

# Phenomenal Fishing

in Northwest New Mexico



Nestled within a high desert wilderness laden with abundant piñon and juniper trees, boulder-strewn canyons and river-carved valleys, Northwest New Mexico is a recreationalist's paradise. Outdoor pursuits like hiking, mountain biking, big-game hunting, camping, bird watching and more have earned well-deserved accolades, yet there is one amazing pastime that stands higher than the rest: fishing the area's supernatural freshwater lakes and streams.

Think about that for a moment: Mile after mile of true desert country, and one of its more recognizable characteristics is...  
Water!

The answer is an unequivocal yes, as demonstrated by two Rocky Mountain rivers; four sizable lakes; and the state's second-largest reservoir that, incidentally, nourishes one of the most famous freshwater fisheries in the world. Here is a regional roundup of what avid fishermen (and women!) can look forward to:

## QUALITY WATERS OF THE SAN JUAN RIVER

A 4.2-mile stretch of tail waters designated Quality Waters due to its high nutrients levels and ideal year-round temperatures. The Quality Waters of the San Juan River are reserved exclusively for fly-fishing. This crystal



clear riparian river habit is world renowned for sustaining huge populations of rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout that average 17 inches in length.

The first quarter mile of the river, fed by the hydroelectric Navajo Dam spillway, is strictly catch and release. All hooks must be barbless, flies and lures must be artificial, and every fish must be carefully returned to the river regardless of size. For the next four miles, regulations still mandate artificial flies and lures with barbless hooks, but anglers are allowed to harvest one trout if it exceeds 20 inches.

**Location:** *26 miles east of Aztec via NM 173 (Navajo Dam Road) and NM 511*

- Facilities:** *ADA-compliant fishing platforms; fee-based parking; day camping.*
- Area Services:** *Gasoline stations, motels, restaurants, tackle shops, and fishing guides.*
- Fishing License:** *Required by New Mexico Game & Fish.*

## NAVAJO LAKE STATE PARK

Attracting 300,000 visitors annually, Navajo Lake State Park offers 14,000 surface acres of water, making it a haven for recreationalists that cherish everything from waterskiing and sailing to kayaking and standup paddle boarding. Its 35-mile



long expanse and over 150 miles of shoreline, is also the state's second-largest reservoir, making it equally suited for swimming, scuba diving, jet skiing, motor boating and house boating, plus it is highly popular with campers, RV enthusiasts, mountain bikers and hikers.

Navajo Lake is equally impressive for its fishing including fresh water trout, black crappie, northern pike, smallmouth and largemouth bass, channel catfish, and carp. Perhaps less well known is the reservoir's growing reputation for its Kokanee salmon, which every fall fishing season (Oct 1 to Dec 31) allows a bag limit of 12 Kokanee salmon per day or 24 in possession.

- Location:** *26 miles east of Aztec via NM 173 (Navajo Dam Road) and NM 511*
- Facilities:** *Two full-service marinas provide hot food, fuel, groceries, bait-and-tackle and boating supplies, plus boat, slip and pontoon rentals; two boat docks; two boat launching ramps; fee-based campsites; fee-based parking; and visitor center.*
- Area Services:** *Gasoline stations, motels, restaurants, tackle shops, and fishing guides.*
- Fishing License:** *Required by New Mexico Game & Fish.*

## ANIMAS RIVER

Winding south from its Colorado Rockies headwaters, the Animas River remains one of the few undammed water ways in America. The river, celebrated for its turbulent snowmelt flows every spring, is regarded for its whitewater rafting, kayaking and tubing, plus fishing for freshwater rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout.



The Animas is also known as a central feature of Aztec — the river literally runs through it — adding considerable beauty and sustenance to the region’s agriculture-based economy. The 126-mile river later merges with the San Juan River in Farmington.

**Area Services:** *Gasoline stations, motels, restaurants, and visitor center in Aztec.*

**Fishing License:** *Required by New Mexico Game and Fish.*

## TIGER LAKE

Managed by the City of Aztec, seven-acre Tiger Lake serves as a vital water resource for the city. The recreation area is popular with families who utilize the lake’s day-use pavilions, picnic tables, BBQ grills, walking trail, close access to the Alien Run Mountain Bike Trails, and year-round fishing for rainbow trout and channel catfish.



**Location:** *East of Aztec via NM 173 (Navajo Dam Road).*

**Facilities:** *Day use only; ADA-compliant restrooms; free parking; boating and swimming not permitted; pets must be on leash.*

**Area Services:** *Gasoline stations, motels, restaurants, and-visitor center in Aztec.*

**Fishing License:** *Required by New Mexico Game and Fish.*

## LAKE FARMINGTON

Managed by the City of Farmington, the 215-acre Lake Farmington is a year-round family recreation option for picnics, mountain bikers, horseback riders, swimmers and wildlife watchers. Fishing includes rainbow trout, largemouth bass, catfish and pike. No fuel-powered watercraft allowed and kayaks are available for rent. Entry into the park requires a fee.



- Location:** 16 miles southwest of Aztec via NM 516.
- Facilities:** Fee-based access; lifeguards; watercraft must be inspected; pets must be on leash.
- Area Services:** Gasoline stations, motels, and restaurants in Farmington.
- Fishing License:** Required by New Mexico Game and Fish.

## JACKSON LAKE

Sited within the 840-acre Jackson Lake Wildlife area, the 45-acre Jackson Lake is a local favorite for year-round wildlife viewing, hiking, kayaking and fishing for brown trout, catfish, bluegill and bass. However, to hunt, fish or trap, a Habitat



Management and Access Validation (HMAV) permit is required. A Gaining Access Into Nature (GAIN) permit is also required for snowshoeing, skiing, wildlife viewing, boating, hiking and biking. Both permits are available from the New Mexico Game and Fish.

