



Craters of the Moon

National Monument and Preserve

Idaho

Draft Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement





CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE

Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

March 2004

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the Draft Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Plan/EIS) for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. This Plan sets forth the proposed management direction for approximately 740,000 acres of public lands located on the Snake River Plain of Southern Idaho.

In November 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7373 greatly expanded the boundaries of Craters of the Moon National Monument. The Proclamation also directed that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS) cooperatively manage the area. In August 2002, President George W. Bush signed legislation designating the expanded area within the NPS boundaries of the Monument as a National Preserve.

BLM and NPS published in the Federal Register a Notice of Intent to prepare this Plan/EIS in April of 2002. The agencies then published two newsletters and held eight open houses to encourage public input regarding the future management of the Monument. From this input, the agencies developed four conceptual alternatives that were presented to the public via a widely circulated newsletter, the Internet, and in a series of three workshops in February 2003. Information from these meetings and the response to the newsletters were then used to analyze the impacts of the four alternatives and propose a Preferred Alternative.

This Draft Plan/EIS describes the four alternative strategies for managing the Monument and identifies Alternative D as the Preferred Alternative. The Draft Plan/EIS also contains an analysis of the impacts, consequences, and tradeoffs of implementing each of the Alternatives. We will use your comments on this document in making a final decision among the four alternatives. The final decision may be to implement one of the alternatives in its entirety or to use a combination of various actions contained in more than one of the alternatives.

The Final Management Plan will serve as the guiding management strategy for the next 15 to 20 years. The approved, Final Plan will provide a framework for proactive decision-making, including decisions regarding visitor use and preserving natural and cultural resources. The Final Plan will provide overall guidance under which more detailed activities are conducted or implementation plans are prepared. This Draft Plan and the Final Plan must incorporate the purposes for which the area was established as a Monument, the Monument's significant attributes, and the goals that direct appropriate management activity.

We welcome your comments regarding the content of this document. We are particularly interested in input that addresses: 1) possible flaws in the analysis; 2) new information that would have a bearing on the analysis; or 3) needs for clarification. Specific comments would be most useful. We truly appreciate your assistance and contributions to the future of your National Monument.

Sincerely,

James A. Morris
Superintendent
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve
National Park Service

Rick Vandervoet
Monument Manager
Craters of the Moon National Monument
Bureau of Land Management

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This Draft Management Plan/EIS is presented in five chapters and appendices, consistent with federal requirements that guide the preparation of an EIS. Chapter 1 sets the stage for the Draft Plan and EIS by describing the purpose and need for its preparation as well as providing key background information. Chapter 2 describes several potential management approaches, or “alternatives.” The alternatives represent reasonable sets of management decisions that are considered and evaluated in the EIS. Chapter 3 describes the environment, or resources, that will be affected by the decisions contained in the individual alternatives. Chapter 4 describes the impacts of the decisions on these resources. Chapter 5 describes the actions undertaken to provide open and effective participation from members of the public, as well as from organizations, governmental agencies, and consultation with the tribes that all have a stake in the outcome of this process. The appendices provide more detailed information, including a glossary, which some readers may find helpful when reviewing the main text of the document.

Each chapter begins with a more lengthy discussion of its purpose and how the content of that chapter fits into the planning process. All maps and figures are placed within the text of the applicable chapters. In many cases, decisions or other discussions contained in this Draft Plan/EIS refer directly to maps and figures. In fact, many decisions themselves are “map based.” The reader must rely on the text, maps, and figures taken together to fully understand the proposed decisions described in this Draft Plan.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS DOCUMENT

The announcement in the Federal Register that this Draft Management Plan and EIS is available starts a 90-day public comment period during which members of the public are encouraged to review the document and provide comments. During this period, comments may be submitted using several methods:

All written comments should be sent to:

Craters of the Moon National Monument Planning Team
BLM Shoshone Field Office
400 West F Street
Shoshone, ID 83352-1522

E-mail Comments to:

ID_Craters_Plan@blm.gov

Comments may also be submitted online via both agencies' Web sites:

www.id.blm.gov/planning/craters/index.htm

<http://planning.nps.gov/plans.cfm>

Finally, comments may be made in person at one of the public meetings, which will be conducted in communities surrounding the Monument. The specific dates and times for these meetings will be announced in local newspapers, in a newsletter and on the agencies websites.

***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONSIDERATIONS:** Public comments submitted during this planning review, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Shoshone Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.*

Draft
Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve
Blaine, Butte, Lincoln, Minidoka and Power Counties, Idaho

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve was established on May 2, 1924, (Presidential Proclamation 1694). The Monument and Preserve was expanded five times, with the sixth expansion in November 2000. That Presidential Proclamation expanded the boundaries from 54,000 acres to 739, 682 acres to include more volcanic features. That Proclamation also placed the lands under the administration of both the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), with each agency having management authority over separate portions. Visitor use patterns and types have changed, and people are bringing new recreational activities to the area. The Monument is currently being managed under four BLM land use plans and one NPS general management plan, and there is a need to update and consolidate management plans into one comprehensive plan that assists both agencies in managing their resources.

This document examines four alternatives and the impacts of implementing these alternatives in the National Monument and Preserve for the next 15 to 20 years. The **“no-action” alternative, alternative A**, is the existing management and serves as a basis for comparing the other alternatives. **Alternative B** emphasizes a broad array of visitor experiences within the Monument and perpetuates historic use patterns. It would promote more travel and access in the Monument and provide for more extensive educational and directional signs throughout the Monument. One emphasis would be on maintaining a strong interpretation and education program for visitors in the Monument to help protect resources, maintain a safe visitor experience, and minimize conflicts with traditional uses. This alternative represents the highest accommodation of visitor access to and within the Monument. **Alternative C** would emphasize retention and enhancement of the Monument’s primitive character, with minimal visitor facilities or services outside the Frontcountry Zone, and less intensive management to influence resource conditions. More acres would be allocated to the Pristine Zone as compared to the other alternatives. This alternative would emphasize opportunities for solitude and provide a more primitive setting for recreational, education, and management activities; it would also offer protection for geologic and cultural resources and features by limiting access and development. **Alternative D** would emphasize aggressive restoration of the sagebrush steppe community lands, including noxious weed control and fire management. It proposes fewer acres in the Pristine Zone than Alternative C and less Frontcountry area than Alternative B. This alternative would target the most acreage for restoration. Commercial service (e.g., outfitters and guides), as well as off-site visitor opportunities, would be emphasized in this alternative. These commercial services would provide opportunities inside the Monument for visitors to experience and learn about the Monument’s resources and minimize the need for development and agency staffing in the Monument. This alternative would also encourage more off-site visitor experiences. Alternative D is the National Park Service’s and Bureau of Land Management’s preferred alternative. The key impacts of implementing the four alternatives are also described in the “Environmental Consequences” chapter.

Please refer to *How to Use This Document* on the previous page for comment procedures and addresses. This method for public comment submittal stems from court rulings concerning the release of public comments; it is included as recommended by the Office of the Solicitor, Department of the Interior.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Draft Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Plan/EIS) for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (Monument) is to provide land use direction for both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS) at the Monument for the next 15 to 20 years. The approved plan will provide the framework for making decisions about managing the national and cultural resources, visitor use, development, and operations so that future opportunities and problems can be addressed effectively.

