

# Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Travel Map



## WELCOME TO YOUR PUBLIC LANDS!

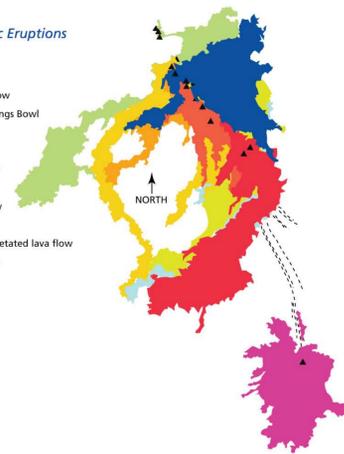
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is a 750,000-acre geologic wonderland. Its central feature is the Great Rift, a 52-mile long crack in the Earth's crust. The Great Rift is a remarkably preserved volcanic landscape with an array of exceptional features. Exposed fissures, lava fields, lava tubes, craters and cinder cones form a strangely beautiful volcanic sea on central Idaho's Snake River Plain. Craters of the Moon was formed by eruptions that started 15,000 years ago and represents the last period of active volcanism in this area. The most recent activity occurred just 2,100 years ago, and is likely to continue in the future.

Craters of the Moon offers opportunities for hiking, camping, and backcountry travel for all levels of interest and ability. For casual travelers the 7-mile Loop Road and trails in the National Park Service (NPS) Monument provide easy access to a range of volcanic features. A network of primitive roads in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Monument offers backcountry driving opportunities for those with high-clearance, 4-wheel-drive vehicles and more time to explore. Individuals seeking challenge and solitude will find both in the cross-country hiking available in the rugged lava flows of the Craters of the Moon Wilderness and several Wilderness Study Areas along the Great Rift.

This map depicts travel routes available for public use as established by the 2009 Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Travel Management Plan. All motorized travel is limited to designated roads and primitive roads.

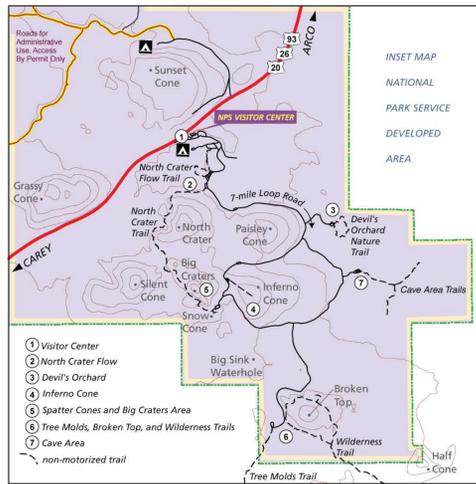
## The Great Rift Zone's Volcanic Eruptions

- c. 2,100 years old Blue Dragon Flow
  - c. 2,200 years old Wapi Flow & Kings Bowl
  - c. 4,000 years old Minidoka Flow
  - c. 6,500 years old Sawtooth Flow
  - c. 7,300 years old Little Park Flow
  - c. 7,300 years old Grassy Flow
  - c. 10,200 years old Pronghorn Flow
  - c. 12,100 years old Carey Flow
  - c. 15,100 years old oldest, non-vegetated lava flow
- Rift Zone Faults  
▲ Volcano



## Points of Interest (Locations on Reverse Side)

**★ Visitor Center, Loop Road and Campground** – Located 18 miles west of Arco on U.S. Highway 20/26/93 the NPS Visitor Center is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily with extended summer hours and closed on winter holidays. It is an ideal place to begin your visit with films, exhibits, and staff to orient you and explain the volcanic origins of the outstanding natural features. Explore dark lava tube caves, gaping craters, and steep-sided spatter cones along the scenic 7-mile Loop Road. There are excellent short hikes and educational signs along the route. A variety of ranger-led walks and talks are offered throughout the year including cave tours in the summer and snowshoe walks in the winter. The Loop Road is open to vehicles from May into November and becomes a cross-country ski trail in the winter. Fifty-one NPS campsites are open from May into November. Some are ADA-accessible. Camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis.



**★ Blue Dragon Flow** – When magma rose from the Earth's mantle creating lava flows, the mineral titanium may have separated and surfaced as the iridescent cobalt blue color on certain flows. Early visitors to the Great Rift claimed this marvel resembled the scales of a dragon's back, hence the name Blue Dragon Flow. The Craters of the Moon lava field is the only place in the world where the Blue Dragon phenomenon is known to occur.

**★ Bear Trap Cave** – an easy stop along the Arco-Minidoka Road. Bear Trap Cave is a major lava tube system. It is one of several systems that originated northeast of the Kings Bowl Rift. The tube can be traced for more than 15 miles westward until it is buried by lava flows. The total cave length at this stop is about 150 feet.

