

2012

Strategic Management Plan for the Valles Caldera National Preserve Fiscal Years 2012-2018



Valles Caldera Trust

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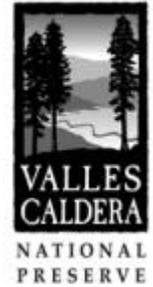


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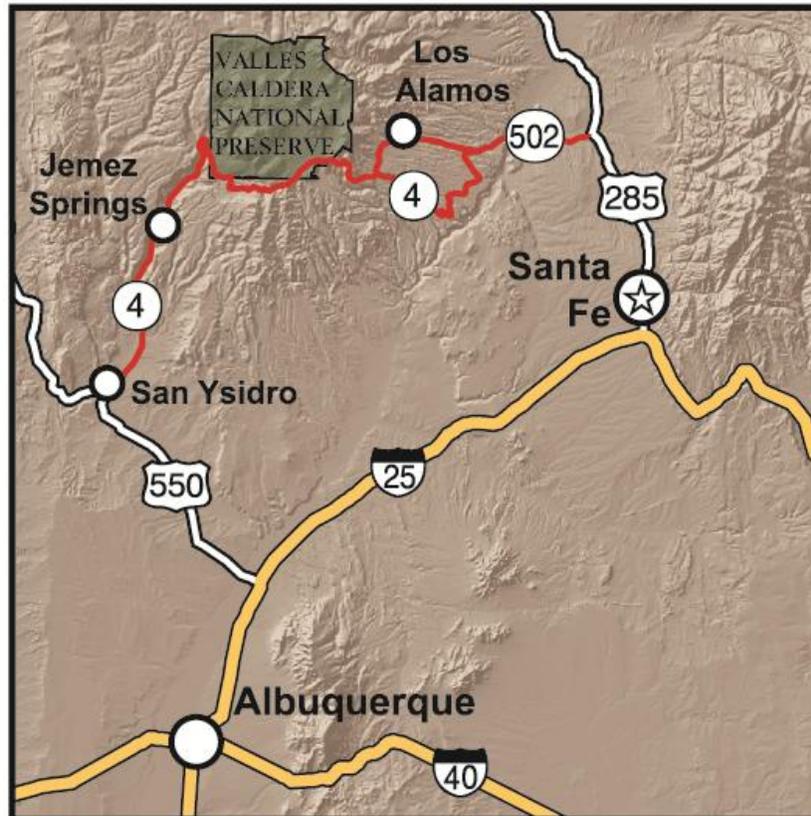
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1. Introduction – About Us

In 2000, President Clinton signed the Valles Caldera Preservation Act¹ acquiring a relatively small (less than 100,000 acre) parcel of land in northern New Mexico (Figure 1) while creating a large experiment in public land management. The landscape had been long known as the *Valles Caldera*, a Spanish name and geologic term describing the vast, grass valleys (*valles*) contained within a volcanic caldera. The tract of land had also been known as the *Baca Location No.1* and the *Baca Ranch*; the latter refers to its management as a private ranch for more than a century². The President's signature renamed the landscape to the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) and declared it a unit of the National Forest System (NFS). The act also created the Valles Caldera Trust, (VCT) a wholly owned government corporation, to oversee an experimental management regime. The United States Forest Service (USFS) was authorized to manage the preserve on an interim basis until the trust was established.

Figure 1 - Valles Caldera National Preserve and vicinity



¹ U.S.C. (2000, July 25). P.L. 106-248 - July 25. *Valles Caldera Preservation Act*. Washington D.C.: 106th Congress

² Anschuetz, K., & Merlan, T. (2007). *More Than a Scenic Mountain Landscape: Valles Caldera National Preserve a Land Use History*. RMRS-GTR-196. 277p. Fort Collins, CO: USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station

² Anschuetz, K., & Merlan, T. (2007). *More Than a Scenic Mountain Landscape: Valles Caldera National Preserve a Land Use History*. RMRS-GTR-196. 277p. Fort Collins, CO: USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station

1.1 Enabling Legislation

Included in section 102 of the act, Findings and Purposes, congress found that: “... *the Baca ranch can be protected for current and future generations by continued operation as a working ranch under a unique management regime which would protect the land and resource values of the property and surrounding ecosystem while allowing and providing for the ranch to eventually become financially self-sustaining;*” and “...*an experimental management regime should be provided by the establishment of a trust capable of using new methods of public land management that may prove to be cost-effective and environmentally sensitive;*”.

The purposes identified in the act included establishing “...*a demonstration area for an experimental management regime adapted to this unique property which incorporates elements of public and private administration in order to promote long term financial sustainability consistent with the other purposes enumerated...*”

The act also established several benchmarks to measure the progress of the experiment. Within two years from the date of acquisition, we were to provide the public with reasonable access to the preserve for recreation and other purposes. This benchmark was met as the USFS transferred management responsibility to the trust in 2002 at which time interim programs for public access and use of the preserve were initiated.

Within two years after assuming management of the preserve, we were to establish a program for comprehensive management of the preserve’s resources. In 2003 we published procedures to “... *implement the comprehensive management of the lands, resources, and facilities of the Valles Caldera National Preserve...*” and to “...*achieve the purposes of NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act]³.*”

Within two years of their first meeting the Board of Trustees was to submit a plan to decrease appropriations and achieve financial self-sufficiency by 2015. The board’s plan for decreasing appropriations was included as an appendix to the *Framework and Strategic Guidance for the Valles Caldera National Preserve*⁴ completed in 2005. This framework document was a summary of the current state of the VCNP; suggested goals for management and incorporated extensive public involvement. This document provided the basis for the interim management of the preserve.

1.2 Interim Management Period

“Interim Management” is a term we have adopted to refer to programs and activities that we assume will be replaced or terminated as long term, comprehensive management decisions are

³ Valles Caldera Trust. (2003, July 17). National Environmental Policy Act Procedures of the Valles Caldera Trust for the Valles Caldera National Preserve. *Federal Register / Vol. 68, No. 137*. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office

⁴ Valles Caldera Trust. (2005, June 1). *Framework for Comprehensive Management, Appendix B - 2000 - 2015 Plan for Decreasing Appropriations*. Retrieved from www.vallescaldera.gov: <http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/cmfr/Framework.p>

made. It is also a term we use to describe the current state of the trust as we try out new methods of public land administration. Over the past 10-years, we have engaged in a variety of interim programs and activities which can be grouped into several overarching categories: research inventory and monitoring, natural resource management, public access and use, facilities and infrastructure maintenance and repair, and administration.

1.2.1. Research, Inventory and Monitoring

Over the past ten years we have amassed detailed information on the forests, grasslands, wetlands, geology, soils, minerals, water, mammals, reptiles, birds, fish, insects, lichens, fungi, climate, all related to the preserve's web of life including its layers of human use, occupancy and value dating back thousands of years and continuing to the present day.

Data have been collected through field sampling activities that include inventorying plants, wildlife, insects, capturing and tracking the habitats and movements of mammals and birds, establishing permanent instrumentation to record weather, water quality, stream discharge, seismic activity, and cycles of carbon and other nutrients. Permanent ecological monitoring sites have been established to provide baseline conditions and measure the effects (or effectiveness) of management actions.

Cultural resource inventories (Figure 3) are also conducted through field sampling. These inventories are located to support compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation act, to ensure that artifacts are protected from management activities, to better understand the history of the landscape and to improve the efficiency of future surveys.

Field sampled inventory and monitoring have been supported by data collected through remote sensing technologies such as high resolution aerial photography, satellite imagery, and LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) which uses airborne laser mapping to precisely inventory the landscape surface including both topography, vegetative structure and other features.

Figure 3 – Archeologists inventory a pre-historic obsidian quarry on the VCNP



1.2.2. Natural Resource Management

Since federal acquisition we have thinned approximately 2000 acres of forest and treated a similar amount of acreage using prescribed fire (Figure 4). We have also completed a variety of riparian and wetland restoration activities; these are often associated with road maintenance activities.

