

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

for

**CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL  
MONUMENT**

**FISCAL YEAR 2000 – 2005**

**(October 1, 1999 – September 30, 2005)**



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **About This Plan**

This is the Strategic Plan for Craters of the Moon National Monument, a unit of the National Park System, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Our Plan includes our mission statement, derived from the Presidential Proclamation and subsequent legislation establishing and affecting this park. It contains our goals organized under goal categories and mission goals (the “in perpetuity” goals that encompass everything we do). It also contains long-term goals that describe in quantified, measurable ways examples of what we plan to achieve in the six-year period covered by this plan, October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2005, federal fiscal years FY2000-2005.

The content and organization of this Plan relates to the process established by the National Park Service under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) [see following sections]. Additional copies of this Strategic Plan are available by visiting park headquarters at Milepost 134 on U.S. Highway 20-26-93 or writing to P.O. Box 29, Arco, Idaho 83213. We welcome questions and comments, which should be addressed to the Superintendent at this address.

The Plan also contains a general section on “Strategies” of how goals will be accomplished, that briefly sketches the organization, facilities, and financial resources available to achieve the plan’s long-term goals. There is a brief discussion of “Key External” Factors” that could positively or negatively affect goal achievement. Each long-term goal has one or more explanatory paragraphs that give background, detail, and other information useful to help the reader understand the goal as well as how the goal will be accomplished. After these goal explanations, there is an overview of how results will be measured. Finally, there is a listing of those who were consulted in the development of the plan and a list of plan preparers.

Each year that this Strategic Plan is in effect there also will be an Annual Performance Plan covering one year increments of each long-term goal. The Annual Performance Plan will be available by January 1<sup>st</sup> each year. In addition to the Annual Performance Plan, we also use internal management documents to guide daily operations throughout the year. They detail the specific activities, services, and products that will be carried out or produced to accomplish goal results and the dollars and people that will do it.

### **Craters of the Moon National Monument**

Craters of the Moon National Monument is a vital part of America’s national system of parks, monuments, battlefields, recreation areas, and other natural and cultural resources. Established by Presidential Proclamation in 1924, Craters of the Moon National Monument is located in southeastern Idaho along U.S. Highway 20-26-93 between Arco and Carey in Butte and Blaine Counties. Containing 53,440 acres, the park preserves volcanic features and landscapes in perpetuity and makes this valuable part of America’s heritage available to over 200,000 visitors each year for their experience, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation.

In the Presidential Proclamation of 1924 establishing Craters of the Moon National Monument, this was described as *“an area which contains a remarkable fissure eruption together with its associated volcanic cones, craters, rifts, lava flows, caves, natural bridges, and other phenomena characteristic of volcanic action which are of unusual scientific value and general interest.”* It further describes this as an area which *“contains many curious and unusual phenomena of great educational value and has a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself.”*

While geological features and unusual scenery are what attracted initial interest in the establishment of a national monument, the area is also recognized for having important wildlife habitat; for having important, and in some cases, remnant vegetative communities; and cultural resources. Approximately 80% of the land area within the monument was designated as wilderness by Congress in 1970, one of the first two such designated Wilderness Areas in the national park system. The monument’s Wilderness Area is designated “class I”, which mandates measures to limit degradation of the air quality under the Clean Air Act.

### **The National Park Service**

The National Park Service (NPS), established in 1916, preserves outstanding examples of the best of America’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. These resources of national significance constitute a significant part of America’s heritage, character, and future. The National Park System consists of 378 park units located in nearly every state and territory of the nation. The National Park Service not only directly preserves these treasures, it also makes them available to millions of visitors from throughout the country and the world every year. NPS also has legislated responsibilities for natural and cultural resource conservation outside national parks in partnership with state and local governments, tribes, and non-profit organizations. These programs provide a variety of technical and/or financial assistance.

In consultation with Congress, OMB and other interested parties, the NPS developed its own implementation process to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). Using an 8-step process, the NPS developed its first *Strategic Plan* in 1997. A copy of the current NPS Strategic Plan is available for review at Craters of the Moon National Monument. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/planning>.

As part of its GPRA implementation process, NPS decided that each of its component parks, programs, and offices would develop and submit their own Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, and Annual Performance Reports. These plans address applicable long-term goals in the NPS *Strategic Plan* and may add goals specific to their own legislative mandates, missions, resources, visitor services, and issues needs. The local plans are generally a blend of national and local missions and goals.

## Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)

GPRA is one of the most recent and comprehensive of a number of laws and executive orders directing federal agencies to join the “*performance management revolution*” already embraced by private industry and many local, state, and national governments.

In a nutshell, *performance management* uses performance goals based on an organization’s primary mission to guide daily actions and expenditures. Importantly, goals must be quantifiable and measure results or outcomes, rather than efforts or outputs such as activities, services, and products. The established and proven performance management approach is to ***establish goals – allocate resources to accomplish those goals – take action/do the work – measure results – evaluate and report performance – use evaluation to adjust goals and reallocate resources – and continue the loop.*** This process sharpens our focus on accomplishing our mission in the most efficient and effective ways, and holds managers and employees accountable on a clear and measurable basis.

The approach seems so elegantly simple and logical that one is compelled to ask, “Isn’t that what everyone is already doing?” In fact, most federal agencies have not traditionally done business this way. They have been funded by programs and activities rather than by goals. Too often they have conducted business year after year based on what they have always routinely done, rather than in pursuit of mission-oriented goals. Too often they have not measured their performance in terms of results achieved, but rather in level of activities conducted, products produced, or services provided – if they have measured performance at all. And too often managers and employees have not been held accountable for their performance in achieving concrete, results-oriented goals, and have not communicated the outcomes of their work to their important constituencies – the American people, the Congress, even the President. So performance management, as embodied in GPRA, is new, revolutionary, and vitally important to a more effective, efficient, and credible federal government.

This Plan is much more than just a response to legislative mandate, however. The law was a catalyst that caused the park staff to reexamine daily activities and routine products and services, as well as funding and staffing expended to accomplish them. It motivated and energized us to make sure these things are aligned with the mission of the National Park Service and Craters of the Moon National Monument, and the long-term goals established to achieve those missions. The results, we believe, will be better planning, better management, and better communication among ourselves and with all of our constituencies and stakeholders, about where we are, where we need to be, and how we are going to get there most effectively and efficiently.

## II. MISSION

**It is the mission of the National Park Service at Craters of the Moon National Monument to protect the natural and cultural resources of a portion of the geologically significant Great Rift, while providing the public outstanding experiences and opportunities for the appreciation and understanding of these resources. The monument is one of the most accessible places in the world to see the results of recent fissure eruptions that produced an array of volcanic cones, craters, rifts, lava flows, caves, natural bridges, and other phenomena of unusual scientific, educational, and scenic interest.**

The mission statement of the National Park Service at Craters of the Moon National Monument grows from the park's mandate found in the Presidential Proclamation No. 1694 of May 2, 1924 and the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 supplemented by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Our mission statement is a synthesis of our mandated purpose and the park's primary significance.

**Purpose:** The purpose of Craters of the Moon National Monument is to preserve and protect the remarkable geological features, wilderness solitude, and natural systems that have shaped, and continue to shape the landscape of the Great Rift region of the Snake River plain. It is also to provide present and future generations with the opportunity to experience, understand, and value these features and natural systems.

**Significance:** The primary significance of Craters of the Moon National Monument can be summarized as:

- it contains a major portion of the Great Rift, the deepest known open land based volcanic rift on earth and the longest volcanic rift in the continental United States
- it contains many of the physical features associated with a fissure eruption including volcanic cones, craters, rifts, lava flows, caves, and natural bridges which are of unusual scientific value and general interest
- the stark and weird landscape, wilderness solitude, and expansive vistas offer visitors unexpected, memorable experiences
- the combination of geology and extremes of the Great Basin High Desert climate have produced a diversity of habitats providing valuable areas for ecological studies, where plant succession is easily observed and where wildlife have made remarkable adaptations to survive



### **III. STRATEGIES: Accomplishing Goals**

We plan to accomplish our goals using the organization, facilities, and financial resources summarized below. These paragraphs should give our partners, stakeholders, and the public a better understanding of what we are trying to accomplish, and how we plan to do it.

