

The road system in the planning area provides access for visitors, permittees, non-federal landowners, and administrative needs while protecting those resources and values the Monument was established to preserve.

The agencies coordinate road management inside and outside of the Monument in a cooperative fashion with local government agencies so that the transportation system is managed in a comprehensive, logical manner.

The agencies also work cooperatively with local government agencies to provide appropriate access to the Monument and private land within the Monument.

The road system within the planning area supports efficient response time for fire suppression activities.

Most management direction related to travel and access is covered by management zone allocation.

#### **Management Actions:**

- ROAD-1: All lands except for the existing roads shown on Figure 4 are designated as “closed” to vehicle use. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is “limited” to existing roads shown on Figure 4 unless and until such roads are closed, converted to Class II Trails, or are further limited by operation of this plan or by the forthcoming travel management plan. (OHV designations do not apply to specifically authorized administrative use.)
- ROAD-2: All land within the Monument other than designated roads and trails will be designated “closed” for off-highway vehicle (OHV) and mechanized vehicle use.
- ROAD-3: The agencies will prepare an implementation-level travel

management plan showing road and trail classifications, standards, restrictions, and closures. Current road standards and classifications will be in effect until the travel plan is approved.

- ROAD-4: The agencies will prepare guidelines and procedures for authorization of emergency and administrative off-road travel.
- ROAD-5: The agencies will prepare a travel map showing allowable uses, road and trail classifications, and standards and restrictions.
- ROAD-6: No motorized vehicle roads or trails will be permitted within the Pristine Zone.
- ROAD-7: The agencies will close and rehabilitate all routes established in Wilderness Study Areas that were not identified in the wilderness inventory as “existing ways.”
- ROAD-8: All roads and trails shown on Figure 4 within the BLM-administered portions of Monument will be designated “limited” for OHV/motorized vehicle use unless further limited or closed in the forthcoming travel management plan.
- ROAD-9: All authorized roads on NPS-administered portions of the Monument and Preserve will be open only to bicycles and highway licensed motorized vehicle travel and will be designated as “park roads.”
- ROAD-10: The agencies may close individual roads and trails temporarily or permanently to protect resources on a case-by-case basis.
- ROAD-11: Snowmobile use on BLM-administered portions of the Monument will be addressed

in an upcoming travel management plan.

- ROAD-12: The agencies will seek local jurisdiction concurrence (county or highway district) for any change in the commitment to future maintenance for any roadway under that entity's jurisdiction.
- ROAD-13: Existing Class B and C roads will remain open, but maintenance will be driven by natural resource management needs, primarily fire suppression, weed management, and restoration activities.
- ROAD-14: A Class B standard will be allowed on the Arco-Minidoka Road through the Monument should the adjacent road segments outside the Monument be upgraded.
- ROAD-15: Selected Class D roads in the Primitive Zone could be converted to trails or closed for resource protection. Class D roads in the Pristine Zone could be converted to Class I trails where resource protection needs dictate.
- ROAD-16: Temporary improvements to existing Class C and D roads could be authorized in the Passage and Primitive Zones to facilitate fire suppression and restoration activities or other management actions aimed at natural resource protection.
- ROAD-17: In cooperation with the counties, the agencies will maintain the primary access roads to provide better access for fire management.
- ROAD-18: Redundant, unnecessary, or unused roads will be closed as determined by management after completing a travel management plan.



LIVESTOCK GRAZING IS AUTHORIZED ON MOST OF THE BLM MONUMENT.

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## LIVESTOCK GRAZING

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The proclamation expanding the Monument states:

Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the Monument administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Proclamation 7373

The Monument is cooperatively managed by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The National Park Service administers 465,047 acres, or 62% of the Monument, and that area is not available for livestock use. These areas consist primarily of exposed lava flows, which are mostly devoid of available forage and/or inaccessible to livestock; therefore, prohibiting grazing in these areas has little to no impact on the livestock industry.

Three BLM field offices (Idaho Falls, Burley, and Shoshone) in the Idaho Falls and Twin Falls Districts administer livestock use on the 286,487 acres (including BLM, private, and state lands) in the Monument. Sheep and/or cattle graze these lands, which are divided into management units known as allotments. Grazing permits are awarded to permittees by allotment. These permits, or leases,

convey no right, title, or interest in the land or resources. Although the proclamation specifically mentions livestock grazing, it does not establish the practice as a “right” or convey to it any new status. There are an additional 1,800 acres of BLM-administered land adjacent to privately owned agriculture fields and NPS-administered lava that are designated not available for grazing.

Grazing systems, or acceptable grazing practices, for allotments are detailed in Allotment Management Plans. Grazing systems result from certain decisions and agreements and are subject to standards and guidelines, as are adjustments made to stocking rates. Animal unit months (AUMs) reflect current authorizations and are not a mandated level of use.

#### **Desired Future Conditions:**

Sustainable rangeland ecosystems are healthy; public rangelands are maintained or restored to meet Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (USDI BLM 1997).

Livestock forage is provided on a sustainable basis for the life of the plan, consistent with other resource objectives and with public land use allocations.

Livestock developments are consistent with the desired future conditions for natural, cultural, and visual resources.

#### **Management Actions:**

GRAZ-1: Nine allotment boundaries will be altered to accurately reflect the NPS/BLM boundary. There will be no change in AUM preferences actually available for grazing. (See Appendix F of the Proposed Monument Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement [USDI NPS and BLM 2005] for additional details.)

GRAZ-2: BLM land available for livestock use totals approximately 273,000 acres. BLM land not available for livestock use totals approximately 1,800 acres. NPS land not available for livestock use totals approximately 465,000 acres.

