

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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Cabinet Secretary

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

**Tommy Mutz, Division Director**  
State Parks Division



## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Beth Wojahn 505-476-3226; E-mail: [beth.wojahn@state.nm.us](mailto:beth.wojahn@state.nm.us)  
Jim Winchester 505-231-8800; E-mail: [jim.winchester@state.nm.us](mailto:jim.winchester@state.nm.us)

## Grand Opening for New Reptile Exhibit at Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park

**Carlsbad, NM** – Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park (LDZG) is hosting the grand opening for its new, \$1.23 million, state-of-the-art Reptile Exhibit on Saturday, June 28, 2014. A variety of programs will be presented to the public throughout the day, including special tours of the exhibit.

“We are very excited to have a new home for our reptiles and to present them to the public in a unique way,” said LDZG Superintendent Adrian Stiteler. “Our donors have been very generous by providing the funding for this important project and we appreciate the community and local business support.”

Funding for this project was provided by the Carlsbad National Bank as trustee of the Benjamin P. Duke Living Trust, which stipulated that the assets be distributed to charitable organizations which have a purpose of “promoting the well-being of animals both domestic and wild.” The directors and trust officers of the bank recognized Friends of the Living Desert, the zoo’s non-profit support group, as having such a purpose.

The facility includes an indoor 3,142 square foot area for interpretive displays and 16 animal enclosures, as well as a large outdoor covered patio overlooking a canyon. The reptile collection now includes several more species of native venomous and non-venomous snakes and soon two color phases of the fabled Gila Monster.

Saturday’s events will include:

- **9 a.m.** - Herpetologist Lawrence (Larry) Jones, co-editor of the book “Lizards of the American Southwest,” will guide a Lizard Walk through the zoo. Meet by the gift shop.
- **10 a.m.** - Interpretive Ranger Kathryn Law will present a hands-on program, “Snakes Alive.”
- **11 a.m.** - Dr. Carol Hurst shows the PowerPoint “Survival Strategies of the Gila Monster.”
- **1 p.m.** - PowerPoint “Lizards and Snakes of the American Southwest” by Larry Jones. Signed copies of his book will also be available for sale in the Carlsbad Horticulture Society gift shop at the zoo.
- **12 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.** - Tours of the new reptile habitats by animal keeper Rick Reed.

All programs are offered free of charge, but visitors must pay regular zoo admission fees to enter the zoo: Children 6 and under are free, 7-12 years are \$3, 13 and up are \$5. The contact person for this event is Kathryn Law who can be reached at (575) 887-5516.

LDZG was recently featured in USA Today article "20 Stunning State Parks Across the USA." According to the article, this park is a must-see for all animal lovers and prides itself on providing outreach to thousands of visitors and school children every year.

Visit [nmparks.com](http://nmparks.com) for more information about LDZG and other New Mexico State Parks.

*Conditions are right for adventure at New Mexico State Parks!*



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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](http://www.nmparks.com)