

VALLES CALDERA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PUBLIC MEETING

Friday, May 14, 2004

9:00 a.m.

Research Park

Los Alamos, New Mexico

PRESENT:

William deBuys, Chairman

Tracy S. Hephner, Vice Chairman

Thomas Swetnam, Member

David Yepa, Member

Palemon Martinez, Member

Barbara Johnson, Member

Larry Icerman, Member

Darlene Koontz, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Rich Engstrom, Business Manager

Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager

Bob Parmenter, Preserve Scientist

Jack McCarthy, Legal Counsel

Dave Phillips

transcript by: EDITH ARNOLD FLORES, NM CCR#208, Cumbre Court Reporting

minutes prepared by: Tracy S. Hephner, Valles Caldera Trust Board Vice Chair
and Acting Executive Director

AGENDA

- I. INTRODUCTIONS
- II. REVIEW/APPROVE AGENDA
- III. REVIEW/APPROVE 3/12/04 MINUTES
- IV. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION
- V. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Administrative Update
 - i. Finance Committee Report
 - ii. Legislative Changes
 - iii. Interpretive Master Plan
 - iv. Tribal Access Policy
 - v. Executive Director Search
 - b. Operations Update
 - i. Geothermal Issues
 - ii. Summer Recreation
 - iii. Elk Hunt
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Recognition of Gary Ziehe
 - b. Public Road Closure
 - c. Infrastructure Planning
- VII. RIO GRANDE CUTTHROAT TROUT RESTORATION
- VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT
- IX. ADJOURN

INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman deBuys opened the meeting.

REVIEW/APPROVE AGENDA

Mr. Swetnam moved to add an item to the agenda to discuss the planning for an administrative and/or visitor center site. Ms. Hephner seconded this motion. Chairman DeBuys suggested the discussion topic be called Infrastructure Planning.

Mr. Yepa moved to accept the agenda with the one addition and Mr. Swetnam seconded the motion. Chairman deBuys asked for a vote on the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

REVIEW/APPROVE 3/12/04 MINUTES

The minutes of the March 12, 2004 meeting of the Board of Trustees were amended. **Dr. Icerman moved to approve the minutes as amended, with a second by Mr. Martinez. The motion passed unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS

Administrative Update

Finance Committee Report

Dr. Icerman, Chairman of the Committee, noted that the Finance Committee is formally titled the Finance and Audit Committee. The committee met on March 30, 2004 at the office in Los Alamos to review and define the committee's responsibilities.

There were two topics that were felt to be beyond the scope of the Finance Committee. The first was "Review the Trust policies with respect to risk assessment and risk management." The second was to "Review the Trust's legal, regulatory, and ethical compliance." It is the recommendation of the Finance Committee that those two areas would be more appropriately addressed by the full Board.

The committee reviewed the implementation status of the Trust's financial systems, and urged the staff to continue to work on developing standard financial statements so that as a matter of course at Board meetings, summary financial statements would be provided.

The process that the Finance Committee suggested to be used going forward would be for the Finance Committee to make recommendations for revising the budget as it became necessary throughout the course of the fiscal year.

Dr. Icerman moved the Board approve the revised budget for fiscal year 2004. Ms. Koontz seconded. The FY04 budget was approved unanimously.

Interpretive Master Plan

As the meeting was running slightly ahead of schedule and Dr. Gary Ziehe had not yet arrived to report on legislative changes, the Board moved on to a report on the Interpretive Master Plan. Rich Engstrom presented an overview of the ongoing work by Aldrich Pears.

Tribal Access Policy

Mr. Yepa made a motion to adopt the Tribal Access Policy. Mr. Icerman seconded the motion. The Tribal Access Policy was adopted unanimously.

Dorothy Hoard, a member of the audience asked "Can you describe some of the cultural activities? Some of them could be logging and resource extraction that might conflict with government policy."

Mr. Yepa replied that cultural activities might vary going depending on which pueblo or which Indian tribe is involved. He pointed out that the policy includes at a provision that pueblos and tribes have to comply with additional requirements, whatever they might be, including any other federal laws that apply.

Ms. Hoard questioned if the policy will be posted on the web site.

Chairman deBuys replied "Yes, this will be a public document. And the policy

is specific that *The Trust recognizes that it shall be the responsibility of tribes or tribal members who gain access to the Preserve under this policy to obtain appropriate authorization for the taking of any plants or animals that are subject to regulation by other federal or state agencies.*"

Mr. McCarthy, legal counsel for the Trust, added "I would also point out that the Act specifically says it does not create any new right enforceable at law but recognizes existing rights, and I think this is a very important point."

