



Rockhound Roundup

Friends of Rockhound
State Park

April, May, June, 2009

Editors: Sandy & Greg Scarpella

Third Annual Rockhound Park Bluegrass Festival

The months of April, May, and June were full of events sponsored by the Friends of Rockhound State Park, but none were bigger than the Third Annual Rockhound Park Bluegrass Festival. The event was held on Memorial weekend, May 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, and drew bluegrass lovers from all over the southwestern United States.

The highlight of the festival, of course, were the bands. Returning this year to entertain us were The Pecos Valley Bluegrass Band, Salty Dogs and Coyote Crossing. New to the stage were From the Heartland and The Foley Bluegrass Band.

Also new this year was the festival brochure. It was professionally illustrated and designed by Deb Fonzroy. Volunteers combed the town of Deming looking for advertisers. It also provided a great opportunity to

showcase the generous sponsors of the Friends group.

The Friends group also provided booths at the festival for those attending to purchase t-shirts, caps, buttons, and other merchandise related to the festival. All the food was provided by the Friends group. Thanks to the skilled grilling expertise of board member Nancy Grinnell and her husband Greg as well as Dick and Carol Wootton the hamburgers and hotdogs were big sellers.

Sunday, the final day of the festival was dedicated to a devotional and gospel music. The devotional was given by the master of ceremonies of the event, Greg Scarpella. After that the bands provided three hours of old time gospel music and bluegrass gospel.



The Bluegrass Festival Brochure

Thanks to all the volunteers that made the event such a success this year the bands have decided to come back next year. Mark your calendars for the Fourth Annual Rockhound Park Bluegrass Festival on Memorial weekend 2010.

Desert Alive/Native Plant Sale

April 18, 2009 marked a major event for the park, the Desert Alive and Native Plant Sale. As in previous years the event was well attended by the community.

The Desert Alive featured many events like the Guided Plant Walk buy Gene Jercinovic and Betty Griffin. Larry Malone also

led a Bird Walk at Spring Canyon State Park. Dr. Carol Sutherland, an Entomologist with MNDA and NMSU had a program about the arthropods of the area. Laura Simmons returned with her Swainson's hawk and allowed us to get up close and personal with it. The silent auction, the Deming Garden Club's Bake Sale, Jim Hazelton's

polished thunder eggs, Ron Wolfe's nature photography, and Gary & June Loudon's polished gemstones were booths at the event.

The Native Plant Sale was a great success again this year. The plant sale is the main money maker for the Friends group and raked (no pun intended) in \$2,790.51.

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Special points of interest:

- The 3rd Annual Rockhound Park Bluegrass Festival
- Easter egg hunt given to Deming Lions Club
- Buffalo Soldiers, Bobcats, and Bats
- Future events
- Music in the Park



Photo by Greg Scarpella

Around the Park

Robert Apodaca, the park ranger, gives monthly reports to the board of the Friends group of things happening around the park. He is in the process of purchasing educational materials for the children that visit the park. The material he purchases helps educate the children on our desert environment. So far he has purchased owl pellets, rattlesnake skulls, and plant identification card decks. He is in the process of starting a Junior Ranger program. It will include a booklet that will encourage the children to adventure in the park and find certain plants and animals. Once the booklet is filled

out the child will receive a Junior Ranger certificate. It will cost approximately \$1600.00 to implement the program.

The special project report for the labyrinth has been sent to Santa Fe for approval by the state. If approved the labyrinth will be constructed. It is estimated that the whole process will be completed sometime in August.

The Friends group has decided to give the responsibility for the Easter egg hunt to the Deming

Wildcat Lions for next year. They Lions received the bunny suit and left over Easter eggs in great anticipation of a good hunt next year.

Rockhound Park will be getting four new shelters this year and the old ones at Rockhound Park and Spring Canyon need to be painted. Robert has asked the Friends group for financial help to purchase new grills for the new shelters. He has also asked for funds to purchase the tools to do the job. We want to thank Robert for his great work around Rockhound Park.



Photo by Greg Scarpella

Fred Hampton as Lt. Matthias W. Day
Photo by Ron Wolfe

The History of the Buffalo Soldiers

For the April meeting two members of the New Mexico Humanities Council, Fred Hampton and Jim Fudge, presented a history of the Buffalo soldiers.

Fred Hampton played the role of Lt. Matthias W. Day. Lt. Day, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in 1876, was assigned to lead the 9th Cavalry, a company of black cavalry men known as the Buffalo soldiers.

Day said the name "Buffalo soldiers" had at least three different origins. One name developed because of their dark color, similar to the buffalo. Another developed because of the soldier's hair, also similar to the buffalos. Most believe that the Native Americans named the black fighting troops Buffalo soldiers because they were so tenacious. The Indians believed they fought as hard as wounded buffalo.

