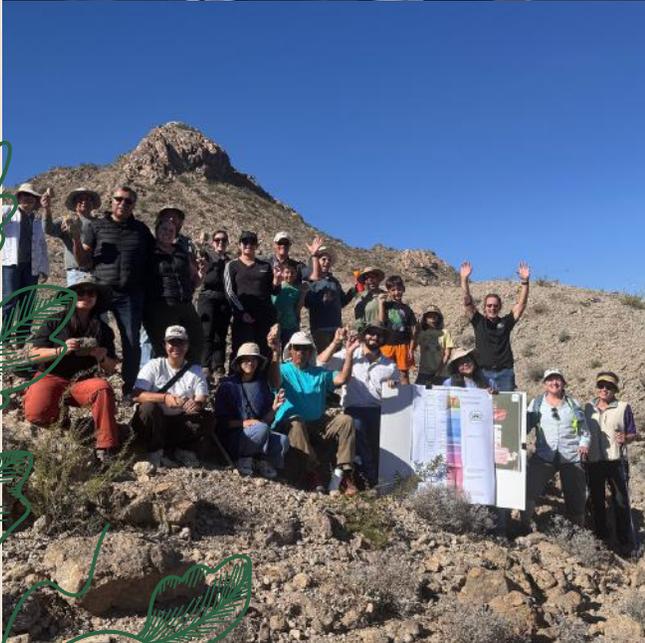


*Celebration of  
Our  
Mountains*

**Spring  
2026  
Program**



# Table of Contents

Letter from President	Pg. 3
Spring Program Overview	Pg. 5–6
Collaborators	Pg. 7
Trip Leaders	Pg. 8–10
Junior Rangers: A Family Exploration Day Hueco Tanks	Pg. 11
Rio Bosque Park Nature Walk	Pg. 12
T or C Gem & Rock Show	Pg. 13
RockHound RoundUp (Deming Gem & Mineral Show)	Pg. 14
Slot Canyon Hike	Pg. 15
El Paso Tin Mines	Pg. 16
Hueco Tanks Tribal Perspective Tour	Pg. 17
March Monthly Social	Pg. 18
Tonuco Fluorite Mine & Petroglyphs	Pg. 19
Junior Rangers: Discovering the Franklin Mountains	Pg. 20
Outdoor Yoga in the Franklin Mountains: Movement, Breath, and Connection	Pg. 21
Lost Dog Trail & Rescue Runners 915	Pg. 22
UTEP Colloquium & Field Trip	Pg. 23
Kilbourne Hole Volcanic Crater Tour	Pg. 24
Who's Running Around the Desert at Night?	Pg. 25
Spring Canyon Hike & Geology Tour	Pg. 26
Oro Grande Mining District, Native Plants & Rockhounding	Pg. 27
Mammoth Rock Trail	Pg. 28
April Monthly Social	Pg. 29
Community Events We're Attending	Pg. 30
Our Friends	Pg. 31
Contact us!	Pg. 32

# Letter from the President

We welcome you to another one of our no-cost, action-packed semiannual programs... this one for Spring of 2026. You will notice that Spring is a time when many of the regional gems shows are held – we have organized trips to the Demming and T or C shows, both of which have their own local field trips for rock hounding. For those loving the rocks and minerals, we encourage you to attend one or more of the shows to learn about mineral forms and occurrence, self collecting, jewelry stones, and even lapidary techniques.



Following on from our collaboration with UTEP in the Fall 2025 program, we are highlighting the upcoming colloquium held by the Department of Earth, Environmental and Resource Sciences (DEERS) in April followed by a joint field trip to check out the mega-breccia in the Franklins where we will hear professors talk about the unique setting where precambrian igneous boulders were incorporated into much younger marine limestones on "Franklin Island". This season we have an expanded team of volunteer trip leaders who are working hard to show off their favorite places to enjoy the outdoors – be sure to sign up, notify a friend, dust off your hiking shoes and join us. Remember, we are an all volunteer organization and rely on donations...as always send us any suggestions, sign up as a volunteer, or make a donation to help our mission. Rock on!



