

Valles Caldera Trust – Public Access and Use Public Meetings July 31 – August 16, 2007 Public Meetings Summary – Combined Report

INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of public input received during a series of four New Mexico public meetings in 2007 on the subject of Public Access and Use. The meetings were sponsored by Valles Caldera National Preserve and managed and facilitated by The Mary Orton Company, LLC (TMOC). They were held in Jemez Springs (July 31), Pojoaque (August 2), Los Alamos (August 14), and Rio Rancho (August 16).

Each public meeting consisted of two parts. The first was an open house at which the public was invited to drop in any time between 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm. The open house included informational posters, staff and board members to talk with, flipcharts on which to write comments, and maps on which to draw. In addition, attendees were given comment cards and evaluation sheets and urged to fill them out. The second part of the meeting was a discussion-oriented workshop, during which several questions were asked of the public and the answers recorded. The workshop portion of the meeting occurred once or twice during the open house, depending on the number of people present. This report focuses primarily on input received during the workshops.

TMOC prepared separate meeting summaries for each of the four public meetings. In its direction to TMOC for this combined report, the Valles Caldera Trust said that the combined report should “be a summary of the values, the activities, and how people perceived challenges and opportunities. The summary [should] capture those items that were commonly threaded throughout the communities as well as community-specific items (if there were any).”

For ease of visualization, and to help determine which items were identified by all the communities and which may have been specific to one community, the comments are color coded, as follows:

Red: Jemez Springs

Green: Pojoaque

Blue: Los Alamos

Black Italic: Rio Rancho

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SECTION 1. VALUES

Responses to the questions: “What do you value about the Valles Caldera National Preserve? What do you want to preserve for your children and grandchildren?”

Note that exact duplicates from the same community have been removed.

Beauty / Pristine Natural Landscape / Setting / Personal Values

- Pristine setting
- The Preserve is pristine compared to the Forest Service
- Keep pristine nature – limit vehicles and off road
- The natural setting
- Unique natural landscape
- I value the open natural appearance.
- Unspoiled open beauty
- The beauty
- The beauty of the natural resources and their extent over ~90,000 acres of variation.
- Expansive views
- The long grassy (?) vistas
- “Natural” landscapes
- Open scenic vistas
- Beauty
- Natural beauty that is rapidly disappearing
- Natural beauty that is rapidly disappearing in this world
- Dramatic place – special
- Scenic uniqueness
- Open spaces/vistas
- A unique, natural wonder landscape
- Natural beauty and natural health
- Truly unique sense of place
- Natural beauty and undisturbed appearance
- Natural beauty, relatively free from artifacts
- Natural beauty
- The unique beauty of the valles
- Preserve’s pristine beauty
- The incredible beauty of the preserve
- Open space
- Vistas
- Ability to visit such a beautiful place
- I want to preserve the beauty of the VC so other people seeing it for the first time can experience the awe and excitement of seeing such a landscape
- The breathtaking views and natural landscape and seeing hundreds of elk grazing in the valley
- I value the beauty of the preserve and access to see it all the future generations
- Beauty – nothing else like it in the world
- Beauty and history
- Landscape
- Open space
- Great natural views

- Vast views
- Scenic vistas
- Pristine environment
- Scenery
- Vistas and viewsheds
- Scenic vistas
- Scenic beauty
- Landscape

Solitude / Silence / Spiritual

- Stillness
- Silence
- Solitude
- Sense of solitude
- The solitude
- Solitude – public but controlled access
- Quiet solitude
- Solitude – feeling of remoteness
- Peacefulness of valleys in early morning and evening
- Quiet and peaceful
- Unique tranquility, beauty
- The spirit of the place
- It's not over-run with thousands of vehicles, tourism
- Zen experience
- No engine noises
- Dark
- Awe inspiring
- Unsupervised solitude, free thought
- Solitude – quiet, open vistas
- Sense of discovery
- Sense of solitude
- Sense of solitude, openness, maintain some (illusion) of wildness. No crowds!
- Value the solitude
- Solitude / beauty
- Solitude
- Spirit of the place – use of all senses
- Isolation and wildness
- The Valles Caldera “experience” – sense of wonder, majesty, privacy that I had when I first laid eyes on this vast expanse of land.
- Sense of place – enormous, self-contained, a place apart
- Not crowded
- Unknown territory to explore
- Un-crowded
- Solitude/empty space
- Value 13,000 years of continuous habitation and it is still a pristine environment. There is a lesson here.
- Lack of development (wilderness)
- Value: its uniqueness and capacity to be a semi-wild place
- The “unknown beyond the fence”

Land Characteristics / Ecological Values / Resources

- Wildness (raw power of nature)
- Wildlife – all
- The pristine environment – wilderness with the plants and animals
- The natural values that still exist, and to see those that don't still exist restored.
- Efforts to preserve land without cutting it off from various uses.
- Relative resilient landscape confined to two upper watersheds with great potential.
- Highest point of watershed headwaters.
- Wild space
- To experience wildlife in a natural (almost) setting
- Intense thunderstorms – amazing!
- “Wet” streams
- Enhanced watershed capabilities
- Potential for synergizing with Santa Fe National Forest and Bandelier (large area)
- Scale of Caldera
- Elk herds
- Good “management” of wildlife – protection, population control
- Abundant wildlife
- Wildlife – especially # bird species
- Potential for new model for resource conservation – new experiment
- Unique combination of resources – science, recreation, wildlife management, agriculture
- Affordable local use of resources – wood, grazing, fishing, hunting
- Big, open, natural environment
- A native ecosystem in its restored state
- Clean water, native fish
- Ecological and landscape diversity
- “Standing waves of grain”
- An ecosystem that can be returned to its native state
- Preserve and regenerate natural setting
- Its resources
- Wildness
- Landscape where fire can be restored to its natural role
- Functioning ecosystem – all the parts
- Wildlife including invertebrates
- Nature
- Wildlife habitat
- Pre-dawn animal-life and lighting
- Predators not harassed, visible
- Natural, un-impacted areas – clean water, limited roads
- Lots of predators & other wildlife
- Quiet self determined landscape
- Bison
- Inspiring resilience
- Unique landscape (biological, botanical & cultural)
- The “wild” feeling of it
- Relationship to landscape
- Relatively undeveloped
- Unique wildlife concentrations (golden eagles, bald eagles, prairie dogs, pikas)
- Wildlife

