

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve



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Dear Friends,

The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service are pleased to release the approved Management Plan for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (Monument Plan). The Record of Decision, included as Appendix A of the Monument Plan, establishes the management framework for approximately 738,000 acres of public lands located on the Snake River Plain of Southern Idaho that are cooperatively managed by the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. Please note that this document is not a full reprint of the Proposed Monument Management Plan (Proposed Management Plan)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Some readers may find it valuable to refer to the Proposed Management Plan/FEIS while reading the condensed final Monument Plan.

The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service are extremely appreciative of the active role that you have taken in this process over the last several years. Please be aware that the planning process does not end with the Record of Decision. We look forward, as we move on, to the implementation process. The implementation of the plan and its many elements will require your continued support and collective involvement with the individual organizations and agencies that participated in the plan development.

Thank you again for taking part in the management decision-making for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Your active participation in the planning process will help the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service achieve our respective missions to conserve, study, protect, and preserve this nationally significant resource and provide for public enjoyment for our visitors. We look forward to working with all interested governments, agencies, organizations, and members of the public in implementing this plan for the management of one of our nation's special places. We will strive to manage the Craters of the

Moon National Monument and Preserve as a valued resource that has been entrusted to our care by the American people and in a manner which deserves your continued trust.

Sincerely,



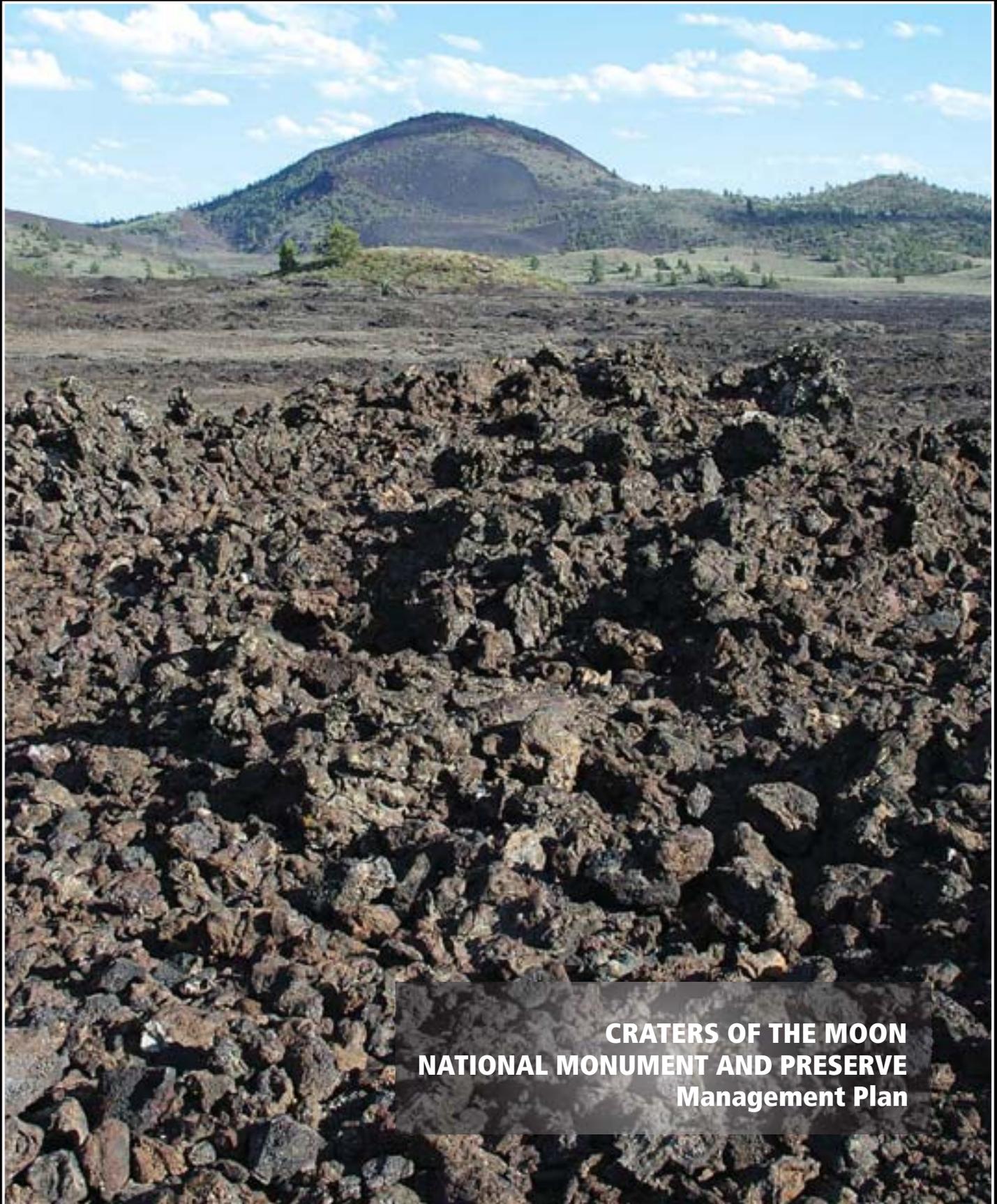
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Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve
Idaho



