

Ca Ventana en los Valles

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

Trust Leases Education Facility

by Dr. Bob Parmenter, Director of Science and Education



[Above] Pueblo Middle School Annual Science Summer Camp in the Valle Grande, July 16. (Photo courtesy of T.K. Thompson.) [Right] The V.L. Martin Building in Jemez Springs, now the Valles Caldera educational facility.

The Valles Caldera Trust has leased one of the Servants of the Paraclete's facilities in Jemez Springs to support its development of formal and informal educational programs on the Preserve. These programs will serve the public, from elementary school children through senior citizens. The facility has 25 bedrooms (50 person capacity), dining hall and institutional kitchen, classroom space, teaching laboratory space, and offices, and is only 15 min-

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.



utes from the Preserve's southwest corner. The facility will provide overnight lodging for students, teachers, scientists, and public sector participants nationwide.

The Board of Trustees authorized \$306,000 to purchase furniture, laboratory and teaching equipment for the facility. These Trust funds were generated by visi-

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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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Bio Bug Blitz 2009

by Zoe Anna Duran, Biological Science Technician

This summer the Valles Caldera Trust teamed up with the United States Department of Agriculture's Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) and the Smithsonian Institution (SI) to conduct the first ever Bio Bug Blitz on the Preserve. This campaign consisted of four weekend expeditions of intensive invertebrate collections. Scientists and volunteers targeted different biotic regions of the Preserve, to discover the biodiversity of our local invertebrate populations.

The Bio Bug Blitz program required volunteers to commit to four weekend collections, one weekend per month, May through August. Each weekend involved one day of intense field collecting, followed by a second day of specimen curation. Volunteers also had the opportunity to participate in night catches stationed at the Union Building.

This program offered a unique opportunity for volunteers of all backgrounds to be trained in professional insect collection, preservation, and identification techniques. Volunteers received instruction on how to preserve insect specimens using spreading-boards and assorted pinning methods. Entomologists demonstrated the proper operation of: 1) Malaise Nets, to capture arthropods in the order Hymenoptera (wasps); 2) CDC Mosquito Traps, to collect arthropods in the order Diptera (mosquitos, gnats, & midges); 3) black light traps, to collect Lepidoptera specimens (butterflies & moths); 4) UV lights, to hand collect nocturnal arthropods; and 5) Aerial and Sweep nets. The various traps were set strategically throughout remote regions of the Preserve for the duration of the summer season.



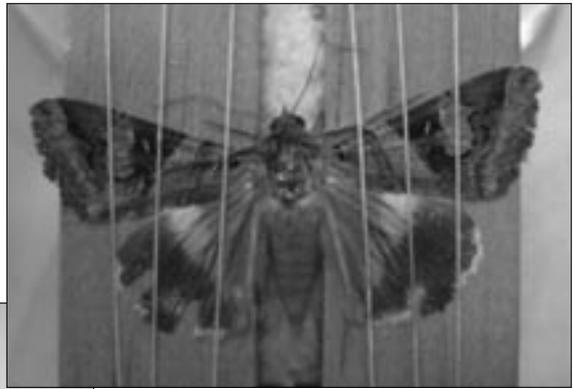
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Bio Bug Blitz 2009

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A variety of experts came to the Preserve this summer to help with the bug blitz. USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory SI specialist Matt Buffington surveyed micro-hymenoptera. Matt, along with SEL interns, set malaise nets throughout the Preserve. John Brown, also from the SEL, was our leading lepidoptera specialists. He focused his collections on butterfly/moth populations with the use of light traps. Local odonata specialist, Relf Price, surveyed dragonfly specimens in the Caribbean Pond areas.

The Bio Bug Blitz gave volunteers and scientists the chance to explore remarkable remote locations on the Preserve, in the search of our creepy-crawly friends. Collections not only focused on interesting smaller habitats, such as high elevations forest habitat on Redondo, the felsenmeers, Alamo Bog, and Sulphur Creek habitats, but also on the vast mountain meadows and riparian zones from Redondo Creek at the southwestern corner of the Preserve to the far northeastern Rio de los Indios.



