

Minutes of the Valles Caldera Trust
Public Meeting
November 14, 2001
1:30 p.m. Courtyard by Marriot
Santa Fe, New Mexico

MEMBERS PRESENT

William deBuys, Chairman

David Yepa, Member
Palemon Martinez, Member
Thomas Swetnam, Member
Karen Durkovich, Member
Leonard Atencio, Member
Bob Armstrong, Member

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: Called meeting to order, and thanked everyone from the public for coming as well as guests. He introduced additional items, 1) update on a trip to Washington and 2) Interim Management.

Agenda approval moved seconded. (No objections.) Agenda approved.

Minutes from previous meetings should be finalized in the next few weeks.

Approval of the minutes was dispensed with.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE SPACE

DR. ZIEHE: We are currently reviewing the lease. Several technical corrections need to be made, but we're in the process of making those corrections, and agreeing with the providers of the Los Alamos Inn to finalize that lease agreement and should be done within the next couple of weeks. The office space is within the complex of the Los Alamos Inn which is on Trinity in the center of Los Alamos, what was formerly the restaurant within the hotel and will be remodeled to meet VCT needs.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Moved that Gary Ziehe sign the lease subject to review by David Yepa. Motion seconded and carried.

ELK HUNT PROPOSAL

MR. ATENCIO: We have been working on this hunt structure for a very short period of time, and we have been working cooperatively with Game and Fish, both the Game and Fish Commission and the Department. Director Bell, Assistant Directors Glenn Case and Scott Brown, and the Area Director, Luke Shelby, and others have been working very hard with us to develop this hunt structure. This is the first year for a hunt on the Valles Caldera under the leadership of this trust, of this board, and we know we're going to make mistakes. It's subject to change, modified sometime in the future, meaning if the seasons didn't work out or the numbers or however we configure it, that it will remain open for change in the future. We expect to make a presentation to the Commission for final approval at their next meeting which is Monday the 19th. If agreement is reached on Monday, we will continue to work out the final details with the Game and Fish Department. These details would be included in a proclamation that sets up the rules of hunting for that year. Information would be put out to the public as soon as possible.

DR. ZIEHE: Discussed working in cooperation with Director Bell and his staff, and came up with

proposal that should meet needs and desires of both the Department and the Trust.

Proposed Guidelines:

- Under the current regulations, approximately 90 bulls would be taken off of the preserve, and those permits for access or for authorization to be on the preserve would be distributed in two fashions.
- There would be a small number, not more than five, that would be distributed through an auction process, and that would be to the highest bidder.
- The majority, around 85, would be distributed through a lottery system with \$25 fee to enter. Winners would be granted these authorizations for access which they would then take to the Department of Game and Fish and be issued a license upon paying Department fees. Hunts would be set up per regulation.
- There would be 10 hunts over the fall; one archery hunt, three rifle hunts, one handicap antlerless, one youth antlerless, three rifle antlerless, and one muzzleloader hunt. These would occur on the preserve in the fall of 2002.
- Antlerless hunts, permits and licenses would be distributed through the Department of Game and Fish's normal public draw process. A \$150 fee to the VCT would cover the administrative costs of providing that hunt. · There would be no restrictions on barter and sell of those authorizations once they were won, with a deadline as to when a person would have to notify the trust as to who is going to utilize that authorization.
- At least on bull hunts there would be no point restrictions.
- Vehicular traffic would be restricted to designated roads only.
- No off-road vehicular traffic allowed.
- Hunts are assigned to one of ten subunits, allocated by draw when the hunt begins to create an equal spread of hunters across the preserve.
- Hunters would be assigned a chaperone unless they have a guide registered by the Trust.
- Scouting would be restricted to the day prior to the beginning of the hunt.
- Camping would not be permitted on the preserve.
- Hunters would be allowed to pack their elk on foot or with a horse, or a pack service would be provided for an additional fee of not more than \$250.
- No meat processing services would be provided. A cooler would be available for fully field-dressed elk.
- The Trust would reserve the right to impose additional restrictions, but would make every attempt to make sure those were expressed in the proclamation.
- There would be a restriction that a given hunter would only be authorized to shoot one bull elk. If a hunter draws more than one authorization by chance, the second authorization would have to be sold or bartered or given to an additional hunter to try and spread this out.
- 150 Cow tags would be issued under public draw, and \$150 access fee for the cow hunts.
- The Trust will retain the right to remove any hunter at anytime if rules are not followed.

