

VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE
PUBLIC MEETING
Wednesday, May 15, 2002
9:15 a.m.
Los Alamos Inn
Los Alamos, New Mexico

PRESENT:

William deBuys, Chairman
Stephen Stoddard, Vice-Chairman
David Yepa, Member
Palemon Martinez, Member
Thomas Swetnam, Member
Karen Durkovich, Member
Bob Armstrong, Member
Leonard Atencio, Member
Dennis Vasquez, Member
Gary Ziehe, Executive Director

ALSO PRESENT:

Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager
Rich Engstrom, Business Manager
Dave Phillips, LANL Detailee

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA
3. DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS
 1. Executive Director's Report
 2. Preserve Manager's Report
 3. Business Manager's Report
 4. Resolutions
 - a. Assumption of Management
 - b. Interagency Fire Management Agreement
 - c. Authority for Emergency Action
4. PRESENTATION
5. Visitor Opportunities and Capacity on the Preserve Dr. Glenn Haas
5. UPDATES
6. NEPA PROJECT UPDATES
 - a. Livestock Grazing and Elk/Livestock Enclosures
 - b. Roads and Bridges
 - c. Water System
 - d. Fuels Management
 - e. Noxious Weeds
7. COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RETREAT
8. NEW BUSINESS
9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman deBuys welcomed everyone and introduced the staff who were present and Glenn Haas,

from Colorado State University, who would be presenting. He also asked members of the public who were present to introduce themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman deBuys asked if any Board members had any additions to the meeting agenda. Ms. Durkovich asked that the Chairman add to the agenda a report on the minority minerals for the Preserve. A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Chairman deBuys stated that the minutes from previous meetings were still being developed and apologized for not having them available. Dr. Ziehe commented that none of the information from past meetings was lost and the delay is owed to a lack of available staff time to complete the task.

MINORITY MINERAL REPORT

Chairman deBuys addressed the minority mineral interests. He acknowledged the owners of the minority mineral interests have publicly stated they want to develop the geothermal resources on the Preserve. Chairman deBuys stated that it is not the Trust, but rather the Secretary of Agriculture, who is responsible for this issue from the government side. He stated that if a serious proposal to develop the geothermal resources was put forward, there would be a number of steps to go through prior to the recommencement of drilling on the Preserve, let alone the construction of power lines. He stated that the Trust is still trying to understand the full scope of the minority mineral holders intentions.

DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS

1. Executive Director's Report

Dr. Ziehe started by announcing a change in the Board meeting format to having the Board meet for their work session prior to the public meetings instead of after.

He gave an overall status report on Preserve, starting with an announcement that because we are under the Santa Fe National Forest's Fire Closure Order, the Trust had to cancel some tours that had been scheduled. He also stated that the staff has begun developing a strategic planning process to help increase the efficiency of the staff by having a set protocol on how to address projects.

He then updated the Board on the progress of staff development. The Controller and Office Manager positions have been announced and resumes are being accepted. The GIS Coordinator and Outdoor Recreation Coordinator positions are being developed for release.

Dr. Ziehe ended his presentation with a report on the status of the budget. For fiscal year 2003, he said it is unlikely the Interior bill will get passed in a timely manner and that we will likely be operating under a continuing resolution as the year starts. For fiscal year 2004, he announced that we are finally caught up with the timing of the budget system and have submitted the Trust's budget request into the system on time.

2. Preserve Manager's Report

Mr. Trujillo briefed the Board on the infrastructure developments of the Preserve. He stated that he has conducted a walk-through inventory on all of the facilities to inspect for health and safety issues and are addressing those issues through available staff or by contracting with local companies.

The Boundary Survey is progressing and the Pueblo of Santa Clara has been contacted to jointly work out the signage on our common boundary.

Several of the inventory and monitoring projects are underway and several scientists are being housed on the Preserve.

