

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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## News Release

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## Celebrate the New Year With First Day Hikes at Your State Parks on January 1, 2016!

**Santa Fe, NM:** New Mexico State Parks will sponsor free, guided hikes in 14 state parks on New Year's Day as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes, a 50 state initiative. First Day Hikes offer individuals and families an opportunity to begin the New Year rejuvenating and connecting with the outdoors by taking a hike on January 1, 2016 at a wonderful state park. First Day Hikes offer a great way to get outside, exercise, enjoy nature and welcome the New Year with friends and family.

"We are excited to host First Day Hikes as part of this national effort to get people outdoors and into our parks. First Day Hikes are a great way to cure cabin fever and burn off those extra holiday calories by starting off the New Year with an invigorating walk or hike in one of your beautiful state parks," said NM State Parks Director Christy Tafoya.

"Last year, we hosted a record-breaking 41,000 people who hiked 72,442 miles in our state parks across the country when we launched America's State Parks First Day Hikes," said Dominic Bravo, President of the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD). "Think of it as the start of a new and healthy lifestyle, for the whole family. Whether you're staying close to home or traveling, join us at one of America's State Parks on New Year's Day."

New Mexico State Parks boast a variety of beautiful settings for year-round outdoor recreation, and each First Day Hike will offer an opportunity to explore unique natural and cultural treasures. From Carlsbad to Clayton, hikers can climb hills and mountain tops, walk along lakes, and traverse trails through forests and prairies.

"Studies have proven that getting outdoors is one good way to relax and recharge the body, mind and spirit," stated Lewis Ledford, NASPD's Executive Director. "We hope that hiking along a trail in a state park will become part of an individual's or family's regular exercise routine."

First Day Hikes originated over 20 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation, a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. The program was launched to promote both healthy lifestyles throughout the year and year round recreation at state parks. Last year marked the first time all 50 state park systems have joined together to sponsor First Day Hikes.

Park staff and volunteers will lead the hikes, which average one to two miles or longer depending on the scheduled hike. Details about hike locations, difficulty and length, terrain and tips regarding proper clothing are listed on the America's State Parks website. Visit [www.naspd.org](http://www.naspd.org) or [www.nmparks.com](http://www.nmparks.com) to find a First Day Hike nearest you.

In New Mexico, hikes will be offered at the following locations and times:

1. Bluewater Lake State Park - Prewitt – 10 a.m.
2. Cerrillos Hills State Park - Cerrillos – 1 p.m.
3. City of Rocks State Park - Fayewood – 9 a.m.
4. Eagle Nest Lake State Park - Eagle Nest - 10 a.m.
5. Elephant Butte Lake State Park - Elephant Butte - 10 a.m.
6. Fenton Lake State Park - La Cueva – 11 a.m.
7. Hyde Memorial State Park - Santa Fe - 9:30 a.m.
8. Leasburg Dam State Park - Radium Springs - 10 a.m.
9. Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park - Carlsbad – 10 a.m.
10. Oasis State Park - Portales - 1:30 p.m.
11. Rockhound State Park - Deming – 10 a.m.
12. Sugarite Canyon State Park - Raton - 11 a.m.
13. Sumner Lake State Park - Ft. Sumner - 1 p.m.
14. Ute Lake State Park - Logan – 10 a.m.

America's State Parks is committed to promoting outdoor recreation in state parks as a way to address obesity, especially among children. Getting kids outside and unplugged from video games and other electronic media creates a unique connection with nature that promotes physical and mental well-being and encourages creativity and stewardship of our shared resources. Please visit [nmparks.com](http://nmparks.com) for more information.

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*Conditions are Right for Adventure at Your New Mexico State Parks!*

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