

Ca Ventana en los Valles

News of the Valles Caldera National Preserve
from the Valles Caldera Trust

Trust Holds Public Use and Access Workshops

Since the federal purchase of the lands that became the Valles Caldera National Preserve in 2000, an eager public has looked for opportunities to help the Trust plan recreation, restoration, and education programs. "It has been clear" said Board Chairman Tracy Hephner, "that the public wants to help the Trust develop the alternatives for public use and access that will become part of the NEPA process." In response to that desire, the Trust planned a series of four public meetings in August 2007 at:



Hiking on Cerro Abrigo. (Photo courtesy of Karen Kendall.)

- Jemez Springs, at the Trust offices, on July 31st.
- Pojaque, at the Cities of Gold Conference Center on August 2nd.
- Los Alamos, at the Student Center at

UNM/Los Alamos on August 14th.

• Rio Rancho, at the Hilton Garden Inn, on August 16th.

The Valles Caldera Trust oversees the Valles Caldera National Preserve, formerly the privately owned "Baca Ranch." The 89,000 acre property is located in the Jemez Mountains in northern New Mexico. It was purchased by the federal government in 2000 under the Valles Caldera Preservation Act. The property is known for its huge meadows, abundant wildlife, meandering streams, and remarkable scenery. The mission of the Trust is to create a successful model of public land management that protects and preserves the unique values of the Preserve. Toward that end, the Trust will operate the Preserve as a working ranch; strive to become financially self-sustaining; meet the varied needs of visitors; strive to use and steward the multiple resources of the Preserve; and work collaboratively with our neighbors.

The first step in the pre-NEPA planning process provided a forum to hear the public's ideas on visitor capacity at the Preserve, recreation and education programs to be offered to the public, and the types of facilities and infrastructure, such as roads, trails, and utilities, that will be needed to support visitor programs. The Trust intends to use the insights gathered in the meetings to inform future management decisions. As stated in the *Framework and Strategic Guidance for Comprehensive Management*, "Maintaining a constructive public dialogue about the goals and programs of the VCNP is a core responsibility of the Valles Caldera Trust and vital for successful management of the Preserve."

The public meetings were planned as a hands-on experience for members of the public. Scheduled to run from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., the meetings included an

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Public Access Workshops

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orientation, an open house with staffed stations, and facilitated workshop sessions. After a brief orientation, participants were asked to participate in a workshop and plan their own "ideal experience" on the Preserve. Members of the Board of Trustees and the staff were on hand to answer questions, listen to comments, and participate in the discussions. The final portion of the exercise asked the public to take on the role of Board and staff and recognize the challenge of balancing the six goals established for the Preserve by the Valles Caldera Preservation Act.

Information presented at the meetings will be posted on the Trust's website. Comments can be submitted at the meetings; through the Trust's website (www.vallescaldera.gov); by email to Marie Rodriguez (mrodriguez@vallescaldera.gov); or by letter to Valles Caldera Trust, P.O. Box 359, Jemez Springs, NM 87025. Comments should be received by September 21, 2007.

From Trust Chair, Tracy Hephner



Greetings! You will notice two significant differences in the newsletter you hold in hand. The first is that *La Ventana en los Valles* is now a publication of the Valles Caldera Trust. The second is that this issue is actually two newsletters in one. Produced under a cost-share agreement, *La Ventana* is joined by the first issue of *News from Los Amigos*, published by Los Amigos de Valles Caldera, a non-profit group established to support the Preserve. If you or your organization are interested in helping the Trust achieve the goals set forth in the Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000, you might consider adding your energy and resources through Los Amigos.

In May, the Trust received the long-awaited announcement of new members to fill Board vacancies. With the addition of these good folks, the Board is complete: Stephen Henry, Las Cruces, NM – Wildlife Management; James Range, Washington, DC – Non-Profit Conservation Organizations; Ed Tinsley, Capitan, NM – Financial Management. Also joining the Board, earlier this year, was Dan Jiron, Santa Fe, NM – Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor.

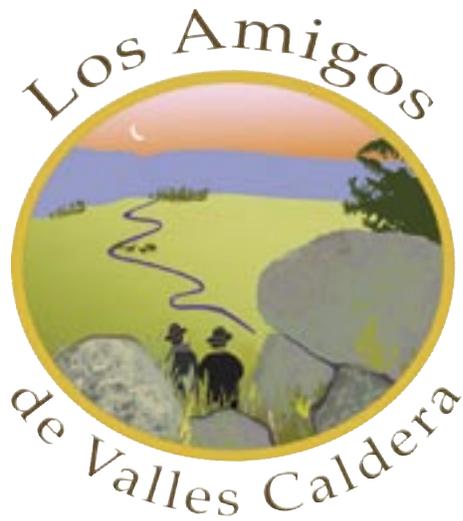
Our new members bring a wealth of experience to the Trust. Their many accomplishments and accolades can be viewed in the biographies on the Trust website. Outdoorsmen, land managers, and avid enthusiasts of outdoor recreation, they have already shown great energy for and understanding of the challenges inherent in the experimental nature of the organization.

