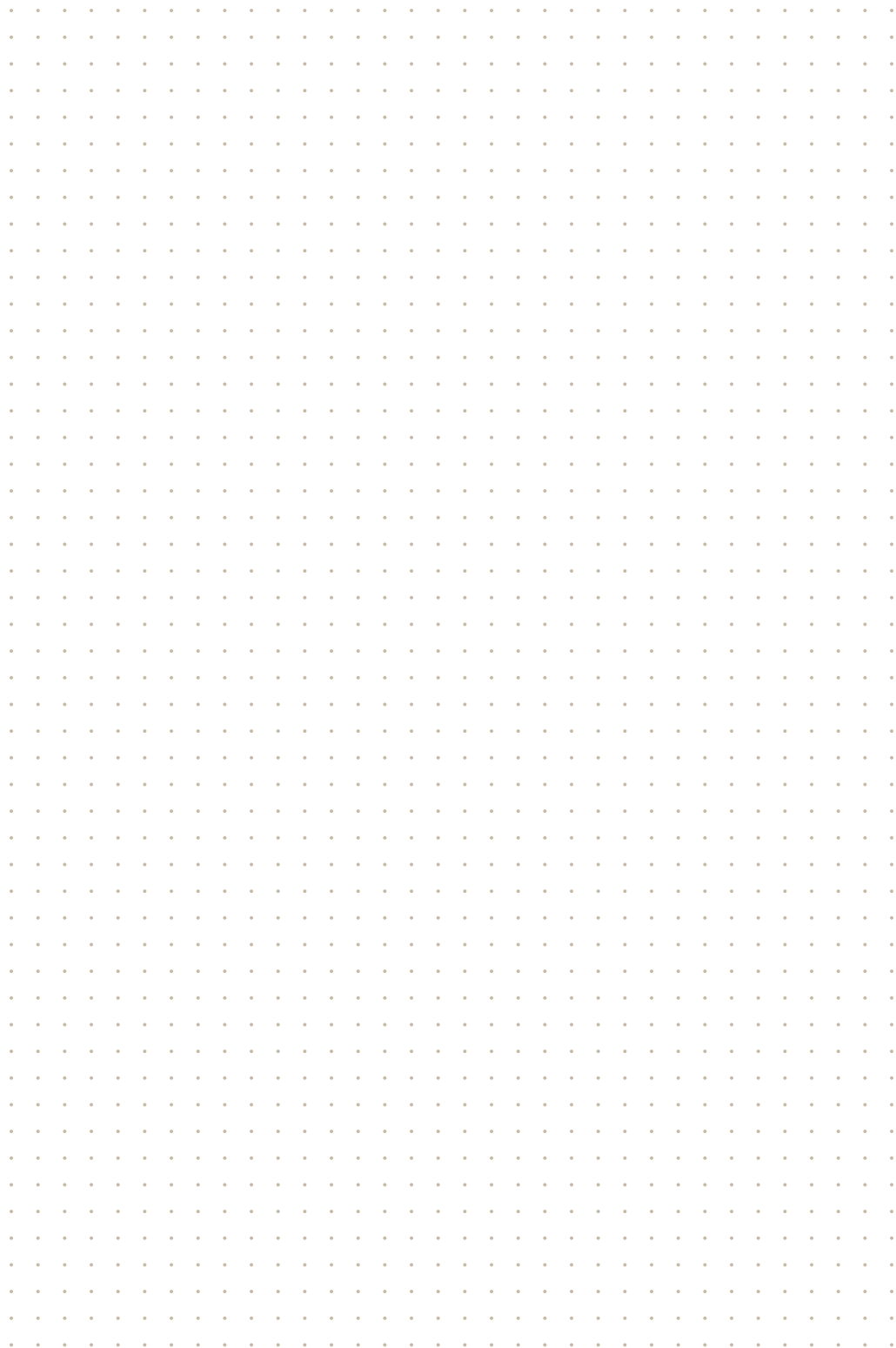
Recognize that every moment of rest offers an opportunity for growth and renewal

Envision yourself stepping boldly into a new stage

Take a few more deep breaths, savoring the any clarity that has flown in

Gently wiggle your fingers and toes as you return to your physical body

When you feel ready, return and note down any reflections



READING

We Are Water

*Falling in drops in the sweet way
Rushing forward and toward in the tides
Pulsing through the secret veins
Running relentlessly
endlessly*

*Enchanting in the babbling way
Carving deep through stones and soil
Wandering though the plains
Nourishing tirelessly
lovingly*

The earth's surface and the human body are made up of more than half of this vital building block of life. Water is what makes life as we know it. It is an element of creation responsible for nourishing mighty forests and carving vast canyons upon the land. We see the influence and presence of water even when it is not visible.

In the desert, the legacies of once great rivers and oceans surround us. Water is the storyteller of the land we walk on, the keeper of long lost secrets, and the life force of the planet we call home. Water continues to shape this expansive region, more than ever through human intervention which strips through occupation. Our rushing tide must hold traces of the past that will not be washed away.

An eclipse offers us the opportunity to witness a new moon at its height. Along with the tides, the moon is known to pull groundwater closer to the surface of the earth. It is comforting to imagine the the water running in the earth rising to meet the plants and beings that sink their roots deep in its soil. In this moment of rest, experience the water deep inside our bodies, rising and uplifting us with it. With this momentum, letting our bodies surrender to the pull. We are all water, renewed.

