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March 14, 2010

Los Alamos County Council
PO Box 30
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Subject: Comment Concerning Future Management of Valles Caldera

Dear Council:

Board of Directors

Stan Primak

David Horpedahl

Jill Cook

Bill Wadt

Kent Pegg

Bill Enloe

John Davies

Jeannette Wallace

Bill Godwin

Denise Lane

Steve Laurent

Johnnie Martinez

Kevin Holsapple

Please accept our organization's comment on the question of the future management of the Valles Caldera property. Our organization operates several programs having strong interest in this matter. The Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce is an association of about 300 businesses, organizations, and individuals interested in positive community and economic development and our Los Alamos Meeting and Visitor Bureau program operates visitor centers in Los Alamos and White Rock and is an important resource for understanding visitation and tourism in our area.

We believe that the most desirable management option coinciding with the interests of the Los Alamos community is for the Valles Caldera to become a National Park managed by the National Park Service. This option presents several advantages:

- The National Park Service option is by far the best from the standpoint of promoting visitation and tourism to the area. The NPS "arrowhead" is a powerful brand that far exceeds those of forest service and the Valles Caldera Trust in terms of attracting interest and visitation.
- The NPS mission of "safeguarding America's special places" stands in contrast with the role of the Forest Service in consumptive use of resources. In contrast with the VCNP Trust, the NPS works with small businesses to provide concession opportunities whereas the VCNP is motivated to develop captive services that do not provide such opportunities. These attributes of the NPS are best aligned among the three management options with our community's interests in realizing economic benefit from visitation and tourism
- In our experience in Los Alamos County, the involvement of the NPS in our community has far exceeded that of the other proposed management entities. Based on this experience, we believe that it is more likely that the NPS would be interested in working closely with our community for mutual benefit.

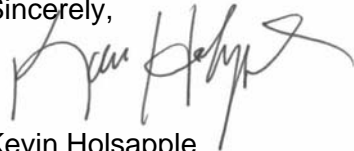
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Please note that we do not expect the Valles Caldera to become “Los Alamos-centric” in any of the scenarios. We think that Los Alamos is a natural eastern gateway to the Valles and the Jemez Mountains just as we recognize that Jemez Pueblo and Jemez Springs are natural western gateway communities. We understand that it will be important for whatever management entity that is selected to reach out in both of these directions. We encourage that as general input regardless of the choice that is made.

We think that there is an opportunity to collaborate with the selected entity on a joint visitor center (or centers) in Los Alamos County. Such a facility would be a natural first stop for visitors to Los Alamos and would feature not only the Valles Caldera, but also Bandelier National Monument, the Bradbury Science Museum, the Los Alamos Historical Museum, the Pajarito Environmental Education Center, area Pueblos, and area recreational attractions. We are currently the operator of the visitor center here and we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a joint visitor center. We believe that this would enhance the visitor experience as well as enable economies of operation.

Thank you for listening to and accepting our input. Our organization stands ready to assist the County and the selected management entity for the Valles Caldera .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Holsapple". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "H".

Kevin Holsapple
Executive Director
On behalf of the Board of Directors of LACDC