

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

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State Park First Day Hikes and Polar Bear Plunges Offer Invigorating Start to the New Year

Santa Fe, NM - Make a New Year's resolution to your health and happiness by kicking off 2019 with a First Day Hike or a Polar Bear Plunge at a state park near you. On New Year's Day, New Mexico State Parks will sponsor free, guided hikes in eight state parks as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes. Polar Bear Plunges will also be held at three parks this year.

"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 Christy Tafoya, NM State Parks Director. She added, "On New Year's Day, the Polar Bear Plunge has been a long-standing tradition at Storrie Lake State Park in Las Vegas."

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 Raton, hikers can climb hills and mountain tops, walk along lakes, and traverse trails through forests and prairies.

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

First Day Hikes:

1. Bottomless Lakes State Park - Roswell – 11 a.m.
2. Cerrillos Hills State Park - Cerrillos – 1 – 3 p.m.
3. Elephant Butte Lake State Park - Elephant Butte - 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
4. Hyde Memorial State Park - Santa Fe – 10:30 a.m. – noon
5. Leasburg Dam State Park - Radium Springs - 10 a.m. - noon
6. Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park - Carlsbad - 9 a.m.
7. Oasis State Park - Portales - 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

8. Navajo Lake State Park- Navajo Dam - 10 a.m.
9. Ute Lake State Park - Logan -1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
10. Sugarite Canyon State Park - Raton – 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
11. Sumner Lake State Park – Ft. Sumner- 10 a.m. - noon
12. Eagle Nest Lake State Park - Eagle Nest - Polar Bear Stomp (Hike) 10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Polar Bear Plunges:

1. Storrie Lake State Park - Las Vegas – Polar Bear Plunge 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
2. Sugarite Canyon State Park - Raton - Polar Bear Plunge 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.
3. Navajo Lake State Park - First Annual Bearoon Plunge 11 a.m. – noon

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 America's State Parks or www.nmparks.com to find a First Day Hike nearest you.

First Day Hikes originated more than 20 years ago, at a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. America's State Parks is committed to promoting outdoor recreation in state parks 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. Log onto nmparks.com for more information.



First Day Hike at Elephant Butte Dam. The Dam is open to pedestrians once a year for this event.

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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.