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Elephant Butte Lake State Park Sets Holiday Weekend Record with Over 125,000 Visitors

Largest Number of Visitors Ever Recorded

Santa Fe, NM – Elephant Butte Lake State Park recorded over 125,000 visitors during the recent holiday weekend. With a final total of 125,325 visitors, Elephant Butte Lake State Park saw more guests than ever recorded. The 2015 Independence Day guest total is a significant increase from 98,000 in 2014 and 47,000 in 2013. Historically, the Independence Day weekend leads Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, which also bring large crowds, as the busiest time of the year for the park.

“Welcoming this many visitors doesn’t happen by accident -- credit goes to dedicated park staff and great community support around Elephant Butte Lake State Park,” said Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Secretary David Martin. “We’re proud that so many people choose to visit New Mexico and choose Elephant Butte Lake State Park.”

Elephant Butte Lake State Park has seen significantly higher water levels this year. Currently, the lake’s water level is nearly 14 feet higher than it was in 2014, which equals more than 122,000-acre feet of additional water.

“The conditions at Elephant Butte Lake State Park are always fantastic,” said New Mexico State Parks Director Christy Tafoya. “New Mexico’s State Parks are amazing and affordable, and a new visitation record proves that word is getting out.”

An increased number of visitors creates additional revenue for the park and the local economy. Park revenue totaled over \$100,000 for fiscal year 2015, which is about \$22,000 more than the previous year. Because revenue totals are equal to less than \$1 per visitor, New Mexico State Parks provide one of the most affordable experiences in the state. Revenues collected by New Mexico State Parks go directly to personnel, maintenance, and improvement costs of each of the 35 parks.

During the Independence Day holiday at Elephant Butte, Rangers and Marine Enforcement Officers provided visitor with safety and educational resources for safe boating and park protection. Citations were given to individuals not wearing life jackets

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on the lake, littering, and using prohibited fireworks. There were no major safety incidents over the weekend.

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