



Eagle Nest Lake State Park **MANAGEMENT PLAN**



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EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022

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CHAPTER 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Eagle Nest Lake State Park

In 2004, the State Parks Division (State Parks) of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department was deeded 851 acres from the State Game Commission to establish Eagle Nest Lake State Park (Park). This deeded portion of the Park is located on the west side of Eagle Nest Lake (Lake). The southeast shoreline and the Lake area, a total of 3,488 acres, is operated by State Parks under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department and the State Game Commission through the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

The mission of State Parks and the Park is to:

Protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide first-class recreational and education facilities and opportunities, and promote public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.

The Park is located on the Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway in the Moreno Valley. At an elevation of 8,200 feet, the summer temperatures are cool with cold and snowy winters. The Park's setting in the Moreno Valley is characterized by a variety of natural resources, including wildlife and plant species typical of the high mountain environment. Fishing and boating are popular activities, as are camping, walking and hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking. Interpretation and education programs are also important activities.

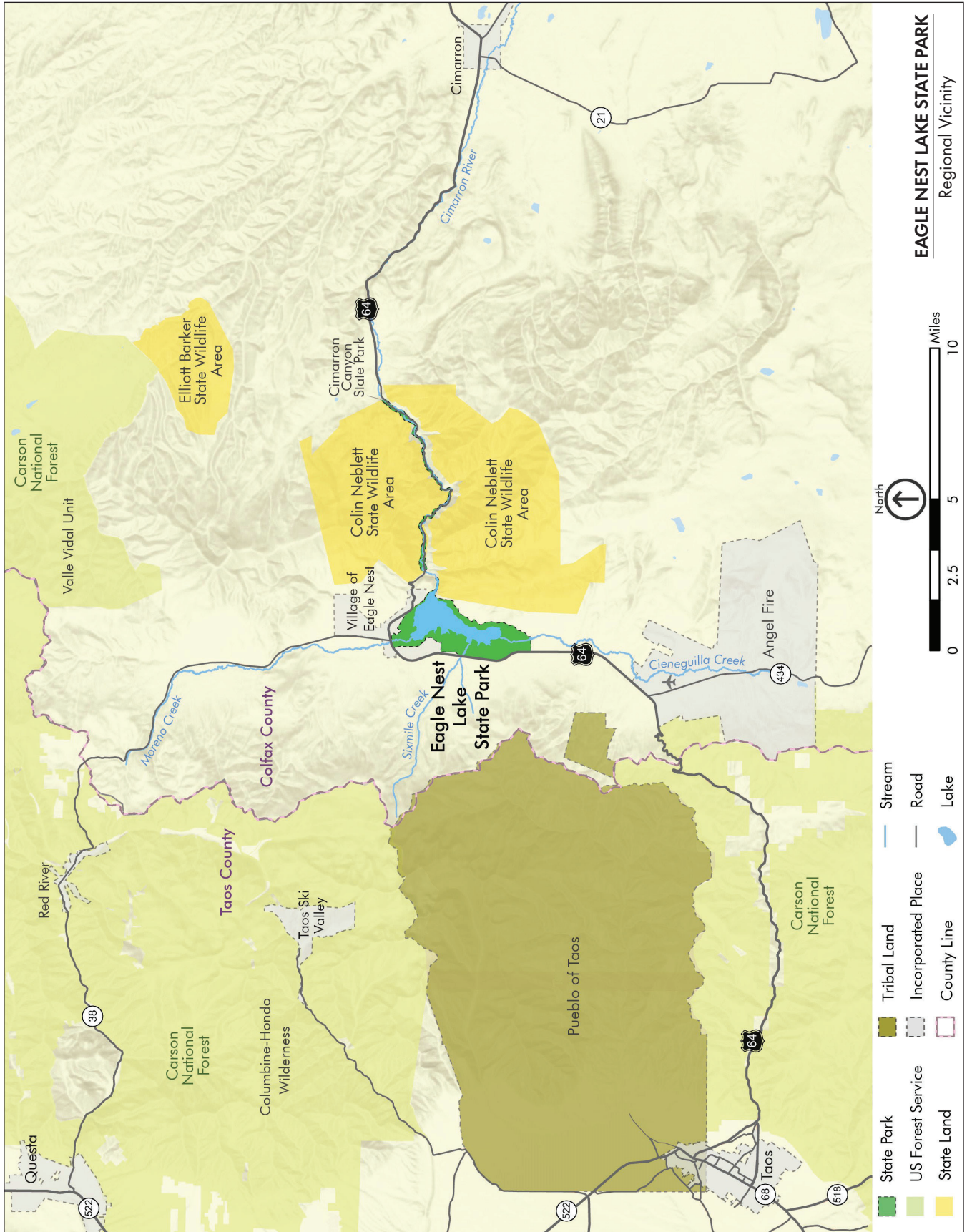
The primary facilities offered to visitors at the Park include a Visitor Center with an exhibit area, classroom, offices, and a large multi-purpose patio; and a campground with 19 RV campsites located south of the Visitor Center and the boat ramp. Free access areas are available at the Moreno, Six-Mile, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas. A maintenance yard containing an open shed storage building and a maintenance shop are also at the Park.

Eagle Nest Lake State Park Management Plan

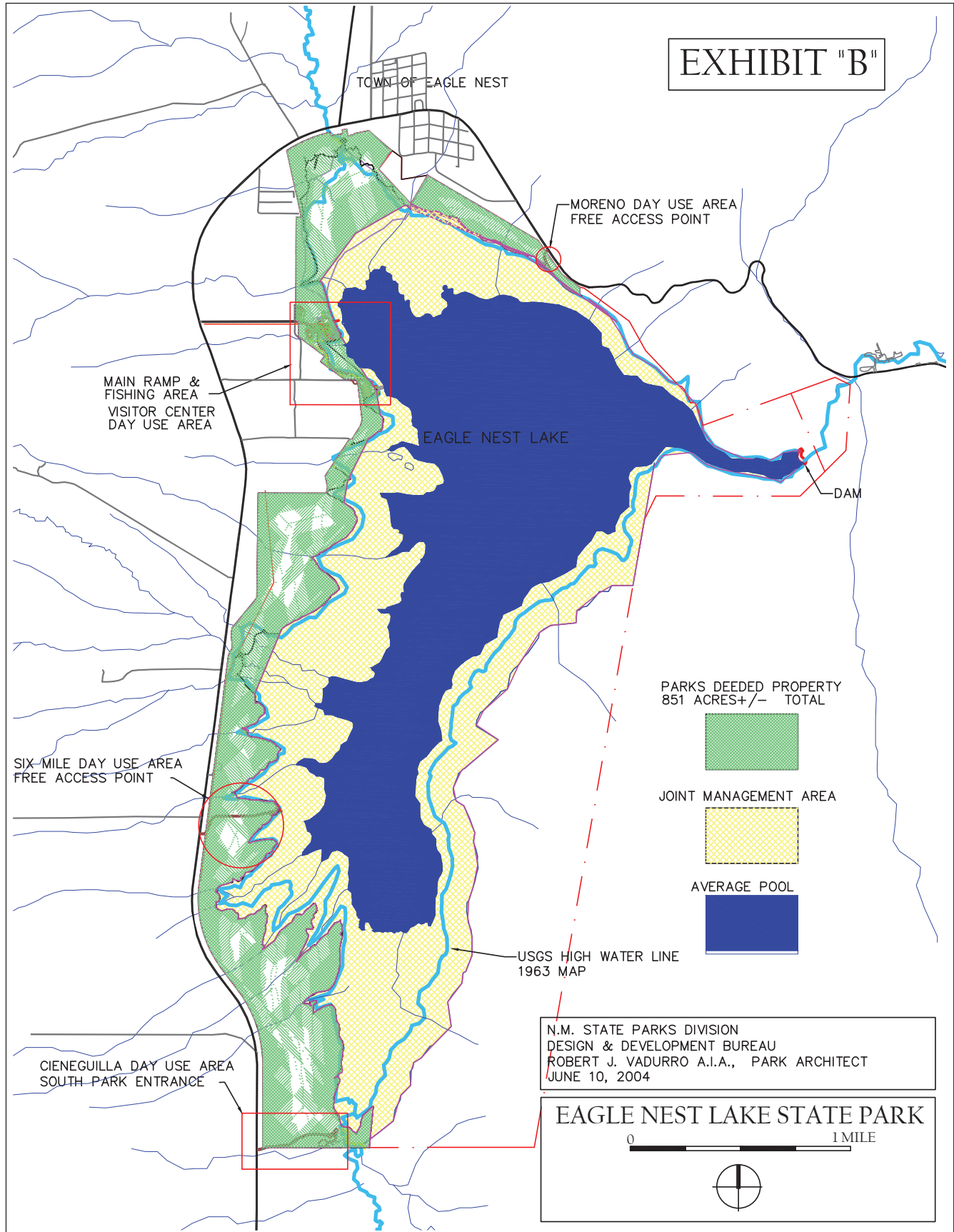
The Eagle Nest Lake State Park Management Plan (Management Plan) provides guidance on the management and development of the Park over a five year period. The planning process included thoughtful evaluation from multiple perspectives so that future actions balance the need for recreational opportunities and the protection of park resources. The Management Plan describes and provides assessments of existing conditions at the Park and recommendations for management of Park resources.

The Management Plan is divided into the following six chapters:

- Chapter 1: Executive Summary
- Chapter 2: Resource Assessment
- Chapter 3: Recreation Assessment
- Chapter 4: Facilities
- Chapter 5: Operations and Management
- Chapter 6: Recommendations



DEEDED PARK PROPERTY MAP - EXHIBIT B (PER JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT)



1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

Establishment, Reviews, and Updates of Management Plans

19.5.3 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) requires that each state park establish a management plan, and subsequently, review and update the plan on a five-year basis. The stated objective is “to provide direction for the management and development of the parks in the New Mexico state parks system in a manner that enhances recreational opportunities, protects park resources, and provides for public input and protects the environment” (19.5.3 NMAC). Section 13 of the “State Parks Policy and Procedures Manual” explains in more detail the planning process and content and format of park management plans and procedures.

Management plans are intended to assist State Parks in planning for both short- and long-range program development and capital improvement projects, and function as a:

- tool to guide decisions and management;
- reference that documents park history, facts, and conditions;
- tool for identifying land use within a park’s boundary; and
- capital improvements recommendation.

The planning process provides opportunities to discuss the long-term, “big picture”. Issues, trends, and changing conditions and uses affecting the Park should be addressed. In addition, management plans and the associated planning process provides State Parks with the opportunity for communication with the public to learn their concerns, expectations, and values for the Park, and in turn, share with the public the purpose, significance, opportunities, and constraints of the Park.

Stakeholder Input

State Parks Staff

The consultants met with State Parks and Park staff on a bi-monthly basis throughout the planning process. In December 2021, State Parks staff and Consensus Planning met on-site at the Park to kick-off the project, and discuss existing Park conditions, facility and management needs at the Park, and the project schedule. A second on-site meeting was held in February 2022.

Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks

On March 4, 2022, the Project Team held a meeting with the Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks (Friends Group). The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Management Plan underway and receive input and feedback from the Friends Group on their role as partners with State Parks. The discussion also included the events and activities organized by the Friends Group, and ideas on how the Park could be improved.

EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK KEY FACTS

- Year Established: 2004
- Area owned by State Parks: 851 acres
- Area managed by State Parks: 3,488 acres
- Joint Management Area: 2,400 acres
- Partner Agency: NM Department of Game and Fish
- Agreement Type and Term: Memorandum of Agreement, approved in 2019 (original agreement was a Joint Powers Agreement approved in 2004 and superseded by the 2019 MOA)
- Park Elevation: 8,200 feet
- Amenities: Visitor Center, 1 campground with 19 campsites, 1 group shelter, 2 boat ramps, picnic tables, Lake View Trail, and disc golf
- Use Areas: Moreno, Six-Mile, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas

Local RV Park Owners

The consultants reached out to RV park owners in the Eagle Nest area as part of stakeholder input for the Management Plan. State Parks felt it was important to hold a focus group meeting to learn more about nearby RV park operations to foster good working relationships in the area. Invitations were sent to all of the RV Park owners in Eagle Nest and two participated in the focus group meeting. These owners explained that full RV hook-ups are offered at their parks but some RV parks offer more services than others. Users at the RV parks in Eagle Nest tend to stay for longer periods than the 14 days permitted at the State Park. The RV park owners reported that their businesses are recovering after the spring wildfires. Most of their customers come from out of state for the cooler mountain climate and many return every summer. The RV park owners said they view the State Park as an asset for the entire region, and they see the existing campground in the State Park as complementary to their businesses. One suggestion provided at the meeting is that State Parks provide printed information to the RV campers regarding the RV dump stations in Eagle Nest.

Public Meeting

TO BE FILLED IN AFTER THE MEETING IS HELD

1.3 PARK DESCRIPTION

Eagle Nest Lake State Park is in Colfax County and within the picturesque Moreno Valley. It is situated along the Enchanted Circle, a popular tourist route and a designated New Mexico Scenic and Historic Byway. From Taos, the 83-mile Enchanted Circle loops around Wheeler Peak, the tallest mountain in New Mexico, traverses the communities of Angel Fire, Eagle Nest, Red River, and Questa, and loops back to the Rio Grande Gorge.



Eagle Nest Dam.

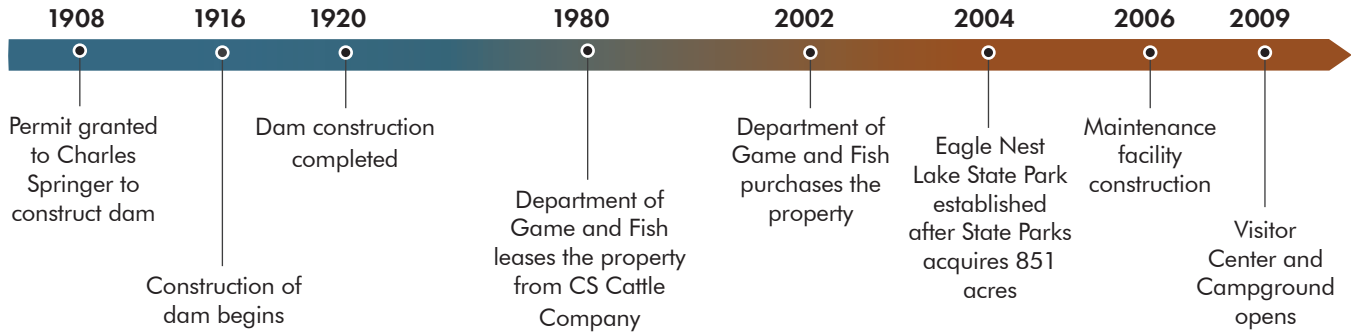
The high alpine Moreno Valley is bounded by the Taos Mountains on the west and the Cimarron Range on the east. The Village of Eagle Nest is located on the north end of the Lake and the Village of Angel Fire is located to the south at the far end of the Valley.

The Park Management Area includes property owned by State Parks and the State Game Commission. A Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) was originally adopted in 2004 and established management policies for the Park. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), adopted in 2019 by State Parks and the State Game Commission through the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, superseded the 2004 JPA and currently governs the partnership between the two agencies.

Regional and Park History

There are indications of prehistoric movement throughout the Moreno Valley. However, there is no substantive archaeological evidence of human occupation of the Moreno Valley prior to 5500 B.C. Human use of the area commenced during the Archaic period (5500 B.C. to A.D. 200), indicated by distinctive tool kits and specific projectile points.

KEY HISTORIC EVENTS



During the Plains Woodland/Village period (200-1300 A.D.), archaeological sites have been identified in nearby areas but not in the Moreno Valley. Sites consisted of poorly made gray ceramics, projectile points, slab metates, and coursed masonry enclosures.

There is evidence for Ancestral Puebloan use of the Moreno Valley during the Developmental Period (A.D. 1050 – 1200) and possibly later (to A.D. 1400), although it appears to have had a transient nature. No architectural remains have been identified, but artifact scatters of carbon painted ceramics and lithic debris have been located. If architectural remains are in the Valley, they are likely found in riverine locations; consequently, they would be beneath Eagle Nest Lake.

Archaeologists and historians have a better idea of human use of the Moreno Valley during the historic period. Several Spanish records mentioned the Apache in the valleys of the Upper Mora drainage in 1598, 1696, and again in 1715, corroborating Jicarilla Apache oral histories that included the upper Mora (including the Moreno) Valley. These territories were traditionally associated with the Llaneros contingent of the Jicarilla Apache tribe.

Starting in the 1700s, the Comanche dominated the east side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. By the mid-18th century, the Jicarillas had abandoned the Mora and the Cimarron drainages. It was in the latter half of the 18th century that the Comanches entered into a peace treaty with the Spanish government after a defeat by forces under Governor Juan Bautista de Anza, opening the area for new settlement.

The Mora Valley attracted Spanish settlers as early as 1818 when, according to historical documents, Mora Valley villagers requested a priest visit from the Picuris district. Occupation of the upper Cimarron drainage, including the Moreno Valley, does not appear to have followed suit. The short growing season and harsh winters may have dissuaded anything but seasonal use of the area. Angel Fire, at the south end of the Moreno Valley, drew its name from the Moache Utes who named the alpenglow of Agua Fria Peak the “fire of the gods”. Later, Franciscan friars altered the phrasing to read “the place of the fire of angels”. In the mid-1800s, Wild West legends like Kit Carson further refined the name, coining the phrase “Angel Fire”.

The Park is located within what was known as the Maxwell Land Grant, which was one of the largest land grants established at nearly two million acres. Charles Beaubien and Don Guadalupe Miranda submitted the petition for the grant in 1841 for the stated purpose of creating industry and settling the area. Beaubien’s son-in-law, Lucien Bonaparte Maxwell, inherited the grant and became the largest individual landowner in the history of the United States at that time.