**★ Kings Bowl** – the magnificent Great Rift up close. Here the character of this deep volcanic fissure has been revealed on the surface by a violent explosion that resulted from the interaction of hot lava and ground water. Interpretive signs at the site describe the volcanic events that led to the creation of this young feature and the Wapi lava field. NPS permits are required to enter this extremely dangerous rift cave.

**★ Wapi Park** – a good place to camp providing an access to Pillar Butte and Old Juniper Kipuka. This narrow strip of shrub land is surrounded by fingers of lava from the Wapi Flow. At about 2,200 years in age, the Wapi Volcano is the youngest shield volcano on the Snake River Plain. Wapi Park can be reached from the road to Kings Bowl, and requires a four-wheel drive vehicle.

## Map Routes

**ROAD:** A route managed for use by low clearance vehicles having four or more wheels, and maintained for regular and continuous use, depending on current weather conditions. Roads are open to all motorized and non-motorized use unless specified otherwise. Portions of all roads within the Monument are rocky, unimproved and may require a high-clearance vehicle.

**PRIMITIVE ROAD:** A route managed for use by four-wheel drive or high-clearance vehicles. Primitive roads do not normally meet any BLM road design standards. These roads are open to all motorized and non-motorized use unless specified otherwise.

**TRAIL:** A route managed for human-powered, livestock, or off-highway vehicle transportation or for historical or heritage values. *Currently ALL trails within the Monument and Preserve are limited to non-motorized use.* UTVs are limited to roads and primitive roads. Use caution when traveling on any of these routes.

## Travel Restrictions

Cross-country motorized travel is not allowed within the Monument and Preserve except immediately adjacent to roads and trails for purposes such as parking, turning around, or passing another vehicle.

Only vehicles licensed for highway use are allowed on the 7-mile Loop Road and no vehicles, including motorcycles and bicycles, are permitted off designated roadways. All trails in the Loop Road area are limited to non-motorized use.

Additional travel restrictions are in effect in certain areas to protect wildlife and sensitive features. Roads designated with "Seasonal Closures" may only be used during the open period. Permission from private land owners is required to cross private land unless legal access is provided by a Federal, State, or County road.

## Safety

Outside the developed NPS area, there are no services and marginal phone coverage in the Monument. Exploring these areas requires special planning and an awareness of potential hazards. Bring a map, compass or GPS, a reliable form of communication, first-aid kit, sun protection, fire extinguisher, shovel, and plenty of water, food and fuel. Always let someone know where you're traveling and when you'll return.

On any road or trail, conditions may change at any time based on weather and maintenance frequency. Summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit with high winds causing dangerous fire conditions. Rain or snow can make roads impassable. If you do get stuck or have a mechanical breakdown, stay with your vehicle. A vehicle is much easier to locate than a person on foot.

## Prevent Wildfires

- Completely drown all campfires with water and stir with a stick. Leave a campfire cool to your touch.
- Make certain all motorized vehicles are equipped with a proper exhaust system and spark arrester.
- Never park or drive on dry grass. The exterior of your exhaust system can reach temperatures up to 2800 degrees Fahrenheit, igniting fires in dry vegetation. Vegetation can gather on top of your exhaust system causing it to ignite.
- Include a fire extinguisher and a shovel in your vehicle as standard equipment.
- Report all wildfires at 1-208-886-2373 or #FIRE on your mobile phone.

## Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics

The mission of the Leave No Trace program is to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. It is dedicated to building awareness, appreciation, and most of all, respect for our public recreation places.

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors



## What Did Native Americans See?

Shoshone legend speaks of a serpent on a mountain who, angered by lightning, coiled around it and squeezed until liquid rock flowed, fire shot from cracks, and the mountain exploded. As the rock cooled, the snake was caught in the lava where it remains today.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
This region of Idaho was inhabited by humans 10,000-12,000 years ago.



## Volcanology 101

Volcanic Feature	Simplified Diagram	Examples	Characteristics
Shield Volcano		Laidlaw Volcano, Pillar Butte (Wapi Volcano), Hawaiian volcanoes	Liquid lava emitted from a central vent; large; sometimes has a caldera or a crater; broad, low-angle profile
Cinder Cone		Craters of the Moon, Mount Labor, Mount Zion, Chamberlain Hill, Pilot Butte, Lava Butte	Explosive liquid lava; small; emitted from a central vent; if continued long enough, may build up a shield volcano
Volcanic Dome		Big Southern Butte, Mount St. Helens Lava Dome	Very viscous lava; relatively small; can be explosive; commonly occurs adjacent to craters of composite volcanoes.
Caldera		Yellowstone Lake, Crater Lake	Very large composite volcano collapsed after an explosive period.

