

Valles Caldera National Preserve Management Zoning

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



We Want to Hear From You

The National Park Service has initiated a management zoning process for Valles Caldera National Preserve. The goal is to balance how the park supports visitor services and recreational opportunities with stewardship of the special natural and cultural values that bring people to experience the park.

Public input is an essential step in the process, and we need your help.

This newsletter contains information on the draft zoning approaches under consideration that we would like your feedback on. The public comment period will be open from **April 9, 2021 to May 5, 2021**. If you have questions or are interested in learning more, please consider attending a virtual townhall meeting.

Virtual Meeting Schedule

Tue. April 20, 2021 • 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm MT
Thu. April 22, 2021 • 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm MT

Links to these meetings can be accessed via the project website: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/VALL_zoning

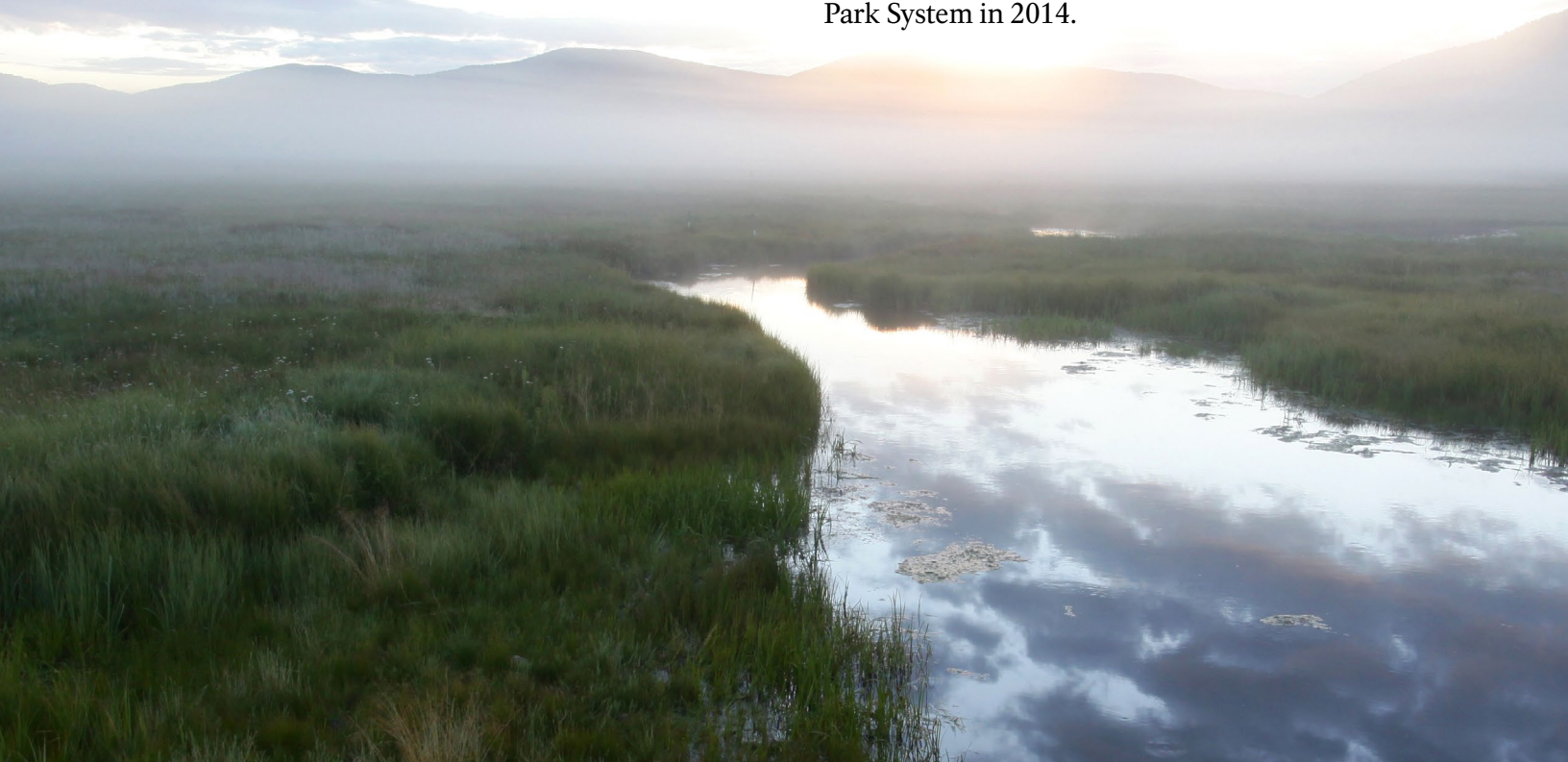
This is a chance to have your say about your public lands. Valles Caldera needs to hear from you!

What is Zoning?

Park zoning identifies and describes the appropriate variety of desired future resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved and maintained in geographically distinct areas of a park. It includes consideration of the types of management activities and visitor use, and general types and levels of development suitable in a given area. Zoning does not propose specific developments; rather, it is used as basis to inform future planning and decision-making.

