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## Report on Master Plan for Interpretation and Education in Valles Caldera National Preserve

### *Summary of April 23 to 29 Workshops & Site Reconnaissance*

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#### 1.0 Introduction

On April 24 and 25, the Interpretive Planning Team of AldrichPears Associates, Bufo Inc. and Studio Hanson/Roberts visited the Valles Caldera National Preserve and surrounding area under the guidance of Rich Engstrom, Business Manager for the Valles Caldera National Trust. The purpose of this visit was to acquire a solid appreciation and understanding of the site, its interpretive resources, the operation of existing programs, and the opportunities for the public to connect with the area intellectually, physically and emotionally. Following this research a concept development workshop was conducted in Albuquerque and Los Alamos over the following four days.

The purpose of the concept development workshop, held on April 26 through 29, was to establish interpretive themes and messages, and a range of audience experiences that can support them in a sustainable manner on the existing site of the Valles Caldera. To achieve this goal a diversity of perspectives was brought to bear on the issue through the involvement of the Board of Directors of the Valles Caldera Trust, the staff of the Trust and the interpretive consulting team. A complete list of the participants is included in an appendix to this report.

The approach to the workshop process first involved a series of conversations that were designed to help the group focus and resolve thinking on the stories that needed to be told, the types of audiences that will be recipients of these stories and the differences in needs for each of these groups. The first step was to review the work-to-date by the Trust as summarized in the Draft Framework and Strategic Guidance for Comprehensive Management. The participants then brainstormed concepts for experiences that each of the audience types would appreciate. The consulting team took the results of this thinking, added to it, sorted the ideas and developed a diagrammatic understanding of how all the parts fitted together to make a coherent approach that would match the stories and the experiences together under a thematic direction. This thinking was presented to both the staff and the Board on the fourth day for comment and to ascertain the support for the project's direction.

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## 1.1 Terms of Reference

It was clear from the discussions during the workshop that there needed to be a more clearly defined set of definitions for work on the project. A diversity of perspectives on who was to visit the site in the future and their purposes led the consulting team to provide a set of definitions so the group could move forward with similar understandings regarding the key issues related to the people that would use the site and what impacts they needed to experience in order for us to succeed. This first led to a renaming of the planning work document so as to clarify that the terms of reference included both 'education' and 'interpretation'. The new title for the work will be:

"Master Plan for Interpretation and Education"

Second, the initial discussions and thinking on the goals for success, as defined in the Framework Document, clarified that two overall goals were key for the interpretive planning.

1. Minimize site impact
2. Maximize impact on hearts, minds and behavior

Balancing these two goals has become the key to the development of any ideas that are intended to enhance the experiences of all those on the site. While we want to maximize the impact that we have on visitor thoughts, feelings and behaviors, we cannot chose mechanisms that will have a deleterious effect on the environmental and perceptual integrity of the site they are to visit.

## 1.2 Definitions of Terms

As the workshop progressed it became apparent that some of the terms for the plan's outcomes were being used interchangeably. For the purposes of this plan, we identified three different terms to describe the master plan's communications activities. These were:

### Information

Information is defined as free-choice in nature (user chooses to receive information) and knowledge-based. It is generally informal in presentation and is most often linked directly to decision-making, i.e., "What can I do? Where am I? What will it cost?" Information commonly has an audience of Individuals or small groups and can be effective both first-hand, e.g., sign at entrance, or remotely, e.g., website. Information is also linked directly to agency communications and marketing; for this plan's purposes, information is largely confined to elements that directly complement education and interpretation.

### Education

Most definitions of education include the word "knowledge" - e.g., "*knowledge* acquired by learning and instruction" – and this is the goal for educational communications. To achieve this, education is usually structured and undertaken in formal groups. Because of its goal, the success of education is relatively easy to assess. While many techniques are applied to education, like interpretation, it is most effective as a first-hand activity.

## Interpretation

The National Association for Interpretation defines interpretation as "...a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource." It is sometimes defined as free-choice learning but knowledge is only one of the objectives together with emotional connections and behavioral outcomes. Interpretation is informal in practice and may take place with audiences from one to many. Because of its attitudinal and action-based objectives, it can be hard to measure effectiveness, e.g. behavioral change may not exhibit itself until long after the interpretation. Not only is interpretation most effective when first-hand; it needs to be related directly to the nature of a particular site or object. "Sense of Place" is frequently cited as the ultimate interpretive goal.

