Timeline

10,000 yrs. ago

Humans have inhabited the area now known as Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge for thousands of years. Ancient ruins and pottery shards provide evidence of their presence.

1300

The Piro Indians resided in pueblos or small communities in this area and lived off of the land. They cultivated crops, such as corn, beans, and squash.

1400-1500's.

The Navajo and Apache tribes also had a presence in the Rio Grande Valley for decades trading with and raiding the Pueblos and in later years, the Spanish.

1598

Spanish explorer, Don Juan de Onate traversed this rugged landscape, trail-blazing El Camino Real. This brought new religion, food, and lifestyles to the Piro Indians.

1680

The Pueblo Revolt was the culmination of eighty years of cruelty and mistreatment by the Spanish. It caused great upheaval including the abandonment of the four major Piro Pueblos. These encompassed the Sevilleta Mission, Alamillo Mission, Socorro Mission, and the Senecu Mission. The Pueblo people drove the Spanish out of New Mexico and into Mexico.

1693

Under the resettlement agreement with the Pueblo Indians, the Spanish returned and reoccupied New Mexico. As part of the resettlement, they began to distribute several types of land grants.

1700's

In the eighteenth century the Spanish Land Grant System was put into effect in New Mexico and four square leagues were granted to ten married men who promised to establish a town.

June 1819

Occupants of the land now known as Sevilleta NWR were given a land grant and their area became known as the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant.

1821

Mexico declared independence from Spain. The Spanish land grants that had been established were allowed to continue on through Mexican rule.

1854-1865

Fort Craig was established in 1854 to defend local citizens against Native American raids. Later its purpose was converted to repel the small amount of Confederate raids that occurred. One such was in 1862, when Confederates retreated right through the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant.

1881

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad comes through the Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant, thus bringing more industry to the communities.

1891-1904

The U.S. Court of Private Land Claims was created by Congress to decide which land grants could be proven. Less than ten percent of the land grants were confirmed, and most of the land grants in New Mexico were dissolved.

1903

The first National Wildlife Refuge was established by President Theodore Roosevelt. He established fifty-one refuges and became known as the father of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

1912

New Mexico gained statehood into the United States of America. Due to New Mexico being under American government policies, many land grants were taken away from their residents because they were unable to pay taxes on the land.

1936

The Sevilleta de la Joya Land Grant was acquired by General Thomas D. Campbell with assistance from the Raskob Family. The Campbell Family ranched these lands for the next several decades and also leased land to other ranchers.

1939

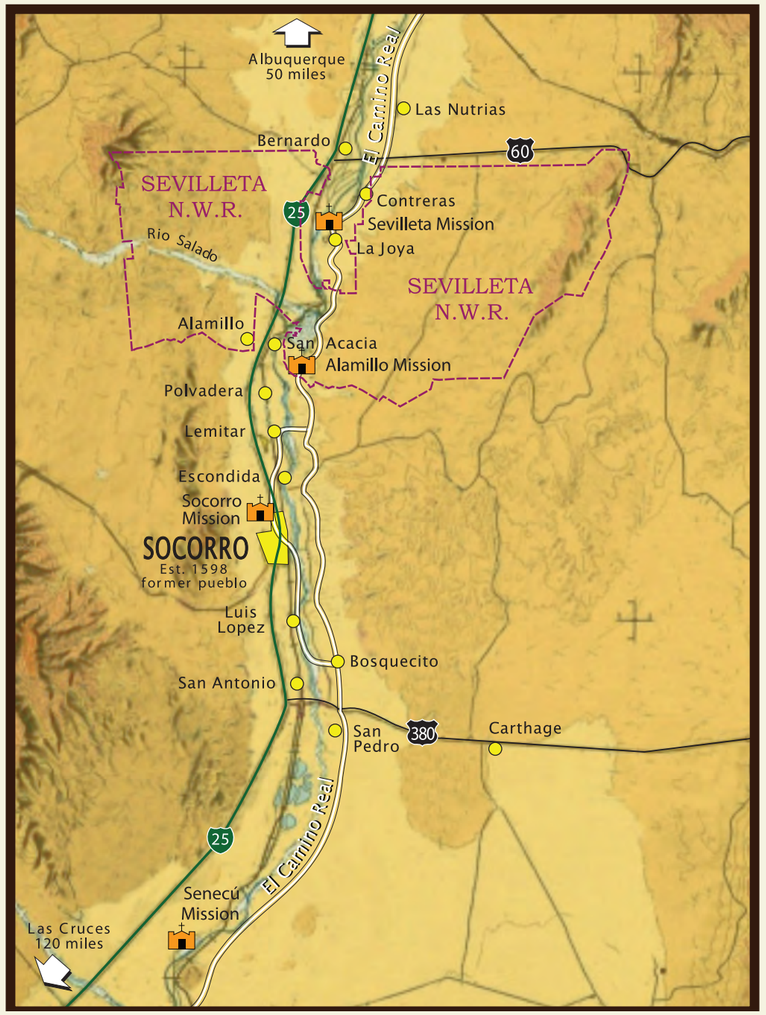
The United States Fish and Wildlife Service was established as an agency under the Department of the Interior. The Wildlife Refuge System was then managed by this department.

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

Reflections of our Past

The Campbell Family Foundation donated the Sevilleta land to the Service through The Nature Conservancy with the assistance of Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. The land was established as a refuge. The purpose of Sevilleta NWR is "…to preserve and enhance the integrity and natural character of the ecosystem of the property by creating a wildlife refuge manages as nearly as possible in its natural state, employing only those management tools and techniques that are consistent with the maintenance of natural ecological processes…not to be subjected to commercial exploitation…and the land and the plants and animals supported by it to be managed to permit the natural ecological succession and processes typical of the area to prevail…and that portions of the property be made available to educational institutions and conservation organizations for scientific research and study."

December 28th, 1973



For more information, visit these nearby sites

From Sevilleta NWR:

Fort Craig	10.8 miles
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Site	60 miles
Old Mission in Socorro, NM	21 miles
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monuments	36 miles

June 2016