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Bandelier National Monument
Superintendent of:
Bandelier, New Mexico (Hand delivered)

Long have I regretted that the visitors center was in the middle of the valley, and that it took the defacing of La Jara to do it. This is so unthinkable, but it happened. My deepest hopes based upon my entire life in the Jemez back to a time when my family had a horse ranch on the Rio de la Vacas, and a concession for the Game and Fish Dept. at Fenton Lake, and knowing the Fentons personally, is that this sort of thing will be better in the future planning and consideration of the beauty of the Valles Caldera. When the lake concession contributed to the overuse of area eventually, we supported its end.

The natural outlet of the tremendous lake in the Valles Caldera is Jemez Springs. Santa Clara is not available for the traffic. Between the route through the town of Jemez Springs, and the route through Los Alamos, there can exist a visitor's center on the rim where the view of the big valley just comes into view.

From the rim, a bicycle trail that encircles the calderas can begin and end at the visitor's center, hiking trails can start where they do now. In addition, the travel into the ranch headquarters should be limited to buses, one in the morning and one in the evening. I have seen a huge male cougar, and birds that need protecting, and herds of elk that need to remain mostly undisturbed. There are timber rattlers that used to grow to over 6 ft. long. I do not know if ranchers have largely changed the area beyond the diminishing of the blue grouse along the creeks.

Limited fishing could certainly be allowed on the creeks according to that which is needed to maintain what bears, eagles, and minnow eaters need. We have seen eagles during wet years, when the creeks are bigger. We still see the ones that eat rodents. Cattle of course should no longer figure. As a ranch preserve only the history of it is appropriate now. Cows I know from life on the ranch we owned, only increase the prevalence of ticks.

Elk hunts were allowed. I have no reason to oppose this regulated hunt. I do, however oppose trophy hunting because nature would choose the fittest. Elk with less than a royal 12 rack should be taken. This would also be an encouragement for those hunters who eat the meat. Less waste. Winter activities should allow for cross-country skiing on trails and mostly on the trail of the perimeter. I think that the horse led carriage is great.

I think that study hikes and ski trips are great. The snow covered valley is magnificent when pristine, and unlike most areas other than those in a wilderness.

My blessings to this wondrous area, and prayers for its sensible care.

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