

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1734

To establish the Valle Vidal National Preserve in the State of New Mexico.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

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

A BILL

To establish the Valle Vidal National Preserve in the State of New Mexico.

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 Vidal Preserva-
5 tion Act.”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National
9 Forest comprises approximately 100,000 acres of
10 some of the finest scenic, wildlife, and outdoor rec-
11 reational resources in New Mexico;

1 (2) the Valle Vidal provides a home for a spec-
2 tacular array of game and nongame wildlife, in a
3 setting that uniquely allows for close public inter-
4 action;

5 (3) the Valle Vidal provides an unparalleled op-
6 portunity to hunt world-class trophy elk among New
7 Mexico's largest herd, drawing hunters from
8 throughout the State, region, and the United States;

9 (4) the Valle Vidal is an important component
10 of efforts to recover the native Rio Grande cutthroat
11 trout and provides miles of fish habitat prized by an-
12 glers;

13 (5) the open meadows and sweeping vistas of
14 the Valle Vidal are extraordinary for the region, al-
15 lowing visitors to take in the expansive spaces filled
16 with tall grass and thick patches of pine, spruce,
17 and aspen;

18 (6) the Valle Vidal comprises the headwaters of
19 the Rio Costilla in the Rio Grande watershed, and
20 numerous streams in the Canadian River drainage,
21 making it an important source of fresh water for
22 human and wildlife needs in New Mexico;

23 (7) the Valle Vidal is an important part of New
24 Mexico's ranching heritage and the local ranchers
25 have worked cooperatively with the Forest Service to

1 establish a grazing program within the Valle Vidal
 2 that meets the needs of the ranchers, the wildlife,
 3 and visitors with notable sensitivity to protection of
 4 the natural resources;

5 (8) the wilds of the Valle Vidal provide an out-
 6 standing backcountry experience for enthusiasts, in-
 7 cluding the Scouts of the nearby Philmont Scout
 8 Ranch; and

9 (9) for these and other reasons, the Valle Vidal
 10 is treasured as a special place for New Mexicans jus-
 11 tifying enhanced protection so future generations
 12 may enjoy the Valle Vidal.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) PRESERVE.—The term “Preserve” means
 16 the Valle Vidal National Preserve.

17 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 18 the Secretary of Agriculture.

19 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the State
 20 of New Mexico.

21 **SEC. 4. VALLE VIDAL NATIONAL PRESERVE, NEW MEXICO.**

22 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—To preserve the wildlife, sce-
 23 nic, watershed, recreational, geological, educational, and
 24 scientific values of the Valle Vidal and to secure now and
 25 for future generations the opportunity to experience and

1 enjoy the wonders of the area, there is established the
2 Valle Vidal National Preserve.

3 (b) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries of the Preserve
4 shall be those of the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson Na-
5 tional Forest in existence on the date of enactment of this
6 Act.

7 (c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Preserve is to pro-
8 tect and enhance the values described in subsection (a)
9 for current and future generations.

10 (d) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights,
11 the Federal land and interests in land included within the
12 Preserve are withdrawn from—

13 (1) all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal
14 under the public land laws;

15 (2) location, entry, and patent under the public
16 land mining laws; and

17 (3) operation of the mineral leasing and geo-
18 thermal leasing laws and the mineral materials laws.

19 (e) FISH AND GAME.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
21 graph (2), nothing in this title affects the respon-
22 sibilities of the State with respect to fish and wild-
23 life, including the regulation of hunting, fishing, and
24 trapping within the Preserve.

1 (2) NO HUNTING, FISHING, OR TRAPPING
2 ZONES OR PERIODS.—The Secretary may, in con-
3 sultation with the State, designate zones where, and
4 establish periods when, no hunting, fishing, or trap-
5 ping shall be permitted in the Preserve for reasons
6 of public safety, administration, the protection of
7 nongame species and their habitats, or public use
8 and enjoyment.

9 (f) MANAGEMENT.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall manage
11 the Preserve in a manner that conserves, protects,
12 and enhances the resources and values of the Pre-
13 serve (including the resources and values described
14 in subsection (a)) pursuant to the laws applicable to
15 the National Forests and other applicable law, in-
16 cluding this Act.

17 (2) USE.—The Secretary shall allow only such
18 uses of the Preserve as the Secretary finds will fur-
19 ther the purposes for which the Preserve is estab-
20 lished.

21 (3) LIMITATION ON USE OF MOTORIZED VEHI-
22 CLES.—Unless needed for administrative purposes
23 or to respond to an emergency (as determined by the
24 Secretary), use of a motorized vehicle in the Pre-

1 serve shall be permitted only on roads specifically
2 designated for such use by the Secretary.

3 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
5 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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