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# News Release

## U.S., Mexico Announce Binational Cooperative Conservation Action Plan

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### Salazar, Elvira Underscore Commitment to Protecting and Preserving the Big Bend/Rio Bravo Region

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**BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK**— Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Mexican Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada today announced a working plan that identifies the next steps for the continued coordination between the two countries in the protection and preservation of the transnational Big Bend/Rio Bravo region – North America’s largest and most diverse desert ecosystem.

The Cooperative Action for Conservation in the Big Bend/Rio Bravo Region working plan was developed in close coordination with the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, Mexico’s National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and other partner agencies – and implementation has already begun.

“As neighbors and partners in conservation, the United States and Mexico share more than just a border,” said Secretary Salazar. “We share a commitment toward fulfilling a conservation vision President Roosevelt and

President Camacho proposed over 60 years ago. With the support of Secretary Elvira and our counterparts in Mexico, today's announcement marks a major step in turning this vision into a reality."

"Today, the Governments of Mexico and the United States write a new chapter to our strategic partnership," said Secretary Elvira. "We celebrate putting into actions a model of collaboration for transboundary conservation. The Big Bend-Rio Bravo Natural Area of Binational Interest is a model envisioned by our Presidents; it is a dream shared by many past generations; and a legacy for present and future ones. In sum, it is an example of the best our governments and people can pursue through cooperation and joint work."

"When you come to an area as remote and as beautiful as Big Bend, it truly changes your perception of what a border is and what a border can be," said U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Anthony Wayne. "There is a line - the river in this case - that politically marks the boundaries of our two countries. But for a tourist, for a park ranger, for a conservationist, and for anyone who has visited this spectacular place, one thing is clear: what we share here - the seamless flow of nature across both banks of the river - is far stronger and far more enduring than what divides us."

Home to 446 species of birds, 3,600 species of insects, more than 1,500 plants, and 75 species of mammals, the Big Bend region of Texas and the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Coahuila provide a unique opportunity for scientists, natural resource managers, and park staff to collaborate in areas that will benefit the people, the landscapes, and the wildlife on both sides of the border.

Following the announcement, the Secretaries and Ambassador participated in a wildlife release on the U.S. side of the border, demonstrating the results of successful coordination efforts in reaching a common conservation goal. Joined by members of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Salazar, Elvira, and Wayne helped with the transport and release of 267,000 Rio Grande Silvery Minnows as part of an ongoing recovery project for the endangered species. Earlier this month, Mexico released fifteen bird species on the Mexican side of the border in Chihuahua. The species included: two Red-tailed Hawks, two Roadside Hawks, two American Kestrels, one Gray Hawk, two Great Horned Owls, three Burrowing Owls, and three Cooper's Hawks.

For a fact sheet on the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow, please click [HERE](#)

To view the joint statement announcing the action plan, please click [HERE](#)

For photos from the event, please click, [HERE](#)

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