Executive Director Search

It was agreed that the target date for the first set of Executive Director applicant interviews would be May 24, 2004.

Public Comment

A citizen in attendance inquired about the appointment of new Board members and urged the Board to try to insure that there be no delay in the appointments.

Legislative Changes: Bill S 1582

Dr. Ziehe arrived and presented a status report on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee mark up on S 1582.

Operations Update__

Geothermal Issues

Dr. Ziehe presented an update on geothermal issues.

Charlie Allen, a resident of La Cueva, asked for elaboration on the VCT strategy on dealing with the ongoing geothermal issues. Chairman deBuys and Preserve Manager Dennis Trujillo answered the inquiries.

Marty Peale, a member of the audience, commented on a meeting she attended at the New Mexico Geothermal Working Group. Ms. Peale informed the BOT that The Valles Caldera Coalition had formulated a position statement about this which basically backed the Trust in its position with Congress.

Summer Recreation

Dennis Trujillo presented an overview of the summer recreation programs, and proposed programs.

Carole Jacobson, from the audience, reported that local people, from Los Alamos, were finding that the geologic explanation on the van tours was not always accurate. She and others felt the van drivers needed better training.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognition of Gary Ziehe

Chairman deBuys acknowledged the contributions that Mr. Ziehe had made in his two and a half year association with the Trust. The public joined the Board of Trustees in thanking Dr. Ziehe.

Public Road Closure

Ms. Koontz updated the Board on the status of the Los Alamos National Laboratory possible road closures on Highway 4 or West Jemez Road.

There was a general discussion of the design features of the lane stations that would regulate access to the road, and the possible impacts on Ponderosa Campground.

Many details regarding the road closure remain uncertain or lack definition at this time.

Infrastructure Planning

Mr. Swetnam reopened a discussion from the work session the previous day. Dennis Trujillo had asked the Board to consider authorizing him to move forward on a planning initiative for an administrative site and/or visitor center site, to begin that process of gathering data and assessing our needs and preliminary planning efforts for infrastructure.

Mr. Swetnam summarized the discussion, emphasizing the need to integrate planning efforts so that infrastructure, transportation and the Interpretive Master Plan work together.

He reiterated a concern that the Trust utilize with the best advice possible, and possibly call on experts regionally and nationally for advice on the best way to proceed with our infrastructure needs for an administrative or visitors site. Mr. Swetnam said he, and other Trustees felt a need to start moving more quickly on making decisions about infrastructure.

Ms. Johnson and Dr. Icerman concurred. Ms. Koontz and Chairman deBuys cautioned to “move smartly” rather than quickly and that carrying capacity studies were essential to guide planning efforts.

The Board reviewed a proposal for a contract with URS. The Board asked URS and staff to work together to rewrite the scope of work so that it reflected the Board’s discussion on approaching planning with first tier data collection. The Board agreed to review the revised scope of work at the upcoming retreat.

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Reintroduction

Chairman DeBuys introduced Mike Sloan from the Department of Game & Fish, to talk about Rio Grande Cutthroat reintroduction on the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Mr. Sloan circulated some handouts and reviewed the Department’s ongoing efforts at Rio Grande Cutthroat reintroduction within the state. Mr. Sloan encouraged the Board to consider reintroduction on the Preserve, and indicated that the Department would welcome working with the Trust at whatever pace the Trust felt comfortable.

Mr. Sloan fielded numerous questions from the Board and the audience. Representatives of Trout Unlimited, the Forest Service and the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society spoke in support of reintroduction.

The Board was polled and was evenly split on the topic of reintroduction on the Preserve. The Board indicated a willingness to allow discussion on reintroduction between VCNP staff and the F&G Dept. to continue.

Appointment of New Board Members

There was a discussion, with questions from the audience, on how and when new board members would be appointed to fill the four trustees whose terms expire in January of 2005. Chairman deBuys indicated that nominations for the positions should be submitted directly to the Office of White House Personnel. He indicated that the Council on Environmental Quality and the New Mexico Congressional delegation might also be contacted.

With no further requests from the Board or audience, Chairman deBuys asked if there was a motion to adjourn. **Dr. Icerman moved to adjourn. Mr. Yepa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**