



2015 Ute Lake State Park Management Plan

ENERGY, MINERALS, AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - STATE PARKS DIVISION



**Ute Lake State Park
Management Plan
2015**

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Abbreviations

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

BLM U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

BOR U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

DGF New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

EMNRD Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department

FY Fiscal Year

ISC Interstate Stream Commission

NM New Mexico

RV Recreational Vehicle

SPD Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, State Parks Division

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Mission of the State Parks Division and

Ute Lake State Park:

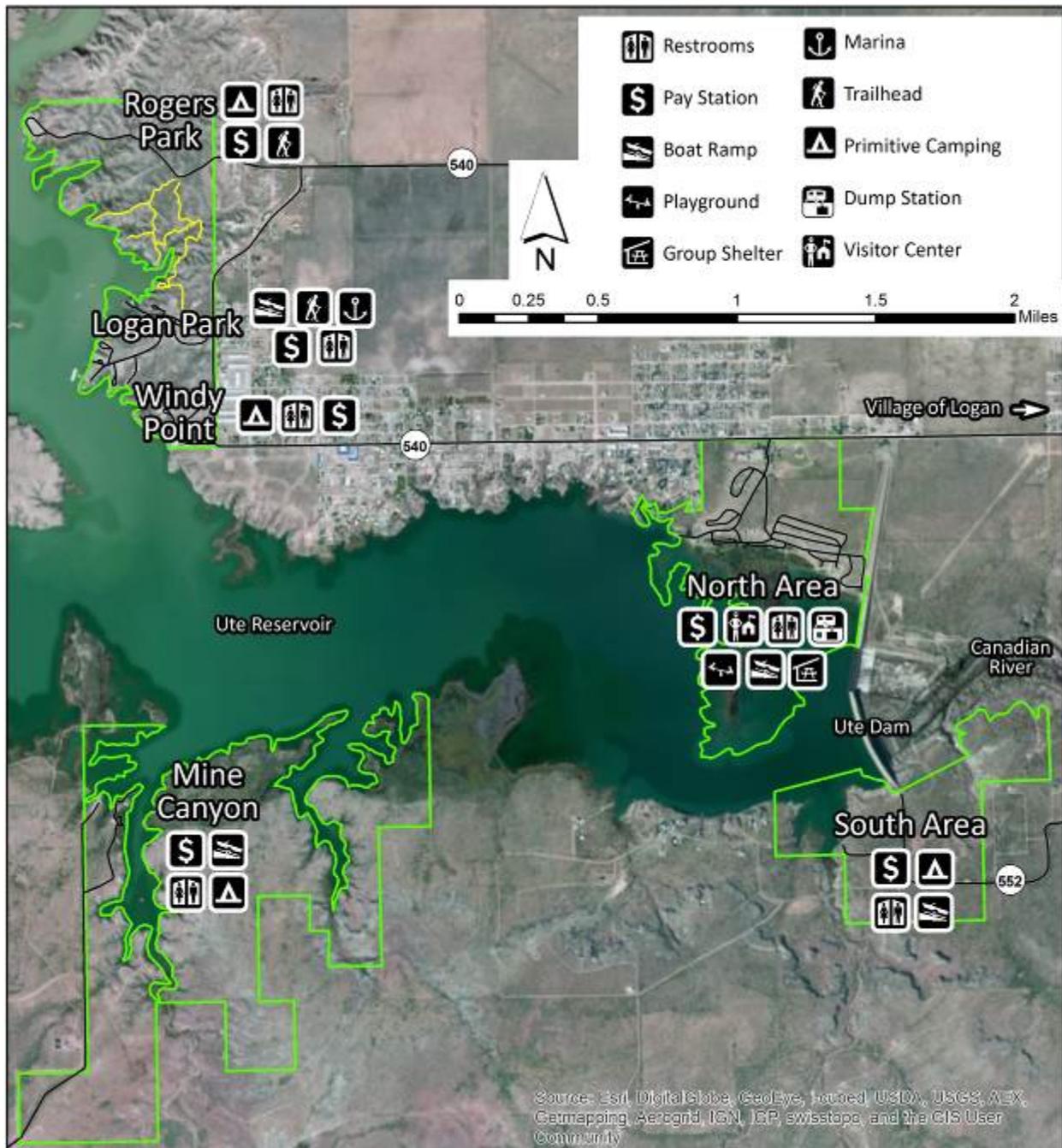
Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide first-class recreational and education facilities and opportunities, and promote public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.

Key Facts	
Park established:	1964
Park management area:	1,676.56 acres
Owned by SPD	253 acres
Leased from ISC	1373.62 acres
Leased from Village of Logan	50 acres
Campgrounds and campsites:	4 primitive campgrounds 10 developed campgrounds 154 developed sites 95 sites with water and electric 1 group shelter w/water & electric
Park Employees (FTE):	7
Park Elevation:	3,800'
County:	Quay County

INTRODUCTION

Park Description

Ute Lake State Park (Park) consists of 1,676.56 acres and is adjacent to the Village of Logan, NM (Village). The Park is divided into six separate recreation areas on Ute Reservoir's eastern side. It is the only state-owned, major reservoir in NM, and the dam was built without federal funds. The Ute Reservoir (reservoir) is approximately 13 miles long from east to west and around two miles wide at its widest point. The shoreline extends for 145 miles when the water is at a level of 3,787 feet. The reservoir is known for its many coves and inlets, which visitors enjoy exploring. The primary recreational activities at the Park are boating, fishing, and camping. Visitors also enjoy water skiing, bird watching, hiking, kayaking, paddle boarding, and occasionally, scuba diving.



Park History

In 1959, the NM State Legislature allocated money to the Interstate Stream Commission for the construction of Ute Dam, on the Canadian River. The reservoir was created primarily as a source of water for municipalities south of the Park, such as Clovis and Portales. ISC completed building the dam, which created Ute Reservoir, in 1963. Ute Creek, which flows in from the north, also feeds the reservoir. In 1984, ISC added 27 feet to the dam height and the largest labyrinth weir spillway in the United States. The addition doubled the reservoir's capacity.

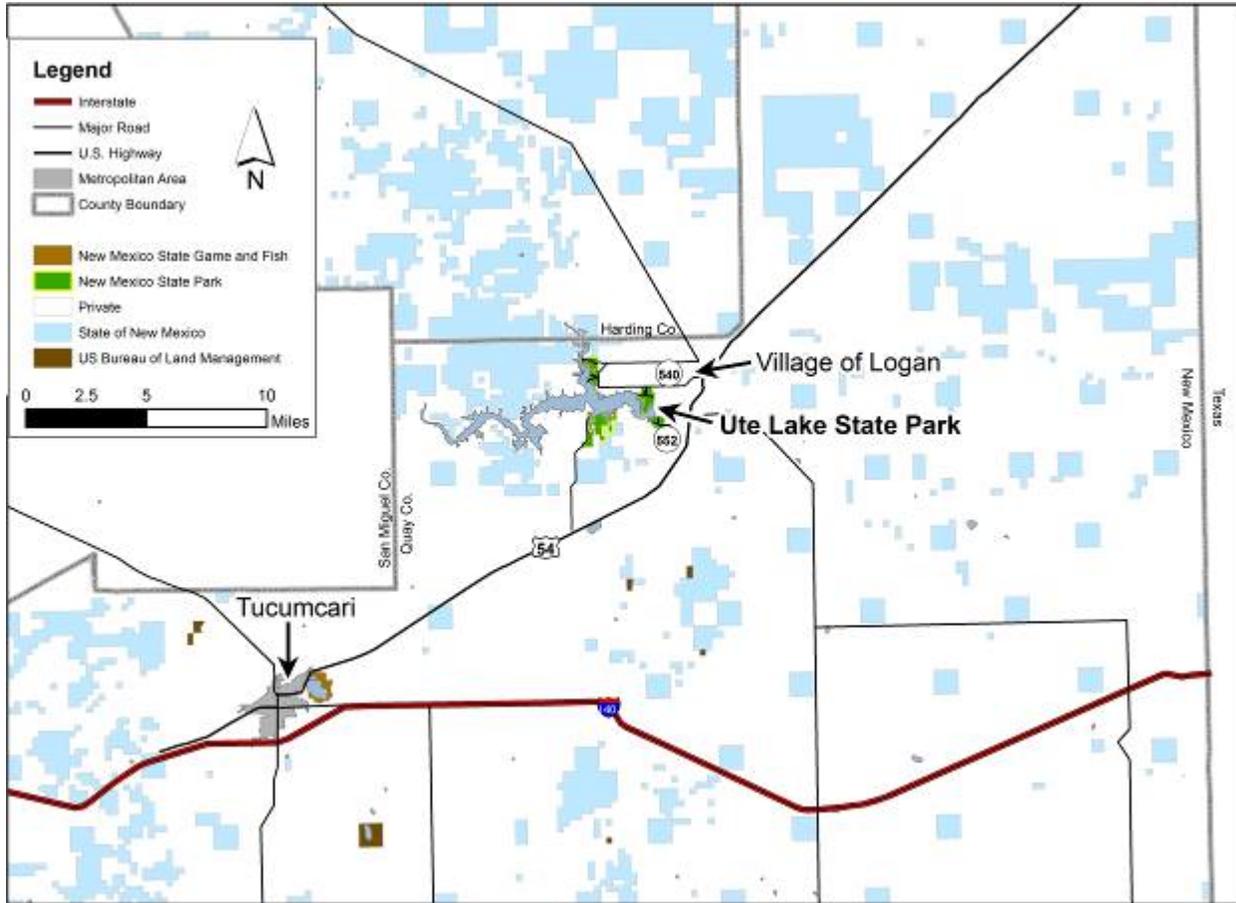
The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish transferred recreational jurisdiction to the New Mexico Park and Recreation Commission in 1964. This agreement established the Park. DGF continues to have jurisdiction over fishing, licensing of anglers, fisheries management, and wildlife management.

Between 1964 and 1971, the State Parks Division leased a total of 1,019 acres from ISC. SPD also leased 342 acres from the Village, in the Logan Park area. In 1965, SPD purchased 253 acres from ISC in the Mine Canyon area, on the south side of the reservoir. SPD, ISC, and the Village have amended three separate leases over the years. In 2010, SPD, ISC, and DGF implemented a memorandum of agreement, which terminated and replaced 11 previous agreements, including all leases that SPD had with ISC, and clarified the powers, duties, and financial responsibilities of each entity.

