Embracing the Outdoors

Now that we’re back to more structure with the school year, and the nights are getting longer and cooler, it’s a great time to embrace the outdoors here in New Mexico before winter arrives. Our minds and bodies need to get out from in front of the screens and outside more perhaps now than earlier. Many of the events that drew us outside, the State Fair, the Balloon Fiesta, the harvest festivals, aren’t going to provide that opportunity this year. So let’s resolve to go outside!

Simple Pleasures:

These are our latest finds for relatively quick, easy, often healthy, things you can do during COVID-19 restrictions.

The change in season brings changes in produce and products available at your local farmer’s market. And it’s not just chile. Get out, get fresh, get local! --
https://farmersmarketsnm.org/find-a-market/.

The Backyard Farming Buzz, usually an in-person program at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House, is now online at http://gutierrezhubbellhouse.org/backyard-farming-buzz/.

We dove into COVID baking in the spring and tired of it over the summer. Fall may be the time to come back to baking warm, cozy, healthier treats. Consider (safely) sharing with others, too!

Plan an outdoor scavenger hunt! The Parents magazine website provides a few ideas for outdoor scavenger hunts for kids:
A Friend of IFCE Observation:

Wendy Paige Adams is a Community Programs Supervisor at UNM’s Family Development Program. She reminds us here of the many lessons nature can teach us.

Many of Family Development Program’s JUNK (Joy in Uncovering New Knowledge) ‘recipes’ encourage families with young children towards natural and found materials as rich learning material. In nature, clearly, there are colorful and engaging ways to support children in expressing their intrinsic creative spirit. In practicing playing with and communicating about natural objects, adults experience a better appreciation for how nature is our wise teacher. We’ve lost touch with our inborn capacity to live in direct relationship with the land, the seasons, and the elements. Outdoor play helps us connect with this very joyful and embodied knowing; this cellular remembrance that comes from our ancestors.

It can become a daily “practice” to be in relationship with the earth. As we feel our hands damp and dirty from the moist soil, smell the sweetness of grass, see trees brushing up against the sky, try to determine the taste of water, or hear the wings of a hummingbird, our individual and everyday responses may better reside in our capacity to act creatively. Children learn valuable social-emotional skills through interaction with the natural world - their play is very mindful and manifests benefits to their mental health.

A Wemagination Cookbook of Recipes for Family Fun and Learning at Home is offered in both Spanish and English.

It’s a Marathon not a Sprint:

We’re on a long road to new things. Pace yourself!

Have you considered offering virtual tours of your shop or business or gallery since customers are struggling to come to you? See this KOB story about a way you could do that: https://www.kob.com/new-mexico-news/santa-fe-company-helps-businesses-set-up-virtual-tours/5832024/?fbclid=IwAR00BNsJHrLeuNuBHIs0MTvomdlRdsLPkAtWytf4E9as2QPsbywuNnDqW

Jan Armstrong, Professor of Educational Psychology, describes some of the awesome benefits of observing the night sky.

One of New Mexico’s many environmental treasures is its magnificent night sky. Taking time to view the skyscapes above us can be a source of positive energy as we gear up for the next phase of our collective marathon.

You do not need a telescope to see the craters of the moon, planets, comets, stars, galaxies, and the International Space Station cruising overhead. Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and many other celestial objects are often bright enough to be seen with the naked eye. The International Space Station is easy to see as it glistens and glides across the sky, if you know where and when to look for it. For most people, binoculars work better than telescopes for stargazing. One of my best night-sky adventures this summer was viewing the comet NEOWISE with my binoculars. NEOWISE won’t be back for another 6800 years or so, making its close (64 million mile) encounter with the Earth remarkable indeed. It was a little spooky standing out in the dark
alone, hearing the distant yelps of coyotes, but what a thrill when I pointed my binoculars toward where NEOWISE was supposed to be and saw the two-tailed comet for the first time! Every night, when the skies were clear, I trekked out into the darkness to see if I could see the comet again. I became quite adept at spotting it, and never tired of the view. I began to notice and wonder about other bright lights in the sky, and identified them with the help of the “Night Sky” app on my phone. One night, I trained my binoculars on the full moon for the first time – what a sight to see! Why had I not done this before?

