



Rockhound Ramblings

Friends of
Rockhound Park

July, August, September 2009

Editors: Sandy and Greg Scarpella

July Member Appreciation Picnic

July was member appreciation month. The July meeting held on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 was the annual picnic hosted by the board members of The Friends of Rockhound State Park. It was held at the pavilion and given to thank all the members for their support and hard work throughout the year. Nearly 80 people



attended the event.

Members of the board including Jim Hazelton and Nancy Grinnell cooked up hamburgers and hot-dogs on the grill that could not be outdone.



Many members from the Friends group get up early every six months to help unload the truck full of plants for the Native Plant Sales that are held in the spring at the Desert Alive event and then in the fall at the Native Plant Sale. This event is usually a hit with the local Deming residents and this year was no exception.

Park Ranger Robert Apodaca's wife, Jodie, graced us with her baking genius by providing us with a delicious chocolate cake.



Every year the Friends group hosts the picnic to thank each and every member for their participation in park events. It is our members that make us strong. This group is blessed with members that volunteer for the many events that we have throughout the year.

The years events start in April with the Desert's Alive. This event celebrates spring with a native plant sale, desert walk, and demonstrations by experts on desert plants and animals.

May brings the featured event of the year and that is the annual Bluegrass Festival. Bluegrass bands from all over the southwest come to entertain us on Memorial weekend.

June, July, and August become a flurry of activity with the increasing popular Music in the Park events. This event allows the Friend's group to showcase local talent and have a fun night out at the park.

September is also very busy with the Mariachi's and Spanish Folkloric event along with the fall Native plant sale.

The year is capped off with the Luminaries in December.

Thanks to all members who volunteer to make these events a success. We could not do it without you.

Fall Native Plant Sale is a Hit

The fall event was held this year on September 26th from 8:00AM to 12:00PM. Pre-orders were taken at the extension office every Thursday morning for three weeks on August 27th, September 3rd and September 10th. Pre-orders were also taken at the Garden Club meeting Monday, September 14th.

Nearly every plant was sold bringing the total to \$2,314.50. After expenses the total the Friend's group received was \$1,100.00. The left over plants were planted in the Rockhound Park garden by the park employees. Thanks to all the volunteers for making this event a success.

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Special points of interest:

- Fall Native Plant sale brings in money
- Work continues to get Jim Brady's memorial approved
- Volunteers needed to make luminaries
- Music in the Park concludes
- Dennis Kauffman's spotted owl research
- Seven circuit classical labyrinth completed



Around the Park

Robert Apodaca always keeps the members of the Friends group up to date on what is happening around Rockhound Park.

The memorial for Jim Brady had to be taken from the park because, according to state regulation, there is a two year waiting period after someone dies until a memorial can be erected in their honor.

Kevin Hansen worked on a biography of Jim to give to Dave Simon, director of Park services,

so he can get this approved by the state. Robert will make proposals to the Park Services Department that the original stone be put back in the park along with a metal etched stone that will give an account of some of Jim's accomplishments for the park. At least two different proposals for a memorial will be sent to the Parks Department for them to decide on which one would be the most appropriate. All costs will come from the 15% that the Friend's group gives Rockhound Park.

The shelters for the RV spaces

are going to be replaced gradually. The first four were replaced in July for a cost of \$1,600.00. The Jr. Ranger program is still in the works. A proposal has been sent to Santa Fe for approval.

As we all know, the State of New Mexico is having a very difficult budget crunch right now. This has also effected the money that is flowing to the state parks for improvements. Some of the improvements have already been approved by the state but the money is not yet available to implement them.



Sally Allen will host two star parties. One will be November 14th and the other will be December 5th.

We need volunteers in December to make luminaries.

2010 dues payable in January

Future Friend's Events

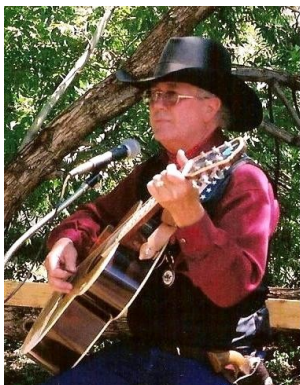
The Friends group continues to be busy the next three months. On Wednesday, October 21st plan for the regular garden/labyrinth care. The regular meeting for October will be on Wednesday, October 28th. The speaker for October will be Sherry Robinson from the New Mexico Humanities Council. She will speak on her book, *Apache Voices*.

In November, Sally Allen will host a Star Party on Saturday the 14th. The garden/labyrinth care will be on Wednesday, November 18th. There will be no meeting in November because of Thanksgiving.

In December Sally will host another Star Party on Saturday the 5th. There will be no garden/labyrinth care in December. We will need volunteers on Decem-

ber the 9th to make 1,152 luminaries for the Holiday Lights program to be hosted on Saturday, December 12th. There will be no December meeting because of Christmas.

In January membership dues for 2010 will become payable. All the leadership for the Friends group would like to wish each and everyone of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Eddy Harrison

Music in the Park Concludes

The summer series event, Music in the Park, has become an increasingly popular event over the years. This year has been no exception.

