

## **Mystery Stone**

### **Valencia County**

### **T 7 N, R 2 W, Sec 36**

The aptly-named Mystery Stone is one of New Mexico's most famous attractions, drawing visitors from across the globe. Is it evidence of pre-Colombian activity in the New World? Is it an elaborate hoax dreamed up by idle students with too much time (and a lot of imagination)? Or is it something else entirely? We prefer to leave these determinations to you, the Recreational Access Permittees who make the trek to the center portion of our Land of Enchantment. Check out the Wikipedia entry ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los\\_Lunas\\_Decalogue\\_Stone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Lunas_Decalogue_Stone)), make the journey, and experience the Mystery Stone for yourself.

The Mystery Stone is an 80-ton volcanic basalt boulder bearing an inscription that some believe is an abbreviated version of the Ten Commandments written in Hebrew. Its existence was first documented in 1933 by University of New Mexico Archaeology professor Frank Hibben.

Located in a beautiful high desert setting at the base of Hidden Mountain, the Mystery Stone and the surrounding landscape is a perfect destination for those looking to escape the hustle & bustle of the daily grind. While trying to determine the true nature of this mystical and mythical mineral attraction, visitors can also hike the area and take in the varied flora and fauna including coyotes and snakes (primarily in late spring, summer and early fall).

Visitors will need to prepare for a hike of just over a mile round-trip. Two-wheel drive vehicles are more than adequate to access the venue's parking area.

**Getting there:** To get to the parking area: From Los Lunas, NM, take Highway 6 east from I-40 about 20 miles. Watch the right-hand side of the road for the Landfill sign and turn left when you find it. There is a bridge over the Rio Puerco right BEFORE the turn-off. Turn off Highway 6 onto the gravel road and cross the railroad tracks. There is one more single-lane bridge over the San Jose Arroyo as you get to the landfill gates. Park just across the bridge and avoid blocking any additional traffic.

To find the Mystery Stone: Cross the fence at the walk-through. Hike East about one third of a mile along the dirt road until you pass the hills to your right. Then another, smaller two-track road heads off toward the south. Not far along this track you will find a substantial rock landmark that looks a bit like a Gila monster. Follow this two-track along the edge of the hills until you come to another barbed-wire fence. Go through the walk-through, head right along the path, and cross a little arroyo. Then follow the path diagonally up the side of the mountain (Hidden Mountain). The Mystery Stone is not too far up the mountain and unmistakable. Distance: approximately 1 mile from parking spot.



### Things to Know:

- \* Recreational users of State Trust Lands must have a recreational access permit to access these lands. You can apply for the permit here: <https://openforadventure.nmstatelands.org/>
- \* Obey all postings/respect private property.
- \* No digging for, collecting, or defacing the cultural artifacts found at Mystery Stone or anywhere on state trust land.
- \* SLO operates under a multiple-use concept. Visitors may encounter other permitted users on-site.
- \* We strongly recommend visitors to trust lands carry and utilize a GPS device to avoid trespassing on to lands not managed by the NMSLO.
- \* Visitors are not allowed to manipulate any of the site's improvements and are prohibited from interfering with the ranching operations.
- \* Please try to minimize your use footprint and pack out all trash. [Leave No Trace](#).
- \* Please be attentive to weather reports. Storms can form quickly.
- \* Pack appropriate clothing for the season. During spring, summer and fall, typical day-hiking gear is recommended.
- \* Please be aware of prohibited activities under the [Recreational Access Permit](#).

For more information, please call 505-827-5760