Hiking Southeast New Mexico and Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas
Sat, April 6 – Sun, April 14, 2019 (Trip #1925)

HIGHLIGHTS
We will hike at elevations from 3,900’ to 10,100’...

- White Sands National Monument, the world’s largest gypsum sand dune field, in the mountain-ringed Tularosa Basin of New Mexico.

- White Mountain Wilderness, one of the most attractive backcountry areas in New Mexico. Open ridgeline will provide extensive views of the harsh desert range, valley and canyons below.

- Carlsbad Caverns National Park, including the 14-acre Big Room, one of the largest underground chambers, with a seemingly endless variety of limestone formations.

- Guadalupe Mountains National Park, including Hunter and Guadalupe Peaks, offering some of the most magnificent views in Texas.

ITINERARY
*Note: Leaders reserve the right to make changes to this plan as may best suit the group’s needs.*

**Day 1, Sat, Apr 6: Arrive in El Paso, TX; drive to Ruidoso, NM.** We will pick up our rental vehicles at El Paso International Airport, drive to Ruidoso, where we will stay at the Comfort Inn Midtown for 4 nights. We will enjoy a group dinner, and then purchase lunch and other provisions at a local supermarket. (Driving: 135 mi; 2’30”)*
Day 2, Sun, Apr 7: White Sands National Monument, NM (3900’ – 4000’). Our adventure starts with a 5-mile loop hike on the Alkali Flat Trail that offers a most unique desert experience. The fine gypsum sand makes it easier to spot animal tracks such as roadrunner, bleached earless lizard and darkling beetle. We will learn about the geology of White Sands at the Visitor Center. Elevation gain: 100’. (Driving: 126 mi; 2’40” R/T)

![White Sands National Monument](image)

Day 3, Mon, Apr 8: Argentina Peak, White Mountains, NM (7800’ – 9198’). This 6.5 mi hike along the crest of the mountains will provide many beautiful panoramic desert views, including 12,033’ Sierra Blanca. Elevation gain: 1400’. (Driving: 44 mi; 1’40” R/T)

![Argentina Peak](image)

Day 4, Tue, Apr 9: Big Bonito Loop, White Mountains, NM (7800’ – 10,100’). We will return to the same area for a more demanding, 9.3 mi hike along an open ridgeline with extensive views of the White Mountain Wilderness. Elevation gain: 2300’. (Driving: 44 mi; 1’40” R/T)

Day 5, Wed, Apr 10: Carlsbad Caverns National Park, NM (Visitor Center, 4406’). We will depart early (6:45am) to allow sufficient time at Carlsbad Caverns, and drive from Ruidoso to Carlsbad, NM, where we will stay at the Quality Inn for 3 nights. After leaving our bags, we will continue to Carlsbad Caverns and walk down to the Big Room for a 1.25 mi “hike” through this magnificent underground chamber. Elevation descent & gain: 750’ down and up. (Driving: 150 mi; 2’40” Ruidoso – Carlsbad; 52 mi; 1’10” Carlsbad – National Park R/T)
Day 6, Thur, Apr 11: Hunter Peak, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, TX (5818’ – 8368’).
This 8.5 mi loop hike to the summit offers spectacular 360° panoramic views of the Chihuahuan Desert to the south, and other mountains and the pine forest of the Bowl to the north. Elevation gain: 2550’. (Driving: 108 mi; 1’52” R/T)

Day 7, Fri, Apr 12: Guadalupe Mtn., Guadalupe Mountains National Park, TX (5820’ – 8749’).
One of the highlights of our trip, we will climb to the highest point in Texas. This 8.4 mi round trip hike will give us magnificent views of salt flats to the west and El Capitan Peak, rising like the prow of a ship to the south. Elevation gain: 2929’. (Driving: 108 mi; 1’52” R/T)

Day 8, Sat, Apr 13: Mckittrick Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, TX (4980’ – 5320’).
Our final hike will be to what some consider the most beautiful spot in Texas. It is surprising such a lush, green environment can be found in the desert. We will hike ~2.5 mi to a halfway point. Total mileage will be ~5.0 mi. Elevation gain: 340’. (Driving: 54 mi; 56’’
After our hike, we will drive to El Paso International and check in to Microtel Inn & Suites. We will enjoy our farewell dinner and return the rental vehicles. (Driving: 104 mi; 1’40”)  

**Day 9, Sun, Apr 14:** *Flights home.* The Microtel complimentary shuttle bus operates 24 hours/day. The hotel is located ~1 mi from El Paso International Airport.  

**TIME ZONE**
All areas of this trip are in the Mountain Time Zone which is 2 hours earlier than the Eastern Time Zone. It observes Daylight Savings Time. So, when it’s 9am in Boston, Hartford or New York, it is 7am in the areas we will be visiting.  

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

We have planned for double occupancy of rooms, with leaders consulting trip participants, as required, to make the most suitable matches. Rooms at all properties have a mini-fridge, coffee maker and microwave.  

