

BOTTOMLESS LAKES

[Chaves County]

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Set GPS to W 104 338800°, N 33 354820° [Elev 3500 ft]

TYPE: Public State Park. Handicap Access. pets welcome.

DIRECTIONS: good paved interior rds. good paved access rd. (East of town) From Jct of US-380 & US-285, E 10.2 mi on US-380 to SR-409, S 3.1 mi (R). For Reservations Call (877)644-7787..

SITES: 69 available: 69 gravel sites.some shade, 21 day max stay, 9 pull-thrus (20 x 60), Back-ins (22 x 32), no Side-by-side hookups, 32 electric (30/50 amps), Table at site, BBQ at site.

FACILITIES: restrooms and showers, dumping station.

RECREATION: Lea Lake/Cottonwood/Mirror, lake, swimming, fishing, boat rentals, playground, outdoor games, pavilion, paddle boats, nature trails.

OPEN: Open all year.

RATES: \$10 to \$14 (Last year's).



www.nmparks.com

Bottomless Lakes State Park

New Mexico State Parks Division
 Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department
 HC12, Box 1200 • Roswell, New Mexico 88201

Located In Chaves County

(575) 624-6058 • 1-888-NM-PARKS

Reservations: 1-877-664-7787



Bottomless Lakes State Park

Are They Really Bottomless?

Bottomless Lakes are a chain of eight lakes that are actually sinkholes that range from 17 to 90 feet deep. They were formed when circulating water dissolved salt & gypsum deposits to form subterranean caverns. Eventually, the roofs of the caverns collapsed from their own weight. Sinkholes resulted & soon filled with water & formed the existing lakes.

Lea Lake Recreation Area

Located at the southernmost part of the park, Lea Lake offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities for summer fun and winter retreat. Around this 15 surface acre lake, the following facilities are available:

- Two large covered Group Shelters
- Playground
- Day Use Area with covered tables and grills
- Full Hook-up campground which includes:
 - 26 Sites - Electric & Water
 - 6 Sites - Electric, Water and Sewer
 - 27 Developed Sites, no hook-ups
 - Bathhouse With Hot Water
- Sandy Swimming Beach Open Year-round
- Between Memorial Day and Labor Day the following are available:
 - Rental of Paddle Boards, Pedal Boats and Life Jackets
 - Lifeguards On Duty
 - Drinks and Ice thru Vending Services
- The Wetlands Trail with Wildlife Viewing Blinds

**Emergencies
Dial 911**



Lower Lakes

This area holds the remainder of the Bottomless Lakes which are nestled along the red gypsum bluff. Attractions in this area include the following:

- Visitor Information Center Exhibits & Park Office
- Winter Trout Fishing - November Thru March
- Ten developed campsites with covered tables and grills, no hook-ups
- The Bluff Trail From Pasture Lake to Lea Lake
- Skidmarks Mountain Bike trail at far north end of park



LEGEND	
	Pay Station
	Park Office
	Interpretive Center
	Shelters/Tables
	Group Shelter
	Tables
	Restrooms
	Showers
	Dump Station
	Electrical Hook-ups
	Water Hydrant
	Parking
	Hiking Trail
	Playground
	Scenic Overlook
	Bathhouse
	Rock Shelter
	First Aid
	Ranger Residence
	Mtn. Bike Trail
	Fishing
	Drink Machine



Lea Lake Recreation Area

Enjoy Your New Mexico State Parks



Nearby Points of Interest

- Bitter Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
- Roswell Museum & Art Center and Robert H. Goddard Planetarium
- Historical Center For Southeast New Mexico
- New Mexico Military Institute
- UFO Museum
- Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art

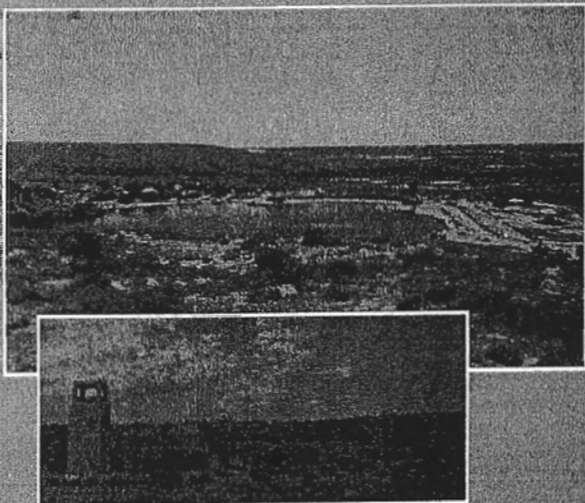
Interested in volunteering for New Mexico State Parks?

