

Minutes of the Valles Caldera National Preserve

Board of Trustees  
January 23, 2001

Santa Fe Community College, 1:00-5:00 pm  
Trustees Present  
Bob Armstrong

Leonard Atencio

William deBuys

Karen Durkovich

Palemon Martinez

Steve Stoddard  
Thomas Swetnam

Dennis Vasquez

David R. Yepa

USFS Employees Present  
John Henshaw

Denise McCaig

Buck Sanchez

Jim Whittington

Audience  
37 individual entries were on the sign-up sheets. At one point, the Recorder counted 48 individuals.  
Organizations listed on the sign-up sheets:

New Mexico Cattle Growers

Senator Bingaman's Office

San Juan Pueblo

Jemez Area Residents Association

Jemez Mountain Trail Scenic Byway

Santa Fe Search and Rescue

New Mexico Game and Fish

New Mexico Winter Sports Alliance

Seeking Common Ground

Santa Fe New Mexican

Los Alamos Monitor

Communities (and number of entries) listed on the Sign-up sheets:

Los Alamos (9)

Santa Fe (7)

Jemez Springs (3)

San Juan Pueblo (2)

Hernandez (1)

Tesuque (1)

Albuquerque (1)

Shreveport, LA (1)

#### GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS

William deBuys welcomed guests and invited the Board to introduce themselves. After introductions, deBuys described the charge of the Board and discussed the orientation session held by USDA.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The first order of business was the election of officers. Positions to be filled were Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Thomas Swetnam entered a motion to elect Mr. deBuys as Chair and revisit the issue after three months. The motion was seconded by Bob Armstrong and approved by unanimous consent.

Palemon Martinez entered a motion that Steve Stoddard be elected as Vice-Chair for the same three-month time frame as the Chair. Mr. Martinez noted that the Vice-Chair would assume the duties of the Chair should Mr. deBuys not be available. The motion was seconded by David R. Yepa and approved by unanimous consent.

Karen Durkovich nominated Mr. Yepa to serve as Secretary. Ms. Durkovich proposed the Secretary be responsible for the cataloging of resolutions and oversight of meeting minutes. Again, the term was tied to the three-month period established for the Chair. Mr. Stoddard seconded and the motion was carried by unanimous consent.

### TEMPORARY BY-LAWS FOR MEETING CONDUCT

Mr. Armstrong moved that the Board adopt Robert's Rules of Order for Informal Meetings until the Board could establish meeting by-laws. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stoddard and approved by unanimous consent.

### RECORDKEEPING

The Chair proposed that Jim Whittington, USFS, keep minutes for this meeting. Leonard Atencio offered that the Board would prefer the minutes be simple. The Chair then noted that the opinion of the Board is that the minutes show the sense of the Board and not become a verbatim transcript. The Chair asked Mr. Yepa to establish a procedure for documenting Board resolutions.

### BY-LAWS

The Chair appointed Mr. Yepa to serve as Chair of the By-Laws Committee. Mr. Martinez and Mr. Armstrong will assist. The committee will try to provide draft by-laws at the next meeting. The Chair will ask for a report from the committee at the next meeting.

### USFS INTERIM MANAGEMENT TEAM

The next order of business was a discussion of the role of the USFS Interim Management Team (IMT). USFS will maintain management control of the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) until the Board feels it is in a position to assume control. A New Mexico Game and Fish Warden is staying at the VCNP. Hunting, poaching, and trespass patrols have been implemented. Denise McCaig, USFS, will be the primary contact point for the Board.

After a question from the floor regarding access, McCaig noted that the VCNP is currently closed to the public.

### STATEMENTS FROM GUESTS

The Chair described the upcoming public listening sessions and discussed procedures for public comment during the meeting. The Chair then consulted the sign-up sheets and allocated 3 minutes each for those who wished to speak before the Board.

Public statements were then heard, with Mr. Armstrong acting as timekeeper to enforce the three minute limit.

Recommendations and comments included:

Primitive area designation for Valle Toledo;

Reintroduction of Cutthroat in suitable streams;

Opposition to the use of cattle grazing for compliance with the self-sustaining provision;

Board coordination with Seeking Common Ground;

Support for the multiple use concept;

Access for USFS permittees through the VCNP;

Work with USFS and USFS permittees to reach agreements on fence maintenance;

Meet with former employees of the Baca.

#### EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Board considered the topic of external communications. McCaig, USFS, described procedures for notice of meetings. The Chair commented that procedures for public notices would be addressed in the by-laws. A question from the floor was taken on the openness of meetings. Mr. deBuys explained the requirements in the law for open meetings and also noted that the Board could meet in executive session when sensitive information, such as personnel or archaeological issues, would be discussed.

