-----Original Message-----
From: Chris_Turk@nps.gov
[mailto:Chris_Turk@nps.gov]
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2012 3:50 PM
To: Jeff Ruch
Subject: What is going on at Big Bend?

Your message was forwarded to me for reply. We're grateful to all of you who pointed out that we neglected to make the project FONSI available to the public. A more thorough explanation follows.

On Feb. 13, 2012, the Intermountain Region director of the National Park Service (NPS) signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Environmental Assessment (EA) to build a new multi-use trail at Panther Junction in Big Bend National Park.

Because of mistakes and miscommunication on our part, the FONSI was not activated for online public view in the NPS Environment and Public Comment system (PEPC) until April 11. We apologize to you for this oversight and for the two-month delay in making the document available and notifying you. The FONSI and two related documents – the “Errata” and “Responses to Comments” – now can be viewed with other project documents at:

http://parkplanning.nps.gov/documentsList.cfm?projectID=14611

The park’s preferred alternative in the EA – to build a new multi-use trail for hiking and mountain biking in an area north of the Big Bend’s Panther Junction visitor center and headquarters – has been selected. It is important to note, however, that according to the FONSI and the EA, mountain biking cannot be permitted on this trail, once built,
until special Park Service regulations are completed to permit bicycle use on a national park trail. As stated in the EA, the NPS must follow a formal federal rulemaking process, which will apply only to this new multi-use trail at Big Bend. That process has numerous stages, including advance notice and publishing of initial analysis, early public involvement, Office of Management and Budget review, Federal Register publication of the proposed rule, a formal public comment period and congressional review, among other steps.

If you are not able to view the above-linked website, you may obtain a paper copy of the FONSI and associated documents by sending your request to:

Superintendent
Attn: Multi-Use Trail FONSI
P.O. Box 129
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834

Again, thank you for your understanding about this delay in notifying you.
If you have any questions about the FONSI, please contact Patrick O’Driscoll in the NPS’s Intermountain Region Office in Denver by phone at 303-969-2839, or email at patrick_o’driscoll@nps.gov.

Chris Turk, NPS-IMDE-REQ
Regional Environmental Quality Coordinator
Phone: 303-969-2832
Cell: 720-201-1559
Fax: 303-969-2717
EQ Intranet: http://imr.nps.gov/environmental-quality/index.html
EQ Tools and Examples:
http://inside.nps.gov/regions/orglist.cfm?lv=2&rgn=274

---------------------------------------------------

"Jeff Ruch"
<jrch@peer.org>

To
04/11/2012 01:28
<ray_todd@nps.gov>,
PM AST
<rick_frost@nps.gov>

Subject What is going on at Big Bend?

Apparently the outgoing Superintendent has started construction on a controversial single-track mountain biking trail (see below) without publishing the EA and without promulgated the needed special regulation.

Please advise.

Jeff Ruch
Executive Director
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)
2000 P Street, NW Suite 240
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 265-7337; Fax: (202) 265-4192
Website: www.peer.org

This is from a local news website published Monday the 9th.
Construction begins on new trail at Big Bend National Park

(Embedded image moved to file: pic22762.jpg)

Construction has begun on the new Lone Mountain Loop trail at Big Bend National Park. AmeriCorps members, under the direction of volunteer Jeff Renfrow, began clearing the corridor in anticipation of American Youth Works crews that will arrive next week. Years of work by local volunteers and International Mountain Biking Association staff, including Trail Solutions' Joey Klein, are finally being translated to on-the-ground singletrack, with a projected opening date of later this year.