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Immediate Release

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New Fish Consumption Advisories Announced for Brantley Reservoir

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and New Mexico State Parks recommend against eating any fish caught in Brantley Reservoir in Eddy County, near Carlsbad.

Elevated levels of total DDT, a banned pesticide and probable human carcinogen, have been detected in four common species of fish found in Brantley. In some cases, the concentrations of DDT are three times above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recommended do-not-eat guidance level of 550 parts per billion (ppb) and are high enough to cause a potential health concern for people of all ages.

“Based on the high levels of DDT found in four species of fish collected to date, we feel that it is prudent to advise against eating any fish caught in Brantley Reservoir,” NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. “DDT is a persistent contaminant that is slow to break down and has likely lingered in the sediment for years from historic applications of the now-banned pesticide. We plan to do more testing upstream and downstream of Brantley to try to determine the extent of DDT contamination and the impacts on fish.”

A February fish consumption advisory warned against eating any channel catfish and that only 4 ounces of walleye from Brantley should be eaten per month due to high total DDT concentrations. The

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Brantley Fish Consumption Advisory

February advisory was based on a composite sample of five channel catfish that had 1,761 parts per billion (ppb) of total DDT, which is more than three times the EPA do-not-eat guidance level of 550 ppb, and a composite sample of five walleye that had 485 ppb total DDT.

The newest data show a composite sample of three largemouth bass had 818 ppb of total DDT and that two, nine-fish composite samples of white bass had 1,562 ppb total DDT and 1,868 ppb total DDT, approximately three times above the EPA do-not-eat guidance level.

An earlier fish consumption advisory due to mercury contamination was already in place for several fish species and size classes at Brantley, advising limited consumption of channel catfish, walleye, bluegill, largemouth bass, and white bass.

"State Parks' primary concern is for visitor safety, but we hope that visitors will still enjoy Brantley Lake's other recreational activities including catch-and-release fishing, boating, hiking and camping," State Park Director Dave Simon said.

Detailed information on fish consumption advisories in the state is available online at www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/advisories. The agencies are working together to post the advisory and minimize disruptions to recreational fishing at Brantley Reservoir. Catch-and-release fishing and other water-based activities are not impacted by this fish consumption advisory and are not being limited or reduced in any way. Health concerns apply only to the consumption of fish caught in Brantley Reservoir.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314; Dan Williams, NMDGF, Communications Director, at (505) 476-8004; or Erica Asmus-Otero, State Parks Public Information Coordinator, at (505) 827-1473.

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