Figure 4 - Valle Toledo prescribed fire designed to improve grassland health and inform future management



The primary purpose of forest thinning activities thus far has been to address wildfire hazards. They have been located adjacent to historic cabins, which are extremely vulnerable to fire, or in areas where human caused wildfires are frequent. These activities have been at the “project” level, meaning that each action is planned to achieve results in the project area and is not planned in context with the landscape as a whole. However the treatments have also been designed to collect information to

inform restoration at a “landscape” scale. Landscape treatments are designed to enhance the structure, composition and function of the ecosystem as a whole. Towards this end we have applied different prescriptions for selecting trees to cut or leave and have used different methods to dispose of the trees after they are cut. Prescribed burns have been intensively monitored. This information will be used to hypothesize the effects of forest restoration at a landscape scale.

1.2.3. Public Access and Use

Prior to Federal acquisition the number of people visiting the preserve each year was in the hundreds. The trust now sees nearly 100,000 visitors annually and provides quality recreation and interpretive experiences to about 25,000 of those visitors⁵. Recreation on the preserve is mostly “backcountry” as activities are not supported by developed amenities (Figure 5). Without parking, visitors use shuttles to travel to and from fishing and hiking areas. The trust has completed deferred maintenance on the main roads that were already in place upon acquisition, but no new roads have been developed and the roads are still gravel, single lane roads with turn-outs. A temporary visitor contact station has been established (without power or water), but a visitor center or main portal for access has not been built. Simple location and road signs as well as composting toilets have been installed but no recreational infrastructure such as parking lots, trailheads, picnic areas, or campgrounds have been constructed.

Figure 5 – Fishing on the preserve



⁵ (Valles Caldera Trust, 2011)

1.2.4. Facilities and Infrastructure

The preserve was acquired with 19 buildings ranging from iconic historic cabins and ranch structures (Figure 6), to a more modern lodge and bunkhouse, to outbuildings and various “shacks”. We have completed detailed evaluations on every building, addressed critical deferred maintenance on some of the buildings (modern and historic), and have initiated improvements to provide for public health and safety and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for some buildings in order to permit public occupancy. However, we have not yet planned work that is required for the long-term protection or preservation of these buildings, nor have we taken on major renovations needed to support a viable lodging enterprise.

Figure 6 - Historic ranch infrastructure



1.2.5. Administration

The enabling legislation provides the trust with several administrative tools to explore “...new methods of public land management that may prove to be cost-effective and environmentally sensitive”¹. These include exemptions from Federal laws and regulations governing procurement, as well as authorization to exchange goods for services, conduct business with anyone, and to solicit and accept donations. In developing policies and procedures we look to those that guide other land managers. We can learn from the lessons of the past – both successes and failures – as we explore new methods of public land management.

1.3 Purpose of this Strategic Management Plan

This document presents our strategy for managing the preserve for fiscal years (FY) 2012-2018 as we transition from interim to comprehensive management. This 7-year time period generally corresponds to the Phase III of our development identified in the *2000-2015 Plan for Decreasing Appropriations*⁴ prepared for the United States Congress in accordance with the Valles Caldera Preservation Act. This strategic planning period includes all near-term activities from FY 2012 through FY 2014, after which the Trust Board of Trustees must recommend to the Committees of Congress that we continue to receive appropriated funds for managing the preserve. In addition, this Strategic Management Plan extends beyond FY 2014 to include the fiscal years FY 2015 through FY 2018, the year in which the Board of Trustees must submit to the Secretary of Agriculture its recommendation as to whether to extend or terminate the VCT after FY 2020.

We have chosen to extend the strategic management planning period through FY 2018 for two major reasons. First, Phase II of the original *Plan for Decreasing Appropriations* relied extensively

upon developing infrastructure, including an integrated road and trails system, a visitor facility, an administrative/science facility with housing, offices, labs, and education and administrative facilities to support large-scale public visitation. These facility development goals have only partially been achieved through facility leases, the use of portable buildings and maintenance and repair of existing roads and buildings. Barriers to further development are only in part due to a lack of appropriation funding. The experimental nature of the Valles Caldera Trust contributes to the difficulty of establishing a fully operational unit of public land, open to broad public access and enjoyment.

There are several characteristics inherent to the trust that has, to date, slowed our progress in comprehensive management, especially the development of facilities and infrastructure. The VCT is governed by a nine member Board of Trustees, seven of which are presidentially appointed on a staggered, two year rotation. Due to the timeframes required for nominating, evaluating and appointing board members, the governing board is in a constant state of flux. The remaining two positions are ex-officio and also subject to frequent transitions. While the make-up of the board creates a remarkable trust of diverse backgrounds and expertise, the inherent instability of the leadership slows progress. The act also created uncertainty in the long-term management of the preserve and limits our ability to enter into long-term (>10 yr.) leases, contracts or agreements. This limitation makes it difficult to realize the potential for developing long-term funding programs, which could significantly accelerate the development of infrastructure and programs.

Figure 7 – The trust has not built any new, permanent facilities on the preserve



Conversely the experimental nature of the trust has resulted in many successes especially in the areas of science-based adaptive management programs for resource management, integrated programs of research and education, unique outdoor recreation programs, collaborative partnerships with other federal, state and local agencies and organizations, as well as unprecedented recovery of direct costs associated with managing a unit of National Forest System (NFS) land.

Positive aspects of our experimental management regime can be measured in both resource outcomes and financial efficiencies. However, we have only established temporary facilities and infrastructure to support our management programs and activities. These include: administrative offices (leased), full service science and education center (leased, remodeled), temporary visitor contact station (acquisition), and portable buildings (acquisition). These facilities, as well as the road/trail systems, have been developed only on an interim basis, and are currently not capable of supporting the level of public access and use envisioned to adequately serve the public or achieve

financial cost-recovery. Achievement of these infrastructure goals is paramount to all future public access and enjoyment of the preserve (consistent with resource protection and preservation), and will require time beyond FY 2014 to fully implement and evaluate.

Second, the Phase II period of trust development was intended to establish permanent recreation and public access programs, replacing the small-scale experimental interim programs developed in Phase I. While some progress in this area has been made, the permanent programs have not as yet reached fruition. Fortunately, the Environmental Impact Statements for plans for public access and use and the restoration and stewardship of our natural resources, are now nearly complete, and final decisions are scheduled for FY 2012. As such, we are on the threshold of transitioning from interim programs to

comprehensive management for public access and use and resource management, and these actions will clearly carry beyond FY 2014. Public access and use activities will need several years to mature and flourish, and therefore it is logical to include this maturation period into the 7-year plan (FY 2012-2018) described herein. Thus, this Strategic Management Plan incorporates all reasonably foreseeable activities from FY 2012 through the remaining evaluation period of the *Experiment in Public Land Management* envisioned by congress.

Figure 8 - The trust is committed to protecting and preserving the preserve's cultural and natural resources into the future



1.4 Our Mission, Vision, and Management Principles

Strategic planning by nature is a long view approach to management and is inspired by a *Mission*, a declaration of the purpose and focus of our existence; and a *Vision*, an inspirational description of what we would like to achieve or the state of our being in the future. Management principles are an expression of our core values and principles of conduct. While mission and vision are used to inspire and direct what we do, management principles guide how we do it.

1.4.1. Mission Statement

Based on formal and informal comments received over time from our stakeholders (including members of the public and congress) and input from our staff, we have developed a broad statement of purpose that identifies what we do, why and for whom:

The Valles Caldera Trust is an experiment in public land management, and is responsible for protecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources of the Valles Caldera National Preserve for present and future generations while being dedicated to sustainable public access and use.

1.4.2. Vision Statement

The following vision of our “ideal future” is also derived from both internal and external contributions:

The Valles Caldera National Preserve is a place of learning and inspiration, where focused, efficient, competent professionals implement adaptive management as an ecologically and economically viable method of public land management.

1.4.3. Management Principles

The following principles describe how we, the Valles Caldera Trust, will conduct our business and define our code of ethics and organizational values. They were adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 13, 2001. They were subsequently incorporated into our procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and published in the Federal Register July 17, 2003.

