



# LONGHORN CATTLE DRIVE



**BIG BEND RANCH  
STATE PARK**

**PRESIDIO, TEXAS**

## **WELCOME!**

Thank you for participating in the Big Bend Ranch State Park Longhorn Cattle Drive. We have combined our needs in herd management with an educational and interpretive program we hope you will enjoy and remember. We present the following material for your understanding of the herd on Big Bend Ranch State Park. If at any time we may be of help, please call on any of the Park Staff. We want to make this a safe and enjoyable experience.

### ***Big Bend Ranch State Park Staff***

Tony J Gallego – BBRSP Site Superintendent  
Ruben Hernandez – Park Ranger/Wrangler (Range Boss)  
Raul Martinez – Park Ranger/Cowboy  
Miguel Renteria – Park Ranger  
Edmundo Lujan – Park Ranger (Lead Ranger)  
Bill Broyles – Park Ranger/Interpreter  
Victor Rivera – Food Service  
Kenneth Martin – Maintenance Supervisor

***Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center***  
Rod Trevizo

***Fort Leaton State Historic Site***  
Tony Manriquez

### ***Big Bend Stables Staff (Horse Outfitter)***

Linda Walker – Owner  
Brian Waldrock – Wrangler  
Kent Potter – Wrangler  
Ofelio Monje – Wrangler  
Janelle DeGroot - Wrangler  
Kelly Sufficool - Wrangler  
Lisa Mikow - Wrangler

***Entertainer - Bill Davis***

***Travel Writer – Denise Dube***

## ♦ RULES & ETIQUETTE

Over a hundred years of working cattle have forged a set of unwritten rules for people working together with horses. Besides being good manners, this "code" has come about for personal safety. Other rules are the result of being in a State Park. Please observe the following customs and regulations:

- ♦ The Range Boss is Ruben Hernandez who is in charge of the herd. Ruben has been at Big Bend Ranch for over 30 years. Though he knows little English, his knowledge of the herd and the terrain is tremendous. It is through his guidance that the wranglers of Big Bend Ranch and Big Bend Stables gather these longhorns. Please listen to the advice of the wranglers on safety and care of the mounts.
- ♦ This is first and foremost a Texas State Park. Collecting or damaging any rocks, artifacts, plants, or animals (including antlers, skulls, etc.) is prohibited. Firearms and pets are not allowed. No public consumption or display of alcoholic beverages.
- ♦ When working cattle, do not ride between someone and the herd without asking permission. This can squeeze someone into a hazardous situation. Riding between a rider and cattle without permission on ranches is an unspoken way of saying the other person is not doing their job, and causes hard feelings.
- ♦ Remember your horse is a living animal with feelings. Do not abuse them by taking them into very rough areas when there is an option. Unnecessary running will tire a horse. Forget the Saturday afternoon western and remember the horses are the ones doing most of the work. Proper respect for your mount will win you the respect of others.
- ♦ Do not get between the camp cook and the fire. The cook is busy and needs to do things quickly. Often they need to take coals from the fire to the dutch ovens. If you get between a cook who is quickly turning around with a shovel full of coals and he accidentally drops them down your boot tops, this will be an easy rule to remember!
- ♦ No ground fires allowed.
- ♦ Please do not "chouse" the cattle. (Chouse is to needlessly run, chase, or disturb cattle.) If you carry a rope, please do not rope at the cattle for practice or without permission from the Range Boss. This is to prevent injury to you, cattle, horses, or others. The staff will give advice on how to safely handle the herd.
- ♦ While we will have a mixture of experienced riders and stock people along with inexperienced persons, we will expect everyone to follow instructions and regulations. Riders who truly are experienced will know why we have certain demands, and should set an example.
- ♦ Please respect the performers at the campfire. Do not interrupt them with loud talking etc. These people are some of the finest in the business and everyone will want to hear them.



- ◆ The natural and cultural resources of Big Bend Ranch State Park must be protected. If you are asked not to ride in a specific area, please comply. Please do not stray from the crew at any time. This includes when everyone is still saddling and while rounding up the cattle in the pasture.
- ◆ You are inheriting a legacy that made Texas great and provided the world with a symbol of America. Take pride in what you do, and all else will follow naturally!