On November 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7373 expanded Craters of the Moon National Monument from approximately 54,000 acres to more than 750,000 acres. The Proclamation and subsequent U.S. Department of the Interior direction instructed the BLM and NPS to co-manage the Monument and jointly prepare a land use plan. A Notice of Intent for the Plan/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2002. On August 21, 2002, Public Law 107-213 re-designated the NPS portion of the expanded Monument as a National Preserve. The BLM National Monument, original NPS National Monument, and NPS National Preserve are simply referred to as “the Monument.”

The Management Plan will replace portions of four existing BLM land use plans and entirely replace the NPS Craters of the Moon National Monument General Management Plan (GMP) (1992). NPS and BLM use slightly different land use planning processes. NPS units typically operate under a GMP, while BLM areas operate under a Resource Management Plan (RMP). This marriage between NPS and BLM represents a need to design a unique planning process, which will produce an effective, single, stand-alone, comprehensive Management Plan for the entire Monument.

ISSUES ADDRESSED

Five major issues were identified during public scoping and were subsequently used in developing alternatives for the Plan. Public scoping included eight open houses and three alternative workshops, with an emphasis on gateway communities. Public comments also involved responses to the publication of three newsletters, tours, briefings for local and state government agencies, Resource Advisory Committee meetings, both agencies’ Web sites, and presentations to a wide variety of interest groups. The five major issues are:

- 1) Development: What kinds of Monument facilities and services will be provided apart from the existing facilities?

This issue deals with the kind of visitor facilities and services the agencies will provide.

- 2) Transportation and Access: What type of road and trail system will be needed for travel to, and access within, the Monument?

This issue concerns the impacts of roads and access on the visitor experience and natural resources.

- 3) Public/Visitor Use and Safety: What will be the extent and location of public uses within the Monument? What kinds of experiences do visitors want?

This issue includes a variety of topics, from solitude and managing increased visitation to emergency services and interpretation.

- 4) Authorized Uses: How will the different uses in the Monument be managed?

This issue addresses concerns over mineral materials, outfitters/guides/concessioners, and permitted livestock use.

- 5) Natural and Cultural Resources: How will natural and cultural resources be protected?

This issue concerns the protection of the outstanding geologic features, as well as plant, animal, and cultural/historic resources, plus related issues concerning fire management, noxious weeds, and restoration of communities.

ALTERNATIVES

The Draft Plan/EIS contains four alternatives.

- **Alternative A** represents the No Action Alternative and continues current management at present levels of funding.
- **Alternative B** emphasizes visitor experience within the Monument.
- **Alternative C** emphasizes and enhances the primitive character of the Monument.

- **Alternative D** was selected as the Preferred Alternative and emphasizes aggressive protection and restoration of physical and biological resources.

The four alternatives vary by emphasis theme, resource management decisions, desired future conditions, and the application of management zones. Each alternative would assign various areas of the Monument to different management zones. These zones identify how different areas would be managed to achieve a variety of resource conditions and visitor experience, including different levels of desired development. The management zones define and spatially apply management goals and objectives for levels of development and different types of potential visitor experiences, as follows:

1. Frontcountry Zone areas would allow for a high probability of encountering other people; paved, improved and maintained roads, a diverse non-motorized trail system, administrative and visitor facilities, developed campgrounds and a high level of interpretive programs.
2. Passage Zone areas would offer a medium probability of encountering other people, relatively high standard gravel/dirt roads, rustic designated campsites, limited interpretation, multiple use trailheads/trails, and a high probability for encountering livestock and associated facilities.
3. Primitive Zone areas would prescribe a low probability of encountering other people, challenging driving conditions on low-standard roads, minimal on-site interpretation, low-standard multiuse trails, and a medium probability of encountering livestock and associated facilities.
4. Pristine Zone areas would allow for a high probability of experiencing solitude, challenging access and no roads, no designated campsites, no on-site interpretation, very few trails, and a low probability of encountering livestock and associated facilities.

Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, proposes no major changes in resource management, visitor programs, or facilities. It depicts current management under the agencies' five existing management

plans, as modified by Proclamation 7373, Public Law 107-213, and the agencies' Interim Management Guidelines. Alternative A also serves as a baseline for comparison with the other three alternatives.

The management zones depicted in Alternative A represent the planning team's assessment of current conditions. In other words, the management zones were mapped based on actual, existing conditions in 2003.

Alternative B emphasizes a broad array of visitor experiences within the Monument. Alternative B provides the largest amount of multiple-use trail opportunities; improved access both inside and outside the Monument; and extensive educational, informational, directional signs, and interpretive support facilities throughout the Monument. This alternative also allocates large areas in the Passage Zone to allow for potential new developments like designated rustic campsites, high standard motorized and non-motorized trail networks, and a relatively high standard road system that provides easier access to many areas of the Monument. Alternative B also includes suggested management direction for access roads outside of the Monument.

Alternative C emphasizes the Monument's primitive character. This alternative contains the smallest number of visitor facilities. Management actions that influence resource conditions are as "light handed" and non-intrusive as possible, including weed control and sagebrush steppe restoration. Alternative C allocates the largest acreage of all the alternatives in the Pristine Zone, the least acreage in the Passage Zone, and would result in the fewest miles of maintained roads. Under this alternative, new interpretive facilities would primarily be located outside the Monument. This alternative includes an 11,000-acre Area of Critical Environmental Concern designation in northern Laidlaw Park to provide special protective management for native plants.

Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) emphasizes protection and restoration of physical and biological resources and processes. Alternative D contains the largest weed treatment and prevention program using all available tools. It prescribes the most aggressive fire management program. Alternative D places a greater emphasis than the other alternatives on promoting partnerships at existing facilities such as visitor centers, state parks, and gateway communities. This alternative also emphasizes the use of outfitters to meet recreation experience demands inside the expanded portion of the Monument. This alter-



native allows for the upgrade of the Arco-Minidoka Road through the Monument should the adjacent county governments choose to upgrade the portions of the road outside of the Monument.

A summary of the main features of the four alternatives can be found in Table 10 of the Plan/EIS. All of the alternatives would provide the high degree of protection for the objects of interest identified in Proclamation 7373, while still fulfilling both agencies' land management missions.

IMPACTS

The potential environmental consequences of the alternatives are addressed for various natural resources, land uses (including livestock grazing), cultural resources, Native American tribal treaty rights, visitor uses, and regional social and economic conditions. Table 11 in the Draft Plan/EIS provides a summary of impacts related to all four alternatives considered, and Chapter 4 contains detailed analyses of these impacts. .

Compared to the other alternatives, the Preferred Alternative would have substantial long-term beneficial impacts from the completion of the extensive sagebrush steppe restoration program, with limited short-term adverse impacts during its implementation. The Preferred Alternative also offers benefits relating to its encouragement for agencies to work with partners, including several key gateway communities, to provide for public information and services outside the Monument. It would also provide for improved access for fire suppression and resource management, which provides benefits that outweigh the adverse impacts that could occur from any disruption of visitor uses. No impairment of the Monument's natural or cultural resources would be expected for the Preferred Alternative, or for any of the alternatives evaluated.

