



2017 Researcher Information Packet

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Section I: Introduction

Welcome!

The following information outlines the requirements for obtaining new biological and geological research permits for work on San Salvador Island, as well as for keeping current research projects and permits up-to-date and active. (Note: Archaeology permits are subject to a separate application procedure. Contact the GRC Research Coordinator for more information.)

Please understand that the Gerace Research Centre is constantly working to streamline the research permit application processes, as well as smoothly incorporate ever-changing government regulations. **Each year there are slight procedural changes, so please read the following information carefully!** For any questions regarding the permitting process, do not hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator (researchGRC@gmail.com).

Also note, requests for GRC housing during your research stay must be submitted separately, directly to our scheduling staff (rhannagrc@gmail.com). Scheduling at least 4-6 months in advance is recommended, especially during our busy times (January, March, May, June). Housing forms and visitation procedures are available on the GRC website at: <http://geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING SPECIMEN EXPORT FOR 2017!!

If you are planning to export any samples or specimens as part of your research (this includes any and all live/dead organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks, and/or water), you **MUST** provide a list including a concise description and numerical estimate of the specimens you intend to remove from The Bahamas **in the text box at the bottom of page 1 on the BEST form**. These instructions are not specifically stated on the BEST form itself, but must be followed in order to obtain your BEST Research Permit and your Ministry of Agriculture Export Permit with your desired export permissions. Obtaining additional or corrected export permissions after your permits have been issued is not possible, so be sure that your requests are accurate before submitting your paperwork.

Section II: General Research Regulations and Procedures

It is the legal policy of the Bahamian Government that all scientific studies and collecting require a research permit issued by the Bahamas Environment, Science, & Technology (BEST) Commission. The Gerace Research Centre (GRC) has the authority to oversee and facilitate all such endeavors on San Salvador Island.

For purposes of keeping the government and other scientists informed, and to prevent any possible conflicts of interest, researchers working out of the GRC must complete a research permit application. Specific procedures for this application are outlined in Sections IV and V of this document for new and renewal permits, respectively.

The GRC Research Coordinator and Research Committee will review all applications for new research. The applicant will be informed of any comments or concerns raised by the Research Committee. Upon the committee's approval, the GRC will forward the paperwork to the BEST Commission for official government permitting. For projects requiring additional export permission, once the BEST Permit has been issued, the Research Coordinator will request the Export Permit from the Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture.

The GRC Research Coordinator will review all applications for research project renewals, and then forward the paperwork on to the BEST Commission for official government permitting. If the direction of your research changes drastically, your proposal may undergo additional review by the Research Committee. For projects requiring additional export permission, once the BEST Permit has been issued, the Research Coordinator will request the Export Permit from the Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture.

Research topics should be succinctly defined so they do not overlap with projects already being undertaken by others. Please include enough detail to give a clear picture of your research objectives and methods. Indicate why your research is important and how your work will further knowledge in this area. You must show **familiarity with the literature on the subject** and with related work, if any, that has been done or is currently being done on San Salvador which may have a bearing on the proposed research.

In the event one scientist feels another's research is incorrect due to approach, assumptions, etc., or if he/she has a new approach to an existing project, the two scientists should discuss the matter personally in an attempt to collaborate in joint research or to resolve the problem. However, if such discussions develop into a controversial exchange, then the Research Committee will consider a separate proposal from the challenging scientist.

The GRC's policy is that any publication resulting from any research done while in residence at the Research Centre must acknowledge the GRC. The accepted form of citation is:

"I (We) am (are) indebted to The Gerace Research Centre and its staff on San Salvador Island, The Bahamas for logistical (and financial) support for this research."

The GRC's philosophy includes preservation of specimens and conservation of the environment of San Salvador. To prevent the useless killing of our species, the collecting of **live specimens is prohibited** unless express permission has been obtained through your BEST permit. The one exception is the collection of specimens to be put in the Research Centre's wet lab for study. These must be returned to their natural habitat upon completion of the project.

Section III: Special Information Regarding Import and Export

Like every country, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has strict regulations in place regarding materials that enter and leave its borders. There are two circumstances under which many of our researchers find themselves dealing with these regulations: equipment import and specimen export.

Equipment Import:

Under Bahamian law, any and all research equipment and materials brought into the country are subject to import/duty taxes, unless a duty-free exemption has been sought and approved. There is a procedure in place, via the BEST Permit Application, for obtaining the appropriate duty-free exemption (see Sections IV and V for specific import instructions when filling out new and renewal permits, respectively). When this procedure is followed, your equipment is listed on your BEST permit as approved for duty-free exemption. Equipment not declared on your application will not receive an exemption on your BEST permit and will be subject to **import taxes from Bahamian Customs** upon your arrival in the country.

