

**Valles Caldera Trust**  
**Minutes of the Public Meeting – September 11, 2008**  
**Northern New Mexico College**  
**921 N. Paseo de Onate**  
**Espanola, NM**

Board Members Present

Stephen Henry, Secretary  
Tracy Hephner  
Daniel Jiron  
James Range  
Brad Traver

Staff Present

Debbie Boggess, Administrative Officer  
Will Breedlove, IT Specialist  
Pam Dale, Human Resources  
Kimberly Duval, Public Education and Interpretation  
Tim Harman, Range Foreman  
Berta Pantoja, Administrative Assistant  
Bob Parmenter, Preserve Scientist  
Marie Rodriquez, Natural Resource Coordinator  
Ana Steffen, Cultural Resource Coordinator  
Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager

I. Welcome and Introductions

Secretary Stephen Henry opened the meeting at 1:10PM and welcomed the Board, staff, and public attendees. Henry asked the group to observe a moment of silence to commemorate the day's September 11<sup>th</sup> legacy. He also noted that the new acting Executive Director, Lucia Turner, was unable to attend today's session due to a recent injury to her ankle.

**Approval of Agenda**

Henry asked the Board for approval of the agenda. Member Tracy Hephner requested the addition of a "Revenue Fund" action item under "Operations." **Member Dan Jiron moved and member Jim Range seconded the motion. The agenda was approved as amended.**

**Approval of Minutes**

Henry asked the Board to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2008 public meeting and the minutes from the Board's June 10/11, 2008 executive session. **Hephner moved and member Brad Traver seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2008 public meeting and the minutes from the executive session. The minutes were approved.**

II. Board Business

**Executive Session Conducted**

The Board met on September 10/11 and decided to maintain the same officer slate for the next fiscal year – William Keleher, Chair; Ed Tinsley, Vice Chair; and Steve Henry, Secretary.

**Approval of Executive Session**

Henry asked the Board for permission to conduct an executive session should one be required. **Member Jim Range motioned and Jiron seconded the motion. The motion was passed.**

III. Operations

**Staffing Announcements**

Debbie Boggess, Administrative Officer, introduced two new employees - Tim Harman, Ranch Foreman and Kimberly Deval, Public Education and Interpretation.

Dennis Trujillo, Preserve Manager, also announced Debbie Boggess's departure to a position in Oregon. Trujillo added that the staff and Board will greatly miss the unique talents and knowledge that she had brought to her position.

**FY2008/FY2009 Budgets**

Boggess presented an update on the FY2008 and FY2009 budgets. She referred to the FY2008 handout, which summarized the fiscal year to 8/31/08. The Trust received a \$3.75 million appropriation for the 2008 fiscal year-coupled with a carry over from the previous year to total \$4.3 million. She noted that the revenue account for 2008 FY totals \$624,143. She referred the group to the FY2009 budget handout that anticipates \$3.75 million in appropriations and \$830,000 in revenues – a total budget for FY2009 of \$4.4 million. She noted that the Trust should also have a \$500,000 carryover to FY2009. The increased revenue income will be generated by expanded stores, merchandise on web sites and special uses such as fishing/hunting/recreation. Henry added that he and Jiron have served as a financial subcommittee to work with staff to prepare the budget. Henry also mentioned that the Trust would be hiring a Communications and Marketing Officer in 2009. **Jiron motioned to adopt the FY2009 budget and Range seconded the motion. The FY2009 budget was approved.**

**Action Item: Revenue Fund**

Hephner explained that the Revenue Fund of \$2.8 million has been established to support the future sustainability of the Trust. Hephner proposed that the Trust continue to protect and build the fund but that it also release a percentage of funds generated in the future to support the on-going goals of the Trust. **Hephner motioned that the revenue fund continue to contribute to the financial goals and ensure the financial security of the Valles Caldera Trust and Preserve by continuing to increase the savings in the revenue account by a minimum of 10% a year. Excess revenue beyond the 10% saved annually may be made**