GRAZ-3: Permitted livestock use totals 36,965 animal unit months. The current livestock use authorizations will be maintained until Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health evaluations or similar NEPA-compliant decisions identify the need for adjustments in livestock use to meet standards, vegetation, livestock, or resource objectives.

GRAZ-4: Use of existing livestock developments in Primitive and Pristine Zones may continue. The Bureau of Land Management may remove developments if they are no longer serving a useful purpose or resource objectives warrant their removal. Sites will be restored.

GRAZ-5: The Brigham Point and Paddelford Flat sheep trails across NPS land will be evaluated for future use.

GRAZ-6: There will be no new livestock developments permitted in North Laidlaw Park pasture and Bowl Crater allotment unless they result in a net benefit to those resources identified as needing improvement or protection.



THE MONUMENT VISITOR CENTER HOUSES INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS, MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES.

## FACILITIES

Administrative and visitor facilities in the Monument are concentrated in an area of about 90 acres adjacent to US 20/26/93 in the north area of the Monument. These are the visitor center/administrative building, maintenance shop, five residential buildings, the entrance station, paved parking areas and roads, a campground, a campsite, and related utilities. The visitor center (which also serves as the NPS administrative headquarters), the maintenance building, and five residential buildings were built in the late 1950s as part of the NPS Mission 66 Program.

The visitor center building contains a lobby with book displays, sales, and an information desk; a small exhibit room; and public restrooms. The administrative office area of the building originally consisted of six rooms serving as offices and shared work areas. Renovation of the building and additions of 1,800 square feet for staff work area and curatorial space and 450 square feet for a multipurpose audiovisual room were completed in 2005.

The maintenance building provides limited area for its intended purposes, since parts of the building have been converted to offices for maintenance staff and storage of supplies. One of the residential buildings has been converted to staff offices. The campground contains more than 50 campsites, a 130-seat amphitheater, and three restrooms. An entrance station where visitors are contacted before entering the paved loop

drive is adjacent to the campground. North of the highway is a public group campsite. In this vicinity are the Monument's potable water wells and delivery systems and underground water storage reservoirs.

A 7-mile paved loop drive with short spur roads, pullouts, and parking areas gives visitors access to scenic vistas, hiking trailheads, and other attractions. Vault toilets are available at three of the parking areas.

Kings Bowl was once a developed site. From the mid-1960s to late-1980s, private operators under permits from the Bureau of Land Management operated a concession at the site with a developed trail/tunnel system into Crystal Ice Cave, a parking and picnicking area, a trailer pad, a generator building, and a small concession stand. All of the aboveground facilities have been removed because of safety concerns. A small parking area and remnants of footpaths and vehicle trails remain. In 2002 the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management installed a series of waysides and signs in the area to convey important safety and resource protection messages to people who might visit this site.

### Desired Future Conditions:

Visitor and administrative facilities within the Frontcountry Zone of the NPS Monument meet visitors' needs.

The agencies cooperate with gateway communities in providing information and services to visitors at sites outside the Monument.

Location of agency facilities and staffing levels promotes efficiency of operations and public needs.

Principles of sustainable and universal design are incorporated into all facilities and operations.

Off-site facilities for new visitor services are emphasized.

## Management Actions:

- FAC-1: Existing paved road system and parking areas will be modified to address safety and maintenance concerns.
- FAC-2: BLM fire stations at Carey and Kimama will include Monument information. There will be informational kiosks located along roads leading into the Monument.
- FAC-3: Opportunities for sharing BLM and NPS facilities and staff will be evaluated.
- FAC-4: Signs and wayside exhibits previously approved for visitor safety and resources protection will be installed at Kings Bowl.
- FAC-5: Monument informational materials will be provided for display or distribution at non-agency sites in communities surrounding the Monument.
- FAC-6: Partnerships will be encouraged in developing new visitor information facilities in gateway communities.
- FAC-7: The Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service will become involved with other agencies and the private sector in seeking opportunities for visitor information centers in communities along the interstate corridor.

## LANDS AND REALTY

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The planning area encompasses approximately 753,333 acres (see Table 6 and Figure 7). Private and state land within the Monument boundary is not part of the Monument and is not subject to the direction in this plan. Most of the private land holdings in the planning area were obtained through agricultural entries such as the Desert Land Act, the Carey Act, the Reclamation Homestead Act, and the Stock Raising Homestead Act. There were

no pending agricultural entries in the Monument on the date of Proclamation 7373. The private and state land inholdings are used for grazing and contain related developments such as fences, wells, corrals, camp trailers, and seedings. There are no houses, cabins, or other permanent human dwellings on the private or state land.

The agencies will consider acquiring private and state land in the Monument through exchange, purchase, or donation. Acquisitions of private land will only be initiated by the private landowners as a willing seller. Private or state land acquired by the agencies will automatically become part of the Monument and subject to the direction in this plan.

Proclamation 7373 withdrew all federal land within the Monument and Preserve from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, and other forms of disposition. Therefore, the agencies cannot exchange, sell, or dispose of any federal land in the Monument except for extremely rare situations that would further the protective purposes of the Monument. This withdrawal includes the disposal of land to local governments for public purposes and community expansion.

Lands and realty authorizations fall into two broad categories — valid existing rights and other valid but lesser interests. Proclamation 7373 states that: “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.” Valid existing rights within the Monument include highway rights-of-way, powerlines, phone lines, a seismic station, a snow fence, a well, and mineral material sites (see Table 7 and Figure 8).

Other existing authorizations in the Monument are three Free Use permits for mineral materials (see the “Mineral Materials” section, below) and 14 easements held by the Bureau of Land Management across state and private land. At the time of Proclamation 7373, there

**TABLE 6. LANDOWNERSHIP**

LAND STATUS	ACRES*	% OF MONUMENT
<b>NPS Lands</b>	465,047	61
Original Monument	53,420	7
National Preserve	411,627	54
<b>BLM Lands</b>	273,488	37
<b>Federal Total</b>	738,535	98
State Total	8,157	1
Private Total	6,642	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>753,334</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Inconsistencies with acreage figures referenced in other documents will exist as a result of updates to data, differing projections, or changes in calculation techniques.

