

# CREATING A VISION CAVE LAKE STATE PARK



## Points to Ponder

(Current Staff Suggestions and Observations)

You can download the questionnaire and email it to

[jscanland@parks.nv.gov](mailto:jscanland@parks.nv.gov) or mail it to:

901 S. Stewart St. Suite 5005

Carson City, NV 89701

Phone: 775-684-2770

Fax: 775-684-2777

E-mail: [jscanland@parks.nv.gov](mailto:jscanland@parks.nv.gov)

Cave Lake State Park is located in White Pine County, in eastern Nevada. At 7,300 feet, Cave Lake is perched midway in the Schell Creek Range, seven miles up the Success Summit Road (also known as Steptoe Creek Road and State Route 486) from U.S. 50, and about 15 miles from Ely.

The 1973 Nevada State Legislature authorized the transfer of land in White Pine County from the Nevada Fish and Game Commission (later, the Nevada Department of Wildlife) to the Division of State Parks. The current master plan was completed in 1990.

The reservoir covers 32.2 acres (784 acre feet), and provides opportunities for fishing, boating and swimming. 1,208 land acres plus an additional 2,960 acres of U. S. Forest Service lands acquired through the White Pine County Lands Act passed in 2007, provides a total 4168 acres of opportunity for

picnicking, camping, hiking/walking, and relaxing outdoors.

Visitors are drawn to Cave Lake by its incredible geologic and scenic beauty. The Park is accessible year round due to the efforts of the Park staff and NDOT and the County in plowing the roads and parking areas.

The Park's primary use is for fishing, including ice fishing and the annual Fire and Ice Sculpture Contest. The proximity to both Ely and Las Vegas makes it a very popular destination as well. Cave Lake is also about 1.5 hour's drive from the Great Basin National Park and the Utah state line.

During the first half of 2008, staff collected site and area information for Cave Lake, and the regional area in many categories: land use trends (ownership, land use, zoning, transportation, trails and utilities), natural resources (topography, geology, hydrology, vegetation, soils, slope, wildlife, climate), and cultural resources (existing facilities, archaeological and historical resources). This information was then analyzed and development limitations and opportunities were identified by the staff the week of September 1, 2008. User survey data from the past 5 years were analyzed and used to develop the first draft of these discussion points.

These discussion points will be presented at the first meeting and ideas, suggestions, solutions will be brainstormed by the participants. These points are a mix of issues, considerations, management proposals and opportunities.

### NOTES:

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## Current Issues and Possible Solutions

**A. Bottleneck in Park Core** - The core of the park is defined in this plan as the developed area surrounding the Lake. This includes the boat launch, park office building, campground and day use area. There is a single travel corridor at this time, Cave Lake road. ATV users camping in the core of the park are forced to drive illegally through the park to reach backcountry roads at present because there are no designated connector trails routing them around the core area.

Due to the bottleneck congestion, noise from the ATV's in the core conflicts with other passive users in the day-use area and campground as well as fishermen. The number of visitors, vehicles and recreational equipment in the park is continuing to grow and exceeds site design, causing erosion, congestion, and noise. This is causing increased overflow into the dispersed camping areas south of the lake and creating damage such as soil compaction and loss of vegetation in the meadows upstream.

### NOTES:

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### B. Non-point Source Water Pollution/Erosion

Roads, campground pads, day use areas and parking lots do not have Best Management Practices (BMP's) in place to capture, mitigate and direct stormwater. Rain events are causing damage to facilities and maintenance needs are increasing. Impacts imposed by visitors to these same areas include damage to vegetation caused by foot traffic and the gathering of firewood within the campgrounds, which is no longer allowed. Foot traffic outside of developed trails has also caused erosion of the shoreline in many places, some of which is severe.

### NOTES:

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### C. User Conflicts

There are currently two campgrounds, the Lake Campground, and the Elk Flat Campground which is outside of the core of the park and downstream. Both campgrounds are being upgraded to include larger and longer sites, and multiple user sites.

Elk Flat is currently being designed to include more units as well as a multi-family campsite and larger pull-through sites for longer vehicles and toy-haulers.

The main campground is being improved to include a reservation only yurt site and an improved group use reserve area.