In 1869, Colfax County was established, with nearby Elizabethtown as the first incorporated town in New Mexico and the county seat. Only four miles north of what would become the Village of Eagle Nest, the settlement was named after Elizabeth Moore, the daughter of one of the community's founders. The gold camp mushroomed to 7,000 residents and nearly 100 buildings by 1870. Herman Mutz, an area rancher, built the Mutz Hotel in 1905. The gold soon ran out, and by 1917, the population dwindled as the gold miners left, leaving only a few residents, such as the Mutz family, as the local economy turned to ranching.

Eagle Nest Lake is a reservoir that was created when the Eagle Nest Dam was built across the top of Cimarron Canyon. The Eagle Nest Dam was the concept of Charles Springer of Cimarron, who wanted to impound the Cimarron River to create a reservoir for cattle ranching, to attract anglers and campers, and for irrigation purposes. The New Mexico Territorial Engineer granted Permit 71 in 1908 for construction of the Dam and the downstream distribution network. The privately funded construction of the dam began in 1916 and was completed in 1920. Eagle Nest Dam is listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties and National Register of Historic Places. The design height of the Dam was 140 feet with an arc length of 400 feet. It is considered the largest privately built dam in the United States.

The community of Eagle Nest exists because of the construction of Eagle Nest Dam. Talmadge D. Neal founded the town, originally called Therma, in 1920. Neal sought to capitalize on tourists and fishermen fishing the stocked Lake or traveling from Red River, Taos, or Cimarron. Therma was established on the north end of the Lake, and due to its isolation, gained a reputation as a wide-open gambling town. By 1935, gambling was outlawed, and the Town's name changed to Eagle Nest.

In 1966, construction began at the ski and golf resort community at the south end of the Moreno Valley - Angel Fire. The first ski trails were cut and soon after local visitors from New Mexico, as well as visitors from Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas, were making their way to Angel Fire. The Village of Angel Fire was established in 1967 and incorporated in 1986. The Village of Eagle Nest and the Moreno Valley have continued to be supported by tourism and ranching.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish leased the Eagle Nest Lake property from the CS Cattle Company to provide public access for fishing from 1980 through 2001. In 2002, the Department purchased the property for \$20 million. In 2004, the Department transferred a portion of the land to State Parks and Eagle Nest Lake State Park was established.

1.4 REGIONAL SETTING

Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

The New Mexico Tourism Department estimates that approximately 5.7 million people visited northeast New Mexico in 2019, with most out-of-state travelers arriving from Texas, California, and Florida. The Enchanted Circle and the Moreno Valley are popular destinations for tourists engaging in a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The Park may be the primary destination, or visitors may be stopping at the Park while visiting other attractions in the area. There are two other State Parks in the vicinity, Cimarron Canyon State Park and Coyote Creek State Park. There are several developed recreation destinations within 30 miles of the Park (see Table 1.3).

Recreation Area	Management	Activities	Distance
Angel Fire Resort	Private	Ski area	12 miles
Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial and State Veterans Cemetery	Dept of Veteran Services	Historic, memorial	7 miles
Carson National Forest	USDA Forest Service	Outdoor recreation	Multiple access points
Cimarron Canyon State Park	State Parks	Camping, fishing	2 miles
Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area	Dept of Game and Fish	Wildlife preserve, hunting, hiking	2 miles
Coyote Creek State Park	State Parks	Camping, fishing	29 miles
Philmont Scout Ranch	Boy Scouts of America	Scout training, camping, hiking	20 miles
Red River Ski & Summer Areas	Private	Ski area	17 miles

According to the Outdoor Foundation, over 65% of New Mexico residents participate in outdoor recreation activities each year. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) estimates that outdoor recreation contributed \$1.9 billion to New Mexico's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020, employing 25,916 people and contributing \$1.0 billion in total income. RVing, boating/fishing, and snow sports were the top three contributors to the New Mexico outdoor economy. Climbing/hiking and tent camping were also important outdoor recreation activities. The value-added by RVing grew from \$91 million in 2018 to over \$108 million in 2020, while boating/fishing grew from \$71 million in 2018 to over \$100 million in 2020 (US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, 2020).

Privately-Owned Area Campgrounds and Fees

There are five privately-owned RV campgrounds in and around the Village of Eagle Nest that are open year-round and seasonally, with a total of 216 RV spaces. There are two privately-owned RV campgrounds open year-round in Angel Fire, with a total of 147 spaces. All of the RV campgrounds offer full RV hook-ups with water, sewer, 30- or 50-amp electric service included in the base rate, although water and sewer may only be available seasonally. Most of the RV campgrounds also advertise the availability of Wi-Fi service. Some of the RV campgrounds also have a lodge or cabin camping, including Park Model RVs offered for rent.

Advertised summer rates at these campgrounds vary from just over \$30 nightly with few amenities and up to \$55 to \$85 nightly with full resort amenities such as access to a clubhouse and pool. Most of the RV campgrounds in the area offer discounted weekly and monthly rates. At one of the campgrounds, electric service is metered for monthly stays, while at another campground electric service is metered monthly during the winter only. Three of the RV campgrounds advertise the availability of a sewer dump station, free for registered guests or with fee for dump station use only. In comparison, Eagle Nest Lake State Park charges a \$5 day use fee or a \$10 a night camping fee; however, no utility hook-ups are currently available.

1.5 DEMOGRAPHICS

The population and economic characteristics of the community has the potential of influencing Park conditions and visitation. The population of Colfax County in 2020 was 12,387, and the population of Eagle Nest was 315 (see Table 1.4). The population fluctuates seasonally with mountain communities attracting part-time residents during the summer. As the historic industries of mining and ranching have contracted, tourism has become the primary industry in the region.

	Population 2020	Median Age 2019	Median Household Income	Families Below Poverty Level	Housing Units	Median Housing Value	Median Gross Rent
New Mexico	2,117,522	37.8	\$49,754	19.1%	937,920	\$171,400	\$844
Colfax County	12,387	50.2	\$36,302	20.0%	10,284	\$104,800	\$676
Eagle Nest	315	54.5	\$34,500	11.4%	372	\$118,800	\$931
Angel Fire	1,192	53.1	\$59,063	12.3%	2,626	\$324,600	\$629
Cimarron	792	48.2	\$29,028	22.4%	579	\$91,900	\$588
Red River	542	39.1	\$49,479	6.5%	810	\$259,700	\$792

Source: US Census 2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

In 2019, the median age in Eagle Nest was 54.5 years of age, higher than the 50.2 median age in Colfax County and much higher than the overall state average of 37.8 years. Angel Fire also had a higher median age, 53.1 years, while the ranching community of Cimarron was 48.2 years and the resort community of Red River was only 39.1 years, closer to the state figure.

The community of Eagle Nest has a lower median household income than Colfax County or New Mexico, and much lower than Angel Fire but higher than Cimarron. However, the number of families below poverty level (11.4%) is lower in Eagle Nest than in other area communities except Red River (6.5%).

There are a limited number of housing units near Eagle Nest Lake State Park. The number of housing units in Eagle Nest increased by 15.2% from the 2015 to 2019, and by 8.7% in Angel Fire, compared to the New Mexico growth rate of 3.1%. Increasing seasonal housing demand due to tourism has not generally affected housing values in Eagle Nest. The median housing value of \$118,800 is higher than Colfax County but lower than New Mexico and much lower than Angel Fire. However, Eagle Nests' median gross rent of \$931 a month is much higher than Colfax County's \$676, and exceeds the New Mexico rate of \$844 a month.

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CHAPTER 2 RESOURCE ASSESSMENT



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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources are important components of the mission and responsibility of State Parks. These resources represent the state's natural landscape cultural heritage and are often among the most threatened. The primary goal for natural resource management is to ensure the long-term protection of State Parks as naturally evolving ecosystems that are subject to and integrated with human uses occurring within the park facility.

2.2 PARK RESOURCES

Land

State Parks owns approximately 851 acres located on the west side of the Lake. The majority of the Lake itself up to the high-water line (2,400 surface acres) is a Joint Management Area that is owned primarily by the State Game Commission but within the Park. The boundary of the Joint Management Area on the eastern shore, south of the dam, includes a buffer of 200 yards above the high-water line.

The 2019 MOA between State Parks and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish governs joint operations and management of the property. The MOA requires State Parks to provide three access points exempt from park fees for fishing access, and storage for up to two boats one of which must be covered but does not need to be enclosed. The Moreno, Six Mile, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas are designated as no-fee areas for licensed anglers and hunters.

To the west and north of the Park is private land developed with residential and commercial uses. The east side of the Lake, south of the dam, is the Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area, which is 33,116 acres in size, closed to motor vehicles, and owned and managed by the State Game Commission. Several trails access the Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area from Cimarron Canyon State Park.

Viewsheds

The Park has some of the best scenery in New Mexico because of the broad Moreno Valley rimmed by high mountain peaks. Looking southeast across the Lake is a scenic mountainside free of any development. Most of this viewshed is the Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area, and as a publicly owned wildlife preserve, it will remain undeveloped, thus protecting this scenic viewshed. The remaining lands immediately surrounding the Park are private and have various levels of development, with the most recent construction occurring as lands south of the Park are being subdivided for residential lots. The viewshed from the Park is an extremely valuable asset, and thus, State Parks intends to stay engaged in community development issues with Colfax County and the Village of Eagle Nest.

Management Zones

State Parks delineates land management zones, acknowledging that "areas intended for different types and intensities of use call for varying degrees of protection in natural resource management practices". Each zone has distinct characteristics, levels of development and protection, levels of visitor use, and visitor expectations. Park lands under the jurisdiction of State Parks are placed in one of three land management zones, including developed, primitive, and conservation. The Developed Zone has a high level of visitor use and includes park facilities, with recreation as the primary purpose. The remainder of the Park is in the Primitive Zone, where the primary purpose is resource conservation, and visitor use is low.

2.3 NATURAL RESOURCES

Ecosystems

Eagle Nest Lake is part of the Southern Rockies ecosystem, which is characterized by high elevation and steep, rugged mountains (see EPA Level IV EcoRegion map, page 17). The Lake and surrounding Moreno Valley is part of the Grassland Parks (21j) ecoregion of grasslands and wet meadows. The Sedimentary Mid-Elevation Forests (21f) ecoregion encompasses the mountains to the west with areas of Gambel oak woodlands. The Crystalline Mid-Elevation Forests (21c) ecoregion rise in the mountains to the east and southwest, with ponderosa pine, aspen, Douglas-fir, and areas of limber pine. The Crystalline Subalpine Forests (21b) ecoregion rise in the higher elevations southeast of the Lake, dominated by Englemann spruce and subalpine fir.

In general, there is a lack of detailed information on the distribution or condition of natural resources in the Park, and where there may be a need for protection, restoration, or enhancement. Blue Earth Ecological Consultants conducted field surveys and compiled a list of plant and animal species seen during a two-day survey in June 2004 as part of the Environmental Assessment completed at that time. Other efforts to inventory the Park include the “Bird Checklist for Moreno Valley and Cimarron Canyon” (Cleary, David J., 2007), Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, and a plant inventory by volunteers from the New Mexico Native Plant Society.

The Lake and associated habitats support aquatic plants and animals and provide a food and water source for wildlife. The majority of the Park is montane grassland habitat, which dominates the open areas surrounding the Lake. Montane coniferous forest occurs in the upland area found outside of the Park on the east side of the Lake and in the surrounding mountains.

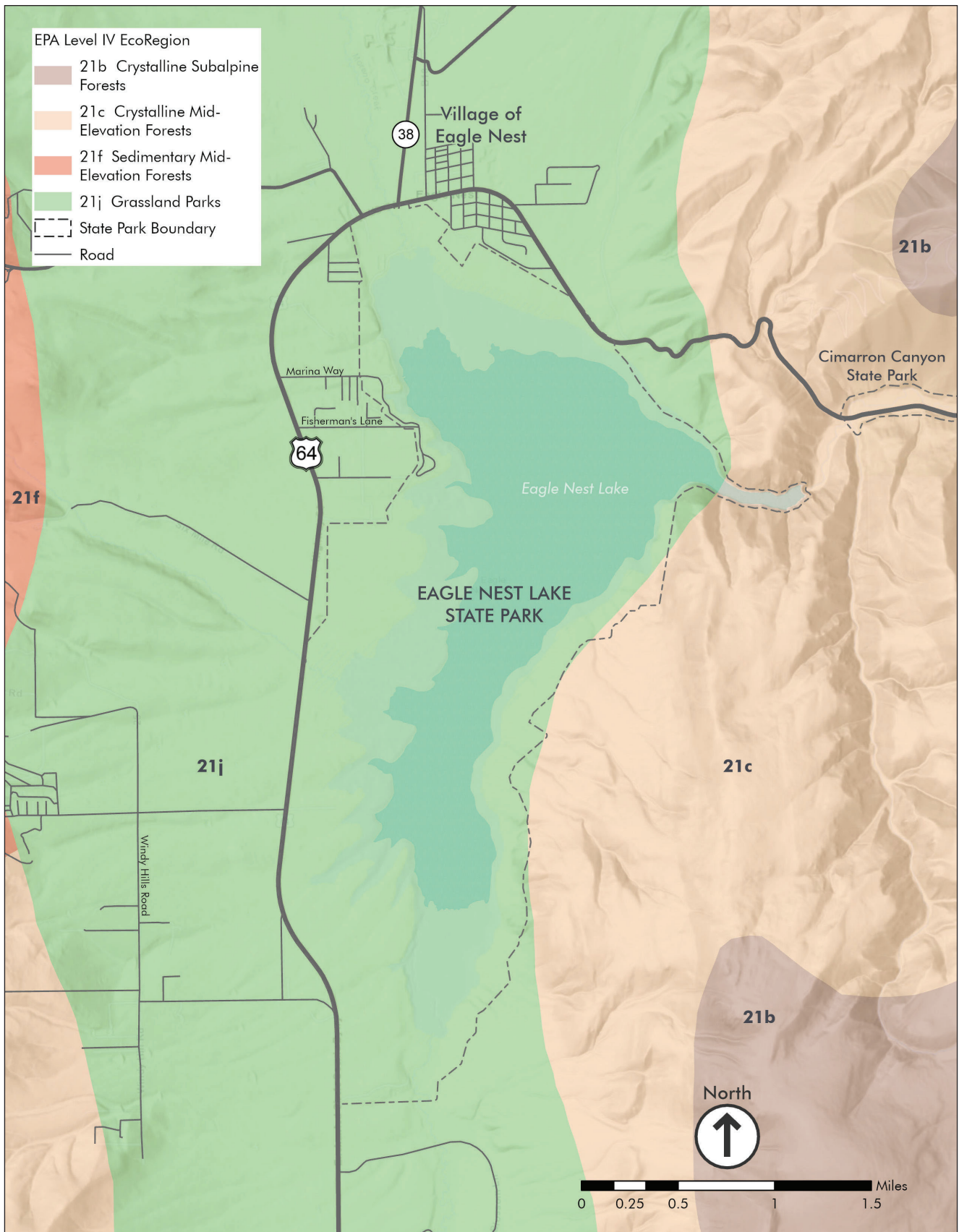
The aquatic habitats in the Moreno, Six Mile and Cieneguilla Creeks are valuable resources for a variety of plants and animals that cannot survive in drier locations. The sedge meadows are transitional areas that may be seasonally flooded and are located at the north and south ends of the Lake along Moreno and Cieneguilla Creeks. Seasonal flooding is an important hydrologic function that maintains the quality of these streamside aquatic habitats.



Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja*) near the shoreline.

TABLE 2.1: FLORA AT EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK

Montane Grasslands	
Blue grama / <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	Big sagebrush / <i>Artemisia tridentate</i>
Hairy grama / <i>Bouteloua hirsute</i>	Chamisa / <i>Chrysothamnus nauseosa</i>
Junegrass / <i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	Winterfat / <i>Krascheninnikovia lanata</i>
Needle and thread / <i>Stipa comate</i>	Snakeweed / <i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>
Timothy grass / <i>Phleum pretense</i>	Fringed sage / <i>Artemisia frigida</i>
Finestem needlegrass / <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>	Cinquefoil / <i>Potentilla</i> sp.
Montane Coniferous Forest	
Ponderosa pine / <i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	Douglas fir / <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
Gambel oak / <i>Quercus gambelii</i>	White fir / <i>Abies concolor</i>
Rocky Mountain juniper / <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	Mountain mahogany / <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>
Sedge Meadow, Lakeshore Riparian, and Stream Wetlands	
Sedge / <i>Carex</i> sp.	Yarrow / <i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Willow / <i>Salix</i> sp.	Bulrush / <i>Scirpus</i> sp.
Iris / <i>Iris missouriensis</i>	Bluegrass / <i>Poa</i> sp.



EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK
EcoRegions

Many of these streamside aquatic habitats qualify as jurisdictional wetlands. A wetland is an area often, if not always, saturated with water and characterized by hydrophytic vegetation and hydric soils. A jurisdictional wetland is one that is regulated under the Clean Water Act. Disturbance to a wetland requires permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Wetlands, as defined by the Clean Water Act, are “areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.”

Tree Canopy Cover

Tree canopy cover is less than 1% throughout most of the Park, according to the 2016 United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service’s tree canopy cover dataset (see *Tree Canopy Cover map, page 19*). The Park is predominately covered with grasses and shrubs, and features sparse stands of coniferous trees near the Visitor Center. However, a small section in the southeast area of the Park, near the Joint Management Area, contains up to 30% tree canopy cover.

Climate

The climate at the Park is characterized by cool summers and cold winter temperatures. The diurnal cycle of temperatures in the summer goes from a low of 40°F and a high of 76°F. The winter cycle includes lows averaging 5°F and highs of 40°F. Annual precipitation averages approximately 15 inches. Summer is the wettest season, receiving more than 40% of the annual total. Winter, though dry, receives an average snowfall of approximately 57 inches.