**TABLE 7. VALID EXISTING RIGHTS**

LOCATION ON FIGURE 6	CASE TYPE	CUSTOMER NAME	CASE FILE NUMBER	SIZE IN ACRES	EXPIRATION DATE
1	Federal Aid Highway 93	ITD <sup>a</sup>	IDI-001314	94	Perpetuity
2	ROW <sup>b</sup> Powerline	Lost River Electric Cooperative	IDI-002855	19	12/16/2019
3	ROW Observation Well	USGS <sup>c</sup>	IDI-012671	10	12/02/2009
4	ROW Telephone Line	ATC Communications	IDI-020118	6	08/08/2012
5	ROW Seismic Station	DOE <sup>d</sup>	IDI-028657	<1	04/16/2012
6	ROW Snow Fence	ITD	IDI-032380	14	09/09/2017
7	ROW Mineral Material Site	ITD	IDI-006614	109	Perpetuity
8	ROW Observation Wells	BOR <sup>e</sup>	IDI-0008954	4	Perpetuity
9	Emergency Airstrip Lease	Idaho Division of Aeronautics	IDI-0010307	43	03/05/2013
10	Emergency Airstrip Lease	Idaho Division of Aeronautics	IDI-0010310	40	09/19/2013
11	Federal Aid Highway 93	ITD	IDBL-0047476	87	Perpetuity
12	ROW Mineral Material Sites	ITD	IDBL-0047852	156	Perpetuity
13	Federal Aid Highway 93	ITD	IDBL-0049776	373	Perpetuity
14	ROW Mineral Material Site	ITD	IDBL-0052624	40	Perpetuity
15	Federal Aid Highway 93	ITD	IDBL-0052700	141	Perpetuity
16	Federal Aid Highway 93	ITD	IDBL-0053778	28	Perpetuity
17	ROW Mineral Material Sites	ITD	IDBL-0053709	7	Perpetuity

a. Idaho Transportation Department; b. right-of-way; c. U.S. Geological Survey; d. Department of Energy; e. Bureau of Reclamation

were no other pending lands and realty cases or applications such as rights-of-way, land use permits, exchange or sale proposals, or trespass cases.

#### **Desired Future Conditions:**

Existing access to private lands is maintained, consistent with applicable laws, while minimizing environmental impacts.

Valid existing rights are protected.

#### **Management Actions:**

LANDS-1: Private or state lands within the Monument boundary acquired by the agencies will automatically become part of the Monument and subject to the direction in this plan.

LANDS-2: The agencies will pursue acquisition or exchange for private inholdings within the Monument based on initiation by willing seller.

LANDS-3: The agencies will pursue an exchange with Idaho Department of Lands for state lands located in and near the Monument.

LANDS-4: Action on applications for new discretionary land use authorizations will be guided by existing NPS and BLM policies.

### **MINERAL MATERIALS**

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The proclamation expanding the Monument withdrew all federal lands and interests in lands within the Monument from entry, location, selection, sale, lease, or other dispositions (except for exchanges that would further the protective purposes of the Monument) under the public land laws, including the mineral leasing and mining laws. Thus, new federal mineral leases or prospecting permits may not be issued, nor may new mining claims be located within the Monument. No mining claims existed in the

Monument on the date of Proclamation 7373.

There are no known natural gas, oil, or mineral deposits within the Monument boundaries. The general area has moderate potential for developable geothermal resources (Kuntz et al. 1979, Ridenour 1979). Active mining claims for locatable minerals, primarily gold, exist just north of the Monument in the Pioneer Mountain foothills. The National Park Service has rehabilitated two old abandoned gold mine adits in the northern portion of the original Monument. The Bureau of Land Management processed several applications for geothermal leases in the 1970s and issued one lease, which was relinquished in 1982.

There are three Free Use Permits for pumice/cinders on BLM lands in the Monument. Butte County and Blaine County use these sites as a material source for gravel road maintenance. Free Use Permits authorize use only by state or local governments. These material sites are not available to the general public or commercial parties.

The amount of suitable road surface material available within the Monument is essentially unlimited. However, Proclamation 7373 and agency policy restricts extraction of mineral materials to valid existing rights and administrative uses only. Cinders are generally considered to be an undesirable material for road maintenance because they are not very durable compared to gravel. Cinders are very light, which reduces transportation costs. High quality crushed gravel is available outside the Monument, but at a substantially higher cost than the readily available cinders.

The Idaho Transportation Department also holds three right-of-way grants for five pumice/cinder material sites in the Monument. These right-of-way grants are valid existing rights unaffected by Proclamation 7373. The former General

Land Office granted these rights-of-way in the 1940s during the construction of US 20/26/93.

**Desired Future Conditions:**

Material sites (sites excavated for gravel, cinder, and other materials) are reclaimed and restored where feasible when no longer in use.

Current BLM reclamation requirements at material sites include: sloping of all pits to a natural contour and appearance; replacement of stockpiled topsoil and reseeded with recommended seed mix; reduction or removal of all vertical slopes and removal of all overhangs; scarification and rehabilitation of all created roads used to access the site; and other stipulations as agreed upon by the Bureau of Land Management and applicant at the time that the use was permitted and included in the mining and reclamation plan for mineral material disposal. Although complete restoration may not be practical, feasible, or desirable, reclamation of a mineral material site in the Monument shall be deemed successful when the site has been stabilized and revegetated, and it blends into the surrounding landscape.

