



**SouthWestern Association of Naturalists**  
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**Resolution on the US-Mexico Border Fence**

**Approved by the membership of the Southwestern Association of Naturalists (SWAN)  
At the Annual Meeting at the University of Memphis, Memphis, TN  
11 April 2008**

WHEREAS, The Southwestern Association of Naturalists is an organization of 791 scientists and others from the United States, Mexico, and Central America concerned about the future of indigenous plants and animals in the American Southwest and who strongly support their conservation based on sound and accurate scientific knowledge; and,

WHEREAS, we are disturbed by potential negative environmental impacts of the Secure Fence Act of 2006 which mandates the US Department of Homeland Security to construct 3 - 4 m high steel fences along large sections of the US-Mexico border, stretching from near San Diego, California, to Brownsville, Texas, totaling over 1,280 km; and,

WHEREAS, Section 102(c) of the Real ID Act of 2005 exempts the Department of Homeland Security from all federal, state, and local environmental laws when constructing fences, roads, and other barrier along US borders, including the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act; and,

WHEREAS, fence construction has progressed without substantive consideration or mitigation for environmental effects; and,

WHEREAS, plans to complete the fence before 2009 have been expedited (Segee and Neeley 2006); and,

WHEREAS, major regions along the US-Mexico border are comprised of federal protected lands that provide essential habitat for wildlife, including Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, Coronado National Forest, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, Big Bend National Park, Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in the United States, and the El Pinacate Biosphere, Santa Elena Canyon Flora and Fauna Protection Area, and Maderas del Carmen Flora and Fauna Protection Area in Mexico; and,

WHEREAS, construction of the fence will directly destroy rare and endangered plants (Cohn 2007); and,

WHEREAS, the US-Mexico boundary is an arbitrary division in relation to the natural world; and,

WHEREAS, the US-Mexico borderlands is a region of high biological diversity, including many rare, threatened, and endangered species, and the fence will prohibit movement and dispersal for larger species of terrestrial wildlife, particularly federally endangered mammals such as the jaguar, ocelot, jaguarondi, and Sonoran pronghorn and especially those that exist as metapopulations linked by dispersal, which depend on movements across the international border for persistence (e.g., Hellgren et al. 2005, McCain and Childs 2008); and for some species, such as the endangered jaguar, scientific conclusions (McCain and Childs 2008) indicate a dependence on large expanses of habitat and cross-border movement, and that disruption of habitat and movement by the fence will put populations of jaguars in the United States at great risk; and,

WHEREAS, fence construction will irreparably harm many species and some of the Southwest's most significant lands;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Southwestern Association of Naturalists, meeting at their 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Memphis, Tennessee on 10-12 April 2008, calls upon the Governors of all the border states (those of the U.S. and of Mexico), the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) of Mexico, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Secretary for Homeland Security to consider and mitigate potential negative impacts of the border fence to wildlife and to enact a moratorium to immediately stop all construction pending resolution of the issue. We further recommend that the U.S. Congress repeal section 102(c) of the Real ID Act of 2005, and enact the Borderlands Conservation and Security Act (HR 2593) that will require the Department of Homeland Security to determine the effect that a border fence will have on wildlife and to explore alternatives to fence construction, to require compliance with environmental laws, and fund initiatives that help reduce damage to borderland wildlife and resources.

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Approved and signed by the President of The Southwestern Association of Naturalists (SWAN)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley Fox", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Stanley Fox  
President of SWAN