



Petroglyph Point Newsletter



From the Superintendent

Lava Beds National Monument is inviting public comment on preliminary concepts for the management of the Petroglyph Point unit.

Petroglyph Point, a detached unit of Lava Beds National Monument, contains the most concentrated rock art in the park, as well as one of the largest panels of Native American rock art in the United States. Petroglyph Point is considered one of the most sacred sites to the Modoc people. These unique and significant resources at Petroglyph Point are also considered one of the park's fundamental resources and values. The National Park Service will be preparing a new plan to address natural and cultural resource protection, facility development, visitor use, and other management needs. This plan will be developed with guidance from members and representatives of Lava Beds's two associated Native American Tribes, partners, stakeholders, and the public in compliance with legal and policy requirements. As a first step, we invite you to participate in our first public comment period.

During this comment period, the public is invited to learn about and comment on desired conditions and preliminary concepts for Petroglyph Point, which include improving the visitor experience, protecting the petroglyphs, ensuring the accessibility of trails, and enhancing interpretive features at the site.

Chris Mengel
Superintendent

Brief Overview of the Planning Area

Before 1900, Petroglyph Point unit was a dramatic palagonite island formation in the vast Tule Lake. The Modoc creation story describes Tule Lake as the center of the world and Petroglyph Point as essential to the creator of the world. For thousands of years, the Modoc people and their ancestors inscribed petroglyphs into the calcified mineral salts that cover the basalt base of the butte. Petroglyph Point includes more than 5,000 petroglyphs and is a setting of continued significance to the Modoc members of the Klamath Tribes and the Modoc Nation as a part of their traditional homeland.

A painting of the American flag on the east aspect, completed by local homesteader Charles Coppock in 1917, and historic graffiti made by Japanese American people incarcerated at the nearby Tule Lake Segregation Center during World War II, are also found here.

In addition to the vast cultural resources Petroglyph Point contains, this location is an excellent location for bird-watching. The area is largely open, with expansive sight lines, and is a well-known location for birders.

What Is the Petroglyph Point Site Management Plan?

The Petroglyph Point site management plan will focus on enhancing the protection of the area's key resources and values from both natural and human threats, as well as determining appropriate access for visitors. The plan will address a variety of issues and opportunities related to Petroglyph Point, including the following:

- providing a framework for National Park Service (NPS) managers to guide decisions aimed at safeguarding resources while ensuring high-quality visitor experiences through the effective management of visitor activities and facilities
- clearly defining resource conditions, visitor uses and experiences, visitor capacity, types and intensities of development, and operational functions to be achieved in the planning area.

The general management plan for Lava Beds National Monument, completed in 2011, envisioned significant facility development at Petroglyph Point, including a new road alignment south of the land form (shown as "2" on the preliminary concepts map). Since then, the park has strengthened its collaborations with the Klamath Tribes and Modoc Nation. By centering their perspectives in our planning process, we have been motivated to revise the general management plan to place a greater emphasis on protecting the fragile cultural and natural resources of the area.

This planning process asks us to imagine what Petroglyph Point will look like in 15 to 20 years. Actions directed by this plan would be accomplished over time. Budget restrictions, requirements for additional data or regulatory compliance, and competing priorities may delay or modify the implementation of actions.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and NPS policy, the plan is expected to be evaluated through an environmental assessment. The plan will identify issues and concerns and present a reasonable range of management alternatives for public review. The environmental assessment will also analyze the environmental consequences of each of the alternatives and identify a preferred alternative. At the end of the environmental assessment process, the National Park Service may issue a "finding of no significant impact," which is the document that would finalize the decision on the site management plan.



Desired conditions describe the visitor experiences and resource conditions that the National Park Service will strive to achieve through implementation of the plan. Desired conditions can be interpreted as objectives of the plan and are statements of aspiration. They help guide the appropriate levels of development and visitor use. We welcome your comments on these draft desired conditions.

