

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1210

To authorize the acquisition of the Valles Caldera currently managed by the Baca Land and Cattle Company, and to provide for an effective management program for this resource within the Department of Agriculture, and consistent with land management to protect the watershed of the Bandelier National Monument.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 24, 1997

Mr. BINGAMAN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To authorize the acquisition of the Valles Caldera currently managed by the Baca Land and Cattle Company, and to provide for an effective management program for this resource within the Department of Agriculture, and consistent with land management to protect the watershed of the Bandelier National Monument.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the Valle Grande/Valles  
5       Caldera Preservation bill.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress of the United States finds the follow-  
3 ing:

4 (1) The lands managed by the Baca Land and  
5 Cattle Company which comprise most of the Valles  
6 Caldera in central New Mexico, represent a unique  
7 land mass, with significant scientific, cultural, his-  
8 toric, recreational, ecological, and productive values,  
9 including:

10 (A) The Valles Caldera is one of the  
11 world's largest resurgent lava domes, testing by  
12 the United States Geological Survey of the  
13 Valles Caldera indicates significant geothermal  
14 activity;

15 (B) The land was originally granted to the  
16 heirs of Don Luis Maria Cabeza de Vaca as  
17 part of a settlement by the United States of  
18 their Spanish land grant claims to the Village  
19 of Las Vegas, New Mexico, under the 1848  
20 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, (Act of June 21,  
21 1860, an Act to Confirm Certain Private Land  
22 Claims in the Territory of New Mexico, Section  
23 6). Generations have used this land to raise  
24 sheep, cattle and horses, and as a timber sup-  
25 ply. Archaeological evidence of this use in the  
26 form of old logging camps, and other artifacts

1 is important to a historical knowledge of terri-  
2 torial New Mexico. In addition, these lands  
3 have been used since the 1940s for numerous  
4 films about the American West, and the various  
5 film sets remaining on the property are a sig-  
6 nificant part of the history of the American film  
7 industry;

8 (C) The careful husbandry of the land by  
9 the Dunigan family, the current owners, includ-  
10 ing selective timbering, limited grazing and  
11 hunting, and the use of proscribed fire, have  
12 preserved a mix of healthy and nearly pristine  
13 range and timber land with significant species  
14 diversity which could be used as a model for  
15 sustainable land use; and

16 (D) The incredible natural beauty and  
17 splendor of these lands, and their proximity to  
18 large municipal populations could provide nu-  
19 merous recreational opportunities for hiking,  
20 fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, and  
21 hunting.

22 (2) The current owners have indicated that they  
23 wish to sell the land, creating an opportunity to ac-  
24 quire these lands into public ownership and allow for

1 public access and enjoyment of these lands for the  
2 first time since 1860.

3 (3) The Baca Land and Cattle Company Lands  
4 are bordered by the Sante Fe National Forest and  
5 the Bandelier National Monument. They also con-  
6 tain the headwaters for the Jemez and San Antonio  
7 rivers.

8 (4) These lands should be acquired expedi-  
9 tiously so that the American people will not lose the  
10 opportunity presented by this resource to potential  
11 subdivisions.

12 (5) As these lands have different potential uses  
13 with different resulting impacts on water and land  
14 resources, an appropriate set of authorities is needed  
15 to allow the Department of Agriculture and the De-  
16 partment of the Interior to jointly develop a jurisdic-  
17 tional mechanism for best use and preservation of  
18 these lands.

19 **SEC. 3. ACQUISITION OF LANDS.**

20 The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the For-  
21 est Service is hereby authorized to acquire all of the rights,  
22 title, and interests in the lands shown and described as  
23 Baca Location No. 1, on the plat entitled "Independent  
24 Resurvey of the Baca Location No. 1," made by L.A.  
25 Osterhoudt, W.V. Hall and Charles W. Devendorf, U.S.

1 Cadastral Engineers, June 30, 1920–August 24, 1921,  
2 under special instructions for Group No. 107 dated Feb-  
3 ruary 12, 1920, in New Mexico, by purchase through ap-  
4 propriated funds or funds which may be later made avail-  
5 able by Congress from the sale of lands or assets adminis-  
6 tered by the Bureau of Land Management or the General  
7 Services Administration, by exchange of lands, or by dona-  
8 tion: *Provided*, That such acquisition be on a willing seller  
9 basis, and on terms mutually acceptable to the current  
10 owners and the Secretary.

11 **SEC. 4. BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS: SANTA FE NATIONAL**  
12 **FOREST; BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

13 The Secretary of Agriculture acting through the For-  
14 est Service, and the Secretary of the Interior acting  
15 through the National Park Service (the Secretaries), shall  
16 jointly develop a plan to adjust the boundaries between  
17 the Santa Fe National Forest and the Bandelier National  
18 Monument to provide consistent land management to pro-  
19 tect the watershed of the monument. The Secretaries shall  
20 submit this plan to Congress within 120 days of the acqui-  
21 sition of the Baca Location No. 1 by the Secretary of Agri-  
22 culture.

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