



Coyote
© DANNY PROUD



American kestrel
© PETER CURRY

Discover
a resilient land
with a powerful past

MAJESTIC LANDSCAPE

Vast, wild, and stunning.

Lush montane grasslands, scenic vistas, old-growth ponderosa pine, and diverse habitats help make Valles Caldera a land of volcanic enchantment.

This dynamic landscape is recovering from overgrazing, aggressive logging, and road-building. Unnatural wildfires and changing climate have also disturbed the land.

Valles Caldera National Preserve is working to restore these ecosystems and protect the caldera's nature, scenery, and cultural stories for generations to come.

CERRO DEL MEDIO

CERROS DEL ABRIGO

CERROS SANTA ROSA

REDONDO PEAK

CERRO SAN LUIS

CERRO SECO

SAN ANTONIO
MOUNTAIN

THE POWER OF MAGMA



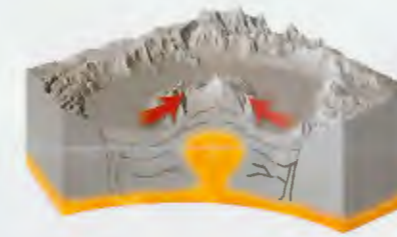
ERUPTION

You are standing in a sunken volcano. Its eruption 1.25 million years ago was 300 times larger than Mount Saint Helens' in 1980. Ejected ash fell as far as Kansas, Utah, and Wyoming. The science of large-scale explosive volcanism began with studies here.



COLLAPSE

A bowl-like depression formed when a vast amount of magma erupted rapidly, the huge magma chamber emptied, and the land above sank into the vacant chamber. Valles Caldera is one of the world's best examples of an intact volcanic caldera.



RESURGENCE

After the collapse, new magma filled the chamber and caused the caldera floor to heave upward. A central dome (Redondo Peak) surged. Valles Caldera is a defining example of the caldera resurgence phenomenon, which researchers first identified here.

DID YOU KNOW? VALLES CALDERA HELPED PROVE THE THEORY OF PLATE TECTONICS!

A classic example of Earth's explosive forces, Valles Caldera features in many scientific discoveries. Scientists, researchers, and visitors continue to come here to learn about geology, volcanology, and ecology.

CULTURAL CROSSROADS

For millennia people were drawn to the caldera for ample natural resources to make tools, projectile points, medicines, and more. Past people prized the caldera's obsidian for making knives, arrowheads, and spear points. Obsidian (volcanic glass) often occurs with calderas and forms from high-silica magma that rapidly cools. Obsidian from the Jemez Mountains has been found at prehistoric sites in Nebraska, North Dakota, Texas, northern Mexico, and Mississippi. Since we can trace obsidian to its volcanic origin, we know Valles Caldera was one of North America's most culturally significant obsidian sources.



These obsidian points can be traced to Valles Caldera and the Archaic Period.
NPS

People have used red elderberry for medicine and food.
© JAMES GATHIER



REKINDLED ECOSYSTEMS

Thriving forests and grasslands depend on cycles of wildland fire. A century of logging, overgrazing, and fire suppression interfered with normal fire regimes. Wildfires in 2011 and 2013 burned two-thirds of the preserve. Large areas lost all living trees and understory vegetation; erosion from monsoons stripped away the soil and created large debris flows. But returning low-intensity fire can restore these fire-adapted ecosystems. Prescribed fires imitate healthy natural fires and can help reduce forest fuels, recycle nutrients, and increase habitat diversity.

Fire managers perform a prescribed burn at the preserve.
NPS



VIEW FROM THE PRESERVE ENTRANCE
Freezing air and dense lake-sediment soils prevent tree saplings from establishing in the grasslands, creating a distinctive inverted tree line.
NPS

CERRO LA JARA

CERROS DEL ABRIGO

HISTORY GROVE

VALLE GRANDE

CONNECTING CULTURES

Paleoindians (10,000 years ago) first regularly visit the caldera and use its obsidian. They are the earliest known of many peoples to use the caldera.

Archaic Period hunter-gatherers (8,000–1,000 years ago) rely on the caldera's plentiful water-fowl, game, fish, berries, roots, seeds, and nuts.

Ancestral Puebloans (800 years ago) first settle in the Jemez Mountains. They grow crops and build masonry field-houses and pueblos in lower elevations that suit agriculture.

Spanish settlers (1500s) bring sheep and other livestock to these grasslands. Herding is the land's primary use into the Mexican period (1821–48).

Hispanic shepherds in the 1900s left carvings in aspen trees.
NPS

The US government grants the land to private owners (1860), known since as Baca Location No. 1. Successive owners of **Hispanic and Anglo heritage** (1900s)

use Valles Caldera for sheep grazing under the *partido* system, cattle ranching, logging, geothermal energy exploration, and more.

Valles Caldera National Preserve is established (2000). Management of the preserve is transferred from the Valles Caldera Trust to the National Park Service (2014).

American Indians' connections to this land and cultural values have continued throughout these eras of ownership to the present day.

Today, **you** can visit Valles Caldera National Preserve to explore diverse cultural history, serene beauty, and wild natural wonders in a variety of ways.

Connect with Nature

HEALING HABITATS



Clear-cut logging (1963–71) removed almost all old-growth trees. Logging roads are still visible within the preserve (left).

Valles Caldera National Preserve is restoring this landscape to its natural splendor. A dynamic living laboratory, the preserve is repairing years of human use to foster ecosystem health and balance.

