



REFUGE UPDATE

September 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 November Refuge Update is published.

Manager's Update

Kathy Granillo, Refuge Manager

I begin these notes with the bad news that the Visitor Center was once again broken in to in the wee hours. Two young men stole various optic and GPS equipment. Not really much stuff compared to the effort they put into it. We did get some brief camera footage of them both, but not enough to see faces very well. Our law enforcement folks are investigating. Meanwhile we are beefing up our security measures.

Much better news - the new intern, Jena, started August 19. She is working with Jeannine to develop Drawn to Sevilleta poster contest virtually and other environmental education projects.

I have selected the refuge Heavy Equipment Operator and we are now waiting for all of the approval process to happen. He will start October 13. I also got approval to hire another maintenance position and have submitted the paperwork. This will fill a position that we haven't had since 2012.

The Bureau of Reclamation has agreed to help us repair some water control structures in our wetland units and to do some repair work on the two roads that parallel the Unit 7 drain. We hope all will be done prior to waterfowl season (late October). Dove season opened Sept 1 FYI.

Federal Highways (via contractor) finished up the Rio Puerco bridge work - closing off access to the old bridge, and finishing up some fencing. They already added new bat houses to the new bridge that are designed and built by our local bat expert, Justin Stevenson.

We held the annual Sevilleta butterfly count August 22. We had one team of 3 people survey the area around the Visitor Center and the Nature Trail, and one team of 2 cover the wetland areas. Both teams had very few butterflies compared to previous counts, but still managed to find a variety of species including monarchs. There are tons of sunflowers in bloom in the wetlands and all over the HQ area and these are attractive to many butterflies.

Our Directorate Fellows Program person Catherine completed her project - thanks to all of you who took the time to talk with her and to watch her presentation.

The front gate entrance gate is now open again Monday-Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm and the public is welcome to park in the parking lot at the Visitor Center. Trails are open and there are still lots of wildflowers along the trails and around the Visitor Center.

Amigos Board News

Ann Adams, Board President

Hola, Amigos!!

Once again, I am hoping that you are well and have not succumbed to cabin fever during our quarantine time. Our first venturing out was certainly “two steps forward, one step back”. Maybe we’ll be able to maintain real progress as the year moves on. Looks like we are still uncertain of the opening date for the Sevilleta Visitor Center. We all have our fingers crossed that it will be soon, but trying to coordinate the readiness levels of all the Federal & State public lands in New Mexico is a yeoman’s job!! At the refuge, small signs of returning to normalcy include hiring new biologist and maintenance staff. They will be ready for reopening and I’m sure that we will be hearing that they are busy getting prepared to welcome you back.

So we’ll have to take advantage of the hiking on the refuge trails...masking up, practicing our social distancing and limiting group size while getting fresh air and exercise. Be sure to bring plenty of water with you as the heat can dry you out really fast. In fact, cool mornings offer an excellent time to be out for both humans and refuge critters. You might spot something special on an early morning walk. I heard our weather folks saying that there are changes ahead soon... I hope those come with cool and color ...though maybe not the color white!

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, your Board has been meeting monthly by conference call and welcomes you to join us at any point. Currently, meetings occur on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 4:30pm. Send me a note and I’ll send you the conference number should you want to join in. We are, like most everyone else, in the throes of approaching all we do in different and creative ways to accommodate the new rules of life. We are always looking for input and ideas from our members. We look forward to hearing from you soonest...

Sorry for the really brief note...the only critters partying on the refuge at the moment are the four-legged ones and those with fins and feathers! Maybe next time there will be more exciting things to report. Would love to see all of you ...at a distance... on the trails.

Best,
Ann

The next Amigos board meeting is September 16 at 4:30 By Teleconference

All amigos members are welcome and are encouraged to attend, contact Ann ann.d.adams@comcast.net, for access # if you would like to attend.

Volunteer

Submitted by Rex Myers

Smile for the camera.

You think it's hard getting family and friends to smile for the camera – Sevilleta has a volunteer who hopes elk, deer, oryx, and all the little critters spread across the refuge smile when they are on camera. Kim maintains more than a dozen cameras at wells and drinkers that provide water to animals in our arid environment. A trail camera takes a picture when there is motion in front of it – day or night. Kim makes sure batteries are charged, lenses are clean, memory cards are replaced when full, and itchy animals haven't rubbed the supporting post into the ground. If you follow Amigos' Facebook page, and have enjoyed animal photographs over time, those come from well and drinker cameras. Thank you, Kim.



Kim At Work



Front of Camera

See Page 5 for another fantastic photo by Kim

Visitor Center Happenings

Submitted by Penny Lommen

I Pledge Allegiance.....

About the only benefit to this virus thing is having LOTS of time to do things around the house. I decided to clean out closets, drawers and cabinets. I'm doing it very slowly though, don't want to wear myself out!

I started with the cabinet in my office/library that held a lot of pictures. For several years I have just tossed things in there meaning to organize things later. Well, later is now. It took twenty minutes to pull everything out but three days to put it all back!

One of the interesting things that I found in that mess was a packet of pictures that had been taken at Sevilleta. Remember cameras that used film, negatives, and envelopes from the processor? There they were.

My husband Jim and I had come to Socorro in late December of 2003. We were thinking about moving here from Denver and wanted to see what the area was like in the winter months. On our way home we decided to stop at Sevilleta and see what this refuge was all about. When we pulled in and parked we were surprised to see a group of Boy Scouts in uniform milling around the front of the Visitor Center. When we asked what was going on we were told that they were getting ready to dedicate the new flag pole in front of the center. Jim had his camera in the car so he took pictures of the event.

The flag pole had been a project for one of the scouts who was in the process of obtaining his Eagle Scout badge. One of the requirements for this badge is to plan, develop and carry out a service project which is useful to your church, school or community. Dennis Pritchard who was the Acting Refuge Manager at that time gave a speech explaining the project and then turned it over to the scouts. The honor guard approached the flagpole and hoisted the flag to the top. I have to tell you that it was very moving to watch these young men.

When I found these pictures I contacted Dennis to see what he remembered about the project. He remembered that the pole had been constructed so it would sway during a hard wind and not snap off. He also contacted the Boy Scout Council in Albuquerque in order to find out more about the troop. Troop 335 was affiliated with the Mormon Church in Los Lunas. I have tried several different phone numbers listed for the church but none are current. The very tall young man on the right in the picture with Dennis is the scout who originated the project. If anyone recognizes these young men or knows any more about the project, please let me know.





The photo is of Desert bighorn sheep on the west side of the refuge - seen while fixing fence
photo credit Kim Pravda

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>

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