Campground host & other volunteering positions are available. For more information contact any park manager or call 1-888-NM-PARKS.

For Camper Services & Amusements, see Area Guide inside this brochure.



BOTTOMLESS LAKES STATE PARK



Named by the Vaqueros from long ago, this beautiful and unique area comes as a surprise to travelers in contrast to the flat country surrounding Roswell, New Mexico. A 12 mile drive east of Roswell along U.S. Hwy 380, and then south on NM 409, the road drops down from the red bluffs and loops around a series of small lakes (sinkholes), dazzling the viewer with their deep greenish-blue color.

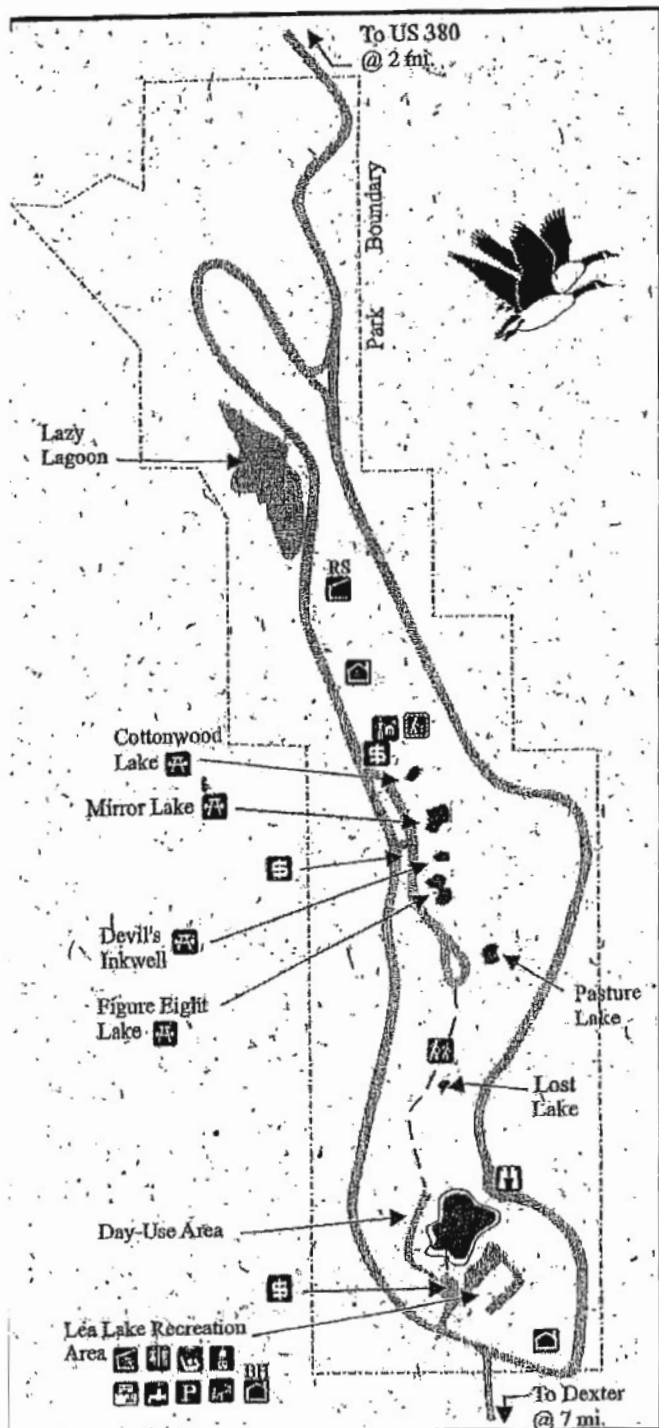
Bottomless Lakes State Park

HC 12, Box 1200

Roswell, NM 88201

(575)624-6058; (575) 624-6057

Fax: (575) 624-6029



Legend		N
Pay Station	Electrical Hookups	
Park Office	Water Hydrant	
Interpretive Center	Parking	
Shelters/Tables	Hiking Trail	
Tables	Playground	
Rest Rooms	Scenic Overlook	
Showers	Bath House	
Dump Station	Rock Shelter	



