

## **Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Research Permit Instructions**

All applicants are required to contact the Refuge Operations Specialist before submitting an application to discuss the proposed project and prepare for the application process. New project applications are accepted on or before April 15 and November 15 of each year. For projects that will begin in June through December of that year, applications are due by April 15. For projects that will begin in January through June of that year, applications are due by November 15 of the previous year. Refuge staff will inform the applicant of approval/disapproval within 30 days of after the due date. Permits to reconnaissance for 1-2 days to check out research locations for the next permit application due date, may be applied for at any time.

Please read the following to assist you in completing your application:

### **Sevilleta NWR**

The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is one of the largest refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), encompassing 228,700 acres in central New Mexico. It is unique because four biomes, the Colorado Plateau Shrub Steppe, the Chihuahuan Desert, the Great Plains Short Grassland Prairie, and the Piñon Juniper Woodland, intersect on the refuge. In addition, the Rio Grande flows through the center of Sevilleta NWR, providing a riparian oasis that plays a vital role in the mixed ecosystems. These habitats support 89 mammal species, approximately 250 bird species, 58 reptile species, and 15 amphibian species.

### **Purpose of Research on the Refuge**

One of the objectives of the refuge is to provide opportunities for research. On-refuge scientific research benefits include:

- information to assist with management on Sevilleta NWR
- information to assist with management of other NWRs and public lands
- information to assist with threatened and endangered species management
- long-term data collection in a “natural state” environment
- graduate student opportunities for research on a NWR
- teacher and K-12 student opportunities to observe and participate in scientific research

### **Permit Application Review Criteria**

All projects must be compatible with:

- 1) the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service mission: working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people, and
- 2) with Sevilleta NWR's purposes: to preserve and enhance the integrity and character of the ecosystems of the . . . property by creating a wildlife refuge managed as nearly as possible in its natural state" and "Consistent with the regulations and policies of the national wildlife refuge . . . portions of the property will be made available . . . for scientific research."

All projects must also be compatible with the refuge goals and objectives as stated in the Sevilleta NWR Comprehensive Management Plan (CCP), including:

- threatened and endangered species management to provide for the enhancement, preservation, and protection of threatened and endangered species as they occur naturally or were historically present on the refuge so that viable, self-sustaining populations can be restored to their natural habitats;
- wildlife and habitat management to preserve, restore, and maintain the natural diversity of plants and wildlife as it occurred historically on the refuge;
- research management to encourage research by research institutions, agencies, and individuals and to provide an atmosphere conducive to investigations into environmental processes on the refuge;
- water management to protect existing and secure additional water rights and/or in-stream flow rights as necessary to protect the integrity of the riparian and aquatic habitats on the refuge;
- public use management to achieve appropriate levels of public uses that are compatible with the purpose for which the refuge is established and with the goals of the NWRS, and to regulate as provided by law, all activities, uses, and practices that are potentially harmful to refuge resources;
- outreach to establish a formal program for public outreach, identify important public resources, and implement environmental education programs;
- cultural resources management to protect, maintain, and plan for Service-managed cultural resources on Sevilleta NWR for the benefit of present and future generations;
- land management to protect existing refuge lands for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources, to provide for the acquisition of additional lands, and to ensure the integrity of refuge boundaries relative to adjacent lands;

- operations management to effect improvements to funding, facilities, and staffing that will result in enhancement of refuge habitat and wildlife resources;
- and coordination/partnership to strengthen interagency and jurisdictional coordination on or near Sevilleta NWR, resulting in decisions benefiting fish and wildlife resources while avoiding duplication of effort.

Specific research objectives and strategies for Sevilleta NWR as listed in the CCP are:

1. Encourage research that improves management and monitoring of species, communities, and processes on the refuge and the Upper/Middle Rio Grande to comply with deed restrictions.
2. To permit research from a wide range of interested parties and institutions while protecting the plant and wildlife components of the ecosystem from the detrimental human intrusion and manipulative research protocols.

The CCP also lists strategies for reaching these objectives, including:

- Permit research at levels determined by the refuge manager to be compatible with the refuge purposes.
- Continue to centralize research activities in localized research zones to reduce or eliminate research impacts on habitat outside of these zones.

Projects which answer questions or provide information regarding threatened or endangered species, invasive species, fire management, or land management on Sevilleta NWR will be given priority consideration, as these projects have the potential to impact daily refuge management decisions. Projects related to or contributing to other projects on or off-refuge will also be given special consideration. Affiliation with a research institution or agency, and peer review of a project will also contribute positively toward project approval. If new projects conflict in time, space, or methodology, renewal of on-going or modification of existing projects will receive consideration over these new projects.

**Application Requirements:**

- No applications will be accepted after the April 15/November 15 due dates.
- Each project must have a separate application/permit.
- Incomplete applications will be returned.
- All applications must include all site(s) marked on a map, with GPS coordinates.
- All sites that have construction, development, or habitat alterations of any kind are required to submit photo images of the site “before” construction. “During”

images are required with interim reports, and “after” clean-up images are required with the final report when the project is completed.

- All permittees must provide a sign (cost  $\leq$  \$200) using refuge specifications, that states the name of the project. Refuge staff will work with the permittee to install the sign. Also, a detailed paragraph of the project will be required for refuge staff use in a research “tour guide” publication.
- Permittees will be required to report the monthly number of visits to the project site and the number in group per visit with each interim report and the final report.
- All project sites are either active, or inactive. If a permit is not renewed annually, the site is considered inactive and will be removed and rehabilitated.
- Research sites where the status is unknown or inactive will be considered abandoned and restored to a “natural state” unless the permittee has contacted the Refuge Operations Specialist to make other arrangements.
- Permittees are required to submit an interim report each year, by November 15 in order for a new permit to be issued on January 1, or April 15 for a new permit to be issued June 1. Permits will not be issued at any other time! If you miss a deadline, you must resubmit your interim report/application for the next deadline. A final report and a copy of any publication/thesis are required upon completion of the project/publication.