**Management Actions:**

- MINE-1: Existing authorization for material sites within the Monument will continue for the term of the authorization.
- MINE-2: A Material Sites Reclamation Plan will be prepared.
- MINE-3: New materials sites will not be developed except for Monument administrative purposes.
- MINE-4: Agencies will consult with Idaho Transportation Department on relinquishment of three right-of-way grants for material sites along US 93.

- MINE-5: Information will be provided on BLM areas outside the Monument where casual collection is appropriate and permitted for materials similar to those found in the Monument.

**WILDERNESS AND  
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS  
(WSAS)**

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Congressional designation of the 43,243-acre Craters of the Moon National Wilderness Area was enacted on October 23, 1970, making the Monument and Petrified Forest National Park the first units within the National Park System with designated wilderness areas (PL 91-504). The Craters of the Moon Wilderness is entirely within the original Monument (see Figure 9). All but the north end of the wilderness boundary is adjacent to lands inventoried by the Bureau of Land Management as the Great Rift Wilderness Study Area in 1980 (USDI BLM 1980a, 1980b). When designated, the wilderness boundary was offset one-eighth of a mile (660 feet) inside the Monument boundary. This “buffer” area was intended to permit administrative vehicle access for firefighting and other management needs (U.S. House of Representatives 1970). Since the narrow buffer area does not contain roads and consists largely of impassable lava flows, it never has been used for such purposes.

Wilderness Study Areas are lands identified through the BLM wilderness inventory process as possessing wilderness characteristics (defined by the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, 16 U.S. Code 1131). Wilderness Study Area lands are designated in BLM land use plans and managed under the BLM “Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review, Handbook H8550-1,” so as not to impair their suitability for wilderness designation (USDI BLM 1995).

Four Wilderness Study Areas have been designated within the boundaries of the Monument (see Table 8 and Figure 9). Eighty-four percent of the Wilderness Study Areas are within the National Preserve; the rest is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The 381,800-acre Great Rift Wilderness Study Area was designated in 1980 (USDI BLM 1980a, 1980b). The Great Rift Wilderness Study Area encompasses most of the Craters of the Moon and Wapi Lava Fields, along with parts of the surrounding sagebrush grasslands. The Raven's Eye Wilderness Study Area covers 68,300 acres of the western part of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field, with 66% of the area within the Monument. The Little Deer Wilderness Study Area takes in 35,200 acres of a narrow extension of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field and adjacent sagebrush grasslands. The 9,700-acre Bear Den Butte Wilderness Study Area is centered on a narrow finger of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field, which extends into Laidlaw Park. The Raven's Eye, Little Deer, and Bear Den Butte Wilderness Study Areas were designated in 1986 (USDI BLM 1987).

Presidential Proclamation 7373 transferred portions of the four Wilderness Study Areas to the National Park Service in 2000. The proclamation directed the following:

Wilderness Study Areas included in the Monument will continue to be



managed under Section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S. Code 17011782).

BLACKTAIL BUTTE.

Section 603(c) requires that Wilderness Study Areas be managed to maintain their suitability for wilderness designation and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. BLM wilderness inventory procedures (USDI BLM 2001b) define roads as routes improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. A route maintained solely by the passage of vehicles is defined as a vehicle way. Numerous vehicle ways exist within the Wilderness Study Areas. The BLM Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (USDI BLM 1995) permits continued motorized travel on those ways recorded during the wilderness inventory. Additional vehicle routes created after the

**TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS**

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA	AREA WITHIN MONUMENT (ACRES*)	NPS AREA (ACRES*)	BLM AREA (ACRES*)	TOTAL WSA AREA (ACRES)	AREA WITHIN MONUMENT RECOMMENDED SUITABLE BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (ACRES)
Great Rift	381,100	335,000	46,000	381,800	322,450
Raven's Eye	45,400	37,000	8,400	68,300	67,110
Little Deer	35,100	21,300	13,800	35,200	0
Bear Den Butte	9,700	4,300	5,400	9,700	0

\*Acreage within the monument has been rounded to the nearest hundred acres.

inventory are not authorized, and motorized vehicle use of such routes is prohibited.

#### **Desired Future Conditions:**

Natural conditions in Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, including air quality, dark night skies, and natural quiet, are substantially free of human influences.

Air quality degradation and adverse impacts to air quality related values, particularly visibility, within the Class I air quality Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area, do not occur.

Future generations enjoy the enduring wilderness resources of the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, including its conservation, scientific, cultural, educational, and recreational benefits.

Wilderness Study Areas retain the wilderness values identified in the wilderness inventory and study process.

#### **Management Actions:**

**WILD-1:** NPS and BLM staff will develop a joint Wilderness / Wilderness Study Area Management Plan following completion of this plan. No additional wildlife water developments or other habitat manipulations will be undertaken to manage wildlife populations in Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or the Preserve.

**WILD-2:** As part of the joint Wilderness / Wilderness Study Area Management Plan, and consistent with current guidance on inventorying for and management to protect or enhance wilderness characteristics, the agencies may conduct additional inventory, consider citizen proposals, and consider protections of lands with wilderness characteristics.

**WILD-3:** Minimum requirement analysis will precede any proposed management activities within designated wilderness areas and Wilderness Study Areas managed by the National Park Service. BLM-administered Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed under the guidance in the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. Should those portions of the Great Rift Wilderness Study Area adjacent to the original Monument be designated as wilderness, the 660-foot strip of non-wilderness between the Craters of the Moon Wilderness boundary and the original Monument boundary should be designated as wilderness as well.

**WILD-4:** Use of aircraft to survey and monitor wildlife populations could be continued, but flights will be scheduled to avoid high visitor use periods. Any landing of aircraft or dropping of supplies from aircraft in wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas will be consistent with a minimum requirement and minimum tool analysis.

