



Foundation Document Overview

Lassen Volcanic National Park

California



Contact Information

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Purpose



LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK preserves dynamic volcanic phenomena, scenic values, outstanding wilderness character, and diverse natural and cultural resources; and provides educational, recreational, and exceptional scientific opportunities for the benefit of the public.



Significance

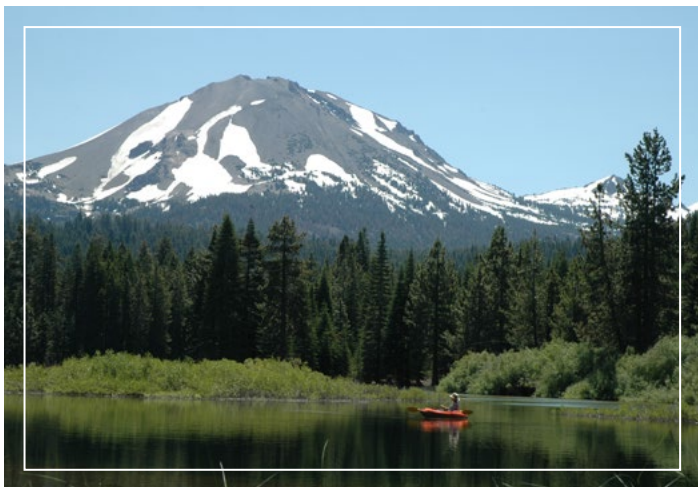
Significance statements express why Lassen Volcanic National Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to 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.

1. Few places on Earth parallel Lassen Volcanic National Park's concentrated diversity of volcanic features. The park showcases a dynamic geologic landscape containing an intact network of hydrothermal features and 60 extinct and active volcanoes in relative proximity to one another that represent all four primary types: (1) shield, (2) composite, (3) cinder cone, and (4) plug dome. This extent and diversity is complemented by more than a century of scientific study, which enhances global knowledge of volcanic systems and contributes to future research, management, and stewardship.
2. Located at the crossroads of three distinct biological provinces—Cascades, Sierra Nevada, and Great Basin—Lassen Volcanic National Park preserves an exceptional biodiversity of more than 1,050 plant and animal species. This biologically rich transition zone offers many opportunities for scientists to research anthropogenic effects on biological processes and populations.
3. Lassen Volcanic National Park protects valuable archeological sites, historic structures, objects, stories, and traditional places that remain significant to people of various backgrounds. These resources enrich our understanding of people that have lived in, adapted to, and traveled through the southern Cascade region for thousands of years.
4. Lassen Volcanic National Park includes more than 90,000 acres of designated and proposed wilderness, which comprises more than 85% of park lands and are buffered by large expanses of other public lands and a contiguous wilderness area. The park's wilderness lands provide outstanding opportunities to experience natural quiet, solitude, clean air, clear views, and pristine night skies amidst a distinctive, vast landscape of volcanic landforms.

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.

- **Wide Variety of Volcanic and Hydrothermal Features and Associated Geology**
- **Biodiversity and a Distinctive Range of Flora and Fauna**
- **Human Pathways and Ties with the Landscape (past, present, and future, including artifact collection)**
- **Lands with Wilderness Character and Other Backcountry Areas**
- **Diversity of Traditional Recreational Values and Visitor Experiences**



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 park significance statements and fundamental resources and values.

- **Geology.** Lassen Volcanic National Park is a dynamic volcanic landscape providing an awe-inspiring glimpse of Earth's seething power, above and below ground.
- **Biodiversity.** Diverse natural systems coexist in Lassen Volcanic National Park due to the intersection of three distinct biological provinces. Study and research of these ecosystems furthers the understanding about the changing ecological health of the region, nation, and the planet.
- **Pathways.** Lassen Volcanic National Park is part of a network of social and natural pathways that connect the park and its values to surrounding resources and partners.
- **Human Activity.** Stories of human experience from precontact to the present day are reflected in the cultural resources of Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- **Wilderness.** The park's wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for self-discovery in wild soundscapes, natural darkness, and relatively undisturbed ecosystems.



Description

Lassen Volcanic National Park encompasses over 106,000 acres of a dynamic and diverse, volcanic landscape. Located at the southern extent of the Cascade Range in northern California, the park was established as a unit of the national park system in 1916 shortly after a series of highly publicized, dramatic volcanic eruptions of Lassen Peak in 1914 and 1915. The park's name is indicative of the dynamic geology and landscape of the area, as nearly every rock at Lassen Volcanic National Park originates from volcanism. Lassen's volcanic domes are part of the Lassen Volcanic Center, located at the southern end of the Cascade Range, which began to erupt about 825,000 years ago and is still active today.

More than 85% of park acreage is either designated or proposed wilderness lands. Nearly 79,000 acres of the park were designated as Lassen Volcanic Wilderness in 1972, and another 13,151 acres have since been proposed to Congress as additional wilderness. Both the designated and proposed wilderness lands are managed as designated wilderness.

Lassen Volcanic National Park also protects a rich diversity of plant and animal life. This unique biological diversity of the park results from a variety of factors, but most notably, its location at the transition zone of three large regional biological provinces: the Cascade Range, the Sierra Nevada Range, and the Great Basin desert.

This biodiversity is demonstrated by approximately 300 species of vertebrates, 765 species of plants, and a wide variety of invertebrates.

Lassen Volcanic National Park also protects a robust human history related to how people inhabited, explored, and traveled through this unique landscape. These cultural resources include important stories, artifacts, and sites. Additionally, the park has several significant examples of human pathways and cultural landscapes, including Drakesbad cultural landscape, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) / Park Development, the Nobles Emigrant Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway – All American Road.

Lassen Volcanic National Park also provides a wide array of opportunities for park visitors to experience, enjoy, and learn about these resources, as well as pursue many forms of outdoor recreation across all seasons. The park receives an average of 450,000 park visitors per year. Visitor opportunities include camping, hiking, backpacking, auto touring, wildlife viewing, wildflower viewing, stargazing, boating, horseback riding, fishing, and a wide range of educational programs provided by park staff. In addition, during winter months the park also provides access for many winter recreation activities such as snowshoeing, skiing, and sledding.