- Headwaters
- Land use
- Valles: large, open meadows and wetlands
- Ecosystems toward Ponderosa
- Grassland and wet meadows in so many cases
- Connection to mother nature
- *The wide open valley floors (with wildlife in them)*
- *Wildlife diversity*
- *Wildlife*
- *Natural resources*
- *How the land and resources have been recovered and maintained*
- *Value that the Preserve is both large and small enough to serve as a land management laboratory.*
- *Contact with nature*
- *The wilderness experience with some accessibility for those who cannot manage the biking and walking*
- *Size – wildlife, history*
- *Elk*
- *Functional nature*
- *Wild and quiet*
- *Forests*
- *Water*
- *Native fish*
- *Forest productivity*

Cultural / Historical / Geological Values

- *The history*
- *Geologic history*
- *The history that time has presented.*
- *Unique cultural resources and landscape*
- *Historic ties to present-day cultures*
- *Historic buildings and archaeology*
- *Additional geologic stories still to come*
- *Archaeological sites of all kinds and sizes and ages*
- *Fewer and fewer cows*
- *The ranching way of life, specifically horse-back riding*
- *Cultural history – the fact that the VC has been special to people for thousands of years*
- *VCNP is not scarred or trashed by human use except for logging roads, which will reclaim.*
- *Interesting geological story*
- *Cultural resources landscape*
- *Geology*

Public Use and Access - Activities

- *Backcountry experience*
- *Fishing for wild rainbows and brown*
- *Hiking / cross country skiing*
- *Outdoor educational activities*
- *VCNP is a part of the Jemez Mts. Public land should be available to the public for appropriate uses. The VCNP has opportunities.*
- *A real opportunity for sustainable multiple-use management.*
- *I would value the opportunity that I don't yet have to wander where and when I wish.*

- I don't know anything about it yet.
- Continued accessibility
- Proximity – location
- Affordable access for hunting, fishing, visit
- Hospitality opportunity – with nature, done right = +\$
- Education potential – “outdoors” classroom
- Unsupervised, less regulated access
- True and open access by the public
- Opportunity for discovery through recreational experiences
- Opportunity to learn
- The human role in nature
- Congenial staff
- Show children the healthier land by management
- The fantastic fishing
- Hiking and biking opportunities with solitude to observe the natural beauty up close
- Natural resources and recreational opportunities and avenues to access via trails
- Hiking and riding trails – an excellent way to share the natural wonders of the area and teach my grandchildren about ecology and stewardship
- I've been enjoying the Valles since 1945. My children and grandchildren are already enjoying it. But others in the future should have the same experience and take care of it.
- Free or token cost access to hike on remote areas of the VCNP.
- Hiking on ancient trails
- *Volunteer opportunities*
- *Value: primitive activities: hiking, equestrian, x-c skiing, snowshoeing*
- *Value: integrated activities, somewhat limited group sizes, biking/equestrian, x-c skiing/snowshoeing*
- *Future opportunities to access more of area*
- *Maintain current activities*
- *Hiking*
- *Overnight biking and equestrian*
- *Mt. biking*
- *I want to preserve accessibility and hunting*
- *XC skiing*
- *Value: sustained hunting and fishing*
- *Backwoods experience*
- *Viewing wildlife in its natural state*
- *Opportunity to see wildlife*
- *Unique recreation opportunities*

Preservation

- To keep what we have forever.
- The fact that it was saved from development
- Mandate to preserve – goals Nos. 2 and 6 (from statutory goals)
- Preserve this landscape for future generations'
- Preserve VCNP intact
- Preserve ecosystem health
- I would like my children's children to see that beauty.
- Commitment to restoration
- *Children: preserve the history.*
- *Save all the present values for children and grandchildren*

- *Keep it as it is, you can't improve on it – Theo. Roosevelt*

SECTION 2. ACTIVITIES

Responses to the question (having seen a list of activities currently offered on the Preserve): “Are there activities not listed here that you think the Trust should add to the suite of activities offered on the Preserve?”

Administration / Fees

- How much is reasonable to reach financial self-sufficiency – lower fee and more people, or higher fee and less people who can afford it.
- What is the optimum number of people?
- User friendly attitude
- Less intensive management by staff
- Some things (activities) should be done independently
- Flexibility for permitting: allowing changes to days for fishing, redraw for people who cancel an elk hunt – more customer friendliness, business-like atmosphere, less bureaucratic
- Annual pass
- Self-pay stations at all trailheads
- Season pass (annual)
- Shared pass with Bandelier
- Much more accessible to people in general at a reasonable cost
- Annual pass (\$100 a year) (2 participants) – although some would pay more
- Adults pay (not just volunteer) to help with field work
- Golden age pass
- Seven-day / week access pass
- Open 7-days a week
- 24-hour access
- Unstructured activities, particularly for children
- Reduce activities
- Emphasis on non-motorized access
- Golf carts for transportation
- Horse and wagon instead of buses
- Use bicycles as transportation to trail heads
- Handicap access
- Facilities that are ADA
- *Balance activities against impacts on resources*
- *Balance number of users vs. revenue potential*
- Set aside a large with almost no public access – a control area
- Stringent regulations to protect the preserve