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Chapter 1

Introduction



Previous page, clockwise, from top left
People hiking on cinder cone
Chain of Craters
Bitterroot
Lava river

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On November 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7373 expanded Craters of the Moon National Monument from roughly 54,000 acres to approximately 755,000 acres, including 739,682 acres of federal land. The President signed this proclamation to ensure protection of the Great Rift volcanic rift zone and its associated features. The Proclamation also placed the lands under the administration of both the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), with each agency having primary management authority over separate portions. In addition, on August 21, 2002, Public Law (PL) 107-213, 116 Statute [Stat.] 1052 designated the NPS portion of the expanded Monument as a National Preserve.

This document is the Draft Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Plan/EIS), which sets forth the future direction for the use and management of the Monument. This plan covers all new lands and the original NPS Monument; it addresses the direction set forth in the Proclamation and the designation of National Preserve status for NPS lands. It is intended to serve as a combined Resource Management Plan (RMP)/General Management Plan (GMP) to replace portions of four existing BLM RMPs and one NPS GMP. From here on, any reference to “the Monument” is intended to refer to all lands within the new Monument boundaries, including the National Preserve-designated lands.

MONUMENT DESCRIPTION HISTORY

Craters of the Moon National Monument, the first national park site in Idaho, was established on May 2, 1924 (Presidential Proclamation 1694) for the purpose of protecting some of the unusual landscape of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field. This “lunar” landscape was thought to resemble that of the moon and was described in the Proclamation as “a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself.”

Since 1924, the Monument was expanded and boundary adjustments made through five presidential proclamations issued pursuant to the Antiquities Act (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S. Code [USC] 431). Presidential Proclamation 1843 of July 23, 1928,

expanded the Monument to include certain springs for water supply and additional features of scientific interest. Presidential Proclamation 1916 of July 9, 1930; Presidential Proclamation 2499 of July 18, 1941; and Presidential Proclamation 3506 of November 19, 1962, made further adjustments to the boundaries. In 1996, Section 205 of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (PL 104-333, 110 Stat. 4093, 4106) made a minor boundary adjustment to the Monument.

Presidential Proclamation 7373 of November 9, 2000, expanded the boundary to 739,682 acres (from about 54,000 acres) to include many more of the area’s volcanic features. It also enlarged the Monument’s administration by adding the efforts of the BLM to those of the NPS, all under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. Federal legislation PL 107-213, 116 Stat. 1052, on August 21, 2002, made one further adjustment by designating the area within the expanded NPS boundaries of Craters of the Moon National Monument as a National Preserve, which allowed for hunting on lands that were closed to this activity by the November 2000 Proclamation. Appendix A provides copies of the proclamations and legislation related to creation of the current Monument and Preserve.

MONUMENT OVERVIEW

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is located in South Central Idaho (Figure 1) in Blaine, Butte, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Power



Spring flowers in lava.

counties. It is within a one-hour drive of Twin Falls and Idaho Falls.

The Monument contains the youngest and most geologically diverse section of basaltic lava terrain found on the Eastern Snake River Plain, an extensive area of volcanic formations that reaches across southern Idaho east to Yellowstone National Park. It includes three distinct lava fields: Craters of the Moon, Kings Bowl, and Wapi. The Craters of the Moon Lava Field is significant in that it is the largest basaltic lava field of predominantly Holocene age (less than 10,000 years old) in the conterminous United States.

The Monument protects most of the Great Rift area, which includes the numerous lava flows and other products discharged from the Great Rift volcanic rift zone. It compares in significance to other volcanic rift zones such as those found in Hawaii and Iceland. The Great Rift varies in width between one and five miles and extends for more than 50 miles.

Many features and structures associated with basaltic volcanism are represented in the Great Rift Zone, including various kinds of lava flows, volcanic cones, and lava tubes. There are also lava-cave features such as lava stalactites and curbs, explosion pits, lava lakes, squeeze-ups, basalt mounds, an ash blanket, and low shield volcanoes. Some lava flows within the Great Rift Zone diverged around areas of higher ground and rejoined downstream to form isolated islands of older terrain surrounded by new lava. These areas are called “kipukas.” In many instances, the expanse of rugged lava surrounding these small pockets of soil has protected the kipukas from people, animals, and even exotic plants. As a result, these kipukas represent some of the last undisturbed vegetation communities in the Snake River Plain.

Young (dominantly Holocene) lava flows and other features cover about 450,000 acres of the Monument. The remaining 300,000 acres in the Monument are also volcanic in origin, but older in age and covered with a thicker mantle of soil. This older terrain supports a sagebrush steppe ecosystem consisting of diverse communities of grasses, sagebrush, and shrubs, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife. This area also includes

lava tube caves, older volcanic formations, and volcanic edifices locally referred to as buttes.

Approximately 70 percent of the Monument is in Wilderness Study Area (WSA) status or designated Wilderness. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness, designated in 1970, is located south of U.S. Highway 20/26/93 within the original Monument. A substantial portion of each of the four WSAs includes lava flows administered by the NPS.

Both the Great Rift Zone and sagebrush steppe ecosystem contain a wealth of cultural resources dating back to the last volcanic eruptions, which were likely witnessed by the Shoshone people. Today, local tribes and communities, as well as visitors and other stakeholders, have an interest in the Monument. Current efforts include preserving cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and pristine wilderness qualities, while also allowing for a variety of resource uses.

Most visitor and educational opportunities are located near U.S. Highway 20/26/93 between the “gateway” communities of Carey and Arco in the north. In addition to guided walks and programs offered by the NPS, the Monument has several self-interpreting trails with waysides and a 7-mile loop drive. Facilities include a visitor center complex, which consists of a campground, museum, and bookstore.



Kings Bowl, The Great Rift





0 50 MILES



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management or National Park Service for use of the data for purposes not intended by these agencies. Frontcountry and Passage Zone polygons have been oversized for graphic presentation and are not to scale.

FIGURE 1 Location

Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve
U.S. Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide the NPS and BLM with a comprehensive framework for managing public lands within the newly expanded Monument over the next 15 to 20 years. Both agencies are required to maintain up-to-date management plans with an environmental impact statement level analysis. When approved, this plan will replace the land use planning decisions in the existing land use plans for this area. Decisions in existing plans that still have merit will be carried forward and incorporated into the planning effort.

The approved plan will provide a framework for proactive decision-making, including decisions on visitor use and on managing and preserving natural and cultural resources. It will prescribe the resource conditions and visitor experiences that are to be achieved and maintained in the Monument over time. Where law, policy, or regulations do not provide clear guidance, management decisions will be based on the Monument's purpose, public concerns, and analysis of social and resource impacts of alternative courses of action, including long-term operational costs.

This document will not describe how particular programs or projects will be implemented or prioritized. Those decisions will be deferred to more detailed implementation planning, which will follow the broad, comprehensive plan presented in this document.

NEED

The Monument is currently being managed under four BLM land use plans (within three field offices – Shoshone, Burley, and Idaho Falls) and one NPS GMP using the *Interim Management Guidelines* (Appendix B). These five separate existing plans do not address current administrative boundaries and do not provide a comprehensive interagency framework for managing public lands within the new boundaries. They represent a fragmented approach that should be replaced with a single planning document that addresses both BLM and NPS policies, directives, and concerns. Also, the current plans do not specifically address the status of the NPS lands as a National Preserve. Therefore, there is a need for both BLM and NPS to review, update, and consolidate management direction for the new Monument and Preserve and to present relevant Monument planning information and decision-making in one document.

