



Fishing

The VCNP features over 27 miles of stream habitat suitable for trout. While part of this habitat is in degraded condition, many of the reaches are in excellent shape, with the potential to support healthy trout populations and offer exciting fishing opportunities. People interested in fishing the streams of the VCNP will likely range from beginners seeking their first high-country experience to veteran fly

casters familiar with premier streams from around the world. Fishing opportunities on the VCNP will probably include both guided and unguided excursions, with the number of anglers at any given time limited in order to preserve the quality of the fishing experience and to avoid adverse impacts on fish populations and the streamside environment. Fishing membership groups, which conspicuously and enthusiastically participated in the trust's listening sessions, are expected to play an important role in stream rehabilitation efforts and in the enhancement of fishing opportunities within the preserve.

One of the trust's central goals will be to provide quality outdoor angling experiences that include the enjoyment of scenery, solitude, wildlife viewing, and the challenge of fishing.

Sample questions and issues:

- What regulations for creel and size would best embody the trust's management principles, contribute to progress in aquatic and riparian restoration, and maintain consistent high quality in the angling experience available at the VCNP?
- How can fishing operations best be integrated with other ongoing programs?
- How much traffic from anglers can preserve streams bear without

showing unwanted signs of wear and tear?

- What other fishing opportunities besides stream fishing should the VCT provide?
- To what degree should the preserve's fishing program emphasize guided fishing opportunities?

Winter Activities

Winter snowfall is highly variable in northern New Mexico. In some years several feet of snow accumulate in the preserve's valleys, while in others conditions remain dry. The trust's programs will need to be responsive to this variability. When snow fills the landscape and winter quiet falls, the caldera is a truly magical place. Most winter sports produce only light environmental impacts, and the trust hopes to develop excellent programs of cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sleigh rides, and possibly sledding. An interim program, started in February 2003, included unguided cross-country skiing opportunities as well as horse-drawn sleigh rides. Two warm-up huts were sited to provide skiers with places for orientation, shelter, and refreshment. The lack of infrastructure for parking and access to trailheads may constrain program development for some time.

Sample questions and issues:

- Should the trust develop a system of "huts" to support overnight backcountry ski touring? Can

partners be found to assist in the establishment and maintenance of such a system?

- How can the trust satisfy the interest in unguided skiing and snowshoeing while managing transportation on and off the preserve?
- Are there effective ways to mitigate the liability issues associated with sledding?

Horseback Riding

Horses have long been part of the life of the caldera, and they continue to be essential to the ranching operations of the VCNP. The wide-open vistas and gently sloping mountains offer experiences that riders of every level of skill and experience can enjoy. As a first step toward providing horseback riding opportunities, it may prove best for the trust simply to accommodate those who would bring their own horses to the preserve. Once again, the availability of sufficient, safe infrastructure may temporarily constrain full program development. In order to avoid damage to trails and high-use areas, the size and number of horseback riding groups will likely be limited.

Sample questions and issues:

- Horseback riding involves risks, and the high cost of liability insurance for commercial horseback riding discourages the development of riding programs. Should



Movie set for *The Missing*. The barn has since been removed.

the trust nevertheless seek a concessionaire to operate a horseback riding service?

- Should horseback riders be restricted to certain trails?
- Should overnight horse packing be permitted, and if so, should camps be restricted to certain areas (which might change from year to year)?

Quiet Days

The expansive quiet that pervades the caldera is an important part of the special character of the VCNP. This stillness is important both to wildlife and to human visitors, but it is easily shattered. Within the preserve's self-contained

topography, loud disturbances can seem amplified. Even as it strives to accommodate a wide range of activities, the trust anticipates that it may be desirable to build some "quieting" elements into its programs. These may include reserving certain areas from certain kinds of disturbances or designating specific "quiet days" or "no vehicle days" to give a rest to the landscape and the creatures living there. Such special times might also be linked to retreats of various kinds or to programs for painting, photography, or writing.

Sample questions and issues:

- What would be an acceptable frequency of "rest days" for the preserve?

- Should certain areas be reserved from most or all motorized activity?