“Fine,” you say, “another simple pleasure to provide a diversion and self-comfort in the age of Covid19.” But there is more! Viewing the night sky can have physical, emotional and psychological benefits for people of all ages when the experience triggers the emotion of awe. In a classic article, Keltner and Haidt (2003) defined awe as a complex emotion that includes two elements: “vastness and accommodation.” Vastness involves a sense of huge scale and boundlessness. Experiencing awe puts us in touch with our smallness in the wider scheme of things. Such experiences are cognitively challenging. We have encountered something beyond our everyday understanding and are compelled to modify our mental structures accordingly. The experience of awe can thus produce both terror (when we cannot accommodate) and spiritual renewal or “inspiring energy” (when we find a way to do so). Researchers have found that awe seems to foster humility, generosity and critical thinking. People often report experiencing awe in natural settings, but they also report feeling “awestruck” when seeing humans perform feats of exceptional generosity, artfulness, courage or skill. Keltner argues that experiencing awe could help to address a number of cultural ills by making us less materialistic and self-focused, generating an expanded sense of self and creating a revitalized sense of purpose.


- EarthSky offers up-to-date information on what to watch for in the night sky: earthsky.org. It can answer questions such as: Where are some of the best places in New Mexico to stargaze? https://earthsky.org/stargazing.

- Here are some excellent “Top tips for binocular stargazing” from earthsky.org: https://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/top-tips-for-using-ordinary-binoculars-for-stargazing.

- James O’Meara explains why the naked eye and binoculars are the best way to view the night sky. https://earthsky.org/space/stephen-omeara-skywatching-with-binoculars.

- Watching the International Space Station (ISS) make a pass overhead can be an AWE-some experience. It is easiest to see the ISS just after sunset or before sunrise. The ISS is “the third brightest object in the sky” when you know when and where to look for it, but its flight path is never the same from one day to the next. NASA.gov and
several phone apps provide detailed information about when and where to look for the ISS and other celestial sights. NASA will even send you an alert when prospects are good for you to see it. For the directionally challenged, an inexpensive compass or phone app will help to point you in the right direction. See https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/.

- The popular Berkeley astrophysicist, Alex Filippenko has devoted his career to studying and teaching about things celestial. Here is his “awe-inspiring” “Entertaining Tour of Our Awesome Universe”: https://youtu.be/7w7479TF0cl.

- Here is a talk by Dacher Keltner on the cultural, physical, psychological importance of awe. This is an introduction to a 2016 conference on awe sponsored by the Greater Good Science Center: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/why_awe_such_important_emotion.

Gains and Losses:

All of these changes!
Some are true losses big and small.
Some, though, are gains.

You could be part of the solution by participating in a COVID-19 vaccine trial. These trials are in particular need of people from diverse populations. There are several sites in New Mexico where you could participate. See https://www.coronaviruspreventionnetwork.org/ for more information.

The Navajo Nation has reported its first day with zero new COVID-19 cases since March! This is definitely a gain while we also mourn the many losses.

Here are online opportunities for some of our Fall favorites that won’t be in-person this year:

- The New Mexico State Fair has moved online! Lots of the events you love are still there at https://statefair.exponm.com/?noSplash.

- Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta -- A launch and a glow.

- Red Rock Balloon Rally -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65x8AAv2GIi&list=PLBuHKwa2OWe19QVUpesihFV7CgCbr_PS&index=10.

- The Hatch Chile Festival -- https://www.pbs.org/video/hatch-chile-festival-7ypwjr/.
Coping Skills:

We need to recommit to what works and to learn new ways.

An IFCE Observation

Renée C. Howells (Assistant Professor of Counselor Education) has been hiking and notes that, for every season -- Take a Hike!

“I cannot endure to waste anything so precious

as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house.”

- Nathaniel Hawthorne

As the pandemic looms longer and screen-time feels endless, nature beckons us forward.

The season has begun to change, and so must we. Change begins with acknowledging the obstacles in our path. Covid-19 is still upon us, and our favorite fall activities will look a little different this year. We can grieve this shifting of tradition, and still walk on.