#### **Organization**

Superintendent James A. Morris leads the Craters of the Moon National Monument staff. Staff is organized into five operating divisions: Resource Management, Interpretation, Visitor and Resource Protection, Maintenance, and Administration. Staff expertise and specialties includes one interdisciplinary resources program manager and one biological science technician employed for less than the full year; two full time park rangers with interpretation and education duties; two permanent park rangers with visitor and resource protection duties; one part time visitor use assistant; two permanent and one part time maintenance worker; and an administrative officer. There are five seasonal visitor use assistants with duties primarily in fee collections and management; one or more seasonal park guides and interns who provide information and interpretive programs to visitors; and one to three seasonal maintenance workers. Within the life of this plan, the park intends to add an interdisciplinary natural resource specialist, an education specialist, an administrative technician, and an additional seasonal maintenance worker.

Our staff will be supplemented and/or supported using special project funds, contracts, the assistance or expertise of various other NPS parks and central offices, and/or other partners, or organizations. NPS assistance in achieving specific park FY2000 annual goals will be provided by the National Park Service's Columbia Cascades Support Office. Each summer, the park employs two or more Youth Conservation Corps and one or more Student Conservation Association interns to assist with park projects in maintenance and resource programs. In addition to helping accomplish education and visitor service goals through literature sales and donation of funds, the Craters of the Moon National History Association provides sales clerks to assist with daily operation of the visitor center.

#### **Facilities**

Park facilities and infrastructure for accomplishing our goals include: The Robert W. Limbert Visitor Center with exhibits, interpretive literature sales, and administrative offices; a 52-site campground with two comfort stations; a group campsite; an amphitheater, four self-guiding interpretive trails; over 10 miles of hiking trails; 7 miles of groomed cross-country skiing trail (on the park loop road); seven-mile scenic loop drive with three comfort stations; maintenance building; picnic area; eight employee housing units for on-site protection and management of park resources; one housing unit converted to offices and museum storage; a research camp; a potable water system with four springs and two wells as the source; four septic systems; and a microwave dish for phone services. Much of the infrastructure is several decades old and in need of upgrade and modernization. In addition the park's 1992 General Management Plan should be revised or prepared as a new document within the next five years to guide future upgrade or replacement of existing facilities, resources management efforts, and educational programs.

## **Financial Resources**

Financial resources available to achieve the park's strategic plan include a base operating budget of approximately \$752,000 (FY2000), which funds a permanent work force of 13 permanent positions (4 of which are less than full time), and 3 seasonal positions. About 2% of base funds also are withdrawn for certain park overhead expenses such as uniforms, FTS phone service, and training. The park work force will usually be supplemented annually by roughly 1,500 hours of Volunteers-in-Parks service, 1 to 2 Student Conservation Assistants, and 2 student interns. The park expects to receive special project and program funds distributed by the National Park Service regional and Washington offices. Idaho State University, the Department of Energy, and the U.S. Forest Service will provide additional, vital assistance through cooperative agreement services or contracts. Additionally, cooperative efforts with the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Geological Society, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and others will support the fulfillment of the goals and tasks in this plan. Achieving our goal performance targets is critically dependent on our base funding and on these additional project funds, volunteer assistance, partnerships and donations. However, only base funds are included in developing this Plan.

Please note that the goals in this plan assume a budget increase of roughly 17% in 2001, in addition to annual increases for inflation. These increases in appropriations were taken into account. Where other funding sources (donations, fee revenues, etc.) were "reasonably assured", they too were taken into consideration when setting performance targets. Obviously, limits on funding constrain what can be accomplished toward our goals and mission. GPRA, however, is distinctly not about discussing budget shortfalls or requesting or justifying additional funding. Rather it is about planning, managing, and communicating what we can accomplish with what we already have. Performance target numbers speak for themselves about how well funded we are to accomplish our mission, and where targets are low, additional budget discussions might be generated. But this is not the primary purpose of the plan.

We would, however, be remiss as stewards of the priceless natural and cultural resources in our care, if we did not note we are under-funded and under-staffed to fully achieve our important mission and goals. We also recognize that tax dollars are scarce, and we are pursuing a wide variety of alternative management, funding, and staffing scenarios to augment our appropriations. In the meantime, we welcome the opportunity to respond to the requirements of GPRA with this *Strategic Plan* and its companion documents to better plan, manage, and communicate how - and how well - we are achieving our mission through performance goals supported by existing levels of funding.