## **2.0 Results**

The following is a description of the outcomes of this workshop that the team will use to move forward with further research and then develop in more detail so as to test the direction at public feedback sessions slated for this summer.

### **2.1 Draft Thematic Structure**

Interpretation is based on themes used both as statements of the "big ideas" and as organizing elements for determining content and media. They serve as a check during the planning process; if a proposed story does not logically fit into the overall theme and at least one of the subthemes, it should not be used. On the basis of the key stories identified by the workshop participants, a draft thematic structure was developed by the interpretive team and reviewed by the Board and staff.

#### **Draft Overall Theme**

*VCNP is a bold experiment in managing a working ranch in a way that preserves cultural practices and sustains ecological integrity*

#### **Draft Subthemes**

1. *VCNP preserves key components of the human history of the Jemez Mountains*
  - What it means and has meant to people – Mt. Redondo, ranching, shared use of the land
  - Historical interactions with the landscape
  - Management practices – culturally and chronologically, and their impacts
  - Pueblos, Hispanics, Anglos...

2. *VCNP protects a remarkably diverse ecosystem of great biotic and abiotic significance*
  - Geology – caldera, obsidian, plate tectonics
  - Vegetation – natural processes, high elevation grasslands
  - Fauna – endemics, abundance, extirpation, diversity...
  - Climate and weather
  - Hydrology, water
3. *VCNP inspires new directions in public land management by serving as a vast experiment in balancing natural processes with human uses.*
  - Evolution of VC Trust – structure, working ranch
  - Restoration of natural components
  - Living landscape for understanding relationships between people and nature
  - Developing, testing, and educating about new models for sustainable land management – national significance
  - Science-based
  - Economic goals

## **2.2 People on Site**

Substantial effort was dedicated to identifying the users of the site at all levels (visitor, staff, etc.) and how the master plan would affect them. Over the course of the workshops, the following organization was developed.

### **2.2.1 Reasons for Being There**

For the purposed of master planning, people can be characterized by their purpose for being on the site:

Recreational Activities (these people come in large numbers and will seek out experiences based on their needs and interests)

- “Alone” and in place – e.g., artists, fishers, etc.
- “Alone” and moving around – e.g., hikers, backpackers, horseback riders, etc.
- “Knowledge” seekers – e.g., local community, tourists, etc.
- “Convivial” groups – e.g., families, tour groups, etc.
- “Casually Curious” – e.g., opportunistic travelers

