

FENTON LAKE STATE PARK

Management Plan | Jemez Springs, NM

New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, State Parks Division

APRIL 2026

FENTON LAKE STATE PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN

APRIL 2026

PREPARED FOR:

New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
State Parks Division



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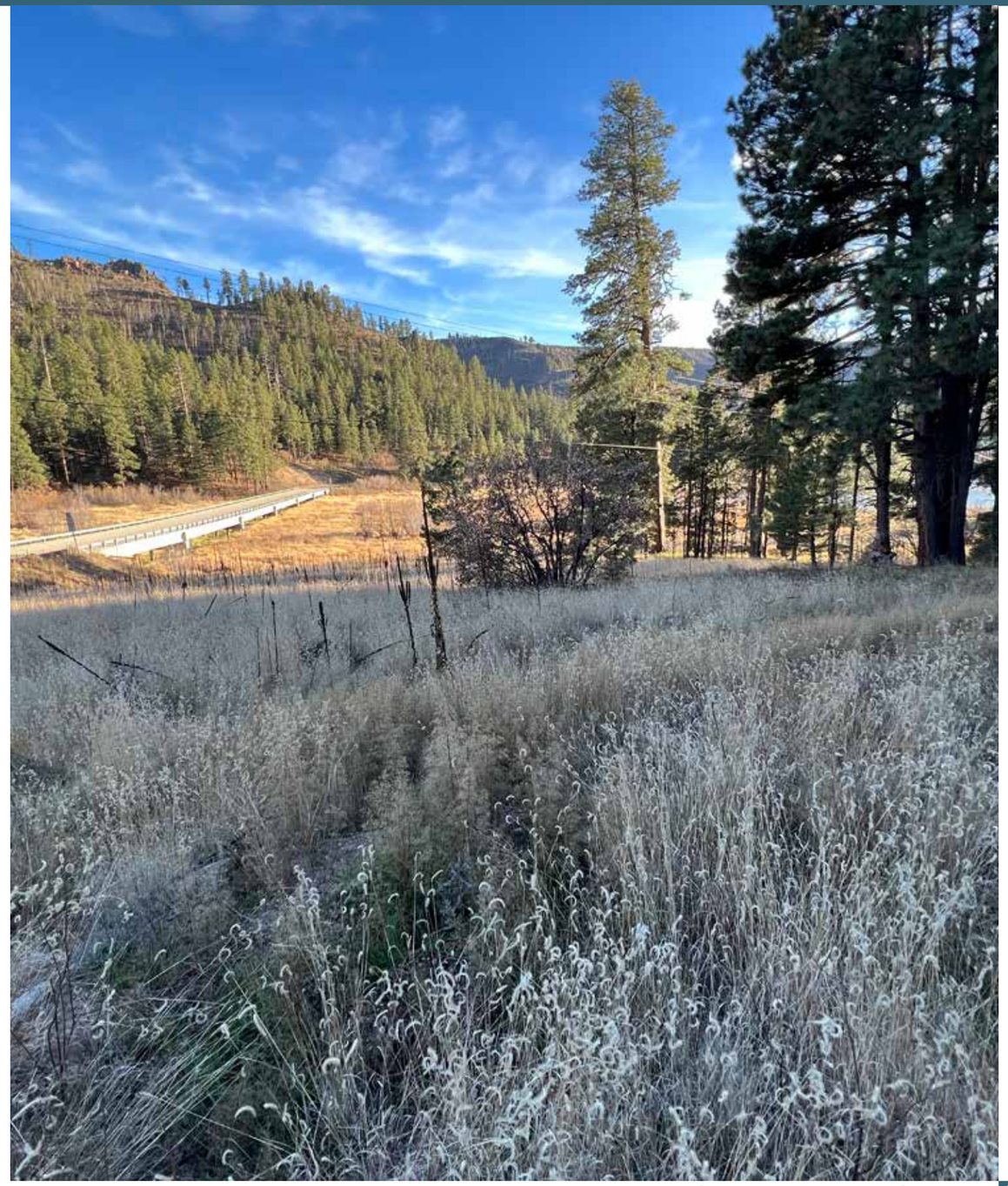
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Acronym List:

ACE	Army Corps of Engineers
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AIS	Aquatic Invasive Species
APE	Area of Potential Effects
BISON-M	Biota Information System of New Mexico
dbh	Diameter at Breast Height
DOW	New Mexico Department of Wildlife
EMNRD	New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FY	Fiscal Year
HFD	Historic Fires Database
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
JPA	Joint Powers Agreement
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NM	New Mexico
NMDA	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
NMRPTC	New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWI	National wetlands Inventory
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Healthy Administration
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SFNF	Santa Fe National Forest
SGC	State Game Commission
SHPO	New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division Historic Preservation Office
SPD	Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, State Parks Division
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
YCC	Youth Conservation Corps

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Park Overview

The mission of the State Parks Division is to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide first-class recreational and educational facilities and opportunities, and promote public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.

The Fenton Lake State Park Management Plan serves as a strategic guide for park operations and development. It outlines existing conditions, identifies key issues, and recommends improvements to facilities, as well as park and resource management. The plan aims to ensure that Fenton Lake State Park continues to offer exceptional recreational experiences while preserving its natural and cultural assets.

Nestled in the scenic Jemez Mountains, Fenton Lake State Park offers a tranquil, year-round retreat surrounded by majestic ponderosa pine forests. The Rio Cebolla winds through the park and into Fenton Lake, creating ideal conditions for fishing and canoeing. The lake is stocked with Rainbow Trout from fall through spring and is also home to German Brown Trout, making it a popular destination for fly fishing. While summer draws most anglers, the park also supports winter ice fishing. In addition to fishing, visitors enjoy camping, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

In recent years, increased visitation has placed added pressure on park staff and infrastructure, making it more difficult to maintain the high-quality experiences that make the park unique. To meet these growing demands, the plan emphasizes the need to improve facilities, better support staff, strengthen natural resource management, and enhance visitor experiences. These efforts are essential to accommodate current use while safeguarding the park for future generations.

The objective of this plan is to provide a clear framework for managing and developing the Park over the next five years. It seeks to enhance recreational opportunities, protect natural and cultural resources, incorporate public input, and align with the broader mission of the State Parks Division. Through specific goals, policies, and proposed improvements, this plan outlines a path toward a sustainable and enriching future for Fenton Lake State Park.

KEY FACTS	
Park Established:	1984
Management Area:	283.58 acres
Ownership:	New Mexico Department of Wildlife: 251.074 Acres
	United States Forest Service: 32.51 Acres
Campsites:	35
Lake Area:	30 acres
Elevation	7,650 feet
County:	Sandoval County

The land comprising Fenton Lake State Park is primarily owned by the New Mexico Department of Wildlife (DOW) and managed by the State Parks Division (SPD) of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. Additionally, the United States Forest Service (USFS) owns approximately 32.51 acres within the park boundaries. These lands are operated by SPD under a Special Use Permit in coordination with the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF). Surrounding the park are parcels owned by private landowners and the USFS. The map on the following page illustrates the park's boundaries and the land ownership

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Parcel Key #	Size	Owner
1	*73.88 Acres*	*New Mexico Dept. of Wildlife (DOW)*
2	*32.51*	*United States Forest Service (USFS)*
3	*177.19*	*New Mexico Dept. of Wildlife (DOW)*

ALL LAND ABUTTING THE PARK BOUNDARY IS OWNED BY USFS, OTHER THAN THE HATCHED AREA LABELED "PRIVATE PROPERTY."

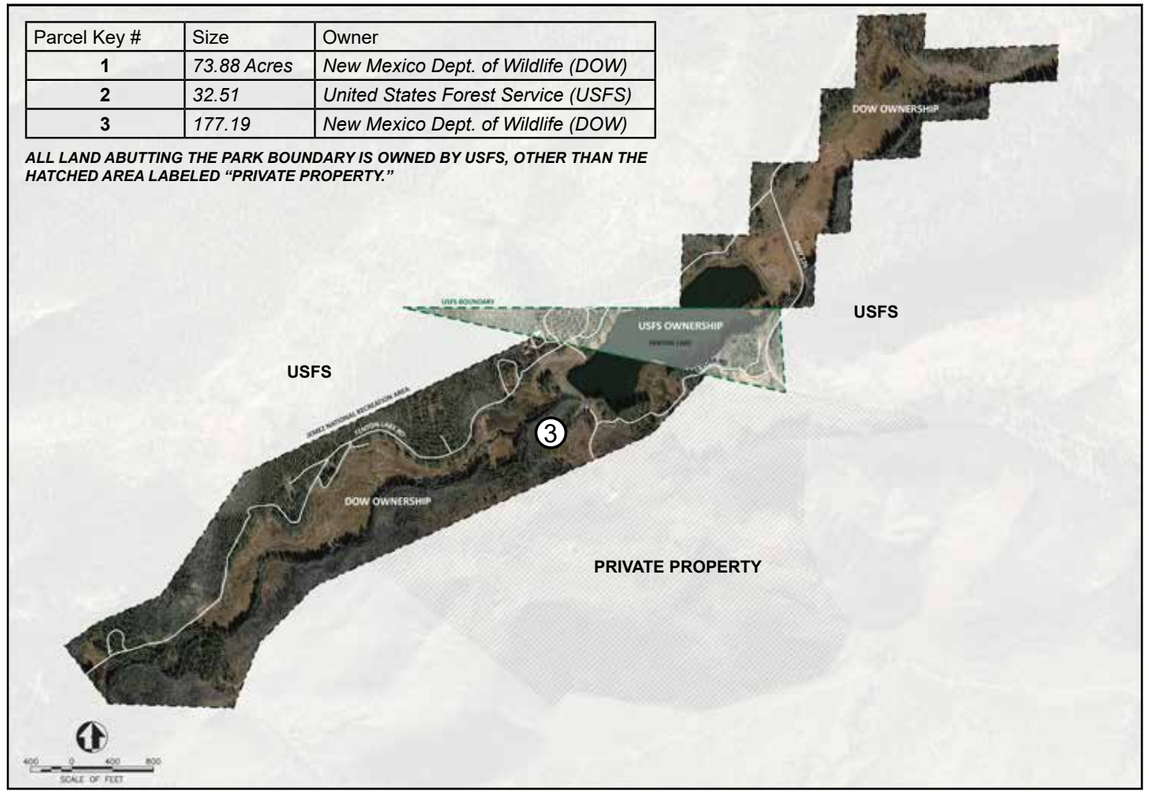


FIGURE I-1: Park Boundary and Property Ownership Diagram

Significant Recommendations

The objective of this management plan is to enhance, protect, and maintain the natural and cultural resources that define Fenton Lake State Park. As visitation continues to grow, the plan also seeks to identify and implement facility improvements that will accommodate increased use while preserving the park's distinctive character and visitor experience.

To achieve these goals, the plan proposes the following key actions:

- **Circulation and Access Management:** Improve internal roadways, parking areas, and trail connectivity to enhance safety, accessibility, and traffic flow.
- **Park Operations Support:** Strengthen staff facilities and resources to ensure effective park management, high-quality visitor services, and improved staff support.
- **Campground and Recreational Facility Improvements:** Upgrade existing infrastructure and amenities, and identify expansion opportunities to meet growing demand and improve overall visitor experience.

INTRODUCTION



Mission

The mission of the State Parks Division is to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide first-class recreational and educational facilities and opportunities, and promote public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.

Park Description

Overview:
Fenton Lake State Park (the Park) encompasses approximately 280 acres divided across three parcels. Two of these parcels are owned by the New Mexico Department of Wildlife (DOW), while the third is owned by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The State Parks Division (SPD) of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department manages the park's operations, maintenance, development, and protection under a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with DOW. Additionally, the USFS has issued a Term Special Use Permit to SPD for the parcel it owns within the park, allowing for the construction and maintenance of recreational facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, and boating and fishing infrastructure.

Fenton Lake (the Lake) itself spans approximately 30 surface acres, with water levels managed by DOW. These levels fluctuate some throughout the year to prevent overflow and accommodate winter freezing. Under the JPA, SPD may adjust levels to protect the Park facilities in consultation with DOW, provided there are no conflicting water storage or delivery obligations.

Recreational Activities:
The Park is open year-round and offers a wide range of recreational opportunities:

- **Fishing:** Anglers can fish all along the lake's edge as space allows, with four designated accessible fishing pads located on the north side. The lake and the Rio Cebolla are regularly stocked with Rainbow Trout, and also support German Brown Trout and Cutthroat Trout that are not stocked.
- **Boating:** A moderately sized boat ramp is located on the lake's north side. Permitted watercraft include canoes, kayaks, rowboats, inflatable boats, and boats with electric trolling motors. Gasoline-powered boats, and sailboats are prohibited. Swimming is not allowed, but float tubes and paddle boards are permitted.
- **Camping:** The Park features six campgrounds with a total of 33 individual campsites and one group campsite, all available by reservation only.
- **Hiking:** The primary hiking trail is the Hal Baxter Trail, a scenic 2-mile loop through the Park.
- **Picnicking:** There are four designated picnic areas, with two located on each side of the lake, available for day use.
- **Winter Recreation:** During the winter months, visitors can enjoy ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and winter camping. Lake Fork Road, which provides access to facilities on the south

side of the Lake, is closed to motor vehicles from November through March, but remains open to skiers and snowshoers.

The Park's five electric campsites remain open during the winter season; however, water is only available during summer months. All other campsites are gated off in winter, allowing the access roads to be re-purposed as cross-country ski and snowshoe trails.

Additional Amenities:
Other park amenities include a large day-use shelter located on the southwest side of the Lake and a playground situated east of the Lake, near the campgrounds.

Vision and Goals

VISION

The Park will ensure the protection and enhancement of its natural and cultural resources to continue providing high quality services in a safe, friendly, and efficient manner, while making thoughtful improvements to broaden and enrich the recreational experience for all visitors.

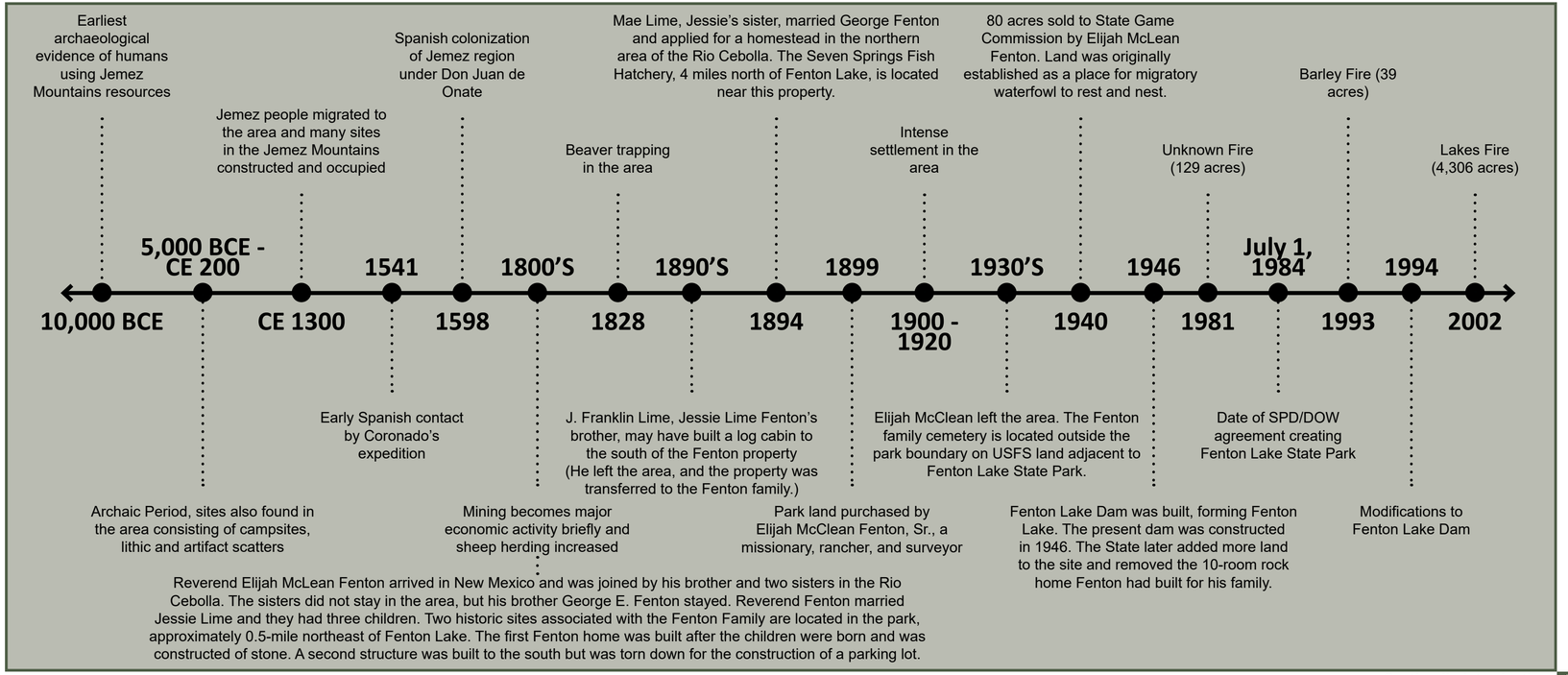
GOALS

- **Protection and Rehabilitation:**
  - Preserve and protect environmental resources
  - Rehabilitate both natural landscapes and developed areas
- **Facility Improvements:**
  - Upgrade visitor facilities
  - Improve road infrastructure
  - Enhance parking areas
  - Introduce new visitor amenities
  - Provide improved accommodations and support for park staff
- **Access and Designation:**
  - Improve accessibility for all visitors
  - Manage park access and usage to ensure safety and visitor experience
- **Partnerships:**
  - Collaborate with external agencies, such as United States Forest Service (USFS), for coordinated resource management
  - Explore opportunities for park expansion and inter-agency cooperation to consolidate ownership and clarify management jurisdiction within the park boundary

Park History and Key Historical Events

In 1940, the New Mexico State Game Commission (SGC) purchased 80 acres from Elijah McClean Fenton, Sr. for $2,176 using Wildlife Restoration funds. The land was originally established as a resting and nesting area for migratory waterfowl, primarily ducks, and to support local wildlife populations including beaver, muskrat, deer, elk, and wild turkey. Recognizing the area's recreational potential, a cooperative agreement was signed on July 1, 1984, between the Department of Wildlife (DOW) and the State Parks Division (SPD) to develop the Fenton Lake area in Sandoval County, New Mexico. Funding for the development was provided through a federal grant-in-aid program administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS), along with additional support from DOW.

Under a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), SPD assumed responsibility for operations, maintenance, development, and protection of the park. On September 26, 1984, the USFS issued a Term Special Use Permit to SPD for a parcel of USFS-owned land within the park, authorizing the construction and maintenance of camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, and related recreational facilities. SPD, through its agreement with the SGC, continues to manage the park's facilities for the recreational enjoyment of the public. Prior to 1984, the area had minimal recreational infrastructure – there were no designated campsites, limited development, and unrestricted vehicle access. Visitors could camp and picnic anywhere which led to resource degradation. Since assuming management, the SPD has worked to protect the park's natural an cultural resources while enhancing the visitor experience through structured development and ongoing maintenance.



Regional Context, Demographics, and Climate

Fenton Lake State Park is located approximately 30 minutes from the town of Jemez Springs and is equidistant in drive time from both Santa Fe to the east and Albuquerque to the south. The park is bordered by private property to the southwest and is otherwise surrounded by land managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS). This setting places the park within a rich network of public lands and recreational destinations, all within an hour's drive. These include a national preserve, a national monument, two mesas, a scenic overlook, multiple campgrounds, fishing areas, trailheads, a visitor information site, and an interpretive center. This proximity enhances the park's appeal as a regional hub for outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism.

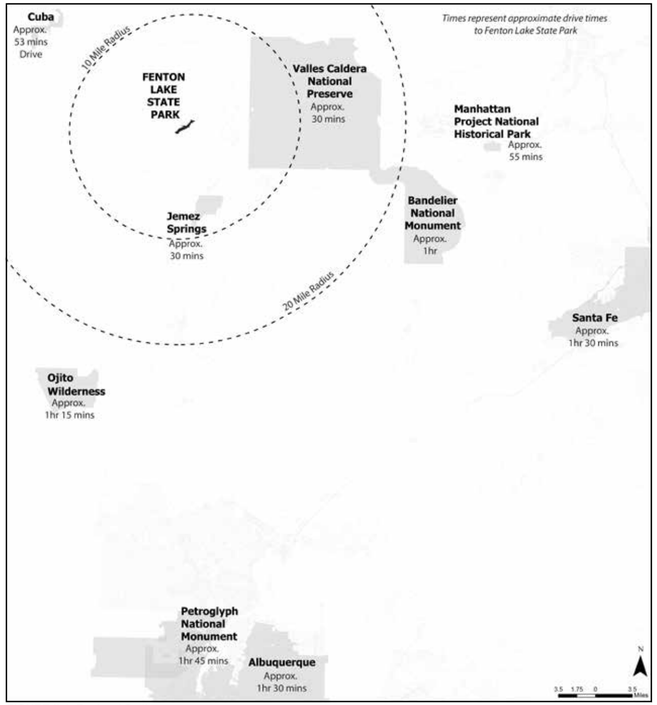


FIGURE II-1: Regional Setting

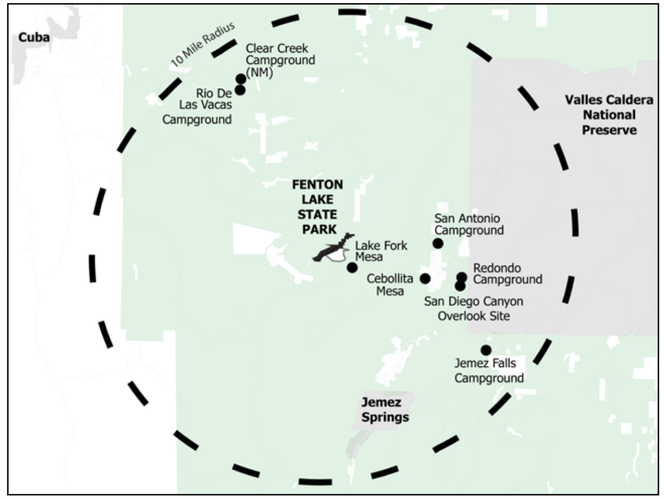


FIGURE II-2: Regional Campgrounds

Campgrounds/Camping Areas - 10
Clear Creek Campground
12 Sites
Rio De Las Vacas Campground
15 Sites
San Antonio Campground
30 sites
Redondo Campground
62 sites
Jemez Falls Campground
50 sites
Paliza Family
10 sites
Vista Linda
13 sites
Resumidero, primitive campground
15 single sites
6 RV campsites
1 group campsite
Rio Puerco
5 sites
Coyote Canyon, primitive tent camping
2 sites

Picnic Areas - 7
Jemez Falls
Battleship Rock
Seven Springs
Spanish Queen
Clear Creek
La Cueva
Las Conchas

Fishing Areas - 7
Rincon
Dark Canyon
La Junta
Las Casitas
San Diego
River's Bend
The Bluffs

Trailheads - 12
Las Conchas
Los Pinos
Canones
Jemez Falls
Corralitos
San Jose
Rio Puerco
Spence Hot Springs
San Gregorio
Palomas
Battleship Rock
East Fork

Information Site - 1
NRA Gateway
Observation Site - 1
San Diego Overlook
Interpretive Site - 1
Tea Kettle Rock

The park is situated in Sandoval County, New Mexico, and serves a diverse population from across the state, particularly from the nearby urban centers of Santa Fe and Albuquerque. These cities, with a combined population of over one million, contribute significantly to the park's visitation. Understanding the demographic and economic context of the region is essential for effective planning and management, as it helps shape visitor needs, expectations, and patterns of use.