Key Historical Events	
1959	The state appropriates funds for ISC to construct Ute Dam.
1962	ISC and DGF agree that ISC will provide funds for operation and maintenance, and DGF will have jurisdiction of fishing and recreational uses.
1963	ISC completes construction of the original dam.
1964	An agreement between ISC and SPD for 260 acres near the dam establishes the Park.
1964	DGF transfers jurisdiction of recreational use to the Park and Recreation Commission (excluding fishing and wildlife management).
1965	SPD acquires 253 acres at Mine Canyon.
1967	ISC leases 402 acres of land in the North Area to SPD.
1971	ISC and SPD amend a lease to add 420 acres of ISC lands to the Park in the Mine Canyon Area.
1984	ISC increases the capacity of the reservoir by raising the height of the dam and creates a labyrinth weir spillway.
2010	ISC, EMNRD, and DGF agree to a trilateral memorandum of agreement.

PARK ASSESSMENT

PARK RESOURCES



Land

Lands Managed by SPD		
Rogers Park Area	Leased from Village	50 acres
Logan Park and Windy Point Areas	Leased from ISC	292.24 acres
North Area	Leased from ISC	402.1 acres
South Area	Leased from ISC	259.52 acres
Mine Canyon	Leased from ISC	420 acres
	SPD-Owned Land	252.7 acres

The Park is adjacent to the Village, which has a population of approximately 1,024 year-round residents. The population of the Village can double in the summer time. According to a 2006 report, there were 1013 homes in the Village, and 40 percent of these homes were vacation homes (Sites Southwest *et al.* 2006). The Village has approved five developments along Ute Reservoir that have a total of 1,159 planned lots. Ninety-five percent of the lots are vacant, most likely due to the economic recession,

which began in 2008, and uncertainty concerning future water levels in the reservoir (Albuquerque Journal, 2013). The year-round population of the Village has declined by eight percent since 2000, and the population of Quay County is expected to drop by approximately three percent over the next 20 years (University of New Mexico, 2012).

The Park is mostly surrounded by private land, but the State Land Office and BLM have land nearby. The Park is only 20 miles from the Texas border and 110 miles from Amarillo, Texas (Pop. 250,000). Tucumcari, NM (Pop. 5,150) is 24 miles to the southwest. The only other significant outdoor recreation areas in the region are Conchas Lake State Park, Santa Rosa Lake State Park, and Kiowa National Grassland, which are all over an hour away.

Natural Resources

Ute Reservoir is unique in the area because it has both permanent water and wetlands, which support a multitude of plant and animal species. The Park also straddles two ecoregions, the Southwestern Table Lands Ecoregion and the High Plains Ecoregion, which adds to the diversity of flora and fauna. The reservoir and the surrounding area are home to 23 plant and animals species that are rare, threatened, or endangered.

Geology

The Canadian River carved through rocks in the area to create the canyon that is now Ute Reservoir. Most of the rocks, including the bedrock upon which the dam rests, belong to the Upper Triassic Chinle Group. The group is a sedimentary rock that was created by sediment deposits 220 million years ago. This sandstone is typically reddish-brown, maroon, gray, or yellowish. The red color in some of the rocks is caused by the oxidation of iron, which indicates that they were once submerged in a marine environment. Other layers of this group show signs that they formed as a result of a river depositing sediments. Loose, or unconsolidated, material found in the area is a result of glaciers wearing away at the Sangre de Cristo Mountains during the last ice age. This was the time when the Canadian River began to form, as well (McLemore, 1997).

Climate Data	
Average maximum temperature in January	51.9°
Average maximum temperature in July	94.2°
Average minimum temperature in January	22.3°
Average minimum temperature in July	66.0°
Record high (June 25, 2011)	108°
Record low (February 3, 2011)	-12°
Average annual precipitation	14.3"
Average annual snowfall	13.5"

Water Resources

Water Agreements

The headwaters of the Canadian River are in the Southern Rocky Mountains of Colorado. New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas signed the Canadian River Compact in 1950, which established water allocation in this watershed among the states. The compact states that New Mexico has unrestricted use of all water originating above Conchas Dam and has unrestricted use of water originating below the dam, provided that no more than 200,000 acre feet of water are used as "conservation storage".

The New Mexico State Legislature authorized the construction of Ute Dam and Reservoir in 1959. The water stored in the reservoir was intended for municipal and industrial uses in eastern New Mexico, which then, as now, was experiencing diminishing groundwater supplies. It also provides recreation

value to the area. A minimum pool elevation of 3,741.6 feet was established by a 1962 agreement between the ISC and DGF. The 1962 agreement was replaced by the 2010 trilateral memorandum of agreement, which kept the minimum pool elevation of 3,741.6 feet. The minimum pool is meant to reserve enough water to provide for fishing and recreation purposes during times of drought.

In 1981, the New Mexico Legislature authorized funding to increase storage at Ute Reservoir by raising the dam's height. ISC completed construction of the upgraded dam in 1984. Prior to construction, the dam's spillway was at an elevation of 3,760 feet, and the reservoir had a maximum capacity of 110,000 acre feet. Upon completion of the upgrades the spillway elevation was 3,787 feet, and the maximum capacity of the reservoir was 245,000 acre feet.

Ute Dam's increased capacity concerned officials in Oklahoma and Texas. They believed the increased storage capacity violated the Canadian River Compact of 1950, which established a conservation storage maximum of 200,000 acre feet. The understanding at the time was that, whenever the reservoir's capacity reached 200,000 acre feet, ISC had to release water downstream to Texas and Oklahoma. The State of New Mexico asserted that the additional 45,000 acre foot storage capacity was intended to account for the sediment entering the reservoir from the Canadian River and smaller drainages. The sediment would raise the reservoir's floor, and therefore decrease capacity, but NM would still be able to hold 200,000 acre feet of water in conservation. Texas and Oklahoma sued NM over the capacity of the dam, and the case reached the Supreme Court in 1991.

The court found that New Mexico was in violation of the Canadian River Compact, not because of the increased capacity of the dam, but because New Mexico had allowed Ute Reservoir to store water that originated above Conchas Dam. The Supreme Court found that this action violated the Canadian River Compact because all water released by, or spilled over, Conchas Dam should be sent downstream to Texas and Oklahoma, regardless of the conservation holding levels within Ute Reservoir. Neither the Supreme Court ruling, nor the original compact, place limits on the amount of water that New Mexico can use, but only what the maximum storage can be. New Mexico has no minimum delivery obligations to any states downstream.

The Pipeline

“The proposed action would result in lower average water levels in Ute Reservoir and could potentially affect access to recreation facilities (for example, boat ramps) and the quality of recreation.” “Visitation to ULSP is especially high when recreation opportunities are limited at nearby reservoirs (including Brantley and Conchas) due to low lake levels. Ute reservoir has historically had a stable water elevation compared to other reservoirs in the state. There is a concern that changes in the water levels at Ute Reservoir may change recreational opportunities in the Project Area, specifically in Logan and Quay County. There is also concern about the effect of changing reservoir levels on the use of private boat docks.”

Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Assessment of Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System, June 27th, 2011

In 1987, the Ute Reservoir Water Commission (Commission) formed when the communities of Clovis, Tucumcari, Portales, San Jon, Logan, Grady, Texico, Melrose, Elida, and Canon Air Force Base set out to reach an agreement on how to “plan, develop, acquire, finance, protect, and conserve water resources from Ute Reservoir to the common benefit of all parties”. The Commission and ISC negotiated a long-

term lease in 1996 to reserve 24,000 acre feet of water a year for the communities affiliated with the Commission. The water would be delivered by a 151-mile-long pipeline. The pipeline is also known as the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System Project.

There was little progress on pipeline planning or construction from 1996 until around 2009. During this time, the communities affiliated with the Commission continued to rely on the Ogallala aquifer for their water, and ground water levels in the aquifer continued to decline. A 2013 study showed that the water depletion in the previous eight years of record was about 32% of the total aquifer depletion during the entire 20th century (Konikow, 2013). According to recent projections, the Ogallala aquifer will essentially run dry in the area within the next 10 years (Widdison et al., 2013). Most communities believe that there will be an urgent need for the pipeline within the next five to six years.

As groundwater levels in the region continue to decline, population in the area continues to rise. Recent studies predict that the population of the area will increase by 29% over the next 30 years (University of New Mexico, 2012). Even with water supplied by the pipeline, water demand by communities affiliated with the Commission may outpace supply by 2060 (BOR, 2011).

In 2009, Senator Jeff Bingaman included the pipeline in a bill, which was signed by the President. The bill authorized \$550 million to fund the pipeline, but not all the money has been appropriated. The federal government will pay 75% of the project’s cost, the state will cover 15%, and the remaining 10% will be

Reservoir Level	Elevation	Capacity (Acre Feet)	Surface Area
Minimum Level w/Cumulative Impacts of Pipeline w/High Water Use	3,738’	26,410	1,568 ac.
Minimum Pool	3,741.6’	50,000	2,350 ac.
Minimum Level w/Cumulative Impacts of Pipeline with w/Low Water Use	3,751’	50,140	2,401 ac.
Bottom of Boat Ramps at Logan	3,754’	81,000	3,300 ac.
Reservoir Averages with Old Dam	3,760’	110,000	4,078 ac.
Averages Post Pipeline with Status Quo Management	3,775’	145,130	5,508 ac.
Median Post Pipeline Under Drought Management Plan	3,779’	146,618	6,000 ac.
Current Averages	3,781’	174,350	6,289 ac.
Maximum Storage under Compact	3,784’	193,240	7,000 ac.
Maximum Physical Storage	3,787’	216,000	8,047 ac.

paid by the communities that will be served by the pipeline. To date, the federal government has contributed over \$5 million to the project. The state has contributed \$32.55 million on planning, engineering services, and construction, which count towards the state’s 15% share of project costs.