### Spiritual Pursuits and Traditional Practices

- Pueblos
- Others

### Education, Training and Skills Development (these people come in small groups)

- Ranchers
- “Loggers”
- Students and educators
- Environmentalists

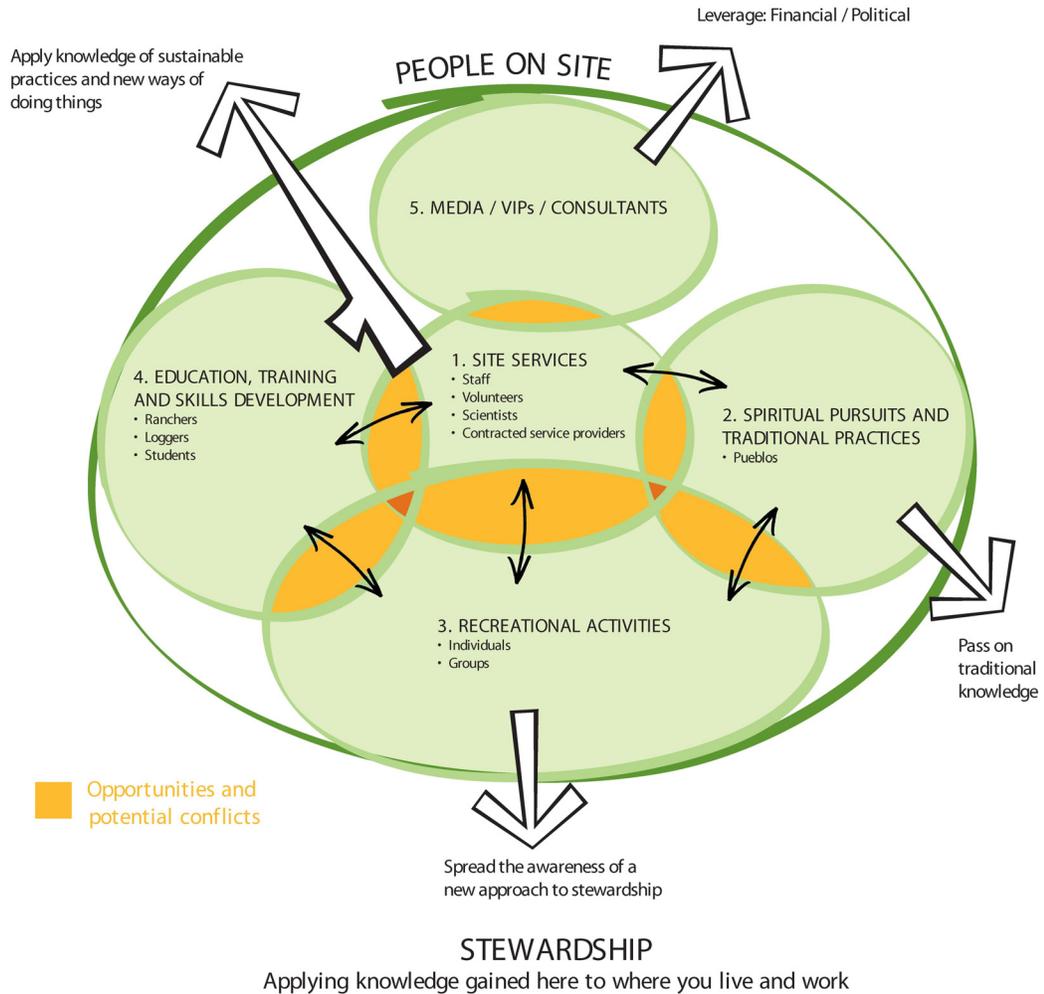
### Special Treatment

- Media, journalists
- VIPs – Political and financial figures, etc.
- Professional peers
- Donors and sponsors

### Site Services

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Scientists

## 2.2.2 Relationships of Users to Each Other, and to the Outside World



## 2.2.3 Potential Experiences

The following matrix organizes the users into “audiences” for information, interpretation and education and lists ideas for related experiences that were developed over the course of the workshops. In the case of interpretation, the experiences have been organized into categories reflecting different learning styles and interests.

Off-Site & On-Site "Information"	Interpretation for Meaningful Connections							Hands-On, Adaptive Mgt Education: Two-way
	Experience Stories Through Media and Built Environments			Active On-Site, Real Time Experience		Unguided Personal Experience		Development & Sharing of Personal Working Knowledge
	<b>Build and use appropriate environments to reinforce experience</b>	<b>Learn remotely through technology</b>	<b>Preserve experience through purchased mementos</b>	<b>Onsite interactive educational experience</b>	<b>Experience northern New Mexico heritage</b>	<b>Solitary sensory experience of nature</b>	<b>Pueblo native practices</b>	<b>Participate in the ongoing sustainable working landscape of the Jemez Mtns</b>
Website information	VC themed kids play area while parents are on the deck	Auto tour that focus on the preserve and extending beyond the boundary	Take home an "obsidian" souvenir	Participating in observational studies when hiking	I will see traditional cattle herding activities and be reminded of the "west"	Guided nature's noises tour (with isolation activities)	I can practice my religious & cultural activities without restriction or interference	Opportunity to talk & interact with visitors (cowboys)
Advertising	Visitor and education centre	"Sim city" concept around VCNP balance	Cowhide "recliner" chair	"Weekend with Bob" lottery	Cowboy or sheep herder for a day	I want to hear elk bugle and have the power reconnect me with life's forces		Timber opportunity for demos that show sustainable practice
Brochures at information centers	Used gorgeous restrooms and learn about water cycles	Saw a video about the caldera formation	VC buy themed products gift shop/books/t-shirts, DVD	Learn by doing e.g. ongoing cultural history of religion	Participate in an in-depth cultural experience	I want to hear silence, quiet		Learn new techniques on livestock mgt through demos & hands-on
Maps and Books	Stop at various pullouts with particular themes and viewing aids	VC virtual reality program experience of the preserve	I want to buy art that will always remind of my experience		Witness working landscape e.g. ongoing cultural history and religion	Potential for wildlife viewing		View science-based adaptive mgt in action
Site orientation	Camping/lodging within the historical context of the VCNP	Create an open database for knowledge exchange	Take a piece of the VCPN experience home (not obsidian)	Hands-on and interpretive outings field trip/tour	Chuck wagon dinner, caldera cocktail watching sunset & stars	Minimal contact with others		Participate in research work – monitoring inventories
Highway signage	Theme interpretive trail (guided or not) with quiz			Participate in topic-based tours	I will be able to explore the preserve on horseback	Natural soundscape		Outreach by users on resource mgt issues
				3-D objects mounted on interpretive signs (e.g. rock strata/elk antlers)	I will have access to information that will increase my knowledge of the Pueblos history	By seeing and touching the variety of geological features I will be reminded of the forces of nature		Involve practitioners in exchange of info with visitors
				Touch animal props like fur, antlers & scat				Training program to interface with public on their expertise
								Incorporate new/old expertise into existing programs

