10) ALKALI SACATON – Alkali Sacaton is a perennial, robust bunchgrass that grows in large, tough clumps 1½ to 3 feet tall. It is found throughout this region in meadows, valleys, and desert foothills. It is most abundant on moderately moist alkaline or saline soils of bottomlands.

11) BIRD LIFE – Over 130 bird species have been identified at Bottomless Lakes. Many birds are year-round residents, while others migrate through during the summer and winter months. Please stop by our visitor center for a brochure listing our many feathered friends.

Contact Us

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BOTTOMLESS LAKES STATE PARK
545 A Bottomless Lake RD.
ROSWELL, NM 88203

Flora & Fauna

12) TAMARISK – Tamarisk, more commonly known as Salt Cedar, is a non-native perennial plant that grows in areas where water is at or near the surface. This woody shrub was introduced to the United States to be used for erosion control and as an ornamental tree. Since its introduction, Salt Cedars have quickly invaded natural mid-1800s wetland habitats. Notice the lack of other plant species in this area. Salt Cedars out-compete other plants by producing too much shade, depositing salt on the ground, and by simply drying up a water source.

13) FOUR-WING SALTBUSH - Four-wing Saltbush, so named for the distinct winged pattern of the seeds, is a native plant found throughout the park. The male and female of this species are actually totally separate plants. Those plants with the distinct seed are the female plants, and those lacking the distinct seed are male plants. It is an excellent food source for park wildlife

14) PICNIC DELL – Picnic Dell is a dry sinkhole that did not collapse deep enough to penetrate below the water table and form a lake. There are many such dry sinkholes in the park. In the 1950s and 60s, Picnic Dell was used as a campsite for scouting groups. If you look closely, you might see the remnants of a trail leading up to the sinkhole.

BLUFF TRAIL

Trail Map

BOTTOMLESS LAKES STATE PARK

1) DESERT SALTGRASS – This native, perennial grass grows in wetland areas associated with broad, flat, alkaline valleys. Desert Saltgrass has adapted well to this type of habitat. Salt glands on the leaves extrude salt, allowing the plant to utilize salty water. Birds and small mammals make use of this grass for cover, nesting, and forage.

2) LEA LAKE OVERFLOW – As you look toward the bluff, notice a depression resembling a dry pond. Historically, this was the natural overflow area for Lea Lake when spring overflow activity was extremely high. There is now a canal located at the southwest shore of Lea Lake that diverts all excess water to an overflow wetlands area between the park and the Pecos River. You can view the wetlands from the scenic overlook above Lea Lake.

3) SIGNS OF ANIMAL LIFE – While walking the bluff trail, keep your eyes open for evidence left behind by other creatures. You might find tracks and scat (droppings) of Desert Cottontail, Raccoon, Striped Skunk, Porcupine, Coyote, Mule Deer, and Bobcat. Birds, snakes, and lizards leave unique markings as well.

4) IODINE BUSH – also called *Quinine Bush*, is another native plant to this area. The name iodine comes from the brown color that emerges when the leaves are crushed, along with the salty-bitter iodine taste of its saltwater-filled tissue. It is a woody shrub that has distinctive, succulent, green segments along a chainlike stem. This plant can tolerate extreme environments and grows in moist, saline soils where most other forms of vegetation cannot survive.

5) SALT DEPOSITS ON SOIL – The crusty white soil you see here is formed after rainfall saturates the ground and dissolves the salt in the soil. When the water evaporates, salt deposits are created and left as a top layer. Plants have a difficult time adapting to these extremely salty, alkaline soils.

6) CAPITAN/SIERRA BLANCA VIEW – If you look out to the west, you can see two mountain ranges in the distance. The closer, more visible mountains are the Capitan Mountains. This mountain range runs east to west, is about 20 miles long, and is 10,083 feet at the highest peak. On a clear day, you may also be able to see the Sacramento Mountains with Sierra Blanca as the highest peak at 11,977 ft. This mountain range is near Ruidoso, NM, and extends for 85 miles north to south.

7) MESQUITE – Mesquite is an extremely hardy, drought-tolerant plant because it can draw water through its long taproot (up to 190 ft. in depth). This native plant has a long history of being widely utilized by New Mexico's early people. The branches provided shelter, fuel, and food. The bean pods were delicacies, and the seeds were cooked or dried and ground into meal. A honey-like substance was derived from the nectar of the flowers, and the roots made beautiful baskets. Its gum served as glue, dye on pottery, and as medicine. Mesquite foliage is a food source for wildlife.

8) LOST LAKE – Lost Lake is the smallest and least known of the eight lakes that make up Bottomless Lakes State Park. This small lake, tucked up against the bluff, provides important habitat for park wildlife.

9) MULE DEER – A native deer found mostly in the western half of North America, the Mule Deer gets its name from its large mule-like ears. Mule Deer typically blend into their environment, but they can be seen foraging within the Salt Cedar thickets throughout the park. Look closely in this area, and you may be able to see a game trail that cuts across the Bluff Trail. Look for tracks left behind by deer and other wildlife.