The Elk Hunt lottery is in progress and various outreach avenues are being explored to increase the visibility of hunt. The outfitter/guide RFP has been released.

On the hikes, the RFP is being put together and should be completed by the end of the week.

The livestock terms and conditions are being developed while the NEPA process for the grazing environmental assessment is being completed.

For the Fuels Management effort, in conjunction with the Walatowa Initiative, about 275 acres around the headquarters area are being examined for treatment along with another 200-250 acres on the southwest corner of the Preserve adjacent to Highway 4.

There is currently no potable water at the headquarters because the filtration system has gone dry and as a result water is being delivered once a week to support the housing on the Preserve.

3. Business Manger's Report

Mr. Engstrom presented the Business Manager's Report, addressing the status of the transition of the finances from the Forest Service, an update on establishing Trust offices in Los Alamos. He also stated the Trust and Preserve logos have been finalized.

The financial transition from the Forest Service could take up to a year to complete and Mr. Engstrom stated he is working with the CFO of the Forest Service to develop a financial transition plan.

The offices are being finished in Los Alamos and the furniture and phones have been installed, with computers going in next week thanks to a generous grant from the Los Alamos County Lodger's Tax Board.

4. Resolutions

a. Assumption of Management

Chairman deBuys asked Dr. Ziehe to read the resolution requesting the Secretary of Agriculture to delegate management authority for the Valles Caldera National Preserve to the Trust.

This resolution is made by the Board of Trustees of the Valles Caldera Trust as follows:

Recitals:

1. The Valles Caldera Preservation Act, referred to as the 'Act' was enacted on July 25, 2000, establishing the Valles Caldera National Preserve, the 'Preserve,' and the Valles Caldera Trust.
2. The Board of Trustees was duly appointed by President Clinton and sworn into service on January 10, 2001.
3. The Trust has adopted bylaws, as well as policies pertaining to personnel, NEPA compliance,

and procurement.

4. The Trust has established and implemented processes for handling financial, personnel, procurement and other administrative services.

5. The Trust has hired an Executive Director, a Preserve Manager, and a Business Manager.

6. The Trust has entered into agreements with the Forest Service for law enforcement and fire protection services at the Preserve.

7. The Trust has established its office and business operations in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

8. The Trust has adopted Forest Service regulations and closure orders for management of the Preserve.

Section 108(a) of the Act provides for assumption of management responsibilities as follows: The Trust shall assume all authority provided by this title to manage the Preserve upon a determination by the Secretary that...

1) the Board is duly appointed and they are able to conduct business; and

2) provision has been made for essential management services.

Now therefore, it is

RESOLVED that the Trust requests of the Secretary of Agriculture to exercise her authority pursuant to section 108(a) of the Act to allow the Trust to assume management of the Preserve.

The Executive Director is authorized to take such actions as are necessary or desirable to effect the intent and purposes of this Resolution.

Mr. Armstrong moved to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Ms. Durkovich and unanimously passed.

Interagency Agreements:

It was moved by Ms. Durkovich to approve an interagency fire agreement with the Forest Service, subject to resolution of the remaining outstanding issue concerning limitations on overhead expenses of Forest Service employees and clarification of legal authority to access emergency funding in the case of a catastrophic event. The motion was seconded by Mr. Martinez and passed unanimously.

Authority for Emergency Action

Dr. Swetnam moved that in the event of emergency conditions requiring management attention arising on the Preserve, the board expressly requests and directs the executive director to represent its interests and execute its responsibility as well as to consult with the chair on the emergency at the earliest opportunity. It further requests and directs the executive director to recommend a policy on emergency decision making for the board's consideration. Ms. Durkovich seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION

Chairman deBuys introduced Dr. Glenn Haas from the Colorado State University, who gave a presentation to the Board on visitor opportunities and capacity.

Dr. Haas began by presenting the Chairman with a notebook containing a copy of the federal interagency task force report which will be published by October, and an array of other articles.