New Mexico State Parks Division
P. O. Box 1147, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1147
575-827-7173 or toll free 1-888-NM-PARKS

www.nmparks.com

BOTTOMLESS LAKES STATE PARK

History

In the 1800's, the lakes were a stopover for cowboys herding cattle through the New Mexico territory on the Goodnight Loving Trail. Folklore says that the cowboys tied their lariats together to find the bottom of the lakes. Due to the underwater currents, the lariats were swept aside, giving them the impression that the lakes were "bottomless."



The lakes are actually sinkholes ranging in depth from 17 to 90 feet, and were formed when circulating underground water dissolved salt and gypsum deposits to form subterranean caverns. When the roofs of caverns collapsed under their own weight, sinkholes resulted and soon filled with water. The illusion of great depth is aided by the deep color which is created by algae and other aquatic plants covering the lake bottoms. Visitors are surprised to discover that the water in the lakes is salty. This is caused by water sifting through gypsum and limestone.

Bottomless Lakes State Park was dedicated in 1933; the first area set aside as a state park in New Mexico. The original stone structure at Lea Lake was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934 and 1935.

Geology

The area is famous for "Pecos Diamonds" which are actually quartz crystals formed inside gypsum. The soft gypsum sometimes crumbles away exposing the "diamonds."



Flora

Primary plants of the salt flats include tamarisk (salt cedar), mesquite, alkali sacaton, four-wing saltbush, snakeweed, creosote and salt grass. They have a unique ability to survive the saline soil of the valley floor. Upland plants tend to be more scattered due to the greater depth of the ground water on the hillsides.

Fauna

There are over 150 species of birds that can be seen in the area, and along with the ever popular roadrunner, there are also coltontails, small rodents, snakes, and lizards to be seen. Larger animals such as mule deer, bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, badgers, porcupines and skunks are also seen occasionally.

Lakes

The park consists of eight lakes along an escarpment that runs through the park. Some lakes at the north end of the park are stocked with Rainbow Trout during winter months. Water quality determines which lakes are stocked..

Lazy Lagoon ...looks deceptively shallow but is actually 70 ft. deep. It is surrounded by treacherous alkaline mud flats. The crust covers deep, unpleasant smelling mud. Visitors should not attempt to walk or drive near this muddy area. With the exception of summer, flocks of waterfowl are often seen on this lake.

Cottonwood Lake...is 30 ft. deep and was named for a large Cottonwood tree that once stood on its shore. The park visitor center is located here with exhibits describing the natural history of the area.

Mirror Lake...is 50 ft. deep and is sometimes separated by a narrow strip of land. The lake is aptly named for its beautiful reflection of the surrounding red bluffs.

Devil's Inkwell...is 32 ft. deep and is named for its steep sides and very dark water. Overnight campsites and drinking water are available nearby.

Figure Eight Lake...is actually two contiguous sinkholes 37 ft. deep. This is a quiet lake bordered by numerous salt cedar trees.

Pasture Lake...at 17 ft. is the shallowest of the lakes. Local legend ascribes its name to the one time presence of a flock of wild ducks, although it is unclear what ducks have to do with pastures! Nearby Picnic Dell is a dry sinkhole that illustrates how the lakes were formed.

Lost Lake...is found hiding along the escarpment in between Picnic Dell and Lea Lake. It is small (less than 1 acre) and accessible only by hiking.

Lea Lake...is 90 ft. deep and the largest of the lakes. It is the only lake in which swimming is allowed. The lake is spring fed with almost 5 million gallons of water flowing through it daily. Due to the clarity of the water, scuba diving has become popular. There is a large day-use and picnic area adjacent to the lake. A bath house with flush toilets, and outside showers for swimmers are available. During the summer the swimming beach is well maintained, lifeguards are on duty, and a concession stand offers pedal boats, paddle boards, and life vests for a nominal fee.

A spacious campground is provided for year round camping. The campground offers its own bath house with hot showers and modern restrooms, primitive sites to full hook-up sites, outdoor grills, and covered picnic tables.

Group facilities are also available in both areas.



Entrance and camping fees charged year round!