**TRANSPORTATION**
We will fly into and out of El Paso International Airport, El Paso, Texas. We ask that participants arrive no later than 1:00pm MDT. This timing allows sufficient time to drive to Ruidoso, NM, 2 ½ hours north, settle in to our accommodations, enjoy our welcome dinner, and grocery shop in the evening for lunch and other provisions.
We will wait until everyone has arrived at the airport and then drive as one group in our rental mini-vans. In the event of flight delays, we would make every effort to minimize the impact on other hikers by arranging for at least 1, if not 2 vehicles to depart for Ruidoso.

On our last day, flights will generally depart in the morning. We will plan to return our rental cars the evening before and use the 24-hour free hotel shuttle to bring hikers to the airport.

The leader and co-leader will be designated drivers, and we will enlist one additional trip member as an additional designated driver. We will also ask that up to 3 additional hikers agree to serve as backup drivers. If you would like to volunteer to be a driver or backup driver, please let the leaders know. AMC will check your driving record before you can be approved.

MEALS
Hot and cold breakfast buffets are available in the lobbies of all our accommodations. However, it is likely that some (or many) hikers will be departing too early on Sun, Apr 14 for breakfast to be set up. The leaders will make every effort to make special arrangements with the staff to provide at least some breakfast items. However, we cannot guarantee they will agree to do so.

Everyone will prepare their own lunches using groceries purchased at local supermarkets and smaller markets we will visit for “group shopping outings.” We will have dinner every night at nearby restaurants. Some will include the entire group and others will be smaller with carpooling coordinated by the leaders.

LEADERS’ EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS
Trip Rating: This trip is rated 3 / 4. Hiking will be Moderate (3) to Vigorous (4). Expect to be active 4 – 6 hours/day, with reasonable-to-brief breaks. You need to be able to hike 5 – 9 miles/day at a moderate (~1.5 – 2.0 mph) pace easily, with elevation gains from 100’ – 2900’, while carrying enough equipment, water and food to keep you safe in the event of bad weather or injury. Your pack is likely to weigh 18 – 22 lbs.

Ability: This trip has been designed for experienced hikers who can comfortably hike up to 8 hours/day, not including breaks, at a moderate pace (up to 2 miles-per-hour). Vertical ascents will range from 100’ to 2,929’. Elevations will vary from 3,900’ to 10,100’ over distances of 5.0mi. to 9.3mi.

Safety: Individual and group safety is our highest priority. We will always hike together at a pace that is comfortable for the slowest hiker. Every day, everyone should be prepared to bring a minimum of 2 liters and as much as 3 liters of water, lunch and snacks, plus wear and bring appropriate clothing, including a hat. (We will provide an equipment list separately.)

As participant safety is the highest priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and to make the experience successful for all.
Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance to a trip, please carefully read and sign the Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement. Please call the leader and/or co-leader if you have any questions.

**Risks:** SE New Mexico (White Sands National Monument & Lincoln National Forest) and Guadalupe Mtns. National Park average ~280 days of sunshine, compared to the US national average of 205 days. So, we are likely to experience a considerable amount of sun. Therefore, it is important to protect your skin from excessive exposure and to keep well-hydrated at all times. Average minimum and maximum temperatures in mid-April will vary from low 30s to mid 60s, requiring proper clothing. And temperatures will vary further with elevation. Early mornings, in particular, will be chilly. However, we are unlikely to experience hot weather.

Spring is the windy season in SE New Mexico and Guadalupe Mtns. National Park, and these high winds dry the forest to the point of extreme fire danger. Therefore, we will be very alert to US Forest Service and National Park Service signs and follow all posted warning precautions.

Although no one has had a physical encounter with a mountain lion in Guadalupe Mtns. National Park, sightings have become more frequent in the last few years. Lions have increasingly shown more curiosity about people, and less fear. If a lion is sighted, we will never approach, but provide a way for it to escape. Most try to avoid confrontation.

Rattlesnakes are the only venomous snakes in the area. To avoid them, we will stay on the trails where we are more easily able to see them. We will always watch where we put our hands and feet, and we will look around before sitting down.

**Attitude:** We are planning on a group size of 16 hikers (including two leaders). We believe your enjoyment will come as much from your interaction with other hikers as it will from the rugged beauty of the desert Southwest, what you learn, and the capabilities of the leaders. If you are prepared to help your fellow hikers, practice basic courtesies like being on time, and take a “go-with-the-flow” approach to events that may be beyond our control (delayed flights, rooms not ready for occupancy), we will all have a wonderful, memorable experience.

It may happen that a trip participant is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders, in their sole judgement, have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any participant for reasons of safety, whether it be of the group or the individual. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that may result in a participant being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.
COST
The cost of the trip is $1,895. It excludes round trip airfare to El Paso which is estimated* to be $499 from Boston, $566 from New York and $621 from Hartford. Hikers will be required to purchase their own tickets. However, the leaders will monitor online fares and provide updates on a timely basis. (*Note: March 2018, Travelocity.com, assumes October 2018 dates)

Participants will be responsible for any unanticipated cost increase; however, any surplus funds will be returned after the trip. The leaders have tried to plan for all costs from the biggest—accommodations, to the smallest—entrance fees.

