Information on Research at
Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Introduction

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve encourages scientific research by academic, agency, and independent research scientists.

Priority for a research permit is given to research proposals that focus on those resources that are most pertinent to the Great Sand Dunes system: hydrology, geology, archaeology (historic and prehistoric), and biological elements that are endemic to Great Sand Dunes, or elements whose natural histories are strongly influenced by the sand dunes system.

Qualified scientists are invited to conduct independent studies in their special areas of expertise in the national parks when the work promises to yield information that is useful to park management. NPS policy discourages studies that are not likely to produce results having some intrinsic value for preserving or managing park resources.

Information Specific to Social Scientists. Should you plan to conduct surveys at Great Sand Dunes National Park, you must obtain a Research Permit, as well. You may also need to obtain clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Instructions and information detailing OMB clearance may be found at the **NPS Social Science Section** of the NPS Natural Resource Stewardship and Science webpage.

How to Obtain a Research and Collection Permit for Great Sand Dunes National Park

To submit an application for a research permit, go to the **NPS Research Permit and Reporting System** website. The application form may be filled out and submitted directly from the website.

Expect that it may take **at least 90 calendar days** to process an application for a research permit (see following section for details).

In addition to the application for a research permit, a research proposal or study plan is required. Proposals may be attached electronically during the application process, or may be sent directly to park staff either electronically or via regular mail. Contact information follows.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the instruction set and general guidelines posted on the website prior to completing the Application Form (see **Application FAQs** and **Permit FAQs**).

Processing of Permit Applications. The 90-day lead-time is sometimes necessary because processing the application involves numerous steps. These include various levels of review and checks for compliance with NEPA, park regulations, compatibility with wilderness management guidelines, etc. Additional review may be sought depending upon the scope and complexity of the proposal. Applicants may be contacted by park staff and requested to provide additional information or clarification about the proposed work. A special permit must be obtained from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by investigators planning to handle or otherwise disturb any species listed under the Endangered Species Act . Upon completion of these reviews, PI's will be notified via e-mail or telephone about the status of their permit. Persons conducting multi-year projects may request a permit valid

for up to 5 years. Researchers will be mailed two copies of the permit. The PI should sign both and mail one back to the park. The other signed original must be carried by the PI or field team leader at all times while in the field in the park.

Restrictions and Guidelines for Researchers

No Pets. Please note that pets are not allowed to accompany researchers. There is currently no kenneling facility in or near the park. Kenneling or other pet-sitting arrangements must be made prior to your arrival to the park. Pets may not be left unattended at Park housing or a Park camping site during your stay, may not be left with Park staff, nor may they accompany you in the field.

Equipment. Researchers should possess all necessary equipment to carry out their activities, including 4WD vehicles, maps, tools, guides, identification keys, and other related supplies. While the park may have some supplies or equipment for loan, we are not obligated to do so.

Collection of Specimens. Researchers who plan to collect and retain specimens are required to contact the park's museum curator to discuss arrangements for cataloguing, curating, and housing of specimens prior to commencement of their project. Funding and time for curating and cataloguing of specimens, including the required catalogue data entry into the Department of the Interior's Interior Collection Management System (DOI ICMS) database, must be programmed into the project plan. Any specimens retained remain under the management of the National Park Service, but may be placed on loan to another institution or repository (does not apply for archaeological artifacts; see next paragraph). Please contact the park's museum curator for more detailed information. Contact information follows.

Collection of Archaeological Artifacts. All archaeological artifacts retained during an archaeological survey or research project, are, as previously described, to be curated and catalogued according to NPS guidelines. However, retention of artifacts at repositories other than a NPS unit is prohibited. Please contact the park's cultural resource specialist for further information.

Reporting Requirements. All reports, publications, and other derived data products resulting from the study shall be sent to park staff either digitally (e-mail, FTP, disk, other) or through standard mail (hard copies) at the end of the project. Additionally, researchers will be asked at the end of the calendar year to submit an "Investigator's Annual Report" to the NPS Research, Permit, and Reporting System.

Camping. There are a number of options:

a. Currently, the Resource Management building has a tent pad available for researchers, and can accommodate two 2- or 3-person tents. It is frequently occupied during the summer months, and so is subject to availability. This tent pad is situated next the Resource Management building and will allow researchers access to bathroom, shower, and cooking facilities.

   Because the Resource Management Building holds office space for Great Sand Dunes staff members, it is incumbent upon the users of this tent site to clean up during and after their stay, and to adhere to guidelines that are posted in the kitchen and bathroom.

b. The park has one volunteer campsite that can accommodate up to 15 persons, and three vehicles (**no RVs**). It is free of charge for researchers. However, it is in high demand, and is often occupied during the field season. Please provide us with the specific dates of your stay(s) in the park so that we may check availability of the campsite for you, and reserve it if it is available.

c. If the volunteer campsite is not available, we may, depending on availability, be able to hold a campsite for you in the first loop of the campground. These sites can accommodate up to 6 people and 2 vehicles per site. RVs may be accommodated in a limited number of sites.

d. You may also occupy a backcountry site along the Medano Pass Primitive Road corridor, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis. This area may only be accessed on foot, horse or by a high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle. Please see the following webpage for further information on this area: http://www.nps.gov/grsa/medano-pass-road.htm

   Park staff is unable to reserve a backcountry campsite for your stay.

e. If all campsites listed above are occupied, please see the following webpage for other camping or lodging opportunities: http://www.nps.gov/grsa/planyourvisit/lodging.htm

   Park staff is unable to make arrangements for campsites outside of the park's boundaries.

Lodging. Depending on availability, the park may provide housing (for a fee) for researchers. Please call well in advance of the commencement of the field work to determine whether or not we have available housing, and what the costs to the research project may be.

Fee Waivers. Investigators engaged in approved research projects at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve are entitled to a fee waiver for entry into the park. A fee waiver form will be provided to you and each of your crew members at the commencement of your project. The fee waiver form should be presented to the fee station staff when entering the park, or to any park staff member who may inquire about your activity.

This fee waiver does not apply to relatives or acquaintances of researchers who are not directly involved in the project.

To obtain a fee waiver, PI's or field team leaders should provide a list of names of all persons in their crews along with license number(s) and a description of the vehicle(s). This must be submitted to our office in advance of arrival.

Contact Information

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