While here, you might think about the complex relationship between humans and nature; engage in recreation, education, or preservation; or “just be” in this vast, rugged landscape—all while helping to protect the caldera’s many treasures.

Lively forests

Strategic restoration of forests can reduce the risk of wildfire, retain carbon, purify air and water, and provide prime habitat for native wildlife.



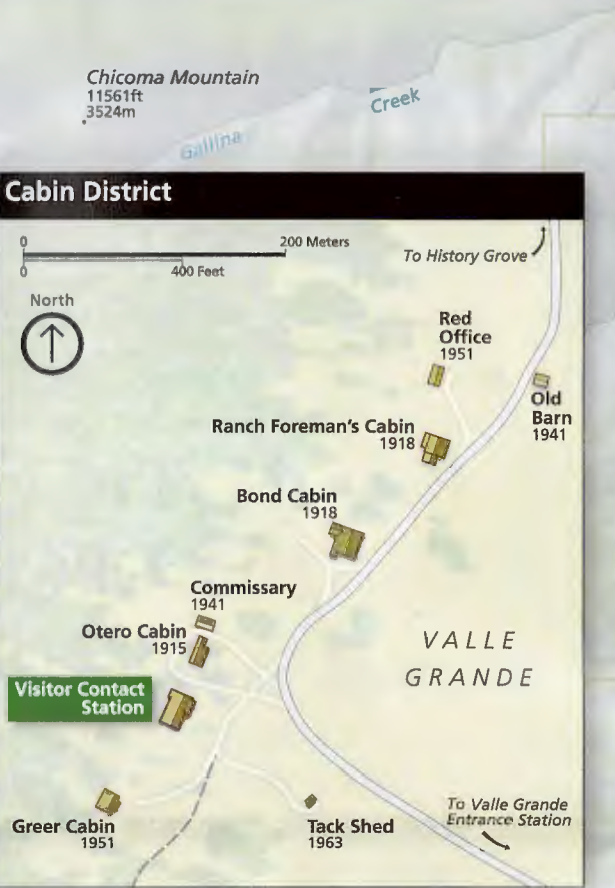
Open grasslands

Stunning and sprawling, these grasslands hold soil in place, retain precipitation, and absorb nutrients efficiently.



Vital wetlands

The preserve protects headwaters of several streams and rivers. Wetlands reflect ecological health and provide an array of essential plant and animal habitats.



Once the hub of ranching operations at Baca Location No. 1, this cluster of historic log cabins (above) facilitated spring, summer, and fall ranching operations. The location offered the shelter of towering,

old-growth conifers, ample spring water, and a vista of Valle Grande. Representing four eras of private ownership, the cabins reflect northern New Mexico's enduring ranching heritage.

WHAT IS A NATIONAL PRESERVE? A National Preserve is similar to a National Park and may permit activities like hunting, fishing, and grazing so long as they do not jeopardize the site's natural values. Elk and turkey hunting and trout fishing are allowed by permit and with a New Mexico state license. For permit and firearms regulations visit the park website.

ACTIVITIES include hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ranger-led programs. • If you are new to the park, consult with a ranger for information. • The park has no water, food, lodging, or camping facilities; these may be found in nearby communities. • Visit the park website or contact station for information on programs and volunteering.

SAFETY Be alert for sudden weather changes, lightning, falling trees, flash floods, hypothermia, and dehydration. Several feet of snow may cover the park in winter. • Cell phone coverage is not reliable in the park. • Report accidents or safety hazards to a park ranger. • Carry plenty of water.

REGULATIONS Park roads are dirt and gravel. Off-road driving is prohibited. Park only in designated areas. • Pets must be leashed at all times and are prohibited in the backcountry. • Do not feed, approach, or attempt to touch any wild animal. • Federal law protects all natural and cultural features in the park. Collecting is prohibited (including antlers, rocks, obsidian, insects, plants, and mushrooms). • Practice Leave No Trace principles.

OPERATING HOURS Open daily except Thanksgiving and December 25. Hours vary seasonally. Call or visit the park website for more information.

DIRECTIONS From Santa Fe Take US 84/285 north to the NM 502W/Los Alamos exit. Continue on NM 502 to NM 4. From Albuquerque Take I-25 north to exit 242. Continue on US 550 to NM 4. The entrance to the park is near NM 4 mile marker 39 at 39201 NM 4, Jemez Springs, NM 87025.

ACCESSIBILITY We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. Park facilities currently have limited accessibility. For more information about accessible services and programs call or check the park website.

Emergencies call 911

MORE INFORMATION Valles Caldera National Preserve PO Box 359 Jemez Springs, NM 87025 575-829-4100 www.nps.gov/valles val_info@nps.gov Follow us on social media.

Valles Caldera National Preserve is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

Los Amigos de Valles Caldera, the official park friends group and cooperating association, assists with volunteer-led ecosystem restoration projects and raises funding to promote education, interpretation, and science. To support the park or get more involved, visit www.losamigosdevallescaldera.org.

National Park Foundation. Join the park community. www.nationalparks.org

©GPO 2018—403 33282083 New in 2018 Printed on recycled paper.

By the early 1900s hunting had eliminated New Mexico's native elk. In the 1940s and 1960s around 100 elk from Wyoming were reintroduced to Valles Caldera. Today, the Jemez Mountains are home to New Mexico's second-largest elk population.

