

**VALLES CALDERA TRUST
PUBLIC MEETING**

Thursday, January 30, 2003

9:00 a.m.

Sheraton Old Town
Albuquerque, New Mexico

PRESENT:

William deBuys, Chairman
Palemon Martinez, Member
Thomas Swetnam, Member
Leonard Atencio, Member
Steve Bone, Member
David Yepa, Member
Gary Ziehe, Executive Director

ALSO PRESENT:

Rich Engstrom, Business Manager
Jack McCarthy, Legal Counsel
Rick Dustin, Outdoor Recreation Coordinator

AGENDA

- 1) WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
- 2) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- 3) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (10/17/02)
- 4) REPORT ON EXECUTIVE SESSION (11/15/02)
- 5) ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS
- 6) OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Administration and Operations
 - i. Staff Development
 - ii. Office Development
 - iii. Administration Development
 - iv. Preserve Operations
 - v. Volunteer Development
 - vi. Documents in Development
 - b. NEPA Procedures and Planning Process
 - c. Comprehensive Management Program Development
 - d. Continued Program Planning
 - i. Winter Recreation
 - ii. Administration
 - iii. Interim Livestock Grazing
 - iv. Elk Hunt Access Program
 - v. Summer Recreation
 - vi. Vegetation Management and Fuels Treatment
 - vii. Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout
- 7) NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion of Film Studio Proposal
 - b. Other New Business
 - c. Executive Session Approval
- 8) PUBLIC COMMENTS
- 9) ADJOURN

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman deBuys called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He introduced the Board and staff who were present as well as the Trust's outside legal counsel.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman presented the meeting agenda and asked if Board members had any additions. There being none, Mr. Martinez moved to accept the agenda as presented. Mr. Atencio seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman deBuys presented the minutes from the October 17, 2002 public Board of Trustees meeting and asked if there were any changes required. Several minor corrections were suggested and recorded. Mr. Atencio moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved

REPORT ON EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairman asked Dr. Ziehe to report on the Executive Session, held on November 14, which dealt with personnel issues. He said that actions taken at the meeting included:

- 1) Revising the personnel policy, making corrections that ensured the policy was internally consistent and creating provisions that provide more flexibility in moving staff into the area as part of the hiring process.
- 2) Modifying the pay bands to keep up with inflation
- 3) Establishing an executive team management format and reclassifying the Preserve Manager, Business Manager and, when hired, the Preserve Scientist positions into pay band 5.
- 4) Authorizing the hire of Rick Dustin as Recreation Coordinator without competition after two unsuccessful attempts to fill the position through a competitive process

ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

Dr. deBuys explained that under the Trust bylaws, the officers of the Board are elected to one-year terms each year during the January meeting. He stated the need to elect a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, and a Secretary.

Chairman: Dr. Swetnam nominated and Mr. Yepa seconded Dr. deBuys to remain as Chairman. Mr. Atencio made a motion for nominations to cease, which was seconded by Mr. Bone. The nomination was put to a vote and passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman: Mr. Atencio nominated and Dr. Swetnam seconded Mr. Martinez to become Vice Chairman. Mr. Yepa made a motion for nominations to cease, which was seconded by Dr. deBuys. The nomination was put to a vote and passed unanimously.

Secretary: Mr. Martinez nominated and Mr. Atencio seconded Mr. Yepa to remain Secretary. Mr. Atencio made a motion for nominations to cease, which was seconded by Dr. deBuys. The nomination was put to a vote and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman deBuys asked Dr. Ziehe to report on old business.

A. ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

1. Staff Development

Dr. Ziehe outlined the current staffing of the Trust:

- Business Manager – Rich Engstrom (Executive Team Member)
- Office Manager – Ida Formea
- Controller – Chris Morris
- GIS Coordinator – Karen Lee
- Preserve Manager – Dennis Trujillo (Executive Team Member)
- Ranch Foreman – Randy McKee
- Recreation Coordinator – Rick Dustin
- Kimber Barber – Recreation Specialist (Temporary Employee)
- Communications Manager – Julie Grey

In addition, Dr. Ziehe stated the Preserve Scientist (Executive Team Member) position closed on January 4 and a Cultural Resources Coordinator position will close on February 20. These should be filled in March and April respectively.

