



Lava Beds National Monument is Revising its Cave Management Plan



A Lava Beds National Monument park ranger examining the passage ceiling in Catacombs Cave.

Dear Friend of Lava Beds National Monument:

The National Park Service is preparing a revised Cave Management Plan for Lava Beds National Monument. This revision will be accompanied by an Environmental Assessment to determine if there are any significant impacts.

The Environmental Assessment process allows the Monument to review its legal obligations, any environmental concerns, and is a direct means for the public to have a voice in the process.

The current Cave Management Plan was implemented in 1990 and is dated in regards to modern cave management practices, identifying research needs, and describing future desired conditions of cave resources. The revised Cave Management Plan will be a multifaceted document guiding the Monument's future

actions regarding cave resources. You are invited to become a part of this process by assisting us in identifying topics and issues to be addressed in the new draft management document. Lava Beds will be soliciting relevant issues and topics from May 24 to July 07, 2008 to be incorporated during the revision of the plan.

Complete information regarding how to engage in public participation and comment is described on page 3 of this newsletter.

Lava Beds is also conducting an open house session where park staff will be available to provide information, answer questions, and to allow the public time to provide comments about cave management planning. The open house location and dates are identified to the right.

For your convenience, a comment form is attached to this scoping notice.

**A Public Comment
Period
Will be Open
From:**

5/24/08 - 7/07/08

**Public Scoping
Meeting**

**Thursday,
June 5, 2008
From 7 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Klamath County
Courthouse
Lower Conference
Room**

316 Main Street

See page 3 for more information
on public commenting

Why Does Lava Beds Need a New Cave Management Plan?

The Cave Management Plan will establish guidelines that provide long term management strategies and sets resource condition goals for the Monument's caves.

These management strategies will identify opportunities for visitors to experience the caves in Lava Beds, while working to protect the natural and cultural resources within.

Cave resource planning in Lava Beds is needed because:

- The current Cave Management Plan was developed in 1990, and is not up to date with modern management practices, nor does it identify current research needs.
- NPS Management Policies (2006) requires Lava Beds to "manage caves in accordance with approved cave management plans to perpetuate the natural systems associated with the caves."
- The most recent Lava Beds Visitor Study (2007) indicates that 80% of the Monument's visitors come to Lava Beds to explore caves and 83% of all visitors use the caves, while here. A revision to the Cave Management Plan is needed to incorporate this intensive use of caves.
- New technology requires NPS agencies to consider new ways to protect cave resources and improve a visitor's experience.
- NPS Resource Stewardship Planning requires management plans to describe current conditions and define Desired Future Conditions. These are not addressed by the existing Cave Management Plan.

Cave Management Plan Goals

Lava Beds National Monument is an area of basaltic lava flows containing approximately 750 reported caves. The caves are notable in their abundance, length of passage, and excellent preservation of primary volcanic features. Many also contain resources such as ice formations, cultural resources, or unusual biotic communities or populations. With this in mind, the goals for the management of cave resources and values in Lava Beds are as follows:

- **Protect and conserve the integrity of the Park's cave systems for present and future generations.**
- **Provide a broad range of recreational opportunities in a manner that is consistent with park purposes and protection of resources.**
- **Promote safety of visitors and employees in and around caves.**
- **Support interpretive programs to promote a positive visitor experience and facilitate the public's understanding of cave processes and preservation.**
- **Encourage and support scientific research of natural and cultural resources that is of high-quality and mutually beneficial.**
- **Inventory and monitor cave resources, and strive to increase the knowledge and understanding of these resources.**
- **Prioritize management directions, projects, and research objectives for NPS staff.**



The ice floors of several caves, like this one at Heppe Ice Cave, represent a unique resource and management concern at Lava Beds.

Initial Topics for Consideration.