# 2026 Spring Program

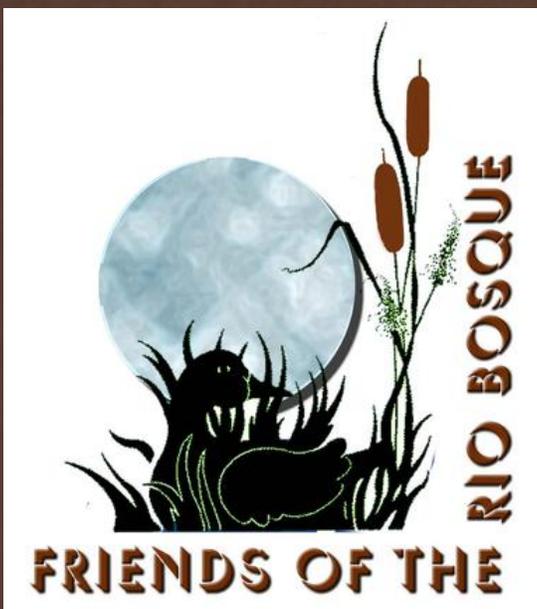
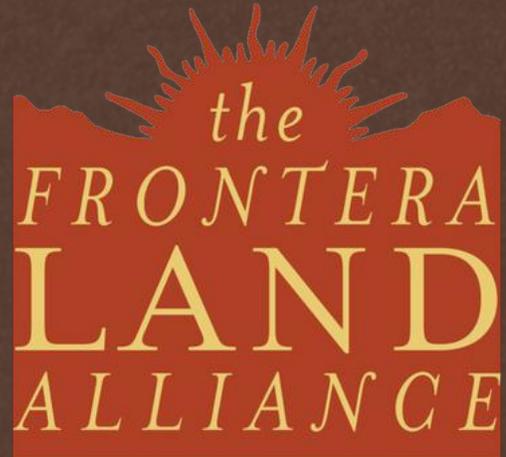
MAR <b>01</b>	<b>Junior Rangers: A Family Exploration Day Hueco Tanks</b>
MAR <b>07</b>	<b>T or C Gem &amp; Rock Show</b>
MAR <b>07</b>	<b>Rio Bosque Park Nature Walk</b>
MAR <b>14</b>	<b>RockHound RoundUp (Deming Gem &amp; Mineral Show)</b>
MAR <b>15</b>	<b>Slot Canyon Hike</b>
MAR <b>21</b>	<b>El Paso Tin Mines</b>
MAR <b>22</b>	<b>Hueco Tanks Tribal Perspective Tour</b>
MAR <b>26</b>	 <b>Monthly Social</b>
MAR <b>28</b>	<b>Tonuco Fluorite Mine &amp; Petroglyphs</b>
MAR <b>29</b>	<b>Outdoor Yoga in the Franklin Mountains: Movement, Breath, and Connection</b>
MAR <b>29</b>	<b>Junior Rangers: Discovering the Franklin Mountains</b>



# 2026 Spring Program

APR <b>04</b>	<b>Lost Dog Trail &amp; Rescue Runners 915</b>	
APR <b>09</b>	 <b>UTEP DEERS Colloquium</b>	
APR <b>10</b>	 <b>UTEP DEERS Colloquium</b>	
APR <b>11</b>	 <b>UTEP DEERS Geology of the Mega-breccia of the "Franklin Island" in the El Paso Group Limestones</b>	
APR <b>12</b>	<b>Kilbourne Hole Volcanic Crater Tour</b>	
APR <b>18</b>	<b>Who's Running Around the Desert at Night?</b>	 
APR <b>19</b>	<b>Spring Canyon Hike &amp; Geology Tour</b>	
APR <b>25</b>	<b>Oro Grande Mining District, Native Plants &amp; Rockhounding</b>	
APR <b>26</b>	<b>Mammoth Rock Trail</b>	
APR <b>30</b>	 <b>Monthly Social</b>	

# Collaborators





# Trip Leaders



**Amy Bocanegra**

*Artist, Explorer*

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**Angelica Paz**

*Explorer, Educator, Queen & King*

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**Brenna April**

*UTEP Student: Geology*

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**Brian Gillis**

*Board Secretary, Educator*

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**Cristian Trujillo**

*Photographer, Birder*

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**Daniel Fox**

*Educator, Native Plant Expert*

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# Trip Leaders



**Eugenio Lucero**

*Climber, Mountaineer*

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**Fernanda Lugo**

*Environmental Activist*

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**Dr. Jay Champan**

*Geologist, Professor*

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**Dr. Katalina Salas**  
*Outreach Lead, Environmental Scientist*

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**Dr. Ken Steigman**

*Ecologist, Educator*

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**Lance Robert**  
*Board President, Geologist*

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# Trip Leaders



**Lexi Dominguez**

*Educator, Experienced Hiking Guide*

**Dr. Melissa Ortega**  
*Geoscience researcher, Educator*



**Pam Almodovar**

*Educator, Animal Science*

**Paul Galvan**  
*Educator, Geologist*



**Dr. Paul Hyder**

*Ecologist, Educator, Musician*

**Trinity Fushille**  
*UTEP Student: Geology*



MAR

01

## Junior Rangers: A Family Exploration Day Hueco Tanks



**Date & Time:** Sunday, March 1, 2026 · 9:00am

**Location:** Hueco Tanks State Park

**Meet-up Location:** Park Entrance Gate

Join Celebration of Our Mountains for a special Junior Rangers experience designed for families with young explorers! This easy, ranger-style program takes place on short, mostly flat trails and introduces children and caregivers to the natural and cultural wonders of Hueco Tanks through hands-on activities and guided exploration. Participants will learn about desert ecology, cultural history, rock art preservation, and responsible outdoor stewardship while moving through one of the most culturally significant landscapes in our region. Activities emphasize curiosity, storytelling, observation, and respect for the land. This event has limited capacity to the first 25 individuals.

**Distance:** ~0.5–1 mile total

**Duration:** ~3 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy (family friendly; ideal for elementary-aged children)

**Best for:** Children and families

**Bring:** Comfortable walking shoes, water, sun protection, and snacks

**Important:** Hueco Tanks is a culturally sensitive site. Participants are expected to follow all park guidelines, remain on designated trails, and respect cultural resources at all times.

