



Craters of the Moon

Craters of the Moon National Monument
and Preserve
Planning Newsletter No. 3

Planning for the Future of the Monument

DEAR FRIENDS:

WE ARE AT AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE PLANNING process for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (the Monument). Now, more than ever, we need your participation. We believe that your input is critical as we craft alternative management strategies for Craters of the Moon.

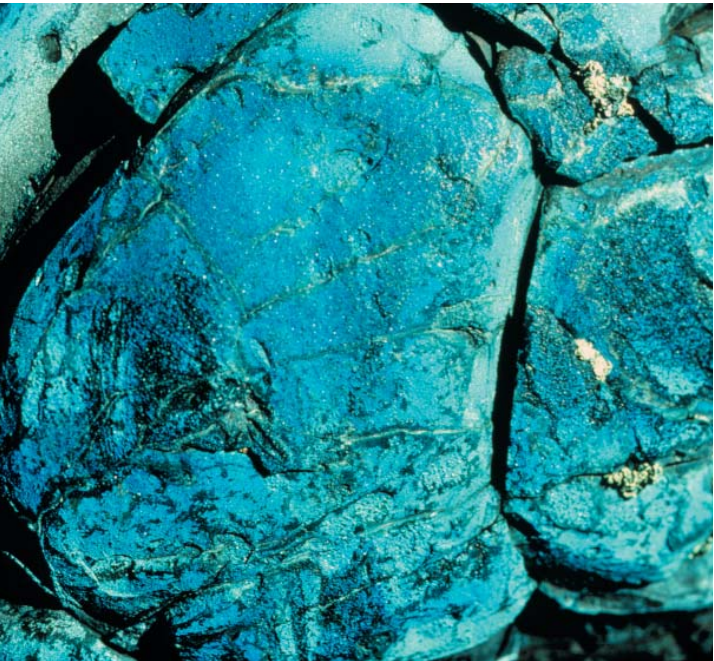
This newsletter describes four conceptual alternatives. Each of these preliminary alternatives represents a different management strategy. One alternative is to continue with the current management strategy or the "no-action alternative." The other three alternatives describe changes to current management. All of the alternatives address the Monument's purpose and significance, draft goals, legal mandates, and your input over the past year.

The BLM/NPS planning team created four management zones to map many of the differences between these alternatives. The management zones incorporate many of your comments and the planning issues that we described in the first two newsletters. This newsletter contains a detailed description of the management zones and a zone map for each alternative. The maps are pictures of how the Monument would look under each alternative.

The next step in the planning process is to refine these conceptual alternatives. With your help, the

Rick Vander Voet, Monument Manager
Craters of the Moon National Monument
Bureau of Land Management

Rick Vander Voet



planning team will develop a preferred alternative for the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The preferred alternative may look like one of the four alternatives in this newsletter or, more likely, may include elements from several of the alternatives. After refining the alternatives, the planning team will evaluate the impacts of the actions in each alternative. This information will be detailed in the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. You will have another opportunity to comment before a final recommendation is made.

Meanwhile, please take some time to comment on these preliminary alternatives and management zones. We have included a postage-paid form for your suggestions. You may also send comments via e-mail. If you really want to roll up your sleeves, we invite you to attend one of three workshops scheduled for this winter. The workshops will provide an opportunity for participants to work with the planning team on the alternatives.

We have heard from many of you in letters, e-mails, phone calls, and at meetings and open houses. We value your continued contributions to Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. Thank you for your time and effort. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Jim Morris, Superintendent
Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve
National Park Service

Jim Morris



Background

*Craters of the Moon National Monument, established in 1924 by a presidential proclamation, is an area that **"contains many curious and unusual phenomena of great educational value and has a weird and scenic landscape peculiar to itself."***

In 1989, at the urging of local citizens, Congress directed the National Park Service to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of adding more federal lands to the Monument. The intent was to determine how a higher level of protection for the entire Great Rift could be achieved. That study concluded that this is an area of national significance as one of the longest and the deepest known open volcanic rift zones on earth.

The most recent proclamation provides protection of the entire Great Rift volcanic zone and associated lava features. It also ensures that traditional activities consistent with the overall purpose of the area will continue.

Public Law 107-213, signed into law on August 21, 2002, redesignated approximately 410,000 acres of land as "Craters of the Moon National Preserve." This law permits hunting in the National Preserve.

