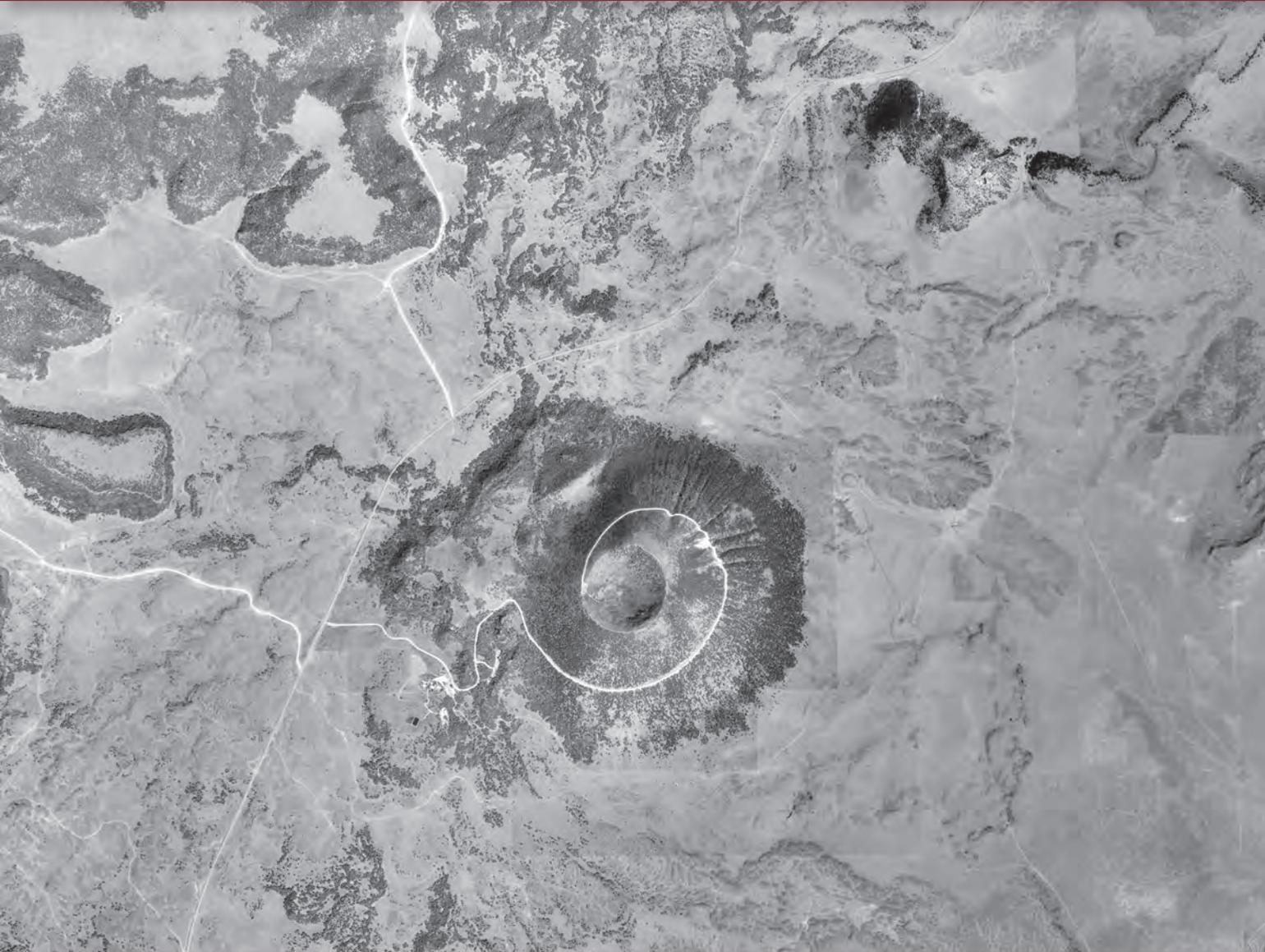




Foundation Document Overview

Capulin Volcano National Monument

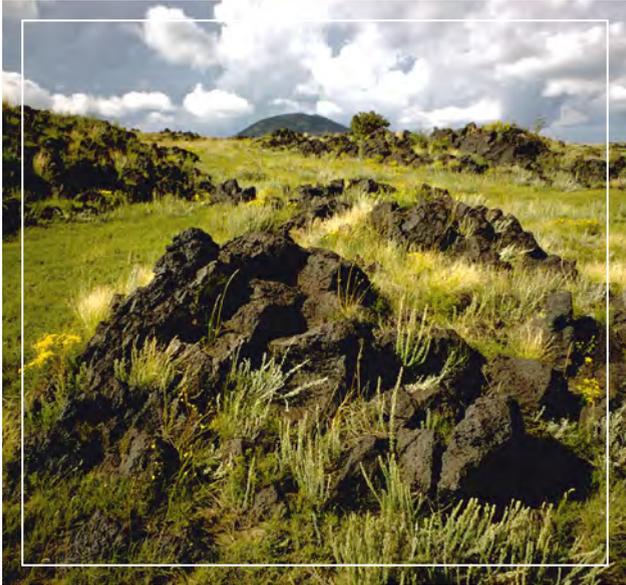
New Mexico



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of CAPULIN VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT is to preserve, protect, and interpret the scientific values, geologic integrity, and scenic viewshed of the striking volcanic features resulting from the creation and eruption of Capulin Volcano.

Significance

Significance statements express why Capulin Volcano National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Capulin Volcano's classic cinder cone and associated volcanic features provide a striking example of a recently extinct volcano for observation and study at local to global levels.
- Capulin Volcano is part of the geologically and morphologically diverse Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field, the easternmost Cenozoic volcanic field in North America.
- The breathtaking panoramic view from the crater rim provides opportunities for education and scientific investigation of natural and cultural landscapes, including how the features were formed and how the volcanic landforms helped shape the human history of northeastern New Mexico.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Volcanic Features and Geologic Processes.** This includes the cinder cone, crater, lava flows, and other volcanic features found within the monument, Capulin Volcano's role in the formation of the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field, and the geological processes of erosion, rifting, and extensional tectonics.
- **Scenic/Historic Viewshed.** This includes the unobstructed panoramic views of the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field and traces of overland trails of historic importance that are possible along Volcano Road and the Crater Rim Trail, the natural setting of pinyon-juniper woodlands surrounded by shortgrass prairie, the air quality of northern New Mexico that make these views possible, and the dark night skies that allow for spectacular celestial observation.
- **Opportunities for Scientific Study.** This includes opportunities to study climate change, process geomorphology, soils development, mammal and avian migration patterns, archeology and ethnography, and astronomy.

Capulin Volcano National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Cultural Resources.** This includes a number of interrelated cultural features found at the monument: historic designed cultural landscape (Volcano Road, the Crater and Rim trails, the Mission 66 visitor center and residences, and other features), ethnographic resources, archeological resources, and the monument's museum collection.
- **Rare Species.** This includes two rare species that have been recorded at the monument: the Capulin Goldenrod (*Solidago capulinensis*) and the Capulin Alberta arctic butterfly (*Oeneis alberta capulinensis*).

