

Nature

Cont'd from Page 37

The free celebration is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **March 31**, at the El Paso Museum of Archaeology, 4301 Transmountain Road.

Keystone Heritage Park and El Paso Desert Botanical Garden — 4200

Doniphan (across from Frontera). Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Admission: \$3 (free for members). Information: 584-0563, keystoneheritagepark.org or elpasobotanicalgardens.org.

The park's 2-acre Botanical Garden, funded by the Rotary Club of El Paso and the Junior League, features native plants, amphitheater, butterfly garden, wedding garden, children's maze, and a Butterfly House.

Keystone Heritage Park has 189 species of migratory and local birds, and a 4,500-year-old archaeological site.

The site is open for bird watching 9:30 a.m. to noon the second and last Saturday of the month.

Keystone's Chihuahuan Desert Experience (immediately west of the wetland) is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for walking and bird watching.

Franklin Mountains State Park — The 24,000-acre park extends north from the heart of El Paso to the New Mexico state line. The highest point is North Mt. Franklin, 7,192 feet above sea level.

Most hiking and mountain-biking trails begin in the Tom Mays area, off Transmountain Road on the west side of the park (east of I-10).

Entry fees are \$4 per person, free for age 12 and under (with family). Group rates available. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Information: 566-6441.

Guided hikes are offered at 9 a.m. selected weekends. Cost is \$3 (\$1 ages 5-12; under 5 free), plus \$4 park entry fee for ages 13 and older. Reservations required: 566-6441 ext. 21. or erika.rubio@tpwd.state.tx.us.

• Saturday, **Feb. 4**: Cottonwood Mine Shaft

- Sunday, **Feb. 5**: Upper Sunset.
- Saturday, **Feb. 18**: Nature Walk.
- Sunday, **Feb. 19**: Lower Sunset.

Camping in the Tom Mays Area of the park, with both traditional tent sites and RV areas (no hookups). Site fee is \$8 (limit of four campers), plus the park entrance fee.

Picnicking in the Tom Mays Area, with picnic tables and restrooms that are accessible to the handicapped.

No ground fires are permitted.

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park — UTEP's

Center for Environmental Resource Management offers free guided walking tours and other activities at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in El Paso's Mission Valley. Tours last about two hours. Information: 747-8663 or rio-bosque.org. Upcoming events:

- Bird Tour, 3 p.m. Sunday, **Feb. 5**.
- Introductory Tour, 3 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 11**.
- A Community Workday is 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, **Feb. 18**.

Meeting place is a bridge crossing Riverside Canal. Take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Drive, turn left and travel 1.5 miles.

Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site

— The site is famed for many Native American rock paintings and unique geology. Winter hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission: \$5 (free for children 12 and younger). Additional activity cost for tours (including birding tour and morning hike): \$1 for ages 5 and older. Information: 857-1135 or texasstateparks.gov. Reservations are recommended for the self-guided area and for camping, especially during winter months: (512) 389-8900.

Tours offered Wednesday through Sunday, by prior arrangement at 849-6684. Participants must carry at least one bottle of water per person.

- Pictograph tours are 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Rock climbing/bouldering tours are 9:30, 10 and 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Hiking tours are 9, 9:30 and 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Birding tours are 8 to 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month (**Feb. 18**). Advance sign-up encouraged.

To get there: Take Montana Avenue (U.S. Highway 62-180) all the way into the Hueco Mountains then turn left on Ranch Road 2775.

North Mountain is available for self-guided day use, for up to 70 people at a time; reservations recommended. There is an annual orientation program for visitors. Guided access is offered to the rest of the site. Picnicking allowed at ten tables closest to headquarters. Wood and charcoal fires are not permitted. Bicycles permitted only on designated paved areas. Pets allowed only in camping or picnic areas. Call for reservations and other information: 857-1135.

Hueco Tanks' campground has reopened. There are sites with water and electric, as well as water-only tent sites. Call the park for reservations.

Area hiking websites — A variety of organizations in the El Paso/Las Cruces area offers hiking opportunities. Hikes typically are rated as easy, moderate, or strenuous. Solo or new hikers are welcome.

- Meetup.com offers a variety of groups for all activities, including the El Paso hiking meetup club (meetup.com/El-Paso-Hiking) and the Las Cruces hiking meetup club (meetup.com/hiking-261)
- El Paso Ridgewalkers — The group posts its hikes at elpasoridgewalkers.com. Or contact Carol Brown at 630-1424.
- Celebrations of Our Mountains now offers an ongoing calendar of hiking and related events at celebmtns.org/calendar
- elpasonaturally is a blog by Jim Tolbert on various environmental topics, with a calendar of events that also includes the Sunrise Hikers Tuesday morning group. See elpasonaturally.blogspot.com or contact tolbert@elp.rr.com.
- The El Paso chapter of the Sierra Club posts its hikes at sierraclub.org/elpaso.
- Outdoorel Paso.com offers an interactive map, of El Paso County hiking and running trails, calendar of events and more. Information: 546-2098 or epcounty.com.

Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

— 5000 Calle del Norte in Mesilla. Winter hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. All events free with park admission. Day use fee: \$5 per vehicle (\$40 annual pass). Closed New Year's Day. Information: (575) 523-4398.

World Wetlands Day events are 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, **Feb. 4**, with guided bird tour a wetland presentation by Environmental Specialist Chris Canavan, and the Rolling River display sponsored by El Paso Water Utilities.

