



The Capulin Chronicle

Park Chosen to Champion New *Call to Action* “Class Act” Initiative

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service—a moment that offers an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our accomplishments as we prepare for a new century of stewardship and engagement. Through the support of the American people, partners, volunteers, and employees, the NPS is having a profound effect on

“A Call to Action charts a path toward that second century vision.”

the lives of our citizens. A Call to Action (C2A) seeks to expand those impacts, even in these times of fiscal constraint, by strategically focusing our efforts and aligning existing resources on powerful action that advances our mission.

The heart of this new plan includes four broad themes supported by specific goals and measurable actions. Each action has an assigned champion park, as well as two support parks. Capulin Volcano was selected to champion action 15 “A Class Act.” This particular action calls for parks to “Help students develop a deep understanding of park resources...” Each park is asked to adopt a class of students due to graduate in 2016 and assist them in discovering the relevance of national parks in their lives through a series of educational interactions.

For Capulin Volcano, inclusion in the C2A as a champion is an opportunity to



Park Guide Ty Labeth giving “Hunting Lobo,” a curriculum-based education program, to students from Boise City, Oklahoma.

showcase the talents and abilities of staff. Superintendent Peter Armato said, “I supervise a fairly young staff who are literally jumping feet first into this goal. Thus far, we have had several meetings focusing on the mechanics of the goal; how to involve our local communities; how to involve our academic institutions at the university, middle, and high school levels to help our park achieve this goal.”

Superintendent Armato is quick to point out that while C2A is asking for a new vision in the NPS, it is not necessarily asking parks to do more. Rather, C2A is asking employees and partners to reconsider how they accomplish the mission of the National Park Service and what they can do differently. “C2A is

simply providing new opportunities to be innovative, creative, and engaging in the way we work. For Capulin, that means using new technology and new programs

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to reach a broader audience and that’s something we have been working toward for the better part of a year.”



Visitor Use Assistant Amy Jewell showing off some of the local wildlife.

Capulin Volcano National Monument

Set aside in 1916, Capulin Volcano National Monument preserves a striking example of a recent extinct volcano.

Superintendent

Peter Armato

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 40
Des Moines, New Mexico 88418

On the Internet

www.nps.gov/cavo



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Phone

575-278-2201

E-mail

cavo_interp@nps.gov

Federal Highways Road Repair Set for October

Erosion has long been a battle for Capulin Volcano. Between gullies and cinder slides created by rain and snow, it seems the volcano is constantly at war with Mother Nature. In order to preserve the volcano for future generations, staff must delay these natural processes which slowly wear down the mountain of basalt—a task that can be daunting at best. It seems, however, staff will soon be getting some help from Federal Highways. Work on the Volcano culvert system has been long awaited and will begin in October of this year. Currently, the culvert system, which is supposed to drain water from the roadway, cannot keep up with the heavy rains that routinely occur during the New Mexico monsoon season. As a result, three cinder slides in the last 2 years have caused closures of the road to the rim and damaged the support for the road.

To fix this problem, workers will bring large natural rocks for riprap to put underneath the spillways at each erosion location. This will better disperse the

water and hopefully keep topsoil and cinders from washing down the slope. Federal Highways will also bring in contractors for the revegetation of native plant species to ensure the root systems of the new plants take hold and maintain the soil for years to come. The cost of this project will be approximately 2.5 million dollars. Contractors will work days and nights to minimize road closures to the top of the volcano while also trying to protect our resource.

Although the National Park Service does not like to detour visitors or create safety risks, access to the work sites are very limited due to the steep slopes of the volcano. In order to perform this work, it will require heavy equipment in the roadway during some park hours. The contractor and monument staff will be working together in order to serve the visitors to the best of our ability. The park asks that people understand what problems may persist if this work is not completed.



Culvert 14, one of several inadequate culverts, has experienced significant erosion due to heavy rainfall undermining the road to the volcano rim. Notice the exposed cinder.

Lions, Rams, and Bears...Oh my!

New and exciting changes are in store for the species list at Capulin Volcano. Three new big game species have been spotted in the park within the last year. Two of the species were known to inhabit the surrounding area but there was little to no evidence of these species utilizing Capulin's resources.

Beginning in January, rangers found evidence of a cougar living on the volcano. A park employee working in the field stumbled upon the cougar's kill site. He returned with a game camera, capturing more than a hundred photos of the cat. The cougar was later sighted by visitors driving through the park.