### **3.0 Implications**

This variety of users has major implications for planning, including:

- Infrastructure – what level of services and facilities are needed?
- Experiences – an enormous range of experiences are possible on site but which are appropriate, affordable and sustainable?
- Time required (for experience) – what is the appropriate ratio for extended experiences versus short experiences?
- Where on site (location)? – how can the high quality solitude-based experiences be provided at the same time as group experiences?
- Physical and human resources required – how many staff and what physical resources such as vehicles, buildings, etc. will be needed?
- Opportunities for interaction – this will need to be carefully planned in order to avoid conflict
- Viewing corridors – the physical beauty and rich views are an important value of the site so these must be maintained
- Acoustic studies – the sounds of what activities in which locations would conflict with the needs of others?

#### **3.1 Landscape Use for Programs**

To address some of these implications, it is necessary to understand the current landscape use. Progress was made on the development of map overlays that capture landscape use patterns: van tours, hiking, special events (potential fat tire event from ski resort, family tours, equestrian/ski trail), fishing and fishing clinics. A preliminary review was undertaken as to how fishing, hiking/horseback riding / cross-country skiing / van tours are currently handled; these will be analyzed in more detail in the near future. Additional mapping of key interpretive features and sensitive (no-go) areas will be necessary.

#### **3.2 Ideal Sequence of Experience**

The workshops introduced an idealized sequence of experience that planning should strive to achieve. This sequence is referred to by the acronym “ADROIT” and includes the key components that provide a satisfying, enjoyable experience. This sequence list is annotated with definitions and with implications for services and infrastructure:

Arrival – plan and find your way to destination (interp facilities)

Decompression – collect your thoughts and leave the travel behind (interp facilities)

Reception – tickets, first interface with staff/volunteers (interp facilities, some programs/exhibits)

Orientation – quick how, where, when, what answers – information (interp facilities, programs/exhibits)

Interpretation – methods of delivering messages/themes/content (interp facilities, programs/exhibits)

Transformation – how do you say good-bye? - making decisions based on your experience and/or sharing your experience – may lead you to do other activities related to the experience and/or plan to come back (interp facilities)

### **3.3 Interpretive Facilities**

There was also substantial discussion regarding a possible need for interpretive facilities. Roles played by interpretive facilities generally include:

- Minimize impact to site by concentrating experiences/resources close to the “edge”
- Maximize exposure of all users to the messages – through media, etc.
- Create the “front gate”
- Orientation, information, interpretation – in one place
- “Hub” – resource center – transfer, restrooms, staff, equipment
- Place for interaction among users
- Revenue opportunities – gift shop, etc.
- Show “unseen” Valles Caldera – use as promotion of on-site programs
  - Aerial views
  - Winter in summer
  - Geological processes, progression
  - Going back in time

These roles are assessed and simplified in the following table:

**Opportunities for Exposure to Message, Low Environmental Impact and Revenue Generation**

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Exposure to Message</b>	<b>Site Impact</b>	<b>Number of People</b>	<b>Revenue Potential</b>
Educational and Recreational Activities On Site – individuals and groups	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
Special Events, Special interest Groups	Medium	Low	Low	High
Interpretive Facilities	High	Low	High	High

No decision regarding interpretive facilities was sought at or resulted from the workshop discussions. Until further research and assessment is complete, the question of interpretive facilities remains as only one possible opportunity for delivering interpretive, educational and information messages.

