Goodale’s Cutoff

“We are traveling long now through a volcanic country... all torn up and it is a very rough desert of a looking place.” – Nellie Slater

Craters of the Moon’s volcanic landscape has long been impressive, though not always in a positive way.

Miss Slater didn’t post those words on her Facebook page last summer. The young woman wrote them in her diary 150 years ago as she and a thousand others trudged to Oregon on Goodale’s Cutoff. Last year over two hundred thousand people made the same trek to visit this “torn up volcanic country.”

For Nellie, the trip through Craters of the Moon was likely the most difficult undertaking of her life. Her house rolled on rickety wooden wheels and brought all the chores that come with life: cooking meals, collecting wood for fuel, and tending the livestock.

Adding grief to challenge, her father died just days before reaching Craters of the Moon, his gravestone a few miles east of the lava fields. The loss surely added to Nellie’s list of chores, not to mention her doubts about the path ahead.

Anxiety probably lurked in the back of each mind on the Goodale train. Today we think nothing of traveling alone cross-country, atop a web of smooth roads and under an umbrella of cell phone coverage. Emigrant families—with poor “roads” and no contact with the outside world—often travelled in teams of wagons.

Safety in numbers offered insurance against trail hazards, not to mention encounters with potentially unfriendly natives.

If emigrants were uneasy about meeting Indians or other travelers, they were even more frustrated at the sight of each new wagon. Decades of emigrants and their stock animals ate up grass and muddied water along the trail, scarce high desert resources needed by increasingly desperate Indian groups.

By the time of Nellie’s journey, relations between the two groups had frayed badly. To defuse tensions, Goodale amassed over 330 wagons before passing through Craters of the Moon. He also brought his Shoshone wife, Jennie, to defuse tensions. A rolling town of nearly 1100, the wagon train was one of the largest to cross any section of the Oregon Trail. In doing so safely, the route became known as Goodale’s Cutoff.

Enduring endless work and lurking apprehension, Nellie’s curt description of Craters of the Moon is easy to understand; her travel anything but a vacation. Surely the Goodale travelers breathed easier as this blackened obstacle receded behind them.

Much has changed in the 150 years since. Then, emigrants pushed through in search of a better tomorrow. Today, travelers linger to explore hidden corners of a lava tube cave. But despite the years, travelers still pause here for only a brief visit, before pushing on to find new environs—and the impressions left are not soon forgotten.

Peaks to Craters Scenic Byway

“...and to gather roots on the Camas Prairie. As you travelled to Craters of the Moon you shared an ancient travel corridor with those who have come before. The Shoshone and Bannock tribes traveled through here on their annual migration into the mountains and to gather roots on the Camas Prairie.”

As you travelled to Craters of the Moon you shared an ancient travel corridor with those who have come before. The Shoshone and Bannock tribes traveled through here on their annual migration into the mountains and to gather roots on the Camas Prairie.

Our Big Backyard

The Visitor Center, Loop Road and trails are Craters of the Moon’s front yard—the part most visitors see and experience. But a whole other monument of wildlife, sagebrush, and elbow room awaits those willing to explore Craters of the Moon’s backyard. Cooperatively managed by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), these two agencies are working together to enhance public service and protection of this landscape while retaining many of the traditional uses of the land.

The BLM is undertaking a variety of “backyard” projects in this less-visited area of Craters of the Moon National Monument this summer. In addition to our usual road and facilities maintenance, grazing administration and other seasonal work, we will be implementing our Transportation Management Plan, and assessing sage-grouse habitat.

Last year over 50 miles of unneeded or redundant routes were removed from the BLM-managed portion of the monument. In many cases routes were simply disguised with rocks and other materials

Inside Great Rift Gazette

Visitor Information ... 2
Junior Rangers ... 3
Walks and Talks ... 4
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 sidewalks, 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 Area) and is only accessible 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.

Caving
To prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has killed over a million bats since 2006, screening is required before entering any cave at Craters of the Moon. Pick up a permit at the Visitor Center or by cell phone where reception is available. 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.

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.

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. Please utilize the pet area near the Visitor Center and clean up after your pet.

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.

Recycling
The monument’s recycling center is located in the campground across from the entrance station. Please recycle the following materials there:
• Glass
• Plastics #1-5
• Mixed paper (office paper, newspaper, etc.)
• Cardboard
• Aluminium & tin cans

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 breeze-way 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:

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.

Volunteers
Last year 65 volunteers donated almost 3400 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.

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 have benefitted greatly from the work of these bright and motivated young scientists for over a decade.

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.
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!

Backyard . . .

continued from page 1

and then seeded with native plants thereby restoring wildlife habitat. For the seeding to be successful people must avoid driving on the route. Please stay on designated roads as you explore. This spring and early summer, crews will monitor last year’s work to repair any areas identified that need more work.

A major investment of time and effort this year will be the start of the Sage-grouse Habitat Assessment Framework. Eleven newly hired seasonal employees will fan out across the Monument to identify and assess sage grouse habitat, implement conservation actions, and install monitoring studies. Data collected will be used to guide management of the health and condition of this important wildlife habitat.

An exciting and productive season is in the works for 2012. To explore the BLM Monument, pick up a copy of our free Travel Map, available at the NPS Visitor Center and the BLM office in Shoshone. Be sure to follow all the safety recommendations. Our big backyard has lots to see and do. Be sure to stop by and say hello. Have a great visit!

Creature Feature: Sage-grouse

Sage-grouse love sagebrush. They eat its leaves for food and build their nests under it. Females are speckled and blend in with their surroundings. Can you tell the sage-grouse from the rock below?

Each spring sage-grouse visit large, open areas called leks, where males fan out their tail feathers and puff up their chests to attract a mate. Afterwards, they return to the safety of their sagebrush home.

Continue your Junior Ranger adventure by becoming a WebRanger!

www.nps.gov/webrangers

Nearby Businesses

THE GREAT RIFT GAZETTE IS PRODUCED BY THE ARCO ADVERTISER, ARCO, ID 83213
Walks and Talks  June 8 – September 3

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.

Evening Stroll  Campground amphitheater
Nightly at 7:00 p.m. (30 min., .25 mile)
Evening Stroll explores Buffalo Caves.
Bring sturdy shoes, water, a flashlight and a cave permit for exploring Buffalo Caves.

Nightly at 9:00 a.m. (2 hours, 1.8 miles)
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 close-toed shoes, bring a flashlight, water and a cave permit.

Special Programs  Various locations

Tour the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, enjoy a hike beneath the full moon or join other volunteers for a service project. Sign up for these special hikes and events by giving us a call or stopping by the Visitor Center.

Wildflower Walks  June 9 & 16
Star Party  June 22 & 23
Service Saturday  June 23
Geology Hike  June 30
Evening Hike  July 7
Wilderness Hike  July 14
Service Saturday  July 21
Goodale’s Cutoff  July 28
Full Moon Hike  August 4

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 present 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.

Loop Drive Map

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

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