

Ca Ventana en los Valles

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

Profitable 2008 Grazing Season Ends

by TK Thompson

The big rigs rolled slowly out of the Valle Grande, each loaded with 48,000 pounds of healthy, live cargo, marking the end of the 2008 grazing season at the Valles Caldera National Preserve.

The Trust was mandated in its founding legislation in 2000 to “. . . operate the Preserve as a working ranch where consistent with the goals for resource protection and preservation and providing access for recreation and other purposes. . .” and to “. . . manage renewable resources for multiple use and sustained yield consistent with the other purposes of the Act. . .”

Cattle grazing seems to be the cornerstone of the “working ranch” concept, especially in the historical context of the Preserve. Grazing by domestic livestock has occurred on the Preserve since the late 1700s. At first it was sheep, up to 100,000 in the early



[Top] Moving cattle toward the pens and the scales. [Bottom] Cattle and elk happily coexist on the Valle Grande. (Photos courtesy of the author.)

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.

1900s. In the 1950s cattle replaced sheep due to market conditions, with greater than 10,000 sometimes being grazed on the grasslands that are now the Valles Caldera. The previous owners of the ranch, the Dunigan family, reduced the number of cattle and started the practice of rotational grazing and riparian area protection.

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If you would like to receive a copy of the Comprehensive Management Framework, the Annual Report to Congress, the State of the Preserve, or notices regarding events, public Board meetings, or planning for management of the Valles Caldera National Preserve, contact
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Welcome to New Staff

There's a new ranch foreman in town—or should we say on the Preserve. Tim Haarmann joined the Valles Caldera Trust staff in August. Tim will have many responsibilities including overseeing the grazing program, range management, road and fence maintenance, building preservation, and the headquarters water system.

Tim lives with his family in Cañon and is active as a 4-H volunteer. He has 18 years experience in natural resource management, as well as public and stakeholder outreach. He has worked for Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Public Service Company of New Mexico. Tim has a B.S. in Zoology with a minor in Botany and Range from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico in Biology.

Among his varied experiences, Tim has worked with local ranchers, spent two years in South America as a Peace Corps volunteer in agricultural extension, worked as a horse drawn wagon/carriage driver, served as a USAID-funded short-term agricultural extensionist in Mozambique and Bolivia, and worked with livestock risk assessment modeling of cattle diseases. Tim is excited about his new job and looks forward to interacting with the public and overseeing the many tasks associated with keeping the infrastructure of the Preserve running smoothly.

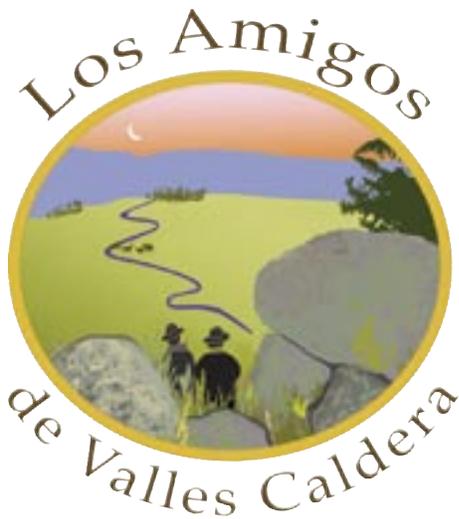
Kimberly DeVall

In July, Kimberly DeVall began working for the Valles Caldera Trust as the Supervisory Recreation Specialist. She has over ten years of experience in the field of conservation education and interpretation and eight years in the field of recreation.

"I wanted to work in the Valles Caldera National Preserve because it is a unique landscape, physically and culturally, and the recreational and educational opportunities seem limitless," comments DeVall. "The Trust staff and board members have such a strong passion for making the Preserve a success that I find it refreshing to work alongside them."

DeVall has a B.S. and M.S. in wildlife and fisheries ecology from Oklahoma State University. Her work experience includes being a volunteer interpreter for Sullys Hill National Game Preserve (Fort Totten, ND), a camp director for the Nebraska State 4-H Camp (Halsey, NE), a camp director and teacher naturalist for

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News from Los Amigos

Supporting the Valles Caldera
National Preserve
for Present and Future Generations

Western Artist Gary Morton Donates Print to Los Amigos for Restoration of the Bond Cabin

Western painter Gary Morton has made an extremely generous offer to Los Amigos. He is painting a picture of the Bond Cabin, where he and his family have been staying this summer while they ran the cattle program on the Preserve. He is offering to let Los Amigos make prints of the painting and sell them for \$225 each to raise money to help restore the historic Bond Cabin. He saw firsthand the problems with this historic structure and he wanted to do something to restore it.

