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NEWS RELEASE

ICE FISHING SEASON OPENS AT EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK *2010 Ice Fishing Tournament Set for January 16*

EAGLE NEST -- Eagle Nest Lake State Park is open for ice fishing the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and New Mexico State Parks announced.

All terrain vehicles and snowmobiles will be allowed on the ice at this time, but not on the state park shorelines. Full-sized vehicles are not allowed on the ice. All vehicles must be taken into the park on trailers and driven directly onto the ice from the boat ramp. Ice fishing access to the lake is available through the state park for a \$5 per vehicle day-use fee, or free of charge through access points outside the state park boundaries.

Fishing for rainbow trout, kokanee salmon and yellow perch should be good because the fish have not been disturbed since the lake froze over a few weeks ago. Anglers are advised to protect themselves against the cold and harsh elements and take safety precautions regarding falling through the ice. Anglers should not wear clothing that severely restricts the ability to swim or to stay afloat, and should wear a personal flotation device. Anglers should never wear hip boots or waders, as they can fill with water. State Parks also recommends using ice cleats on footwear while on the lake.

The 2010 Eagle Nest Lake Ice Fishing Tournament will be held Saturday, January 16.

The annual New Year's Day "Polar Bear Plunge" at Eagle Nest Lake will be Friday, January 1, at 10:00 a.m.

The State Parks Division and the Department of Game and Fish manage Eagle Nest Lake and surroundings via a Joint Powers Agreement. The Department of Game and Fish has the authority to open or close the lake to ice fishing. The State Parks Division has a formal procedure for checking the depth of ice. The ice thickness is measured starting at the shoreline and progressing out over the lake. When the ice is of a thickness that is considered safe, the lake is opened to ice fishing. The ice thickness was 13-plus inches on Tuesday. Park staff continually makes visual checks of the ice looking for cracks, water on top of the ice, and open water, all signs that the ice may not be safe for anglers.

For more information and current updates about ice conditions, please contact Eagle Nest Lake State Park, (575) 377-1594, or for questions about fishing in northeastern New Mexico, call the Department of Game and Fish in Raton, (575) 445-2311. Information also is available on the Department of Game and Fish or New Mexico State Parks respective Web sites, www.wildlife.state.nm.us and www.nmparks.com.