

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE



# JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

AT FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JUNIOR RANGER AT FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS STATE PARK

Franklin Mountains State Park is a special place. It belongs to you and to me, but with that comes great responsibility. We need people to look after the park and care for it. It might be hard to believe that a rugged mountain wilderness needs protecting, but it is true.

The Franklin Mountains State Park resides within the Chihuahuan Desert. The Chihuahuan Desert is the largest desert in North America. With 24,000 acres comprising the entire park, the Franklin Mountains State Park is the largest urban wilderness in the continental United States. That means that the entire park exists within the city limits of El Paso, Texas. This makes our park and the city of El Paso pretty unique places to be!

Unfortunately, sometimes visitors take the park for granted. They leave litter that destroys habitat and ruins the pristine wilderness of the park. Others vandalize the park, by putting graffiti names or tags on rock walls. Some people visit the Franklin Mountains and they just don't understand the vital importance of the park as a habitat for the wild creatures and plants of the Chihuahuan Desert, and as an escape to the outdoors for the people of El Paso.

The Junior Rangers are a dedicated group of individuals who enjoy the park, strive to learn about it and agree to protect it. We hope that you can share what you learn as a Junior Ranger with your friends and family and with visitors you may encounter in the park. Education is the best way to prevent damage to the Franklin Mountain State Park.



Presented by Franklin Mountains State Park  
Developed by Kelly Serio

2008

## THE PROGRAM

You must complete all of the tasks in order to receive your certificate and official Junior Ranger patch. You may complete the tasks in any order, make sure to keep track of your work, and if you have any questions you may contact the Junior Ranger coordinator, Kelly Serio, at (915) 566-6441, ext. 24. Make sure to read over all of the tasks required; you may be able to combine certain tasks. All tasks must be completed within Franklin Mountains State Park. You must complete the tasks on your own, but you need be accompanied by an adult whenever you are in the park.

Within this booklet there may be words that you are not familiar with. Please refer to the glossary at the end of the booklet.

---

Your name

---

Phone number

---

Date beginning the Junior Ranger Program

---

Date completed



## TASK #1

Complete three of the five listed hikes.

1. West Cottonwood Springs
2. Aztec Caves
3. Schaeffer Shuffle
4. Ron Coleman at Smugglers Pass (to the mammoth's trunk)
5. Upper Sunset

Keep a brief journal of each hike. Describe the trail, what you saw, such as plants, birds, what kind of rocks or fossils you spotted along the way, even what the weather was like that day. **Also, record the dates of your hikes.** Any interesting observations you make should be noted and illustrated.

**Hike #1**

Trail Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Observations:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Hike #2**

Trail Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Observations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hike #3**

Trail Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Observations:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## TASK #2

### Bring a friend to the park!

Bring along a friend or two who have never been to Franklin Mountains State Park. Share your favorite hike with them, have a picnic, tell them about the park and the animals that live here, and why the park is important to you.

After your hike with your friends, ask them the following questions and record their responses:

1. What are your names?

---

---

---

---

---

2. What was your first impression of Franklin Mountains State Park?

---

---

---

---

---

3. What was the coolest thing that you saw in the park?

---

---

---

---

---



4. Why do you think it is important to protect Franklin Mountains State Park?

---

---

---

---

---

5. What are you going to tell your friends and family about your visit to the park today?

---

---

---

---

---

6. Will you come back to Franklin Mountains State Park?

---

---

---

---

---



## TASK #3

### Identification

Good identification takes careful observation, especially when attempting to identify reptiles, birds and mammals who move, as opposed to plants! This task may require multiple attempts.

You may check out certain identification books at the park on weekends. You may borrow one book at a time, and we ask that you return the books when you leave the park so that other junior rangers may use it. Your local library is another resource where you can take out books to help you with identifying the plants, birds, reptiles and mammals of the Chihuahuan Desert.



**I. Identify four different species of birds.**

Describe the birds you have identified by their size, shape, color and beak type. **Tell us where you spotted each bird, the date and the time of day** (different birds are active at different times of day). Please illustrate the birds you identify below your description. Or you may photograph your specimens and paste the photo into your journal if you prefer, or do both!

Bird #1 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Illustration:

Bird #2 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Illustration:



Bird #3 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Illustration:**

**Bird #4 Species** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description/Date** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Illustration:**

## 2. Identify Three Different Species of Reptiles

Describe the reptiles you have identified by their size, shape and color. Tell us where you spotted each reptile, the date, and the time of day. Illustrate the reptiles you identify below your description. Or you may photograph your specimens and paste the photo into your journal if you prefer, or do both!

