

131/D-61

**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT
1997**

SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

This year we completed the renovation of the visitor center exhibit room and lobby. The new exhibits are an outstanding improvement in the interpretation and orientation provided to visitors. The improved lighting, wall and floor coverings also improve the appearance of the visitor center. The successful outcome of the project was due largely to the input of park staff in all phases of the project. We owe a lot as well to the cooperation between the park, Harpers Ferry Center and the various exhibit contractors, and the assistance provided by the maintenance staff from Yellowstone National Park.

A number of significant staff changes occurred during the year. The Administrative Officer position was vacant until Lorie Rummele, from John Day Fossil Beds N.M., joined the staff in May. The Chief of Resources Management and Chief Ranger positions were vacant from February until May when John Apel transferred from Buffalo National River and George Rummele transferred from John Day Fossil Beds.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Budget: The ONPS program authorization was \$681,000. Withdrawals included \$6,700 for uniforms; \$5,600 for permanent change of station costs; \$4,800 for general un-funded needs such as FTS phone usage, etc; \$1,019 for the cost of the Columbia Cascades Cluster activities; \$1,000 for training; and \$82,000 withdrawn for "no year" fee program funds which were reprogrammed towards the park's resources management and interpretation programs. Supplemental annual funding was received to repair damage to administrative offices from a broken water pipe (\$5,000); revegetation efforts from last year's road reconstruction (\$10,000); replace Devil's Orchard wayside exhibit panels (\$2,000); acquire snow blade for the John Deere loader (\$21,500); acquire pickup truck to replace motorcycles (\$13,000); trail repairs (\$21,000); repairs to visitor center roof (\$12,000); support for the VIP program (\$2,500); bat habitat research (\$,200); soil survey \$55,000); aerial photography (\$7,800) and support for collection of park fees (\$18,000). In addition the park received \$25,000 in funding from the Department of Energy under the terms of an interagency agreement for the collection of data and monitoring of air quality.

Personnel: As stated above three new replacements joined the staff. In addition resources management specialist Natalene Cummings resigned in September to pursue personal education interests. The park continues to deal with operating budget shortfalls. At the present time it was not fiscally prudent to fill Natalene's vacancy with a full time permanent

position. Also, the current requirements of the position may be more technical in nature than professional. Therefore the position will be filled with a permanent less-than-full time person in a technical field.

Superintendent GS-025-13	Jim Morris
Administrative Officer GS-303-09 (5/97)	Laura Rummele
Administrative Technician GS-303-06	Judy Pederson-Campbell
Maintenance Foreman WS-4749-08	Kent Campbell
Maintenance Worker WG-4749-08	Bill Aierstuck
Laborer - Term WG-3502-03	Verda Garner
Chief Interpreter GS-025-11	Dave Clark
Park Ranger - Interp. GS-025-09	Doug Owen
Chief Ranger GS-025-11 (1/97)	Marshall Neeck
" " " (5/97)	George Rummele
Park Ranger - Protection GS-025-09	Tammie Henderson
Resources Mgt. Chief GS-401-11 (1/97)	Vicki Snitzler-Neeck
" " " " (5/97)	John Apel
Resource Mgt. Specialist GS-401-09(8/97)	Natalene Cummings
Natural History Assoc Ex. Director	Judy Rindfleish
NHA Sales Manager	Rhonda Morris
Seasonal:	
Resource Mgt.: 1 tech. plus 1 SCA	
Interpretation: 4 plus 1 intern	
Rangers/Fee Collectors: 5	
Maintenance: 2 laborers; 7 YCC	
NHA: 2 sales clerks	

PUBLIC USE

Visitation: Annual visitation was 218,036, up 0.2% from 1996.

Backcountry Use: Overnight Use: 132
Northend Day Use Permits: 5
Horse use permits: 0

Arco Tunnel: 19 permits

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Personnel: With the transfer of Vicki Snitzler-Neeck in early January and the resignation of Nataleen Cummings in August, the park lost ten years of accumulated experience in the resources program of this park.

Resources Monitoring: The routine monitoring activities as described in the park's Long Term Monitoring plan were carried out with the exception of some late season water resource monitoring. Due to a shortage of personnel, the cave water monitoring and the September/October monitoring of Little Cottonwood Creek were not completed. Water sampling on Little Cottonwood, Big Cottonwood, and Leech Creeks were completed in May, June and August.