PLANNING AREA DESCRIPTION

The Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve encompasses 739,682 acres of federal land, 8,321 acres of state land, and 6,860 acres of private land. The decisions made through this planning process will apply only to the 739,682 acres of federal land within the Monument boundary, referred to as “the planning area” (see Figure 2).

The planning area lies within the Snake River Plain. The Snake River Plain was built up by repeated volcanic outpourings. The chief physiographic features of this region are the flat lava plains broken only by occasional volcanic cones. The Snake River Plain north of the Monument is bounded by the northernmost occurrence of the Basin and Range Mountains. The dominant vegetation is sagebrush with associated grass and forb understory species. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is also widespread as an invasive, non-native component of the plant community.

DIRECTION FOR THE PLAN

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONUMENT

Purpose statements are the foundation for all subsequent decisions and qualify the language used in the legislation to more clearly state the purpose of the Monument. They are the specific reasons why this area warrants Monument status. Based upon the proclamations (Appendix A), the purposes of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve are to:

- Safeguard the volcanic features and geologic processes of the Great Rift.
- Provide scientific, educational, and interpretive opportunities for the public to foster an understanding and appreciation of the volcanic geology and associated natural phenomena.
- Maintain the wilderness character of the Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and of the WSAs.
- Perpetuate the scenic vistas and great open western landscapes for future generations.
- Protect kipukas (older vegetated terrain surrounded by lava flows) and remnant vegetation areas and preserve important habitat for sage grouse, a BLM sensitive species.
- Continue the historic and traditional human relationships with the land that have existed on much of this landscape for generations.



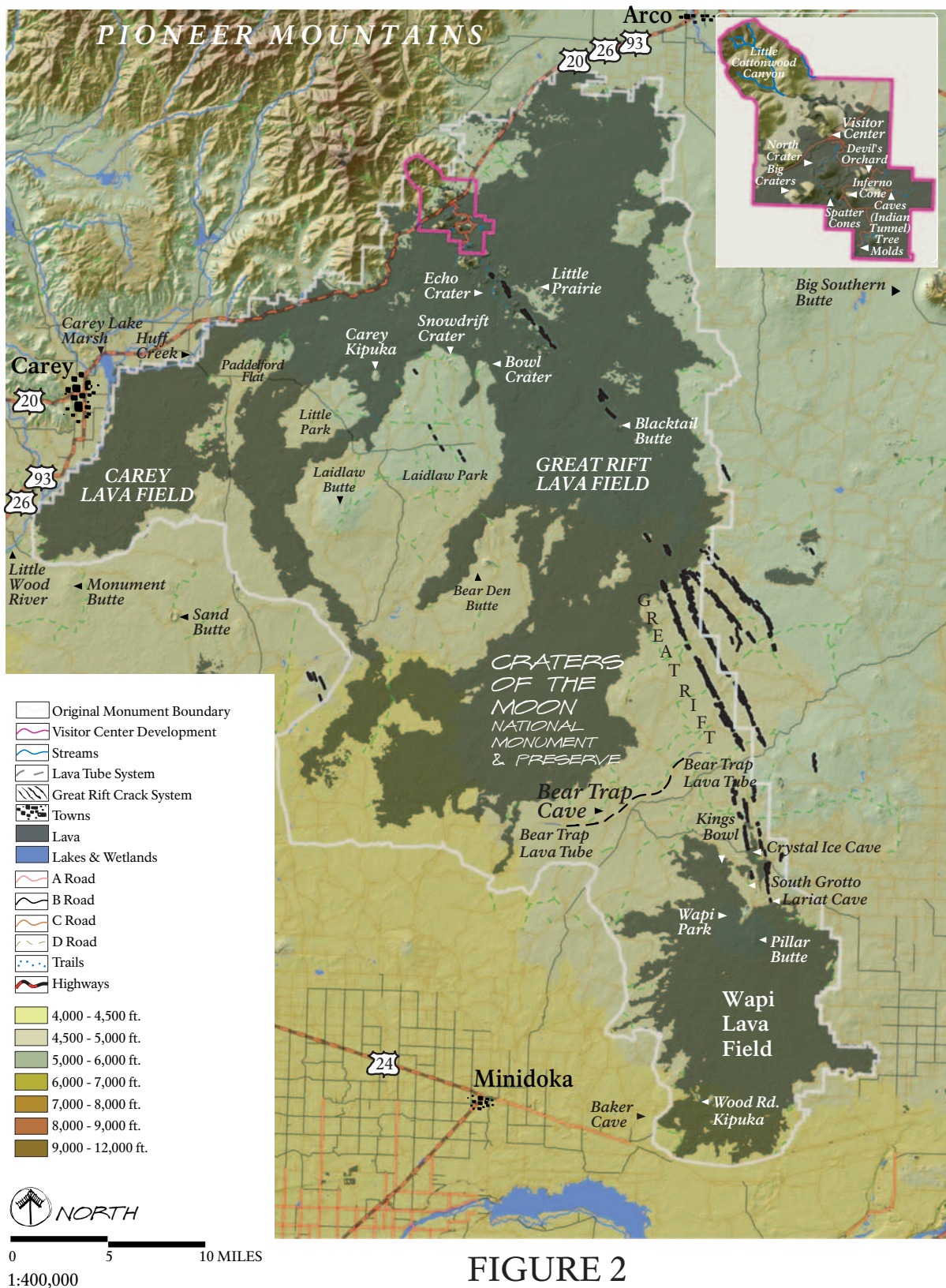


FIGURE 2
Planning Area

Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve
U.S. Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management or National Park Service for use of the data for purposes not intended by these agencies. Frontcountry and Passage Zone polygons have been oversized for graphic presentation and are not to scale.

Significance statements are also drawn from the proclamations establishing Craters of the Moon National Monument, as well as other descriptive documents. Significance statements explain what resources and values warrant the area's designation as a National Monument. Craters of the Moon is significant because:

- It contains a remarkable and unusual diversity of exquisitely preserved volcanic features, including nearly all of the familiar features of purely basaltic volcanism – craters, cones, lava flows, caves, and fissures.
- It contains most of the Great Rift area, the deepest known land-based open volcanic rift, and the longest volcanic rift in the continental United States.
- Many of the more than 400 kipukas contain representative vegetative communities that have been largely undisturbed by human activity. These communities serve as key benchmarks for scientific study of long-term ecological changes to the plants and animals of sagebrush steppe communities throughout the Snake River Plain.
- It contains the largest remaining land area within the Snake River Plain still retaining its wilderness character. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and WSAs within the Monument encompass over one-half million acres of undeveloped federal lands.
- It is a valued western landscape of nearly 755,000 acres that are characterized by a variety of scenery, broad open vistas, and pristine air quality.
- It contains abundant sagebrush steppe communities that provide some of the best remaining sage grouse habitat and healthiest rangelands on the Snake River Plain.
- It contains many diverse habitats for plants and animals as a result of a long history of volcanic deposition.

MISSION GOALS

The following statements are general desired future conditions, or mission goals, for the Monument. These goals incorporate mandates required of Monument management and include input solicited from the public on how others would like to see this area managed.

- The Monument protects, restores, and monitors the geological features, the native biological

communities, and the viewscape that characterize the Great Rift area.

