

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Twin Falls District  
Shoshone Field Office  
400 West F Street  
Shoshone, ID 83352**

**Finding of No Significant Impact  
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve  
Comprehensive Travel Management Plan  
NEPA No. ID-230-2007-EA-332**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:**

I have determined that the proposed action, as described in the EA will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

In making this determination, I considered the following factors:

**Context**

Comprehensive travel management planning has become a priority for federal land management agencies over the past decade. Whereas many public lands have traditionally been open to cross country traffic without restriction, new pressures have necessitated a national level change from passive to active transportation management.

This project is a Travel Plan affecting public lands located within Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, located in south central Idaho in portions of Blaine, Butte, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Power counties. The Monument 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 is regionally important to visitors who use the area for recreation, scientific research, permitted livestock grazing and other purposes, and nationally important as a unit of the National Park System and National Landscape Conservation System. The environmental assessment (EA) is a cooperative effort between the BLM Shoshone Field Office and the NPS Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Headquarters.

Presidential Proclamation 7373 requires that a transportation (i.e. travel) plan be prepared that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects identified in Proclamation 7373. The Record of Decision for the Monument Management Plan (MMP), and the MMP itself identified the travel plan to be completed as the first and highest priority implementation-level plan.

According to the MMP, 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.

I considered the national, regional and local context of this comprehensive travel management plan.

**Intensity:**

**1. The activities described in the proposed action do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)).** The EA includes a description of the expected environmental consequences of closing and rehabilitating routes; limiting access on certain routes to authorized administrative access only; closing certain routes during the active sage-grouse lekking season and times; closing routes to motorized use in areas used by wintering big game; improving access through road upgrades; and providing parking areas for Monument users. As described in the EA, none of the expected environmental consequences would have any significant beneficial or adverse impacts.

**2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).** The proposed action would result in an increase in public health and safety by upgrading certain routes to facilitate the movement of people and equipment within the Monument, and reducing the risk of large wildland fires. Implementation of the components of the proposed action would not result in potentially significant or adverse effects to public health and safety.

**3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.** The project area does not contain any prime or unique farmlands or wild and scenic rivers. The project area contains Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. The proposed action does not include any roads or routes in these areas, nor does it propose any actions within them. The project area contains cave resources. Proposed activities would not significantly affect cave resources because known cave resources are located in areas away from locations where the proposed road-related actions will occur. Cultural resources occur but were determined not to be significantly affected because the indirect effects of the proposed action include the reduction of motorized access to cultural resources, which in turn will result in the potential for fewer incidents of looting and human-caused fire. Also, routes to be closed would be surveyed for cultural resources before any ripping occurs so that ripping activities avoid cultural resources. Coordination with agency archaeologists will ensure roadbed ripping does not occur directly on cultural resources. And Agency archaeologists will conduct cultural resource surveys to ensure no parking lots are placed in areas that would impact cultural resources. Areas of critical environmental concern occur within the project area but were determined not to be significantly affected because a reduction in motorized routes will reduce access in these areas, as well as reduce the frequency of human-caused fires and the spread of non-native invasive plants and noxious weeds

**4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).** Travel Management Planning is a common practice with the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service (the Agencies). The routes that are proposed for closure have been identified as either unneeded, unnecessary or unused, which will have a minimal effect on most visitors. It is common for the NPS and BLM to close these types of roads. The environmental effects of closing roads are well understood and do not involve effects that are likely to be highly controversial. The Agencies frequently apply administrative use only restrictions to routes to facilitate resource management.

**5. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).** The effects of the proposed action identified in the EA are not uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks. Travel Management techniques such as those described in the EA are not new or unique, and have been successfully used by the Agencies in many previous travel plans.

**6. My decision to implement these activities does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).** The Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Comprehensive Travel

Management Plan does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects because the Agencies are directed to prepare travel management plans, and the actions proposed in this EA have been used by the Agencies numerous times in the past. Any similarly proposed future project must be individually evaluated on its own merits.

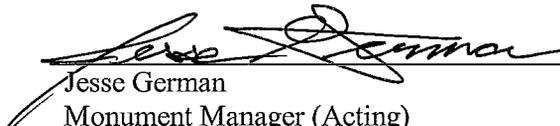
**7. The effects of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Comprehensive Travel Management Plan project would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).** The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts. An analysis of cumulative effects was conducted in the EA and no significant cumulative impacts were identified.

**8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).** Scientific, cultural, and historical resources will not be significantly affected by the Proposed Action, and clearances will be completed during implementation of the proposed action in cases where potential damage to these resources could occur as described on pages 43-44 of the EA. In addition no districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified. Lastly, design features in the proposed action have been incorporated to ensure that unknown cultural resources would be protected should they be discovered during implementation.

**9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).** There are no Threatened or Endangered Species in the project area nor will any be affected by the proposed action. The EA discloses impacts to wildlife species on pages 31-43.

**10. The proposed activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).** The proposed action does not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

**APPROVED:**

  
Jesse German  
Monument Manager (Acting)

Date 9/29/09

Craters of the Moon National Monument  
and Preserve