**available to fund the goals of the Trust. Traver seconded the motion. The motion was approved.**

*Attendee Tom Ribe, Caldera Action, asked how the Trust generates revenue. (Activities such as hunting, fishing, and all fees and merchandise sales.) Attendee Dorothy Hoard asked how a federal entity is allowed to generate revenue. (The Trust has a special designation that allows enterprise activities.)*

**Action Item: Review of Personnel Policies**

The Trust's personnel policies need to be consistent with corresponding federal policies. The Board asked the staff to review their policies for concurrence. The Trust's personnel policies are not effective until the Board has acted.

Pam Dale, Human Resources, presented several proposed changes for Board approval. One proposal (on the third page) will allow for a two-year trial period for new hires and will allow for permanent seasonal appointments. On the fourth page, the term appointments will be changed to allow for extensions beyond four years. Benefits #13 are on the web therefore not needed to explain. **Traver motioned and Jiron seconded the approval of the proposed personnel changes. The motion was approved.**

IV. Existing Programs

**Stewardship Action Planning Updates**

Marie Rodriguez, Natural Resource Coordinator, presented updates on the following ongoing stewardship planning activities: Multiple Use and Sustained Yield of Foraging; Public Use and Access; and the San Antonio Watershed Wetlands Restoration. A detailed summary of all the stewardship planning activities is available on the web page – [www.vallescaldera.gov](http://www.vallescaldera.gov) - under “Get Involved”, then scroll to “Stewardship.”

The Multiple Use and Sustained Yield of Foraging planning actions include evaluating various impacts of multiple uses of forage - native fauna, livestock, and other uses. The Trust will seek and evaluate public comment on four alternatives: A) *No Action*; B) *Minimum Forage Allocation* -5% livestock, removal of fences and minimum infrastructure changes; C) *Preferred Allocation* - 60% ecosystem service, 25% for elk grazing, 15-20% for a livestock collaboration; and D) *Allocation by Emphasis on Economic Efficiencies*. The document is currently being edited and is expected to be out for a 45-day public comment period this fall.

Public Use and Access planning involves convening an Inter-disciplinary Team (IDT) to develop a business plan. The Notice of Intent is anticipated to occur in 2009.

The San Antonio Watershed and Wetlands stewardship planning is evaluating the riparian areas and wetlands along the San Antonio river. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is scheduled for 2009.

Future stewardship planning actions will include Forest and Rangeland Management. Proposed actions will be presented to the Board in 2009. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is scheduled to be completed in 2010. The Trust is also endeavoring to build planning capacity through collaboration with the Santa Fe National Forest, The Nature Conservancy, and the Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University. They will compete jointly for funds made available by the passage of the Landscape Forest Restoration Act. The Trust is also working to support community capacity building via Forest Investment Zones.

Finally, The Trust is planning to collect information in Redondo Canyon to quantify outcomes in ecosystem services to inform future management activities.

*Attendee Laura Rotegard asked if foraging planning includes haying. (Yes, harvesting grass and natural seed production are factors included in the assessments.) Attendee Tom Ribe asked Rodriguez if her power point could be posted on the website. (Yes)*

### **Recreation and Resource Management Updates**

*Valle Grande Entrance:* Trujillo presented on the Preserve's entrance upgrade activities. He noted that JF Sato and Associates began work on 6/11/2007 on the north and south side of the Highway 4 entrance. The improvements include turning and acceleration lanes for improved safety as well as various aesthetic changes. The work should be completed in the next several weeks.

*Movie:* The movie "Kites" was filmed on the Preserve from 8/29-9/3 and was a low impact use that brought in \$22,500 in revenue.

*Livestock Program:* A report on the 2008 summer steer operation will be available at the December Board meeting. The herd will be shipped offsite on 9/30.