Management Zones

The frontcountry zone would be defined by structures and grounds provided for visitor support services such as information, education, and recreation. Access would be easy and convenient, and the encounter rate would be very high. High maintenance and intervention would be required to accommodate concentrated visitor use.

The passage zone would include secondary travel routes that receive use as throughways and provide access to destinations. Rudimentary facilities necessary to protect resources, educate visitors about Monument resources, or for public safety would be provided.

The primitive zone would provide an undeveloped, primitive and self-directed visitor experience while accommodating motorized and mechanized access on designated routes. Facilities would be rare and provided only where essential for resource protection.

The pristine zone would include mostly lava flows, designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. This zone would provide an undeveloped, primitive, and self-directed visitor experience, generally without motorized or mechanical access. Facilities would be virtually nonexistent.

	Frontcountry Zone	Passage Zone	Primitive Zone	Pristine Zone
Visitor Experience	high chance for encounters with people	medium chance for encounters with people	low chance for encounters with people	high chance for solitude
	paved, improved, or maintained roads	higher level of road maintenance than the primitive and pristine zones	challenging driving, low-standard roads	challenging access and no roads
	developed campground	rustic, designated campsites	no developed campsites	no developed campsites
	a high level of interpretation programs	limited interpretation, wayside exhibits	minimal onsite interpretation	no onsite interpretation
	diverse trail system, some paved	multiuse, maintained, and designated trails	low-standard multiuse trails	very few trails
	opportunities to observe sheep/cattle trailing operations	high chance for encounters with livestock or associated facilities	medium chance for encounters with livestock or associated facilities	low chance for encounters with livestock or associated facilities
Access and Kinds of Development	paved roads and high-standard gravel roads	regularly maintained gravel and dirt roads	two-track dirt roads, accessible seasonally only with high-clearance vehicles	no roads
	hardened and maintained pedestrian trails	trailheads; maintained motorized and nonmotorized trails	low standard multiuse trails	very few trails
	frequent signs for directions, safety, and interpretation	signs for directions, safety, resource protection, and interpretation	minimal signs for visitor safety and resource protection	very few signs
	offices, utilities, maintenance facilities, storage areas, visitor center, housing, and restrooms	minimal administrative structures and vault toilets	no buildings	no buildings
	few, mostly temporary, livestock facilities	livestock facilities, including fences, corrals, troughs, reservoirs, and sheep bed grounds	few livestock facilities	primarily temporary facilities associated with livestock trailing

- Wilderness boundary
- Expanded Monument boundary
- Primary highway (paved)
- Principal access road
- Agricultural land

Preliminary Alternatives

The four preliminary alternatives differ in how they apply the four management zones. The alternatives also differ in a variety of natural resource management strategies. Some actions are emphasized more in one alternative than another. Some actions may appear in only one alternative. Some management decisions are common to all alternatives.

For example, Alternative B places a greater emphasis on providing visitor experiences within the Monument by improving access to and within the Monument. Alternative C places more of an emphasis on enhancing the primitive, natural character of the Monument by limiting access. Alternative A would continue the current level of sagebrush steppe restoration, while alternative D would dramatically increase the amount and extent of restoration actions.



