

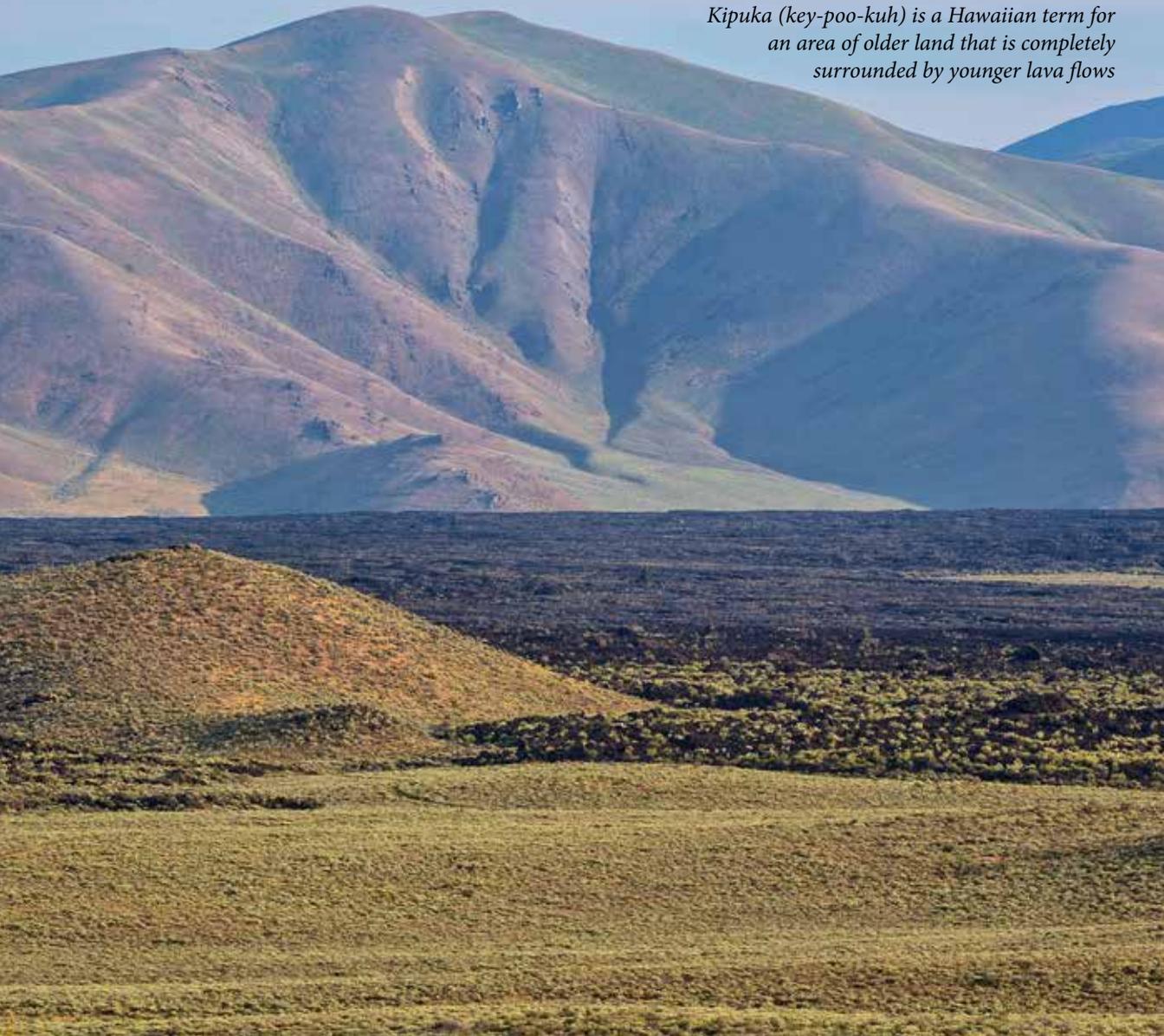


NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS

Laidlaw Park: Sagebrush Oasis

A Guided Tour of the Largest Kipuka at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Idaho

Kipuka (key-poo-kuh) is a Hawaiian term for an area of older land that is completely surrounded by younger lava flows



Points of Interest

1. Little Park is an area known as a kipuka—a topographically higher island of older land and vegetation which has been completely surrounded by younger lava flows.



Kipukas are important because they can provide a picture of vegetation that may be thousands of years old. Paddleford Flat and Laidlaw Park are two other kipukas.



2. Piss Ant Butte is a cinder cone formed by the forceful ejection of frothy, gas-filled lava. While airborne, the lava bits cool rapidly to form a light, porous, glassy rock called cinder. The cinders from Piss Ant Butte have been excavated as a source for local road building materials.



3. Big Blowout Butte is the vent area of a shield volcano that formed about 210,000 years ago. This 1,500' by 150' deep vent was the source of an enormous amount of molten volcanic material as it surfaced from the earth's crust. Big Blowout Butte has produced two significant lava flows—one to the south and another to the west.

