

2019 Researcher Information Packet



Photo: Dr. Jeffrey Dick

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction**
- II. General Research Regulations and Procedures**
- III. Special Information Regarding Import and Export**
- IV. Obtaining Research Permits**
 - A. New Research Permits**
 - B. Renewing Active Permits**
 - C. Archaeological Research Permits**
- V. BEST Permit Application Special Instructions**
 - A. Required Documentation**
 - B. Writing a Successful Proposal**
- VI. Annual Progress Reports**
- VII. San Salvador National Parks**
- VIII. Other Restrictions**

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 Gerace Research Institute (GRI) Research Coordinator for more information.)

The Gerace Research Institute works constantly to streamline the research permit application processes and incorporate smoothly 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, contact the Research Coordinator (researchGRI@gmail.com).

Requests for GRI housing during your research stay must be submitted separately, directly to our scheduling staff (rhannaGRI@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 GRI website at: <http://geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html>

Important Information Regarding Specimen Export For 2019!!

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 your requests are accurate before submitting your paperwork.

Section II: General Research Regulations and Procedures

It is the legal policy of the Bahamas Government that all scientific studies and collecting require a research permit issued by the Bahamas Environment, Science & Technology (BEST) Commission and the Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC). GRI has the authority to oversee and facilitate all such endeavors on San Salvador Island.

In order to keep the Bahamas Government and other scientists informed, and to prevent any possible conflicts of interest, researchers working out of GRI must complete a research permit application. Specific procedures for this application are outlined in Sections IV, V and VI of this document for new and renewal permits.

The GRI 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, GRI 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 Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture. For projects involving archaeological research, email the Research Coordinator with your proposal before contacting AMMC.

The GRI Research Coordinator will review **all applications for research project renewals** and forward the paperwork 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 Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture.

As dictated by the Bahamas Government, the GRI research season follows the calendar year. You may not apply for research dates beyond the current calendar year (2019). Permits for ongoing projects must be renewed yearly.

Research topics should be succinctly defined so they do not overlap with projects already being undertaken by others. 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 in an attempt to collaborate in joint research or resolve the problem. However, if such discussions develop into a controversial exchange, the Research Committee will consider a separate proposal from the challenging scientist.

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

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

GRI'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 GRI's wet lab for study. These must be returned to their natural habitat upon completion of your visit.

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. Via the BEST Permit Application, you can obtain the appropriate duty-free exemption. Equipment listed on your BEST permit as approved for duty-free exemption. Equipment not declared on your application will not receive an exemption and will be subject to **import taxes by Bahamian Customs** upon your arrival in the country.

Shipping of Equipment: Under certain circumstances, a researcher may find it necessary to ship research equipment directly to San Salvador that would not otherwise fit or be allowed on an airplane. In order to do this, you must set up your own account with Seacor Island Lines (www.seacorislandlines.com). Please be aware that there are customs duties on anything brought to the island. When shipping, use **your name** as the **receiver/consignee** in San Salvador to avoid confusion with items purchased by the Institute. GRI is not responsible for anything you choose to ship.

VAT and Brokerage Fees: When shipping items to San Salvador, note that hefty VAT (Value Added Tax) and brokerage fees are placed on items even if those items are exempt from duty with your BEST permit. You are responsible for paying any fees to customs agents.

Specimen Export

The Bahamas Government requires an Export Permit issued by the Bahamas 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 whether export is an absolute necessity for your research. If so, you **must** provide description and numerical estimate of your intended specimens (see Sections 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 Bahamas 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 GRI. 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 Research Permits

A. New Research Permits

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

For new research projects, application submissions are accepted year round. However, it is **imperative** that you submit the necessary paperwork at least 4 months in advance of your planned arrival on San Salvador so that it can be processed through the GRI Research Committee, the Bahamas Environment, Science & Technology (BEST) Commission in Nassau and the Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture (if necessary for specimen export). If adequate time is not allowed, GRI will not initiate the permitting process and your research project will not be approved for that calendar year. All of the necessary forms are available on the GRI website at: <http://geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html>

All forms must be submitted electronically to the GRI Research Coordinator (researchGRI@gmail.com). Please note the “submit form” button does not work. 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 GRI via the postal service or fax.

B. Renewing Active Permits

As dictated by the Bahamas Government, the GRI research season follows the calendar year. You may not apply for research dates beyond the upcoming calendar year (2019). 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 on one set of forms.

The deadline for submitting your renewal application for the 2019 calendar year was November 10th 2018. All of the necessary forms are available on the GRI website at: www.geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html

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

C. Archaeological Research Permits

New proposals for archaeological research should be typed and emailed to the Research Coordinator (researchGRI@gmail.com) for review **before** you apply for an archaeological permit. Once accepted by GRI, researchers must contact the Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation (AMMC) **directly** for new and renewed projects to obtain their

permit and pay the associated fees. Once the AMMC approves your research, send a copy of your permit to the Research Coordinator before your arrival in San Salvador.