- Location:** 19 miles southwest of Aztec via NM 516 and NM 170 (La Plata Highway).
- Facilities:** Restrooms not available; no swimming; boat use limited to non-motorized watercraft.
- Area Services:** Gasoline stations, motels, and restaurants in Farmington.
- Fishing License:** Required by New Mexico Game and Fish

## MORGAN LAKE

Managed by the Navajo Nation and providing cooling for the Arizona Public Service Company Power Plant, the 1,200-acre Morgan Lake offers year-round waterskiing, windsurfing and fishing for channel catfish, largemouth bass, bluegill, and carp.

Catches are restricted and

limited: No fish 12 to 17 inches long may be kept;

Bass under 12 inches or over 17 inches may be kept;

Bass limit is four.



Note: All watercraft must be permitted by the Navajo Nation.

**Location:** 32 miles southwest of Aztec via NM 516, US 64 and Indian Route 5086.

**Facilities:** Boat ramp and docking pier.

**Area Services:** Gasoline stations, and restaurants in Kirtland.

**Fishing License:** Required by the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## CUTTER DAM RESERVOIR

Cutter Dam is a little known body of water located about 8 miles south of Blanco, New Mexico and east of Largo Canyon. A picturesque little lake with beautiful cliffs and scenery it covers approximately 64 acres. The lake serves as a reservoir for Na-

vajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI). Access to the lake is possible from two locations, however neither access is paved, so four wheel-drive, high clearance vehicle is highly recommended.



**Location:** 6 miles east-southeast of Blanco via US 64 and County Road 4450.

**Facilities:** Boat ramp; no restrooms available.  
**Area Services:** Gasoline stations and restaurants in Bloomfield.  
**Fishing License:** Required by the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## LICENSE INFORMATION

### Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife

(928) 871-6451  
nndfw.org

### New Mexico Game and Fish

(505) 222-4700  
wildlife.state.nm.us



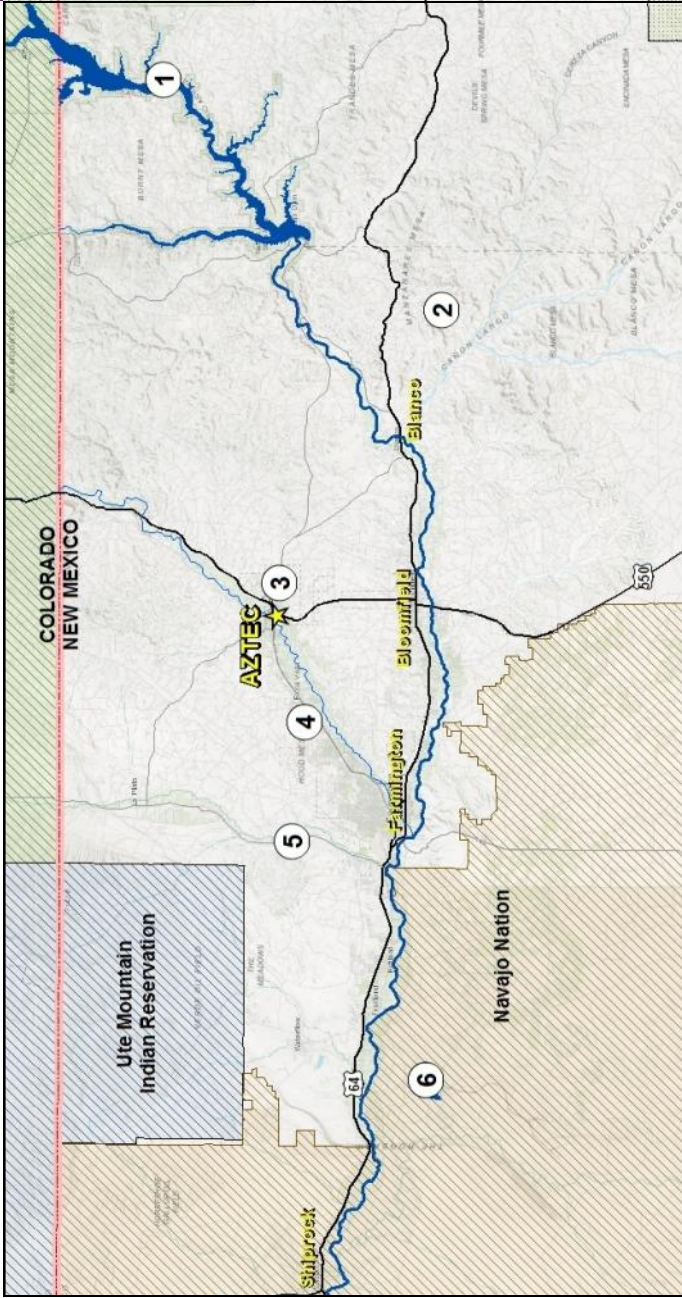
## New Mexico, USA

### Aztec Visitor Center

110 N Ash Avenue  
Aztec, NM 87410  
(505) 334-9551  
(888) 543-4629

goaztec@aztecnm.com  
www.aztecnm.com

# FISHING LOCATIONS



1. Navajo Lake/  
San Juan River Quality Waters
2. Cutter Dam Reservoir
3. Tiger Lake

4. Lake Farmington
5. Jackson Lake
6. Morgan Lake