[Page 2] The author demonstrating the use of an aerial net at Alamo Bog. [This page, above] One of the bugs caught and preserved. [Top left] Volunteers Matthew Fernandez, Jan Saunders, and Morgan Light preserving collected insects. [Middle left] Eight-year-old Shiloh Duran spreading moth specimens for the Terrestrial Invertebrate Reference Collection. [Bottom left] Bio bug blitz volunteers and scientists on Redondo, from right to left: Carl Fernandez, George Duran, Zoe Anna Duran, Matthew Fernandez, Jan Saunders, Morgan Light, Robby, Matt Buffington, and Nick. (Photos courtesy of George Duran and Bob Parmenter.)

Each “blitz” weekend focused on different invertebrate populations. It was the goal of the Trust to collect beneficial species, such as pollinators and predators, as well as herbivorous “pest” species, such as grasshoppers and the Spruce budworm moth. Specimen collections included concentration on the diversity of bees, ants, worms, orb weaver spiders, butterflies, moths, and dragonfly populations. Bob Parmenter (Chief Scientist) and I led volunteers on the bug wrangling expeditions.

This summer, the Bio Bug Blitz program allowed us to expand our understanding of the diversity of insects and other invertebrates on the Preserve.

Furthermore, as stewards to the Preserve, this program provided a method to inventory, monitor, and manage these important terrestrial invertebrate communities. Participants in the event helped in the effort to record data that will be used for management, as well as provide a baseline for future historical comparisons. Thanks to all that contributed to the program this summer, allowing it to be a huge success! Special thanks to the devoted volunteers: Carl, Matthew, and Andrew Fernandez, Morgan Light, Jan Saunders, and George and Shiloh Duran.

From the Desk of Trust Chair, Steve Henry

I want to tell you about progress at the Valles Caldera and mention an issue that deserves substantial discussion and input from the public.



(Photo courtesy of Steve Henry.)

New Buildings

First, we are very pleased to have signed a lease for a new educational facility. We believe that this will ensure that the Preserve becomes a sustainable national resource for research and educational programs in science and natural resource management.



Please see the story on page 1.

Second, the Trust has improved public service and safety at the Valles Grande staging area by upgrading the visitor contact station. The two modified storage buildings have been replaced with a single temporary facility that provides more space for visitors and staff, including a covered porch at the entrance. This visitor contact station will welcome our visitors over the next three-five years while planning and analysis are completed regarding the location and construction of permanent visitor facilities.



[Top] An aerial view of the new educational facility. [Bottom] The new public building at the staging area as it was being completed. (Photo courtesy of T.K. Thompson.)

Activities

On the activities side, you can now drive your car to fish the San Antonio seven days a week. Van service was discontinued as the result of positive comments received from the public on the enhanced safety and convenience of driving their own cars to the river. Also, as of August 4, you can now park at the staging area and hike South Mountain on an unguided basis. A full list of activities available can be found at www.vallescaldera.gov.

The grazing contract with NMSU and partner organizations continues to function well with literally no objectionable incidents being reported. The animals are pastured in upland areas that are fenced, requiring minimal supervision and not allowing for access to perennial stream

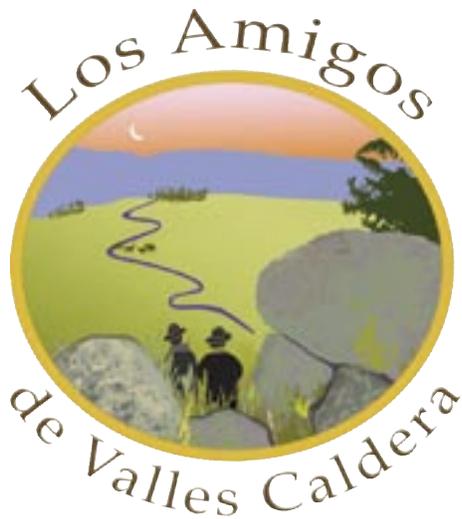
riparian zones. The registered bulls to be auctioned in October were given pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP) testing in July and those showing symptoms of Brisket disease were removed from the herd. The range condition on the Preserve can only be described as “excellent” with the consistent rainfall this summer. See the story on pages 10-11.

Future of the Preserve

Senators Bingaman and Udall have officially requested “that the National Park Service undertake a reconnaissance study of the Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico to assess its potential for inclusion in the National Park System as a national preserve.” They indicated

the need to complete the study within a few months in order to review potential management options later in the year.