**4.0 Conclusions and Next Steps**

The general comments from Board and staff suggest that the consulting team is on the right. While acknowledging that not all Board members were present at the last presentation and workshop – and changes may be forthcoming upon review of this document – we are proceeding with the next steps:

- Creating a content matrix (reads like a table of contents, delivering particular stories in these locations using these kinds of media) and an experience matrix (emotional connections). Together, these matrices allow managers and planners to ensure that both agency and visitor goals are being met.
- Preparing draft themes and preliminary material for public presentation at several locations in approximately six weeks (sometime between early June to early July) The format would be an open house with consultant team present and adequate visual support to ensure that the public understands what is being proposed.

- Consultant team would like to make any necessary amendments after reviewing those results from the Draft Framework public meetings that relate to interpretation prior to the public presentations.
- The draft document will be ready to submit to the Board in approximately three months

## **Appendix A: Workshop Participants**

### **Board of Trustees**

Bill Debuys, *Chairman*  
Larry Eiserman  
Tracy Hephner, *Acting  
Executive Director*  
Barb Johnson  
Darlene Kootz  
Palemon Martinez  
Thomas Swetnam  
David Yepa  
Gilbert Zepeda  
Gary Ziehe, *Former  
Executive Director*

### **VCNP Staff**

Dennis Trujillo  
Rick Dustin  
Rich Engstrom  
Bob Parmenter  
Julie Grey  
Rourke McDermott  
Marie Rodriguez

### **Interpretive Team**

AldrichPears  
Phil Aldrich  
Victor Chorobik  
Jennifer Aldrich  
BUFO Inc.  
Harry Parsons  
Shannon Macey-Carroll  
Studio Hanson/Roberts  
Becca Hanson

## **APPENDIX B: Key Stories to Tell**

Workshop participants identified stories about the VCNP and the VCT that they want to tell the public:

- How and why is the VCNP important to Jemez culture and history
- Spirit and resonance of the land and what it has meant to people
- Western heritage and way of life (feel like you've slipped back in time) – dominant fence lines tell you it's a ranch
- People raising animals for food and wool, etc. for a long time (tradition of agriculture)
- Portray the history of New Mexico. Total history needs to be told – e.g., sheep herding
- Interaction of people historically and in landscape (cooks and kings)
- Understanding of management structure – story of how the trust came to be
- Value and abundance of useable resources
- Continuum of use of landscape – this is not stopping
- Geology of the place – scientifically famous (world class)
  - Obsidian ties people to this place – mined for generations
- Story of stewardship ethic – how to “nudge” the landscape rather than “manage” it
- Natural history (last 18,000 years – from peak of last ice age) – ecological components
- Use of landscape and resources (wise and unwise)
- Role of public land in food production, grass-fed beef
- Headwater area is unique as a water resource
- History of recreational use - family connections and story of working on the land – blur between work and recreation (it's a way of life)
- Contested terrain, control, and ownership – politics and possession, the story of the Baca Land Grant, etc. (land tenure)
- Movie sets and fun part of history
- The place as a source of learning for the Trust – journey of learning shared with public (science-based)

## **APPENDIX C: Preliminary List of Reference Material Gathered**

### **Photocopied Documents:**

Valles Caldera Interpretive themes developed for the 2003 recreation season (3 pages)  
Valles Caldera Visitor Centre Site Criteria (1page)  
Abiquiu Lake – pp 5, 10, 11, 29, 31, 33 of Master Plan  
Cochiti Lake – introduction to Master Plan

### **Reference/Research Material:**

#### Valles Caldera:

Valles Caldera Framework Document, 2003  
A Vegetation Survey & Preliminary Ecological Assessment of Valles Caldera National Preserve, 2003  
Valles Caldera Maps – hard and digital copies for roads, boundaries, geographic names, vegetation  
Valles Caldera 2003 Fiscal Year Consolidated Annual Report  
Biota Information (2000) and image for *Plethodon neomexicanus* (Jemez Mtns Salamander)  
Land Use History Draft Document (digital)  
Community Meeting Recordings (two Hi8 tapes)  
Unformatted Plant List (2000)  
Bird List  
Aquatic Invertebrate Taxa List – East Fork of Jemez River 2002