(1) We will administer the Preserve with the long view in mind, directing our efforts toward the benefit of future generations;

(2) Recognizing that the Preserve imparts a rich sense of place and qualities not to be found anywhere else, we commit ourselves to the protection of its ecological, cultural, and aesthetic integrity;

(3) We will strive to achieve a high level of integrity in our stewardship of the lands, programs, and other assets in our care. This includes adopting an ethic of financial thrift and discipline and exercising good business sense;

(4) We will exercise restraint in the implementation of all programs, basing them on sound science and adjusting them consistent with the principles of adaptive management;

(5) Recognizing the unique heritage of northern New Mexico’s traditional cultures, we will be a good neighbor to surrounding communities, striving to avoid negative impacts from Preserve activities and to generate positive impacts;

(6) Recognizing the religious significance of the Preserve to Native Americans, the Trust bears a special responsibility to accommodate the religious practices of nearby tribes and pueblos, and to protect sites of special significance;

(7) Recognizing the importance of clear and open communication, we commit ourselves to maintaining a productive dialogue with those who would advance the purposes of the Preserve and, where appropriate, to developing partnerships with them;

(8) Recognizing that the Preserve is part of a larger ecological whole, we will cooperate with adjacent landowners and managers to achieve a healthy regional ecosystem;

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(9) Recognizing the great potential of the Preserve for learning and inspiration, we will strive to integrate opportunities for research, reflection and education in the programs of the Preserve; and

(10) In providing opportunities to the public we will emphasize quality of experience over quantity of experiences. In so doing, while we reserve the right to limit participation or to maximize revenue in certain instances, we commit ourselves to providing fair and affordable access for all permitted activities.

Figure 9 - Management Principles adopted in 2001 express a commitment to the quality of the visitors' experiences



2. Future Goals and Strategies

Goals are the general end toward which we are directing our efforts. This strategic plan addresses three levels of goals: *Agency Goals*, *Strategic Goals* and *Performance Goals*. Goals stretch and challenge us; attaching measurable, time-based statements of intent and a strategy for their attainment assures that our goals remain realistic and achievable.

2.1 Agency Goals

Congress assigned the following management goals in 2000 within the Valles Caldera Preservation Act ⁶

1. operation of the Preserve as a working ranch, consistent with paragraphs (2) through (4);
2. the protection and preservation of the scientific, scenic, geologic, watershed, fish, wildlife, historic, cultural and recreational values of the Preserve;
3. multiple use and sustained yield of renewable resources within the Preserve;
4. public use of and access to the Preserve for recreation;
5. renewable resource utilization and management alternatives that, to the extent practicable—
 - a. benefit local communities and small businesses;
 - b. enhance coordination of management objectives with those on surrounding National Forest System land; and
 - c. provide cost savings to the Trust through the exchange of services, including but not limited to labor and maintenance of facilities, for resources or services provided by the Trust; and
6. optimizing the generation of income based on existing market conditions, to the extent that it does not unreasonably diminish the long-term scenic and natural values of the area, or the multiple use and sustained yield capability of the land.

2.2 Strategic Goals, Performance Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Strategic goals are statements of aim or purpose to advance the agency mission and address relevant problems, needs, and challenges. Achieving our strategic goals is key to meeting the purposes and goals established by congress in the enabling legislation.

Each strategic goal is associated with one or more *performance goals*. Performance goals are target levels of accomplishment against which our achievements and progress can be measured. These goals will guide the annual allocation of resources and support the evaluation of employee performance. Each performance goal is associated with one or more objectives expressed as tangible, measurable accomplishments or as a quantitative standard, value, or rate. Objectives will

⁶ U.S.C. (2000, July 25). P.L. 106-248 - July 25. *Valles Caldera Preservation Act* , Section 108 Resource Management (d) Management Program. Washington D.C.: 106th Congress

be used to measure our progress towards goal attainment, and serve as the basis for developing annual performance goals and program evaluation. Objectives are followed by our strategy for goal attainment.

2.2.1 Strategic Goal 1 – Public Access and Use -

Encourage public understanding and enjoyment of the preserve, including the development of facilities and infrastructure to expand the capacity for visitors consistent with resource protection.

This goal reflects the priorities of both the public and congress for the management of the preserve and was identified as an important benchmark for management in the *2000-2015 Plan for Decreasing Appropriations*. At this time we are preparing to make a final decision about where (or if) to develop a permanent entrance and visitor facilities on the preserve. We will also be deciding what scale of facility development and what type of transportation system is best suited to the preserve. Based on this decision we can begin design and construction of the entrance and facilities as well as beginning detailed plans for amenities and infrastructure to further expand the public's access to and enjoyment of the preserve (e.g., roads, trailheads, parking, restrooms, day-use amenities, campgrounds and possibly cabins.)

Figure 10 - Conceptual illustration of a visitor center



This planning effort has been informed by more than five years of public involvement, planning, and analysis and will represent a permanent commitment of resources and long-term commitments in capital improvements and fixed costs.

Three performance goals have been identified as critical to achieving this strategic goal.

2.2.1.1 Public Access and Use - Performance Goals and Objectives

Public Programs

Establish comprehensive programs and activities for recreation, interpretation of natural and cultural resources and education.

- a. Establish sustainable outdoor recreational programs for hiking, camping, biking, equestrian, hunting and fishing, plus other programs such as livestock grazing by 2015.

- b. Establish permanent formal and informal educational program for all ages, and make available interpretive naturalist programs for all visitors by 2015.
- c. Ensure all public programs are available to a broad range of social and economic groups now and into the future.

Capital Improvements

Design, engineer, and construct facilities in support of visitors and public programs, administration and education, as needed in program development.

- a. Design and build a permanent visitor center and administrative/education facility (scope and size to be determined by EIS) with associated capacities for supporting public programs by FY2015.
- b. Design and build permanent infrastructure and transportation system, including roads, trails, and ancillary facilities for public recreation, safety, and resource protection by (FY 2016).

Sustainability

Reduce greenhouse gas pollution, eliminate waste, improve energy and water performance, and leverage Federal purchasing power to support innovation and entrepreneurship in clean energy technologies and environmentally-responsible products.

- a. All new facilities will be “green” as defined by the Guiding Principles for Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings. These buildings will employ integrated design principles, optimize energy efficiency, use renewable energy, protect and conserve water, have improved indoor environmental quality, and reduce the environmental impacts of materials.
- b. Reduce our “per-use” use of potable water in existing facilities by 10 percent over present.
- c. Increase our use of electricity from renewable resources by at least 7.5 percent over present by 2015.

2.2.1.2 Public Access and Use – Management Strategy

The cornerstone of meeting this goal is the development of capital improvements needed to expand public access and enjoyment of the preserve while protecting and preserving resources and values. The first benchmark in our strategy is the scheduled completion of the Public Access and Use Plan (PAUP) and Record of Decision in FY 2012. Based on this plan, the trust will commence with designing and building these facilities. Our benchmark for completing the main portal for access is 2015, however meeting this benchmark will be tied to funding.

Among the authorities of the Secretary (of Agriculture) included in the Trust’s enabling legislation is the construction and operation of a visitor center. This authority is subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Capital improvement needs during the strategic planning period are estimated at \$32,022,710. Therefore developing support and contributions from non-federal sources and will play a large role in goal attainment.

An example of this type of support is our current participation in “Parks for the People”, a collaborative initiative of the Van Alen Institute, National Parks Conservation Association, and the National Park Service, supported by the National Endowment of the Arts and Golden Gate National Park Conservancy. As part of this initiative, Rice University School of Architecture will be providing us with innovative ideas for facility design, which incorporate our unique cultural and ecological environment, as well as the latest ideas and technology for sustainable design.

The outputs of this collaboration will lead to considerable cost savings in the architecture and engineering phase of facility development and may attract additional sponsorship.

Simultaneously with designing and building an entrance and visitor center we will begin planning a system for motorized and non-motorized travel on the preserve including ancillary infrastructure and facilities (trailheads, picnic areas, shuttle/parking, fishing access, camping areas and possibly cabins and other amenities) also consistent with the PAUP.

Figure 11 - Conceptual illustration of transportation infrastructure to support public access and enjoyment of the preserve



This goal also incorporates performance goals aligned with Federal priority goals for sustainability. All planning efforts focus on sustainability and the trust has invested in a study of local power generation to meet electricity needs of a visitor center and potential fleet electric of vehicles. We are also comparing a shuttle system as the primary means of visitor transportation in lieu of personal vehicles.