He started his discussion by saying that the function and appropriateness of use over various zones

of the Preserve will need to be identified. He then presented ten points to illustrate how to approach the task.

1. Capacity can be defined as the supply of available activities on the Preserve.
2. You do not determine a capacity, you decide a capacity.
3. Identify your supply space as 365 days times 24 hours per day times 89,000 acres.
4. Clearly define your recreation opportunities.
5. Restraint on recreational freedoms is the price we pay for conserving extraordinary resources.
6. Visitor capacity decisions are made within an integrated and comprehensive planning process.
7. Track your demand and supply.
8. Create a marketing strategy that promotes the Preserve's capacity.
9. Educate the public, the community and visitors that capacity can be increased through voluntary distribution.
10. Recognize that your capacity decisions are going to change.

Dr. Haas then offered several observations based on his time spent at the Preserve:

1. Establish a recreation research advisory team to help make recreation decisions.
2. Think regionally, beyond the Preserve to understand recreation opportunities.
3. Speed and sound are contradictory to what the Preserve has to offer.
4. Think about getting a science director, not a natural resource person, who can fold in the social sciences.
5. Build a recreation inventory.
6. Use Charettes to get expert input.

The Board had a lively interchange with Dr. Haas, asking for details and clarifications on his points and observations. Chairman deBuys ended the presentation by noting that Dr. Haas' presentation to the Board was made possible by the generosity of the Valles Caldera Coalition.

UPDATES

Chairman deBuys asked the staff to provide updates on the following projects:

1. NEPA Project Updates

a. Livestock Grazing and Elk/Livestock Enclosures

The process of building the enclosures has been delayed to the complexities of getting everything coordinated. The time frame for starting construction has slipped until at least the middle of July.

b. Roads and Bridges

A scoping letter was sent out three weeks ago with a comment period that ends on Friday. Project is moving ahead. The compliance with heritage resource requirements is one of the largest remaining components.

c. Water System

A scoping letter was sent out three weeks ago with a comment period that ends on Friday. Project is moving ahead. The compliance with heritage resource requirements is one of the largest remaining components.

d. Fuels Management

The fuels management proposal is out for comment until May 31, and a decision to move forward will be made shortly after that. Heritage resource studies will be the biggest holdup to implementation.

e. Noxious Weeds

A proposed action and scoping is being developed and should be out within the next 30 days.

2. Comprehensive Management Program Retreat

The Chairman asked Dr. Ziehe to provide an update on the status of the upcoming Board retreat to draft an outline for the Comprehensive Management Program called for in the legislation. Dr. Ziehe provided information on the logistics and development of Board packets of reference materials to support the retreat.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business presented at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman deBuys opened the floor for public comment:

Faith Stephens from Los Alamos: Ms. Stephens urged the Board to make use of local volunteer skills and expertise in developing the Preserve. She also encouraged the Board to ban the use of boom boxes and mechanical noise making devices.

Randy Benson: Mr. Benson asked about the goals and activities planned for the Preserve, citing the sensitivity of using the words "wilderness area" in describing the Preserve because of its specific meaning in law.

Alan Dobson from Albuquerque: Mr. Dobson expressed his hope that the Trust will develop a plan for this area that includes primitive areas, maybe on the northern side, and maybe have the southern area correspond to higher impact development, maintaining more primitive wilderness areas for back country skiing.

Dorothy Hoard from Los Alamos: Asked for a status on the Board appointments as some of the members' terms are coming up. [Mr. deBuys and Dr. Ziehe explained the set up of the Board and their terms.]

Mr. Benson: He asked about timing on the planning and selection of activities. [Mr. deBuys went over the timing of the development of a comprehensive management program.]

Kim Manley: Ms. Manley commented on the rich and unique geology on the Preserve and hoped that there would be ample opportunities for educational use of the Preserve to explore them. She also volunteered to help.

There was a motion to adjourn which was seconded and passed unanimously.

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