In response to public comment, the Trust has suspended the contract for outdoor recreation activities and brought this function in-house. Kimber Barber has been hired as a temporary employee through the remainder of the contract in order to try to bring the cost of public recreation activities down.

2. Office Development

Dr. Ziehe observed that the expanding Trust staff has created a need for additional space. The Trust has secured additional space at the Los Alamos Inn that will provide more room and is in the process of building out a conference room

3. Administration Development

The Trust is in the Process of developing various policies for administration of the Trust and the Preserve. A request for proposals has been released to hire two accounting firms. One will provide consulting assistance in developing strong accounting policies and procedures for the Trust and the other will serve as auditor of the Trust's financials.

The transition of the Trust financial system from the Forest Service to the Trust's own system appears to be on schedule. Cost for this transition is estimated to be approximately \$160,000.

The new website for the Trust is up at www.vallescaldera.gov and Phase I of this three

phase development effort is complete. Phase I is the basic document management system as well as a photo gallery and a library system so that documents can be posted on the web site. Phase II will be implemented within a couple of months, and will provide access to geospatial data, booking/reservation system, and a web-based lottery system. Phase III will be analyzed after the first two phases are complete to examine adding additional capability to the web site.

4. Preserve Operations

Water System Refurbishment: On hold until spring weather allows continuing.

Entrance Road Reconstruction: On hold until spring weather allows continuing.

Winter Sports Activities: Ready to go with cross-country skiing on Valle Grande as soon as snow cover permits. Sleigh rides have been discontinued and replaced with wagon rides on a trial basis due to lack of snow cover.

Elk Hunt: Dr. Ziehe explained the structure, cost and dates of the four 2003 bull elk hunts on the Preserve, the lottery system to allocate the hunts and the cow hunts to be conducted in cooperation with New Mexico Game and Fish Department.

Winter Operations: Due to the high expense of maintaining residences on the Preserve through the winter, the staff is reevaluating the feasibility of maintaining a presence on the Preserve throughout the winter.

5. Volunteer Development

The Trust is developing the administrative and training infrastructure to begin a volunteer program. The initial opportunity for volunteering will be with the cross-country skiing program. Currently, 65 people have signed up for volunteer training.

6. Documents in Development

The Trust is required to have an annual report to Congress and to provide a plan of annually decreasing appropriations from Congress over the first 15 years to attain financial self-sufficiency. The January 15 deadline for both of these documents has already passed, but the staff expects both documents to be finished soon. Both of these documents will be available to the public.

B. NEPA PROCEDURES AND PLANNING PROCESS

The Trust has developed its own procedures to insure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The draft procedures are ready for publication in the Federal Register and the Trust will allow a public comment period of at least 45 days on the procedures.

C. COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Chairman deBuys summarized the legislative requirement for developing a comprehensive management program within two years after assuming management from the Forest Service on August 2, 2002. He stated that a draft framework document has been developed based on public input from the listening sessions and the results of a week-long retreat held last summer with the

Board and staff. The framework document has been distributed internally for review and to ensure it fits with the Trust proposed NEPA Procedures. A second draft will be developed and it is hoped that a very rough version of the document will be available for public review in late spring or early summer. It is anticipated that a series of public meetings to present the document and another series to get public reaction to it will be held later this year. This input will be used to produce a final draft. The framework document will be combined with the record of what has been accomplished to date to constitute the comprehensive management program.

D. CONTINUED PROGRAM PLANNING

Dr. Ziehe presented the interim programs currently being developed by the staff.

1. Winter Recreation

The planning process is complete and the staff is ready to implement the program.

2. Administration

The staff is currently engaged in developing administrative policies for the Trust that will apply to both office administration and preserve administrative activities.

