

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

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New Mexico State Parks Sponsors Winter Events to Make Your Season Bright

Santa Fe, NM – New Mexico State Parks is your official sponsor of adventure this holiday season! Numerous outdoor winter events and activities are scheduled for the month of December to make your season bright!

“Our holiday park events are spectacular!” said State Park Director Christy Tafoya. “New Mexico State Parks has something for everyone to enjoy year round.”

For instance, join us at Elephant Butte Lake State Park where visitors can follow a path of 4,000 luminarias along the beach and enjoy a variety of holiday snacks and programs. Park staff, Friends Groups and volunteers dedicate a lot of time, energy and pride in hosting these traditional, family-oriented events each year in state parks. Here are some other holiday state park programs:

December Events:

- **Cerrillos Hills State Park, near Santa Fe - Hibernation Hike-Saturday, December 5th, 10-noon**
Wildlife have many strategies to get through the lean months of winter. On this hike, we will learn and discuss how different animals conserve energy to survive cold weather.
- **Leasburg Dam State Park, Radium Springs - Turning Back the Sun, Saturday, December 5th, noon to 9 p.m.** - The Astronomical Society of Las Cruces along with Leasburg Dam State Park staff will be presenting a tour of the winter quality day/night sky at Leasburg. Learn about the phenomenon that occurs for only a few days of winter. Hear traditional coyote stories from Navajo, Blackfeet, and Pueblo storytellers, taste authentic buffalo stew with Pueblo adobe oven baked bread, watch Native American traditional dances, all by a warm campfire! Several telescopes, including the 16 inch research grade observatory telescope will be available for public viewing.
- **Percha Dam, Caballo Lake State Parks, NM - Birding Photography Workshops, Saturday, December 5th from 9 -11am and Sunday, December 6th, 2 - 4 p.m.** – Visitors are invited to participate in birding field trips. Meet at the Percha Dam State Park Visitor Center and come and discover why this area is one of the top birding sites in New Mexico. The tour will be led by Wayne Pope, a college photography instructor with a degree in biology. After each tour, attendees are invited to stay for a pot luck meal at the large picnic area for socializing and sharing photos. Bring your own food, table service and beverages. This event is free and open to the public. No particular skill level is required. Cell phones, point & shoot cameras and Digital SLRs are all okay. Pre-register to guarantee a seat by calling Caballo Lake State Park at 575-743-3942. For more information visit waynerpoppe.com.

- **Elephant Butte Lake - 21st Annual Luminaria Beach walk, Saturday, December 12th from 5 – 8 p.m.** - Stop at sites along the walk and enjoy refreshments provided by local sponsors as well as a holiday light boat parade, hayrides and caroling. 4,000 luminarias will light the way. Start at the Dirt Dam area within the main entrance to the park.
- **Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park, Carlsbad, Holidays with the Animals- Saturday, December 12th, 1 - 3 p.m.** - Celebrate the season with children's crafts and face painting. Children can make holiday cards for their favorite Living Desert animal and hang them on the tree. There is no fee for activities in the Visitor Center, but regular entrance fees apply to go through the zoo.
- **Oliver Lee Memorial State Park, Alamogordo, The Perseus Story Cycle Saturday, December 12th, 6- 7:30 p.m.** - The Amateur Astronomers Group of the New Mexico will be sponsoring a tour of the fall night sky. Come listen to tales from the night sky: the Perseus story cycle. The constellations Cepheus, Cassiopeia, Andromeda, Perseus, Pegasus and Cetus linked Greek cultures together and created the plot line for the movie "Clash of the Titans". A few Geminid meteors may also enliven the night sky. Dress warmly, come early and enjoy a beautiful Dog Canyon Sunset. Meet at Group Shelter.
- **Rockhound State Park, Deming- Luminaries Night, Saturday, December 12th, 5- 6:30 p.m.** – More than 1,000 luminarias surround the Visitor Center Native Garden & roadway. Enjoy holiday music hot chocolate & cookies.
- **Sugarite Canyon State Park, Raton- Christmas on the Chicorica, Saturday, December 12th, 5- 8:30 p.m.** - This legendary northern New Mexico event features some 1,500 luminarias lighting the trail along Chicorica Creek in Sugarite Canyon State Park. Munch on cookies, whisper in Santa's ear, stroll to Christmas carols, and enjoy the night sky at the park telescope.
- **Cerrillos Hills State Park, near Santa Fe- Animal Superpowers, Saturday, December 19th, 10- noon** - What is the connection between your favorite comic book superheroes and wildlife? Learn about specific adaptations that help these animals survive life in the wild.
- **Pancho Villa State Park, Columbus, Luminaria Event, Sunday, December 20th, 6 - 7 p.m.** - Bundle up and spend your evening at Pancho Villa State Park to see the beautiful luminarias with free hot chocolate and cookies! Raffle tickets will be given away to win free baked hams! Pancho Villa State Park is located at the intersection of Highways 9 and 11 in Columbus.

For more information and a complete listing of all New Mexico state Park events, call 888-NMPARKS or visit www.nmparks.com

Conditions are Right for Adventure at a New Mexico State Park!

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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.

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