About Valles Caldera

Located in the Jemez Mountains of north-central New Mexico, Valles Caldera is a dormant volcanic caldera created by an ancient eruption that over time shaped the forested domes and grassland valleys of today. Diverse plants and wildlife and vital waterways are found in this high elevation ecosystem. Many American Indian tribes maintain very old and powerful cultural connections to this place. The park also shares stories of Spanish, Mexican, and American settlement. Although intensive land use left a legacy of ecological impacts, the resilience of nature and proactive efforts to restore the landscape inspire hope for the future. Today, visitors can experience the park through outdoor recreation, scientific study, and educational programs. First established in 2000, Valles Caldera National Preserve became a unit of the National Park System in 2014.



Draft Management Zones & Desired Conditions

Desired conditions paint a picture of what an area will look like, feel like, sound like, and function like in the future, not necessarily what it looks like today. The following draft management zone concepts and desired conditions have been established for Valles Caldera National Preserve:

■ Visitor Engagement Zone –

This zone is where most short-term visitors to the park will go. These easy-to-reach areas may have higher visitor use and visitor density. Visitors are provided with opportunities to experience, appreciate, and connect with park resources in a more developed setting. Most of the development, visitor services, and facilities in the park are in this zone, and could include things like a visitor center, amphitheater, paved roads, parking areas, full-service restrooms, picnic areas, developed campgrounds, and administrative facilities and utilities. Most public roads in this zone would be open year-round. Visitors are offered a variety of opportunities for all ability levels, including onsite interpretation and education to learn about park resources.

■ Self-Guided Zone –

In this zone, visitors have an opportunity to venture into the park away from the main hub of activity to directly experience the sights and sounds of the natural landscape. The zone includes development and facilities that are dispersed and designed for low to moderate densities of visitors, such as trailheads, parking, well-engineered multiple use trails, occasional waysides/signage, vault toilets, picnic areas, and primitive campsites. This zone includes transportation corridors to explore the park, and most facilities would occur within these corridors. Public roads in this zone would be open seasonally. Although a degree of self-reliance and outdoor skill is necessary, areas in this zone are not so remote that they require a high level of skill or preparation.

■ Backcountry / Self-Reliance Zone –

This zone encompasses large contiguous areas of the park, where natural processes, ecosystem function, and wildlife behavior are prioritized, and visitors can experience solitude in diverse natural landscapes with few encounters with other visitors. Areas in this zone are remote and undeveloped, requiring a higher degree of outdoor skill and self-reliance. Beyond primitive trails and minimal signage, there are no maintained visitor facilities.

More detailed desired condition descriptions are available on the project website (https://parkplanning.nps.gov/VALL_zoning).



Draft Mapping Options

Zoning Option A

The Visitor Engagement Zone would include the Cabin District, areas along NM-4, and Sulphur Springs. The Self-Guided Zone would offer extensive vehicle corridors and multiple new entry points to promote exploration throughout the park by visitors of all abilities and skills. Facilities such as trailheads, picnic areas, and primitive campsites would be located along or in walking distance from public roads, which would also provide jumping-off points for activities in more remote, less developed areas. The Backcountry Self-Reliance Zone would offer a network of primitive trails and preserve large areas of the park for their natural values.

Zoning Option B

The Visitor Engagement Zone would include the Cabin District, areas along NM-4, Sulphur Springs, and South Mountain. The Self-Guided Zone would offer a less extensive vehicle corridor that still facilitates access to different landscapes and geography within the park. Non-motorized recreation would be emphasized parkwide, with a well-maintained multiple-use trail network within the Self-Guided Zone. Facilities such as trailheads, picnic areas, and primitive campsites would be located along or in walking distance from public roads. The Backcountry Self-Reliance Zone would offer a network of primitive trails and preserve large areas of the park for their natural values.