One of several potential options moves the Trust under the management system of a different federal agency, i.e., the National Park Service. Another option adjusts the current law to remove the “financially self-sufficient” mandate, which would allow the Trust to continue cost recovery for the taxpayer by providing activities and events to the public on a “fair market” basis. This would minimize the degree of developmental activity necessary and allow for continued expansion of science and education programs. I urge you to get informed and participate in this dialogue. Please make your comments and opinions known to Senators Bingaman and Udall, and Congressman Lujan.



Fall 2009

News from *Cos Amigos*

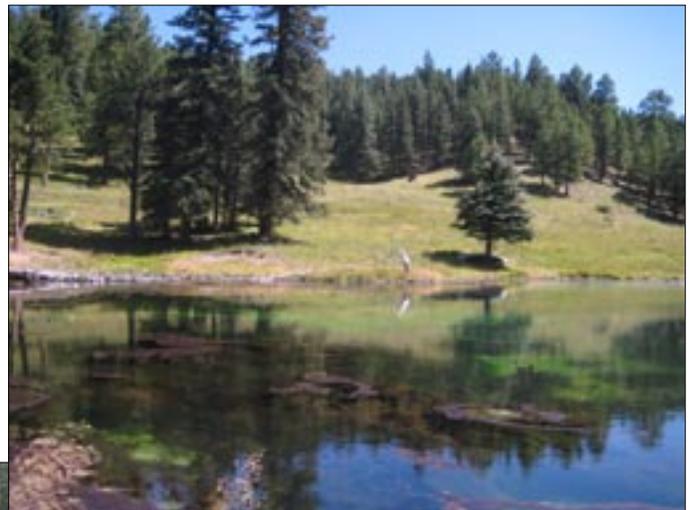
Supporting the Valles Caldera
National Preserve
for Present and Future Generations

Forty Volunteers Work at Alamo Bog!

by Peggy Gautier



(Photos courtesy of
Glenda Muirhead.)



A project in Alamo Canyon, that involved building exclosures to protect the rare bog birch from hungry elk that love to eat the shoots, was led by Gene Tatum of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation (AWF) on August 14th-16th. Members of Los Amigos de Valles Caldera worked with AWF to complete this project,

as well as removing no longer needed fencing. Workers were able to camp out on the Preserve for two nights, which is a rare experience.

AWF was very excited about returning to the Caldera for their fourth year. They appreciated the uniqueness, ecological importance, and beauty of the Bog. By combining AWF and Los Amigos

volunteers, we were able to make a significant difference in Alamo Canyon.

The Alamo Canyon Bog Birch is the only known population of Bog Birch in New Mexico. This particular

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Dendroglyph Tour on July 11

by Jim Counce

In 2007, Colleen Olinger led a group of volunteers in the study of dendroglyphs (tree carvings) on the Preserve. Colleen led a group of Los Amigos on a tour of some of those dendroglyphs in July.

We met at the Valle Grande staging area and left for the Sulfur Creek Road and west entrance to the Preserve. We had to go through the Sulfur Springs area. We got out of the van and discussed how the area was mined in the late 1800s and early 1900s by the Otero family and apparently visited by Al Capone some years later!

We then proceeded up to Alamo Canyon where we stopped to view Aspen trees with carvings from as early as 1914. We viewed several trees in several different spots.

After lunch, Colleen took us to a tree that they had recently discovered but had not yet logged (documented) or taken pictures of. Peggy volunteered

to help with the documentation as the rest of us looked on. Many thanks to Colleen for an excellent tour that we all enjoyed.



[Top] Here is a carving of a pipe-smoking shepherd. [Middle right] Notice how the writing is in script on this tree. [Middle left] The group gathers at the van. [Above] Checking out a particularly interesting dendroglyph. [Below] Peggy helps Colleen document a new find. (Photos courtesy of Jim Counce.)



Members Barbeque

Thirty-five members of Los Amigos gathered around the speaker, who was talking about elk calf mortality studies on the Preserve, during our third annual Members and Old-Timers BBQ. It was another beautiful day at the Preserve, in between the rain and lightning that is! This picture was taken by one of our newest members, Howard Kessler of New York City. He and Andy Thomas joined at the BBQ and sent us this picture on their return to the Big Apple.



Alamo Bog Work Weekend

(con't from page 5)

Birch stand is very desirable to elk and, as a consequence, is susceptible to substantial browsing, which can limit the species' ability to propagate in this area. The Bog Birch, as its name indicates, requires wetlands to survive.

