



Staycation 2023

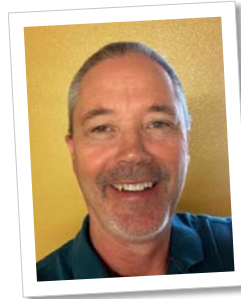


THE LAS CRUCES
Bulletin

Your guide to summer
activities in southern New Mexico

Life is good in New Mexico

Richard Coltharp, editor & publisher



I've lived in southern New Mexico almost half my life, 13 years in Alamogordo and 14 in Las Cruces.

The Land of Enchantment, from top to bottom, from side to side, is an endless source of fascination. Santa Fe, the Four Corners area, Taos, Socorro, the

Very Large Array, the green chile cheeseburgers in San Antonio, Albuquerque and many other places have presented great times and memories.

But looking at back at a quarter-century of memorable adventures and excursions in New Mexico, the vast majority of them took place less than two hours from my house.

Dancing at the Win, Place or Show bar in Ruidoso. Hiking at Aguirre Spring on the east side of the Organ Mountains. Boulderling at the City of Rocks. Dining at the Buckhorn Saloon and Pinos Altos Opera House near Silver City. Playing disc golf or riding the Toy Train in Alamogordo. Chopé's in La Mesa. NMSU basketball in the Pan Am Center. Ardovino's Desert Crossing in Sunland Park. And it may be sacrilege to some, but I love what El Paso has to offer. And nothing can restore the soul like laying down in the dunes at White Sands National Park.

Still, hanging out right here, at home in Las Cruces, well, life is always good.

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SOUTHWEST EXPEDITIONS

Sierra County day trips

The Old West comes alive

By Mike Cook

Venture off Interstate 25 about an hour north of Las Cruces and you will truly take a step back in time.

The small communities and ghost towns that surround Truth or Consequences offer a gold mine of the Old West and make up some of the most amazing and historically significant day trips you will ever take.

To cover northern Sierra County, start in T or C and travel northwest to Placita (San Lorenzo Catholic Church, old schoolhouse) and Monticello (San Ignacio Catholic Church; historic plaza, with some of its original adobe walls still intact; cemetery), then on to Cuchillo (Old Cuchillo Bar and Hotel, an 1850s stage stop; San Jose Catholic Church) Winston (Winston General Store, old schoolhouse) and Chloride (Pioneer Store Museum, RV park, two historic cemeteries, the old hanging tree in the center of town).

For southern Sierra County, travel from T or C south to Hillsboro (restaurants and stores), Kingston (Black Range Lodge Bed and Breakfast; Percha Bank Museum; Kingston Cemetery; remnants of the oldest (1927) steel truss bridge in New Mexico) and Lake Valley (three-quarter mile walking tour of a real ghost town, old school house, Lake Valley Cemetery, St. Columba Episcopal Chap-

el), or you can go from Las Cruces north to Lake Valley, and then on to Hillsboro and Kingston.

Placita and Monticello were settled in the 1840s and '50s. Monticello was headquarters for the Southern Apache Agency at one time. The first postmaster, Aristide Bourguet, named the town for the home of Thomas Jefferson.

Cuchillo was established by ranchers and farmers in the 1850s and flourished as a stage stop and trade center. San Jose Catholic Church was rebuilt for the third time in 1907.

Winston, originally named Fairview, was settled by miners in 1880-81.

Englishman Harry Pye, a mule skinner and prospector, was delivering freight for the U.S. Army from Hillsboro to Camp Ojo Caliente in 1879 when he discovered silver in the canyon where Chloride is now located. He staked a claim in 1881 and the town was born. It would grow to more than 3,000 people, including eight saloons and three general stores.

Engle is 17 miles west of T or C via New Mexico Highway 51. It was built in 1879 as a station on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and several old buildings are still standing.



Hillsboro was founded in 1877 when two prospectors found gold on the east side of the Mimbres Mountains along Percha Creek. They staked out the Opportunity and the Ready Pay mines, with the Rattlesnake and the Bonanza coming soon after.

Kingston was founded in 1882 when miner Jack Sheddon discovered a rich load of silver ore at what would become one of the Southwest's most famous mines: The Solitaire. The population peaked at more than 7,000 in the mining boom of the 1880s and '90s, as some \$7 million in silver was extracted from the Black Range Mining District. One of the wildest towns in the Wild West, Kingston had 22 saloons, gambling halls and three newspapers. Visitors included Mark Twain, President Grover Cleveland and Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Kingston is home to the Spit and Whittle Club, the country's

oldest social club.

Lake Valley was founded with the discovery of silver in 1878 and moved twice before settling in its current location in 1882. The Bridal Chamber Mine was discovered that year, a subterranean mine lined with silver so pure it was shipped unsmelted to the mint. Lake Valley grew to 4,000 people and included 12 saloons. The 1893 silver panic wiped it out, and a fire destroyed main street two years later.

You will also find placenames in the area that include Gold Dust, Chise, Grafton and Zapata, along with San Miguel, whose historic Catholic church is shaped like a coffin.

