



Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

January 22, 2009

Lava Flows into the Sea Again

This afternoon, scientists of the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory reported to park officials that a lava flow made it to the sea within the park late yesterday or early today.

This is the park's first ocean entry since June 20, 2007.

According to scientists, the new ocean entry is located very close to the long-buried Waha'ula Heiau and Visitor Center.

There are sure to be those tempted to undergo the 9-mile roundtrip hike from the end of Chain of Craters Road to the flow.

Said Chief Ranger Talmadge Magno, "If you're thinking of hiking to the flow, talk to the rangers, read the information at the end of Chain of Craters Road, and heed all warnings. There is risk of serious injury, or worse."

Some dangers are obvious, some hidden.

- It's a hard, hot, rough hike over a shadeless windswept lava field. There is no marked trail and the ground is cracked, uneven, and slippery.
- High temperatures and humidity increase risks of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- There is the chance of inundation by vog (volcanic smog) from Pu'u 'O'o and laze (lava haze) from the ocean entries.
- When rain falls on hot lava, visibility is obscured and hikers are easily disoriented by whiteout conditions.
- All who venture out along the park's new coastline need to stay at least one-quarter mile inland. Many sections of new land along the coastline are unstable and can collapse into the sea without warning.



*Lava shatters into black sand and steam plumes rise wherever Pele meets Namakaokaha'i, her sister of the sea.
USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory Photo*