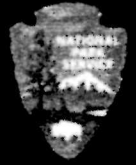


# History of *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park*

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park  
Hawai'i



## History of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

*By Dwight Hamilton*

Because the eruptions of Hawaiian volcanoes are gentler than those of most other volcanoes around the world, the edges of the active vents are frequently accessible, allowing people to come pay their respects to Pele. The early Hawaiian revered her and made offerings to placate her wrath. Missionaries William Ellis and Asa Thurston visited Kīlauea's boiling lake of lava in 1823, the first Westerners to do so. Pele's fiery lake was described in magazines of the day, and adventuresome travelers came to see it firsthand. Mark Twain, on seeing Kīlauea in 1866, enthusiastically wrote, "Here was room for the imagination to work!"

Lorrin Thurston, publisher of the Honolulu Pacific Commercial Advertiser at the turn of the century, loved to explore the volcano lands. Among his discoveries was a giant lava tube, formed when a river of hot lava cooled and crusted over and the still-molten interior continued to flow downhill. Eventually, the lava drained out, leaving a cave-like shell. The Thurston Lava Tube (Nāhuku) is a major attraction on Crater Rim Drive.

In 1906, Thurston began a campaign to make this amazing area into a public park. His efforts were not effective until he was joined in 1912 by Dr. Thomas A. Jaggar, who came to the islands to establish and serve as director of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. Together, the two conservationists collared politicians, wrote editorials, and promoted the idea of making the volcanoes into a national park in what was then the Territory of Hawai'i.

On August 1, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the country's 13<sup>th</sup> national park into existence. It had taken 10 years, but the perseverance of Thurston and Jaggar paid off.

At first, the park consisted of only the summits of Kīlauea and Mauna Loa on Hawai'i Island and Haleakalā on Maui. Eventually, Kīlauea Caldera was added to the park, followed by the forests of Mauna Loa, the Ka'ū Desert (the site of ancient warrior footprints set in ash), the rainforest of Ola'a, and the Kalapana archaeological area of the Puna/Ka'ū Historic District.

In 1961, Haleakalā was made a separate national park. Today, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park protects 520 square miles of the island's volcanic wonders and is a refuge for surviving native plants and animals.

In 1980, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural organization (UNESCO) named Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park an International Biosphere Reserve because of its outstanding scenic and scientific values. The park was recognized for its important volcanic sites (including two of the world's most active volcanoes); and its volcanic island ecosystem, which preserves one of the largest significant ecosystems on the Hawaiian Islands; and its cultural and historic sites. The Biosphere Reserve program goals are to conserve the diversity of a designated site's ecosystems and provide areas and facilities for international ecological and environmental research, education and training.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987. World Heritage sites recognize and protect areas around the globe that have outstanding natural, historical, and cultural values. It evolved from the idea that certain natural and cultural sites have "universal value" for all people.

# Hawai'i Volcanoes

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<b>Park Unit</b>	Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park was established on August 1, 1916, the 15 <sup>th</sup> National Park in a system that now numbers 401 areas. The park is located in the state of Hawai'i, on the southeastern part of the Island of Hawai'i, in the districts of Ka'u and Puna. The Superintendent is Cindy Orlando. The park website is <a href="http://www.nps.gov/havo">www.nps.gov/havo</a>
<b>Purpose</b>	The mission of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is to protect, conserve, and study the volcanic landscapes and associated natural and cultural resources and processes, and to facilitate safe public access to active volcanism, diverse geographic settings, and wilderness for public education and enjoyment.
<b>Resources</b>	In recognition of its outstanding values, Hawai'i Volcanoes has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve (1980) and a World Heritage Site (1987).
<b>Geological</b>	Hawai'i Volcanoes extends from sea level to 13,677' (4,169 meters) and encompasses the summits and rift zones of two of the world's most active volcanoes, Kīlauea and Mauna Loa. Kīlauea has been in nearly continuous eruption since 1983; Mauna Loa last erupted in 1984. Volcanic features found within the park include calderas, pit craters, cinder cones, spatter ramparts, fumaroles, solfataras, pāhoehoe and 'a'ā lava flows, tree molds, lava tubes, black sand beaches, and thermal areas.
<b>Biological</b>	The park's seven ecological zones (seacoast, lowland, mid-elevation woodland, rain forest, upland forest, subalpine, and alpine) harbor distinct plant and animal communities. The park provides refuge for many endangered species: honu 'ea (hawksbill turtle), nēnē (Hawaiian goose), 'ua'u (Hawaiian petrel), 'io (Hawaiian hawk) and ope'ape'a (Hawaiian hoary bat).
<b>Cultural</b>	The cultural heritage begins with the indigenous Hawaiians. Their connection to the land, both past and present, is found from the coastal cliffs to the summit craters of both volcanoes. The rich archeological record connects today's Hawaiians to their voyaging ancestors who made landfall on this island. The history of geological exploration and the protection of significant natural landscapes through the establishment of the park itself is found and shared with visitors by driving the roads, walking through historic districts, visiting historic buildings, and through the use of the park's archives and museum collections.
<b>Statistics</b>	
<b>Size</b>	333,086 acres; 66 mi of paved roads; 155 mi of marked trails; 123,100 acres legislated wilderness; 121,015 acres of eligible wilderness; 7,850 acres potential wilderness
<b>Staffing</b>	143 employees (full-time equivalents) in 2014
<b>Annual Visitation</b>	1,583,209 recreational visits in 2013
<b>Budget</b>	\$7,152,640 in appropriations after assessments for 2014
<b>Other Agencies &amp; Organizations</b>	Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association Hawai'i Volcanoes Lodge Company, LLC Kīlauea Military Camp, a Joint Services Recreation Center U.S. Geological Survey, Hawaiian Volcano Observatory U.S. Geological Survey, Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center U.S. Forest Service, Biological Quarantine Facility Volcano Art Center
<b>Congressional Delegation</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> District: Senator Brian E. Schatz (D), Senator Mazie Hirono (D) Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D)

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