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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, SEPT. 25:

SNAGGING, FISHING OFF-LIMITS NEAR NAVAJO LAKE'S PINE BOAT RAMP

NAVAJO DAM – Low water levels at Navajo Lake have caused the New Mexico State Parks Division to close the Pine Boat Ramp and adjacent areas to fishing and salmon snagging, State Parks and the Department of Game and Fish announced today. Snagging season opens at Navajo Oct. 1.

Salmon snagging is done with large, weighted treble hooks, and authorities said the low lake level combined with the casting of the heavy hooks would be potential hazards for visitors, boats, and the marina. Navajo Lake areas that will remain open to salmon snagging include the cove between the Pine Main Campground and the picnic area, Lake Shore area of Sims Mesa, and off the face of the dam from the spillway to the far corner of the dam.

"Protecting visitor health and safety and property has to be our top priority," said Tommy Mutz, Director of New Mexico State Parks Division. "Currently, there are too many potential hazards around the main boat ramp for our visitors." Those hazards include a varying cliff face, gas lines, electric lines, boats and cables.

"This is the lowest I have seen the Pine Boat Ramp area at this time of year," said Doris Goode, Superintendent at Navajo Lake State Park. "The area will remain closed to fishing until the lake rises enough to keep all park visitors safe."

The snagging season also opens Oct. 1 at Abiquiu Lake, the Chama River from El Vado Lake to the west boundary of the Rio Chama Wildlife Area, El Vado Lake, and Eagle Nest Lake. The bag limit is 12 a day and 24 in possession. Kokanee salmon die after spawning, so snagging allows anglers to take advantage of a resource that otherwise would be wasted.

By State Game Commission rule, Heron Lake remains closed to salmon snagging until Nov. 9. Fisheries crews will capture salmon at Heron and spawn the next generation of this popular fish.

Navajo Lake is New Mexico's second largest lake, is typically more than 15,000 surface acres and offers the full gamut of water sports and services. The San Juan River area below the dam is world renowned for excellent trout fishing. For more information, call Navajo Lake State Park at (505) 632-2278, or visit www.nmparks.com.

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