

Valles Caldera National Preserve

Sandoval County

New Mexico

Stewardship Register

Stewardship Action	Valle Grande Entrance Upgrade	
File Number		
Target Start Date	Fall 2005	
Actual Start Date		
Target Completion Date	Spring 2006	
Actual Completion Date		
Location (approximate project center)	NM Hwy 4 Mile Marker 39.2	
Latitude/Longitude		
Legal description		
UTM	365742.64 3966145.41	

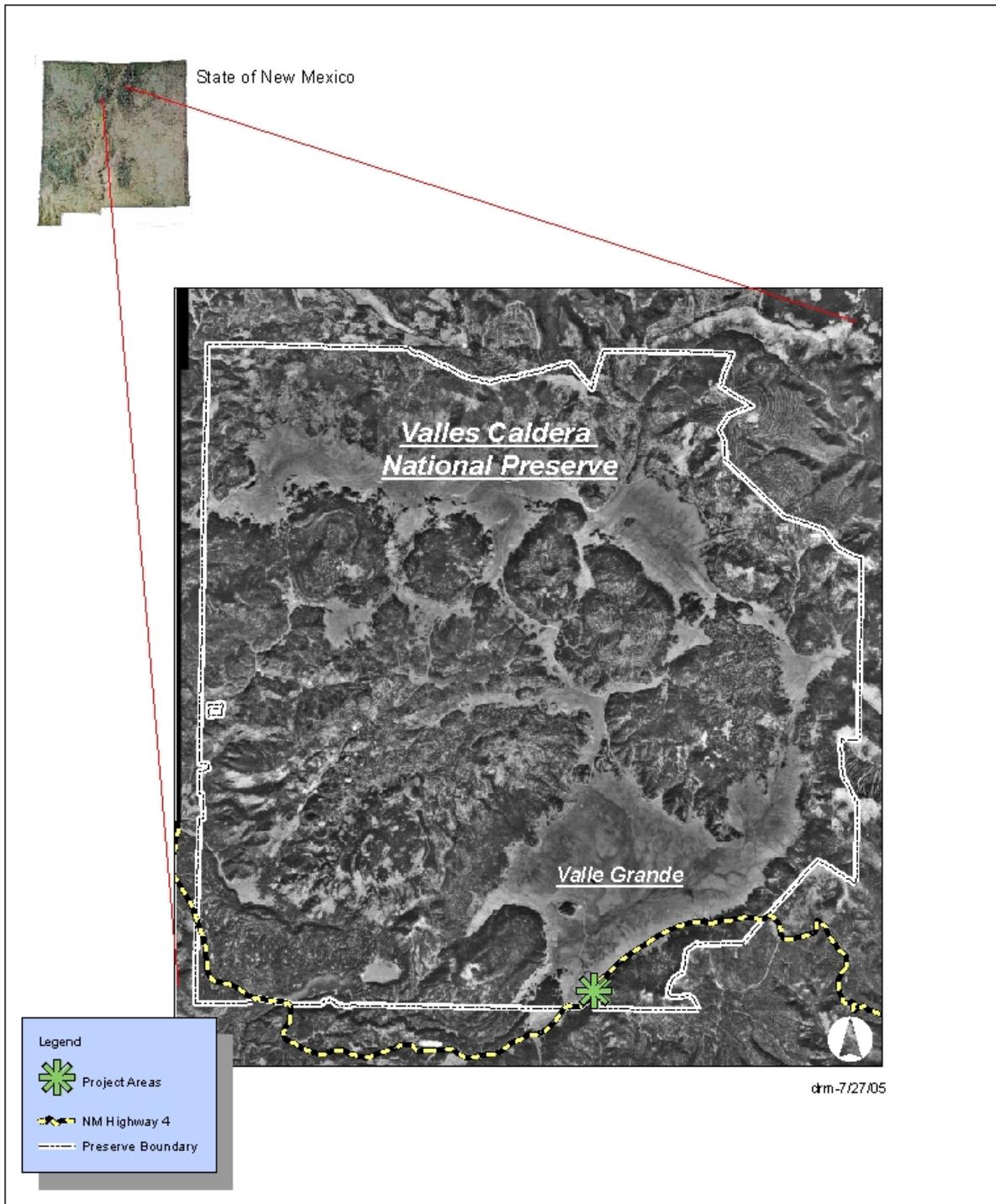


Figure 1 -- Vicinity Map

Valle Grande Entrance Upgrade

Purpose and Need

The Valle Grande Entrance located on NM 4 near mile marker 39, is an ancillary facility of the Valles Caldera National Preserve providing the main point of access to the Preserve for vehicle traffic. The purpose of the proposed upgrade to the Valle Grande Entrance is to provide safe access to and from the Preserve and NM 4, and to increase the safety for motorists traveling on NM 4 past the Valle Grande entrance. Since acquisition of the Preserve in 2000, access through the Valle Grande Entrance has increased from incidental necessary for ranch operations and seasonal hunting, to between 6,000 to 7,000 visitors annually, as well as daily access by employees, visitors, contractors and others. In addition, the general commuter and tourist traffic between Los Alamos and Jemez Springs continues to increase.

Currently the Valles Grande Entrance has inadequate sight distance to the west and provides no lanes for acceleration and deceleration into or out of through-traffic. In addition, there is inadequate space for a vehicle turning into the Preserve to stop, turn around, and re-enter traffic on NM 4 if the Preserve gate is closed.

The upgrade to the Valle Grande Entrance is being proposed to provide access that meets standards established by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The upgrade of the Valle Grande Entrance is also being proposed to meet the goals of the Valles Caldera Trust established in the Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000, Section 108. Resource Management, (d) Management program; specifically:

- ∞ [Paragraph] (1) operation of the preserve as a working ranch consistent with paragraphs 2-4;
- ∞ [Paragraph] (4) public use of and access to the Preserve for recreation;

Figure 2 depicts the entrance in relation to these conditions and the upgrades being proposed for the entrance. As depicted on the map, most of the upgrade work would occur within the right-of-way of NM 4 (about 60 feet from center line on either side of the highway). The remainder would consist of maintenance of the entrance road and ancillary facilities associated with the management of the Preserve (e.g. adding a cattle guard, relocating gate, adding new fence and moving a mailbox), without any major road reconstruction proposed on the Preserve.

Performance Requirements

Performance requirements such as the use of silt fencing will be implemented as necessary to avoid adverse impacts to water quality, road use and other concerns. Timing of the work would be coordinated to reduce conflicts with Preserve traffic and minimize interruption on NM 4. Requirements for the protection of cultural resources would also be imposed as appropriate.

