

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 22, 2014**

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# National Safe Boating Week Raises Awareness Heading Into Memorial Day Holiday

**Santa Fe, NM** – New Mexico State Parks participated in National Safe Boating Week by raising awareness on boating safety initiatives throughout the state. State Parks staff also played an active role in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Western States Boating Administrators Association (WSBAA) Conference in Santa Fe.

As New Mexicans prepare to enjoy the warm weather, they look to the Land of Enchantment's expansive outdoors and waterways for relaxation and recreation. New Mexico's lakes, rivers, and streams are enjoyable, but can sometimes pose dangers. National Safe Boating Week provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of safety precautions and sensible behavior when spending time on the water.

The goal of National Safe Boating Week is to educate and inform the boating public about the need to follow safe boating practices and wearing your lifejacket. It doesn't matter if you're only going out for a short boat ride, fishing for an afternoon, or paddling with friends - safety should always be foremost on your mind. National Safe Boating Week in New Mexico parallels efforts throughout the United States, focusing on drawing attention to the number of people who die each year in boating-related accidents.

"Tragically, many boating accidents are the result of operator error, an error that is too often caused by fatigue, recklessness, inclement weather, or intoxication from alcohol or drugs that cause serious injuries, and claim lives of innocent people," said Toby Velasquez, Chief of Law Enforcement and Boating Safety for the New Mexico State Parks Division. "The simple act of wearing a lifejacket could mean the difference between life and death during a boating accident. If we can prevent one fatality by reminding the public to wear a lifejacket, we have accomplished our goal."

This year during National Safe Boating Week, and throughout the boating season, practice these simple steps that can save your life as well as the lives of the people boating with or around you.

- Get a vessel safety check
- File a float plan
- Designate a sober operator
- Wear a lifejacket

- Be aware of weather
- Take a **FREE** boating safety course



Participants of *Ready! Set! Wear It!* event at Conchas Lake State Park kicking off National Boat Safety Week

In addition, the New Mexico State Parks Division hosted the Western States Boating Administrators Association (WSBAA) 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico. For 53 years, the mission of WSBAA has been to identify and share best practices in boating education, law enforcement, search and rescue, and waterway management; promote greater uniformity in boating laws; encourage cooperation between boating agencies and organizations; advance interstate cooperation and efficiency in administration, law enforcement, and search and rescue activities; and serve as a forum for discussing existing and proposed laws and other boating safety issues of mutual concern in the west.

“For decades, this association has fulfilled a prominent role for boating safety, education, and enforcement programs in the West,” said Toby Velasquez, State Park’s Chief of Boating and Law Enforcement. “The Division is proud to host and show case Santa Fe and our State to our western neighbors and colleagues.”

Through its association work, the sixteen WSBAA member States and Territories address a wide variety of issues related to recreational boating safety, education, and enforcement. The WSBAA Annual Conference provides recreational boating professionals in state, federal, and non-governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the marine industry with a long established and cost-effective forum for engaging western state recreational boating safety, education, and enforcement program leaders so that they can better manage their state programs.

State Park officials remind you to always make safety your number one priority—be prepared on the water and always wear your lifejacket! FREE boating safety classes are offered around the state and on-line throughout the year.

Enjoy YOUR state parks soon, for more information, call 888—NMPARKS or visit [www.nmparks.com](http://www.nmparks.com).

*Conditions are Right for Adventure at New Mexico State Parks!*



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*The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.*

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