We are trying to get all this finalized in time for the Game and Fish Department to be able to include these provisions in the proclamation so hunters have the information if they decide to go for this hunt.

The idea behind the lottery is to try and allow every hunter the chance for the ability to get out on the preserve. We are trying to balance the Trust's revenue-generating need with the public's need and the public's desire to be able to hunt on the preserve. The best way seems to spread the cost out among a number of individuals who would take a chance rather than try to restrict it to just those who could pay access fees and the higher cost of recovery of administrative costs on the preserve, creating a limited number of people who would be drawing.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: Our intention is to set it up so the Valle Grande itself, the great grassland viewable from Highway 4 would not be hunted and to preserve the wildlife viewing opportunities from the highway

MR. ARMSTRONG: We're going to try to make this a truly nationwide endeavor with a wide range of advertising venues, and we anticipate that it will produce a lot of hunters if it works, and that's why we're holding it to \$25 or less.

MR. ATENCIO: The current road system that we're using for administrative purposes, might be the road system that we would use. This could change.

MR. CASE: For right now, it is really the only workable process that we've been able to come up with without legal ramifications. We may have to make changes in the future, but for right now I think it's the best solution we have come up with.

MR. ATENCIO: Discussed providing horse facilities within the preserve in the future. For this first year no facilities will be provided as we would like to be as soft on the land as we can.

MR. ATENCIO: Chaperones will receive the hunters, get them to their area, and show them around. We will have radio contact and assign a radio to each hunter and to the chaperones. We are going to try to make their hunt as enjoyable as possible. That is what the chaperone is for, primarily just to help them and not necessarily be a guide.

MR. ATENCIO: I would like to make a motion that we approve the basic hunt structure for elk hunting as discussed today for presentation to the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission in the spirit of cooperation.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: Would you like to attach to that motion by reference the description Gary Ziehe has drawn up as we amended it this morning?

MR. ATENCIO: Yes, that would be the hunt structure.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: The motion has been made. Is there a second for it?

MR. MARTINEZ: Second.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: The motion has been seconded by Mr. Martinez. Discussion by the board? (No discussion.)
The motion passes without opposition.

SLIDE PRESENTATION BY DR. MULDAVIN (ecologist with the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program)

DR. MULDAVIN: This summer we embarked on an ecological survey, which essentially developed a vegetation classification and vegetation map as the foundation to that survey. We established 100 plots, scattered throughout the preserve. We'll take those 100 plots, go through some analytical procedures, and then follow the national classification and build a vegetation classification.

We also want to move on next summer and however long it takes to do the more high resolution vegetation mapping that really is based on the new photography that was flown this summer and fall. We'll bring that into play, and build something around a 1:24,000 scale, our USGS topographic

scale. It will be based on the vegetation classification that we develop with the hundred plots. Hopefully a map like that can be the underpinning to a whole range of resource issues in the park. Definitely forestry.

We want to be able to track special places on the preserve and ask ourselves if they need special management consideration.

For this year then, we will have done an overview vegetation classification.

We are in the process of building a working legend based on that classification, and then we will get on with doing the map next year. But meanwhile we have a general map of forest and grasslands, including the old growth, logged areas, wetlands and drylands, and the areas of special interests. It will all be in a database.

So in closing, our goal at Heritage is to provide tools and information for effective management in an ecosystem context.

Discussion occurred amongst the board and floor on different possibilities for use of this resource and what else might be needed from Dr. Muldavin's services.

WATERSHED REPORT

MR. McWILLIAMS: Last spring Leonard asked me to organize a group to go out and look at watershed conditions along with Chic Spann, the regional hydrologist and Pete Steward, the watershed program manager on the Gila at that time. This particular report is made available to the board for their review.

One of the major concerns was the road system and its impact on hydrology of the area, i.e., putting additional sediments into the system over and above the normal bedload. The report has an itemized list of some general activities and the usual costs that you could anticipate being incurred.

DR. SWETNAM: They're doing a more extensive survey of the roads. They're going road by road and doing some observations at points along those roads, and going to provide us another report.

MR. ATENCIO: We should have that other report done around December 1. With bulk pieces of information we should be able to develop probably a restoration and rehab plan for roads.

