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Summer Recreational Opportunities Are Promising Based on Winter Snowpack and Runoff

(ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico) — As a result of substantial winter snowpack and spring runoff, reservoir levels statewide are projected to be good for recreational opportunities in New Mexico for Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

A joint news conference was held today in Albuquerque with state officials attending including: State Engineer John D'Antonio; Jon Goldstein, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, and New Mexico Tourism Department Advertising, Marketing and Promotions Manager Richard Eeds.

"Elephant Butte Reservoir as well as other reservoirs around the state should have enough volume to sustain a vibrant water recreation season," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "With more rain in spring and summer, recreation conditions will remain strong through Labor Day."

New Mexico has experienced an active El Niño pattern this winter and spring, and precipitation so far has been near or slightly above average. As of March 1, snowpack levels around the state were all at or above average in every single one of the state's river basins. Some of the southern basins such as the Mimbres, San Francisco-Gila, and the Zuni/Bluewater basin, snowpack was at or near its highest levels ever. The average to well-above-average snowmelt runoff should help replenish storage reservoirs making it another great season to enjoy water-related recreational activities.

"The moisture this winter will make it a great season to enjoy water recreation at state parks like: Elephant Butte, Heron and Navajo lakes," stated Jon Goldstein, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. "However, drought in the Southwest is a long-term phenomenon; New Mexicans need to remain vigilant against wildfires."

(MORE)

New Mexico is rich with abundant natural resources. Did you know that that 70 percent of New Mexicans live within 40 miles of a State Park? There are 35 diverse state parks to explore, including cool lakes, mountain forests, canyons, desert beauty, and fascinating historical sites—even dinosaur tracks! New Mexico State Parks offer family-friendly settings, endless recreational opportunities, and hundreds of special events and educational programs each year. Reservoir levels at state parks vary, but will provide superb water recreation this season.

Despite the substantial winter snowpack and spring runoff across parts of New Mexico, the possibility of wildfire is still a very real concern. Fire danger in many areas across the state is high and state residents and visitors should check to see if any fire restrictions exist in the area they plan to visit.

“While we are optimistic New Mexico’s water recreational opportunities will remain a mainstay of our spring and summer seasons,” said Richard Eeds, advertising, marketing and promotions manager for the New Mexico Tourism Department. “We must also remember that the Land of Enchantment is 22 million acres of prairies, plains and forests, offering every recreational pursuit imaginable. New Mexicans annually welcome nearly 12 million domestic visitors, who contribute nearly \$6 billion to the state’s economy. This is accomplished through partnerships - public and private - dedicated to expand tourism opportunities to every corner of the state.”

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The nine-member Interstate Stream Commission has broad powers to investigate, protect, conserve and develop New Mexico’s water including both interstate and intrastate stream systems. It ensures the state meets its obligations under eight interstate stream compacts. The Commission was also given water planning responsibilities for the state.

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department works collaboratively with individuals, agencies and organizations on energy and natural resource management to ensure a sustainable environmental and economic future.

The mission of the New Mexico Tourism Department is to market New Mexico as an enchanting visitor destination to the world.

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