



# Foundation Document Overview

## Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

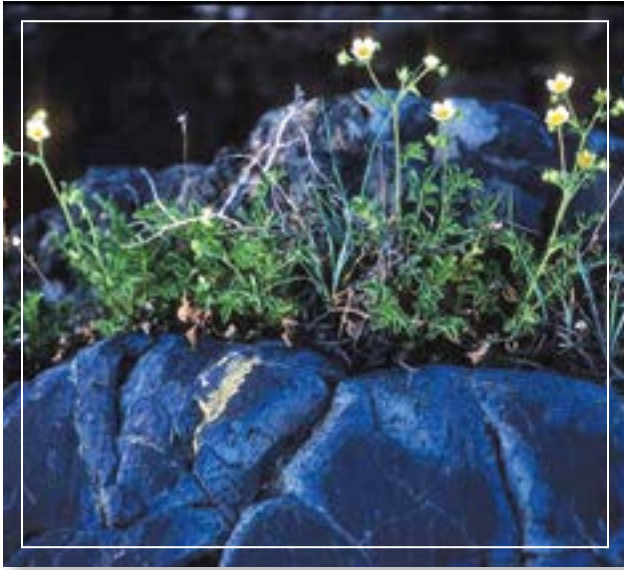
### Idaho



#### Contact Information

For more information about the *Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Foundation Document*, contact: [CRMO\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:CRMO_superintendent@nps.gov) or (208) 527-1300 or write to:  
Superintendent, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, National Park Service,  
18 miles west of Arco and 24 miles east of Carey on Hwy 20/26/93, PO Box 29, Arco, Idaho 83213

## Purpose



*CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE protects a vast “weird and scenic landscape” with remarkable and diverse volcanic features, sagebrush steppe ecosystems, and wilderness, which provides opportunities to explore, understand, and value the rugged and remote high desert landscape of the Great Rift Region.*

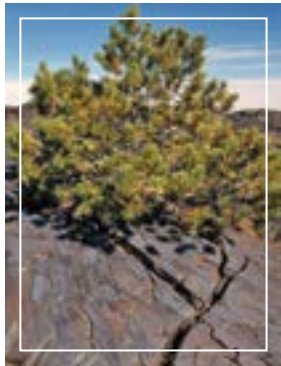


## Significance

Significance statements express why Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve 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.

- Active as recently as 2,000 years ago, the Craters of the Moon lava field is the largest post-ice age basaltic lava field in the lower 48 states. The lava field contains a remarkable and unusual diversity of exquisitely preserved basaltic volcanic features.
- The Great Rift is the deepest known land-based open volcanic rift in the world, and is nearly all contained within the park. It is also one of the longest volcanic rifts in the continental United States.
- Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve contains more than 500 kipukas, or isolated vegetation communities surrounded by lava, largely undisturbed by modern human activity. These communities are key benchmarks for scientific study of long-term ecological change in sagebrush steppe ecosystems.
- The combination of harsh, young volcanic terrain and extremes of a high desert climate have produced a diversity of habitats where plant succession is easily observed and where wildlife display remarkable adaptations that allow them to survive.
- As one of the first two simultaneously designated wilderness areas in the national park system, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is also the largest remaining area within the Snake River Plain that retains wilderness character. The monument and preserve, combined with the BLM-managed monument, encompasses more than one-half million acres of undeveloped federal land.
- Clean air offers visitors expansive scenic views of the high desert and surrounding mountains, which change dramatically with the seasons and from day to the dark night skies.
- For thousands of years, people have explored, used, pondered, and even avoided this vast “weird and scenic landscape.” Members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe and the descendants of those who passed this way on Goodale’s Cutoff on the Oregon Trail retain enduring human connections to the landscape. Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve continues to inspire these lasting impressions.

## 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.

- Geological Features and Processes.
- Opportunities for Scientific Research and Education.
- Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystems.
- Kipukas.
- Life on the Lava.
- Wilderness Character.
- Clean Air and Unobstructed Views.
- Past and Present Human Connections to a Harsh Volcanic Landscape.



## Other Important Resources and Values

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve may contain 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.

- Goodale's Cutoff.
- Pronghorn Migration Corridor.
- Mission 66 Historic Complex.
- Historic Log Structures.
- Little Cottonwood Creek.
- Developed Area.