## **Program Evaluations**

Changes have been made in this plan compared to the last Strategic Plan approved September 10, 1997. By making selected goals more inclusive, we have dropped a number of the long-term goals. Reflecting changes in the NPS Strategic Plan for the period of 2000 - 2005, we have added some goals to the park's strategic plan. Also, with an expected base operating budget increase in 2001, we expect to be able to

accomplish more in our years. Finally, the experience of celebrating the monument's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999 has provided park staff with a different perspective on achieving desired results in the personal services interpretation and education programs. These changes are reflected in this plan.

#### **IV. KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS**

Park management and staff can plan, manage, and control much of what occurs within the park. Sometimes they can influence factors external to park boundaries that affect the park. Other factors, such as natural events, are beyond managing or influencing. All of these things can negatively or positively affect goal outcomes. A few of the most important or most likely are briefly identified below. This is not an exhaustive list but simply those factors that are most likely to influence outcomes at the time this plan was written.

We will continue to pursue grants from, and interagency agreements with, outside funding sources. Our success or failure in obtaining these funds will influence the outcome of several goals. The normal budgetary restraints and the sometimes unpredictability of lapsed staff positions will affect the achievement of these goals. The future mission of the nearby Idaho National Environmental and Engineering Laboratory, particularly a decision on the proposed Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project, will have some effect on park efforts to protect air quality and other park resource values.

The popularity of the Craters of the Moon National Monument is expected to continue and present even greater challenges both in terms of natural and cultural resource preservation and visitor use. Visitation has remained fairly constant over the last five years, but visitation is spreading out over a longer season. Additional factors affecting performance include:

- ♦ The costs of maintaining facilities are escalating
- ♦ Costs of utilities are escalating
- ♦ Replacement of computer hardware, maintaining data systems, and keeping staff skills in computer applications current is costly and largely non-funded
- ♦ New activities outside the monument, such as the proposed advanced mixed waste treatment facility, could impact park resources
- ♦ The implementation of new programs that emphasize wise use of limited resources and sustainable practices.
- ♦ The National Parks and Omnibus Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-391) established major new responsibilities for employee training and career development, natural resources inventory and monitoring, and cooperative research studies.

#### **V. GOALS**

##### **Goal Categories and Mission Goals**

The NPS performance management process requires all units of the NPS to organize goals and efforts under four goal categories in broad, nationwide, "in perpetuity" mission goals that state ideal future conditions. These mission goals encompass all we do and a brief explanation about each one is below.

## **Goal Category I: Preserve Park Resources**

Park Mission Goal I. The geologic features of Craters of the Moon National Monument and its full array of natural and cultural resources, processes, and values, which along with its wilderness character define the Great Rift, shall remain unimpaired for future generations.

This category addresses all goals that relate to the condition of natural and cultural resources and the acquisition of knowledge from and about them. It includes the concepts of biological and cultural diversity to ensure park resources are preserved and interpreted in relationship to the broader ecosystem and cultural context that extend beyond the park to nearby lands. Park cultural context means that park resources are managed in relation to other historical events or cultural processes.

The long-term goals related to this category are shown in the next section and include the protection, restoration, or maintenance of ecosystems, rare or endangered plant and animal populations, archeological and ethnographic resources, historic structures and cultural landscapes, museum objects, and research collections. Mission Goal Ia focuses on the condition of these resources. Mission Goal Ib focuses on obtaining and using scholarly and scientific knowledge about resources to make better informed decisions.

Ia Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

Ib The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

## **Goal Category II: Provide for the Public Use and Enjoyment and Visitor Experience of Parks**

Park Mission Goal II. Visitors, now and in the future, shall have an enjoyable, safe and meaningful experience at Craters of the Moon National Monument.

This category includes all goals for visitor satisfaction, enjoyment, safety, appreciation, and understanding. It includes the mandate found in the NPS Organic Act “to provide for the enjoyment of the [resources] in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

The long-term goals related to this category are shown below and include programs, facilities, services, and recreational opportunities affecting the enjoyment, understanding and safety of visitors from all over the nation and the world. Mission Goal IIa covers facilities and services such as the visitor center, campgrounds, road and trails, recreational opportunities and keeping visitors safe. Mission Goal IIb is about helping visitors learn more about park resources and significance so they will enjoy their visit more, support preserving this country’s heritage, and gain a better understanding of the experiences and peoples that built this nation.

