# Asombro Insights

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 32, ISSUE 3, JULY - SEPT. 2023

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## Asombro Hosts Workshops for 60 New Mexico and Oklahoma Teachers

Summer "break" may have been a break from the normal routine, but it was still full of teaching and learning for the Asombro staff and 60 teachers who participated in six teacher professional development workshops hosted by Asombro.

Asombro was delighted to partner with six organizations to expand our outreach to teachers in New Mexico and Oklahoma. Many thanks to the USDA Southwest Climate Hub, Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, BlueSTEM AgriLearning Center, USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub, Lynn & Carolyn Melton, and Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge for helping with one or more of the workshops. The photos below show a snapshot to answer the important question, "What did you do on summer break?"

## New Mexico Climate Champions Albuquerque, New Mexico



Curious About Cows? Workshop El Reno, Oklahoma



Climate Change - Oklahoma



Curious About Cows - Las Cruces



Virtual Climate Workshops

Using Data to Understand Climate Change

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## **CONTACT US**

Asombro Institute for Science Education

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DESERT STORIES!

Asombro's Desert Stories program is 10 years old! A decade ago, we created this multidisciplinary, three-lesson series to teach elementary students science, math, reading, and writing while focusing on a fascinating story in the desert.

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The 3rd-graders who pilot-tested the first module about the yucca and yucca moth have just graduated from high school! The success of this 3rd-grade module led to the creation of a unique module for 1st grade through 5th grade, and all five will continue to bring fascinating stories of the desert to students this school year.

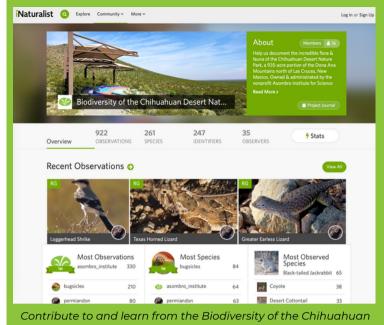
## Contribute To and Learn From the iNaturalist Project at the Nature Park

Last year, Asombro created an iNaturalist project for the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. iNaturalist is a global database of plant & wildlife observations submitted by the public in the form of photos and sound recordings. The free mobile app and website help visitors identify the organism in the photo they just took, and with time, experts in the iNaturalist community will suggest species names, comment, and answer questions. These data are also used by scientists all over the world; for example, last year over 700 journal articles were published using iNaturalist data.

Asombro hopes this iNaturalist project at the Nature Park encourages everyone to visit the park, share and learn about what they see, and discover that they have a role to play in science. Our collective efforts have grown the number of iNaturalist observations within the park from 209 in December 2022 to over 900 today! More than 250 species have been identified in the park to date.

With the help of local contributors, we are gaining a better understanding of the "what, where, and when" of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. We've already drawn from this resource for Asombro's classroom lessons and field

this resource for Asombro's classroom lessons and field trips. We encourage everyone to explore the project page and project journal at <a href="https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/biodiversity-of-the-chihuahuan-desert-nature-park">https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/biodiversity-of-the-chihuahuan-desert-nature-park</a>



Desert project on iNaturalist.

# Community Science Takes to the Skies as Asombro

Participates in Butterfly Surveys

<u>Above</u>: A Sleepy Orange (Abaeis nicippe) observed during a survey

<u>Below</u>; Marissa and Natalie at the end of a survey route.



While the Asombro staff loves being in the classroom teaching students, they also enjoy experiencing the desert in the field. In March, Asombro was invited to join the New Mexico Butterfly Monitoring Network (NMBMN) to establish a butterfly survey route within the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. Natalie and Marissa jumped at the chance to create the route and monitor it, improving their butterfly identification skills while cataloging the species present in the Park.

The NMBMN runs from March through October. More than 30 volunteers monitor 25 butterfly routes, and the new route in the Nature Park is the first to represent the Las Cruces region. Marissa and Natalie have documented 14 different butterfly species across four habitat types so far.

While surveying, they discuss community science and the butterfly monitoring project with fellow hikers at the Park as well as interested teachers, students, and community members. They will continue their surveys into the fall and look forward to documenting even more butterfly individuals and species. Natalie created a butterfly journal, documenting sightings, photos, and other notes. To view the journal, visit <a href="https://rb.gy/0idyi">https://rb.gy/0idyi</a>

## Asombro Wins Award!

The Air Force Research Lab Tech Engagement Office selected Asombro as the non-profit recipient of the 2023 Excellence in STEM Awards (a.k.a. the **STEMYS)**. The annual award honors New Mexicans doing great things in STEM.

Asombro is honored to have received this prestigious award and to provide excellent science education to our community!



## **Wonder Award for Outstanding Volunteer** Service: Don Stahl

Over the last year. Asombro created the Trail Keepers, a team of volunteers dedicated to the upkeep and improvement of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. This summer. the Wonder Award goes to one of our most dedicated and reliable Trail Keepers, Don Stahl.



Wonder Award recipient Don Stahl

Don moved to Las Cruces a couple of years ago and was excited to discover the Nature Park just down the road. We enjoy seeing Don and his wife Laura at the Nature Park all the time! Don is always willing to lend a hand, whether we are hauling rocks during a Trail Keeper work day or helping out with emergency repairs. We can always count on Don for a helping hand and a positive go-getter attitude.

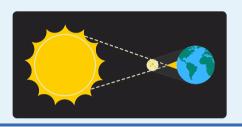
Thanks Don! We think you're wonderful!

## Solar Eclipse Viewing at the Nature Park: October 14

Mark your calendars now for the next Scientist Saturday event at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park from 9 a.m. to noon on October 14 to view the annular solar eclipse!

NMSU astronomer Dr. Paul Mason will share his knowledge and expertise as visitors safely view the eclipse through a telescope, make their own solar viewer, learn about the solar system, and enjoy this special celestial event in a grand desert setting.

The eclipse maximum will occur around 10:30 a.m., when the sun itself will appear as a thin blazing crescent. The next solar eclipse visible in New Mexico won't take place until 2024, so be sure to catch this one.



## THANK YOU!

## We are grateful to our generous donors from May through July 2023.

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Native Plant Society of New Mexico

New Mexico Department of Game &

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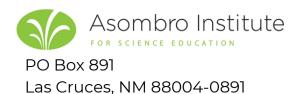
Outdoor Learning Start-Up Grant Sustainable Southwest Beef Project

Tutti Bambini Foundation

USDA Southwest Climate Hub

USDA Southern Plains Climate Hub





# **Extended Summer Hours at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park**



The Nature Park is now open from **7:00 AM until 7:00 PM, Tuesday through Sunday** throughout the summer!

When the temperatures soar, some of the best times to enjoy the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park are near sunrise and sunset. Early birds have always enjoyed our 7:00 AM openings. Now those who enjoy evening outings can enjoy these later hours.

New signs show the new hours, which will be in effect until the official end of summer, the autumnal equinox on **September 23, 2023**.

YES! I want to support the
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