



NEWS RELEASE **For Immediate Release**

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The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

NMED launches nationwide Holloman Lake public health survey *Results inform next steps to combat toxic PFAS contamination*

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is asking anyone who has visited or recreated at Holloman Lake, also known as Raptor Lake, to participate in a survey to determine potential exposure to toxic PFAS in the area from firefighting foams, commonly called AFFF, used at Holloman Air Force Base.

“Our state’s natural beauty attracts outdoor enthusiasts from around the world and the Environment Department is committed to safeguarding outdoor recreation for campers, hikers, and hunters,” said **Environment Secretary James Kenney**. “This survey is one of the first of its kind, aiming to inform New Mexicans and others of potential impacts of PFAS pollution on their health.”

Earlier this year, the New Mexico Department of Health issued a health advisory after detecting [world-record-breaking levels of PFAS](#) in the water, plants and animals around Holloman Lake. In addition, testing of Holloman Lake’s surface water in 2019 showed an average concentration of more than 101,000 parts per trillion, compared to the federal PFAS drinking water standard of 4 parts per trillion.

While the New Mexico Department of Justice and New Mexico Environment Department sought the public closure of the Holloman Lake recreation area in 2019, the lake was not closed to the public until August 2025. In May of 2019, the New Mexico Department of Health issued an [advisory](#) recommending that visitors to this area should not:

- Ingest water or foam from the lake.
- Swim in the lake.
- Touch the water if possible.

If you do get water or foam from the lake on your hands, wash them with soap and clean water before eating. Pet owners should avoid allowing animals to drink or come into contact with the water or foam. If a pet does come into contact with the water or foam, rinse the animal with clean water before petting it.

Holloman Lake is located within 10 miles of White Sands National Park — which saw 702,236 visitors from around the world in 2024 — and a short drive from Lincoln National Forest. It has long served as a camping and recreational area for those visiting southern New Mexico.

To better understand recreational use and potential exposure before the lake's August 2025 closure, NMED, in partnership with Eastern Research Group (ERG), has launched a 10-minute online survey, [available here](#), for those who visited or stayed in the area. The survey will remain open until Nov. 30, 2025.

Individual input is essential to understanding how people may have interacted with Holloman Lake and its environment. The information collected will help guide future efforts to protect public health and inform next steps related to PFAS exposure.

Survey participation is voluntary and anonymous unless participants choose to provide their contact information. NMED encourages anyone who has visited Holloman Lake in the past ten years to take the survey and share it with others who may have used the area.

Once the survey concludes, NMED will develop a public report based on its findings.

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