In 2011, when the pipeline was in the planning process, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) conducted an Environmental Assessment of the project and found that there would be no significant impact. A year later, the Village of Logan sued the DOI in federal district court and challenged that finding. The Village argued that the pipeline would cause irreparable harm to the community because there would be a “loss of revenue, aesthetic impairment, declining property values and business devaluation, and degradation of the fisheries population” (Portales News Tribune, 2014). The Village also wanted the court to grant an increase to the elevation of the minimum pool from 3,741.6 feet to 3,765 feet. The Village contended that the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority had agreed to

this level, which the Village believes to be the level necessary to maintain the ecosystem and continue recreation on the reservoir. The court ruled against the Village, which appealed the case to the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeals court ruled against the Village in August 2014, essentially ending the Village's chances of stopping the project ([Portales News Tribune](#), 2014).

Construction on the pipeline began in March 2013 after the first ruling by the federal district court, and it is expected to be completed within the next 10 to 20 years. According to some residents in the Village, when construction of the pipeline began, property values dropped, construction on new homes slowed dramatically, and sales of lots and existing homes also slowed ([Albuquerque Journal](#), 2013).

Under the ISC's current management practices, a computer projection showed that annual water use of 24,000 acre feet would make it likely that a water shortage would occur at some point over a 40- year period, and Ute Reservoir's capacity would reach the minimum pool level. The Eastern New Mexico Water Utility Authority and the Ute Reservoir Water Commission hired contractors to come up with a drought management plan for the reservoir. A draft of the plan was completed in 2013, and completion is pending.

Studies during the planning process examined a variety of strategies for managing Ute Reservoir water during times of drought. The authors of the plan found that the preferred alternative for reservoir management during periods of drought was to base planning on 90 percent of the historical inflow into the reservoir over an 83-year period of record and to have set trigger points when the water level reached specific elevations. When the reservoir reaches an elevation of 3,771 feet, the ISC would reduce output to the pipeline by 10 percent. When the elevation reaches 3,769 feet, output would decrease by 20 percent, and at 3,765 feet, output would decrease by 30 percent. When the water level reaches the minimum pool elevation of 3,741.6 feet, water delivery would cease entirely. The bottom elevation of both boat ramps at Logan Park is 3,754 feet.

Every decade, the BOR must complete a sedimentation survey of the reservoir, which will determine how much storage capacity had been reduced due to sediment entering the reservoir. The trigger points for output would change accordingly, but the minimum pool level would stay the same. A 1992 survey showed that capacity over a 30-year period had been reduced by an average of 930 acre feet each year (Ferrari, 1993).

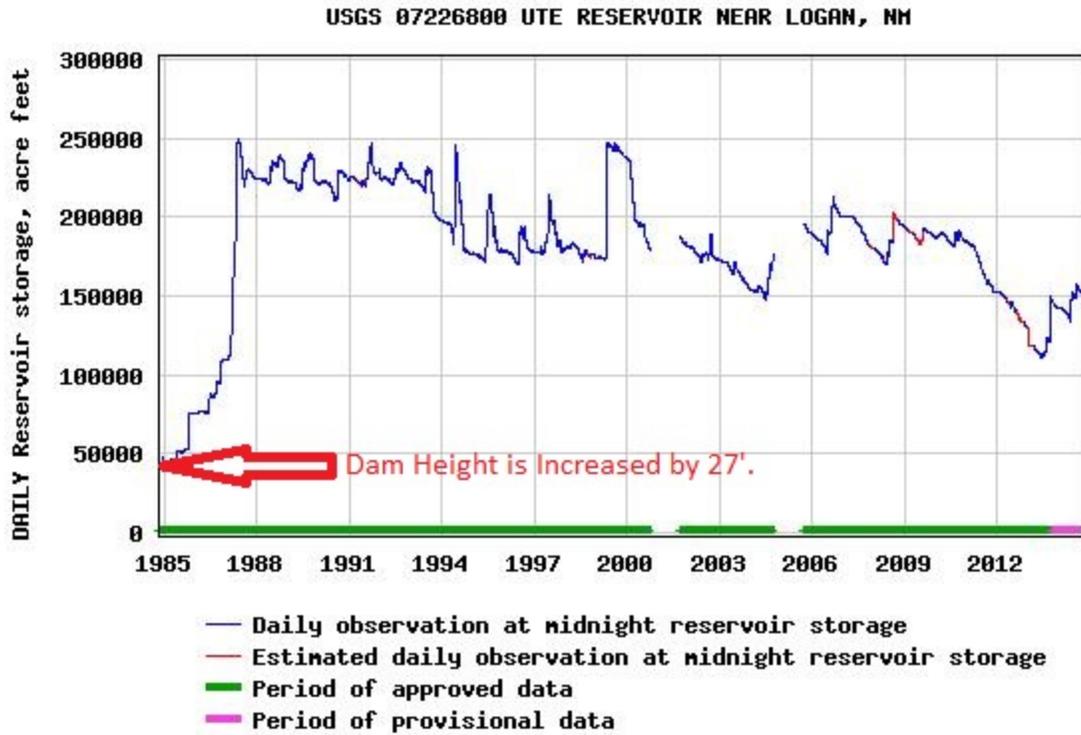


Figure 24. Cumulative Effects to Ute Reservoir Storage.

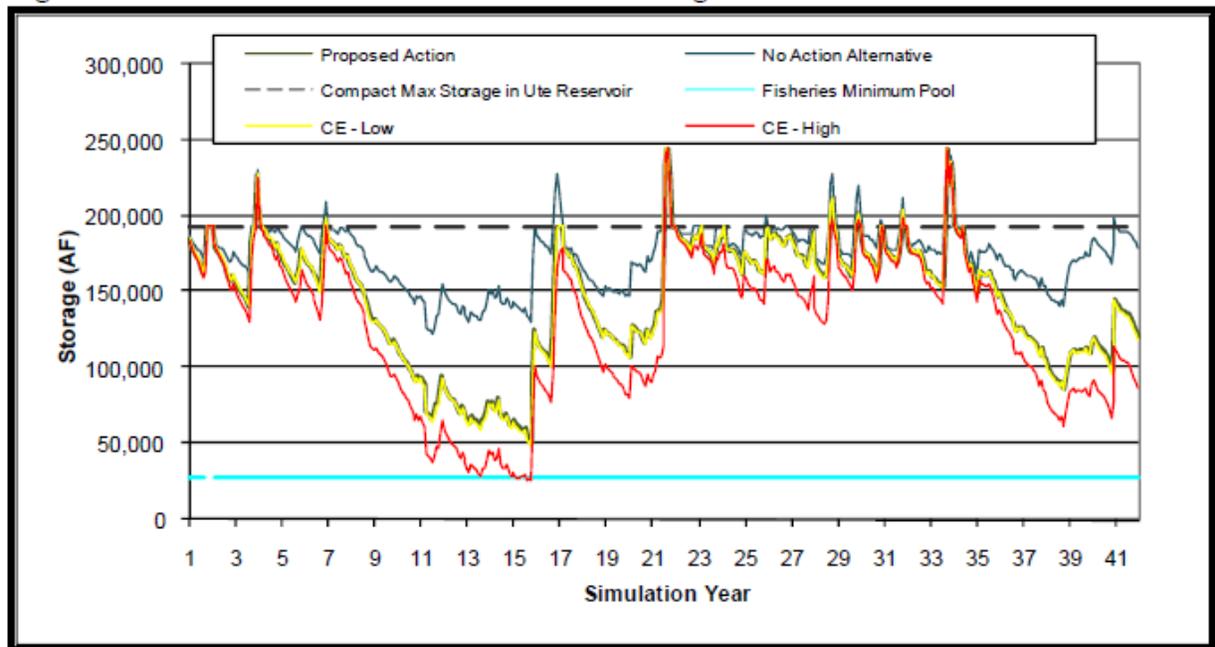
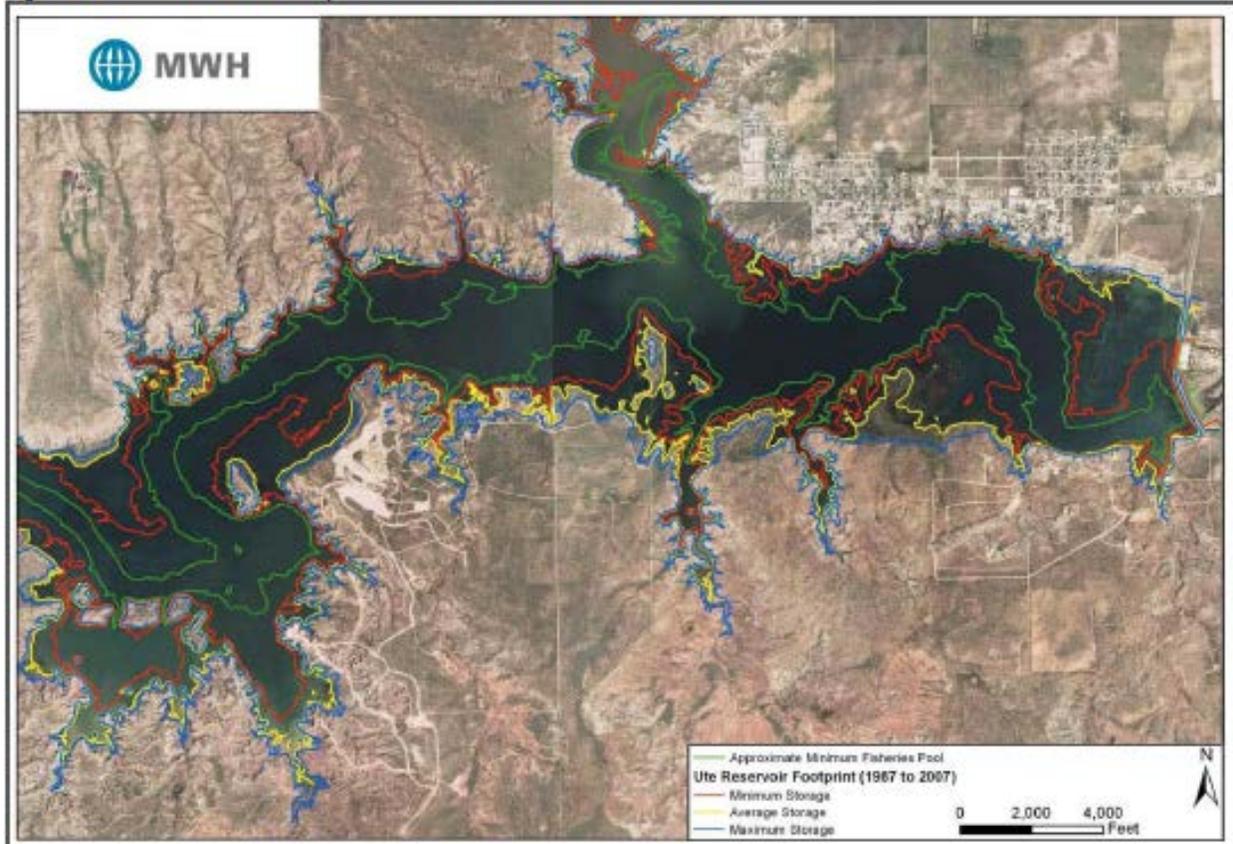
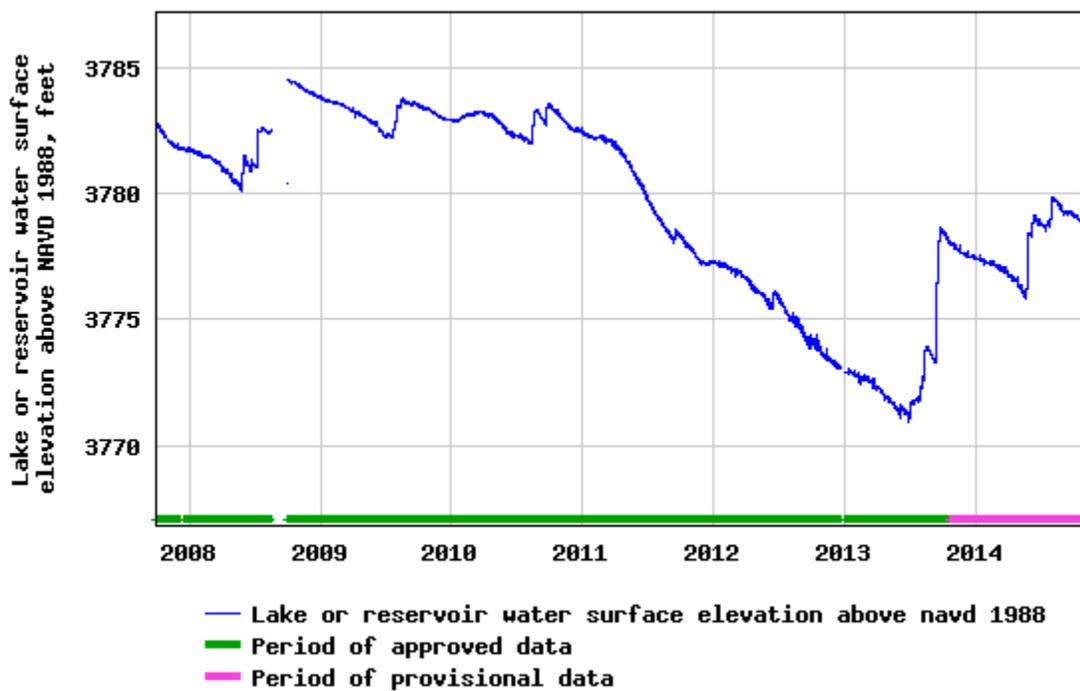


