

# Monument Management Plan

Newsletter 2 • August 2002  
Summary of Comments From Open Houses

Dear Friends:

Many of you have provided us with a wealth of information to consider in developing a Management Plan for Craters of the Moon National Monument. We appreciate your attending the open houses in June and your responses to our first newsletter. This newsletter presents a summary of what we have heard. Your comments will provide the foundation upon which we will

formulate a range of alternative strategies for managing the Great Rift area within the boundaries of the Monument.

Your voice is important in helping us guide our planning efforts. If you participated in one of our initial meetings or by writing, thank you and keep those comments coming. If you haven't participated, now is the time to get involved. Let us know what you think.



Rick Vander Voet, Monument Manager  
Craters of the Moon National Monument  
Bureau of Land Management



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## What We Heard from You

In April, 2002 we announced the beginning of the planning process for Craters of the Moon National Monument. We mailed our 1st newsletter to approximately 300 individuals and organizations. We apologize for any confusion the May 1st comment return date may have caused. This was a printer error and should have read, June 24th. Eight Open Houses were held in June 2002. Approximately 170 individuals attended one of the open houses held in Arco, Carey, Shoshone, American Falls, Rupert, Fort Hall, Hailey and Boise. A compilation of the comments we received is available at Craters of the Moon National Monument Headquarters and the BLM Shoshone Field Office. Selected comments that follow illustrate the diverse opinions and the opportunities we have before us.



# Comments

## General Comments

Some of your comments:

- The expanded portion of the Monument provides visitors with opportunities to experience significant expanse of wilderness and wilderness values. Management of the Monument must emphasize retaining these values and characteristics by limiting development to the bare minimum consistent with visitor safety, access, education and enjoyment.
- A top priority should be educating the public about the Monument values outlined in the proclamation, in order to ensure public participation in its protection.
- National Monument status needs to encompass agency coordination, range grazing, geology, biology, recreation, education, natural conditions,



solitude and cultural resources. The goal of a national monument should include all of these-at current status and in anticipation of the future.

- "...how beautiful the backcountry is, but even more amazing is the solitude. You are truly alone. The feeling of being the only one for miles in a relatively pristine, beautiful environment is truly a wonderful, deeply religious feeling."

## Development

- Minimize the amount of new visitor amenities and interpretive signs by placing them in nearby gateway communities.
- The expanded area of Craters should be left as a primitive area. No road improvements, no restroom, no camping areas. Any improvements will ruin what you are trying to protect.
- The Monument will need trailside guide signs, maps and information, improved roads and trails, access to various new areas camping locations, toilets, water and perhaps communication. Do not remove any existing facilities.
- To preserve the clarity of night sky and the tranquility of the Monument, keep development of visitor amenities and other structures to a minimum and monitor visitor use in order to prevent light and noise pollution.
- Consider interpretive trails for the southern area.

## Transportation and Access

- Leave all roads in their semi-primitive state or condition and close many of the two track trails. Improving roads would promote more visitation in a fragile environment. This is contrary to the spirit



in which the Monument was expanded

- A southern access and suitable roadways to accommodate travelers to and within the Craters boundary is imperative. The road should be adequate to provide suitable, accessible travel between Minidoka and Arco.
- The Arco-Minidoka road would seem to be a natural corridor for exploring the Monument, but motorized recreation should not be a management goal- the beauty of the Great Rift and the Craters of the Moon are difficult to appreciate, much less preserve, at 35 mph.
- Existing roads to in-holdings need to remain open so that the state and its lessees can access the land for administration.
- No new roads should be constructed. Vehicular travel only on designated routes.

- Provide adequate access throughout the Monument, especially to those with handicaps.
- An evaluation is needed to determine where ATV-motorcycle-horse-hiking trails can be added. Without designated trails, illegal trails will be created with greater disturbance.
- Minimize the road system. Close all roads to protect cultural, geological and other natural features and to reduce the spread of noxious weeds.
- Unrestricted use of off road vehicles poses serious threats to the ecological integrity of public lands.
- Roads that dead-end or are redundant, and all other roads without a clear specific purpose should be closed.

### Visitor Use and Public Safety

- Hunting, and sportsmen's access should be considered in management planning as a traditional use of the land.
- Camping within the Monument should be conducted with resource protection and restoration uppermost in mind. Open fires throughout the Monument should be prohibited.
- Build more and longer trails for mountain bikes.
- Certain trails must be designated as non-motorized to allow hikers, horseback riders, backpackers and others to experience the monument without motorized transportation conflicts.
- Hunting and ORV uses are incompatible uses for wilderness areas such as the Monument.
- Place monument boundary signs only along roadways.

- Sensitive cultural sites, caves and other natural features may be best explored when an experienced guide accompanies visitors.
- No surface area of the monument is suitable for rock climbing.