July brought us Eddy Harrison from Las Cruces. He is very popular in the Las Cruces area, but proved to be popular as well with the crowd at Rockhound Park. He sang cowboy and

western songs and also entertained us with his western poetry. More than eighty people attended the event and he has been invited back next year.

A return favorite, Guitar Greg Scarpella, was on tap for the August event. He again wowed the crowds with his cowboy songs and old rock and roll music. Greg also entertained us

with stories from his past and jokes that were enjoyed by all. There were over seventy in attendance in August.

September was to bring the Mariachis and Spanish Folkloric Dancers. They were unfortunately rained out this year. Thanks to all that set up the stage for this event. Stay tuned next year for more great entertainment.

Owls and Ibex

Dennis and Mary Kauffman came to us from the Sacramento Mountains to inform us on ibex and owls for the September meeting. Dennis had been with us before to talk about ibex but this time he also spoke to us about his 26 years of experience observing owls.

He has worked mostly with spotted owls because New Mexico is part of their native habitat. Because of the media attention surrounding the spotted owl, they are the most studied owl species in America. Spotted owls are about 17 inches tall and

have a wingspan of about 35 inches. They nest in either trees or caves and usually mate for life. In the wild they can live to be 10 to 13 years old. They are very territorial and they like their space. They don't like to hear other owls when they are on the nest with their young. They have very few predators and do not fear humans.

The Florida mountains are the habitat for gray horned owls. These owls are bigger and have a wingspan of about five feet. They can kill prey up to three times larger than they are and

they frequently like to eat skunks.

Ibex are not native to this area but were transplanted to the Florida's from Turkey. They are very allusive, surefooted, and agile animals that live well in the rocks. The males will get to be about 160 lbs. full grown and the females will be about 60 lbs. full grown. They are hunted in New Mexico to contain the population and Dennis has lead many hunting expeditions. He has also spent many days on the Florida Mountains studying these animals. Thanks Dennis for another great presentation.



Photo by R. Bennetts



The Flight of the Monarchs

In August MaryKay Brady gave us a presentation on the flight of the monarch butterflies presented by PBS and produced by Elizabeth Artledge.

We all know that monarch butterflies are both beautiful and delicate. They make the most amazing journey each year. They start out as caterpillars who shed their skin four times. On the fifth time they transform

into a butterfly and start an arduous and dangerous trek from southern Canada to Mexico. They fly about fifty miles each day and they will stay in Mexico for about five months when they arrive. While in Mexico the Monarchs will mate and then die.

The next generation of Monarchs will fly to Texas, mate and also die. This new generation will fly to the Midwest and also

mate and die. The last generation will fly up to southern Canada where they will stay and mate the generation that will make the return trip to Mexico.

This migrating ritual has stumped scientists for years because they have been unable to figure out why this happens. It is just another wonder of nature that amazes us mere humans.



The labyrinth is completed

Several members of the Friends group worked tirelessly to finish the labyrinth which is now located next to the native garden at the visitor center.

The labyrinth is a welcome addition to our park. Labyrinths, like the one found in Rockhound State Park, have been found from Peru to Siberia, India to Arizona, and Africa to Scandina-

via. Labyrinths have been found dating back over 5,000 years. The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures. One feature that they have in common is that they have one path that winds in a circuitous way to the center. The labyrinth in Rockhound State Park is set to align with the North Star.

Labyrinths are currently used

world-wide as a way to quiet the mind, recover a balance in life, and encourage meditation, insight, self-reflection, and to discover innovation and celebration.

You are invited to come get enjoy the outdoors, walk the path, renew your spirit, let go of stress, and be one with nature. It is a great way to unwind, listen to the birds, and smell the desert.



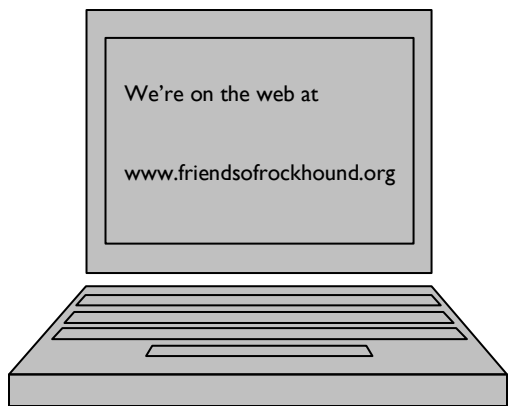


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Friend of Rockhound Park, Inc. is a
non-profit 501-C3c New Mexico
Corporation



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Art Vasquez	President
Sally Allen	Vice President
Shelley Perkins	Secretary
MaryKay Brady	Treasurer
Nancy Grinnell	Board Member
Jim Hazelton	Board Member
Jerry Owens	Board Member

New Members

None this quarter! Let's get busy on this!

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 Art & Brenda Vasquez
 Mike & Barbara Walsh
 W Lowell White
 Donna Whitten
 Will & Marty Willis
 Peggy Wion
 Ron & Sue Wolfe
 Dick & Carol Wootton



Aerial photo taken by
Ron Wolfe
10/1/2009

Other photos taken by
Greg Scarpella

Thank you both for sharing
your talents!