

# GAIN Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is GAIN?**

**G**aining **A**ccess **I**nto **N**ature (GAIN) is a program offered by the Department of Game and Fish. Many Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are being opened to additional wildlife associated recreation activities beyond traditional uses of hunting and fishing. Depending on the WMA, wildlife viewing and wildlife photography opportunities are accessible by hiking, bicycling, skiing, snowshoeing, and horseback. These activities are designed to offer new incentives to recreate and to draw attention to the conservation of public trust wildlife and the habitats they depend on.

## **Which Wildlife Management Areas are open to GAIN activities?**

Open areas include: Pecos River Complex (Bert Clancy, Mora, Terrero, and Jamie Koch areas), Charette Lakes, Colin Neblett, Elliott Barker, McAllister Lake, Rio de los Pinos, Urraca, Wagon Mound, Bluebird Mesa, Edward Sargent, Jackson Lake, Ladd S. Gordon Waterfowl Complex (Bernardo and La Joya), Rio Chama, Water Canyon, William Humphries, Bear Canyon, Bill Evans, Heart Bar, Lake Roberts, Mimbres, Red Rock, Socorro-Escondida, Brantley, Lesser Prairie Chicken Areas, Seven Rivers, William Huey, and the Sandhills Prairie Conservation Area.

## **Who needs a GAIN Permit?**

Anyone 18 years or older must purchase a Permit and a Habitat Management and Access Validation (HMAV) to access one of the above WMAs for a GAIN activity. Children younger than 18 do NOT need a Permit. Examples: A family of 4, with 2 children younger than 18, only need 2 GAIN Permits with HMAVs. However, a family of 4, with 2 children older than 18, need 4 GAIN Permits with HMAVs.

## **If I am hunting or fishing on a WMA, do I need a GAIN Permit?**

No. A current New Mexico hunting or fishing license with a HMAV allows holders to hunt or fish on WMAs during any season for which they are legally licensed.

## **If I have a current hunting or fishing license with a HMAV, can I hike, bicycle, ski, snowshoe or horseback ride on a WMA (if allowed) without purchasing a GAIN Permit?**

No. Hunting licenses are for hunting; fishing licenses are for fishing and GAIN permits are for GAIN activities permitted on each WMA. You must purchase a GAIN permit to hike, bicycle etc.

The only exception to this is Colin Neblett where, as per a JPA with State Parks, a person is good to go for any allowable GAIN activity with a GAIN permit or a park permit or a hunting or fishing license, but only for the timeframe indicated on the hunting or fishing license. For example: You may participate in GAIN activities during the 5 days you have an elk hunting license on the Colin Neblett. You may also participate in GAIN activities for the several months fishing is permitted if you have a fishing license. Again, this is allowed only because there is a State park at that particular area.

**Do I need a GAIN Permit and HMAV to access U.S. Forest Service or BLM lands?**

No. However, a HMAV is required to hunt, fish, or trap on U.S. Forest service or BLM lands.

**Where can I purchase a GAIN Permit and/or HMAV?**

From any Department office, license vendor, or through the Department's online license system.

**How much are the fees?**

Each person 18 years or older, must purchase a GAIN Permit and a HMAV to participate in any GAIN activity. Permits available include:

- An **Annual** GAIN Permit is \$15 + HMAV \$4 = \$19.
- A **Temporary** (5 consecutive days) GAIN Permit is \$4 + HMAV \$4 = \$8.
- A \$1 vendor fee may be charged if you purchase it from a license vendor.
- If you purchase it online, a \$4.95 vendor fee will be charged.
- Both types are valid statewide.

**Are there discounted GAIN Permits for seniors, mobility impaired, or veterans?**

No.

**Do I need another HMAV if I purchased one with my hunting or fishing license?**

No. Only one HMAV must be purchased each year.

**What are "Special Opportunity GAIN Permits"?**

These special GAIN Permits allow participants to become involved in unique, Department-sponsored wildlife tours, bighorn sheep and turkey trapping and relocation efforts, prairie chicken and electro-fishing surveys, etc. Special Opportunity GAIN Permits are available through a drawing. Visit the Department's website for more information and applications.

### **What is a “Site-based Shelter Use Permit”?**

These permits are available for the Jamie Koch Wildlife Area Community Shelter north of Pecos, NM. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis for up to 4 consecutive days. The cost is \$25/day. For reservations, contact the Santa Fe office at (505) 476-8101. Individuals using the Jamie Koch Area Community Shelter do NOT need a GAIN Permit or HMAV when covered by a Site-based Shelter Use Permit.

### **Where are GAIN Permits Available?**

Individual GAIN Permits and HMAVs are available from any Department office or license vendor. Other GAIN Permits are available from the Department’s office in Santa Fe.

### **When are GAIN Permits valid?**

The Annual Permit is valid from April 1-March 31. The Temporary Permit is valid for 5 consecutive days. Closures may occur during certain times of year.

### **What is a “Commercial Use Permit”?**

A Commercial Use Permit is a permit that allows a person or business to conduct any activity on a WMA for pay or compensation. The exception is a hunting activity conducted by a Department registered outfitter or guide.

### **Who needs a “Commercial Use Permit”?**

Any person or business conducting any activity for pay or compensation on a WMA needs a Commercial Use Permit. They may include fishing guides, wildlife viewing guides, horseback riding outfitters, etc. Anyone using the services of one of these guides ALSO must have a GAIN Permit and HMAV. Fisherman contracting the services of a guide on one of the WMAs, must only have a current fishing license with a HMAV. However, the fishing guide must have a Commercial Use Permit.

### **Do I need a guide to take part in a GAIN activity?**

No.

### **Where can I find a list of the hunts taking place on specific WMAs?**

Visit the Department’s Web site at [www.wildlife.state.nm.us/](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/), or call: (505) 476-8000, or obtain a copy of a Big Game Hunting and Trapping or Small Game and Waterfowl Hunting rules and information booklet available at any Department office or license vendor.

### **What are LEGAL activities on a GAIN WMA?**

Any person, holding a valid GAIN permit and HMAV may, unless specifically prohibited:

- View and/or photograph wildlife.
- Hike, horseback ride, snowshoe, ski, or bicycle if specifically allowed at that WMA.
- Camp (if the WMA is open to camping) for no more than 9 consecutive days. Licensed hunters and their guests may camp during their hunt.
- Have an open fire only if it is contained in a metal fireplace or charcoal grill.

### **What are activities are ILLEGAL on a GAIN WMA?**

It is illegal for a person to:

- Operate any motorized vehicle or bicycle off established roads or on closed roads within a WMA.
- Deface or remove any rocks, minerals, plants, firewood or man-made features from a WMA.
- Excavate, injure, destroy, or remove any cultural resources or artifacts from a WMA.
- Violate any of the provisions of signs posted on WMAs.
- Use or possess any hay or feed that is not certified "weed free".

### **What specific activities are allowed on each WMA listed above?**

See the list of Specifically Allowed Activities on the Department's website [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us).

### **Where can I get More Information?**

Visit the Department's Web site at [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us) or call: (505) 476-8000.