



# Refuge Update

April 2024

Published quarterly by the Amigos de la Sevilleta

*Board meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month; all are welcome. The next Board meeting is Tuesday, April 16th at 2:00PM at the Visitor Center. You can also attend remotely via zoom.*

## Refuge Manager's Update

Jeff Sanchez

### Re-introduction Efforts: Human and Tortoise

We are working on “re-introducing” staff to this station, one position at a time. The new Administrative Officer job will be advertised to the public in early April. If you are interested in a great position at Sevilleta NWR and have budget and administrative experience, you might want to check out USA Jobs and create an account to learn more. As for our Wildlife Refuge Specialist, we are awaiting the next step within our Human Resources division, therefore, we are probably three months out from putting that position out on the street. In addition, we will be bringing on two interns this year, one focused on invasive species work and the other focused on habitat management, ensuring we are ready to welcome our newest refuge inhabitant, the Bolson Tortoise.

On that note, we began setting in place a nine-acre soft release pen for the Bolson Tortoise several weeks back, marking the exciting first step for a Fall 2024 re-introduction. As with every project, we ran

into a few minor setbacks, but our amazing maintenance team worked through the issues, as usual. We were also pleased to have 14 members of the Sierra Club come out and help get this construction project started. Without the help of the Sierra Club and local volunteers, we would not have made the progress we have so far. To get to this point, here's a little construction project background: we worked closely with Bolson Tortoise experts, Chris Wiese and Scott Hillard of the Turner Endangered Species Fund to locate a site that exhibits the known habitat requirements for this species. A few examples include areas with minimal slope, soils in which the tortoises can excavate deep tunnels, plant species, such as tobosa grass and globemallow, and an area protected from human disturbance. Since tortoises don't really jump or climb fences, we only needed a 1½ foot tall fence that is buried approximately 2 feet into the ground to keep them contained temporarily. This required trenching, setting corner

posts, pounding t-posts, connecting 100-foot segments of wire fence, and moving lots of dirt. As you can imagine, this is a lot of work that is still ongoing. Our overall plan is to release a number of juvenile tortoises within the pen, allowing them to acclimate to the area before removing portions of the fence to allow for expansion. We will be keeping an eye on the released tortoises with

tracking equipment but intend for them to be wild and independent.

All in all, we will be bringing in new refuge inhabitants to help us move toward a naturally functioning system, both in the office and in the field.



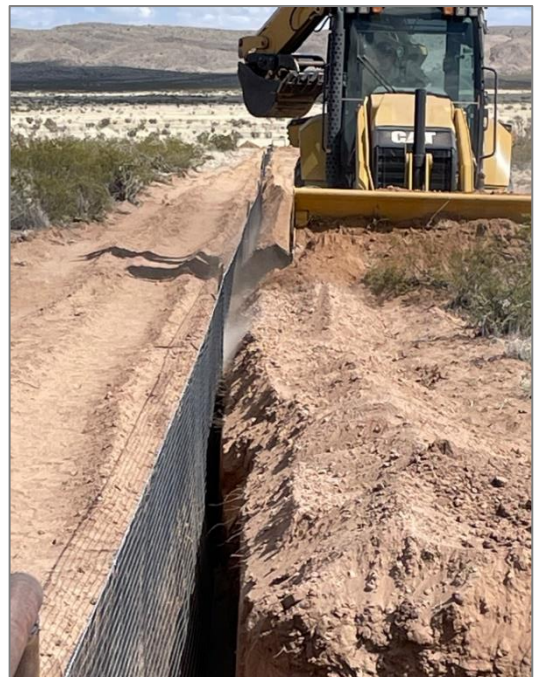
Trench with fence in



Fence aligned



Trench with fence in



Putting dirt back in

# Spring to Sevilleta

Rex Myers, Amigos President

Save Saturday, May 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., for a fun-filled family day at the refuge – Spring to Sevilleta.

Take bus tours of the refuge and UNM Field Station research at 9 a.m. or 12:30 p.m., on a first-come-first-served basis. Interactive stations at the Visitors Center will highlight Bolson tortoises, the Mexican grey wolf reintroduction program, UNM Long Term Environmental Research, wildflower seed ball making, Nature Trail activity books, and outdoor education—something for family members

of all ages. As always, you can hike Sevilleta’s great trails – Mesa View, Ladrones Vista and wetlands – at your leisure. Food will be available for purchase.

Amigos de la Sevilleta is hosting Spring to Sevilleta and would love to share the refuge with you. Plan now; bring the family; enjoy the day at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. I-25 Exit 169.



# The Nature Store

Penny Lommen, Amigos Treasurer

Walking into the Visitor Center you can't help but notice the Nature Store. Our store is small but it's filled with some of the most wonderful items. Our merchandise includes tee shirts, jewelry, books for adults and kids, fantastic plush animals and much, much more!

different types of merchandise that we carry. Knowing that a static display does not attract customers, every few months Marj totally dismantles the store and re-creates it! She has created many of the actual display fixtures that



Marj Richards

Much of the success of any retail establishment is the way that the merchandise is displayed. Lighting and color create a positive environment which improves a customer's in-store experience and leads to increased sales.

We are very fortunate to have our very own Merchandise Manager, Marj Richards. Marj joined the Amigos Board this year but she has been helping with the store for many years (she's the sister of Store Manager Susan Richards).

Marj who has worked for Lowe's, Disney and Mikasa is responsible for the fabulous appearance of the store. She uses her retail background to create eye-catching displays that focus on the

you see such as the tee shirt and puppet display stands and the magnet holders. When she pulls out her hammer and cordless drill, you need to watch out!

We are very fortunate to have Marj on our team. Not only does she help with the store and serve on the board but she is also one of the volunteers who are keeping the Visitor Center open two days a week! Many thanks Marj for all you do for the Amigos!

Remember, if you need a gift for any occasion, you can probably find it here. And if you're an Amigo you get a discount!



## 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>

## Editor's Note

Items for consideration in the *Refuge Update* are encouraged.

Please email your submission in Word format to [sdrandl72@gmail.com](mailto:sdrandl72@gmail.com).

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