

# Volunteers make National Public Lands Day a success

by Danny Leep, Cochiti Lake Park Ranger

With visitation increasing at Cochiti Lake Recreation Area, caring for the park is a big job.

Part of the way Cochiti Lake accomplishes this job is by asking for help from volunteers. There has been a significant increase in volunteerism from the community looking for ways to help care for Cochiti Lake by contributing their time and effort.

The Cochiti Lake Volunteer Program operates primarily with volunteer labor under the direction of Park Rangers Greg Carpenter and Danny Leep. Volunteers are involved with various projects around the park including minor maintenance, painting, transplanting and other jobs including visitor center operation. Volunteering at a United States Army Corps of Engineer project is an excellent opportunity to make a difference in the community, enjoy friendships that last a lifetime, acquire new leadership skills, and have a chance to network with fellow volunteers.

Nearly 900 volunteers contributed over 2,600 hours of labor in 2006 from April to October. This contribution is an essential part of the Cochiti Lake project's success. The Volunteer Program is preparing to start the 2007 season with the same enthusiastic response.

Want to volunteer? We have a volunteer opportunity that is right for you.

"National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands American's enjoy," according to <http://www.publiclandsdays.org/>. National Public Lands Day is a coast to coast annual event sponsored by Toyota. This year's USACE Cochiti Lake Project event was a great success. Coordinated by Cochiti Park Ranger Ray Chinana, it took a team effort to pull off the magnanimous event.

"We were very successful in bringing together volunteers from the local community and surrounding areas over the two day period," said Chinana. The volunteers participated in park beautification projects on both sides of the lake – Cochiti Lake Recreation Area and Tetilla Peak Recreation Area. "We accomplished the goals set forth for these projects which included painting, trail work, campsite improvements, and litter clean up, along with the building and placement of fish habitats."

"National Public Lands Day was a success because of the advanced preparation and combined coordinated efforts by each of the staff," said Chinana, as he led the team in planning, delegation of tasks, and logistics.

The Corps of Engineers provided the food and supplies for the volunteer luncheon at the Cochiti Lake Recreation Area. USACE Cochiti Lake obtained donations of beverages and cups from the Coca-Cola Company, donuts from



File Photo

Kips at half price, and a large quantity of apples from a local orchard, Dixon's Apples. We received door prizes from the Albuquerque District Office (am/fm radios) and posters from the NPLD Organization. Other prizes came from the New Mexico Tourism Department. We were also given trash bags from the New Mexico Clean and Beautiful Agency.

The event was successful and we thank all the team members, volunteers and those that contributed in other ways. If it were not for their commitment and hard work, nothing would have been accomplished.

The Cochiti Lake Project would like to take this opportunity to give a hardy thanks to all our volunteers for the 2006 recreation season. We would like to extend special thanks to the following contributors: Dan Powell of Alb, NM; John & Dot Stepp of Harskell, OK; Art & Dorothy Finkelstein of Maple Grove, MN; Ed Swenson of Alb, NM; Sara Brown of CA; Boys & Girls Scout, and school groups alike along with more than 360 others from the local area that also made a great contribution for this year's National Public Lands Day held September 29 & 30.

A special thanks to Park Rangers Carpenter, Kathryn McSorley, and Helen Cole, Albert Readwin, Clerical Assistant at Cochiti, and Ranger Ray Chinana, Cochiti Park Ranger Ray Sisneros and Project Assistant Rose Lucero, Ranger Patrick Segura, Tanja George of New Mexico Tourism Department, Ranger Cole's husband, Dennis Cole, Ranger Leep's wife and children, maintenance personnel Larry Torrez and Tim O'Connell, Larry Williams, Park Electrician, and Robin Greene, Gate Attendant at the Tetilla Peak Recreation Area. 🏡