

an experiment in public land management. Purposes and goals include continued operation as a working ranch consistent with the protection and preservation of resources and provision public access for recreation and other purposes. The act also establishes that the Trust should strive to become financially self-sufficient where consistent with other goals and purposes.

Since 2002, the Trust has been managing an interim program for public access and use of the Preserve. The interim program was developed in response to the Valles Caldera Preservation Act (Pub. L. 106-248), which mandated that reasonable access to the Preserve for recreation would be provided within two years of Federal acquisition. The interim program provides a variety of regularly available outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hiking, hunting, wildlife and scenic tours, wagon rides, horseback riding, as well as winter recreation activities. The interim program has also included opportunities for the public to enjoy and learn about the Preserve through an array of special events. Special events have included night sky adventures, youth and adult outdoor education seminars, photography workshops, mountain biking and running events and more recently, overnight opportunities such as weddings and workshops, which use the existing facilities on the Preserve. Universities, K-12 schools, and various educational and research entities have also had access to the Preserve on a case by case basis.

Infrastructure development has been limited to road maintenance and upgrade activities necessary to provide safe access while protecting and preserving natural and cultural resources. Temporary facilities (portable buildings, portable toilets, etc.) have been used to facilitate public access and use of the Preserve.

Prior to Federal acquisition, about 200-300 people visited the Preserve annually. Since Federal acquisition, that number has increased to an estimated 15,000 visitors annually. Visitors enjoy their experience on the Preserve but consistently request broader, less controlled access. In addition, the Preserve's unique setting within a basically intact volcanic crater offers unique opportunities for learning and inspiration. Interest in the Preserve as a portal to learning about and being inspired by nature is growing. With increasing interest from partners, the Trust sees opportunities to develop science and education programs which

have local, regional, national, and global effects.

In December 2006 the Trust initiated "Phase I" of comprehensive planning for public access and use. This phase was largely information gathering and included a series of public workshops, strategic level business planning and analysis, and assessing various sites on the Preserve to determine possible locations for a visitor and interpretive center and other ancillary facilities. Based on the information accumulated, the Trust is entering into "Phase II", planning and decision-making for public access and use.

Based on the information accumulated, the Trust is proposing to establish a visitor and interpretive center within the boundary of the Preserve. The purpose of the center will be to expand public access and use on the Preserve while continuing to provide unique, high quality recreation, education, and interpretive experiences that impact the hearts and minds of our visitors. It is needed to facilitate broad access to the Preserve while protecting and preserving the natural, cultural, scientific, scenic, and recreational values of the Preserve. The design for the visitor and interpretive center will include parking and connected ancillary facilities such as interpretive trails, overlooks, and motorized access onto the Preserve.

The Trust is also proposing to make programmatic decisions that will guide or prescribe future development of programs and facilities.

Alternatives will be developed with input from the public that vary in the scale and location of the visitor and interpretive center and the capacities and types of programs that would be considered in the future.

A variety of reference documents are available for viewing and downloading from the Trust's Web site http://www.vallescaldera.gov/about/trust/trust_ref.aspx.

Dated: August 18, 2009.

Gary D. Bratcher,

Executive Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc.: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financial assistance to Minnkota Power Cooperative, Inc. (Minnkota Power) for the construction of the proposed Distribution Substation and Overhead Transmission Line for the Keystone Pipeline Pump Station No. 17 Project in Steele County, North Dakota.

ADDRESSES: The Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI are available for public review at USDA Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1571; at Minnkota Power's headquarters office; and at the Steele County Auditor's Office in Finley, North Dakota.

Contacts: To obtain copies of the EA or FONSI or for further information, contact Mr. Richard Fristik, Senior Environmental Protection Specialist, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Stop 1571, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone: (202) 720-5093 or e-mail: richard.fristik@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The study area for the proposed project is in Steele County, North Dakota. The proposal involves the construction of a substation on ¼ acre of land inside the fenced area of the Keystone Pipeline Pump Station No. 17 site, construction of an 11.75-mile 69 kV transmission line, and upgrading of 17.34 miles of existing 69 kV transmission line. The new line would be constructed in existing distribution line rights-of-way and would connect the new substation to an existing Minnkota transmission line.

No significant environmental impacts resulting from the proposal have been identified. Therefore, RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposal have been adequately addressed and has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and RUS' Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1794). An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this proposal.

Dated: August 24, 2009.

Nivin Elgohary,

*Acting Assistant Administrator—Electric,
Rural Utilities Service.*

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