How can we honor water in new and old ways? How can acknowledge its impact on this land? How can we honor its power to nourish and cleanse?

REGENERATE

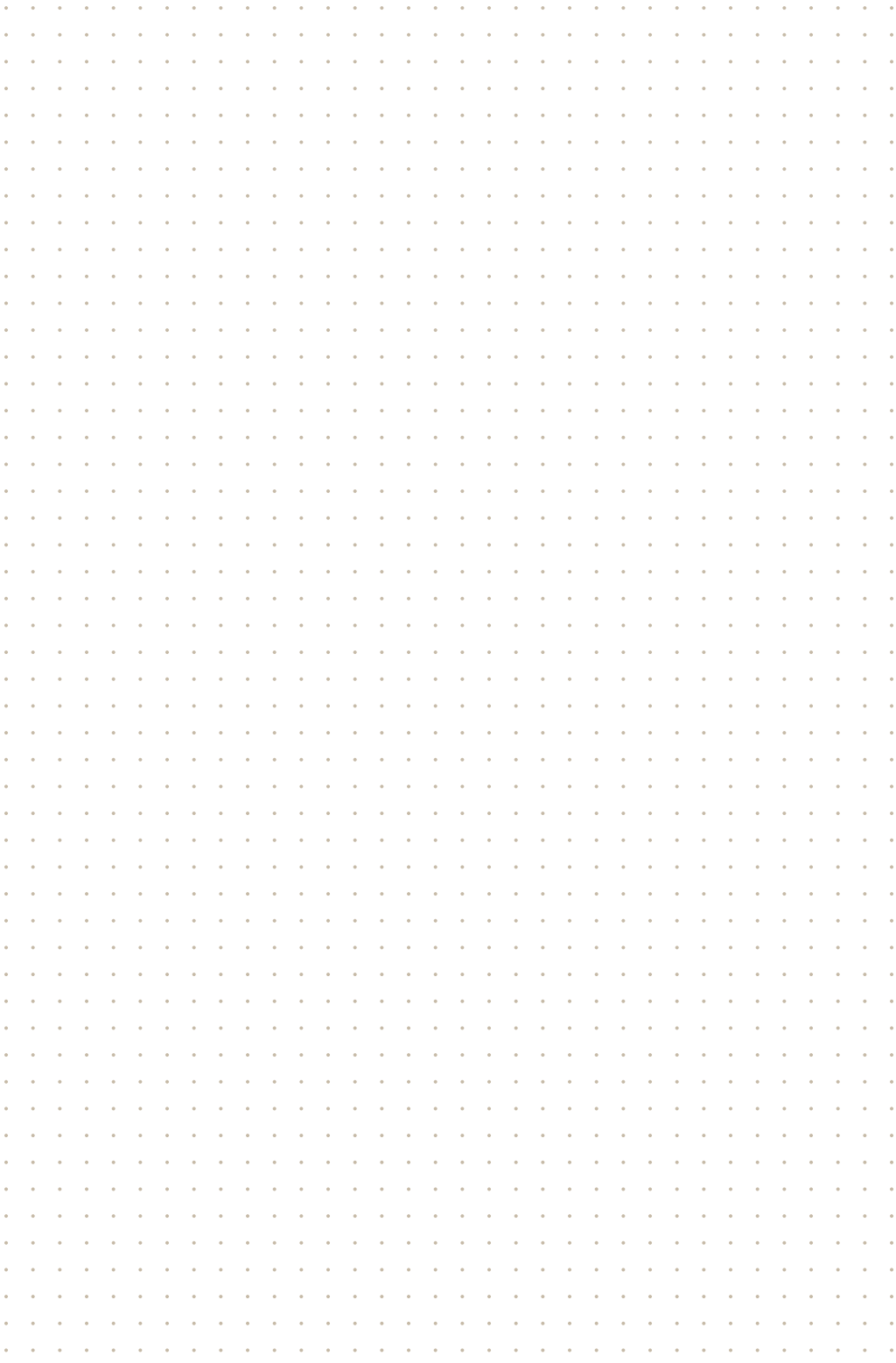
Post Eclipse

Moving through darkness involves confronting adversity rather than avoiding it. It involves engaging with the challenges we encounter with sincerity and a spirit of inquiry, rather than turning away and suppressing.

By facing difficult times head-on, we cultivate a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us, welcoming growth and insight instead of withdrawing into avoidance.

Eclipses are symbolically understood as moments of bold transition. In astrology and spiritual traditions, they are potent times for introspection, releasing old patterns, and opening up to change. In the absence of light, creation can take charge without surveillance. Darkness is a catalyst for growth. Cells divide and multiply, a caterpillar morphs within its cocoon, and shy plants bloom in darkness.

After viewing the eclipse, continue showing yourself and each other care. Engage in meaningful conversations and share what the experience meant for you.



Follow up + Sources

To read and reminisce:

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The Indian Texans by James M. Smallwood (2004)

Queer Nature : A Poetry Anthology edited by Michael Walsh (2022)

National Park Service. “Big Bend National Park (U.S. National Park Service)” (2023)

The Mishomis Book - The Book of the Ojibway by Edward Benton-Banai (1988)