

State of New Mexico
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News Release

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Sugarite Canyon State Park Reopens Upper Campground Areas

RATON, NM – Sugarite Canyon State Park has reopened its upper campground, Soda Pocket, following renovations prompted by the Track Fire of June of last year.

“We’re very happy to have Soda Pocket available for campers again,” said Sugarite Park Manager Robert “Mac” McIvor. “We believe the wider campsites will provide a better experience for our visitors, especially for those with RVs.”

Fourteen campsites will be available in Soda Pocket. Although the sites include picnic tables and grills, fire restrictions remain in effect and only gas grills are allowed. The water system is not operational at this time, so campers need to fill up their water tanks at Lake Alice Campground. The southern end of Soda Pocket campground will remain closed as renovations continue. Future projects include widening and resurfacing the remaining sites, adding new site amenities such as grills, tables and shelters, and new toilet facilities.

Soda Pocket is a first-come, first-served campground which does not require reservations. An adjacent campground, the Gambel Oak Group Camping Area, is now available by reservation via the internet at www.nmparks.com or by calling toll free at 877-664-7787.

Soda Pocket Campground and the Gambel Oak Group Camping Area traditionally remain open only in warmer months and will close November 1 for the winter season.

Sugarite Canyon State Park closed for two months in 2011, following the fire that burned an estimated 80 percent of the 4,000-acre park. Investigators said the blaze was ignited by exhaust from an off-highway vehicle being driven illegally on railroad property about one mile north of the City of Raton. The Track Fire eventually burned more than 27,000 acres in Colfax County.

Sugarite Canyon State Park includes a camping area for visitors with horses. That area, which includes corrals, vault toilets and grills, can be reserved by calling the park directly at 575-445-5607. The lower elevation campground, Lake Alice is open year-round. Most of the Lake Alice sites are by reservation only.

By reopening the Soda Pocket Campground, park visitors again have driving access to the Vista Grande trailhead as well as to the upper trailhead for Opportunity and Ponderosa Ridge trails. Sugarite Canyon State Park is located about six miles northeast of the city of Raton by way of State Highways 72 and 526. The scenic park is a popular destination for campers, hikers, anglers, rock climbers and bird watchers. Lake Maloya, with 100 surface acres, contains rainbow and German brown trout.

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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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