- The public enjoys a range of recreational and educational opportunities compatible with protecting Monument resources.
- The Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area and the Wilderness Study Areas retain natural conditions and remarkable opportunities for solitude.
- The public has opportunities to learn and appreciate the diverse history and prehistory and the Monument's important cultural resources.
- The livestock permittees work with BLM to develop management actions to achieve sustainable, healthy rangelands.
- The public receives efficient and coordinated services from the NPS and BLM.

PLANNING CRITERIA (INCLUDING LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES)

BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1610) and NPS directives (Director's Order #2) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs/GMPs. Planning criteria are the constraints, or ground rules, which guide and direct the development of the plan. They influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, formulation of alternatives, estimation of effects, and ultimately the selection of a Preferred Alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based primarily on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations and agency guidance, plus consultation and coordination with public, other federal, state, and local agencies and government entities, and North American Indian tribes; analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; and professional judgment.

The NPS and the BLM jointly developed the planning criteria for this Draft Plan/EIS, although the authorities of each agency differ. Each agency's authorities have their origin in separate and different enabling legislation and proclamations. As a result, some planning criteria are specific to one agency or the other. On the other hand, some laws, such as the Clean Water Act, apply equally to both agencies and require the same planning criteria. The agencies'



goal was to develop a single set of planning criteria to guide the development of a single management plan for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. The BLM District Manager, Upper Snake River District approved the planning criteria, with concurrence by the NPS Superintendent for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, in September 2002.

Appendix B presents the planning criteria for this planning effort and identifies the laws, regulations, and policies that form the basis for these criteria and are relevant to each of the resource topics discussed in this Draft Plan/EIS.

THE PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC SCOPING

Planning provides an opportunity to create a vision and to define the Monument's role in relation to its national, historic, and communal settings. The planning process is designed to provide decision makers with adequate information about resources, impacts, and costs. Analyzing the Monument in relation to its surrounding natural, historic, and communal setting, as well as future challenges, helps managers and staff understand how the Monument could interrelate with neighbors and others in systems that are ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable. Decisions made within this planning context are more likely to be successful over time and promote more efficient use of public funds.

The planning process begins by defining the purpose and significance of the Monument, including appropriate goals, and descriptions of resource conditions, visitor uses, and management actions to best achieve those goals. After goals are established, the treatment and use of Monument resources are considered, based on scientific and technical analyses that employ current scientific research, as well as applied and accepted professional practices. Management alternatives are generated on the basis of the goals and analyses. The alternatives are then scrutinized with respect to their consistency with the Monument's purpose and goals, the planning criteria, the impact on Monument resources, the quality of the visitor experience, the short- and long-term costs, and environmental consequences that extend beyond Monument boundaries. The overall planning process for this Draft Plan/EIS is illustrated in Figure 3.

An interdisciplinary planning team was assembled in the spring of 2002. It was comprised of the BLM

Monument Manager, the NPS Monument Superintendent, and resource specialists and staff from both the NPS and BLM. The team also included representation from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The planning team met several times during 2002 and 2003 to gather background information, identify goals and objectives, examine resource issues, and develop alternatives. Throughout the planning process, public scoping efforts played a large part in helping to focus the plan, identify issues, and formulate alternatives. Public input was especially important in the development of the four management zones that were used to define the alternatives. Several Monument tours and briefings were held, three newsletters were released, and open houses were conducted in eight communities throughout southern Idaho. A detailed account of the public scoping process and public input received during the planning process for the Monument is provided under the Consultation and Coordination chapter of this Draft Plan/EIS.

Following release of this Draft Plan/EIS, there will be a 90-day public review period including public meetings, after which time the comments received will be gathered, analyzed, and used to complete the proposed plan and produce the Final EIS. The proposed plan will then be released for a 30-day no-action and protest period. A Record of Decision will be signed by the NPS Regional Director and the BLM State Director, and a Final Plan will be released to the public. The plan is then implemented, subject to additional environmental analysis for site-specific actions.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

This Draft Plan/EIS seeks to define what resource conditions and visitor experiences should be achieved and maintained over time to achieve the purpose of the Monument. This Draft Plan/EIS considers various approaches to use, management, and development, some of which may represent competing interests for the same resource base. Ultimately, the plan serves to define a series of desired future conditions that reflect the concerns and needs of the BLM and the NPS, as well as the public.

As previously described, this Draft Plan/EIS replaces the four existing BLM land use plans and the current NPS GMP, and serves as a combined

RMP/GMP for the Monument. As such, it covers a broad area; addresses a wide range of programs, concerns, and resources; and must, therefore, function at a general level.

The more specific actions required to attain the goals and outcomes defined in this Draft Plan/EIS are accomplished through implementation plans. These plans apply to specific program areas, projects, or operational and development strategies for specific areas of the Monument. Because planning is an ongoing and continuous process, this Draft Plan/EIS must be viewed as a dynamic document. A number of plans already completed would remain in effect, and this Draft Plan/EIS reflects those still deemed to be useful. Future implementation plans would use

the goals and conditions defined in this Draft Plan/EIS as their starting point. Implementation plans for actions with potential to affect the environment would require formal analysis of alternatives in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related legislation, including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

The following explains the relationship between this planning effort and existing plans, policies, or programs of both the BLM and NPS. Other relevant plans, policies, or programs (e.g., state/local land use plans) that were considered in the preparation of this document are listed and discussed in the Environmental Consequences chapter as part of the cumulative impact scenario.

Craters of the Moon National Monument Planning Process

2001 Initiate Project

Project Scoping

October

Joint planning team assembled, identified project scope and issues, and customized planning project.

2002 Visioning

Develop Alternatives

February

1st newsletter sent out to obtain public suggestions on qualities of Monument that are valuable to preserve, uses to be accommodated, and concerns to be addressed.

June

Public open house meeting held with agencies and interest groups.

July

2nd newsletter sent out summarizing public comments from June workshops.

August

Preliminary alternatives developed by joint planning team from public comments, resource data, and planning criteria.

October

Alternatives reviewed by BLM state director and NPS regional director.

2003 Alternatives Evaluated and Developed

Develop Draft Monument Management Plan/EIS

January

3rd newsletter sent out for public comment on preliminary alternatives.

February

Public workshop for input on alternatives.

March

Comments compiled and alternatives revised to reflect comments.

May

Environmental impacts of alternatives assessed.

April - December

Draft Monument Management Plan written.

2004 Final Monument Management Plan/EIS Prepared

Final Plan Distributed

April - June

90-day public comment period; open house held to obtain comments on draft plan.

July - November

Revisions to the draft plan; final plan prepared and printed.

December

Final plan distributed to the public and implemented. Detailed site plans and programs will be developed in the future based on directions established in the approved plan.

FIGURE 3
Planning Process



RELATIONSHIP TO CURRENT BLM PLANS AND POLICIES

The following current BLM land use plans and Environmental Impact Statements have been considered in the development of this Draft Plan/EIS. The Final Plan/EIS will replace the portions of these plans that provide direction for the Monument.

Fire, Fuels, and Vegetation Management

Direction: The BLM Upper Snake River District (USRD) is preparing an EIS that will amend all 12 existing land use plans in the district (USDI 2004). The Draft Fire, Fuels, and Vegetation Management Direction Amendments (FMDA) overlaps this Draft Plan/EIS direction related to fire, fire-affected resources, and sagebrush-steppe restoration. Management direction proposed and analyzed for the Draft FMDA/EIS Preferred Alternative is incorporated in this Draft Plan/EIS as “Management Guidance Common to All Alternatives” (see Chapter 2).