Ila Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Ilb Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of and its resources for this and future generations.

### **Goal Category III: Strengthen and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources and Enhance Recreational Opportunities Managed by Partners**

This mission goal refers to the legislated NPS partnership programs that assist others outside of park units to preserve our natural and cultural and recreational resources. At Craters of the Moon National Monument we have incorporated tasks related to this goal category within the above two mission goals in the strategic plan and have not developed long-term goals specific to this goal category.

### **Goal Category IV: Ensure Organizational Effectiveness**

This category includes all goals that support the mission of the park and the NPS, and the focus is on governmental processes rather than the results. Goals in this category measure various workplace standards and cover those things that will help us be more responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable.

IVa The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

IVb The National Park Service increases its managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

At Craters of the Moon National Monument we have incorporated tasks related to this goal category within the above two mission goals in the strategic plan and have not developed long-term goals specific to this goal category, with one exception. A long-term goal has been developed for “employee lost-time injury rate” because there is such a critical and immediate need for the NPS to improve its performance in this area across the entire agency.

### **Long-Term Goals**

Long-term goals are examples of how we will make progress toward the mission goals above, and how we will contribute to nationwide NPS goals during the period of this Plan. The numbering sequence for long-term goals follows that of the NPS Servicewide plan so that our contributions can “roll up nationally” into NPS accomplishments. Goal numbers may not be consecutive - where numbers are left out, an NPS goal does not apply to Craters of the Moon National Monument. Associated goals that are similar to NPS goals but not identical with NPS criteria, optional goals, and goals specific to this Craters of the Moon National Monument contain a zero (0) in the number. Goal categories and mission goals are in regular type. *Long-term goals are italicized.* Each year, by January 1<sup>st</sup> we will also produce an Annual Performance Plan that shows how

much of each long-term goal we intend to accomplish during that fiscal year. We will assess what we actually accomplished in an Annual Performance Report at the end of each fiscal year.

**Goal Category I            Preserve Park Resources**

1a    Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Craters of the Moon National Monument are protected, restored and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

*1a0 By September 30, 2005, 90% of the Great Rift area is under legislative or administrative protective classification.*

There is no specific, defined boundary for the Great Rift. However, for purposes of this goal, the area is generally defined as including most of the "Craters of the Moon" lava field, the "King's Bowl" lava field, the "Wapi" lava field and the shrub and grass covered area with the pronounced open cracks or rifts lying between these lava flows. This is an area of roughly 494,000 acres. As of 1999, approximately 82% of the Great Rift area was under legislative or administrative protective classification as Craters of the Moon National Monument (NPS; 54,000 acres) or Wilderness Study Area (WSA) designation (BLM; approximately 356,000 acres). The additional legislative or administrative protective classification this goal aims to achieve includes, but is not limited to, National Park or National Conservation Area designations (legislative) or National Monument, Area of Environmental Concern, or Public Land Orders for withdrawal from specific use that might damage targeted natural or cultural resources (administrative). If the current WSA status should change, this goal will need to be modified.

There are no available funds for studies or for development of legislative proposals. However, under an existing Memorandum of Understanding the two land-managing agencies, with the participation of the U.S. Geological Survey, work together, with available funds and within normal operations, to identify significant and vulnerable geologic and other resources of the Great Rift outside of current legislative or administratively protected areas. Once identified the agencies will examine possible actions for protection. The agencies will also work together to inform and educate public land users of the Great Rift and to increase our understanding of the natural and cultural resources in order to better manage and protect the area.

*1a1B Exotic Species By September 30, 2005, exotic vegetation [spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, bull thistle, mullein and other alien vegetation species] on 60 acres (80%) of 75 targeted acres of parkland in Craters of the Moon National Monument are contained. New introductions or populations are identified and contained or reduced while still less than one acre.*

Craters of the Moon National Monument remains relatively free of the multitude of exotic plants that are spreading rapidly across the western United States. However, based upon surveys in 1998 and 1999, it is estimated that approximately 75 acres of land area within the monument are at least partially

occupied by one or more exotic plants (not including the widespread distribution of cheatgrass) and represent the “targeted” areas for this goal.