Front Country Zone



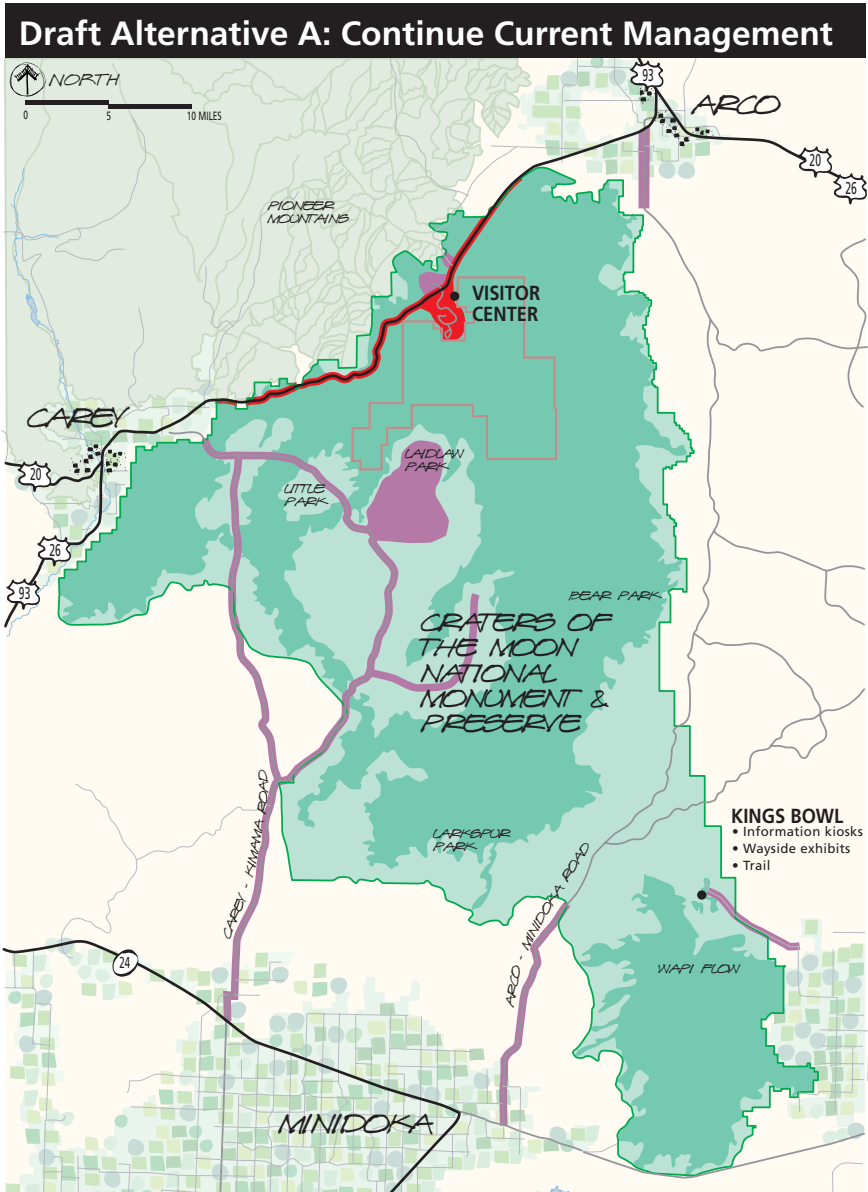
Passage Zone



Primitive Zone

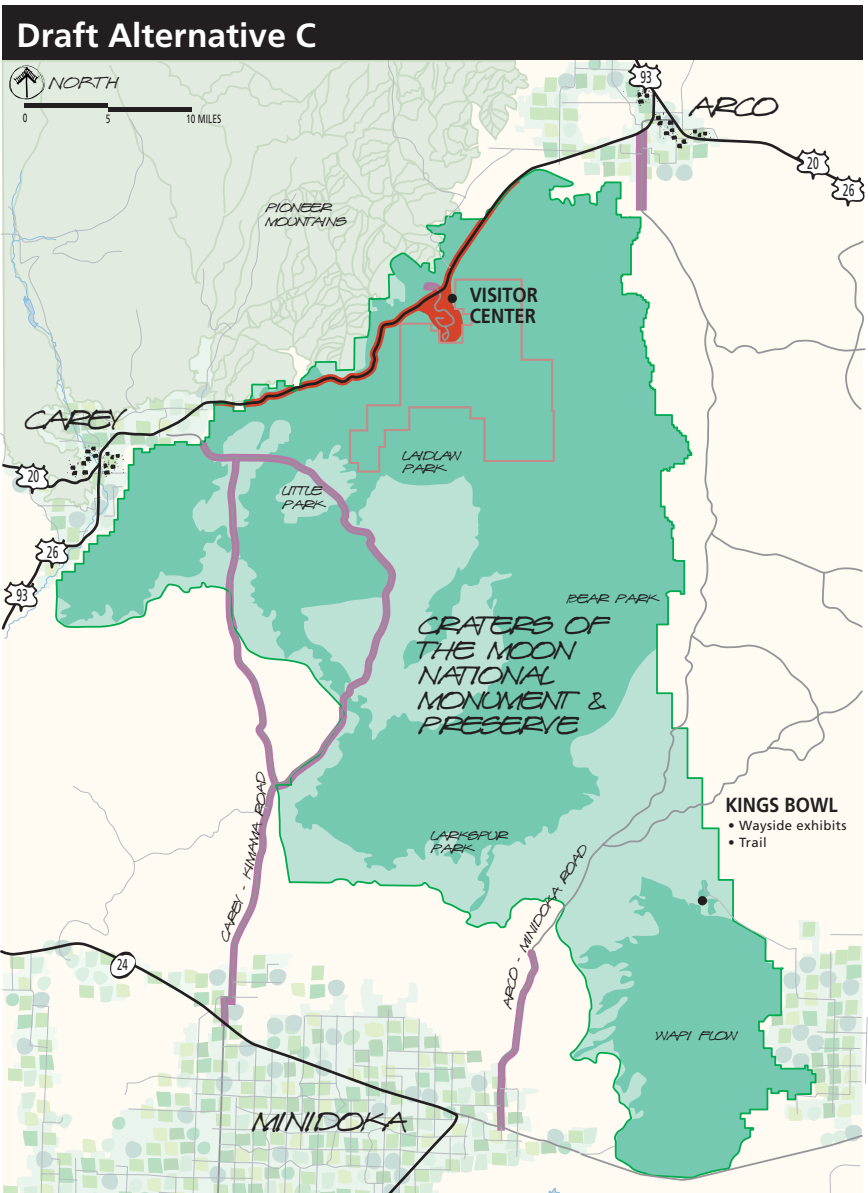


