

BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

BRIEFING STATEMENT

Very interesting

ISSUE:

Forest Service request for access over old logging road in newly acquired lands of the Upper Frijoles Canyon watershed.

BACKGROUND:

Prior to NPS acquisition of 3,076 acres of the Baca Location No. 1 in February of 1977, Santa Fe National Forest had been negotiating with the owners for a temporary easement on an old existing logging road for access to an area they wish to log in the Valle Timber Sale. This area had been logged by a Mr. Galager some 20 years ago and a number of old roads are still evident.

On March 22, 1977, Forest Supervisor Zamora contacted the Superintendent requesting a mutual arrangement between our agencies to permit access and the removal of 35 to 50 truckloads over the quarter mile course and their desire to have the lane left open for general administration. Mr. Zamora's request was transmitted to the Region for review and comment with my memorandum of March 25, 1977.

In discussions with Regional Director Cook and Deputy Regional Director Thompson, it was decided that the road could not be left open for administrative use and that the park was not to use the existing roads for vehicle travel except under extreme emergency conditions such as a wildfire. Route clearing of downed timber was provided for by crews on foot. It was also decided that access may be possible for a very short period of time, such as up to 30 days, but during a period of time of our choosing so minimal environmental impact would occur. (Such as during the winter when the ground was frozen and less likely to cause ruts or dust problems.) We were to convey this to the Forest and obtain a better idea on the time period they would require and also obtain the alternatives they had considered.

The Forest was invited to meet with us to discuss this matter and other issues of mutual concern. We finally met at Bandelier on April 20, 1978. During this discussion the Forest Service indicated their strong desire to maintain the road for no less than 10 years. They said that they intended to expand their timber sale some, from what they had originally indicated to us and that they wanted to permit public entry after logging to help clean up the slash and thereby reducing the fire hazard. At that time they were informed that we must see the alternate routes and their assessment and that if entry was permitted, it could be no greater than 30 days and at a time of our choosing. They said they would get this assessment of alternate routes to us but there were few feasible alternatives without considerable engineering and environmental impact. The map dated April 19, 1978 by Daniel Winner was delivered to the Monument but without any discussion concerning the routes identified.

On March 7, 1979, the Monument staff met again with the Forest at their invitation and the right-of-way was again a topic of discussion. During this meeting, they said that more than 100 truckloads of timber would now be removed and they definitely wanted public entry for slash removal.

The Valle Timber Sale is to be advertised shortly (April or May) for logging in 80. They indicate the value of the timber here to be in the neighborhood of \$60,000 and that it will be somewhat of an embarrassment to them if cutting of this pristine stand cannot be accomplished. * 1

In discussion with the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) concerning the 115 kV transmission line corridor, we were told that the Forest Service had indicated their preference for that corridor to coincide with the right-of-way location they want from us, if the corridor was approved through the Monument in Upper Frijoles. Their position on this is of course logical because it is the route they want to keep open.

A copy of a recent Forest Service News Release concerning the Valle Timber Sale is enclosed.

ACTION NECESSARY:

A position concerning this matter must be made. In our recent March meeting I again requested an assessment of the alternative routes and was promised a copy.

TIMETABLE:

April 1, 1979

ALTERNATIVES:

Make no action: This would leave the Forest up in the air and probably cause more problems from inaction than by saying no.

Say no: Depending upon the importance the Forest places in this portion of the sale, they can either forget logging in this area or go to the effort and expense of developing an access road of their own. This probably would not be a positive influence upon our relationships.

Say yes: Under specified times and conditions, damage could be minimized but could not be fully mitigated. The road has been recovering for 20 years but healing is slow at this high elevation. We would be in violation of both policy and the sales agreement if the public was permitted through the area. Some erosion would occur but it is not expected to be significant. The Forest is agreeable to rehabilitating the area after their work is completed in compliance with our specifications. Entry through the park for wood cutting and gathering would further confuse the general public concerning our distinctly different missions and management philosophy.

PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE:

During La Mesa Fire a fireline was cut from the Water Canyon Road to State Road 4 to the south of the right-of-way location they are interested in. This area has not started to heal and could benefit from rehabilitation after they have removed the timber. They believe that the entry to State Road 4 is not as safe as the other road and point out that an approach would require construction.

RECOMMENDATION:

March, 1979

NAME OF PAPER

WHERE PUBLISHED

DATE OF ISSUE

SENT BY

LOCATION

COPY SENT SWRO

YES ☒

NO ☐

COPY SENT WASH

YES ☐

NO ☒

Forest Service Slates Timber Sale

The U.S. Forest Service plans a timber sale in 1980 involving about 2,700 acres of the Santa Fe National Forest, including some land close to the Camp May Road.

The "Valle Timber Sale" has been proposed for several years as a means to thin out forested land previously held by the Department of Energy and its predecessors, forester Ed Collins said.

The area considered for harvesting is bounded by N.M. 4 on the south, the rim of Los Alamos Canyon on the north and West Jemez Road on the west.

Collins said the harvesting is needed because many of the trees are diseased, too big, too close together or too mature — robbing younger, healthier trees of soil nutrients.

He said the Forest Service tentatively plans to make available about 2.5 million board feet of timber.

Of the trees being eyed for removal, fewer than 100 are along the Camp May

Road, Collins said.

If these trees were cut down, he noted, the chances would be reduced of an accidental break in the power line extending to the Los Alamos ski hill.

"The trees could be a hazard if they fell on the line especially during fire season," he said.

He said a fuel break could be developed along Camp May Road at the time the trees were harvested.

"The fuel break wouldn't be as drastic as the one along West Jemez Road," Collins said, adding that the Forest Service "wouldn't want to build it unless (the Los Alamos County government) will construct one also."

The county owns the road and 40 feet of right-of-way on either side of the road, he said.

Since the power lines crosses the road at several points, Collins has suggested the county conduct its own timber sale

there.

In a recent memo, County Public Services Director John Bradley cited three advantages to the county in having a timber sale.

He said the tree thinning would serve as a fuel break, shed more light on the road so snow would melt more quickly

and reduce the chances of a break in the power line.

Collins said logging trucks probably would use Camp May Road during the sale and that access roads might be developed in the area.

He said the typical timber sale contract runs three years.