Contained is where current exotic vegetation infestations or past infestations requiring continued treatment are eliminated or their populations are constrained geographically. Concerted and consistent effort will be required to prevent the spread of existing populations and contain any newly introduced populations. Leafy spurge represents the greatest potential threat for introduction of new exotic plant species to the monument.

In addition, approximately three acres of land are undergoing active restoration because of past road reconstruction, water and sewer system upgrades and the removal of irrigated lawns within the “park development” and “interpretive development” sub-zones of the monument. Construction activities will lead to new disturbed lands during the life of this plan. Disturbed lands are often colonized and remain dominated by exotic weeds unless aggressive action to re-vegetate the ground is undertaken. Re-vegetation of an area is considered successful when native plants occupy and dominate the plant cover with minimal need for continued human intervention.

*la03 By September 30, 2005, no impairment of air quality related values, natural conditions, or opportunities for solitude within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area have occurred since 1997.*

Approximately 80% (43,243 acres) of the monument is designated Wilderness. As a mandatory Class I area, only a small incremental impairment of the area's existing air quality is allowed under the Clean Air Act. Regular monitoring of air quality is necessary for ensuring compliance and enabling the NPS to work proactively with regulatory agencies in protecting the area from new sources of air pollutants. The Department of Energy funds much of the NPS monitoring of air quality within the park under an Interagency Agreement. Also, support is anticipated from a program funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. However, park base funds support the coordination efforts with these partner agencies, support the ongoing interaction on activities that may be future potential sources of new air emissions, and support program management. With the assistance from the NPS Air Quality Resources Division the assessment of data from these programs will be used to determine impairment of air quality related values.

The Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude in an area "untrammled" by man. Wilderness area designation adds an additional layer of legal protection and management direction to those that apply generally to units of the National Park System. Management of wilderness lands requires different approaches be taken to assure that the intent of the Wilderness Act is fulfilled. Annual evaluation of the most popular visitor use sites in the Wilderness area, tracking the number of overnight permits issued, visitor feedback, and occasional patrols of Wilderness lands will be utilized to evaluate whether this goal is being achieved.

*la6 By September 30, 2005, 50% of the museum preservation and protection standards enumerated in the "Checklist for Preservation and Protection of Museum Collections" are being met.*

Out of 107 preservation and protection items in the current "checklist," 43 items (or 40%) are being met as of 1999. The "checklist" includes such activities as museum environmental controls, security, fire protection, housekeeping, and museum collection storage. With the current level of funding, an additional 17 items will be met by the end of FY 2005.

The Chief of Resources Management has the delegated responsibility for management of the park's museum program. However, the park has no trained or specifically assigned staff for this program. Each year arrangements are made for one or more people to be detailed from other parks for a short period of time to assist the park with its museum management program.

*la09A By September 30, 2005, the base-line condition of the monument's trace fossils within 50% of the monument has been documented.*

Among the geological features found within the monument are tree molds, which are considered paleontological resources. While the location of many of these features has been mapped, the condition of the features has not been documented. Documentation must be sufficiently detailed to permit the determination of changes in condition over time.

Many of the known tree molds are in remote areas of the park, and are very difficult to access. The 50% of the monument included in this goal are within the more accessible portion. Successful accomplishment of this goal is probably dependent upon the park successfully obtaining special project funding. The goal will be met when 50% of the land area of the monument has been surveyed for tree molds and similar trace fossils and those fossils have been recorded and documented according to yet to be established protocols.

*la09B By September 30, 2005, the base-line resource condition of two of the caves within the monument's Caves Area has been documented.*

Of the one hundred plus lava-tube caves within the monument, five are easily accessible and heavily visited caves within an area known as the "Caves Area". Public use of these caves has been promoted by the NPS for 70 years. No documentation of the resource condition of these caves exists.

Successful accomplishment of this goal is probably dependent upon the park successfully obtaining special project funding. The goal will be met when two of the five targeted caves have been surveyed and documented according to yet to be established protocols. Park base funds will be used to develop proposals for special project funding, development of the



protocols, and overall program management, as well as ongoing efforts to protect and maintain cave resources throughout the monument.

