

# NATURE

**El Paso Zoo** — 4001 E. Paisano. Zoo Entrance hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Admission is \$12 for ages 13 to 59; \$9 for ages 60 and older and active duty military (including spouse) with ID; \$7.50 ages 3 to 12; and free for ages 2 and under. Zoo members admitted free. Information: 212-0966 or elpasozoo.org.

The “Wings of the World” Bird Show is 12:30 p.m. weekdays and 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. weekends at the Wildlife Amphitheater.

“Meet the Keeper” talks are 10:30 to 3:15 p.m. at various locations. Asian Elephant Training Encounters at noon daily.

“African Star” Train ride tickets are \$2 plus tax (\$1.50 for children and society members).

## Tech2O Center volunteer orientation

— Tech2O Center 10751 Montana hosts a free orientation 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 3**, for those interested in volunteering. Learn how to help public understand water and the uniqueness of the Chihuahuan Desert. Orientation sessions necessary for all new volunteers. Information: 621-2001 or tech2o.org.

**Dino Tracks Tour** — Insights Science Center host its monthly Dino Tracks tour 1 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, **Feb. 4** and **March 4**, at Mt. Cristo Rey in Sunland Park. The tour covers topics such as “Dinosaur & Crocodylian Trace-fossils,” “Volcanism,” “Plate Tectonics,” “Sedimentation & Metamorphic Processes” and more. Cost: \$15 per person; available at eventbrite. Information: 534-0000 or info@insightselpaso.org.

The 3-mile hiking tour promotes learning in the STEAM fields: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.

**Super Plant Sunday** — Sierra Vista Growers, 2800 Hwy 28 in La Union, N.M., hosts its 2nd annual plant-themed pre-game event on Super Bowl Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

Sunday, **Feb. 4**, with games, music, local food and plants to start the spring garden. Kid and pet friendly. Admission is free. Information: (575) 874-2415 or sierravistagrowers.net.

**Wyler Aerial Tramway** — 1700 McKinley. Information: 562-9899 or 566-6622.

“Ten Essentials” what to pack for a hiking or camping trip hands-on demonstrations are every 30 minutes noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 10**.

Hikes begin at the Directisimo trail head. Wear sturdy shoes, weather appropriate clothing, hats and sunscreen; bring walking stick. Strenuous hike, 1,000 feet elevation gain.

- Women Only Hike is 8 a.m. Sunday, **Feb. 4**.
- Last Sunday Hike is 8 a.m. Sunday, **Feb. 25**.

Wyler Aerial Tramway State Park is managed by Texas Parks & Wildlife and is also part of Franklin Mountains State Park. To get there: Take Alabama to McKinley and turn toward the mountain.

**Tree Steward program** — Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Department and Keep Las Cruces Beautiful are accepting applications for the 2018 class of volunteer Tree Stewards, community volunteers to care for trees in public spaces. Training includes 28 hours of hands-on classes 8 a.m. to noon on Thursdays from **Feb. 8-March 22**, at Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center Auditorium, 304 Bell. Tree Stewards volunteer at least 40 hours planting trees, aiding in educational efforts like Arbor Day, and assisting in the maintenance of trees in Las Cruces parks. Information: (575) 541-

2101, anlopez@las-cruces.org or on Facebook at LasCrucesTreeStewards.

## El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society

— The annual Awards Dinner and program is 6:30 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 17**, at the Hyatt Place Hotel, 6030 Gateway East. The El Paso Zoo Raptor Rehabilitation Program is recipient of the Conservation Award. Scott Cutler will present a program on Birding in Costa Rica. Reservations required: Janet Perkins, 637-5269 or jntperk@elp.rr.com.

Field trips are open to the public. Information: Mark Perkins, 637-3521 or trans-pecos-audubon.com.

Rio Bosque Wetlands Field Trip is 7 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 10**, meeting at parking lot of Office Depot at Bassett Place to carpool. Lots of waterfowl and raptors should be seen.

Hot Spots on El Paso's West Side trip is 7 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 24**. Meet at Keystone Heritage Park, 4200 Doniphan, then go to Crossroads Pond and other spots on the West Side, including El Paso Country Club area and possibly Coronado Country Club.

**Franklin Mountains State Park** — Most hiking and mountain-biking trails begin in the Tom Mays area, off Transmountain Drive on the west side of the park (east of I-10).

