

VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE  
PUBLIC MEETING  
Monday, August 5, 2002  
10:00 a.m.

2201 Trinity  
Los Alamos, New Mexico

PRESENT:

William deBuys, Chairman  
Steve Stoddard, Vice Chairman (Phone)  
Bob Armstrong, Member (Phone)  
Leonard Atencio, Member (Phone)  
Karen Durkovich, Member  
Palemon Martinez, Member  
Thomas Swetnam, Member (Phone)  
Gary Ziehe, Executive Director

ALSO PRESENT:

Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager  
Rich Engstrom, Business Manager  
Chris Morris, Controller

Jack McCarthy, Legal (Phone)

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA
3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES
4. OLD BUSINESS
- A. ASSUMPTION OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES
  1. Closure Order
  2. Delegation of Decision Authority
- B. INTERIM GRAZING PROGRAM
  1. Adoption of Environmental Assessment
  2. Distribution of EA
  3. Comment Period
- C. SET NEXT BOARD MEETING
5. NEW BUSINESS
6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman deBuys called the meeting to order and pointed out the presence of a quorum even though David Yepa and Steve Bone were absent and several members were attending by telephone as allowed in the Trust bylaws.

Mr. Stoddard moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Durkovich and unanimously approved.

Valles Caldera Trust Board Meeting Minutes: Due to the physical absence of so many of the Board members it was moved by Mr. Martinez that the approval of the meeting minutes before the Board be deferred until the next scheduled meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stoddard and

unanimously approved.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Assumption of Management Responsibilities: Chairman deBuys announced that the Trust had assumed management authority over the Preserve, stating that Secretary Veneman signed the assumption of management letter on August 2, 2002 by which management authority for the Preserve transferred from the Forest Service to the Board of Trustees.

Closure Order: Mrs. Durkovich presented a resolution regarding closure and enforcement on the Valles Caldera National Preserve for the Board's consideration which read:

#### RESOLVED,

1. That the Valles Caldera Trust will cooperate with the Forest Service in appropriate revision of the existing closure order affecting the Valles Caldera National Preserve.
2. That said revision shall reflect the delegation of management authority conveyed to the Trust by the Secretary of Agricultural in her letter received by the Trust on August 2, 2002.
3. That the policies and standards of the Forest Service applicable to the enforcement of the Order shall be the policies and standards of the Trust until such time as the Trust expressly revises or replaces them.

Mr. Martinez seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Delegation of Decision Authority: The Chairman explained that this item entails decision authority for specific projects under the National Environmental Policy Act. He reported to the Board that the Trust has received a letter from Dinah Bear, General Counsel of the Council on Environmental Quality, saying that she concurs in the judgment that the Trust is a federal agency for purposes of compliance with NEPA. This clears the way for the Trust to develop its own procedures under NEPA.

Mr. Martinez presented a resolution for the Board's considerations which reads:

#### RESOLVED,

1. The Preserve Manager shall have the decision authority of the Valles Caldera Trust regarding the following projects which have been reviewed and are accepted by the Board of Trustees
2. Projects:
  - A. Reconstruction of Road A and five bridges;
  - B. Reconstruction of the headquarters potable water system;
  - C. Noxious weed control program; and
  - D. Fuels reduction treatments and tree thinning relating to the Walatowa initiative.
3. The authority granted by this resolution shall pertain to those portions of the above-listed projects which do not require the adoption of an environmental assessment by the Trust.

Ms. Durkovich seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### INTERIM GRAZING PROGRAM

Chairman deBuys presented a copy of the Environmental Assessment for the Interim Grazing Strategy and announced that it is ready for public distribution. He stated the report incorporates as Appendix C the Program Terms and Conditions, and as Appendix D, the Range Readiness Report of August 1st, 2002. These were included as the Board instructed at its last meeting. He expressed

the desire of the Board to distribute the report for an expedited period of public comment.

Mr. Martinez stated that as Chairman of the Grazing Committee, he appreciates the fact that we initiated the effort back in January and that it has taken quite a bit of time. He commented that John Phillips and his interdisciplinary team did an excellent job. He also complimented the thoroughness of the range readiness team.

All clarifying questions being answered Mr. Martinez made the following motion:

#### RESOLVED,

That the environmental assessment for the interim grazing program be adopted and released for comments as amended to include an erratum sheet stating that the Board of Trustees, and not the Executive Director, will make the final decision to adopt and implement a grazing program, and That the public comment period be open through the close of business on August 12, 2002.

The motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

#### NEXT BOARD MEETING

Chairman deBuys discussed receiving and considering public comment prior to the next Board of Trustees meeting to be held at 2:00 PM on August 13, 2002, stating that the Board will have the first half of Tuesday, the 13th, to digest the comments it has received prior to the Board meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented at the meeting.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chairman opened the floor for public comments.

Bill Huey: Mr. Huey is a member of the Executive Committee of the Valles Caldera Coalition. He expressed his concern about letting cattle onto the Preserve prior to the construction of the exclosures as valuable information may be compromised.

Jan Crawford: Ms. Crawford represents Trout Unlimited. She seconded Mr. Huey's comments about the importance of the grazing exclosures so that the Trust doesn't lose the opportunity to get this good data. She stressed the importance of having qualified herders and expressed her concerns for the stream banks during grazing.

Mr. Stoddard made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Martinez and passed unanimously.

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