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Fall rains improve recreation conditions at State Parks

Boat ramp reopens at Elephant Butte; Navajo Lake sees dramatic rise

SANTA FE – Heavy fall rains brought significant changes to some of New Mexico's best-known recreation areas, including restored boat access at Elephant Butte Lake State Park.

At Elephant Butte, the Rock Canyon boat ramp has reopened as water continues to flow into the reservoir. The reopening provides a new launch option for boaters following months of low-water conditions.

The State Parks Division is sharing water level updates to help visitors better plan their next outing.

"The recent rains are a reminder of how much our parks can change from one visit to the next," said **Division Director Toby Velásquez**. "A familiar shoreline can look completely different, and there's always something new to experience. New Mexico offers outdoor recreation year-round, and we encourage everyone to check conditions, plan ahead and get outside."

In northwestern New Mexico, Navajo Lake has experienced a dramatic rise. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) reports that the reservoir gained nearly 60 feet between Sept. 20 and Nov. 7, reaching its highest level since August 2019.

The changes extend beyond the state's largest reservoirs. Conditions vary by watershed and park, and higher water does not mean every recreation area or boat ramp is open. The division's dedicated lakes conditions page has up-to-date information for those

looking to explore year-round recreation opportunities across New Mexico. Visitors are encouraged to check the State Parks website for lake conditions and alerts from individual parks before heading out, as conditions can change quickly.

“Our field staff has worked diligently during challenging conditions, responding to emergencies in your parks and helping neighboring communities when they needed it most,” **Velásquez** said. “I’m proud of their dedication to the people and communities we live in and serve.”

Visitors should watch for floating debris and newly submerged obstacles and always wear a properly fitted life jacket while boating. Cooler weather makes preparation for inclement weather and cold-water immersion especially important.

Learn about park and lake conditions at
www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd/blog/2026/07/29/lake-conditions/



(Photo: Rock Canyon boat ramp on Elephant Butte Lake State Park)

New Mexico State Parks is a division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. The Division manages 35 state parks across New Mexico and works to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide recreational and educational opportunities, and promote public safety for the benefit of residents and visitors.

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