

Trail To The Crater

Allow yourself a minimum of 3 hours hiking time. Located 1.1 miles from the day use area, the cone is one-mile in circumference. Round trip is roughly 3 miles. Follow the trail to the west of the cinder cone. This will take you to a wide opening where an explosive eruption had breached the crater wall. From here, the climb to the top is an 80-foot incline. Due to the extreme heat, it is suggested that hikes be planned between the months of October thru April.

Scenic Overview

If the hike to the crater doesn't appeal to you, an ADA* compliant shaded platform providing a scenic view of the crater is located 250 feet from the day use area.

Photography

Photographers love this area in the spring. The crater and surrounding area provides a backdrop of desert lilies, pink primroses, and purple sand verbena.

Leave No Trace

Enjoy your visit and help minimize impacts by staying on designated routes to reduce erosion, packing out litter, respecting others, and leaving natural and cultural resources as you find them.

Organized Groups

If you are planning a visit to the crater with an organized group, please contact the BLM office at (760)326-7000 at least 180 days in advance to see if a permit is necessary.

*American with Disabilities Act

Amboy Crater

Amboy Crater, formed of ash and cinders, is 250 feet high and 1,500 feet in diameter. It is situated in one of the youngest volcanic fields in the United States. It is located in the Barstow-Bristol trough, a conspicuous west-northwest trending physiographic feature which approximately straddles the boundary between the Mojave and Sonoran tectonic blocks.

This field was created by at least 4 distinct periods of eruptions, resulting in a coaxially nested group of volcanic cinder cones. The most recent eruption of Amboy Crater was approximately 10,000 years ago.

The lava flows consist of basalt rich in minerals of magnesium, iron, and calcium. Upon close examination, you may be able to see minute green-colored olivine crystals. The red color indicates the presence of ferric iron and is a result of steam on heated rocks.

Amboy Crater is located on public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Its recent origin and its near perfect shape led to its designation as a National Natural Landmark in 1973.

Facilities at the crater consist of a day use area with interpretive kiosk, four shaded picnic tables, two vault toilets and a shaded scenic overlook of the area. Facilities and the overlook are connected by a series of concrete walkways and are all wheel-chair accessible.

The closest facilities for gas are Amboy CA, 2 miles east of the crater, Ludlow, CA, 30 miles west or Fenner, CA, 42 miles east. Please plan your trip accordingly.

Volcanic Features

Amboy Crater is a good place to observe various volcanic features. Look for the following when you are exploring the area:

“PAHOEHOE FLOW” is a molten material that contained steam, making it flow more smoothly, creating a surface like rope with a glassy outer skin.

“JUMBLES” are subsurface explosions that disrupted hardened lava flows, creating chunks of volcanic rock.

“BOWL-SHAPED DEPRESSIONS” were formed as a result of inflation of an emplaced, but still plastic, crust by molten lava around a general void in the flow. There are twelve depressions throughout the lava field, ranging from 25 to 300 feet in diameter and 4 to 40 feet in depth.

“PRESSURE RIDGES” are long, narrow ridges where large slabs of lava buckled due to pressure from the molten lava flowing under a hardened crust.

“SQUEEZE-UPS” are bulbous extrusions formed from lava squeezing up through cracks.

“LAVA TUBES” are not known to be present in any of the flows, a few lava channels are present.

Low-lying areas on the flow are filled with windblown sediments which range from a few inches to more than 3 feet thick. Sand-blasting is prevalent over the entire flow, and wind-faceted pebbles of basalt are common.



