



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 3/27/2008

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NEWS RELEASE

Valles Caldera Trust Awards Contract to Manage a Livestock Program for the 2008 Summer Grazing Season

(JEMEZ SPRINGS, NM) – Gary Morton of Las Vegas, New Mexico has been awarded the opportunity to graze livestock on the Valles Caldera National Preserve for the 2008 summer grazing season. Mr. Morton's proposal was selected from a total of six proposals submitted to the Valles Caldera Trust for consideration. A panel composed of members of the Trust board and staff reviewed the proposals.

Mr. Morton's proposal was selected based on criteria that considered economical, ecological, and social benefits, and evaluated the soundness of the proposed management plan. Mr. Morton will bring 2000 yearlings onto the Preserve in early June. They will be rotated through the Preserve's grassy valles through the end of September.

The Trust is looking forward to seeing life imitate art on the Preserve this summer. Gary Morton, a lifelong cowboy whose resume includes work on numerous large ranches in New Mexico and Arizona, is also a well known western artist. Works such as "Simple Pleasures of New Mexico," which is hanging in the New Mexico State Capitol across from the Governor's office, and "The Vanishing Breed" depict the timeless tradition of a cowboy stewarding both the land and the animals in his care. Two full-time cowboys will be on the Preserve all summer carrying on this tradition of stewardship.

Mr. Morton served under Governors Garrey Carruthers and Bruce King as Chair of the New Mexico Arts Commission, under Governor Gary Johnson as Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, and is currently serving under Governor Bill Richardson on the Equestrian Facility Task Force advising the state on the design of an all purpose equestrian facility that is being developed south of Albuquerque.

Mr. Morton's art demonstrates his appreciation of the history of ranching. However it was his decades of ranching experience, a well designed management plan, and the offer of \$28 per head in grazing fees that earned him the opportunity to graze cattle on the Valles Caldera National Preserve this summer.

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