**Trip Lead:** Lexi Dominguez, **Contact:** 915-873-7323, **Co-Lead:** Amy Bocanegra



MAR  
07

## Truth or Consequences Rock & Gem Show



**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 7, 2026 · 7:45 AM

**Location:** Sierra County Fairgrounds, 2953 S Broadway, T or C NM

**Meet-up Location:** Dairy Queen/Speedway gas station at Transmountain and I-10 (6990 N Desert Blvd, 79912)

Join us for a day trip to the annual Sierra County Rock and Gem Society (SCRAGS) Rock & Gem Show, a favorite regional event for mineral enthusiasts, collectors, and curious newcomers alike. Participants will have time to explore the rock and gem show floor, featuring mineral and fossil specimens, lapidary arts, educational displays, door prizes, and opportunities to engage directly with collectors and experts. For those interested, optional field trips are available through SCRAGS, including visits to the Palm Park barite and fluorite site and the “candy” rhyolite site near Hatch. These field trips are primarily vehicle-based with little to no hiking and are scheduled to depart around 10:00 AM. Field trip participation is optional, and details are provided directly by the rock show organizers.

In addition to the show and field trips, participants may choose to explore the town of Truth or Consequences, known for its historic mineral hot springs, local dining, and relaxed desert charm. This trip offers flexibility, allowing participants to tailor their experience based on interest and energy level. Note: we will depart promptly at 8:00 AM to ensure arrival in time for scheduled field trips and show activities. Entry is free.

**Distance:** Minimal walking; mostly indoor and vehicle-based

**Duration:** ~6 hours total (including travel)

**Difficulty:** Easy (all experience levels welcome)

**Best for:** All ages

**Bring:** Comfortable clothing, water, snacks, sun protection, cash or card for vendors

**Trip Lead:** Lance Robert, **Contact:** hlswwrob@yahoo.com, **Co-Lead:** Amy Bocanegra.



MAR  
**07**

## Rio Bosque Park Nature Walk



**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 7, 2026 · 4:00 PM

**Location:** Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

**Meet-up Location:** Bridge by the River side canal

Join us for an easy, family-friendly afternoon walk through the Rio Bosque Wetlands, one of El Paso's most important environmental restoration sites. This guided nature walk follows flat dirt and gravel paths and offers participants an opportunity to explore the unique riparian ecosystems that exist along the Rio Grande corridor. As we move through the wetlands, participants will learn about habitat restoration efforts, migratory bird pathways, and the role of water systems in shaping life along the U.S./Mexico border. This experience is designed to be accessible and engaging for all ages, making it ideal for families, first-time participants, and anyone interested in learning more about local ecosystems without the physical demands of a traditional hike.

**Distance:** ~1–1.5 miles

**Duration:** ~2 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy (family friendly)

**Best for:** All ages

**Bring:** Comfortable walking shoes, water, sun protection, and camera/binoculars if you have them.

**Important:** Trails are flat but include dirt and gravel surfaces; dress for weather and outdoor conditions.

**Trip Lead:** Katalina Salas, **Contact:** katsalas7@gmail.com, **Co-Lead:** Cristian Trujillo



MAR  
14

## RockHound RoundUp (Deming Gem & Mineral Show)

**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 14, 2026 · 10AM

**Location:** Deming, NM

**Meet-up Location:** Dairy Queen/Speedway gas station at Transmountain and I-10 (6990 N Desert Blvd, 79912)

Join us for RockHound RoundUp, a relaxed, all-ages trip to the Deming Gem & Mineral Show, one of the Southwest's long-running gatherings for mineral enthusiasts, collectors, and curious learners. This easy, low-physical-demand experience centers on exploring indoor and outdoor exhibitor spaces rather than hiking trails. Participants will have time to browse a wide range of mineral specimens, fossils, lapidary art, jewelry, and educational displays while engaging directly with vendors, collectors, and subject-matter experts. Throughout the visit, participants are encouraged to ask questions, handle specimens, and learn about the geology behind Southwest mineral diversity, how specimens are formed, and the science and ethics of collecting. The show environment makes this an ideal entry point for beginners, while still offering depth and variety for experienced rockhounds. The flexible format allows participants to move at their own pace, making this trip accessible for families, older adults, and anyone interested in geology without the physical demands of a traditional hike.

**Distance:** Minimal walking on paved and packed surfaces

**Duration:** Half-day experience

**Difficulty:** Easy (all ages and experience levels welcome)

**Best for:** All ages

**Bring:** Comfortable walking shoes, water, snacks, sun protection, and cash or card for vendors

**Important:** This trip focuses on exhibitor spaces; no field collecting is planned.

**Trip Lead:** Celebration of Our Mountains Members



MAR  
**15**

## Slot Canyon Hike: Erosion, Water, and Desert Landscapes



**Date & Time:** Sunday, March 15, 2026 · 7:45AM

**Location:** Las Cruces, NM

**Meet-up Location:** Dairy Queen/Speedway gas station at Transmountain and I-10 (6990 N Desert Blvd, 79912)

Join Celebration of Our Mountains for a guided slot canyon hike that explores one of the desert's most striking landforms, narrow canyons carved by erosion and episodic flash flooding. This moderate out-and-back hike winds through sandy washes and rocky passages, offering participants a close-up look at how water, sediment, and time shape desert landscapes. As we move through the canyon, participants will learn about desert geomorphology, sediment transport, and canyon formation, with hands-on discussions focused on reading rock layers, recognizing erosional features, and understanding the role of intense but infrequent rainfall events. The narrow walls and changing terrain provide dramatic scenery and a tangible sense of how dynamic desert environments can be. This hike is designed for teens and adults and requires comfort navigating uneven terrain, sandy sections, and confined spaces. The pace allows time for observation, discussion, and photography while maintaining a steady forward movement through the canyon.