Everyone has seen the Bond Cabin as they ride or drive through the Headquarters Area at the north end of the entrance road into the Preserve. Situated in the middle of the Ranch Headquarters Historic District, with an inviting front porch and a gorgeous view of the Valle Grande, this cabin evokes a past era of domestic comfort amid the once-bustling activities of a busy ranch. The Bond



Gary working on his painting of the Bond Cabin. (Photo courtesy of TK Thompson.)

Cabin was built in 1918 by Frank Bond, as a seasonal residence for Bond family members involved in the operation of the ranch.

The log construction and rustic style are important character-defining features of the building and contribute strongly to the overall feeling of the historic Headquarters Area. Despite decades of continuous use, the appearance and integrity

of the Bond Cabin remains largely undiminished: many of the windows and doors are original.

But it needs a new foundation and there other problems, like drainage from the slope behind the cabin which is causing water damage.

Please see page 5 for details on how you can help the Bond Cabin and own an original Gary Morton print.

Gary Morton, Cowboy and Western Artist

Gary Morton sometimes likes to joke about breaking into the art business by saying, "I've been turned down by the best." While that may have been true earlier in his career, now his work hangs in the most prestigious of locations. For instance, a four foot by eight foot oil entitled *The Simple Pleasures of New Mexico* was commissioned by the New Mexico State Legislature for inclusion in the permanent collection which hangs in the State Capitol Building in Santa Fe. Morton is also a regular participant in the Wyoming Governor's Invitational Show in Cheyenne which is held as a part of their "Frontier Days Celebration," and a number of his paintings have been displayed at the Museum of the Big Bend in Alpine, TX.

Gary began cowboying on different ranches as a teen and ultimately became wagon boss on the historic Bell Ranch in New Mexico. The life of cowboying makes Gary more than familiar with his subjects. "I don't just paint for myself, but to honor the working cowboy." Gary's paintings are realistic, accurate and his attention to detail allows him to be honest to himself and the people he paints. Each piece is unique and a representation of real cowboys doing real ranch work.

He has served on many boards throughout his career. He is one of the founding directors of the Working Ranch Cowboys Association and served as Vice-President and President. He remains a WRCA Director and chairman of rules and sanctioning.

He was on the New Mexico Arts Commission for eight years and served as Chairman. In 1995, Governor Gary Johnson appointed Gary as Director of the Office of Cultural Affairs in Santa Fe.

Over the years he has sold his paintings in many shows and galleries throughout the country. For the last few years he has sold his work primarily through personal contact.

Gary has a body of work that reflects a life dedicated to portraying the cowboy in his truest form. He is primarily a self-taught artist who has honed his talent by spending numerous hours drawing the images he has experienced first hand.

Although he is now a full time artist, Morton still spends time every year working as a ranch hand. "My greatest joy in the art business is going to these ranches. It gives me a chance to enjoy the camaraderie of these special men, and to keep the images of their work sharp in my mind." Gary and his wife Suzie manage the C R Ranch near Las Vegas, New Mexico.

2008 Grazing Season Ends

(con't from page 1)

One does not just turn a bunch of cattle loose on the Valles Caldera. Extensive studies of forage availability linked to the number of elk and cattle must first be done, since both species eat the same type of plants. One elk will roughly consume the same amount of forage as a yearling steer or heifer. These studies involve determining the number of elk on the Preserve and sampling many test plots for plant type and amount to determine the condition of the range. The forage allocated for elk and cattle use is always kept below 40% of that available, allowing 60% of the forage to remain for the future.

Interim Programs

The Preserve has tried a number of interim grazing programs to gain knowledge about resources and capacity. Cattle grazing on the Preserve started in 2002/3 with a modest emergency drought relief program for local

ranchers. In 2003/4, a replacement heifer project was undertaken using an open/lottery scheme. The program allowed ranchers to graze on the Preserve and breed their soon-to-be cows to high quality bulls specially chosen for calving ease. A conservation based competition was used in 2004/5 for a conservation stewardship grazing study. This program allowed ranchers to rest and make improvements on their home lands while their cattle grazed and were cared for on the Preserve. New Mexico State University furnished the steers in 2006 for a grazing research program. All of these early programs were ecologically sustainable but were at a net cost to the Preserve.