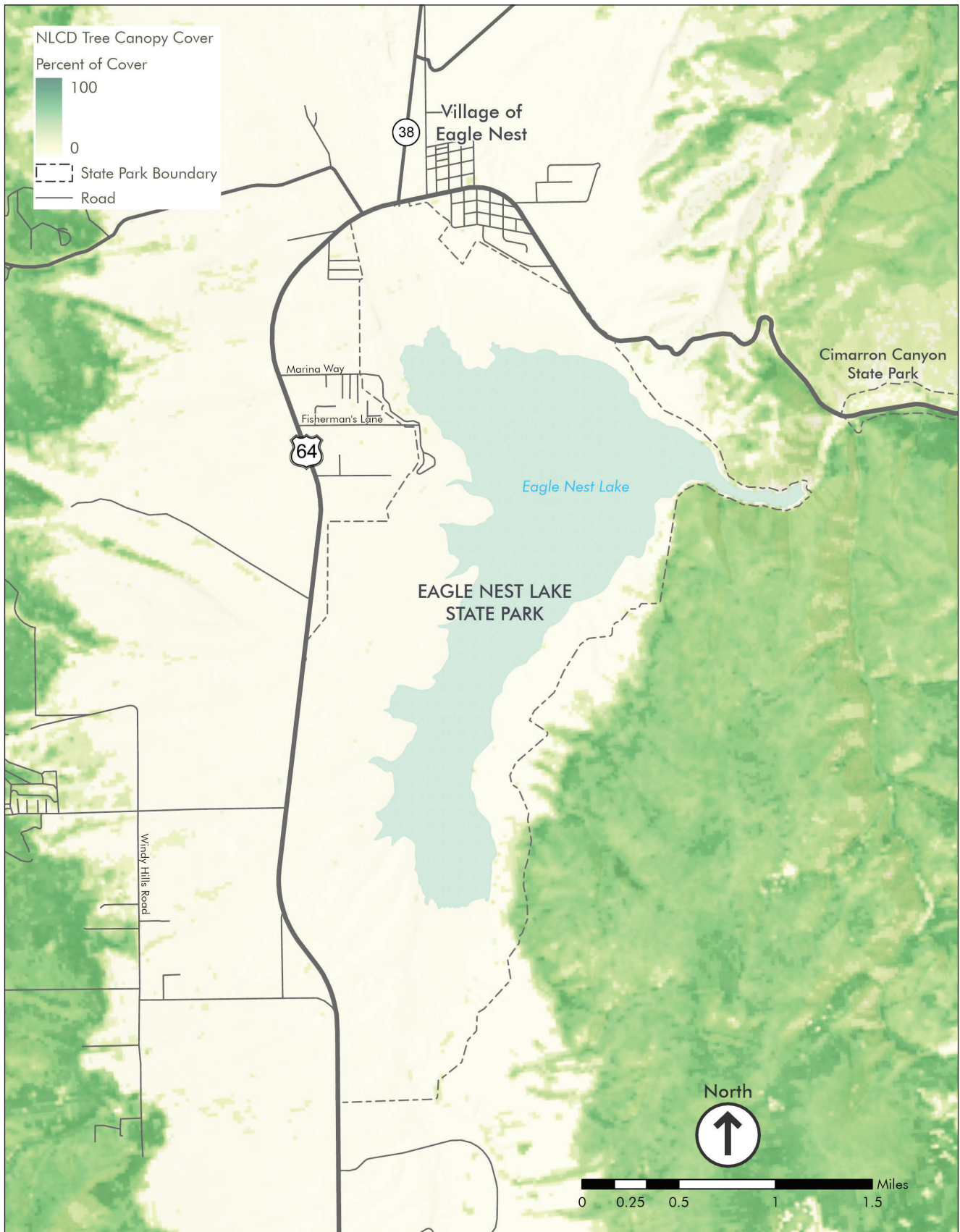
Geology

The picturesque Moreno Valley is surrounded by high uplands of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains complex. The Taos Mountain’s component of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains looms to the west and includes the state’s highest point, Wheeler Peak (13,161 feet above sea level). Baldy Mountain (12,441 feet) and Touch-Me-Not Mountain (12,045 feet) punctuate the vista to the east as part of the Cimarron Range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The wide-open valley and high peaks combine to create one of the most scenic locations in New Mexico.

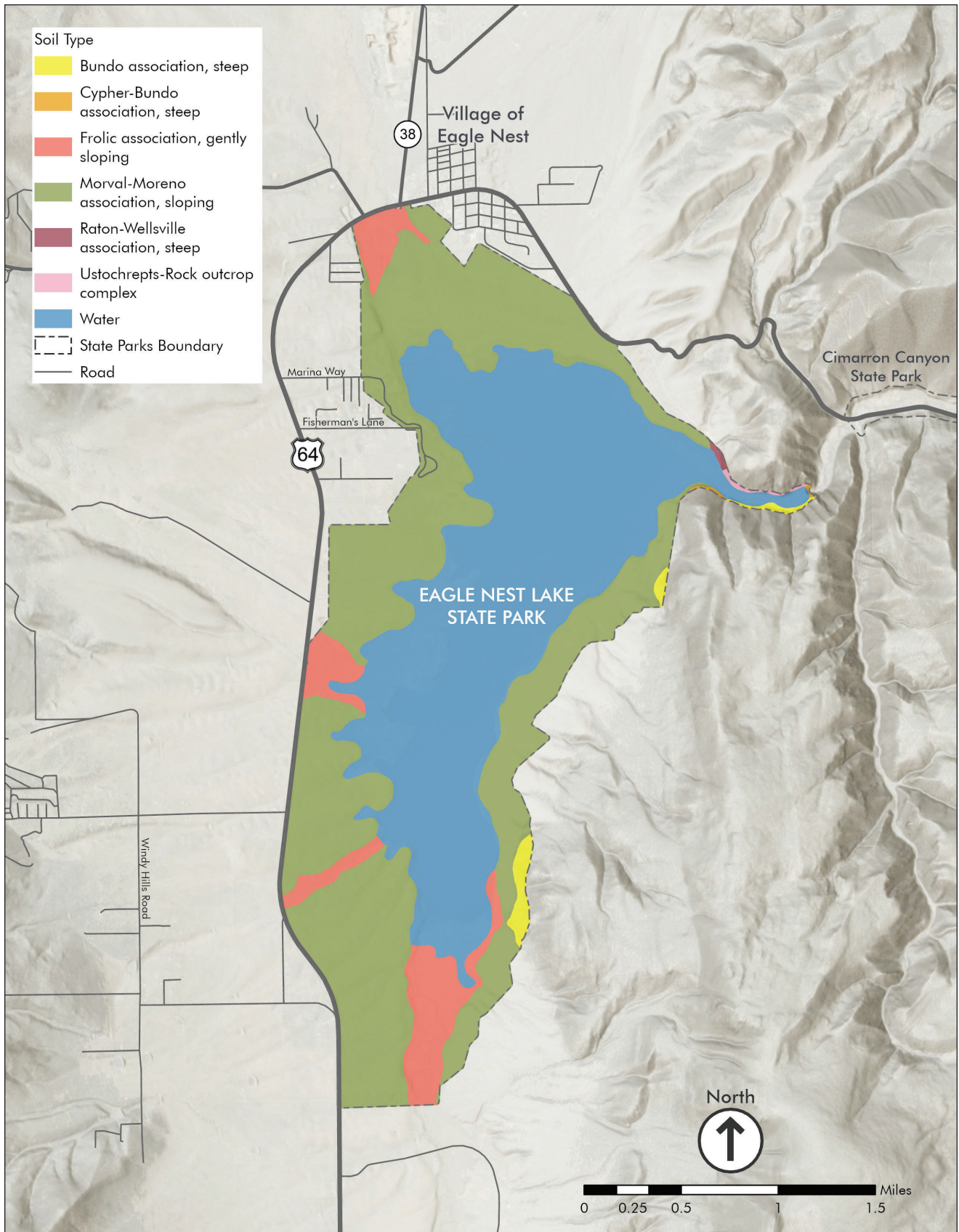
The Wheeler Peak massif contains some of the oldest rocks in New Mexico; igneous gneisses dating to 1.8 billion years ago. Their most recent uplift forming the mountains seen today occurred within the last 170 million years. The Cimarron Range forms the east margin of the Moreno Valley. Its uplift is more recent – 20 to 30 million years ago. The Moreno Valley began as a south-flowing watershed between the Taos and Cimarron ranges. Volcanic activity blocked the south end of the Moreno Valley about five million years ago, but a new outlet eventually formed as waters carved the deep chasm we know today as Cimarron Canyon.

Soils

A total of six soil types are found in Eagle Nest Lake State Park, with gradients ranging from gently sloping to steep (see *Soils map, page 20*). The most prominent soil types are the Morval-Moreno association (sloping), which nearly encircles the Lake, and veins of Frolic association (gently sloping) which are found along the lengths of Cieneguilla, Moreno, and Six Mile Creeks. The Morval series consists of very deep, well drained soils that feature a clay loam texture that may include pockets of up to 30% gravel. The Frolic series typically features a fine-loamy texture with a very fine sandy loam on the surface horizon. The remaining soil types, Cypher-Bundo association (steep), Raton-Wellsville association (steep), and Ustochrepts rock outcrop complex are found east of the Lake near Eagle Nest Dam and contain up to 65% rock fragments at the surface horizon.



EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK
Tree Canopy Cover



Water Resources

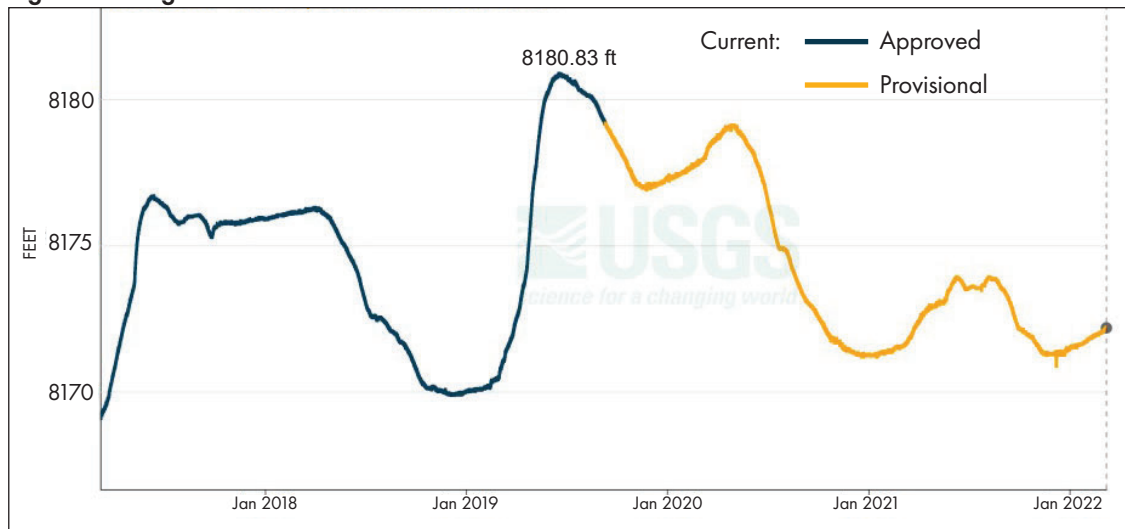
Eagle Nest Lake is fed by the perennial Moreno and Cieneguilla Creeks and the intermittent Six Mile Creek. Prior to the construction of Eagle Nest Dam, these drainages flowed into Cimarron Canyon where the Dam is now located. The Lake collects runoff from a watershed of approximately 162 square miles of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and is part of the larger Canadian River basin. The Lake's surface area at full capacity is about 2,800 acres, and the maximum Lake level is 8,199 feet in elevation. The normal pool elevation is approximately 8,167 feet. The surface elevation of the Lake fluctuates with changes in precipitation, tributary inflow, and reservoir releases.

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission operates and maintains Eagle Nest Dam. The reservoir's water rights history is complex and telling of the value of water in the west. Charles Springer sold water rights to farmers to help finance the dam construction when he applied for the original permit from the State Engineer in 1907. In 1951, there was an adjudication of the Cimarron Basin that confirmed Springer's right to store water for later use. Over the years, the number of water rights holders grew, and it became apparent that there was not enough water to meet all of the users' allocations.

After several years of litigation, a settlement was reached in 2006 that determined allocations and that all users would share in water shortages. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is the lead agency on the water rights permit. As of 2006, there were 18 entities with water rights. According to the settlement, water in the reservoir "for public recreational uses and propagation of fish and wildlife, [is] subject and subservient to delivery of and use of the Delivery Rights and Private Storage Rights". There is effectively no minimum water level to support public recreational use. In times of drought, the Lake's water level could be very low and even go dry. State Parks would need to pursue the acquisition of water rights to gain some control of water levels or assure in-stream flows.

The water level of the Lake varies seasonally as well as year-to-year with drought cycles. As shown in Figure 2.1, over the last five years the Lake level has varied from a low of just under 8,170 feet in elevation in March 2017 to a high of 8,180.83 feet in June 2019. Note that elevations are considered provisional for one year and are subject to revision.

Figure 2.1: Eagle Nest Lake Water Surface Elevation



Source: US Geological Survey.

The New Mexico Environment Department and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish monitor the Lake's water quality. Community development and land management practices have the potential to alter water flow into

the Lake and the water quality, as the Moreno Valley watershed drains into the Lake. Naturally occurring blue-green algae can be highly toxic to fish and dogs. Signs are posted at the Park warning visitors about the potential presence of blue-green algae.

Wildlife and Fish

Wildlife viewing, such as birdwatching, is an attraction for many Park visitors, and the most striking for tourists are sightings of elk (*Cervus elaphus*), the largest mammals in the Moreno Valley. Elk move in and out of the Park in response to the seasonal availability of food and water. The Department of Game and Fish has erected temporary elk enclosures along Cieneguilla Creek to allow re-growth of streamside willows that elk heavily browse in the winter. The Park also is home to a colony of Gunnison’s prairie dogs, which are widely recognized as keystone species of grassland ecosystems because so many other animal species depend on them.

A raptor nest platform was constructed near the Visitor Center on the west side of the Lake. However, eagles and ospreys tend to congregate on the east side of the Lake and the platform did not attract a nesting pair. Other birds identified at the Lake include hawks, pelicans, geese, heron, and other water fowl.

The *Eagle Nest Lake Fisheries Management Plan* included a summary of historic conditions and management and proposed fisheries management actions such as fish stocking rates, population surveys, angler harvest surveys, and water quality monitoring. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has lowered the recommended number of fish to be eaten from Eagle Nest because of poor water quality. Kokanee salmon and rainbow trout have continued to be stocked at the Lake.

The *New Mexico Fisheries Management Plan (2016)* identified an annual stocking rate of 600,000 triploid rainbow trout at three inches in length, as well as stocking kokanee salmon fry. However, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has decided to stock larger trout due to predation by northern pike. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish continually monitors fishery health and adjusts stocking plans in response to changing conditions.

After the Ute Park Fire in 2018, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish stocked more fish in Eagle Nest Lake while other areas were closed for restoration. The Friends Group members have stated that the increased fishing pressure at Eagle Nest Lake seemed to decrease the overall fish population.

Protected Species

The Environmental Assessment completed in 2004 evaluated proposed park development sites for impacts to protected species and did not find evidence of any protected species in the proposed development areas. State Parks works to design and implement park management activities that minimize harm to and maximize opportunities for these and other animals. Table 2.3 lists the protected species that have either been observed in the Park or have the potential to occur in the Park. The New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) was placed on the Federal Endangered list in 2014.



Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*).

TABLE 2.2: FISH IN EAGLE NEST LAKE	
Game Fish	
Kokanee salmon /	<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>
Rainbow trout /	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
Cutthroat trout /	<i>Oncorhynchus clarki</i>
Brook trout /	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>
Yellow perch /	<i>Perca flavescens</i>
Non-Game Fish	
White sucker /	<i>Catostomus commersoni</i>
Rio Grande chub /	<i>Gila pandora</i>
Fathead minnows /	<i>Pimephales promelas</i>
Common carp /	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>

TABLE 2.3: PROTECTED SPECIES

Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	State Threatened	Seen at the Park during the winter. Potential roost sites would be in the conifer forest on the east side of the Lake. Eagles take advantage of dead or dying fish as a major food source.
Gunnison's Prairie Dog (<i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>)	State Species of Concern	Occurs in the Park near the Six Mile Day Use Area.
Rio Grande Chub (<i>Gila pandora</i>)	State Species of Concern	Found in the Lake and in Cieneguilla Creek in 2004. Protecting streamside and lakeside riparian zones from disturbance will enhance habitat for this aquatic species.
Black-footed Ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>)	Federal Endangered	Not known to exist at the Park. Black-footed ferrets live in black-tailed prairie dog towns, none of which exist at the Park. The colony of Gunnison's prairie dogs at the Park is thought to be too small to support a family of black-footed ferrets.
New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse (<i>Zapus hudsonius luteus</i>)	Federal Endangered, State Endangered	While none have been found at the Park, suitable habitat exists in the sedge meadow and stream floodplain wetlands areas of the Park.
Lake Fingernail Clam (<i>Musculium lacustre</i>) Star Gyro Snail (<i>Gyraulus crista</i>)	State Threatened	These mollusks are not known to occur at the Park, but the stream habitats of Moreno, Six Mile, and Cieneguilla Creeks would be appropriate habitats.