Figure 14. Ute Reservoir Historic Footprint: for 1967 to 2007 and Minimum Fisheries Pool.



USGS 07226800 UTE RESERVOIR NEAR LOGAN, NM



Vegetation

The Park straddles two different ecoregions: the Table Lands Ecoregion and the High Plains Ecoregion. The Table Lands Ecoregion is sparsely vegetated with one-seed juniper, sand sagebrush, skunkbush sumac, and yucca. The grasses that grow in the area are sideoats grama, little bluestem, western wheatgrass, blue grama, buffalo grass, galleta, and alkali sacaton.

The High Plains Ecoregion shares many of the same species. This portion of the high plains is known as “the rolling sand plains”. The rolling sand plains consist of flat sandy plains and dunes that are stabilized with vegetation such as sand sagebrush. Giant sandreed, little bluestem, sand dropseed, sand bluestem sideoats grama, blue grama, buffalo grass, switchgrass, indiagrass, and yucca are also present in the ecoregion. Other species that occur in both ecoregions are netleaf hackberry, western soapberry, and honey mesquite (BOR, 2011).

Many reservoirs in the state do not support shoreline wetlands because water levels fluctuate too dramatically to support wetland obligate species. Since the water levels at Ute Reservoir have been relatively stable over the years, around 123 acres of wetlands have been able to form along the Ute Reservoir shoreline (BOR, 2011). These wetlands support species such as plains cottonwood, coyote willow, and tamarisk (also known as salt cedar). Tamarisk is a primary component of the shoreline at Ute Reservoir. In 2014, the tamarisk beetle migrated to the Canadian River from the Amarillo, Texas area, which is one of the places where it was introduced to control the tamarisk. It has defoliated some of the tamarisk in the area and is expected to continue to do so. Trees that are defoliated by the beetle year after year often die.

The wetland plant communities are important to a wide variety of fauna. If water levels in the reservoir fluctuate more in the future because of the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System Project, then the extent of wetlands may fluctuate as well. A water level change of as little as 5' can leave many current wetland areas too dry to support wetland vegetation (Office of the State Engineer, 2007). The environmental assessment conducted for the pipeline project in 2011 predicted that wetlands lost due to water level fluctuations would be replaced by wetlands that would form at lower elevations. While this may be true, if the water levels fluctuate too much, it would be difficult for wetlands to reestablish in areas away from drainages.

Wildlife

The area within and around the Park could support over 228 species of birds, 47 species of mammals, 12 species of amphibians, 36 species of reptiles, 28 species of fish, and up to 343 species of invertebrates (Office of the State Engineer, 2007). The most common mammals at the Park are deer, black-tailed jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, skunk, raccoon, and numerous species of small rodent. Predators in the Park may include coyote, red fox, badger, bobcat, and mountain lion.

The Park is home to thousands of waterfowl during the winter months. The area from Horseshoe Bend and westward is a waterfowl refuge area. There have even been occasional loon sightings. Other bird species include birds of prey such as the osprey, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, Swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, northern harrier, owls, and American kestrel. Songbirds include swallows, larks, doves, kingbirds, orioles, sparrows, towhees, and finches. Migratory species that may occur are yellow-headed blackbird, sandhill crane, spotted sandpiper, cliff swallow, and heron.

Fish include stocked species such as white bass, walleye, and largemouth and smallmouth bass. Species that are not stocked include carp, yellow bullhead, and bluegill.

The area in and around the Park has habitat that may support several endangered species. The interior least tern, southwestern willow flycatcher, western ribbon snake, paper pondshell, brown pelican, peregrine falcon, Arkansas River shiner, yellow-billed cuckoo, Canadian River spike chub, plains silvery minnow, bigscale logperch, and lesser prairie chicken may occur within the Park. There have been confirmed sightings of the black tern, gray vireo, bald eagle, golden eagle, and Texas big-eared bat in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir. The shoreline of the reservoir has potential habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo (Office of the State Engineer, 2007).

Cultural Resources

People may have inhabited the area around the Park as long ago as 10,000 years. Through the years, archaeologists have conducted multiple cultural resource surveys within and surrounding the Park. The majority of the sites found have consisted of lithic scatters, which could date from anywhere from 10,000 years ago to sometime in the 20th century, but several sites can be attributed to more specific times and cultures (Office of the State Engineer, 2007).

Clovis people first arrived in the area around 10,000 years ago and were hunting big game such as mammoth, bison, and species related to the camel and horse. A 2005 archaeological survey of Ute Lake Ranch discovered a partial Clovis spear point on the property. After the Clovis culture, the Folsom culture emerged. The Folsom people focused their hunting mostly on bison, as mastodons and other species edged closer to extinction. They were replaced by the Plano people, who made a more diverse set of projectile points as the number of large game species dwindled.

The Archaic period began around 7000 to 6000 BC when the climate in the region became similar to today's climate. People from this period, in this region, were mostly hunter-gatherers and relied more on plants for food than their Paleoindian predecessors. As the Archaic period progressed, archaeologists have found evidence that these people began living in settlements of higher populations, for longer durations. They also began building pit-houses, which were structures that were partially dug into the ground and covered with a roof made of plant material and mud or clay. They made other advances, such as building wells and creating artwork. They also began producing, collecting, and storing enough food to get them through lean times. There is one known cultural site within a mile of the reservoir that can be dated to the Archaic period.

Archaeologists have also recorded one site that can be attributed to Ancient Puebloan culture between AD 900 and 1100, during what is known as the Formative period. Ancient Puebloans would come to the area seasonally, most likely to hunt bison. They may have also traded with the Apishapa people of the southern plains, whose culture existed in the area from around AD 1000 to 1400.

Five sites in the area can be attributed to the Plains Village and Plains Nomad cultures. These cultures arose during the formative, or developmental, period of southwestern archaeology. Plains Village culture occurred between around AD 250 to 1600. These people made pottery and hunted bison with side-notched arrow points. They gathered wild plants, but also practiced agriculture on a small scale. This enabled the people to live in small villages consisting of structures built with stone slabs.

The Plains Nomad culture existed from around AD 200 to the early part of the 20th century. Plains Nomads followed herds of bison through the area, collected wild plants, and practiced limited agriculture. The people in the area included the Apache, Comanche, Pawnee, and Kiowa, all of whom lived in tipis.

In the spring of 1541, members of Coronado's expedition may have traveled along the Canadian River on the way to Kansas, as they sought the legendary cities of gold. In 1601, Juan de Oñate may also have passed through this area, but there is scant archaeological evidence from either journey in the southern plains. European presence in this area was sporadic, as it became part of Mexico in 1822 and then part of the United States in 1848. During the mid to late 1800s, Mexican-American seasonal traders known as "comancheros" would come to the area to trade (often illegally) with the Plains Indians.

In 1863, Fort Bascom was established on the Canadian River about five miles to the west of the reservoir. The fort was established to stop the comancheros from trading, as well as to discourage raids by the Kiowa and Comanche. In 1864, Colonel "Kit" Carson was among the soldiers that were dispatched from the fort to fight Plains Indians who raided the Goodnight-Loving Cattle Trail, as well as the Santa Fe Trail. The United States Army abandoned the fort in 1870 and moved operations to Fort Union. The area has been dominated by cattle ranches since the 1870s. Tucumcari, New Mexico, and the Village of Logan were established in 1901, when the railroad came to the area.