Entry fee is \$5 per person, free for age 12 and under (with family). Correct cash or check only. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Information: 566-6441 or on Facebook at FranklinMountainsSP. Web: [tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/franklin-mountains](http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/franklin-mountains).

Guided hikes and bike rides are \$8 per person (\$3 State Park Pass holder; \$1 children 12 and under); price includes entry. Dogs welcome on leash on some hikes. RSVP required: 566-6441 (8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday).

February hikes begin at the Tom Mays Unit.

- Hike to North Franklin Peak is 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 3**. Difficult/strenuous 8-mile hike.
- Hike to Aztec Caves is 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, **Feb. 4**. Moderate 1.2-mile hike.
- Women Only Hike is 8 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 17**.

• Copper Prospect Mine Tour is 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, **Feb. 18**. This is a short moderate hike up to the opening of the mine, and then a short crawl into the mine shaft. Bring flashlight and helmet.

## Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

— UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management offers free guided walking tours and other activities at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, 10176 Socorro Rd. in El Paso's Mission Valley. Tours last about two hours.

Information: 747-8663 or riobosque.org.

- Birding tours are 8 a.m. Sunday, **Feb. 4**, and 3 p.m. Sunday, **March 4**.
- Introductory tour is 3 p.m. Saturday, **Feb. 10**.
- Community workday is 9 a.m. Saturday, **Feb. 17**.

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

## Keystone Heritage Park and El Paso Desert Botanical Garden

— 4200 Doniphan. Hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday, Wednesday-Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; closed Tuesdays. Admission: \$2 (\$1 children). Information: 584-0563, keystoneheritagepark.com.

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.

Bird watching with the Trans Pecos Audubon Society is 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 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday for walking and bird watching.

## Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site

— Ranch Road 2775 off U.S. 62/180 (Montana Ave.). The site is famed for many Native American rock paintings and unique geology. Hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Admission: \$7 (free for children 12 and younger). Admission including tours or hikes is \$9 (13 and over); \$2 (ages 5-12). Information: 857-1135, ext. 0, or [texas-stateparks.gov](http://texas-stateparks.gov).

Birding hike is 8 a.m. the third Saturday of the month. See website for other special events.

Reservations are recommended for the self-guided area and for camping: (512) 389-8911.

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. Bicycles permitted only on designated paved areas. Pets allowed only in camping or picnic areas.

## Guadalupe Mountains National Park

— 110 miles east of El Paso on the way to Carlsbad, the 86,416-acre park includes the highest point in Texas: Guadalupe Peak, 8,749 feet. Entry fee: \$5 for ages 16 and older, good for one week and all trails. Pine Springs Visitor Center hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Camping is \$8 per site per night. Information: (915) 828-3251 or [nps.gov](http://nps.gov).

## White Sands National Monument

The glistening gypsum dunes are about 15 miles southwest of Alamogordo, N.M., on U.S. 70. Visitor Center hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 31, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. starting Jan. 2. Park hours are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Dec. 31. Entrance fee: \$5 age 16 and older. Free for children. Information: (575) 479-6124, ext. 236 or (575) 679-2599, ext. 232; or go to [nps.gov/whsa](http://nps.gov/whsa).

Sunset strolls are offered daily one hour before sunset: 4 p.m. through Jan. 5.

Ranger-guided Lake Lucero Tour is usually offered on the last weekend of the month, to learn about the formation of the sands and the special plants and animals that live in and around the dunes. Program fee is \$8 (\$4 age 15 and younger). Check website or call for tour date; reservations required, available one month prior to tour.

**Carlsbad Caverns National Park** — The park is about 160 miles east of El Paso, off the Carlsbad Highway (U.S. 62-180). Information: (575) 785-2232 or [nps.gov/cave](http://nps.gov/cave).

Winter hours: Visitor Center open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; tours available 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Last entry into cave via natural entrance is 2 p.m. with last entry into cave via elevator 3:30 p.m. (be in line to exit cave by 4:30 p.m.).


Plan 3-1/2 hours for a walk-in tour and 1-1/2 hours for Big Room tour of the Caverns. Cost is \$10 (free or ages 15 and younger). The park's audio self-guided tour is \$3 extra (also available in Spanish).

Other guided tours are available; call or check website for details.

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## Historic Magoffin Hall

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(Located at the corner of Magoffin Ave and Virginia Ave in Central El Paso's historic Magoffin District.)