	New Mexico	Sandoval County	Jemez Springs
Population:	2,117,522	148,834	198
Median Household Income:	$62,268	$82,026	$88,750
Median Age:	40	41	56
Race:			
American Indian and Alaska Native	10%	12.3%	1.5%
Asian	1.8%	1.7%	2%
Black or African American	2.2%	2.2%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0%
Some Other Race	15%	10.6%	6%
Two or More Races	19.9%	18.2%	13.6%
White Alone	51%	54.8%	76.8%
Ethnicity:			
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	47.7%	38.7%	23.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	36.5%	42.6%	71.2%

Fenton Lake State Park lies within the Jemez Mountain Range at an elevation of approximately 7,600 feet and is characterized by a semi-arid climate with distinct seasonal variations. According to data from the Jemez Springs Cooperative Observer Program Station (#294369), the area experiences an average annual maximum temperature of 66.4°F and a minimum of 37.0°F. Average annual precipitation is 16.96 inches, with most rainfall occurring between July and October. Snowfall averages 28.9 inches per year, primarily from December through March. These climate conditions influence park operations, infrastructure planning, and the types of recreational activities available throughout the year(Western Regional Climate Center 2023).

Jemez Springs Annual Climate Data 1910 - 2016													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max Temp (F)	45.9	50.3	56.9	66.1	74.5	84.0	86.1	83.7	78.3	68.4	56.0	46.8	66.4
Average Min Temp (F)	19.6	23.3	27.8	34.4	42.5	50.4	56.2	54.9	48.2	38.1	27.7	20.9	37.0
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	0.91	0.93	1.07	0.98	1.11	1.10	2.64	2.98	1.77	1.55	0.93	0.98	16.96
Average Total Snowfall (in.)	7.3	6.1	4.1	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	2.3	7.1	28.9
Average Snow Depth (in.)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Recent Accomplishments
(since last plan was approved)

- **2004:** State Parks (Tafoya 2004) completed a cultural resources survey of 245 acres, covering the majority of the park (NMCRIS 90680)
- **2014:** Park entrance station
- **2015:** Housing septic system replaced
- **2019:** Shop drainage culverts installed; rip rap deposited at dam and group shelter
- **2020:** Repainted house; shop, signs, and vaults; Hal Baxter Trail clearing
- **2021:** Barbed wire fencing repaired and new pipe fencing installed; new culverts were installed in Fenton Lake Road
- **2023:** Clarification of boundary issues through boundary survey
- **2024:** New water pressure tanks; five new vault toilets; new waterline; Lake Fork Road work
- **Various Years:** Cleared dead and hazardous trees

Planning Process

GENERAL PLANNING PROCESS

The general planning process for all park management plans consists of:

- **Establish a Planning Team:** Form a team for each state park.
- **Site Visit/Assessment:** Visit the park to assess its resources and facilities.
- **Analyze Information:** Review all existing data about the park.
- **Propose Goals and Activities:** Set goals and plan activities to be completed over the next five years.
- **Develop a Draft Plan:** Create a draft version of the management plan.
- **Solicit Public Input:** Gather feedback from the public on the draft plan.
- **Revise the Plan:** Make necessary changes based on public input.
- **Approval:** Get the revised plan approved by the SPD director.
- **Implementation:** Put the approved plan into action.

SPECIFIC PLANNING PROCESS

Based on this general process, the following process was developed for this project in Fenton Lake State Park:

- **Topography and Boundary Survey:** Conducted to clarify the Park's boundaries and gather detailed topographic data.
- **Data Collection and Review:** Gathered and reviewed existing documents, environmental and cultural data, and GIS files.
- **Initial Site Visit and Assessment:** Conducted in November 2022, resulting in a Site Assessment Report (found in the appendix of this document).
- **Additional Surveys:** Completed further environmental and cultural surveys.
- **Development of Plans:** Created initial architectural and site plans based on the collected.
- **Charette:** Held a collaborative session in February 2022 to review and refine the plans.
- **Accelerated Development:** Identified specific components (vault toilets and park house) for faster development and replacement.

PUBLIC INPUT

As part of the planning process, the SPD sought to better understand visitor demographics, behaviors, and perceptions related to the Park. The goal was to assess how visitors currently use the park, their opinions on existing facilities and services, and their attitudes towards potential improvements. This information would help SPD evaluate both historical and current use of the park resources, as well as public sentiment regarding park operations and future development.

To gather this information, the project team developed a visitor survey designed to collect the following key data:

- **Current and Past Visit Characteristics:** To understand how visitors use the park
- **Visitor History:** To learn about visitors' connections to the park over time
- **Trip Characteristics and Residence Information:** To understand travel demand for the park and its relationship to the region
- **Perceptions of Facilities and Services:** To gauge attitudes towards potential management changes

To achieve these objectives, an on-site visitor survey was conducted over a single weekend in Fall 2022. Following this, a separate online survey was distributed to a self-selected sample of the public interested in contributing to the parks' management planning process. Full results of both surveys are available in the appendix of this document but a general summary follows.

- **Purpose and Need:** The surveys aimed to understand visitor patterns, behaviors, opinions on current facilities, and attitudes towards potential changes. This information helps park staff manage resources

and plan future improvement.

- **Survey Methods:**
  - **On-Site Survey:** Conducted over a three-day period in November 2022, capturing responses from 54 visitor groups.
  - **Online Survey:** Conducted from November 30, 2022, to January 6, 2023, with nearly 700 responses. This survey was shared on various platforms, but results may be biased as it was a self-selected sample.
- **Key Findings:**
  - **Visitor Demographics and Group Characteristics:** Average group size was 3 people, with over 60% visiting with family
  - **Visitation Patterns:** Over 89% of visitors were repeat visitors and most visits occurred during summer, fall, and spring.
  - **Activities:** The most popular activities were fishing, viewing scenery, hiking, and camping
  - **Facilities and Services:** Most facilities were rated as “good” or “very good,” except for restrooms which received more mixed reviews but in general were ranked lower (“average” or worse). Improvements ranked as most important were new vault toilets, improved roads and parking, and better cell phone and internet services.
  - **Visitor Residency:** All respondents were US residents, with most visitors being from New Mexico.
- **Visitor Preferences:**
  - Visitors appreciated the Park’s natural beauty, fishing opportunities, and proximity to home.
  - Desired improvements included better restrooms, roads, parking, and connectivity
- **Additional Comments:** Many respondents emphasized the need to maintain the Park’s natural and undeveloped charm while making necessary improvements to facilities and services

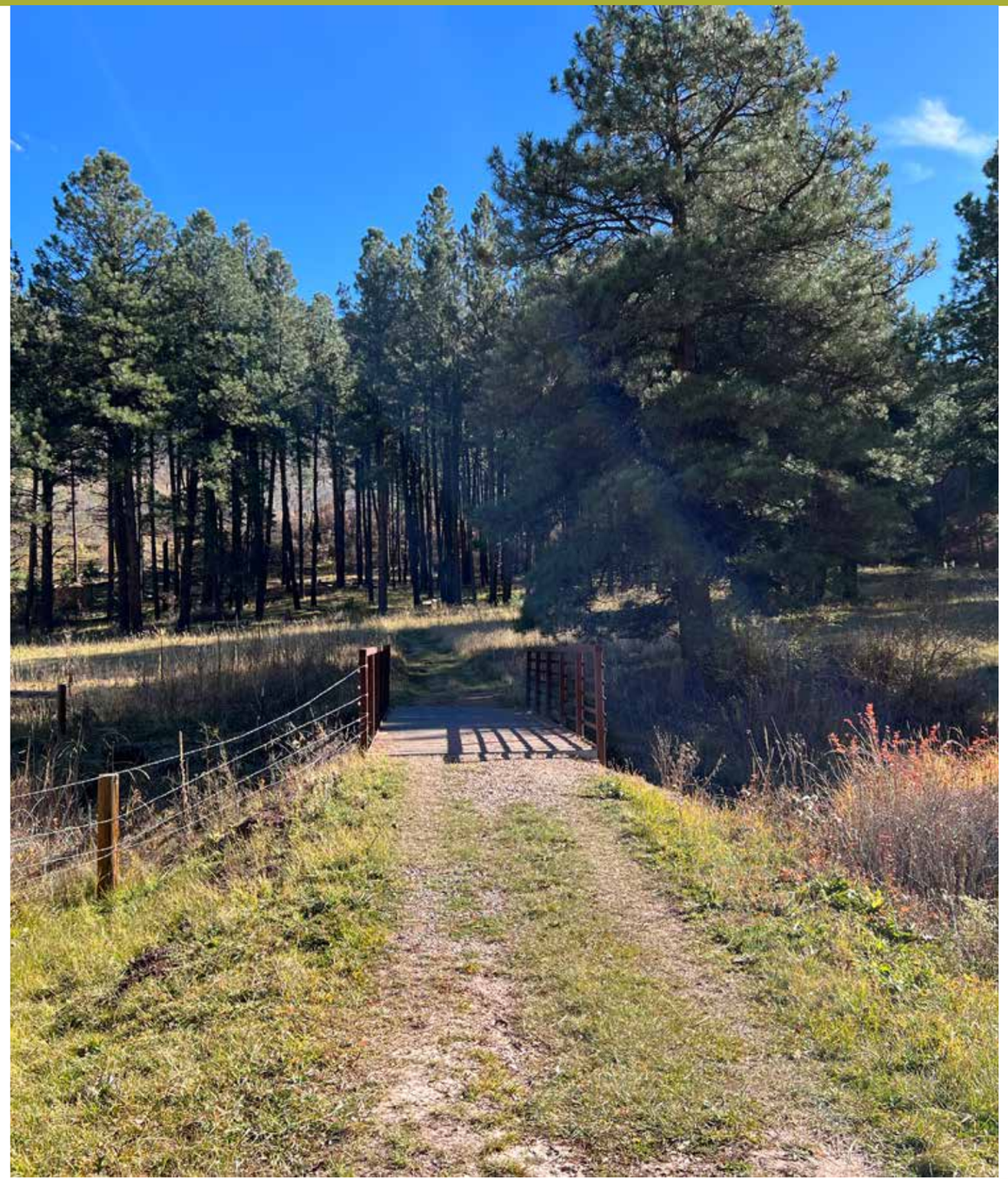
Summary Paragraph of Public Meeting and Public Comment Period (Insert after)

CONSULTATION

As part of the planning and implementation process, both the DOW and USFS will be consulted independently. All planned improvements will be analyzed for their potential impact on cultural resources, and appropriate consultations will be conducted as required. Additionally, consultations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be carried out to assess any potential adverse effects on state and federally listed species. The results of these analyses will inform and guide the selection of appropriate actions and mitigation strategies.

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PARK ASSESSMENT



Park Resources

LAND

- **Physical Context:** The Park is located at an elevation of approximately 7,600 feet in the Jemez Mountains of north central New Mexico. It is surrounded by a variety of natural wonders within a 20-mile radius, including several hot springs, the Soda Dam, and numerous scenic overlooks. Among the most notable nearby features is the Valles Caldera, one of the largest volcanic calderas in the world. This rich natural setting, both in and around the park, contributes to the its appeal as a year-round destination for outdoor recreation and nature appreciation.


FIGURE III-1: Jemez Mountains


FIGURE III-2: Valles Caldera


FIGURE III-3: Soda Dam

- **Viewsheds:** Within the Park, typical viewsheds include scenic views of Fenton Lake, the surrounding ponderosa pine forest, the Jemez mountains, and the Rio Cebolla. These natural features create the picturesque environment that enhances the visitor experience and keeps visitors returning to the Park. Examples of these views are illustrated below.


FIGURE III-4: Lake Views


FIGURE III-5: Rio Cebolla


FIGURE III-6: Surrounding Mountains


FIGURE III-7: Forest Views

- **Terrain:** The Park terrain is characterized by a corridor of relatively flat land, with slopes ranging from 0-2%, where Fenton Lake, the Rio Cebolla, and adjacent wetlands are located. This flat corridor is boarded by areas with moderate slopes (2-15%), which are further constrained by steeper slopes exceeding 15% along the park's outer boundaries.

  The steeper slopes limit the suitability of certain areas for development, particularly for campgrounds and park facilities. As a result, both existing and proposed facilities are concentrated within the flatter corridor, where the terrain is more conducive to infrastructure development and visitor access.

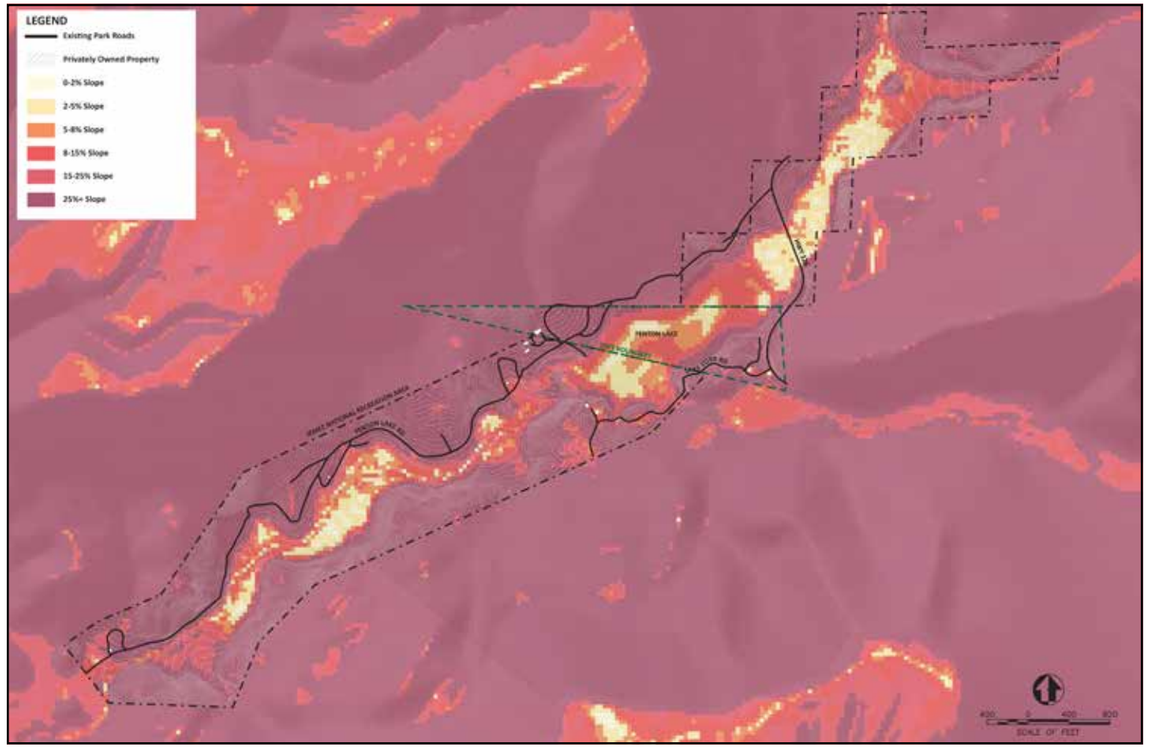


FIGURE III-8: Fenton Lake State Park Slope Diagram

This terrain produces different zones throughout the park with different uses and management needs. Each zone reflects distinct terrain characteristics and management priorities, including collaboration with agencies like DOW, USFS, and SHPO.

- **Riparian Zone:** This zone includes the Lake, the Rio Cebolla waterway and the adjacent banks. The zone requires collaboration with DOW for management of the Lake as well as the dam.

- **Wetland Zone:** The wetland zone includes designated wetland areas in the park and requires protection of resources and animal habitat. Development must comply with all proprietary jurisdictional requirements at the federal, state, and local level.

- **Forest Zone:** Much of the park contains dense Ponderosa pine forest and steeper sloped

- terrain. Management of this zone requires collaboration with USFS as they manage the lands adjacent to the park.

- **Recreation Zone:** The recreation zone includes the developed areas of the park such as the campgrounds, office/maintenance area, staff housing area, park entry, day use areas, parking areas and park roads. These areas comprise the mostly flat areas of the park and are where the majority of visitor activity takes place. Management in this zone balances visitor comfort and convenience with staff efficiency and natural resource protection.

- **Cultural Landscape Zone:** Surveyed areas with known cultural resources require special monitoring and protection. Management of these areas should be in collaboration with SHPO.

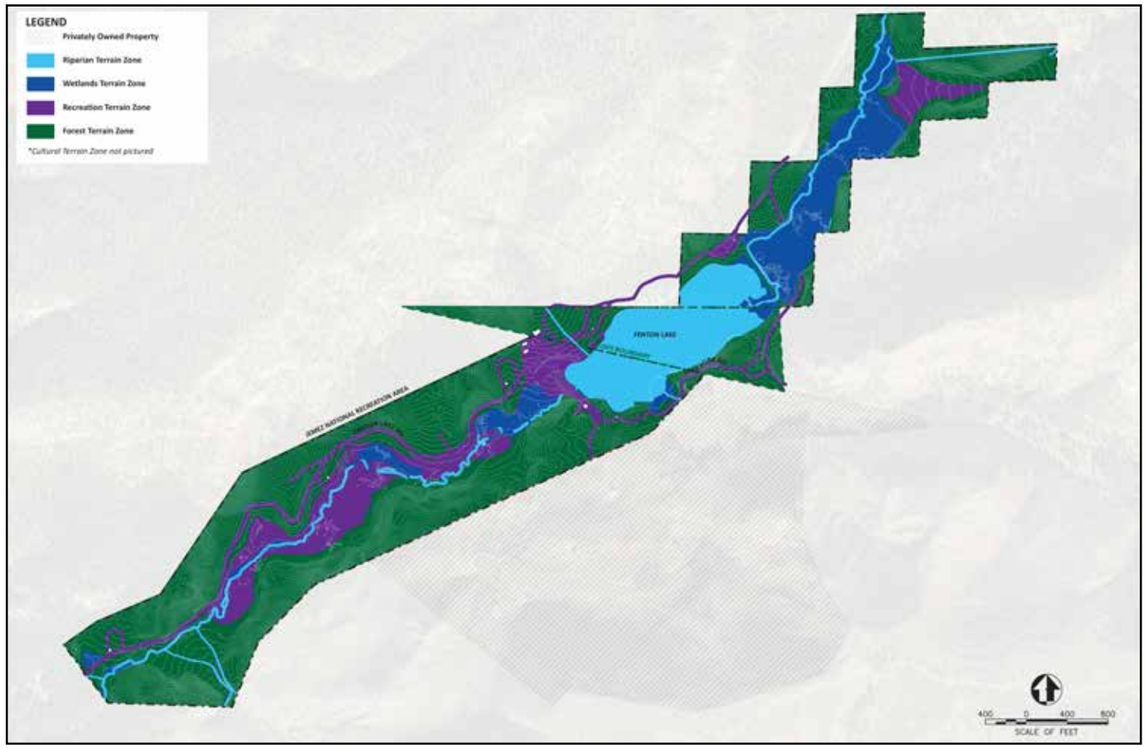


FIGURE III-9: Terrain Zones

NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Vegetation:** The Park is nestled within forested mountains of the Jemez Range, featuring a mix of coniferous and deciduous vegetation that supports a rich ecological environment.

  - **Tree Cover:** The park's upland areas are dominated by coniferous trees, including:

    - Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) — found in both pure stands and mixed forests
    - Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii)
    - White fir (Abies concolor)
    - Blue spruce (Picea pungens)

    Deciduous trees common to upland zones include:

    - Gambel's oak (Quercus gambelii)
    - Aspen (Populus tremuloides)
    - Rocky Mountain maple (Acer glabrum)

    In riparian zones, vegetation includes:

    - Willow (Salix spp.)
    - Alder (Alnus spp.)

  - **Ground Cover and Understory:** A variety of grasses, forbs, and shrubs grow in open meadows, along the Rio Cebolla, and beneath the tree canopy where light permits. However, in heavily shaded areas—especially in day-use and camping zones—understory vegetation is sparse or absent. This lack of ground cover contributes to soil erosion and the movement of sediment and debris toward the lake's edge.

    Common grasses include:

    - Mountain brome (Bromus marginatus)
    - Blue grama (Bouteloua gracilis)
    - Indian ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides)

    Representative forbs include:

    - Western yarrow (Achillea millefolium)
    - Wild strawberry (Fragaria americana)
    - Indian paintbrush (Castilleja spp.)
    - Kinnikinnick (Arctostaphylos uva-ursi)

    Native shrubs found in the park:

    - Mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus)
    - Rocky Mountain juniper (Juniperus scopulorum)
    - New Mexico locust (Robinia neomexicana)

- **Wildlife:** The Park was established in part to support and protect resident wildlife populations. The

park's location within northern New Mexico's Transition and Canadian Zone mountain habitats provides a diverse environment for a wide range of species.

- **Mammals:** Visitors may encounter a variety of mammals typical of the region, including:
    - Elk (Cervus canadensis)
    - Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus)
    - Bobcat (Lynx rufus)
    - Mountain lion (Felis concolor)
    - Muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus)
    - Beaver (Castor canadensis)
    - Black bear (Ursus americanus)
    - Tassel-eared squirrel (Sciurus aberti)
    - Golden-mantled ground squirrel (Citellus lateralis)
    - Bats, which are commonly seen during summer months

- **Birds:** The Lake serves as a resting and nesting area for migratory waterfowl, especially ducks. The park also supports a wide variety of bird species, including:

    Raptors:

    - Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus)
    - Cooper's hawk (Accipiter cooperii)
    - Osprey (Pandion haliaetus)

    Water Birds:

    - Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos)
    - Wood duck (Aix sponsa)
    - American coot (Fulica americana)
    - Great blue heron (Ardea herodias)

    Forest-Dwellling Birds:

    - Steller's jay (Cyanocitta stelleri)
    - Wild turkey (Meleagris gallopavo)
    - Juncos (Junco spp.)
    - Black-headed grosbeak (Pheucticus melanocephalus)
    - Broad-tailed hummingbird (Selasphorus platycercus)

    Additional bird observations from E-Bird can be found in the Appendix of this document.

- **Sensitive Areas/ Ecosystems:** Beavers have had a long-standing presence at Fenton Lake State Park, historically constructing multiple dams and a lodge south of the Fenton Lake dam. However, many of these natural structures were damaged or washed out during spring runoff in 2023. In response, the State Parks Division (SPD) is exploring the implementation of Beaver Dam Analog (BDA) structures to enhance both fishing opportunities and the ecological health of the Rio Cebolla watershed.

    Beaver Dam Analogs are man-made structures designed to mimic natural beaver dams, using similar

materials such as wood, branches, and sediment. These structures are a key tool in process-based stream restoration, a growing field in ecological science. BDAs replicate the beneficial functions of beaver dams, including:

- Slowing and storing water
- Raising and recharging the groundwater table
- Trapping sediment
- Creating diverse and rich habitats for native plant and animal species

In addition to improving aquatic habitat and fishing conditions, BDAs promote channel complexity, floodplain connectivity, and water table elevation, all of which contribute to the long-term resilience of the watershed.

Further details on this initiative can be found in the Fenton Lake State Park Fishing Enhancement with Beaver Dam Analogs Draft Project Report, included in Appendix J of this document.

- **Protected Species (state and federally listed species):** Protection of natural resources is an essential part of the SPD mission. This Park was created in 1984 in part because an on-site presence was needed to protect land and resources from further deterioration through overuse by visitors. Although significant natural resource improvements have been made, the need for protection continues.

    Environmental Consultants SWCA reviewed data from the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) System (USFWS 2023a), DOW Biota Information System of New Mexico (BISON-M) data (2023), New Mexico EMNRD data (2021), and New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council (NMRPTC) (1999) to compile the list of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species for Sandoval County. Additionally, SWCA used the Level IV U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Ecoregions of New Mexico (Griffith et al. 2006), Southwest Regional Gap (SWReGAP) (2016) aerial imagery, and topographic maps to evaluate potential habitat for threatened and endangered species within the park.

    Special-status species with potential to occur in the Park include: Parish's alkali grass (Puccinellia parishii) (state listed endangered species), wood lily (Lilium philadelphicum) (state-listed endangered species), monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus) (federally listed candidate species), Jemez Mountains salamander (Plethodon neomexicanus) (federally and state-listed endangered species), bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) (state-listed threatened species), Mexican spotted owl (Strix occidentalis lucida) (federally listed threatened species), peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus) (state-listed threatened species), New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (Zapus hudsonius) (federally and state-listed endangered species), pacific marten (Martex caurina) (state-listed threatened species), gray vireo (insert latin name) (state listed threatened species, and spotted bat (Euderma maculatum) (state-listed threatened species).

    In addition, USFWS critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl, Jemez Mountains salamander, and New Mexico meadow jumping mouse overlaps the Park boundary.