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Dramatic yet accessible, Capulin Volcano invites people to explore an exceptional cinder cone volcano and offers opportunities for educational study and personal inspiration.
- The geologically diverse Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field creates an evocative and evolving landscape that opens the door to an understanding of how geological forces shape our world.
- At the meeting place between the shortgrass prairie and the Rocky Mountains, Capulin Volcano protects a natural and cultural environment that is rich in opportunities to explore and study a dramatic volcanic landscape.
- Capulin Volcano provides an opportunity for visitors to understand and appreciate the fascinating science of volcanism that is explored at a number of sites in the national park system.
- Clean air and natural darkness enhance opportunities for visitors to experience the scenic landscape.



Description

The national monument was established by presidential proclamation on August 9, 1916. The intent of President Woodrow Wilson's executive order was to preserve the nearly perfectly shaped volcanic cinder cone, which stands more than 1,200 feet above the surrounding high plains of northeastern New Mexico.

Capulin Volcano is just one of about 100 volcanic features in the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field, which covers about 8,000 square miles in northeastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado. This collection of volcanoes is the easternmost Cenozoic volcanic field in North America and has been active during the past 9 million years. The field is considered dormant as no activity has occurred within the last 30,000 to 40,000 years. The eruption of Capulin Volcano is one of the most recent eruptions (approximately 60,000 years ago). More than 15 square miles of associated lava flows extend beyond the monument's boundary.

A two-mile paved road spirals up to the volcano rim making Capulin Volcano one of the most accessible volcanoes in the world. The unobstructed, panoramic views of the volcanic field, distant Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and portions of four states (Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to understand and appreciate the geologic history of northern New Mexico. Trails leading around the one-mile rim and to the bottom of the 415 feet deep crater allow a rare opportunity for visitors to easily and safely explore what was once an active volcano.

Capulín is a Mexican-Spanish word for chokecherry, a shrub or small tree commonly found on the slopes of the volcano.

Encompassing almost 800 acres, Capulin Volcano National Monument is located in Union County, New Mexico, approximately 20 miles east of Raton and received 48,710 visitors in 2012.