*Ib3 By September 30, 2005, vital signs for natural resource monitoring at Craters of the Moon National Monument are identified, a plan for gathering and interpreting natural resource data is being implemented, and a strategy for filling in the data gaps is developed.*

“Vital” signs are key resource indicators that collectively provide a measure of the health of the natural systems operating in the area of the monument. Vital signs are identified in a collaborative process involving NPS staff and other resource expertise drawn from outside the National Park Service. “Data” refers to the specific information on monument resources that are systematically gathered and analyzed to evaluate vital signs.

Identifying vital signs of this ecosystem allows tracking the status and trends of natural resources within the monument. These indicators should serve as the basis upon which the health of the park ecosystem is defined and what, if any, remedial or mitigating actions are proposed.

*Ib04A By September 30, 2005, geological features within the “outstanding natural features” and “interpretive development” sub-zones of the park are inventoried and human influences identified.*

The General Management Plan for Craters of the Moon National Monument defines six sub-zones within three management zones. Within the “natural environment” zone are the “outstanding natural features,” and “interpretive development” sub-zones. These two sub-zones encompass 7,737 acres or 14% of the land area of the monument and contain both the highest concentrations of outstanding geological features and of visitor use.

A protocol defining what geological features to be inventoried will need to be developed. Those features will then be identified, located and mapped, and an assessment of current condition, along with human activities that may impact these resources, will be made.

*Ib04B By September 30, 2005, the human influences that affect the inventoried features within the “outstanding natural features” and “interpretive development” sub-zones of the park are mitigated sufficiently to prevent future human caused impairment.*

This is largely an ongoing goal to assure, as much as possible, that the geological features, for which the monument was established, are not being damaged by human activity, most obviously by visitor use. Past activity has damaged geological features. Trail development has led to off-trail damage of features. Interesting features such as “lava bombs” have been collected illegally and physically removed from the park. Ongoing park activities will include better signing; construction of barriers in some areas; educational programs such as the “Stay on the Trails”

program; redesign, reconstruction, and relocation of some trails and other facilities; maintenance of facilities; and enforcement are parts of the effort to accomplish this goal.

As progress is made on Goal Ib04A we will obtain the information needed to determine whether our efforts are resulting in quantifiable reduction in human disturbance of the monument's geological features.

## **Goal Category II: Provide for the Public Use and Enjoyment and Visitor Experience of Parks**

*Ila1 By September 30, 2005, 95% of visitors indicate a satisfying or better experience at Craters of the Moon National Monument.*

Craters of the Moon National Monument is visited by over 200,000 people annually. People visiting Craters of the Moon National Monument should experience a safe, enjoyable, pleasant visit. They should find the facilities clean, accessible, and satisfactory. They should encounter informative, helpful, and courteous employees. To obtain feedback from visitors on their experience at the monument, an annual survey designed for application to park units throughout the country will be conducted. In 1998 this survey showed 99 percent of customers were satisfied with appropriate park facilities and services offered by the National Park Service. This figure changed slightly to 96 percent in 1999. The principle activities include sightseeing, photography, touring the visitor center, hiking, picnicking, and camping.

To maintain these high levels of customer satisfaction, the park has identified several facility and visitor service maintenance and enhancement opportunities. Preventative maintenance is essential to assuring continued high customer satisfaction. The park will be preparing a preventative maintenance plan for park facilities and equipment and initiating its implementation. Routine maintenance will necessarily continue, but a gradual shift to preventative maintenance will be achieved by trying and implementing new ways to economize and improve efficiency. Park management is aggressively seeking funding for major facility upgrades to the visitor center, to the road system, and to aging potable water, wastewater and electrical systems.

A high degree of park employee contact with visitors in the most visited areas is believed to be important for providing informational, emergency, and other services to our customers. We will strive to maintain this direct contact as much as possible by staffing of the visitor center; regular patrols, staffing the entrance station, and emphasizing customer service in all that we do. In all of our programs we will strive to be inclusive of all groups. We will continue to improve accessibility to facilities and programs. In addition to maintaining existing trails and other facilities, the park will be working to upgrade the trail and viewing area at the Spatter Cones and creating a new trail and viewing area overlooking Big Sink.

*IIa2 By September 30, 2005, the annual visitor accident/incident rate for each of the previous five years at Craters of the Moon National Monument will be maintained at or below 3.0 per 100,000 visitor days.*

About 230,000 people visit Craters of the Moon National Monument each year. The five-year (1992-1996) average visitor accident rate from 1992 to 1996 was 3.5 per 100,000 visitor-days. This rate is significantly lower than the average visitor accident/incident rate of 9.48 across the National Park System.