Specimen Export:

The Bahamian Government requires an Export Permit issued by the Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture for any and all scientific specimens being removed from the country. This Export Permit is in addition to the BEST Research Permit and is required for any and all natural materials you intended to transport out of The Bahamas in connection with your research, **including but not limited to live organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks, and water.**

Please consider carefully if export is an absolute necessity for your research. If so, you must provide description and numerical estimate of your intended specimens (see Sections IV and V for specific export instructions when filling out new and renewal permits, respectively). Export Permits will NOT be issued by the Ministry of Agriculture without this information.

The BEST Permit and Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture Export Permit apply to entry/exit and export from The Bahamas **ONLY**. Some specimens may require additional permitting for importation into the United States (or other countries). Such permits are beyond the scope and jurisdiction of the GRC's duties. It is the researcher's sole responsibility to determine whether their specimens require U.S. import permits and to obtain the necessary documentation. For more information, visit these websites:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/index.shtml)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (<http://www.fws.gov/permits/overview/overview.html>)

Section IV: Obtaining New Research Permits

If you intend to apply for a new research permit, please read the following information carefully and pay very close attention to the “Special Instructions” provided for filling out the BEST application. (If you are looking for information regarding permit renewals, please see Section V.)

As dictated by the Bahamian government, the GRC research season follows the calendar year. You may not apply for research dates beyond the current calendar year (2017), and permits for ongoing projects must be renewed yearly.

For new research projects, it is **imperative** that you submit the necessary paperwork at least 4 months in advance of your planned arrival on San Salvador Island, so that it can be processed through the GRC Research Committee, the Bahamas Environment, Science, & Technology (BEST) Commission in Nassau, and the Bahamian Ministry of Agriculture (if necessary for specimen export). If adequate time is not allowed, the GRC will not initiate the permitting process and your research project will not be approved.

All the necessary forms are available on the GRC website at:
<http://geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html>

All forms must be submitted electronically to the GRC Research Coordinator (researchGRC@gmail.com). Please note the “submit form” button does not work. Please print the document as a pdf and email it to the Research Coordinator. **DO NOT** send any materials directly to the BEST Commission and **DO NOT** send any printed materials to the GRC via the postal service or fax.

Part A: Required Documentation

1. BEST Commission Research Permit Application

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

PAGE 1

- Be precise as possible regarding the dates you intend to carry out your research. If specific dates are not yet known, you may list a general range, such as “June-July and Oct-Nov 2014”.
- **Export** – In the text box at the bottom of the page, provide description and numerical estimate of the specimens you intend to remove from the Bahamas. This includes any and all live/dead organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks, and/or water.

PAGE 2

- Refer to the guidelines in Part B (below) when entering your “Project Description”.

- If your project includes research locations on other Bahamian islands, include them in conjunction with your San Salvador sites (i.e. you do not need to fill out an additional application for other islands).
- **Import** - Be sure to list any and all research equipment you will be bringing to and from the Bahamas in the appropriate table. If no equipment is listed, no duty-free exemption will be granted.

PAGE 3

- List any collaborators who will be traveling to the Bahamas in conjunction with your project. Additional collaborators **cannot** be added once a permit has been issued for a given year. You must list your students on this page **only if** they will be traveling to the GRC alone to work on the project without your direct supervision.

PAGE 4

- Submit a signed and scanned copy of the Signature Page as an additional email attachment. An electronic signature is also appropriate. **DO NOT** fax the Signature Page to the GRC.

2. Curriculum Vitae (CVs)

- Provide an updated CV for yourself and any collaborators/students you have listed on page 3 of the BEST application.

Part B: Writing a Successful Proposal

Your proposal for new research (as included in the 'Project Description' section of the BEST form) should broadly cover three main points:

- 1) Explanation of proposed research (**what** will be done)
- 2) Methods and techniques to be employed (**how** it will be done)
- 3) Novelty/importance of the study (**why** it should be done)

Further, in order to ensure timely approval by the GRC Research Committee, be sure your proposal also addresses the following specific questions:

- How does your proposed research relate to prior or pre-existing GRC projects? Is there any potential for overlap or conflict with other ongoing GRC projects?
- Please include a few critical citations that relate to the research.

