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## GETAWAYS

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### Boaters take notice: Scenic Lake Powell is for everyone

By **DARREN MARCY**  
THE (Farmington, N.M.) DAILY TIMES

Lake Powell, which straddles the state line between Utah and Arizona, has been called one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

Those who have been there would probably find it hard to disagree.

The crystal-clear water reflects the towering red canyon walls that rise hundreds of feet straight up from the depths of the blue-green waters. Magnificent spires, arches and sandstone bluffs create a visual contrast with the waters below.

It's a desert oasis with a little something for everyone -- a rugged landscape enveloped in a softness that has to be seen to be believed.

Boating and fishing lead the list of activities, but plenty of people show up to tour some of the 96 side canyons and take in the sights, relax on houseboats, zip across the water on personal watercraft, water ski, scuba dive, camp, hike, mountain bike or take photos.

Boating accounts for 400,000 visitors annually and another 325,000 come to see Rainbow Bridge.

Nearly 3 million people visit Lake Powell annually, and most come for the water -- 90 percent of which is in Utah. In Arizona are a small portion of the lake and Glen Canyon Dam, the structure that holds the 27 million acre-feet of water in place.

Covering 266 square miles, Lake Powell is 186 miles long and has 1,960 miles of shoreline.

Much of that shoreline is made up of brilliant red, pink and brown vertical canyon walls, rising hundreds of feet straight up. Those walls also extend straight down into the water, sometimes hundreds of feet. Places in the lake are 500 feet deep.

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Between the rock walls are sandy beaches, popular camping and picnic spots. Boaters often beach their craft for the evening and then resume their recreational activity the next day.

Those who stay the night are treated to a brilliant night sky featuring some of the darkest skies in the west. On a moonless night, the sky explodes with astronomical delights.

Small arches dot the canyon walls and a few archaeological sites can be seen.

Named for Maj. John Wesley Powell, a civil war veteran and explorer, the lake is surrounded and protected by the Glen Canyon Recreational Area -- 1.2 million acres operated by the National Park Service.

Although construction on Glen Canyon Dam began in 1956, the recreation area wasn't set aside by Congress until 1972.

More than 275 species of birds inhabit the area, including the peregrine falcon, which now breeds in more than 30 nesting areas in the canyons.

In addition, as many as 45 bald eagles winter in the Lake Powell area, feeding off the fish and soaring high above the water-filled canyons. As many as 11 eagles have been seen at one time, soaring above the Big Bend area of the San Juan River arm of the lake.

**More than 750** species of plants occur within Glen Canyon Recreational Area, and a wide variety of animals is known to inhabit the area as well.

Bobcats, fox, black bears, coyotes, mountain lions, sheep, jackrabbits, ground squirrels, beavers, wood rats, badgers, kangaroo rats, porcupines, lizards, snakes and bats are all common in the area.

With temperatures reaching into the 50s, many people take houseboat trips in the dead of winter, when the water is often glass-smooth.

Fall may be the prime time for boating, with temperatures reaching into the 70s, yet cool enough to make a campfire a cozy way to head into the night.

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