The Chair then moved to the topic of the previously mentioned listening sessions. Ms. Durkovich discussed possible dates and locations. The Chair then discussed a communications plan and asked Dennis Vasquez to establish such a plan and arrange the listening sessions. Mr. Vasquez requested the assistance of the USFS IMT in the preparation of such a plan. The Chair noted that the plan should include provisions for the presentation of the Patricia Woods video at the listening sessions, a revision of the VCNP brochure, and the creation of a Frequently Asked Questions document to provide clear and consistent answers to the most common questions. It was also noted that there would be many future opportunities for listening sessions as the Board works toward a management plan for the VCNP. It was agreed that the Jicarilla Apache and Navajo Chapter Houses in the area west of Cuba be contacted.

The Chair remarked on the importance of establishing a logo and stationary. Mr. Vasquez was charged with identifying a process for developing a logo (seal) and stationary. This process might include a contest.

Mr. Armstrong made an appeal to the public for new ideas, particularly in the realm of hunting, fishing, and access. He noted that any ideas would be welcomed.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board proceeded to schedule future board meetings:

February 12, the Board will meet in executive session to address personnel issues.

February 13, the Board will meet in open session at 1:00 p.m.

March 9, the Board will meet in open session at 1:00 p.m. in Los Alamos at Fuller Lodge to be followed by a listening session in the evening. The Board may also consider a work session during the morning of March 9.

April 3-4 will follow the same schedule as the February meeting. Except for the March 9 meeting, no locations are currently identified.

#### PERSONNEL

The Chair appointed Mr. Atencio to head a committee on personnel. Ms. Durkovich and Mr. Stoddard will assist with Mr. Armstrong available if needed.

Mr. Atencio then discussed the position of Interim Director, a proposed outreach notice and potential requirements. The Interim Director will come from the ranks of current Federal

employees simply because mechanisms exist to easily detail a person for up to four months. This will allow the selection process for the permanent Executive Director to proceed without immediate time pressure. Questions about salary and temporary promotions were raised. Mr. Atencio will research the issue.

The sense of the Board is that the outreach notice should be clear in describing the position of Interim Director as one that will assist the Board in administrative and organizational matters. The outreach notice should also require a resume of no longer than one page. All applications will be sent to McCaig, USFS. It was agreed that the Interim Director position be based in Santa Fe.

Mr. Atencio then discussed the search for a permanent Executive Director. The Board has great flexibility in this regard, and would like to hire a person as soon as possible. The Board would like to find the best possible candidate regardless of current standing. Mr. Atencio then passed out job descriptions from Federal agencies to assist the Board in developing a job description for the Executive Director. In developing the job description, it is important to look at special lands and land management agencies.

The Board would also like to consult any existing employment contracts in place at Federal agencies. All Board members should assist in acquiring job descriptions and contract information. The Personnel Committee will report at next meeting.

#### INTERIM MANAGEMENT

The Chair, in reference to a suggestion from Mr. Stoddard, asked Buck Sanchez, USFS, to report on interim management security issues. Sanchez discussed several violations on the VCNP during the last hunting season and provided more information on the hunting and trespass patrols.

#### MONITORING AND INVENTORIES

The Chair next asked Mr. Swetnam to discuss monitoring and inventory projects on the VCNP. Mr. Swetnam noted that the Trust must find out what is on the land and the goal of monitoring and inventorying would be to establish a baseline to assess future management actions. The resulting data could also be used to analyze trends.

Mr. Swetnam commented that this process must get started quickly and make use of partners from groups, government, and academia. The Board also needs to develop a plan for evaluating proposals from individuals and groups wanting to do scientific work and create criteria that would lead to the identification of priorities. The Board may also need to contract for some aspects of the inventory, particularly the technologically sophisticated aspects such as remote sensing.

Several proposals have been received by the Board, including:

NMED has offered to assess water quality within the Preserve;

LANL and several universities would like to start a geologic mapping project, and;

An institution has offered to house the VCNP plant and animal collections.

All extensive proposals as well as those that may have a secondary impact on the VCNP will be need to be presented to the board for approval.

Mr. Swetnam discussed the idea of bringing together a group of scientists to decide what kind of

monitoring will be necessary for the preserve. Mr. Swetnam will attempt to bring to the next meeting a list of three of our priority projects that will need to start as soon as the weather permits. He also proposed a Board visit to the VCNP with scientists to discuss issues. The Chair appointed Mr. Swetnam as Chair of the Science Committee.

