



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

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## Hawai'i Volcanoes NEWS RELEASE

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### Kilauea Commemorates Twenty-five Years of Volcanic Activity

*"It fascinates, enthralls, overwhelms. The camera cannot measure its depth, convey its sounds, or depict its glow. Those and only those who have heard its roar or felt its burning heat can ever know the power, the wonder, the magic of the spell it casts upon one."*

Frances King Headler, 11 June 1909

Who could have known that the fountains of fire that first lit up the night sky on January 3, 1983 would continue to burn so brightly a quarter-century later?

At Hawai'i Volcanoes, we bear witness to the longest-lived rift activity of a Hawaiian volcano in the past 800 years, and there is no end in sight. Every minute, another 50,000 gallons of molten rock gush from earthcracks on the volcano's flank. Every day, enough lava flows from Kilauea to fill Diamond Head Crater to a depth of one foot.



Kilauea...Still Flowing after all these Years

Lava buried the park's coastal visitor center at Waha'ula, campground at Kamoamoa, miles of Chain of Craters Road, and tens of thousands of archeological features. Its torched expansive tracts of native woodland and rainforest, home to rare species of plants and animals.

But wherever lava spills into the sea, the island grows. During the past twenty-five years, two-hundred and twelve acres of new coastline have been added to the park...without political fanfare or Congressional approval.

*"We leave this record as a warning to future travelers to be cautious—as the lava is constantly breaking in and changing it is scarcely possible for those most familiar with the crater to know with certainty where it is safe."*

L. E. Harris, 11 March 1874

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#### EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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



Every day, visitors arrive by the thousands seeking to stand on the edge of creation, to view this incredible spectacle of nature. Those most fortunate see rivers of molten rock cascade down the pali, ignite trees, overrun roads, and pour into the sea. They hear the booms of methane explosions and the pops and crackles of an advancing flow. They feel the warmth of lava's radiant glow.

The volcano vents nearly 2000 tons of sulfur dioxide a day, enough noxious gas to fill 100 Goodyear blimps. During his visit to Kilauea in 1866, Mark Twain quipped "the smell of sulphur is strong but not unpleasant to a sinner." We try to avoid the fumes and advise visitors do the same.

Flowing lava is dangerous and unpredictable. Here, in one of earth's most hostile physical environments, the park maintains a superlative safety record:

It attests to the professionalism and dedication of rangers who work from early morning into the night with one thought foremost on their mind, the safety of park visitors. They adjust operations to ever-changing volcanic conditions. They mark trails, put up closed area signs, and run rope as a boundary indicator between old sea cliff and unstable new coastline.

It attests to the good sense of the overwhelming majority of park visitors who take their health and safety seriously. They stay on trails, obey signs, and heed the rangers' warnings.

It attests to the self-governing nature of a 2000°F lava flow. It's primordial. It beckons, but at the same time warns, "Stay back, I'm hot."

*"Pele, the sacred living deity of Hawai'i's volcanoes, controls the limitless power of creation through her perseverance, molten strength, and unearthly beauty. Her passion emanates from her ancient existence. Revered and honored is the fire goddess. She is my spiritual guardian and forever the heartbeat of my soul, continuously giving life to her land and its people."* Pele Hanoa, 8 August 2004

At Kilauea, the very ground is sacred to Native Hawaiians. Lava flows and volcanic formations are manifestations of *Pele-honua-mea*, a deity both feared and revered. When her molten body moves, the ground trembles and the sky is afire—those who know whisper in awe, "Ae, aia la o Pele, yes, there is Pele."

We continue on an incredible journey in a place where footsteps often cannot be retraced. It is here on earth's most active volcano that everlasting memories are forged. How appropriate on this, the occasion of the eruption's Silver Anniversary, to reflect upon what was and look forward to what will be.

*"Nuthin' like it in Oklahoma."* H. T. Collins, 8 April 1920

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park's After Dark in the Park lecture series for January will feature presentations on different aspects of this eruption. [http://www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/events\\_adip.htm](http://www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/events_adip.htm)

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