*An unidentified attendee asked about the 2008 season's lessons learned. (The Trust found that managing the livestock as one herd makes it difficult to allow the requisite flexibility to coexist with multiple uses.)*

*San Antonio Fishing Program:* Trujillo presented several proposed changes for the 2009 season based on lessons learned from this summer. He recommends that the Trust use a reservation instead of a lottery system, dividing the river into fourths, thus providing for larger reaches for 24 anglers, and increasing adult fees to \$35 and youth fee to \$21. He estimates that these changes will increase revenue to \$70,000, require one less staff person, and allow more flexibility around grazing activities.

*Tom Ribe asked why there were fewer applications to the lottery system this year. (People are less able to plan, need to wait for a response, and find it chaotic and inflexible.)*

*Elk Hunt:* Trujillo reminded the attendees at the meeting that every two years the Trust is required to work with the New Mexico Game Commission to ensure concurrence of policies. Based on the review, the Trust will continue to use the lottery system for elk hunting. The Trust will increase thirteen hunting types to 17 hunting types with a new emphasis on mentor/youth applications and the ability to apply as pairs of hunters. A Deluxe Hunt proposal was discussed whereby some hunters would apply to hunt, have lodging and meals prepared, and pay an increased fee to participate. In addition, proposed increased application fees to apply for 2009 elk hunts were discussed.

*An unidentified attendee commented that increasing the number of elk tags would allow more forage for livestock.*

### **Catch a Dream Foundation**

Walter Taylor from the Catch a Dream Foundation presented on their partnership activities with the Trust. He clarified that the better-known Make a Wish Foundation does not grant wishes related to hunting – the niche filled by his organization. This October, the Trust will host a youth from Michigan for an elk hunting outdoor experience.

### **Update on Climate, Elk Monitoring and Fisheries**

*Climate:* Bob Parmenter, Preserve Scientist, reported that the 2008 summer is the second wettest since 2003, with average soil moisture and a typical summer monsoon season. He explained that next week he would start forage-monitoring activities. The Trust will collaborate with the Sierra Club, United States Forest Service, and Bandelier National Monument, using volunteers and staff to monitor 75 sites.

*Elk Monitoring:* Parmenter explained that the June-September elk monitoring activities revealed an increase from last year's calf/cow ratio to 33/100 cows this year, though this is less than an expected average of 45/100 cows. He explained that the herd might have numerous older cows beyond the reproductive years.

*Fisheries:* Parmenter noted that brown and rainbow trout populations are holding in numbers and size since measures intended to bring this about began in 2003. Fathead minnows have significantly decreased in population since the 2006 drought. He also mentioned a new National Science Foundation Grant that will provide \$3 million per year for 5 years to study climate change impacts on New Mexico's water quality and quantity, the Preserve to probably participate.

### **Historical Structures Overview**

Ana Steffen, Cultural Resources Coordinator, provided an overview of an Environment Assessment on the built environment conducted by SWCA Environmental Consultants. The report will soon be available in a PDF version for easy access. The study assessed 18 of 36 structures present on the Preserve using

interviews, photos, and archival documents. The final report provides detailed specifications, preferred methods and materials, and a maintenance checklist related to preservation activities. The document can be used to prioritize repairs, to inform use decisions, to support fundraising, and to navigate the regulatory requirements for such activities as historic designations.

Steffen also announced that Gary Morton, recipient of the 2008 cattle contract and well-known western artist, has completed a painting of the Bond Cabin and is making prints of his painting. Gary has donated the prints to the Amigos de Valles Caldera, to be sold to raise revenue for the rehabilitation of the cabin.

*Attendee Fred Pierson asked if a historic designation would incur additional regulatory obligations. (The bulk of the obligations are already required.) Pierson also asked when the draft Business Plan is going to be released for public comment. (Mid-October.) Attendee Dorothy Hoard asked about a fire management plan. (Fire management is included in the Forest and Rangeland Management planning activities.)*

V. Adjournment

Secretary Henry asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.