- **Critical Habitat Zones**: The Park is home to USFWS-designated critical habitat zones for three species (USFS 2022b): the Jemez Mountains salamander (Plethodon neomexicanus) - 5.4 acres, the Mexican spotted owl (Strix occidentalis lucida) - 291.4 acres, and the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (Zapus hudsonius luteus) - 159.0 acres. These habitat zones can be seen in the diagram below.

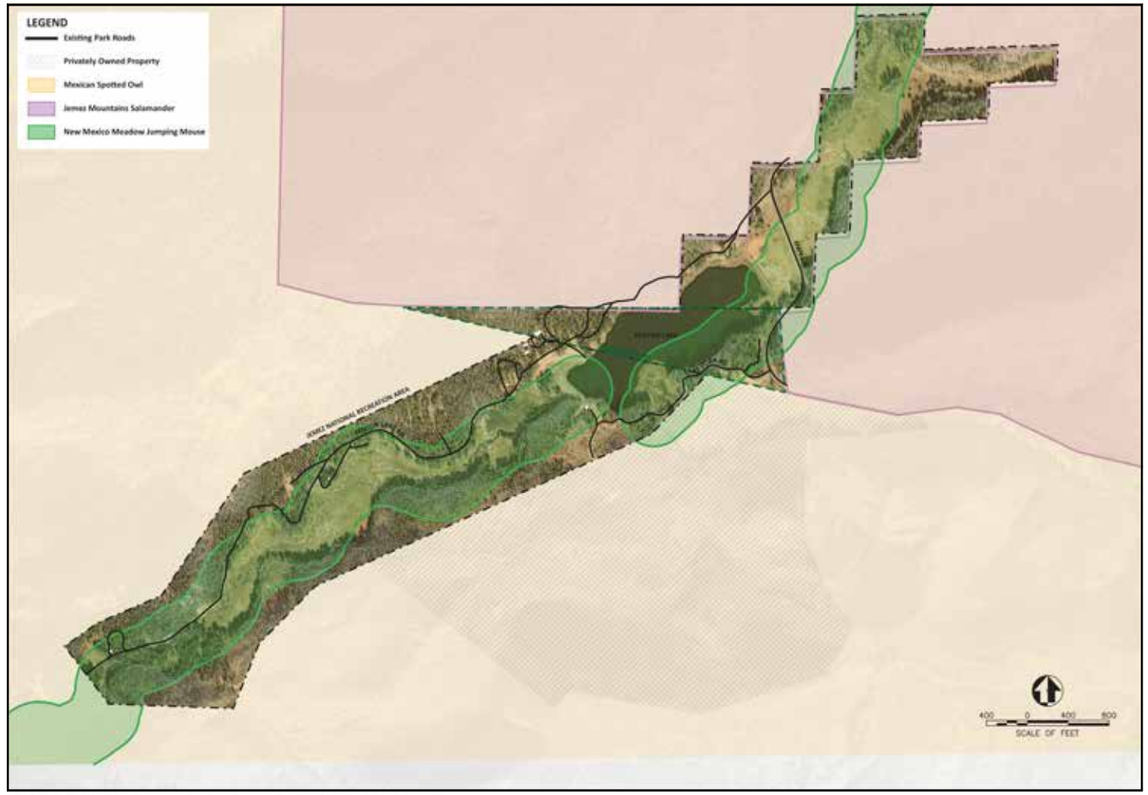


FIGURE III-10: Fenton Lake State Park Critical Habitat Zones

- **Jemez Mountains salamanders** (Plethodon neomexicanus) are a strictly terrestrial, fossorial species listed as endangered by both the State of New Mexico and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). It primarily inhabits high-elevation (7,200–9,500 feet) mixed conifer forests within the Jemez Mountains. These salamanders spend most of their lives underground, emerging primarily during the summer months when conditions are cool and moist.

  Habitat Characteristics: Key features of suitable habitat include:

  - Elevation between 7,200 and 9,500 feet above mean sea level
  - Mixed conifer forest with deep shade and high humidity
  - Cool, moist micro-habitats (43–63°F)
  - North-facing slopes with gradients less than 30 degrees
  - Proximity (within 200 meters) to a permanent water body
  - Presence of well-decayed logs, rocks, and rocky soils that allow for horizontal and vertical movement below the surface

Fruticose (e.g., Cladonia) and foliose (e.g., Peltigera) lichens are often indicators of moist habitats suitable for this species.**Habitat Components and Threats:** Large downed logs and stumps are critical habitat components. They provide cool, moist micro-environments that offer relief from heat stress during warmer months and serve as nesting and foraging sites. Old, stabilized talus slopes with damp soil and plant debris are also important cover types.

Disturbance to these features—especially during the salamander's active summer period—can negatively impact the species. Removal of downed wood, soil compaction, and habitat fragmentation are key threats.

Management Recommendations: To minimize impacts to the Jemez Mountains Salamander and its habitat:

- Avoid removing large downed logs and stumps in areas of proposed improvements.
- Schedule ground-disturbing activities outside of the salamander's active summer period to reduce the risk of direct harm.
- Avoid work in known or potential habitat areas, particularly during warm, moist conditions when salamanders are most likely to be above ground.
- Implement mitigation and due diligence measures adjacent to critical habitat, including habitat mapping and
  pre-construction surveys where appropriate.



FIGURE III-11: Jemez Mountains Salamander

- **Mexican spotted owl** (Strix occidentalis lucida) is listed as a threatened species by both the State of New Mexico and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Although breeding has not been documented in Sandoval County or adjacent counties, precautionary measures are recommended to avoid potential impacts to this sensitive species.

  Habitat Characteristics: Key features of suitable habitat include:
  - Mixed conifer, pine-oak, and riparian forest types with uneven-aged tree structure
  - Elevations typically associated with steep slopes and mature forest stands
  - A mix of tree sizes, with 30–45% of the stand composed of trees greater than 12 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH)
  - A minimum of 40% canopy cover to maintain shaded conditions
  - Presence of snags greater than 12 inches DBH
  - High volumes of fallen trees and woody debris

- A diverse understory of tree and plant species, including hardwoods
- Adequate residual plant cover to support fruit and seed production and natural regeneration

These habitat features support nesting, roosting, and foraging needs, as well as the presence of prey species.

Habitat Components and Threats: Mexican Spotted Owl populations have been negatively affected by habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation due to:

- Even-aged timber harvesting
- Urban, suburban, and agricultural development
- Water diversion in riparian areas
- Mining and road construction
- Recreational disturbance (e.g., hiking, off-road vehicles, shooting) near nesting or roosting sites

Such disturbances can lead to site abandonment and indirect habitat degradation through trampling, vegetation loss, and increased fire risk.

Management Recommendations: To minimize impacts to the Mexican Spotted Owl and its habitat:

- Avoid vegetation removal during the breeding season (March–August) unless preceded by a pre-construction nesting survey conducted no more than two weeks prior to the activity.
- Limit activities that open or fragment mature or old-growth forests, including logging, road construction, and site development.
- Maintain large stands of mature and old-growth forest, especially on steep slopes.
- Manage timber harvesting and firewood collection to promote uneven-aged forest structure and preserve critical habitat features.



FIGURE III-12: Mexican Spotted Owl

- **New Mexico meadow jumping mouse** (Zapus hudsonius luteus) is a federally and state-listed endangered subspecies of the meadow jumping mouse. It is a habitat specialist that relies on dense riparian vegetation and moist soils for survival, while nesting in nearby dry soils. In Fenton Lake State Park, this species has been observed using two riparian community types: persistent emergent herbaceous wetlands and scrub-shrub wetlands. Protection of these habitats is critical during any future park improvements or development.

  Habitat Characteristics: Key features of suitable habitat include:

  - Vegetation Type:
    - Persistent emergent herbaceous vegetation dominated by forbs and sedges, such as common threesquare (Schoenoplectus pungens)
    - Scrub-shrub riparian areas composed of willows (Salix spp.) or alders (Alnus spp.) with an understory of forbs and sedges
  - Hydrology:
    - Flowing water that maintains saturated soils throughout the mouse's active season
    - Soils with moisture levels measuring 8–10 on a Lincoln soil moisture meter
  - Vegetation Structure:
    - Tall and dense herbaceous vegetation with an average vertical cover of at least 24 inches (61 cm)
    - Plant species commonly associated with suitable habitat include:
      - Forbs: water hemlock (Cicuta douglasii), field mint (Mentha arvensis), marsh marigold (Caltha palustris), Indianhemp (Apocynum cannabinum), wild licorice (Glycyrrhiza alepidota), cutleaf coneflower (Rudbeckia laciniata)
      - Sedges: beaked sedge, water sedge (Carex aquatilis), spikerush (Eleocharis macrostachya)
      - Grasses: slender wheatgrass (Elymus trachycaulus), brome (Bromus spp.), foxtail barley (Hordeum jubatum), redtop (Agrostis gigantea), timothy (Phleum pratense), rabbitsfoot grass (Polypogon monspeliensis), Japanese brome (Bromus japonicus)
      - Rushes: Juncus spp. and Scirpus spp.

  Habitat Components and Threats: The species is highly sensitive to changes in riparian ecosystems. Identified threats include:

  - Livestock grazing and trampling of wetland vegetation
  - Drought and climate change reducing water availability
  - Development and water diversion in riparian areas
  - Recreational disturbance
  - Forest fires
  - Conversion of riparian habitat to agriculture

  These factors contribute to habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss, which are the primary drivers of population decline.

Management Recommendations: To support the conservation of the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse:

- Avoid disturbance to persistent emergent herbaceous and scrub-shrub wetlands, particularly during the active season.
- Implement grazing management practices that maintain herbaceous riparian wetlands with adequate vertical cover.
- Restore suitable habitat in areas where the species has been extirpated through:
  - Willow planting
  - Check-dam construction
  - Erosion control measures
- Re-establish beaver populations in montane streams to help restore natural hydrology and riparian vegetation.



FIGURE III-13: New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse

- **Geology and Soils:** The Park is framed by volcanic tuff cliffs rising 700 feet above Fenton Lake, a striking landscape shaped by millions of years of geologic activity. It lies on the southwestern slope of the Valles Caldera, a massive volcanic feature formed about 1.3 million years ago when a volcano collapsed after a major eruption, creating a 15-mile-wide, 1,000-foot-deep depression in the Jemez Mountains. Although the magma body beneath the region is no longer tectonically active, it still provides heat for hot springs and geothermal research. Downstream, sedimentary rocks of Permian age (about 300 million years old) appear in the Rio Cebolla Valley, primarily limestone and sandstone, while high ridges to the west expose Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks more than 1.5 billion years old.

  Soils in the Park are primarily derived from volcanic and igneous parent material, with some sedimentary and metamorphic influence. Their composition reflects the interaction of time, climate, organic matter, and topography, which also affects erosion and development. Vegetation contributes organic material, while slope influences soil stability. According to NRCS (2022), 11 mapped soil units occur within the Park, with drainage classes ranging from very poorly drained to well drained.

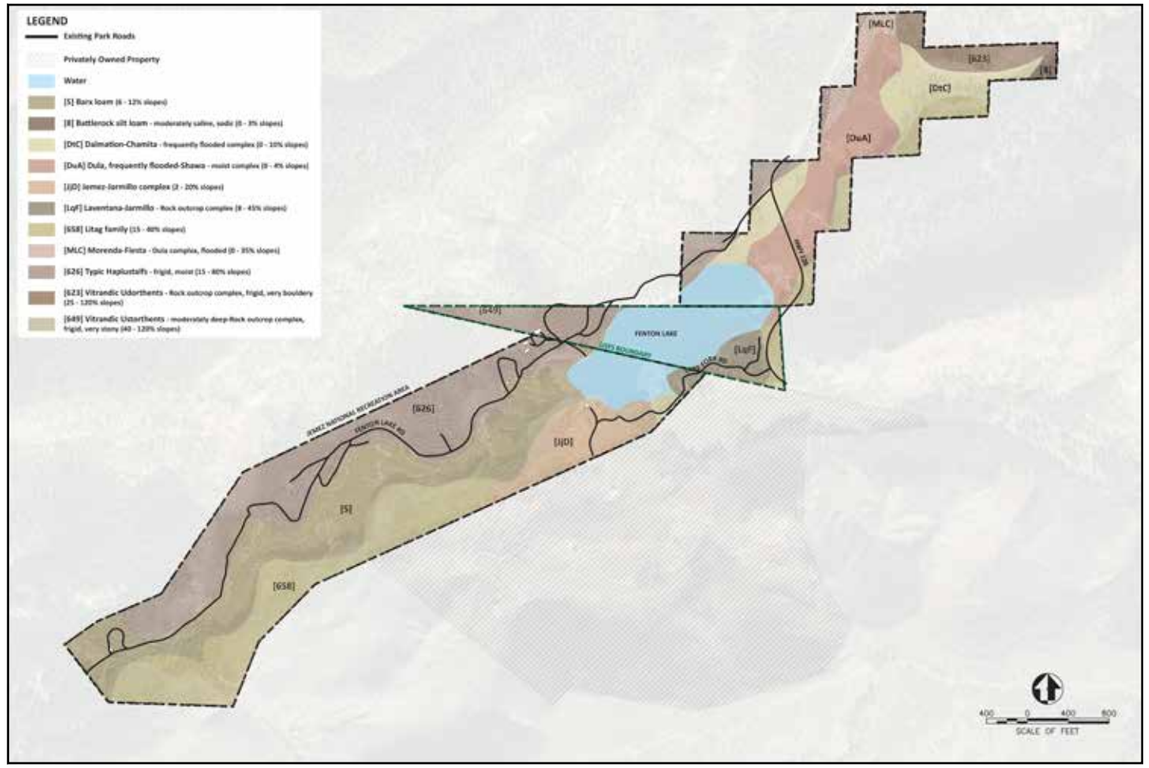


FIGURE III-14: Fenton Lake State Park Soil Types

- **Water Resources:** Water resources—particularly Fenton Lake and the Rio Cebolla—are central to the Park's character and popularity. Rio Cebolla begins as a small trickle near the base of Cerro Pelon in the Jemez Mountains at an elevation of about 9,852 feet and gradually grows as it collects tributaries and springs along its 12-mile course. It flows southeast through the Seven Springs Fish Hatchery before entering the Park at Forest Road 378 near Barley Canyon Day Use Area. Within the Park, the river runs for three miles, filling Fenton Lake and passing through the developed campground before exiting the southern boundary. Fenton Lake was created in 1946 by damming Cebolla Creek and now covers about 30 surface acres with a maximum depth of 11 feet. Its water is reserved exclusively for recreation. The lake is stocked with Rainbow Trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) and also supports German Brown Trout (Salmo trutta) and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkii). The Rio Grande Cutthroat is native, while Rainbow and Brown Trout are non-native species introduced for sport fishing.



FIGURE III-15: Rainbow Trout



FIGURE III-16: German Brown Trout



FIGURE III-17: Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

- **Wetlands and Floodplains:** A recent survey identified one stream, one lake, and nine three-parameter wetland features within the Park. These wetlands, shown on the diagram below, should be avoided as much as possible during future development or redevelopment. If complete avoidance—including temporary and permanent impacts—is not feasible, disturbances should be minimized through clear design plans and mitigation measures. The diagram also shows floodplains within the Park, which lies in a FEMA-mapped Zone A Special Flood Hazard Area. This designation represents a 100-year floodplain subject to a 1% annual chance of flooding (FEMA, 2022). Sandoval County zoning provisions for shallow flooding areas are included in the Appendix.

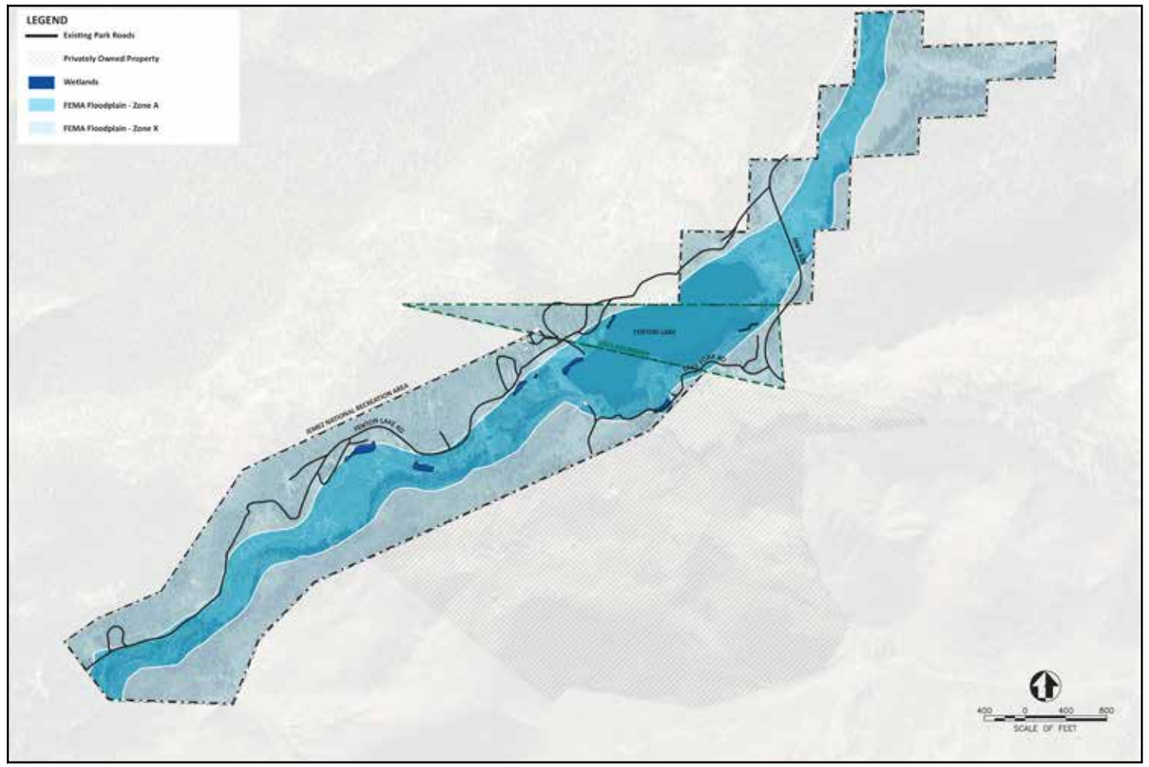


FIGURE III-18: Fenton Lake State Park Wetlands and Floodplains Diagram

- **Invasive Species (non-native/exotic plant and animal species):** A June 2023 biological survey identified three New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)-listed noxious weed species within the Park: Bull Thistle (Cirsium vulgare), Musk Thistle (Carduus nutans), and Cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum) (NMDA 2020). Bull Thistle, a Class B species, is widespread in New Mexico but typically occurs at low densities on disturbed soils, such as roadsides, and can generally be controlled by hand digging. Musk Thistle and Cheatgrass are Class C species and are also widespread throughout the Park.

  NMDA recommends that management decisions for these species be made locally, based on infestation levels and feasibility of control. Mitigation measures, such as installing noxious weed washing stations, can help reduce the introduction of invasive plants. Weed management plans may also be prepared by DOW on a project-by-project basis.

  There are no invasive fish species in the Park. While non-native Rainbow Trout are stocked for sport fishing, they are not considered invasive. Rio Grande Chub, a native and desirable species, is also present. Grass carp were last introduced in 2018 to manage algae and invasive vegetation. No zebra mussels have been detected, but they remain a potential threat along with other aquatic invasive species (AIS). Although AIS inspection stations are not currently in use, educational signage is posted throughout the Park.



FIGURE III-19: Bull Thistle



FIGURE III-20: Musk Thistle



FIGURE III-21: Cheatgrass

- **Wildfire:** The area around the Park has, and continues to, experience extreme wildfires. Although not all the fires have directly intersected the Park's boundaries, they have had an impact on the surrounding forests, wildlife, immediate community, as well as the psyche of the whole state of New Mexico.

  The 2014 SPD Wildfire Evacuation Plan (Appendix L) and the Sandoval County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) both provide guidance on wildfire management and safety within the Park and provide good resources to continue to update and utilize in park management.

  The Historic Fires Database (HFD) and specifically the "Fires 1950 to Present" data set was initially developed to support the NASA Recover wildfire decision support system at Idaho State University's GIS Training and Research Center. This dataset indicates three fires that border or intersect the Park boundary, these fires are listed below and the approximate fire perimeters can been as seen in the following figure.

  - 1981 Unknown Fire - approx. 129 acres burned
  - 1993 Barley Fire - approx. 39 acres burned
  - 2002 Lakes Fire - approx. 4306 acres burned



FIGURE III-22: Fenton Lake State Park Forest Fire Proximity Map

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- **Cultural Resource Management:** Cultural resources within the Park boundaries are subject to state and federal cultural resource protection laws (see Appendix G). Development within the park will be coordinated with the SPD Program Support Bureau and SPD Archaeologist (where applicable) to avoid impact to significant cultural resources. SPD personnel will work to preserve and protect cultural resources from impacts from the public or environmental factors.

- **Cultural Resource Inventory:** In August 2023 SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) performed a cultural resources survey to support the permitting and design of a proposed park project. SWCA conducted a Class III (100-percent coverage) pedestrian cultural resource survey for a project to replace vault toilets and other infrastructure within the Park.

  As additional projects are undertaken in the Park, similar cultural resource inventories will need to be completed for associated areas of potential effect (APEs).

- **Archaeological Sites:** There is potential for archaeological sites at the Park, representative of the diverse cultures who historically occupied this region. (See timeline on p. 13 for additional information) Archaeological evidence indicates that people have used the Jemez Mountains since 10,000 BCE. Stone tools from obsidian sources in the vicinity have been found at Paleoindian sites throughout the southwest. These tools provide evidence that humans used the resources of the Jemez Mountains as early as 10,000 years ago. Archaic Period sites (5,000 BCE - CE 200) have also been found and consist of campsites, lithic and artifact scatters.

  Many sites in the Jemez Mountains were constructed and occupied after CE 1300 and are considered ancestral to the Pueblo of Jemez. Both oral tradition and archaeology indicate that the Jemez migrated to the area from the north sometime before CE 1300. They lived in villages, farmed and hunted on the mesas and in the canyons of the Jemez Mountains, as do their descendants today. They built pueblos ranging in size from 50 to 3,000 rooms and consisting of two, three and four stories. These are some of the largest archaeological sites in North America.

  Early Spanish contact was made by Coronado's expedition in 1541, but the Jemez lifeway changed little until Spanish colonization of the region began in 1598 under Don Juan de Oñate. With Spanish colonization, the Jemez were forced from the scattered mesa top pueblos to villages in San Diego Canyon.

  A mission was established at Guisewa (Current Jemez State Monument) and another, San Diego de la Congregacion was likely constructed at what is now the present-day Jemez Pueblo of Walatowa.

  Abandoned during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, Jemez was reoccupied by missionaries in 1693. In 1798, the San Diego Grant, extending from near Jemez Springs northward to present day Fenton Lake, was issued.

  During the 19th century, mining became a major economic activity for a short period and sheep herding increased. In 1828, beaver trappers were in the area. Some use of alpine meadows for summer sheep grazing may have occurred. Homesteaders took up claims throughout the region and intense settlement took place between 1900 and 1920. Lumbering also became important in this era. Archaeological sites related to these activities can be found in the park, including mining sites, homesteads, remnants of railroad grades and campsites.

A missionary, Elijah M. Fenton, who was also a rancher and surveyor, originally owned Fenton Lake. He bought land in the area in 1899 and 1907 and built a stock pond at or near the present Fenton Lake. Fenton and his family lived at what is now the Park until 1945. The Fenton homestead is no longer standing, but the foundation is still within the park.

By the mid 1940s, changes in the national marketplace led to a decline in the region's economic activities and new economic pursuits focused on scientific research at Los Alamos and tourism and recreation.

- **Historic Structures:** The present dam was constructed in 1946. Modifications to the dam were made in 1994. At present, it does not appear that this dam is significant historically, particularly due to these modifications.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

SPD Policy Manual, Section 15 establishes general guidelines for tribal government consultation and communication and establishes SPD's commitment to work with tribal governments to create intergovernmental relationships and promote coordinated partnerships. SPD will work closely with tribes and the State historic Preservation Office regarding cultural resource issues, education, and interpretation. SPD will conduct tribal consultation prior to any ground disturbing activities and for any projects that may have an impact on cultural resources.