Pristine Zone



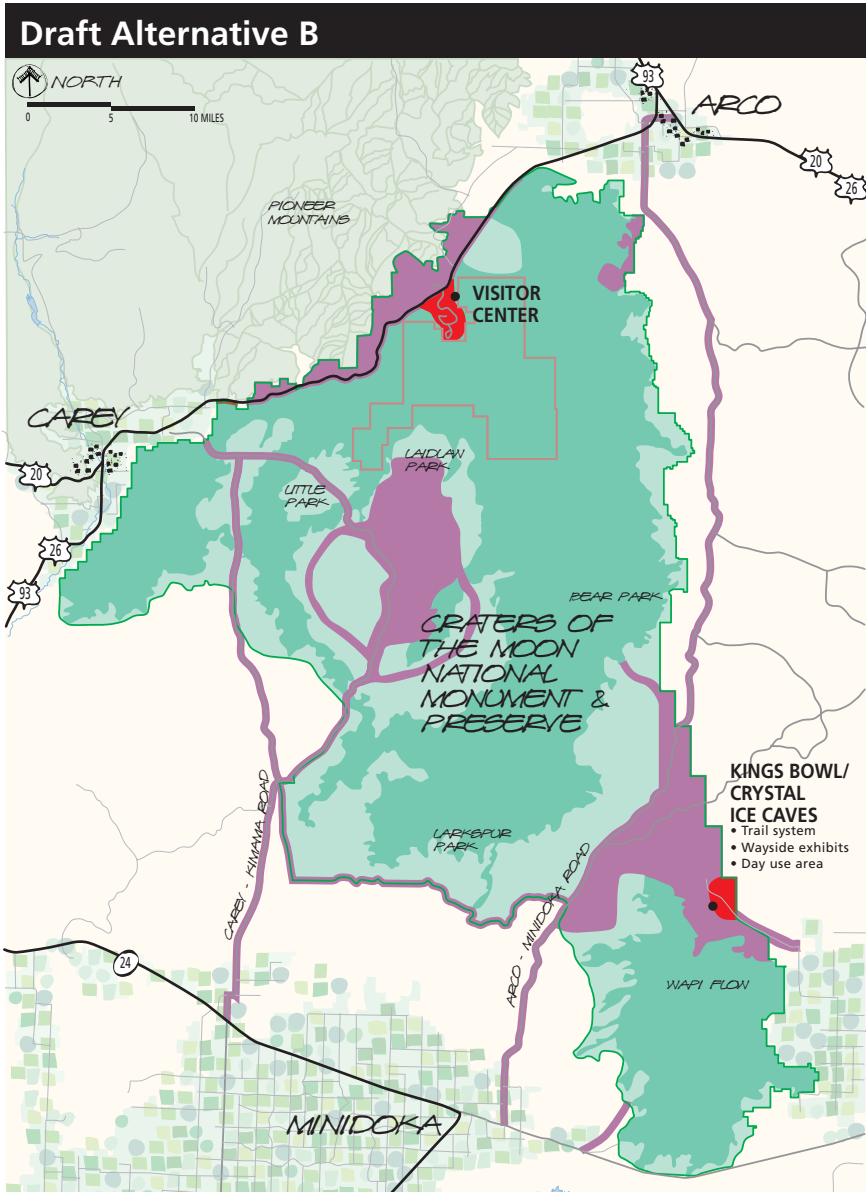
Concept: No major changes in resource management, visitor programs, or facilities.

