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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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The New Mexico State Parks Division reminds hunters and anglers to keep safety first while experiencing adventure this fall

Sign up for free boating safety classes around the state and online!

Santa Fe, NM – Autumn is welcomed in New Mexico with the smell of roasting green chile and warm days followed by chilly nights—it is Mother Nature’s way of coloring our world and preparing us for winter. Waterfowl are migrating, elk are bugling, and the salmon are spawning! The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) State Parks Division wants to remind hunters and anglers to keep safety as their number one priority during their fall adventures.

To have a safe, enjoyable, hunting or fishing trip this fall, State Park officials recommend following these simple tips:

- Lifejackets save lives! State law requires that you wear a lifejacket when on a boat, canoe, kayak, or raft and that all children 12 years old and younger wear a lifejacket while on the deck of a moving vessel.
- Impairment on the water is deadly! Never boat under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Avoid placing yourself and passengers in danger by overloading your boat. Refer to your vessel’s capacity plate.

- Minimize movement in your vessel. Capsizing, sinking, or falling overboard for small boats accounts for more than 70% of all boating fatalities in the United States.
- Know the weather forecast. Weather conditions can change rapidly and defeat your operator skills and vessel's capabilities.
- Plan ahead! Tell someone where you are going, when you plan to return, and update them on your plan as it changes; or file a float plan at the local marina or park office.
- Make sure you have a way to call for assistance. Marine radios and cell phones are good options.
- In the event of an emergency try to stay with your vessel if possible, because rescuers will look for you there first.

“Regardless of the activity, a boater’s intention is never to end up in the water,” stated Toby Velasquez, New Mexico State Parks Director. “In New Mexico, conditions change quickly, and accidents can happen unexpectedly. More hunters and anglers are killed each year by drowning than by gunshot wounds in the field.”

Typically, hunters use semi-V hulled, flat bottom boats, canoes, or kayaks which tend to be less stable and have a higher probability for capsizing. Hunters and anglers need to be aware of their boat’s limitations and their ability as operators when heading out to hunt fish or just enjoy a great autumn day out on the lake.

“Late season hunters and anglers should exercise an extra degree of care when air and water temperatures are colder,” stated Manuel Overby, State Parks Law Enforcement and Boating Safety Chief. “Boaters could find themselves fighting to survive cold water immersion with sudden movement on a boat overloaded with extra gear and partners.”

The State Parks Division offers FREE boating safety classes around the state and online throughout the year. For more information, call 888-NMPARKS or visit <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/>.



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