DR. SWETNAM: It's a pretty sobering report in terms of the problems we have and costs involved. We have got a big job ahead of us in terms of trying to stabilize these watersheds and restore and repair some of the damage that is coming from the many hundreds of miles of roads that are out there.

MR. ATENCIO: What we are finding out though is that a lot of those roads are stable.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: I hope you will see this on our web site within the next eight weeks. I think, too, that as the biological symposium approaches or in its aftermath, you will begin seeing posted on the web site some of the reports of the scientific studies, or at least summaries of those reports.

Before any work can be done, the roads have to be cleared archeologically, so when we have our priority list of what needs to be done from an engineering and watershed standpoint, then that helps us set the priority of what archeological work has to be done.

Discussion occurred amongst the board and floor on different aspects of this subject.

WASHINGTON TRIP

DR. ZIEHE: Bill and I traveled to Washington, D.C. and had a series of meetings and conferences with various people who will have an influence on our financial needs from the standpoint of the budgeting and appropriations process. We met with Mark Rey, the new Undersecretary for

Environment and Natural Resources at USDA along with several of the Washington Forest Service staff, including the budget director, to discuss what we felt our needs would be from 2003 and did a little bit of brainstorming on other ideas, alternative sources or alternative ways to go about fulfilling those needs. We also had a very productive meeting with the appropriations committee staffs from both sides of the Hill and both sides of the aisle. We presented them with a brief idea of what our operating expenses could be expected to be over time, what our capital needs were for 2002 and 2003, or what we anticipated them to be, and how we anticipated that the generation of revenue would evolve into covering some of, primarily initially, the operating expenses with the idea that capital improvements could be taken on a case-by-case basis.

I was very pleased with the reception to those kinds of ideas that the senior staff of the appropriations committee had. I think they felt like they wanted to know that we were planning on working on trying to cover our operating expenses through the receipts that we would generate. They were very receptive to the idea that there would be changes and as we go along, there would be adjustments. The bottom line from the appropriations committee was just keep them informed, and I think they will be much more amenable to our requests if we continue to do that. I met also with the Office of Management and Budget just to familiarize the new examiner in OMB who will be covering our accounts, and he was very impressed with the idea, very excited with the new approach, and I think we will certainly find him accepting of what we're anticipating that we will need to do. It will be a challenge to compete against every other aspect of the federal budget for the things that we need.

My final meeting was with Mary Kohlmeyer at the Department of Treasury who has been doing some work for us, helping us establish an accounting system, and we should be getting a further report in that. Hopefully within the next couple of weeks she should have that to us so we can go about the process of selecting the final system and getting it up and running, hopefully in January.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: I think the bottom line here is that the more people back there who understand what we are doing and what we're aspiring to do, the more they understand us, the more flexibility and support they're going to give us. That means that there are two tasks before us that are going to be continuous, and that is to get back to Washington and tell our story to the right people on a regular basis, and the other is to get those people out here as often as we can to show them what we are doing, and in the new year we're going to have to do both of those things and put some priority on it.

2002 WORK PLAN

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: The 2002 work plan is a work in progress. There will be a workshop session up in Los Alamos to start identifying some of the top tasks and projects wanting to get accomplished in 2002, including capital projects, and begin prioritizing them, and make sure the budget that we're developing is an accurate reflection of needs and capabilities for the year.

BOARD CALENDAR

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: The next board meeting will be December 13th, possibly in Albuquerque, location to be announced. There will be a public meeting in the afternoon with executive session in the morning. Will be posting information on the location on the web site, and sending notices out. After that will be Wednesday, January 23 in Los Alamos, and we're hoping that our new offices will be ready and maybe after that meeting, we can have a little open house.

The next day will be the biological symposium, half of which will be focused on the Valles Caldera, and we will all be attempting to attend that. There will be presentations from people doing work specifically on the preserve that either the morning or the afternoon will be devoted to the Valles Caldera Preserve, and the other half of the day will be more of a potpourri of different kinds of studies.

LOGO COMPETITION

DR. ZIEHE: Competition entry was closed on October 29. Dennis Vasquez has a panel of judges that will be reviewing entries the week after Thanksgiving, to try to narrow it down and present those to the board at the next meeting.