Embracing change means challenging our mindsets. I encourage you to do a quick check-in with yourself. What are you holding on to? What is holding you back? What is weighing on you? Nature teaches us many lessons, and perhaps the lesson of fall is learning how to let go.

“Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go.” – Unknown.

Celebrating change may look different to us all; based on our own needs, desires, and hopes for the future. However, sometimes a literal change of perspective can ease our own inner transitions. With autumnal temperatures cooling it is the perfect time to hit the trails. New Mexico has abundant opportunities to get lost in nature and seek peace. Whether you’d like to climb the Sandias, take a stroll through the Bosque, soak in the Jemez, or practice forest-bathing in the
Santa Fe National Forest – the path is clear. The path is yours. Honor the fall season by stepping outside and reveling in the vast New Mexican beauty that surrounds you.

“Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.” - F. Scott Fitzgerald

When hiking and adventuring, please practice trail safety. Bring plenty of water, snacks for the trek, and remember to communicate with others about your location and timeline prior to leaving cell service areas. Enjoy!

Quick links for hikes in or near ABQ:


Quick links for hikes that include Hot Springs:


Keep your daily practices simple. We make things complicated or have expectations of ourselves that impact our worth at the end of the day. This psychology today article describes the importance and power of keeping it simple:
Right now a lot of us are feeling anxious. Here is an anxiety “tool kit” with 50 ideas for managing anxiety:

Keeping a nature journal is a wonderful way for children and adults to benefit from their time outdoors.

- This article by Bonnie Johanna Gisel describes how to begin a nature journal, taking inspiration from the life and work of John Muir --

- Download information about nature journaling, including K-12 lesson plans and related resources, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service --

- For a helpful introduction to “Teaching Children in the Outdoor Classroom,” download the Prairie Wetlands Nature Center (US Fish and Wildlife Service), “Compass to Nature: Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom”:

**An IFCE Observation**

Kelley Renae Holladay, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, urges us to get outside and dance!

Dance offers a way to bring diverse community members together through a shared love of dance, movement, art, music, and energy. The dance community unites different tribes, pueblos, cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, and styles of dance. In fact, “hiphop is built from oppression” (see both the speaker and a great video here). Dance is also used in the counseling world. It is a way to speak, without words. A way to heal, without talking. A way to unite, through meaningful and historical movement. As we navigate this fall, and the changing of seasons, jump on your zoom, take your device outside, and dance.

**Check out some cool videos and links below to dance with others here in New Mexico:**

NDI New Mexico Virtual Gala 2020 Zoom Boom! As noted, hundreds of New Mexican’s are dancing synchronously because, “I feel better when I’m dancin” (Meghan Trainor):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfCeF6fIBSq
NDI Teaching Children Excellence offers ONLINE dance programs at both free and reduced costs for families experiencing financial hardships this summer:
https://www.ndi-nm.org/summer2020/

The New Mexico Ballet Company offers $10 Zoom drop-ins:
https://newmexicoballetcompany.com/tuitionpolicies-2/

Check out this video on the “science of breakdancing” here from the dancing turtle. While they are closed during Covid, check out Warehouse Five O’eight’s Facebook page here for some online events:
https://www.facebook.com/warehouse508/

Check out this video and article: “Dancing an Indigenous Future: Native American Hip-Hop and Freestyle in Albuquerque”
https://www.kqed.org/arts/13882337/if-cities-could-dance-albuquerque

Check out VIBES for hip hop and other forms of dance:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/VIBES-683774681792570/events/?ref=page_internal

Albuquerque International Folk Dance: http://abqfolkdance.org/ or National Folk Dance:
https://www.cdss.org/community/covid19/online-events.

Conflict Resolution:

All of our relationships take extra attention right now. Conflict, unfortunately, happens easily.

Many people seem to be a little less resilient, a little more irritable, a little quicker to snap. We run into that in ourselves and others quicker and with less provocation than we’re used to. Knowing that is a good first step to working with it -- our own resilience and others’. Here some ways to work with this COVID-19 impact:

● Give each other, particularly those close to you, some space to say things they may not really mean --
  https://simonsayspsychstuff.wordpress.com/2020/05/19/covid-causes-short-fuses-covid-mentalhealth/.

