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**News Release**

For immediate release

## **Valles Caldera Winter Recreation Season Begins December 26**

**Jemez Springs, N.M.-** Winter activities on the Valles Caldera National Preserve will begin on December 26, 2009, weather permitting, and if the snow stays, will end on March 21, 2010. The Preserve will be open daily during the holiday season of December 26<sup>th</sup> thru January 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9 AM to 5 PM. After January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Preserve will only be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 AM to 5 PM.

In addition, the Coyote Call Trail and surrounding area on the south side of State Highway 4 are open for skiing and snowshoeing, free of charge, everyday during daylight hours.

Day use cross-country skiing and snowshoeing permits are available as snow and weather allow. Cost is \$10/adult, \$8/senior (62+ years), \$5/youth (6-15 years) and free for kids 5 years and younger. No pets are allowed on the Preserve, only working assistance animals are allowed. No advance reservations are required. You must check in and depart from the Valle Grande staging area two miles down the Preserve's main road.

Two free public appreciation days will be offered this season on December 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Bring the whole family out to take advantage of the skiing and snowshoeing opportunities on the Preserve. Free skiing and snowshoeing will be offered from 9 AM to 5 PM. Check in and check out at the Valle Grande staging area are required to take advantage of this opportunity.

Special moonlit events will be offered if snow conditions permit. On December 31, start a new tradition by attending our *Fire & Ice New Year's Eve Celebration* from 6 PM – 1 AM. There will be fireworks, hot cider, refreshments and more. Fees are \$25/adult, \$20/senior (62+ years), \$15/youth (6-15 years) and free for kids 5 years and younger.

The January 30 and February 27 moonlit events run from 6 PM -10 PM and cost \$15/adult, \$12/senior (62+ years), \$10/youth (6-15 years) and free for kids 5 years and younger. Visitors should come prepared for high elevation, winter mountain weather and night conditions.

Horse-drawn sleigh rides offer visitors with an hour long ride through the winter landscape. From aboard, visitors experience the elements, the solitude of winter, and possibly the wildlife of the Preserve. A guide will share the interesting history and lore of the old Baca Ranch, offering you insight into its past and its future. Ride costs are \$30/adult, \$24/senior (62+ years), \$15/youth (6-15 years) and free for kids 5 years and younger. Reservations are recommended.

For more information or to make reservations, please visit the Valles Caldera National Preserve website <http://www.vallescaldera.gov/comevisit/>.

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