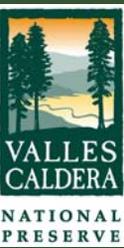


# MUSY - Forage

## The Working Ranch



The Valles Caldera National Preserve was a privately owned working ranch for over a century before being purchased by the Federal government. Congress acknowledged this history in multiple passages throughout the Valles Caldera Preservation Act, the legislation authorizing Federal acquisition.

The Act further provided that, where consistent with the other goals of the Act, the Preserve should continue operation as a working ranch.

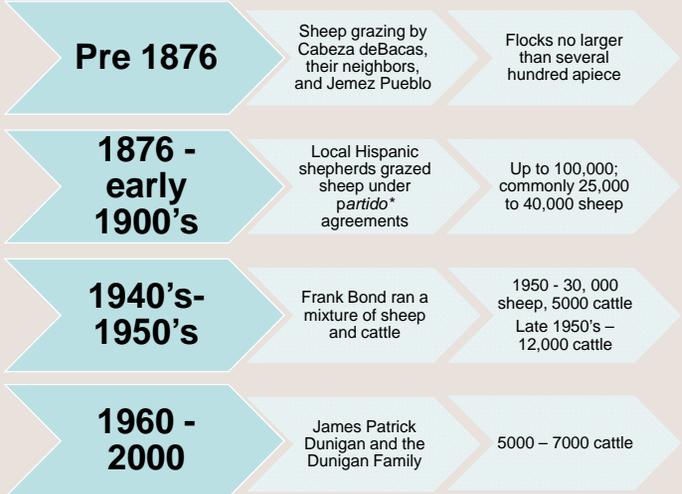
Quantitative assessments of the Preserve's natural resources are uncovering the cumulative effects of over a century of intensive grazing and logging. The actual condition of the Preserve is somewhat more impaired than it appears on the surface.

The existing ecological condition as well as Congress's mandate that the operation of the Preserve become financially self sufficient will influence the management of the Preserve as a working ranch into the reasonably foreseeable future.



Don J. Uşner

The Board of Trustees has defined a working ranch as, *"...an operation placing its primary emphasis on the stewardship of the resource as the foundation for both ecological and economic sustainability."*



\* Under the *partido* agreement, their own stock served as collateral. Bond collected a fee for range use from and the *partidarios* also had to outfit themselves from his store, where he charged a flat 10% interest rate. With expenses mounting, most *partidarios* were lucky to keep their own sheep at the end of a contract.



**Interim Grazing**

Since Federal acquisition the Trust has operated a variety of annual grazing programs.

- 2002/3 Drought relief for local producers (open/lottery)
- 2003/5 Replacement Heifer (open/lottery)
- 2004/5 Conservation Stewardship (criteria based competition)
- 2006 Research (NMSU brought steer)
- 2007 RFP Ecological/Economical (criteria based competition)

All programs have been ecological sustainable with measurable improvements in ecological condition occurring over a five year period.

Only the competitive RFP operation of 2007 has broken even financially. Resource protection and balancing the livestock program with recreation programs has required intensive management.

Over 50 individual producers participated annually in the 2004/5 programs, incurring excessive administrative costs.

