

Sevillita National Wildlife Refuge

Project Leaders: Larry Benson, 505-821-7999, LawRBenson@aol.com, and Jon Blakey, 734-255-5251, jblakey102@gmail.com.

Come help build a permanent naturalistic drinker for thirsty wildlife in the hilly eastern part of the vast Sevillita Wildlife Refuge. In addition to wetlands along the Rio Grande, the Refuge's 230,000 acres include four different biomes—Chihuahuan desert, Great Plains short grassland prairie, pinon juniper woodland, and Colorado Plateau shrub steppe—providing habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. The animals needing this new drinker range from bears (who have damaged artificial drinkers) to bats (who can drink only while flying over an area of open water). To construct the new drinker, we'll line a shallow 12 by 18-foot depression with landscaping fabric and cover the surface with rocks embedded in concrete. The large surface and gently sloped edges of this virtual pond will accommodate numerous reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Preparations: Volunteers should wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy boots or work shoes (not soft shoes), work gloves, hat, sunglasses, and bring a day pack with sunscreen, plenty of water, snacks, and lunch. It's likely to be hot and sunny, but if rain is in the forecast, pack a poncho or waterproof jacket. No toilet facilities will be available, so you may also want to bring sanitizer and tissue. Additional guidance is available at <http://nmvfo.org/volunteer/volunteer-faq>. Register for the project by sending an email to the project leaders as soon as possible but no later than May 3. Please indicate if you'd like to offer or obtain a ride, and they will try to coordinate ride sharing.

Directions: We will meet at the far northeastern corner of the refuge. As shown in the accompanying map, take I-25 south from Albuquerque about 50 miles to US Highway 60 (Exit 169) and drive east approximately 16 miles (where the road curves south into the Los Pinos Mountains). Look on your left for a faded blue elephant statue in front of the closed Blue Springs Cafe. In about 100 more yards, turn right onto a dirt road (where a green NMVFO sign should be visible) and park just past the gate. (To locate on Google Maps, enter 34°25'16.6"N 106°31'03.6"W.) Plan to arrive no later than 8:30 AM. We'll then carpool in high clearance vehicles to the work site, about 6 miles to the south.