As staffing and visitation increase so will our use of potable water. In keeping with federal priority goals, we have set a goal to reduce water consumption at existing facilities; however this will be reflected on a per use basis. This goal will be met by reducing the amount of water used with each flush of toilet, and use of faucets and showers.

We foresee our public programs continuing to expand and evolve commensurate with the development of facilities and infrastructure. We will continue to keep up with current demands within the capability of the lands, resources and facilities of the preserve⁷.

Meeting this goal will be an interdisciplinary effort and a priority of work for all divisions. Present and future staffing increases will be required to continue planning while simultaneously expanding programs and developing infrastructure. Additional staffing can include a mix of trust employees, contractors, concessionaires, or partnerships and agreements with other entities.

2.2.2 Strategic Goal 2 - Natural and Cultural Resources

Restore and enhance the preserve's rich natural, cultural and historic resources for sustainable use and enjoyment by present and future generations of Americans.

The second goal, restoration and rehabilitation of the preserve's natural and cultural resources, is critical for meeting the purposes and goals put forth by congress in the 2000 legislation. Understanding the changing patterns across 10,000 years of human use of the caldera provides a context for conceiving stewardship of the preserve. The last two centuries of human activity, including grazing, logging, road building and geothermal exploration have significantly degraded the preserve's natural resources.

While "restoration" *per se* was not mentioned in the enabling legislation, aggressive restoration efforts are needed to reduce the vulnerability of both natural and cultural resources to wildfires such as the Las Conchas fire shown right, climate change, and other disturbances.

Rehabilitation of the area burned by the Las Conchas Wildfire In 2011 is inherent to this goal. The Las Conchas fire burned over 30,000 acres of the preserve (approximately one-third of the land area). More than half of these acres burned severely enough to significantly alter the natural patterns of growth and succession. Severe post-fire flooding of scorched watersheds killed 95 percent of the trout population in San Antonio Creek. Ancient obsidian quarries burned with high severity, causing severe artifact damage and exposing this unique cultural landscape to permanent loss from post fire erosion. Immediate rehabilitation

Figure 12 - Towering flames from the Las Conchas fire



⁷ U.S.C. (2000, July 25). P.L. 106-248 - July 25. *Valles Caldera Preservation Act* Section 108 Resource Management, (e) Public Use and Recreation; (3) Public Access. Washington D.C.: 106th Congress

efforts are needed to reduce and stop the loss and damage to natural and cultural resources. Further, much of the burned forested land has been placed off limits to the public due to safety concerns and road conditions. Rehabilitating the watersheds, forests, roads, trails and other infrastructure in the burned zone will need to be accomplished quickly to allow full utilization of these areas by the trust for public programs. Rapid mobilization of large-scale forest and watershed restoration activities requires proactive and efficient inventories and treatment plans to avoid damage to sensitive cultural properties and landscapes. It also presents an opportunity to incorporate the voices, traditional knowledge and concerns, of tribal and community stakeholders.

Without restorative actions, the Baca Ranch Headquarters historic district will begin to succumb to time and the elements. We have completed detailed evaluations (engineering and historic preservation) of all the historic structures on the preserve and are poised to address restoration as well as interpretation and potential public occupancy and use of these structures for the long-term.

Two performance goals have been identified. The first is focused on natural resource restoration and rehabilitation; the second is focused on the protection and preservation of cultural resources and historic structures.

2.2.2.1. Natural and Cultural Resources - Performance Goals and Objectives

Natural Resources Restoration and Stewardship

Move the condition of forests at a landscape scale towards a condition that, to the best of our collective knowledge, is sustainable and resilient in the event of natural disturbance.

- a. Complete the Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the restoration and stewardship of natural resources in FY 2012 and initiate restoration activities.
- b. Expand contracting capabilities to assist with restoration and rehabilitation activities, including “goods for services” contracts by 2013.
- c. Benefit local communities and businesses through direct and indirect income and jobs and non-monetary contributions now and into the future.
- d. Thin 30 percent of dense, young forests and reduce the crown-fire potential (see Figure 13 below) by 30 percent by 2018.
- e. Establish a transparent record of accomplishment and monitoring, including State of the Preserve reports in 2012 and 2017.

Figure 13 - Ponderosa pine forest before (left) and after (right) forest thinning/fire hazard reduction



Cultural Resources Protection and Preservation

Investigate, interpret, and restore the layers of human occupancy and use on the preserve.

- a. Programmatic agreement for NHPA Section 106 procedures and project level agreements in place for landscape restoration and public access and use programs with the State Historic Preservation Office and interested Tribal Governments by 2013.
- b. Restoration/preservation actions are completed on at least two historic structures by 2015.
- c. Complete archaeological surveys on 30 percent of the preserve by 2018.
- d. Public interpretation and education programs established by 2014.

2.2.2.2. Natural and Cultural Resources – Management Strategy

The Natural Resources and Scientific Services Divisions will work together to restore, protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of the preserve. The first benchmark for goal attainment will be to complete the preserve-wide plan for the restoration and stewardship of these natural systems. This plan is due to be completed in FY 2012; based on these decisions the trust will expand forest and riparian restoration and stewardship actions using annual funds awarded through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). We currently thin about 600 acres per year. In order to meet our goals, we will have to triple our capacity. Building on a decade of cultural resources investigations, we will use spatially enabled tools for identifying and predicting the distribution of sensitive cultural resources. Using this landscape approach to managing and interpreting data, we

Figure 14 - Large field house with remnants of a standing wall found in the southwestern corner of the



optimize the efficiency of inventory and monitoring and build a more complete understanding of the human past. Key actions needed to increase our capacity to implement restoration activities include:

- ❖ Use of agreement documents to streamline NHPA Section 106 compliance and SHPO consultation, and to improve consultation and involvement of interested Pueblos and Tribes.
- ❖ Complete landscape scale cultural resource surveys.
- ❖ Expand the existing preserve-wide monitoring network into all forest types.
- ❖ Develop contracting instruments such as stewardship contracts or similar agreements to improve administrative efficiencies.
- ❖ Continue current collaborations with neighboring land managers and increase management activities across boundaries.
- ❖ Continue strong partnerships with non-government organizations including WildEarth Guardians, The Nature Conservancy, Los Amigos del los Valles Caldera, and others. These groups bring resource knowledge and expertise, project design ideas, and volunteer labor, which greatly expand our capacity to steward the preserve as well as the quality of our work.

Additional staffing and skills needed include forestry, range and watershed, and engineering. We are currently pursuing a shared fire and forestry organization with Bandelier National Monument. This would allow both agencies to expand skill sets without increasing the number of employees. Similar partnerships with the Santa Fe National Forest as well as the use of contractors and volunteers will also be tools in expanding capacity.

2.2.3 Strategic Goal 3 – Financial Sustainability

Establish a public-private model of administration to optimize revenues and develop philanthropy to support the preservation, enhancement and operation of the Valles Caldera National Preserve.

The goal of generating revenue, grants, and other sources of non-Federal funding, addresses the financial self-sufficiency goal set out by congress in the purposes and goals of the act. This goal will also assure the continued economic viability of education and other programs that enhance the benefits of public lands. Three performance goals have been selected to optimize income, increase philanthropy, and enhance the economic vibrancy of the surrounding area.

2.2.3.1 Financial Sustainability - Performance Goals and Objectives

Revenue Optimization

Optimize the generation of income from public programs for access and use to the extent that it does not unreasonably diminish the long-term scenic and natural values of the area unduly exclude or limit public access to and enjoyment of the preserve.

- a. Achieve 100 percent cost-recovery for all expenses associated with revenue generating programs by the end of FY 2015.
- b. Achieve greater than 50 percent occupancy of lodging facilities by the end of FY 2015.
- c. Increase participation in public programs to 80 percent of capacity by the end of FY 2018 based on supporting infrastructure.
- d. Assure customers will, on average, be satisfied with the quality of their visits and experience and the fees charged based on survey results.

Philanthropic Support and Commercial Investment

Develop philanthropic support and commercial investment for the programs and management of the facilities, lands and resources of the preserve.