**WILD-5:** Ways or travel routes within Wilderness Study Areas not identified during wilderness inventories will be closed to motorized vehicles and rehabilitated.

**WILD-6:** Should Congress release any Wilderness Study Area from WSA status, then the area will be managed under the direction of this land use plan.

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### INTERPRETATION/ VISITOR UNDERSTANDING

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The interpretive program at the Monument focuses on providing an educational experience to the widest possible variety of visitors. Major target audiences are summer visitors, school students, visitors from local communities, and winter visitors. Other groups are backcountry travelers, hunters, and people planning visits to the Monument. Programs to best meet the needs of these groups are regularly scheduled walks and talks during summer, school group orientations and teacher workshops in spring and fall, special topic weekend programs, and winter ecology workshops.

Interpretive waysides, informational kiosks, press releases, publications, and agency websites also provide for the informational and interpretive needs of the public. Visitors unable to attend or take advantage of the various scheduled interpretive programs have an excellent opportunity to learn about the Monument through these other venues.

Interpretive themes are important ideas, stories, and concepts that are presented to visitors in exhibits, publications, and programs. With the development of the Long-Range Interpretive Plan for the Monument (see “Future Planning Needs” in Chapter 3), the following interpretive themes will be addressed:

- The Monument provides opportunities for people to explore a remarkably well preserved volcanic landscape.
- The Great Rift and its associated features are only the most recent reminders of an awesome series of geologic events that began to shape the Snake River Plain 16 million years ago.
- The geology of Craters of the Moon has created unique and unexpected habitats that provide for the survival of a surprising diversity of plant and animal species. This vast lava and sagebrush plain also provides for critical human needs throughout this desert region.
- Searing lava flows that initially destroyed everything in their path today protect the last islands of intact sagebrush steppe communities on the Snake River Plain.
- Craters of the Moon contains vast areas that are managed to preserve their wilderness characteristics.
- For thousands of years people have avoided, endured, and pondered this vast western landscape.

#### Desired Future Conditions:

The Monument builds and maintains positive relationships with visitor user groups and educational organizations.

The public perceives the Monument as a single entity, and its management as a model of public service.

The public understands and appreciates the area’s natural and cultural resources, including its history and uses.

The public has access to Monument information and learning opportunities, both on- and off-site.

Information/orientation materials such as travel maps, safety bulletins, resource information, and recreation information are available.

Visitors are offered a variety of interpretive media within the Frontcountry Zone.

**Management Actions:**

- VISIT-1: A Long-Range Interpretive Plan for the Monument will be developed.
- VISIT-2: Both agencies will coordinate services to meet the needs of permittees, visitors, students, educators, interest groups, and the general public.
- VISIT-3: Monument staff will continue to promote visitor safety and resource protection. Designated roads, trails, and facilities will be maintained, and new facilities will be provided as appropriate in the Frontcountry Zone for resource protection and visitor enjoyment.
- VISIT-4: Developed facilities such as the visitor center at the original NPS Monument will continue to be provided. Informational/orientation materials dealing with recreation, maps, safety, and resource concerns will be posted on kiosks located at all primary backcountry access points surrounding the Monument and at the Carey and Kimama BLM fire stations.
- VISIT-5: Interpretive programs and the maintenance of exhibits and waysides will continue.
- VISIT-6: Educational programs for schools will focus on programs on-site in the original NPS-administered Monument. A number of programs (summer and winter) aimed at special users will be presented each year.
- VISIT-7: Educational programs will be expanded to off-site locations.
- VISIT-8: A variety of interpretive media for on- and off-site use will continue to be developed.
- VISIT-9: Interpretive signs will be provided along the US 20/26/93 corridor.
- VISIT-10: Interpretation outside the Frontcountry Zone will emphasize publications, websites, exhibits, and other off-site interpretive media.
- VISIT-11: Interpretive emphasis will be on providing new interpretive and educational materials and programs outside the expanded portion of the Monument and in partnering communities and facilities.
- VISIT-12: A variety of portable media (maps, tapes, guidebooks, etc.) will be developed to interpret the expanded portion of the Monument.
- VISIT-13: Informational/orientation materials dealing with recreation, maps, safety, and resource concerns will be available in gateway communities. Visitor center(s) operated in cooperation with local partners will be proposed within the I-84 corridor.
- VISIT-14: Commercial outfitters and guides will be encouraged to offer a range of guided experiences. Visitors who might not otherwise have the proper knowledge, vehicles, or preparation to experience the interior of the Monument will then have a viable option that will not require a lot of road, trail, and facility improvement.
- VISIT-15: Safety and resource protection will be emphasized at access points.

## RECREATION

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Visitation to the original NPS Monument averages 200,000 people per year, with peak visitation on summer weekends. Many visitors are on vacations that include Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks to the east and Sun Valley and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area to the west (USDI NPS 1990). Commonly, visitors spend less than 3 hours at the Monument; 5% remain overnight. The typical visitor will stop and tour the visitor center, then sightsee along the 7-mile paved loop drive, taking advantage of photographic opportunities and often having a picnic before leaving.

School groups represent an important visitor group. More than 100 school groups comprising more than 3,000 students visit the Monument each year. Teachers who have attended one of the Monument-provided teacher orientation workshops lead many of these groups.

Commercial tours also come to the Monument through the primary visitation season. Commercial tour numbers vary from year to year, but the average is between 30 and 40 tour buses each year.

Winter visitation is low, but winter attracts local and regional visitors familiar with the quality cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities. The loop drive is closed to vehicle traffic and groomed for skiing in winter. The National Park Service has also offered winter ecology programs for the past few years; these are always well attended.

