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**National Safe boating week kicks off New Mexico's
recreational boating season**

Be prepared, wear a life jacket, and designate a sober boat operator

SANTA FE – The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's State Parks Division announces it will participate in National Safe Boating Week, May 21–27, by raising awareness for the need to follow safe boating practices while recreational boating in New Mexico's waterways.

“This Memorial Day Weekend and throughout the summer, wear your life jacket, be prepared, and don't operate a boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol,” said Scott Chalmers, Boating Safety and Education Program Coordinator. “It doesn't matter if you're only going out for a short boat ride, fishing for an afternoon, or paddling with friends, safety should always be foremost on your mind.”

There have been 17 boating-related fatalities in New Mexico since 2016. All of these unnecessary deaths could have been prevented by following some simple safety tips. This year during National Safe Boating Week, and throughout the boating season, practicing the following steps can save your life, and the lives of the people boating with and around you:

- Designate a sober boat operator
- Wear a life jacket
- Be prepared for changing wind and weather
- File a float plan and always tell someone where you will be boating
- Take a FREE boating safety course and get a FREE vessel check. Call 1-888-NMPARKS (1-888-667-2757) or visit www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd/ for details.

The State Parks Division offers FREE boating safety courses around the state and online throughout the year. All motorboat, personal watercraft, and sailboat operators born on or after January 1, 1989, must complete a boating safety course to boat in New Mexico. State law requires that you wear a life jacket while on a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard, and that all children 12 years old and younger wear a life jacket while on the deck of a moving vessel.

National Safe Boating Week in New Mexico parallels efforts throughout the United States, focusing on drawing attention to the number of people who die each year in boating-related accidents. Celebrate and enjoy your New Mexico State Parks. For more information, please call 1-888-667-2757 or visit www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd/.



Paddleboarders enjoy Elephant Butte Lake State Park. Photo courtesy: New Mexico State Parks

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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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