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**State Parks Announces New Million Dollar Reptile Exhibit
Being Built At Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park**
New Exhibit Made Possible By \$1,000,000 Donation From Carlsbad Resident

CARLSBAD, NM — Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park in Carlsbad will begin construction in 2013 on a new reptile exhibit made possible by the generous donation of \$1,000,000 from the estate of a private individual in Carlsbad. It will replace the aging existing exhibit that was built in the late '60s.

“This is really a dream come true for Living Desert,” said Ken Britt, Superintendent for Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park. “We had identified the need for a new reptile facility. We were overwhelmed when the Carlsbad National Bank Trust Department, as trustee for the estate, notified us of this generous donation that would fulfill the individual’s request to promote the wellbeing of animals both wild and domestic after his death. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity. This is truly a gift to for our park that the entire State of New Mexico can celebrate.”



The Planned Million-Dollar Reptile Exhibit at Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park.

The new building will be approximately 3,150 square feet and will feature a visitor exhibit room, where visitors can view 16 new exhibits featuring reptiles, native snakes and lizards. Visitors will be greeted by an interpretive entry room which will display information about the biology and adaptations of Chihuahuan desert reptiles. The visitor exhibit room will be supported by a modern keeper room to provide for the care of the reptiles and room for off-display animals and quarantine needs. The exhibit will be constructed using modern standards and practices from the requirements of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The project is intended to blend into the landscape and is designed to resemble a reptile. The wall covering of the main building will resemble snake scales, and the entry and exit from the visitor exhibit room will be through sinuous passageways intended to demonstrate reptilian mobility to the visitors.

The building's northern side will have a large, 3000 square-foot patio sporting long views to the north and east. This outside patio will offer visitors a place to relax and feature a view of the surrounding landscape. The patio will also be available for outdoor classes. Other facilities will include additional restrooms and water coolers to serve the east end of the park.



The To-Be-Constructed Reptile Exhibit Will Overlook Nearby Carlsbad.

In addition to offering an attractive place to display native reptiles, the building will be highly energy efficient. It will be built from highly insulative structural insulated panels that aid in saving energy and operating expenses. LED lighting and energy efficient air conditioning and heating equipment will also keep electric bills to a minimum.

“This will be a state-of-the-art building,” said Tommy Mutz, New Mexico State Parks Division Director. “We have successfully designed a facility that will be visually attractive with minimal costs to operate. The price of admission for Living Desert will not increase, making this new exhibit one of the best deals in the state park system.”

The design and architecture was completed in-house by Rob Vadurro, an architect employed by the New Mexico State Parks Division. Construction is scheduled to begin in January of 2013 and should be completed by September.

“This gift reinforces the strong connections that State Parks has with New Mexicans,” said John Bemis, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. “We look forward to adding this world class exhibit for all to enjoy. Likewise, if I were a reptile, I’d be pretty ‘puffed up’ about moving into a slick new home!”

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