

Great Rift Gazette

Summer 2011



Moon Buggies

The early morning visitor to Inferno Cone is rewarded with an amazing scene. Seas of blackened lava unfold across the plain. Distant mountain ranges float on the horizon. Calm morning air makes the silence complete. So captivating is the scenery and solitude, you may not even notice the ranger coasting by en route to her morning hike. That's because she is driving an electric car, which emits no exhaust and virtually no sound. In fact, it's powered by the sun.

The pair of electric cars is one part of a broad effort by park managers to reduce Craters of the Moon's carbon footprint. Entrusted to preserve America's natural and cultural heritage, sustainability is a consideration in virtually all management actions taken today by the National Park Service. As part of the Climate Friendly Park network, Craters of the Moon has embraced two simple philosophies: Use less. Go renewable.

The "moon buggies" – as the electric cars are known among park staff – certainly use less. Traveling up to 40 miles on a single charge, rangers are able to get around the park's 7-mile loop road easily and efficiently, emitting no carbon dioxide. As an added bonus, the silent cars help maintain the natural quiet of the monument's soundscape.

The drawback to most electric cars is that they still need power to run. That power is often generated from distant fossil fuel-burning plants. But by embracing the second philosophy – utilizing renewable resources – park managers have truly made Craters of the Moon's electric cars carbon neutral. The recently-completed solar panel array at park headquarters began producing electricity in fall 2010. This American Reinvestment and Recovery Act



Rangers proudly showing off their new rides.

(ARRA)-sponsored project will produce enough solar energy each year to offset about one-third of all electric use in the monument. That's enough to make operation of the visitor center – and the moon buggies that charge up there – carbon-neutral.

Beyond using the latest technology, several sustainability initiatives at Craters of the Moon rely on time-tested conservation measures. Water use has been cut drastically, both by removing lawns that needed irrigation and by upgrading aging water-line infrastructure. The monument's recycling center, located in the campground across from the entrance station, diverts a wide range of products – including plastic bottles and cans – from the landfill. Not only does the recycling program use simple, low-tech measures anyone can utilize, it is only successful with the help of visitors and staff working together.

Taken together, these steps are reducing the demand for limited resources and cutting the amount of carbon dioxide and other pollutants released into the atmosphere. Which means the view from Inferno Cone just got a little clearer.

Talking Trash



The monument's recycling center is located in the campground across from the entrance station. Please recycle the following materials there:

- Glass
- Plastics #1 & 2
- Mixed paper (office paper, newspaper, etc.)
- Cardboard
- Aluminum & tin cans

Sustainable Steps

To learn about other sustainability measures at Craters of the Moon, ask a ranger or visit our website at www.nps.gov/crmo/parkmgmt/sustainability.htm.

The Evening Show

The show takes place every night in the cool, calm desert evening. Crowds pack the benches in the campground amphitheater, pointing and gasping in rapture, leaning forward to see what will happen next. Although they are there to hear the ranger describe life in the lava terrain, the show they're enthralled by is the Little Brown Bat that dances overhead, stealing the limelight from the young woman in the flat hat.

The modest little bat, only four inches long and weighing about one-quarter pound, is oblivious to the spell she has on the crowd. A mother bat with a baby to feed, she is too busy collecting a meal for herself before she returns to her roost site in a cave to nurse her child.

She is nocturnal, or active at night, for a great reason: that's when the eating is best. The Little



Townsend's Big-eared Bat in lava tube.
One of 11 species found in the Monument.

Brown Bat dines on insects, and the relatively moist evening air brings out a variety of moths and gnats. "Bats" continues on page 3

Welcome

In 2000 President Bill Clinton initiated a 13-fold increase in the size of the Monument in order "to assure protection of the entire Great Rift volcanic zone." This was accomplished by merging the existing National Park System (NPS) unit with a new unit of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System. The fundamental purposes of these two national systems have been brought together here to enhance public service and protection of nationally significant natural and cultural resources, while retaining many of the traditional uses of the land.

As we begin our second decade of cooperative management, staff from the two agencies have much to be proud of:

- Newly paved spur roads around the loop road and a new accessible sidewalk from the visitor center to the campground.
- Photovoltaic panels that provide clean and green energy for the visitor center complex.
- A completed Transportation Plan for the BLM Monument and NPS Preserve; Parking areas at three locations in the BLM Monument (Ant Butte, South Well, and Bear Trap Cave) and an accompanying travel map and guide should be available by this summer.
- New Monument Guidebook with detailed information about the Monument and Preserve, available in the visitor center bookstore.