Tribal Access

Continuing the traditional and cultural practices of Tribal members and historically associated communities is prioritized and serves as a guiding principle in management decisions. Resources connected to these practices are integrated into the park's decision-making process. When appropriate, and following consultation, park staff work collaboratively with Tribal partners to make informed decisions regarding the site and its resources.

Facilities and Structures

New facilities and structures prioritize the health and protection of both cultural and natural resources. These additions accommodate diverse uses and foster cooperation among visitors with designs that are visually harmonious with the natural surroundings and are respectful of cultural significance.

All visitor services, amenities, and infrastructure promote education about the site and ensure on-site safety, particularly in response to potential extreme weather and climate events. These services may include benches, walkways, shade structures, and potable water.

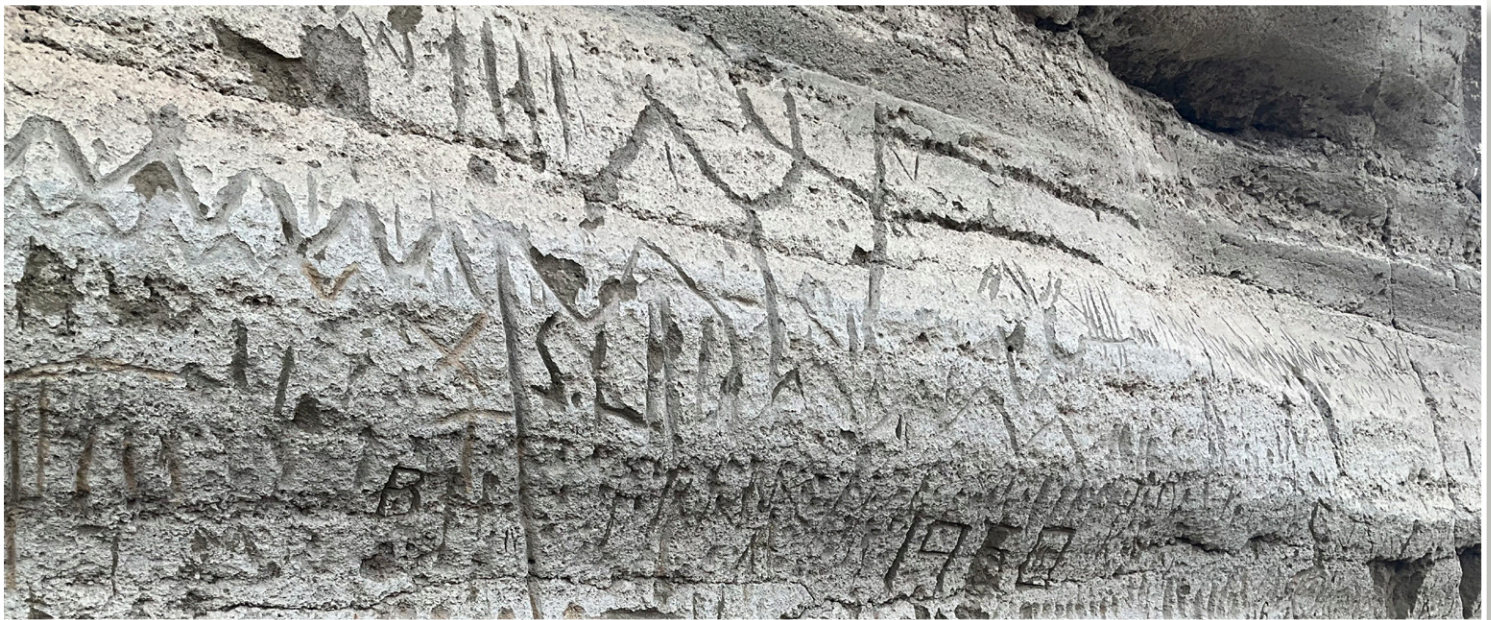
Cultural Resources

Protecting and preserving significant cultural resources are paramount, shaping the management priorities for the area. Cultural resources associated with traditional practices are safeguarded to the highest standard and interpreted in a manner that reflects their sensitivity and importance to traditionally associated peoples.

