



National Park Service
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White Sands
National Monument

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White Sands News Release

For Immediate Release

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Unmanned Aircraft to be Prohibited in White Sands National Monument

Alamogordo, NM –White Sands National Monument announces the banning of unmanned aircraft within the Monument. This regulation change implements a policy memorandum signed by National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis on June 20, 2014. The new policy directs National Park Service superintendents nationwide to prohibit launching, landing, or operating unmanned aircraft on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service.

National Park Service Director Jarvis stated, “We embrace many activities in national parks because they enhance visitor experiences with the iconic natural, historic and cultural landscapes in our care. However, we have serious concerns about the negative impact that flying unmanned aircraft is having in parks, so we are prohibiting their use until we can determine the most appropriate policy that will protect park resources and provide all visitors with a rich experience.”

In addition to the recent National Park Service policy memorandum, aircraft of any kind (including remote control) are prohibited at White Sands National Monument due to the restricted military airspace administered by White Sands Missile Range. This restriction applies from ground level up.

The term “unmanned aircraft” means a device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator in command to operate or control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

The new prohibition applies only to lands administered by the National Park Service and does not apply to unmanned aircraft that is launched, landed or operated outside the monument boundary. The prohibition will remain in effect until further notice.

For more information, contact White Sands National Monument at 575-479-6124 x 236 or visit: http://www.nps.gov/whsa/parkmgmt/upload/SMALL_2014_Superintendents_Compndium_8_20_2014.pdf

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