## ◆ PURPOSE OF THE HERD

The purpose of maintaining Longhorn Cattle at Big Bend Ranch State Park is to provide a demonstration herd to interpret the ranching heritage of the Big Bend area. The retention of a cattle herd at Big Bend Ranch State Park will be as an adjunct only to the park's interpretive program. The longhorn herd will be managed under the following guidelines:

- ◆ The herd will be micro-managed to ensure the preservation of BBRSP's cultural and natural resources. Cattle will be confined to pastures predetermined in BBRSP's current management plan and will be monitored to prevent damage to endangered or threatened species of plants and animals, significant archeological sites, or historic structures.
- ◆ The Longhorn will be used only in an interpretational perspective and as a small part of the overall operation of BBRSP. Their presence will not override park operations in regards to visitor use and services. The herd will be used in programs and events pertinent to their presence.
- ◆ The herd will be managed to be financially self-sufficient through the sale of the yearly calf crop and older animals to be replaced. Resources, however, will not be sacrificed for profits.
- ◆ The genetic integrity of the herd will be maintained to high standards through a well-planned breeding program and registry with the Cattlemen's Longhorn Registry.
- ◆ The Longhorn herd will be managed within the directions outlined by TPWD Commission policy and legislative mandates.
- ◆ The Longhorn herd will demonstrate the ranching tradition of the Texas Big Bend in general and specifically of Big Bend Ranch.
- ◆ The program will offer active interpretation of traditional ranching procedures and customs.
- ◆ The herd will carry on the genetic integrity of a breed of animals historically important to several Texas cultures.

## ◆ HISTORY OF THE TEXAS LONGHORN

The Longhorn is an example of how domestic animals can evolve under "survival of the fittest". Ancestors of the Longhorn came to the Western Hemisphere with Columbus in 1492.

As Spanish occupation of Mexico expanded, they brought their stock with them. Different breeds of Moroccan-Iberian bloodlines were shipped into the new world many to the same location where they grazed together. In many instances, these animals escaped, became wild, rapidly multiplied, and gradually drifted up from central Mexico, reaching the present-day northern states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Texas by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Through two centuries of uncontrolled breeding, individual Iberian strains had fused into one widespread speckled type, known as Creole, *corriente*, or straight-run cattle. The cattle adapted by natural selection to the climatic extremes, dense vegetation, predators, and the often-harsh environment. The result was an extremely hardy animal, domestic in origin and wild by nature.

Texans returning home after the Civil War found a shattered economy and few prospects. There was, however, a market for beef in the north, which could be met with the vast numbers of cattle roaming the wilds of Texas. The result has been called the greatest migration of domestic animals in the history of the world. An estimated 10 million cattle herded by 40,000 cowboys and one million horses made their way to markets and railheads in the next two decades. While the cattlemen and herders were by the large of Anglo heritage, Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans also represented their numbers. It was truly an American endeavor, which would become history and legend.

Originating in Texas, long trails snaked there way northward to the waiting markets. Early trail drivers would become immortal in the names of the routes taken such as the Goodnight Loving and Chisholm Trails. Along these paths fame and infamy would be bestowed upon trail towns and a whole lore would evolve around cowboys, the Wild West, and Longhorns. The Longhorns, already adapted to adverse conditions, were perfect for the long treks, terrain, and dangerous river crossings. Their temperament, however, was not of a completely domestic nature, and folklore was colored not only with stampedes and untimely death, but also recognition of superior horsemen and bravery.

By the end of the Nineteenth Century the range was fenced, railheads came closer to areas where cattle were produced, and the long trail drives died. Ranchers imported other breeds of cattle known to put on weight quicker and of more pacific temper. Within a few years the animal that opened a whole new economy, founded tradition, and created an image that would be identified with America the world over was almost extinct. A few Texas cowmen were keeping small herds of Longhorns for the

love of the cattle and for what they stood for. In 1927, concerned individuals led by Senator John B. Kendrick of Wyoming established a herd in Oklahoma in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. In the history of the Texas Longhorn, seven pioneer families contributed in saving them from extinction. Those seven families are Cap Yates, Milby Butler, Graves Peeler, M.P. Wright, J.G. Phillips, John Hatton & Will C. Barns, & Emil Marks. The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge was a big contributor as well. It is from these bloodlines that the herd at Big Bend Ranch State Park is alive today.

Interest in Longhorns as a beef animal has revived in the last half of the Twentieth Century. Longhorns are known for their low birth weight, and Longhorn bulls are bred to heifers of other breeds to produce a low weight first calf to ease delivery. Longhorns are well adapted to hot arid climates and range more like wild animals and utilize browse better than the less hardy breeds that stay closer to water and may overgraze as a result. Longhorns are also very protective of their young, and in many places do not require predator control to raise a calf to weaning size. A benefit being recognized by a nation increasingly aware of health concerns is that grass fed Longhorn beef is not only lower in calories and cholesterol than other beef breeds, but also even when compared to skinned and baked chicken. The Longhorn has returned to Texas.

## ◆ HISTORY OF THE LONGHORN AT BIG BEND RANCH

Longhorn cattle on Big Bend Ranch can be traced back to the 1860's when Milton Faver, the first Anglo rancher in the Big Bend, established his ranch on Cibolo Creek. This is in the vicinity of the Cienega Mountains on Big Bend Ranch State Park, which was at that time under the custody of Faver. His herd was all black or black and white, Mexican cattle with the "F" brand. Many of them had a horn spread of six or seven feet. It is estimated that by the early 1880's there were 20,000 head of the famous "F" brand cattle and some four or five thousand of unbranded cattle running through Presidio County. The herd had grown beyond his ability to brand. Twice each year he would have a round-up for the purpose of branding. They were as wild as antelope and just about as fleet of foot.