The Board bids a sincere farewell to our members whose terms expired in January of this year, Barbara Johnson, Larry Icerman, and John Caid, and to Gilbert Zepeda, who was promoted to a new position within the Forest Service. Barbara, Larry, John, and Gilbert provided extraordinary service to the Trust under difficult times. Their contributions were significant and selfless. Please join the present Board in thanking these past members for their service to the Trust.

Adios,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tracy".

P.S. As we go to press, we have learned that Guy Glosson, a member of the team managing the cattle on the Preserve, suffered injuries in what we in the ranching industry call "a bad horse wreck." We wish him a speedy recovery.



Summer 2007

News from Los Amigos

*Supporting the Valles Caldera
National Preserve
for Present and Future Generations*

Consider Joining Los Amigos de Valles Caldera

In 2004, the Valles Caldera Board of Trustees began looking into the possibility of forming a 501(c)(3) “friends” group to help the Trust. In 2006, that effort, spearheaded by (now former) Trustees Larry Icerman and Barbara Johnson, resulted in the formation of Los Amigos de Valles Caldera.

Attorney (and Los Amigos member) Matthew McQueen helped with Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, and the Board of Trustees discussed and approved the process. Then a Board of Directors was constituted (see p. 6). It currently contains three former Trustees, the Assistant Tribal Administrator of the Pueblo of Jemez, the author of *Valle Grande: A History of the Baca Location No. 1*, the Lands Monitor from Santa Clara Pueblo, and the Chair of the Del Norte Credit Union Board.

Los Amigos received its 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS in January. The Board has been meeting monthly since September.

On June 24, 2007, at the Member Appreciation event (see p. 4), Los Amigos Chair Doug Fraser, Trust Board Chair Tracy Hephner, and Trust Executive Director Jeff Cross signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Trust and Los Amigos to provide a “framework for cooperation between Los Amigos and the Trust with respect to restoration and preservation of Preserve that serves the mutual interests of the respective entities and the public.”

Los Amigos, in conjunction with the New Mexico Environment Department, has received a \$158,000 grant from the Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA) to fund restoration work on Preserve wetlands. The inventory, assessment, and design phase of the project is currently underway on Alamo Bog and San Antonio Creek.

The Trust has composed a list of projects that it would like to have funded and the Board of Los Amigos will decide which projects to fundraise for. That fundraising will be a combination of government grants, private foundation grants, and individual donations. In addition, Los Amigos will be helping the Trust with volunteers and other assistance.

Los Amigos currently has 102 “founding” members. If you are interested in joining Los Amigos, please contact one of the Board members listed or visit our website (www.losamigosdevallescaldera.org).



Los Amigos Chair Doug Fraser, Trust Board Chair Tracy Hephner, and Trust Executive Director Jeff Cross sign the Memorandum of Understanding. (Photo courtesy of Kathy Fraser.)

Los Amigos Celebrates First Member

Los Amigos de Valles Caldera held its first member appreciation event on Sunday, June 24, 2007 at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The event permitted members to enjoy a day on the Preserve, allowed the Los Amigos Board of Directors to meet a portion of the group's membership, and allowed all to enjoy the many attractions of the area. The gathering was made sweeter by Chair Doug Fraser's announcement that Los Amigos had just acquired its one-hundredth



membership.

Those members who took the opportunity to spend the day hiking began assembling at the staging area at 9 a.m. Twenty-one hikers were driven in the Preserve's vans to the foot of Cerro Abrigo. The group was led by board member Craig Martin, and board members Greg Kendall and Larry Icerman accompanied the group on their seven-mile excursion. Craig told stories about the Preserve's history as the hikers circumnavigated the volcanic mound. Since the group included botanists, a geologist, and several excellent bird watchers, they



had plenty of information to share and absorb. Craig stopped at overlooks of each of the major valles visible



from the trail and discussed how each was impacted by different historic eras: prehistoric obsidian mining, sheep ranching, cattle ranching, and logging. Other highlights were learning about limber pines and their close relation southwestern white pines, a discussion of the formation of lakes in the valleys, and a terrific view of an expansive rock formation on the west side of Abrigo. Although it was a hot afternoon, the group was well prepared with plenty of water and protective clothing, and the hiking companions made for an interesting walk.