Considering the multiple cultures and long history of human occupation in the area, it is likely that additional prehistoric and historic archaeological sites are present within the Park.

RECREATION

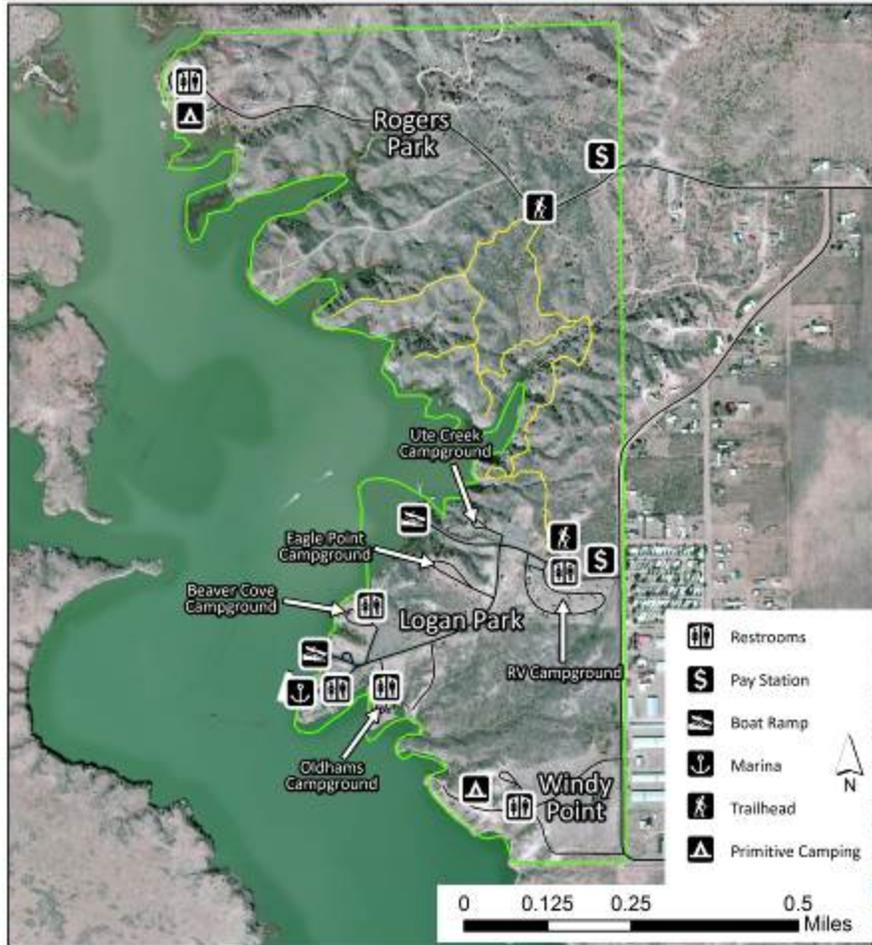
Camping

The Park has six distinct recreation areas located on the reservoir's eastern half. Logan Park, Rogers Park, Windy Point, and North Area Campgrounds are located on the reservoir's north side. Logan Park and North Area have established campsites, most of which include a sheltered picnic table and grill. Windy Point and Rogers Park have primitive, undeveloped sites and each has a vault toilet. Water is available at the Windy Point Campground.

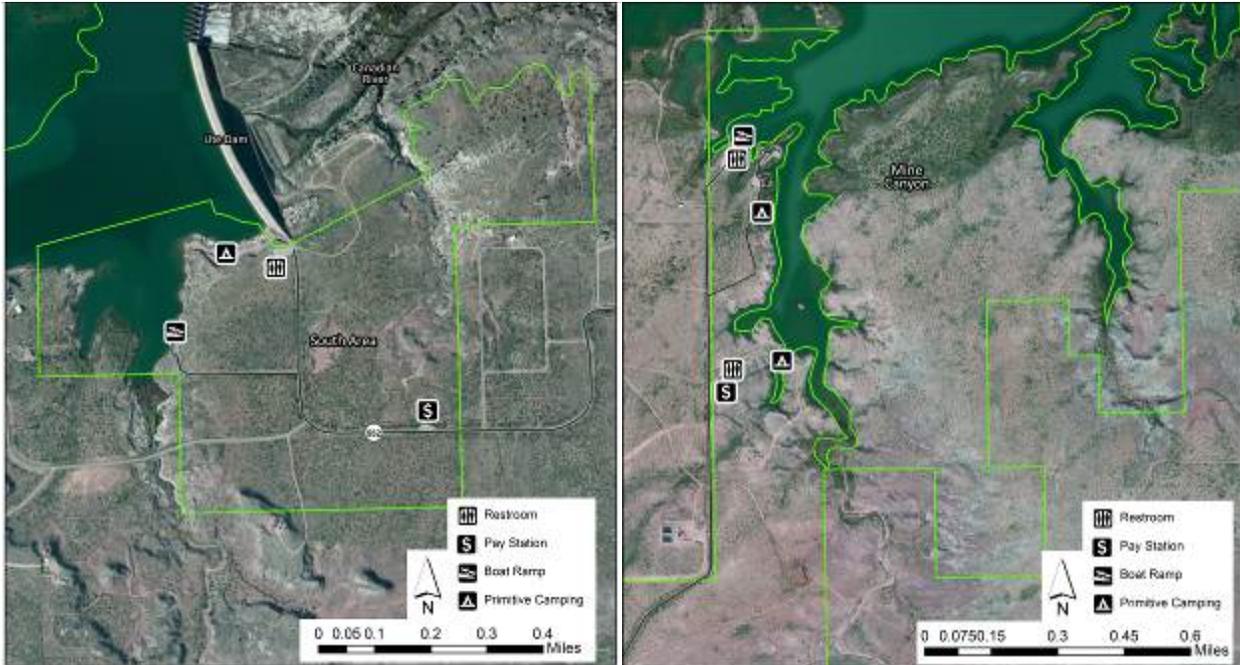
Camping at the Park is very popular. The 39 reservation sites are booked solid nearly every weekend in the summer. The Yucca Campground is particularly popular and is usually at full capacity every weekend in the summer. Eagle Point Campsite, Zia Campsite, Roadrunner Campsite, and Ute Creek Overlook Campsite are closed from November 1st through March 31st. A number of comfort stations and vault toilets are also closed during this time. The Windy Point area is currently closed until further notice because of the hazard of falling rocks in the area. In the past, people have used this area for cliff diving.



The Park office and visitor center are located at the North Area Campground, which features three RV dump stations, five restrooms, a playground, two baseball fields, a boat ramp, a courtesy dock, and four different campsites. The Zia Campsite has 24 sites with both electrical and water hookups. The Roadrunner Campsite has 20 defined sites without hookups. The Cottonwood Campsite has 17 developed sites and an area to pitch tents. The developed sites do not have any hookups. The Park's largest camping area is the Yucca Campsite, which has 47 sites with electric and water hookups. There is one group shelter in the entire Park. It is located just southeast of the Yucca Campsite. A vault toilet is adjacent to the site. Visitors can reserve and rent the group shelter year-round.



The Logan Park Campground is home to the marina, two courtesy docks, two boat ramps, four restrooms, and six campgrounds. Ute Creek Overlook has two established sites, Eagle Point has five sites, Beaver Cove has five sites, Oldham's Circle has 10 sites with water available, and Oldham's Overlook has four. The Logan RV Campsite has 24 established sites with water and electric hookups.



Mine Canyon and South Area Campgrounds are on the south side of the reservoir and consist of primitive, undefined campsites. Both of these campgrounds have a vault toilet, a boat ramp, and courtesy dock.

Boating

Boating is very popular at the Park, for both visitors and residents. Motorboats and jet skis (also known as personal watercraft) are most popular, but visitors also enjoy canoeing, kayaking, sailing, and windsurfing. Paddleboarding has recently become quite popular at the Park, as well. Fall can be a great time for canoeing, paddleboarding, and kayaking because the water is still warm, but there are fewer powerboats and jet skis. Visitors have access to fuel service, a retail store, boat rentals, and 45 slip rentals at the marina.

SPD has authority over all boating activities throughout the reservoir. This authority includes the regulation of private boat docks in conjunction with the ISC, community boat docks in conjunction with the ISC, the marina, mooring areas, and boat launching permits. The boat ramp at the North Campground has four launching lanes. The Logan Marina, McFarland, South Side, and Mine Canyon areas all have two lane boat ramps. There is one courtesy dock for each boat ramp. Windy Point Campground and the North Area Campground each have a wind warning light. Storms and accompanying winds usually come from the west and northwest in the summer.

In 2007, ISC had a contractor develop a shoreline management plan for Ute Reservoir. Among the recommendations in the plan was to maintain a no-wake area in the Park within 100 feet of the shore. Since jet skis can travel in much shallower water than propeller-driven vessels, they can cause greater shoreline erosion, turbidity, sediment scouring, and destruction to vegetation. For these reasons, ISC found that the no-wake area should be extended to 200 feet for jet skis. SPD currently maintains a no-wake area within 150 feet of the shore for all watercraft (State of New Mexico, 2007).

Trails

The Ute Lake Nature Trail is 1.07 miles long between Rogers Trailhead and the Logan Trailhead. This trail winds in and out of arroyos through the desert. Two picnic shelters are located along the main trail. The trail has an additional 0.87 miles of spur trails leading from it, which end at scenic overlooks with benches. The trail was constructed between 2007 and 2009 with funding from a Recreational Trails Program federal grant.

Fishing and Hunting

Ute Reservoir is a warm water fishery regulated by DGF. The reservoir is known for its walleye pike, but people take good catches of largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, bullheads, bluegills, and green sunfish. Smallmouth bass less than 14 inches long must be released. Several fishing tournaments take place at the Park throughout the year.

Migratory waterfowl come to the park over the winter in large numbers. People can hunt on the reservoir at least 300 yards away from developed areas. People also hunt from private land with the landowners' permission.

Events and Interpretation

The Park hosts a First Day Hike on New Year's Day. In April, the Park hosts a chuck wagon cook-off at the baseball fields. Several other events take place at the Park during the summer. On the July 4th weekend, the Park hosts a fireworks show with a barbeque at the baseball fields. The Park also holds the Prairie Fest in July, which is an all-day event that features live prairie hawks, a hands-on water color program, and a night sky program. In early August the Park hosts the "Ute the Man! Sprint Triathlon". The triathlon features an 800-meter swim, a 13-mile bike ride, and a 5-kilometer run. In 2014, more than 50 people participated in the event.

