

PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT (July 26-August 7 2012)
 Valles Caldera National Preserve
 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Public Access and Use Plan
 To Los Alamos County Council

11 Commentors/12 Preferences												
Comment Subject	TOTALS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
National Park Service Mgmt (vs. mgmt by Valles Caldera Trust)	3	X			X				X			
Most Access Possible	1		X									
No ATVs	1			X								
Option 3A (limit vehicle access)	3					X					X	X
Option 4A	1											X
Option 3B (shuttles too restrictive)	2						X	X				
Multi-Use Mountain Biking Trail	1									X		
TOTAL # COMMENTS:	12											

1

[Redacted]

Sent: Saturday, July 28, 2012 10:27 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valle Caldera Plan

I support the recommendations contained in the National Parks Service Analysis that recommended that the reserve be integrated into the National Parks Service. Senator Bingaman has a bill pending in the senate to support this tax saving action that I believe would also result in increased revenue to LA county businesses. Why is LAC council responding at all? I thought they already voted to support Sen. Bingaman and his bill. County actions should support savings to taxpayers and increased access to ALL county residents, not just those with higher incomes. Sincerely,

[Redacted]

2

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Monday, July 30, 2012 3:29 PM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera Preserve -- suggestion

To: Kelly Stewart

Dear Kelly,

The Sunday Monitor (July 29) presents four alternatives for public access to the Valles Caldera. I favor the option that gives the most access to the public without prior reservation.

What I think should be added to considerations for access to the Valles Caldera is an aerial tram that would start in the center of Los Alamos, stop at the ski hill and hiking trail (also for cross-country skiing) and go over the rim all the way to the visitors' center. This is a great way to attract people to stay in Los Alamos while visiting the Valles Caldera. Many places in Switzerland have such amenities. The community could really benefit from such a tram.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

August 7, 2012

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 9:56 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: comments regarding use of Valle Caldera

I am deeply concerned that ATV and or UTV traffic on the trail/road systems will be detrimental to the terrain. I ride enduro motorcycle and mountain bike. The single-track trails in the Jemez used only by motorcycle/mountain bike are, and have been, maintained by such groups as Blackfeathers and mountain biker volunteers. These trails do little more damage than a trail made by cattle or wildlife. More than a few of the single-track trails were destroyed by the Las Conchas fire but I did manage to find a few...they were well underway to restoration as the trails were very tough to find...I have seen the trails carved out by such atv/utv vehicles and it is clear that the restoration process is not as progressive as single-track trails....single-track trails do little to the environment compared to the destruction that atv/utv's create!! I have seen the destruction 4 wheelers, ATV, and UTV's have created and it is not a pretty site!! I therefore would like you to consider not allowing such vehicles on that property unless it is group organized with supervision.

Thank You!

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2012 8:32 PM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: vcnp

Greetings:

Here is my response to the Valle Caldera National Preserve Public Access and Use Plan:

Because the Preserve has been mismanaged virtually from its inception, I have zero confidence that the Preserve's management can do anything correctly. Consequently, my preference is that the National Park Service take over management of the Preserve. I suppose that I could vote for Option 1 - Do Nothing, which is basically what management has been doing, but I'm afraid that my voting for one of their offered Options might be interpreted as a vote of confidence of some sort in current management's ability to do anything.

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 03, 2012 1:38 PM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera comment

Dear Ms. Stewart:

I wish to let you know that I support option 3A in the VCNP access plan. I think the planned Visitor Center Site on the North side of NM 4 is the best option. Furthermore, I believe that limiting public vehicle access to permits for those positioning cars for extended excursions or for other special uses are in the best interest of maintaining the natural ambiance of the Preserve.

I hope that you find these comments of some value.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

6

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 03, 2012 3:10 PM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera EIS Public Comment

Kelly,

Please communicate to the Council that I favor Alternative 3B: Entrada del Valle Visitor Center— Primary Access via Personal Vehicle would be the same as alternative 3A, but the primary mode of transportation onto the preserve would be personal vehicles. Shuttles would only be used for tours and group events or to reduce congestion on high-use days.

I think there needs to be restrictions on where personal vehicles can go, but shuttle only is too restrictive. I also think there needs to be a provision for access by bicycle.