### CAUTION

**Should you spot a snake while observing for reptiles, do not approach it!!! Franklin Mountains State Park is home to at least three varieties of venomous rattlesnakes. These snakes have a home in our park but also require a great deal of respect. DO NOT attempt to move the snake in any way!! Use extreme caution; DO NOT try to touch, scare off or harm the snake in any way! Yield to the snake and find another observation spot if necessary.**



Reptile #/ Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Illustration:





Reptile #2 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Illustration:**

**Reptile #3 Species** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description/Date** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Illustration:**

### 3. Identify two different species of mammals.

Describe the mammals you have identified by their size, shape and color. **Tell us where you spotted each mammal, the date, and the time of day.** Please illustrate the mammals you identify below your description; or you may photograph your specimens and paste the photo into your journal, or do both!

Mammal #1 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Illustration:

Mammal #2 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Illustration:

### 3. Identify five different species of plant.

Describe the plants you have identified by their size, shape, color, texture and smell, if they have any. (Some plants will have an odor if you rub a small amount between your palms.) **Tell us where you spotted each plant and the date.** Illustrate the plants you identify below your description; or you may take a photograph of your plant specimen and paste it into your journal, or do both!

Remember that plants should be observed in place and not picked.

Plant #/ Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Illustration:

Plant #2 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

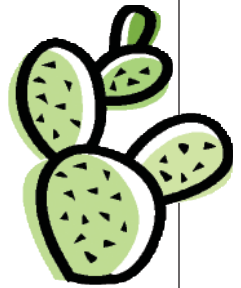
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Illustration:



Plant #3 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Illustration:

Plant #4 Species \_\_\_\_\_

Description/Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Illustration:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## TASK #4

### Litter Gitter

Pick up two 13-gallon-sized trash bags full of litter at Franklin Mountains State Park. Don't try to do both in one day. You must provide your own trash bag from home. After you have filled your bag, find the nearest Park Ranger and give them the bag. Have them initial and date in the spaces below.

Trash Bag #1

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Park Ranger Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Trash Bag #2

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Park Ranger Initials \_\_\_\_\_



## TASK #5

### The Final Test

Complete the brief quiz below. If you are stumped, check in the opening essay of the Junior Ranger Program booklet titled *What it means to be a Junior Ranger*. You may also ask a Park Ranger if you are unsure of an answer.

1. Franklin Mountains State Park is the largest \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in the continental United States.

2. Franklin Mountains State Park is \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

3. Within which desert does Franklin Mountains State Park exist?

---

---

4. Who does Franklin Mountains State Park belong to?

---

---

---

---

---

5. What sort of things does Franklin Mountains State Park need protecting from?

---

---

---

---

---





When you have completed all the tasks in this booklet, you may hand-deliver it any day of the week to any Park Ranger at the Franklin Mountains State Park at the Tom Mays Unit or to the Headquarters building in McKelligon Canyon, Monday–Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

You may also mail it to:

Franklin Mountains State Park Headquarters

Attn: Kelly Serio

1331 McKelligon Canyon Rd.

El Paso, TX 79930



## GLOSSARY

**Acre** — a unit of measure used in the United States and England that is equal to 43,560 square feet.

**Graffiti** — to draw on, carve into or spray-paint on any public surface.

**Habitat** — the place or environment where a plant or animal normally lives.

**Indigenous** — Being local to the area.

**Mammal** — warm-blooded vertebrates that nourish their young with milk, their skin is usually more or less covered with hair (includes humans).

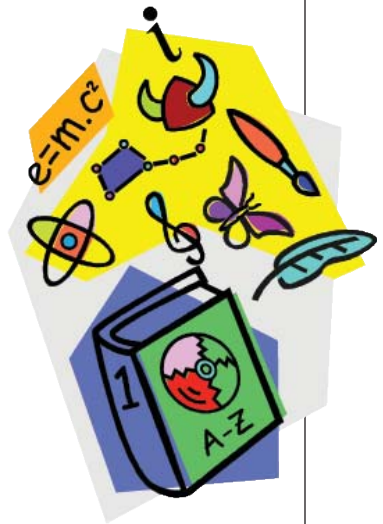
**Observation** — to watch and wait; also, recording what you see.

**Reptile** — Cold-blooded, air-breathing vertebrates that include alligators, lizards and snakes.

**Texture** — The way that something feels to the touch.

**Vandalism** — Willful or malicious destruction of public or private property.

**Vertebrates** — Having a backbone or spinal column.







**Life's better outside.™**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

Franklin Mountains State Park  
El Paso, Texas