When appropriate, and with Tribal consultation, the traditional practices, stories, uses, and cultural histories of affiliated Tribal partners are effectively communicated to visitors and staff to enhance the understanding of Petroglyph Point. Visitors are informed about the serious consequences of damage to nonrenewable resources—artifacts and features that cannot be repaired or restored once they are harmed or removed.

Areas of the site with a high concentration of nonrenewable resources, such as rock art and archeological sites, may be temporarily or permanently closed to protect the sensitive and sacred nature of these assets.

Data collection regarding archeological resources is prioritized to meet current standards, address knowledge gaps, and inform effective management decisions.



Natural Resources

Petroglyph Point exemplifies the functioning of natural ecosystems and processes in the area. Natural resources and processes are managed to emphasize their most pristine and unaltered state wherever possible, serving as an educational tool for visitors to appreciate the rich ecosystem and landscape of the surrounding area.

Habitats are maintained to promote resilience and demonstrate natural processes, including resource adaptability. Efforts focus on removing or mitigating invasive species while preserving native flora and fauna. Geologic features remain in their natural state, undisturbed by human use. Their unique characteristics are acknowledged and valued for their contribution to the site's significance.

Efforts are made to mitigate altered fire regimes and other adverse climatic effects, with planning strategies in place to address the challenges posed by climate change. The health of native flora and fauna take precedence over visitor opportunities, ensuring that management decisions respect the cultural and spiritual significance of the site.

Data collection related to plant and animal species is prioritized to address knowledge gaps and guide informed management decisions.



Visitor Use and Experience

Before their arrival, visitors are informed about the significance of Petroglyph Point and best practices for their on-site experience. The site's messaging engages a diverse audience, encouraging appreciation of its various opportunities. All resources are interpreted through both physical and digital media, providing detailed information that helps visitors connect with and understand these resources.

On-site visitor orientation and wayfinding are clear and logically organized, effectively communicating the opportunities available at Petroglyph Point and inspiring confidence in visitors to navigate the site respectfully. Visitors learn that Petroglyph Point is a cultural and sacred site for Indigenous peoples and that their visitation is primarily an educational experience with limited recreational opportunities. Visitors understand that the site's significance encompasses both its natural and cultural resources. Visitors and partners gain a fundamental understanding of key issues related to Petroglyph Point and the threats facing the surrounding ecosystem.

The safety of both Tribal members and visitors is a top priority, especially in light of potential extreme weather events and environmental hazards. Site stewardship is promoted, fostering an atmosphere of spiritual reverence for the site and its resources. Efforts are made to ensure that all features and attractions are accessible to the greatest extent possible, considering the sensitive nature of the nonrenewable resources.

The following preliminary concepts represent early collaborations between the planning team and Tribal representatives, and we will use your input to further refine and improve these concepts. Based on ideas gathered from the Tribes, public, and park leadership, the NPS planning team will propose an action alternative to address the challenges and opportunities identified at Petroglyph Point. The National Park Service will also, at a minimum, consider a no-action alternative. These alternatives will be released publicly, along with an analysis of the environmental costs and benefits of each alternative. You will have another opportunity at that time to comment on the direction of the plan and the adequacy of the analysis. The National Park Service will not select an alternative for implementation until after environmental compliance is completed under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Your comments on the following preliminary concepts are appreciated and will be used to develop management alternatives and improve the plan.

Tribal Access

To allow for privacy for Tribal members engaged in ceremonial practices, certain trails and other areas may be restricted from use by the general public. Tribal members may undertake efforts to restore the site within areas otherwise excluded to the general public during certain times of year. Additionally, an accessible trail to the top of the landform may be installed for ceremonial uses.



