

# Conchas and Cochiti Lakes celebrate National Public Lands Day

by Patrick Trier and Dave Dutton

The Conchas Lake Project in Conchas Dam, New Mexico celebrated its third Annual National Public Lands Day September 28. **The Corps of Engineers teamed up with New Mexico State Parks to host this year's event, which** brought approximately 171 volunteers from Arkansas, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Chama, Clovis, Las Vegas, Santa Rosa, Conchas Dam and Tucumcari.

Between the volunteers and staff, approximately 1368 accumulated volunteer hours went into the shoreline cleanup. All together more than 100 cubic yards of trash, including old anchors, cable, steel bars, 55-gallon drums, pipes, tires, bottles, and cans were cleaned up from the Conchas shoreline.

As part of the event, both agencies furnished a Chuck Wagon Style barbeque lunch for all the volunteers. Donated prizes were given to all the volunteers who participated. After lunch all volunteers and staff participated in various activities including a live band, horseshoes, volleyball, and free golf at the Conchas Golf Course.

"We were very proud to see people in the community interact in the spirit of volunteerism for the benefit of the public good." Gary Cordova, Operations Manager at Conchas, commented. There was overwhelming generosity on the part of sponsors in donating items.

"It is a wonderful feeling to know that people really care about their nation's public lands," Bernie Valencia, supervisory park ranger, said.



Photo by Patrick Trier

**It wasn't all work and no play for the volunteers at Conchas.**



Photo by Patrick Trier

**This is but a small sample of what was retrieved from Conchas Lake by volunteers.**

Next year on September 27, 2003 Conchas Dam Project will be hosting its fourth Annual National Public Lands Day. We hope many will, again, come and participate in this important event.

For the fourth consecutive year, private citizens from throughout New Mexico, converged on the shores of Cochiti Lake to purge it of unwanted refuse in celebration of National Public Lands Day (NPLD). Nearly 350 volunteers spent the day at Cochiti Lake, making it the single largest NPLD event in the state of New Mexico. Their collective labors resulted in a cost savings to the government of nearly \$17,000, as well as the removal of nearly one and a quarter tons of garbage from Cochiti Lake.

Since the inception of NPLD at Cochiti Lake in 1999, 1,350 citizens have contributed nearly \$54,000 worth of volunteer labor. This year's NPLD event featured 19 private sector business sponsors and incorporated seven private non-profit associations, as well as three federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management's Albuquerque and Taos Field Offices, and the Santa Fe National Forest.

In addition to the shoreline cleanup, all participants were treated to a free snack and hamburger lunch with all the trimmings, a stylish NPLD T-shirt, and a frame-worthy poster, featuring a gorgeous image of America's public lands.

This year, as in past years, also produced an

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