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Run the Caldera Celebrates the Year of the Cougar

If ever there was an animal with an identity crisis it is the cougar which is the mascot for the Seventh Annual Valles Caldera Run, June 9-10 at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The cougar is also known as a puma, mountain lion, catamount or panther. In fact, there are so many names for the cougar that, according to the Guinness Book of World Records, no other animal in the world has as many different common names, which at last count was more than 40 in the English Language alone. The reason is because the cougar has the largest geographic habitat of all big cats, ranging from the Yukon in the north to Andes in the south. Since it lived in that many neighborhoods during the last few thousand years of civilization the species was destined to be called by few different names.

Biologist Mark Peyton had a chance to get up close and personal with one of the Valles Caldera cats in March of 2009. Mark stumbled upon a cougar dining on its breakfast and managed to take the photo below and then executed a quiet retreat to avoid becoming an item on the dessert menu. You can read Mark's close encounter of the feline kind at <http://ow.ly/alg7a>. Look for the page nine article entitled "Biologist vs. Mountain Lion: Just Another Day at the Office!"



Photo Courtesy Mark Peyton

We decided to celebrate the Valles Caldera Cougars by dubbing the Seventh Annual Valles Caldera Run as The Year of the Cougar. While runners enjoy the view and the challenging course they will also be able boost their cougar IQ by reading cougar factoids posted at various intervals along the route. To learn more about the Valles Caldera Run or to register for the marathon, half marathon or 10-K runs you can call 1-866-382-5537 or go online to <http://ow.ly/aP9m9>. Registration closes May 22nd.