The core area for what would become Big Bend Ranch was a sixty-section ranch called La Saucedo purchased by three brothers, Gus, Gallie, and Graves Bogel in 1908. The Bogel's raised cattle and angora goats on La Saucedo until 1935. The ranch was then purchased by two other brothers, Edwin and Mannie Fowlkes who started an aggressive strategy of buying neighboring property. The Fowlkes brothers amassed over 300,000 acres, which they called Big Bend Ranch. The Fowlkes were primarily sheep ranchers and held the property until they sold it in the mid 1950's. Big Bend Ranch passed through two other owners, Len McCormick and Julian Sprague in the late 1950's.



Big Bend Ranch was purchased in 1961 by Robert O. Anderson of the Diamond "A" Cattle Company. Anderson originally stocked the ranch with cattle imported from Mexico. Anderson started stocking registered Longhorns in the mid 1960's. The cattle were ideal for Big Bend Ranch's dry and hot climate, rocky terrain, and thorny vegetation. The cows proved to be very protective of their calves in the face of predators. Anderson continued raising Longhorns of high genetic purity until Texas Parks & Wildlife purchased the property in 1988.

The initial purchase of Big Bend Ranch's 215,000 acres doubled the land ownership of Texas Parks & Wildlife. The area was designated a State Natural Area, but the Longhorns were retained for their interpretational value and genetic integrity. This action sparked a statewide controversy over cattle grazing at Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area. Opponents of the Longhorns felt that their presence did not belong in the desert ecosystem as an introduced species or fit in with the concept of a State Natural Area. Supporters of the herd maintained the cattle represented an important aspect of the history and culture of the Big Bend area.

The controversy continued through two drafts of the management plan for the new park. When presented for public review, the response to each draft was by a large majority in favor of removing all the cattle. In this regard the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission decided to remove the herd by December 31, 1995. This decision was met with local opposition who felt the public review process had been unfairly directed toward groups against the cattle. As a result, the Commission's decision to sell the herd was reversed in 1995 by legislative action in the form of a rider put on a Texas Parks & Wildlife appropriations bill. Another rider on the same bill was introduced to change the name to Big Bend Ranch State Park. The bill passed with both riders attached. By legislative mandate, Big Bend Ranch State Park is obligated to keep the Longhorns with the exception of yearly calf crops and older stock to be replaced.

## ◆ INTERPRETATION

All Longhorns located on Big Bend Ranch State Park will be used for the purpose of interpretation in several areas:

### History/Tradition

The herd will be used to exhibit husbandry traditions in Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American cultures. The basis of Longhorns in the early Texas economy, including area ranchers such as Milton Faver, will be interpreted in terms of history and economic relevance. The presence of Longhorns in recent years, such as under Anderson's ownership will also be interpreted as history of BBRSP.

### Active Interpretation

The Longhorns will serve as living exhibits for traditional ranching practices and techniques. In a state becoming more and more urbanized, the actual working, care, and management of the herd will serve as an educational tool for people who are unfamiliar with animal husbandry. Tasks that must be performed such as branding, vaccination, and handling of cattle can be used in interpretational programs. BBRSP will have cattle drives twice a year, one in the spring and another in the fall. The public will be invited to participate. During these drives the public will have the opportunity to see cattle in their pastures, learn how a herd is moved using horses, and take part in working the calf crop.

### **Genetic Repository**

Robert O. Anderson ensured that the Longhorn herd kept a pure and well-respected bloodline. Some groups of Longhorns have been crossed with other European breeds. This herd maintains old bloodlines going back to the cattle at Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge and is important to America's heritage. The herd will be bred and maintained for the pure gene pool they represent. The herd will be used as a visual interpretation as descendants of the original cattle that evolved through natural selection in the Texas brush country.

## **◆ RESOURCE PROTECTION**

The preservation of the resources at BBRSP will have the highest priority in herd management. Cattle will be contained in the designated pastures. Fence lines will be well maintained to keep cattle out of sensitive springs and riparian areas, important archeological sites, historic structures, areas known to harbor endangered or threatened species, and areas where sanitation would be a problem.

The pastures the cattle are kept in will also be closely assessed to monitor grazing pressures on forage, erosion from loss of ground cover and cattle movement, and habitat loss for wildlife. Scheduled rotation will be observed, and unscheduled rotation will be used if needed. Environmental factors such as rainfall and available water will also be considered. Management strategies to benefit wildlife, such as maintaining artificial water sources will also be implemented. It is possible that important archeological sites will be discovered in areas designated for grazing. These sites will be mitigated by controlled documentation and collection if necessary, or they will be fenced to keep cattle off.