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New Mexico Boating Officer Stephen Verchinski Receives National Boating Safety Award

SANTA FE, N.M. – New Mexico State Parks Division proudly announces that its boat program coordinator and marine officer Stephen Verchinski was presented with a Boating Safety Award this week by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. Officer Verchinski received the esteemed Boating Safety Award for maintaining a solid work performance for 13 years and continuing to teach boaters and co-workers the intrinsic value of boating safe and smart in the Land of Enchantment.

“I appreciate Officer Verchinski’s continued efforts,” said Tommy Mutz, Director for New Mexico State Parks. “We are fortunate to have a professional on staff with his boating background, institutional knowledge, and law enforcement certification.”

The Boating Safety Award was first presented in 1992. It is awarded to a state or local government individual who is involved in boating safety but does not serve as a boating law administrator, and who has demonstrated outstanding performance in any area of the program, including but not limited to enforcement, education, search and rescue, navigational aids, or registration and titling. The award is sponsored the National Safe Boating Council, a longtime partner of National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

Stephen Verchinski has been with the New Mexico State Parks Division for approximately 13 years. He is a certified and commissioned law enforcement officer, with advanced knowledge, skills and abilities that are great contributions.

“We all benefit from Officer Verchinski’s hard work and willingness to take on a variety of duties to make our boating safety, education, and enforcement program successful” said Toby Velasquez Chief of Law Enforcement with New Mexico State Parks.

New Mexico State Parks Division is responsible for a robust statewide boating safety program that involves education, enforcement, outreach and marketing as essential program coordination functions. Consequently, Officer Verchinski has both administrative and field assignments in his position that directly supports the statewide program.

During the summer season, Officer Verchinski is responsible for providing marine patrol within lakes not administered by the New Mexico State Parks Division. In addition, he provides additional marine patrol at lakes administered by the New Mexico State Parks Division throughout the state as required by vacancies, holidays, special events or special assignments. Along with the field duties that are required from early spring through early winter, Officer Verchinski is the lead boating educator for the New Mexico State Parks Division and provides boating education courses statewide, with the majority of these classes being provided within the state's largest city, Albuquerque. In addition, Officer Verchinski is responsible for working to track boat registration data, the boat accident reporting database, educational curriculum and programming, marine enforcement policies, state fair exhibit programming, in-school courses, boating website content, and providing Department of Public Safety and in-house certified instruction.

State Park officials remind boaters to always wear a lifejacket when out on the water and to be aware of weather conditions. State law requires that you wear a lifejacket when on a canoe, kayak, or raft and that all children 12 years old and younger wear a lifejacket while on the deck of a moving vessel. The New Mexico State Parks Division offers free boating safety classes around the state and on-line throughout the year; for more information, call 888-NMPARKS or visit www.nmparks.com.



New Mexico State Parks Boating Officer Stephen Verchinski (CENTER) accepting the Boating Safety Award from Virgil Chambers (National Safe Boating Council-Executive Director.-LEFT) and Jim Graybeal (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators President-RIGHT).

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