



Valles Caldera National Preserve
Interim Summer Recreation Program
Stewardship Register

Stewardship Action: Interim Summer Recreation Program	File Number: PLAN –
Target Start Date: May 2004	Responsible Official: Preserve Manager
Target Completion Date: Seasonally Until Rescinded	Signature Date: 5/11/2004
Actual Start Date: Summer 2004	Actual Date of Completion Ongoing

Introduction

The Valles Caldera Trust is proposing to continue the existing Interim Summer Recreation Program as we continue planning for a comprehensive visitor experience. The Stewardship Action Proposal for our Master Interpretive Plan can be viewed by going to our website library, (www.vallescaldera.gov/library.php) and opening the Facilities folder displayed in our library listing.

Proposed Action:

The activities currently available through our summer recreation program consist of seasonal, backcountry (undeveloped) fishing and hiking or tours via van or horse drawn wagons in the VCNP (Valles Caldera National Preserve). These activities will be available weekly, generally from Friday – Monday. Other events are proposed on a less regular basis, these include fishing clinics, elk viewing tours, night sky adventures as well as youth and educational activities which are not ground disturbing and are limited in duration and intensity. An example of this would be the elk shed collection activity. To view detailed descriptions as well as maps of our activities go to the recreation page of our web site www.vallescaldera.gov/vtours or you may call PLIA (Public Lands Information Association) 1-866-382-5537 to receive copies of our brochures.

Location:

- Our activities are distributed throughout the Preserve.

Purpose and Need:

- Address the public demand for access to the Preserve prior to having a comprehensive recreation program in place.
- Allow the public to experience the exceptional scenery, wildlife and other assets of the Preserve;
- Provide education and interpretation to the public on the unique cultural, historical, geological values of the Preserve along with sharing the mission of the Valles Caldera Trust;
- Allow the public to provide feedback to the staff regarding the future of the Valles Caldera Trust and to give suggestions for program improvements.

- Provide for a variety of river lengths, fishing experiences and challenge levels as part of the quality fishing experience for all age groups.
- Develop an appropriate fee structure that is informed by the experience gained under the program and that ensures an adequate return to the Trust;

Performance Requirements:

Cultural Resources

1. No activities in support of this action will take place prior to completion of the VCNP Cultural Resources Compliance Process.
2. Access for public vehicles will be limited to designated parking areas. Transportation to and from recreation activity areas will be provided by the VCT (Valles Caldera Trust).
3. Road grading will be restricted to the existing road bed and identified parking areas.
4. Hikers are required to stay on trails.
5. No permanent facilities will be constructed in support of these activities
6. Administrative activities where concentrations of people may occur will be within approved parking areas or on existing roads.
7. Van Tours, and Horse Drawn Wagon Tours, and any other recreational activities involving wheeled or motorized vehicles will be limited to open roads on the Preserve (open roads are identified in the Draft Comprehensive Management Framework, page 92 other roads are limited to approved administrative access.)
8. Information regarding cultural resource protection will be included in orientation and interpretive programs.

Soil/Water Quality

1. Measures in place for the protection of cultural resources will also serve to protect soil and hydrological resources.
2. A reservation system will be used to organize, distribute and set limits on the numbers of people that are allowed on a given reach of a stream.
3. Beats will be rested or eliminated from use if monitoring indicates erosion or excessive compaction is occurring.
4. Education and interpretive messages will be provided to visitors at administrative points and during transport to and from recreation points.
5. Drop off/ pick up points will be in areas not particularly vulnerable to trampling such as gravel sites, turn outs and heavily wooded areas.

Vegetation

1. Measures to protect cultural resources and soil and water quality will serve to protect vegetation.

Wildlife

1. In order to reduce the chance of spreading Whirling Disease to trout populations on the Preserve and to protect the streambed and its aquatic life, waders are prohibited.

2. The number of participants will be limited commensurate with the area available to distribute people.
3. Activities will be curtailed in the San Antonio area when eagles are present in the late fall and early winter.
4. Motorized access to the preserve will continue to be limited.
5. All fish kept will be killed immediately
6. To ensure the preservation of the existing “quiet” of the VCNP, the current system of distribution of visitors as well as visitor free days will continue.
7. No pets are allowed on the preserve with the exception of assistance animals.

Invasive Plants

1. Weed occurrence as a result of the program will be monitored, recorded and eradicated.
2. Cleaning of vehicles prior to entering the VCNP will be encouraged.
3. Identifying, and preventing the spread of, invasive plants will be included in the interpretive information shared with our equestrian visitors.

Conflicts between Activities

1. Visitors will be informed that the VCNP is a working ranch with typical ranching activities ongoing throughout the Preserve.
2. Interpretive information regarding traditional herding and ranching activities will be included as part of the visitor’s experience when ever possible.
3. Herding activities will be managed to reduce obvious conflicts such as bringing cattle to water where a person is actively fishing.
4. Forest management activities such as thinning, road maintenance, and facility maintenance will be occurring. These will be considered interpretive opportunities in general. Activities can be curtailed for special events or they would impair the visitor’s ability to engage in a specific activity.

Public Health and Safety

1. Volunteers and employees will attend employee safety and orientation including first aid and fire safety.
2. Visitors will be provided with safety information.
3. Recreation hours may be adjusted during the typical late summer lightning season.
4. The VCT’s policy regarding hazard analysis and mitigation for all activities will be reviewed and adhered to.
5. Portable toilets will be available at various sites.
6. Potable water will be available at limited sites.
7. Leave no Trace ethics are encouraged, littering is prohibited.
8. No pets are allowed on the Preserve with the exception of assistance animals.
9. Horse drawn wagon rides, van tours, and hikes of varying lengths and difficulties allow access by visitors of various ages and physical abilities.

10. Visitors will check in/out of the VCNP.
11. Visitors will be located if they have not left the VCNP prior to closing.
12. For certain activities radios may be provided to visitors.

Laws and Policy

1. All anglers will be required to hold valid New Mexico fishing license and Habitat Improvement Stamp.
2. This program and been prepared in compliance with the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) procedures adopted by the Valles Caldera Trust (Federal Register/Volume 68, No. 137/July 17th 2003)
3. A Biological Evaluation producing a finding of “No Effect” on threatened and endangered species or migratory birds was prepared for this stewardship action.

Prepared by: Marie E. Rodriguez, Natural Resource Coordinator
April 14, 2004