Infrastructure

- Donated, “full-blown” visitor center
- Conference facility
- *Use headquarters buildings as retreat center*
- Education center – environmental education for kids
- *What is cost to repair existing lodges (38)? (Estimated cost to bring existing building up to standard is \$1.4 to 1.6 M) Ask a contractor to maintain and manage*
- Separate trails dedicated to horseback, biking and hiking (linkage between hiking and biking)
- *Enlarge visitor center and supplies, materials available*

- Developing access points from existing routes – NM4, FSR44
- Covered shelter along NM 4 for various programs
- Access from Highway 4. It's a day use area.
- Extend the yurts – more possibilities, summer use

Volunteers

- Trail building – public could be involved with
- Volunteer trail-building
- Student Conservation Association – utilize them ASAP
- Building huts, etc. using logs/lumber from thinning projects – public program
- Roads – use volunteer involvement for restoration
- Beef up volunteer programs – especially retired people
- More volunteer opportunities

Overnight Camping / Backpacking

- Backpacking
- Backcountry camping
- Backpacking
- Designated backcountry/backpacking areas
- Backpacking
- Backpacking and wilderness camping – primitive
- Wilderness camping and improved – youth groups, especially
- 3-5 day trips with locations for overnight
- General camping – primitive, backcountry, close to highway
- Overnight camping for equestrians (maybe RVs and equestrians).
- To attract other uses – primitive camping, cabins.
- Overnight camping for fishing
- Overnight camping
- Luxury camping
- Camping
- Overnight family use
- Camping / overnight outside
- Overnight activities work together with educational activities – e.g. cross-country skiing
- Large group (20-50) backpacking, controlled access
 - Is a need for more of this
- Why is camping not on the current activity list?
 - This is the interim plan, subject to change for the long-term plan
 - Infrastructure is not yet in place
- Could create backpacking routes navigable by GPS
- Overnight camping
- Overnight access at parking area and on horse trails

Lodging

- Hospitality and lodging greatly enhanced
- Hospitality and lodging – not too upscale, not Hollywood, this is New Mexico – rustic
- Restaurant
- Convert existing buildings to overnight use
- Additional buildings for overnights
- Don't rename the Kiva

- *Palatial lodge \$350-500/night (with wine!)*
- *Luxury tourism as funding source*

Backcountry / Rustic Lodging

- *Hut to hut touring with food service*
- **Hut hopping**
- *Wilderness lodging, hut hopping*
 - *Guess \$1M/year income*
 - *Requires minimal facilities cost*
- *Yurts in small meadows with overnight stays, separate uses for equestrian, hiking and skiing*
- *Overnight at the lodge*
- *At Vermejo Park, people can reserve exclusive use of a valley, for example*
- **Guided tours to backcountry**

PROGRAMMING

Astronomy

- **Moonlight skiing – should be broken out**
- **Stargazing**
- **Night access for amateur astronomers**

Bicycle

- **Single track (trail for bikes)**
- **Less limited mountain biking – how often and where**
- **Individual biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing**
- *Mountain biking*

Birding

- **Access for bird/wildlife watching**
- **Sponsorship for birdwatching (with organizations)**
- **Birding**
- **Bird watching, especially bald eagles**

Commercial Recreation

- *Commercial recreation – guiding and tour companies*
 - *Already done at other national parks*
 - *Coordinate with Bandelier*
 - *Sources of out-of-state money*
- *Income source – concessionaire – develop for overnight stays*
- **Hot springs business**

Cross-Country Skiing / Winter Activities

- **Self-guided cross-country skiing with a variety of access points**
- **Cross-country ski passes**
- **Sledding**
- **Snow-shelter building class**

Education Programs

- **Field research station (e.g. like at Glacier National Park Glacier Institute)**
- **Educational presentations about current research**

- Adult level field school like Grand Canyon
- Field based school for students playing staff roles; students as guides, journalists, monitors
- Educational facility – classroom lab coupled with hospitality (food service, dorms)
- Education – primitive skills like flint knapping
- Interaction with public schools – basic science, every level from kindergarten up
- Open air things like a history lecture – include people from Jemez Pueblo, also storytelling
- Storytelling with Pueblo
- “Campfire talks” and storytelling activities
- Activities at the movie set, BBQ, Western ballads, evening activities, star gazing
- Environmental education, not just for children
- Biology, geology
- Children’s activities to introduce them to the natural world
- Camps for kids, schools – science camp, wilderness camp
 - Need dorms
- More non-academic educational opportunities – a field station somewhat open to the public

Equestrian

- Equestrian trails – would be nice to have destinations (not just a loop) way out there – springs, etc.
- Overnight parking/camping for equestrian people coming long distances - corrals or hi-lines
- Horse rentals
- Longer trails (horse trails)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access (therapeutic horseback)

Hiking

- Hiking in a freer – taking one’s own car to the trailhead and hike
- Freedom to hike more widely, access from Camp May, self-guided
- Longer hiking trails
- More backcountry access for hiking - How will this impact/be impacted by hunting?
- Through hiking – depending on trail system, can start in different areas and hike through
- Guided hiking
- Rim trail/rim route with access from rim
- Rim trail – 60-70 mile loop (described) – more access to the north rim
- Trails, not roads
- Grassland hiking

Hunting / Wildlife

- Weighted lottery for elk hunting
- Lottery for each elk-hunting season - \$10,000 prize nationwide lottery
- Trophy surcharge for elk hunters
- Expand hunting opportunities and species – deer, bear, cougar, trapping
- Wolf watching
- Opportunity to view the elk in rut

Livestock / Dude Ranch

- Dude ranch
- Dude ranch activities
- More kids participating in dude ranch, research
- Enhance historic ranching – living museum
- Observe cattle operations