OPERATIONS

Park Facilities

ADA Access

The Park's visitor center and comfort stations are ADA accessible. The Park has ADA accessible campsites at the Zia Campground, the RV Campground, and the Yucca Campground. These campgrounds also have ADA accessible restrooms. The vault toilet adjacent to the marina is also ADA accessible, as is the playground adjacent to the cottonwood and roadrunner sites.

Visitor Center

The visitor center is located at the North Area and includes a reception area with interpretive exhibits, a storage room, restroom, kitchen, and two offices. The building was renovated in 1997 with the addition of a porch, new sidewalks, and extra parking. An addition was built on in 2012, which now houses additional office space.

Maintenance Shop

The Park's maintenance shop, located in the North Area, is a three-bay garage used for maintaining equipment and storing tools and supplies. The maintenance yard behind the building has a portable storage building, shed, and a covered bay for storing boats and vehicles.

Staff Housing

The Park has two houses for employees. There is a doublewide mobile home next to the visitor center and another doublewide mobile home at Windy Point.

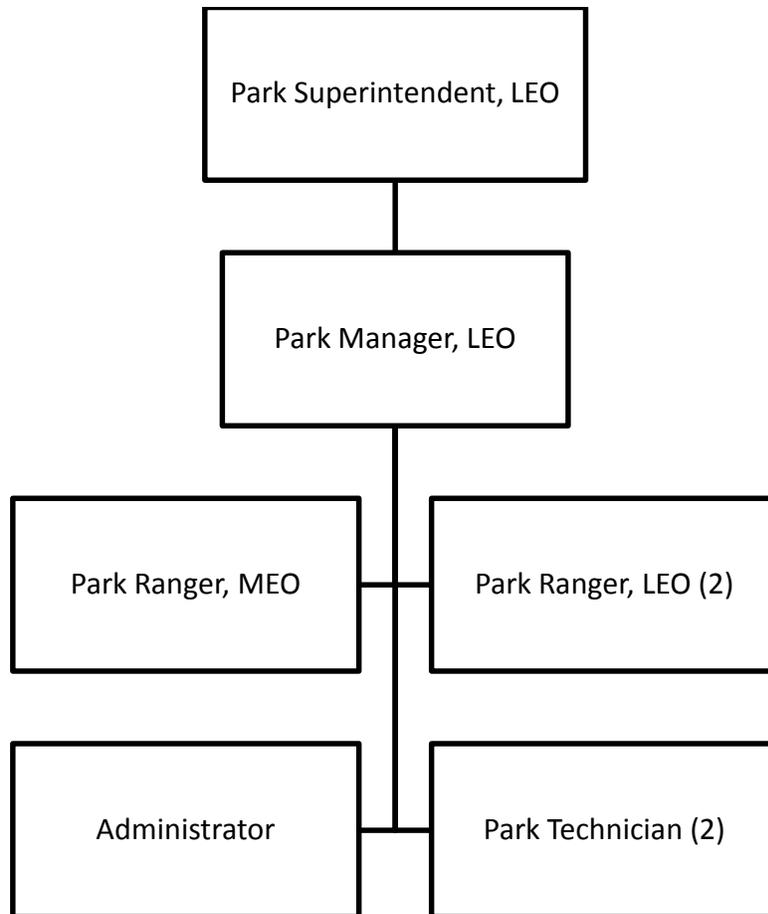
Utilities

Utility Providers	
Water	Village of Logan
Electricity	Farmers Electric Cooperative
Propane	Local Vendor
Solid Waste	Park Staff
Wastewater	Four on-site septic leach fields/Village of Logan
Telephone	Eastern New Mexico Rural Telephone Cooperative

Park Management

Staffing

The Park has eight full-time employees including four law enforcement officers and one marine enforcement officer. The Park typically has three to five summer seasonal employees as well. The Region 2 administrative office, located in Tucumcari, provides support to the Park. The Regional Manager supervises the Park Superintendent. A regional administrator and regional interpreter also support the parks in the region.



Partners

In 2010, SPD entered an agreement with ISC and DGF, which terminated and replaced 11 previous agreements between the parties. SPD entered an agreement with ISC in 1968, which furnished the Park with 50 acre-feet of water per year (approximately 16,340,000 gallons). This agreement expires on December 31st, 2017. SPD also has an agreement with the Village and the Logan School Board concerning the baseball fields across from the visitor center. A 1983 agreement initiated the construction of the baseball fields. A 2012 agreement established that the Village would pay for all the utility bills associated with the ball fields, Logan Schools would maintain the fields, including the sprinkler system, grass, fertilization, and landscaping, and SPD would perform ongoing maintenance to the landscape, the electrical system, the surrounding structures, and the water system leading to the field. The relationship between the Park and the Village is important to both parties. The Park is vital to the revenue that the Village brings in through taxes, and the Village leases land to the Park and also helps promote it.

SPD also partners with the Friends of Ute Lake State Park, which is a 501(c)(4) organization. The group formed in 2007 and complements, contributes to, supports, and aids in the function of the Park. They work closely with the Village's chamber of commerce to put on the July 4th fireworks show and contribute significantly to the event. The group buys cell phone service for the campground hosts, has built fish weighing and cleaning stations for the fishing tournaments, and helps with the Park's involvement in the Village's parades. They have also sponsored such activities as a concert in 2008, the

Ute Lake Prairie Fest in 2009, and the 3-D archery shoot in 2013. The group is instrumental in proposing, funding, and executing some park projects.

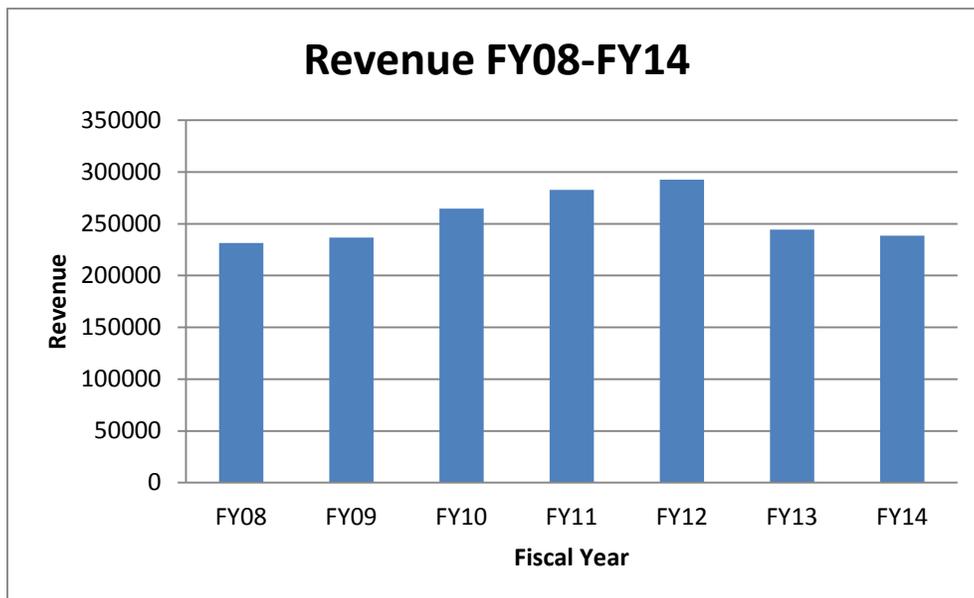
Volunteers

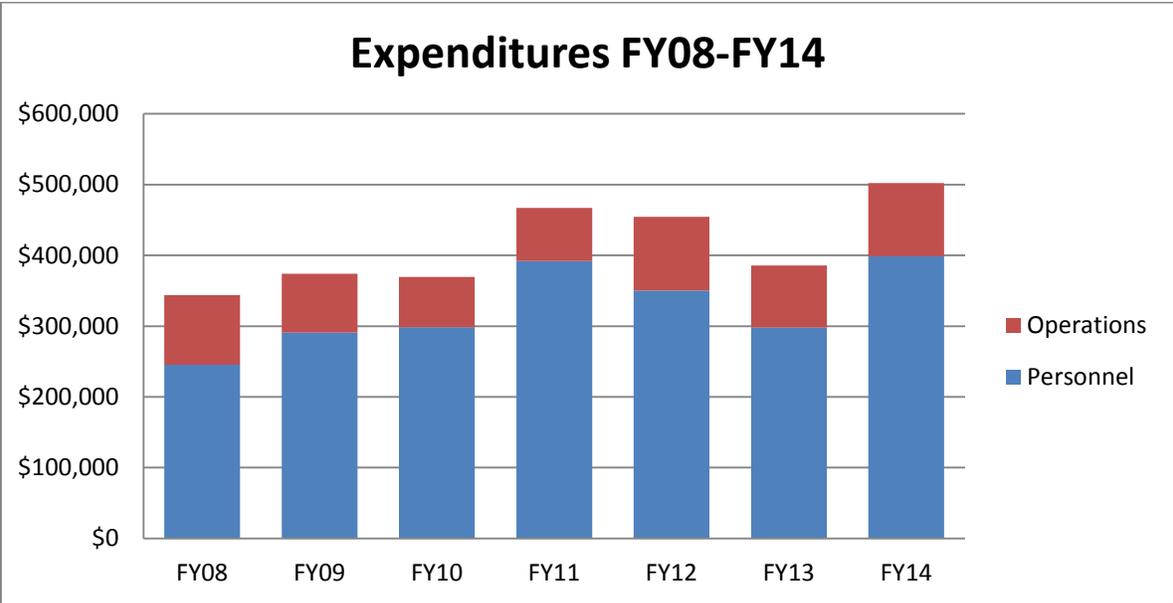
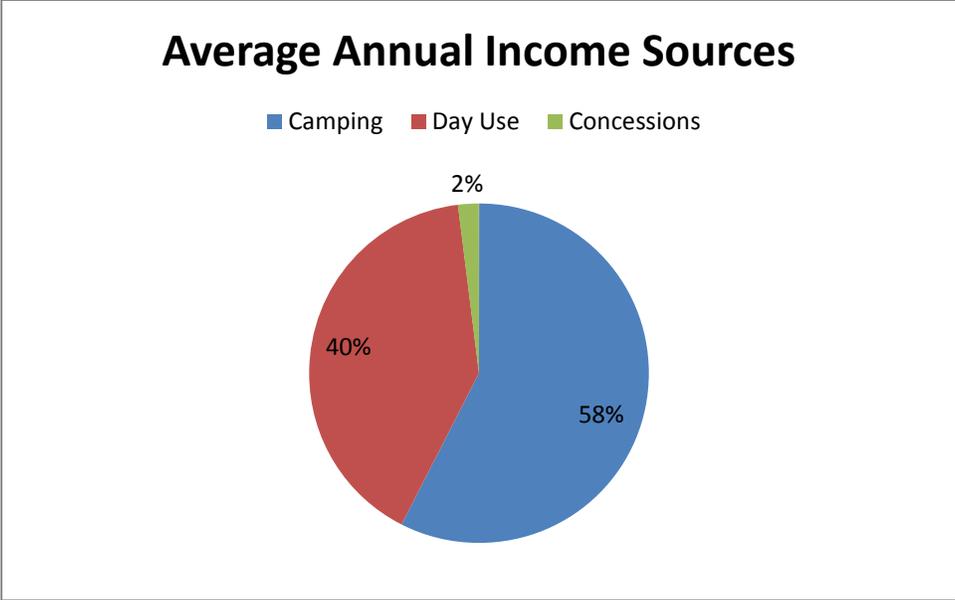
The Park currently has two volunteers that serve as campground hosts. Zia and Logan Park campgrounds each have a host site. The Yucca Campground has two sites. In addition to monitoring and maintaining the campgrounds, volunteers greet park visitors and assist park staff.