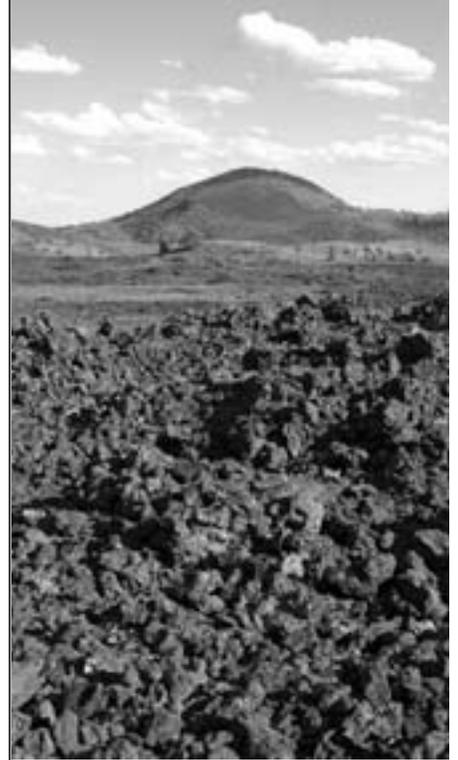
**CRATERS OF THE MOON
NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE
Management Plan**

FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS BY DAVE CLARK.
USED BY PERMISSION

**Craters of the Moon
National Monument
and Preserve**

**Monument
Management Plan**

U.S. Department of the Interior,
National Park Service
and Bureau of Land Management





Overview

This Monument Management Plan documents the overall management strategy, developed by the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. This document summarizes the selected alternative from the Proposed Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (July 2005). The Record of Decision, approved by both agencies in September 2006, is included in this document as an appendix. The Record of Decision includes a summary of changes to the plan made following release of the Proposed Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement in response to public and interagency review.

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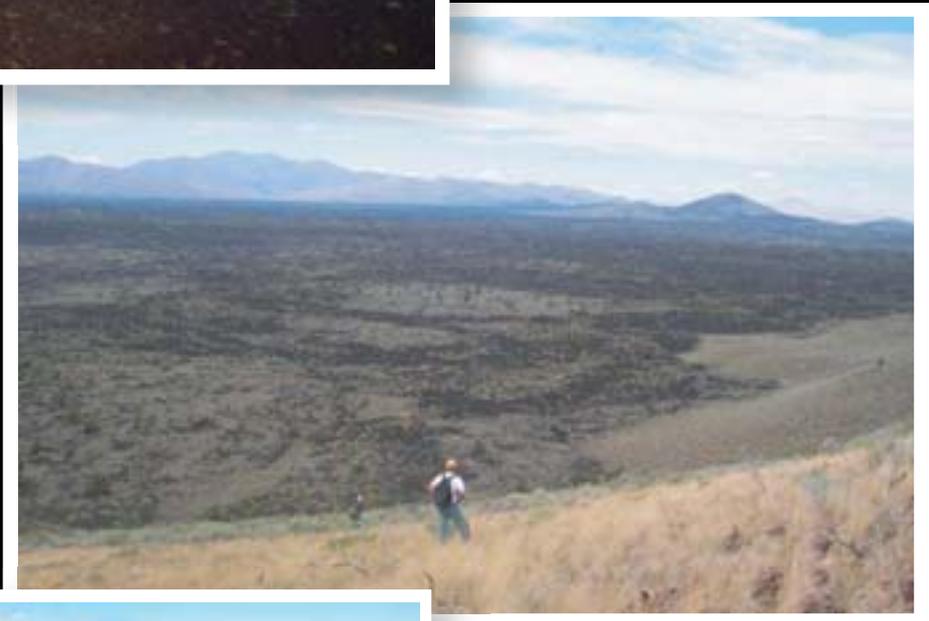
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION



Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

MONUMENT OVERVIEW

This document is the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan (Monument Management Plan or Management Plan), which sets forth the future direction for the use and management of the Monument. It includes the Record of Decision (see Appendix A). This plan covers all federal lands added by Proclamation 7373 and the original NPS Monument. It addresses the direction set forth in the proclamation and the designation of National Preserve status for NPS lands. The Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service manage separate portions of the area according to different laws, regulations, and policies. However, this plan provides a jointly developed framework for cooperative management of the entire area by both agencies. It serves as a combined Resource Management Plan (RMP) / General Management Plan (GMP) to replace portions of four existing BLM resource management plans and one NPS general management plan. From here on, any reference to “the Monument” refers to all lands within the current Monument boundaries, including the BLM National Monument, the NPS National Monument, and the NPS National Preserve.

This Monument Management Plan provides a framework for proactive decision-making, including decisions on visitor use as well as on managing and preserving natural and cultural resources. It prescribes the resource conditions and visitor experiences that are to be achieved and maintained in the Monument over time. Where law, policy, or regulations do not provide clear guidance, management decisions have been based on the Monument’s purpose, public concerns, and analysis of social and resource impacts of alternative courses of action, including long-term operational costs.



CINDER GARDEN

This document does not describe how particular programs or projects will be implemented or prioritized. Those decisions will be deferred to more detailed activity-level implementation plans, which will follow this document. Chapter 3 describes the implementation of this Management Plan in more detail.

For more detailed information regarding the planning process, alternatives, and environmental analysis, readers should refer to the Proposed Monument Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDI NPS and BLM 2005).

MONUMENT HISTORY

Craters of the Moon National Monument, the first national monument in Idaho, was established on May 2, 1924 (Presidential Proclamation 1694), to protect some of the unusual landscape of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field. This “lunar” landscape was thought to resemble that of the moon and was described in the proclamation as “a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself.”

Since 1924, the original Monument was expanded and boundary adjustments were made through five presidential proclamations issued pursuant to the Antiquities Act (34 Statute 225, 16 U.S. Code 431). Presidential Proclamation 1843 of July 23, 1928, expanded the NPS Monument to include certain springs for water supply and additional features of scientific interest. Further adjustments to the boundaries were made in Presidential

A VIEW OF THE PIONEER MOUNTAINS FROM BIG CINDER BUTTE.



Proclamation 1916 of July 9, 1930; Presidential Proclamation 2499 of July 18, 1941; and Presidential Proclamation 3506 of November 19, 1962. In 1996, Section 205 of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (PL 104-333, 110 Statute 4093, 4106) made a minor boundary adjustment to the original NPS Monument.

Presidential Proclamation 7373 of November 9, 2000, expanded the boundary to 737,700 acres of federal land (from about 53,400 acres) to include many more of the area's volcanic features — including the 60-mile-long Great Rift. It also enlarged the Monument's administration

by adding the efforts of the Bureau of Land Management to those of the National Park Service, all under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. Federal legislation (PL 107-213, 116 Statute 1052), on August 21, 2002, made one further adjustment by designating the area within the expanded NPS boundaries of Craters of the Moon National Monument as a National Preserve, allowing hunting on lands that were closed to this activity by the November 2000 proclamation. Appendix B provides copies of the proclamations and legislation related to creation of the current Monument and Preserve.

MONUMENT DESCRIPTION

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is in South Central Idaho (see Figure 1) in Blaine, Butte, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Power Counties. It is within a one- to two-hour drive of Twin Falls, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and other population centers along the Interstate 84 (I-84), I-86, and I-15 corridors.

The Monument contains the youngest and most geologically diverse section of basaltic lava terrain found on the Eastern Snake River Plain, an extensive area of volcanic formations that reaches across southern Idaho east to Yellowstone National Park. It includes three distinct lava fields: Craters of the Moon, Kings Bowl, and Wapi. The Craters of the Moon Lava Field is the largest basaltic lava field of predominantly Holocene age (less than 10,000 years old) in the conterminous United States.