- More grazing with local communities, e.g. grassbank coverage

Resource Use / Protection

- Extreme efforts for fire prevention
- Natural fire regime restored
- Reduce fencing as possible
- Follow the law regarding ecosystem protection
- Ecotourism, courses and research projects
- *Lumber production, timber - Income source with low visual impact*
 - Consider any conflicts with public access
 - Christmas tree harvesting as income source
 - The Preserve has marketable, medium-sized timber - Old-fashioned horse logging – educational opportunity
 - Consider conflicts with resource preservation - remove some for forest health
 - Logging falls under the sustainable use goal
- Public access to forest products – firewood cutting, Christmas tree harvesting for families
- Work with ranchers/dude ranch

Other Uses

- *Spontaneous events, e.g., running*
- Evening fishing
- Retreats for corporations, nonprofits, whoever, at the lodge
- Event gatherings – weddings, family reunions – help keep other uses lower cost
- Pack trips (light animals) – llamas or horses
- Free day last year – could have charged \$1/car to help lower other costs.
- Day-use picnic facilities
- Picnicking
- Hot spring bathing – historical use on ranch.
- Mycology tour (mushrooms)
- Archaeology programs and other “...ologies”
- Orienteering
- *Adventure sports – orienteering, races*
- Sitting quietly
- Photography and painting at all hours
- Photography workshops
- Green burial
- Kite festival in the Valle Grande
- Kite flying
- Rock climbing

SECTION 3. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Public responses to the questions: “Think about (a given) activity in conjunction with other activities on the list, and think about the opportunities and challenges that conjunction presents. What opportunities present themselves with pairs of activities? For examples, are there opportunities for sharing infrastructure or other resources between activities? Do you see any challenges or problems with pairs of activities? If so, what could be done, if anything, to address the challenge? For example, would activities be more compatible if they occurred at a different time or a different location? Do you have any thoughts about how many people should be allowed at one time for this activity? What kinds of infrastructure would be needed?”

➤ Hiking

- General Comments
 - Lots of hiking needed
 - South Mountain trail is ideal except for the berms
 - Hiking should be spontaneous
 - Research can identify areas that are better suited for hiking
 - VC has 1,200 miles of roads that could be used for hiking
 - What is the backcountry? What you can't see from the road.
 - Limited access roads – van access only – that would be more backcountry or horses.
- Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Can it be compatible with mountain biking?
 - Can mountain biking and hiking share infrastructure? Depends on how fast the bikers go
 - Hikers, mountain bikers, cross country skiers, runners all need and use trails
 - Hiking and ranching may be a conflict
 - Hiking and dude ranching
 - Hiking can be done by current staff, while dude ranching is specialized, need concessionaire
 - Gates/access needed through livestock fencing
 - Hiking trails should not follow grazing trails – otherwise needs interesting footwork
 - Biggest connection is financial
 - Too many people allowed in
 - Dude ranching does not seem a serious approach to grazing and revenue generating
 - 15 cowboys to 1 cow degrades the resource
 - Resorts to a recreational opportunity rather than financial
 - Can't combine recreational and serious sustainable cattle raising to generate funds
 - Crowd Caldera with recreation
 - Recreation is important
 - Dude ranching could be additional income, could share infrastructure
 - Hiking and elk viewing
 - Interference management – how do you keep the experience?
 - Control and timing – different times of the year
 - Hiking and education share infrastructure
- Infrastructure
 - Need trail crews for maintenance
 - Trailhead parking, toilets, maintenance
 - Law enforcement, emergency responders
 - Interpretive and safety panels (sign), Solid waste (trash) facilities

- Fee stations (dispersed rather than centralized)
- Communications – self guided hikes with cell phone or PA
- Port-a-potties
- Trails, good maps, signage, secure parking, routes (backcountry walking/wandering) trailheads, toilets, schedule or no schedule
- Vans are a good idea, to keep people in the right places
- Nature trail for short-time visitors, so they can actually get on the preserve
- Infrastructure range from none to developed trails
- Trail heads, parking, bathrooms, education, maps, visitor login, posting web advisories, trail updates, zones, safety issues. Also applies to other foot access to VC
- For camping, you can hike to it
- Appalled that hiking at Rocky Mt. National Park is on paved trails – it costs for infrastructure, but it's needed to preserve the resource if the area is overused.
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - Paying for hiking access helps
 - Willing to pay \$20 a day for hiking
 - \$100 a year north side hiking pass
- Resource Protection
 - More hiking = less resource protection
 - Good trails = better resource protection
 - Access generates appreciation of the resources
 - Monitoring helps reduce impact
- **Camping / Backpacking / Backcountry Camping**
 - General Comments
 - Backpacking – different requirements
 - *Good opportunity at the Preserve: specific to this place and its goals*
 - *Not in favor of car camping – like backpacking*
 - *Spontaneous activities*
 - *Surcharge for plastic water bottles, discount for canteens, rewards for trash removal by guests*
 - *Increased risk of fire*
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Conflict with grazing – people don't want to be with cattle, cattle could be dangerous to people – separate by space – also applicable to hiking
 - Manage wildlife areas
 - Set up zones, seasons
 - Cap numbers of people
 - *Trails – for hiking and skiing*
 - *Delimited camping areas*
 - *Share resources with hunting: trails, camps*
 - *Separate hunters from camping, hikers*
 - Infrastructure
 - *Use a percentage of access fee for search and rescue*
 - *Huts, yurts*
 - *Permitting mechanism*
 - *Search and rescue, insurance, emergency services*
 - Campgrounds, water, electricity, bearlines/boxes, restrooms