Mr. Vasquez brought up the idea of a science advisory board to offer advice to the Board on scientific matters. The Board viewed this proposal favorably. However, before any action is taken on this matter, the Board may want to consult with the USDA General Counsel to see what aspects of the Federal Advisory Committee Act might apply.

Mr. Atencio spoke to the issue of budgets, contracts and other administrative concerns in regard to monitoring activities.

Mr. Swetnam reiterated that the data collection would be used for justifying future management decisions and noted that the process would also provide scientific information that may be more exacting and expensive than that needed for management decisions. The Board may want to consider approaching foundations and other interested parties to assist with the scientific data collection while the Board would continue to fund the data needed for management. The scientific data may also be used to establish interpretive programs for visitors.

#### ELK MANAGEMENT

Glenn Case of New Mexico Game and Fish (G&F) addressed the Board. Case noted the following:

- 1) VCNP holds the core of the Jemez Mountain elk herd;
- 2) No hunt is currently scheduled for the VCNP during 2001;
- 3) Though the resource damage was not great this year, G&F would like to resume hunts for management consistency and population control;
- 4) Recommendations for a hunt were presented to the Board;
- 5) 2001 is the first year Unit 6 has been divided, with 6a being the western Jemez, 6b the VCNP and 6c the eastern Jemez.

Recommendations for a fall hunt include:

Six hunts to coincide with hunts in Units 6a and 6c;

Each hunt would have 20 permits;

Each hunt would be antlerless;

One hunt (20 permits) would be for handicapped hunters;

Five hunts (100 permits) would be for youth;

Any legal weapon (including muzzle loaders and archery) could be used for these hunts.

Other information provided by Mr. Case included:

Past experience shows that if 25 or more hunters are operating on the VCNP, the elk tend to leave the area, hence the desire to limit VCNP hunts to 20 permits each.

22% of all permits must be made available to hunters outside of New Mexico. If all are not filled, the remainder would be made available to New Mexicans.

Of the 22%, 10% would go to hunters with no guides while 12% would be issued to hunters with guides.

Hunter's may submit one application per species per year.

It is the hunter's responsibility to track and take any wounded animal.

Larry Bell of G&F noted that some access restrictions for other areas, such as military reservations, can be quite strict and similar procedures could be implemented for the VCNP. Bell also committed to having two G&F wardens available for patrols in the VCNP during the hunts. In response to a question, Case noted that hunting by horseback would have little impact. Case also mentioned depredation hunts as a possibility for the fall. Depredation hunts are for cows only.

G&F needs to publish an agenda for their Commission meeting on February 21 by February 11. The next meeting of the Board will be February 13. Bell acknowledged that the hunt structure does not have to be finalized when the agenda is publicized and that the formal hunt structure (weapons, dates, numbers) need not be decided upon until just before the February 21 G&F meeting. The board may want to consider future agreements with G&F.

The sense of the Board is that G&F proceed with the agenda item for the February 21st meeting. Meanwhile, the Board will consider the hunting issue at their February 13 meeting and communicate the desires of the board to G&F before the Commission meeting.

All that need be decided on February 21st is the formal hunt structure. The Board, between February and the hunting season, may determine area closures, access restrictions, vehicular restrictions, and similar conditions. Should the Board wish to place restrictions, G&F would inform permitted hunters though G&F would not be able to enforce any of the restrictions.

Mr. Stoddard said he would like to hear from the public after the newspaper stories are published before making any final decision on the hunt.

Mr. Martinez would like to start a committee that would work with G&F in drafting a written resolution to address the hunting question.

Mr. Atencio agreed with Mr. Stoddard on the desire to proceed slowly, but also looks to G&F to provide recommendations on the management of the herd. Because of this, Mr. Atencio was in favor of placing the hunt on the G&F agenda and have the Board work on details between now and February 13th.

The Chair advised that the Board be open and advertise the elk proposal as a subject for the next meeting. The Chair also charged the board members to listen to those members of the public who

have an opinion on the hunt.

Mr. Martinez moved that the 6b hunt be placed on the G&F calendar. The motion was seconded by Ms. Durkovich and approved unanimously.

The Chair then appointed Mr. Martinez as chair of an effort to draw up a written resolution for consideration of the Board by the February 13 meeting. Mr. Martinez will coordinate a meeting with G&F and interested Board members next week.