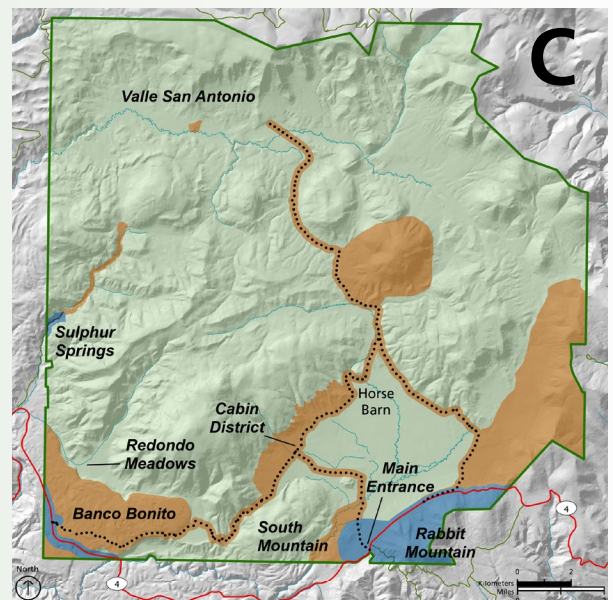
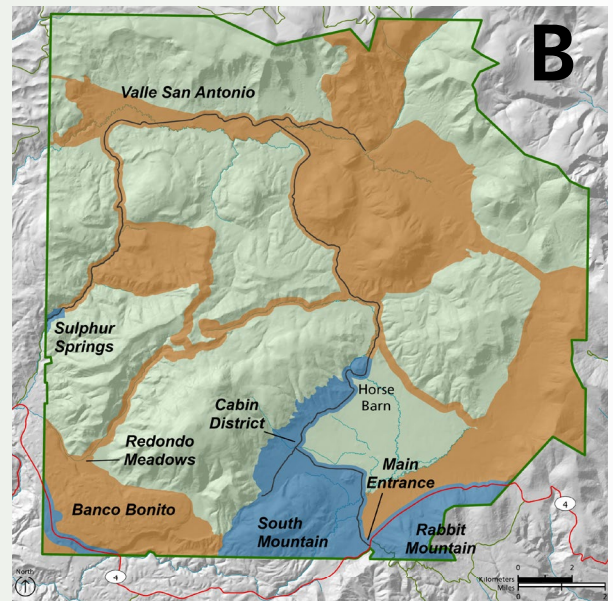
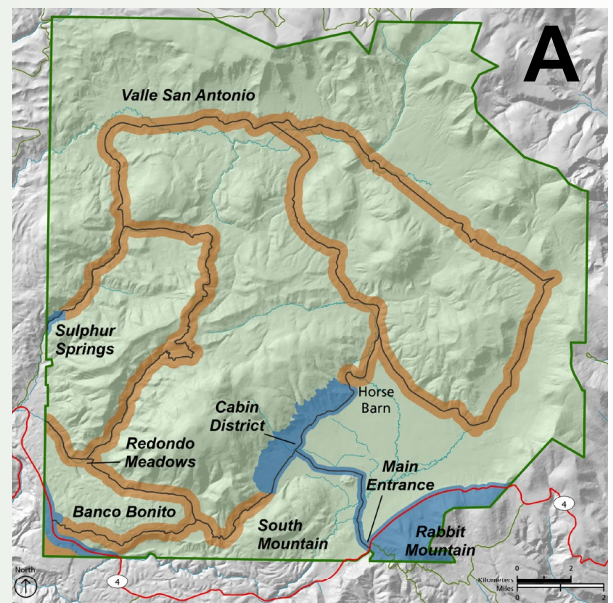
Zoning Option C

The Visitor Engagement Zone would include areas along NM-4 and Sulphur Springs. Beyond the Visitor Engagement Zone, non-motorized experiences would be emphasized; there are no public roads outside this zone. Within the Self-Guided Zone, a shuttle system that operates seasonally would bring visitors into the park interior to access the Cabin District and facilities such as trailheads, picnic areas, and primitive campsites. The Backcountry Self-Reliance Zone would offer a network of primitive trails and preserve large unfragmented areas of the park for their natural values.

Common to All Mapping Options

- Future planning would develop a well-designed trails network across the park and determine the locations and types of trails.
- Mountain biking and horseback riding may be allowed in all three zones, based on the zone's desired conditions and future trails planning.
- Camping may be allowed in all three zones; the type of camping will depend on the zone's desired conditions.

(continued on next page)



Zone

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Visitor Engagement | State Route 4 |
| Self-Guided | VCNP Boundary |
| Backcountry/Self-Reliance | SFNF Roads |
| Vehicle Corridor | Streams |
| Shuttle Only | |



Give Us Your Feedback

We welcome public feedback on management zoning at Valles Caldera, which will help inform and refine our zoning approach. To assist you in developing your comments, please consider the questions below. We are seeking public input from **April 9, 2021 to May 5, 2021**:

1. What do you value about Valles Caldera?
2. Do you have any ideas or feedback on our zone concepts or desired conditions?
3. Is there a mapping option you prefer? If so, what makes you prefer this option over others?
4. Are there elements of other options that you like or dislike?
5. Do you have other thoughts or ideas for how different parts of the park might be experienced and/or preserved?

How to Comment

Please submit your comments at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website https://parkplanning.nps.gov/VALL_zoning. Once on the website, select “Open for Comment” to provide your thoughts.

Common to All Mapping Options (cont'd)

- Hunting, fishing, and livestock grazing programs will continue to be offered, consistent with the park’s enabling legislation, park-specific regulations, and the desired conditions for each zone.
- Vehicle access for visitors would be along designated public roads, regardless of activity type.
- Facilities and infrastructure at the park would use minimal energy and produce minimal waste; the park strives to be a model for self-sustainability in a remote environment.

Contact and More Information

Phone: (575) 829-4100 ext. 9

Email: VALL_info@nps.gov

Project Website: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/VALL_zoning

Park Website: <https://www.nps.gov/vall>

Further planning and environmental compliance will be completed, as appropriate, prior to implementing future actions beyond this zoning effort.