Invasive Species

Native plant communities are important habitat for wildlife and provide opportunities for interpretation of the resources representative of the region. Non-native invasive plants (such as Canada and bull thistles) are found in the Park; however, it is unknown how many different invasive species are present and how widespread they are. Non-native invasive plant species are typically the first to colonize disturbed areas and often out-compete native plants. For example, it is difficult to keep thistles and cockleburrs off dock ramps with the heavy traffic at that location.

The Park's ecosystems and habitats are in reasonably good condition, although the widespread timothy grass and snakeweed are evidence that the area has a long history of grazing by domestic livestock prior to the establishment of the Park in 2004. Additional impacts are from vehicles driving off-road, which has trampled vegetation, compacted soils, and introduced weed species. Limiting vehicles to designated roadways and parking areas will protect undisturbed areas and encourage re-growth in areas already impacted. A weed management plan would provide a systematic approach to controlling invasive species in the Park.

Northern pike have been classified as an invasive species in Eagle Nest Lake and a catch-and-keep requirement has been implemented to reduce the population. Aquatic invasive species pose a threat to all New Mexico lakes - in particular, the quagga mussel and zebra mussel. These exotic species native to the Black and Caspian seas were first discovered in the Great Lakes in the 1980s. These types of mussels grow in colonies, reproduce prolifically, and can interfere with water conveyance devices and structures. Neither has been found in the Lake, but staff is asked to report any sightings.



Northern pike (*Esox lucius*).

The *New Mexico Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan* (2008) provides strategies to prevent the spread of these species. More information about aquatic invasive species is available on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website (<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/>).

Wildfire

Wildfire is a constant hazard in New Mexico, especially in the mountainous back country surrounding the Park. While wildfires tend to have the most intensity in forested areas, grass fires also burn quickly and intensely in high mountain meadows with topography like the Moreno Valley. The Ute Park Fire ignited on May 31, 2018, at the beginning of the busy summer camping season. The wildfire burned 36,740 acres east of Eagle Nest Lake, threatening the communities of Cimarron and Ute Park. Eagle Nest Lake was closed to recreation while helicopters filled water buckets for aerial firefighting. Cimarron Canyon State Park was closed into July.

The Park has an evacuation plan but does not have a Fire Management Plan. The United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service contacts State Parks when it takes water out of the Lake for fire suppression purposes. The Eagle Nest Fire Department has asked for a dry hydrant on the Lake to supplement its water supply for fire suppression. While the Line Camp site is vulnerable, other sites in the Park rate well for wildfire preparedness.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

The Emergency Evacuation Plan for the Park outlines procedures in the case of a fire or other emergency event that require visitors to leave the area. Park staff will contact the Region II Manager and Incident Command when one has been established. Incident Command will dictate whether evacuation is necessary. Park staff will then notify all visitors of evacuation routes, and clear the day use areas, campground, and parking areas. If boat trailers are in the parking lot, a patrol boat will go onto the Lake to alert boaters. Staff will then clear hiking trails, secure cash in the safe, take all outside equipment to the maintenance yard, lock buildings, turn off propane tanks, and lock the Park gates. If fire is imminent and time allows, Staff will clear an 8-foot firebreak around the maintenance building and Visitor Center with a loader or backhoe. If evacuation is not possible, Staff are instructed to send visitors to the Shop yard until other arrangement can be made.

2.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Park personnel work under a mandate to preserve and protect cultural resources from impacts caused by human or environmental factors. Cultural resources within Park boundaries are subject to state and potentially federal cultural resource protection laws (see *Appendix B: Statutes, Rules, and Policies*). Development within the Park will be coordinated with the State Park's Cultural Resources Planner to avoid impacts to cultural resources and to comply with state statutes and rules and any applicable federal statutes and regulations. Prior to any activities that would result in ground disturbance, State Parks will ensure that appropriate cultural resource management measures are undertaken to protect and/or minimize impacts to cultural resources.

Cultural Resources

As part of the Environmental Assessment completed in 2004, a relatively extensive cultural resource survey was conducted for the primary development areas. State Parks has conducted subsequent cultural resource surveys at the Park, which were specific to park projects, such as trail building. A few historic sites were documented during these surveys.

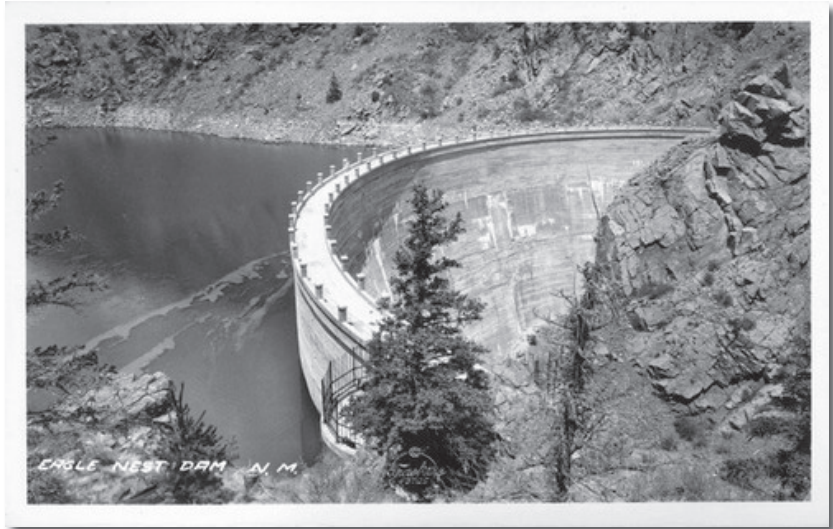
Eagle Nest Dam

The Eagle Nest Dam was nominated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. As stated in the nomination, the "Eagle Nest Dam is considered a significant because it is one of the oldest functioning arched-type dams in New Mexico in a privately financed irrigation project."

The following narrative has been taken from the historic nomination form written by William L. Cumiford in 1978:

“Built in 1916-20 across the Cimarron River, Eagle Nest Dam was designed to store water for the irrigation of more than 40,000 acres of land in eastern Colfax County, most of which belongs to the Charles Springer Cattle Company. Willis Ranney served as chief engineer on the project and Neal Hanson was construction superintendent.

Several small irrigation projects were developed in the area in the 1880s and 1890s. Building a dam to store the waters of various streams traversing land holdings was the



Historic photo of Eagle Nest Dam.

practice of many individual ranchers even before the turn of the century. Hundreds of small lakes resulting from these endeavors still dot the high plains from the Colorado border to Springer, New Mexico. Only the Maxwell Project and the Springer Ditch System represent large-scale 19th century irrigation efforts.

The largest and most important irrigation project in the area was the Eagle Nest Dam. Conceived and largely financed by one of the county’s early settlers, Charles Springer, its construction marked the apex of water development in northeastern New Mexico.

The idea of storing water from the Cimarron River at the point where it departed the Moreno Valley was an old one. In 1888, a surveyor by the name of Levi Preston surmised that a 100-foot tall dam would be sufficient to collect adequate water for the irrigation of 54,000 acres. Conscious of the need for a dependable water supply on his sprawling lands, Charles Springer purchased a 600-acre dam site from the Maxwell Land Grant Company in 1906. In conjunction with several associates, Springer soon controlled enough land to construct a 100,000-acre-foot reservoir. Organized as the Cimarron Valley Land Company, the new enterprise announced plans to build a massive reservoir at the junction of the Moreno and Cieneguilla Rivers.

Though various individuals exhibited interest in the project between 1908 and 1911, few were sufficiently impressed to invest in the undertaking. In 1911, a group of ranchers, including men from the Springer Ditch Company and the French Tract Corporation, joined Springer in the construction of a series of small dams and canals, but the proposed large project was postponed. Five years later Springer, impatient with the lengthy delay, announced his intention of beginning the large dam.

Prior to the initiation of dam construction, two preparatory jobs had to be completed. Owing to the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Railway’s plans to extend into the Moreno Valley, a railroad tunnel had to be cut through the rock above the dam site. Also, the road from Ute Park to Elizabethtown and Taos had to be diverted from the bottom of the canyon to bypass the proposed construction site. Beginning in late 1916, 150 men worked on the 8-mile project. Major construction work on the dam commenced in early 1918.

A temporary town established near the dam provided housing for several hundred laborers recruited from all over the state. Equipment and supplies were transported to the site through Cimarron, and a 60-foot overhead trestle was installed to lift the cement into place. When the underground work was completed in 1919, the structure began to rise above water level.

Despite the feverish building activity evident at Eagle Nest between 1918 and 1920, several factors delayed the project's completion. Severe winter freezes in 1919-1920 made it impossible to lay cement during a large part of the year. Furthermore, the United States' entry into World War I precipitated shortages in labor and material. But when the final phases of construction were completed in late 1920, ranchers and farmers in northeastern New Mexico could depend on a reliable and consistent supply of irrigation water.

The construction of Eagle Nest Dam symbolizes the ingenuity and dedication of Colfax County settlers in their efforts to enhance the economic potential of a rich agricultural area. The region's subsequent development was greatly influenced by the completion of this important engineering project. For half a century, Eagle Nest has provided water for the largest private irrigation project in New Mexico. Eagle Nest Lake has become a significant recreation area in north central New Mexico."

Line Camp

The Line Camp, located at the southern end of the Park, contains a small windmill and corral. The age and significance of the Line Camp are unknown at this time. However, as a ranching property, the Line Camp may have historic value. If its historic significance can be established, any development related to the building, structures, or viewshed would require consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). State Parks anticipates a cultural survey for the Line Camp to be completed soon. Depending on the results of the cultural survey, State Parks will plan accordingly for this area.



Top: Line Camp building in disrepair; Bottom: Line Camp site area.

CHAPTER 3 RECREATION ASSESSMENT



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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Eagle Nest Lake has been a popular fishing and boating destination since the completion of the Eagle Nest Dam in 1920. Camping, walking and hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, and other activities have increased over the years and many times visitors are turned away because there are no campsites available. Interpretation and education programs are also important features of the Park.

3.2 ACTIVITIES

Fishing

Fishing at Eagle Nest Lake is the primary recreational activity for park visitors. In addition to the main park area around the Visitor Center, there are three parking areas for Lake access, including Moreno, Six Mile Creek, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas. The current MOA with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish designated the three Day Use Areas as no-fee areas for licensed anglers and hunters.

Northern pike have been classified as an invasive species in Eagle Nest Lake and the Park has implemented catch-and-keep requirements to reduce the population. There is concern that fish stocking rates have not kept up with the popularity of fishing at Eagle Nest Lake.

There are two unique fishing opportunities offered during the fall and winter, including ice fishing and salmon snagging.

- **Salmon Snagging:** During the fall (October-December), when the kokanee salmon are spawning, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish opens a special season for salmon snagging.
- **Ice Fishing:** During the winter, when the Lake is frozen over, the Park is open to ice fishing. According to an article about ice fishing in the *Albuquerque Journal* (December 2, 2021) "Eagle Nest at 8,300 feet in elevation and spanning 2,200 acres, is easily the state's most popular ice fishing site." During the ice fishing season, snowmobiles and ATVs are permitted on the Lake, but are restricted to the Lake and parking lot only.



Boy fishing at lakeshore.

Camping

Seasonal camping in recreational vehicles has been popular since the campground opened in the spring of 2009. Tent camping can be difficult at the Park due to high winds and lack of screening. Camping is only permitted in the developed campground, and no primitive camping is permitted. The campground has been consistently full during the peak tourism season. Camping is limited to 14-days in the Park and many campers are at the Park for only a few days or a weekend. Campers must leave for at least six days before they can return to the Park.

Boating

Eagle Nest Lake is open to both motorized and non-motorized watercraft, primarily for fishing. Some other activities are windsurfing, and occasionally sailing and kayaking. The cold temperatures of the water are a limiting factor for these activities. There are currently no marinas at the Park. Concession permits that allow for the rental of boats and guided fishing are available.

The rise and fall of water levels requires adjustments to the docks throughout the boating season. Dredging silt has had limited effectiveness in maintaining depth necessary for safe boating access. The two existing boat docks are heavy and do not have wheels, making it difficult for Park staff to move in and out of the Lake.

Walking and Hiking

Walking and hiking are popular activities for Park visitors, as are snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter. An unimproved trail connects the Visitor Center to the Village of Eagle Nest and the Moreno Day Use Area on the north end of the Park. Another unimproved trail runs south of the campground along the Lake high water line. Visitors must walk in the road between the Visitor Center, south boat ramp, and the campground. The trails are also used for bicycling, running, cross-country skiing, birdwatching, and access to the lakeshore.

In 2017, the Enchanted Circle Trails Association and Trust for Public Land facilitated a planning process resulting in the *Enchanted Circle Trails Plan*. While the Trails Plan covers portions of four counties, it included a closer look at trails in the Eagle Nest and Angel Fire areas with a recommendation for trail improvements along US Highway 64 (see *Enchanted Circle Trails Plan map, page 32*).

Picnicking

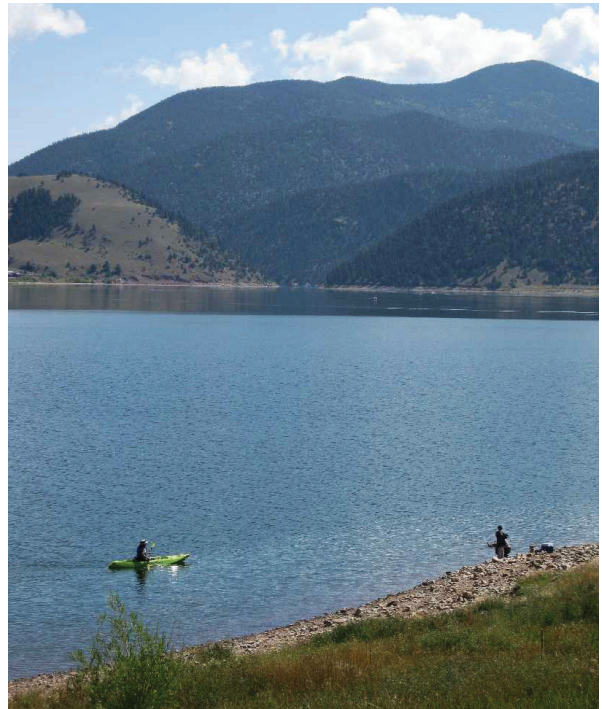
The following areas of the Park feature shelters with picnic tables and BBQ grills:

- **Visitor Center:** The patio of the Visitor Center has a large, covered area that could be used for large groups and a small picnic shelter on the patio. Additional picnic shelters with tables and grills are located next to the Visitor Center.
- **Group Shelter:** For large gatherings, the group shelter (32 feet x 32 feet) can hold up to eight picnic tables. It is located north of the Visitor Center and has a water spigot and one double vault toilet.
- **South Boat Ramp Area:** Three family size picnic shelters, each has a picnic table and grill.

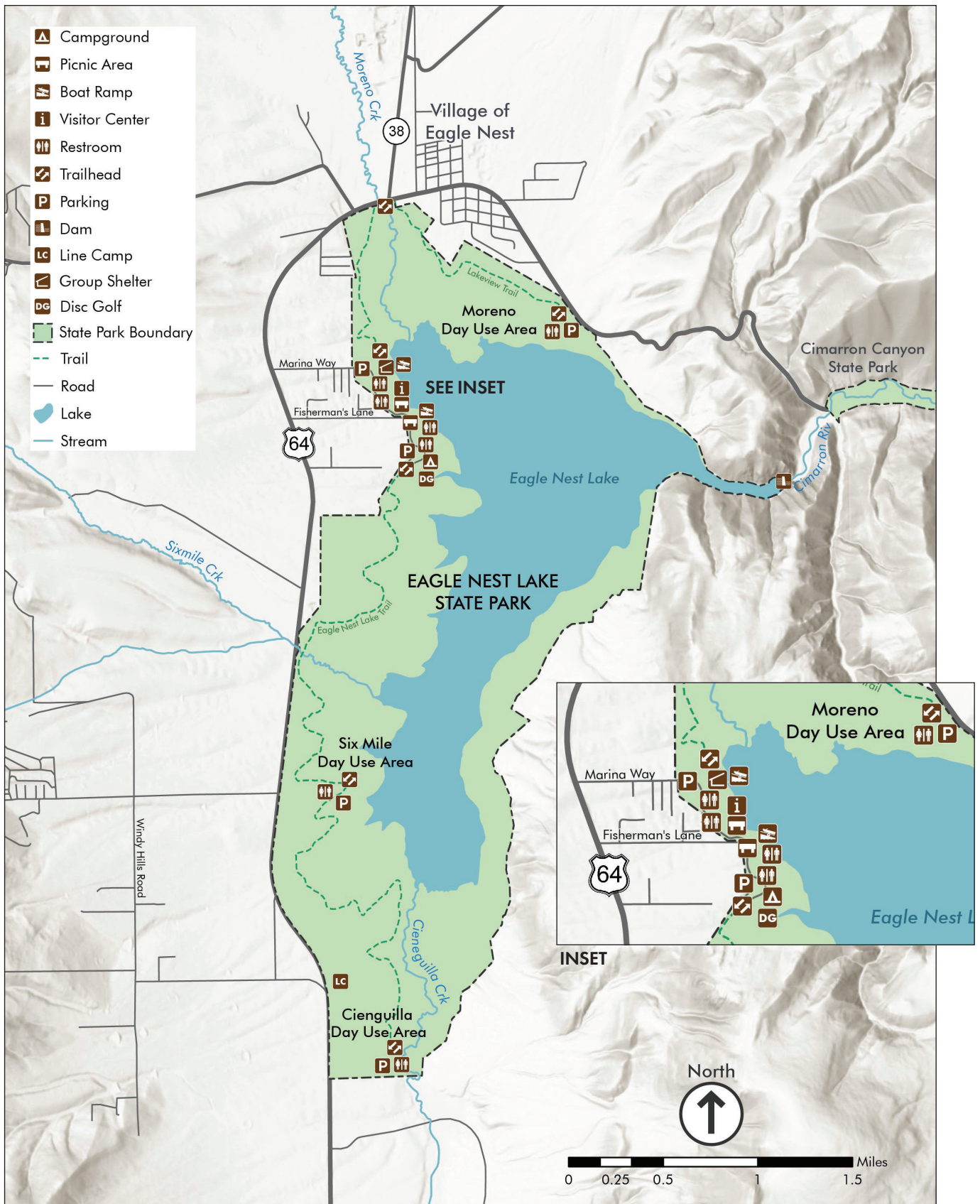
Events

There are several events at the Park each year. Most events are organized or co-organized by the Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks. The Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce also sponsors larger events, including:

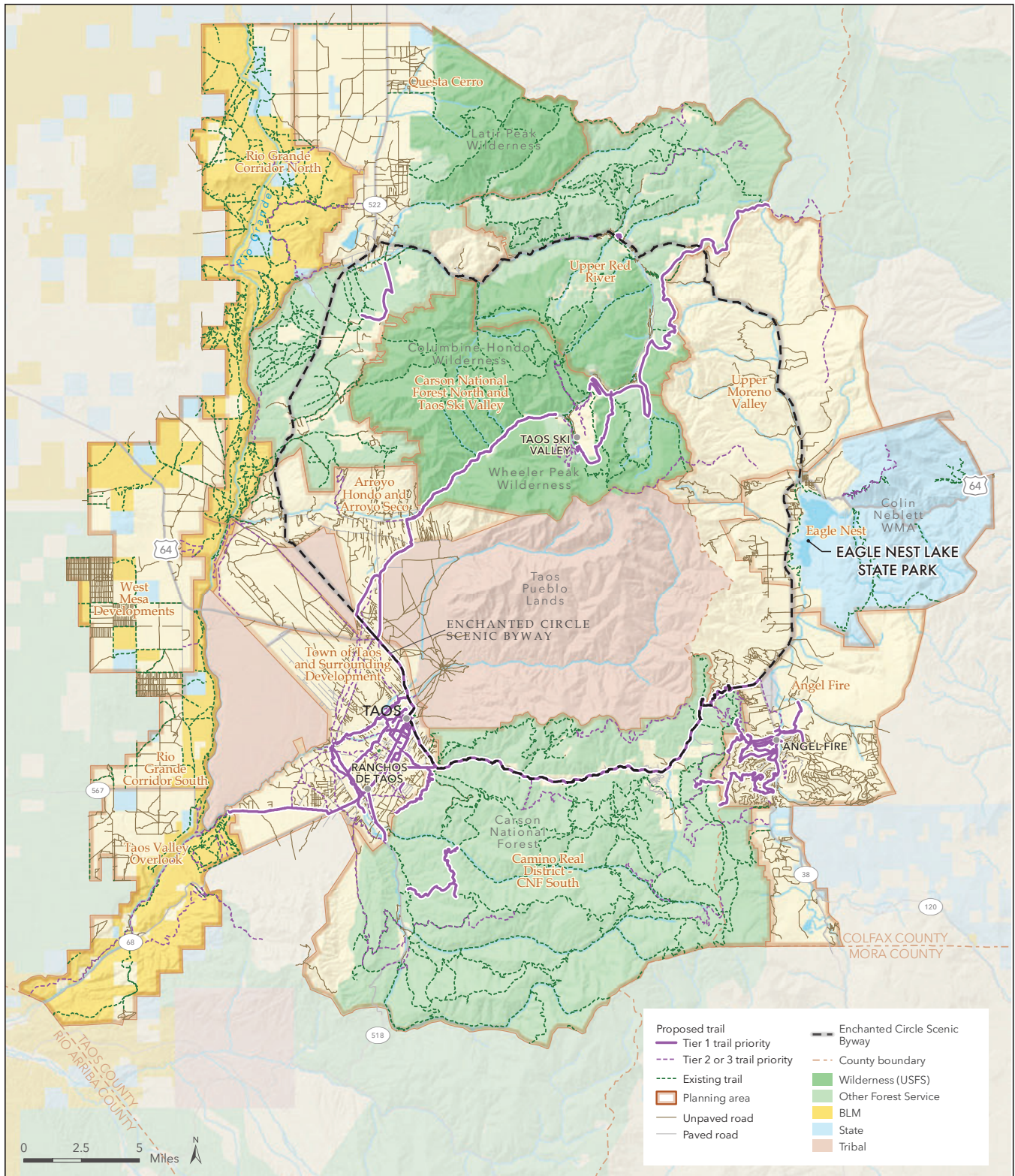
- **Ice Fishing Derby:** Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce sponsors an annual ice fishing derby at the Lake, held in January (weather dependent). There were 365 participants in 2022, with about 300 additional



Kayakers on the Lake.



EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK
Park Facilities & Amenities



ENCHANTED CIRCLE TRAILS PLAN - EXISTING and PROPOSED TRAILS

Source: Trust for Public Land.



Group shelter north of the Visitor Center.

spectators on the ice during the Derby. The event requires approximately 30 volunteers. In 2022, the event raised \$6,000 for Eagle Nest Lake State Park.

- **Fourth of July Fireworks:** Viewing the fireworks over the Lake is a popular event that attracts tourists to the Moreno Valley for the holiday weekend.
- **Annual Fish Fest:** Held the end of September, this event typically attracts several hundred participants.

The Friends Group also sponsor other events, such as the Enchanted Circle Marathon, interpretive events with local Girl Scout troops, and the Polar Bear Plunge, a dip in the icy waters of Eagle Nest Lake that attracts approximately 12-25 participants and 25-50 spectators.

3.3 INTERPRETATION and EDUCATION

Exhibits

An exhibit design plan was developed in 2007 by Exhibit Design Associates. The plan identified several different interpretive themes for the exhibit, which could be topics for a variety of interpretive opportunities including programs, projects, signs, and brochures.

Interpretive Topics

- **Circle of Life:** Based on the interrelationships of the eagle and Lake ecosystem.
- **Watershed:** Most of which is the Moreno Valley, clearly visible from the Park.
- **Wildlife:** Elk and waterfowl, dependent on the Lake and grassland ecosystem.
- **History:** Moreno Valley, Lake, dam, and mining.
- **Grasslands and invasive plants:** Found in the Moreno Valley.
- **Sustainability:** Green features of the Visitor Center and how the same concepts can be used at home.
- **Enchanted Circle:** Destinations and attractions along the Scenic Byway.

The first phase of interpretive exhibits was installed in the Visitor Center in 2009. It included information on the Park and region, the circle of life, the history of Eagle Nest Dam and the Lake, local history, and the renewable energy aspects of the building. One exhibit is based on the book *Lure, Lore, and Legends of the Moreno Valley*

published by the Moreno Valley Writers Guild. The second phase of exhibits is planned to feature prehistory, Native American history, and the wildlife in the area.

Programs

Eagle Nest Lake State Park is included in the Northeast New Mexico (Region 2) interpretive programming schedule. The Region 2 has one staff person that manages interpretation programming for the Region's eight state park facilities. The regular summer schedule includes interpretation programs at each park once a month. Ideally, Eagle Nest Lake State Park would have its own staff for programming and interpretation, which would allow for more frequent interaction with the campers and visitors.

Programming at Eagle Nest Lake State Park has focused on a "Walking Program" where campers are engaged within the campground on various topics about the Park including the prairie dog colony surrounding the campground, astronomy, bats, and birding. Community programming events, co-organized with the Friends Group, have included school field trips to educate on wildfire and watersheds and fisheries education as well as events with the local Girl Scouts which included programs on astronomy, aquatic insects, and archery. Future programming could incorporate past topics and the effects of the climate emergency on Eagle Nest Lake and the Moreno Valley.



Interpretive exhibits in the Visitor Center.

CHAPTER 4 **FACILITIES**



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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The facilities at Eagle Nest State Park provide spaces for socialization, education, and recreation. Well maintained Park facilities, such as the Visitor Center, roads, campground, boat ramps, and docks, are essential to make visitors' experiences safe and enjoyable. Facilities need constant maintenance and upgrades to ensure the Park is fully operational and can accommodate guests and activities. Upgrades and improvements to facilities are costly and are often funded by grants from entities such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This chapter provides an overview of the existing conditions of Eagle Nest State Park's facilities and identifies potential upgrades to sustain a robust facility system.

4.2 BUILDINGS

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center is a major asset and activity center of the Park that was opened in 2009. The building contains 3,770 square feet of heated space and features offices, a reception area, restrooms, a classroom/multi-purpose room, and permanent exhibits. There is a large outdoor patio overlooking the Lake, with a fireplace and large covered area for group gatherings on the north end of the patio, and a small covered area with a barbecue grill at the south end of the patio. Next to the Visitor Center is a picnic area with shelters, picnic tables, and grills.



Eagle Nest Lake State Park Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center is an energy efficient building that is LEED gold certified and has a net zero energy use that meets all its energy needs on site through conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy production. The building is constructed with straw bales, and features include passive solar heating and solar daylighting. There is a photovoltaic array containing 2.8 kilowatt solar panels that serves the Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center has become a popular site for weddings and family gatherings. There is a fee schedule for use of the facility or for meeting rooms only that ranges in cost depending on the season and day of the month, as well as a cleaning deposit required. Cooking and food preparation facilities are not available at the Visitor Center, but catering services are allowed.

Maintenance Yard

The maintenance yard is fenced and gated with covered vehicle and equipment storage and parking. The open shed building at the maintenance yard stores heavy equipment but does not provide adequate shelter from harsh mountain weather, nor is there sufficient space for equipment in use. Nesting birds have also damaged equipment and the building itself is deteriorated from severe weather conditions.



Starting clockwise from top left: maintenance shop; top right: deterioration and cracks in the storage building; bottom left: open shed storage for heavy equipment; middle left: water treatment system in the maintenance shop.



Open shed storage for heavy equipment in the maintenance yard.

The maintenance shop was constructed in 2005. This structure incorporates passive solar heating to minimize operational expenses. The shop includes two bays for vehicle repair and storage, office space, and a restroom. A water treatment system for the domestic water is in the maintenance shop.

The Friends Group has requested a storage building to support ongoing volunteer programs, which could be located within the maintenance yard. The Friends Group has indicated that a storage container or 10-foot by 20-foot shed could be fully utilized for materials storage with provisions to control rodents and weatherproofing.

4.3 CAMPGROUND

The existing campground contains 19 campsites, a central water tap, a double vault toilet, and a small group fire pit. The campsites on the interior of the drive loop provide for back-in parking of recreational vehicles and those on the outside allow for pull-through parking. Each campsite features a barbecue grill and table with an integrated shade structure. Tent camping is permitted but there are no tent pads or platforms provided. Generators are not permitted during quiet hours.

Campers have provided input that the campsites are too exposed and do not offer shade and respite from the sun. There are currently no host sites at the campground. The campground has been consistently full during the

season and there is a desire to add an additional camping area to accommodate campers who are turned away due to a lack of available campsites.

Prairie dogs are a challenge to keeping campsites and trails safe and accessible as they prefer to tunnel in the disturbed dirt within improved areas. They have also eaten through irrigation drip lines in landscaped areas around the Visitor Center.

4.4 TRAILS

The Lakeview Trail extends from the Moreno Day Use Area to Eagle Nest and the north end of the Park and then goes south to the Visitor Center (see *Park Facilities & Amenities map, page 31*). There is a gap in the trail corridor between the Visitor Center and the campground area, requiring pedestrians to walk within the park access road, which is unsafe. The Eagle Nest Lake Trail starts at the existing campground and goes south to the Cieneguilla Day Use Area.

An off-road trail is needed to fill the gap from the Visitor Center to the existing campground. The trail should include a low maintenance surface, such as crusher fines, and benches and rest stops to provide a better experience for trail users. Once this gap in the trail system is filled, the trail system will be approximately 7.8 miles in length.

Additional crusher fine trails from the existing campground and the Day Use Areas to the shoreline should be provided for visitors and campers. Extending the trail system along the east side of the Lake should also be considered.

4.5 PARK ROADS

The primary Park access is designated on Marina Way, with exit-only access from the south boat parking area provided on Fishermans Lane. Each day use area has dedicated access to US Highway 64. The Park roads are graded and surfaced. More parking areas and roadways should be paved, and existing paved roads will need to be repaved. Mud and dust are problems for staff, park visitors, and neighbors. Periodically, gravel roads must be graded to maintain a smooth roadbed. This work is done by the State Park's construction crew as the Park does not have the appropriate equipment. Park staff use truck-mounted equipment to plow snow in the winter.

4.6 OTHER FACILITIES and ACCESSIBILITY

Boat Ramps, Docks, and Fishing Pier

There are two concrete boat ramps with docks at the Lake:

- **North Boat Ramp:** This is a concrete, double lane ramp. The Lake bed is shallow in this area so the ramp can only be accessed during high water levels and cannot be extended due to the slope of the Lake bed at that location. Parking shared by the group shelter is limited, especially for longer boat trailers.
- **South Boat Ramp:** This ramp is the Park's primary boat launching facility. It is a concrete, double lane ramp with a courtesy dock with dockage for four to six boats. The boat ramp is steep, and the concrete has crumbled over time. The ramp should be evaluated for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The existing dock is heavy and tends to break down. The south boat ramp may need to be extended when the Lake level drops lower. A large parking lot with a double vault toilet is located near the ramp.



South boat ramp centered between two docks.

- **Fishing Pier:** The small fishing pier is located on the lakeshore between the Visitor Center and the south boat ramp. Fluctuating lake levels can leave the pier on dry ground when the water is low. The pier is accessed by a “zig zag” configured, ADA-accessible, concrete sidewalk from the south parking area. The sidewalk is crumbling and should be replaced.

Restrooms

There are nine double vault toilets for public use at Moreno, Cieneguilla, and Six Mile Creek Day Use Areas, north and south boat ramps, campground, and the picnic area at the Visitor Center. Each toilet has a 1,000-gallon capacity tank that gets pumped out annually by Park staff. Additional vault toilets are needed for availability during annual servicing.

There are restrooms with flush toilets inside the Visitor Center. There is currently water at the existing campground, but no flush toilets or shower facilities. The maintenance building has a restroom for staff use only.



Vault toilet building at the south boat ramp area.

Utilities

Wet and dry utility systems are provided at the Park as follows:

- **Water:** On-site well with treatment in the maintenance shop
- **Wastewater Management:** On-site septic systems (one for the maintenance shop and one for the Visitor Center)
- **Electricity:** Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Inc., three meters (electric service lines are limited to the Visitor Center and the maintenance shop).

- **Propane:** Contract vendor, one 500-gallon tank
- **Solid Waste Management:** Colfax County
- **Communications Telephone:** CenturyLink (DSL), Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Inc. (fiber)

Eagle Nest Sewer Lagoons

The Village of Eagle Nest formerly operated a wastewater treatment facility on what is now the property of State Parks. A condition of the Village's discharge plan with the New Mexico Environment Department was that the Village decommission and remove the old facility. The site is to be "re-graded to match surrounding contours and reseeded with native grasses". A legislative appropriation for the work was given to State Parks and it is currently undertaking remediation of the lagoon area.

Accessibility

The Visitor Center provides access to individuals with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The boat ramps are steep, which makes it dangerous for people in wheelchairs to access the docks. Trails, campsites, restrooms, and fishing and boating access should be brought into conformance with ADA when improved. While the ADA does not specify requirements for campsites, accessible RV sites would typically be wide, often concrete, and include an accessible table and fire pit. Compacted trails may be concrete, asphalt, or compressed gravel. Accessible parking should be provided near vault toilets located on the road network.

Boundary Fencing

Under the MOA, fencing other than Park boundary fencing is the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish's responsibility. Currently, a barbed wire fence marks the Park boundary. A short section of boundary fence near a church on US Highway 64 was replaced with single-strand wire for the safety of children at play. Wildlife crossings on US Highway 64 should be identified with specific fencing installed for wildlife safety. In some cases, the fence is not located exactly on the boundary. Wire fencing does not provide visual separation between land uses. However, some adjacent landowners may not want their views of the Lake to be obscured.

4.7 LAND and WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal program administered by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The LWCF provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. State Parks administers the state program in partnership with the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

In September 2019, the EMNRD applied for a grant to the LWCF for improvements to Eagle Nest Lake State Park. The EMNRD was awarded a 50/50 matching grant towards the total project cost of \$1.726 million. State Parks intends to use the grant funding for the design and construction of improvements that will increase the usability of the existing campground. The improvements will include extending utility services to the existing campsites, adding a new comfort station, installing water and wastewater treatment systems, and adding ADA campsites. The consultant team for the Management Plan is creating a Master Plan based on the recommendations identified in the Management Plan and anticipated future improvements.