Recreation

For many visitors, a trip to the park offers a welcome escape from the heat of summer and the stresses of daily life. For others, it provides solitude and a peaceful setting for reflection. Often serving as a "backyard playground," the park is a popular destination for day trips filled with fishing, hiking, picnicking, and enjoying the natural scenery. Whatever the reason for visiting, the park offers a wide range of recreational opportunities. Developed areas are especially appealing to those who wish to experience nature with a degree of comfort and convenience. These areas include campgrounds, picnic sites, fishing access points, and trailheads. Amenities at these sites may include picnic tables, grills, vault toilets, potable water, trash receptacles, and electricity—providing the essentials for a comfortable and enjoyable outdoor experience. A summary of recreational facilities at the park is provided in the chart below. Please note that not all parking areas are formally delineated; parking space numbers are estimated based on an assessment of usable space.

	North Side	South Side
Boat Ramp	1	0
Campgrounds	6	0
Loop D	5 Sites • Water and electric: All • RV, Tent, or Trailer: All • Max Vehicles/Site: 2	
Sites 1-9	9 Sites • ABA Sites: 2 • Non-Electric: All • RV, Tent, or Trailer: 7 • RV: 2 • Trailer: 1 • Max Vehicles/ Site: 2-3	
Loop E	5 Sites • Non-Electric: All • RV, Tent, or Trailer: 5 • Max Vehicles/ Site: 2	
Sites 16-18	3 Sites • Non-Electric: All • RV, Tent, or Trailer: 2 • Tent: 1 • Max Vehicles/Site: 2	
Loop F	11 Sites • Non-Electric: All • RV, Tent, or Trailer: 8 • RV: 2 • Max Vehicles/Site: 2	

	North Side	South Side
Group Campsite	1 Site • Non-Electric • Max People: 50 • Max Vehicles: 10	
Camp Host	1 Site	
Group Shelter	0	1 • Non-Electric • Max People: 100 • Max Vehicles: 40
Park Office	1	0
Parking		
Free Angler Parking	10*	3*
Trailer Parking	3	0
Day Use	74*	35*
Special Event	0	15*
Pay Station	4	1
Picnic Area	2	2
Vault Toilets	8	3
Trailhead	2	1
Trails	1 Hal Baxter Trail: 2-mile loop	

- **Campgrounds:** The Park has two developed campsite areas: the electric campground, located just below the dam which contains the sites in “Loop D”, and the lower campground, located along the Rio Cebolla south of the Lake which contains “Sites 1-9,” “Loop E,” “Sites 16-18,” “Loop F,” and the Group Campsite. The electric campground was built several years ago, and the sites remain relatively level. The lower campground has 29 existing campsites, two of which are marked ADA accessible. There is no primitive camping in the park.

- **Day Use Areas:** The Park has several day-use areas located on both sides of the Lake. North side facilities are located off Fenton Lake Rd after entry to the park. The south side day-use area accessed off Highway 126 via Lake Fork Rd which is winding and hilly and not recommended for RVs or trailers. It is also closed to all motor vehicles from November through March but open to cross- country skiers and snowshoers.

  Picnicking is a popular day use activity for the Park and it occurs every weekend with large family groups and cookouts. There are two picnic areas on the north side of the Lake consisting of approximately 30+ picnic sites with tables, grills, and fire rings. This side of the Lake also features four wheelchair-accessible fishing piers and a moderately sized boat ramp. The south side of the lake offers another two picnic areas with an additional approximately 10 picnic sites and a group shelter that was built in 1998. The group shelter consists of a large, covered log shelter with a fireplace overlooking the lake, and a 750-gallon Romtec vault restroom on the site.

- **Trails (walking, hiking, biking):** The Park has only one designated and maintained trail. The Hal T. Baxter Memorial cross-country ski trail is an easy beginner trail that is approximately two miles in length. Trailheads are located in the lower campground between campsites 18 and 19, and at the front park entrance. Half of the trail runs along the lower campground, which closes during the winter when the road is impassable. The other half runs east across a footbridge and crosses an open meadow. From this point, the trail proceeds north along the tree line and finishes back at the original trailhead. Park staff maintain the trail by clearing away all deadfall and brush, making sure the trail is properly marked. When the snow falls, the trail receives proper grooming with the use of snowmobiles and a tram-sled, which compacts and cuts ski grooves into the snow.

  Hikers often use the park as a base camp and follow trails into the SFNF. The popular Ojitos Mesa Trail offers a moderately strenuous hike through a ponderosa pine forest to the top of a mesa and splendid views of the Lake, the long Rio Cebolla Valley and surrounding mountains. The trail is about two miles long and climbs about 1,500 feet.

- **Fishing:** Fishing is one of the most popular activities at the Park based on visitor surveys. The Lake is stocked with Rainbow Trout from Fall through Spring and is also home to German Brown Trout and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. It is an excellent spot for fly-fishing, shore and boat fishing, as well as ice fishing in the winter. Free parking for anglers is provided on both sides of the lake. On the north side there is a lot with approximately 10 spots available for anglers and a small lot on the south side accommodates approximately three spots.

  Per the JPA between SPD and DOW, DOW retains jurisdiction and regulatory responsibility for all fishing in the Park and authority to enforce NMSA Chapter 17 - Game and Fish and Outdoor Recreation. All regulations adopted by the SGC, including those addressing hunting, fishing, trapping and Gaining Access Into Nature (GAIN) activities apply to the Park.

- **Boating:** The Lake is closed to sailboats, sailboards and all gasoline powerboats, but open to paddle craft, human-powered watercraft, and small vessels with electric motors. Swimming is prohibited. People engaged in boating on the waters of New Mexico are subject to the NM Boat Act.

- **Birdwatching:** Birdwatchers come to observe and photograph the variety of birds present in the Park including Osprey, Steller’s Jays, Canada jays, Pinyon jays, and Woodhouse’s scrub jays. There is also old “duck housing” on poles that has fallen out of use due to poor condition, but could be replaced or relocated.

- **Events:** Events require a Special Use Permit issued by the Park. Weddings take place about 3-4 times per year, usually reserving the group shelter. Various groups reserve the group shelter and group campsite such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Scouts of America. In addition, there are two to three fishing derbies per year in the Fall and/or Spring, and an ice fishing derby in January.

- **Prohibited Uses:** Prohibited uses can be referenced in NMAC 19.5.2: Park Visitor Provisions, and the Park Alerts section of the Fenton Lake State Park website. Of particular note, Fenton Lake is closed to sailboats, sailboards and all gasoline powerboats. Swimming is also prohibited due to USFS Special Use Permit (Condition #58) but visitors may use float tubes. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and hunting are also prohibited in the Park.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Currently, the park does not have a designated outdoor classroom. Historically, it has been a popular destination for youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Scouts of America, who frequently visit for camping trips and outdoor experiences. Park staff have supported these visits by offering interpretive programs on topics ranging from local ecology and biology to wilderness survival skills.

All materials used in these educational programs have been generously donated by volunteers or provided by State Parks. In recent years, interest from schools in organizing day trips to the park has grown significantly, highlighting the increasing demand for structured educational facilities.

To meet this need, the development of a dedicated outdoor classroom and/or visitor center has become a priority. Such a facility would serve as a central hub for learning and engagement, offering interpretive exhibits on the park’s geology, wildlife, vegetation, and cultural history. Additionally, a visitor center would provide a much-needed contact point for guests seeking information, orientation, and educational resources.

Management and Operations

PARK FACILITIES

- **Visitor Center/Park Office/Maintenance Shop:** The Park shop/office building was remodeled, and a new two-bay garage was added during the Summer of 1998. This expansion allowed for more office space and more storage area in the new garage. Also, a carport structure was added to the garage and a covered storage area behind the shop was built. These renovations allowed park staff more covered storage area to park the backhoe, the park maintenance boat and the snowmobile assigned to the park. It also allowed the park office to use all the room where the original shop was. However, the office/shop area has now become inadequate for both storage and staff needs. As vehicles and equipment continue to become larger, additional storage space is needed and the combined nature of this building makes it impossible to separate visitor facing functions from internal park operations functions. The existing chain link fence and gate around the office/shop and the housing area also prevents the physical separation of these uses.

- **Employee Housing:** The park's staff housing currently consists of two double-wide mobile homes, both installed in 1985. Retaining walls were originally constructed around the housing pads using untreated pine logs harvested from within the park. Over time, these logs deteriorated, and the retaining wall at the Park Ranger's residence was replaced with treated 6" x 8" x 10' timbers. Unfortunately, these timbers are now also rotting, and the retaining wall is once again in need of complete replacement.

  The condition of the housing units themselves has significantly declined. Both structures are now considered substandard. They are infested with rodents, and the interiors are deteriorating due to extensive damage. Rodents have destroyed the insulation, leaving the homes poorly insulated and vulnerable to temperature extremes.

  In addition to structural issues, the utility systems are outdated and unsafe. The electrical wiring is not up to current code and cannot support modern appliances. Similarly, the plumbing system is composed of discontinued materials that no longer meet safety standards.

  These conditions present serious health, safety, and operational concerns. Upgrading or replacing the housing and associated infrastructure is essential to ensure safe and livable accommodations for park staff.

  The current location of the staff housing presents additional challenges beyond structural and utility issues. Situated in close proximity to the park office, the residences lack adequate fencing or clear delineation between private and public areas. As a result, it is common for visitors to mistakenly approach the homes, often ringing doorbells to ask park-related questions.

  This lack of separation compromises the privacy and security of park staff and their families, and underscores the need for improved site planning. Establishing clear boundaries—through fencing, signage, or landscaping—would help distinguish residential areas from public spaces and reduce unintentional intrusions.

- **Park Entrance:** The main entrance to the Park currently consists of a set of double pipe gates, a 20' x 20' landscaped berm with treated timber retaining walls containing the park historical style sign, and a parking area. Pay station #1 is located at this site as well as the pay booth.

- **Restrooms:** The Park currently has six 750-gallon Romtec single vaults and five 1,000-gallon Romtec double stall vault restrooms, all but one of which are in need of replacement.

- **Roads and Parking:** The park's road network provides sufficient access to all campgrounds and day-use areas; however, internal circulation can be confusing for visitors. Parking areas are poorly defined, often requiring park staff to actively guide vehicles to optimize space usage.

  Ongoing road maintenance is also a significant concern. Regular upkeep is required year-round to address potholes and to manage erosion and sediment runoff into the lake. Although two-foot diameter culverts were installed in 1985, with additional culverts added in 2021, severe erosion remains a persistent problem.

  One particularly troublesome section is along Loop B Road, near the sidewalk leading to the accessible fishing pads. In this area, stormwater runoff results in the buildup of silt and mud on both the sidewalk and the fishing piers, posing safety and accessibility issues. Furthermore, concrete jersey barriers installed against the fishing piers following the 1994 dam modification project—intended to improve water access by allowing the lake to reach the piers—have inadvertently blocked natural drainage from the hillside picnic area.

  Additionally, Lake Fork Road, located on the southeast side of the lake, is in need of significant rehabilitation to improve safety and accessibility. Key improvements should include removing a rock slide area, installing new drainage culverts, and widening the road at several critical points. At present, the road is unsuitable for low-clearance vehicles or recreational vehicles (RVs), which limits access for many visitors. Its narrow width and poor drainage contribute to ongoing erosion and safety hazards. Upgrading the drainage infrastructure and widening the roadway are essential steps to ensure reliable access and to accommodate a broader range of vehicles.

  These improvements would enhance the visitor experience, reduce ongoing maintenance needs, and support safer, more efficient circulation throughout the park.

- **Accessibility:** Accessible camping is currently offered at campsites 6a and 6b and four accessible fishing concrete pads exist along the north side of the lake. However, on crowded days conflicts can arise at these fishing spaces as visitors try to find any available area to fish. There is a marked accessible route from designated accessible parking spaces in Loop B to the fishing pads but it can be difficult to navigate due to mud and pine needles that bury the path itself.

  On the south side of the Lake there is no existing accessible parking at the group shelter, or other designated accessible amenities.

- **Utilities and Infrastructure:**

  - **Electricity:** Electrical service to the park is provided by the Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative. There are six 30-amp RV electrical pedestals, with the meter for these sites located near the wellhead along Fenton Lake Road, just downhill from the maintenance area. Separate meters serve the park shop and each staff residence.

    The existing power supply is inadequate to meet the demands of park staff, with modern tools and appliances frequently overloading outlets and tripping circuits. To address frequent outages caused by lightning storms and heavy snowfall, two backup generators are in place—one located behind the shop building and another situated below the staff housing area.

- **Gas:** Local vendors under state contract provide liquid propane gas at the Park. Natural gas service is not available. SPD owns a 1,000-gallon liquid propane tank that provides gas to the shop and office building. Another 500-gallon tank, owned by the propane vendor, is below the staff housing area and provides service for the back-up generator. Both park residences also have a 500-gallon tank owned by the propane vendor.

- **Telecommunications:** Windstream previously provided the Park shop/office with data and communication service, however connection speeds were insufficient for park needs and limited the area where data was available to the only the park office. This made it difficult for park staff and visitors to access campsite reservations or other information in other locations throughout the park such as the main entrances and campground areas. Potential options for improved service were explored and are limited by the remote nature of the park. However, data and internet were recently upgraded and are now provided by Starlink with greatly improved results.

- **Water:** The park's drinking water is supplied by a single well, registered with the Office of the State Engineer. Located near the park office and shop building, the well reaches a depth of 59 feet. In July 2023, the well pump and two pressure tanks were replaced to improve water delivery and reliability.

  In spring 2024, new waterlines were installed to connect the well to the park office/shop, two staff residences, and multiple water hydrants throughout the park. A 1¼-inch PEX waterline was laid alongside the existing lines to minimize excavation and disruption to the site. This infrastructure upgrade was prompted by recurring issues with discolored (brown) water and the detection of a slow leak in the previous system.

  The water system, including pressure tanks, switches, a water meter, and a pump protector is housed in the office/shop building. It supplies water to the residences, the office/shop, and seven hydrants in the electric campground and boat ramp area.

  A contracted water specialist, required to be a certified Small Water Systems Operator, monitors the system. Duties include monthly microbiological water sampling for coliform analysis, inspecting and repairing the well and pump system, and reporting monthly water consumption to the Region 1 Plant Operations Specialist and the Office of the State Engineer.

  There is a dry hydrant located at the north end of the lake along Fenton Lake Road that used to draw water from the lake for firefighting. This hydrant was authorized and installed under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between EMNRD, DOW, and the Sandoval County Fire Department. Sandoval County Fire Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of this dry hydrant.

- **Wastewater:** The wastewater system at the Park includes the septic systems for the shop and park housing, holding tank for the volunteer camp hose dump station, and the vault toilets.

- **Solid Waste:** A contractor handles all the solid waste removal. Throughout the year, the contractor provides the park with nine four-yard dumpsters. Contracts normally are for one year, with an option for an additional year. Annual review of the hauling frequency and number and size of bins is standard procedure.

- **Equipment and Maintenance:**

  - **Equipment:** The Park currently has acceptable equipment to maintain the Park in its day-to-day operations. This equipment includes:

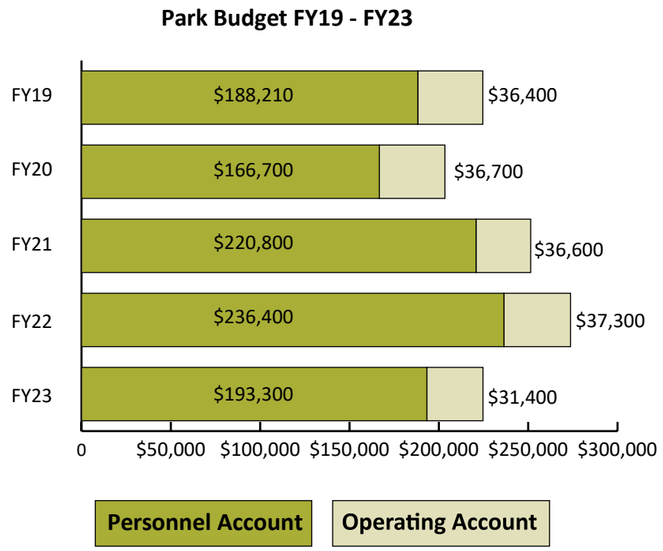
    - (3) Ford F-150s
    - (1) Ford F-250
    - (3) John Deere Gators
    - (1) Caterpillar Backhoe - Model 450
    - (1) T86-T4 Bobcat
    - (1) 16-foot Smoker Craft Boat with Trailer

  - **Maintenance:** Park employees use the SPD Standards of Care Manual and use standard maintenance procedures as the guideline for proper care of park facilities. The facilities are maintained in a safe and attractive condition for visitor and staff use and to prevent unnecessary and unplanned maintenance expenses.

PARK MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

- **Hours of Operation and Seasonal Closures:**
  - **Hours of Operation:** The Park is open 365 days a year. During summer months, the Park is open for day-use from 6:00AM – 9:00PM. During winter months, the Park is open for day- use from 7:00AM – 7:00PM. The daily staff hours are from 7:30AM – 4:00PM except on weekends and during busy times of the year when a Ranger will be scheduled until 11:00PM and on call in case of emergencies and to better assist visitors in the Park. Staffing schedules are adjusted as needed to account for visitor services needed.
  - **Seasonal Closures:**
    - Non-electric campsites closed beginning October 1 - April 30
    - Lake Fork Day Use Area closed from November 1 - April 30
    - Osprey Hill Day-use area closed based on snow conditions
- **Fee Collections:** SPD Park Fees are defined in the NMAC, Rule 19.5.6. The Park collects web-based and in-person payments for day-use activities. A single day-use pass can be purchased online or with a 'self-pay' envelope available at each recreation area. Annual day-use passes can be purchased online or from Park staff on-site. Camping at the Park is by reservation only. Reservations for overnight camping can only be made and paid for online.

  The five year park budget, FY19 - FY23, can be seen in the diagram below.

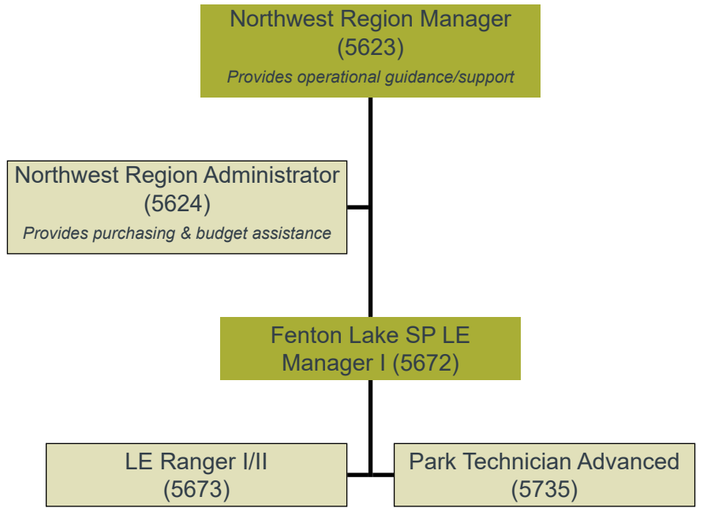


- **Public Safety & Emergency Management:**
  - **Emergencies:** Park emergencies are managed in accordance with the SPD Policy Manual, Section 5, and related SPD directives. Additional guidance specific to wildfire is provided by the 2014 SPD Wildfire Evacuation Plan (Appendix L) and the Sandoval County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP). Emergency response is also why Park Rangers reside on-site and are in dire need of new housing and possible review of housing placement as needs evolve.
  - **Emergency Resources:**
    - NM State Police Dispatch, Albuquerque: (505) 827-9300. Option 8
    - Sandoval County Policy/Fire Dispatch, Bernalillo: (505) 891-7226
    - Santa Fe National Forest, Jemez Ranger District, Fire Management Officer (FMO): (575) 829-3535
    - NM State Parks and Forestry Dispatch, Santa Fe: (505) 827-8080

    There is a dry hydrant located at the north end of the lake along Fenton Lake Road that is used to draw water from the lake for firefighting. Sandoval County Fire Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of this dry hydrant.
- **Law Enforcement and Boating Safety Staffing:**
  - **Rules and Policies:** The Park uses the standard SPD and EMNRD Policies for operational guidance. These include EMNRD's Policy Manual, the SPD Policy Manual, the SPD Standards of Care Manual and the Administrative Service Division's Procedures manual. State Personnel policies govern the personnel procedures of the park. These policy manuals are kept up to date and employees have access to them. New employees are required to read and sign all policy manuals.

    SPD is charged with enforcing the Boat Act (N.M. Stat. Ann. Chapter 66, Article 12) on all waters of the state. This includes enforcing provisions of the Boat Act.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteers work in the Park during the busy season to augment the staff's efforts. It is difficult to retain volunteer staff in the off season. The volunteer position most in need is a Campground Host to occupy the existing host site adjacent to Loop D. Duties involve providing information to visitors, spot maintenance, fee verification and assisting with the opening and closing of entrance gates as needed.
- **Concessions:** There is currently no concessionaire at the Park and lack of access to WiFi is a limiting factor for potential concessionaires. Previously the Park had one vendor in the last seven years who rented kayaks and sold bait. This vendor paid a year-to-year concession permit. A small convenience store and food truck located about 10 miles east of the Lake on Highway 126 seems to adequately serve the needs of visitors who travel into the area.
- **Staffing:** There are three full time employees at the Park: a State Park LE Ranger Manager I (Law Enforcement), a Park Law Enforcement Ranger II (Law Enforcement), and a Park Technician Advanced. During the summer season, there are three seasonal laborers. With the increase in visitation over the past five years, the Park is seeing the need for additional staff. In order to maintain and run the park efficiently, the Park would require a Park Law Enforcement Ranger II, and/or another Park

Technician in addition to existing staff. The additional staff would allow the Park to operate more effectively and better serve visitors by providing a safer environment and enjoyable experience. Brief job descriptions can be seen below as well as an organizational chart:



- **Park LE Manager I: Park LE Manager I:** This position is to supervise and oversee the management of the operations and maintenance at the State Park, including implementation of day-to-day operations according to the policies, procedures and standards of care; tracking and implementation of all programs relating to the basic operations and maintenance of the park. Programs include interpretive, trails, reservations, American Disability Act (ADA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and all maintenance and preventative maintenance programs. Addressing personnel issues and working with other agencies and ensuring the safety of staff and visitors.

- **Park LE Ranger I/II:** This position performs a myriad of duties to include patrolling Fenton Lake State Park to enforce Park Rules and the NM Boat Act, present interpretive programs to the public and other employees, and the general care and maintenance of boating equipment, vehicles and facilities. The incumbent will be required to perform many of these duties in unpredictable and extreme weather conditions throughout the year. Responsibilities also include other assignments determined by park management to ensure the safety and success of Fenton Lake State Park.

- **Park Technician Advanced:** This position is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and safety of the Park, as well as maintenance of the vehicles, equipment and tools. The incumbent will need to communicate with the general public to preserve the Park's natural and cultural resources. The incumbent will need to be familiar with the state park policies and procedures and rules. Scheduled preventive maintenance on vehicles, equipment, water systems and facilities will need to be identified and scheduled. Additionally, appropriate budget to purchase supplies, repair/replacement parts so they are on hand at the time the maintenance is scheduled.

- **Seasonal Personnel:** This position, under supervision, performs manual labor necessary to perform a variety of maintenance and landscaping tasks through such activities as maintaining campgrounds, restroom facilities and buildings, maintaining and operating vehicles and landscaping equipment. This position will assist park visitors and collect fees.

The Northwest Region office is located at 1002 Rio Brazos, Aztec, NM, 87410. This office provides operational support for the Park.