At this stage of the planning process, topics are being identified that should be addressed in the Cave Management Plan. Three internal meetings with Lava Beds staff and other National Park Service specialists have been conducted and several preliminary topics have been identified:

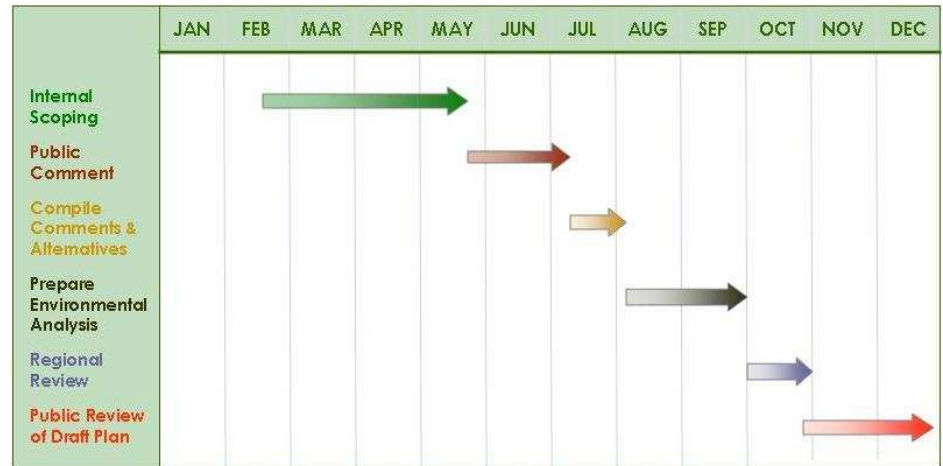
- Development of interpretive materials and educational programs
- Development and maintenance of cave infrastructure
- Restoration of cave resources
- Improve visitor and staff safety
- Reduce resource degradation through improved protection measures
- Surface and subsurface cave sanitation mitigation
- Update the Monument's cave classification system
- Identification of critical research needs and determine direction of cave research
- Evaluation and revision of backcountry cave use
- Protection of pristine cave resources
- Desired future conditions of cave resources

Your input and concerns regarding these topics or other topics is an important part of this process. Please refer to the **Public Participation and Comment** section to learn how to contribute to the planning process.



A simulated cave rescue in Catacombs Cave.

Cave Management Plan 2008 Timeline



Public Participation and Comments

There will be several opportunities throughout the Cave Management Planning process to share your thoughts and ideas with us (listed below). Please let us know if you have thoughts, ideas, or concerns about what should be addressed in the Cave Management Plan. It is important that we hear your ideas and concerns early in the planning process. The comment period for this stage of the planning process will extend through **July 7, 2008**. The general timeline for this project is illustrated on the chart above.

Public Meeting. This summer we will hold a public meeting at the Klamath Falls Court House. This meeting will provide an opportunity for you to share your thoughts, ideas, values, concerns and information. You will also be able to learn more about the planning process. Please refer to the date on the front of the newsletter for times and location.

Newsletters and Web site. Newsletters such as this will be distributed periodically throughout the planning process. For the most up-to-date information view the planning web site <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/labe>. All newsletters will be posted on the planning web site and you can enter in your comments through the web site.

Discussions with Groups and Organizations. Our planning team members will also meet with interested agencies and organizations in order to gather and generate ideas, and to provide information about the plan's progress.

What Next?

The interdisciplinary planning team will review all of the public comments received during the May – July comment period (see chart above). Relevant issues and alternatives from public comments will be incorporated into the Draft Plan/Environmental Assessment. The Draft Cave Management Plan/Environmental Assessment should be available for public review and comment next fall.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds National Monument
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LAVA BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT CAVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Contact Information

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Cave Management Plan Web site:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/labe>

Dear Friend of Lava Beds National Monument:

The National Park Service is preparing a revised Cave Management Plan for Lava Beds National Monument. This newsletter details information about the process, topics to consider for commenting, and ways in which to participate. The initial public comment period is being held from **May 24, 2008 to July 07, 2008**.

You can send us your comments by completing the enclosed comment form and mailing it back to us, by submitting your comments electronically through the web site <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/labe>, or in person at our public meetings. Thank you for your interest in Lava Beds National Monument and your participation in the revision of the Cave Management Plan.



Cave Adapted Millipede



Pacific Tree Frog



Townsend's Big-Eared Bat