- What is your level of familiarity with San Salvador and the GRC? Have you visited before, and if so in what capacity? What special logistical requirements do you anticipate while working in this remote, island setting?
- Will you be exporting specimens as part of your project? If so, why is this a necessary component of your work? How will you transport these specimens? What Bahamian export and American (or other) import requirements will you need to meet?
- Where will your field sites be on San Salvador? What analyses will be performed at the GRC, and what analyses will take place back at your home institution or elsewhere?
- Will your project involve any field assistants (students, colleagues, advisors, etc)? If so, what will their role be?

Section V: Renewing Active Research Permits

When renewing a currently active research permit, please read the following information carefully and pay very close attention to the “Special Instructions” provided for filling out the BEST application. (If you are looking for information regarding new permit applications, please see Section IV.)

As dictated by the Bahamian government, the GRC research season now follows the calendar year. You may not apply for research dates beyond the upcoming calendar year (2017).

If you have multiple active research projects that you wish to renew, a separate set of forms must be submitted for each project renewal. Do NOT combine projects onto one set of forms.

The deadline for submitting your renewal application is November 15th.

All the necessary forms are available on the GRC website at:
<http://geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html>

All forms must be submitted electronically to the GRC Research Coordinator (researchGRC@gmail.com). DO NOT send any materials directly to the BEST Commission and DO NOT send any printed materials to the GRC via the postal service or fax.

The following documents are required for permit renewal:

1. BEST Commission Research Permit Application

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

PAGE 1

- Be precise as possible regarding the dates you intend to carry out your research. If specific dates are not yet known, you may list a general range, such as “June-July and Oct-Nov 2014”.
- **Export** – In the text box at the bottom of the page, provide description and numerical estimate of the specimens you intend to remove from the Bahamas. This includes any and all live/dead organisms, plant/animal tissue, extracted DNA, sediment, sand, soil, shell material, microbes, rocks, and/or water.

PAGE 2

- Be sure to update your “Project Description” with any new directions that your research will be taking.
- If your project is expanding to locations on other Bahamian islands, include them in conjunction with your San Salvador sites (i.e. you do not need to fill out an additional application for other islands).

- **Import** - Be sure to list any and all research equipment you will be bringing to and from the Bahamas in the appropriate table. If no equipment is listed, no duty-free exemption will be granted.

PAGE 3

- List any collaborators who will be traveling to the Bahamas in conjunction with your project. It is acceptable for collaborators to change from year to year, but additional collaborators **cannot** be added once a permit has been issued for a given year. You must list your students on this page **only if** they will be traveling to the GRC alone to work on the project without your direct supervision.

PAGE 4:

- Submit a signed and scanned copy of the Signature Page as an additional email attachment. An electronic signature is also appropriate. **DO NOT** fax the Signature Page to the GRC.

2. Curriculum Vitae (CVs)

- Provide an updated CV for yourself and any collaborators/students you have listed on page 3 of the BEST application.

3. Annual Progress Report

- See Section VI

Anyone who does not comply with these documentation requirements will not be allowed to conduct or continue their research at the GRC or in The Bahamas until such time as ALL requirements are met.

Section VI: Annual Progress Reports

In addition the application materials outlined in Sections IV and V, an Annual Report Form is required for every permit issued in a given year (regardless of whether or not the permit is intended to be renewed) .

Annual Progress Report

- This form must be submitted at the close of the research season.
DEADLINE: November 15th
- Progress Reports will be forwarded to the BEST Commission and GRC Research Committee for review.

Anyone who does not comply with these documentation requirements will not be allowed to conduct or continue their research at the GRC or in The Bahamas until such time as ALL requirements are met.

Section VII: Restricted Collection Sites on San Salvador

There are several designated areas of San Salvador and its outlying cays that are protected by the GRC from any collecting, unless express permission has been obtained through your BEST Permit. These include:

Geological Sites:

- Any of the Pleistocene reefs
- Quarry E
- Sandy Point (all of the southern end of the island from Conch Point around to the western side of the island)
- Stromatolites in Storr's Lake
- Lighthouse Cave (animals as well as speleothems)
- Conch shells embedded at Barker's Point
- Fossil Cerion
- Rhizocretions

Archaeological Sites:

- Prehistoric Indian Sites (artifacts on the surface and in the ground)
- Historic Sites (artifacts on the surface and in the ground, plus, no one should climb on buildings and no one should deface (i.e., write on or chisel) the building walls)
- Underwater Sites (shipwrecks, prehistoric Indian sites, colonial sites)

Botanical Sites:

- Rocky Blacklands east of Sandy Point
- Fern Locations
- Fresh water Marshes near Airport & Research Centre

Underwater Sites:

- Dump "reef" (it is close to the campus and can thus be utilized for long term studies by students)
- Archaeological Sites (described above)