Hunting (Other Than Elk)

In cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the trust may explore development of programs for hunting animals other than elk. Turkey or grouse might be the first game animal so considered. It is unlikely, however, that mule deer will be considered unless or until the preserve’s population of deer rebounds significantly from its present low level. For the foreseeable future, the business of managing the elk herd will be the most consuming wildlife matter before the trust, closely followed by a suite of issues associated with fishing and stream management, and so the timetable for addressing other hunting opportunities remains unknown.

Sample questions and issues:

- What priority should the trust place on developing a hunting program for turkey or grouse?

Special Uses

As part of a flexible management program, as well as to generate income, the preserve will likely accommodate a range of special uses. These activities would be authorized and managed on a case-by-case basis. They might include commercial film and video production, advertising photo

shoots, chartered chuck wagon outings, corporate retreats, or weddings, to name only a few possibilities. Special permits might be issued for artistic or photographic endeavors. It is also possible that the public would be invited to participate in special no-fee or low-fee days.

Sample questions and issues:

- What kinds of special uses should the trust consider?

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Long-term planning for facilities development at the VCNP needs to take fully into account the infrastructure already present on nearby lands. The map on page 122 depicts the developed recreation areas within a 10-mile radius of the preserve, and the accompanying table on pages 124–25 lists their capacities. In addition, the development and use of facilities within the preserve should avoid attracting the congestion of vehicles and people that afflicts similar parks and outdoor recreation areas elsewhere in the country.

Within approximately 10 miles of the preserve, the U.S. Forest Service administers the Jemez National Recreation Area and provides 21 campgrounds and recreational access sites with a total capacity of 259 overnight camping spots, including space for RVs and trailers at eight of the locations; the National Park Service provides additional

facilities. In addition, the Jemez Mountains include the following special areas and features: the Bandelier/Dome Wilderness Areas, the Jemez Wild and Scenic River, and the Jemez Mountain Trail National Scenic Byway. In general, the National Forest lands adjacent to the preserve are characterized by a high density of publicly accessible roads, including primitive forest roads.

As the trust plans and develops visitor facilities for the preserve, we will want to consider those in the surrounding area and determine to what extent these facilities are adequate to meet the needs of visitors to the region and in what ways they are inadequate.

Highway 4 Corridor

The existing corridor of New Mexico Highway 4, an all-weather, hard-surface, fully maintained two-lane highway through the southeast corner of the VCNP, offers outstanding views of the Valle Grande and provides an initial point of contact with the preserve for those traveling from Los Alamos to Jemez Springs. It offers superb opportunities for wildlife observation, visitor orientation, and landscape interpretation. In cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the trust expects to design and construct preserve entry and exit signage and to explore the possible expansion

Junction of Valle
Santa Rosa and
Valle San Antonio.



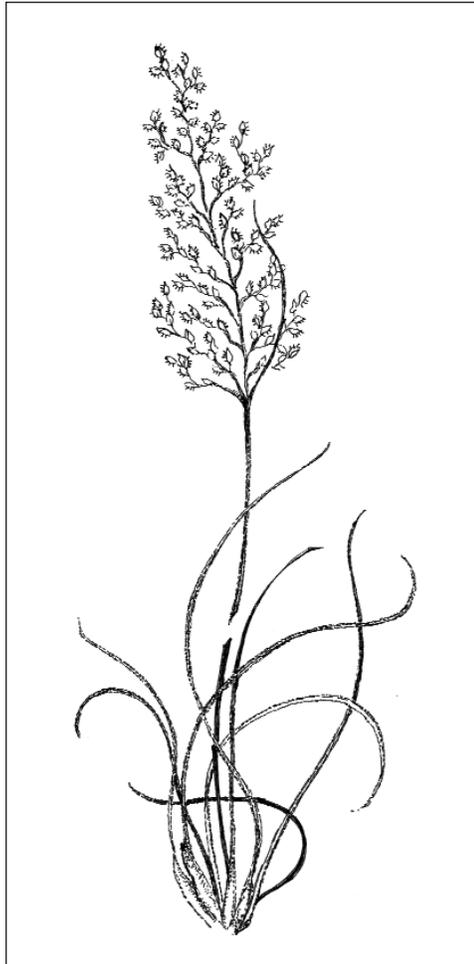
and enhancement of existing roadside pullouts, improvement of vehicle and pedestrian safety, and installation of improved interpretive displays. In the context of utilizing the Highway 4 corridor, the trust will consider offering a range of outdoor opportunities in the Rabbit Mountain area (south and east of the Highway 4 corridor). In addition to the area adjacent to the Valle Grande, the trust intends to examine opportunities that would allow for public use and interpretation and the development of administrative facilities along Highway 4 as it traverses the southwest corner of the preserve in the Banco Bonito area.