PRESERVE MANAGER AND BUSINESS MANAGER POSITIONS

We're still in the process of filling the position of the preserve manager. Advertisements are out in various places for a business manager. To date we have gotten quite a few responses, and that position announcement closes on December 1

FINANCIAL SYSTEM

DR. ZIEHE: The trust is in the process of establishing the way it will do business, the functioning of a business as a government corporation, and in that we will have a number of reporting requirements that are required under federal law for any agency.

The Department of Treasury is contracted to help secure support mechanisms for the financial system. We should be seeing a final report with more detail on two or three weeks and hopefully have that selection in place very soon after the first of the month. The board cannot assume management under the statute until we are capable of doing business, paying bills and paying payroll and meeting all those kinds of administrative needs. We are trying very hard to have that in place by the first of January so that the board can assume management then.

MS. McCAIG: It is necessary to request the attention of the Secretary of Agriculture to this issue, because she has to make the determination. I have discussed it with Jim Snow in the Washington Office of General Counsel, and we talked about trying to make the easiest transition we can. We think it would be by letter.

DR. ZIEHE: The other alternative is it may be a resolution that the board makes, not just a letter.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: A resolution that we would pass formally making the request for the determination.

DR. ZIEHE: You are ready to do business and the essential management requirements are being covered and we're ready.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: We may need to prepare that resolution for the next meeting which will be our last meeting of this calendar year if we think we can have things in place by January 1.

STATUS OF INVENTORY AND MONITORING REPORTS

DR. SWETNAM: We were able to have a tour on the preserve about a month ago with a group of foresters. The purpose was to discuss our forest resources, inventory and monitoring needs. There were about 15 people, scientists and managers, including four foresters from the Santa Fe National Forest, three foresters from the Jemez Pueblo Wallatowa Woodlands Initiative, a couple of scientists from the Wilderness Society, and several scientists from the University of Arizona. We received a lot of very good suggestions about how to possibly proceed over the next couple of summers in terms of projects that we might initiate. There was some discussion between the Jemez pueblo foresters and the Santa Fe foresters. Scott Wilkinson on the Jemez District, for example, offered to work with us and assist in terms of preparing our environmental assessments and our planning for forest thinning projects that we have funded now with the Jemez Pueblo Wallatowa initiative. We have a small project to fund, I believe within about 400 acres, small diameter tree

thinning to reduce fire hazard, so we're talking about removing dog hair thickets. Primarily along Highway 4 are the likely areas where we will begin this work.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT

DR. ZIEHE: This is from Steve Romero, and there are a couple of issues that the board needs to be aware of. The first one on the list is the unplanned costs. The Forest Service at the beginning of the year submitted or determined how much they would need for interim management for these first three months of the fiscal year from October through December. There have been some minor unplanned costs that have been associated with that interim management. The major one I think is probably not a big issue but the board needs to be aware of this headquarter site plan, which is a detailed aerial photo survey of the headquarters area that will be very useful to us in future planning. But the need for it now is to develop the potable water system that we will need to install at some point in the near future.

Currently, from Steve's assessment the Forest Service is about halfway through the period and they've spent about half of the money. The headquarter site plan was one of the main issues or one of the big costs that was not anticipated. Their archeological work has been completed and areas identified where we need to be very careful on some of the roads, the primary roads that we have been talking about for improvement in the spring.

The furniture at the preserve, all rental furniture is now gone, and the Dunnigans were gracious enough to donate back some of the furniture that they have in storage. There probably may still be some need for rental or purchase of furniture for some of the buildings.

Most of the facilities have been winterized at this point.

MR. ATENCIO: Even though we did have some poaching that did take place, overall, as far as the violations that were issued, none were issued relative to hunting which was a big change from last year, so I think I would like to attribute some of that success to our effort of getting the word out and really putting some effort outside of the preserve this year. I think it made a big difference.

NEW BUSINESS

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: We have one item of new business. We have talked a little bit about grazing from time to time at previous meetings, and I know there is a lot of interest out there about what we're going to do about grazing and whether we're going to have some grazing next year or not. We are considering having some grazing next year and trying to have it in a way that it will help us answer questions about future years to basically have some livestock grazing go on out there in an experimental context that may help us figure out better what we need to do farther down the line. For various reasons, the need for NEPA compliance among them, we need to keep it at a modest scale.