Cultural Resource Protection

To enhance the preservation and protection of the fragile rock art, park staff would embark on several mitigation measures to minimize human-caused damages. The existing chain link fence would be removed and replaced with an equally durable and sustainable version. The new fence would provide increased security through its design and new location at an increased distance from the petroglyphs. One potential solution includes a complete enclosure of the landform.

Dust from the adjacent county road, which contains sharp volcanic glass, may contribute to erosive impacts worsened by wind scouring. Potential solutions include realigning the existing road or resurfacing its current alignment. Park staff are also exploring the installation of a windbreak along the unit's western boundary to protect the petroglyphs from dust impacts associated with agricultural activities.

Natural Resource Protection

The National Park Service would define and close certain areas to prevent irreversible degradation of geologic and biologic resources and preserve the largest intact stand of mature sagebrush in the park. Additionally, parking and restroom facilities may be relocated away from steep rock faces to minimize human noises near bat and raptor habitat.

Visitor Experience

The National Park Service would provide interpretive materials that incorporate Tribal perspectives on their history and relationship with site. An accessible pedestrian route would be established to ensure universal access over rough bedrock, leading to shaded viewing areas designed for bird-watching or observing the petroglyphs. One potential solution includes a new trail that circumnavigates the entire landform, following the existing grade. Additionally, the dangerously positioned vehicle pulloff that provides viewing access of the Coppock Flag may be relocated or closed to enhance visitor and vehicle safety.

How Can I Be Involved?

Your involvement in the planning process is critical for the completion of a successful plan. You can submit formal comments within two time periods. The first comment period is underway and ends on November 24, 2024. The next opportunity will be when the draft plan is released in spring of 2025. You can always contact us to voice your concerns or insights and check in on the planning process. Here are several ways for you to participate:

- Comment online at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/PEPO_Site_Plan.
- Send a letter to the park superintendent at:
Petroglyph Point Site Management Plan
Superintendent
Lava Beds National Monument
P.O. Box 1240
Tulelake, CA 96134

NOTE: Comments will not be accepted by fax or any other method than those specified above. Please also note that your entire comment—including personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and e-mail address—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.

Steps in the Planning Process

The planning process will likely involve the following steps:

Status	Designation Process Steps
We are beginning this step	Develop preliminary concepts and describe the potential solutions.
Not started	Develop alternatives – The planning team will develop a proposed action and reasonable alternatives based on public input, safety considerations, visitor opportunities, and resource analysis.
Not started	Prepare/distribute site management plan – You will have an opportunity to comment on the plan and environmental assessment. The NPS planning team expects to release this document in spring 2025.
Not started	Distribute the decision document and prepare to implement the plan.



What Do You Think?

Your perspectives and ideas will help refine the desired conditions and preliminary concepts. In particular, we're interested in your responses to the following questions:

1. What do you like about the draft desired conditions and why? What would you change about the desired conditions?
2. What do you like about the preliminary concepts and why? What would you change about the concepts?
3. What resources and experiences in the park are the most important to you?
4. What resources and experiences should be considered a priority as the National Park Service responds to climate change impacts?
5. What other ideas do you have?



Invitation to Public Meetings

The National Park Service will host public meetings on November 7, 8, and 9, 2024. The purpose of these meetings is to share information about the planning process, gather input on the preliminary concepts, and answer questions from the public. Please consider attending a public meeting.

Date	Time	Location
November 7	6:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)	In person – Check for details at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/PEPO_Site_Plan
November 8	3:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)	Virtual – Check for details at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/PEPO_Site_Plan
November 9	12:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)	In person – Check for details at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/PEPO_Site_Plan

Scan this QR code to visit the project website and comment on the preliminary concepts, desired conditions, or any other comments on the upcoming plan.



Scan this QR code to visit Lava Beds National Monument's web page and learn more about the park and the plan.