Sample questions and issues:

- Would such improvements as picnic tables, shade structures, toilets, and observation platforms be welcome additions to the Highway 4 corridor?
- What kind of signage would be appropriate for marking the boundaries and features of the preserve along Highway 4?
- What kinds of activities should the Rabbit Mountain area accommodate?
- What kinds of activities should the Banco Bonito area accommodate?

Internal Roads and Transportation

At present the VCT uses a network of administrative roads totaling



Pine dropseed is found in many savannah communities within the preserve.

about 90 miles. These roads are suitable for use only by high-clearance vehicles, and especially in inclement weather, four-wheel drive is frequently necessary. If the singular qualities of the VCNP, which the public so clearly values, are to be preserved, the trust must develop a comprehensive transportation network that will meet public, emergency, administrative, and other access requirements while remaining true to core principles of the trust and providing coordination to enhance interpretation of the

preserve. This will require not only planning for improvement of the existing road system, but also thorough consideration of future public recreation and interpretive programs, including the sighting of trailheads, staging areas, targeted visitor experiences, and areas that should remain relatively undisturbed.

The cost of upgrading roads to accommodate typical passenger cars may be prohibitively high. U.S. Forest Service engineers estimate that reconstructing preserve roads at their present one-lane width to federal safety standards, improving drainage capabilities, and resurfacing with appropriate native materials could cost as much as \$100,000 per mile. The cost would rise as the roads traverse mountainous terrain or penetrate farther to the interior of the preserve, increasing the cost of hauling materials. Costs could double where roads are widened to two lanes. This estimate does not include the cost of archaeological assessment and mitigation. Many of the roads of the preserve pass through areas of extreme archaeological complexity. Any widening may involve the disturbance of important sites, the mitigation of which may require large amounts of both time and money.

As the trust and the interested public consider the kind of transportation infrastructure the preserve

should develop, considerations relating to public safety, cost of construction or reconstruction, and performance requirements dealing with archaeology, wildlife, watershed, and visitor management will be important. Even more important, however, will be the impact of roads and vehicles on the resources of the preserve and the quality of experience its visitors enjoy. As mentioned in chapter 8, it is instructive to review the experience of similar parks and preserves around the West and to note that vehicle congestion is a serious problem for many of them.

If the VCT ultimately develops a transportation system to provide all or most visitor access to the interior of the preserve, the necessity of widening and paving existing roads will be much reduced. This in turn will reduce the potential for negative impacts of roads on landscape aesthetics as well as physical resources. Whether the transportation infrastructure of the VCNP ultimately accommodates private vehicles, relies on a system of shuttles, or becomes a hybrid of these two approaches, the total number of people allowed to access the interior of the preserve on a given day will probably have to be limited in order to sustain the natural and cultural values so treasured by the public. With respect to off-



road vehicles (ATVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, etc.), the VCT will consider these potential uses in the course of its transportation planning. Determining the future of the preserve's transportation infrastructure will be one of the first major planning efforts the trust undertakes.

Sample questions and issues:

- How many miles of what kinds of roads should the preserve have?
- What types of vehicles should use them?
- Should the trust develop a transportation system, restricting or even barring the use of private vehicles?
- If the trust develops a transportation

system, how should it be equipped, organized, and funded?

