



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Guadalupe Mountains
National Park

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Guadalupe Mountains News Release

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Guadalupe Mountains National Park Free Interpretive Programs, December 2011

(Pine Springs, TX) Superintendent Dennis A. Vásquez invites everyone to join park rangers for free interpretive programs at Guadalupe Mountains National Park throughout the month of December. Said Vásquez, “the winter is a wonderful time to visit Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The cold winter temperatures and shorter days bring unique views of the Guadalupe, along with unique challenges to being in the backcountry. With the recent snows, the park is truly a winter wonderland. Hike the 86 miles of trails, take in some fresh air, visit one of the park’s historic sites, such as Frijole Ranch, Pratt Cabin, The Pinery Butterfield Stage Station Ruins or Ship-on-the Desert. We remind visitors to make sure they are prepared so that their visit is a safe one. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday and hope that everyone enjoys all that Guadalupe Mountains National Park has to offer.”

The December schedule of Free Interpretive Programs and Activities at Guadalupe Mountains National Park follows:

Thursday, December 8

Horns and Antlers

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

From High Tide to High Desert: Water in the Guadalupe

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station.

Saturday, December 10

From High Tide to High Desert: Water in the Guadalupe

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station.

Struggling to Survive: Desert Adaptations in the Guadalupe Mountains

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

Sunday, December 11

McKittrick Canyon Hike to Pratt Cabin

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Ranger-led hike. Meet at the McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station at 9:45 AM. Hike is 4.8 miles roundtrip, moderate with minimal elevation gain. Bring water (at least one gallon per person is recommended), food, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and sturdy hiking boots. Trekking poles are recommended.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Dress warm. Weather may change rapidly, so dress in layers. **Ranger-led hikes may be cancelled, subject to weather conditions. Please call the Pine Springs Visitor Center at 915-828-3251 x2124 for the most up to date information.**

Thursday, December 15

Clean and Honest: The Subtle Beauty of Chihuahuan Desert Plants

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

From High Tide to High Desert: Water in the Guadalupe

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station.

Saturday, December 17

McKittrick Canyon Hike to the Notch

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Ranger-led hike. Meet at the McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station at 7:45 AM. Hike is 10.2 miles, roundtrip, strenuous, with 1,500 feet of elevation gain. Bring water (at least one gallon per person is recommended), food, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and sturdy hiking boots. Trekking poles are recommended. Dress warm. Weather may change rapidly, so dress in layers. **Ranger-led hikes may be cancelled, subject to weather conditions. Please call the Pine Springs Visitor Center at 915-828-3251 x2124 for the most up to date information.**

Sunday, December 18

Horns and Antlers

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

Eatin' Dust for 23 Days: The Butterfield Overland Mail

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. The Pinery Butterfield Overland Mail Station Ruins.

Thursday, December 22

Birding Basics

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Patio.

Eatin' Dust for 23 Days: The Butterfield Overland Mail

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. The Pinery Butterfield Overland Mail Station Ruins

Sunday, December 25

The Pine Springs Visitor Center will be closed.

Thursday, December 29

Clean and Honest: The Subtle Beauty of Chihuahuan Desert Plants

10:00 AM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

Birding Basics

2:00 PM. Patio Talk. Pine Springs Visitor Center Front Patio.

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Background:

Guadalupe Mountains National Park is located in far west Texas, on U.S. Highway 62/180. The driving distance is 110 miles east of El Paso, TX or 55 miles southwest of Carlsbad, NM. Visitors travelling to Dog Canyon, on the north side of the park, can access that area via New Mexico State Road 137, passing through the Lincoln National Forest and the Village of Queen, NM. While the approach to Guadalupe Mountains National Park is scenic from any direction, there are no paved driving tours within the park. Park roads provide access to the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center and Campground, the McKittrick Canyon Contact Station, historic Frijole Ranch, the Dog Canyon Visitor Contact/Ranger Station and Campground, historic Williams Ranch (4x4) only, historic Ship-on-the-Desert, the Pinery and trailheads. Public access to Ship-on-the-Desert is available only during open houses. To access Williams Ranch Road, it is necessary to check out a key at the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center.