- a. Recover at least 50 percent of all costs for restoration and rehabilitation operational and monitoring costs through grants, donations volunteer efforts, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations.
- b. Acquire 25 percent of design and build costs through philanthropic and commercial sources.

Benefit local communities and business

Contribute to the cultural riches and entrepreneurial efforts of the communities surrounding the preserve.

- a. Participate in local and regional tourism committees and partnerships.
- b. Have positive, measurable socio-economic impact at local and regional scales.
- c. Increase the amount of stream discharge from the preserve through the Jemez Valley within restored watersheds by 10 percent by 2018.

2.2.3.2 Financial Sustainability – Management Strategy

The first step in our attainment of financial sustainability is the establishment of a dedicated functional area and organizational division. The *Enterprise Division* will develop and implement a communications and market strategy to inform the public about the opportunities available on the preserve in order to increase visitation. They also will develop and implement a strategy to communicate the unique mission of the trust in providing opportunities for groups and individuals to participate in restoration and management of the preserve.

Program areas that present opportunities for philanthropic grants, donations, sponsorships, and volunteer efforts include: landscape restoration, restoration of historic structures, sustainable development, and unique outdoor recreation, interpretation and educational programs dedicated to learning and inspiration.

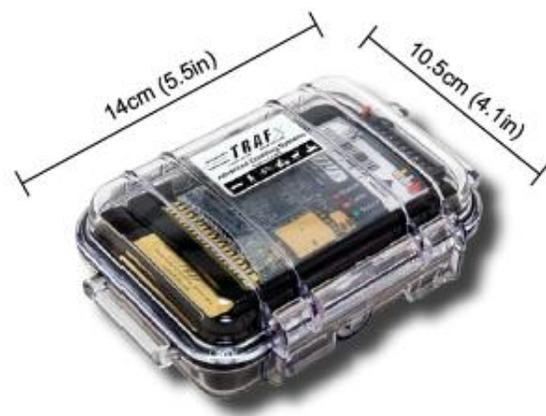
Our economic health is directly related to the economic vibrancy of the surrounding communities, the regional area, and the state as a whole. This is a synergistic relationship,

for increased visitation to the preserve brings increased visitation to the surrounding communities and vice-versa. We can enhance this synergy by partnering with local tourism organizations, participating in local activities, and broadening our marketing venues and messages.

We are developing quantitative metric to evaluate our progress towards goal attainment. The trust has recently developed methods to measure visitation consistent with other public land management agencies using traffic data loggers (Figure 15). Prior methods measured visitors who actually participated in activities, signed trailhead forms or otherwise presented themselves for an individual count.

Quantifying the number of visitors as well as their degree of satisfaction is important for managing both and for moving towards goal attainment. Customer satisfaction is currently measured qualitatively by direct feedback and use of social media. As long-term programs are established, customer satisfaction can be quantified and evaluated over time using methods comparable to other public land management units and compliant with OMB guidelines.

Figure 15 - Traftx traffic data logger



3. Ensuring Our Success

This section presents the roles and responsibilities of the trust organization in ensuring goal attainment, describes how success will be measured and reported, describes how progress will be evaluated and programs adjusted, predicts the probability of success, and identifies the resources needed to succeed.

3.1 Roles, Responsibilities

Our first step in ensuring the success of this strategy was to reorganize our workforce. The purpose for this reorganization was to:

- ❖ Meet the purposes and goals from the act
- ❖ Meet strategic goals for next 3-6 years
- ❖ Increase efficiency and quality of work produced
- ❖ Optimize existing workforce
- ❖ Plan and prioritize needed skills
- ❖ Adjust workload to match budget and workforce
- ❖ Level workloads
- ❖ Manage span of control for supervisors/managers

We began comparing organizations from National Park Service Units such as Bandelier National Monument, other experimental NFS land management units (Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument), and a National Forest unit who had reorganized based on function (White Mountain National Forest). All these units employed 3-4 times the number of full time employees than that of the trust. We did not believe that a significant increase in funding for full time employees was likely; nor would such a large increase in fixed costs be consistent with the Act.

Rather than seeking to significantly expand our organization, we identified overlapping management functions as illustrated below in Figure 16. Functional responsibilities were distributed into six divisions: Leadership, Administrative Services, Scientific Services, Natural Resources, Operations, and Enterprise as illustrated in Figure 17. These divisions were customized to best utilize existing technical and leadership skills and capacities with safety as a critical component of all management actions⁸. Changes and additions in our workload or workforce could initiate a shift in division responsibilities that could more closely reflect the functional organization.

⁸ The Trust's safety program is the responsibility of the Leadership Division and is managed by the Operations Division leader.

Figure 16 - Management Functions

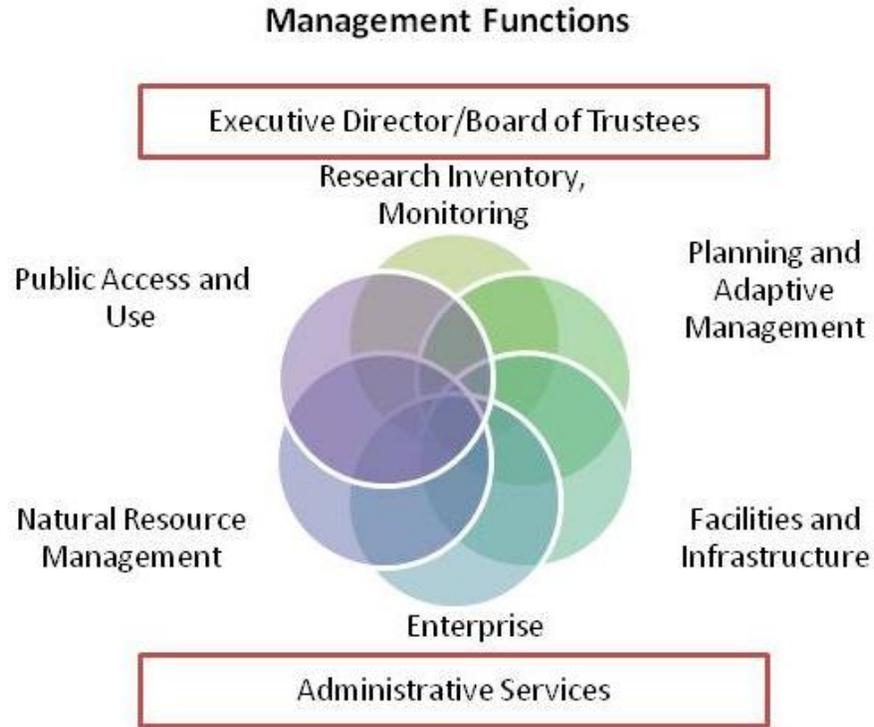


Figure 17 – Organizational Divisions



The divisions are focused on goal attainment and with goal attainment incorporated into performance standards as appropriate for each division.

- ❖ Operations Division – This division oversees programs for recreation, safety, facilities maintenance and repair, and livestock grazing. They will be responsible for meeting our goals for expanding the public’s use and enjoyment of the preserve.
- ❖ Natural Resource Division – This division oversees programs related to the stewardship natural resources including the development and maintenance of Stewardship Registers (NEPA documents). They will be responsible for the attainment of goals and objectives for the restoration, rehabilitation and continued stewardship of the preserve’s natural resources.
- ❖ Scientific Services Division – This division oversees programs related to research, inventory and monitoring of natural and cultural resources. This division also serves as the independent arm of the agency responsible for evaluating monitored outcomes and ensuring the incorporation of best available science in the programs and activities implemented by the Operations and Natural Resources Divisions. The Scientific Services Division also provides expertise (wildlife, fisheries, soils, hydrology, etc.) in support of the Natural Resources Division and oversees the stewardship of cultural resources.
- ❖ Enterprise Division – This division oversees all commercial activities and philanthropic fund development as well as communications and marketing. This division will be responsible for goal attainment related to financial sustainability.
- ❖ Administrative Services Division – This division provides support services including, human resources, personnel, fleet, budget, procurement, and accounting services.
- ❖ Leadership Division – The Leadership Division consists of the Executive Director and Board of Trustees who are ultimately responsible for goal attainment and governance of the trust and the safety of employees and visitors.

