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April 12, 2005

Dear Friends,

In 2004 the staff of the Valles Caldera Trust requested authorization from the Board of Trustees to plan a prescribed fire in a portion of the Valle Toledo. The board authorized the staff to proceed with the proposal and the staff completed an environmental assessment for the prescribed fire. Implementation was planned for the fall of 2004. This information was recorded in a Stewardship Register in September of 2004. Due to a series of rain and snow showers that occurred during the proposed implementation period, the prescribed fire was postponed.

Since last fall the Trust's Science staff has applied for, and been awarded, a grant from the U.S. Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Research Station to consider detailed data on the interactions of prescribed fire and the grazing activities of elk and cattle.

Furthermore, the staff of the Trust has been incorporating procedures unique to the Valles Caldera Trust for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The staff of the Trust has reviewed the Stewardship Register and rescinded the environmental assessment and implementing decision of 2004. We are proposing to redesign the proposed action as well as the purpose and need for the action based on the specific monitoring and research elements of the aforementioned grant. We also believe this to be an opportunity to fulfill the spirit of our unique NEPA procedures by reinitiating the planning for this stewardship action.

Attached is a description of the proposed use of prescribed fire in the Valle Toledo as well as a brief statement of the purpose and need for the action.

If you are interested in participating in this planning process there are several ways to do so.

- Marie Rodriguez, our Natural Resource Coordinator, is the project manager for the Valle Toledo Prescribed Fire. All comments should be sent to her attention.
- Early participation by responding to this letter is appreciated. Your comments can then be considered in the actual development of the stewardship action. You may comment by email, surface mail, by telephone or in person.

Comments submitted in writing or by email should present each comment or question in a complete sentence to ensure its meaning is understood. All comments will be considered, however; if you wish to receive a response to your comments from the Trust, be sure to request that response in your correspondence. In addition, if you are providing multiple comments and requesting a response it is helpful to number each comment for reference.

Marie is also available to receive your comments or discuss the proposed stewardship action by phone or in person. Simply call our office at 505/661-3333 and leave your name and phone number and Marie will contact you. Emails may be sent to mrodriguez@vallescaldera.gov.

Written comments can be submitted to The Valles Caldera Trust, 2201 Trinity Drive, Suite C, Los Alamos, NM 87544.

- You may also comment in person at any public board meeting. Your comments will be recorded and considered by our planning staff.
- An Environmental Assessment will be completed for this project and will be made available to the public for a 30-day comment period. Comments received during that period will be considered prior to determining the significance of the environmental effects and making an implementing decision.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Valles Caldera National Preserve.

Sincerely,

s/ Ray Powell

Ray Powell

Executive Director