#### Other Park/Reserve Sites:

Bandelier National Monument Business Plan  
Bandelier National Monument Final Comprehensive Interpretive Plan Foundation Information, 2001  
Bandelier National Monument Education and Community Outreach Strategy – Draft  
Bandelier National Monument Archive of the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning Process, 2001  
Respect the Rio Ranger Program, 2003 – Dispersed Recreation Report

#### Tourism Related:

Jemez Mountain Trail Scenic Byway Interpretive Plan – Draft 2003  
2003 New Mexico Scenic Byway Economic Impact Study – executive summary  
2003 New Mexico Scenic Byway Economic Impact Study

2002 Psychographic Research for New Mexico Scenic Byways  
2002 New Mexico Scenic Byways Market Data Final Report  
2002 New Mexico Scenic Byways Print Conversion Study  
2002 New Mexico Scenic Byways Focus Group Research

**Research/Reference Books:**

Brown, David E., Editor. *Biotic Communities Southwestern United States & Northwestern Mexico*

Cain, M.J. *Near Horizons: A Weekender's Guide to Easy Trips from Albuquerque*

Cajete, Gregory. *A People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living*

Chavez, Thomas. *An Illustrated History of New Mexico*

Chronic, Halka. *Roadside Geology of New Mexico*

DeBuys, William. *Enchantment & Exploitation, the Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range*

Deloria, Vine Jr. *God is Red: A Native View on Religion*

Dozier, Edward. *The Pueblo Indians of North America*

Dunmire, William W. and Tierney, Gail D. *Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province*

Folsom, Franklin. *Indian Uprising on the Rio Grande: The Pueblo Revolt of 1680*

Fontana, Bernard. *A Guide to Contemporary Southwest Indians*

Kessell, John L. *Kiva, Cross, & Crown, the Pecos Indians and New Mexico 1540-1840*

Kessell, John. *The Missions of New Mexico 1776 and Before*

Kessell, John. *The Missions of New Mexico 1776 to the Present*

Lambert, David and the Diagram Group. *The Field Guide to Geology, updated edition.*

Martin, Craig. *Valle Grande – A History of the Baca Location No.1*

Sando, Joe S. *Pueblo Profiles, Cultural Identity through Centuries of Change*

Stokes, Wm. Lee. *Scenes of the Plateau Lands and How They Came To Be*

Wiewandt, Thomas, and Wilks, Maureen. *The Southwest - Inside Out: An Illustrated Guide to the Land and its History*

**Tourism/Outreach Material:**

Valles Caldera National Preserve Site Brochure  
2004 Valles Caldera Elk Hunt Promotional Brochure  
Seeking Common Ground Adaptive Management Strategy for Elk and Habitat Management

New Mexico National Parks Brochure  
Bandelier National Monument Brochure  
Campground and Accommodation Information  
Walatowa Native Ed-Ventures  
Abiquiu Lake Brochure  
Cochiti Lake Brochure  
History of the US Army Corps of Engineers  
New Mexico Visitor Guide

**Contact Names, Websites, Etc.:**

Personal Contacts:

New Mexico State Tourism: Bruce Poster 505-989-8500 [bp.swpm@protigy.net](mailto:bp.swpm@protigy.net)

Jemez Corridor Transportation: John Peterson (Jemez Ranger Station) 505-829-3535

Santa Clara Pueblo  
Gilbert Tafoya  
Cultural Preservation Land Claims and Rights Protection Office  
PO Box 580, Espanola, NM 87532

Zia Pueblo  
Peter Pino  
135 Capitol Square Drive, Zia Pueblo, NM 87053-6013

Heddy Dunn, Head of the Historical Society in Los Alamos, 505-662-8159

Websites:

For National Park monthly visitor reports: <http://www2.nature.nps.gov/mpur/>

Jemez Mtn Trail Scenic Byway:  
<http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/scenicbyways/JemezMountainTrail.asp>

Surrounding state park recreation areas: <http://www.recreation.gov/> and  
<http://www.rfl.psw.fs.fed.us/recreation/>