

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

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Three State Parks Hosting *Transit of Venus* Viewing Events *Catch a Glimpse of Venus Inching Across the Face of the Sun*

SANTA FE, N.M. – Catch transit of Venus, because the next transit won't happen until 2117. It only happens four times every 243 years. Venus will appear as a small black dot gliding across the disk of the sun. Cerrillos Hills, Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, and Oliver Lee Memorial state parks will all be hosting viewing events on Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

A transit is when one of the inner planets, Venus or Mercury, passes directly between the sun and the Earth, becoming visible against the background of the sun. As in a solar eclipse, do not stare directly at the sun; wear special protective glasses. During the transit, Venus will pass directly between Earth and the sun. A tiny dark circle will appear near the top of the sun and slowly move down and across it.

Venus transits occur in pairs spaced about 112 years apart. This pair occur in 2004 and 2012; the last set occurred in the late 1880's and the next pair does not occur again well into the 22nd century. This is a once in a lifetime event.

The nearly seven-hour transit will begin at approximately 4:04 p.m. mountain time.

Transit of Venus Events, Tuesday, June 5, 2012

Cerrillos Hills State Park will host an educational program beginning at 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Visitors are asked to meet at the main parking lot, ½ mile north of Cerrillos Village on County Road 59. For more information contact park staff: 505-474-0196.

Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park will host an educational viewing program beginning at 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Visitors will view the sun through telescopes with special solar filters. In the event of clouds, the park will have computers with real-time video footage available. For more information contact: Kathryn Law: 575-877-5516.

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park will host an educational viewing program beginning at 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Visitors are asked to meet at the Group Shelter. For more information contact: Charles Wood: 575-437-8284.

Celebrate New Mexico's Centennial at YOUR state parks; for more information, call 888-NMPARKS or visit nmparks.com.



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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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