The park will maintain a proactive safety committee that meets regularly to review and resolve potential safety concerns, before incidents occur. Direct contact with visitors to provide information and to discourage potentially unsafe activities through patrols and other efforts identified under the previous goal will continue. Also, as stated under the previous goal, a preventative maintenance program will be developed and implemented, which will serve to maintain facilities in a safe condition.

*IIb1 By September 30, 2005, 85% of visitors to Craters of the Moon National Monument understand and appreciate the significance of the park.*

During the next five years, Craters of the Moon National Monument will be putting an increased emphasis, particularly in its “personal services” education and interpretive programs, upon increasing understanding and appreciation of the park and its resources by people within the region surrounding the monument. Personal services will be designed, scheduled, and presented in a manner which primarily targets students and the general public within a day’s travel distance from the park. The park intends to add an education specialist to the staff to enhance our capability in this area, while at the same time reducing in scope and frequency the traditional in-park interpretive programs provided in recent years. One reason is that it is estimated that the traditional in-park programs directly serve only 7 percent of our customers. We will continue to help all visitors to the park, regardless of origin, learn to understand and appreciate the significance of the park, but will increasingly rely upon “non-personal” services interpretation and education programs for this purpose. This means some expansion of exhibits and brochures available in the park and continual maintenance of interpretive materials and access to the same. One proposed project is to complete the Broken Top Loop Trail with a self-guiding capability. It also means efforts to update and improve informational services available via the Internet and other electronic media. Finally, it may mean increased off-site presentations and classroom interaction and a different suite of in-park interpretive/educational programs than those offered in the past.

Ongoing efforts to locate, document and describe park resources will provide the information needed to pass along to visitors and others to enhance their understanding of the park and its resources. Existing and new partnerships for the collection and interpretation of resources information and the dissemination of that information are critical to the successful outcome of this goal.

Evaluation of visitor understanding and appreciation of Craters of the Moon National Monument will be determined through feedback from visitor surveys conducted each year in all National Park units. In 1998 this survey revealed that 82 percent of our visitors understood to some degree the significance of Craters of the Moon National Monument. In 1999 the survey indicated a slightly higher percentage of 89. Focus groups may be used to supplement findings from the survey.

#### **Goal Category IV: Ensure Organizational Effectiveness**

*IVa6A. By September 30, 2005, the number of Craters of the Moon National Monument employee lost-time injuries is reduced from the FY 1992-FY1996 five-year annual average of 0.20 to 0.*

*While the employee lost-time injuries record at Craters of the Moon has been held at almost zero, the National Park Service is distinguished by having the worst record in the Department of the Interior, and nearly the worst record in the Federal Government. We recognize that our record at Craters of the Moon cannot be credited to a superior employee safety program. During the next five years program improvements will be put into service. In addition to lost-time injuries, the National Park Service at Craters of the Moon National Monument will be tracking "recordable injuries" and "near-miss incidents" – those incidents that might have caused serious injury or had an adverse health effect.*

#### **VI. MEASURING RESULTS**

The idea of performance management requires that there be a means for measuring goals and determining if the planned outcomes are achieved. The results under most of the goals under goal category I will be evaluated by acres. For example the control of noxious weeds, protection of geological features, and preservation of wilderness values are all measured against the amount of acres within targeted areas of the monument. For other goals, a process, rather than a result, is being evaluated. For example in Goal 1a6 a checklist of conditions is measured. Goal 1b3 measures whether a plan is in place. A survey is used to measure results both for Goal 1Ia1 and Goal 1Ib1.

#### **VII. STRATEGIC PLAN PREPARERS**

The following park staff members were involved in preparing this Strategic Plan:

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Dave Clark, Chief of Interpretation  
Dwayne Moates, Chief of Maintenance  
George Rummele, Chief Ranger

#### **VIII. CONSULTATIONS**

In developing our original Strategic Plan draft copies were distributed to and discussions held with staff to the Idaho delegation to Congress; Butte County Commissioners; staff

members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall; Bureau of Land Management, Upper Snake River District staff; the Board of Directors and staff of the Craters of the Moon Natural History Association; and copies were made available to the general public. These efforts in 1997 and since have generated very little feedback.