

Bill Richardson
Governor

Joanna Prukop
Cabinet Secretary

David J. Simon
Division Director
**New Mexico State
Parks**



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Contact: Marti Niman, Public Information Officer,
505-827-1474

NEWS RELEASE

Bluewater Lake State Park to Close for the Winter *State Parks to Host Public Meeting in Grants on Nov. 3*

PREWITT, N.M. – Bluewater Lake State Park will close for the winter beginning at 5:00 p.m., Oct. 30, 2009. The Stone Ridge Recreation Area (main area) of the park is scheduled to reopen March 1, 2010 and the Las Tusas Recreation Area is scheduled to reopen May 1, 2010.

“Although budget constraints are causing this closure, I believe a seasonal closure at this time will have a relatively small impact because visitation at Bluewater is minimal during the winter,” said State Park Director Dave Simon. “It also will give us the opportunity to concentrate on some park improvement projects that visitors will appreciate when the park reopens.”

Currently, Bluewater has only one full-time employee – a park technician – due to resignations, retirements and the effects of the state government hiring freeze that was put into effect in November 2008. Four of the park’s five full-time staff positions are vacant, including all three of the park’s law enforcement ranger positions. State Parks is unable to fill these vacancies due to the hiring freeze and budget constraints.

State Parks will host a public meeting to discuss the seasonal closure and park improvement projects at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3 in the Cibola County Convention Room, Cibola County Courthouse, 515 W. High Street in Grants, N.M.

Peak months of visitation at Bluewater Lake State Park are June - August; visitation at the park drops dramatically during the months of November - February. During the four winter months of 2008-2009 (November, December, January, February), Bluewater Lake State Park recorded a total of only 611 visitors.

The State Park Division’s construction crew has been working on a number of park projects at Bluewater Lake recently and work on these projects will continue through the seasonal closure. Recently completed improvements and others underway include: a new entrance configuration at the Stone Ridge Recreation Area; selected campsite improvements; interior road consolidations and improvements; plumbing and fixture renovations to the park’s two comfort stations and the visitor center; park boundary delineations; and new employee residences.

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Bluewater Lake State Park is situated on the north flank of the Zuni Mountains, 28 miles west of Grants via I-40 and N.M. 412. For more information about Bluewater Lake State Park, call 505-876-2391. To find out more about NM State Parks, call 888-NMPARKS or visit www.nmparks.com.

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

New Mexico State Parks
1220 South St. Francis Drive ▪ Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone (505) 476-3355 ▪ Fax (505) 476-3361 ▪ www.nmparks.com