**Distance:** ~2–3 miles round trip

**Duration:** 3 hours

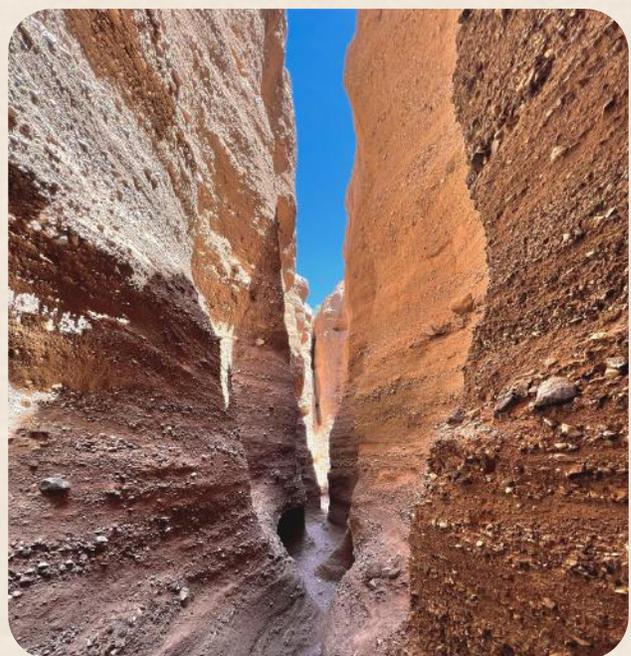
**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** Teens and adults

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and a small backpack

**Important:** Slot canyons are weather-dependent environments. This hike will be canceled or rescheduled if rain or flash flooding is forecast.

**Trip Lead:** Angelica Paz, **Contact:** 915-525-5081, **Co-Lead:** Melissa Ortega



MAR  
21

## El Paso Tin Mines Hike: Mining History & Desert Geology



**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 21, 2026 · 7:45AM

**Location:** Franklin Mountains State Park

**Meet-up Location:** Jon Cunningham Boulevard, parking lot Chuck Heinrich Memorial Park.

Join us for a moderate, geology-focused hike through the historic tin mining district of the Franklin Mountains, where El Paso's industrial past meets complex desert geology. This guided out-and-back hike explores remnants of early mining activity while offering participants a deeper understanding of how geology, resources, and human history intersect in this iconic mountain range. As we move along rocky trails with gradual elevation gain, participants will learn about the region's tin mining history, the economic importance of mineral extraction, and the role of igneous processes in the formation of mineral deposits. Discussions will connect visible landscape features to broader geologic processes, helping participants interpret rock types, structures, and landforms encountered along the route. The hike rewards participants with sweeping desert views and opportunities to pause for observation, discussion, and reflection on how the Franklin Mountains have shaped, and been shaped by, human use over time. This experience is best suited for teens and adults who are comfortable hiking on uneven, rocky terrain.

**Distance:** ~3 miles round trip

**Duration:** ~3-4 hours

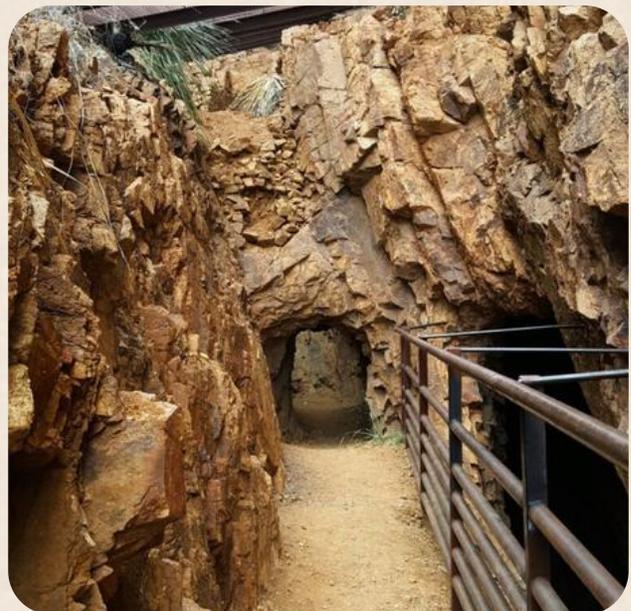
**Difficulty:** Moderate, rocky surfaces and elevation gain; participants should be prepared for sustained hiking in desert conditions.

**Best for:** Teens and adults

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and a small backpack

**Trip Lead:** Lexi Dominguez,

**Contact:** 915-873-7323, **Co-Lead:** Eugenio Lucero



MAR  
**22**

## Hueco Tanks Tribal Perspective Tour



**Date & Time:** Sunday, March 22, 2026, 8:45AM

**Location:** Hueco Tanks State Park & Historic Site

**Meet-up Location:** Park Entrance Gate

Join us for a guided walking experience at Hueco Tanks that centers Indigenous perspectives on land, history, and stewardship. This tour invites participants to engage thoughtfully with one of the most culturally significant landscapes in the region, emphasizing listening, reflection, and respectful presence. This easy, low-impact walk focuses on cultural narratives, rock art interpretation, and the enduring importance of Hueco Tanks to Indigenous communities past and present. Rather than emphasizing physical challenge, the experience prioritizes understanding how place, memory, and responsibility intersect, and how cultural knowledge shapes relationships with land over time.

Participants will be encouraged to consider multiple ways of knowing the landscape, including oral histories, cultural continuity, and stewardship practices that extend beyond recreation. The pace is intentionally slow, with frequent pauses for discussion, observation, and reflection. This experience is best suited for adults and older teens who are interested in cultural learning and are willing to engage with the site thoughtfully and respectfully.