- Key components:**
- Depicts current management under the five existing management plans as modified by Proclamation 7373, Public Law 107-213, and the agencies' "Interim Management Guidelines."
 - Is the no-action alternative required by the National Environmental Policy Act.
 - Serves as a baseline for comparison with the other three conceptual alternatives.



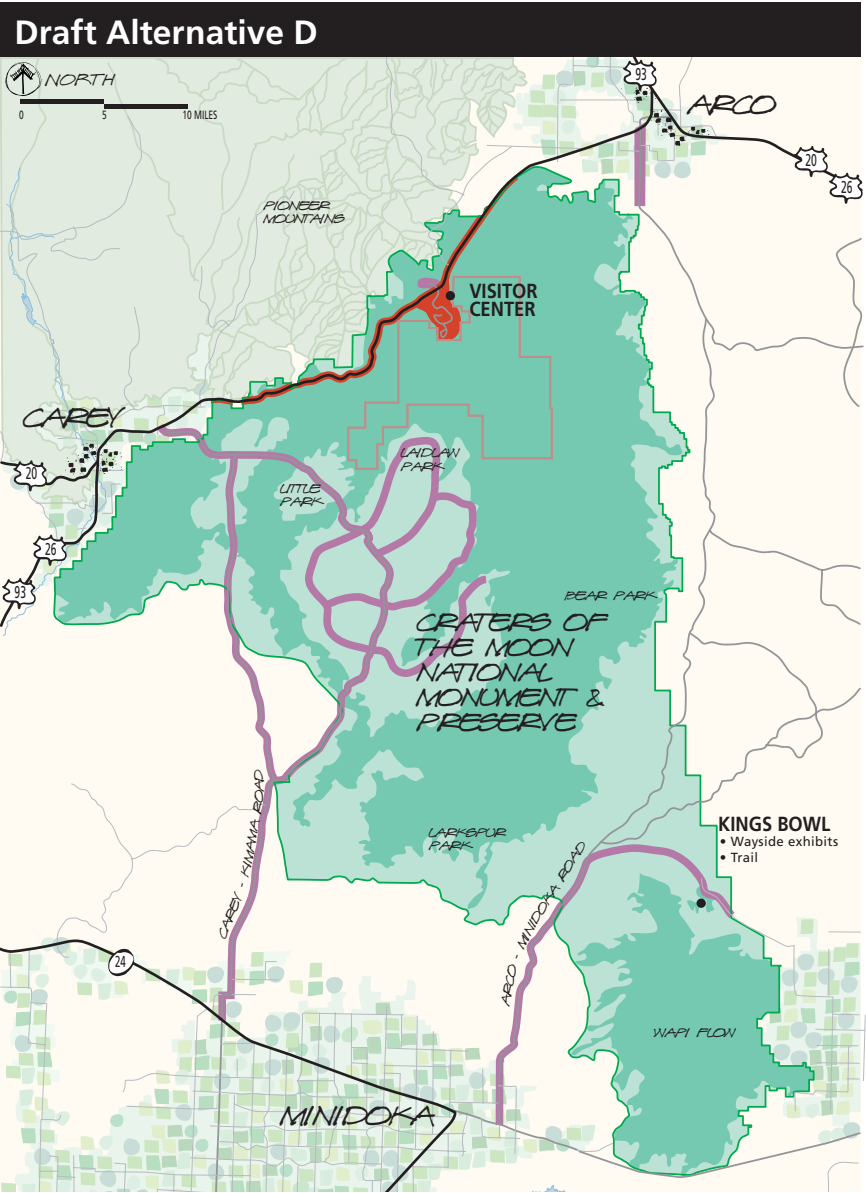
Concept: Emphasizes retention and enhancement of the Monument's primitive character with minimal visitor facilities or services and less management action to influence resource conditions.

- Key Components:**
- Has the largest acreage in the Pristine Zone and least acreage in the Passage Zone.
 - Maintains the fewest miles of roads.
 - Locates interpretation activities and most signs outside of the expanded Monument.
 - Relies on the least intrusive methods of resource management including sage steppe restoration.
 - Might include a large Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation in northern Laidlaw Park to provide special protective management for native plants.



