

**SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO
OZONE SUMMARY**
Prepared by WildEarth Guardians, August 2020

Three ozone monitors in Eddy and Lea Counties are in nonattainment, with 2017-2019 design values all above the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 0.070 parts per million. The “design value” refers to the three year average of high ozone readings that reflects whether or not a monitoring site show air quality is violating ozone standards.

These monitoring sites have recorded regular exceedances of the 8-hour ozone NAAQS since 2015. The tables below show the annual first, second, third, and fourth maximum 8-hour ozone readings at the three monitors in Lea and Eddy Counties between 2015 and 2019.¹

Hobbs, NM 8-Hour Ozone Readings (in ppm), 2015-2019 (Lea County)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1 st Max.	0.070	0.069	0.080	0.083	0.082
2 nd Max.	0.069	0.066	0.074	0.078	0.075
3 rd Max.	0.069	0.065	0.072	0.077	0.073
4 th Max.	0.067	0.065	0.069	0.076	0.070
Number of Days Above NAAQS	0	0	3	6	3

Carlsbad, NM 8-Hour Ozone Readings (in ppm), 2015-2019 (Eddy County)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1 st Max.	0.069	0.065	0.082	0.096	0.095
2 nd Max.	0.068	0.064	0.078	0.095	0.092
3 rd Max.	0.067	0.064	0.077	0.091	0.084
4 th Max.	0.067	0.063	0.076	0.083	0.080
Number of Days Above NAAQS	0	0	10	18	19

Carlsbad Caverns National Park 8-Hour Ozone Readings, 2015-2019 (Eddy County)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1 st Max.	0.068	0.070	0.069	0.099	0.082
2 nd Max.	0.068	0.069	0.065	0.081	0.080
3 rd Max.	0.065	0.069	0.065	0.080	0.078
4 th Max.	0.065	0.069	0.065	0.080	0.074
Number of Days Above NAAQS	0	0	0	10	6

A violation of the 8-hour ozone NAAQS is triggered when the three-year average of the annual fourth highest daily reading exceeds the NAAQS. See 40 C.F.R. § 50.19(b). This three-

¹ Ozone monitoring data was queried from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s AirData website, <https://www.epa.gov/outdoor-air-quality-data/monitor-values-report>.

year average value is commonly referred to as the “design value.” Based on this monitoring data, all three ozone monitors are in violation of the NAAQS, with the design value at the Carlsbad monitor even violating the ozone NAAQS adopted in 2008, which limited 8-hour concentrations to no more than 0.075 parts per million. This means these monitors are currently in nonattainment.² The table below shows that the design values at the Lea and Eddy County monitors have increased over the last five years and that currently, all three monitors are violating the ozone NAAQS.

8-Hour Ozone Design Values for Lea and Eddy County, New Mexico Monitoring Sites

Monitor	Monitor ID	2015-2017 Design Value	2016-2018 Design Value	2017-2019 Design Value
Hobbs	350250008	0.067	0.070	0.071
Carlsbad	350151005	0.068	0.074	0.079
Carlsbad Caverns	350150010	0.066	0.071	0.073

So far in 2020, ozone levels continue to rise, indicating there remains a serious air quality problem in Eddy and Lea Counties. Not only have ozone exceedances been recorded in 2020, but the 2018-2020 design value is certain to violate the NAAQS yet again at the Carlsbad monitor. As the table below shows, the Carlsbad monitor has recorded numerous high 8-hour ozone concentrations so far in 2020. **Based on the three-year average of the fourth highest annual 8-hour ozone readings the Carlsbad monitor currently has a 2018-2020 design value of 0.075 parts per million, meaning it is in nonattainment.** In other words, the air pollution problem in southeast New Mexico persists.

Carlsbad, NM 8-Hour High Ozone Readings (in ppm) so Far in 2020³

	Date	8-hour Ozone Concentration
1 st Max.	June 24	0.075
2 nd Max.	July 8	0.067
3 rd Max.	July 6	0.066
4 th Max.	June 25	0.064

² Although the region of Eddy and Lea Counties is not designated “nonattainment,” the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) has been clear that in reference to air quality, a monitor in violation of the NAAQS is considered to be in nonattainment, explaining that in the context of developing and implementing SIPs under Section 110 of the Clean Air Act, “‘nonattainment’ refers to air quality, not designation status.” 63 Fed. Reg. 57,356, 57,372 (October 27, 1998).

³ Ozone concentration data for 2020 was obtained from EPA’s AirNow.gov archives, <https://gispub.epa.gov/airnow/>.