Meanwhile, other members were gathering at the Casa de Baca Lodge. Members sat in the shade of tall ponderosa pines, and enjoyed cranking out and eating handmade ice cream. Los Amigos Board members Doug Fraser, Steven Stoddard, and Barbara Johnson greeted guests. Members also had the opportunity to

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Appreciation Event, June 24, 2007



[Top left] Hikers rest and discuss what they have seen; [Middle] There is discussion of a plant and a rock formation; [Top right] Allie Thompson photographs an unusual plant; [Middle right] Trust staff caravanned hikers (including State Senator Dede Feldman and her husband) and others to the Lodge; [Bottom left and right] members enjoy a barbeque behind the Lodge. (Photos courtesy of Karen and Greg Kendall and Kathy Fraser.)

Photos, page 4 (courtesy of Karen and Greg Kendall): [Top left] Hikers preparing to start; [Middle left] Hiking the Cerro Abrigo trail; [Bottom left] Craig Martin answers questions; [Right] Dorothy Hoard, Becky Shankland, and Vice Chair Greg Kendall in front of one of the imposing views of the Preserve from Abrigo.



canopy of pines, with the ever-present elk grazing in the Valle Grande below. The event was made possible by the support of the Valles Caldera Trust, who permitted Los Amigos to use the Lodge, provided transportation for guests, and offered the use of the Cerro Abrigo Trail for the membership. In addition, Tracy Hephner provided on-the-ground assistance by preparing the meal with Barbara Johnson and master grillers Kirk Thompson and Laura Fraser.



talk with the Executive Director of the Valles Caldera Trust (and Los Amigos member), Jeff Cross. Although mostly working in the kitchen, Valles Caldera Trust Board Chair (and Los Amigos member) Tracy Hephner was also in attendance.

At 4 p.m., all present assembled in the Lodge for introductions, a hearty thanks for the support of the members from Doug, and a history presentation by Craig. Food and drink were enjoyed under the



From the Chair, Doug Fraser

We are pleased to send you this first edition of our joint newsletter with the Valles Caldera Trust. Los Amigos has been “in business” less than a year, but we have managed to achieve a lot. We have 102 memberships and over 150 members, we have received a large grant, we have held our first Member Appreciation Event, and we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trust to make sure that we can achieve our mission of supporting the Preserve for present and future generations. If you are not already a member, we hope that you will consider joining us in this effort today. We will be sending out this joint newsletter quarterly. In between, please visit our website for more information: www.losamigosdevallescaldera.org. In particular, check out our website to learn about volunteer opportunities.



(Photo courtesy of Kathy Fraser.)

Journey into the Geologic History of the Valles Caldera

Please join us for an exciting geologic tour of the north rim of the Valles Caldera led by local geologist, international tour guide, and Los Amigos member Kirt Kempter on Saturday, September 1.

Departing from Española at 9:00 a.m., we will drive west on Forest Road 144 (also known as 39-mile road), stopping at several view points as we wind our way into the northern Jemez Mountains. As we ascend the back side of Chicoma Peak, there will be spectacular views of the Rio Grande Rift, Pajarito Plateau, and other geologic features. The road also cuts through the core of an old volcano, active 10 million years ago. Our destination will be a lunch stop near Cerro La Garrita on the Valles Caldera National Preserve. A lecture at this stop will provide a geologic history of the caldera since the massive eruption occurred 1.2 million years ago, a dynamic story including multiple lakes and volcanic eruptions within the caldera since its collapse.

There are two alternate endings for the day, yet to be determined: a hike up Chicoma (~one mile each way, 600' elev. gain) or a return through the Preserve via the Valle Toledo and Obsidian Valley.

Kirt is offering this tour as a fundraiser for Los Amigos. Cost: \$30/person for Los Amigos members, \$40 for non-members; 35 participants; lunch provided! Please bring water, hat, rain gear, and sunscreen.

Kirt Kempter is a geologist who has conducted fieldwork and mapping for USGS in the Jemez Mountains for years, leads tours around the world for the Smithsonian and other organizations, and is co-author/producer of a new fold-out map and geologic history of the Jemez volcano (available from the Trust at the Preserve gift shop).

To attend this tour, please contact Barbara Johnson, 505-474-6689 or lunah3@comcast.net.

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Grazing on the Preserve This Year is a Family Affair

This year, the grazing program on the Preserve has both old and new elements. The Hagelsteins (Jack, Pat, and their five children) and Guy Glosson and his son Will are bringing family back to livestock grazing—they are even staying in the “Bond” cabin, where the Bond family used to spend their summers when they ran livestock on the Preserve (then called the Valle Grande). But, the cattle program this year is very different from the programs that have been in place since the government purchased the Preserve in 2000.

