

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Susana Martinez
Governor

David Martin
Cabinet Secretary-Designate

Brett F. Woods, Ph.D.
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Tommy Mutz, Division Director
State Parks Division



News Release

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Contact: Beth Wojahn 505-476-3226; E-mail: beth.wojahn@state.nm.us
Jim Winchester 505-231-8800; E-mail: jim.winchester@state.nm.us

Turning Back the Sun at Leasburg Dam State Park

Radium Springs, NM – Although we can't turn back time, we can turn back the sun at Leasburg Dam State Park on December 21, the shortest day of the year. This event begins at 11:00 a.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m.

"Winter Solstice is a perfect time to have a star party," said State Parks Division Director Tommy Mutz. "This community event is a great opportunity for outdoor learning and fun for the whole family."

Witness this natural phenomenon of "turning back the sun" and learn how Native people observed and recorded the sun long ago. Presentations and activities throughout the day include sun telescopes and time-lapse film on sunlight and shadow interactions with petroglyphs. Members of the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo will demonstrate how to bake bread in a traditional horno, along with pueblo dances throughout the day.

In the evening, Navajo, Pueblo, Apache and Blackfeet Native Americans will share traditional winter stories around a campfire. This will be followed by night sky viewing of constellations, planets and stars with help from the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces. They will use different telescopes including Leasburg's new 16" telescope and observatory.

For a small donation, the Friends of Leasburg Dam State Park will have coffee and hot chocolate on hand for visitors. Bring a folding chair and dress warmly for this fun event.

How to get there: Leasburg Dam State Park is located 15 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25. Take exit 19, turn left on NM-157, and right on Leasburg Dam Road.

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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.

1220 South St. Francis Drive • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone (505) 476-3355 • Fax (505) 476-3361 • www.nmparks.com