

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Research Special Use Permit Instructions

All new applicants are required to contact the Refuge' Deputy Manager 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 January and run through December of that year, applications are due by November 15 of the previous year.

- For projects that will begin in June and run through December of that year, applications are due by April 15.

Refuge staff will inform the applicant of approval/disapproval within 30 days of after the due date.

Modifications to existing permits can be submitted and reviewed once a month. However, reviewing the permit depends on the schedule of the review committee. Modifications will still be accepted during the normal review periods. There are special conditions to modifications outside of the review periods, so please contact refuge staff for the monthly modification review dates and additional information.

Reconnaissance permits for 1-2 days to check out research locations for the next permit application due date, may be applied for at any time. Projects involving the collection of data are not considered reconnaissance and must be submitted during the normal research application process. Contact Refuge staff for additional information on obtaining a reconnaissance permits.

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

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Background

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

- New applications will NOT be accepted after the April 15/November 15 due dates.
- **All applicants must fill out the FWS Form 3-138-R.** Applicants that are renewing their permit must also fill out the Sevilleta NWR Research Interim Report.
- Each project must have a separate application/permit.
- Incomplete applications will be returned.
- All applications must include all site(s) marked on a map or attach a KMZ/KML google earth file when submitting the application.
- 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 long term projects 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 and remove it when project is completed. 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.
- All new permittees will be required to pick up their permits at the refuge office, to provide an opportunity for refuge staff to communicate and interact with research permittees.

- All new projects must be “fire compatible.” Wild fires can and do happen on the refuge, and prescribed fire is used as a habitat management tool. In general, research projects will not be protected from wild or prescribed fire. As determined by refuge staff, some existing projects may be protected.

Refuge Regulations and Policies

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. A research permit is not a permit for touring/hiking/sightseeing.
- To minimize disturbance to wildlife and habitat, you may travel only on established roads on direct routes to and from research site(s).
- Bicycles and pets are not permitted.
- The vehicle speed limit is 25 mph.
- All Sevilleta NWR 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-quarter 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.
- 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 Renee Robichaud at renee_robichaud@fws.gov or 505-864-4021, prompt # 2 for Extension 26103. In case of emergency while on the refuge, ask for the Refuge Manager, or any available staff.

**IF YOU ARE RENEWING YOUR PERMIT OR COMPLETING YOUR PROJECT,
PLEASE DETACH AND FILL OUT FOLLOWING RESEARCH REPORT FORM:**

**SEVILLETA NWR
Research Report Form**

Check only one:

_____ I am submitting an **Interim Report** and I will be submitting a **renewal** to my project using the **FWS Form 3-138-R**. There are no changes to my project.

_____ I am submitting an **Interim Report** and I will be submitting a **modification** to my project using the **FWS Form 3-138-R**. For the upcoming year, I will be modifying my project as described in **FWS Form 3-138-R**.

_____ I am submitting a **Final Report** for a completed project.

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>) | Telephone (.....) |
| | Fax (.....) |
| | Email |
| 3. University/Department or Agency/Sponsor | For graduate students, Major Professor Name & Phone |
| 5. Project Title | |
| Research Report (Interim or Final) | |
| 15. Site Visits | |
| # of visits to project site in... | # in group per visit (average if necessary): |
| January: | July: |
| February: | August: |
| March: | September: |
| April: | October: |
| May: | November: |
| June: | December: |
| Please send 1-3 images (.jpg or slides) of your project site and/or people working on/at your site! | |

16. Project Progress Report (include preliminary results, attach maps, etc. as appropriate, note problems/challenges)

Please submit your completed and signed application to:

Renee Robichaud
Refuge Deputy Manager
P.O. Box 1248
Socorro, NM 87801

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