- Backcountry camping needs less or no infrastructure
- Trails leading away from campgrounds
- Parking related to vistas
- Parking off-site, including the Pajarito ski hill lot, and use shuttles
- Infrastructure could be shared with hunting and hiking
- Infrastructure – pit toilets, water, maintenance, trash receptacles, parking, roads, campsites, and staff.
- Heavier use areas need established camps, light use areas don't.
 - *Trash receptacles, wildlife blinds*
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - \$10 to \$15 per night or vehicle or site (or \$20)
 - \$6 to \$10, especially with maintained sites – bear poles, toilets
 - *Fee: \$80-100/night, sliding scale, depends on services used*
 - *Fee: \$25/night camping, \$25/person huts*
 - Fees must be greater than costs
 - refer to other parks for statistics
 - *If well done, the camping could provide significant income*
 - *Hire a marketing firm*
 - *Amenities for all income levels*
- Resource Protection
 - Access, separated by time, space (location) to lessen impact
 - Resource protection – damage deposit
 - Protect water-buffer from cattle damage
 - *How to evaluate income and recreation value vs. impact and cost to land? (resource protection)*
 - *Teach “Leave No Trace” ethic*
- Working Ranch
 - *Education: care and feeding of livestock*
- **Equestrian / Horseback Riding**
 - General Comments
 - **Rotation system – get to see new trails, new parts of the Caldera (that have compatible uses)**
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - **Look at zoning so some trails are one use only**
 - **Compatible with**
 - **Photography**
 - **Fishing**
 - **Hikers/campers**
 - **Hiking, biking, snowshoeing, x-c skiing**
 - **Land along perimeter - Forest Service access points. Park and continue in – discuss with Forest Service.**
 - *Share area with hunters*
 - *Offer dude ranch activities to equestrian groups*
 - *Include equestrian people in volunteer resource protection*
 - *Volunteers: help with work, e.g. trails, fences, maintenance*
 - Infrastructure
 - **Parking – not interior**
 - **Check-in – not necessarily at HQ (additional access)**

- Parking/access – a little more for equestrian.
 - Day use, overnight – types of structures
 - Facility on campus – beautiful barns falling into disuse – huge, big enough for horses stabled, llamas, sustainable yield. Infrastructure is there. Facilities are compatible
 - More equestrian trails. Want to be able to roam freely
 - *No infrastructure*
 - *Parking for horse trailers*
 - *Porta-potties*
 - Resource Protection
 - *Horse – grassland management*
 - Working Ranch
 - Shared use with livestock - feed and water
- **Hunting**
- General Comments
 - Bow and arrow – different than gun
 - Starts in September
 - Advantage of the 90,000 acres of the VC is that it is surrounded by 1.6 million acres of forest and other land
 - Elk herd is too large - Hunting can help manage that
 - Avoid RMNP – sharpshooters
 - **Luxury hunting: hunts on weekends with other activities limited**
 - *Need animals to hunt – don't kill them all!*
 - *Current hunting system works well*
 - Traditional and cultural hunting of bull elk is for meat. The meat is not good during rutting season, not worth eating. It is unfair to hunt the elk during the rutting season, when he is careless and will respond to bugling, and the hunter has a high-powered rifle. If you are only there to put a head on the wall ... it is only to generate money, leaves a bad taste in my mouth.
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - *Roads, trails, specialized hunting camps*
 - *Taxidermy, butcher shop, packing*
 - *Other dude ranches are moving away from hunting and toward fishing – better ROI*
 - *Hunting manages the livestock herd*
 - Fishing and hunting – both incompatible with hikers
 - Fishing is solitary, want to be alone, needs stealth
 - Hunting: also solitary, and dangerous
 - Hunting – you have to know where other people might be – no surprises.
 - It would be a shame to close it off when the colors are turning
 - Would have to be separate in time and space
 - Very little can be concurrent with hunting, or vice versa
 - Concurrent uses with hikers for yurts
 - Yurts can be used by different activities, sequentially – hunters, hikers, etc
 - Hunting is April for turkey, September and October for elk
 - Dude ranching is summer only
 - Infrastructure
 - A lot of the same infrastructure as hiking

- Lodging
- Primitive camping – don't need a facility, this defeats the experience and adds to unaffordability
- Security, meeting points, camping, outfitters, scheduling/monitoring, hunting locations (limited areas) off-road access for retrieval/scouting
- Small roads would be overused during hunting season along with other activities (horses)
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - Hunting is generating most revenue because it is developed the most. We don't have to rely on hunting alone. Development and advertising other activities.
 - Attorney General ruling – 78% to NM residents, can't sell outright
 - 78 percent hunting lottery to NM residents, 22 percent out-of-staters
 - If Game and Fish could relax the 78-22 rules, more out of state hunting
 - Limited to NM permit system?
 - Predator practice imperiling big money – revenue generator
 - Don't want it to become too exclusive
 - The highest revenue generator
 - Provides only 7% of total budget needs
 - Need to increase the number of hunters as possible
 - Have capacity to increase – elk herd is big, needs professional evaluation – how much to harvest
 - Raise the price
 - Still would not generate that much revenue
 - It's the largest money-maker
 - Hunting has the shortest window of use and highest income
 - *Good income source*
- Resource Protection
 - Harvesting the herd, fencing
- Sustainable Yield
 - Over-hunting, over-grazing issues
- Working Ranch
 - Effect on calves due to fencing
- **Fishing**
 - General Comments
 - Must be on or by a stream area
 - Variety experience for out of state anglers in conjunction with Rio Grande and San Juan
 - Recent rigidity in the distribution of beats, and need for a trading system and first-come, first-served choices.
 - Consider opening other waters to fishing.
 - *Place camps near seeps, springs, streams*
 - *Currently – K-12 field trips, especially on “closed” days*
 - *Cost of bringing kids in*
 - *Multi-day camps might be more cost-effective*
 - *How about elder hostel, wilderness*
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - There is so much stream, there are compatibilities with artists and livestock (fish are used to that)
 - Can be concurrent with hunting and livestock grazing

