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NEWS RELEASE

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Valles Caldera Trust and New Mexico State University Encore Livestock Program for 2010 Agreement Builds on First Year Success

Jemez Springs, NM- The extremely successful Livestock and Range Improvement Program operated by New Mexico State University in 2009 on the Valles Caldera National Preserve created almost as many questions as it answered last year, and will be continued for 2010 according to Gary Bratcher, Executive Director for the Trust. "We feel that tremendous potential exists for scientific, research, and extension activities to be expanded in the programs designed and managed by New Mexico State University to benefit the regional livestock industry and the economic interests of northern New Mexico. Additionally, we expect the technical assistance provided the Trust through an agreement with NMSU and private sector participation in their programs will assist us in identifying commercial opportunities that will be of direct economic benefit to the Preserve. At the same time, we are assuring the public that our livestock program will not be detrimental to the proper stewardship of the property."

The new lease service agreement with NMSU will be for a four-year period with grazing rates, herd size, and services re-negotiated annually. This will allow NMSU and the Trust sufficient flexibility to adjust the program to changing range, weather and forage

conditions. It will also provide certainty that seamless data collection and analyses will continue over an extended period of time during variable conditions in order to validate the information gathered.

The 2009 program combined genetic improvement of breeding lines to address Brisket Disease in the beef cattle industry and a range conservation and restoration strategy to provide a direct benefit to ranchers from Jemez Pueblo and Sandoval County who improved their operations and restored their own range lands. "The shift to herd improvement and range conservation programs clearly had very positive impacts on the regional livestock industry and the Preserve" said Dennis Trujillo, General Manager of Preserve Operations. "But we can make even greater improvements by utilizing the resources of New Mexico State and expanding research activities on issues such as stocking rates, forage consumption, sensitive habitat protection, proprietary feed and mineral supplements, and beef marketing."

Data collected from 2009 was valuable and can serve as a foundation on which to expand to more programs through seamless continuation of the research program established last summer. "NMSU made excellent progress on the initial research involved in high elevation bull evaluation," said Valles Caldera Trust Science and Education Director Dr. Bob Parmenter. "But this type of research, as is the case with most research, requires longer, more detailed involvement."