



FRIENDS OF CITY OF ROCKS NEWSLETTER
(Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2017)
MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Friends of City of Rocks State Park, Inc. (<http://www.friendsofcityofrocks.org>) is to help support the New Mexico State Parks in the enrichment of the park area. Specifically, the Friends aim to enhance, preserve and promote park use, to participate in nature as responsible stewards of the earth, to create an awareness of the wonder, fragility and importance of the park, to develop and improve existing education/interpretive programs, to develop and improve public awareness of the park, and to encourage public participation and/or membership in the Friends group.

RECENT FRIENDS HAPPENINGS

The Friends of City of Rocks has opened up a gift shop inside the Visitor Center. Here, campers, picnickers and people just passing through the area can purchase t-shirts and patches with City of Rocks images and themes, snacks, personal items, first aid items, walking sticks, keychains, matches, firewood, etc. with all proceeds going to support park operations. Come check it out!

UPCOMING MEETING OF THE FRIENDS

Come join us on Saturday, Jan. 20 2018 for the next meeting of the Friends. This meeting will take place between 11:00 PM – noon at “The Patio” restaurant in Hurley, NM (100 Cortez Ave., across street from the post office). During this meeting, we will discuss potential projects

for the Friends, which might include (but are not limited to):

- Adopting a nearby highway for cleanup
- Management of the Botanical Gardens
- Presentations on stars, geology, cultural history, wildlife, etc.
- Fund-raising (Bake Sales, participation in “Give Grandly”, etc.)
- “City of Rocks Days” in May to celebrate park establishment, perhaps on Mother’s Day
- Participants are invited to stay for lunch after the meeting

BECOME A MEMBER!

To become a member of the Friends of City of Rocks, download, complete and submit a membership application from the Friends website:

<http://www.friendsofcityofrocks.org>

WISH LIST

One way to contribute to general park operations is through donation of essential equipment and supplies. For example, park personnel and volunteers greatly appreciate a recent donation of a freezer to keep ice for the park by Steve Collie and Susan Mosely. 😊

The following is a “wish list” of items that would benefit the park:

- **FIREWOOD.** This is by far the most popular item for sale at the Visitor’s Center gift shop.
- Solar panels and batteries to power the park Visitor’s Center and well pumps
- Remote “game cameras” to photograph hard to spot park wildlife
- Bird feeders
- Emergency food supplies
- Debit and credit card device connected to a smart phone to aid in Visitor Center gift shop sales transactions
- Microphone to help astronomers talk at star parties
- New batteries for the Orion observatory
- New video at the Visitor Center to replace and update the present 20 year old video.

FACEBOOK AND WEBSITE

Our Facebook page and website (<http://www.friendsofcityofrocks.org>) will keep everyone informed on all the happenings of the Friends group as well as general park happenings. *If there is a cancellation of one of the Star Parties (which are weather dependent) we will post it on both the Friends website and Facebook page.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CITY OF ROCKS STATE PARK

Monday, Jan. 1, 2018. First day hike with Tony Godfrey on the Cienega Loop Trail (2 miles). Meet at the Visitor’s Center at 9:00 AM, and be prepared to drive from there to trailhead. Participants should bring binoculars (if they have them). Bring water, and dress in layers. Tony will bring the telescope and tripod for extended looks at perched birds. (Day use fee waived for participants in the hike.)

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2018. Star Party (weather permitting). Program will start at 6:40 PM, and end at 8:10 PM. It will be held in the Orion Group Area. Day use fee applies this event.



1ST GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS OF CITY OF ROCKS

(meeting summary by Gary Woollen)

- The first general meeting of Friends of City of Rocks took place at 10:00 AM – noon on Saturday, Oct. 28 2017 at the Orion Group Campsite.
- Park volunteer Shela Delong pointed out that we could get increased donations if we organized a “City of Rocks Days”, perhaps in conjunction with Mother’s Day.

- It was suggested that we compile a “wish list” of needed park items to appear in the next newsletter
- Steve Collie and Susan Moseley announced that they would donate a freezer to the park
- Park staff member Tony Godfrey gave a presentation on the history of City of Rocks State Park, and the current state of park funding. He informed us that Friends of City of Rocks funds would help with park operations that used to take months to fund from Santa Fe.
- Member at large Bobbi Widick gave us a summary of progress on our application for 501-3c status
- Attendees decided that our next general meeting of the Friends of City of Rocks would be at the Patio restaurant in Hurley.
- After the meeting, we enjoyed a variety of dishes at a big pot-luck dinner
- After lunch, we helped Bobbi and her husband Terry unload a pickup load of firewood needed for bundles of firewood to be sold in the Visitor’s Center.

**CITY OF ROCKS BIRDS:
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**
by Tony Godfrey



Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) perched on soap tree yucca

A mesquite tree or barbed wire fence covered with impaled grasshoppers and other prey typically indicates the presence of a Loggerhead Shrike. Noxious Monarch butterflies and lubber grasshoppers are impaled on thorns and barbs, allowing time for the poisons to break down. Once the prey has dried, the “Butcher Bird” will return after two or three days to feed on the crunchy morsels.

Referring to the unusually large head in relation to the rest of its body, the name loggerhead literally means “blockhead”. Its large head enables it to carry lizards and small snakes in its beak, while larger prey such as rodents, small birds, and frogs are carried in its feet.

The oldest known living individual was of a male nestling that was banded in California; it was recaptured after 11 years and 9 months.

Endemic to North America, the Loggerhead Shrike is declining in many areas. It has all but disappeared from the northeastern states. Pesticides and habitat loss are believed to be the two main contributors to its decline. The population at the City of Rocks appears stable at the present time.

No matter the time of year, look for the Loggerhead Shrike prominently perched on large boulders, fence posts, and bushes, on your next visit to the City of Rocks.



How many Gambel's Quail do you see on the rocks? (photo by Tony Godfrey)

HIKING UP TABLE MOUNTAIN: A TRAVELOGUE by Gary Woollen

At 9:00 AM on Nov. 1, 2017, Tony, Shela, Conors and I started hiking up Table Mountain (also called Table Mesa). Table Mountain is actually a true mesa and this mesa is the oldest land mass within 150 miles. We hoped to find an Eagle's nest or maybe sight a mountain sheep, plus visit an Apache observatory cave. Tony and Conors hiked ahead, spotting birds that totaled 25 species by the end of our hike. I stayed back to kick rocks off of the trail with Shela, who was hiking with a sore knee.

We had our lunch on the cliff looking down into the Apache archaeological site. Conors spotted a lone mule deer down below the mountain. The winds increased after lunch; so we abandoned plans for a circular trip around the top of the mesa.

On our cross-country trip back to the trail, Shela discovered an old cowboy camp next to a windbreak with a firewood supply. While we hiked up and

down Table Mesa Trail, we saw small reddish animal scat that Park Supervisor Gabe later said later was a fox. The eagle's nest and mountain sheep were not spotted. Tony did find Mimbres Indian grinding stones on the north end of the mesa.

As usual, Table Mountain was slow to give up its secrets.



Table Mountain in different seasons. Photos by Tim Geddes.