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Fees Waived for First Day Hikes at Six New Mexico State Parks: *Bottomless Lakes, Cerrillos Hills, City of Rocks, Leasburg Dam, Rockhound, and Sugarite Canyon State Parks*

SANTA FE, NM – Rejuvenate by taking a family friendly trek through a state park close to home. New Mexico State Parks will sponsor free, guided hikes in six state parks on New Year's Day as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states. First Day Hikes offer individuals and families an opportunity to begin the New Year connecting with the outdoors by taking a healthy hike on January 1, 2013 at a state park close to home. Bottomless Lakes, Cerrillos Hills, City of Rocks, Leasburg Dam, Rockhound, and Sugarite Canyon State Parks will all host a First Day Hike and the park fees will be waived for the event.

"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 our beautiful state parks," said State Parks Director, Tommy Mutz.

Information about **First Day Hikes in New Mexico:**

[Bottomless Lakes State Park](#) – 11:00 a.m. Meet at Lea Lake Trailhead. Easy to moderate difficulty. Ranger-led tour regarding the history, flora and fauna, and geology of area.

[Cerrillos Hills State Park](#) – 1:00-3:00 p.m. Meet at main parking lot, ½ mile north of Cerrillos. Moderate difficulty. Enjoy geological and mining history in the rolling Cerrillos Hills.

[City of Rocks State Park](#) – 9:00 a.m. Meet at the Visitor's Center. Moderate difficulty. Nature walk about local plants, animals, geology and park history.

[Leasburg Dam State Park](#) – 10:00-11:30 a.m. Meet at office headquarters. Easy to moderate difficulty. Nature hike exploring the wildlife and plants of the Chihuahuan desert and resources along the Rio Grande.

[Rockhound State Park](#) – 9:00-10:30 a.m. Meet at the Visitor's Center. Easy to moderate difficulty. Learn about the unique botany of the park, enjoy the Visitor's Center garden and Jasper Trail.

[Sugarite Canyon State Park](#) – 1:00-2:00 p.m. Meet at the Visitor's Center. Moderate difficulty. Ranger-led tour of the rich resources of the canyon and learn how they impacted the cultural and mining history.

“Last year, we hosted over 14,000 people who hiked over 30,000 miles in our state parks across the country when we launched America’s State Parks First Day Hikes on New Year’s Day 2012 in all 50 states,” said Priscilla Geigis, President of the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD). “To start 2013, we’re inviting kids and adults to get their hearts pumping and experience the beauty of our state parks at one of over 400 hikes nationwide. Whether you’re staying close to home or traveling, join us at one of America’s State Parks on New Year’s Day!”

America’s State Parks boast a variety of beautiful settings for year-round outdoor recreation, and each First Day Hike will offer an opportunity to explore the unique natural and cultural treasures close to home. From California to Maine, hikers can climb hills and mountain tops, walk along ponds and beaches, and traverse trails through forests, fields and prairies. Visitors can listen to birds, breathe in the fresh air, discover wildlife tracks, and feel the wind and the warmth of the sun or the coldness of the snow. Visitors can expect to be surrounded by the quiet beauty of nature in winter, experience spectacular views and vistas and benefit from the company of a knowledgeable state park guide.

“Studies have proven that getting outdoors is one good way to relax and recharge the body, mind and spirit.” stated Phil McNelly, 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 joined together to sponsor First Day Hikes, offering 400 hikes nationwide. Park staff and volunteers will lead the hikes, which average one to two miles or longer depending on the state park.

Details about hike locations, difficulty and length, terrain and tips regarding proper clothing are listed on the America’s State Parks website. Visit www.americasstateparks.org to find a First Day Hike nearest you.

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.

Short Trips, Long Memories: Your Best Recreation Value Close to Home

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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