**Distance:** ~1 mile total

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Best for:** Adults and older teens

**Bring:** Comfortable walking shoes, water, sun protection, and an open, respectful mindset

**Important:** Hueco Tanks is a culturally sensitive site. Participants are expected to follow all park guidelines, remain on designated trails, and respect cultural resources at all times.



**Trip Lead:** Angelica Paz, **Contact:** 915-525-5081, **Co-Lead:** Melissa Ortega

MAR  
26



# March Monthly Social

**Date & Time:** Thursday, March 26, 2026, 6:00PM

**Location:** Angry Owl Southwest Grill & Cantina, 4799 N Mesa St, El Paso, TX 79912

We're excited to invite you to our monthly gathering. The evening will feature a special lecture from an expert, more details to come!

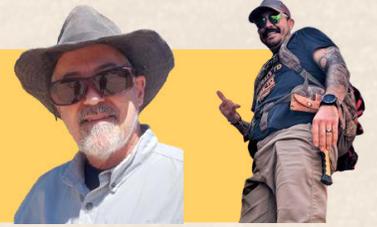
- Enjoy delicious food and drinks
- Connect with wonderful company

Whether you're an experienced geology, ecology, birds, hiking, yoga or just curious about getting outside, this event is sure to be both informative and fun. Feel free to bring along a friend or two—everyone is welcome! We can't wait to see you for a night filled with laughter, learning, and camaraderie.



MAR  
28

## Tonuco Fluorite Mine & Petroglyphs



**Date & Time:** Saturday, March 28, 2026 · 7:45AM

**Location:** Near Tonuco Mountain NM (~1 hr north of EP)

**Meet-up Location:** Dairy Queen/Speedway gas station at Transmountain and I-10 (6990 N Desert Blvd, 79912)

Join Celebration of Our Mountains for an exploration-focused hike near Tonuco Mountain that weaves together geology, mineral resources, and cultural history in a rugged desert landscape. This guided outing introduces participants to fluorite mineralization, volcanic features, and ancient petroglyphs, offering a layered understanding of how natural processes and human presence have shaped this area across time. As we hike across rocky and uneven terrain, participants will examine fluorite deposits and volcanic rock features while learning about the geologic processes responsible for mineral formation. Along the route, we will also discuss the cultural significance of petroglyphs in the region and what these markings reveal about long-standing human relationships with the land.

The hike balances hands-on geology discussions with thoughtful engagement around cultural resources, emphasizing observation, interpretation, and respect. This experience is best suited for teens and adults who are comfortable hiking on uneven ground and interested in both earth science and cultural history.

**Distance:** ~2 miles total

**Duration:** approximately 6 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult

**Best for:** Teens and adults

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and a small backpack

**Important:** Petroglyphs and cultural features are protected resources.

Participants must remain on designated routes and observe without touching or altering any features.

**Trip Lead:** Brian Gillis, **Contact:** 915-861-2990, **Co-Lead:** Paul Galvan



MAR  
29

## Outdoor Yoga in the Franklin Mountains: Movement, Breath, and Connection



**Date & Time:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 · 8AM

**Location:** Franklin Mountains State Park

**Meet-up Location:** Park Headquarters Parking Lot, 2900 Tom Mays Access Rd. 79911

Join Celebration of Our Mountains for a grounding outdoor yoga experience set within the natural beauty of the Franklin Mountains. This all-levels yoga session invites participants to slow down, breathe deeply, and reconnect with their bodies while surrounded by desert landscapes and open skies. Led by Fernanda Lugo, the practice will focus on gentle, accessible movement, mindful breathing, and presence in nature. The session is designed to be welcoming for beginners and experienced practitioners alike, with options offered throughout to support different bodies and comfort levels. Rather than intensity or performance, the emphasis is on connection—to breath, to place, and to community.

This experience offers a restorative complement to Celebration of Our Mountains' hiking and exploration programs, creating space for reflection, balance, and embodied engagement with the landscape. This is an outdoor event on natural ground. Participants should expect uneven surfaces and variable weather conditions.

**Duration:** ~60 minutes

**Difficulty:** Easy (all levels welcome)

**Best for:** Teens and adults

**Bring:** Yoga mat or towel, water, sun protection, and comfortable clothing

**Yoga Instructor:** Fernanda Lugo, Contact: [lumiferz@gmail.com](mailto:lumiferz@gmail.com)



MAR  
**29**

## **Junior Rangers: Discovering the Franklin Mountains**



**Date & Time:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 · 9AM

**Location:** Franklin Mountains State Park

**Meet-up Location:** Park Headquarters Parking Lot, 2900 Tom Mays Access Rd. 79911

Join us for a Junior Rangers experience designed especially for families and elementary-aged children who are ready to explore the Franklin Mountains together. This easy, interactive program follows short park trails and introduces young participants to the desert environment through movement, observation, and hands-on learning. Along the way, children and caregivers will learn about desert plants, wildlife, basic geology, and “Leave No Trace” principles in an age-appropriate and engaging way. The program includes frequent stops for discussion, activities, and questions, allowing children to build confidence outdoors while discovering how scientists and stewards observe and care for natural places. With its low difficulty level and flexible pace, this experience is ideal for first-time hikers, curious young scientists, and families looking for a welcoming introduction to outdoor learning in one of El Paso’s most iconic landscapes.