Next year, we plan on refurbishing the campground and transforming the North Crater Flow Trail into a universally accessible trail with new interpretive signs. New interpretive signs are also being designed and fabricated for pull-outs along the portion of the Monument and Preserve traversed by the Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway (U.S. Highway 20/26/93). We hope you agree that Craters of the Moon is a very special place that deserves the very best treatment.

We thank you in advance for actively helping to take care of this special place by staying on roads and trails, putting litter in its place and leaving things pretty much as you find them. We invite you to make the most of your visit by participating in the variety of educational offerings listed in this newspaper. Have a safe and enjoyable visit!

Doug Neighbor,
NPS Superintendent

Holly Hampton,
BLM Monument
Manager

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Accessibility

The visitor center, restrooms, and amphitheater are wheelchair accessible. Audio-visual presentations at the visitor center are also accessible for hearing and visually impaired people. The campground sidewalk, Snow Cone, and Devil's Orchard Trails are wheelchair accessible. There is also a wheelchair accessible campsite in the campground. Signs at each trailhead provide additional information about accessibility.



Backpacking

Most of the monument is designated Wilderness, or recommended to congress for Wilderness designation (Wilderness Study Areas), and is accessible only by foot. If you wish to stay overnight in the Wilderness area you must first obtain a free permit. These permits and maps of the area are available at the visitor center during business hours.

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Camping

Camping is available by self-registration in the 51-site Lava Flow Campground. Water and restrooms are available but no hookups or dump station. Early registration is encouraged to claim your campsite of choice. A separate campground is available for groups of up to 30 people. Reservations for this facility must be made in advance by contacting monument staff at (208)527-1325.



Caving

Most caves on National Park Service lands at Craters of the Moon are currently closed to entry. Four caves on the Caves Trail (Indian Tunnel, Boy Scout, Beauty, Dew Drop) and Buffalo Caves on the Broken Top Loop Trail may only be entered on Ranger guided walks or with a valid Cave Permit. Obtain a free Cave Permit



at the entrance station or at the visitor center. These closures have been implemented in response to the rapid spread of white nose syndrome, a fatal disease affecting cave-dwelling bats (see article on page 1) and recent changes in National Park Service policies regarding recreational use of caves.

Before You Step Off the Trail

Please consider that these lava flows and features are thousands of years old and easily damaged by off-trail travel. In addition, park regulations prohibit off-trail travel around the North Crater Flow and Spatter Cones/Big Craters areas (see maps on trailhead signs to identify specific closure areas). You are also quite fragile and easily damaged by sharp and abrasive lava rock! Taking a fall will almost certainly result in cuts and scrapes. When hiking on trails we encourage you to slow down and use caution. Sturdy shoes (no sandals) and long pants are highly recommended. When exploring caves a hat or helmet for head protection and a flashlight are a must. Thank you for helping to protect your Monument and yourself!



Emergencies

If the visitor center is closed, contact any employee or call 911 from the pay phone in the visitor center or by cell phone where reception is available.



sparse and slow growing in this high desert environment. Please help us protect them.

Fires

Wood fires are prohibited within the NPS Monument and Preserve (except within the fire ring for groups reserving the Group Campground). Grills have been provided at each campsite and charcoal is available for purchase at the visitor center store. Trees are

Off-Road Driving

Only street legal vehicles are allowed on the 7 mile Loop Road and no vehicles, including motorcycles and bicycles, are permitted off of designated roadways. Visitors planning a trip on dirt roads within the BLM National Monument should have a properly equipped, high clearance vehicle with good tires. Adequate water and emergency supplies, including a shovel and fire extinguisher, are highly recommended. Maps, travel tips, and road and weather updates are available at the visitor center or the BLM Shoshone Field Office (208) 732-7200.



Pets

Leashed pets are welcome on park roads and in the campground. For the protection of park wildlife and your pet, they may not be taken on park trails, into the backcountry, or left unattended.

Picnicking

Picnic tables are available at the visitor center and you are welcome to use any unoccupied table in the campground or Loop Road pull-outs.



Resource Protection

All natural features are protected by law and are to be left unchanged for others to enjoy. Let photographs and memories be your only souvenirs. Hunting is permitted only within the National Preserve and the BLM Monument in accordance with state law.

Services

Groceries, gas, and lodging are not available within the monument. Cold drinks and snacks are available from vending machines at the visitor center. There is also a public pay phone available in the breezeway of the visitor center at all times.