Section V: BEST Application Special Instructions

A. Required Documentation

1. 2019 BEST Permit Application

- PAGE 1
- Please list a general range of dates, such as “June-July and Oct-Nov 2019”. If you know your specific travel dates, you may list those. But, be aware that changing the date on your permit should something change requires an *entirely new application!*
 - **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: Writing a Successful Proposal” when entering your Project Description.
 - If your project includes research locations on other Bahamian islands, include them in conjunction with your San Salvador sites. 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. Students, including graduate students, are not allowed to conduct research at GRI without faculty supervision. Any students listed as collaborators on the BEST application must have a faculty member present at all times during their stay in San Salvador.
- 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 GRI.

2. *Curriculum Vitae (CVs)*

- Provide an updated CV for yourself and **ALL** collaborators listed on page 3 of the BEST application.

3. *Annual Progress Report (when renewing active permits only)*

- See Section VI

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 GRI Research Committee, be sure your proposal also addresses the following specific questions:

- How does your proposed research relate to prior or pre-existing GRI projects? Is there any potential for overlap or conflict with other ongoing GRI projects? Check the GRI website for more information on previous and current research projects: <http://www.geraceresearchcentre.com/research.html>
- Have you included a few critical citations that relate to the research?
- What is your level of familiarity with San Salvador and GRI? 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 (See Section VII: Restricted Collection Sites)? Feel free to attach a map with your proposed research locations.
- What analyses will be performed at GRI 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 be their role?

Section VI: Annual Progress Reports

In addition to the application materials outlined in Section 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 for the subsequent year). As Gerace Research Institute is a Bahamian institution, it is vital that all research conducted here be reported and shared with

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Progress Reports will be forwarded to the BEST Commission. The Annual Progress Report Form can be downloaded from our website at: www.geraceresearchcentre.com/packetsandforms.html

This form must be submitted at the close of the research season by **November 10, 2019** for all research conducted this year. In addition to this form, please submit any **published research articles** based off any data collected in The Bahamas.

Section VII: San Salvador National Parks

The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) has designated 5 areas as national park land: Graham's Harbour, West Coast Marine Park (Fernandez Bay through French Bay including Low Cay), Southern Great Lake, Pigeon Creek and Snow Bay, and Green's Bay (see map below). Collecting of any kind within these national parks is **forbidden without a separate permit from the BNT**. This permit is **in addition** to the BEST Commission Permit and Ministry of Agriculture Export Permit. Even if you already have a BEST permit, GRI will not allow anyone to collect from National Parks without first obtaining this separate BNT Permit.

If you plan on collecting specimens on National Park Land, follow these steps:

1. Acquire your BEST permit through GRI as usual (follow sections IV through VI).
2. Email your BEST permit (**not** your application!) to the BNT at: science@bnt.bs
3. Fill out the application form on the BNT website: <http://bnt.bs/science/research-permits/>
4. Pay the BNT research permit processing fee of \$75.

The BNT permit will be sent directly to you. Email a copy of your BNT permit to the Research Coordinator as proof that you are allowed to conduct research in the National Parks.



SAN SALVADOR NATIONAL PARKS
Bahamas National Trust

Section VIII: Other Restrictions

A. Class Projects

Students may conduct small research projects during a course without a research permit so long as it is for educational purposes and the work is not intended to be published or presented. **No export** is allowed for such projects and anything collected live must be returned to the wild upon completion. Collection from national parks and protected locations is **forbidden** with such projects. Students hold **no “ownership”** over these projects if another researcher chooses to submit a permit application for the same project.

Faculty members who believe their students' projects may lead to publishable or presentable work should apply for a research permit before the beginning of their course (See Sections IV and V).

B: Protected Locations

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

- Geological Sites:*
- Any of the Pleistocene reefs
 - Quarry E
 - Stromatolites in Storr's Lake
 - Lighthouse Cave (animals as well as speleothems)
 - Conch shells embedded at Barker's Point
 - Fossil Cerion
 - Rhizocretions
 - Dump “reef” (its proximity to campus can be utilized for long term studies)
- Archaeological Sites:*
- Prehistoric Lucayan Sites (artifacts on the surface and in the ground)
 - Historic Buildings (artifacts on the surface and in the ground)
 - No one should climb on buildings or deface walls (write or chisel)
 - Underwater Sites (shipwrecks, prehistoric Indian sites, colonial sites)
- Botanical Sites:*
- Rocky Blacklands east of Sandy Point
 - Fern Locations
 - Fresh water Marshes near Airport & Research Institute

No research may be conducted in The Bahamas without a permit. GRI will not provide accommodations to anyone conducting research without proper permits and will inform the authorities of such transgressions. Anyone who does not comply with the requirements set forth in this document will not be allowed to conduct or continue their research at GRI or in The Bahamas until such time as ALL requirements are met.