Different Approach

A different approach to cattle grazing was tried

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July 21: BBQ and Hike

On July 21, Los Amigos held a Hike and BBQ at the Preserve. The hike was around the Cerro Seco Trail. You can see that the trail sign [top right] has been chewed by a bear. (Caldera Staff have seen him munching!) This hike doesn't provide the continuous views of the Cerro Abrigo hike, but there were a few long views looking down into the Valle San Antonio. It's more of a forest hike, and a very peaceful and pleasant one. Steve Henry, a Trust Board member, joined the rest of the hikers [middle right]. Before the afternoon BBQ, Ana Steffen, Cultural Resources Coordinator for the VCNP [below], gave a talk about protecting cultural resources and historic building restoration procedures. The BBQ was held at the Bunkhouse, a fully furnished place that sleeps 16 and can be rented! Molly Padgett, a biology student intern, also gave a talk on the grass monitoring program. Kirk Thompson manned the BBQ while his fiancée Laura Fraser prepared the next set of burgers [bottom right]. (Photos courtesy of Greg Kendall.)



Order Your Morton Print to Help Restore the Bond Cabin!

There will be a run of 350 signed and numbered 15" by 20" lithographs. Each will be \$225, which includes shipping and handling. The proceeds from the sale of the prints will be used for restoration work on the Bond Cabin, such as pouring a new foundation, eliminating the drainage problem, etc., in addition to administrative costs associated with the work. (All work must be approved by the Trust and be compatible with State Historic Preservation Office requirements.)

To order, please email lunah3@comcast.net or greg_kendall@yahoo.com, or mail a check with your order to Print, Los Amigos, P.O.Box 416, Jemez Springs, NM 87025.

Prints will be given free to each new Lifetime or Obsidian Guild member.



Alamo Bog Work Weekend

On August 15th, 16th & 17th members of Los Amigos de Valles Caldera, the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation, and the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (as well as a few folks from the Sierra Club and other environmentally related organizations) worked together to create exclosures around stands of the rare bog birch in Alamo Canyon. The birch is struggling to survive around Alamo Bog because it is being eaten almost to extirpation by the elk. Fencing around other patches has shown promise in keeping this unique species alive.

We split into two main groups. One



This page: [Top] A man-made pond at the beginning of Alamo Canyon that contains a high concentration of sulphur. [Middle] NMWA set up a cooking area for the campers. [Above] Cars at the campsite. [Right] A curious prairie dog from a large town near the work site. Page 7: [Top] Bill Zeedyk and Bob Armstrong of AWF [Right] Taking down the old fence. [Above] The crew laying fence for an exclosure toward the middle of the Canyon. (Photos courtesy of Greg Kendall.)

group built fence to protect the rare bog birch and another group tore down old range fence. We needed posts from the old fence to complete the new fence. Taking down old fence is not easy! Johnny, a staff member of the Valles Caldera Trust, helped move heavy supplies to the remote work site. This part of the Preserve is not generally open to visitors, so this was an opportunity to see some rare scenery as well as do good work.

We worked under the direction of Bill Zeedyk, internationally known riparian restoration specialist and one of the experts on our wetlands grant. Gene Tatum, President of the AWF, led the fence-building crew.

We were able to camp at the entrance of Alamo Canyon on a fairly flat dirt area that was very pleasant. Michael Scialdone of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance cooked bison burgers for the 35 crew members, which was a good way to end the busy work day!

The wetlands grant Los Amigos and the New Mexico Environment Department received from the EPA is for work on San Antonio Creek and for the Alamo Canyon restoration, which will include pre-



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Alamo Bog Work Weekend

(con't from page 6)

servicing habitat for the rare bog birch, lowering the height of the falls at a significant headcut to reduce the force of falling water, dispersing the flow, hardening the base of the falls to protect subsoil, and conserving soil moisture within the bog upstream of the headcut, thus protecting existing wetland plant growth.



2008 Grazing Season Ends

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in 2007 and 2008. The 2007 program was open to applicants through publication of a Request for Proposals. The proposals were judged on specified criteria. The high-scoring proposal came from a private operator who ran 500 yearlings and provided full care. A grazing plan was developed with Trust staff to manage the cattle in an intensive pasture rotation. This approach made a little money for the Preserve and was tried again this year but on a larger scale.

Competitive Bid

The cattle grazing program this year was again determined by competitive bid. Gary Morton of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and his partner Cody Lewis of Claredon, Texas, submitted the winning proposal. After consultation with staff and a resources evaluation on the Preserve, it was decided that conditions were favorable to stock cattle up to the conservative limits set in the existing Environmental Assessment.