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PHOTOS BY ELVA ÖSTERREICH

Hot springs abound in T or C

Bulletin report

Before Ralph Edwards changed its name in 1950, Truth or Consequences was Hot Springs, and for a good reason.

There were about 40 hot springs spas in the town before World War II. Today, there are about a dozen

Here is what the Sierra County New Mexico website has to say about T or C's hot springs:

"The hot thermal water flows out of a rift along the Rio Grande that appeared more than 50 million years ago. The rift uplifted Truth or Consequences' landmark hill, and faults along the rift allow deep groundwater to flow freely to the surface without losing heat or minerals, producing pristine waters with temperatures ranging from 98 to 115 degrees, with trace elements of 38 different minerals. The pH of the water is 7, or neutral.

"With almost 2,700 parts per million of assorted minerals, these thermal springs constitute some of the most heavily mineralized water in the United States. The continually flowing waters also have two important and unique features: 1) The water has no unpleasant odor; and 2) The

single largest ingredient in the water is chloride, a naturally occurring germ killer that sterilizes the skin and ensures the purity of the water.

"During the late 1800s, while neighboring areas like Kingston and Chloride were experiencing the gold and silver rush, the hot springs were visited by more and more people and the area became known as "Palomas Hot Springs." The first generation of bath houses were actually tents, and a soak entailed laying in the hot mud and slathering it all over oneself; doing so was thought to cure rheumatism.

"The event that changed the area forever was the construction of Elephant Butte Dam between 1911 and 1916. Liquor and gambling were outlawed at the construction site, but establishments in the hot springs settlement five miles away offered both - and in abundance. The population grew rapidly, and the town was incorporated in 1916.

"Once the dam was completed, the flow of the river was altered such that more land could be claimed from the flood plain, allowing for stick frame bathhouses to be built in what had been swamp. Wells were sunk into the aquifer, allowing clear spring water to flow."

Truth or Consequences hot springs

- Backstone Hot Springs, 410 Austin St., 575-894-0894
- Charles Hot Springs Resort, 601 Broadway St., 575-894-7154
- Fire Water Lodge, 311 Broadway St., 575-740-0315
- Hoosier Hot Springs, 516 Austin St., 575-740-8949
- Indian Springs, 218 Austin St., 575-894-2018
- La Paloma Hot Springs and Spa, 311 Marr St., 575-894-3148
- La Paloma Too, 300 Austin St., 575-894-2228
- Pelican Spa, 306 S. Pershing St., 575-894-0055
- Riverbend Hot Springs, 100 Austin St., 575-894-7625
- Sierra Grande, 501 McAdoo St., 877-288-7637



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ADVENTURE + PLAY

Escape for the Day to the Zoo

Alamogordo boasts oldest zoo in state

By Sylvia Quintanilla

W e often take for granted how Las Cruces is in close proximity to several great day trips. With summer here, the open road offers opportunity any day of the week to find enjoyment.

On a recent sunny Tuesday afternoon, we loaded up the car and headed on a cruise to the zoo. In just over 60 minutes from Las Cruces is the Alameda

Park Zoo, located in Alamogordo. Alameda Park is the oldest zoo in the state and was founded in 1898.

Guests enter via the gift shop to pay admission and get a chance to view the stuffed-animal versions of some of the live residents of the park.

Walking through the 12-acre property, guests encounter several different animals that call Alameda Park Zoo home. On our walk, we saw lemurs, owls, bears, a camel and several confident peacocks.

Close to the turkey vultures and raven, was a sassy bobcat ready for her lunch. Near the bobcat was an exhibit for raccoons lounging among the trees. Neighbors to the raccoons were the river otters, who were having a joyful day swimming and playing what seemed to be a game of tag.

An exhibit that features a lot of character is the Walk-Through Aviary. Housed in an enclosed stand-alone building, the Walk-Through Aviary has 10 different animals, including eight species of birds, ducks, fish and turtles.

You enter the aviary through a secure double door. Trees provide shade and paint a backdrop of serene nature. There is a bridge over the pond that has koi fish.

Turtles take in the sun on the moist rocks and as ducks nest nearby.

Watching the white peacocks walk by and quails scurry is really a sight to see considering all of these different types of animals coexist.

“For any exhibit, we will research diets, climates, prey/predator, and compatibility of animals,” said Kate Rogers, zoo manager.

Rogers explained that she believed the aviary was completed in 2014; the Alamogordo Friends of the Zoo donated a project. “Alamogordo Friends of the Zoo started while Bud

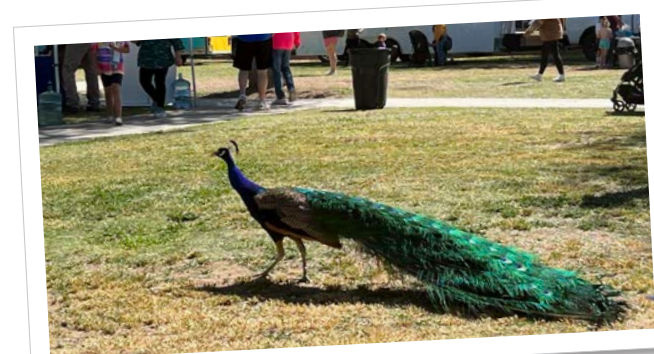


PHOTO BY ELVA ÖSTERREICH

Wiser was the zoo manager back in the 1980s. The group has been active until 2023,” she said.