A question from the floor was taken on whether the access for hunters will increase pressure from other groups desiring access. Mr. Armstrong explained that the controlling factor is the consistent and sustained management of the elk herd in the Jemez Mountains. The Chair reiterated Mr. Armstrong's point and emphasized the management aspect.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law Enforcement was considered next. The Board agreed to invite law enforcement officials from the following organizations to the next meeting:

USFS;

Bandelier/National Park Service (NPS);

New Mexico Game and Fish;

Officials from Sandoval County (with which the USFS currently has a law enforcement agreement) and Rio Arriba County.

Mr. Vasquez offered a briefing on how NPS manages law enforcement in national parks and monuments, which might be a good model for the VCNP.

Mr. Atencio proposed that the Board ask law enforcement officials to develop alternatives and suggested the Board should solicit recommendations for enforcement activities on the VCNP. Mr. Atencio emphasized the Board must have a law enforcement plan in place before assuming management control of the VCNP.

#### BOUNDARIES

The Chair asked Sanchez, USFS, to explain the current boundary issue. Sanchez noted that the act required a map that reflected the adjusted boundaries between the VCNP and Bandelier National Monument be delivered to Congress for consideration. Sanchez presented the Board with three options:

- 1) Make no adjustment to the boundary, in which case, there would remain a dogleg in the line and the line would not conform to true watershed boundaries;
- 2) Straighten out the current boundary, which would move a small amount of acreage into Bandelier but would not conform to true watershed boundaries; and,
- 3) Set the boundary along the precise watershed divide, which would move acreage from Bandelier into the VCNP.

John Henshaw, USFS, commented that the original intent of the act was for the boundary to be based on watersheds.

Ms. Durkovich moved that the boundary be set at the watershed divide between the Alamo and Cochiti watersheds.

Mr. Vasquez noted that the uses of Bandelier and the VCNP are compatible and that as Bandelier Superintendent, he could accept the watershed option even though a small amount of acreage would be moved over to the VCNP should Congress accept the recommended boundaries.

Mr. Swetnam supported the motion by Ms. Durkovich and pointed out that should fence lines be built in the area, the fence need not conform precisely to the boundary lines and that the boundary need not necessarily restrict fencing options.

Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion by Ms. Durkovich and Mr. Atencio noted that Mr. Swetnam's fence comments would only be applicable if the Board decided to permit grazing in the area.

The motion to set the boundary lines in accordance with watershed divides was approved 8-0 with Mr. Vasquez abstaining.

#### HERITAGE RESOURCES

Mr. deBuys reported having contacted the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Santa Fe National Forest Heritage Resources Staff to begin discussions about archaeological surveys and clearances, which are necessary before most management activities take place. Mr. deBuys will meet at 9:00 a.m. on February 7 with both of the aforementioned groups at the SHPO office in Santa Fe. Mr. deBuys extended an invitation to the rest of the board to participate in the meeting.

#### PUBLIC TOURS

The Chair gave a brief history of the consideration of public tours. The Chair then named Ms. Durkovich as chair of a tour committee with Mr. Stoddard and Mr. Vasquez as assistants. The committee will also draw on McCaig, Sanchez, and Whittington. The committee will report to the Board at the next meeting. The Board is considering tours for when they eventually assume management of the VCNP.

The Chair asked Mr. Stoddard to chair a committee with assistance from Mr. Atencio to identify a financial management system that would meet the needs of the Board and also be compatible with the act. Mr. Atencio recommended a meeting with USFS financial experts to discuss the issue. The Chair will ask for a progress report at the next meeting.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Armstrong proposed the Board begin a procedure to get a plaque placed on the VCNP that would commemorate all those who played a part in acquiring the VCNP for the American people. The Chair asked Mr. Armstrong to draft a list of potential honorees.

Mr. Atencio mentioned the Board was invited to a meeting of the Wildlife Federation and the Society for Range Management (SRM) would like to conduct a tour of the VCNP this summer. Ms. Durkovich took possession of the letter from the SRM and will try to incorporate the request into the tour planning process.

The Chair then asked if there were anymore public comments. Operating under the previous rules,

recommendations and comments included:

Maintain scenic values;

Consider a friends group;

Consider the potential conflicts between skiers and snowmobiles as well as hikers and ATV users;

Please call on representatives of groups when writing plans;

Sounds and scenes are important;

Concern from Jemez residents regarding potential summer traffic through Jemez Springs;

Offer of assistance from the 4-wheel drive association.

When there were no others wishing to address the Board, Mr. Stoddard motioned to adjourn. There were several simultaneous seconds and the motion passed by unanimous consent.

Compiled by Jim Whittington, USFS, and submitted for approval to David R. Yepa, Secretary, on January 24, 2001.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 13, 2001.

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