



# REFUGE UPDATE

May 2020

Published bi-monthly by the Amigos de la Sevilleta

## Calendar

Due to the current situation with the Corona virus pandemic all of the planned events have been canceled. There will be a special notification sent to all if things change before the July Refuge Update is published.

## Manager's Update

Kathy Granillo, Refuge Manager

I hope this note finds you all well and safely hunkered down as best as possible through this stage of the Covid 19 pandemic. Sevilleta NWR staff are all teleworking from home, with occasional visits to our offices to make sure the building is still there and to swap out projects to work on from home. As I suspect is true for most of you, we are all a little stir-crazy from looking at computer screens all day and way too many phone calls, webinars and conference calls. And we really miss the refuge and our "real" work – conserving one of the best places in the world and interacting and sharing the refuge with the public.

The Refuge trails and San Lorenzo Canyon remain open for recreational use. We ask that when you visit, you practice social distancing and limit your party size to 5 or less. Wetland areas are open to foot traffic. Gates are closed there as we had some vandalism. There is a Porta Potty in the parking lot of the Visitor Center.

Several cacti are blooming in the cactus garden. Hummingbird feeders are up and hummingbird numbers are increasing. Kingbirds and mockingbirds are back, as are Swainson's hawks. We do not know when we will be back. There will be phases of returning to work and opening the Visitor Center, dependent on guidance from the CDC, the State Health Department and our leadership team.

We do have some good news in the midst of this pandemic. The refuge has a new refuge biologist, Nancy Spencer-Morris. She comes to us from another refuge, and prior to that a few years with other federal agencies. I hope you will all be able to meet her soon!

We have been able to continue some of the resource work - Prairie Dog Pals released 99 p-dogs on the refuge on April 7. Refuge RV volunteers Tish and Bill helped with the release and have been checking on them periodically. *See pictures on page 3*

And finally, Jeannine Kimble, Refuge Visitor Services Manager, released several dozen native fishes into the Rio Grande in mid-April. These were fish that were part of the Native Fish in the Classroom project. The school children couldn't be there to help as they are all sequestered at home. Hopfully we can do this again next year and the kids will get to release them. . *See picture on page 3*

Take care, stay safe, and I hope to see you all soon!

# Amigos Board News

Ann Adams, Board President

Greetings, Amigos!

What a unique time this is...while we are stuck at home, I've never seen so many folks out walking daily and though we may be covering our faces with masks, we are still greeting our neighbors and strangers we meet on the trails. Creativity and imagination are everywhere as we invent new ways to work, connect, communicate. So many of us are ill or unemployed but so many others are showing the generosity and kindness that makes us a great people. Resilience is certainly a strength of Americans...it's how we came to an unknown New World, built a new country and settled the West. We've made lots of mistakes along the way but we learn from them and continue working to make ourselves better.

So many lessons are coming out of the current situations... we are better believers when we actually experience something rather than read about it. It's taken 50 Earth Days and a pandemic to convince us that it is possible to stop some of the air pollution. Who knew the skies over NY and LA would clear so quickly when we stopped driving and spitting contaminants into the air? I, personally, love seeing animals returning to cities...even if they ARE lying in the roads or eating the hedges! If you are following Sevilleta/Amigos on Facebook, you will see lots of activity among the denizens of the refuge, taking advantage of the drinkers, bringing their offspring. I'm excited to see the oryx even though they are not natives, they are dramatic and unusual. Lots of folks loved seeing the pronghorn as well! I am continually reminded by our refuge manager, Kathy, that they are not antelope but a group unto themselves. Good to know that they are out there oblivious to the world of humans.

Along the lines of "giving back", I'd like to make a case for joining the Amigos Board. We are a small, volunteer, working Board. We represent you, Members, in supporting and serving the refuge in areas beyond its normal means. We hold events, do educational outreach, and participate in community activities in order to raise awareness of our refuge and keep it top of mind among New Mexicans and out-of-state folks as well. Right now, we hold monthly meetings by teleconference but Zoom might be in our future. We want to expand our membership and would welcome anyone who would like to work with us on that endeavor. Members are the life-blood of an organization and we have great ones. If you have an interest in joining the Board, please, give me a call (585-615-6695) or an email ([ann.d.adams@comcast.net](mailto:ann.d.adams@comcast.net)). I can tell you all about it...and, of course, encourage you to try it out!