- **Partnerships:**

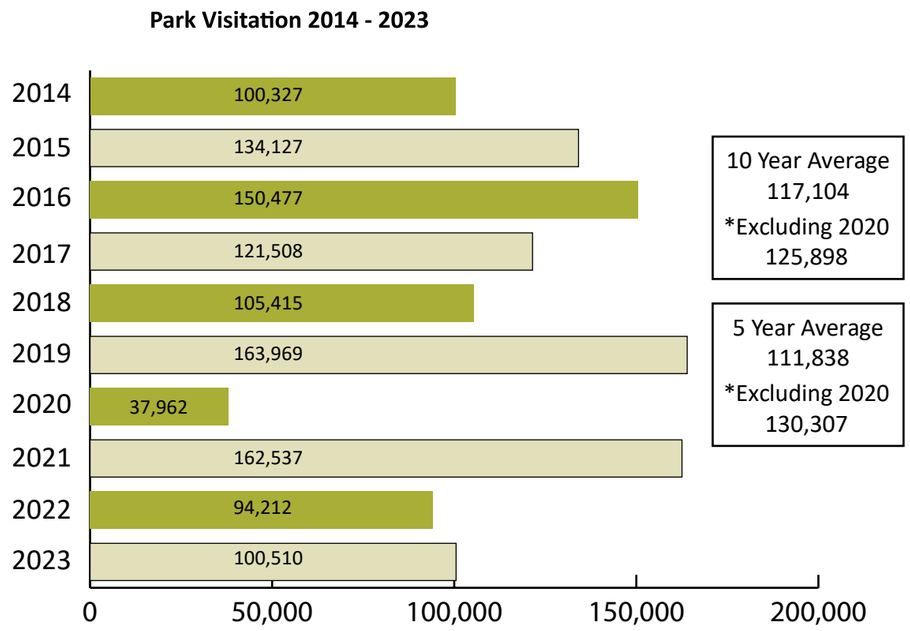
  - **Government Entities:**

    - DOW
    - USFS
    - NMDOT
    - EMNRD Forestry Division
    - Tribal Nations
    - Sandoval County
    - NM State Police

  - **Local Organizations:**

    - Friends of Fenton Lake
    - Zia Pueblo
    - Town of Jemez Springs
    - Jemez Springs Volunteer Fire and Rescue
    - Albuquerque Public Schools
    - Adjacent Landowners

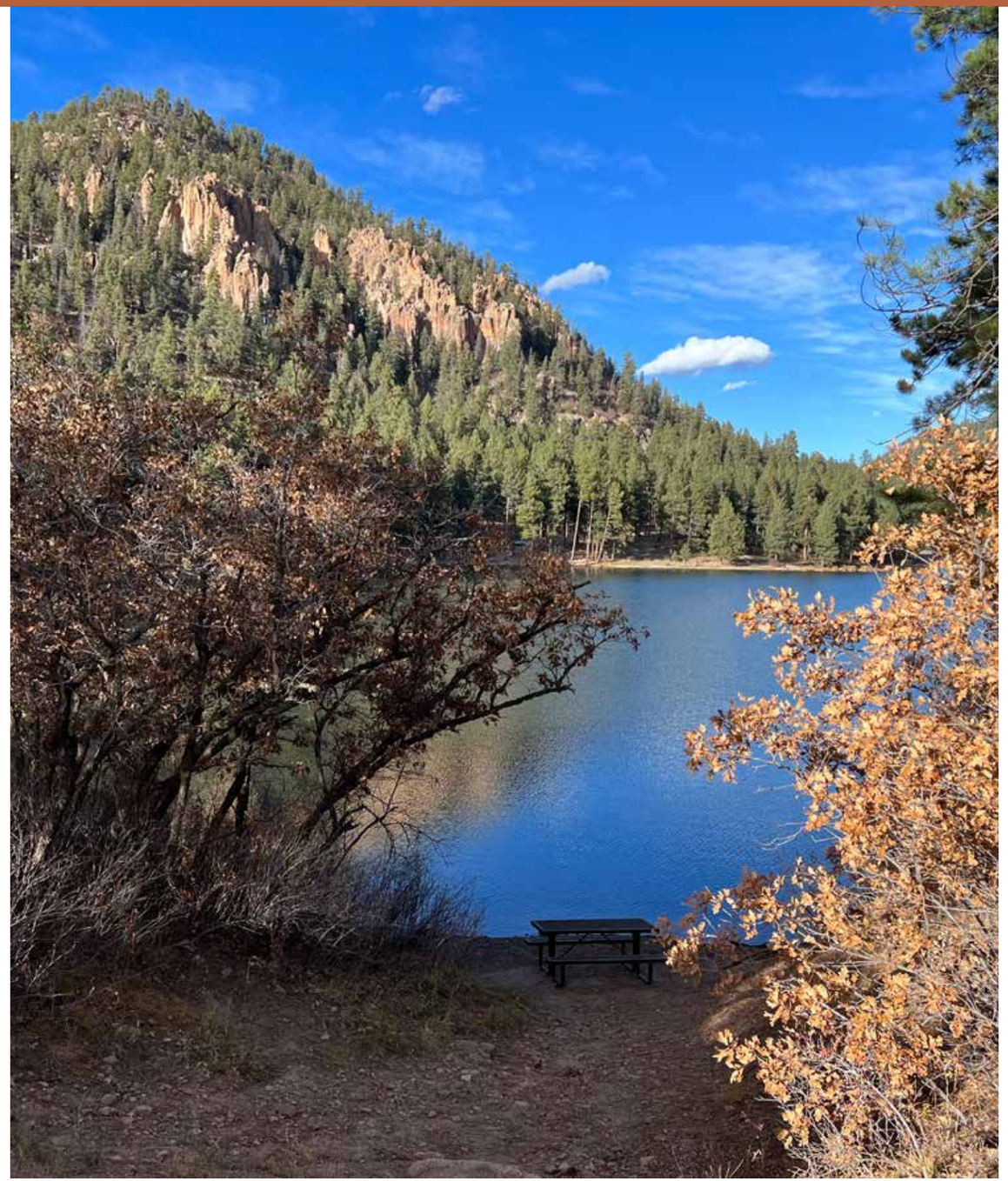
- **Visitation:** Park visitation averages for the last 5 years and 10 years can be seen in the charts below.



- The majority of visitors to the Park are day-use anglers mostly from the Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Española areas and the heaviest use of the park is from fishing and picnicking at the main day-use areas.
- Based on receipts, roughly half of campers are New Mexico residents.
- In the last 5 years, visitation at the Park has grown, with the exception of 2020 (during the
- COVID-19 Pandemic). According to the data above, if you exclude 2020, the last four year average is approximately 11% higher than the 10 year average. And the last 5 year average (excluding 2020) is approximately 6.5% higher than the previous 5 year average (2014-2018). Crowds fill the park every day during summer months and on weekends the park is forced to close the front gates when parking capacity is reached. Both park amenities and parking will have to be developed simultaneously to meet the demand.
- The implementation of reservation only camping has improved efficiency for staff and visitor experience for the Park in some ways but it has also created new issues. The most frequent of which is when people reserve two campsites simultaneously at different parks, keep both reservations, and only use one while no-showing the other. Four to five times per year, the reservation system will cause a “double booking” creating a reservation for two separate parties at the same site at the same time. Site 28 is held open for situations like this. Having more sites that could be held for these situations would be helpful in dealing with this issue. Cell/data service limitations are also a factor as people who might arrive without reservations have issues creating a reservation on-site.

FENTON LAKE STATE PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT - 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS



Proposed Improvements Diagram

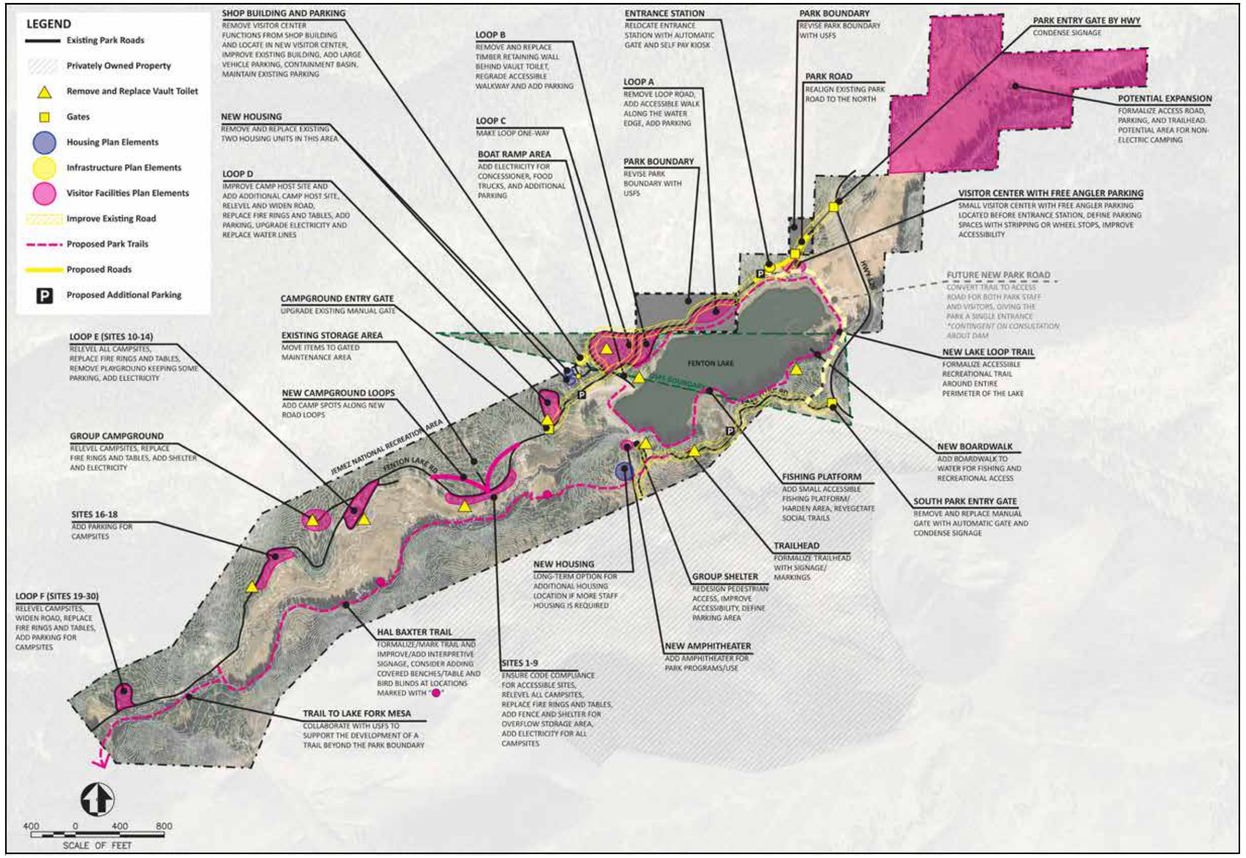


FIGURE IV-1: Proposed Improvements Diagram

Recommendations

Based on concerns or problems raised by Park staff, stakeholders, partner organizations, or by the public, recommended improvements for efficient operations and enjoyment of the Park were developed. Not all recommendations will result in immediate action or may be of lower priority during this planning period.

The following recommendations are also listed in the “Action Plan” in the following section. Some actions will require further research, evaluation, planning, or design before they can be implemented. Each action is contingent upon available funding and other resources, and there is no guarantee that it will be feasible or that it can be funded and implemented in the proposed time frame

RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Trails and Trailheads:** The park currently has three trailheads, none of which are clearly marked with signage. This makes it difficult for visitors to locate the trailheads and navigate the trails, both of which are less than a mile long. Additionally, the trails lack signage that identifies park features and resources.

  Recommendations include:

  - **North Entry Trailhead:** A trailhead sign with a map and markings should be added to formalize the existing trailhead by the north entry and to guide visitors to the proposed lake loop trail. Educational signage highlighting wildlife, wetland ecology, and lake information should be incorporated along the trail leading to the lake loop trail.

  - **Hal Baxter Trail and Trailhead:** The Hal Baxter trail, currently the only trail in the park, is an out-and-back trail ideal for easy walking. To maintain its natural state while preventing erosion and social trailing, the trail should be clearly marked with signage, markers, and barriers where needed to protect the habitat.

    The trailheads at both the east and west ends of the trail should be formalized with additional information and amenities, such as maps, trail length, difficulty level, safety information, and covered picnic tables. The east trailhead would mark the beginning of the Hal Baxter Trail, and the west trailhead would mark its end and the potential beginning of a trail extending beyond the park boundary.

    To enhance the visitor experience and promote wildlife observation, a strategically positioned bird blind could be constructed approximately a quarter mile from the east trailhead. This location is away from the main day use areas and has dense tree canopy, which would provide natural cover for the bird blind and create an ideal environment for observing birds and other wildlife in their natural habitat. The bird blind would also provide an outdoor classroom for students and offer a sheltered space for visitors to quietly view and appreciate the diverse fauna inhabiting the park, fostering a deeper connection with nature.

  - **Proposed Lake Loop Trail:** The proposed lake loop trail provides a 1.5 mile scenic trail along the perimeter of Fenton Lake, along with wayfinding signage to help visitors access and navigate the trail. This trail has the potential to be fully accessible with seating, aiming to provide a welcoming experience for visitors of all abilities. Additionally, the trail can offer an educational component through the installation of interpretive signs that will delve into the rich history and

diverse ecology of the lake, enhancing visitors' understanding and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural significance.
A boardwalk may need to be added where the trail is typically wet on the south side of the lake, near the south entry of the park. A boardwalk would provide a stable and dry pathway, preventing erosion of the trail and allow visitors to complete the lake loop trail.

- **Proposed Trail Beyond Park Boundary:** SPD and partner agencies could collaborate to create longer and more challenging trail by connecting and expanding the trail systems beyond the park's boundaries. For example, working with the USFS could support developing a 5-to-6-mile trail south of the park boundary. This trail would offer visitors views of Fenton Lake from a natural summit.

- **Trail Standards:** The USFS uses "Trail Fundamentals" and "Trail Management Objectives (TMOs)" to categorize, standardize, and manage their trails. The USFS Southwestern Regional Trails Program Manager informed SPD that trails within a special use permit area, when on USFS lands do not require a TMO. However, the formulation of draft TMO's are recommended at a minimum so that all parties understand the purpose, use type(s), management, and design parameters associated with the proposed trail(s). If those trails do enter non permit area(s), they do need a TMO. The USFS Southwestern Regional Trails Program Manager has offered to assist/support formulation of these documents if interested. Although a TMO is not required, USFS has high interest (and is required) in ensuring new trails adhere to sustainable design to reduce/eliminate future maintenance burden and to ensure protection of resources, and so would like to provide input and be informed of who will be designing the trail(s) in the future.

- **Campgrounds:** The campsites within the park have been negatively affected by water runoff and drainage patterns, causing erosion and the need for re-leveling. Site amenities, such as fire rings and picnic tables, also need replacing. Regrading the sites and adding swales to redirect water flow will enhance the sustainability and preserve the camping areas. Where the tree canopy is less dense, native shrubs and grasses can be added to absorb runoff water and improve the overall quality of the campsites.

Recommendations include:

- **Campground Entry Gate:** The existing manual entry gate, located just west of the camp host sites, could be replaced with an automated gate to better manage access to the campgrounds as needed.

- **Camp Host Site:** To better accommodate seasonal needs during periods of high visitation, a second camp host site can be established to the east of the current location. The addition of clear signage for the camp host site will assist campers in locating the host and asking any questions they may have. Both camp host sites will have standard parking, RV parking, electricity, a fire ring, and a picnic table.

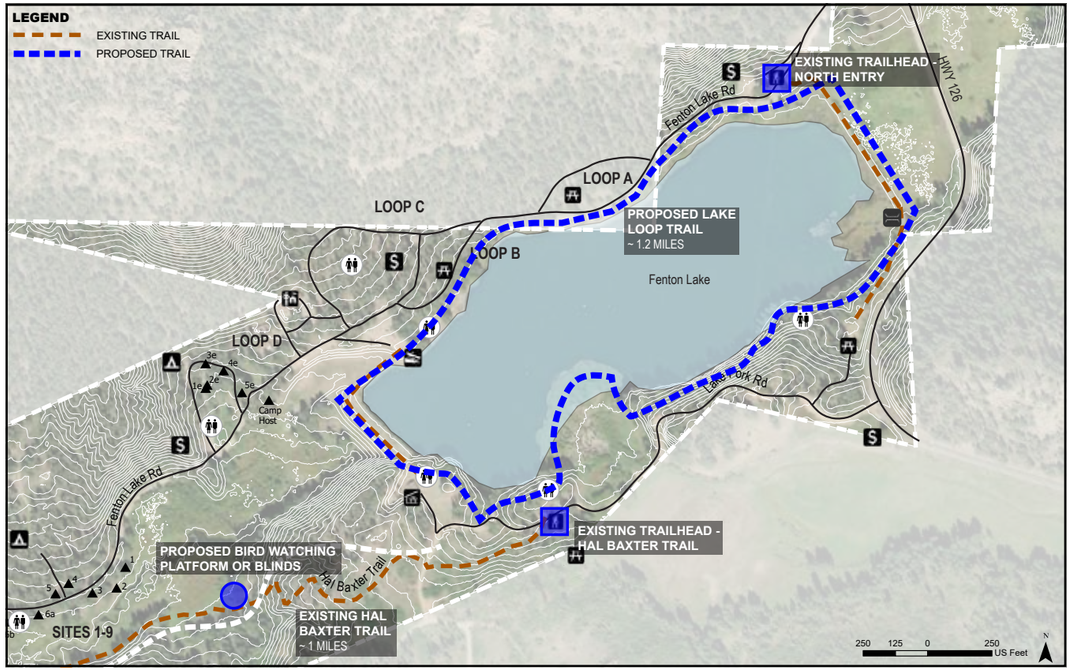


FIGURE IV-2: Proposed Trails Diagram East

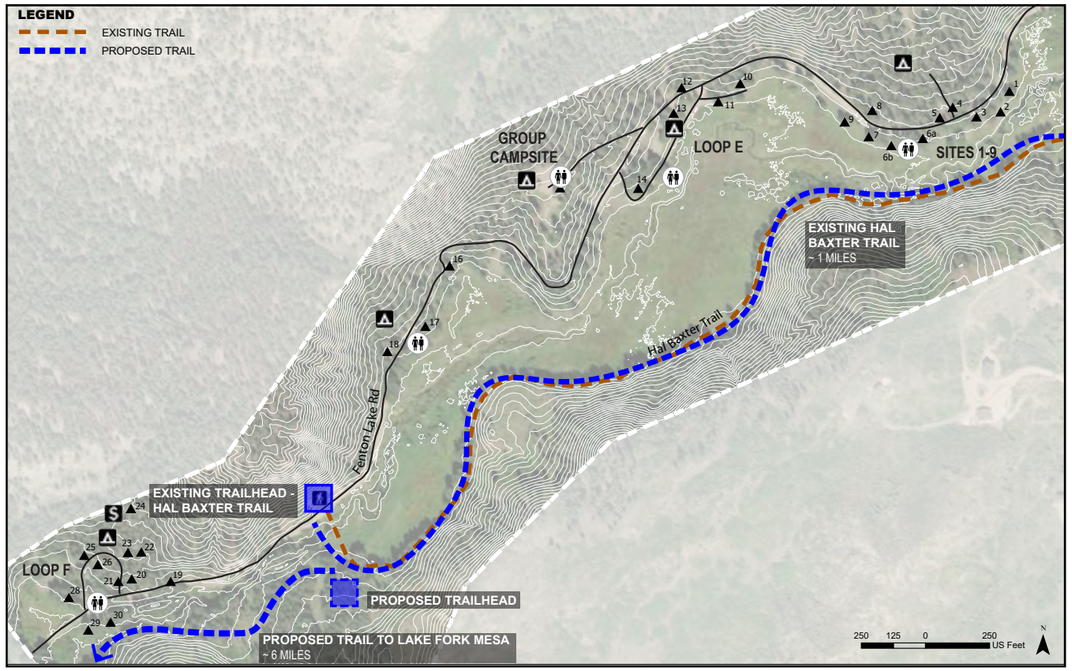


FIGURE IV-3 Proposed Trails Diagram West

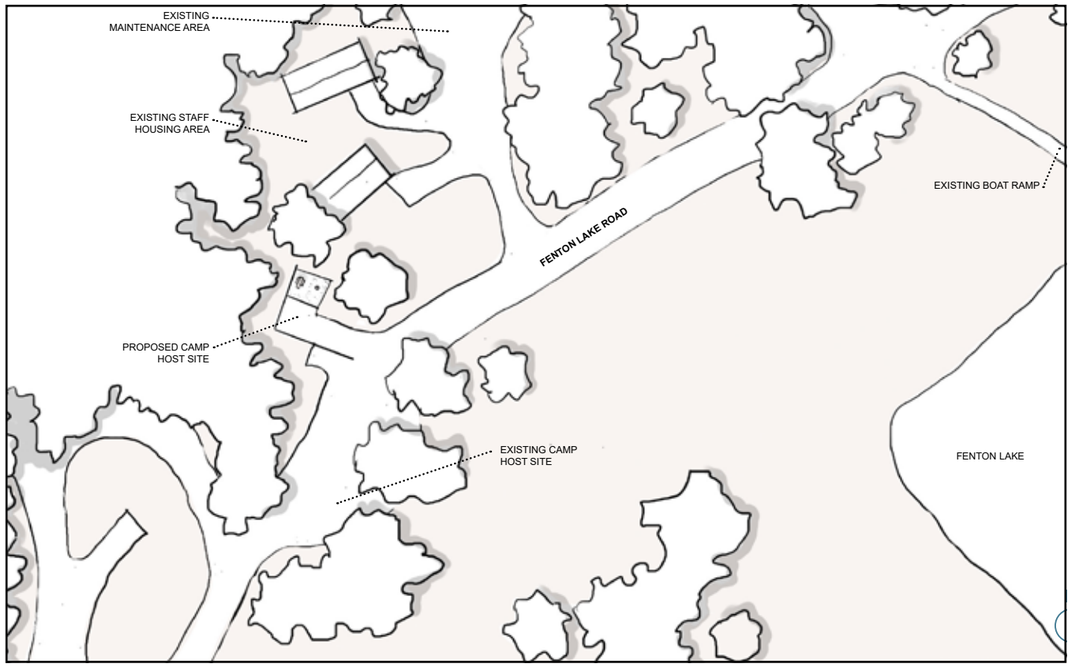


FIGURE IV-4: Proposed Camp Host Site

- **Loop D:** The Loop D campground will need replacement of existing fire rings and picnic tables, modification of an existing campsite to fully comply with outdoor accessibility standards, two additional parking spaces, and upgrades to the electrical system to support higher power demands and ensure safety and reliability.

- **Campsites 1-9:** The campsites in this area all need re-leveling for adequate drainage as well as to ensure code compliance for all designated accessible sites. They also need replacement fire rings and picnic tables, and the addition of electricity for all sites is proposed.

- **Loop E (Sites 10-14):** The Loop E campground sites are all in need of re-leveling, replacements of fire rings and picnic tables. The playground equipment located in Loop E of the campground should be removed entirely because of the difficulty in the maintenance and upkeep required for compliance. The area can then be re-purposed to create additional parking spaces specifically designated for anglers. This change will address the growing demand for accessible parking for those visiting the campground for fishing.

- **Group Campsite:** The group campsite is in need of regrading, new fire rings and picnic tables, as well as adding electricity.

- **Sites 16-18:** Expand the campsite parking area to accommodate three additional standard vehicles, enabling larger groups to park together.

- **Loop F (Sites 19-30):** The Loop F campsites all need re-leveling and replacement of fire rings and picnic tables. To improve maneuverability and safety, the Loop F road should be widened.

This improvement will also add five new parking spaces for campers.

- **Proposed Campground Loops:** North of campsites 1-9, there is space to create new campground loops that would accommodate eight additional sites. These new sites would require electrical hookups, fire rings, picnic tables, and designated parking spaces. This expansion would not only increase the overall number of campsites but also provide campers with greater accessibility to the lake and day use areas.

  SPD should consider diversifying the types of camping experiences offered along these new loops through the installation of yurts or cabins, in addition to RV and tent camping sites. This would require significant clean-up of the park materials storage area and evaluation for electrical service.