Visitation to the expanded parts of the Monument during the last 10 years averaged approximately 20,000 visits per year, according to BLM's Recreation Management Information System (RMIS). Some popular sites are Pillar Butte, Wood Road Kipuka, Bear Park, Snowdrift Crater, Kings Bowl, and Bear Trap Cave. No visitor facilities are available at any of the sites, but all receive day use and



GUIDED INTERPRETIVE WALKS ARE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER MONTHS.

occasional overnight camping. Recreational activities in the expanded part of the Monument, in order of popularity, are hunting; driving for pleasure; geologic exploration including caving, lava hiking and sightseeing; hiking; primitive camping; photography; horseback riding; and mountain biking.

**Commercial Outfitters and Guide Services.** There is currently one temporary special use permit issued for guided tours within the Monument. In 2004 there were no tours conducted under the two existing hunting outfitter permits issued for Hunting Units 52A and 68 (one in each unit) within the Monument, and past use of these permits has been quite low as well. Although some interest in commercial outfitter and guide permits has been expressed, the agencies do not foresee a dramatic increase in demand for these permits over the life of the plan.

**Hunting.** The Idaho Fish and Game Commission sets hunting seasons and other regulations for hunting in Idaho. Most of the Monument and Preserve is within Idaho Fish and Game Hunting Unit 52A (see Figure 10). The southern part of the area, including all of the Wapi Lava Field, is included in Unit 68. A very small portion of the northern edge of the Monument and Preserve falls within Units 49 and 50. The length of season and number of available controlled-hunt tags vary annually on the basis of wildlife population levels and other factors.

BLM's Recreation Management Information System and Idaho Department of Fish and Game estimates indicate that Greater sage-grouse hunting and open mule deer hunting attract the highest number of hunters in the Monument. The open seasons for archery (antelope, elk, and deer), other small game (rabbits, upland birds), predators, and unprotected species, along with the controlled seasons (draw tags) for antelope, elk, and deer, account for a much smaller portion of hunting use.

Almost all hunting has historically been in the BLM portions of the Monument. Hunting occurs in what is now the NPS Preserve, although hunting has never been authorized in the original NPS Monument. The exposed lava flows in the NPS Preserve can be used for a quality hunt for a few hunters who seek the challenge. The very small amount of hunting by members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes that takes place in the Monument is considered a treaty right and is not considered a recreational hunting experience.

**Motorized and Mechanized Recreation.** OHV (off-highway vehicle) use in the Monument includes off-highway motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles. Most OHV use in the Monument takes place during hunting seasons or in association with other land uses like livestock operations. The amount of OHV-specific recreation activity in the Monument is quite small (Recreation Management Information System estimates less than 5,000 visits per year). Most OHV activity takes place on the road network, since no trails have been designated for motorized use.

A small amount of mountain biking occurs in the expanded Monument. This small but growing recreational use is confined primarily to the existing road network, because no designated trails for mountain biking exist. In the area of the original Monument, mountain bike permits are available for riding along portions of Goodale's Cutoff. Bicycle use occurs on the 7-mile loop drive and other areas. No OHV use is permitted within the original Monument.

**Hiking and Horseback Riding.** Most hikers hike on designated trails in the original Monument. Hiking trails to features of interest in the original Monument are the North Crater Flow, Devils Orchard, Inferno Cone, the Big Craters/Spatter Cones area, Tree Molds, and the Caves Area. Hikers in the non-wilderness part of the original Monument regularly see other

visitors, because the area is highly used. Opportunities for solitude are limited; however, the Craters of the Moon Wilderness offers outstanding opportunities for self-directed hiking, with an excellent chance to experience solitude.

Wilderness use is extremely light, with an average of 130 overnight backpackers per year (based on backcountry permits issued 1990 through 2002). Backpacking parties usually consist of fewer than four persons, and they seldom stay out more than two nights (USDI NPS 1990). All water must be packed into the backcountry. Exact numbers of day users are unavailable. Some constructed hiking trails exist at the Crystal Ice Caves/Kings Bowl area (Recreation Management Information System estimates 1,000 visits).

Horseback riding in the original Monument is limited to the Craters of the Moon Wilderness Trail by permit only. No other designated trails currently exist for horseback riding.

**Camping.** In the original Monument, more than 50 developed campsites with water, restrooms, charcoal grills, and picnic tables are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Most campers stay only one night. The campground is rarely full, with the exception of several weekends during the summer, generally around holidays.

**Caving.** Tens of thousands visit the Caves Area in the developed portion of the Monument each year. Although dispersed caving does not draw large numbers of visitors, it is an important and unique recreation opportunity at the Monument. Opportunities exist for recreational cave experiences throughout the Monument, ranging from hiking a paved trail to an easily accessible lava tube such as Indian Tunnel, to visiting a remote wild cave somewhere in the expanded portion of the Monument, to the potential to actually discover a previously unknown cave.



LAVA FLOW  
CAMPGROUND.

**Health and Safety.** Several factors are involved in health and safety concerns for Monument visitors and surrounding communities. These factors include road standards and levels of maintenance, extreme weather, wildfires, caves/fissures, lava terrain, livestock, and snakes.

#### **Desired Future Conditions:**

Opportunities are available for diverse recreational experiences, consistent with the intent of Monument proclamations and applicable laws.

The area continues to offer a range of opportunities for discovery.

The public enjoys opportunities for self-discovery and primitive type recreational experiences.

Unsigned and self-directed motorized recreation opportunities are available.

Within the Pristine Zone, public opportunities to experience solitude, natural quiet/night sky, and views of landscapes remain substantially free of human influence.

Commercial outfitters and guide services provide opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the resources, reducing the need for development and agency staffing.

Public awareness of responsible low-impact recreational use reduces or eliminates the need for restrictive management policies.

