

NEW MEXICO STATE LAND OFFICE
LUERA MOUNTAINS BACKPACKING PROGRAM –
BACKPACKING PERMIT POLICY

Purpose

The overall goal of the Luera Mountains Backpacking Program (Program) is to provide an alternative dispersed camping option on New Mexico State Trust Land that allows hunters overnight backcountry access to an area rich in wildlife and natural beauty. This Luera Mountains Backpacking Policy (Policy) describes the New Mexico State Land Office policy regarding the stipulations, issuance, and management of Luera Mountains Backpacking Permits (Permit) for the 2023-2024 hunting season. Only holders of a NMDGF license for hunting within GMU 16E are eligible to apply for a Backpacking Permit.

Background

The New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO) and New Mexico Game Commission signed an easement agreement that provides access to 8.8 million acres of State Trust Land for hunters and anglers who hold a valid New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) license. The agreement authorizes backpacking in specific areas designated by the Commissioner.

The NMSLO developed this Program to allow, manage, and evaluate backpacking under the easement on designated State Trust Land in the Luera Mountains (GMU 16E; Catron County). The Program reflects recommendations received from NMSLO working groups comprised of sportspeople, agriculture lessees, and NMDGF.

Definitions

A Luera Mountains Backpacking Permit is an instrument issued under the Luera Mountains Backpacking Program that allows for temporary backpacking on New Mexico State Trust Lands in specified areas.

Applicability

This policy only applies to holders of a valid NMDGF hunting license between August 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 for the 2023-2024 season, during the dates for which their license is valid, inclusive of the 14-day advanced scouting period.

Policy

Backpacking Permits are required for all licensed hunters to backpack in the permitted area. Applications for Backpacking Permits will be diligently reviewed by the NMSLO.

A Backpacking Permit is **NOT** needed to camp in the existing Luera camping area on State Trust Land and identified under the easement. This camping area will remain open in 2023-2024 per the terms of the easement and managed as it has been in recent years. For more information about this camping area, go to <https://bit.ly/SLOHuntMap>.

The following describes the requirements for issuance of Backpacking Permits and the responsibilities of Permit holders:

- A. Backpacking Permit Applications may be downloaded from the NMSLO website or obtained by calling 505-827-5729.
- B. Completed Backpacking Permit Applications may be returned to the email address provided on the application or mailed to the New Mexico State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. If applying via email, please submit application at least ten calendar days in advance of period of use. If applying via U.S. mail, please allow seventeen calendar days.
- C. Only holders of a NMDGF license for hunting within GMU 16E are eligible to apply for a Backpacking Permit.
- D. The NMSLO will issue 30 Backpacking Permits for the Luera Mountains Program on a first-come, first-served basis.
- E. There is no application fee for a Backpacking Permit issued under the Program.
- F. Backpacking Permits are valid for 14 consecutive days within the time period of August 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 corresponding with the dates for which their NMDGF hunting license is valid. The 14-day period includes any advanced scouting period. Backpacking Permits state the dates during which the Permit is valid.
- G. Backpacking Permits are only valid for use on State Trust Land within the delineated boundary on the Backpacking map included with the Permit and as shown on the Luera Mountains Backpacking map on the State Land Office website, and attached to this Policy. Backpacking Permittees are responsible for knowing their location and not trespassing on private property. Do not cut fences or deface or remove signs. Please close all gates passed through, regardless if they were open upon arrival.
- H. Backpacking Permit holders must carry a paper or electronic copy of the Backpacking Permit at all times and present their Backpacking Permit upon request to NMDGF staff, NMSLO staff, and/or a NMSLO agricultural lessee (NMSLO agricultural lessees are responsible for preventing trespass on the State Trust Lands they lease). Permit holders also must display a visible copy of the Backpacking Permit on the dashboard or windshield of their vehicle. Vehicles without the Permit will be considered to be parked overnight illegally on State Trust Land.
- I. A list of Backpacking Permit holders that includes email and cell phone contact info will be provided on a weekly basis to NMDGF staff and any relevant NMSLO agriculture lessees who lease State Trust Land included in this Program. Upon approval of their Permit, Backpacking Permit holders will be provided with contact info for the abovementioned NMSLO agricultural lessees, along with guidelines that include helpful tips, dos, and don'ts to facilitate awareness and any communication that may need to occur between the multiple users of State Trust Land. Please help foster good relations between sportspeople and NMSLO lessees by following the rules and guidelines.
- J. Backpacking Permit holders must park within a two-car-width along established roads located on State Trust Land located on the Luera Mountains Backpacking map.