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CHAPTER 5 OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT



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5.1 INTRODUCTION

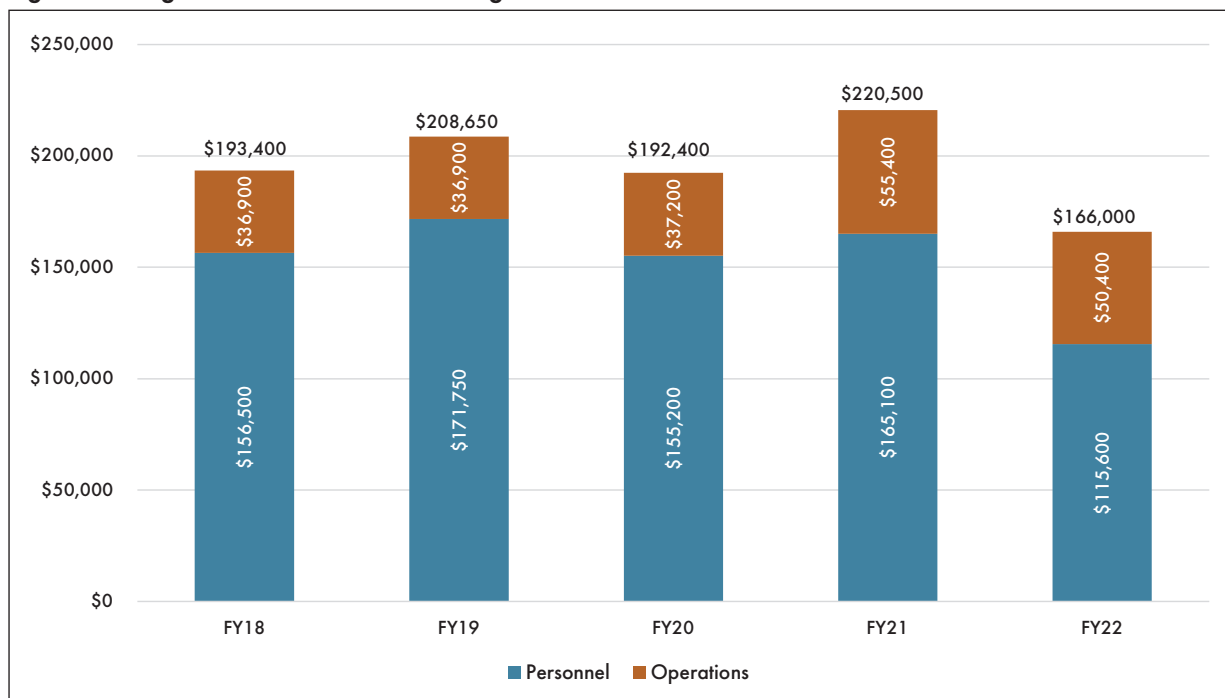
Operations and management are multi-faceted and involve several functions and procedures, including budgeting and staffing, visitation, and hours of operation and fees. Maintaining partnerships with other public agencies and local entities to adequately operate, manage, and provide services at the Park is important to State Parks and the on-site managers of the Park. As with all State Parks, Eagle Nest Lake State Park follows the guidelines contained in the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and State Park’s “Policy and Procedures Manual” and is maintained according to the guidelines contained in State Park’s “Standards of Care Manual”, which ensures quality, safety, and consistency. Park management, rules, and law enforcement authority are authorized by New Mexico statutes and the implementing rules in the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC).

5.2 PARK OPERATIONS

Park Budget

The budget for Eagle Nest Lake State Park in FY2022 was \$166,000, significantly lower than budgets over the five-year period (see Figure 5.1). This included \$115,600 for personnel and \$50,400 for operations. The operations budget was relatively stagnant between FY18 and FY20 (\$36,900 to \$37,200) and then grew to \$55,400 in FY21. Operations line items include travel and transportation, maintenance, supplies, utilities, and other expenses. Gas and oil have shown the greatest variation, from \$5,000 to \$9,760, with changing market prices. Electric utilities is also a large category, with a budget as high as \$8,234 in FY20.

Figure 5.1: Eagle Nest Lake State Park Budget



Source: State Parks.

Staffing

Eagle Nest Lake State Park and Cimarron Canyon State Park staff form one work team. The Park Superintendent is based at Cimarron Canyon State Park and oversees both parks. The Park Manager is based at Eagle Nest Lake State Park. There is a Park Ranger and a Park Technician at Cimarron Canyon State Park and a Marine

Enforcement Officer (MEO) at Eagle Nest Lake State Park. Seasonal employees assist with maintenance and operations during the summer season. Ice safety demands significant staff time during the winter season.

The following are the typical duties of each full-time position:

- **Park Manager:** Responsible for park management and day-to-day operations.
- **Park Ranger/MEO:** Responsible for law enforcement, boating safety, and interpretive programming.
- **Park Technician:** Responsible for grounds, facility, and equipment maintenance.

The Park is in Region II and the regional office is in Tucumcari. The Regional Manager supervises the Park Superintendent, and regional office support is provided by a Regional Administrator and a Plant Operations Specialist that assists with water and wastewater operations. The Park also receives assistance from staff at Coyote Creek State Park. The Regional Interpreter is based out of Sugarite Canyon State Park and serves all the State Park facilities in northeast New Mexico.

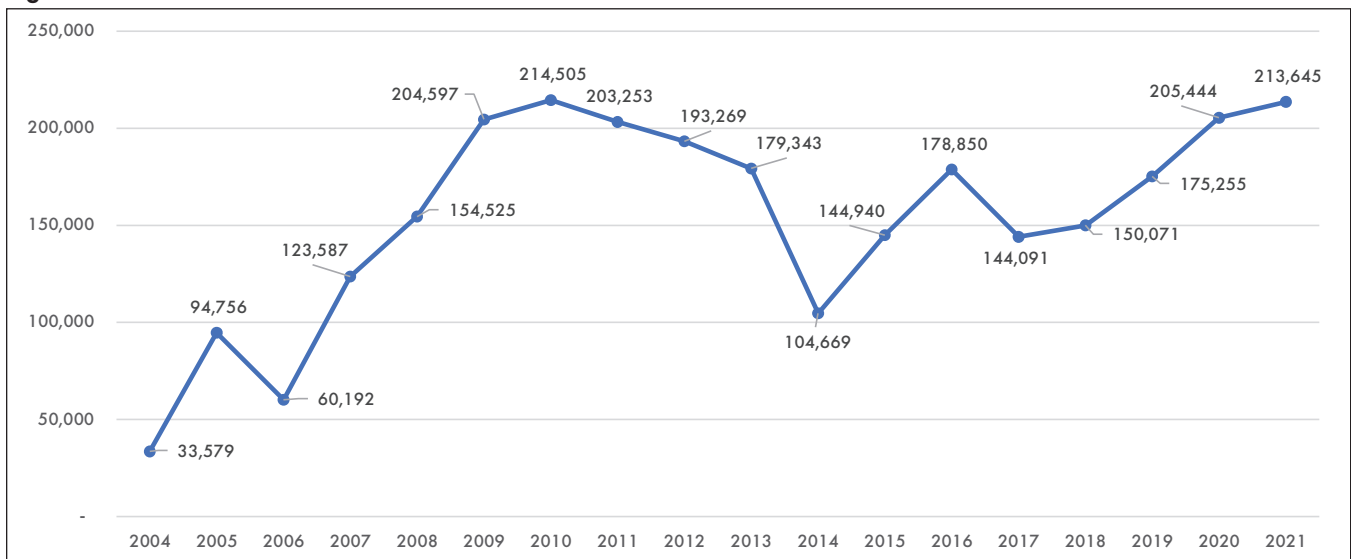
It is difficult to recruit employees due to limited housing options in the area. Growth in tourism brings more visitors to the Park but has also led to increasing housing costs and limited availability of housing in Eagle Nest and Angel Fire. The number of housing units in Eagle Nest grew by 15.2% between 2015 and 2019 (Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). However, there is not enough affordable housing options for staff, which is exacerbated by the short building season, lack of building trades in the area, and relatively long distance for delivery of construction materials.

Park Visitation

Visitation is estimated based on a combination of self-pay receipts and vehicle counters to track entry and exit at free access areas. There are a total of five vehicle counters at the park entrances at Marina Way, Fisherman’s Lane, and Six Mile Creek, Moreno, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas.

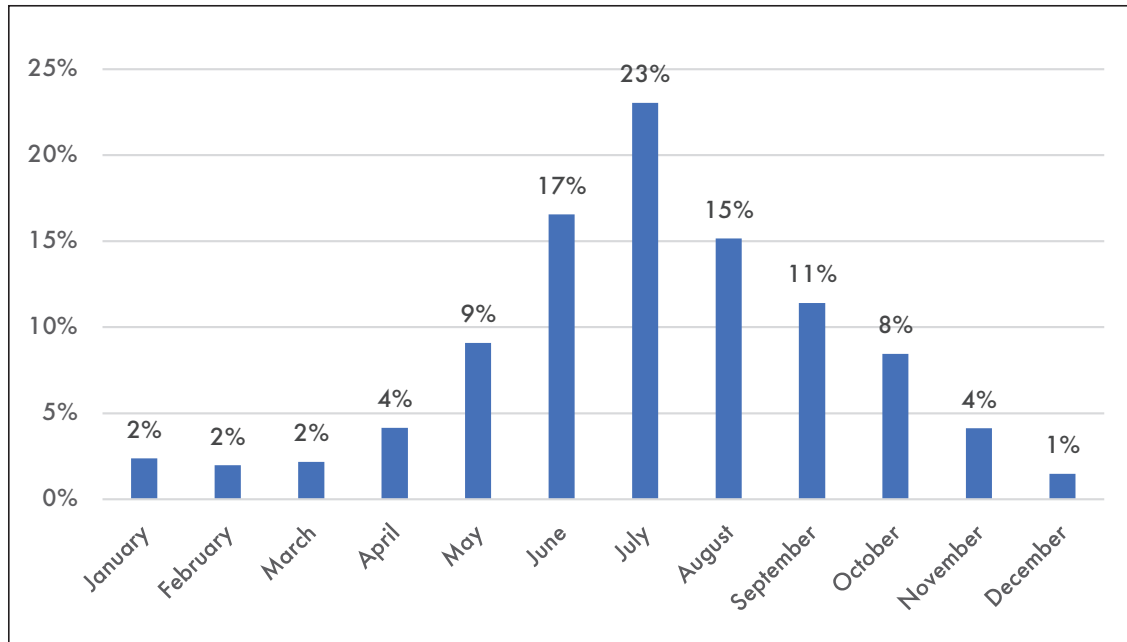
Visitation has been tracked since the Park opened in 2004. Since that time, visitation has mostly risen with some dips in certain years (see Figure 5.2). There was a total of 213,645 visitors to the Park in 2021. This was the busiest year at the Park since the peak of 214,505 in 2010. Visitation has been growing since 2018, when the Ute Park Fire restricted summer park access. On a monthly basis, the peak month is July, which typically accounts for 23% of annual visits, June accounts for 17% of annual visits, and August accounts for 15% of annual visits (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2: Annual Visitation



Source: State Parks.

Figure 5.3: Average Monthly Visitation



Source: State Parks.

5.3 PARK MANAGEMENT

Hours of Operation and Seasonal Closures

The Park and Visitor Center are open daily, year-round. The campground is seasonal, open generally from March 15 to October 1 and closed in the winter months. Campground visitors can stay for 14 days and then can return after six days.

The Cieneguilla Day Use Area is closed during the winter; however, if there is a demand for use, such as cross-country skiing, the area could be opened when conditions are appropriate. The current equipment for snow removal is inadequate for high mountain winter operations.

Fees and Revenue

All visitors to the Park are required to pay established fees; however, the Moreno, Six Mile, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas are free access areas as specified in the MOA with the Department of Game and Fish. The Fee Schedule is established by regulation and fees are posted on the State Park's website. Self-pay stations at the Park identify required fees for visitation.

The Day Use Permit (as of April 2022) is \$5 per motor vehicle, \$15 for a school bus, and \$50 for a commercial charter bus. There is no charge for walk-ins or bicyclists. A camping permit is \$10 for a developed campsite. There is an established fee schedule for rental of the Visitor Center facilities, including a cleaning deposit. The Rental fees for the group shelter is \$90 and \$300 for a concession permit for a parks, fishing, or boating guide.

Signage and Wayfinding

The freestanding sign on US Highway 64 is the standard NMDOT brown and white sign, which is not as visible as it should be to signal the main entrance to the Park. There is another sign set back from the entry that has small text and is difficult to read. As such, visitors frequently miss the entry as they drive along US Highway 64.

While much of the Park boundary is along US Highway 64, the Visitor Center, boat ramps, and campground are located along the lakeshore. Wayfinding from the highway can be challenging as signage is limited once visitors enter the Park. The Park currently lacks boating safety signs.

Entry signs to the Park should be carefully placed and designed to increase visibility for drivers. Entry and wayfinding signs within the Park should utilize materials that can withstand the UV rays of the high elevation and extreme winter weather in this area.

Public Safety

The Park has two employees that are certified law enforcement officers. Law enforcement support is available from Cimarron Canyon State Park staff, Colfax County Sheriff's Office, and the New Mexico State Police. Emergency services are provided by the local volunteer fire departments from Eagle Nest and Angel Fire.

Boating Safety

One of the law enforcement employees is also a marine enforcement officer. The officer conducts routine patrols and boat inspections to ensure that boaters are complying with the State Boat Act (NMSA 1978, Section 66-12-1 et seq.). The Park has two patrol boats and a flat-bottom boat for patrolling the Lake and for maintaining the channel marking and regulatory buoys as water levels fluctuate.

Ice Fishing Safety

The Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures for Eagle Nest Lake State Park in the State Parks Standards of Care Manual provides the process for ice fishing safety. State Parks employees neither encourage nor discourage ice fishing on frozen lakes except when the lakes are closed to ice fishing. State Parks employees respond factually to ice fishing inquiries and recommend specific safety precautions to visitors. All activities on the lake surface by members of the public are at their own risk.



Top: Small highway sign; middle: sign inside the Park; bottom: wood sign as visitors enter the Park.

The Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures state that Department of Game and Fish staff and the Park Superintendent or Park Manager will meet at the Lake to make a closure determination. However, the departments have agreed that this procedure is not necessary, and instead, State Parks manages the closing procedure.

The Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures recommend that visitors using the Lake surface carry a 25-foot length of rescue rope, have a second party nearby, and carry spike nails to enable self-extrication if they should break through the ice. ATVs may be allowed onto the lake surface when ice is six inches thick or greater; utility vehicles (i.e. side-by-sides) may be allowed when the ice is 9-inches thick or greater. The Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures does not allow larger vehicles onto the Lake.

The Park staff monitors air temperature and wind speed daily and regularly checks the depth of ice at the Lake throughout the winter to ensure it is safe for ice fishing. Data about ice depth and weather conditions are posted to the State Parks' website. When the ice meets the thickness requirements, State Parks allows ice fishing and has the authority to open or close the Lake to ice fishing. The ice thickness is measured starting at the shoreline and progressing out over the Lake. In recent winters, there have been 18-20 inches of solid ice on the Lake. However, there are some years when the Lake is not open for ice fishing during the winter season.

5.4 PARTNERSHIPS

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

The State Park's primary partner in management at the Park is the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. The current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was created in 2019 covering several New Mexico State Parks, including Eagle Nest Lake State Park. Key elements of the MOA include:

- EMNRD is authorized to operate the State Park on SCG lands designated by the MOA.
- The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish retains jurisdiction for wildlife and fisheries management and reserves the right to close all or portions of the State Park.
- State Parks charges use fees except at designated "Free Access Areas". Designated "free access areas" for licensed anglers and hunters are located at the Moreno, Six Mile, and Cieneguilla Day Use Areas.
- Any State Park rules that do not conflict with the MOA would apply.
- Fencing other than Park boundary fencing is the responsibility of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Interstate Stream Commission

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission operates Eagle Nest Dam and is responsible for the terms and conditions of Permit 71. There is a Joint Powers Agreement (EMNRD No. 03-521-0500-0079) between State Parks, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Office of the State Engineer, and the Interstate Stream Commission that clarifies responsibilities for the facilities and services at Eagle Nest Lake. The JPA specifically addresses the Interstate Stream Commission's responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and management of Eagle Nest Dam. The USGS New Mexico Water Science Center operates a lake gage at Eagle Nest Dam and a stream gage on the Cimarron River below the Dam. Water level data is available online for the Cimarron River from 1950 to the present and for Eagle Nest Lake from 1986 to the present.

Volunteers and Community Partnerships

The State Parks Volunteer Program Operations Manual provides detailed guidelines regarding Volunteer Program requirements, operational procedures, and program management procedures. Detailed information on the types of volunteers, such as day volunteers, resident volunteers, event volunteers, project volunteers,

interns or work-study, volunteer groups, and support group members, is also provided. Prior to placement into a position, volunteers must complete the required application process, which includes a preliminary assessment, processing, and placement procedures.

Community partnerships at the Park involves working on a variety of projects, programs, and services with different organizations, including:

- Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks
- Village of Eagle Nest
- Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce
- Cimarron Watershed Alliance
- Cimarron School District

There is the potential to partner with other organizations, including the local Audubon Society chapter and the local New Mexico Native Plant Society chapter, on a variety of projects.

Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks

The Friends of Eagle Nest Lake and Cimarron Canyon State Parks (Friends Group) was established in 2005. The Friends Group supports activities to enhance visitor experiences and raise money to support operations at the Park. The Friends Group has many active members, including full-time and part-time residents of the area. Regular monthly meetings are held to plan and prepare for activities and events such as fundraisers and clean-up days.

The Friends Group organizes volunteers for clean-up after major events. Funding and volunteer hours are dedicated to some maintenance and repair needed at the Park, such as painting buildings, disc golf course repairs and supplies, boat ramp repair, light bulb replacement, snow plow and cutting edge replacements, floor mats, and outdoor ash trays. In the summer months, the Friends Group sells firewood to campers and then donates the profits to the Park.



Polar Bear Plunge event organized by the Friends Group.

The Friends Group members are invested in the community and are a vital liaison between the Parks and local residents and businesses. Community outreach by the Friends Group to secure sponsorships for events from numerous local businesses has been successful. The Friends Group also works closely with the Eagle Nest Chamber of Commerce to promote events throughout the region.

CHAPTER 6 **RECOMMENDATIONS**



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6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides recommendations for improvements to the Eagle Nest Lake State Park based on identified needs and as determined through meetings with State Parks staff, research and analysis, and use since the original Management Plan was completed in 2010. The recommendations are based on needs over a 5-year planning horizon and categorized under resources, recreation, facilities, and operations and management. The Master Plan for Eagle Nest Lake State Park will provide conceptual design and cost estimates for the physical improvements identified in the Management Plan.