## Authorized Uses

- Grazing and national monuments are not compatible.
- It is important that grazing, through guidelines established by BLM, continue.
- Livestock permittee operations should continue in non-lava areas.
- Livestock permittees should work with BLM and other interested publics to develop management actions to protect and achieve sustainable, healthy multiple use range- lands. Eliminate grazing from some of the more significant kipukas and other geologic features.
- Grazing plans must protect wilderness values and sage grouse habitat. Grazing, while recognized as valid by the Proclamation, is not the highest use of the land within the Monument, and should be accorded a lower priority than restoring and preserving the resources.
- To insure sustainability of range-lands, stocking rates on most allotments of public lands must be reduced.




- Commercial and non-commercial extractive activities, including the removal of rocks or cinders that could harm the monuments unique basaltic, volcanic formations should be prohibited.
- Prohibit any new range improvements, such as pipelines, or troughs, or fences.
- No "preventative" killing of predators or any wildlife should occur, as this is a sanctuary for wildlife.

## Natural and Cultural Resources

- Craters should be managed for sustainable populations of sage grouse.
- Encourage visitors to go to less critical sites and avoid those that could be easily damaged.
- Kipukas should be left undisturbed and ungrazed.
- The management plan needs an aggressive statement on protecting & restoring sage steppe environments, including control of noxious weed populations.
- Baker Caves should continue to be used as an interpretive site for cultural resources.
- Demonstrate that the Native American community is to be included in determining where specific sites of geologic and cultural importance are located and protected.
- The Monument provides unique opportunities to view the night sky. Prevent any light pollution.
- Native vegetation should play a major role in the Monument's management. Existing native vegetation should be encouraged and protected. Non-native vegetation should be aggressively removed and replaced with native vegetation.

## Ways You Can Participate

Schedule	Planning Activity	Public Participation Opportunities
Fall 2001 to Summer 2002	<b>1. Set the Stage for Planning and Management</b> The first step is to lay the foundation for everything that is done in the plan and, ultimately, in the Monument. Statements of Monument purpose and significance are reviewed to ensure that everything we do is consistent with the reason that the Monument was established. Issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the plan are identified. This helps to focus our work and determine the scope of the planning effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in open houses.</li> <li>• Read and comment on newsletter</li> </ul>
Summer 2002 through Winter 2003 <b>We are here!</b> 	<b>2. Gather Data and Develop Alternatives</b> The BLM and NPS planning team will be working to better understand the resources, learn more about issues, identify opportunities for solving problems, and develop ideas for the future. Concepts for alternatives will be generated. These are broad descriptions of different resource conditions and visitor experiences that could achieve the area's purposes and maintain its significance. Management strategies for achieving these alternatives will also be developed, and the potential environmental consequences of implementing each alternative will be evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and comment on newsletter # 2 (August/September).</li> <li>• Review the planning criteria.</li> <li>• Read and comment on newsletter # 3 (late fall or early winter of 2003).</li> <li>• Participate in meetings/workshops.</li> </ul>
Spring 2003 to Fall 2003	<b>3. Publish Draft Monument Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement</b> The <i>Draft Plan/EIS</i> will be published for public review. Public comments on the draft will be accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and comment on <i>Draft Plan/EIS</i>.</li> </ul>
Fall 2003	<b>4. Publish Final Monument Management Plan/EIS</b> Based on public comments, appropriate revisions to the draft will be made and a <i>Final Monument Management Plan/EIS</i> will be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to the planners and Monument Managers.</li> </ul>
Winter 2003 and beyond	<b>5. Implement Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold us to the MMP.</li> </ul>

## What is the Next Step?

In the next few months the planning team will develop a range of alternative strategies for managing use of the Monument while maintaining or restoring resources. Your input will be sought through public workshops and meetings. Monument managers will review the planning criteria (the legal guidelines) to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues pertinent to the planning effort and to ensure that we avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis. The approved planning criteria will be available upon request and available on the BLM website. We will be adding maps displayed at the open houses to the web sites also.

Your involvement throughout the process is a key component in the final Monument Management Plan. If you would like a workshop or meeting in your community, please contact us.

If you would like a copy of newsletter #1 or the planning criteria, you can contact us at: Craters of the Moon National Monument Planning Team, Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone Field Office, P.O. BOX 2-B, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352-1522 Telephone calls are welcome anytime: NPS @208-527-3257 ext. 106 or BLM@208-732-7200.

To submit comments, email:  
[ID\\_Craters\\_Plan@blm.gov](mailto:ID_Craters_Plan@blm.gov).

For general information please see the following websites:

[www.nps.gov/crmo](http://www.nps.gov/crmo)

[www.id.blm.gov/planning/index.htm](http://www.id.blm.gov/planning/index.htm)





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Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of the Interior



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