



July 26, 2012

Valles Caldera Trust
P. O. Box 359
Jemez Springs, NM 87025

Dear Sir:

This letter provides some comments on the public use alternatives proposed in your Environmental Impact Statement. Specifically, I would like to speak in favor of Alternative 3B.

In terms of the location of the proposed future Visitor Center, I believe it is important for this Center to be in the Valle Grande and on the north side of NM 4, near the current entry road, as proposed in Alternative 3B. For visitors who are just passing through, this would provide a better, more intimate impression of the Valle. For visitors who are entering the Preserve for hiking, skiing, or other activities, this location would provide better access.

Alternative 3B allows access by private vehicles in addition to shuttles. This is very helpful for activities such as longer hikes, winter cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking, or camping. A shuttle system is still a good idea for many short-term uses. But access by shuttle only would make it difficult to do longer hikes within the limited hours of operation, and would make it very difficult for ski tourers to access the central or back areas of the preserve in winter. I believe strongly that the Valles Caldera Trust should facilitate low-impact access to the Valle for many uses, but not including motorized sports. Alternative 3B includes paved or gravel 2-lane roads that provide such access.

However, in order to mitigate the impact of such roads, I would prefer to see Alternative 3B modified so that private vehicles were limited to that portion of the proposed roads that lie within or near the Valle Grande. Roads that go all the way into the Valle San Antonio should be accessible by shuttle only. The back valleys are naturally isolated from the Valle Grande by Redondo Peak and its outlying hills. These areas should be managed for hiking, camping, fishing, skiing, and other quiet, low-impact activities. This modification would provide a good balance between better access for low-impact uses and continued preservation of the outlying areas in their current condition.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS. Sincerely Yours,



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