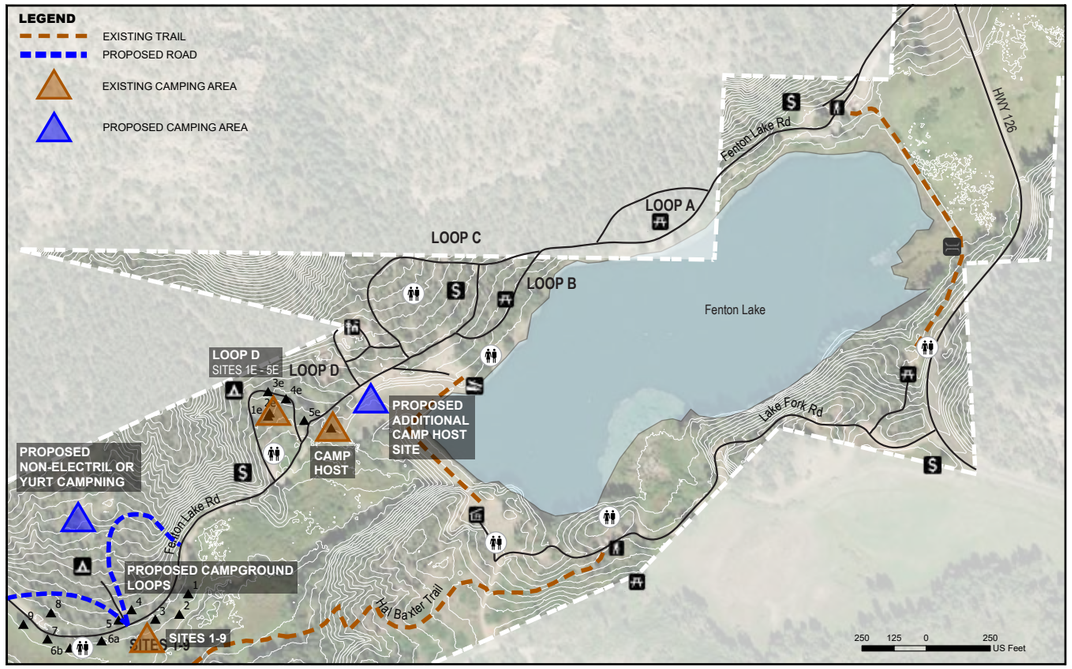


FIGURE IV-5: Proposed Campground Improvements

- **Fishing Platform:** To enhance the recreational experience and accessibility of the lake area, a fishing platform can be constructed on the southern side. This platform will serve multiple purposes: providing an accessible location for anglers to enjoy their sport, creating a point of interest for visitors strolling along the proposed lake loop trail, and potentially offering opportunities for educational programs or nature observation. The fishing platform should be designed to be accessible with appropriate clear space and lower railings, use natural material to blend in with landscape, and accommodate10-12 people. Social trails that have developed in this area should be closed off (with natural boulders and shrubs) and revegetated with native plant species. This will help restore the natural landscape and deter visitors from creating new trails and causing further damage along the lake shore.

- **Group Shelter:** The current parking area for the group shelter is large, open, and unpaved. To improve visitor safety and efficiency, designated accessible parking spaces and a clearly marked accessible walkway leading to the group shelter should be established. These improvements will ensure a clear separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

- **Boat Ramp Area:**

  Recommendations include:

  - **Electrical Infrastructure:** Installing electrical connections would support the operation of concession stands and/or food trucks, providing visitors with convenient access to refreshments and meals.

  - **Parking Expansion:** Creating additional parking spaces designated for trailers and concessionaires would accommodate the increased traffic and potential business opportunities that may arise from the improvements.

  - **Boat Launch Paving:** Paving the boat launch area would create a smoother and more durable surface, improving accessibility for boaters and simplifying maintenance requirements. Incorporating vegetated swales and regrading roads adjacent to the boat ramp would mitigate sediment accumulation by redirecting and filtering stormwater runoff.

  - **Seasonal Dock:** Adding a small floating dock for a ranger boat would allow staff to keep a boat in water for faster emergency response. This dock would be removable in the winter.

- **Picnic Areas:** The picnic tables and fire rings in the day use areas need to be replaced. In addition, more picnic tables should be installed to accommodate visitor demand.

- **Proposed Amphitheater:** To enhance the park's day-use amenities and provide a dedicated space for park programs, an outdoor amphitheater can be added to the west of the existing group shelter. The amphitheater should be designed to accommodate a small size school group, prioritize accessible seating, and integrate with the natural surroundings.

- **Northeast Area of Park:** The northeast portion of the park is currently undeveloped and presents a potential opportunity for future recreational expansion. However, any development in this area must account for the presence of critical habitat, wetlands, and steep slopes to maintain environmental integrity and site stability. Additionally, the area is located near a blind curve along Highway 126; a traffic study should be conducted to evaluate safe vehicle access to the site.

  Recommendations include:

  - **Proposed Road Improvements and Parking:** Forest Service Road 378 is east of NM-126 and provides access to the northeast section of the Park. This road has a small, informal parking area with well-worn pedestrian trails to the river. Beyond this parking area there is a wooden vehicular bridge. SPD should coordinate with USFS and DOW to improve the existing roadway of Forest Service Road 378. This should include an inspection of the bridge. SPD should evaluate areas to formalize parking and day-use areas off this road.

  - **Proposed Signage and Fee Station:** Signage and a fee station should be installed at the first parking area along Forest Service Road 378.

- **Proposed Meadow Loop Trail with Boardwalk and Wildlife Blinds:** SPD and partner agencies could collaborate to install an accessible trail and boardwalk with one or more wildlife blinds featuring interpretive exhibits.

- **Outdoor Education Area:** This area may also be suitable for an outdoor education area.

- **Connector Trails:** SPD and partner agencies could collaborate to connect and expand the trail systems beyond the Park's boundaries.

- **Proposed Camping:** The easternmost park boundary as a pipe rail fence with pedestrian access points leading to USFS land. There are areas here with level ground that may be suitable for camping. Because of the remote location and vicinity to USFS recreation, SPD camping should have formalized sites rather than allowing primitive camping without designated sites. Camping facilities here could include two or three off-grid yurts.

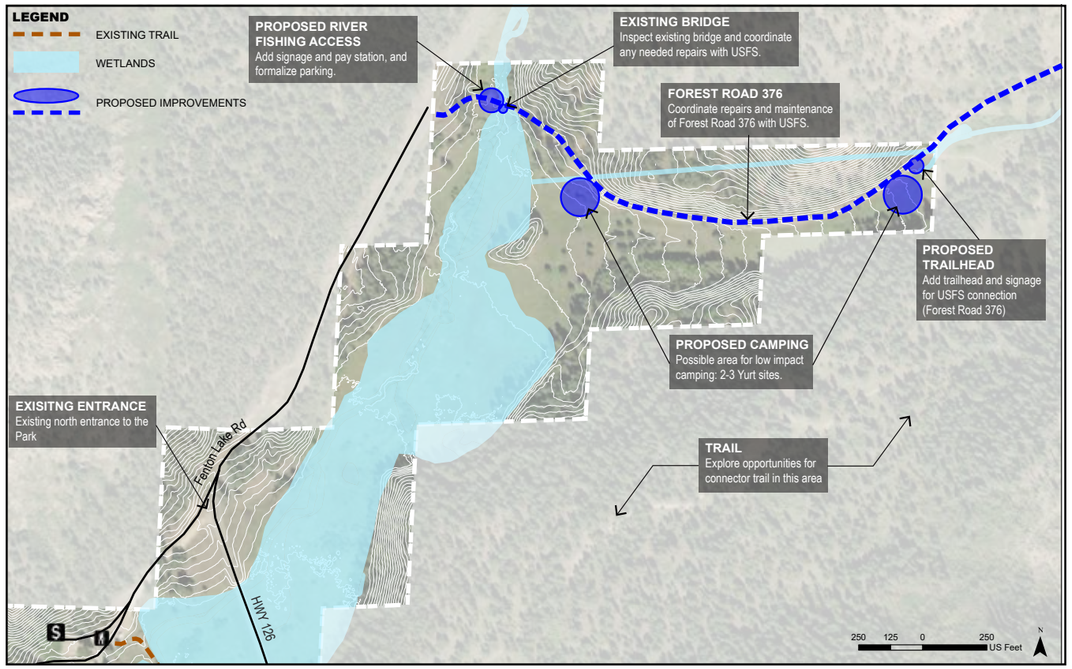


FIGURE IV-6: Proposed NE Area Improvements

FACILITY AND UTILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Park Entries:**

  - **North Entry:** To enter the park on the north side of the lake, visitors first pass through a gate located directly off Highway 126. This gate must be manually opened and closed each day by park staff. An automatic gate is recommended to provide more efficiency in managing the park admittance. In this case, these gates would need to be programmable and equipped with a sensor that would enable them to open automatically from the inside to let people exit after the gate has been closed. This entry area also has several signs which could be consolidated and improved to be more uniform in appearance and material to clearly communicate information to visitors.

    The short distance between the park entrance from Highway 126 and the entry kiosk, combined with the visitation volumes that the park experiences cause vehicles to stack in the two lanes entering the park and onto the highway beyond the park road. The vehicular congestion at the north entrance makes it difficult for park staff to enter or exit the park. Relocating this entry station further into the park along Fenton Lake Road would allow more space for vehicles entering the park and avoid congestion along the highway. This redesign of the entry station should also provide space for additional and/or emergency/staff entry lanes by expanding the road width in this area. Automatic pay stations and gates should be considered to help improve and allow for more efficient management of entry operations. This would also require improvements to data and electricity in this area, both of which are discussed further under “Site Wide Roads, Drainage/Grading, Parking, and Utilities.”

  - **South Entry:** The south side entry to the park has a small pull off area outside of a gate that is manually opened and closed by park staff to give visitors access to Lake Fork Road. Automating this gate would eliminate the need for park staff to open or close the gate at the beginning and end of each day. This gate also needs the capability to have personalized codes or similar programmability to provide access for neighboring landowners. The signage at this entry point can be condensed and made consistent with other signage within the park to create consistency and effectively communicate important park information to visitors.

Recommendations Include:

- **North Entry Area:**
  - Install automated gate with sensor.
  - Condense signage and set design/material standards for all park signs.
  - Relocate entry kiosk further into the park to increase vehicle stacking.
  - Replace manual self-pay station with automated pay station.
  - Widen road to accommodate additional lane for park staff only.
  - Incorporate gated emergency access lane to dry hydrant for firefighting vehicles.

- **South Entry:**
  - Remove existing manual park entry gate and replace with automatic gate for ease in snowy weather and to reduce staff time in the morning and evening opening and closing the gate
  - Condense signage and set design/materials standards for all park signs
  - Replace manual self-pay station with automated pay station

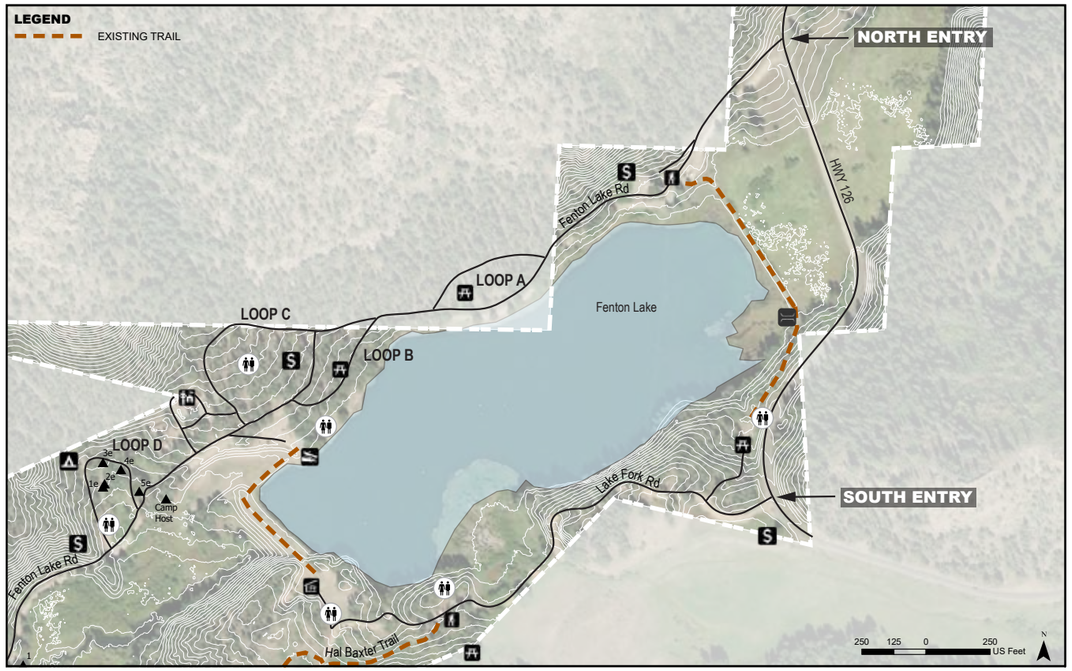


FIGURE IV-7: Park Entry Locations

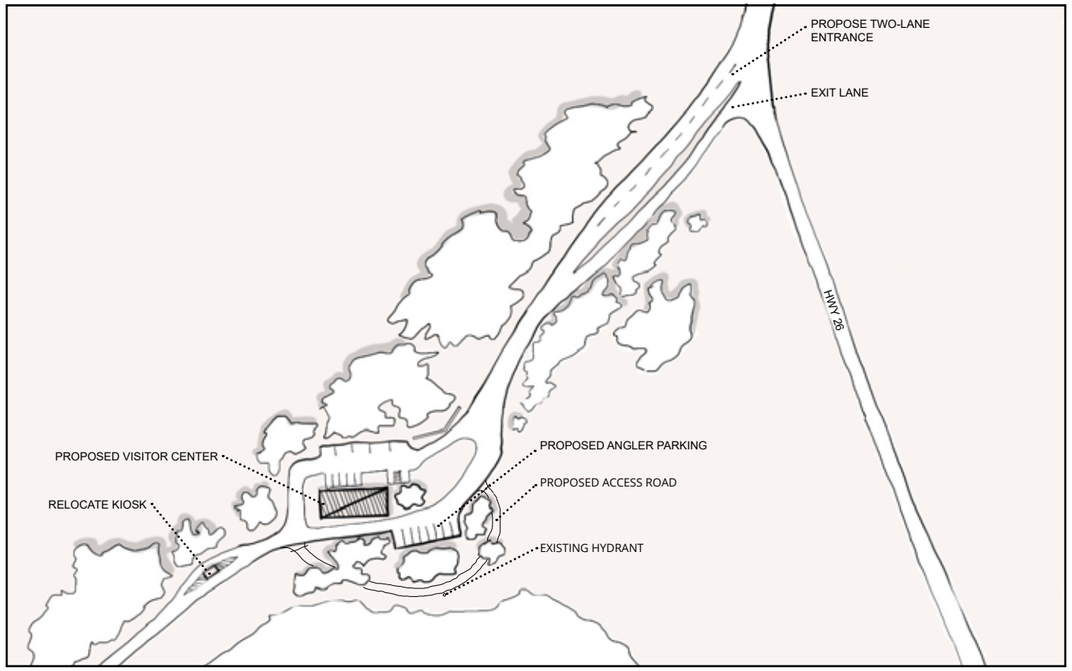


FIGURE IV-8: North Park Entry Improvements

- **Parking:** Parking can be added by clearly defining spaces in existing lots and along roads that are wide enough and have minimal tree impact. Converting some roads to one-way traffic would allow for safer and more abundant roadside parking without affecting circulation. Any new parking spaces should be situated close to day-use amenities.

  Recommendations Include:

  - **Free Angler Parking:**
    - **North Side:** The proposed site for the new visitor center is the current location of the free angler parking area. The parking area will be moved across the street with an accessible path to the lake (see figure below). This would continue to allow for anglers to have their own dedicated parking area, approximately 8 parking spaces.
    - **South Side:** There is existing parking on the south side of the lake for anglers. Adding wheel stops to clearly mark the parking spaces would maximize parking availability.
  - **Boat Ramp Parking:**
    - Improve pedestrian access and walkways including ADA accessible paths.
    - Improve parking including ADA accessible parking spaces.
  - **Loop A:** *Note: this section of road is currently not included in the park boundaries.*
    - Explore the possible expansion of the park boundary to include this loop with USFS in a new SUP.
    - Analyze road alignment options to reduce steepness, maximize parking, and improve access to the lake.
    - Improve quality of day-use areas and visitor access to the lake.
    - Revegetate area to decrease erosion and degradation.
  - **Loop B:**
    - Improve pedestrian access and walkways including ADA accessible paths
    - Improve parking including ADA accessible parking spaces
  - **Group Shelter Parking:** The large gravel area that currently serves as group shelter parking will remain open and flexible. However, two accessible parking spaces have been paved and striped with a wheel stop as part of the 2024 Vault Toilet Replacement Project. This will ensure accessibility to the new vault toilet and shelter in this area.

- **Park Roads:** Roadways throughout the Park experience significant erosion due to inadequate drainage infrastructure and unmanaged stormwater conveyance. Over time, this has degraded unpaved surfaces, exposing tree root zones and compromising both roadway integrity and surrounding vegetation. Past maintenance efforts—primarily regrading to smooth potholes and ruts—have lowered roads below their natural grade, making routine upkeep difficult without importing additional base material. Depressed roadway sections now act as primary stormwater channels, accelerating washouts, sediment transport, and damage to natural habitats and recreational infrastructure.

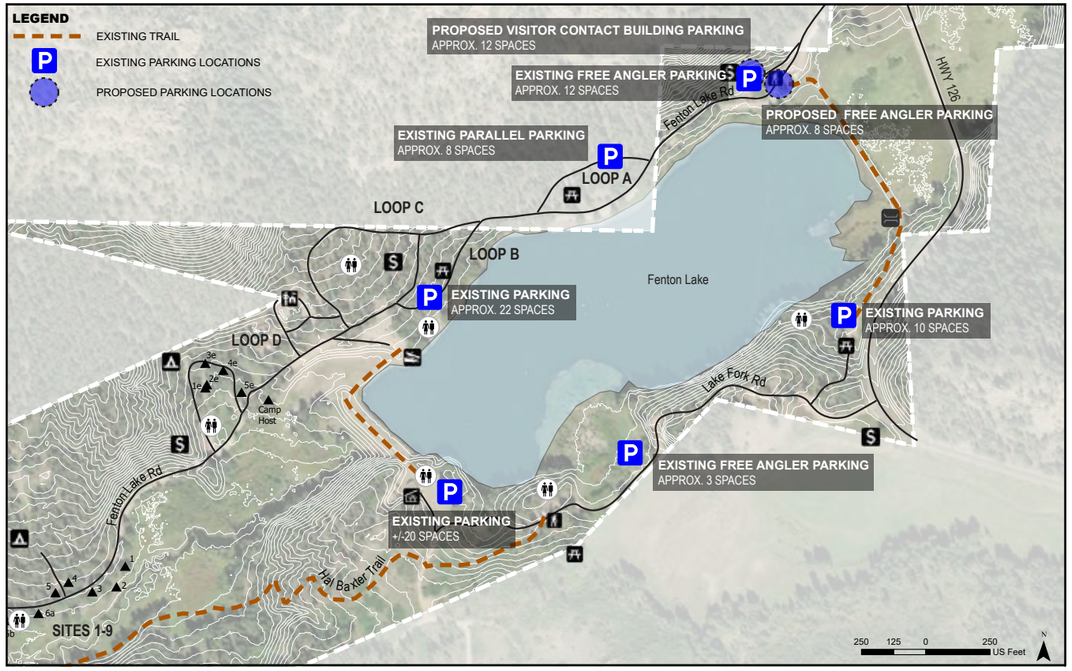


FIGURE IV-9: Parking Locations - Existing and Proposed

The proposed design approach focuses on controlling runoff and directing flows through hardened or protected features such as vegetated swales, cobblestone swales, and culverts. These improvements will create smoother, more durable roads that reduce maintenance needs while preserving the Park's natural character. Key considerations include maintaining narrow corridors to limit tree removal, using a single cross-slope surface for simplified upkeep, avoiding asphalt or concrete to retain a natural aesthetic, and limiting daylighting slopes to a maximum of 10:1 to reduce erosion from sheet flow.

Recommendations Include:

- **Park-wide:**
  - Import and place road base material.
  - Improve drainage and establish alternate conveyance paths.
  - Implement natural slope stabilization techniques for steep grades using straw wattles and contour log terraces (shown in Figure IV-10).
  - Consider road realignments.
  - Implement gravel pavement system.
  - Develop a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan.

In some areas, especially those with steep adjacent slopes or mature trees, corridor expansion may present challenges including potential tree removal and slope stabilization.

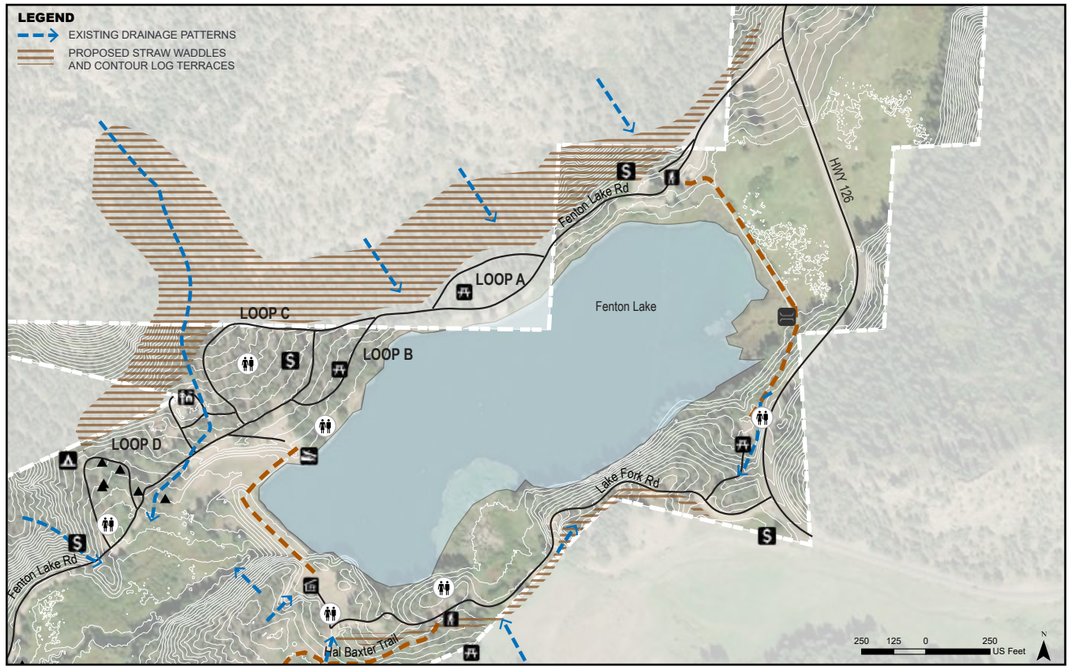


FIGURE IV-10: Proposed Natural Slope Stabilization Recommendations

In areas where mechanical drainage solutions are impractical due to steep slopes or ecological sensitivity, natural methods such as straw wattles and contour log terraces can be employed to reduce runoff velocity and promote infiltration.

- **Fenton Lake Road:**
  - Realign and widen the existing road to allow for an extra lane for emergency staff only and additional vehicular stacking at the park's north entrance. Shifting Fenton Lake Road farther north will allow more space for new parking and potential visitor center facility at the north park entrance.
- **Loop A:** *Note: this section of road is currently not included in the park boundaries.*
  - Explore the possible expansion of the park boundary to include this loop with USFS and a new SUP.
  - Analyze road alignment options to reduce steepness, maximize parking, and improve access to the lake.
  - Improve quality of day-use areas and visitor access to the lake.
  - Revegetate area to decrease erosion and degradation.
- **Loop B:**
  - Improve pedestrian access and walkways including ADA accessible paths.

  - Improve day-use areas and parking including ADA accessible parking spaces.
  - Formalize and improve fishing access areas including ADA accessible fishing areas.
- **Loop C:**
  - Make loop one-way.
- **Loop D:**
  - Re-level and widen road.
- **Loop F:**
  - Widen road.
- **Lake Fork Road:**
  - Re-grade and consider road realignment.
  - Opportunity to add parking along road.
- **Proposed Park Road:**
  - Convert trail on the east side of the Lake to an access road for both park staff and visitors, giving the park a single entrance and an additional circulation path around the Lake. However, this would be contingent on further consultation regarding the dam.

