

## **Resolution of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club Opposing the Construction of Reinforced Fencing (a Border Wall) in Texas along the International Boundary between the United States and Mexico**

- Whereas,** The Lower Rio Grande in Texas, part of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico, nourishes a series of unique habitats that support over 1,100 plant and 700 vertebrate species, including 20 that are listed as threatened or endangered by the U.S. government.
- Whereas,** Ocelots, which are listed as an endangered species by the U. S. government, live in the wildlife corridor and are at risk of extinction in the U.S. due to loss of habitat and inability to reach potential mates.
- Whereas,** The Lower Rio Grande’s riparian woodlands also provide habitat for rare birds and about one half of all butterfly species found in the United States.
- Whereas,** During fall and spring migrations millions of birds from the Central and Mississippi flyways funnel through the Lower Rio Grande area on their way to and from Central and South America, as do migratory bats and butterflies.
- Whereas,** The US Fish and Wildlife Service has spent \$90 million to purchase and re-vegetate land along the Lower Rio Grande to create a wildlife corridor.
- Whereas,** The Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Bentsen Rio Grande State Park and World Birding Center, Sabal Palms Audubon Refuge, the NABA Butterfly Park, and other protected sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley preserve riparian habitat that supports 20 federally threatened and endangered species and is a vital stopover for millions of migrating birds, bats, and butterflies.
- Whereas,** Ecotourism brings 200,000 visitors and \$125 million annually to the Rio Grande Valley for wildlife viewing and related activities, and cities have invested millions of dollars in projects such as the World Birding Centers to attract ecotourism dollars.
- Whereas,** If habitat is damaged and wildlife suffers, ecotourists will go elsewhere and those investments will be lost.
- Whereas,** The Secure Fence Act enacted by the U. S. Congress calls for “2 layers of reinforced fencing, the installation of additional physical barriers, roads, lighting, cameras, and sensors,” along more than 700 miles of the United States’ southern border, including fencing adjacent to El Paso, from Del Rio to Eagle Pass, and from Laredo to Brownsville in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
- Whereas,** While the stated goal of the Secure Fence Act is to “achieve and maintain operational control over the entire international land and maritime borders of the

United States,” the Border Patrol and Department of Homeland Security have stated that fencing will only slow a crosser down by “five minutes” or less.

**Whereas,** Under the Real ID Act the Secretary of Homeland Security has the unilateral authority to “waive all legal requirements such Secretary, in such Secretary’s sole discretion, determines necessary to ensure expeditious construction of the barriers and roads” needed to comply with the Secure Fence Act.

**Whereas,** In California and Arizona this unprecedented power was used to “waive in their entirety” federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Clean Water Act.

**Whereas,** The proposed border fence is really a “wall” that would either cut through U. S. federal, state, and private sites designated for habitat protection or place those sites on the Mexican side of the border and would not be subject to federal environmental laws due to the Real ID Act.

**Therefore, be it resolved that the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes the construction of a fence or wall along the international boundary between the United States and Mexico within the state of Texas.**

**Further, the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club urges the U. S. Department of Homeland Security to explore alternative means to provide border security other than fencing of the type described in the Secure Fence Act. In such endeavor the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club believes that it is imperative that the Department of Homeland Security refrain from invoking the Real ID Act and that the Department instead uphold and obey all of the laws of the United States of America.**

Adopted by the Lone Star Chapter Executive Committee in August 2007.