This summer, to the surprise and delight of visitors and park rangers, two more species made appearances. Bears are known to inhabit the area surrounding the volcano and are even occasionally seen within park boundaries; but, this summer a juvenile black bear took up residence in the volcano's crater. This was a treat since many of our visitors hale from places where bears are either



Female Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep captured in the park by the Mantz family. non-existent or uncommon. Many a visitor, young and old, saw their first real live black bear this summer.

The most exciting wildlife encounter was in July. Visitors first sighted two Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ewes, and told park staff about their discovery. The next day park staff and visitors alike saw the sheep. Later in the summer a visitor saw a single ram. This began a search for the sheep but unfortunately he was not seen again. Bighorn sheep are typically found along the Oklahoma-New Mexico border, near Black Mesa. The New

Mexico Department of Game and Fish have been equally enthusiastic about these sighting, as it shows dispersion of a species they have long been trying to re-introduce to northeastern New Mexico.

On an equally exciting note a species of goldenrod, thus far found growing wild only on the slopes of Capulin Volcano, has been "rediscovered." The species *Solidago capulinensis* was first described as a new species in 1936. It was not mentioned in accounts of New Mexico or North American flora. It lived and flourished forgotten, until ten years ago when an individual collected samples of the plant from flower beds at a Nature Center in Pueblo, Colorado. Unable to identify the species, they sent the sample to the University of New Mexico where researchers worked at discovering the identity and history of the shrub. In 2010, researchers found the species growing in its wild state at Capulin Volcano. Park employees are very excited and have made plans to continue protecting and monitoring this species.

Meet Annie Boyd, SCA Junior Ranger Ambassador

Each summer a handful of parks within the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service are chosen to host a Student Conservation Association Junior Ranger Ambassador. These Ambassadors spend twelve weeks overhauling the Junior Ranger programs at their park. This summer Capulin Volcano was lucky enough to host Annie Boyd.

Annie, a recent graduate from the University of New Hampshire, came armed with a passion for volcanoes and science which made her a perfect fit for Capulin. During the course of the summer, Annie gave programs, interacted with visitors, and re-vamped Capulin's Junior Ranger book and Lady Bug Hunt (renamed the *Junior* Junior Ranger book). She also collaborated on a third book for the Santa Fe Trail which incorporated national parks in New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas.



Trek or Treat

On October 29, 2011, Capulin Volcano will host its first ever Trek or Treat Junior Ranger Day. Entrance fees will be waived all day for guests arriving in costume. Halloween themed activities, such as mask making and pumpkin painting, will take place from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Capulin Volcano Visitor Center. The park will also host a campfire program starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Haunted Hollow Picnic Area. For more information on this or other programs, please contact the park at (575) 278-2201.

a SCARY
GOOD TIME





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Capulin Volcano National Monument
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 Des Moines, NM 88418

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The Capulin Chronicle is the official newsletter of Capulin Volcano National Monument.

Editor

Lynn Cartmell

Contributors

Zach Cartmell
 Kara Blodgett
 Amy Jewell

NPS Photographers

Zach Cartmell
 Lynn Cartmell

Comments? Write to:

Capulin Volcano National Monument
 P.O. Box 40
 Des Moines, NM 88418

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Superintendent's Corner

Since arriving at Capulin, I have had the privilege of working with a great staff and the opportunity to visit and learn about our neighboring communities. I have met many hard working ranchers and residents and have been warmly welcomed by all. I look forward to learning more about our neighbors and communities and to developing lasting relationships with the people of Capulin, Folsom, Des Moines, Clayton, Branson and Raton. This is your monument, and I am honored to help hold the values of the land in trust for you and for future generations.

My first visit to northeast New Mexico was October 2010. My wife Kathy and I traveled from Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska to Capulin Volcano for my interview for superintendent of the park. Little did I know at that time, I would be traveling back permanently to join the staff. In January 2011, I was notified that I had been selected for the position and in March, after 15 years in Alaska, Kathy and I began our nearly 3,900 mile journey from Seward, Alaska to New Mexico. Quite a change given that Seward is located at 0 (zero) elevation and summer temperatures are very cool by New Mexico standards. Now we live at 6,500 ft. elevation in Raton, work at about 7,000 to 8,000 ft. at the volcano and best of all, we enjoy warm, sunshine filled days.



I look forward to many years of public service at Capulin Volcano and involvement in neighboring communities. I encourage each of you to become a part of the monument as over the coming years I anticipate that there will be many positive changes in how we manage and how we support our local communities.