FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 12, 2017

Contact: Christina Córdova 505-476-3363; E-mail: Christina.cordova@state.nm.us
Beth Wojahn 505-476-3226; E-mail: beth.wojahn@state.nm.us

New Mexico State Parks Division
Recognizes Outstanding Employees

Santa Fe, NM – New Mexico State Parks honored staff, volunteers and partners during its annual awards ceremony throughout the state. A total of 41 awards were given and nine retirees honored.

“State Parks has hard working, ethical and dedicated employees and volunteers who excel every day to provide excellent customer service within our 35 state parks. The employees recognized at the awards ceremony are nominated by their supervisors and peers and they reflect that dedication,” said Director Christy Tafoya. “Each employee is worthy of this special recognition and I am extremely proud to be a part of this special awards program.”

The Governor’s Award, State Parks’ most prestigious award, recognizes an employee who performs duties in a superior manner and exemplifies, in attitude and action, those traits most desired in the Division. The 2016 recipient was Mr. Shank Cribbs, Park Manager, Santa Rosa Lake State Park.

His nominator added: “Shank Cribbs is a role model for not only new employees but for the entire Division. The younger officers/employees see how hard he works and puts the Division first. He is a one of a kind Ranger and we as a Division are very fortunate to have him working with us. He has taken on extra responsibilities and liabilities only to make this Division as well as its employees better. He is paving the way for a solid future for NM State Parks.”

2016 Governor’s Award Recipient: Christy Tafoya, Director of NM State Parks presents the Governor’s Award to Shank Cribbs, Park Manager, Santa Rosa Lake State Park.
system. The 2016 Secretary Awards was presented to Chris Vigil, Park Manager, Coyote Creek and Morphy Lake State Parks. The impact that Chris had on the region is great. He has shown his employees and other employees around the region that he is willing to assist them without hesitation. The benefits to the park, region and state are showing that he is a committed employee and that he will do anything to assist the division to make it a better place to work.

2016 Secretary's Award Recipient, Chris Vigil, Park Manager, Coyote Creek and Morphy Lake State Parks is pictured with Richard McCrea, Christy Tafoya and Joe Kasuboski at the Northeast Region Award Ceremony in Eagle Nest Lake State Park in November.

The Director’s Award recognizes employees at any job level who set and meet high standards and who have sustained a high level of performance when doing the job. Four awards were presented to the following: Robert Stokes, Division Archeologist, Frank Suazo, Seasonal Laborer, Heron Lake, Alfred Spinney, Seasonal Laborer, Navajo Lake and Shanna Reed Parsons, Navajo Lake State Park.

2016 Director's Award Recipients from Navajo Lake State Park are: Alfred Spinney and Shanna Reed Parsons both are photographed with NM State Parks Director, Christy Tafoya at the Awards Luncheon at Navajo Lake State Park Visitor Center.
Robert Stokes, NM State Parks Archeologist receives the 2016 Director’s Award

The Exemplary Park Award is the annual recognition of one park and its staff who have contributed significantly to the department’s goals and objectives. Any park whose staff performs its duties in a superior manner and exemplifies those traits most desired in Division employees and sustains this high level of performance throughout the year is eligible for this award. The nominees this year included: Bluewater Lake State Park, Cimarron Canyon State Park, Navajo Lake State Park and Oasis State Park. The 2016 Exemplary Park Award was presented to Fenton Lake State Park.

2016 Exemplary Park Award- Fenton Lake State Park- Randy Trujillo and Joshua Herron proudly accepted the award on behalf of the entire staff from Fenton Lake State Park.

The Customer Service Award recognizes employees who exemplify the principals of customer service towards fellow employees, park visitors and public. This year, three dedicated employees and park staffs were honored. Jacqueline Wiebe, Navajo Lake, Christopher Roberts, Sugarite Canyon, and Toby Velasquez, NM State Parks Deputy Director.
NM State Parks Deputy Director Toby Velasquez received the 2016 Customer Service Award

The Ranger of the Year Award is the annual recognition of a certified and commissioned park officer in good standing, at any job level, who performs duties in a superior manner and exemplifies, in attitude and action, those traits most desired in a Division officer. This year, the Division did something different. They honored a group. That honor went to the Firearm Instructors of the Division. They include: Andrew Armendariz, Mark Brown, Mac McIvor, Jake Morales, Chris Smith, Bryon Wilson, Eric Ytuarte, Shank Cribbs, and Daniel Gurule. Law Enforcement Instructors provide training on many different topics, from general firearm qualifications to tactical shooting and air medical training. Due to the great training that the Law Enforcement Instructors delivered, law enforcement officers experienced shooting in several tactical courses, used their training in officer-down situations, and learned important medical skills to save an officer’s life.

2016 Ranger of the Year Award Recipients: NM State Parks Firearm Instructors: (L-R) Daniel Gurule, Byron Wilson, Andrew Armendariz, Eric Ytuarte, Mac McIvor, Shank Cribbs, Jake Morales, Mark Brown and Christopher Smith.
Park staff work hard to keep the public safe and to save lives. Life-Saving Awards are the annual recognition of any employee, permanent or temporary, who has directly contributed to saving or attempting to save a life. A huge part of our mission is promoting public safety within our parks.

The following employees received the Life Saving Award: Bluewater Lake State Park: Andrew Armendariz, Former Park Superintendent, Mark Brown, Park Ranger Supervisor, Christopher Smith, Park Manager and Carol Brown, Park Ranger from Navajo Lake, Sam Encinias, Park Technician, Villanueva State Park: From Elephant Butte Lake State Park: Greg Claesson, Park Ranger and Jake Morales, Park Ranger. Representing Coyote Creek were Chris Vigil, Park Manager, Andrew Archuleta, Park Technician, and Debra Chavez, Seasonal Laborer, Christopher Smith, Park Manager, Navajo Lake, Alvaro Garcia, Marine Officer from Navajo Lake and finally, Miche Bove, Training/Development Supervisor and Danelle Earle Ute Lake State Park Administrator were also presented with the Life-Saving Award.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of NM State Parks and this year’s awardees were Joyce and Clarence “Skip” Eccleston from Manzano Mountains State Park, Wendell & Reba Schweitzer from Navajo Lake State Park, Donna and Eddie South from Bottomless Lakes State Park and Ned, Gail, Mac and Peggy from Cimarron Canyon State Park.

State Parks also recognizes partners. Our Partnership Award recognizes a citizen or organization that made a positive and significant contribution to the Division. In 2016, the recipients were: Cimarron Canyon Volunteer Ambulance, NM Department of Game and Fish Farmington Office, Bureau of Land Management Law Enforcement- Cole Blevins, NM State Police Farmington Office and San Juan County Fire Department.
 NM State Park staff honors partners (L-R): Detective Mike Sindelar, San Juan County Sheriff's Office, Chief Craig Daugherty, San Juan County Fire Department, Captain Micah Doering, New Mexico State Police, Sergeant Matthew Anthony, New Mexico Game and Fish, and Cole Blevins, Ranger, Bureau of Land Management.
The 2016 Retirees were recognized for their distinguished service and honored in each of their regions. They were: Alan Fiala, Ramon Gallegos, Jeff Harris, Charles Jordan, Wendy Justice, John Rector, Alan Resnicke, Kelly Richerson, and David Sharp.

For more information about State Parks and park programs call 505-476-3381, 877-NMPARKS or visit www.nmparks.com

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

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