Concessions

The Park has one concessionaire that operates the Ute Lake Marina in Logan Park. The marina has a general store with fishing, boating, and camping supplies. It also has a gas dock. This facility has provided these services to visitors for over 25 years.

Budget

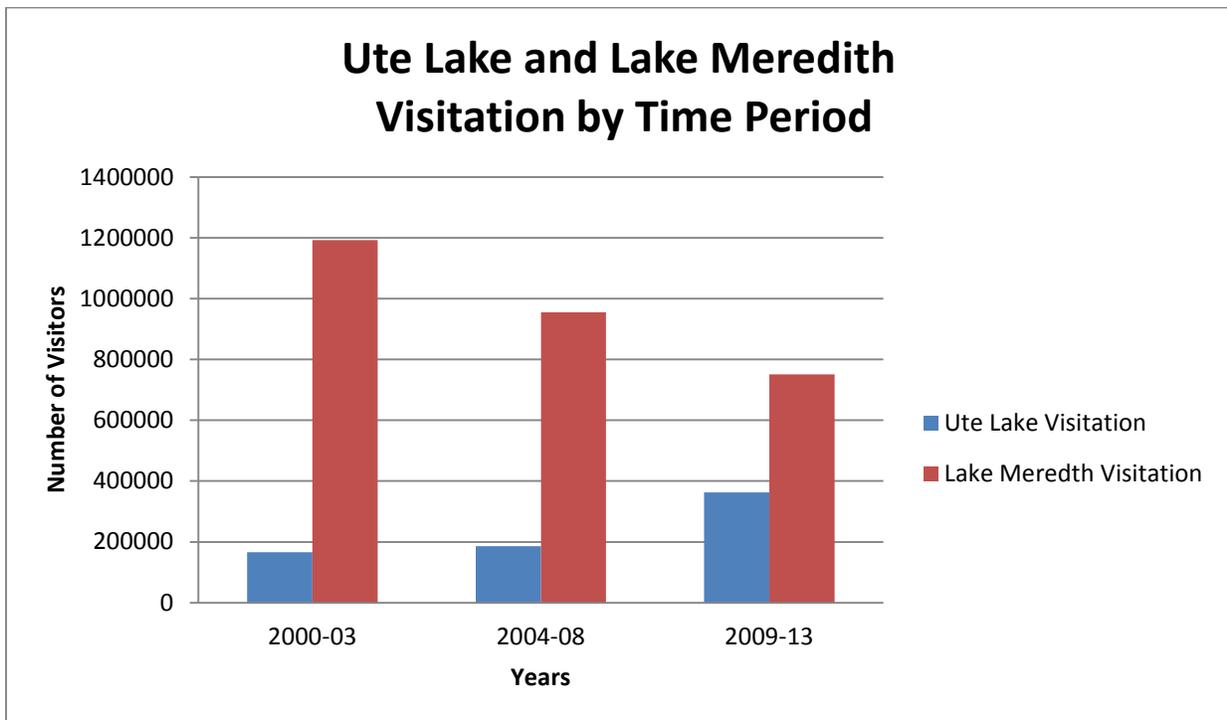




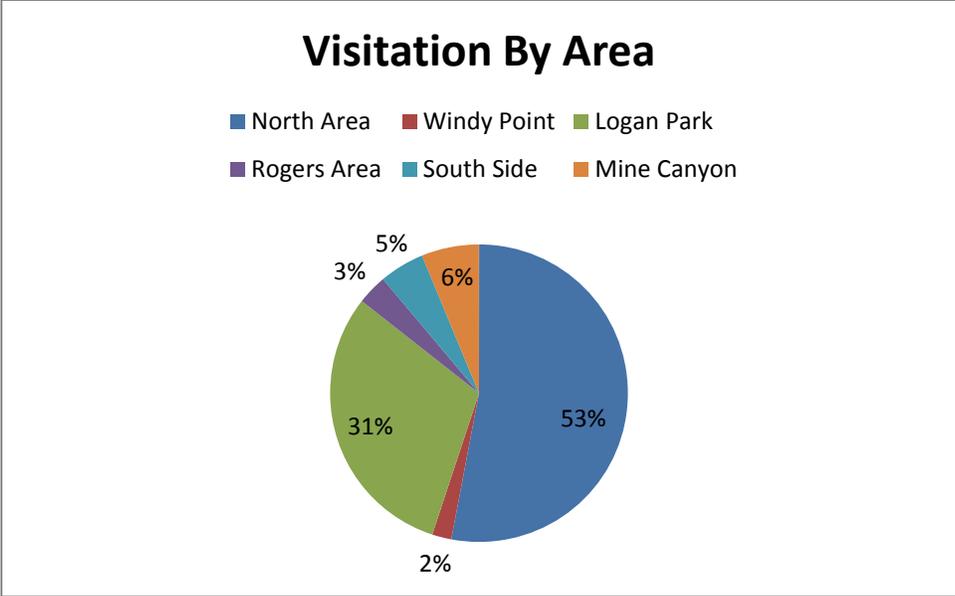
Visitation

In the past seven years, an average of 372,308 people have come to the Park annually. From 2004 to 2008, the annual average visitation was 185,804 visitors, which is less than half of the recent average. Some of the increase may be due to the population growth in the surrounding area, including Amarillo, Texas, which grew 12.5% between 2000 and 2012. The park superintendent estimates that 75% of the Park’s visitors are from out of state, primarily Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, and, especially, Texas. Texans may account for around 50% of visitors to the Park. The city of Amarillo, Texas, is less than two hours away and has a population of 250,000. The population is expected to increase by approximately 30,000 over the next five years.

Lake Meredith, which is about 30 miles northeast of Amarillo, is a National Recreation Area. The lake has been experiencing declining water levels since 2000 and spent most of 2011, all of 2012 and 2013, and the first five months of 2014, below the minimum pool level. In 2010, the lake's only marina closed, and during this time, six of seven of the lake's boat ramps were above water level. These ramps remain closed, and the reservoir is at 5% of capacity. The annual visitation to Lake Meredith peaked in 1984 at 1.94 million, but as water levels decreased, so did visitation. Visitation in 2009 was 1.08 million visitors and dropped to 502,457, in 2012, and to 554,272, in 2013. Visitation rose to 693,046 in 2014, most likely due to an influx of water in the spring, which raised the lake's water level. The National Park Service has also focused on building trails on the property in recent years in order to increase land-based options for visitors ([Amarillo Globe-News](#), 2014). There is no comparable body of water in the Texas Panhandle, so it is likely that many people in the area will decide to travel to the Park to pursue watersports when water levels at Lake Meredith are low.



According to a breakdown of visitation numbers over 18 months in 2009 and 2010, 84% of visitor generated revenue comes from the Logan Park and North Area locations. The primitive camping areas are less popular. Six percent of visitor-generated revenue comes from the Mine Canyon area followed by South Side with 5%, Rogers with 3%, and Windy Point with 2%.

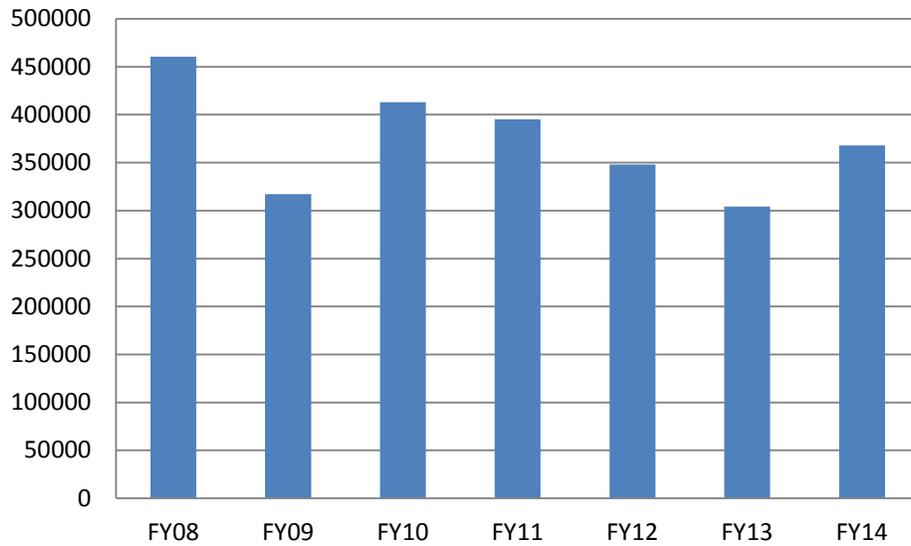


The 2011 environmental assessment conducted by the DOI for the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System Project predicted that a drop in water level as a result of the project could decrease visitation by 6% to 10%. This prediction is based upon visitation data from Brantley and Conchas Lake State Parks as water levels in those two parks have fluctuated in the past. This decrease in visitation could result in decreased revenue for the Park from between \$15,350 to \$25,584 based on the average revenue in the past seven years.