The Morton & Lewis partnership delivered 1,960 yearling steers in the first week of June. The grass was good—each steer gained approximately 300

pounds gross over the 120 days they lived on the Preserve. There were at least three fulltime cowboys tending the cattle every day in addition to five day workers used on an as-needed basis. The full timers were Gary Morton, Cody Lewis, and BJ Browning. Extra help was provided by Gary's grandsons Caleb and Connor and BJ's little brother Brady Bill. This was all done on horseback the old-fashioned way—horses can go places and do things with cows that motorized vehicles cannot do and with much less impact on the natural resource. The cattle are now in a feedlot in Texas getting even fatter—they will weigh about 1,000 pounds when they are slaughtered.

Dennis Trujillo, the Ranch Manager of the Preserve, summed up this year's program rather succinctly: "This year's steer operation included the largest number of livestock since the government's purchase and with this opportunity also came some challenges. We learned a great deal based on this year's operation. Hopefully we can apply what we have learned and adapt to better accommodate all the programs and activities, such as fishing and hunting, while at the same time protecting and enhancing all of our resources."

Shipping Cattle at the Valle Grande

by Tracy Hephner

The horses are saddled well before sunrise. They stand quietly at the rail as the gathering crew heads for the warmth of the Bond Cabin. Coffee, breakfast, and an equally warm smile from Suzie Morton are waiting. There is little talk around the table but plenty of “Thank you, ma’am”s after the meal, as the crew members settle hats, zip jackets and step off the porch.

The sun tries to rise through a heavy fog covering the Valle Grande. Elk are everywhere, bugling, whistling, snorting, calling. It is the end of the spectacular season known as the “rut.” The cowboys cinch up their saddles and hit a hard trot down the road from ranch headquarters.

Gary Morton, Cody Lewis, and B.J. Brown have spent the last few weeks gathering the steers into the shipping trap surrounding the main entrance to the Preserve. Throughout the season, they’ve heard about extensive problems with “brisket,” or altitude sickness in cattle, in the Jemez Mountains. And the densely wooded terrain and elk damage to fences always pose the threat of loss by sickness or straying. Yet the three men have managed to complete a remarkably successful grazing season. With years of combined experience and ability—and a little luck on their side—they are delivering a count just six head short of the 1,960 steers they started with in June.

For them, this shipping day has been anticipated with both excitement and regret. On one hand, it means payday, a welcome reward for the season’s

hard labor. On the other, it dictates the conclusion of their contract with the Trust, and the end of a memorable summer on the Preserve.

The Valle Grande looks like a big smooth world of grass from the highway, but the horseback reality proves different. The turf is uneven, with literal pitfalls. The East Fork of the Jemez River snakes maze-like through the valle. Riders trot carefully to the far edges of the trap. Whoops erupt as horses stall, then leap high over the stream bed.

As the riders reach the perimeter fence, Cody assigns positions. The object is to gather the cattle quietly, efficiently, and quickly. Single riders wait in the fog. Cattle move in the distance. The gathering begins. Soon, steers are trailing down the ranch road in a long line, four or five abreast. Gary turns them at the corner and they head into the shipping pens.

Once the gates are wired shut, the action picks up. The crew quickly figures out how to work in this unfamiliar set of pens. Two riders feed steers into the alley

that leads to the scales. Two more peel off 20 head and push them toward the scale platform. Johnny Yepa and Meldon Chinana, of the VCNP ranch crew, assist with a final push onto the scale. On either side, neighbor Ray Trujillo and New Mexico livestock in-

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This page: [Top] Gary Morton (left, near truck), Tracy Hephner (on horse), and new Trust Ranch Manager Tim Haarman. [Bottom] Leading cattle to the scales. (Photos courtesy of Greg Kendall.) Page 9: [Top] Tracy eating Jemez melon. (Photo courtesy of TK Thompson.) [Bottom] Cowboys say “so long” to the 2008 grazing season. (Photo courtesy of Greg Kendall.)

Shipping

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spector Donald Maestes work the gates.

Inside the scale house, Gary, cattle owner Rick Paul, and Tim Haarman, a representative from the Trust, balance the big Cardinal scales. With a shout of "Bring 'em!" the first set of steers are loaded on the scale. Ray shuts the scale gate and hollers, "Weigh'em!"