Families with children are invited to ask about our Junior and Senior Ranger and Junior Paleontologist programs at the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center. Children of all ages who complete the activities will receive a certificate and badge and are eligible to purchase a Junior Ranger or Senior Ranger patch. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are encouraged to participate in our Resource Stewardship Scout Ranger Program (www.nps.gov/gettinginvolved/youthprograms/boyscouts.htm) or Resource Stewardship Girl Scout Ranger Program (www.nps.gov/gettinginvolved/youthprograms/girl_scouts.htm).

An accessible park slide presentation is available in the Pine Springs Visitor Center Auditorium. Ask the park ranger at the information desk to start the film for you. A push-button operated film about McKittrick Canyon, narrated by Petroleum Engineer Wallace E. Pratt, who was instrumental in the creation of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, is available on the patio of the McKittrick Canyon Visitor Contact Station.

Continue your interpretive experience with a visit to the bookstore, which is operated by the park's non-profit cooperating association partner, the Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association (www.ccgma.org), inside the Headquarters Visitor Center at Pine Springs. Proceeds from bookstore sales benefit interpretation and education programs and scientific research at Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Ask about the CCGMA member's discount.

The park entrance fee is \$5.00 per person, valid for 7 days, and children under 16 years of age are free. Guadalupe Mountains Annual Passes may be purchased for \$20.00, America the Beautiful Annual Passes, under the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program, may be purchased at the park for \$80.00 and are valid for all federal public lands. America the Beautiful Senior Passes (lifetime passes) may be purchased by U.S. citizens or permanent residents, 62 years of age or older, for \$10.00. America the Beautiful Access Passes (lifetime passes) for U.S. citizens or permanent residents with qualifying permanent disabilities may be obtained free of charge. For more information about those passes, please see <http://www.nps.gov/gumo/planyourvisit/feesandreservations.htm>. Golden Age and Golden Access passes are honored, as well.

Overnight RV and tent camping is available at the Pine Springs and Dog Canyon Campgrounds. Campsites are \$8.00 per night. There is limited group camping, and groups should contact the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center at (915) 828-3251 x2124 for group campground information or reservations. There are ten primitive designated backcountry/wilderness camping

areas throughout the park. A free backcountry permit, required for overnight stay, may be obtained at the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center between 8:00 AM and 15 minutes prior to closing. There are brand new, covered picnic areas at Frijole Ranch, including one for groups.

Park information, including park conditions, closures or restrictions, weather and program information, may be found on the park's website at www.nps.gov/GUMO/, on the park's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GuadalupeMountains/, or by contacting the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center at (915) 828-3251 x2124. The Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center is open daily (except for Christmas) from 8:00 AM until 4:30 PM (8:00 AM until 6:00 PM from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend). Be sure to stop by to get a map, site bulletins, brochures, post cards, books or film about Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The McKittrick Canyon, Frijole Ranch House, Dog Canyon and Salt Basin Dunes (Dell City, TX) Visitor Contact Stations are open intermittently. Please call the Headquarters (Pine Springs) Visitor Center at (915) 828-3251 x2124 to find out whether they are open. For Dog Canyon, call the Dog Canyon Visitor Contact Station/Ranger Station at (575) 981-2418.

Weather may change quickly so dress appropriately. Make sure to fill your tank and bring plenty of food, water (at least one gallon per person per day, if you are hiking), and snacks, as there are no gasoline, lodging, groceries or food services available in the park. The nearest are 35 miles east of Pine Springs in White's City, 45 miles to the west in Dell City. There is no public transportation to the park. Motorists traveling past the park along U.S. Hwy 62/180 may tune in to the park's Traveler Information Station at 1610 AM for up-to-date park information.

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