Water

Drinking water is available only at the visitor center and the campground. Make sure to obtain water before venturing beyond these areas. Please utilize the service sink located in the campground's brick restroom to wash dishes or dump dish water. The nearest RV dump station is in Arco.



Monument Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Craters of the Moon? Everyone!

Here are some people who deserve special thanks:

	<p>Craters of the Moon Natural History Association (NHA) Since 1959 the NHA has supported "the scientific, educational, historical, and interpretive activities of the National Park Service" through sales of books and other publications. This newspaper is a tangible example of this support. Won't you join us? Inquire about the benefits of membership at the bookstore desk.</p>
	<p>Volunteers Last year 62 volunteers donated almost 5000 hours of service to Craters of the Moon. Do you have a talent that you would like to share? Both short and long term opportunities are available. Check out our website (www.nps.gov/crmo/supportyourpark/index.htm) or inquire at the visitor center desk for current opportunities.</p>
	<p>Geological Society of America (GSA) GSA's Geocorps program offers paid geoscience internships on public lands across America. Our understanding of the geologic history and features at Craters of the Moon has benefitted greatly from the work of these bright and motivated young scientists for over a decade.</p>
	<p>Student Conservation Association (SCA) The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is America's conservation corps. Members protect and restore national parks, marine sanctuaries, cultural landmarks and community green spaces in all 50 states. SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. Craters of the Moon, and many other national parks, have benefitted greatly from the hard work of SCA interns.</p>

Bats

continued from page 1

She cannot fly as fast as a bird, but uses superb hearing to catch winged creatures on even the darkest of nights. As she flutters through the evening air she emits a series of high-pitched calls; the soundwaves bounce off objects and return to her. Like a submarine that uses sonar to locate underwater objects, the echoes help her pinpoint the location of potential food – a process known as “echolocation”.

Finding a meal is only the first step. The mother bat still must guide the insect to her mouth. Fielding the moth like a baseball player, she scoops the insect into her mouth with her wing. Such amazing mid-air dexterity has rightly earned bats the scientific grouping *Chiroptera*: literally, “hand-wing”. Swirling over the crowd of campers, she methodically moves from one insect morsel to another, eating 600 to 900 insects in an hour.

Back in her roost cave after eating her fill, she has to find her baby among scores – and often hundreds – of mothers and pups huddled together against the cave wall. But like a human mother that recognizes her child’s call for “Mommy!” amid a crowd of children, she zeroes in on her pup’s call and finds him in the dark.

Though the cave offers a place of safety from predators for the mother bat and her young, today a subtle but lethal threat is spreading throughout caves nationwide. The cool, damp conditions of

most caves have become a breeding ground for a fungus heretofore unknown among North American bats. The fungus produces a fuzzy, white growth around the snout of infected bats, giving the ailment its name – white-nose syndrome.

Exactly why white-nose syndrome is so lethal among North American bats is still unknown. It could be that the fungus is so discomforting that it forces a hibernating bat to rouse from torpor, burning precious fat reserves in the process. Under this scenario, roused too frequently the bat’s energy reserves give out before food is available in the summer. The result has been staggering: over one million bats have died from white-nose syndrome since 2006.

Although primarily spread from bat to bat, the fungus was likely introduced from Europe by humans with contaminated gear and it is spreading rapidly across the nation. In order to slow the spread of the fungus into unaffected areas, caves are being closed nationwide. In response to this dire emergency, most caves on National Park Service lands at Craters of the Moon are closed. Four caves on the Caves Trail (Indian Tunnel, Boy Scout, Beauty, Dew Drop) and Buffalo Caves on the Broken Top Trail may only be entered on Ranger guided walks or with a valid Cave Permit. Obtain a free Cave Permit at the entrance station or at the visitor center.

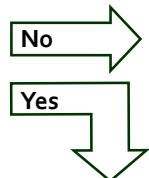
Back in the amphitheater, the ranger can only tip her flat hat and acknowledge the mother bat’s command performance. Through the effort of all to prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome, may the show continue for decades to come.

Attention! Help protect our bats



By following the flow chart you can help slow or stop the advance of White-Nose Syndrome, a disease fatal to bats.

Have you been in a cave or mine since 2005?



Obtain a cave permit & enjoy caving!



Little Brown Bat infected with White Nose Syndrome

Do you have any items with you that entered into the caves or mines you previously visited? (e.g., clothing, shoes, flashlights, cameras, watches, phones etc.)

Yes

No

Talk to a Ranger

Then

Obtain a cave permit & enjoy caving!

Craters of the Moon is an out of this world place to be a kid!