3.2 Program Evaluations

This section describes program evaluations used in establishing or revising strategic goals with a schedule for future evaluations.

One of the strengths of the trust has been the incorporation of adaptive management⁹ into project and program management. We are proposing to incorporate adaptive management into this plan to better integrate our strategic vision with operational management. Benchmarks incorporated into performance goals and objectives will be used to evaluate our progress towards goal attainment.

⁹ Valles Caldera Trust. (2003, July 17). National Environmental Policy Act Procedures of the Valles Caldera Trust for the Valles Caldera National Preserve. *Federal Register / Vol. 68, No. 137*. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office Means adjusting stewardship actions or strategic guidance based on knowledge gained from new information, experience, experimentation, and monitoring results, and is the preferred method for managing complex natural systems.

3.1.1. Strategic Plan Evaluation and Revision

The act requires the trust to submit an annual report to the Committees of Congress. In the future this report will be prepared to comply with the requirement of the act as well as annual reporting requirements under the GPRA Modernization Act. The annual reports to congress for FY years 2012 – 2018 will include annual and cumulative metrics applied towards goal attainment as appropriate.

This strategic plan will be reviewed in 2014. This will bring the trust into the four-year revision schedule identified in the amended GPRA. Interim adjustments may be made without further congressional review unless the adjustment reflects a substantial change in our operating environment. The annual reports will serve to document interim adjustments.

3.1.2. Performance Measures

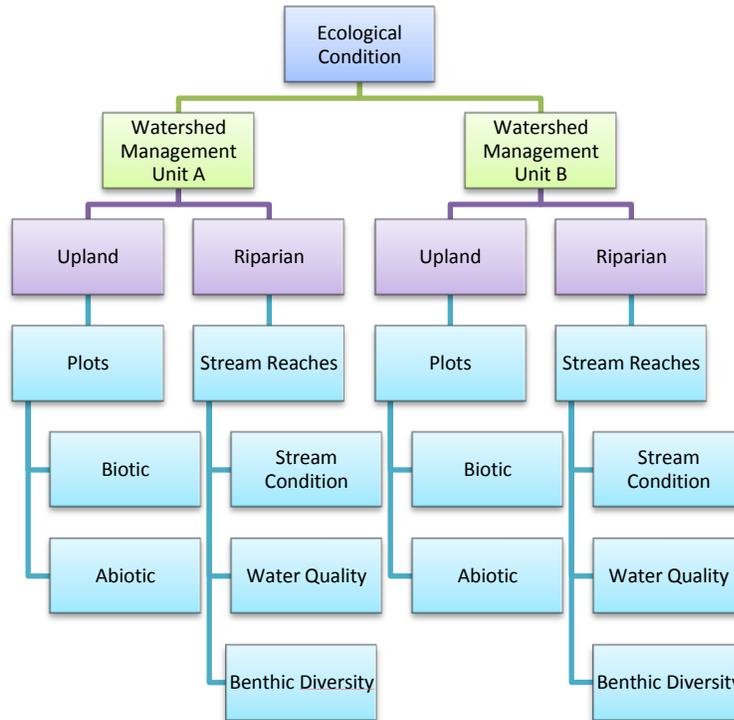
Strategic goals have been associated with performance goals and objectives for goal attainment. We have identified measures that can be reported annually and cumulatively to show measured progress. Progress will be reported annually using quantifiable units of achievement (e.g. dollars, acres, miles), percent or ratios, level of achievement (e.g. level of visitation, customer satisfaction, ecological condition), compliance or standards, (e.g. environmental, safety, legislative) or simple benchmarks (e.g. plans complete, methods established).

The State of the Preserve, which we prepare every five years,¹⁰ offers us an opportunity to examine our progress and evaluate the cumulative effects of our management actions. Figure 18 below illustrates how local measures taken within a plot or a stream can be combined to measure overall riparian and upland condition. Riparian and upland condition can be combined to measure ecological condition at the watershed level which can be combined to estimate ecological condition at a landscape or preserve-wide level.

This systematic approach of measuring performance relates actions implemented at single location or point in time to broader goal attainment and tracks the effects as well as the effectiveness of our strategies and actions towards goal attainment. The State of the Preserve also offers us the opportunity to adjust management actions if actual outcomes are significantly different than predicted or to incorporate new information.

¹⁰ The current State of the Preserve is due FY 2012.

Figure 18 - Illustration of local measures combining up to a cumulative measure of ecological condition



3.3 External Factors

External factors are those factors that are reasonably possible or even likely but are mostly beyond our control. We have identified six external factors that may threaten or impede goal attainment or substantially alter our operating environment. External factors that threaten or impede goal attainment may require interim adjustments to the strategic plan. External factors that result in a substantial change in our operating environment may require a significant revision to the strategic plan and further review by congress.

3.3.1 Management Scenarios

Within the planning period, there are several scenarios that could affect or substantially change our operating environment:

- ❖ A bill (S. 564) has been introduced to the U.S. Senate that would transfer management of the preserve to the National Park Service, terminating the Valles Caldera Trust.
- ❖ 2015 is the last full fiscal year which the trust is authorized to receive appropriated funds for managing the preserve. By the end of FY 2014, the trust must make a recommendation to the Secretary of Agriculture regarding continuing appropriations to the trust.
- ❖ In FY 2018, the board must make a recommendation to congress as to whether or not the trust should continue to manage the preserve beyond the 2020 authorization termination date; congress must then act to reauthorize the trust. Without congressional action,

management of the preserve would be assumed by the Santa Fe National Forest following Fiscal Year 2020.

3.3.2 Funding

We are currently organized to move forward towards goal attainment with the existing organization and flat (or slightly reduced) levels of funding. Less funding can slow or limit our progress and more funding could accelerate that progress. Some forecasts predict a reduction in appropriated funds provided to public land management agencies of 3-10 percent. This level of reduction would require us to review near-term goals and objectives, which are heavily reliant on capital improvements.

Changes in funding may require either an interim adjustment of the plan or could substantially alter our operating environment require a revision of the strategic plan and further review by congress.

3.3.3 Administrative Factors

There are three administrative factors that could affect goal attainment: 1) potential claims (liability, workman's compensation, etc.); 2) appointments to the Board of Trustees; and 3) continued occupation of our current facilities. These are all factors that we cannot control beyond preparing for their possible occurrence. If any of these scenarios were to materialize, an interim adjustment or major revision of the strategic plan could be warranted.

- ❖ Claims – The trust does not have access to the Judgment Fund and therefore, has to cover its own liabilities and procure its own liability insurance. Acquiring and maintaining liability insurance for preserve management, especially public access and use, has been tenuous, as well as expensive. If a significant claim were to be filed, it is possible and even probable we would lose our insurance. Public access could feasibly be limited to those visitors with proof of insurance.
- ❖ Board of Trustees - The make-up of the board has been shown to greatly influence the direction and priorities for management. The board will transition numerous times during the planning period.
- ❖ Facilities - The trust operates from two leased facilities in Jemez Springs. These facilities are currently on the market for sale. If sold, new owners could terminate our lease. Further, the neighboring USFS field office, (Jemez Ranger District) is scheduled to build a new facility, which could create an opportunity for the two offices to share facilities as well as some administrative and public services.

3.3.4 Environmental Factors

Because we operate in the natural environment, nearly all progress towards goal attainment can be significantly affected by weather and natural events (e.g. fire, floods, drought etc.).

Environmental conditions affect our ability to complete landscape restoration activities such as prescribed burning and forest thinning. Conversely, as we complete more restoration work across the landscape, the forests will become less vulnerable to external factors.

Public access and use on the preserve is also affected by natural events. The current road network limits motorized access during inclement weather. Even on a daily basis travel can be difficult during summer monsoonal events. The Las Conchas Fire in 2011 significantly limited public access to the eastern third of the preserve, as roads were rendered impassable and post-fire conditions were (and still are) very dangerous (Figure 19). Improvements to facilities and infrastructure will reduce the impact that weather has on public access and use.

Figure 19 - Trees killed by the Las Conchas fire will present a safety hazard for years to come



Generally, environmental factors and events are incorporated into our strategic plans. However events along the scale of the Las Conchas wildfire may warrant an interim adjustment of our strategic plan. It is feasible that a natural event such as fire or flood that resulted in a loss of facilities or a claim against the trust or government could require a major plan revision in consultation with congress.