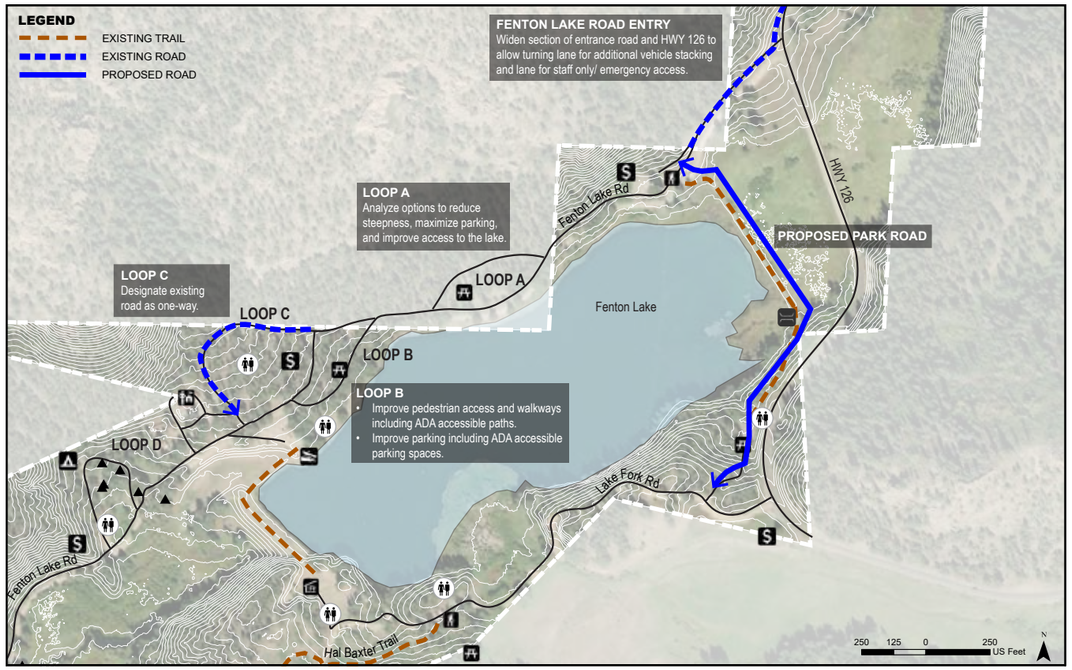


FIGURE IV-11: Proposed Road Improvements

- **Vault Toilets:** The vault toilets located at Fenton Lake experience a high volume of visitor usage throughout the entire year and have been identified as requiring immediate replacement. To maintain a positive visitor experience, a phased approach to replacing the vault toilets was adopted. Phase one of this project, which focused on the initial replacement of the five most used vaults, was successfully completed in the Fall of 2024 and included vaults #1, #10, #9, #6, and #7. The subsequent phase, phase two, is scheduled to commence construction in the Fall of 2025 and will include vaults #3, #4, #5, and #8. This project aims to ensure that visitors to Fenton Lake have access to modern and well-maintained restroom facilities, thereby enhancing their overall experience at the park.

  Recommendations Include:

  - **Vault Toilet #1 (Loop C):**
    - Remove double vault toilet and replace with new double vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #2 (Loop B):**
    - This vault is not included in Vault Toilet Replacement Projects and will need further coordination to determine appropriate placement of a new vault toilet in this area.
  - **Vault Toilet #3 (Loop D):**
    - Remove double vault toilet and replace with new double vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #4 (Sites 1-9):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #5 (Loop E, Sites 10-14):**
    - Remove double vault toilet and replace with new double vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #6 (Group Campsite):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #7 (Sites 16-18):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #8 (South side, close to highway entrance):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet
  - **Vault Toilet #9 (South side, along road at trailhead):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet.
  - **Vault Toilet #10 (South side, by group shelter):**
    - Remove single vault toilet and replace with new double vault toilet.

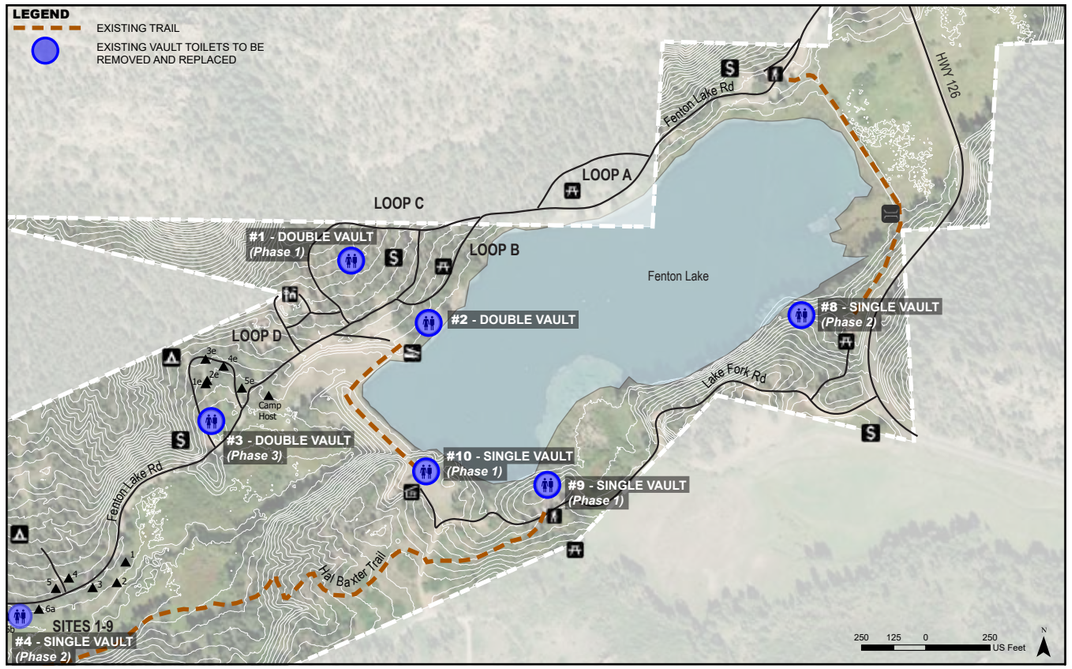


FIGURE IV-12: Vault Toilets to be Replaced (1)

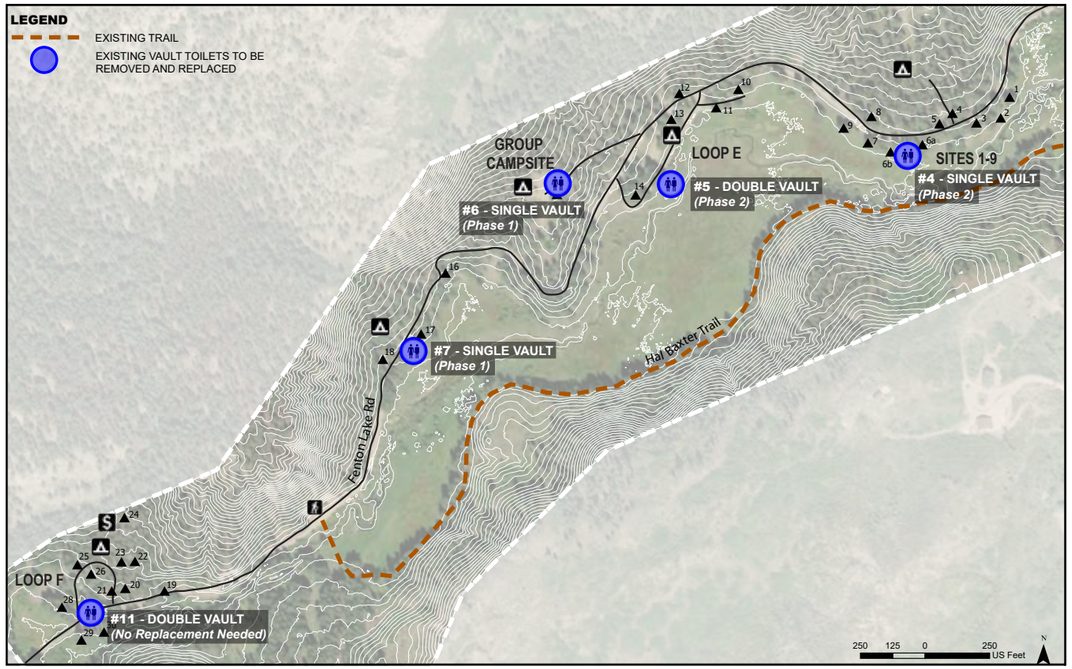


FIGURE IV-13: Vault Toilets to be Replaced (2)

- **Shop/Maintenance Area:** Once the visitor center and park office are relocated, the existing building will be repurposed exclusively as a maintenance and shop facility, with limited office space retained for operational needs. This transition will improve site functionality by creating more room for large vehicle storage and materials, such as those currently stored near campsites 1-9. The area will also be securely fenced and gated to restrict public access and protect valuable park equipment.

Recommendations Include:

Building Modifications:

1. Remove visitor center functions from the existing shop building.
2. Improve the existing building roof to address current deficiencies and extend the building's usable life.
3. Reconfigure the interior layout to better support maintenance operations and staff needs.
    a. Introduce additional storage capacity for tools, equipment, and materials.
    b. Include a new kitchenette and small office area to improve staff comfort and functionality.

Site Enhancements:

4. Add large vehicle parking areas to support maintenance operations and improve circulation.
5. Construct a containment basin at the fueling station to meet environmental and safety standards.
6. Maintain the existing number of staff parking spaces to ensure capacity remains consistent.
7. Improve the site perimeter for better security and functional separation from public areas:
    a. Install a gate at the entry drive, accompanied by appropriate "Parking Staff Only" signage.
    b. Add new coyote fencing around the maintenance yard to enhance site security and visual screening.

Circulation and Access:

8. Abandon and revegetate existing drives that no longer serve the revised site functions.
9. Construct new access drives to support the updated layout, improve circulation, and enhance safety.

Housing and Equipment Shelter:

10. Remove existing housing units on the site as part of the site reconfiguration.
11. Replace housing at the existing housing site.
12. Construct a three-sided shelter for large equipment, with the following considerations:
    a. Proposed location identified near the maintenance yard for operational efficiency.
    b. Alternative location available should site constraints or environmental conditions require relocation.
13. Add snow awnings at vehicle bays to protect equipment and enhance year-round usability.

Additional Support Amenities:

14. Develop a new proposed camp host site, located for visibility, accessibility, and proximity to key park facilities.
15. Outdoor storage area for possible relocation of items from existing "boneyard."

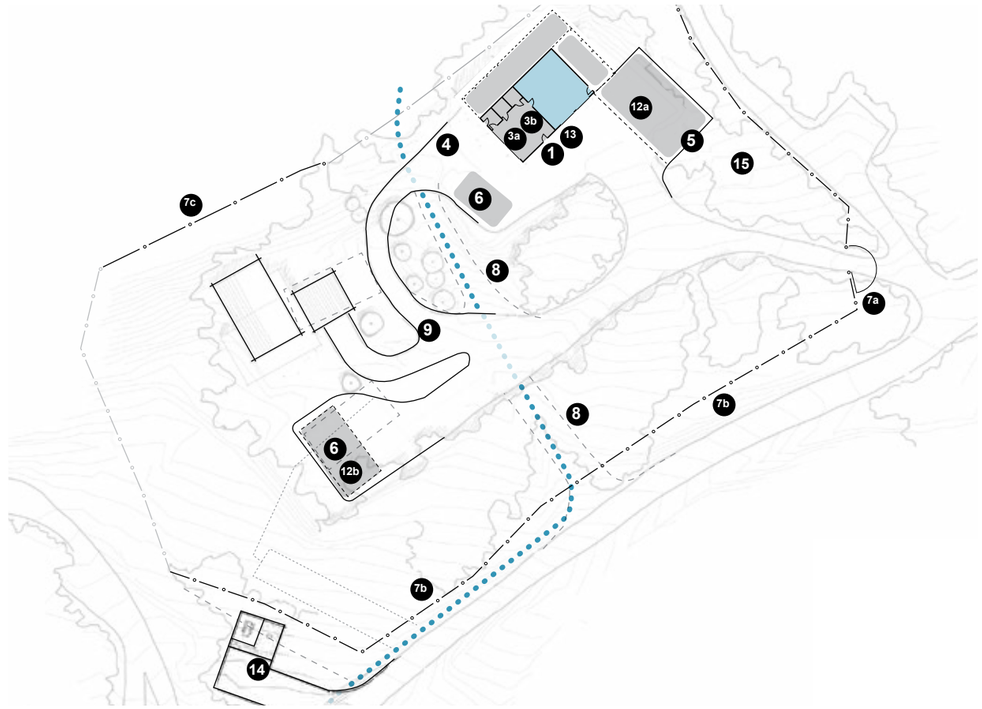


FIGURE IV-14: Proposed Shop/Maintenance Area Site Plan

- **Employee Housing:** New Mexico State Parks typically provides housing for law enforcement staff (i.e. park rangers), so they are on site to respond to emergencies. Fenton Lake State Park currently provides two mobile homes for staff, but the poor condition of these has created challenges for recruiting and retaining staff for the park.

  Recommendations Include:

  - **Proposed North Housing:**
    - Remove existing (2) housing units.
    - Locate two new housing units at current disturbed area.
    - Add gate for privacy.
    - Improve drainage.
  - **Proposed South Housing:**
    - As a long term option, SPD should consider locating one new housing unit southwest of the lake if additional staff housing is required.
    - Add new well.
    - Add road connection with gate.
    - Add propane generator for electric backup.
    - Add large vehicle carport/storage.
  - **Housing Acquisition:**
    - SPD should remain open to acquiring staff housing in the region as an alternative to building new housing within the park boundary.

- **Existing Storage Area:** This area currently stores excess building materials, equipment and other items as needed by park staff however it does not offer security for these items. This prevents the park from using the area to store more sensitive items. With the proposed improvements to the shop/ maintenance building area, including the addition of a secure gate around the area marking it as “Staff Only,” items requiring protection from potential visitor interference could be moved from this current storage area. This would leave this area to continue to be used as needed for items that do not require protection, such as road materials.

  Recommendations Include:

  - Move items to gated maintenance area, leaving only road material storage.

- **New Visitor Center/ Point of Contact:** The current visitor center setup presents several challenges that limit both operational efficiency and visitor experience. At present, the visitor center, park office, and maintenance shop are all housed within a single structure. This shared space restricts functionality, offering no dedicated areas for staff meetings, visitor engagement, or break rooms. The building’s location also fails to provide a clear point of contact for guests upon arrival, reducing the sense of welcome and orientation. Additionally, the lack of separation between public and maintenance areas raises security concerns and limits available space for storing equipment and materials. This configuration also prevents efficient use of the site for large vehicle storage and organized material handling, further complicating park operations.

  - Add a small visitor center in the existing north entry angler parking area. The visitor center will include offices, front desk, storage, breakroom, and parking.
  - Add angler parking south of the entry kiosk.

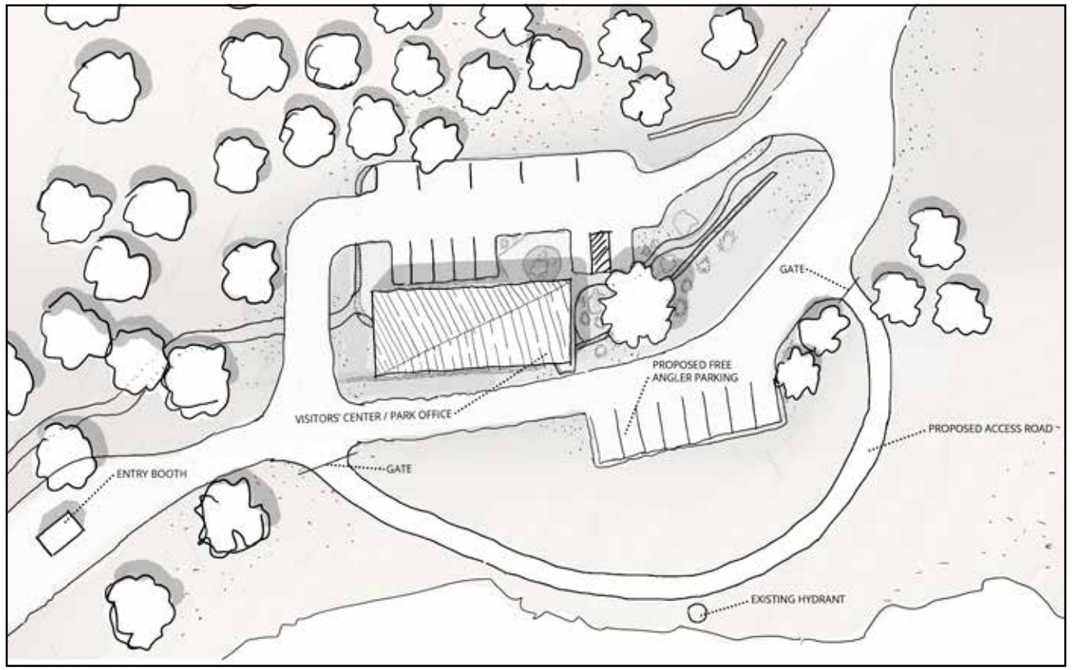


FIGURE IV-15: Proposed Visitor Center Site Plan Showing Proposed Free Angler Parking

- **Utilities:** Utility service within the park is challenging due to its remote location. Available service providers are few, and the services they offer are often unreliable. The area's geology further complicates matters, contributing to water quality issues such as sedimentation and elevated manganese levels. Phone service is also limited and inconsistent, frequently disrupted by wind and storms, which hampers communication for park staff.

  Recommendations Include:

  - **Phone:** Phone service is unreliable, and providers are limited.
    - Investigate internet-based phone service that could provide better coverage
  - **Internet:** The park has recently upgraded to using StarLink for internet service. It is currently working well but limited to the office/maintenance building area for park staff use only.
    - Add additional receivers at the entrance area to the park that could be used at the entry station and potentially a new visitor center.
    - Consider additional locations for receivers as needed to expand internet coverage to the park.
    - Provide Wi-Fi for visitors, particularly to enable emergency calls to be made using Wi-Fi given the lack of cell coverage in the park.
  - **Septic/Sewer:** The existing septic is relatively new and functioning well for the current needs of the park.
    - Provide additional septic/sewer as needed for new development in the park, like an additional housing site on the south side of the lake.
    - Continue to evaluate septic/sewer needs as needed in response to additional facilities.

- **Water Distribution:** The park water lines are old and have been patched and repaired many times over the years. These repairs with more modern materials have put additional stress on the extremely brittle galvanized steel that comprise the majority of the pipe. Rather than continue this pattern, the pipes need to be fully replaced with a new line adjacent to the existing one.

  The primary water quality issue with the single well on-site is manganese. This has been measured at 2 ppm, which exceeds standards by 40x. A heavy duty residential manganese removal system is recommended to fix this problem.

  - Rather than dig up the existing pipe and cause all the associated disruption, install a new water distribution line close to the existing one to take over water distribution.
  - Consider filtration options to help with water quality concerns.
  - Add new well on south side of the lake to provide water for housing at new proposed housing site.

- **Electricity:** Electricity service can also be unreliable throughout the park and there are areas that currently have no electricity where it will be needed in order to upgrade facilities, provide additional visitors services, and improve park operations. These improvements will require coordination with Jemez Mountains Electric Co-Op.

  - Add electricity at both park entrances to feed automatic gates and pay stations.
  - Evaluate upgrading electrical service in existing electric loop.
  - Evaluate installing electrical service at additional campsites.
  - Provide electric service to any new park facilities, such as visitor center or new park housing, as needed.

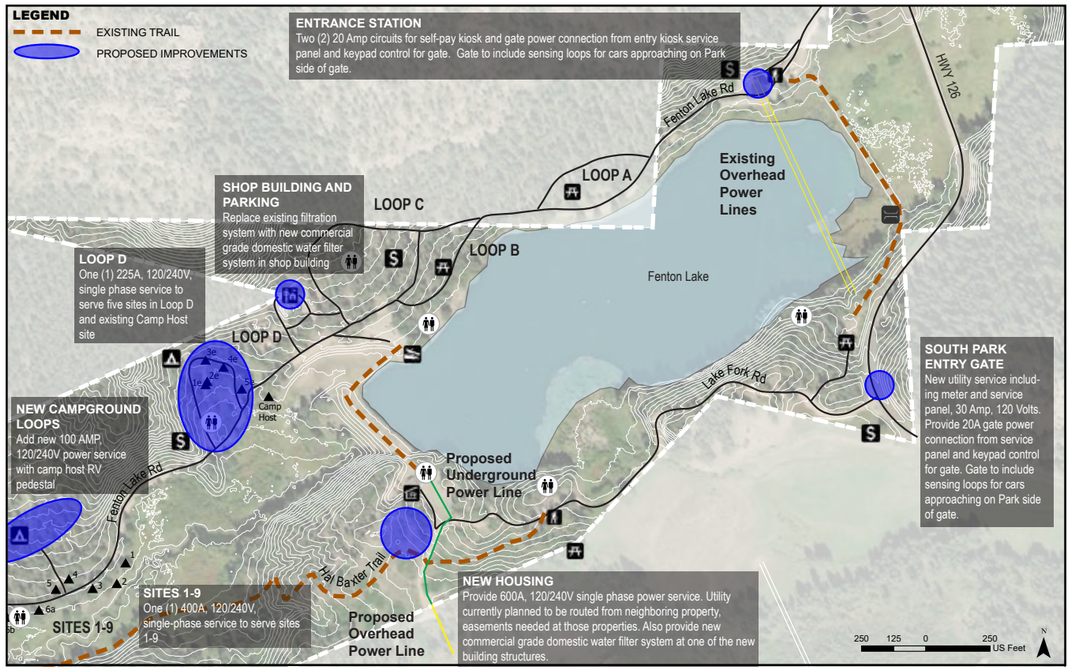


FIGURE IV-16: Proposed Utility Improvements

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Natural Resource:** To maintain the ecological integrity of the park, it is essential to protect sensitive habitats, preserve water quality, and conserve wildlife and native vegetation. At the same time, restoring degraded natural environments and aging infrastructure—such as riparian zones, trails, and campsites—will enhance environmental health and improve the overall visitor experience.

  Recommendations Include:

  - Sandoval County has completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) that helps guide wildfire management and safety, but additional opportunities to implement fire management projects within the Park should be evaluated.
    - Study fire loads and defensible space considerations.
    - Consider forest thinning for both fire management and forest ecosystem health.
  - Protect critical habitat for threatened and endangered species known to exist in the Park

- **Cultural Resource:** The Park holds potential for archaeological sites that reflect the diverse cultures historically present in the region. Cultural resources within park boundaries are protected under state and federal laws, ensuring their preservation. SPD personnel are committed to safeguarding these resources from both public impacts and environmental threats, helping to maintain the park's cultural and historical integrity.

  Recommendations Include:

  - Coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and cultural resource specialists to protect existing cultural resources in the Park.
  - Continue to undertake cultural resources surveys to support permitting and design for any proposed park projects.

LAND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Acquisitions:** Land ownership within the Park is complicated by overlapping jurisdictions, as certain park facilities are located on USFS land, sometimes beyond the official park boundary. This overlap requires close coordination between park and USFS staff to ensure effective management and maintenance

  Recommendations Include:

  - SPD should remain open to and explore potential land acquisitions that will improve park management, including opportunities to acquire housing in the vicinity of the Park.
  - SPD should continue attempting to resolve and renew a Special User Permit (SUP) with USFS and should inquire about expanding the park management boundary to include the mapped areas below which have park access roads.