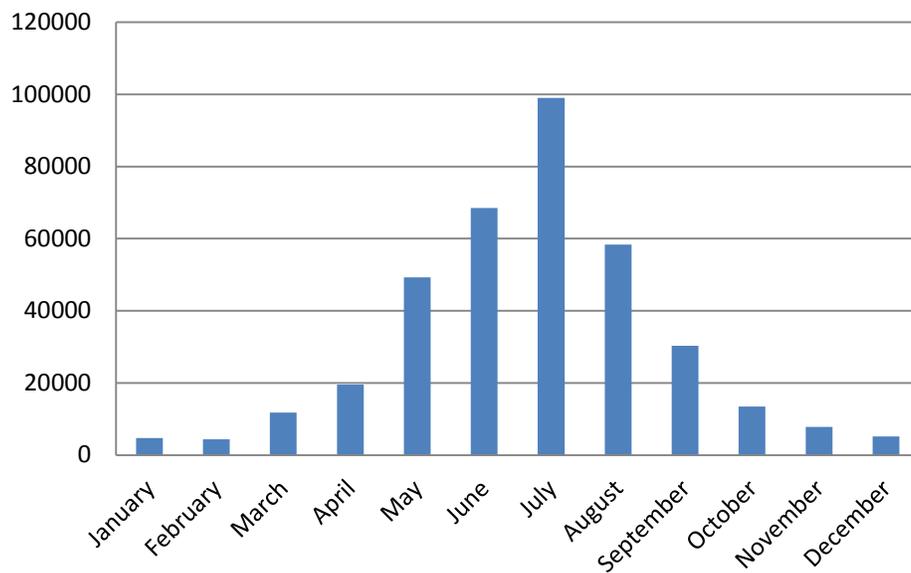
	No Action	CE-Low	CE-High
Percent of years with reduced visitation due to low water conditions	22%	51%	68%
Projected average annual visitation	318,000	298,000	286,000
Percent reduction in visitation compared to the No Action Alternative	NA	-6%	-10%
Minimum visitation in driest year	306,000	227,000	194,000

The table above is from the Environmental Assessment for the pipeline project. It shows the projected effects of not having a pipeline (No Action), the low end of cumulative effects (CE-Low), and the high end of cumulative effects (CE-High), upon Park visitation.

Ute Lake State Park Visitation FY08-FY14



Ute Lake State Park Average Monthly Visitation



RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, issues were raised by SPD staff, stakeholders, partner organizations, or by the public. Not all issues resulted in an action. Some issues may be beyond the SPD's control, or may not be a priority during this planning period. The issues are listed in the categories that correspond to this plan's organization.

The actions (shown with ➤) are also listed in the "action plan" following this section, along with estimated costs and prioritized using the criteria developed in the Strategic Operations and Sustainability Plan. Some actions will require further research, evaluation, planning, or design before they can be implemented. Each action is contingent upon available funding and other resources, and there is no guarantee that it will be feasible or that it can be funded and implemented in the proposed timeframe.

Recreation

Camping and Day Use

The Park does not have sufficient areas in which to picnic. SPD will add a day use picnic area with a group shelter to the North Area across from the Yucca Campground comfort station, in order to fulfill a current need and increase revenue by renting out the shelter. SPD will also add an amphitheater next to the group shelter and have it wired for electricity so that Park staff can better accommodate interpretive programs.

- Develop a day use area with amenities such as an amphitheater, shade structures, and picnic tables.

The Roadrunner Campground in the North Area is in need of upgrades, such as replacing old, deteriorating shelters and providing electric service to some of the campsites.

- Upgrade the campsites at the Roadrunner Campground.

The RV Campground at Logan Park is without a shelter at 12 sites. These sites will be upgraded by adding shelters.

- Add shelters to 12 sites at the RV Campground in Logan Park.

No RV sites at the Park currently have sewer hookups. SPD will add hookups to sites in the Yucca Campground by tying in to the existing system at the comfort station, which already has a lift station and is tied into the Village of Logan's sewer system. This will reduce the lines and load at the existing dump stations during times of high demand and increase the desirability of the existing RV sites.

- Add sewer hookups to sites at the Yucca Campground.

Eagle Point currently has five campsites, but there is room for at least two more that have shelters, picnic tables, and grills.

- Add more campsites to Eagle Point.

Ute Creek Overlook currently has two campsites with shelters. There is room in this area for a group shelter, which SPD can rent out as an additional source of revenue for the Park. SPD will also look into adding a vault toilet in this area and will install one if feasible.

- Add a group shelter to the Ute Creek Overlook area and install a vault toilet if feasible.

Boating

Park staff have noticed a recent increase in the number of people participating in paddle sports such as kayaking, paddleboarding, and canoeing. This nationwide trend has led to the development of “water trails” or “blue trails”, which are marked routes through waterways similar to trails on land. During times of drought or low water levels, people with motorized watercraft are less likely to visit New Mexico’s lakes and reservoirs, but people who enjoy paddle sports are usually not deterred by such conditions. Developing water trails in the reservoir could lead to increased, or more stable, visitation numbers, especially during times of drought or low lake levels.

- Identify potential areas for blue trail development at the Park and create a blue trail pilot program if feasible.

Facilities Recommendations

ADA Access

The Park does not currently have a good place from which people with disabilities can fish. The Park’s friends’ group is interested in helping to provide funds to construct an ADA-accessible fishing dock adjacent to the McFarland boat ramp.

- Install an ADA or universally accessible fishing dock and related pathways.

The pathways to the docks adjacent to the boat ramps are often uneven. SPD will look into areas where it is possible to build to the docks at the boat ramps, which would allow for easier access.

- Evaluate locations to build sidewalks to boat docks and construct sidewalks where possible.

The area to the south and west of the visitor center is currently unpaved and has an ADA parking spot. The parking lot will be paved and striped with assigned ADA parking. The area will also have a sturdy fence that can stand up to the weather in the area and will separate the park residence and the yard/shop area from the visitor center. SPD will also raise and extend the fence along the south side of the shop yard so that visitors cannot see the area from the campsites at the adjacent Zia Campground. Landscaping will accompany these improvements in order to beautify the area.

- Pave the parking area around the visitor center and build a fence to screen the park housing and shop area.

Some people may find it difficult to access the marina and surrounding area. SPD will work with the marina concessionaire to evaluate the possibility of making the area around the marina ADA accessible.

- Work with concessionaire to evaluate the possibility of making the area around the marina ADA accessible.

New Facility Development

There is currently not enough room in the shop or carport to store all of the Park’s vehicles and equipment, which leaves some expensive items exposed to the elements. Currently, some boats and a trash truck cannot fit in the available space. SPD will expand the shop by adding two more bays that are 45’ deep so that boats and the trash truck can fit within. SPD will also expand the carport to accommodate more equipment.

- Expand the shop and carport to accommodate the equipment.

The area around the boat ramp in the North Area can get very congested. SPD will expand the parking area adjacent to the boat ramp and will also install a vault toilet in the immediate vicinity to better serve visitor's needs.

- Expand the parking lot adjacent to the North Area boat ramp and add a vault toilet.

Infrastructure

Half of the water system at Logan Park is old and needs to be replaced. The old water lines are made out of PVC, which has deteriorated over the years. During this process, it may be possible to extend water service to Eagle Point and Beaver Cove Campgrounds.

- Make upgrades to the water system at Logan Park.

Management Recommendations

The Village has expressed an interest in working with SPD to establish a road between the South Area and the Mine Canyon Area. If SPD worked with the Village to establish a 1.5 mile stretch of dirt road between the two recreation areas, a trip from the Village to Mine Canyon would be reduced from a 14 mile one-way trip to a nine mile one-way trip. A one-way trip from the South Area to the Mine Canyon area is currently over 13 miles and would be reduced to just over six miles. The construction of a stretch of dirt road would reduce emergency response time and would significantly reduce the time and resources used by Park staff to manage the Mine Canyon Area.

- Work with the Village to create a road from the South Area to the Mine Canyon Area.

People use an area to the north of the marina boat ramp for parking even when there are available spaces in the designated parking lot. SPD will restrict access to this area except for times when the adjacent parking lot is crowded.

- Limit access to the unpaved parking area.

Park staff currently have to move equipment to and from Windy Point in order to do routine maintenance. Adding a shelter or storage container at the Windy Point Area to store equipment and a UTV will improve the efficiency of maintaining the area.

- Add an equipment shelter or storage container to the Windy Point area.

The Mine Canyon Area is seldom used from October through April, but Park staff still need to patrol and maintain the area, which is a long drive from the North or Logan Areas. During times when visitation is low, SPD will close parts of the Mine Canyon Area.

- Have seasonal closures in parts of the Mine Canyon Area.

ACTION PLAN

The tasks recommended above are listed in priority order in the following table.

Ute Lake Action Items	Total Scores	Cost Estimates
Upgrade the campsites at the Roadrunner Campground.	15	
Add sewer hookups to sites at the Yucca Campground.	12	
Build a fishing dock that has ADA access.	10	
Have seasonal closures in parts of the Mine Canyon Area.	10	
Pave the parking area around the visitor center and build a fence to screen the park housing and shop area.	9	
Expand the shop and carport to accommodate the equipment.	9	
Work with concessionaire to evaluate the possibility of making the area around the marina ADA accessible.	8	
Add an equipment shelter or storage container to the Windy Point area.	7	
Add shelters to 12 sites at the RV Campground in Logan Park.	6	
Expand the parking lot adjacent to the North Area boat ramp and add a vault toilet.	6	
Work with the Village to create a road from the South Area to the Mine Canyon Area.	6	
Add a group shelter to the Ute Creek Overlook area and look into the possibility of adding a vault toilet.	5	
Evaluate locations to build sidewalks to boat docks.	5	
Develop a day use area with amenities such as an amphitheater, shade structures, and picnic tables.	3	
Limit access to the unpaved parking area near the marina boat ramp.	3	
Add more campsites to Eagle Point.	2	
Make upgrades to the water system at Logan Park.	1	
Identify potential areas for blue trail development at Ute Lake and create a blue trail pilot program.	0	

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