Air Resources Monitoring: This program was carried out on its weekly schedule, including the National Atmospheric Deposition Program, automatic visibility camera, ozone monitor, and the IMPROVE fine particulate sampler. The ozone monitor was down (March to mid-May) during the renovation of the visitor center exhibit room. The ozone National Air Quality Standards were not exceeded during the year. Staff were involved in several meetings with the Department of Energy (DOE) and State Department of Environmental Quality concerning the "Advance Mix Waste Treatment Project" proposed for development on the western edge of the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory 12 miles east of the monument. The facility will treat radioactive contaminated waste to allow shipment off site. Included in the plant will be an incinerator.

An interagency agreement with DOE initiated in July, 1996 was fully implemented this year. The agreement provided \$25,000 in DOE funding to support the park's air resource monitoring program. Specifically, the agreement provides \$14,500 to support the NPS contract with Air Resource Specialist, Inc. for the ozone and visibility monitoring and \$10,500 to support personnel costs at CRMO. The agreement was renewed for a second year in July.

Other Monitoring: Standard deer surveys were completed in the spring and late summer. Five breeding bird surveys were completed in the spring. Seven of the 42 comparative landscape photos were taken. Two of the eight vegetation transects were re-measured. Hazard tree assessments were conducted throughout the developed area of the monument and 55 trees previously identified as potential hazards were re-surveyed.

Bat Habitat Research: Dr. Barry Keller of Idaho State University continued research on habitat use by bats in the north end of the monument with funds (\$4,210) from the Columbia Cascades Cluster natural resources management account. A species of bat (Fringed Myotis (Myotis thysanodes)) previously unreported within CRMO was documented.

Soil Survey: A soil survey and mapping project, funded (\$55,000) by the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program and conducted by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, was initiated. Field work was completed this year. A final report is due late spring of 1998.

Aerial Photos: A complete set of new color aerial photographs of the monument at a scale of 1:12,000 was taken during the summer under a project funded (\$7,800) by the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program and conducted by the USDA Forest Service.

Revegetation: Work continued on revegetating ground disturbed last year during the loop road reconstruction. Additional seedlings grown at the USDA Plant Materials Center in Aberdeen, Idaho were planted and seedlings watered through the summer. Removal of exotic weeds continues in these disturbed areas. The Salmon Core crew from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall was employed for two days to assist with plantings.

INTERPRETATION

Visitor Center: The culmination of two years of intensive planning and design work was the production and installation of new exhibits and facilities in the visitor center exhibit room and lobby. The dedication of the new exhibits was held in May. Visitor feedback has been very positive. There have been some problems, but the significant problems have been fixed by the exhibit contractor or by the park's maintenance staff. Of particular note, Dave Clark received distinguished recognition as the Pacific West Region's recipient of the Freeman Tilden Award for the inspired work he did on guiding the entire process for the design and installation of the new exhibits.

Personal Services: Visitors attending guided walks and tours numbered 4,961. Attendance at evening programs in the amphitheater was 4,330. The "point contact" station initiated last year in front of the visitor center directly interacted with 3,162 visitors.

Wayside Exhibits: The design for the "Kid's Site" was completed with assistance from Harpers Ferry Center and funding from the National Park Foundation. The new waysides will be produced, installed and dedicated in 1998.

A new wayside will be installed on Inferno Cone and the three scattered waysides presently in place will be removed. A grant was obtained from the Idaho Humanities Council, and in cooperation with the Natural History Association, design work was completed this year. The installation will occur in 1998.

75th Anniversary of CRMO: Preliminary planning was completed with the focal point for the 1999 celebration to be a series of special Saturday events through the summer of 1999. We developed a strategy plan for focusing our energies in 1998 to line up partners and funding.

Environmental Education Program: On-site programs were provided to a record number of school groups -- 85 groups and 6,623 students. This amount of groups and the size of some of the groups has park staff engaged in reevaluating the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current program. A small number of off-site programs were also provided in local schools by park staff.

CRATERS OF THE MOON NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

FY 1997 was a successful year for the association in both sales and in support of the National Park Service. The association donated nearly \$18,000 in interpretive and resource management projects at the monument. The funding supports publication of the park newspaper, production of the badges for the junior ranger program, support for media activities, matching funds for the production of new wayside exhibits on Inferno Cone, and a set-aside to support activities in celebration of the monument's 75th anniversary in 1999.

RANGER ACTIVITIES

Operations: A Memorandum of Understanding was completed with the Lost River Fire Protection District for structural fire protection and is only awaiting review by the solicitor before signing. Other operating plans were reviewed and updated.

Protection: Rangers recorded 16 incidents: 1 for stolen property; 3 for vandalism; 1 for weapons possession; 1 for disorderly conduct; 8 for resource violations; and 2 "other". Chief Ranger Rummele was detailed as the NPS incident commander for the Rainbow Family gathering incident on the Ochoco National Forest near John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Boundary markers were relocated on the North boundary of the monument to reflect the boundary changed authorized by the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996. Chief Ranger Rummele completed DARE officer training.