The Monument also protects most of the Great Rift area, which includes the numerous lava flows and other discharge from the Great Rift volcanic rift zone. It compares in significance to other volcanic rift zones such as those found in Hawaii and Iceland. The Great Rift varies in width between 1 and 5 miles and extends for more than 50 miles.

Many features and structures associated with basaltic volcanism are represented in the Great Rift zone, including various kinds of lava flows, volcanic cones, and lava tubes. There are also lava-cave features such as lava stalactites and curbs, explosion pits, lava lakes, squeeze-ups, basalt mounds, an ash blanket, and low shield volcanoes. Some lava flows within the Great Rift zone diverged around areas of higher ground and rejoined downstream to form isolated islands of older terrain surrounded by new lava. These areas are called “kipukas.” In many instances, the expanse of rugged lava surrounding these small pockets of soil has protected the kipukas from people, animals, and even exotic plants. As a result, these kipukas represent some of the last undisturbed vegetation communities on the Snake River Plain.

Young (dominantly Holocene) lava flows and other features cover about 450,000 acres of the Monument. The remaining 300,000 acres in the Monument are also volcanic in origin, but older in age and covered with a thicker mantle of soil. This older terrain supports a sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.) steppe ecosystem consisting of diverse communities of grasses, sagebrush, and shrubs and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. This area also includes lava tube caves, older volcanic formations, and volcanic buttes.

Approximately 70% of the Monument is in Wilderness Study Area status or designated Wilderness. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness, designated in 1970, is located south of U.S. Highway 20/26/93 (US 20/26/93) within the original Monument. A substantial portion of each of four Wilderness Study Areas within the Monument includes lava flows administered by the National Park Service.

Both the Great Rift zone and sagebrush steppe ecosystem contain a wealth of cultural resources dating back to the last volcanic eruptions, which were likely wit-



nessed by the Shoshone people. Today, local tribes and communities, as well as visitors and other stakeholders, have an interest in the Monument.

FROM NORTH LAIDLAW BUTTE
LAVA FLOWS EXTEND IN ALL
DIRECTIONS.

Most visitor and educational opportunities are located near US 20/26/93 between the “gateway” communities of Carey and Arco in the north. In addition to guided walks and programs by BLM and NPS staff, the Monument has several self-interpreting trails with waysides and a 7-mile loop drive. Facilities include a visitor center complex, which consists of a campground, museum, and bookstore.

When the original NPS Monument was expanded in November 2000, lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management were included from three field offices of the Upper Snake River District (Burley, Idaho Falls, and Shoshone field offices). On October 1, 2004, Idaho BLM district boundaries were realigned and the Twin Falls District was created. As a result, the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve lies entirely within the BLM Shoshone Field Office, which is now part of the Twin Falls District.

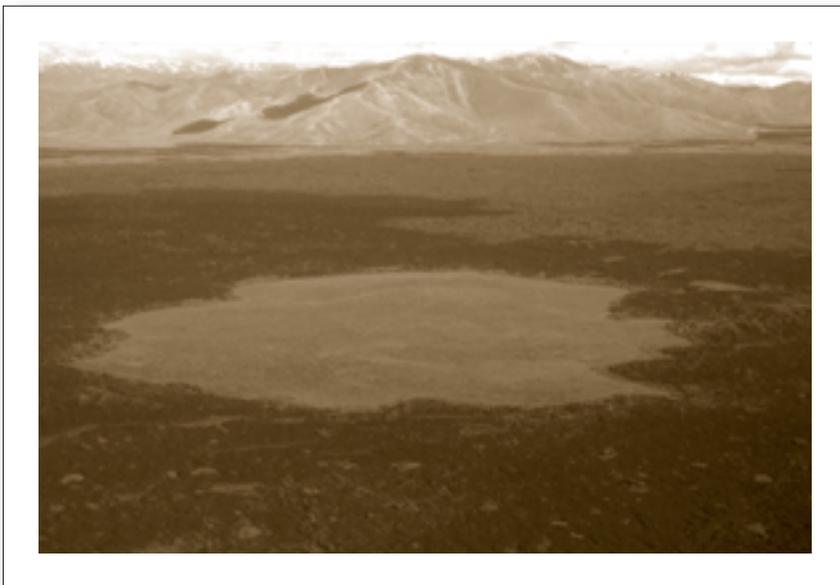
DIRECTION FOR THE PLAN

Monument purpose, significant features, and agency mission and mandates (laws) form the basis for management decisions and planning. Decisions about the management of resources are generally measured against these elements to determine activities that may be acceptable in the Monument.

