



Valles Caldera National Preserve
Winter Recreation Program
Stewardship Register

Stewardship Action: Winter Recreation	File Number: PLAN – 7 2004.12.01
Target Start Date: December 19, 2003	Responsible Official: Preserve Manager
Target Completion Date: Until Rescinded	Signature Date: December 01, 2003
Actual Start Date: 12-14-2004	Actual Date of Completion

Proposed Action:

The Valles Caldera Trust is proposing to open the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) for seasonal winter recreation use from December – March depending on snow conditions. Operating hours for day use will generally be from Friday through Monday with a monthly mid-week day opening. Overnight use of existing facilities may occur as a special event. Winter recreation activities include cross country skiing, snow shoeing and horse drawn sleigh rides. When snow is not sufficient for winter activities, wagon rides may be available. Hiking will not be a permissible activity during the winter recreation season. These events may be delivered to either groups or individuals and be either guided or unguided. Additional snow-play related activities may also occur by request.

Associated activities may include driving on existing roads, maintaining existing roads, grooming trails for the sleigh and cross country skiing, parking for passenger vehicles, vans, and horse trailers. Yurts will be placed at administrative and public parking areas. Yurts are transported by pick-up truck and constructed on site (no use of heavy equipment, laying of base, ground leveling, or other disturbance is required. The Yurt resides on, but is not attached to the surface)

Location: (see attached map)

- Public parking and access is proposed within turnout areas along Highway 4 and within a mill site off Road 7.
- Administrative parking is proposed at the corral site off Road A.
- Yurts will be placed in the parking areas (public and administrative) and used as temporary facilities for program administration.
- Winter recreation activities will take place primarily in the Valle Grande and El Cajete areas of the Preserve.

Purpose and Need:

- To meet the intent of the Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000, purpose (3)...To provide for public recreation.
- Allow the public to experience the exceptional scenery, wildlife and other assets of the Preserve.

- Provide education and interpretation to the public on the unique cultural, historical and geological values of the Preserve and also to share the mission of the Valles Caldera Trust.
- Allow the public to provide feedback to the staff on what they see as the future of the Valles Caldera Trust and give suggestions for program improvements.
- Provide for a variety of lengths, experiences, and challenge levels so that all ages can enjoy a quality winter recreation experience on the Preserve.

Performance Requirements:

The following measures provide detail regarding the implementation of the proposed Stewardship Action:

Cultural Resources

1. No use of parking facilities, grading of roads or other potentially ground disturbing activities will take place prior completion of the VCNP Cultural Resources Compliance Process including the receipt of concurrence by the SHPO.
2. Parking in the Cajete area will be on a site used as a fence post operation in the 1990's. The site was graded annually for a period of seven years providing a fairly even distribution and depth of sawdust from the wood processing. The sawdust accumulation will mitigate the potential for any ground disturbance to occur as a result of the proposed winter recreation activities.
3. Road grading will be restricted to the existing road bed and identified parking area.
4. Snow plows will be equipped with shoes to maintain a distance of at least 2" above the road bed.
5. Horse drawn sleigh activities will take place on groomed trails with a minimum of 24" of snow.
6. Horses will not be corralled on the preserve. They are transported to and from the Preserve on a daily basis. They are secured to the horse trailer when not hitched to the sleigh. No hitching posts, temporary or permanent corrals will be constructed.
7. Wagon rides will occur on existing roads only.
8. Yurt placement and associated warming areas where concentrations of people may occur will be in approved parking areas or existing roads.
9. No permanent facilities will be constructed

Soil/Water Quality

1. Measures in place for the protection of cultural resources will also serve to protect soil and hydrological resources.
2. Winter hiking will not be a permitted winter recreation activity.
3. No off road driving or ATV use will be permitted.

Wildlife

1. Snowmobile use will be limited to administrative use by Trust employees, volunteers or emergency services personnel.

Provide a quality recreational experience	Limit the number and concentration of people participating in the activities.
Develop an appropriate fee structure that is commensurate with the experience and ensures a return to the trust.	Review visitor comment forms to determine if the value of the experience was commensurate with the cost. Compile cost versus income to determine net profit or loss.
Minimize adverse impacts associated with this program.	Assess pre, mid, and post season monitoring results.

Evaluation of Monitoring Information

As information from monitoring is evaluated, describe conclusions and any new information as guided by 101.7(b)

9/5/2005: This Stewardship Register is updated to reflect the following changes:

Proposed Action:

- Will include back country cross country skiing opportunities.
- Overnight lodging opportunities in existing facilities or in Yurts placed on the Preserve.

These changes are limited in scope and require no ground disturbing activities. The decision has not been revised.

(MER 9/15/2005)