Tim Haarman, of the Preserve staff, saw that everything needed for the work was staged at Alamo Canyon and ready to go when the volunteer workers arrived. This included t-posts, t-post pullers, pounders, posts, and fencing. Meldon Chinana of the Preserve fencing crew was there on Saturday with an ATV, trailer, truck, and chainsaw. Tim also made sure that the all important portable toilets were on site and gave approval for a campfire. Volunteers entered the Preserve from Sulfur Creek Road and VC08. They brought their own camping gear as well as water, food, work gloves, rubber boots, sun screen, bug repellent, and rain gear.

Gene Tatum of AWF and Jack Crane of Los Amigos led two crews of willing volunteers in erecting the two exclosures. We all learned a lot, worked hard, and enjoyed the comradery. The fence removal crew completed the removal of hazardous barbed-wire fencing and posts from the designated areas. All fencing was rolled up and placed by the road along with the t-posts for easy

(Photo courtesy of Jim Counce.)



[Page 5, top left] Neighborhood watch! [Page 5, top right] The acid pond at Alamo Bog. [Page 5, bottom] The whole gang during a break from work. [This page] One of the new fences around the bog birch.

pick-up by Preserve staff.

Glenda Muirhead, president of AWF, supervised set-up of the camp's eating area and participated in the work projects. Volunteers were served breakfast burritos and coffee Saturday morning and enjoyed a buffalo burger barbecue that evening compliments of AWF. Workers each brought a pot luck dish to the barbecue and renewed old acquaintances and made new friends. The relationships developed at these service projects are as fun and meaningful as the work itself.

Order Your Morton Print to Help Restore the Bond Cabin!

Los Amigos de Valles Caldera is selling 350 signed and numbered 18" by 22" lithographs of *Peace in the Valle* by Gary Morton (see page 8). Each is \$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. (All work must be approved by the Trust and be compatible with State Historic Preservation Office requirements.)

To order, please see the Los Amigos website, www.losamigosdevallescaldera.org, or mail a check with your order to Print, Los Amigos, 3250 La Paz Lane, Santa Fe, NM 87507.

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

Obsidian Guild

The Valles Caldera Obsidian Guild recognizes individuals who provide support for the Valles Caldera National Preserve through planned gifts. Membership belongs to those who have made deferred gifts to Los Amigos de Valles Caldera through one or more of the following methods:

- provision in a will or revocable trust;
- retirement plan beneficiary designation; or
- life insurance policy beneficiary designation.

Members of the Obsidian Guild share a common bond of generosity and visionary leadership, nourishing the Preserve's unique assets. Members who inform Los Amigos of deferred gifts made in 2009 will receive special Founding Member status. For further information, please contact Larry Icerman, licerman@aol.com.

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Peace in the Valle
by Gary Morton



Doug working in front of the Valle Grande. (Photo courtesy of Kathy Fraser.)

From the Chair, Doug Fraser

We want to congratulate the Trust on leasing its new education facility. Los Amigos would very much like to help in this endeavor.

We also want to welcome our newest Board member, Peggy Gautier. In her short tenure with us, she has already helped with the Members Barbeque, put up fence at Alamo Bog, and written stories for this newsletter. She looks like a great addition to our very active Board!

We will be holding our first volunteer workday for our San Antonio River Ecosystem Restoration Initiative project October 3, when we hope to do work near the San Antonio Cabin that will create approximately five acres of wetland that is currently being drained by a cut from an animal trail that has deepened over the years.



Mariposa lily on the Preserve this summer. (Photo courtesy of T.K. Thompson.)

We are in the final stages of approval for a new grant from the Environment Department and EPA that will extend our work on the San Antonio.

We hope more of you will join us in these efforts by becoming members of Los Amigos and coming out for our volunteer work days. There will be many more opportunities next summer for work on the San Antonio projects. We hope some of you will consider becoming Los Amigos Lifetime Members. Life membership status is awarded to members who make a one-time, \$1,000 undesignated gift to Los Amigos. Life members also receive a free Morton print. (See story on page 7 and picture at left.)

Educational Facility

(con't from page 1)

tors' activity and recreation fees and will not come from congressionally appropriated tax dollars.