- Competes with grazing by the stream, could be resolved by rotating the herd
 - *Not compatible with cattle in water*
 - What about elk? Not so easy to control, but can be controlled.
 - *Overlap potential*
 - *Fishers and hunters could use the backcountry butts – require permits for spots*
 - *Potential conflict between fishers, campers – need separate areas*
- Infrastructure
 - Convert stock ponds to flat-water fisheries. Rent them to families, companies.
 - Significant infrastructure investment
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - Charge \$200/day
 - Potential for money
 - Avoid setting up a system so only rich can afford; suggest lottery
 - Lower fee for children
 - Fees could be \$50 per season, lottery
- Resource Protection
 - High volume of people, low impact
- **Education Programs**
 - General Comments
 - All activities lend themselves to educational activities, some for pay, some free (underprivileged), some could pay while others could draw from those, requires timing and infrastructure
 - Connects to everything because that is our opportunity to educate the public on what we do
 - Youth – allowing access so youth get an appreciation of this area
 - For UNM, NMSU, Continuing Ed
 - Vast array of biological species
 - Short nature groups → growth to HS and grade school
 - Teach children ways to behave in that environment
 - Studies – children who can play in that environment in an unstructured manner grow up to be more environmentally aware (*The Last Child in the Woods*)
 - The youth in our community – they are the ones we’re going to rely on – education for youth is real critical – we need to make it free and viable.
 - Learn what it takes to protect resources
 - Leave No Trace program
 - A cost center + a profit center.
 - Lots of grants out there to encourage youth to get involved.
 - Opportunities to bring kids from Albuquerque
 - Bus trip limits actual time here
 - Dormitory for kids to spend the night
 - Need road, bus parking
 - Ways to manage schedule
 - There are educational centers throughout the country
 - Many potential content areas
 - Education creates a constituency, customer base
 - Parents of visiting school children as donor prospects (long-term)

- Values – beauty, solitude
 - Where and when cultural resources
 - Visual resources also affect activities and infrastructure needs
 - If you do not open the preserve soon, could lose public support; need for public to learn, not just camp.
 - Access to field researchers
- Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Conflicts between legally mandated activities
 - Archeology – impact
- Infrastructure
 - Education – open classroom (tent and porta-potty) in geology, archeology, environment
 - Share lodging
 - Classrooms, staff, materials, DSL
 - Classrooms, campus, dormitories, instructors, parking, infrastructure
 - Communications – walkie-talkies
 - Van, transportation
 - Incorporate sustainable development into education infrastructure – composting toilets, cutting edge construction.
 - Visitors center – interesting education before you go out, classroom
 - Could put it east side of Highway 4
 - Visitors center, offices, classroom – lab
 - Toilets, trash, parking, etc. (as before)
 - Water and wastewater systems
 - Energy (heat)
 - Trails marked with birds, flowers present.
 - Trails, interpretation
 - Archeological clearance. Concerns on how to balance these.
 - No activities would be stopped by cultural resources
 - Intensity, magnitude, how, where – these might be affected
 - Cultural resources still used by Jemez Pueblo
 - In small groups, these kinds of problems can be worked out.
 - Dormitory/food service (kids from Las Cruces wouldn't be able to use without this)
 - Overnight – need food service
 - Orientation video, 20-30 minutes, opportunities of what to do
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - Educational programs could generate grants and other support to contribute to financial self-sufficiency.
 - Generates revenue
 - Grants maybe available to finance programs
 - *Fee: \$25-50/child/night*
 - *Sort-term to self-sufficiency: \$100/night, rental hot tubs, also porta-potties*
 - *Adult education, elder hostel, Smithsonian*
 - Fees at \$1,000 per week
 - Through education, they will understand why they have to pay
 - Pay for activities
 - Universities pay for stay
 - Depending on age, ability to pay

- See what other organizations are charging, offer scholarships
 - Underprivileged – some provision so that this preserve doesn't become restricted to those who can afford to pay.
 - Any teacher that wants to bring children for outdoor play – public funds
- Resource Protection
 - Education about fire – absence has created dense forest
 - Use has impacts on system.
 - Has decreased montane grassland – we would like to see that come back.
 - How is fire managed
 - More people → more fires
 - Volunteers
 - Education can create awareness of how to protect resources
 - Danger of overuse
 - Infrastructure will impact resources
 - Educate the public on what we're doing and how they can protect it
 - Has to be a priority, involve families
- Sustainable Yield
 - Educational programs would support the goal of sustained yield by creating public support for the preserve.
 - Minimal impact. We're going to be sustaining our resources.
- Working Ranch
 - Variety of livestock
 - Backcountry horsemen – education
 - Learn about ranching, history of the West
 - Horses used to transport students to sites
 - Some education programs can be ranch related
 - Depends on what's done at the ranch: fishing, equestrian, grazing, etc. teach ranching “on the road”
 - History of grazing
 - Distinguish education programs from interpretation – accreditation vs. knowledge
 - Education on sustainable yield – connect with sustainable grazing
 - Help educate on how to run the ranch without damaging the land, teaching kids, family ranchers
 - Customer service and customer training - problem solving, consequences
- **Research**
 - General Comments
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Potential negative impacts to viewsheds – elk exclosures, weather stations
 - Infrastructure
 - Parking, roads, overnight facilities (camping and/or lodging) secure research area, internet access
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - “Eyes in the field” resource protection, research fees, government funding, guides the practice of resource protection
 - Sustainable Yield
 - Supports sustainability with study of forage, grasslands, timber, game, fish) Potentially enhances other activities (camping, hunting, etc)