6.2 RECREATION

Improve Access

ADA Access

There is no universal access to Eagle Nest Lake for fishing that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. It is recommended that options be identified and evaluated to improve universal accessibility throughout the Park in accordance with the ADA. Accessibility to the Lake is often a challenge due to the fluctuating water levels and steep topography.

- **ADA Access 1.1:** Identify and evaluate alternatives for improving ADA access to the existing south boat ramp, fishing pier, parking areas, and the vault toilets.
- **ADA Access 1.2:** Provide two accessible campsites in the existing campground and three accessible campsites in the future campground (see *Existing and Future Campground Recommendations later in this section*).

Expand Interpretative and Educational Programs

Exhibits

The original exhibit design plan at the Visitor Center included two phases. As noted in Section 3.3 Interpretation and Education, the first phase was installed in 2009 when the Visitors' Center opened. The second phase of exhibits is intended to address prehistory, Native American history, and wildlife in the area.

- **Exhibits 1.1:** Design and install phase 2 of the interpretive exhibits at the Visitor Center.

Youth Engagement

The Visitor Center features a classroom and outdoor spaces designed with youth programs in mind. Park staff and the Regional Interpreter for State Parks should continue to work with the local schools and volunteers to promote school field trips to the Park and increase engagement with youth. Staff should also work with local youth groups and other organizations to expand their access to experiential learning opportunities at the Park.

- **Youth Engagement 1.1:** Promote stewardship of the Park by coordinating with local schools and youth organizations on the benefits of natural resource management.
- **Youth Engagement 1.2:** Develop youth-centered programming and opportunities that include, but are not limited to, building and maintaining trails, improving habitat, water quality monitoring, working at the Visitor Center, and clean-up activities.

Visitor Engagement

The Park itself functions as a living classroom. Staff time is needed to engage with Park visitors in areas other than just the Visitor Center. Environmental education for people of all ages is an increasingly important component of the visitor experience.

- **Visitor Engagement 1.1:** Continue to develop the “walking program” that has Park staff meeting and engaging with Park visitors staying at the campground and other areas of the Park.
- **Visitor Engagement 1.2:** Expand environmental education and astronomy programs, such as star gazing and observation equipment, climate change and its impact on the Moreno Valley and Eagle Nest Lake, and wildlife education, for visitors of all ages.

6.3 FACILITIES

Campgrounds

Improve Existing Campground

The existing campground needs to be improved to protect natural resources and provide additional visitor amenities. Campers have requested shade trees to provide protection from the wind and sun. Utility hook-ups are not provided to campsites. A mobile solar electric system could provide interim service for the camp host. Trail connections are also needed for campers to walk between campsites, restrooms, and the Lake. Without designated trails, campers typically establish a myriad of tracks that lead to degradation of natural resources and habitat, soil erosion, and widening of the path. The principles of “Leave No Trace” (Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics) provide a good framework to minimize the impacts of visitors on the Park’s natural resources.

- **Existing Campground 1.1:** Establish a durable-surfaced walking trail between the campground and other Park facilities.
- **Existing Campground 1.2:** Provide two accessible campsites.
- **Existing Campground 1.3:** Design and construct a social gathering area at the campground.
- **Existing Campground 1.4:** Provide two camp host sites.
- **Existing Campground 1.5:** Install electrical hook-ups at each campsite.
- **Existing Campground 1.6:** Construct a comfort station to provide full-service facilities, including toilets and showers. Provide a few parking spaces next to the comfort station.
- **Existing Campground 1.7:** Add deciduous shade trees (with irrigation bubblers) that are appropriate for the region.

Provide Future Campground

The existing campground is consistently full through the summer and campers are turned away. New campsites are needed to meet the current camping demand. There is an area south of the existing campground that could be developed with a second campground with additional campsites.

A future social gathering area within the future campsite would provide opportunities for socialization and activities. This could provide the venue for staff to engage with campers instead of asking them to gather elsewhere in the Park.

- **Future Campground 1.1:** Design and construct a new campground to address the unmet need for additional camp sites.
- **Future Campground 1.2:** Provide three accessible campsites.

- **Future Campground 1.3:** Provide a social gathering area, two vault toilets with a waste storage tank, and two camp host sites with a small, shared gathering area for the hosts.
- **Future Campground 1.4:** Add a walking path from the new campground to the shoreline.
- **Future Campground 1.5:** Add deciduous shade trees (with irrigation) at the campsites and the social gathering area. Plant selections should be appropriate for the region.
- **Future Campground 1.6:** Add a water hydrant at the new campground.

Trails, Roads, and Parking Areas

Expand Trail Access

As previously noted, the Park has two trails; the Lakeview Trail runs from Moreno Day Use Area to Eagle Nest and south to the Visitor Center and the Eagle Nest Lake Trail runs from the existing campground and goes south to the Cieneguilla Day Use Area. There is a gap in the trail system between the Visitor Center and the existing campground, and there are no walking paths from the campground to the shoreline. State Parks would like to work with Department of Game and Fish to determine the feasibility of extending the trail system around the east side of the Lake to Eagle Nest Dam.

Expanding and improving the Park's trail system would serve several purposes, including providing additional activities to visitors; attracting new visitors; providing better access to the Lake and boat ramps; and protecting native vegetation. Existing and future trails should include a crusher fine surface, supplemented with benches, rest stations, and wayfinding and interpretive signs.

The location of the Park along US Highway 64 presents an opportunity to complete a significant portion of a proposed regional trail outside the Park that would benefit park visitors and the Moreno Valley community.

- **Trail Access 1.1:** Improve the existing Lakeview Trail and Eagle Nest Lake Trail to allow for ADA accessibility.
- **Trail Access 1.2:** Design and construct trail connections that link the Visitor Center, existing and future campgrounds, south boat ramp, and the shoreline (see *Existing Campground Recommendation 1.1* and *Future Campground Recommendation 1.4*).
- **Trail Access 1.3:** Participate in planning for a regional trail corridor outside the Park, which should be coordinated with the Villages of Eagle Nest and Angel Fire.
- **Trail Access 1.4:** Educate visitors on the principles of "Leave No Trace" to minimize the impact on natural resources at the Park, including but not limited to, providing durable walking surfaces.

Improve and Maintain Park Roads and Parking Areas

All Park access roads need to have a rock foundation and base course to withstand the high mountain weather conditions. Gravel roads need to be graded regularly with new gravel added periodically. Pavement slurry has been used to provide a hard surface on some roads, which requires patching and repaving.

- **Roads and Parking Areas 1.1:** Evaluate drainage issues in the parking lots at the Visitor Center, south boat ramp, and Moreno and Six Mile Day Use Areas, and provide stormwater facilities, where needed.
- **Roads and Parking Areas 1.2:** Pave the Moreno Day Use Area access and parking lot.
- **Roads and Parking Areas 1.3:** Develop a road maintenance plan.

Snow Removal

There is a need for new and improved snow removal equipment that would enable Park staff to improve safety and accessibility. Two plows are needed to maintain clear access during the winter. A front loader is also needed to relocate snow from parking lots. The equipment should be purchased in the western United States to ensure the availability of maintenance, replacement parts, and supplies.

- **Snow Removal 1.1:** Acquire two plows and a front loader for snow removal purposes that can also be used at Cimarron Canyon State Park.

Boat Ramps

There are two boat ramps, located north and south of the Visitor Center. The south boat ramp is the highest use area in the Park, with the highest volume of vehicle traffic. Improvements are needed to better accommodate visitors by providing convenient, safe, and diverse boating access. The boat ramps and courtesy dock are both in need of upgrading to improve the functionality and safety for boaters.

New boating safety signs are needed to warn boaters of strong waves from afternoon winds common to the Lake and that boaters should wait out the weather by the dam (accidents can occur from small craft not waiting it out). Signs should also warn boaters to watch for special hazards, such as the fact that the west shoreline has several peninsulas that appear during low water levels.

Funding for these boating access improvement projects will be from the Sport Fish Restoration federal funding and non-federal Motorboat Fuel Tax, and may be supplemented by the state's boat registration funds.

- **Boat Access 1.1:** Evaluate and improve the north and south boat ramps and courtesy docks for resurfacing, extension, widening, maintenance, replacement, and removals during winter months. The boat docks should be light weight and have wheels to ease moving them in and out of the Lake.
- **Boating Access 1.2:** Expand the boat trailer parking at the north dock area.
- **Boating Access 1.3:** Install boating safety signage.

Maintenance Buildings

Improve Storage and Maintenance Buildings

The existing storage building in the Maintenance Yard does not have adequate space to shelter equipment from severe weather. An enclosed shelter would help prevent birds from nesting above equipment as well as protect the equipment from the elements. The existing storage building is unheated, does not have a floor, and has been deteriorating over time.

The existing maintenance building contains the water treatment system and two vehicle bays. The water treatment system does not include chlorination, which has been identified by Park staff as a need. The building's exterior finish has cracking and spalling, which should be repaired.

To support ongoing events and activities, the Friends Group has asked for a dedicated storage building for storing materials used for events on site. This would allow the volunteers to keep materials in one convenient location.

- **Storage and Maintenance Buildings 1.1:** Evaluate the existing drainage within the maintenance yard.
- **Storage and Maintenance Buildings 1.2:** Replace or remodel the existing storage building to provide electricity, and an enclosed and heated space for heavy equipment.

- **Storage and Maintenance Buildings 1.3:** Evaluate the water treatment system and determine whether chlorination should be added to the system.
- **Storage and Maintenance Buildings 1.4:** Re-stucco the maintenance shop building.
- **Storage and Maintenance Buildings 1.5:** Add a secure storage building for the Friends Group to store supplies and equipment.

Other Facilities

Provide a Barrier and Screening at Park Boundary

Fencing and screening along the Park boundary could be achieved by planting vegetation or installing fencing that preserve the aesthetics of the Park and views to the Lake. The location, materials, and need for screening needs to be evaluated as there may be multiple solutions depending on the location and need.

- **Fencing and Screening 1.1:** Install screening in appropriate locations along the Park boundary from the campground to the maintenance yard.
- **Fencing and Screening 1.2:** Work with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to identify and install roll fencing at wildlife crossings along US Highway 64 so animals do not get tangled or injured in the fencing.
- **Fencing and Screening 1.3:** Assess and repair existing fencing (bollard and cable) along the interior park roadways to protect natural resources from random vehicular traffic.

Identify Access to RV Dump Station

There is no RV dump station at the Park and no plans to install one. The Park should work with area RV parks to find convenient locations where RV campers at the Park can dispose of sanitary waste.

- **RV Dump Station 1.1:** Identify RV dump stations in the area and inform Eagle Nest Park campers.

6.4 RESOURCES

Natural Resource Management

Update Biological Data

As noted in Section 2.3 Natural Resources, there is a lack of detailed information about natural resources in the Park. State Parks staff can support volunteer efforts and develop partnerships with local birders and use the information for educational use in exhibits, brochures, and programming. Completing resource inventories can be accomplished by enlisting volunteers and other partners from a variety of backgrounds – non-profit organizations, universities and colleges, other agencies (municipal, state, and federal), and contractors.

A baseline survey of non-native, invasive plant species should be completed separate from the comprehensive botanical survey. As part of this action, State Parks should develop a plan to identify the priority species to target and determine the control methods recommended for each species. Potential partners include Colfax County, Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

Invasive and exotic aquatic species are a threat to the health of the Lake's ecosystem. The *New Mexico Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan* can provide strategies to prevent the spread of these species.

- **Biological Data 1.1:** Complete a baseline biological survey, including non-native invasive plant and aquatic species.

- **Biological Data 1.2:** Develop a weed management plan.
- **Biological Data 1.3:** Continually monitor the Lake for the presence of invasive and exotic aquatic species.

Water Quality

There is a need for on-going water quality testing by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to monitor eutrophication and the growth of algae in the Lake. The New Mexico Environment Department also conducts water testing.

- **Water Quality 1.1:** Educate visitors on the importance of water quality testing at the Lake. Include this as an element of educational programming.

Preserve Wildlife Habitat and Scenic Viewsheds

The loss of wildlife habitat and scenic viewsheds due to development is a concern throughout the Moreno Valley. The loss and fragmentation of habitat is detrimental to wildlife populations, especially large game animals such as elk. The Park should serve to protect wildlife habitat, including wildlife movement corridors, while balancing the needs of visitors.

- **Wildlife Habitat and Scenic Viewsheds 1.1:** Concentrate park development in developed areas while preserving other areas as open space.

Park Evacuation

Improve Evacuation Procedures

State Parks has a partnership with the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, State Forestry Division for fire management and fire fuels mitigation. The Park currently has an evacuation plan in place that addresses notification to visitors, clearance of the Park, securing the facilities, turning off propane tanks, locking gates, etc. During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a determination that all State Parks would close for a period of time. The current evacuation plan does not address different types of emergencies and what, if anything, would be required in response.

- **Evacuation Procedures 1.1:** Review and update the Eagle Nest Lake State Park evacuation plan, as needed.

Cultural Resources

Evaluate Historic Significance of the Line Camp

The Line Camp has not been evaluated to determine the historic significance of the building and the site. The building has continued to deteriorate and should remain closed until the evaluation has been completed and a determination made regarding its future use and potential for rehabilitation.

- **Line Camp 1.1:** Complete a cultural resource survey of the Line Camp.

6.5 OPERATIONS and MANAGEMENT

Park Operations

Improve Water Rescue Capabilities

All activities on the surface of the Lake by members of the public are at their own risk. Park staff will attempt to rescue people who fall through the ice during the winter. However, staff is not ice-rescue certified. The current Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures (ice safety policy and procedures) need to be revisited to update how and when the Lake is closed in the winter. There are no procedures or policies in place requiring people to remove vehicles that have fallen through the ice.

- **Water Rescue 1.1:** Acquire an amphibious vehicle for water rescue operations.
- **Water Rescue 1.2:** Revise the Ice Fishing Maintenance Procedures for Eagle Nest Lake State Park in the State Parks Standards of Care Manual, including procedures for removal of vehicles in the Lake.
- **Water Rescue 1.3:** Provide ongoing water rescue training for Park staff.

Provide Additional Park Staff Positions

Management and operations, in particular boating safety, takes the Park Ranger and staff away from providing services directly to Park visitors. Staff duties are split between Eagle Nest Lake State Park and Cimarron Canyon State Park, which does not allow them to adequately serve visitors and conduct regular Park maintenance.

- **Park Staffing 1.1:** Provide funding for additional full-time-equivalent positions in the Park's annual operating budget.

Staff Housing

State Parks has identified the need for staff housing as a means to improve safety and security at the Park, to address the lack of housing availability in the local area, and being able to attract and retain staff. Park staff must be available 24/7 for emergencies and law enforcement duties. The Line Camp area may offer an accessible location that is close to US Highway 64 while granting staff some level of privacy.

- **Staff Housing 1.1:** Determine the appropriate location for staff housing at the Park.
- **Staff Housing 1.2:** Design and construct staff housing and utilities to serve the residences.

Park Management

Increase Revenue Generation

The Park should evaluate the feasibility of increasing revenue by increasing the number of Park users and rentals. This would be done in compliance with the fee schedule for facility rentals and concessions.

- **Revenue Generation 1.1:** Expand the number of campsites at the Park (see *Future Campground Recommendations 1.1 through 1.6*).
- **Revenue Generation 1.2:** Promote the Visitor Center to rent for special events.

Signage and Wayfinding

There is a need to improve signage and wayfinding in the Park. Some areas either have no signs or inadequate signs. The Park has had difficulty keeping signs in adequate condition due to the elements and weather conditions. The freestanding Park sign on US Highway 64 is not as visible as it needs to be to effectively direct traffic to the Visitor Center. Boating safety signs need to be improved. An information board is also needed at the Visitor Center, where restrictions, times, and other information can be posted as needed. Glass coverings tend to protect materials from ultraviolet solar radiation better than plastic. State Parks is working

on a comprehensive signage plan for all State Parks. This will establish standards for design, placement, and frequency.

- **Signage and Wayfinding 1.1:** Design and install a Park entry sign at US Highway 64, wayfinding direction signs, boating safety signs, and an information board at the Visitor Center.

Partnerships

Expand Partnerships with State Parks, Volunteers, and Local Communities

The proximity of Cimarron Canyon State Park and Coyote Creek State Park is mutually beneficial and provides the opportunity to share resources and collaborate on staffing, programming, advertising, and research. State Parks encourages volunteerism and values the important support volunteers provide at its facilities. The State Parks Volunteer Program specifies that each Park shall have a volunteer plan in place that supports volunteer services and encourages members of the local communities to serve.

The Friends Group is the primary avenue for volunteerism at the Park and could provide a structure for working with more volunteers to support a wider range of Park functions. The limited number of staff make it difficult to keep the Visitor Center open every day, all day. Volunteers should be enlisted to help staff the Visitor Center, assist with office functions, and assist with interpretive programs.

- **Partnerships 1.1:** Expand partnerships with Cimarron Canyon and Coyote Creek State Parks.
- **Partnerships 1.2:** Develop a comprehensive volunteer plan that involves the Friends Group, campground hosts, and other volunteers in staffing the Visitor Center, office functions, interpretative programs, and as many other operational activities as is feasible.
- **Partnerships 1.3:** Provide outreach to the local communities of Eagle Nest, Angel Fire, Taos, and other nearby communities to encourage people of all ages to volunteer at the Park.

Continue to Recruit Camp Hosts

State Parks works on recruiting camp hosts annually to stay at the campground during the summer season. Camp hosts are assigned a campsite (with utility hookups where available) and receive hands-on training by experienced Park staff. In exchange, camp hosts are required to make a commitment to being at the Park for 24 hours a week, and a two-month term of service is strongly encouraged. Schedules are flexible based on the needs and volunteer availability.

