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Subject: National Monument Review - Comments on Craters of the Moon NM & Preserve
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Attachments: [Craters of the Moon Economic Report BLM Reviewed final.docx](#)

Hi Ben,

The BLM has reviewed the draft Department of Interior economic report for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Our suggested edits are compiled and provided in comments and track changes within the attachment.

Thanks for the opportunity to review and provide feedback on this report. Hope you have a great weekend!

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Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on the economic values and economic contributions of the activities and resources associated with Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (CMNM) ~~or Monument~~. A brief economic profile of Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, and Power Counties, which are in the Snake River Basin of Central Idaho, are also provided. An economic profile of Lincoln County is not included because of the small amount of Monument lands within it.

Background

CMNM, the first national monument established in Idaho, was ~~established-designated~~ by President Coolidge on May 2, 1924 (Proclamation 1694) to preserve its “lunar” landscape; thought to resemble that of the Moon. Between 1928 and 1962, four more presidential proclamations were issued, which increased the monument in size adjusted the Monument boundary from approximately roughly 25,000 to 53,000 acres. In November of 2000, President Clinton issued Proclamation 7373, expanding the CMNM from approximately 503,000 acres to nearly (b) (5) DPP. It also enlarged the Monument’s administration by adding BLM lands to those of the National Park Service. Proclamation 7373 transferred management of the area’s exposed lava flows from BLM to NPS, and it included BLM-managed lands to assure protection for the entire Great Rift volcanic zone, a “remarkable fissure eruption together with its associated volcanic cones, craters, rifts, lava flows, caves, natural bridges, and other phenomena characteristic of volcanic action which are of unusual scientific value and general interest.” In 2002, Congress passed PL 107-213, which re-designated as preserve the approximately 411,475 acres of NPS-managed land added through Proclamation 7373. This designation allows for hunting, and on lands. All BLM lands are open for hunting and fishing.

Within the CMNM boundary are 275,100 acres of BLM land, 465,300 acres of NPS land, 8,200 acres of state land, and 6,600 acres of private land. The CMNM boundary occupies approximately 14% of the area in the five counties. Because the mMonument boundary is minimal in Lincoln County (2%), it is excluded from the economic profile provided below. The CMNM may be/is within the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute ~~tribes claim the CMNM is within their tribes~~ historic cultural area.

Public Outreach Prior to Designation

According to newspaper articles published in the early 2000s (prior to expansion), there had been numerous attempts by local boosters organizations to expand the CMNM, most recently in the 1980s. Secretary Bruce Babbitt visited the area in April 2000, meeting with local government officials, permittees, to discuss options and others to have conversations regarding ways to protect the special volcanic resources found in the area. Babbitt returned to the area the following month to meet with local ranchers in the area the following month and, with their input, mapped out what would become the boundaries of the expansion.

In June of 2000, Senator Larry Craig held a Hearing of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management in Twin Falls, Idaho. Three panels comprising a mix of local government officials, environmental organizations, permittees, and other panelists were convened to provide oral testimony on the proposal to expand the monument, from a mix of local government officials, environmental organizations, permittees, and others. There were approximately 75 people in attendance. More than 30 people provided oral testimony in addition to the people on the panels. Testimonies Oral

Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve, Idaho

Location: Blaine, Butte, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Power Counties, ID

Managing agencies: NPS, BLM

Adjacent cities/counties/reservations:

- Counties: 2% of Monument area extends into Lincoln County, ID

Resource Areas:

- ☒ Recreation ☐ Energy ☐ Minerals
- ☒ Grazing ☐ Timber ☒ Scientific Discovery
- ☒ Tribal Cultural

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testimony ~~were~~ about split between those testifying for the support of the expansion of the monument and those testifying against.

Table 1. Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, Power Counties and State of Idaho Economic Snapshot

Measure	Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, Power Counties, ID	Idaho
Population, 2016 ^a	51,972	1,616,547
Unemployment Rate, April 2017 ^b	2.2-3.5%	3.4%
Median Household Income, 2015 ^a	\$37,891-\$60,088	\$47,583

^aU.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

^b<http://lmi.idaho.gov/publications/2017/LAUS/unemploymentbycounty.pdf>

Within the NPS-administered portion of the 2000 monument proposed expansion, the primary public concern was hunting restrictions on the expanded monument lands. The proclamation of the re-designation of this area to the national preserve allowed for hunting, eliminating this concern.

Local Economy and Economic Impacts

As summarized in Table 1, Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, and Power Counties in central Idaho account for approximately 3% of the State's population. Only Blaine County exceeds the State's median household income. All but Power County have unemployment rates lower than the State. The population of Blaine County has increased substantially over the past 20 years, while Butte County has decreased. ~~dropped.~~ In comparison, the unemployment rates within the Native American population ranges from 0% to just over 4% in these counties.