Responsible low-impact recreational use allows for relatively unrestricted recreational opportunities throughout much of the Monument.

Public awareness of area hazards, along with an attitude of self-reliance and personal safety, substantially reduces the need for restrictive management policies.

Impacts associated with recreational uses do not adversely affect the physical and visual integrity of geologic features or the biological integrity of the ecosystem.

The National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and external partners provide the public accurate and consistent information on recreational opportunities throughout the Monument.

Partnerships with off-site facilities, such as visitor centers and state parks, provide Monument information and interpretation.

#### **Management Actions:**

REC-1: The current Idaho State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan and the Idaho outdoor recreation demand assessment will be utilized in implementation-level planning to assist managers in understanding the recreational use patterns, trends, and recreational facilities needed for the area.

REC-2: Implementation-level planning will make determinations as to where specific trails, trailhead facilities, and/or number of primitive campsites will be needed or desired within the Passage Zone.

REC-3: Resources and areas most vulnerable to vandalism, theft, and/or recreational use impacts will be inventoried.

REC-4: The agencies, in consultation with the state, could designate areas within the Preserve and periods of time when no hunting and/or use of firearms will be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, and/or public use and enjoyment.

REC-5: Information/orientation materials such as travel maps, safety bulletins, resource information, and recreation information will be conveniently available.

REC-6: Permits will continue to be required for overnight camping in the Wilderness and/or biking or hiking in the original Monument area north of US 20/26/93.

REC-7: Applications for permitted outfitters and guide services will be encouraged.

REC-8: Should permitted outfitter, guide, or similar NPS concession use numbers of the Monument reach 2,000 annual user days in the expanded portion of the Monument, BLM and/or NPS staff will prepare an implementation level plan for the management of these services. This plan will include use allocations and limits for a variety of recreational experiences, such as geology tours, nature walks, bird/wildlife watching, or horseback riding.

REC-9: No wood fires will be permitted within the original Monument (campground sites provide grills for charcoal cooking only; wood fires are permitted at group campsites).

REC-10: No hunting will be allowed in the NPS Monument.

REC-11: Programs will promote wilderness and backcountry ethics.

REC-12: The agencies will continue to provide and promote

cross-country skiing and snowshoeing activities along the 7-mile loop drive in the northern end of the Monument.

- REC-13: Leave-No-Trace and Tread Lightly programs will be promoted with staff and the public.
- REC-14: Up to six locations could be developed for camping in the Passage Zone.
- REC-15: The Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service will actively seek potential partnerships with off-site Monument information and interpretation.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

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**Viewscape.** Perpetuating scenic vistas and open western landscapes for future generations is one of the purposes identified for the Monument. The visual resources of the Monument represent a remnant of the undeveloped American West and one of the few remaining great expanses of sagebrush steppe. The contrasting lava flows were described in the 1924 Presidential Proclamation originally establishing the Monument as a “weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself.” This creates a viewscape unique in North America.

The gray-green sagebrush steppe and black lava fields about the high Pioneer Mountains to the north. Across the Monument, 3,500 feet of vertical relief present visitors with enormous panoramic views to the south. On a clear day, the Grand Tetons, 140 miles to the east, can be seen from the Monument. One of the nation’s clearest airsheds enhances these long, uninterrupted vistas.

The Monument contains numerous striking volcanic features such as pahoehoe and a’ā lava flows, cinder cones, spatter ramparts, and enormous lava fields. Low shield volcanoes and cinder cones (known locally as “buttes”) rise up throughout the

entire Monument landscape. The exposed lava varies in color, while shapes and textures of the flows add scenic variety on a smaller scale. Nearly barren of vegetation, the most recent lavas at times flowed around kipukas, which offer some visual relief from the continuous lava. Expansive sagebrush steppe and grasslands, as well as the different ages and types of lava surfaces, support a remarkable variety of plant and animal communities that add to the visual diversity of the Monument.

**Visual Resource Management.** Visual Resource Management (VRM) is a standard tool used by the Bureau of Land Management to identify and protect visual values on public lands (USDI BLM 1986a, 1986b). A VRM inventory of the Monument area was completed in 1989, including an evaluation of scenic quality, identification of viewsheds, and key observation points for visitors (see Figure 11). This inventory data was analyzed and presented as visual resource classes. This Plan places all public land into one of four VRM management classes. VRM classes provide standards for planning, designing, and evaluating future management projects. The four VRM management class designations are as follows:

Class I — The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. Any contrast created within the characteristic landscape must not attract attention. This classification is applied to visual Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other similar situations.

Class II — The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. Changes in any of the basic visual elements caused by management activity should not be evident in the landscape. A contrast may be seen but should not attract attention.

Class III — The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Contrasts to the basic elements caused by a management activity may be evident and begin to attract attention in the landscape. The changes, however, should remain subordinate in the existing landscape.

Class IV — The objective of this class is to provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. Contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature in the landscape in terms of scale. However, the change should be compatible with the basic element of the landscape.

**Desired Future Conditions:**

Existing opportunities to experience solitude, dark night sky, and views of landscapes remain substantially free of human intrusions.

A primitive and natural visual setting is retained.

The visual integrity of the Goodale's Cutoff historic trail corridor remains protected.

Management activities meet or exceed adopted Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes.

**Management Actions:**

VRM-1: BLM and NPS managers should seek the cooperation of visitors, neighbors, and local government agencies to prevent or minimize impacts and prevent the loss of western landscape vistas and natural dark conditions.

VRM-2: Existing waste dumps will be inventoried and cleaned up.

VRM-3: VRM inventory classes will be designated as management classes as shown in Figure 11.