Modified from: Topinka, USGS/CVO, 1997. Allen, Volcanoes of the Portland Area, Ore-Blin, v.37, no.9



Volcanic bomb ejected from a vent, NPS Fire Photo

## Words Rock!

- A'a** — Hawaiian term for "hard on the feet" lava flows that have incredibly spiny surfaces when solidified. Walking on 'a'a is very difficult and slow.
- Basalt** — fine grained, dark-colored rock rich in iron and magnesium and relatively poor in silica; the common lava of Hawaii and Craters of the Moon.
- Cinder** — frothy rock ejected from a volcano.
- Crater** — bowl-shaped depression, generally in the top of a volcanic cone, often the vent for volcanic material.
- Fissure** — crack in the earth's surface from which volcanic material may erupt.
- Kipuka** — A Hawaiian term for an "island" of land. It forms when lava encircles a hill or rise as it moves downslope.

- Lava** — magma which has reached the earth's surface.
- Lava Tubes** — hollow tunnels formed when the outer part of a flow has hardened and the inner, still molten material subsequently drains out.
- Magma** — molten rock beneath the earth's surface.
- Pahoehoe** — Hawaiian term for basaltic lava that has a smooth, hummocky, or rogy surface. A pahoehoe flow typically advances as a series of small lobes and toes that continually break out from a cooled crust.
- Rafted Block or Monolith** — large piece of a crater wall carried to a new location by a lava flow.
- Rift Zone** — array of volcanic fissures along which repeated eruptions occur.
- Shield Volcano** — broad, low profile volcano built up by repeated flows of very fluid lava.
- Spatter Cone** — small, steep-sided cone built of blobs of sticky lava that have piled up around a vent.
- Tree Mold** — impression left in the lava of the charred surface of a tree.
- Vents** — conduits in the earth's surface from which volcanic material erupts.
- Volcano** — vent in the surface of the earth through which magma, gases or ash erupt.

## Cooperative Management

Craters of the Moon became a National Monument in 1924 when President Calvin Coolidge set aside an area in southern Idaho containing

"a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself." In the years that followed, the boundaries of the Monument were expanded and altered numerous times by

Congress and five different presidents. In 2000, President Bill Clinton initiated a 13-fold increase in the size of the Monument in order "to assure protection of the entire

Great Rift volcanic zone." This was accomplished by expanding the existing National Park Service unit and merging it with the Bureau of Land Management's newly created National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS).

The fundamental purposes of these two national systems within the Department of the Interior are joined at Craters of the Moon to enhance public service and protection of nationally significant natural and cultural resources, while retaining many traditional uses of the land.

There are three administrative units:

Craters of the Moon National Monument (NPS area) where hunting or grazing are NOT permitted.

Craters of the Moon National Preserve (NPS area) where hunting is permitted and grazing is NOT permitted.

Craters of the Moon National Monument (BLM area) where hunting and grazing ARE permitted.

## National Wilderness Area (NPS)

The Wilderness Act of 1964 recognized wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain". This definition has always fit a large portion of Craters of the Moon. The 43,243-acre Craters of the Moon National Wilderness Area was designated and signed into law on October 23, 1970. With that legislation lands within Craters of the Moon National Monument and Petrified Forest National Park became the first within the National Park System to be designated as wilderness.

Expansion of the Monument in 2000 included another 495,000 acres of adjoining lands already determined by the Bureau of Land Management to be worthy of wilderness designation. These lands remain undeveloped and are managed to ensure they will continue to qualify as wilderness while Congress ponders the issue.

Recreational use of the wilderness area has remained limited. The entire area is snow covered and virtually inaccessible for at least 1/3 of the year. The vast majority of overnight wilderness users hike the Wilderness Trail and camp inside of Echo Crater. The Visitor Center has more information on exploring the wilderness.

## Wilderness Study Areas (NPS and BLM)

In 1976 Congress instructed the Bureau of Land Management, in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, to inventory public land for areas that meet the minimum criteria for wilderness designation under the Wilderness Act of 1964. These areas are called Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

- Criteria for WSA designation are:
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude
  - Opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
  - Ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, scenic or historical value
  - In a natural condition substantially uninfluenced by humans

Congress also asked the BLM to provide recommendations about which areas would be most suitable for wilderness designation. The BLM and the NPS are required to manage WSAs so they remain suitable for wilderness designation until Congress decides to officially designate the land as wilderness or to release it for other purposes.



Rabbitbrush blooms in Inferno Cone at Craters of the Moon, Photo © Glenn Oakley

## Contacts

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Shoshone Field Office  
400 West F Street  
Shoshone, ID 83352  
208-732-7200

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Craters of the Moon  
National Monument and Preserve  
P.O. Box 29  
Arco, ID 83213  
208-527-1300

State of Idaho  
Department of Fish and Game  
Magic Valley Region  
324 South 417 East, Suite 1  
Jerome, ID 83338  
208-324-4359

**REPORT ALL WILDFIRES**  
1-208-886-2373 or  
#FIRE on your mobile phone



BLM/ID/GI-11-0044-1220

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Volcanoes along the Great Rift, Photo © Glenn Oakley