**Distance:** ~1 mile total

**Duration:** 2- 3 hours

**Difficulty:** Easy (family friendly; ideal for elementary-aged children)

**Best for:** Children and families

**Bring:** Comfortable walking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and curiosity

**Important:** Children must be accompanied by an adult. Participants are expected to stay on designated trails and follow park guidelines.

**Trip Lead:** Pam Almodovar, **Co-Lead:** Lexi Dominguez, **Contact:** 915-873-7323



APR  
**04**

## Lost Dog Trail & Rescue Runners 915



**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 4, 2026 · 8:00 AM – ~10:00 AM

**Meet-up Location:** EPAS Westside Adoption Center, 5625 Confetti Dr, El Paso, TX 79912

**Attendance Capacity:** 15 participants

Join us for a meaningful morning at the Lost Dog Nature Preserve, where outdoor recreation meets community connection and conservation. This trip includes a special partnership with Rescue Runners 915, a local nonprofit that helps shelter dogs get exercise, enrichment, and visibility outside the shelter environment. Eligible participants will be paired with a shelter dog to walk during the hike, supporting both physical activity and socialization for these pups. Participants will hike approximately two miles through the Lost Dog Nature Preserve, a protected area stewarded by Frontera Land Alliance. Along the way, we'll learn about the importance of conserving natural spaces within urban environments and how protected trails contribute to ecological health and community well-being.

**Distance:** ~2 miles (loop trail)

**Duration:** ~2 hours

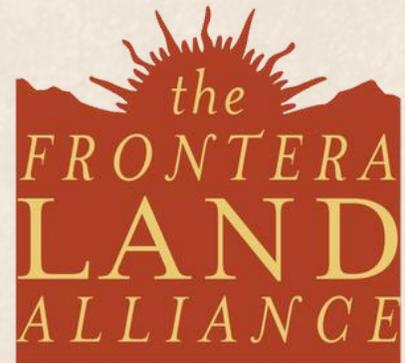
**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** Adults

**Bring:** Sturdy walking shoes, water, sun protection, and a small backpack

**Important:** Participants must be 18 years or older to be assigned a shelter dog. No personal pets allowed to ensure the safety of shelter dogs, one dog per vehicle. All dog-handling guidelines provided by Rescue Runners 915 must be followed.

**Trip Lead:** Katalina Salas, **Co-Lead:** Pam Almodovar, **Contact:** katsalas7@gmail.com



**\*\*Limited to 15 participants. Advance registration through Eventbrite is required, and participants must present their Eventbrite ticket at check-in. No walk-ins permitted.**

**[Register Here!](#)**



# **UTEP Department of Earth, Environmental, and Resource Sciences Colloquium**

## **April 9th, 10th, 11th**

### **Geology of the Mega-breccia of the "Franklin Island" in the El Paso Group Limestones**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 11, 2026 · 09:45 AM – ~1:00 PM

**Meet-up Location:** Thunderbird Trailhead, 1110 Thunderbird Dr., El Paso, TX 79912

This trip is offered in collaboration with the UTEP Department of Earth, Environmental, and Resource Sciences (DEERS) and is designed for adults and students interested in Earth history and geologic processes. During this guided hike, participants will examine large-scale breccia deposits formed when portions of the Franklin Mountains were uplifted out of the sea during Cambrian–Ordovician time, approximately 500 million years ago. Discussions will focus on depositional environments of the time, tectonic uplifting, and the nature of the great unconformity. The route follows an arroyo and involves hiking on uneven, bouldery terrain. Along the way, participants will stop frequently to observe outcrops, interpret rock relationships, and connect visible features to broader regional geologic history. The emphasis is on careful observation, scientific interpretation, and understanding how the Franklin Mountains fit into the larger geologic story of the Southwest.

**Distance:** ~2 miles round trip

**Duration:** ~3 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** Adults and students comfortable on uneven terrain

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and a small backpack

**Important:** Terrain includes loose rock, boulders, and uneven surfaces, and note there is an \$8 per day, per vehicle park fee, or free street parking nearby.

**Trip Lead:** Dr. Jay Chapman, **Coordinator:** Lance Robert  
(hlswrob@yahoo.com)

APR

12

# Kilbourne Hole Volcanic Crater Tour



**Date & Time:** Sunday, April 12, 2026 · Time TBD

**Location:** Kilbourne Hole, NM

**Meet-up Location:** Love's Truck Stop at 2401 Airport Rd. Santa Teresa, NM 88008

Visit one of the Southwest's most spectacular volcanic features! Kilbourne Hole is a maar crater formed by a powerful volcanic explosion thousands of years ago. Today it's a National Natural Landmark and one of the best places to see mantle xenoliths (chunks of Earth's mantle brought to the surface).

**Distance:** ~1 mile

**Duration:** ~2–3 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** All ages

**Bring:** Walking shoes, water, sun protection

**Trip Leader:** Brenna April, **Co-Lead:** Trinity Fushille, **Contact:** [btapril@miners.utep.edu](mailto:btapril@miners.utep.edu)



APR  
**18**

## Who's Running Around the Desert at Night?



**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 18, 2026 · 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

**Location:** Franklin Mountains State Park

*(Specific meeting details provided to registered participants only)*

Join Celebration of Our Mountains for a unique evening adventure into the nocturnal desert. This guided night hike offers participants a rare opportunity to experience the Franklin Mountains after sunset, when cooler temperatures and darkness reveal a very different side of the desert ecosystem. After a brief orientation and safety briefing, we'll set out on a ~1-mile round-trip hike, pausing along the way to observe desert plants, animal tracks, and wildlife behaviors that are often hidden during daylight hours. Participants will learn how nocturnal animals adapt to the desert environment and how plants and landscapes change once the sun goes down.