4. Snowdrift Crater is the top of a low angle shield volcano that formed nearly 500,000 years ago. Snowdrift rises about 800 feet above the sagebrush plains below, is nearly three-quarters of a mile long and over 180 feet deep. The bowl-shaped crater holds snow during the winter and retains moisture year-round. It supports a large stand of quaking aspens and a cast of wildlife including deer, elk, antelope and many bird species.



5. Laidlaw Volcano is one of the tallest, largest, and most imposing of the shield volcanos located within the boundaries of Craters of the Moon National Monument. It stands over 900 feet tall and extends outward for several miles. The volcano formed through a series of eruptions approximately 425,000 years ago. The erupted lava was particularly fluid, creating flows over great distances across the landscape. This volcano was large enough to divert younger flows and resulted in the formation of the largest kipuka in the monument, Laidlaw Kipuka.



6. South Park Well is the site of the last remaining trapper cabin on Craters of the Moon National Monument. The area has a long history of hunting and trapping dating back to early American Indians. This cabin was used by more recent peoples as a shelter from harsh weather conditions. The Bureau of Land Management stabilized the structure in 2013.

7. Lava Point represents the southern-most point of the Grassy lava flow. The lava source is Grassy Cone—a cinder cone located near the Craters of the Moon National Monument Visitor Center. Grassy Cone erupted nearly 7,800 years ago and its lava flows extend almost 30 miles. These flows flank both the eastern and western margins of Laidlaw Volcano, resulting in the largest kipuka in the monument.

8. Bear Den Butte is a large cinder cone which sits atop the vent of a larger shield volcano. The cone is about 600 feet across, nearly 60 feet deep and is the highest point in Minidoka County. It is a relatively young feature compared to other shield volcanos in the area, dating to approximately 60,000 years. The flows at the flanks of the shield volcano contain an extensive system of lava tubes that can be traced for miles.

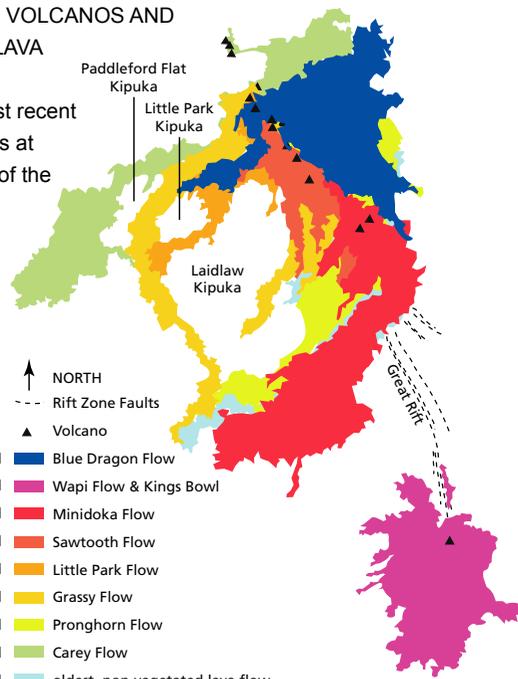
Geologic History

Nearly 7-10 million years ago, Idaho was located over the area now occupied by Yellowstone National Park. As the Earth's crust inched to the southwest over a hotspot, massive volcanic eruptions occurred which damaged and weakened the crust. Leftover heat from the hotspot along with Basin and Range stretching forces caused massive amounts of lava to pour out over the landscape through rift zones, pushing down the crust, flattening the region and creating the vast Snake River Plain. Today, the crust continues to pull apart creating a series of fissures. The largest of these is the 52-mile long Great Rift, the deepest rift of all 7 continents.

Over the past 13,000 years, there have been eight major eruptive events. Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve protects these lava flows and the entire length of the Great Rift.

YOUNG VOLCANOS AND THEIR LAVA FLOWS

The most recent eruptions at Craters of the Moon



Desert Safety

Laidlaw Park is a remote backcountry area with no staff or services. Before leaving, ensure that you take water, sunscreen, first-aid kit, map (BLM 100k or USGS quad), GPS unit, long pants and sturdy shoes or boots and cell phone or SPOT-like device. Drive on designated roads only; 4-wheel drive vehicle with high clearance is recommended. Make sure that somebody knows where you are going and when you intend to return. In case of emergency, please dial 911. Stick to your plan!

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Little Park
2. Piss Ant Butte
3. Big Blowout Butte
4. Snowdrift Crater
5. Laidlaw Volcano
6. South Park Well
7. Lava Point
8. Bear Den Butte

START
HERE

CRATERS OF THE MOON
Visitor Center

FOR MORE INFORMATION



BLM Shoshone Field Office
400 W. F Street
Shoshone, ID 83352
208-732-7200



National Park Service
Craters of the Moon
P.O. Box 29
Arco, ID 83213
208-527-1300



GeoCorps America
Geologic Society of America
rock.geosociety.org/g_corps