The weight is calculated, a weight ticket stamped, and a voice from the scale house hollers, "Count 'em!" Donald releases the off-gate and counts and checks brands as the steers stream off the scales. The final shout is confirmation of the count: "Twenty head!" This routine will be repeated 100 times over the two days of shipping, interrupted periodically by a call for "Balance!" as the scales are adjusted to offset the accumulation of mud and manure.

Back in the scale house, Gary and Rick figure grosses, gains, and shrinks. Everyone has a chance to guess the weights of the steers, but actual weights are needed to figure how many trucks Rick will need. A cattle truck is allowed to haul 48,000 pounds of live freight. The trucks charge by the mile and, at current fuel prices, fees vary from \$3.50 to more than \$4 per loaded mile. Overloaded trucks are dangerous and risk a fine at the port-of-entry; lightly-loaded trucks cost money. Rick does the math and figures on 63 head per truck.

Cattle trailers are full of ramps and compartments. Each compartment must be loaded in sequence with the specified number of cattle. Cody



and B.J. work horseback, with a gateman midway down the loading alley. Donald neatly funnels 63 head into a holding area. Cody shouts out what sounds like Lotto numbers—"6+10+14+26+7!"

The mounted gateman send the requisite number further down the alley. Cody and B.J. fall in behind the steers, urging them up the ramp and into the trailer.

By noon, the sun has come out and cowboys begin to shed layers. Jackets are slung over pen rails. Bright silk wild rags, bound closely at the throat at dawn, reappear, tied at the waist. Weighing is completed. By 2:00 p.m., 15 trucks are loaded, the crew is again fed and the day's work complete, for everyone except Suzie. With the help of her mom, Inez, she's already begun preparations for the evening meal. Later, the crew reconvenes for hot green chile burritos and big stories as dusk falls on the Valle Grande.

The next morning, the cowboys are ready to roll. There is less fog and it's easier to see where the horses' feet needed to be. The crew is relaxed. By now they've learned the pens and know their roles. This turns out to be a good thing. There are three photographers also at work, plus a film crew from the New Mexico Museum of Natural History, which adds to the activity outside the pens.

Johnny breaks out a homegrown Jemez melon for an impromptu coffee break. The melon is fragrant, cool, and sweet. The photographers snap cowboys on horseback waving big yellow melon slices, chins sticky with juice.

The last truck backs up to the ramp and Cody offers his big palomino horse to a friend. Then he stops and reconsiders. "We'll trade before we head back to the barn" he says. "I want to put the last steer on the last truck myself."

Then he spins the palomino around and trots off to the conclusion of the 2008 grazing season on the Valles Caldera National Preserve.





The East Fork Jemez River in the evening. The end of a great day at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. (Photo courtesy of Greg Kendall.)

From the Chair. Doug Fraser

We have lots of exciting news in this issue! First, Los Amigos has been awarded a \$116,000 grant from the State of New Mexico's River Ecosystem Restoration Initiative to work on San Antonio Creek. This will complement the wetlands grant that we have been working on (see story on page 6) in Alamo Canyon.

Second, Gary Morton has generously offered to help Los Amigos restore the Bond Cabin by donating prints of a painting he has been working on (see stories on page 3, 4, and 5). We hope that you will consider purchasing one of these limited edition prints for yourself or as a Christmas present!

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, we have created two new opportunities for individuals to contribute to the Los Amigos mission of supporting the Valles Caldera National Preserve for present and future generations. The Valles Caldera Obsidian Guild recognizes individuals who provide support for the Valles Caldera National Preserve through planned gifts. Life membership status is awarded to members who make a one-time, \$1,000 undesignated gift to Los Amigos.

As an added incentive, we will be giving lithographs of Gary's Bond Cabin picture FREE to any new Obsidian Guild or Life members. With your continued support, we know that we can help the Preserve maintain its ecological health and help the Trust reach self-sufficiency. Thank you!

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The Bog Birch. This stand is contained in a previous enclosure built in Alamo Canyon to keep the elk from munching on this rare plant. (Photo courtesy of Greg Kendall.)



From Trust Chair, William B. Keleher

The Trust was fortunate to secure the services of Lucia Sandoval Turner as interim Acting Executive Director. Lucia retired in February 2008 as Deputy Regional Director of the U.S. Forest Service, Region III, and was very familiar with the federal law authorizing the acquisition of the Preserve, as she was part of the Forest Service team which managed the Preserve the first two years of Federal ownership. Lucia is a direct descendant of Don Luis Maria Cabeza de Baca, the original grantee of a Spanish Land Grant whose heirs were awarded Baca Location No. 1 as a partial substitute for the original grant lands. Lucia's professional background and personal interest in the Valles Caldera is of benefit to the Preserve.