The cost is based on quotes available in March 2018, when the trip was submitted to the Adventure Travel Committee. It includes: accommodations, all dinners, rental vehicles, gas, and national park entrance fees. The costs of lunches, including snacks and alcoholic beverages, are excluded, as are housekeeping gratuities, which are at your discretion. Although Adventure Travel trips are not-for-profit, in accordance with AMC policy, the cost also includes the leaders’ expenses + AMC overhead to defray administrative and publication costs.

The cost further includes emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage, required by the AMC. It does not include insurance for travel delay, interruption, or cancellation, or for baggage loss. If these possibilities concern you, individual travel insurance is recommended. More information about included emergency medical and evacuation insurance, as well as optional and recommended travel insurance will be provided to participants in their formal acceptance letters, which will be sent out when the trip has the required number of accepted applicants.

GROUP SIZE/COST IMPACT
In addition to the two leaders, we’ve assumed 14 hikers will participate and have priced the trip for that number. If only 12 hikers sign up, we would proceed and adjust the cost accordingly.

APPLICATION PROCESS
If you would like to sign up, please complete the application form, enclose a check for $500 payable to Appalachian Mountain Club, and mail it to: George Schott, 4 River Knoll, Westport, CT 06880.

The leader will review your application and call you to assess your skills, experience, and physical condition to determine if you are capable of engaging in the trip activities planned. Your flexibility, adaptability, and compatibility with the group will also be considered. If you are accepted to the trip, you will also be asked to complete and mail back: Assumption of Risk & Release Agreement and Confidential Health Questionnaire. If you have questions you would like to discuss before signing up, please email or call the leader and/or co-leader. (Contact details on last page of prospectus).

The balance of $1395 will be due Monday, January 7, 2019.
CANCELLATION POLICY

Your cancellation should not raise the cost of the trip to any of the participants or the leaders. Therefore, if you cancel, all money paid would be returned, less your share of expenses already incurred, plus any future expenses that cannot be avoided. If the trip were to be completely booked, your payments would be refunded in full. Optional trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended and available through AMC and other sources.

LEADERSHIP

Leader: George Schott is a Connecticut Chapter Hike Leader certified in SOLO Wilderness First Aid, AED and CPR. He also completed AMC Mountain Leadership School. He has co-led 4 AMC Adventure Travel (AT) trips to Big Bend National Park (2012); Saguaro National Park / Tucson Mountains (2014); National Parks of Southeast Utah (2016); Death Valley National Park & Red Rocks of Nevada (2018). And he has led one AMC AT trip: Olympic National Park (2017). Over the past 10 years, he has led or co-led hut hikes in the White Mountains and Adirondacks, and led day hikes on all sections of the AT in Connecticut and Massachusetts. He has climbed 40 4000’+ peaks in the White Mountains and 30 4000’+ peaks in the Adirondacks. George can be reached at 203.223.1677, or geosteven@aol.com

Co-Leader: Annemarie Langhan is a world traveler and lover of outdoor activities and adventures. She is a Worcester, MA hiking and backpack leader, and AMC Program Volunteer at both the Highland Center and Pinkham Notch. She has led and co-lead hiking and backpacking trips in NH’s White Mountains, the Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, and day hiked around Mount Rainer National Park. She has traveled the world as an international retail buyer, navigating numerous air-ports, including those in 2nd and 3rd world countries. She has traveled internationally to Italy, Spain, France, Romania, Hungry, China, Japan, India, and Russia. Annemarie can be reached at 508.932.1798, or amlhikeamc@gmail.com
Application
Hiking S.E. New Mexico & Guadalupe Mtns. National Park

*Please print legibly*

Name: _______________________________ AMC Member? ______________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: _______________________________________________________

Phones: Daytime: ___________________ Evening: _________________________

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy): __________ Gender: ___________________ Smoker? _____

Email Address: _________________________________

**Health or disabilities:** (Please note any medical or physical restrictions) ________
________________________________________________________________________

Name, address, and phone number of person to contact in case of emergency:
________________________________________________________________________

Have you done **mountain** hiking previously? When and how often?
________________________________________________________________________

*Please print* a brief summary of your recent hiking/backpacking experience on the back of this application.
________________________________________________________________________

How would you describe your physical condition and stamina? _________________
________________________________________________________________________

*Please print* a description of how you maintain your physical condition on the back of this application. For example, “I run 5 miles four times a week.”
________________________________________________________________________

Have you gone on other AMC Adventure Travel trips? _____ If so, who were the leaders?
________________________________________________________________________

If this trip is filled, do you wish to be placed on a waiting list? __________________

Are you willing to be a vehicle driver on the trip? _________