Fire: There were no fires in the monument. CRMO provided personnel to one fire on BLM lands and Chief Ranger Rummule served as the safety officer attached to the Blue Mountain Regional Interagency IMT on one incident. We received a new light fire engine, which was completely outfitted with necessary tools and supplies by the BLM. Rummule served as the lead instructor for the facilitator instructor course at the National Interagency Fire Center.

Emergency Medical Services: A total of 30 incidents were recorded, three of which were considered significant and requiring basic life support. One incident involved a cross-country skier, and one a serious injury in one of the caves.

Search and Rescue: Five incidents occurred during the year, three of which required direct assistance.

Fee Collection:

Entrance Station:	
Single Entrance	\$57,276
Individual	1,444
Commercial tour	13,185
Golden Eagle	31,750
Golden Age	3,640
Over/under	<u>133</u>
Total Entrance Station	\$107,295
Campground:	\$ 38,598

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT/MAINTENANCE

Visitor Center: The most noted accomplishment for the year was the achievement by the park's maintenance crew in preparing the exhibit room and lobby for the new exhibits. All the old exhibits were removed. The exhibit cases were donated to several groups (City of Arco, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes museum at Fort Hall, The Nature Conservancy, and the Bureau of Land Management). The CRMO crew constructed the walls and dividers for the new exhibits within very tight tolerances, installed new carpeting, painted the walls and ceiling, and with assistance from Yellowstone National Park, installed electrical circuits and a dropped ceiling in the exhibit room.

Accessible Restrooms: A contract was awarded (\$70,000) for the expansion and upgrade of the public restrooms in the visitor center to meet accessibility standards. Work began in September and is still underway at the end of the calendar year.

Treemolds Restrooms: The last of the old vault toilets in the park was removed from the Treemolds Parking Lot. A prefabricated concrete toilet similar to those in use elsewhere along the loop drive was purchased and we are expecting installation in the spring of 1998.

Water Damage: A broken water pipe over the resources management office in January resulted in major water damage in the staff office portion of the building. Salvage work and repairs to the pipe and ceiling were completed over the next few weeks. The monument's library collection suffered a significant loss, with only some titles replaced at this time.

Assistance: CRMO staff continued to provide maintenance assistance to HAFO. Projects completed included trail construction, parking for the Horse Quarry, excavation and rehabilitation of ground at the Horse Quarry, construction and installation of signs, and general repairs.

CRMO maintenance personnel were also detailed to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site to assist with construction of a historic building replica.

PLANNING

Building from the facilitated "goal driven" planning exercises of last year, a five-year strategic plan with an annual performance plan component for FY 98 was prepared that responds to the intent of the Government Performance and Results Act. Superintendent Morris co-facilitated and instructed one of the courses held within the Pacific West Region to assist other park staffs in the preparation of their strategic plans. He also assisted the staff at HAFO get started in their preparation of a plan.

Working with staff from the Seattle Support Office we initiated an effort to develop a Development Concept Plan type document to guide the

future development of an interpretation site for Big Sink and address use and access issues in the area around Buffalo Cave.

The Superintendent initiated a draft of what will hopefully become a written proposal from the BLM and NPS for a jointly presented strategy for the future protection of the Great Rift, including legislation for the expansion of the current boundaries of the monument.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

Winterfest: The fifth holding of this park-hosted local event was again a great success. While attendance was down slightly from last year's record breaking crowd, close to 500 people came out for the winter activities.

Local Organizations: Superintendent Morris completed his duties as president of the Arco Rotary Club in June and assumed the duties of club secretary/treasurer in July. He also served again this year as co-organizer for Arco's Atomic Days Parade, as well as the parade announcer. Park staff participated in the "Festival of Trees" by purchasing, decorating and donating a Christmas tree for the hospital auxiliary. Superintendent Morris remained active in the development of a growth management plan for Butte County which assures consideration for the scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat interests bordering the monument.

Dare: Chief Ranger Rummele obtained training and coordinated with the Butte County Sheriff. Classroom instruction will begin early in 1998.

Statewide Activities: Superintendent Morris continued to represent the NPS with the Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative. Chief Interpreter Clark and NHA Executive Director Rindfleish represented the park at the annual Governor's Conference on Recreation and Tourism. Chief of Resources Management Apel joined a new initiative to protect air quality and related values in Idaho called the Idaho Air Quality Partnership which is currently comprised of NPS, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality and the Idaho Dept. of Lands. Apel also represented the park and NPS in "Partners in Flight", a national program with state organizations working to develop species and habitat specific conservation plans for breeding birds.