

Questions and Answers
RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL
MONUMENT AND PRESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

January 2007

What is the decision in the Record of Decision for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan?

The decision in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (Monument) Management Plan is to adopt Alternative D as the final management plan for the Monument. The Monument Management Plan emphasizes protection and restoration of physical and biological resources and processes. Management actions include aggressive suppression of wildland fires to protect existing sagebrush steppe, restoration of degraded sagebrush steppe, expansion of noxious weed prevention and control, and enforcement of the prohibition on cross-country vehicle travel.

Why was Alternative D selected? How does the selected Alternative differ from the rest of the Alternatives?

Among the alternatives considered, the selected plan best protects Monument resources while also providing a range of quality visitor experiences, meets the BLM and NPS goals, statutory and policy requirements for managing the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, and meets national environmental policy goals. Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, proposed no major changes in resource management, visitor programs, or facilities. Alternative B emphasized a broad array of visitor experiences, while Alternative C emphasized the Monument's primitive character. Alternative D provides a high level of protection of natural and cultural resources, while providing for a wide range of neutral and beneficial uses of the environment. Alternative D surpasses the other alternatives in realizing the full range of national environmental policy goals in §101 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

How was the issue of livestock grazing on the Monument handled in preparing the Monument Management Plan?

On November 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7373 expanded the Monument from 54,000 to more than 738,000 acres. The Proclamation 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." Livestock grazing, a traditional land use on BLM lands prior to Monument expansion, was to continue in all the alternatives considered, with only minor changes among alternatives.

Are there any changes from the Proposed Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement?

Three protests were filed within the 30-day protest period by the Idaho Conservation League, The Wilderness Society, and Western Watersheds Project. The main protest points pertained to the range of alternatives, analysis of impacts, livestock grazing, soil disturbance, consistency with the purpose and significance for which the Monument was established, minimizing impacts to geologic features from recreational development, OHV designations, reclamation of materials sites, noxious weed control methods, sage grouse guidelines, livestock developments, protection of lands with wilderness characteristics, and travel management.

Changes from the Proposed Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement include editorial corrections and clarification and/or definition of some management actions contained in the Plan. These changes satisfied two protests (Wilderness Society and Idaho Conservation League). These changes further clarified or defined the following subjects:

- Management Zones
- Recreational Development of Geologic Features
- Limited OHV Designation
- Acquired Lands
- Reclamation of Material Sites
- Recreation Desired Future Condition
- Herbicide Use to Control Weeds
- Protection of sage-grouse leks
- Comprehensive Travel Management Plan
- Livestock Developments in Laidlaw Park
- Protection of Land with Wilderness Characteristics
- Integrated Weed Management
- Class 2 Trails
- Class D/Class C User-created Roads

Issues raised in the remaining protest, from Western Watersheds Project, were addressed in a protest response letter from the Assistant Director of BLM (AD), prior to signing of the ROD. The AD concluded that the Idaho State Director and the Shoshone Field Office Manager followed the applicable planning process, regulations and policies, and there was no basis for changing the Proposed Plan as a result of the WWP protest.

How is information about the Record of Decision and the final Monument Management Plan being disseminated to folks that participated in the planning process and the general public?

The Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Monument Management Plan was published in the *Federal Register* on Friday, January 05, 2007. The notice provided addresses where the ROD could be viewed on NPS and BLM websites, or to request a hard copy of the document. Copies of the ROD were mailed on January 5, 2007, to those on the mailing

list who had participated in the planning process. In addition, a news release was sent to members of the media, with notification of the availability of the Record of Decision and how to request copies of the ROD and the Monument Management Plan, when available.

When will the final Monument Management Plan be available? How can I get a copy?

The BLM and NPS are currently working together to finalize the presentation version of the Monument Management Plan. We intend to have copies of the plan (hard copy and compact disc) available for distribution by early spring. When available, the Plan will be posted to BLM (www.id.blm.gov/shoshone/plans/crmo/index.htm) and NPS (www.nps.gov/crmo/parkmt/index.htm) websites. You may also request a copy from the BLM Shoshone Field Office at 208-732-7200 or via email: ID_Craters_Plan@blm.gov.

What happens next?

The BLM and NPS are currently developing an Implementation Strategy to outline priorities and the resources needed during the first several years of implementation of the Plan. The Strategy will also lay out a schedule to develop priority activity-level plans. One of the first activity-level plans, as stipulated by Presidential Proclamation 7373, will be the Comprehensive Travel Management Plan for the Monument. Other priority activity-level plans include: a Long-range Interpretive Plan, a Sign Plan, a Fire Management Plan, a Cultural Resources Management Plan, and a Cave Management Plan. The Implementation Strategy Plan will also contain cost estimates for the first five years of implementation of the Plan, a schedule of implementation actions, and strategies for funding implementation of the Plan.

How do I get involved?

BLM and the NPS will be releasing public notices as we begin the preparation of the first priority activity-level plans. We encourage public participation in the upcoming Travel Management Planning process and other projects as we implement the Plan. Each project will be subject to additional site-specific environmental analysis, associated Tribal consultation, and agency and public involvement. To be notified of upcoming projects, contact the Shoshone Field Office at 208-732-7200 or via email: ID_Craters_Plan@blm.gov