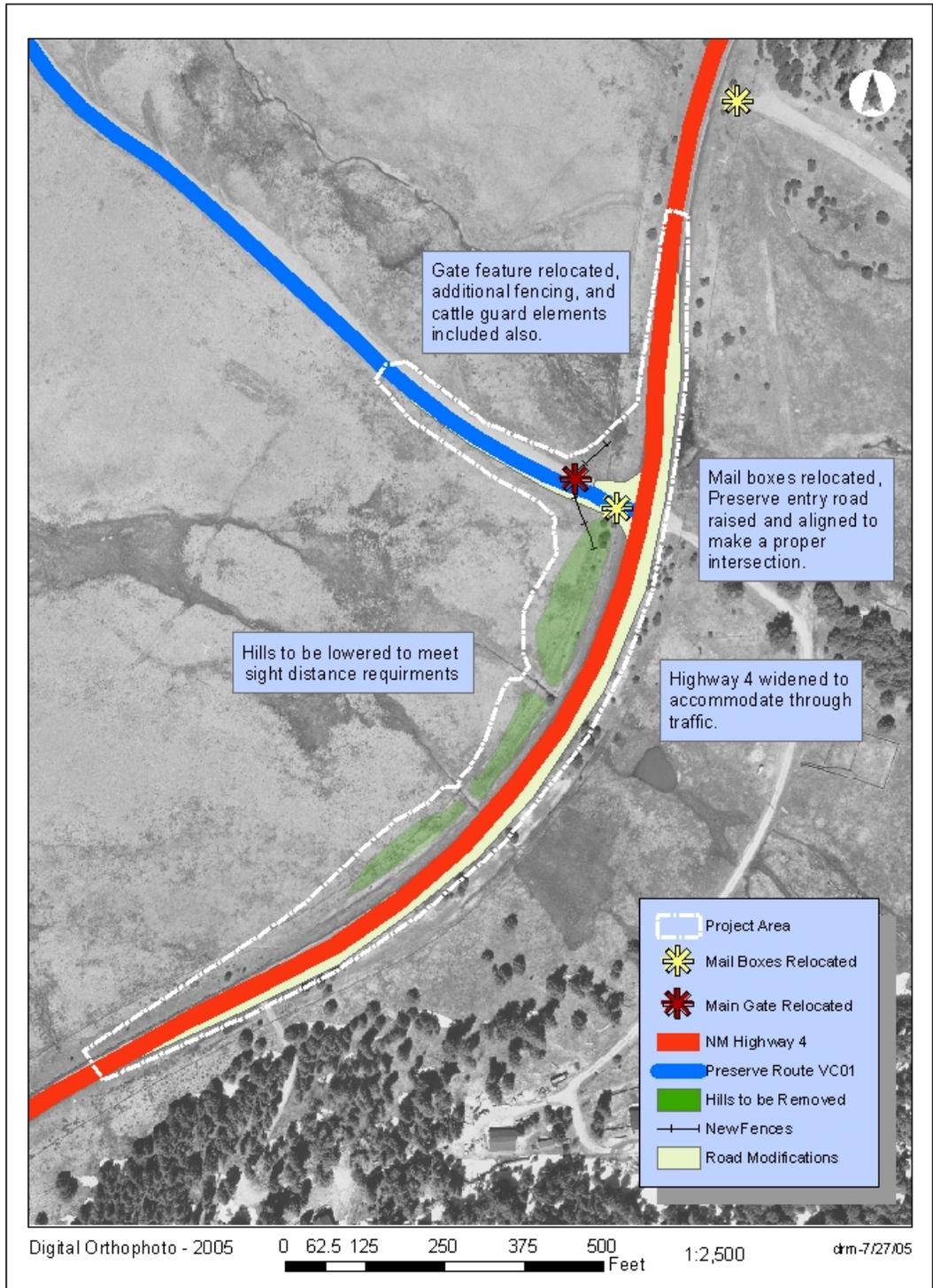


Figure 2 -- Entrance Conditions and Proposed Modifications

Proposed Stewardship Action

The Valles Caldera Trust is proposing to upgrade the Valle Grande entrance to provide for the safety of motorists entering and exiting the Preserve as well as those traveling on NM 4 past the Preserve.

Objective	Outcome	Action
<p>Improve sight distance</p>	<p>Meet standards for sight distance established by NMDOT and AASHTO (e.g. 550 feet clear site distance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flatten the hills west of the entrance in order to create a site distance of approximately 870 feet. • Move the mailbox from its current position to another location out of the line of sight, and clear zone. • Raise the road-bed of VC01 to improve the view to the east for low clearance passenger vehicles.
<p>Provide for the safe acceleration into and deceleration out of through traffic.</p>	<p>Provide adequate space for through traffic to continue on NM 4 while vehicles turn into the Valle Grande entrance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase width of the Valle Grande entrance where it meets NM 4 so that the existing pavement can be made into a right-turn lane. This widening would occur for a distance between 150 and 800 feet based on the final assessment and recommendation by NMDOT.
<p>Reduce potential nuisance presented by a closed or locked gate.</p>	<p>Create adequate space for vehicles to stop if encountering a locked gate. Space should be adequate for vehicles to return to NM 4 or park until gate is opened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realign the entrance so that access on the north and south side of NM 4 are properly aligned. • Create a clear right turn path (or lane) for westbound traffic entering the Preserve (without a deceleration lane). • Set back gate so that vehicles (especially RVs or 18-wheel cattle trucks) have space to stop without interfering with NM 4. • Add cattle guard and side-gate. • Add connector fence from new gate to the existing fence line.
<p>Other improvements</p>	<p>Evaluate signs to meet NMDOT standards. Warning and informational signs should be placed to make traffic on NM 4 aware of features such as sharp curves and intersections, so that traffic entering or driving past the Preserve has adequate time to make the requisite maneuvers.</p>	