Monument Resource Management Plan/EIS and Amendments: The 1985 Monument RMP is the comprehensive framework for managing approximately 1,179,000 acres of public land north of the Snake River in south-central Idaho. RMPs make resource allocations, resolve conflicts between competing uses, and ensure management of the public lands in accordance with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The Monument RMP covers approximately 60 percent of the Monument.

Big Lost Management Framework Plan, Grazing EIS, and Amendments: This 1983 Management Framework Plan (MFP) MFP provides management direction for more than 300,000 acres of public land north of U.S. Highway 20/26/93 in central Idaho. MFPs predate RMPs in the BLM land use planning system. MFPs make management decisions and land use allocations by watershed-based planning units. The Big Lost MFP covers less than 5 percent of the Monument.

Big Desert Management Framework Plan, Grazing EIS, and Amendments: This 1981 MFP covers an area west of Idaho Falls in southeastern Idaho and includes 1,162,463 acres of public land. The Big Desert MFP covers approximately 30 percent of the Monument.

Sun Valley Management Framework Plan, Grazing EIS, and Amendments: This 1981 MFP covers approximately 245,000 acres of public land in the northern portion of the BLM Shoshone Field Office. The Sun Valley MFP covers less than 5 percent of the Monument.

Great Rift Proposed Wilderness EIS: This 1980 EIS recommended that 341,000 acres of the Great Rift WSA be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The entire Great Rift WSA is within the Monument.

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem

Management Project: The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) was based on Presidential direction to develop a scientifically sound, ecosystem-based strategy for managing the 64 million acres of public lands administered by the Forest Service and the BLM within the Columbia River Basin, and portions of the Klamath and Great basins in Oregon. The project was based on concerns over forest and rangeland health, uncharacteristically intense wildland fires, threats to certain fish and wildlife species, and concerns about local community social and economic well-being. A Final EIS and Proposed Decision were published in December 2000. No basin-scale Record of Decision has been signed, nor is one expected.

Public lands administered by the BLM and NPS within the Craters of the Moon National Monument planning area are included within the lands covered by the ICBEMP analysis. The BLM State Directors and Regional Foresters are completing the project through the use of the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy (Strategy). The BLM is guided by a 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to implement this Strategy in the amendment and revisions of RMPs and project implementation on public lands administered by BLM throughout the Interior Columbia River Basin. The Strategy directs BLM to use the findings of the ICBEMP science, new information, and the consideration of the best available science in developing land use plans and implementing resource management projects, including consultation and participation in plan and project design. The ICBEMP analysis and findings have been incorporated into this Draft Plan/EIS.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRENT NPS PLANS AND POLICIES

NPS plans and studies used to develop this document are listed in the bibliography. The plans listed below directly influenced the development of this Draft Plan/EIS.

1992 Craters of the Moon General Management Plan: The 1992 GMP was the guiding document for the original NPS Monument. Interim Monument guidelines were developed in 2001 with cooperative

input from both agencies. The additional lands added as a National Preserve (approximately 410,000 acres) require the updating of this plan.

1996 Resource Management Plan: NPS RMPs provide a long-range comprehensive strategy for natural and cultural resource management. The strategy describes a program of activities to achieve desired future conditions. The current plan does not incorporate any of the National Preserve resources.

October 2000 Wildland Fire Management Plan: The Wildland Fire Management Plan (FMP) provides fire management direction for the original NPS Monument, not the expanded lands.

Fiscal Year 2000 – 2005 Strategic Plan for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve: NPS strategic plans contain the mission statement and goals, describe strategies to accomplish goals, and identify external factors that could significantly affect achievement of goals. The Strategic Plan does not reflect the 2000 expansion.

1993 Cave Management Program: The 1993 Cave Management Program provides management guidelines for the original NPS Monument's cave resources. This plan is no longer adequate, as it does not reflect the expanded areas of the Monument.

1989 (revised 1996) Backcountry/Wilderness Management Plan: This plan provides management guidelines for basic recreation use of the backcountry and wilderness of the original NPS Monument.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND POLICIES

Fire Management Planning

The National Fire Plan is an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to help protect communities and natural resources as well as the lives of firefighters and the public. The federal wildland fire management agencies worked closely with states, tribes, local governments, and interested publics to prepare the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, completed in August 2001. This strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to the management of wildland fire, hazardous fuels, and ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation on federal and adjacent state, tribal, and private forest and range lands in the United States. It emphasizes measures to reduce the risk to communities and the environment and provides an effective framework for collaboration to accomplish this.

An implementation plan was signed in June 2002 to provide consistent and standard direction to implement the common purposes of the Strategy and the National Fire Plan. BLM will incorporate guidance from the National Fire Plan and 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy in this Draft Plan/EIS.

FUTURE PLANNING NEEDS

This Draft Plan/EIS is intended to describe resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved within the planning area at the Monument over the next 15 to 20 years. The agencies will be cooperatively preparing or amending existing "implementation plans" to implement this Draft Plan/EIS. The implementation plans are necessarily dynamic in order to accommodate new information. Following is a list of examples of implementation plans that may be necessary at the Monument.

Travel Management Plan: This would provide further guidance to Monument managers, local road and bridge cooperators, and the general public of the standards for improvement and/or maintenance of the various classes of roads described in this Draft Plan/EIS or potential road closures. It would also include a transportation or road map/brochure of the Monument for public use.

NPS Resources Management Plan: This plan establishes long-term resources management objectives, documents progress towards those objectives, and serves as a guideline for funding specific resource projects.

Fire Management Plan: Management actions analyzed in this Draft Plan/EIS, FMDA, and Wildland FMP (NPS 2000) would be incorporated into an implementation plan to guide suppression efforts and proactive fuels and restoration treatments. The FMP would detail management goals and constraints within specific fire management areas. While these goals and constraints would comply with direction set forth in this Draft Plan/EIS and FMDA, the FMP would be a dynamic document updated regularly to best protect Monument resources.

Wilderness/Wilderness Study Area Management Plan: This plan guides the preservation, management, and use of the designated Wilderness and WSAs. One of the principal purposes is to establish indicators, standards, conditions, and thresholds beyond which management actions would be taken to reduce human impacts to wilderness resources. This plan is no longer adequate as it



does not incorporate the WSAs within the National Preserve.

Comprehensive Interpretive Plan: This plan would identify the primary stories or interpretive themes needed to provide each visitor with an opportunity to develop an understanding of the Monument. Interpretation is a process of education designed to stimulate curiosity and convey messages to the visiting public. This plan would guide the future development of interpretive facilities and programs such as signs, waysides, brochures, guided walks, and oral presentations.

Cave Management Plan: This plan is developed to meet the requirements of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act (FCRPA) to perpetuate the natural systems associated with caves. This plan would build upon the Cave Management Program (Craters of the Moon National Monument 1993) and the Cave Resources Management Plan (USRD 1999).

Cultural Resources Management Plan: This plan would guide the preservation, management, and use of cultural resources. The plan would also include a Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Action Plan to address inadvertent discovery of NAGPRA materials within the Monument.