3. Interim Livestock Grazing

Based on last year's program results, the Trust is conducting a 'lessons learned' analysis and incorporating what was learned into the development of the 2003 interim grazing program. In 2003, new alternatives will be developed and the environmental assessment will be amended and released to the public for comment in the next couple of months. The actual number of units and timing of the program will be decided by the Board and then potentially adjusted based on a range readiness assessment later in the year.

4. Elk Hunt Access Program

The lottery for the 2003 elk hunts are underway as of January 29 and will be open through June 30. The Trust has developed a booth and will attend four trade shows during that period to promote the hunts.

5. Summer Recreation

The staff is in the process of creating summer recreation programs now that winter recreation has been developed. While planning is not yet complete, there is focus being placed on developing a high quality program at a reasonable cost.

6. Vegetation Management and Fuels Treatment

In cooperation with the Walatowa Initiative, the Trust is planning on implementing some thinning in the southwest corner of the Preserve and some in the headquarters area. The ultimate goal is to insure that that whole stand is maintained in good condition and that it is protected from catastrophic fire.

7. Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout

The Board has a number of questions regarding the reintroduction of the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout and there is no program at this time. The Trust, however, is very eager to engage in the necessary discussions both with the New Mexico Department of the Environment and with the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission on the issue as well

as engaging in a dialogue with the public as time goes on

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman deBuys asked Dr. Ziehe to discuss film production proposal before the Board.

A. DISCUSSION OF FILM STUDIO PROPOSAL

Dr. Ziehe outlined the proposal by Ron Howard's company, Last Ride Productions, to film a portion of "The Missing" at the existing set by the front gate of the Preserve starting on March 10 for two to three weeks. He introduced Mike Dellheim, location manager for the production company, who detailed the story line and the modifications to the existing set and additional buildings which would have to be built to support the filming. Mr. Dellheim fielded a number of questions from the Board and public about the details of the proposal.

Mr. Atencio moved that the Board authorize the Executive Director to complete negotiations on the location agreement with Last Ride Productions in consultation with local counsel and execute the contract for use of the location of the Preserve. He further moved that the Executive Director be instructed to include terms that will provide performance assurances, appropriate terms of vehicle use, and that construction of any sets be subject to concurrence by the State Historic Preservation Officer on the report submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Martinez and carried unanimously.

B. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Atencio asked the Chairman to review the meeting schedule for the Board. Dr. deBuys gave the scheduled meeting dates reserved for the Board as:

February 19, 20, 21

April 7, 8, 9

May 5,6

May 22, 23

There was no other new business.

C. EXECUTIVE SESSION APPROVAL

The Chairman asked Dr. Ziehe to outline the need for an Executive Session during the February meeting of the Board. Dr. Ziehe said the primary reasons would be to adjust the pay band structure and staff pay to reflect cost of living increases and to take up the annual performance review of the Executive Director.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. deBuys opened the floor for public comment.

Jan Crawford, representing Trout Unlimited, gave an introduction to Trout Unlimited and a history of the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. She encouraged the Board and public to attend the public meetings being conducted by the State on trout reintroduction.

Chris Ewer, Secretary and Sports Director for the Zia Chapter of the International Organization of Paralyzed Veterans of America, discussed the need for disabled access in the community and

offered any assistance the Trust might desire to help incorporate disabled access into Preserve activities.

Jerry Grayson of Placitas thanked the Board for the approach being taken to public involvement. He voiced a concern about potential fee structure of Preserve activities and was glad to hear of the emerging volunteer program as well as the Trust approach to NEPA.

Ernie Atencio of the Valles Caldera Coalition asked the status of the vacant Board positions. Dr. deBuys stated that there is no new status and it may well take several months as Trustees are required to have background checks prior to being announced.

Don Blossom asked what information is contained on the new web site. He is concerned that the budget and financial information be made public so the public can appreciate the constraints the Board must operate under.

Tom Lucero from the Pueblo of Jemez voiced wanted to ensure that the Trust ensures the archeological sites are protected and that the proper archeological clearances are obtained for the filming and other Preserve activities.

ADJOURN

All public comment being heard, Mr. Yepa made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Dr. Swetnam, approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.