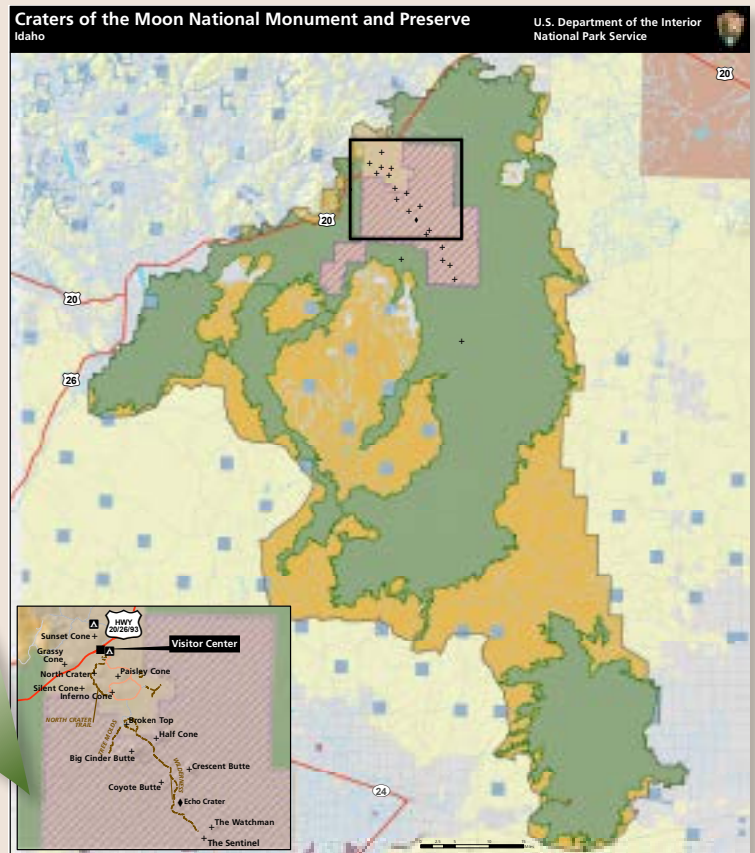
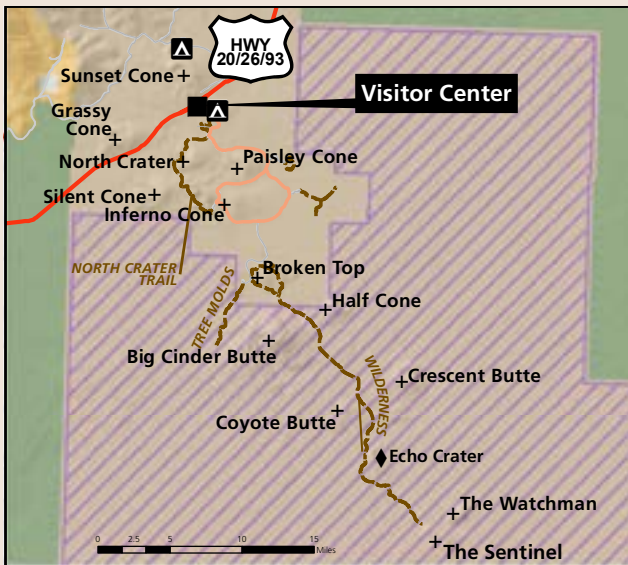
# Description



Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (the park) is in south central Idaho. President Calvin Coolidge established Craters of the Moon National Monument on May 2, 1924, for the purpose of protecting the unusual landscapes of the Craters of the Moon Lava Field. This “lunar” landscape was thought to resemble that of the moon and was described in the presidential proclamation as “a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself.”

Since 1924, the park boundary has been adjusted and expanded numerous times. A 2000 presidential proclamation expanded Craters of the Moon National Monument from roughly 54,000 acres to approximately 753,000 acres 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. On August 2002, Public Law 107-213 designated the NPS portion of the expanded monument as a national preserve.

Cooperative interagency management of these units enhances public service and protection of nationally significant resources, while retaining many traditional uses of the land. This foundation document applies only to the two NPS-administered units.



## Legend

- ◆ Crater
- ▲ Campground
- + Volcanic Peak
- Visitor Center
- Trail
- State Highway
- Secondary Road
- Local Road
- 4WD
- Greater "Monument" Boundary (both NPS and BLM)
- ▨ NPS Wilderness
- NPS-managed Monument
- BLM-managed Monument
- Other BLM Lands
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)
- Private
- State