Our Summer 2008 Grazing Program was a success. Gary Morton and Cody Lewis oversaw almost 2,000 head of cattle rotating through the Preserve. Forage was excellent and the Preserve anticipates that a bonus payment, based upon weight gain of the cattle and required by the terms of the Agreement, will be paid. (See story on page 1.) It appears that this year's grazing program will be the most financially rewarding to the Preserve of any conducted so far. This is extremely important, given the founding legislation's benchmark for financial self-sufficiency for the Preserve by 2015.

At the present time livestock grazing is permitted by an interim forage assessment adopted by the initial board of trustees. Staff is working on a Forage Environmental Assessment which is to be completed and submitted to the public and available for public comment in early 2009.

Summer 2009 will see changes to the fishing program. The interest in the lottery system has declined and we believe public participation will increase if reservations for fishing are available. Staff recommended the change and the Board approved the plan.

We anticipate that by the publication of this newsletter, the ENTRIX Business Plan will have been received and reviewed by our staff. The next step will be for the Board of Trustees to consider the business plan and decide how to proceed. Full compliance with NEPA will be required. We also anticipate in October the

Moss-Adams audit of the Preserve's financial affairs for the first years of Trust operations will have been completed and submitted to the Trust.

Public Access Planning is well underway. The Board recognizes the need for increased public access and the desire of many members of the public for access for independent hikes.

The Trust has continued to work to secure additional appropriations for the Preserve. The Preserve needs federal appropriations to construct a permanent Visitors Center with modern restrooms and for needed improvements to the historic structures. To date, Congress, in spite of our requests, has not appropriated those funds. Congress did provide an appropriation to improve roads as well as the entryway into the Preserve from State Highway 4 as the entrance improvements were required to meet federal highway standards. Basic infrastructure improvements are needed in order to increase public access and participation and we will continue to request appropriations from Congress.

The requirement that the Preserve become financial self-sufficient is a major challenge. The successful implementation of a business plan is critical to the future of the Preserve. The staff and Board of Trustees remain committed to improved public access.

We appreciate the many comments of all whose vision resulted in the acquisition of the Valles Caldera by the federal government.

We want to congratulate Los Amigos on their RERI grant to work on San Antonio Creek. And we want to thank Gary Morton for his generous offer to help with restoration of the Bond Cabin. The Preserve is fortunate to have such good friends.



Catching a Dream

Ben Carlson from Skandia, Michigan, is 17 and has lung cancer. He and his dad have hunted together for years in Michigan, mainly for deer and upland game. They saw ads for the Catch-a-Dream Foundation in the hunting magazines they read and applied. They have always wanted to hunt elk. Thanks to the generosity of the Preserve, the Catch-a-Dream Foundation, Red Top Mountain Outfitters, and Governor Bill Richardson, that dream became a reality this year!

The Catch-a-Dream Foundation grants once-in-a-lifetime outdoor experiences to children 18 years old or younger who have

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[Left] Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager, with recent Catch-a-Dream hunter Ben Carlson at the Baca Lodge. [Right] Ben gets his elk—a 300+ bull! (Photos courtesy of TK Thompson.)



a life-threatening illness. Catch-a-Dream's singular purpose is to provide consumptive use outdoor experiences to fill the "gap" created when the Make-A-Wish Foundation established a national policy that precludes granting a child a wish that involves hunting or use of "...firearms, hunting bows, or other hunting or sport-shooting equipment."

This year, for the first time Gov. Richardson gave one of his Governor's tags to the Catch-a-Dream Foundation so Ben could hunt on the Preserve, and the Preserve allowed Ben and his father to stay at the Lodge and provided other in-kind donations of time to help make Ben's hunt memorable.

The Catch-a-Dream Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, working in cooperation with the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Wildlife Federation.

New Staff

(con't from page 2)

Pioneers Park Nature Center (Lincoln, NE), and an education coordinator for the Santa Fe National Forest (Jemez Springs).

"In addition to expanding recreational activities, I would like to increase the number of volunteers and expand their involvement with recreational activities and events," states DeVall. "Volunteers are a very important component to any program, and I believe in building strong relationships."

While working for the Santa Fe National Forest, DeVall was named the 2006 Southwestern Region "Conservation Educator and Interpreter of the Year." She was also part of the award winning Respect the Rio program that connects people to their riparian environment through education, while returning watersheds and rivers to a healthy state through restoration.