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**SOUNDSCAPES**

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The Monument is a quiet place. "Natural quiet" refers to the state of having only natural sources of sound — for example, wind, rustling leaves, water, and animal calls. Most of the Monument is not subject to modern sources of unnatural sound intrusion, or noise. The only major noise producers are highway traffic from outside the Monument, the railroad near the southern edge of the Monument, and aircraft overflights.

**Desired Future Conditions:**

Aircraft noise impacts are minimized.

Existing opportunities to experience solitude and natural quiet remain substantially free of human intrusions.

**Management Actions:**

SOUND-1: Aircraft landings associated with commercial air tours will not be authorized within the Pristine Zone.

SOUND-2: The agencies will coordinate with the Department of Defense, Federal Aviation Administration, and the Idaho Department of Aeronautics regarding noise impacts.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A look at economic change in each of the five counties within the planning area shows that the economies of even adjacent counties can be very different. While some typify changes that are occurring in many areas of the western United States, others retain high levels of more traditional economic sectors or reflect unique histories. Blaine and Minidoka Counties, for example, follow widespread patterns of economic change in that the services and professional and non-labor income (income derived from investments, retirement, social security, etc.) categories have shown the most significant growth. Despite this similarity, these two counties are at the high (Blaine) and low (Minidoka) ends of the spectrum in terms of per capita income, housing values, and educational attainment.

The Monument contributes to the local economy through its employment of 21 part- or full-time workers and administrators and approximately 10 to 20 seasonal employees who live in various communities around the Monument. The National Park Service also uses concession contracts and commercial use authorizations (formerly incidental business permits) to manage commercial activities within its units. Currently, the only concession con-

tract is issued to the nonprofit Craters of the Moon Natural History Association. This contract allows the association to offer convenience items such as sunscreen, film, and soft drinks, as well as books and educational materials, for purchase by visitors in the NPS visitor center. There are no current commercial use licenses or incidental business permits issued for activities on NPS lands in the Monument. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game offers commercial use licenses on BLM-administered land.

### **Desired Future Conditions:**

Gateway and other nearby communities benefit economically and socially from the presence of the Monument.

### **Management Actions:**

- SOCIO-1: An intergovernmental coordinating group will be considered to ensure consistency of this plan with other state and local plans.
- SOCIO-2: The agencies will participate with interested communities in their planning for accommodating Monument visitors through their communities.

## RESEARCH

All of the proclamations associated with Craters of the Moon National Monument focus on the unique geologic resources of the Monument. The protection, study, and appreciation of the Monument's unique geologic features are perhaps the overriding purposes of the Monument. Both agencies acknowledge the need for scientific study of the Monument's remote and often harsh environment. However, restrictions on surface disturbance and cross-country travel can constrain geo-

logic research. Basic research plays an important role in the identification, characterization, and interpretation of the Monument's resources.

BLM and NPS staff have been working with the U. S. Geological Survey to pursue ongoing research involving geologic mapping, geochemistry, geophysics, geomorphology, seismology, geomagnetism, geodesy, tectonics, earthquake hazards, volcanic hazards, and climate change.

The agencies have engaged in numerous partnerships with a variety of academic organizations, professional societies, clubs, and hobby organizations who have expressed interest in the Monument's unique geologic resources. These organizations include three separate Grottos (chapters) associated with the National Speleological Society.

The National Park Service has a long-term air quality monitoring program in place. Both agencies will strive to continue and expand climatic and air quality research and monitoring. The Idaho National Energy and Environmental Laboratory is an important partner in these activities.

The Monument contains several ongoing archeological scientific studies. The agencies will continue established relationships with academic institutions for these challenge cost share research projects. Inventory, characterization, and protection of cultural resources are a high priority for both agencies. The potential for additional discoveries of significant cul-

tural and paleontological resources is high. Investigations will conform to policy guidelines for surface disturbance within Wilderness Study Areas and minimize surface disturbance elsewhere

The lava flows at Craters of the Moon create many unique opportunities for the study of isolated, relatively undisturbed native plant communities. The proclamation describes kipukas as important comparative benchmarks relative to human-altered plant communities in the Snake River Plain. The Monument has been the site of many vegetative studies and research projects. Several studies involving rare plants, natural fire, fire rehabilitation, and grazing are in progress.

The Monument is also a remnant stronghold for Greater sage-grouse and is particularly suited for the study of healthy Greater sage-grouse populations. The agencies will continue to encourage both population and habitat research in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.



STUDENTS CAN SERVE AS CITIZEN SCIENTISTS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS.

Several potential partners have expressed an interest in biological science at the Monument including Idaho's Conservation Data Center, the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, universities, and the Biological Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. Both agencies actively encourage appropriate and needed biological research in cooperation with these partners to fulfill this important aspect of Monument designation.

**Desired Future Conditions:**

The findings of scientific research enhance management decisions and increase public appreciation and understanding of Monument resources.

The research community and the Monument staff view the Monument as a productive outdoor laboratory.

**Management Actions:**

RSEAR-1: To maintain a complete record of research activities and research and specimen collecting, permits will be required for all projects. Standard operating procedures for the NPS permit process will be incorporated for the entire Monument.

RSEAR-2: The agencies will coordinate the review and approval of research applications to confirm adherence to each agency's policy and to ensure compatibility with the purposes of the Monument.

RSEAR-3: Varying means, including interdisciplinary and interagency research projects, will emphasize the use of the Monument as a productive outdoor laboratory.

RSEAR-4: BLM and NPS staff will facilitate the transfer of research information to the public.

RSEAR-5: To the extent they are available, NPS and BLM facilities and staff assistance may be made available to qualified researchers and educational institutions conducting authorized studies or field classes.

RSEAR-6: The agencies will work with interested partners in sponsoring a symposium or similar forum for sharing information on past research and helping identify future research needs and opportunities.