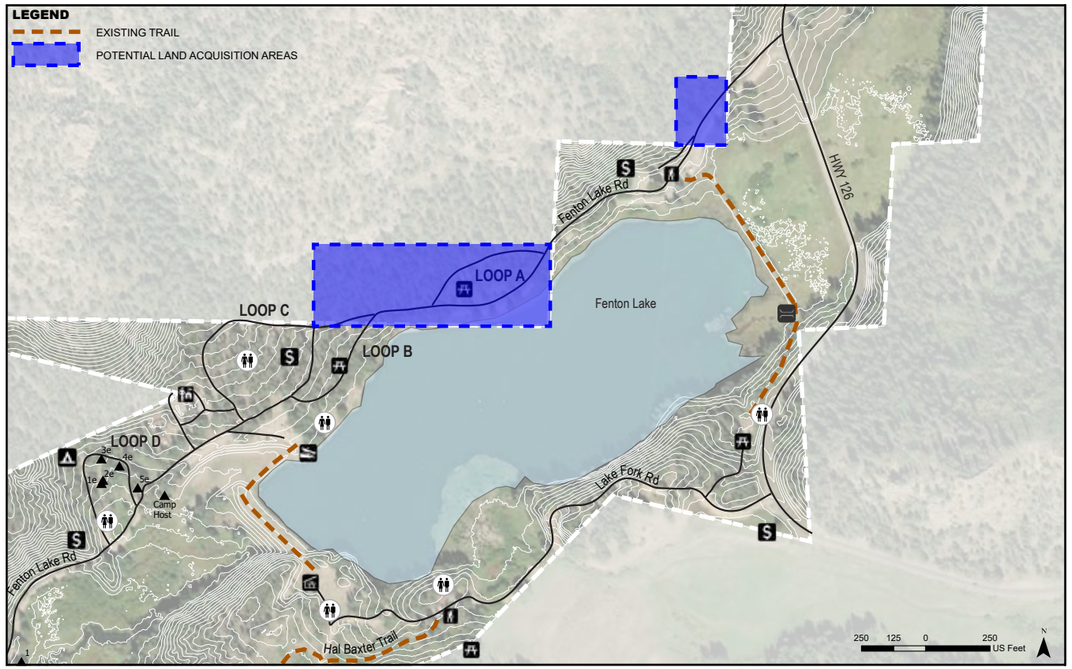


FIGURE IV-17: Proposed Land Recommendations

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Planning:**
  - **Signage:** The park's current signage is inconsistent and overwhelming. To improve visitor experience, signs should be simplified, standardized in design and materials, and placed strategically to clearly communicate rules and important information.

    Recommendations Include:

    - Develop signage plan to condense signage and consolidate signage locations.
    - Update signage to have a consistent style and use of materials throughout the park.

  - **Camping and Recreational Access:** Additional developable land within the park is limited due to the area's topography. However, the park is surrounded by USFS land, and visitors often use it as a gateway to nearby sites that offer more camping and recreational opportunities.

    Recommendations Include:

    - Work with partner agencies to determine any additional opportunities or locations for expanded camping and other recreational opportunities to plan for further growth and mitigate potential negative impacts.

  - **Public Safety and Emergency Management:** The Park's Wildfire Evacuation Plan, now over a decade old, no longer reflects current conditions or practices. A comprehensive update is necessary to maintain effective safety measures for staff and visitors.

    Recommendations Include:

    - Update the 2014 Wildfire Evacuation Plan to reflect current conditions.

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Interpretive Signage Opportunities Recommendations:** The Park's damaged and unreadable interpretive signs should be reviewed for removal or replacement. Evaluating their current locations and identifying key park features can guide where to place new or updated signage. These improvements could be supported by educational programs hosted at the proposed visitor center and amphitheater.

  Recommendations Include:

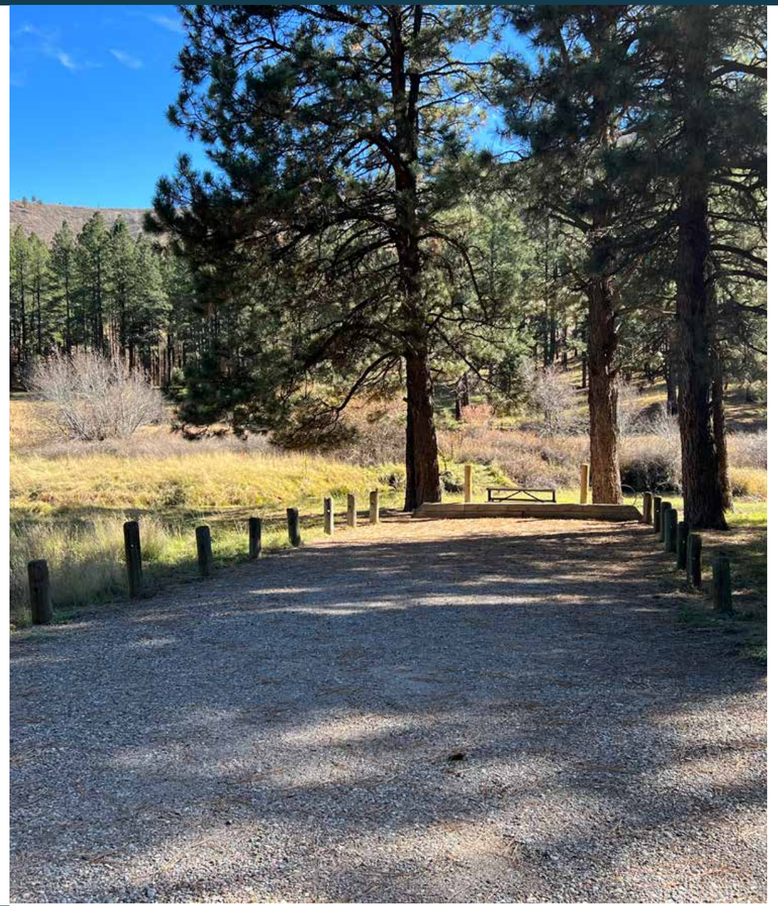
  - Condense signage and consolidate signage locations.
  - Update signage to have consistent style and use of materials throughout the park.
  - Remove existing outdated interpretive signage.
  - Reevaluate existing interpretation locations and identify new locations.
  - Install new interpretive signage.
  - Utilize proposed amphitheater for educational programming.
  - Partner with Albuquerque Public Schools, DOW, USFS, non governmental/local organizations, and nearby communities.
  - Develop interpretive plans focused on:

    1. Wetlands
    2. Beaver dams
    3. Osprey nest
    4. Wildfires
    5. Wildlife connected to the boardwalk and blinds
    6. Healthy forests
    7. Volcanoes and geology
    8. Protected species in the park
    9. Fire management
    10. Cultural resources and history of the area

CONCLUSION

Fenton Lake State Park is a unique natural and cultural resource that requires thoughtful stewardship to balance recreation, conservation, and operational priorities. This management plan outlines strategies to address key challenges—such as aging infrastructure and habitat protection—while enhancing visitor experiences. Through collaboration, adaptive management, and targeted investment in facilities and resource protection, the plan ensures the Park remains a sustainable, welcoming destination that preserves its distinctive character for future generations.

ACTION PLAN



FENTON LAKE STATE PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT - 2026

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
RECREATION					
Trailheads 1.1: Formalize trailhead by north entry with signage/ markings		Trails and Trailheads	North Entry Area		p. 51
Trailheads 1.2: Formalize trailhead with signage/markings		Trails and Trailheads	Day Use Side		p. 51
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Hal Baxter Trail and Trailhead 1.2: Improve/add interpretive signage		Trails and Trailheads	Hal Baxter Trail		p. 51
Hal Baxter Trail and Trailhead 1.3: Consider adding covered benches/table		Trails and Trailheads	Hal Baxter Trail		p. 51
Hal Baxter Trail and Trailhead 1.4: Consider adding bird blinds or platforms with interpretive signage		Trails and Trailheads	Hal Baxter Trail		p. 51
Proposed Lake Loop Trail 1.1: Formalize accessible 1.5 mile trail around entire perimeter of the lake		Trails and Trailheads	Fenton Lake		p. 51 - 52
Proposed Trail Beyond Park Boundary 1.1: Collaborate with USFS to support the development of a 5 to 6 mile trail beyond the Park Boundary with wayfinding signage		Trails and Trailheads	Beyond Park Boundary		p. 52
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Campgrounds 1.2: Replace fire rings and tables		Campgrounds	Loop D		p. 54
Campgrounds 1.3: Add/convert one standard campsite for accessible use		Campgrounds	Loop D		p. 54
Campgrounds 1.4: Add 2 total parking spaces		Campgrounds	Loop D		p. 54
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RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
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Boat Ramp 1.3: Pave boat launch		Recreation	Boat Ramp Area		p. 56
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RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
RECREATION					
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Park Entries 1.4: Remove and replace manual gate with automatic gate		Park Entries	North Entry Area		p. 58
Park Entries 1.5: Replace manual self-pay station with automated pay station		Park Entries	North Entry Area		p. 58
Park Entries 1.6: Widen road to accommodate additional park staff-only lane		Park Entries	North Entry Area		p. 58
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Park Entries 1.9: Condense signage		Park Entries	South Entry Area		p. 58
Park Entries 1.10: Replace manual self-pay station with automated pay station		Park Entries	South Entry Area		p. 58
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Free Angler Parking 1.2: Improve accessibility with designated parking and/or path to the day use areas		Parking	North Side		p. 60
Free Angler Parking 1.3: Add wheel stops to spaces		Parking	South Side		p. 60
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Proposed Parking 1.2: Improve parking including ADA accessible parking spaces		Parking	Boat Ramp Parking Area		p. 60
Proposed Parking 1.3: Explore the possible expansion of the park boundary to include this loop with USFS in a new SUP		Parking	Loop A		p. 60
Proposed Parking 1.4: Analyze road alignment options to reduce steepness, maximize parking, and improve lake access		Parking	Loop A		p. 60
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RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
FACILITIES AND UTILITIES					
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Proposed Parking 1.8: Improve parking including ADA accessible parking spaces		Parking	Loop B		p. 60
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Roads 1.2: Improve drainage and establish alternate conveyance paths		Park Roads	Park-Wide		p. 60 - 61
Roads 1.3: Implement natural slope stabilization techniques for steep grades		Park Roads	Park-Wide		p. 60 - 61
Roads 1.4: Consider road realignments		Park Roads	Park-Wide		p. 60 - 61
Roads 1.5: Implement gravel pavement system		Park Roads	Park-Wide		p. 60 - 61
Roads 1.6: Develop a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan		Park Roads	Park-Wide		p. 60 - 61
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RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
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Vault Toilet 1.3: Remove double vault toilet and replace with new double vault toilet		Vault Toilets	Vault Toilet #3		p. 64
Vault Toilet 1.4: Remove single vault toilet and replace with new single vault toilet		Vault Toilets	Vault Toilet #4		p. 64
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Shop 1.2: Improve existing building roof and interior layout to include more storage and a new kitchenette		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.3: Add large vehicle parking		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.4: Add containment basin at fueling station		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.5: Maintain existing number of parking spaces		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.6: Improve site perimeter		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.7: Abandon and revegetate existing drives		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.8: Add new drives		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.9: Remove existing housing		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.10: Add new Housing		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.11: Add shelter for large equipment, three sides enclosed		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Shop 1.12: Add snow awnings at vehicle bays		Facilities	Shop/Maintenance Area		p. 66 - 67
Employee Housing 1.1: Remove existing (2) housing units		Housing	Proposed North Housing Area		p. 68
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Employee Housing 1.4: Improve drainage		Housing	Proposed North Housing Area		p. 68
Employee Housing 1.5: Locate one new housing unit on undisturbed area southwest of lake		Housing	Existing Housing Area		p. 68

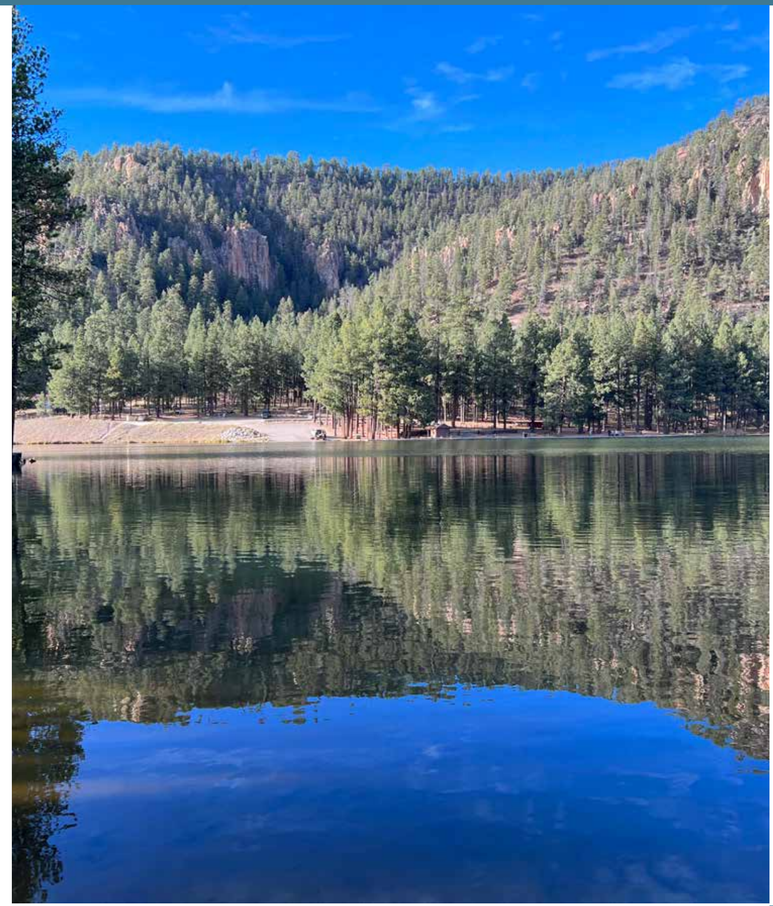
RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
FACILITIES AND UTILITIES					
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Employee Housing 1.7: Add new well		Housing	Existing Housing Area		p. 68
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Camp Host 1.1: Add signage to existing camp host site		Facilities	Camp Host Site		p. 52-54
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Campground Entry Gate 1.1: Remove and replace manual gate with automatic gate		Facilities	Campground Entry		p. 52-54
Existing Storage Area 1.1: Move items to gated maintenance area, leaving only road material storage		Facilities	Existing Storage Area		p. 68
Visitor Center 1.1: Add a small visitor center in the existing north entry angler parking area. The visitor center will include offices, front desk, storage, breakroom, and parking.		Facilities	Existing North Side Free Angler Parking Area		p. 69
Visitor Center 1.2: Add angler parking south of the entry kiosk		Facilities	Existing North Side Free Angler Parking Area		p. 69
Phone 1.1: Investigate internet-based phone service that could provide better coverage		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Internet 1.1: Add additional receivers at the entrance area to the park that could be used at the entry station and potentially a new visitor center.		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Internet 1.2: Consider additional locations for receivers as needed to expand internet coverage to the park		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Internet 1.3: Provide Wi-Fi for visitors, particularly to enable emergency calls to be made using Wi-Fi given the lack of cell coverage in the park		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Septic/Sewer 1.1: Provide additional septic/sewer as needed for new development in the park, like an additional housing site on the south side of the lake		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Septic/Sewer 1.2: Continue to evaluate septic/sewer needs as needed in response to additional facilities		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Water Distribution 1.1: Rather than dig up the existing pipe and cause all the associated disruption, install a new water distribution line close to the existing one to take over water distribution		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70

RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
FACILITIES AND UTILITIES					
Water Distribution 1.2: Consider filtration options to help with water quality concerns		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Water Distribution 1.3: Add new well on south side of the lake to provide water for housing at new proposed housing site		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
Electricity 1.1: Add electricity at both park entrances to feed automatic gates and pay stations		Utilities	Park-Wide		p. 70
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Cultural Resources 1.1: Coordinate with SHPO and specialists to protect existing cultural resources in the Park		Cultural Resources	Park-Wide		p. 72
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Camping and Rec Access 1.1: Work with partner agencies to determine any additional opportunities or locations for expanded camping and other recreational opportunities to plan for further growth and mitigate potential negative impacts		Planning	Park-Wide		p. 74
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EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION					
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RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY RANKING	CATEGORY	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED SPD BUREAU	MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCE PAGE
EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION					
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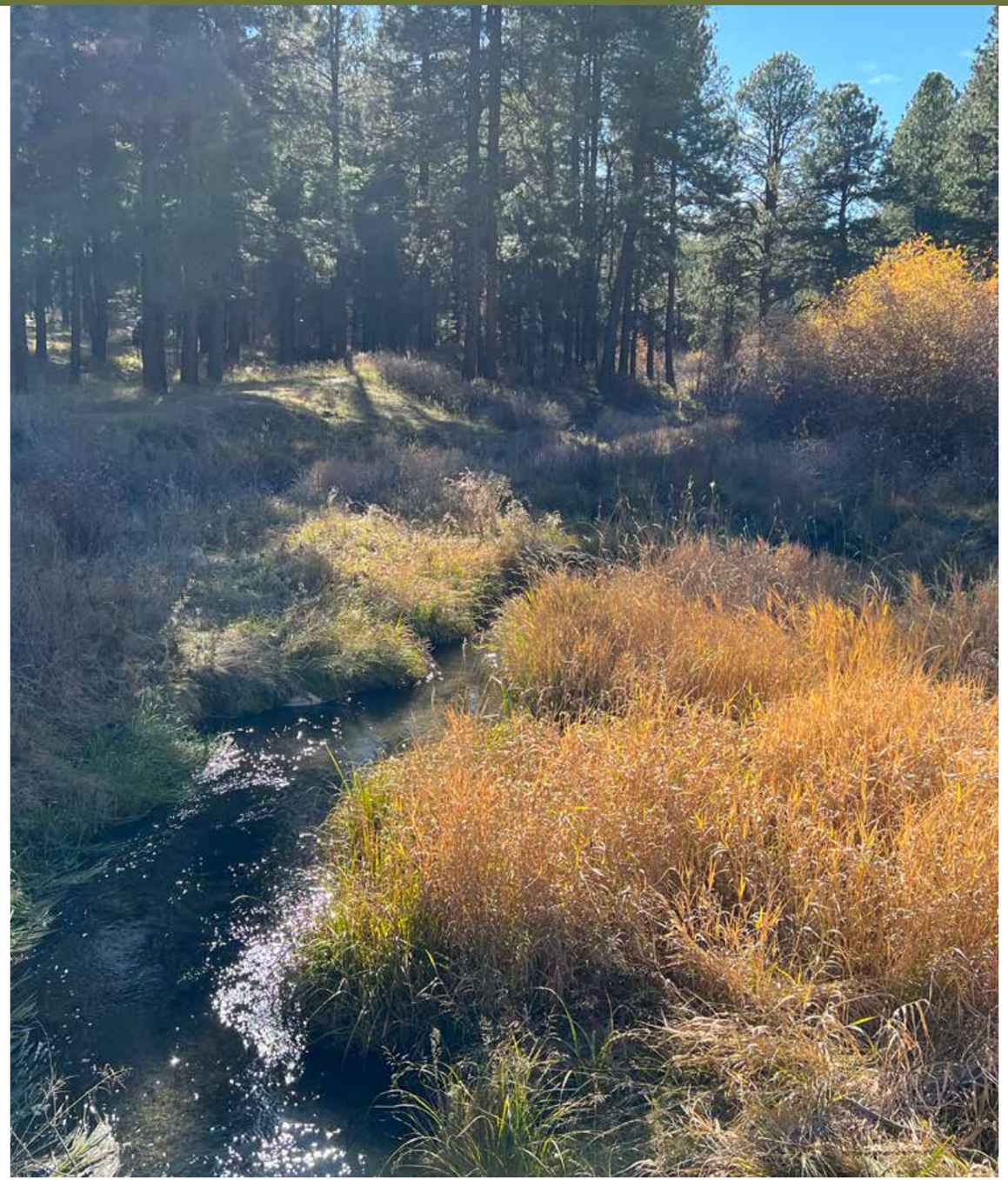
HRD - HISTORIC FIRES DATABASE

- Idaho State University GIS Training and Research Center. 2024. Historic Fires Database (HFD) version2.0. Downloaded from https://giscenter.isu.edu/research/Techpg/HFD/ March 8, 2024.

SANDOVAL COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)

- https://sandoval-county-cwpp-hub-site-sandovalgis.hub.arcgis.com/

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- E-Bird List of Species in Fenton Lake State Park

E-BIRD LIST OF SPECIES IN FENTON LAKE STATE PARK

1. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
2. **Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*
3. **Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*
4. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
5. **Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*
6. **Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*
7. **Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri*
8. **Common Raven** *Corvus corax*
9. **Mountain Chickadee** *Poecile gambeli*
10. **Pygmy Nuthatch** *Sitta pygmaea*
11. **Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*
12. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*
13. **Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*
14. **Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*
15. **American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*
16. **Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*
17. **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*
18. **Red-naped Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*
19. **Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*
20. **Western Wood-Pewee** *Contopus sordidulus*
21. **White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis*
22. **Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*
23. **Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*
24. **Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*
25. **Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*
26. **Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor*
27. **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus*
28. **Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*
29. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Corthylio calendula*
30. **Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana*
31. **Western Bluebird** *Sialia mexicana*
32. **Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*
33. **Grace's Warbler** *Setophaga graciae*
34. **Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi*
35. **White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis*
36. **Clark's Nutcracker** *Nucifraga columbiana*
37. **Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina*
38. **Western Tanager** *Piranga ludoviciana*
39. **Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*
40. **Calliope Hummingbird** *Selasphorus calliope*
41. **Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*
42. **Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*
43. **Western Flycatcher** *Empidonax difficilis*
44. **Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus*
45. **Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma woodhouseii*

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46. **Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*
47. **Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo chlorurus*
48. **Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*
49. **Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*
50. **American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*
51. **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
52. **Northern House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*
53. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta canadensis*
54. **Hammond's Flycatcher** *Empidonax hammondii*
55. **Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus*
56. **Orange-crowned Warbler** *Leiothlypis celata*
57. **Hairy Woodpecker** *Dryobates villosus*
58. **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*
59. **Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*
60. **Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*
61. **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*
62. **Bald Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
63. **Cackling Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*
64. **Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*
65. **Evening Grosbeak** *Coccothraustes vespertinus*
66. **White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*
67. **House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*
68. **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*
69. **Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*
70. **Sage Thrasher** *Oreoscoptes montanus*
71. **Golden-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus satrapa*
72. **Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*
73. **Townsend's Solitaire** *Myadestes townsendi*
74. **White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia albicollis*
75. **Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolnii*
76. **Cassin's Vireo** *Vireo cassinii*
77. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*
78. **MacGillivray's Warbler** *Geothlypis tolmiei*
79. **Downy Woodpecker** *Dryobates pubescens*
80. **Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*
81. **Red Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*
82. **Virginia's Warbler** *Leiothlypis virginiae*
83. **Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*
84. **Brewer's Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*
85. **Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena*
86. **American Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides dorsalis*
87. **Olive-sided Flycatcher** *Contopus cooperi*
88. **Black-throated Gray Warbler** *Setophaga nigrescens*
89. **Dusky Flycatcher** *Empidonax oberholseri*
90. **Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*
91. **Cooper's Hawk** *Astur cooperii*
92. **Western Grebe** *Aechmophorus occidentalis*

93. Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*
94. Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*
95. Band-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas fasciata*
96. Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
97. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
98. Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*
99. Willet *Tringa semipalmata*
100. Wild Turkey *Meleagris gallopavo*
101. American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*
102. Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*
103. Black-chinned Hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*
104. European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
105. Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*
106. Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*
107. Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*
108. Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*
109. Double-crested Cormorant *Nannopterum auritum*
110. Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*
111. Williamson's Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus thyroideus*
112. Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*
113. Dusky Grouse *Dendragapus obscurus*
114. Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus*
115. Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
116. Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*
117. Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii*
118. Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*
119. American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
120. Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*
121. Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*
122. Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*
123. Gadwall *Mareca strepera*
124. American Wigeon *Mareca americana*
125. White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*
126. Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*
127. Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris*
128. Gray Flycatcher *Empidonax wrightii*
129. Cassin's Finch *Haemorhous cassinii*
130. American Coot *Fulica americana*
131. Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*
132. Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*
133. Common Merganser *Mergus merganser*
134. Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*
135. American Goshawk *Astur atricapillus*
136. Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*
137. Rufous-crowned Sparrow *Aimophila ruficeps*
138. Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*
139. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

FENTON LAKE STATE PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT - 2026

APPENDIX L - ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE REPORTS

- Aquatic Resources Inventory Report
- Biological Survey Report
- Cultural Resources Report
- Desktop Environmental Review

APPENDIX M -
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- Memorandum of Understanding for Dry Hydrant; EMNRD, DOW, Sandoval County

APPENDIX N -
WILDFIRE EVALUATION PLAN

- 2014 SPD Wildfire Evacuation Plan