



Date: December 17, 2007, 2007
File: PSA - Interim Camping

Introduction or Background

On April 6, 2006 the Board of Trustees authorized the staff to consider an interim¹ program for overnight camping on the Valles Caldera National Preserve (the Preserve). On June 20th 2007, the board directed the staff to consider overnight camping for administrative use and in support of recreation separately. On December 11, at a public meeting of the board held in Santa Fe, NM the board reviewed and authorized the staff to move forward with planning and analysis for Interim Camping.

Proposed Action

The Valles Caldera Trust is proposing to implement an interim program for overnight camping. Under the interim program, camping could occur on various sites throughout the Preserve; specifically:

- ◆ The footprints of existing facilities.
- ◆ Geothermal well pads in Redondo Canyon.
- ◆ Banco Bonito Staging Area.
- ◆ The footprint of gravel pits or prism of road beds
- ◆ Yurts (currently used for winter overnight)
- ◆ Less disturbed sites (log landing or cattle gathering sites) may be considered for occasional use.

Purpose and Need

Limited opportunities for overnight camping are needed to:

- ◆ Increase the efficiency of contractors, researchers, detailers, volunteers and others performing work on behalf of the Trust;
- ◆ To increase the efficiency of employees working in remote sites on the Preserve;
- ◆ Efficiently support emergency and non emergency fieldwork including fire management and search and rescue.

¹ The Trust operates a variety of “interim” programs. Interim programs are limited in scope and likely to change or end as the Trust develops comprehensive programs for managing the Preserve.

- ◆ Enhance various core recreation activities and special events; and
- ◆ To collect information to inform future plans and decision making for public use and access.

Performance Requirements

The following laws, procedures, policies and mitigative measures will be applied to reduce or eliminate potential effects to the natural, cultural and human environment.

Laws, Procedures, Policies

- ◆ The Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000 as amended
- ◆ The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA)
- ◆ The Valles Caldera Trust Procedures for implementing the NEPA
- ◆ The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- ◆ The Valles Caldera National Preserve Cultural Resource Compliance Process for implementing NHPA

Mitigation Measures

- ◆ Recreational camping would be limited to opportunities initiated by the Trust.
- ◆ All camping would be under the direction and discretion of the Trust.
- ◆ Personal use and parking of vehicles would be under the direction and at the discretion of the Valles Caldera Trust.
- ◆ Camping in viewsheds, valles, or where camping would affect open water would not be permitted.
- ◆ Camping in other than fully self contained units would be supported by portable toilets or access to toilet facilities. Groups of four or less may be provided with back county camping opportunities provided that “Leave No Trace” ethics can be ensured.
- ◆ All trash would be packed out unless specific arrangements are made for the trust to provide trash receptacles or service.
- ◆ Frequent use of any one location would be limited to highly disturbed sites (the footprint of existing parking or staging areas such as Banco Bonito; The footprint of existing facilities; highly disturbed areas such as the geothermal well pads in Redondo Canyon.

Decision(s) to be Made

The Executive Director is the Responsible Official for this Stewardship Action. The Executive to Director will decide whether or not to implement an interim

camping program on the Preserve. They will also decide where and under what circumstances camping may occur.

As directed by the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director may decide to permit camping only for administrative purposes or in support of both administrative activities and recreation programs.

If key issues are identified through public comment or environmental analysis, the Executive Director may consider an alternative to the proposed stewardship action.

Scope of the Analysis

1. Environmental Documentation:

Initially the environmental analysis will be documented in an Environmental Assessment EA. Further documentation may be required or consideration of the action could be terminated based on the findings of the EA.

2. Timing of the Analysis

Resource information is readily available. Depending on response from the public and the findings from the EA, a decision could be forthcoming by spring/summer of 2008.

Public Comment:

Comments on the Proposed Stewardship Action will be most helpful if received by February 15, 2007.

Comments may be provided electronically by selecting feedback from our website, www.vallescaldera.gov; or sending an email to info@vallescaldera.gov.

Comments may be sent through the surface mail to: The Valles Caldera Trust, Re: Interim Camping, P.O. Box 359, Jemez Springs, NM 87025.

You may also bring written comments to our offices located at 18161 State Highway 4, Jemez Springs, NM 87025 (do not send mail to this address).