Integrated Pest Management Plan(s): This plan would provide guidance related to potential pests, monitoring indicators, action thresholds, and treatment methods to address pest issues within the Monument. Among these issues are invasive exotic plants, grasshoppers, and large predators. This plan would be accomplished cooperatively with the USDA.

Kings Bowl Development Concept Plan: All of the alternatives for this Draft Plan/EIS identify some level of development in the Kings Bowl area. These range from the minimal needed to protect the resources and protect visitors from hazards in the area, to that of more fully accommodating visitor access and opportunities for exploring the unique features present in the area. A Development Concept Plan allows for the agencies to examine in greater detail options for protecting the area while accommodating public access and use.

Administrative History: This is a report that documents the history of a unit of the National Park System. It records the evolution of its management and programs in order to familiarize new managers, staff, and other agency officials with the area and provide them with a historical basis for future man-

agement decisions. This report would probably be an addendum to the Administrative History of Craters of the Moon National Monument (1992).

Volcanic Hazards Analysis: No contingency planning has ever been done for the advent of a volcanic eruption. No flow routing modeling has been done to help predict where lava would go and how far it would travel based on possible eruption sites and volumes. Therefore, the team has recommended that a comprehensive volcanic hazard assessment be conducted. This would provide the necessary information for crisis and risk management contingency planning.

PLANNING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

BLM and NPS staff and the public raised several issues and related concerns in meetings, responses to newsletters, and discussions with staff from other agencies and organizations. This section identifies those issues or concerns that were discussed and that are considered in development of alternatives and in completion of the EIS, as well as those that are beyond the scope of this planning process.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS ADDRESSED BY THIS DRAFT PLAN/EIS

The following summarizes the primary issues that were raised and considered in the preparation of this Draft Plan/EIS, organized by major category.

Development

What kinds of Monument facilities and services will there be apart from the existing Monument developments?

- Are new public facilities needed within this Monument within the next 20 years?
- Are there Monument facilities desired outside the Monument?
- What opportunities do surrounding “gateway” communities want for providing services and facilities to visitors?
- Do any existing facilities need to be removed?

Transportation and Access

What type of road and trail system will be needed for travel to and access within the Monument?

- Will any existing roads within the Monument be closed, or will there be any restrictions on mechanized or motorized travel in order to protect Monument resources?

- Will there be increased risks for fire and noxious weeds?
- Will any existing roads be upgraded? Will some roads receive better maintenance?
- Will access to portions of the Monument be improved?
- Are access improvements needed outside the Monument?
- How will the counties be consulted on transportation issues?

Public Uses and Safety

What is the extent and location of public uses within the Monument?

- How will existing recreational uses of the land be affected?
- Will visitation increase and how would it be managed?
- What opportunities will there be for advancing public understanding and appreciation for the Great Rift area?
- Are there new safety concerns associated with visitor use?
- What level of emergency assistance is needed within the Monument?

Authorized Uses

- How will grazing be managed in the Monument?
- Are new range improvements needed to enhance rangeland health?
- Is there a need to authorize access to private and state land inholdings?
- What is the need for local material for road maintenance?
- What opportunities will there be for outfitter and guide operations and concession activities within the Monument?
- What will the criteria be for determinations on new requests for leases or permits?
- What valid existing rights existed at the time of the Proclamation on November 9, 2000?

Natural and Cultural Resources

How will the natural and cultural resources be protected?

- How will the more fragile and significant of the geological features be protected from visitor use impacts?
- What protection will be offered for cultural resources?

- How will the Shoshone-Bannock tribes be consulted?
- How can we best maintain the integrity and understand the scientific value of both the cultural and geological features, the kipukas, and the large tracts of sagebrush habitat in good condition?
- How will the introduction and spread of noxious weeds be controlled? And are kipukas more important to target for eradication efforts?
- Will there be new guidelines for weed, grasshopper, and predator control programs?
- What opportunities will there be for scientific research?
- How will fire management be addressed in the Monument?
- How will restoration and rehabilitation efforts be addressed on Monument lands?
- How will management actions protect intangible resources like night sky and natural quiet, the integrity of viewsapes, and pristine air quality?



Hill in Monument with ATV use





Sagebrush habitat

Monument Administration

What issues does the staff face in the day-to-day operation of the Monument?

- Will new management (administrative) facilities be needed?
- What public services will the federal government and local governments provide, and which will be provided jointly?
- Will the federal government assist local governments with needs for emergency services within the Monument?
- Will state and private property within or adjacent to the Monument be affected?
- Will the Monument be identified with signs to distinguish it from surrounding public lands? Will NPS and BLM lands within the Monument be marked differently?

Visitor Experience

What kinds of experiences do visitors want?

- What opportunities will there be for enhancing understanding and appreciation of the Great Rift area?
- What kind of interpretive and educational services does the public want?
- Which visitor activities are suitable and where can they occur?

ISSUES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS DRAFT PLAN/EIS

A number of public comments raised issues concerning laws, regulations, or actions that cannot be taken because they are beyond the scope of this Draft Plan/EIS; inconsistent with laws, regulations, or policy; or more appropriately addressed by an implementation plan. For example, a new road across a WSA near Bear Park was suggested, which would be inconsistent with BLM WSA Policy. Another comment asked for road improvements in the vicinity of Big Southern Butte. Big Southern Butte is outside of the planning area. Another comment suggested that the Monument be scaled back to include only outstanding features. Reducing the size of the Monument is outside the authority of the BLM and NPS. Several commenters called for the elimination of grazing on the expanded Monument lands. The Proclamation that expanded the Monument directs BLM to

manage livestock grazing under existing laws, regulations, and policies. BLM authority is limited to administering grazing permits on BLM-administered lands only.

Comments that are more appropriately addressed by implementation plans were often site-specific. One comment called for signed turnouts on U.S. Highway 93 with trails to access Goodale's Cutoff. While this comment is too site-specific to be addressed by this Draft Plan/EIS, the plan will generally address signing, vehicle access, and interpretation, as well as the management of Goodale's Cutoff. Another comment called for offices in Arco or Minidoka to fill the need for additional public services. While BLM and NPS planning authority is limited to the lands within the Monument, the Plan/EIS will address need for facilities as well as opportunities to work with local communities and governments to provide visitor services and administrative facilities.

Some comments provided very specific ideas as to how areas should be managed. One comment suggested Moss Cave be monitored and visitor use remain light. Another suggested overnight use at Old Juniper Kipuka should be allowed only with a back-country permit and that group size should be restricted to 10 persons.

Many comments like those presented above are best addressed in future implementation plans. The agencies have saved all comments and will use those in future planning efforts and/or day-to-day management.

IMPACT TOPICS

Impact topics were identified from those issues that were within the scope of the Plan/EIS and from relevant BLM and NPS policies and regulations. The specific topics addressed under the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences chapters of this document include the following:

- ***Natural Resources***
 - Geological Resources
 - Soils
 - Vegetation, including Special Status Species, and Fire Management
 - Water Resources
 - Wildlife, including Special Status Species
 - Air Quality
- ***Cultural Resources***
 - Archaeological and Historical Resources
- ***American Indian Rights and Interests (Ethnographic Resources, Resource and Public Land Values, Treaty Rights)***
- ***Land Use and Transportation***
 - Access and Travel
 - Livestock Grazing
 - Other Land Uses
 - Facilities
 - Lands and Realty
 - Mineral Materials
 - Special Designation Areas
 - Wilderness
 - Wilderness Study Areas
 - Research Natural Areas, National Natural Landmark, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- ***Visitor Experience***
 - Interpretation/Visitor Understanding
 - Recreation, including Public Health and Safety
 - Visual Resources
 - Soundscapes
- ***Social and Economic Conditions***

Each topic is discussed under Affected Environment and analyzed under Environmental Consequences. Also, these topics form the basis for much of the discussion of Management Guidance in the Alternatives chapter.

