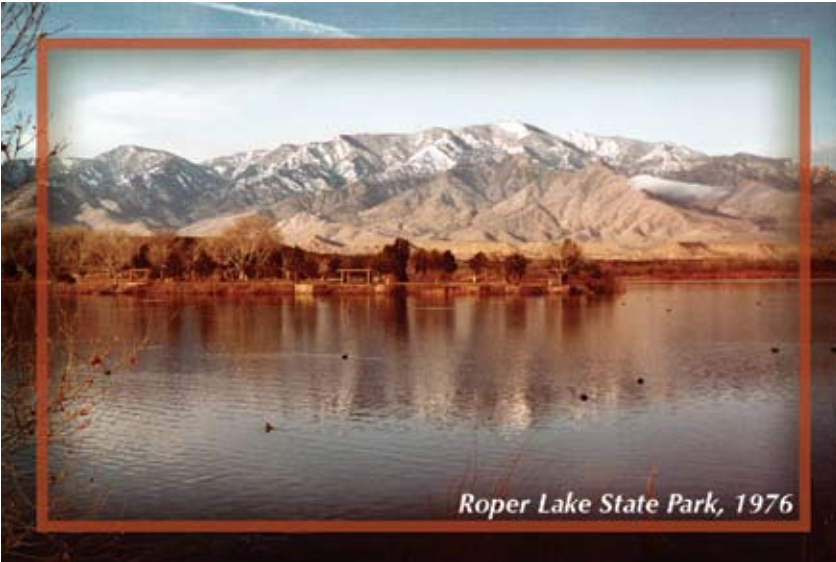


## Roper Lake State Park

Location: 6 miles south of Safford off US 191  
Opened and dedicated March 1975

For a number of years Graham County had been working with its legislators to have a State Park in their county. In 1972, HB 2150 authorized the acquisition of Dead Horse Ranch as a State Park. The bill also included authorization to construct a lake and appropriated \$150,000 for the construction of a 100 surface acre lake in Graham County to be operated as a State Park. Senator Ed Sawyer, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, introduced the amendment to the bill.

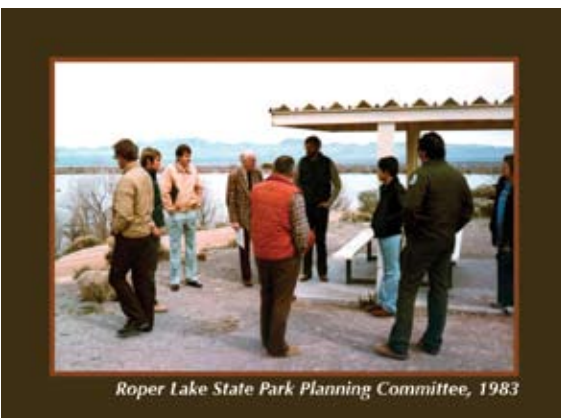


Park's staff worked closely with Graham County officials, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Bureau of Land Management to identify and determine the feasibility of creating a water-based recreation facility in the vicinity of Safford.

On July 28, 1972, a Preliminary Engineering Feasibility Report was completed by the Game and Fish Department and submitted to the Park's Board. The findings and conclusions on the sites examined were not promising. The next alternative examined in cooperation with the Game and Fish Department was the potential for a large lake on

the Dankworth property two miles south of Roper Lake. The analysis of this site showed that a large lake was not feasible. After the investigation of other sites, the construction of a 100 surface acre lake was determined not to be feasible from an economic or engineering standpoint.

The best alternative appeared to be the management of Roper Lake by State Parks and perhaps the future acquisition of the Dankworth site. Roper Lake is located approximately 6 miles south of Safford and consists of a 32-acre lake. The main part of the Park, located around Roper Lake, was developed in the early 1960's as a private recreation area. The lake and the property were sold to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in 1969. The other unit, Dankworth Pond, has a 15-acre surface lake located about 3 miles south of the main Park. It was operated as a private catfish fishing lake before acquisition by State Parks in 1975.



State Parks began negotiations with the Game and Fish Department to secure an acceptable agreement wherein State Parks would operate and manage Roper Lake. These negotiations resulted in a Management Agreement approved by both the Parks Board and the Game and Fish Commission. On December 31, 1974, Roper Lake officially became a State Park. This Park opened to the public in March 1975 with Jeff Dexter as Park Manager. The park's two units totalled 338 acres.