[REDACTED]

Resident in Los Alamos since 1949

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2012 7:14 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera Planning

I support Alternative 3B for the Valles Caldera Development. The shuttle-based alternatives have decreased visitor's access and high operational and maintenance costs and will be cost-prohibitive.

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2012 10:58 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera "Public Access & Use" Plan

Dear Ms. Kelly,

In a quick read of the Executive Summary and a review of the Valles Caldera Trust's Public Access & Use document, I am dismayed at the Trust's approach and ideas for improvements.

As I understand the Summary, the Trust either gets its way with a new visitor center and other infrastructure improvements or it will severely reduce, or eliminate completely, the already limited public access. That sounds like a threat to me!

My strong opinion is this:

No major infrastructure improvements, and no new visitor center at the Valles Caldera -- at any location.

The Trust's plan is not needed for improved public access. They seriously need to work on improving public access.

Put any major improvements on hold until the Department of the Interior takes over management of the Preserve. Interior knows how to design and build superior visitor centers and how to manage natural preserves while allowing public access.

Normally I always support infrastructure improvements, especially for the environment. I am a huge fan of the proposed Nature Center in Los Alamos. But I am against the Trust's plan in its entirety.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2012 9:12 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: VCNP Feedback (comments due to county council by noon tomorrow, 8/7/2012)

Hi, Kelly Monday 8/6/2012

Let's make the VCNP a trail-rich, outdoor adventure place - leaving the motorized vehicles back at parking lot(s) concealed somewhere near or on the perimeter. Overweight, out-of-touch and out-of-shape America needs a place they can go to, play in, and get back in touch with wild America. And the VCNP is perfect - but needs a MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.

My feedback:

BUILD A MULTI-USE MOUNTAIN BIKE /HIKE /SKI /RUN /BACKPACK TRAIL NETWORK WITHIN, AROUND AND CIRCLING THE VCNP.

Where possible, connect it to the existing Los Alamos trail network, using appropriate access controls as needed, although less is better and none would be preferred.
(Fee collection? Could not a low-impact, creative way to collect be devised? Maybe including an "annual subscription"?)

If the trail circling the VCNP is not possible due to land ownership disputes or other reasons, BUILD THOSE PORTIONS OF THE MOUNTAIN BIKE (/hike/ski/running/BACKPACKING) TRAIL CIRCLING THE VCNP which CAN be built, including taking the lead in working with other land owners to bring about a comprehensive circle trail, and add connecting trails allowing a circuit of the VCNP, and including a number of shorter circuit trails, so users can choose between short (an hour or 2), medium (1/2 to 1 day) or long (multi-day) MOUNTAIN BIKE (/hike/ski/running/BACKPACKING) ADVENTURES.

Look to the much-used trails in nearby Los Alamos as an example of what can be done with low cost, low impact and high recreation / nature awareness / outdoor adventure value.

Any visitor center or gathering place or structures or parking lots ought to be positioned so as to be not visible and right on the perimeter of the VCNP - a place like Banco Bonito staging area - and certainly NOT highly visible in the heart of the Valle Grande.

This is a great time to establish this as a goal and precedent, before the anticipated VCNP Park Service transfer, even if this multi-use bike/hike/ski/run trail network project is only begun. Everyone understands multi-year project time scales.

Pro Outdoors!

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2012 12:52 PM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Caldera

I favor the alternative #3 full visitor center north of hiway #4. I am a frequent visitor and hiker in the area. Hopefully, further options for private vehicles will be forthcoming.

I was a volunteer on hiway 4 for 2 seasons and interacted with hundreds of tourists. Let's get them to stay awhile.

Thanks [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 07, 2012 9:36 AM
To: Stewart, Kelly
Subject: Valles Caldera EIS Public Comment

Dear Ms Stewart

I appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment on the Valles Caldera EIS. I support options 3a or 4a. The Valles Caldera is not a wilderness but instead has having been a working ranch with parts of the ranch heavily logged. While not pristine it has some unique biota and environmental settings. Having a developed visitor center with shuttles seems to offer access to the broadest segment of the population. A center also supports continued economic development.

I would also like to offer comments on the graphic (Figure S9) that communicates the benefits and costs of the various alternatives. The costs visually get greater weight because there are 4 magnitudes of costs but only 1 class of benefit. Also the circle presentation gives a smaller wedge to factors closer to center. Unless the intent is to visually skew the weightings then I suggest that a block design might be a better presentation.

[REDACTED]