VCNP Visitor and Interpretive Facilities

Ultimately, the trust expects to develop visitor contact and science, interpretive, and educational facilities for the preserve and will seek partners to assist in funding and carrying out this goal. Great opportunities exist to integrate the interpretive program of the VCNP with those of other nearby visitor destinations, such as Bandelier National Monument, the Walatowa Center at Jemez Pueblo, and the Los Alamos Science Museum. In its

relation to the external world, the VCNP's visitor facility might be seen as an important stop along an integrated interpretive trail through the Jemez Mountains. In its relation to the internal world of the preserve, the visitor center will need to function as a primary staging area, providing links to trailheads, transportation infrastructure, and (probably) a range of outdoor opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the facility. Location and design of the center should protect the quality of views from the interior of the preserve looking back toward the facility itself. As mentioned in chapter 8, the trust will also need to develop an administrative site where it would locate workshops, laboratories, storage facilities for equipment and supplies, offices, classrooms, and employee housing. The facility may be situated with (or incorporated into) the visitor facility area or sited separately. It would host educational activities, visiting researchers, educators, and student groups.

Sample questions and issues:

- Is it right to think in terms of a VCNP visitor facility, or should there be several facilities for different types of visitor contacts?
- Where should it (they) be situated? Do satisfactory sites exist within the present boundaries of the preserve?

- What kinds of services should be contemplated for inclusion in the visitor facilities? Should planning include opportunities for visitor lodging, administrative offices, meeting and conference facilities, etc., in addition to interpretive and other opportunities for trust interaction with visitors?

Lodging and Rentals

Many of the buildings constructed on the preserve have been used historically for lodging of guests. As a result, the preserve now contains at least seven buildings, some termed historic, which are suitable for use as housing for the public. The goals of the trust include creating revenue-generating lodging and rentals from existing preserve buildings that can be made available to a wide spectrum of public users. Buildings may be developed to accommodate a range of the public from backpackers to corporate employees seeking retreats. Upgrade of existing facilities will be needed in the near term, and possibly construction of new facilities in the long term, to optimize the use of these buildings.

Sample questions and issues:

- Should the development of existing buildings focus on creating high-revenue opportunities or expanded access to the general public?
- Should new facilities be developed,

and if so, which activities will they support?

- How should the price of lodging be set to ensure affordability while contributing to the trust’s goal of financial self-sustainability?
- What level of the “rustic” experience should be maintained as part of the lodging on the preserve?

Administrative Facilities

For the immediate future, the current headquarters area will have to serve the needs of the trust for administrative facilities on the preserve. Due to its location on the edge of the Valle Grande and seven miles from NM Highway 4, it is often difficult and will continue to be costly to maintain year-round access to this area. The trust will need to develop plans for facilities to serve the growing administrative functions on the preserve that will have a minimal impact on visitor experiences, wildlife habitat, and other resources. In addition, the development of any new facilities should be situated in an area that is easily accessible year-round. The functions of a typical administrative site would include parking and maintenance of trust vehicles, storage of equipment and supplies, barns and pasture for trust horses and other stock, shops, offices for preserve operations, and housing for selected employees. Other functions the trust may wish to facilitate