**Distance:** ~1 mile

**Duration:** 2–3 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** All ages

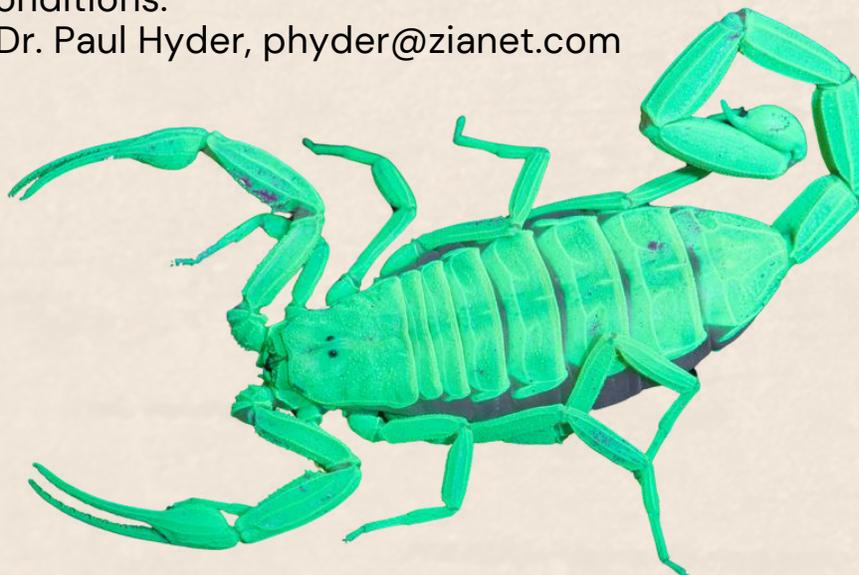
**Bring:** Good walking shoes, water, snacks, and a reliable flashlight or headlamp

**Important:** A Texas Parks & Wildlife park pass is required and must be purchased in advance online. Participants should be comfortable hiking in low-light conditions.

**Trip Leader:** Dr. Paul Hyder, [phyder@zianet.com](mailto:phyder@zianet.com)



**\*\*Limited to 25 participants. Advance registration through Eventbrite is required, and participants must present their Eventbrite ticket at check-in. No walk-ins permitted.**



**[Register Here!](#)**

APR  
19

## Spring Canyon Hike & Geology Tour



**Date & Time:** Sunday, April 19, 2026 · 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

**Location:** Spring Canyon

**Meeting Location:** Fairacres Post Office, 3800 W Picacho Ave, Fairacres, NM

This moderate hike (approx. 3 miles) explores Spring Canyon just to the west of Picacho Peak and south of the Robledo Mountains. Participants will learn about the flora and fauna of the canyon that are supported by a small perennial spring that provides water throughout the year. In addition, the area is a story for land preservation and is a classroom for the interesting Tertiary volcanic geology of the area. This trip is suitable for teens and adults; the hike involves a moderately strenuous hike within a rocky arroyo and panoramic canyon views. The trip leader will be Ken Steigman who is a local resident and member of the Las Cruces Native Plant Society.

**Distance:** ~3 miles

**Duration:** ~4–5 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Best for:** Adults and teens

**Bring:** Hiking shoes, water, snacks, sun protection

**Trip Leader:** Ken Steigman, **Co-Lead:** Lance Robert, **Contact:** [klmecsteigman@gmail.com](mailto:klmecsteigman@gmail.com)



APR  
**25**

## Oro Grande Mining District, Native Plants & Rockhounding



**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 25, 2026 · 9:00 AM – ~3:00 PM

**Meet-up Location:** Circle K at Hwy 54 & Transmountain (next to Lowe's), El Paso, TX

Join us for a day of exploring the Oro Grande Mining District, where geology, mining history, desert botany, and hands-on rockhounding come together in a rugged desert landscape. This outing is designed for adults and children 10 years and older who are comfortable navigating uneven terrain and desert terrain. Participants will learn about the mining history of the district while exploring abandoned mining features and examining the mineral resources that drew early prospectors to the area. Along the route, we will also focus on native desert plants, discussing the unique plant species and hybridization in this area.

Rockhounding is a key component of this trip, and participants will have opportunities to collect colorful mineral specimens (where allowed) while learning about collecting practices and land stewardship. The experience emphasizes observation and respect for both natural and historical features. The hike includes uneven ground, rocky surfaces and steep terrain. A portion of the trip requires travel on dirt roads, making high-clearance vehicles necessary. Carpooling will be coordinated as needed.

**Distance:** ~2 miles total walking

**Duration:** ~5–6 hours (including travel and stops)

**Difficulty:** Moderate (participants will have choices on amount of walking)

**Best for:** Adults and children 10+

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, collection containers/backpack

**Trip Lead:** Lance Robert, **Contact:** (hlswhrob@yahoo.com), **Co-Lead / Plant Expert:** Daniel Fox



APR  
**26**

## Mammoth Rock Trail: Limestone, Erosion, and Desert Landscapes



**Date & Time:** Sunday, April 26, 2026 · 7:45AM

**Location:** Franklin Mountains State Park

**Meet-up Location:** Smugglers Pass Unit, Franklin Mountains State Park, Mammoths Trunk Trail, El Paso, TX 79904

Join us for a challenging and rewarding hike to Mammoth Rock, one of the Franklin Mountains' most striking limestone formations. This out-and-back hike offers participants the opportunity to explore how erosion, uplift, and long-term geologic processes have shaped the dramatic desert landscape visible throughout the park. As we navigate rocky trails with sustained elevation gain, participants will learn about limestone geology, erosion patterns, and the desert ecosystems that persist in this rugged environment. Along the way, we'll pause to examine rock features, discuss landscape formation, and connect visible landforms to the broader geologic history of the Franklin Mountains.