- Working Ranch
 - Area could be a laboratory for grazing research
- **Elk / Wildlife Viewing**
 - General Comments
 - Would like to see mule deer come back – is within historic range
 - People may pay to see elk activity – let them on the Preserve, guided
 - Same time as hunting – need safety controls
 - Toll road, guided tours
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Viewers might scare elk from hunters
 - Not compatible because of safety
 - Separate them – hunting in back, viewing at Highway 4
 - Infrastructure
 - Needs infrastructure
- **Livestock Grazing / Working Ranch**
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Re: camping, separate grazing related activities from other activities
 - Infrastructure
 - Fences, water, corrals, roads, loading stations, water stations, housing
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - They are paying for the privilege, dude-ranching or horse rides
 - Custom beef
 - Resource Protection
 - Overused, over-consumption of forage, riparian areas, could be used for habitat restoration
 - Sustainable Yield
 - Never want to overgraze
- **Dude Ranching**
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Relationship with grazing – cattle have to feed and has to be monitored
 - Infrastructure
 - A ranch, horses, cattle, stables, corrals, tack and saddles
 - Medical
 - Staff, Marlboro man image
 - Lodging, food service, toilets, parking
 - Lodging/housing (for multi-day) gentle horses, liability insurance, public-friendly cowboys (cattle handling cowboys) transportation, food services, stables, tack
 - Programming apprenticeships internships, education programs and clinics
 - Shared infrastructure with grazing operations
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - Could make money but insurance is expensive
 - Resource Protection
 - If not controlled, could be problematic, education shows public how grazing is done to minimize impact
 - Re: Research – interns take “notes” either for pay or bring grant money.

- **Combining Dude Ranching With Working Ranch**
 - *With luxury lodge*
 - *Horses*
 - *Water and sewer*
 - *Dining*
 - *Delivery, roads*
 - *Advertising*
 - *Medical – increased insurance costs*
 - *Fees - \$300-500 per night*
 - *Rustic: \$150/night*
 - *store*
 - *Moving cattle*
 - *Educational activities – learn cattle handling*
 - *Check Western Horseman magazine – compare to the competition*
 - *Ranch will pay for resource protection*
 - *Teach people about the need for stewardship and resource protection*
 - *People will return and bring others*
 - *Cattle affect grass, streams (also educational opportunity)*
- **Lodging**
 - General Comments
 - **Concessionaire like Glacier National Park?**
 - **People respond differently to the historic and the new. There would be a negative reaction if you built a lodge.**
 - **Gut reaction – no hotel**
 - *Many people want ways to stay overnight*
 - Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - **Across on Highway 4, wilderness experience in places where the lodge (etc.) wouldn't generate the negative – the area people don't even realize is the Preserve.**
 - Infrastructure
 - **Improved, like Vermejo Park? The infrastructure was there. Current owner (Ted Turner) has a lot of money. He also has lakes. Fisheries, hunting (elk). We don't have that structure. We have cowboy cabins.**
 - **Geothermal pads could be building sites.**
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - **If you want to preserve the solitude and reach financial self-sufficiency, economics means more money from fewer people**
 - **Synergy with local communities – Los Alamos, White Rock, Desert Willow, Pueblos – lodging, generate revenue**
 - **Challenge is how to get maximum \$ from some people**
 - **The pressure of the money – needs increased visitation, better outreach to non-visitors and past visitors.**
 - Working Ranch
 - *Workshops with overnight stays*
 - **Luxury Lodging**
 - General Comments
 - *Preserve is only 89,000 acres!*

- Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - *Cooperate with Bandelier, National Forest*
 - *Hiking, equestrians*
 - *Ties to hunting and fishing*
 - *Eco-tourism*
 - *Singing cowboys*
 - *Conflict: guests vs. work needed done on working ranch*
 - Infrastructure
 - *All infrastructure*
 - *Tours, fishing*
 - *Cell phone access, Internet*
 - *Landing strip*
 - *Lodge, furnishings, laundry service, spa, fine dining, child care and activities*
 - *Higher staff-patron ratio*
 - *Equipment for backcountry*
 - *Learn primitive lifestyle, e.g., no cell phone*
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - *Liability insurance*
 - *Fee: \$350 up*
 - *Accept donations for wildlife protection*
 - Resource Protection
 - *Lodge guests learn about stewardship*
 - *Luxury lodge helps pay for resource protection*
 - Sustainable Yield
 - Working Ranch
- **Shopping**
- General Comments
 - *Keep the rustic aura of the Preserve – a well-done museum/gift shop/visitors center combination, not a Wal-Mart.*
 - *Some people would like to drive Highway 4 and go to the center*
 - *Would not impact the resource*
 - *Keep ramping up without harming VCNP*
 - *IT opportunities – email list to previous visitors*
 - Infrastructure
 - *Gift shop, souvenirs, supplies for activities, bug spray, camping equipment*
 - *Ski rental, food, natural products*
 - *Advertising to stimulate business*
 - *Staff, signage, parking, toilets, utilities*
 - *CCC kind of structure – substantial, rock and log, link to sustained yield*
 - *Internet, patrons buy online*
 - Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - *Obsidian – sensitive to sell, on the ground as an artifact*
 - *Sell elk antlers as a renewable resource*
 - *Would often be put out to concessionaires for a percent of the profit*
 - *\$20 sale per guest could be significant income*

➤ **Mountain Biking And Cross-Country Skiing**

- General Comments
 - *Distinguish between backcountry x-c skiing and “regular” x-c skiing – income opportunity*
- Conflicts and Compatibilities
 - Elk festivals, marathons, long distance biking
- Infrastructure
 - *Need a staging area for x-c ski close to Route 4*
 - *There are problems keeping road open in mid-winter*
 - **Bicycles require significant pieces of equipment**
 - Have equipment company sponsor special events
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - **They sell their products**
 - **Tie it into something specific, VC volcano hiking boots, Volcano spring water**
 - **Event would brand the products**
 - **Different brand, different event**
 - **Could be a significant tie to financial self-sufficiency**