CALIFORNIA

Amboy Crater

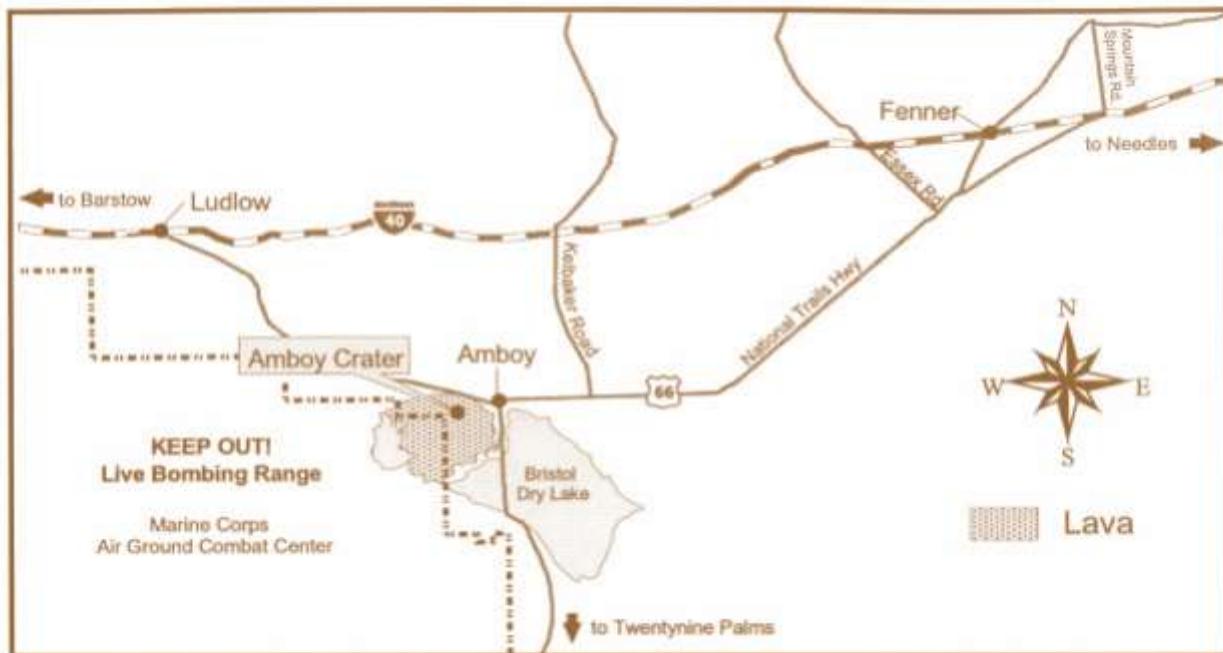
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Fax: (760)326-7099
www.blm.gov/ca/needles**

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Directions

Amboy Crater is approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes from Barstow or Needles. If you want to cruise down historic Route 66 and “get your kicks” here is your chance! From the west: Take I-40 to the Ludlow exit. Then take the National Trails Hwy (aka Route 66) southeast towards Amboy. From the east, take I-40 to the Mountain Springs exit. Take National Trails Hwy heading west towards Amboy. This is one of the more interesting sections of Route 66 You’ll feel like you’ve stepped back in time!

Please Be Advised

Military explosives can be found most anywhere in the desert. Large areas of the desert were and still are used for bombing ranges and maneuvers by the U.S. Armed Forces. There may be unexploded devices that can cause serious bodily injury or death if handled. Report any such devices to the FICC at toll free (888) 233-6518 or call 911.

The Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center borders Amboy Crater to the west. This is a live bombing range. Do NOT enter the bombing range!

BLM/CA/GI-2000/014+8322 Rev: 7/07

Desert Safety

- Do not explore the crater without taking some precautions. Summer temperatures routinely exceed 110° Fahrenheit. Each year people are lost, injured, and sometimes die while visiting desert areas. Take precautions to prevent finding yourself in an emergency situation.
- Always tell someone your plans, or leave a visible note on the dash of your vehicle with your expected route, destination, and time of return. Stick to your itinerary.
- Carry plenty of water. Drink at least a gallon per day.
- Take food or snacks. In the heat, you may not feel hungry, but your body needs nourishment.
- Never go alone.
- Take a good map and compass.
- Carry a first aid kit, signal mirror, flashlight and matches.
- Take a CB radio or cellular phone.
- Wear sunscreen and sunglasses.

- Dress in light colored, loose fitting clothes. Long-sleeves, long pants, a hat, and sturdy shoes will help protect you from the sun, coarse volcanic material, and sharp, spiny vegetation.

- Bring a jacket with you, as evening temperatures may drop 30 degrees or more.

- Make sure your vehicle is in good working condition. Check your tires, spare tire, jack, lug wrench, and fluid levels. Always start with a full tank of gas and try not to let it fall below half a tank before filling up again.

- If you are stranded, stay with your vehicle. Don’t panic. Your vehicle is easier to spot than a person walking. Lift your hood. Attempt to signal for help using a mirror or by using newspapers to make an X on the ground.

- Watch for snakes, spiders, and scorpions among the rocks.



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**In Case of Emergencies
Contact the Federal Interagency
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