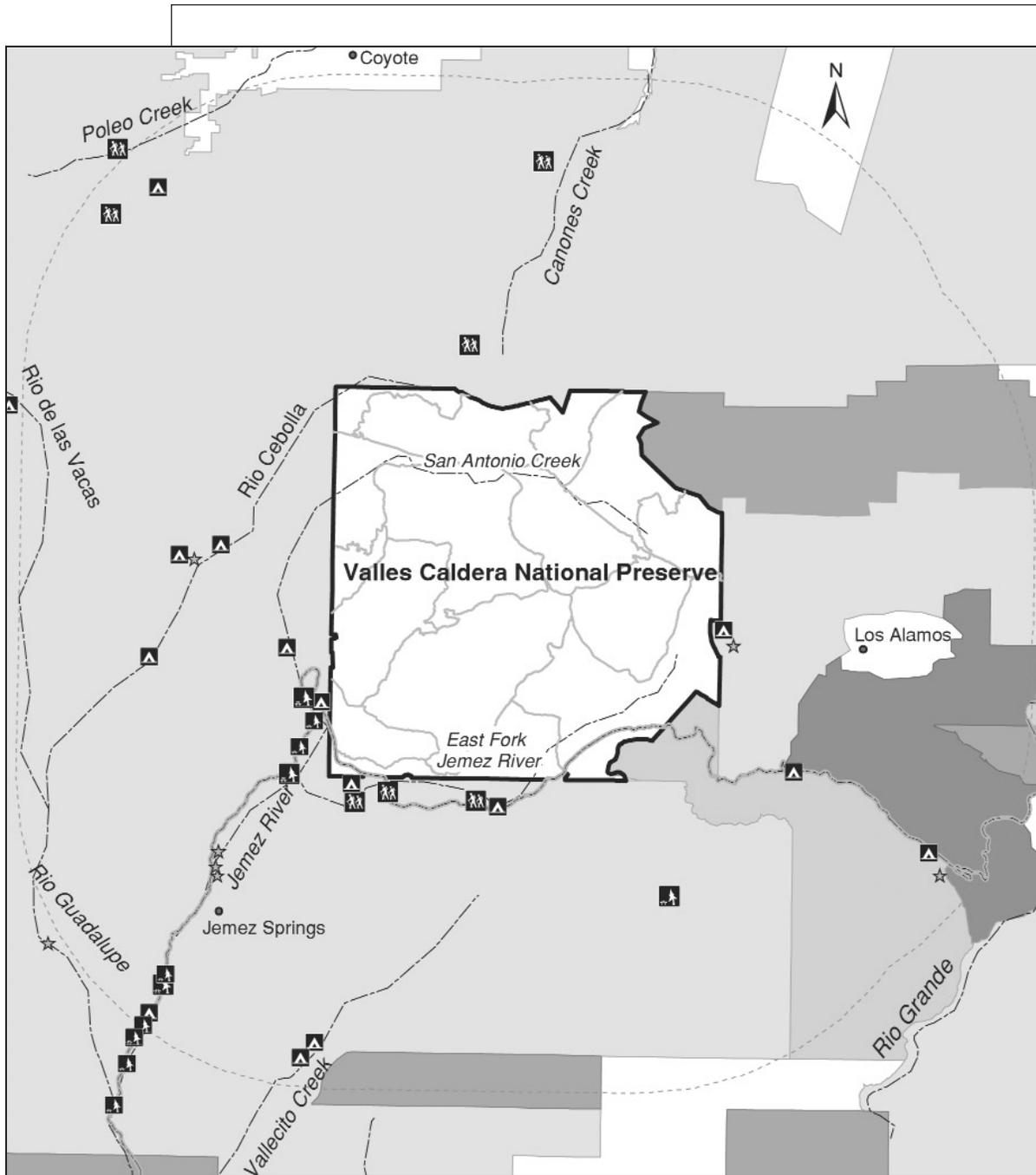
at an administrative site removed from areas of high visitor interactions might include laboratory facilities to accommodate natural and cultural resources research, housing for seasonal employees and guest workers, classrooms and other educational facilities, storage for natural and cultural resources collections, and other functions to meet the long-term goals of the trust for management of the preserve.

Sample questions and issues:

- Should the development of administrative facilities be relocated to a new site away from the current headquarters area?
- What functions should be accommodated at the administrative site?

Other Infrastructure

Besides obvious facilities needs for accommodating visitors, the trust will need to maintain or develop a range of other infrastructure. Among these tasks are the maintenance of existing buildings and utility systems, including the water and wastewater systems in the headquarters area; maintenance of roads and bridges; trail system development and maintenance; construction, maintenance, and in some cases removal of livestock fencing; and maintenance of scientific monitoring infrastructure (e.g., rain gauges, exclosures). The trust will also need to develop and maintain appropriate signage throughout the



Surrounding Recreational Opportunities



- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Developed Recreation Areas | — Preserve Boundary | ■ Department of Energy |
| ▲ Campground | - - - 10-Mile Radius | ■ Indian Reservation |
| ■ Day Use | - - - Major Streams | ■ National Park Service |
| ■ Trailhead | - - - Preserve Roads | ■ U.S. Forest Service |
| ★ Interest Point | — State Road 4 | |

PROGRAMS AND GOALS

preserve, and it will need to develop systems for providing emergency services and communications as well as for handling reservations for visitor activities. The latter will likely rely substantially on Internet technologies.