This year the Trust put out a request for proposal for “an ecologically and economically viable cattle operation” on the Preserve.

Proposal

A number of proposals were evaluated by a committee made up of Trust staff, Trustees, and outside experts. That committee unanimously chose the Hagelstein proposal to conduct a “livestock grazing program that was ecologically sensitive, profitable, educational, and verifiable.” It had several goals:

- To demonstrate the ecological and economic advantages of planned grazing (moving the cattle as one herd through the meadows under the guidance of a herder experienced in low-stress animal handling techniques).

- To demonstrate the advantages of low-stress livestock management (herding).

- To conduct quantitative and qualitative assessment and monitoring to analyze cumulative effects and provide data for adaptive management. (The monitoring is being done by Dr. Craig Conley of the Quivira Coalition. He has taken extensive pre-grazing measurements and is following the progress closely.)

- To conduct outreach.

- To explore additional grazing-related ecological topics, such as the management of invasive species, riparian restoration, and interrelationships of livestock with wildlife.

Jack bought 492 yearlings from various locations and he and Guy “trained” them for the herding operation through use of low-stress techniques which were originally pioneered by Bud Williams and Burt Smith.

Cow Stress

Low-stress animal handling principles involve



Photo courtesy of Avery Anderson.

understanding animal behavior; using pressure and release techniques and stock dogs. Low stress doesn't mean no stress, it means the minimum amount of stress required, gradually introduced, that the cattle can learn to accept and tolerate.

Relaxed cattle consistently out-perform higher stressed cattle in all phases of the beef production chain. They are also easier to handle, which puts less stress on the people managing them as well.

A mineral supplement is being used to help the cows utilize forage more efficiently for weight gain and to ward off the potentially fatal “brisket” disease that often attacks cows moved from lower elevations to the higher elevations of the Jemez Mountains. So far it seems to be working. No cattle have gotten sick and after two “weigh-ins” prior to the cattle leaving the Valle Grande and continuing on their rotation through the Preserve, there was an average weight gain of 2+ pounds per day.

On the Move

A grazing rotation plan was developed by Brett O'Haver of the BLM, with Trust staff. That plan is being modified on the ground to adapt to changing conditions. For example, conditions this year have contributed to late calving, which has resulted in large nursery herds of elk calves in areas planned for grazing. The plan was modified to avoid these nursery areas and to avoid disturbing the elk when they are most sensitive.

The cattle are moved every day within each pasture. It takes at least two riders about 4-6 hours a day to do this. But Jack says it would take the same amount of time to move 1,000 or even 2,000 cattle as the 492. The herders move them away from riparian areas each

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Family Affair

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day, too, after they have drunk water from the streams.

They are moving the livestock so quickly that each pasture recovers from the grazing before they finish in the next pasture. They are quite certain that the Preserve could easily accommodate the 2,000 head the current Environmental Assessment suggests in a year with such abundant forage as there is this year. Capacity always depends on management *and* moisture.

But, as Pat and Jack both say, the most important thing is the land and keeping it healthy. Understanding how an ecosystem functions, and what role grazing animals play



in it, is critical to a successful herding operation. Jack and Guy say this year with the small number of cows is a way to “learn the Caldera” to see what works in terms

of maximizing income without harming the resource.

Family

They also think working on a ranch is good for their family. Pat, who also teaches at the Dexter Consolidated Schools, says: “It’s a family thing.” All of the Hagelstein children have grown up on a ranch (they own Comanche Hill Ranch in Roswell), and all are used to working with cattle. Josh (the eldest), Sam, and William (the youngest) are spending the most time with the cattle this summer. They along with Jack, Guy, Will, and Lee Johnson alternate weeks at the Preserve, taking care of the cattle.

Lee is a herder trainee who is being paid out of a Conservation Innovation Grant received by the Quivira Coalition from the NRCS. He has worked with the Holistic Management Center in Albuquerque, but said he wanted to see what it was like to actually do the livestock management (stockmanship). It has

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been an occasionally bumpy experience, but he is enjoying it. And the rest of the boys have enjoyed his cooking, when Pat is off taking their two girls to camp. The group would like to continue grazing on the Preserve for several more years. Pat says she and kids have been enjoying their time there, “even without TV” or working telephones most of the time.

Education

Guy will be giving a Herding Workshop on the Preserve on August 16-17. He has conducted over 30 workshops in his career. He says his work is to “plant seeds” to show people how to manage cattle in a way that both takes care of them and the land.

Jack has been talking to visitors on the Preserve about the grazing program and would like to be able to reach more people. “Very few people understand what we do,” he says. He would like to change that.



[Above left] William practices roping. [Above] Riders move the cows. (Photos courtesy of Avery Anderson and Craig Conley.)