Where else can you climb a volcano and explore a lava tube cave all in an afternoon? We invite you to get the most out of your visit to the “moon” by participating in our Junior Ranger programs.

Complete the fun activities in our free booklet and become a . . .



The only Lunar Ranger program in the Universe!

Also, join us for Junior Ranger Programs nightly at the campground amphitheater at 8 p.m.



Learn to be a Ranger by doing the things that Rangers do!

Craters Critters

Can you find 13 of the animals that live at Craters of the Moon? When you FIND one, circle it. If you have SEEN this animal during your visit, color it.



Answers: Yellow-Pine Chipmunk, Horned Lizard, Woodpecker, Cotton-tail Rabbit, Gopher Snake, Clark's Nutcracker, Yellow-Bellied Marmot, Pika, Raven, Bobcat, Bat, Butterfly, Mule Deer

Continue your Junior Ranger adventure by becoming a WebRanger!

www.nps.gov/webrangers

Creature Feature: Pygmy Rabbit

Short, round ears and large, dark eyes; weighing in at just under a pound. It's simply hard to out-cute a Pygmy Rabbit. Adorable as they are, they're tough enough to thrive in the harsh high-desert on a diet of sagebrush and little else.



Pygmy rabbits can be tricky to spot among healthy stands of sagebrush. Their cinnamon-buff coat blends well with the groundcover. A quick dash to its burrow often reveals the telltale sign – a brown tail, unlike the Cottontail rabbit's white tail.

Nearby Businesses

Pickle's Place
On Hwy 20-26 – Arco, ID
208-527-9944
OPEN DAILY FROM
6 A.M. - 9 P.M. (winter)
6 A.M. - 10 P.M. (spring & fall)
6 A.M. - 11 P.M. (summer)

For info and reservations:
1-800-562-3408
KOA

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Bar Open 4 to 11 p.m.

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Deli Corner
Carey, Idaho
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7 Days a Week
Arco, Idaho 83213
208-527-3757
Fax 208-527-3766

Mountain View R.V. Park
705 W. Grand Ave. ~ Arco, Idaho 83213
208-527-3707

Craters of the Moon/ Arco KOA
2424 N 3000 W
Arco, ID 83213
email: arcokoa@gmail.com

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Photo by: Jordan Jardine

Walks and Talks

June 10 – September 5



Make the most of your visit to this volcanic wonderland! Enjoy a film or join a Park Ranger for a talk, guided walk, or evening program. A variety of programs are offered each day.

Films Visitor Center, #1 on map
"A Trip to the Moon" - Daily at 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the hour, (25 min.)
"Among the Craters of the Moon" - Daily at 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the half-hour (17 min.)

Begin at the visitor center (open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily) to plan your visit and view exhibits and films that orient you to the area. Pressed for time?...View our new 7 minute introductory film in the museum.

Patio Talks Visitor Center, #1 on map
 Daily at 11:00 a.m.; 1:30, 2:30 and 4:30 p.m. (15 min.)
 Enjoy a short presentation in a shady spot on the visitor center plaza. Check at the visitor center for topics.

Cave Walks Caves Area trailhead, #7 on map
 Daily at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.; also at 9:00 a.m. Fri.-Sun. (1½ hours, 1 mile)

Follow the trail through seas of ropy lava into the strange underground world of a lava tube. Wear sturdy close-toed shoes, bring a flashlight, and water.

Broken Top Hike Broken Top Loop Trailhead/Tree Molds parking lot, #6 on map
 Mon. - Thurs. at 9:00 a.m. (2 hours, 1.8 miles)
 Hike over, under and around a volcano on this fascinating hike. Bring sturdy shoes, water and a flashlight for exploring Buffalo Caves.

Evening Stroll Campground amphitheater
 Nightly at 7:00 p.m. (30 min., .25 mile)
 Take a short hike to a panoramic view of the North Crater Cinder Cone and the lava landscape that surrounds it.

Junior Rangers Campground amphitheater
 Nightly at 8:00 p.m. (30 min.)
 Learn to be a Ranger! Fun activities for kids ages 6-12. Parents are welcome too.

Evening Program Campground amphitheater
 Nightly at 9:30 p.m.; 9:00 p.m. in August and 8:30 p.m. in September (45 min.)

Rangers offer different presentations each night on the natural and cultural history of the park. Check at the visitor center for topics. Bring a jacket and carry a flashlight for the walk back to your campsite.

