

Water Camps and Exhibits for Summer 2004

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In the Southwest, hot, dry June days often lead one to fond memories of past rain events and the anticipation of productive summer storms. With kids out of school and water on the brain, summer is a great time for families to learn about Southwest hydrology at museums, science centers, and summer camps. Public interest and a growing awareness of the importance of water resources has motivated some southwestern science centers to design displays and educational experiences around such topics. For example, the recently opened Explora science center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has dedicated permanent indoor and outdoor space to water and will eventually feature interactive water exhibits. Flandrau Science Center in Tucson, Arizona, hosted a Monsoon Madness camp in the summer of 2003 and plans to offer a Fire and Hydrology camp this summer. The following are just some of the water-related educational experiences available at museums and science centers in four southwestern states – excellent ways to spend those parched summer days.

Arizona

The Arizona Science Center (www.azscience.org) in Phoenix provides a Science on Wheels Outreach Program that takes the museum experience off-site and includes programs for K-8 students that emphasize the properties of water and its importance in Arizona.

Flandrau Science Center (www.flandrau.org), housed at the University of Arizona in Tucson, will have a Fire and Hydrology summer camp that focuses on the connection between forest fires and water cycling, including the impacts of drought and post-fire erosion. The camp will be available to elementary and middle school students and offers partial scholarships. In addition,

plans for a new Flandrau facility include an EarthWorks exhibit hall, which will illustrate the role of water in Earth's natural systems.

Colorado

The Mesa Lab of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (www.ucar.edu/ucar/visitor.html) outside Boulder will open in mid-June 2004, for tours and feature exhibits on atmospheric sciences and on Earth's climate over time. Those seeking an outdoor adventure can explore the Walter Orr Roberts Weather Trail (www.ucar.edu/exhibits/wxtrail/detail.html) in South Boulder, which includes sections devoted to fire and drought, flooding and erosion, and snow.

New Mexico

Explora (www.explora.mus.nm.us) in Albuquerque opened its doors in December 2003 and fosters hands-on exploration throughout the center. Water is expected to be a predominant theme in many of its exhibits.

The New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science (museums.state.nm.us/nmmnh) in Albuquerque features exhibits such as New Mexico's Seacoast and New Mexico's Ice Age, detailing climate changes in the Southwest. During Summer 2004, the museum will host two water-oriented camps. Students who have completed grades 3-5 can explore ecosystems in Eco Adventures, and those who have completed grades 7 or 8 will conduct scientific research, including measurements of water quality, in the Student Ecology Research Program.

Nevada

The Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History (hrcweb.nevada.edu/Museum/hrc.htm) on the campus of the University of Nevada Las Vegas features a xeriscaped desert garden and exhibit space dedicated to the construction of the Hoover Dam.