The overall education program will focus on science-related aspects of the Preserve (including geology, ecology, wildlife and fisheries management, range management and livestock husbandry, forestry, biodiversity, climate change, hydrology, and archaeology). However, it will also include a wide range of other disciplines (art, photography, history, literature, poetry, and music) for which the Valles Caldera provides

an inspirational environment. Numerous preliminary programs in both formal and informal education activities have been conducted since 2003, and the logistical realities of these undertakings have been worked out and perfected. The Trust is now ready to move ahead with permanent programs as part of the Public Access and Use Environmental Impact Statement being developed for the Preserve.

The "clientele" of these programs will fall into four main groups: (1) public and private school students (elementary through high school) and college/university students in formal educational classes; (2) general public participants in informal workshops and theme-oriented or special-topic classes; (3) organized volunteer groups (e.g., Los Amigos, Sierra Club, etc.) that participate in ongoing science projects on the Preserve; (4) private, corporate, NGO, or government retreats and training programs.

The Trust has developed a financial plan for operating the proposed facilities and the programs. Overnight lodging and food service revenues will allow the program to achieve 100% cost-recovery when the facilities reach 45% occupancy.



School program expenses can be defrayed via grants, and such grants are being prepared in cooperation with New Mexico universities and colleges. Several existing grants already support teacher and student educational projects. The Trust believes that the development of Valles Caldera public education

programs will provide an outstanding experience for the public sector and ensure that the Preserve becomes a sustainable national resource for research and educational programs in science, natural resource management, and other academic disciplines. The facility is expected to open for business early next year.

[Top] VCT/LANL science camp for northern Pueblo middle-school students (June 2008).

[Middle and left] Fourth-Sixth grade students learn how to measure fish populations on the Preserve as part of the Pajarito Environmental Education Center's "Nature Odyssey" (June 2009).

[Bottom] High school science teachers from northern New Mexico public schools learn about stream invertebrates (June 2009) as part of a week-long training program.

(Photos courtesy of Bob Parmenter.)

Preserve is Location of Highest-Altitude (and only Grass-Fed) Bull Performance Test

The Valles Caldera National Preserve is becoming a unique performance testing center for high-altitude bulls. Identifying beef genetics that can thrive in an all-natural grazing environment at high altitude is the goal of a unique experiment pioneered by New Mexico State University's Dr. Manny Encinias, which took place on the Preserve this summer.

"Grazing cattle at high-altitude comes with inherent risk," said Encinias, a beef cattle specialist with NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service and coordinator of the 2009 grazing contract with the Trust, "due to their susceptibility of developing hypertension."

Genetic Predisposition

Cattle, like humans, can be genetically predisposed for hypertension at higher altitudes (known as bovine high altitude disease or brisket disease) when they graze above 7,000' elevation for extended periods. The inability to process oxygen efficiently is a key health issue that hampers cow/calf operations in the Rocky Mountain region. Establishing a performance-testing program at the Preserve has given seed stock producers throughout the U.S. the opportunity to identify individual bulls and begin to better understand the impact a bovine's genetic pedigree and previous management have on their ability to perform at higher altitudes without developing high blood pressure.

In June, 113 two-year old bulls were delivered to the 89,000-acre Preserve from participating seed stock producers actively involved in the New Mexico Beef Cattle Performance Association (NMBCPA). The NMBCPA is one of the oldest performance-testing organizations in the U.S. and serves as the administrator and owner of the Tucumcari Bull Test Facility in eastern New Mexico. Nationally recognized as one of the "grand-daddys" of performance testing, the Tucumcari facility was one of four centralized performance-testing facilities in the U.S. developed almost 50 years ago to promote the selection of superior beef cattle genetics.

At 9,000' in elevation, the lush green pastures of the Preserve make the current program unique in that it is the highest altitude centralized performance test in the nation. Furthermore, the program is gaining national attention from cattlemen because the bulls are being developed on a 100% grass diet. "With the exception of salt and minerals, these bulls are expected to get out and make it happen on grass alone," according to Encinias. "There's no 'grain for gain' in this program." After all, a bull's working environment is out on grass pasture, Encinias is quick to point out.

Testing

A national expert on bovine high mountain disease, Dr. Tim Holt, a Colorado State University assistant professor of veterinary medicine and biomedical science, performed the pulmonary arterial pressure (PAP) test on the bulls to evaluate their individual adaptation to the high altitude after 60 days on the Preserve.