➤ **Other Activities / General Recreation**

- Green burial
 - *Un-embalmed, no grave markers*
 - *Scattering ashes*
 - *Income producing*
- **Movie locations**
- **Movie locations**
- **Orienteering**
 - **Description was given of orienteering program and how it was operated in recent years and how it reduced income for the preserve – changes in the program and mixed messages sent.**
 - **Rules were not clear, or too rigid**
- **Catering, guided tours, to generate money for others.**
- **Volunteer input needs to be counted, too.**

STATUTORY GOALS and INFRASTRUCTURE

➤ Statutory Goals

- **VCNP needs a customer-service mindset – problem solving instead of how to say “no”**
- **Are some goals more important than others?**
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
 - **Doesn’t look like recreation will pay much – keep staff busy doing things that will pay**
 - **Recreational activities make a lot – hunting, fishing, others losing. Everyone wants education – got to come from somewhere**
 - **Sending people out and charging \$10 may not pay for everything**
 - *Ask for donations*
 - **Should each program be self-sufficient by itself? Would some programs support others?**
 - *Not every activity must generate income*
 - **Get foundations to support the preserve**
 - **Revenue sources / financial issues and rates**
 - **Seek grant from National Recreational Trails Program**

- Organic beef
 - What are people willing to pay?
 - Rates based on ability to pay?
 - *Where/how to set fees?*
 - *Talk to other parks (their fees set by feds)*
 - *Need spatial and temporal allocation across user groups*
 - Similar to national parks – annual pass
 - *Annual permit for access only; add-ons for other activities*
 - How to make it affordable to most
 - *Limits on fees*
 - Fees should be affordable by school groups
 - Seasonal passes
 - Set \$100 a year pass
 - Lower fee, one activity at a time (\$5-\$10)
 - Consider long-term benefit of kids' programs
 - Balance public land (tax-paid) vs. (income) cost of “elitist” experiences
 - *Alternative to reservations*
 - *Limit access to specific days*
 - *We, the public, are not aware or familiar with the funding setup of the Preserve*
 - *Approaches will have to be modified over time*
 - *Pay to help work on the ranch – educational opportunity*
 - *Imus Ranch – kids with cancer*
 - *Tap volunteers (pay fee) to come help*
 - *Reduce cost of improvements*
 - *Create “This Old House” type of episode*
 - *Canada – public stewardship opportunities*
 - *Volunteer live for extended periods, count wildlife, etc.*
- Sustained Yield
- What is sustained yield? Response: Resources used by people will be replenished, not “mined”
 - Challenge: balancing income and use with sustainability of resources
 - There is no sense expanding activities if use is already at the limits of sustainability?
 - What does it cost to keep it up?
 - It depends on how it's used
 - There are basic costs
 - Do any national parks make money now?
 - Not from recreation
 - Sustainable Yield / Timber Harvesting
 - Timber management an important role in management of these systems
 - Link to fire control, roads, revenue
 - Fire – a high priority at this time
 - Very little timber harvesting
 - Any logging except light logging is absolutely inappropriate
 - 60's – heavy logging. Fire control.
 - Good information in lobby
 - Small diameter trees, fire, insects, water infiltration
 - Opportunity to manipulate these forests

- Majority of merchantable timber out
- Forest Service policy – let fires burn except threatening – controlled burning, a good tool.
- Ability of surface to receive water and recharge

- Resource Protection
 - Infrastructure for highly-used areas would contribute to resource protection, so that people can be kept off more sensitive areas.
 - *NEPA limits locations for development – archeological considerations*
 - Monitoring
 - What is the impact?
 - All these activities have monitoring activities – elk, fisheries, etc.
 - Feeds back to education and interpretation
 - Feeds back to shopping (books and maps, videos, etc.) – information that can be made into products for sale
 - We use volunteers in monitoring programs: education program → monitoring

- Working Ranch
 - Goal: strategic plan indicates as broad a construction as possible
 - It's a goal, not an activity
 - Cattle are not required
 - Cows and camping are compatible if it's a dude ranch
 - Cattle are needed to mow grasses
 - Opportunity to sell organic beef (and elk) – self-sufficiency
 - The working ranch objective would be supported by educational programs oriented to ranch operations.
 - *How can this working ranch afford NEPA?*

- Infrastructure In General
 - Visitor center ideas
 - *Visitor Center could be off-grid*
 - Seek sustainable – wind, solar, rain harvesting
 - Fee booth needed
 - Alternative to a visitor's center
 - Possibly use the movie set as a visitors' center
 - Suggest a lodge rather than a visitor center
 - Suggest southwest corner for visitor center
 - With a restaurant and other amenities
 - Would require electricity, infrastructure, etc.
 - Visitors' centers are very expensive
 - Make examples of “how to do it right”
 - Parking already exists at the Pajarito Ski Area, why build another? Build access to this lot.
 - Preserve is hard to access in winter
 - *I have issues with pullouts near the road*
 - *Would be good to have visitor center, kiosk near Rout 4*

SECTION 4. COMMENT FORMS

“Ideal Experience” activities identified by those who completed and submitted written Comment Forms.

Jemez Springs

- Equestrian

Pojoaque

- Overnight car camping
- Hiking backpacking biking riding (equestrian)

Los Alamos

- Hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing, equestrian
- Hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing
- Hiking (3)
- Cross-country skiing (2)
- Cross-country skiing / snowshoeing
- Fishing
- Overnight fishing
- Equestrian
- Bike Ride
- Mountain bicycling
- Orienteering
- Camping
- Overnight lodging / A-frames / bunkhouse / yurts / hunting cabins
- Ecotours – birdwatching, volcanology, nature walks, etc.

Rio Rancho

- *Horseback riding*
- *Equestrian Activity / Trail Riding and Overnight*
- *Group Horse Camp*
- *Horseman’s Group Camp*
- *Cross-country Skiing*
- *Backcountry cross-country skiing*
- *Wilderness Lodging – hut hopping*
- *Hiking*
- *Geology field school (volcanology)*
- *Formal Educational Program (all subjects)*