3.3.5 Public Support

The public has the power to significantly impact every aspect of preserve management and influence funding as well as congressional support. While we have the ability to inform and influence public opinion, the garnering of public support is not completely within our control. In 2010 a public survey conducted by a University of New Mexico graduate student for a thesis project found that those surveyed placed the highest management priority on providing public access and ecological protection. However, optimizing public access is not always consistent with ecological

Figure 20 – The trust hosted a series of public workshops to discuss the scale and type of facilities that should be built in support of visitor access and enjoyment.



protection¹¹. These conflicts have been the basis for public criticisms in the past.

Planning and decision-making for long-term management has provided opportunities to collect public feedback on the management of resources and the types of programs and activities people would like to see on the preserve. Workshops provide opportunities for the public to work with the trust in a collaborative environment (Figure 20). These comments have been considered in the selection and priority of our strategic goals. We remain committed to including people from all backgrounds and with wide-ranging interests, and we recognize that positive involvement of the local, regional, and national communities are vital to achieving our mission.

3.4 Probability of Success

General Dwight D. Eisenhower is quoted as saying, “Plans are useless but planning is everything.” While this strategic plan does not in itself guarantee success, the process of strategic planning is essential to navigating towards long-term goals in a complex environment.

One exercise we engaged in as part of our strategic planning was assessing our strengths and weaknesses and identifying the opportunities and threats that could either support or hinder goal attainment for the planning period. Many of the weaknesses identified were perceived or were a function of organization or management that we had the control to address internally. Once identified and mitigated these weaknesses were not considered to be factors that would ultimately affect goal attainment.

Further, our strengths such as the passion that all those involved (employees, members of the board, the public, as well as congress) have for the resources and values of the preserve, as well as our commitment to the experiment were thought to far outweigh any weaknesses.

We identified external factors (as described under 3.3 above) that could significantly alter the management of the preserve including potential transfer of management or loss of funding. However, our progress towards goal attainment will support the successful management of the preserve and continued service to the American people under any of the future scenarios.

3.5 Resource Needs

Goal attainment during the planning period will be commensurate with fulfilling organizational and funding needs.

¹¹ Gagnon, Matthew C., August 2012. Valles Caldera National Preserve: Recreationists’ Perspective on Access and Management. Thesis submitted in partial requirement for a Master’s of Science Geography, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

3.5.1 Organization

The trust currently employs 22 permanent employees. The permanent workforce is supported by a temporary workforce¹² of 20 -40 more employees depending on the season. Contractors, employees detailed from other federal agencies or assigned through grants or agreements also bring specialized skills to specific projects. The trust has deliberately limited building a large permanent workforce in order to maintain flexibility and low fixed costs. A 2010 report found the Valles Caldera Trust to have the lowest average salary of any federal agency¹³. As our operations grow during the strategic planning period staffing needs are expected to increase. In the short term it is often more advantageous to hire permanent staff. Employees incur a significantly lower cost per unit than contracted personnel. They also tend to share a commitment to mission, and are flexible, taking on tasks outside their specialty. Contractors and concessionaires tend to have very high costs per unit and tend not work outside of their narrow scope of assigned duties. However, when we fill our organizational needs with contracted services we only pay for work accomplished and lower operating costs over time. Further,

Figure 21 - Valles Caldera Trust staff and volunteers work to inventory and record historic aspen carvings.

the use of contractors allows us to match very specific skills to a particular task. Perhaps the greatest consideration with hiring permanent employees is the increased fixed costs. Increasing fixed costs incrementally reduces our flexibility and ability to respond to changes in funding.



During the strategic planning period we will increase our capacity using a mix of permanent and temporary employees as well as contractors, and partnerships with other agencies, universities and/or organizations. Dedicated volunteers greatly expand the capacity of our workforce. The award winning¹⁴ volunteer group shown above (Figure 21) inventoried and recorded carvings on aspen trees left by shepherds and others around the turn of the century.

¹² Seasonal employees work part of the year; term employees work year round for a limited number of years.

¹³ US News, Politics, *Lowest Paid Federal Employees – Department of Agriculture Employees rank near the bottom for salaries*, Danielle Kurtzleben, December 3, 2010, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/12/03/the-lowest-paid-federal-employees-department-of-agriculture-employees-rank-near-the-bottom-for-salaries>

¹⁴ Volunteers, who inventoried more than 300 historic aspen carvings on the preserve, were designated as *Preserve America Stewards* under the *Preserve America* program. *Preserve America* is a national initiative developed in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the U.S. Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies.

3.5.2 Funding

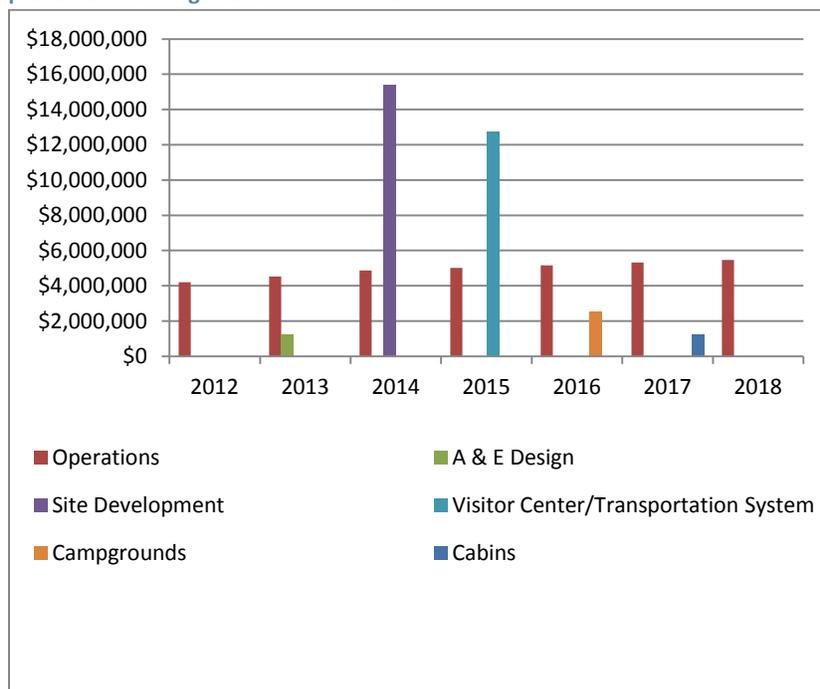
The strategic plan is based on continued funding for operations from appropriations at or near current levels through 2018 and requires additional appropriations for capital improvements. Also, the plan assumes that 50 percent of costs associated with the restoration and rehabilitation of natural resources will be funded by the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program for the duration of the planning period. The remaining 50 percent is expected to come from appropriated funds and external cash and in-kind contributions.

The attainment of goals for public use and enjoyment of the preserve and the trust’s financial sustainability will require significant funding towards capital improvements (see Table 1 below followed by Figure 22) beginning with architecture and engineering design of visitor facilities in FY 2013, followed by site development in FY 2014, and actual construction during 2015-2017.