"When a bull comes from lower altitudes and walks into high elevation, he gets hypoxia because his oxygen is decreased," Holt said of the health condition. "Jugular distention in the animal's neck is one of the first signs. As the hypertension symptoms progress, they eventually lead to congestive heart failure."

Holt conducted the PAP test on each of the bulls, while Encinias' NMSU team, participating producers, as well as Dr. John Heidrich, a local veterinarian and his students from Central New Mexico Community College's veterinary technician program, weighed the bulls and removed hair samples for future DNA marker testing.

During the testing (see photo above), a cardiac catheter is placed in the bull's jugular vein and fed through the heart into the main pulmonary artery that connects the heart to the lungs. From that position the heart's function is measured by the blood pressure. Bulls displaying the early signs of hypertension were removed from the herd and sent back to their home ranches at lower altitudes.

What makes this program so important is that high altitude is the number one killer of cattle on the mountain. "It's not anything to lose 3 to 5% and greater of a herd," said



Tim Holt, veterinarian with Colorado State University, tests a bull for bovine high altitude disease while NMSU's Manny Encinias holds its head. The test is part of NMSU's high-altitude testing project at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences program is the first time bulls have been tested in an all-natural environment for the hypertension disease that plagues some bulls at high altitudes. (Photo courtesy of Jane Moorman, NMSU.)

(con't on page 11)

High Altitude Bull Program

(con't from page 10)

Holt, who has studied bovine high mountain disease since 1980 and has performed PAP tests on more than 100,000 head of cattle. "The most devastating loss I've seen is 80% of the calf crop. The fact that this disposition is genetic makes it even more devastating, because if you get it into the herd then things get worse in a hurry."

According to Holt, the higher the altitude in which the bulls are PAP tested, the more accurate the test results. "The fact that these bulls are on all grass, free from growth promotants and grain, further increases the test's accuracy," says Holt.

When the region's closest high-altitude testing facility, located in Hesperus, Colorado, quit gain-testing bulls a few years back, "it left a large void in the marketplace from which local and regional producers could purchase reputable, performance-tested bulls with good PAP scores," said Encinias.

Heifer Replacement/Range Conservation

In addition to the bull genetics improvement program, NMSU included a heifer replacement plan and a range conservation program in its 2009 grazing program on the Preserve. Under the heifer replacement plan, young cows are bred with genetically-selected bulls to produce "easy" first-calf deliveries of low birth-weight calves. The range conservation effort allows cow/calf pairs to forage on the Preserve to benefit ranchers from Jemez Pueblo and Sandoval County who are working on range restoration projects on their own lands. All three programs were conducted on upland fenced pastures away from sensitive stream habitats.

Science Director Bob Parmenter has been pleased with the new program. "Scientific data of forage quantity and distribution on the Preserve led us to this new management plan that protects virtually all the perennial stream riparian areas on the Preserve, while providing sufficient forage for the livestock programs, wildlife, and maintenance of ecosystem services." Parmenter added, "The shift to herd improvement and range

conservation programs will clearly have very positive impacts on the regional livestock industry." Preserve General Manager Dennis Trujillo agrees. "This year's grazing program has allowed us to combine traditional and modern practices to create a program that is ecologically and economically sound, furthering the Trust's experiment in land management."

For Sale!

On Saturday, October 10th, the Trust is teaming up with NMSU and the NMBCPA to host the first-ever "Top of the Valle" high-altitude bull sale on the Preserve. "It is a great opportunity to purchase bulls with progressive genetics, but more importantly those with the ability to live in the high country," says Encinias. Only the top 35% of the bulls deemed low risk of developing hypertension but also possessing good performance potential will be offered for sale.

Valle Grande Welcomes New Arrival!



Hikers, anglers, and other visitors to the Valle Grande staging area will be welcomed by a larger, more accommodating visitors' contact station when they next come to the Valles Caldera National Preserve. A new, temporary building arrived at the Preserve on August 18th and replaced the old Morgan buildings. The new facility includes retail and office space, with a spacious covered porch entrance. The building will allow us to provide better service to our customers and a much improved work environment for our employees and volunteers. The facility will remain in service until a permanent visitors' center is erected at a site selected through the public access and use planning process. The Morgan buildings will be removed from the staging area and used in another capacity to be determined by the Trust. (Photos courtesy of T.K. Thompson.)

