

# **Valles Caldera Trust Draft Framework Rollout Public Meetings**

**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque  
April 26, 2004**

## **NOTES**

The Fifth and final VCT public meeting for the Draft Framework Document was held in Albuquerque at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center on April 24.. The meeting was attended by 26 members of the public, along with several Board members and staff. Toby Herzlich facilitated the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- present and gather feedback on the Draft Framework document;
- engage in dialogue between the Valles Caldera Trust and the public;
- outline the process and timeline for finalizing the Framework and moving to the next planning steps.

Tracy Hephner welcomed the group and introduced Board and staff members. Toby Herzlich presented the objectives and agenda for the meeting. Gary Ziehe presented a 20-minute slide show as a basis of understanding around the Trust's work to date and the Framework document. Following this introduction, participants met in small groups with Board and staff to talk about specific topics. These discussions were a combination of getting questions answered and sharing feedback and ideas about the material in the Framework document. The discussion topics were adjusted slightly for this meeting.

After the roundtable discussions, participants were invited to share general comments. They were encouraged to speak to the group about anything they wanted to emphasize, or messages that they wanted the Board to strongly consider. These comments are presented below first, with the table summaries following. Comments have been re-organized so that feedback regarding the draft Framework is presented first. There was a great deal of discussion around the issue of developing a final chapter in the Framework that is more quantified.:

### **Participant Feedback on the Draft Framework and other Issues**

- Include a final chapter that commits to next steps of planning with measurable outcomes. Conduct a quantified planning phase prior to initiating the StARS processes. This chapter should have commitments and a timeline.
- Use maps in the final chapter to define geographic and temporal sidebars.
- Include in the Framework a map of watersheds and tributaries. Consider using the watersheds as planning units. Also, use the maps to provide a visual reference for zoning, monitoring, interactions of programs, etc.

- There are two levels of quantification: 1) define what the VCT intends to protect and move toward – standards and quantification of what we want to see in place (ecological conditions standards); and 2) quantification of activities and outcomes – what levels will be implemented out there, both short and long term?
- In this document, lay out a plan of attack for developing measurable outcomes.
- A baseline is needed to define what is there now, as a basis for determining future damage and /or improvement.
- Set a time frame for when the next document will be ready – push for specificity within that time frame.
- Adaptive management requires flexibility. Other agency plans don't allow the opportunity to read what is happening on the ground and respond to it.
- Science-based Adaptive Management calls for a metric that all programs can aim toward. We have to determine what we are trying to achieve, and We have to determine what we are trying to achieve, and why? The metrics can be re-evaluated to meet the “why?”
- The goals need clearer definition (e.g., “sustainable,” working ranch”).
- Regarding the working ranch, grazing tends to polarize people. Experiment with grazing practices that benefit the ecosystem and bridge the divide among views.
- What is the carrying capacity with elk and cattle?
- Coordinate VCNP efforts with the Statewide Forest Health Plan, initiated by Governor Richardson, with a Dec 2004 deadline. Focus on large scale landscape restoration, thinking beyond the Preserve to include USFS, Bandelier, etc., and long-term impacts.
- This experiment cannot be static. We must always keep in mind four values: Diversity (from cattle ranchers to the Sierra Club), Equality, Opportunity, and Action.

## **Summaries of Roundtable Discussions with Board members**

### *Vision and Values Table*

- The values as stated in the Framework are good. The balance will need to be delicate.
- Don't create a Yosemite – maintain opportunities for solitude, keep density low, maintain high-quality experiences.
- Develop with a regional sense – the Preserve does not have to be all things for all people. It is not necessary to focus on the VCNP as providing economic development for the region.
- Conduct a workshop with business experts about the financial model.
- How to ensure that the values are maintained as the Board changes?
- Federal overhead costs should not be counted when factoring the financial self-sufficiency.
- Do there have to be cattle on the Preserve? Consider alternatives.

### *Ecology and Resources Table*

- Use volunteers more in monitoring and providing services.
- Establish a friends group to coordinate volunteers; use this group and volunteers to keep the staff small.
- Focus on restoration. Evaluate the reintroduction of native species.
- Roads – rehab or close as many as possible.
- Focus on hydrological conditions, forest health. Work in coordination with the Governor’s statewide Task Force on Forest Health.
- Define key phrases, such as “multiple use.”

### *Working Ranch Table*

- It is important to keep ranchers on the ground. The Preserve has an opportunity to contribute to this.
- Fire management is critical.
- Use adaptive management.
- Address tree encroachment.
- The working ranch goal should not outweigh ecological health.
- It can be financially viable.
- Focus on the management of people.
- Demonstrate the value of volunteers.
- Manage elk to be compatible with ranching.

### *Self-Sufficiency Table*

- Never put a Taco Bell on the Preserve!
- The Framework is a good introduction with broad language – where is the meat?
- Don’t compete with neighbors for funding or income.
- Don’t let the self-sufficiency goal become overriding or drive the experiment.
- Stratifying costs are OK – don’t let high-income generators preclude other access
- is it possible to achieve self-sufficiency? The group was split – some felt “yes,” others “no,” some “maybe.”

### *Recreation Table*

- The “experiment” is proceeding well.
- Control access to ensure that human impacts are managed.
- Consider zoning, both temporally and geographically.
- Consider mountain biking as a good, low-impact activity if done on the logging roads.
- No ATVs or snowmobiles.
- Recreation can coexist with ranching.
- develop hut-to-hut hiking programs, car camping, wheelchair access, picnic areas.
- There are many volunteers available from the Abq area, but the distance requires an overnight stay. Possibility of developing overnight lodging for volunteers?
- Extend the XC skiing further into the Preserve. Cooperate with the ski hill.

*Infrastructure Table*

- The “slowly but surely” development pace is good.
- Maintain the view from the Hwy 4 corridor – ensure that the Visitors Center does not have a visual impact.
- Whatever we do has impact – try to minimize the visual impact.
- Use local communities for infrastructure needs whenever possible.
- Collaborate with the Forest Service for camping.
- Partner with others to provide public transportation.
- Maintain the integrity of the place.