What I would like to do at this meeting is formally appoint a grazing committee to look at this question and to report back to the board with recommendations at the earliest possible occasion. I hope at the next meeting that there will be some recommendations.

I would like to ask Mr. Martinez to chair that committee and to ask that Mr. Yepa, Dr. Swetnam and Mr. Atencio assist him on the committee along with Dr. Ziehe who will participate fully in the committee and provide support to it. Everyone agreed.

No questions or comments from board or floor.

Is there other new business that the board would like to bring up? (No new business.)

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

MR. PERGLER: Chuck Pergler with Seeking Common Ground, the steering committee. What I would like to do is present a letter to you that we sent this week. It is actually a thank you for all the time and effort this board has been putting in and our looking forward to working with Dr. Ziehe,

and extending an invitation to you to attend our next meeting on November 29 where we would like to tell you what Seeking Common Ground is doing and where we have progressed to, and it is a desire to integrate and coordinate the efforts of management in the Jemez Mountains. That's it. Thank you very much.

MR. NEAL: My name is Jonathan Neal with Valles Caldera.com. I would like to officially thank the board for including our web site on the link section of the official Caldera site. I thought the board might be interested to know that our hit rate has doubled since we received your kind endorsement. Our hope is that Valles Caldera.com and the official site will be able to complement each other in ways that are beneficial to the preserve. I would also like to invite the board and members of the public to share ideas about how this web site should evolve, so please send any suggestions you have to Webmaster at Valles Caldera.com or simply visit Valles Caldera.com and click on the feedback button. Our hit frequency is about 200 people a week right now.

MS. BRODY: I'm Lorraine Brody from Backcountry Horsemen of New Mexico. I'm just here to let you know that we would like to help out on the preserve with anything we can. If you needed chaperones to take horse hunters out, we could learn the layout and we could help you with that. Also if you need help in surveying the roads, we can take a GPS and camera and stuff. We can get further in more quickly with the horses than hikers. We do a bit of that for the Forest Service. I just want to reiterate that we're here.

MR. PATTON: My name is Dave Patton. I'm with New Mexico Trout. I'm part of an informal group that has been trying to gather information for Mr. Armstrong. Certainly the Valles can have higher control over the fishing regulations, but in any event that will be subject really to whatever Sean Ferrell comes up with the riparian and fishing inventory, so we will have more on that later. We looked into the Sikes Act as a potential source of funding for various projects, and it appears that as long as you're involved with the Forest Service, it's a possibility. The deadline for projects for the coming year is the end of January, so perhaps some of the road projects that Steve McWilliams talked about might be something worth looking into here. Jan Crawford has been working with the Sikes Act extensively in the past, so she has been working with Sean and me, and we will come up with some recommendations in that area if you would be interested in that. Sean Ferrell is the fisheries biologist who is doing the inventory work. His recommendation as to how many anglers per day was that 30 is a good number to start with. This number was based on the assessment of the streams and their condition to maintain fishing experience. The key is the monitoring of the environment to see whether the impact of 30 is too many or too few. It will be determined in that way as to what the appropriate numbers will be partly based on fish population and other inputs. We stand by our recommendation, and I guess he'll be with you in December to present his inventory of results.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: I know that his work from this year is not all the work that he needs to do, he needs at least another field season to complete the survey.

MR. PATTON: Is there any idea when fishing might begin? That might give us an indication when fishing regulations would be real important.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: If Sean is going to be continuing his inventory next year, then the earliest that could be would be the year after.

MR. HENDERSON: I would also like to say I'm involved with the Valles Caldera Coalition, and it's a coalition of environmental sportsmen and individuals that are here to assist the Board of

Trustees and Gary to the extent that we can. In saying that, I am pleased that you're putting together a committee for grazing, and I know for a fact that there are some folks within our coalition -- Courtney White, who was one of the founders of Quivera Coalition, in particular would like to make himself available to you to the extent that if you want some input, I'm sure he is very much interested in participating in any way he can.

We just want to make ourselves available to the Board of Trustees.

CHAIRMAN deBUYS: Thank you very much. Okay, is there anything more? (Nothing more.)

Then the chair would entertain a motion to adjourn. (Moved and seconded.)

We are adjourned.

(The hearing concluded at 3:55 p.m.)

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