Table 1 – Capital improvement funding needs and schedule 2012-2018

Year	Total Funding	Operations	Architecture & Engineering	Site Development	Visitor Center & Transportation System	Campgrounds	Cabins
2012	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2013	\$5,726,000	\$4,526,000	\$1,200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2014	\$20,246,020	\$4,861,780	\$0	\$15,384,240	\$0	\$0	\$0
2015	\$17,769,903	\$5,007,633	\$0	\$0	\$12,762,270	\$0	\$0
2016	\$6,434,062	\$5,157,862	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500,000	\$0
2017	\$6,712,598	\$5,312,598	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,200,000
2018	\$5,471,976	\$5,471,976	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Figure 22 - Capital improvement funding needs and schedule 2012-2018



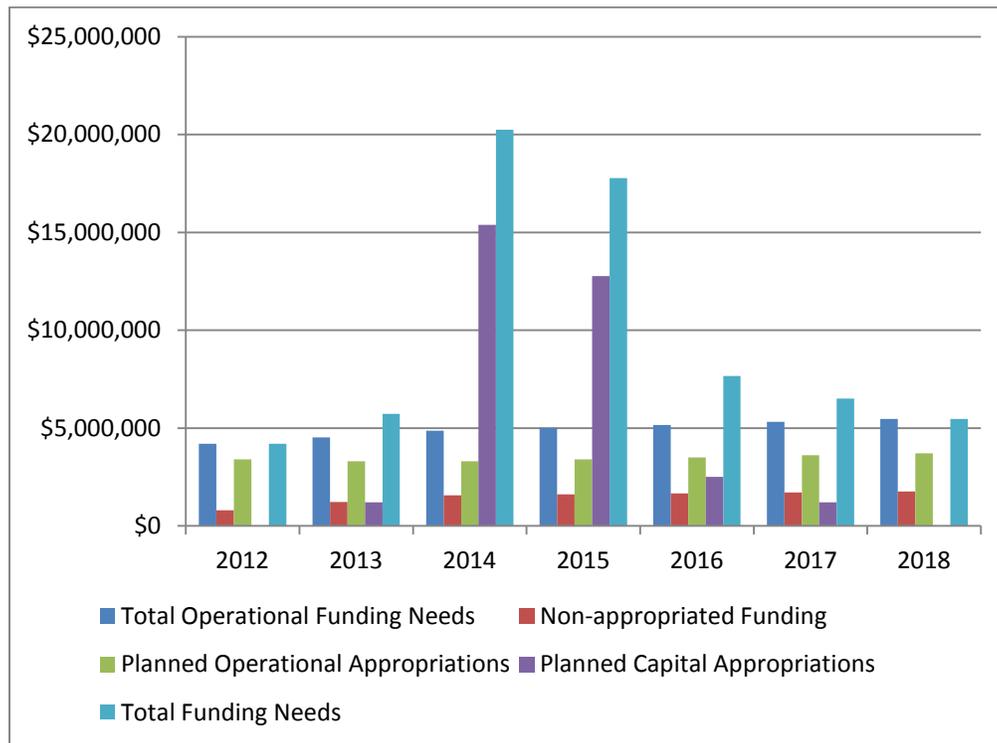
Management of the preserve is funded through a mixture of monies appropriated from congress, revenues generated from fees paid for programs and services, as well as grants and donations. For the purpose of this strategic plan, we have developed a scenario of fund mixtures (appropriated and non-appropriated) to support operations and capital improvements as presented in

Figure 23 below followed by Table 2. This scenario assumes that operational costs will increase by 3 percent annually and that revenues will remain constant and that some trust fund savings would be available to continue transportation planning.

Table 2 – Possible scenario for funding needs 2012-2018 including funds appropriated for operations, capital improvements, as well as non-appropriated funds

Year	Total Funding Needs	Non-appropriated Funding Needs	Total Operational Funds	Appropriated Operational Funds	Capital Improvement Funding Needs	Description of Capital Projects
2012	\$4,200,000	\$800,000	\$4,200,000	\$3,400,000	\$0	
2013	\$5,726,000	\$1,228,000	\$4,526,000	\$3,298,000	\$1,200,000	A&E for Visitor Center
2014	\$20,246,020	\$1,563,780	\$4,861,780	\$3,298,000	\$15,384,240	Site Improvements
2015	\$17,769,903	\$1,607,633	\$5,007,633	\$3,400,000	\$12,762,270	Visitor Center
2016	\$7,657,862	\$1,655,862	\$5,157,862	\$3,502,000	\$2,500,000	Campgrounds
2017	\$6,512,598	\$1,705,538	\$5,312,598	\$3,607,060	\$1,200,000	Cabins
2018	\$5,471,976	\$1,756,704	\$5,471,976	\$3,715,272	\$0	

Figure 23 - Possible funding mixture 2012-2018 including funds appropriated for operations, capital improvements, as well as non-appropriated funds



4. Sharing Our Vision

GPRA requires agencies to include how the strategic plan incorporates views and suggestions obtained through congressional consultations.

4.1 Consultation with Congress

We have made every effort to adopt goals and develop strategies which clearly incorporate and prioritize the views and suggestions of senators, the public, and other stakeholders. This strategic management plan puts the priorities of congress, expanding public access and programs and landscape restoration, as the first and second priority goals for the planning period. The third goal, financial sustainability, is a priority only because of its essential role in the attainment of these goals and the management goals from the Valles Caldera Preservation Act.

Members of the United States Congress and Senate have communicated their views and suggestions through formal correspondence, field trips, representation at public and planning meetings, and through the drafting of Senate Bill 564, which presents the current aspirations of congress for the preserve.

4.2 Public Consultation

The views of the public and other stakeholders have been captured through public meetings and workshops, formal and informal correspondence, and public survey. Public meetings and workshops were related to planning and decision-making for public access and use and natural resource stewardship (Strategic Goals 1 and 2). Correspondence has been related to these planning efforts or were general letters of correspondence directed the Board of Trustees or to congress. They were primarily to request increased efforts and resources be directed to expanding the publics' access to and enjoyment of the preserve.

A graduate student from the University of New Mexico conducted an opinion survey with over 700 individuals interested in the management public access on the preserve¹⁵. This survey was conducted independent from the trust. Question 9 in the survey asked, "What management objective do you think should have the highest priority on the Preserve?" As shown below in Table 3, respondents either believed that Ecological

Figure 24 - 2011 series of public meetings and workshops were held to discuss public access and use and ecological stewardship on the preserve



¹⁵ Gagnon, Matthew C., August 2012. Valles Caldera National Preserve: Recreationists' Perspective on Access and Management. Thesis submitted in partial requirement for a Master's of Science Geography, University of New Mexico, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Restoration and Resource Protection or Recreation should be the highest priority for management or that all management objectives should be given equal priority.

Table 3 - Public preference for priority management objectives

Management Objective	Percent of Respondents
All objectives weighted equally	33.1
Ecological Restoration and Resource Protection	31.4
Recreation	26.1
Grazing	4.3
Science and Research	2.9
Cultural and Religious Protection	1.5
Revenue Generation	.7

- Source: Valles Caldera National Preserve - Recreationists’ Perspective on Access and Management, Gagnon, Matthew C., August 2012

Also addressed in the goals is the publics’ desire for expanded access. The Gagnon survey asked participants to rate their agreement with the statement, “In your opinion, you are satisfied with the level of recreation access experienced on the Preserve.” As shown in Table 4 below, over half were dissatisfied with the level of access. Respondents also had the opportunity to include narrative comments. Generally people want an unspoiled landscape, freedom to drive, park and recreate where they choose, with no obvious presence of management. Very few equate their ability to freely enjoy the preserve to 100,000 other people having that same freedom. Nor do they appreciate the potential demands and impacts on this landscape with its proximity to the populated areas of Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe and Los Alamos (Figure 25).

Figure 25 - Nearly 2,500 vehicles showed up when the preserve was open for a for a day of "Drive and Discover" in 2006



Table 4 - Public satisfaction with current level of access

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Never recreated on the VCNP
Percent of Respondents	22.9	29.3	14.6	20.2	9.8	3.3

- Source: Valles Caldera National Preserve: Recreationists’ Perspective on Access and Management, Gagnon, Matthew C., August 2012

5. Links to Supporting Documents

The Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000 – Public Law 106-248

<http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/PL%20106-248.pdf>

The Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2005 – Public Law 109-132

<http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/PL%20109-132.pdf>

National Environmental Policy Act Procedures for the Valles Caldera National Preserve -

http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/trust_NEPAProcedures.pdf

Framework and Strategic Guidance for Comprehensive Management -

<http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/cmfr/Framework.pdf>

Bylaws of the Valles Caldera Trust [Board of Trustees] -

http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/trust_bylaws.pdf

State of the Preserve 2002-2007 -

http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/trust_SOPDecember2007.pdf

Strategic Plan – November 2006 –

http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/trust_StrategicPlanning2006-11.pdf

Valles Caldera Land Use History - http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/docs/trust_LandUse-History.pdf

Southwestern Jemez Mountains Landscape Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy -

<http://www.vallescaldera.gov/nepa/images/PAUPScop/docs/Proposal%20Sections%201-11.pdf>

6. Works Cited

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