If your application is approved and you receive a permit, it is your responsibility, and your co-workers/students, to know and follow refuge regulations. The following regulations and policies are in effect for each research Primary Investigator and their subpermittees/employees/staff:

Entry to the refuge is only for objectives and locations listed on your permit. To minimize disturbance to wildlife and habitat, you may travel only on established roads on direct routes to and from research site(s). The vehicle speed limit is 25 mph. Bicycles and pets are not permitted. A research permit is not a permit for touring/hiking/sightseeing.

All Sevilleta gate combinations are changed in January of each year. For security reasons, gate combinations are subject to change at any time throughout the year without prior notice. Close and lock all gates when entering or leaving. Do not share the gate combination with anyone, even other permittees. If anyone requests the combination, refer them to the refuge office.

To minimize disturbance to wildlife, park vehicles a minimum of one-half mile from any water source. Park to the side of the road, so that other vehicles and equipment have room to pass.

To protect wildlife, habitat, cultural, and historical resources, collecting plant, animal, or mineral specimens, antlers, man-made objects, and artifacts is prohibited unless otherwise specified on the research permit.

Permanent research sites must be designated with an approved sign. Upon completion of a project, all stakes, flagging, transect markers or other man-made items must be removed according to the approved clean-up plan.

To minimize human impact on the refuge lands and wildlife, camping, fires, weapons, and littering is prohibited.

Do not enter the refuge or drive on dirt roads when conditions are wet or muddy. If it starts to rain/snow, please leave the refuge before you cause damage to the roads.

Permittees must report vehicle accidents and human injuries to the refuge office within 24 hours to complete the necessary documentation. If possible, do not move vehicles from the scene of an accident until an investigation takes place.

Possession of alcohol or controlled substances on federal property is prohibited, as is entering the refuge under the influence of alcohol or medication to such a degree as to endanger oneself, another person, or property.

Respect others' vehicles, structures, equipment, and research projects.

Road hazards, damaged fencing, injured animals, or anything unusual must be reported to the refuge office. As part of our efforts to preserve and restore native habitats on Sevilleta NWR, we also request that any new colonies of invasive plants and non-native animal sightings be reported.

If you have questions about the application and review process, or need additional information, please contact Dennis Prichard at [dennis\\_prichard@fws.gov](mailto:dennis_prichard@fws.gov) or 505-864-4021 x103. In case of emergency while on the refuge, ask for the Refuge Manager, or any available staff.

**Sevilleta NWR  
RESEARCH PERMIT APPLICATION/REPORTS**

Check only one:

- I am applying for a **Reconnaissance** permit (Complete sections A, B).
- I am applying for a **New** research permit (Complete sections A-D).
- I am applying for an **Annual Renewal** of an existing permit  
(Complete sections A and E. *Note: Use only if there are NO changes.*)
- I am applying for an **Annual Renewal with changes**  
(Complete Section A, E, and all portions of B, C, and D with proposed changes.)
- I am requesting a **Modification** of an existing permit  
(Complete section A and all portions of B, C, and D with proposed changes.)
- I am submitting a **Final Report** for a completed project.  
(Complete Section A and E.)

*Please type or print. Attach additional information as necessary.*

Section A - Applicant Information				
1. Principal Investigator ( <i>last-first-middle initial</i> )				
2. Mailing Address ( <i>street/PO box, city, state, zip</i> )	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Telephone (.....)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Fax (.....)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Email</td> </tr> </table>	Telephone (.....)	Fax (.....)	Email
Telephone (.....)				
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3. University/Department or Agency/Sponsor	For graduate students, Major Professor Name & Phone			
4. Sub-Permittee/Assistant Names				
5. Project Title				
6. Applicant's Signature	15. Date			
Section B – Project Information				
7. Funding Source(s) & Amount(s)				
8. Project Location ( <i>include GPS coordinates, attach map, etc. as appropriate, reconnaissance may include general area only</i> )				

**9. Purpose/Needs/Scope**

**10. Procedure (include equipment/materials)**

**Section C – Time Frame/Clean-up**

**11. Time Frame** (if possible, include an image/photo of project location in “before” installing markers, etc.)

Project Start Date:	Projected Completion Date:
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Projected Field Season Dates/Months:
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Projected # site visits/year:	Projected # of workers/visit:
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**12. Site clean-up Plan (include budget and expected completion date)**

**Section D – Project Relationships**

**13. Project’s Relationship to Other Research Projects (note whether other projects are on/off Sevilleta NWR)**

**14. Project Relationship to Refuge Goals (see introduction)**

<b>Section E – Interim Report</b>		
<b>15. Site Visits</b>		
# of visits to project site in...		# in group per visit (average if necessary):
January:	July:	<b>Please send 1-3 images (.jpg or slides) of your project site and/or people working on/at your site!</b>
February:	August:	
March:	September:	
April:	October:	
May:	November:	
June:	December:	
<b>16. Project Progress Report</b> <i>(include preliminary results, attach maps, etc. as appropriate, note problems/challenges)</i>		

Submit your completed and signed application to:  
 Dennis Prichard  
 Acting Refuge Manager  
 P.O. Box 1248  
 Socorro, NM 87801  
 dennis\_prichard@fws.gov