● Understanding and working with your own irritability --
● A particular word to parents about getting irritated with your kids --

● Another look at parenting and how to manage irritability better --

● Why is COVID-19 doing this to us? --

● Turn irritability into compassion --

● Let go of perfect as your goal --

● Be compassionate and gentle --

The New Mexico 19:
Here are 19 ideas for getting outside in New Mexico, or at least experiencing the outside from indoors. Check with a location for restrictions before you go. We’re hoping they’ll be changing throughout the fall.

1. How to enjoy the New Mexico Outdoors safely --

2. New Mexico State Parks are great places to be. Check them out at
   http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/ and see which ones are near you and what the latest restrictions are.

3. New Mexico has a great many National Parks, Monuments and other properties. Get outside; learn some history, culture, and ecology; be together as a family (and not at home!). See a list of possibilities at https://www.nps.gov/state/nm/index.htm.

4. Fall and winter are prime times to visit the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge --
   https://www.fws.gov/refuge/bosque_del_apache/ or any of the other 8 National Wildlife Refuges in New Mexico.

5. Have a picnic --

6. Go on a scavenger hunt. Maybe even take the kids along.

8. Ride a bike! Six reasons why and how to choose a bike for you.


11. 10 creative ways to get outside -- [https://www.abundantmama.com/10-creative-ways-to-get-outside/](https://www.abundantmama.com/10-creative-ways-to-get-outside/).


**For Those in the Helping Professions:**


The Bookshelf -- References and Other Resources

Things the WASH NM Team has read or seen that you might want to examine more closely

For Children:

*The Undefeated* (2019) by Kwame Alexander was a winner of: 2020 Caldecott Medal; 2020 Newbery Honor Book; and 2020 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award. Check it out [here](#).

*Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* (2019) by Kevin Noble Maillard. Check it out [here](#).

*Mindful Me: Get Outdoors Mindfulness Guide to Noticing Nature* by Paul Christelus. Check it out [here](#).

For Adults and Teens:

*A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. Check it out [here](#).

*My First Summer in the Sierras* by John Muir. Check it out [here](#).

**Coming up Next:**

Back to the Basics on September 30 -- Eating, sleeping, socializing, exercising, relationships, learning. The COVID-19 effects grant us opportunities to revisit our basic needs and how to meet them.

**About WASH NM:**

The faculty and students of the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico would like to offer to all New Mexicans thoughts, ideas, and resources from ourselves and our areas of study and work -- counseling, educational psychology, family & child studies, and nutrition -- to enlighten, soften, and aid the COVID-19-related transitions. We intend to make this offering bi-weekly, each with a theme relevant to our times.

We are exiting the initial phase of the Coronavirus effects on our lives, and we are realizing that we face not a pause in our realities to which we will soon spring back but a new reality entirely. We held our breath, put our collective and individual heads down, and gutted it out so far. Now, we face the marathon, not a sprint, of placing ourselves, our children and families, our work selves -- everything -- into this new normal. In these changes, we owe ourselves and those around us opportunities to note and to grieve the losses, big and small, and we also owe it to ourselves and others opportunities to see and seize and solidify the gains. Some of these changes have been good! We’ve (re)discovered simple pleasures like baking, walks, family meals, reading, laughing together. Some of the changes have been among the hardest we’ve faced. We’re in need of new and better coping skills, and, with tensions running high, we need new and better conflict resolution strategies, too. Even simple interactions aren’t simple these
days! With informed reflection and action throughout this time, we can all improve our
Wellbeing at School and at Home in New Mexico.

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How to Pick Up the WASH NM:
All issues of WASH NM are available in pdf format at:
http://coehs.unm.edu/departments-programs/ifce/wash-nm.html

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About the
Department of Individual, Family and Community Education:
The department houses four diverse, but interconnected, programs that prepare students to
address the myriad issues faced by the State of New Mexico. Our faculty members are
leaders in their disciplines of Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Family and
Child Studies, and Nutrition; although each of these programs reflect different professional
fields and identities, we all have shared values of human development, diversity, and
excellence in scholarship and teaching. We offer various Bachelor’s, Master’s, and
Doctoral Degrees and a number of programs have achieved national accreditations in their
fields, a true marker of success and innovation.
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