

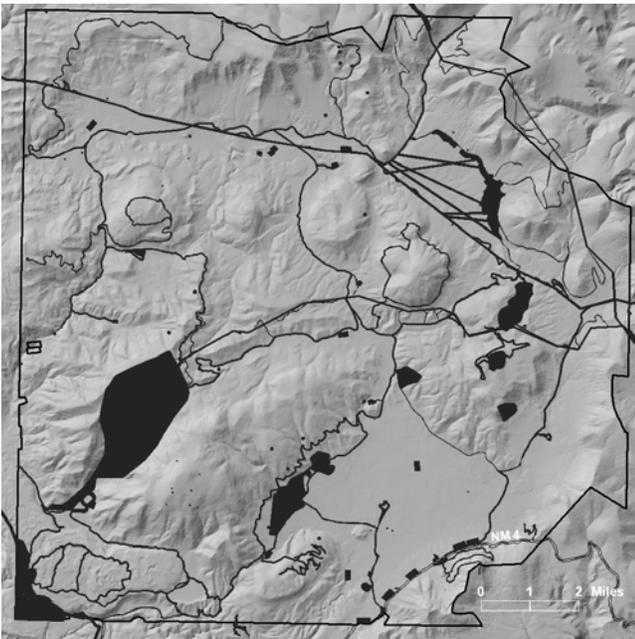


Cultural Resources

How much do we know about cultural resources on the Preserve?

At the time of federal acquisition in 2000, very little was known about the cultural resources (CR) on the Preserve. Prior to acquisition, 2,585 acres (2.9 %) had been surveyed. From 2001 to 2006, 5,500 acres (6.2%) of the Preserve have been surveyed to current standards. Total inventory today is less than 10%.

VCNP Cultural Resources Inventory Through 2006
(only surveys within the VCNP are shown)



Our current knowledge of the types and condition of cultural resources on the Preserve is influenced by the nature and placement of these surveys. Because inventories have been conducted only as part of the planning for specific projects and programs, these surveys primarily represent in-use roads, areas of intensive use (e.g., Cerro la Jara, the Headquarters area, and Redondo Meadows), and large-project areas (e.g., forest thinning in Banco Bonito and the Valle Toledo prescribed burn).

Areas with a high probability for the presence of *undocumented* prehistoric and historic sites include the saddles between domes and along the edges of valleys at the forest-meadow interface. In addition, locations with cultural value to Native American communities occur on the tops of high mountains and domes, as well as atop ridges that overlook valleys or are on the rim of the caldera. Planning for public access trails and facilities (e.g. parking, toilets, camping) includes CR inventory so that potential impacts to archaeological sites and traditional cultural places can be considered.

What kinds of sites are on the Preserve?

To date, 354 historic and archaeological sites have been documented. “Fieldhouses” are present in abundance, but only on Banco Bonito. These simple one- to two-room masonry structures were probably associated with maize agriculture possible only at the lower elevations in the SW corner of the Preserve. In contrast to the surrounding areas, there are no known pueblos (i.e., large multi-room settlements, such as at Bandelier National Monument) in the caldera.

The caldera is renowned for its large obsidian quarries, but the most commonly documented sites are large and small obsidian reduction areas. These surface concentrations of obsidian artifacts represent a range of prehistoric activities and past living areas including tool-making stations, small camps, and large villages. The surface artifacts signal buried cultural deposits built up incrementally over 100s or even 1000s of years of human use. Because these prehistoric deposits can be very large (e.g. several acres) and are found in all areas of the Preserve, they are difficult to simply avoid. Instead, the Trust evaluates the potential each site has for informing about the 10,000 years of caldera prehistory, and develops plans for minimizing the detrimental effects of activities planned in the area of significant sites.

<i>Cultural component:</i>	<i># of sites</i>
lithic reduction	180
large obsidian quarries	20
rockshelters	9
one to two-room fieldhouses	75
multi-room prehistoric structures	3
historic sites (including corrals)	70
historic standing cabins	13
<i>Total</i>	<i>370</i>
<i>Total is higher than the actual number of sites (n=354) because several sites have more than one component</i>	



Cultural Resources

Historical Land Use within Valles Caldera National Preserve

Modern communities that surround the Preserve, including numerous Pueblos and Tribes as well as local Hispanic and Anglo communities, have deep historic and cultural connections to the caldera, which are expressed through on-going ceremonial activities as well as rich oral histories and sacred traditions.

The history of human use of the Valles Caldera began as early as any region in the Southwest. The Jemez Mountains have been occupied continuously for at least 10,000 years. Contemporary Native Americans from surrounding Pueblos maintain a deep connection to the caldera and trace their entry to the area back over 600 years. Ancestral Puebloans used the caldera for game hunting, gathering of medicinal and food plants, maize agriculture, and collecting obsidian. Today, Pueblo Indians from Jemez, Cochiti, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, and Zia Pueblos continue to visit the Preserve to collect medicinal and ceremonial plants and to visit shrines and ancestral sites. More distant groups such as the Navajo, Ute, Hopi and Zuni also maintain a connection with the caldera.

The Spanish arrived in the area over 400 years ago and began using the area for livestock grazing. The Baca Location No. 1 was an indirect Spanish land grant in 1860 to the heirs of Luis Maria Cabeza de Vaca as settlement of a land dispute. However, the large tract passed quickly out of the grantees hands and was acquired in 1899 by the Valles Land Company. Grazing, logging/milling, and mining activities increased in the region throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s as the railroad and timber industry brought Euro-Americans to expanded settlements in the Jemez Valley.

In 1918, Frank Bond leased the ranch lands from the Redondo Development Company; he purchased Baca Location No. 1 in 1926. Bond began extensive sheep herding and sheering operations, raised some cattle and paid for certain land improvements. Most of Bond's employees were Hispanic. Today, traditional Spanish families in the surrounding communities cherish the stories from their parents and grandparents that describe working on the ranch in the sheep, cattle and timber industries.

Logging operations expanded in the Jemez Valley in the 1920s as rail lines were built to carry timber to the major railroads in Bernalillo. The New Mexico Timber Co. began logging operations in the Baca Location No. 1 in 1935. Employees included Anglos, Mexican nationals and local Hispanics. Intensive logging continued on the Baca Ranch for several decades; peak operations throughout the 1960's significantly diminished the future commercial potential of logging on the Preserve.

Pat Dunigan purchased Baca Location No. 1 from the Bond heirs in 1962. He continued leasing to cattle ranchers, but decreased logging after 1971. Beginning in the early 1960s, Dunigan allowed geothermal exploration and elk hunting on the Baca. When Pat Dunigan died in 1980, many of the conservation measures he had adopted were eased, which initiated an era of renewed commercial timber harvesting that continued with decreasing intensity until the ranch was acquired by the federal government in 2000.