- K. Backpacking Permit holders must set up camp at least a quarter-mile away from their vehicle and a quarter-mile off of an established road as shown on the Luera Mountains Backpacking map.
- L. Backpacking Permit holders shall not camp within 200 feet of wetlands, including intermittent streams, and shall not camp within 300 feet of historical structures, archaeological resources, or ranching structures, including corrals and stock tanks.
- M. Backpacking Permit holders may take up to three (3) guests with them for the purpose of assisting with their hunt.
- N. Backpacking Permit holders taking pack animals into the Backpacking Area must park pack animal trailers at the southern entrance to the Luera Mountains Road, off Highway 163, as shown on the Backpacking Map.
- O. Backpacking Permit holders must dispose of waste properly — Leave No Trace. For more information on Leave No Trace visit, <https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>.
 - 1. Pack It In, Pack It Out: remove all trash and garbage.
 - 2. Properly dispose of human waste:
 - a. Find a spot at least 300 feet from a water source;
 - b. Dig a hole 6 to 8 inches deep and bury human waste; and
 - c. Remove used toilet paper from State Trust Land.
- P. Campfire Policy:
 - 1. Campfires are prohibited except as currently permitted by the New Mexico State Forester. Campfires are only permitted in designated camping areas or dispersed camping areas with a current and valid NM hunting license. The Commissioner reserves the right to impose restrictions more limiting, as warranted, than those from the State Forester. It is the hunter's responsibility to obtain current information and to comply with any restrictions in place. Information is available by accessing <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/>, <http://www.nmfireinfo.com/fire-restrictions/> or by calling the Fire Restrictions Hotline at 1-877-864-6985. Should the Commissioner impose additional restrictions, they will be posted online at www.nmstatelands.org.
 - 2. If campfire restrictions are not in place, campers must still take care to prevent forest fires. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. never leaving a campfire or other heat source unattended and ensuring campfires are dead out and cold to the touch before leaving the area. Use the “drown, stir and feel” method: drown the fire with water, then stir around the fire area with your shovel to wet any remaining embers and ash;
 - b. having a shovel and water available;
 - c. maintaining a distance of five feet cleared to bare soil and free of any overhead flammable materials in all directions around the campfire; and

- d. keeping your campfire small.
3. The use of a propane fire pit or fire pan or other device with a spark arrestor is encouraged. Campers may pack in fire wood or may use downed wood but may not cut standing trees, even if those trees are dead. If campers observe a fire that has spread out of control, whether or not they started that fire, they must immediately call 911 and then report the fire to the NMSLO
- Q. Backpacking Permit holders must comply with the terms and conditions of:
1. their NMDGF license;
 2. the NMDGF 2023-2024 New Mexico Hunting Rules & Info publication, including the pages regarding State Trust Land, found at: <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/home/publications>;
 3. the applicable prohibited activities, found at: <https://www.nmstatelands.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Prohibited-Activities-updated-12-13-13.pdf>; and
 4. the terms and conditions on the Backpacking Permit application, along with any additional terms and conditions the Commissioner may require related to the management of State Trust Land.
- R. Backpacking Permit holders are required to adhere to all applicable laws and regulations, including but not limited to those dealing with plant and animal species and cultural resources.
- S. A Backpacking Permit does not grant access to private lands nor grant a right to backpack on State Trust Lands other than those shown on the Luera Mountains Backpacking Map attached to the Backpacking Permit and to this Policy.
- T. Backpacking Permit holders must adhere to NMSLO rules regarding motorized traffic and only operate motorized vehicles, including Off Road Vehicles, on established roads.
- U. Regarding issues related to access under the easement, please call the NMSLO District Resource Manager at 505-290-1281 or the local NMDGF Conservation Officer at 505-350-5507. Another way to report issues is to use NMSLO's Multiple-Use Incident Reporting Form that can be downloaded from our website at <https://bit.ly/MUIRform>.
- V. Backpacking Permit holders agree to complete and return a Program evaluation survey to NMSLO. We need and value Permit holders' input. Permit holders who do not comply may be ineligible for future Backpacking Camping Permits.
- W. The Backpacking Program will only be continued in future seasons if it remains successful. Please help by leaving no trace and respecting private property.