

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL TRUST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

BACKGROUND

The Valles Caldera Preservation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-248) provided for the acquisition of the Baca Ranch located in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico. The Act designated the acquired lands as the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) and created the Valles Caldera Trust (VCT) to manage the 88,900 acre tract. The Preserve was established to protect and preserve the scientific, scenic, geologic, watershed, fish, wildlife, historic, heritage, and recreational values of the Preserve, and to provide for multiple use and sustained yield of renewable resources within the Preserve. In addition, the Act requires the tract to continue to be managed as an operating ranch. Below highlights the annual accomplishments for fiscal year 2005, and planned goals for 2006:

Preserve Goals	Valles Caldera Trust Accomplishments & Plan	Priority
<p>Protect and preserve for future generations the scientific, scenic, historic, and natural values of the Baca ranch, including rivers and ecosystems and archaeological, geological, and cultural resources; and recreational values of the Preserve.</p>	<p>In FY2005, monitoring programs were implemented for water quality, and a large-scale research program was initiated to evaluate prescribed fire in VCNP grasslands. Additionally, ground-truthing of satellite imagery for rangeland productivity was undertaken. A radio telemetry study on VCNP predators has begun with a coyote monitoring project to evaluate impacts on elk calf mortality. Large-area archaeological surveys were conducted on one of the VCNP's interior mountains. A draft Elk Management plan was written in collaboration with New Mexico Dept. of Game & Fish, National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service for the Jemez Mountain area. In FY2006, monitoring studies will expand to include elk calf survival, black bear and cougar predation rates, and increased hydrological modeling. Other monitoring projects will continue for climate, water quality, rangeland and forest productivity, changes in post-fire habitats, and stream communities.</p>	<p>VERY HIGH</p>
<p>Manage public use, access to and the occupancy of the Preserve.</p>	<p>In FY2005, approximately 10,000 visitors came to VCNP for recreation and special events; 20 different recreational programs were conducted. Income from recreation user fees totaled ~\$540,225. Public volunteers gave >1,000 hours of time to assist with recreation and education programs. For public access planning, >175 miles of forest roads were inventoried. In FY2006 the plan is to inventory approximately 300 miles. The road inventory will be used in the future to assist in the development comprehensive plans, such as recreation, transportation and fire management plans.</p>	<p>VERY HIGH</p>
<p>Establish a demonstration area for an experimental management regime adapted to this unique property which incorporates elements of public and private administration in order to promote long term financial sustainability.</p>	<p>In FY2002 Johnson Control conducted a Structural Analysis, which documented the existing building and structural integrity. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the majority of the facilities are historical and are in need of major renovation to bring these to building code. In FY2006, the plan is to complete a Historic Structure Report, to assist in future planning for the Preserve.</p>	<p>HIGH</p>

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Multiple use and sustained yield of renewable resources within the Preserve.	In FY2003 – 2005, wildlife/fisheries monitoring were conducted on the Preserve. Data collected thus far has indicated that sustained yield is being accomplished. Starting in FY2004 through FY2005, the Trust completed the first identified high risk area for Hazardous Fuels Reduction by thinning a total of 325 acres of Ponderosa Pine and mixed conifer stands. An additional 120 acres are planned for thinning in FY2006 along with the development of an interpretive area on forest health for the public. Forest product use will be coupled with thinning projects for forest health and fire prevention, and contribute to forest restoration, where applicable.	HIGH
Achieve a financially self-sustaining operation within 15 full fiscal years of the date of acquisition.	Implement financially sound business practices. Develop and implement a Business Plan that incorporates an annual budget (revenue and expenses) tied to plan of work for 5 years. This plan will be revised annually.	VERY HIGH
Meet public safety standards applicable to units of the National Forest System and the State of New Mexico.	Follow and enforce the VCT Health and Safety Manual. This manual refers to the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and the Federal Worker 2000 Presidential Safety Initiative. The manual addresses, Responsibility, Reporting, Inspecting, Emergencies, Health and Wellness, Job Hazard Analysis, Contractors, Researchers, Volunteers, Visitors, etc. and it also contains appendices. To comply, in FY2005 the Trust completed the upgrade of 6 miles of road which is needed for public access programs. These efforts will continue In FY2006 and beyond.	VERY HIGH
The Board shall meet in sessions open to the public at least three times per year in New Mexico.	The Board will continue to hold at a minimum three public sessions.	HIGH
Interpretation of the Preserve and its history for the public.	Science and cultural education programs have increased annually, and are approaching capacity of existing facilities. Potential plans for educational and outreach facilities considered for expansion of public participation and education. In FY2005, the Master Plan for Interpretation of the Preserve was completed. Starting in FY2006, this document will be used as an internal planning tool in the areas such as infrastructure, facilities and public programs.	VERY HIGH
Operation of the Preserve as a working ranch.	The Trust has implemented programs that are consistent with a working ranch since 2002. Programs such as elk hunting, fishing, livestock grazing, hiking, equestrian, along with tours and special events have had very positive results. Development of the infrastructure has occurred by upgrading some of the facilities on the Preserve. In FY2003-2004, Phase I of the Headquarters Water System was completed to develop an infiltration system and treatment facility for surface water. In FY2005 Phase II was started and will be completed in FY2006, connecting a 1 mile distribution line to all buildings in operation, which allows the buildings in that area to have potable water. In FY2006, the VCT will research the possibilities of a different grazing system, e.g. Steer Program versus existing Programs.	VERY HIGH