This hike provides a strong physical workout and is best suited for teens and adults who are comfortable hiking longer distances on uneven terrain. The effort is rewarded with expansive views across the surrounding desert and opportunities for photography, reflection, and deeper appreciation of the region's natural history.

**Distance:** ~4 miles out and back

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Difficulty:** Moderate, Trails are rocky and include elevation gain; participants should be prepared for sustained hiking in desert conditions.

**Best for:** Teens and adults.

**Bring:** Sturdy hiking shoes, water, sun protection, snacks, and a small backpack

**Trip Lead:** Lexi Dominguez, **Contact:** 915-873-7323



APR  
30



# April Monthly Social

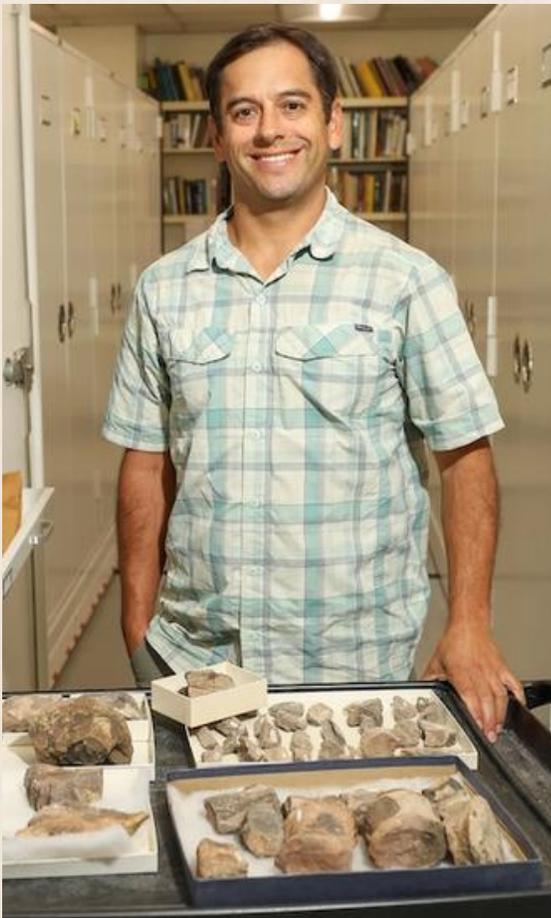
**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 30, 2026, 6:00PM

**Location:** Angry Owl Southwest Grill & Cantina, 4799 N Mesa St, El Paso, TX 79912

We're excited to invite you to our monthly gathering. Gather with your fellow Earth nerds for an Earth Day bash that's all about mingling with experts and your fellow community member. Dive into tasty treats, spirited chats, and maybe even a quirky Earth Day activity or two. Whether you're a seasoned eco-warrior or just dipping your toes into the green scene, this event promises to be both enlightening and a hoot. Don't miss the fun, see you there!



## April Guest Speaker



### Dr. Jason Ricketts Topic: The Rio Grande Rift in the El Paso Area

Dr. Ricketts is a geologist with a major focus on structural geology, tectonics, low-temperature thermochronology, and fluid-fault interactions. Much of his research centers on brittle tectonics in Earth's upper crust. His research combines field methods and observations with various analytical techniques and modeling efforts to investigate processes which control deformation. His expertise centers on the development of the Rio Grande rift of Colorado, New Mexico, and western Texas, where he routinely conducts field work with students and colleagues.

# Community Events We're Attending



**El Paso Science  
Festival  
April 18 & 19  
El Paso  
Convention Center**

# OUR FRIENDS



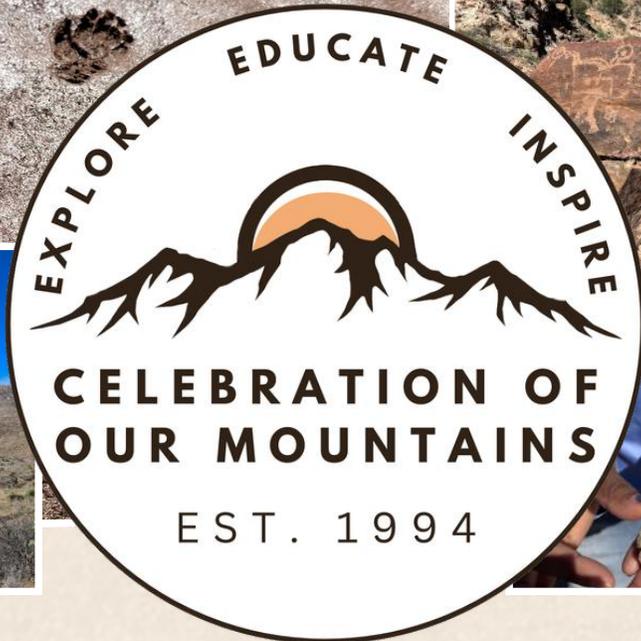
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