Lt. Day and Sgt. Fudge also brought with them authentic Buffalo Soldier artifacts like saddles, veterinary and medical implements, eating and cooking utensils, rifles and swords, and the soldiers dietary staple; hard tack.

The Buffalo soldiers were instrumental in fighting the Indian wars throughout New Mexico. Lt. Day received the Congressional Metal of honor for his bravery.

Future Events

Mark your calendars for July 29, 2009. That will be the Annual Picnic. It will be held at 11:30 at the Group Shelter in Rockhound State Park. Make sure you RSVP to Julie Orban at 575-543-5432 or Nancy Grinnell at 575-544-4031 by July 24th if you plan to attend.

The August meeting will feature a presentation on "The Incredi-

ble Journey-Mariposa's." Mariposa's is Spanish for butterflies. The September meeting brings Dennis and Mary Kauffman with a presentation on Ibex and owls.

Volunteers are always needed for future events at the park. The Friends group still needs people to greet and man booths for the three remaining Music in the Park events. Also, people

will be needed to unload trucks and help with the Native plant sale in September.

MaryKay recently sent out an e-mail request asking members to have their names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails on a list that would be available for members only. If you wish to be on that list please call or e-mail MaryKay at jmrancho@vtc.net

Don't forget to
RSVP for the
Annual Picnic
by
July 24th

Music in the Park

The 2009 Music in the Park season at Rockhound State Park started with a bang. Bob Delp, who hails from Deming, and Wendell Hutchinson, Bob's backup on base guitar, kicked off the season in June. Both are new to performing at the park and the folks who attended got a real treat.

Bob, who is originally from Virginia, moved to Deming and is employed at the NMDOT. He has appeared in the last three installments of the "Grand Ole Opry Deming Style" and is well known in the area. Wendell is

from Silver City and has shared his love of music in church and also at the "Grand Ole Opry Deming Style" since his move to Deming in 2003. Their toe tapping music included country, old rock and roll, and bluegrass. They were such a hit they have been invited back next year.

July will feature Eddie Harrison. He is from Las Cruces and was in the 2008 "Grand Ole Opry Deming Style." He will entertain us with his cowboy poetry and country music. Eddie is also a guitar craftsman and makes his own guitars. He will be playing

one of his crafted guitars.

August will feature a return favorite; "Guitar Greg" Scarpella. He is well known in the area and has performed at the "Grand Ole Opry Deming Style" and the recent "Tournament of Praise."

Local Mariachi's and Spanish dancers will round off the schedule in September. Mark the third Saturday of each month and come enjoy the music!!



*Bob Delp at Music in the Park.
Photo by Ron Wolfe*

Kevin Hansen shares his Love of Bobcats

State Park's own interpretative ranger Kevin Hansen came to the Friends of Rockhound Park meeting in May to share his love of bobcats. Kevin gained his love for big cats while working for the Florida Parks Service in the Everglades. However, his greatest love is for bobcats.

Kevin is quite an expert on the subject. He has written an extensive book called "Bobcats,

Masters of Survival" that was eleven years in the making. He shared with us some of the facts about bobcats. Their territory ranges from lower Canada to deep into Mexico. They can be seen everywhere in the United States. They are only limited by climate.

Bobcats are a part of the lynx family. They are excellent hunters and ambush predators. The

females raise their young by themselves and the males have distinct territories. They have been widely sought in past years for their pelts.

Bobcats are about twenty-two inches long full grown and they look very cute in the pictures Kevin brought. According to him you don't want to get too close because they will "rip your face off." Thanks Kevin for all the great information.



Bats, Nature's Friend and Ours

Hollywood has given bats a bad name according to Rink Somersday of the Asombro Institute for Science and Education. She came to us from the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park in Las Cruces for the June meeting to teach us about bats.

Rick has extensive knowledge on the subject. She has worked with bats for many years both in

New Mexico and in Colorado. She shared with us that bats are flying mammals. They are not birds. They give birth just as we do and they also have hands. Their wings are more like human hands with webs than birds that have feathers. They live on every continent except Antarctica.

Bats are a friend to nature and

us because they eat insects, nectar, fruit, and blood. The insect eating bats can consume nearly 600 mosquitoes in an hour. The fruit eating bats eat the decaying and fallen fruit helping clean the farmer's orchard. Nectar eating bats are pollinators. The blood eating bats are only found in South America and pose little threat to man. Rink has already been invited back next year to give a presentation on bears and mountain lions.





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Friend of Rockhound Park is a
Non-profit 501-3c organization.



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