Sample questions and issues:

- If the trust's reservation system is primarily Web based, what arrangements will be necessary to accommodate the needs of people who do not have ready access to the Internet?

NATIONAL FOREST RECREATION SITES Within 10 Miles of VCNP

<i>Name of Recreation Site</i>	<i>Location (Miles and direction from reference town)</i>	<i>Elevation (ft)</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>	
			<i>Camping</i>	<i>Picnicking</i>
CLEAR CREEK	12 E of Cuba, NM 126	8,500	12	5
RIO DE LAS VACAS	13 E of Cuba, NM 126	8,200	15	
PALIZA	5 NE of Ponderosa, FR 10	7,500	20	
PALIZA GROUP	5 NE of Ponderosa, FR 10	7,500	50	
RINCON	6 N of Jemez Springs, NM 4	7,100		
BATTLESHIP ROCK	6 N of Jemez Springs, NM 4	7,500		21
DARK CANYON	8 N of Jemez Springs, NM 4	7,500		
SAN ANTONIO	9 N of Jemez Springs, NM 4, then 2 W on NM 126	7,800	36	
SEVEN SPRINGS	9 N of Jemez Springs, NM 4, then 14	8,000	7	7
LA CUEVA	9 NE of Jemez Springs, NM 4	7,700		9
REDONDO	11 NE of Jemez Springs, NM 4	8,100	59	
JEMEZ FALLS	15 NE of Jemez Springs, NM 4, then 1 S on FR 133	7,900	47	5
LAS CONCHAS	25 NE of Jemez Springs, NM 4	8,400		9
EAST FORT TRAILHEAD	17 NE of Jemez Springs, NM 4	8,000		
LA JUNTA FISHING ACC.	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,700		
SAN DIEGO FISHING ACC.	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,750		
LAS CASITAS FISHING ACC.	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,750		
RIVER'S BEND FISHING ACC.	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,800		
VISTA LINDA	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,800	13	
SPANISH QUEEN	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,850		12
THE BLUFFS FISHING ACC.	5 S of Jemez Springs on SH 4	5,900		

PROGRAMS AND GOALS

Fee Area	Water			Trailers Under	Managed Season	Stay Limit (days)	Special
	Drinking	Fishing	Boating				
X		X		16'	May–Oct.	14	SH, BF
		X		16'	May–Oct.	14	SH, G
X		X		16'	May–Oct.	14	PR, C
X		X		16'	May–Oct.	14	G, PR, C
		X		NO	May–Oct.		SH
X	X	X		NO	Apr.–Nov.		SH, C
		X		NO	May–Oct.		SH
X		X		22'	May–Oct.	14	BF, SH, NT, C
		X		NO	May–Oct.	14	PR
		X		NO	May–Oct.		BF, SH
X	X			22'	May–Oct.		NT, SH, BF, C, amphitheater
X	X	X		22'	May–Oct.	14	PR, SH, FR, BF, G, C
		X		NO	May–Oct.		SH
				NO	Jan.–Dec.		SH, TH
		X		NO	Mar.–Oct.		BF
		X		NO	Mar.–Oct.	14	BF
		X		NO	Mar.–Oct.		BF
		X		NO	Mar.–Oct.		
X	X	X		16'	Mar.–Oct.	14	BF, C
X	X	X		NO	Mar.–Oct.		BF, C
		X		NO	Mar.–Oct.		BF

Key: C – Concessionaire
 BF – Barrier-free access
 FR – Forest Road
 G – Group picnicking and camping, reservations only
 NT – Nature trail
 PR – Primitive roadway
 SH – State Highway
 TH – Trailhead
 NO – Trailers not accommodated