PURPOSE

Purpose statements are the foundation for all subsequent decisions and qualify the language used in the proclamation and legislation to more clearly state why the Monument was established. They are the specific reasons why this area warrants National Monument status. Based upon the proclamations and legislation (see Appendix B), the purposes of Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve are as follows:

- Safeguard the volcanic features and geologic processes of the Great Rift.
- Provide scientific, educational, and interpretive opportunities for the public to foster an understanding and apprecia-



AN AERIAL VIEW OF CAREY KIPUKA.

tion of the volcanic geology and associated natural phenomena.

- Maintain the wilderness character of the Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and of the Wilderness Study Areas.
- Perpetuate the scenic vistas and great open western landscapes for future generations.
- Protect kipukas and remnant vegetation areas and preserve important habitat for Greater sage-grouse, a BLM sensitive species.
- Continue the historic and traditional human relationships with the land that have existed on much of this landscape for generations.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements are also drawn from the proclamations establishing Craters of the Moon National Monument, as well as other descriptive documents. Significance statements explain what resources and values warrant the area's designation as a National Monument. Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is significant because of the following:

- It contains a remarkable and unusual diversity of exquisitely preserved volcanic features, including nearly all of the familiar features of purely basaltic volcanism — craters, cones, lava flows, caves, and fissures.
- It contains most of the Great Rift area — the deepest known land-based open volcanic rift, and the longest volcanic rift in the continental United States.
- It contains many diverse habitats for plants and animals as a result of a long history of volcanic deposition.
- Many of the more than 500 kipukas contain representative vegetative communities that have been largely undisturbed by human activity. These communities serve as key benchmarks for scientific study of long-term ecological changes to the plants and animals of sagebrush

steppe communities throughout the Snake River Plain.

- It contains the largest remaining land area within the Snake River Plain still retaining its wilderness character. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and Wilderness Study Areas within the Monument encompass more than one-half million acres of undeveloped federal lands.
- It contains abundant sagebrush steppe communities that provide some of the best remaining Greater sage-grouse habitat and healthiest rangelands on the Snake River Plain.
- It is a valued western landscape of more than 750,000 acres that are characterized by a variety of scenery, broad open vistas, pristine air quality, and a rich human history.

MISSION GOALS

The following statements are general desired future conditions, or mission goals, for the Monument. These goals incorporate mandates required of Monument management and include input solicited from the public on how they would like to see this area managed.

- The Monument protects, restores, and monitors the geological features, the native biological communities, and the viewscape that characterize the Great Rift area.
- The public enjoys a range of recreational and educational opportunities compatible with protecting Monument resources.
- The Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and the Wilderness Study Areas retain natural conditions and remarkable opportunities for solitude.
- The public has opportunities to learn about and appreciate the Monument's diverse history, prehistory, and important cultural resources.
- The livestock permittees work with the Bureau of Land Management to develop

management actions to achieve sustainable, healthy rangelands.

- The public receives efficient and coordinated services from the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

POLICY AND PLANNING

BLM planning regulations and NPS directives require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all resource management plans / general management plans. Planning criteria are the constraints, or ground rules, that guide and direct the development of the plan. They influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, formulation of alternatives, estimation of effects, and ultimately the selection of a preferred alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based primarily on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations and agency guidance; consultation with federally recognized tribes; coordination with other federal, state, and local agencies; input from the public; analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; and professional judgment.

The National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management jointly developed the planning criteria for this planning area (see Figure 2), although the authorities of each agency differ. Each agency's authorities have their origin in separate and different enabling legislation and proclamations. As a result, some planning criteria are specific to one agency or the other. Other laws, such as the Clean Water Act, apply equally to both agencies. A single set of planning criteria served to guide the development of a single Management Plan for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. (See the Proposed Monument Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement,

Appendix F, for more information on these planning criteria.)