The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) has developed a set of county-level typology codes that captures a range of economic and social characteristics. The CMNM counties are classified as follows:

- Farming dependent – Minidoka and Power Counties (farming accounted for 25% or more of the county's earnings or 16% or more of the employment averaged over 2010-2012)
- Recreation dependent – Blaine County (ERS formula based on recreation-related employment, earnings, income, and seasonal housing)
- Manufacturing dependent – Power County (manufacturing accounted for 23% or more of the county's earnings or 16% of the employment averaged over 2010-12)
- No dependence on mining, and no persistent poverty

Socioeconomic conditions in these counties have followed roughly the same pattern as the rest of the U.S. in recent years with a long upward trajectory in personal income and employment, which was interrupted by the 2007-2009 recession. Over time, unearned income (income from investments, rental properties, retirement accounts, etc.) has become an increasingly large source of total income within the five counties, reaching a high of around 45% of all income as of 2009. This implies that the local economy could be enjoying stability that comes with income independent on the labor market, and it corresponds with an aging population. From 1970 to 2000, job growth in services, construction, and retail-related industries outpaced growth in every other economic sector in the region. Services industry jobs increased by a much larger number than did jobs in any other industry during those same years, but since 2000, most sectors' employment numbers have remained fairly steady. At 12.5% in 2012, farm earnings as a percentage of total earnings are quite a bit higher in the five-county region than in the U.S. (1%). In 2007, beef cattle operations comprised nearly 30% of all farm enterprises in the study area.

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Activities and Resources Associated With CMNM

Activities taking place at CMNM include:

- Recreation:** As summarized in Table 2, 255,400 NPS park visitors spent an estimated \$8.9 million¹ in local gateway regions while visiting CMNM in 2016. These expenditures supported a total of 139 jobs, \$3.3M in labor income, \$5.3M in value added, and \$10.2M in economic output in local gateway economies surrounding the Monument. Another 3,654 visitors spent \$117,842 on BLM lands, supporting 2 additional jobs and \$78,941 in value added. The average consumer surplus value for the area is \$54.19 per recreational visitor-day, resulting in an estimated \$14M of economic value (net benefits) generated in 2016.¹ The Idaho Fish and Game Commission sets hunting seasons and other regulations for hunting in Idaho. Most of CMNM is within Idaho Fish and Game Hunting Unit 52A. The length of season and number of available controlled-hunt tags vary annually on the basis of wildlife population levels and other factors.
- Energy:** There are no known natural gas or oil deposits within the Monument boundaries. The area has not been formally assessed for energy but a USGS survey on the mineral resource potential of an area that included CMNM noted that “Locating...hypothetical resources (oil and gas) that may underlie the geologically young lava flows of the study area would require extensive geophysical exploration and drilling.”²
- Non-Energy Minerals:** There are no known mineral deposits within the Monument boundaries. There was one Free Use Permit in existence in the BLM Monument on the date of Proclamation 7373. Free Use Permits at two sites within the Monument produced 12,750 cubic yards in 1997 and 1,053 cubic yards in 1998. Once the permit expired, it was not re-issued. The Idaho Transportation Department 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. No mineral processing facilities are identified as located close to the Monument.
- Grazing:** NPS administers 465,047 acres (62%) of CMNM. The NPS-administered areas are 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. BLM manages livestock grazing on approximately 290,000 acres (including BLM, private, and state lands) in the Monument. Of the 275,100 acres managed by BLM, 273,900 (99.6%) are available for livestock grazing. Current permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs) within the Monument total 36,965. Grazing is managed by three different BLM field offices and data on billed AUMs provided by BLM includes AUMs billed on allotments that do not fall within Monument boundaries. In FY 2016, there were 51,386 billed

Table 2. Estimated Economic Contributions, 2016

Activities	Value added (net additions to GDP), \$ millions	Employment supported (number of jobs)
Recreation*	\$5.3M	139
Grazing	Grazing value-added is not available	94
Cultural resources	Unquantifiable; some values would be included in recreation	Unquantifiable; some values would be included in recreation

*Source: National Park Visitor Spending. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>
Recreational visits are based on counts at the main entrance off Highway 20/26 and overnights are at the NPS campground in the park

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¹ Recreation unit value is a survey-based value for general recreation for the Intermountain region from the USGS Benefit Transfer Toolkit <https://my.usgs.gov/benefit-transfer/>. Economic value is the net benefit to recreational users (total benefits minus total costs).

² Mineral Resource Potential of the Great Rift Instant Study Area Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, and Power Counties, Idaho <https://pubs.usgs.gov/mf/1462-B/report.pdf>

AUMs between the three field offices of which an estimated 14,650 are attributed to the Monument. It is estimated that this level of grazing is associated with economic output of approximately \$7.0 million and supports around 94 jobs.³ Direction contained in the CMNM Management Plan prohibits new livestock developments in the North Laidlaw Park pasture and Bowl Crater allotment. The Shoshone Field Office recently released a Proposed [Resource Management Plan \(RMP\)](#) Amendment that analyzes alternatives for livestock grazing management on BLM managed lands. The Proposed [RMP Plan](#) includes minor changes to the total number of AUMs permitted in the Monument.

- **Timber:** None. This area is not conducive to timber production.
- **Scientific Investigation:** Scientific research in the CMNM is diverse and includes ongoing investigations of the geology and kipukas (isolated vegetation communities surrounded by lava). The CMNM focuses interpretive and educational programs on geology, the prehistoric and historic value of the park, ecosystems, and adaptation.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources:** The archaeological record indicates members of the Shoshone-Bannock tribes and their ancestors spent considerable time at CMNM. A small amount of subsistence hunting occurs by members of the tribes. NPS reports that tribal access is good, and members appear to come to CMNM on a regular basis.

If the Monument had not been designated, the lands added during the 2000 expansion would likely be managed under the pre-existing BLM [management](#) planning documents ([1986 Monument RMP](#)). Quantitative data regarding mineral extraction, subsistence activities, and cultural uses are not available.

³ BLM data.