- **Camp Hosts 1.1:** Provide two camp host sites each at the existing and future campgrounds (see *Existing Campground Recommendation 1.4* and *Future Campground Recommendation 1.3*).

Continue to Partner with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

The Park and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish partner to manage the Joint Management Area at the Park governed through the 2019 MOA, which states the Park is responsible for operations and management of the Joint Management Area. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has jurisdiction over wildlife and fisheries management, which includes monitoring fish populations and maintaining water quality in the Lake. The partnership between the Lake and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is important to the overall health and success of the Park.

- **New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 1.1:** Continue to comply with and maintain responsibilities in the 2019 Memorandum of Agreement.
- **New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 1.2:** Work with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to monitor for invasive species.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Abbreviations and References

Appendix B: Statutes, Rules, and Policies

Appendix C: Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, State Parks Division, and the State Game Commission through the Department of Game and Fish

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ADA Americans with Disabilities Act
- AOB Annual Operations Budget, State Parks
- ATV All-Terrain Vehicle
- BOAT Boat Program, State Parks
- BOR Bureau of Reclamation (U.S. Department of the Interior)
- CIP Capital Improvement Plan, State Parks
- CWA Cimarron Watershed Alliance
- DGF New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- NMDOT New Mexico Department of Transportation
- EMNRD Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
- FWS U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- ISC Interstate Stream Commission
- GAIN Gaining Access Into Nature, a program of the Department of Game and Fish
- FY Fiscal Year
- JMA Joint Management Area
- JPA Joint Powers Agreement
- LEED Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, U.S. Green Building Council
- LEO Law Enforcement Officer
- MOA Memorandum of Agreement
- MEO Marine Enforcement Officer
- NM New Mexico
- OHV Off-highway Vehicle
- PVT Private sector, Volunteers, Friends Groups
- RTP Recreation Trails Program
- RV Recreational Vehicle
- SHPO State Historic Preservation Office (Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs)
- SPD State Parks (Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department)
- YCC Youth Conservation Corps

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STATUTES, RULES, and POLICIES

The following statutes, rules, and policies may apply to the operations, management, and development of New Mexico State Parks. This is only a listing of selected statutes, rules, and policies and not a comprehensive list of the statutes, rules, and policies that may apply to the Park.

- Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Policy and Procedure
- New Mexico State Parks, State Parks Policy and Procedures Manual
- New Mexico Statutes (NMSA 1978) nmonesource.com
- Chapter 16, Article 2: State Parks
- Chapter 18, Article 6: Cultural Properties Act
- Chapter 66, Article 12: Boating Act
- New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) nmonesource.com
- Title 4, Chapter 10: Cultural Properties and Historic Preservation
- Title 19, Chapter 5: State Parks and Recreation
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

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**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE
ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
AND THE
STATE GAME COMMISSION
THROUGH THE
DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH**

**REGARDING STATE PARKS AT CIMARRON CANYON,
CLAYTON LAKE, EAGLE NEST LAKE, FENTON LAKE,
MESILLA VALLEY BOSQUE, AND PECOS CANYON**

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) is entered by and between the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), State Parks Division (Division), and the State Game Commission (SGC) through the Department of Game and Fish (DGF) to govern EMNRD's management of Cimarron Canyon, Clayton Lake, Eagle Nest Lake, Fenton Lake, Mesilla Valley Bosque, and Pecos Canyon State Parks.

WHEREAS, pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 9-5A-4, the Division is responsible for developing, maintaining, managing, and supervising all state parks including those portions of Cimarron Canyon, Clayton Lake, Eagle Nest Lake, Fenton Lake, Mesilla Valley Bosque, and Pecos Canyon (State Parks) that are on SGC owned lands and shown on Attachments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to this MOA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to NMSA 1978, §§ 17-1-14 and 17-4-1, SGC is authorized and responsible for acquiring, holding, developing, and improving lands for fish hatcheries, game farms, game refuges, bird refuges, resting and nesting grounds, field stations, dams, lakes, ditches, flumes, waterways, pipelines, canals, rights-of-way, trails, and roads and for all purposes incidental to the propagation, preservation, protection, and management of the game, birds, fish, and wildlife of the State of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, SGC has acquired and developed certain properties and facilities in each of the named areas; and

WHEREAS, DGF and EMNRD entered into prior agreements to provide, among other things, for the development, operation, maintenance, and supervision of the State Parks on SGC property,

NOW THEREFORE, DGF AND EMNRD AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. General Operation and Purposes:

A. SGC grants and assigns to EMNRD authorization to operate State Parks on SCG owned lands in the areas designated on Attachments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The Division shall develop, maintain, manage, and supervise the State Parks in those

areas, except lands owned by the Division, another state agency, or a federal agency, in a manner consistent with this MOA. SCG retains legal title to the properties, including permanent developments, and site improvement funded by SGC or by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Aid Division pursuant to 50 C.F.R. 80. DGF shall notify and consult with the Division concerning any permanent development DGF proposes in the State Parks. The Division shall notify and consult with DGF concerning any permanent development the Division proposes.

B. DGF retains jurisdiction and regulatory responsibility for all wildlife and fisheries management, hunting, fishing, and trapping in the State Parks and authority to enforce Chapter 17 NMSA. DGF personnel or designated agents may access areas designated as State Parks at any time including but not limited to access for wildlife/fish management activities and maintenance projects. Additionally, all SGC rules shall apply to the State Parks, except as provided in Section 1.D below.

C. DGF reserves the right to close all or portions of the State Parks in this MOA and shall notify the Division at least 14 days prior to such closure.

D. The Division may charge use fees consistent with its rules for activities related to camping and picnic facilities, restrooms, vault toilets, and other improvements funded by the Division; provided, the Division may not collect such fees from hunters and fishermen holding licenses or permits issued pursuant to SGC rules when using the areas denoted as "Free Access Areas" as defined by DGF.

E. The Division shall operate and maintain each State Park in accordance with the Division rules that are not in conflict with this MOA or, unless provided for in this MOA, different than SGC rules. Division rules governing activities within State Parks shall apply to State Parks within this MOA.

F. Boundary fencing other than park boundary fencing is DGF's responsibility, but the Division may remove livestock from the State Parks and make temporary repairs to the existing boundary fences to the extent it has staff and funding available for this work. DGF shall provide each park with materials for fence repairs on an as-needed basis upon mutual agreement. The Division shall inform DGF of continuing problems with livestock entering the State Park or of the need for significant repairs to or replacement of the boundary fencing. On a mutually agreed upon schedule, DGF shall make permanent repairs to boundary fences surrounding SGC property.

2. Reporting and Federal Compliance Requirements:

A. Both parties shall participate in inspections and compliance reviews at all DGF Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Acts funded facilities at the State Parks at times arranged by DGF with the agreement by the Division. On a mutually agreed upon schedule, the Division will correct any issues identified as out of compliance during inspections or compliance review.

B. The Division shall provide records for each State Park included in this MOA upon request within 30 days of request.

3. Communications:

A. Both parties shall develop and implement specific procedures for resolving any requests or other matters that may arise in connection with the State Parks that are otherwise not addressed in this MOA. Such procedures may include, but are not limited to, meetings and correspondence at the staff level and, if not successful, formal written requests for involvement and resolution by senior staff within DGF and the Division.

B. The parties agree to send notice of all proposed rulemakings to the other that could impact the State Parks' operations at or before the time notice is published in the New Mexico Register.

4. Events and Programs: The Division shall notify DGF prior to approving any commercial activities that might take place on SGC property within the State Parks. DGF shall not unreasonably withhold approval of such activities, taking into consideration factors set forth in Section 5.A.

5. Cost Sharing and Additional Activities:

A. Except as specified otherwise in this MOA, the Division shall bear or pay with funds available to it any costs the Division incurs for operation, maintenance, and development of the State Parks other specific federal and state funding opportunities DGF manages.

B. The Division shall develop and implement in conjunction with DGF equitable cost sharing procedures between the Division and DGF prior to performing any new specific tasks or responsibilities at the State Parks that DGF may request.

6. Trail Access and Parking:

A. The Division and its visitors shall have access to trails on SGC properties adjacent to a State Park if the trailhead for such trail is within the State Park. Access is permitted adjacent to or beyond the terminus of a trail where allowed by DGF rule.

B. Visitors, possessing a valid license issued by DGF shall be allowed, free 24-hour access to trails and parking on a State Park adjacent to SGC properties in specific parking areas designated in the attachments to this MOA.

C. DGF may close trails from time to time for seasonal wildlife management purposes.

7. Dam Safety and Maintenance: The parties agree to comply with Office of the State Engineer, Dam Safety Division rules. DGF shall be responsible for maintenance projects and will coordinate these activities with the Division.

8. Special Management Units: The parties will coordinate regarding areas DGF designates as special management units based on environmental needs and concerns of specific areas within the State Parks. The parties shall determine how the areas may be used or protected in the forthcoming year.

9. Land Ownership and Issues at Specific Parks:

A. Cimarron Canyon State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on SGC Property as shown on Attachment 1.

Specific Park Issues

- 1) No rock climbing shall be allowed at the Cimarron Canyon State Park. DGF prohibits rock climbing outside the State Park area.
- 2) Free Access Areas for hunting, fishing, trapping, and public recreation are as follows and as indicated in Attachment 1:
 - Tolby Free Angler Day Use Area (north of Highway 64);
 - Tolby Creek Trailhead Free Angler Day Use Area (south of Highway 64);
 - Clear Creek Free Angler Day Use Area;
 - Maverick Trailhead Free Angler Day Use Area; and
 - Perryville Free Angler Day Use Area

B. Clayton Lake State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on SGC property and on state trust land leased from the State Land Office as shown on Attachment 2.

EMNRD No. 20-521-0500-0077
NMDGF. No. _____

Specific Park Issues

- 1) No improvements are allowed on the faces of the dam.
- 2) DGF may adjust the level of water in the lake, including its draining, to accommodate work required or approved by appropriate water authority or owner for the lake or dam. The DGF shall provide reasonable notice of these actions to the Division.
- 3) Free Access Area is as follows: Main Boat Ramp Parking Area.

C. Eagle Nest Lake State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on land it owns and on SGC property (Attachment 3) identified as the Joint Management Area (JMA), which is operated as a part of the State Park as limited below. The JMA is part of the State Park for joint law enforcement purposes and Division rules shall apply to it; subject to SGC rules; however, the JMA is not an authorized area for camping, contained fires, any development, improvements, or other uses without SGC's prior written consent.

Specific Park Issues

- 1) Any authorized hunting area within the State Park shall be determined by SGC after consultation with the Division and subject to Division rules.
- 2) The Division may charge fees for the use of the State Park, but such charge shall not exceed those charges authorized by rule or law. The Division shall not charge fees for the following:
 - The Division shall provide three areas identified on Attachment 3 as access points for State Park patrons to fish from the shoreline along the lake's perimeter, except as such access to the shoreline or lake may be limited pursuant to this MOA between SGC and the Division. The Division shall provide and maintain access, parking, and toilet and waste facilities at these designated points at no charge to park patrons or SGC licensees. The areas are sited to allow access by foot to the perimeter of Eagle Nest Lake; and
 - The Division shall not charge licensed hunters and trappers for the right to access, trap, or hunt in the authorized areas during the designated hunting or trapping seasons if they

enter at one of the three free access points identified on Attachment 3.

- 3) The Division shall provide DGF, at no charge, storage areas for up to two boats, one of which shall be covered but not enclosed, to be coordinated with the State Park.

D. Fenton Lake State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on SGC property and the United State Department of Agriculture, Forest Service property as shown on Attachment 4.

Specific Park Issues

- 1) Provided there are no specific water storage or delivery obligations, Division personnel, after consulting DGF personnel, may raise or lower the water level of the lake as needed to protect the State Park facilities.
- 2) No improvements are allowed on the faces of the dam.
- 3) The DGF may adjust the level of water in the lake, including its draining, to accommodate required or approved work on the lake or dam. DGF shall provide reasonable notice of these actions to the Division.
- 4) Free Access Areas are as follows: Main Entrance Parking Area and Lake Fork Day Use Area (see Attachment 4).

E. Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on land it owns and on SGC property. The Division also leases certain portions of the Park from the International Boundary and Water Commission. This is shown on Attachment 5.

Specific Park Issues

- 1) The Division shall provide, at no charge, space to DGF in the visitor center for administrative and public education purposes, as well as offer opportunities to DGF to conduct other educational programs, to be coordinated with the Division.
- 2) The Division shall prohibit within the State Park the possession of firearms, arrows and air or gas fired projectiles, weapons, and any

EMNRD No. 20-521-0500-0077
 NMDGF. No. _____

other device normally used for legal hunting activities.

- 3) DGF shall request the SGC designate its property as wildlife habitat and nesting ground by closing the Property to hunting and by regulating fishing on the Property in consultation with the Division.

F. Pecos Canyon State Park

Land Ownership: The Division operates the State Park on SGC property. This is shown on Attachment 6.

Specific Park Issues

- 1) If any portion of the property changes ownership during the term of this MOA, DGF will notify the Division at least 90 days prior to a transfer of ownership and the Division's management boundary will change accordingly.
- 2) DGF shall request the SGC designate its property as wildlife habitat and nesting ground by closing the Property to hunting and by regulating fishing on the Property in consultation with the Division.
- 3) Free Fishing Access Areas
 - i. Mora Fishing Access area
 - ii. Bert Clancy Fishing Access area
 - iii. Jamie Koch Fishing Access area

10. Term: This MOA becomes effective upon signature of both parties and shall be ongoing, unless terminated earlier pursuant to Section 11, Termination, or Section 12, Appropriations, below.

11. Termination: This MOA may be terminated by either party upon delivery of a written notice to the other at least 90 days prior to the intended date of termination. By such termination, neither party may nullify or avoid any obligation required to have been performed under this MOA prior to termination, or performance of any conditions contained herein.

12. Appropriations: This MOA's terms are contingent upon the New Mexico State Legislature granting sufficient appropriation and authorization. If sufficient appropriation or authorization is not granted, either party may terminate this MOA, or in the alternative suspend performance pending approval of sufficient appropriation or authorization, upon written notice from one to the other. Either party's decision as to whether sufficient appropriations are available shall be at its sole and absolute discretion and shall be final, binding, and accepted by the other party.

13. Strict Accountability for Receipts and Disbursements: Both parties shall be strictly accountable for receipts and disbursements relating hereto and shall make all relevant financial records available to the other party, the Department of Finance and Administration, and the New Mexico State Auditor upon request, and shall maintain all such records for six years after the close of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

14. Disposition, Division, or Distribution of Property; Return of Surplus Funds: Permanent developments and site improvements on the Property will become property of the SGC upon termination of this MOA unless other arrangements are mutually agreed upon in writing. Upon termination of this MOA, if any party has property, other than permanent developments or permanent site improvements, or funds in its possession belonging to the other, the same shall be returned in proportion to the party's original contribution.

15. Equal Opportunity Compliance: Both parties agree to abide by all federal and state laws and rules and regulations, and executive orders of the Governor of the State of New Mexico, pertaining to equal employment opportunity. In accordance with all such laws of the State of New Mexico, both parties assure that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, physical or mental handicap, or serious medical condition, spousal affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender identity, be excluded from employment with or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity performed under this MOA. If either party is found to not be complying with these requirements during the life of this MOA, that party agrees to take appropriate steps to correct these deficiencies.

16. Amendment: This MOA shall not be altered, changed, or amended except by written instrument between the parties.

17. Liability: Neither party shall be responsible for liability incurred as a result of the other party's acts or omissions in connection with this MOA. Any liability incurred with this MOA is subject to the immunities and limitations of the New Mexico Tort Claims Act, NMSA 1978, §§ 41-4-1, *et seq.*, as amended.

18. Notices: Except as otherwise specified herein, all notices hereunder shall be in writing (including, without limitation, notice by facsimile or e-mail) and shall be given to the relevant party at its address or facsimile number set forth below, or such other address or facsimile number as such party may hereafter specify by notice to the other given by courier, by United States certified or registered mail, by facsimile or by other method capable of creating a written record of such notice and its receipt. Notices hereunder shall be addressed:

EMNRD No. 20-521-0500-0077
NMDGF. No. _____

To the Division:

EMNRD, State Parks Division
Attn: Director
1220 S. St Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
FAX: 505-476-3361

To DGF at:

DGF
Attn: Director
P.O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504
FAX: 505-476-8123

19. Termination of Existing Agreements and Acknowledgement of Related Agreements:

A. This MOA supersedes and terminates the following agreements between the parties:

- EMNRD No. 04-521-0500-0306 regarding Eagle Nest Lake State Park;
- EMNRD No. 05-521-0500-0271 regarding Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park; and
- EMNRD No. 08-521-0500-0027/DGF No. 08-516-0000-0002, regarding the operation of Cimarron Canyon, Clayton Lake, and Fenton Lake State Parks.

B. This Agreement acknowledges the existence of the following agreements related to this MOA, but which do not directly affect this MOA:

- EMNRD 03-521-0500-0079/DGF No. 03-516-32 between EMNRD, DGF, and the State Engineer's Office, Interstate Stream Commission, regarding the operation of Eagle Nest Lake State Park;
- EMNRD No. 12-521-0500-0039 between EMNRD, DGF, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation regarding an elk enclosure at Eagle Nest Lake State Park; and
- EMNRD No. 17-521-0500-0067 regarding Pecos Canyon State Park.

EMNRD No. 20-521-0500-0077
NMDGF. No. _____


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed this MOA as of the date of last signature:

STATE OF NEW MEXICO, ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

By:  _____
Cabinet Secretary or Designee

Date: 11/19/19

STATE GAME COMMISSION

By:  _____
Chair

Date: 11/20/19

Attachment 3 Eagle Nest Lake State Park