In the meantime, please, be safe and well. If you are desperate to get out, the trails at Sevilleta are open and waiting!  
All the best,  
Ann

**The next Amigos board meeting is May 20<sup>TH</sup> AT 4:30 By Teleconference**

All amigos members are welcome and are encouraged to attend

## Nancy Spencer-Morris

Received a B.A in Wildlife Science from Purdue University.

I am originally from Indiana, but I have lived in seven different states, (NM being the 7th) and prior to coming to the FWS, I worked for the USFS, BLM, DOD (Army), and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Professionally, I am particularly interested in ethology, habitat restoration, and interpretation and education.

Personally, I dabble in different creative activities and have mastered none 😊. I enjoy reading, travelling, camping, and just walking in wild areas.

Welcome Nancy we all are looking forward to meeting and working with you!



**Jeannine releasing fish**



**Volunteers Bill and Tish supplemental feeding newly released Prairie dogs**

# Volunteers

Submitted by Rex Myers

## Happy Trails To You

Trails are open at Sevilleta. Park outside the front gate, walk in to the Visitors Center parking lot, and then hike one of the trails – maintaining appropriate social distance from other hikers, of course. Mesa View, Ladrones Vista, Nature Trail, and even the short trails near the parking lot where cacti are starting to bloom – plenty of opportunity. Today, a “hats off” to the volunteers who help maintain those trails. There’s a small crew who hikes the trails with shovels and rakes instead of walking sticks, repairing washouts, stray rocks, and steps that have seen wear or abuse. They are also responsible for making sure the trails signs are in good shape. Dana is the head honcho, plus he’s designed and helped build some of the trails he now maintains. His wife Marion assists him as she is able, and Dave (often with his two dogs in tow) also lends a helping hand. If you haven’t admired their handiwork, you should hike the trails and do so. Hiking is a way to enjoy refuge beauty, up close and personal.



## Visitor Center Happenings

Life goes on at Sevilleta, even with the gate locked. Kathy removed crucial flowers from the one pollinator garden and today Susan and I cleaned up the bricks. Plans are to put a desert willow there whenever desert willows are available for transplanting. We also cleaned up the highway exit and know that human sloppiness will continue long after coronavirus is gone.

Kathy and I are also working on the birding signs in the wetlands. She has called all sorts of state and federal folks who have an interest down there and we are playing with language for the signs and possible contractors. Stay tuned. Also to keep you in the loop, Prairie Dog Pals released about 95 of the little guys the first of this week. Volunteers are supplementing their diet with carrots. Not as fun as tater tots, but it's all they get. Meanwhile, cacti are blooming with or without us.



Pictures and article By Rex and Susan

**New Mugs at the Nature Store**  
**Choose bird or mammal, predator or prey**  
**\$12 each**

*These new mugs have Sevilleta NWR within the design*  
**Submitted by Susan Richards**



**Amigos Contacts**

Amigos web site

<https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org/>

Amigos on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/amigossevilleta>

Refuge Web Site

<Http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sevilleta>

Jeannine Kimble

Visitor Services Manager

505-864-5021ex106

Past editions of this Newsletter are available at the Amigos website: <https://www.amigosdelasevilleta.org/contacts>

## The Impact Of Friends Groups Nationwide



### HOW YOU CAN HELP SEVILLETA

The Amigos de la Sevilleta provide valuable support to this unique refuge. There are several ways that you can help.

Consider increasing your membership contribution to the next level or higher.

Give an Amigos membership to a friend or family member.

Make an annual or semi-annual donation.

Include the Amigos de Sevilleta in your will.

Donate appreciated property or stock.

If you are 70½ or older you can donate a part of your required minimum IRA distribution and avoid paying taxes on it.

Your broker can handle all the paperwork for you. You will need the Amigos' tax ID number (06-1819138) and the mailing address (Amigos de la Sevilleta, Box 1248, Socorro, NM 87801.)

Since the Amigos are a 501c(3) organization, all donations are tax deductible. Your generosity will ensure that Sevilleta continues its mission to provide for the wildlife in this spectacular refuge.

**There are openings on the Amigos de la Sevilleta board of directors.**

**Contact Steve Randall at 505-861-1088**