A free Bosque Education Workshop is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 11**. Teachers learn to use the Bosque Education Guide, an interdisciplinary curriculum designed for grades K-12. Space is limited; call to reserve a seat.

A Hot Chocolate Cache is 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, **Feb. 25**, to commemorate the Centennial of New Mexico's Statehood, for both experienced and first time geocachers. In this three-stage temporary geocache, participants compile everything needed to create a hot mug of hot chocolate.

Master Naturalist Sylvia Hacker will present "Pruning 101," tips on pruning trees and shrubs this winter at 10 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 18**, in the classroom.

Dress accordingly for all hikes; wear close-toed shoes and sunscreen. Bring water and binoculars.

- Ranger-led Nature Hikes are 3 p.m. every Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- Birding tours are 8:15 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 4**,

11 and 18, led by park volunteers.

• Becoming a Birder Series guided hike is at 8:15 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 25**.

MountainFilm On Tour

— NMSU Outdoor Rec's Adventure Art Series host the outdoor film festival at 7 p.m. Friday, **Feb. 10**, at Rio Grande Theatre, 211 N. Downtown Mall, in Las Cruces, as part of its Adventure Art Series. Tickets: \$8 in advance; \$10 at the door. Information: (575) 646-4252

MountainFilm on Tour is dedicated to educating and inspiring audiences about issues that matter, cultures worth exploring, environments worth preserving, and conversations worth sustaining.

Aguirre Spring Campground

— The Organ Mountain recreational area, run by the federal Bureau of Land Management, is off U.S. 70 about 15 miles east of Las Cruces. Fifty-five family camping and picnic sites, plus two group areas. Day-use fee is \$3 per vehicle.

The Baylor Pass (hiking and horseback riding) and Pine Tree (hiking) trails begin at the campground.

Information, group reservations: (575) 525-4300.

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park

— The park, part of Asombro Institute for Science Education, is northeast of Las Cruces, off Jornada Road. Admission is free; donation box at trailhead. Park hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Information: (575) 524-3334 or asombro.org.

To get there: Take I-25 in Las Cruces and head east on U.S. 70. Take the Mesa Grande Road exit (at Oñate High School). Make a U-turn under the highway to head west, and stay in the right lane. Turn right (north) on Jornada Road. Follow Jornada Road for 6.5 miles and turn left at the park sign. Follow the entrance road to the parking area and trailhead.

Asombro Institute for Science Education is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing scientific literacy by fostering an understanding of the Chihuahuan Desert.

Dripping Springs Natural Area

— The recreational area is at the base of the Organ Mountains at the end of Dripping Springs Road (the eastern extension of University Avenue), about 10 miles east of Las Cruces. The area, run by the federal Bureau of Land Management in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy, includes the A.B. Cox Visitors' Center, several hiking trails, and La Cueva Picnic Area. The visitor center is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Access to the main trail to Dripping Springs is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the park is closed promptly at 5 p.m.

Admission is \$3 per vehicle. No pets allowed (except for assistance animals). Information: (575) 522-1219.

White Sands National Monument

— The glistening gypsum dunes are about 15 miles southwest of Alamogordo, N.M., on U.S. 70. Monument hours are 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. through Feb. 9; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 10-March 10. Visitor Center hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Feb. 26; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 27-April 17.

Entrance fee: \$3 age 17 and older. Free for children. Information: (575) 479-6124, ext. 236 or (575) 679-2599, ext. 232; or go to nps.gov/whsa.

Sunset strolls are offered daily beginning at 4:30 p.m. **through Feb. 3**, 4:45 p.m. **Feb. 4-17** and 5 p.m. **Feb. 18-March 2**.

A Dunes at Dawn ranger-led morning hike is 7:15 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 11**. Space is limited; reservations accepted two weeks in advance of

Please see Page 39



Voted The Best of El Paso Antique Shop

Gift Certificates Available

Happy Valentines Day

Get Your Love a Gift at

Mesa Street Antique Mall

We now have God's Tags

6545 N. Mesa 584-0868

Tue.-Sat. 10-6 Sun. 12-5

Layaway & Major Credit Cards Accepted



METTA MASSAGE DAY SPA

PROFESSIONAL MASSAGE THERAPY

In business since 1999

714 Montana (Corner of Virginia)

FEBRUARY SPECIALS

Excellent for Valentine's Day

1 hour Deep Tissue Massage/Aromatherapy and Moist Heat Therapy (apply on your back and neck to reduce muscle tension). Reg. \$69 **Special \$59**

Minty (2 Hour) Special \$89 reg. \$109 Melt away muscle tension, scar tissue and lymph fluids with our 60 minute deep tissue massage / aromatherapy, back hydrotherapy, a complimentary foot scrub treatment, and an organic mini-back facial. (Offer good everyday)

"WE ALSO HAVE A BIG SELECTION OF VEGAN LOTIONS, ORGANIC HANDMADE SOAPS, AND RECYCLING ART GIFTS"

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Bring in this ad for an additional **\$10 OFF**

Cash or checks only

IRMA ESPARZA, OWNER, RMT, B.S.
TUE - FRI 10AM TO 2PM AND 4PM TO 7PM
SAT 10AM TO 4PM
474-3844
Offers expire 2/28/12

www.mettamassagedayspa.com
avagri01@yahoo.com