IMPACT TOPICS CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED FROM FURTHER EVALUATION

As explained below, the following impact topics were discussed during the planning process, but were dismissed from further consideration for the reasons mentioned.

PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND

In August 1980, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) directed that federal agencies must assess the effects of their actions on farmland soils classified as prime or unique by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of USDA. There are no prime or unique farmlands in Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve; therefore, the topic of prime and unique farmland was dismissed as an impact topic in this document.

FLOODPLAINS

Water resources are very limited in the Monument, and there are no designated floodplains associated with the few short stream segments that lie within its borders. Therefore, the topic of floodplains was dismissed as an impact topic in this document.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The topic of public health and safety is addressed in the EIS as a subset of Social and Economic Conditions. There are no hazardous materials used, or disposed of, in connection with Monument operations other than small amounts of cleaners, maintenance chemicals, and fuels used in daily operations. Therefore, a separate topic of hazardous materials was not included as an impact topic in the document.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, focuses federal attention on the environment and human health condition in minority and low-income communities, promotes nondiscrimination in federal programs, and provides access to



public information and an opportunity to participate in matters that may affect these populations.

Local residents in communities surrounding the Monument include low-income and minority populations. However, no distinct areas of low-income or minority populations were identified near the Monument, or any that depend upon Monument resources for such purposes as subsistence hunting or fishing. Actions proposed under the alternatives would not cause disproportionate adverse human health or environmental impacts to minority and/or low-income populations.

The planned sagebrush steppe restoration program associated with all the alternatives would occur within the Monument and would not affect populations in nearby communities. Monument operations and permitted uses, including associated tribal treaty rights, would continue similar to current conditions, including recreational use, grazing, and hunting in permitted areas. In addition, the subject of tribal treaty rights was included in the impact analysis (under “American Indian Rights and Interests”) and is addressed in this Draft Plan/EIS. All areas of the Monument would remain available and open to all ethnic groups and income levels, and no action would displace users of the park to low-income or ethnically sensitive areas. For these reasons, environmental justice was dismissed as an impact topic in this document.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Although there has never been a formal, systematic inventory to document the presence of any cultural landscapes within the Monument, none has ever been identified by NPS or BLM staff, and the public did not identify any cultural landscapes during scoping for the Draft Plan/EIS. Therefore, the topic was not included under Cultural Resources as a separate impact topic.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The Monument’s museum collections include objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections that serve as scientific and historical documentation of the Monument’s purpose and resources. None of the alternatives considered would adversely affect museum collections or cause substantial changes to the collections or their management, so this topic was not included as a separate impact topic under Cultural Resources.

OTHER PLANNING ISSUES

The following planning issues relate to the Monument’s carrying capacity and the adequacy of its boundaries. These issues are common to all alternatives.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Carrying capacity is the character of use that can be supported over a specific time by an area developed at a certain level without causing excessive damage to either the physical environment or the experience of the visitor. To make sure that visitation does not impair resources and compromise visitor experience, NPS is required by law to determine carrying capacity. This determination is based on the purpose, significance and goal statements unique to the Monument. At this level of planning, carrying capacity is defined by the management zone prescriptions for levels of development and desired visitor experiences for that particular zone.

There are three major components of carrying capacity: physical capacity (e.g., parking spaces, facility space, road capacity); visitor experience (such as congestion in the Visitor Center, opportunities for solitude); and resources (including natural and cultural resources). The carrying capacity in a given area could be exceeded for any of these components, which would trigger management action.

The north end of the Monument is the only area that presently has facilities intended to invite and accommodate large numbers of visitors. Roads, parking areas, and related facilities have been designed and located to meet current visitation. This includes consideration of the impact of visitors upon nearby resources. Before any additional facilities are built or current facilities expanded, the agencies will assess whether such development might have any detrimental effects on natural or cultural resources or visitor experience.

Visitation has not reached the point where visitors cause unacceptable levels of resource damage. Due to the older design of the Visitor Center, the museum and bookstore can be congested during peak visitation periods. Because of the harsh terrain, use of the wilderness and backcountry areas is very light.

Carrying capacity for the Craters of the Moon Wilderness is based on “Limits of Acceptable Change” (LAC) planning framework (NPS 1992). The LAC System for Wilderness Planning is appropriate for use at the Monument, since it is a planning

process consisting of a series of interrelated steps leading to the development of measurable objectives, defining desired backcountry and wilderness conditions. It also suggests management actions necessary to maintain or achieve desired conditions. Emphasis is placed on defining and achieving the resource and social conditions desired for the area rather than determining how many users an area can sustain.

MONUMENT BOUNDARIES

Monument Boundaries

Proclamation 7373 set aside and reserved as an addition to Craters of the Moon National Monument, all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the United States within the boundaries of the area described on the map entitled “Craters of the Moon National Monument Boundary Enlargement,” which is included as part of Appendix C. The previous National Monument was an area of 53,440 acres, with all federal lands administered by the NPS.

In a memorandum from the Secretary of the Interior (memo from the Secretary of the Interior dated November 24, 2000) the BLM was instructed to complete a metes and bounds description of the Monument. BLM completed a cadastral survey of the external monument boundary in 2001. Based on that survey, the Monument and Preserve boundary contains 739,682 acres of federal land. The total acreage uncompassed by the Monument and Preserve boundary is 754,862 including 8,321 acres of state land and 6,860 acres of private land which are inholdings and not part of the Monument and Preserve.

National Preserve Boundaries

Proclamation 7373 states that the NPS shall have primary management authority over the portion of

the Monument that includes the exposed lava flows. This land area was described as including approximately 410,000 acres and designated as a unit of the National Park System “Craters of the Moon National Preserve” by PL 107-213 on August 21, 2002. The NPS continues management authority over the original 53,440 acres of Craters of the Moon National Monument. Proclamation 7373 provides that the BLM has primary management authority over the remaining portion of the Monument.

The boundary between the NPS- and BLM-administered lands is often difficult to describe and locate. In some cases, distinguishing the boundary between the NPS- and BLM-administered land on the ground would be a matter of concern to the agencies and the public. Surveying the entire boundary between the agencies would be costly and is not recommended at this time. When a situation requires determination of the National Preserve boundary within the external Monument boundary, the boundary line would be described by the edge of the brown colored lava shown on the most recent USGS 7.5-minute series topographic quadrangle maps available on the date of the Proclamation 7373.

Boundary Modifications

Potential boundary modifications are examined in a management plan to identify potential additional lands with significant resources or opportunities, or which are otherwise critical to fulfilling the Monument’s mission. Based on these criteria, eight areas have been identified for potential boundary modifications. These are described in detail in Appendix C, which contains maps relating to these potential modifications.