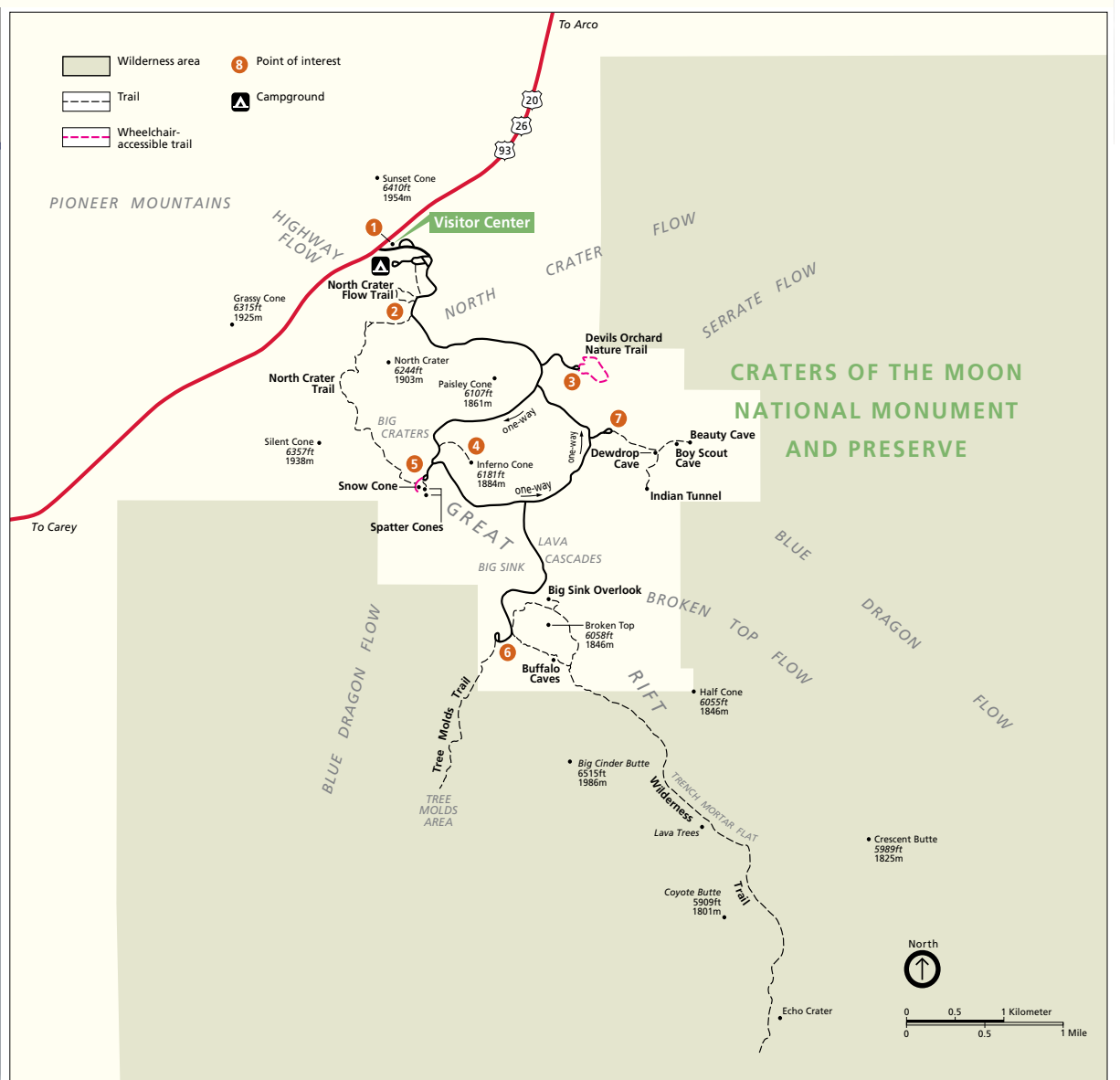
Special Programs Various locations
 Saturdays throughout the summer (times and distances vary)

Explore the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, circle a volcano or enjoy a hike beneath the full moon. Sign up for these longer hikes by giving us a call or stopping by the Visitor Center.

Wilderness Hike	June 4
Wildflower Walks	June 11 & 18
Bicycle Tour	June 25
Big Cinder Butte Hike	July 2
Winter in July	July 9
Full Moon Hike	July 16
Pioneer Mountains Hike	July 23
Geology Hike	July 30



Loop Drive Map



U.S. Department of the Interior Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve



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 www.nps.gov/crmo

www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/shoshone/
 special_areas/Craters.html

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