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August 13, 2010

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Valles Caldera Trust Welcomes New Trustees**

**Jemez Springs, NM---** Dr. Melissa Savage and Dr. C. Kenneth Smith were sworn in as the newest members of the Valles Caldera Board of Trustees this week. They are the first Trustees appointed by president Barack Obama and fill positions left vacant since January of 2009. By statute each trustee position is filled with a specific expertise needed to guide the management of the Preserve.

Dr. Savage replaces former Board Chairman, Bill Kelleher, as the Trustee uniquely qualified to fulfill the need of a person with expertise in the natural and cultural history of the area. She is the director of the Four Corners Institute, a nonprofit organization that provides scientific advice to communities restoring their natural environments.

"The Valles Caldera Preserve is a very special place, with its own set of challenges and opportunities" said Dr. Savage. "The Preserve has initiated an excellent program to restore resilience and integrity to its forest and meadow ecosystems."

Dr. Savage is also a forest geographer with a specialty in fire ecology and the southwestern conifer ecosystems. She is an Emerita Professor of Geography at UCLA and currently an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico. She has a M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Colorado.

Dr. C. Kenneth Smith replaces James Gosz as the trustee with expertise in sustainable forest management. He is a professor of Forestry and Geology at the University of the South in

Tennessee. No stranger to New Mexico, Dr. Smith is a former director of New Mexico's Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas.

“I will draw on my experience with New Mexico forest and watershed restoration to provide input into the multiple restoration projects facing the Preserve” said Dr. Smith. “Fortunately there is a staff of highly qualified land management professionals who I am confident can get the job done.”

Dr. Smith remains active in regional water issues and serves on the board of the Sewanee Utility District. He also spent three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guinea, West Africa, conducting forest research and management projects. Dr. Smith received his Ph.D. and M.S. from the University of Florida, and his B.S. from Colorado State University.

Drs. Savage and Smith were sworn in by Board of Trustees Chairman, Stephen Henry, on August 10, 2010. They attended the Restoration and Land Management public meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup> in Jemez Springs and will participate in their first Board of Trustees Meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup> at the VCNP Science and Education Center in Jemez Springs.

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