Observing the animals in the aviary was truly relaxing. Watching the small yellow Taveta Golden-weaver find twigs to weave its nest in the trees.

Rogers said the zoo has great support from the community and Alamogordo city management.

“This support is allowing us to provide better care to the animals, staff, and guest experience,” she said. “We are a small zoo providing the public the opportunity to see different animals in their natural environment. We are growing and improving the facility all the time.”

The Alameda Park Zoo is at 1021 N. White Sands Blvd. (U.S. 70) in Alamogordo. The zoo is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Last entry is at 4:30 p.m. Admission for children 4 and under is free, children 5-12 is \$2.50, guests 13-59 are \$4, seniors (60+) \$2.50 and active/retired military members are \$2.50. For more information, call 575-439-4290.

WSMR museum reopens after redesign

By Elva K. Österreich

After more than two years of design and refurbishing work, the White Sands Missile Range Museum has reopened with a flourish. In May 2023, the doors of the completely renovated facility opened on a journey through time.

Beginning with the natural history at White Sands, through the early human residents, battles with Apache at the Hembrillo Basin and through to the Manhattan Project, early rocketry and the space program there is enough information and display for several hours of wandering through history.

Guests will also experience an interactive Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Center tailored to grade school educational standards. The exhibit has twice as much text than other larger museums due to the nature of the topics covered, such as how rockets work and nuclear fission.

Providing remarks and cutting the ribbon at the ceremony were U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range Garrison Commander Col. David A. Mitchell, Army Museum Enterprise Director Col. Bryan W. Hunt, and Frances F. Williams, President of the WSMR Foundation.

“As caretakers of the Tularosa Basin, we must tell the

story of the rich and diverse history, so it is preserved and shared,” Museum Curator Darren Court, said during the ceremony. “The Army has had a long and diverse history in New Mexico dating back to when it was part of the northern territories of New Spain, and we hope to spark an interest in that story.”

Later Court expanded on the concept of the museum saying they have the responsibility to tell the story, both good and bad.

“It’s not just walking through missiles, we have the responsibility to tell the story of the history that occurred in the Tularosa Basin,” he said. “If the Army did something stupid, we’re going to tell you they did something stupid, we don’t do apologetic history.”

While closed, the Museum continued to modify and adjust exhibits and content including migrating the archival holdings into a new Archival Research Center.

The museum is open to the public 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily except for Sundays.



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PHOTOS BY
ELVA ÖSTERREICH

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City of Las Cruces: 'Happy Trails to You'

By **Cathy Mathews**

Landscape Architect

City of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department

The City of Las Cruces recently completed design and construction of several trails within the city limits in cooperation with Elephant Butte Irrigation District. These trails include the Mesilla Drain Trail between the Outfall Channel Trail and Burn Lake (2.5 miles), the Armijo Lateral Trail between the Outfall Channel Trail and Burn Lake (three miles) and the Las Cruces Lateral Trail between the Outfall Channel Trail and Spruce Avenue near the Las Cruces Police Station and Fire Station #1 (1.5 miles).

These trails are in addition to other trails managed by the City Parks and Recreation Department; Triviz Drive Multi-Use Trail (4.5 miles) between the NMSU main campus and Kohls, the Outfall Channel Trail (4.3 miles) between Kohls and the river and the La Llorona/Rio Grande Trail (4.6 miles) connecting the Outfall Channel Trail with the Town of Mesilla.

Other trails within the city trail system include Alameda Arroyo Trail (0.7 miles) near Camino Real Middle School, Legends West Trails (1.2 miles) throughout the Legends West neighborhoods and the Twin Parks

Trail (0.9 miles) on Engler Avenue between Mesa Drive and Jornada Drive.

The new trails in the city's system expand the recreational trail system within the city limits from over 19 miles in length to over 26 miles in length.

Upcoming city recreational trail projects include more Las Cruces lateral trails between NMSU main campus and Las Cruces High School and also connecting NMSU main campus to the Village of Tortugas.

Additional trails programming in the planning stages includes mountain bike trails in the vicinity of the East Mesa Public Recreation Complex. Also, the city is completing a park and trail wayfinding plan that will guide the placement and visual appeal of a comprehensive wayfinding sign system that will help guide park and trail users to destinations and routes that are accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Parks and Recreation Department trail system de-



PHOTO BY ELVA ÖSTERREICH

velopment is guided by the master plan which outlines our community's goal to provide a system of multi-use trails that support residents' and visitors' fitness, recreation and transportation needs while linking community destinations such as parks, open space, schools and other community activity centers. This goal is consistent with the city's Active Transportation Plan.




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