BLM and NPS staff developed management alternatives for the Monument based upon public responses to newsletters and public meetings, as well as input from staffs of both agencies. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations and BLM and NPS planning regulations require the formulation of a reasonable range of alternatives that seek to address identified planning issues and management concerns. Each alternative was evaluated to ensure that it would be consistent with the area's purpose and significance; the mission goals for the Monument; and current laws, regulations, and policy.

The four management alternatives developed for the Monument were:

Alternative A — No-action Alternative (required by NEPA) — retained current management of the Monument

Alternative B — Placed emphasis on a broad array of visitor experiences within the Monument

Alternative C — Placed emphasis on retention and enhancement of the Monument's primitive character

Alternative D — Placed emphasis on protection and restoration of physical and biological resources (the preferred alternative)

Each alternative had a somewhat different concept, defined in terms of area allocations into different management zones. Each alternative also varied somewhat in desired future conditions and management prescriptions for various resource topics. All alternatives provided the high degree of protection for Monument resources required by Proclamation 7373.

Planning provides an opportunity to create a vision and to define the Monument's role in relation to its national, historic, and communal settings. The planning process is designed to provide decision-makers

with adequate information about resources, impacts, and costs. Analyzing the Monument in relation to its surrounding natural, historic, and communal setting, as well as future challenges, helped managers and staff understand how the Monument could interrelate with neighbors and others in systems that are ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable. Decisions made within this planning context are more likely to be successful over time and promote more efficient use of public funds.

The plan will now be implemented, subject to available funding and additional environmental analysis for site-specific actions. The most dynamic parts of resource management planning are the activity-level implementation plans that are prepared to implement the decisions in the Management Plan. These implementation plans may change as often as necessary to accommodate new information. Examples of implementation plans that may be necessary at the Monument are listed under "Future Planning Needs" in Chapter 3.

The "Management of Monument Resources" section in Chapter 2 is organized by resource topic. This guidance in essence is the selected Alternative (D), which represents the desired future conditions and management actions for each resource. Desired future condition statements describe the preferred long-term condition for specific resources or activities. Future decisions and actions by management will be judged by whether they further progress towards these desired conditions. Management actions describe specific activities that help to achieve the desired future conditions.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

This Management Plan contains three chapters:

Chapter 1 (this section) includes background information; plan direction; the purpose, significance, and mission of the Monument; an overview of the planning process; and the mission and objectives of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System and the National Park System.

Chapter 2 contains resource- and program-specific desired future conditions and related management actions grouped by resource topic.

Chapter 3 includes information on how the Management Plan will be implemented. Topics covered include future planning needs; compliance responsibilities; relationship to other plans policies, and programs; evaluation of the plan; and future changes to the plan.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

Craters of the Moon National Monument is a part of a larger system within the Bureau of Land Management — the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The overarching mission of the National Landscape Conservation System is to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values. The National Landscape Conservation System assembles BLM's premier conservation designations, including National Monuments, Wilderness, and Wilderness Study Areas, into an organized system to increase public awareness of the cultural, scientific, educational, ecological, and other values associated with these areas. An essential consideration in developing this Management Plan was that it be consistent with the overall vision of the Conservation System.

Five NLCS objectives help to achieve this vision:

- Above all, commit to conserving, protecting, and restoring special values of the landscape, as directed by BLM's organic act (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended).
- Sustain local heritage and natural resources through cooperation with local communities and stakeholders.
- Continue to manage compatible uses and valid existing rights, consistent with the values for which the special area is federally recognized.
- Provide opportunities for public education and individual exploration of special landscapes.
- Foster and support scientific research to acquire a better understanding of how best to manage these landscapes.

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The original Craters of the Moon National Monument and Craters of the Moon National Preserve are units of the National Park System. The National Park System consists of more than 388 units, encompassing 84 million acres in 49 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, which collectively represent the diverse natural and cultural heritage of our nation. All units of this system are managed according to the NPS Organic Act of 1916 and the NPS General Authorities Act of 1970, including amendments to the latter law enacted in 1978. The key management-related provision of the Organic Act is:

[The National Park Service] shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified ... by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and

historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (16 U.S. Code 1).

The fundamental purposes of these two national systems have been brought together at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve to enhance protection of nationally significant natural and cultural resources while retaining many of the traditional uses of the land.