Concept: Emphasizes a broad array of visitor experiences within the Monument.

- Key components:**
- Provides the largest amount of multiple-use trail opportunities and extensive educational/informational/directional signs throughout the Monument.
 - Allocates large areas in the Passage Zone instead of only narrow corridors.
 - Proposes facilities in gateway communities.
 - Proposes travel corridors outside the Monument boundary to provide consistent road standards and access, to and through the Monument, including the Carey-Kimama, Arco-Minidoka, and American Falls-Kings Bowl roads.



Concept: Emphasizes aggressive restoration of physical and biological resources and processes.

- Key Components:**
- Promotes partnerships at existing facilities such as Idaho visitor centers, state parks, and Chamber of Commerce visitor centers.
 - Maintains the most miles of high-standard road within the Monument.
 - Encourages outfitter and guide services in the expanded portion of the Monument.
 - May include a large Area of Critical Environmental Concern [ACEC] designation in Laidlaw Park to provide special protective and restoration management for native plants.
 - Has the largest weed treatment and prevention program.
 - Aggressively manages fire in sagebrush steppe plant communities.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Shoshone Field Office
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400 West F Street
Shoshone, ID 83352-1522

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Ways You Can Participate

NEWSLETTER 1 (JUNE 2002) PRESENTED DRAFT PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE statements, goals and issues. Newsletter 2 (August 2002) presented a summary of public comments, including issues and concerns that you want addressed in the management plan. If you did not receive these materials or no longer have them, they are available on our Web sites or you may contact us for a copy.

Schedule	Planning Activity	Public Participation Opportunities
Fall 2001 –Summer 2002	1. Set the Stage for Planning and Management The first step is to lay the foundation for everything that is done in the plan and, ultimately, in the Monument. Statements of Monument purpose and significance are reviewed to ensure that everything we do is consistent with the reason that the Monument was established. Issues and concerns that need to be addressed in the plan are identified. This helps to focus our work and determine the scope of the planning effort.	• Participate in open houses. • Read and comment on newsletters.
Summer 2002 through Winter 2003 (We are here)	2. Gather Data and Develop Alternatives The BLM and NPS planning team will be working to better understand the resources, learn more about issues, identify opportunities for solving problems, and develop ideas for the future. Concepts for alternatives will be generated. These are broad descriptions of different resource conditions and visitor experiences that could achieve the area’s purposes and maintain its significance. Management strategies for achieving these alternatives will also be developed, and the potential environmental consequences of implementing each alternative will be evaluated.	• Participate in workshops. • Read and comment on third newsletter.
Fall 2003	3. Publish Draft Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement The Draft Plan/EIS will be published for public review. Public comments on the draft will be accepted.	• Participate in meetings. • Read and comment on <i>Draft Plan/EIS</i>
Fall 2004	4. Publish Final Management Plan/EIS Based on public comments, appropriate revisions to the draft will be made and a <i>Final Management Plan/EIS</i> will be developed.	
Winter 2004 and beyond	5. Implement Plan	

Workshops

We have scheduled workshops in Arco, Carey, and Rupert. All workshops are open to the public. At the workshops, we will make a brief presentation on alternatives starting at 10:00 am sharp. Please plan on participating for the full three hours in a small group setting. **In order for us to have enough materials and staff at each location, we ask that you please call and sign up for a workshop one week prior to the date if you plan to attend (BLM (208) 732-7200, NPS (208) 527-3257, ext. 106).**

We can schedule additional meetings and presentations upon request.

Workshop Schedule			
Place	Address	Date	Time
Arco	Arco-Butte Business Center 159 North Idaho Arco, Idaho	February 8, 2003	10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
Carey	Carey High School Multipurpose Room Carey, Idaho	February 15, 2003	10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
Rupert	Rupert City Hall 624 F Street Rupert, Idaho	February 22, 2003	10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Comments

FOR THOSE OF YOU NOT ABLE TO participate in a workshop, or who prefer to respond by mail, we have provided a postage-paid mail-back comment form. All of the information that we receive will be reviewed by the planning team and documented. You may also comment via e-mail or through the Web pages listed below. Your participation is vital to this planning process for the future of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve.

For general information see these Web sites:

www.nps.gov/crmo
www.id.blm.gov/planning/index.htm

Send written comments by March 14, 2003 to:

Craters of the Moon National Monument
Planning Team
Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone
Field Office
P.O. Box 2-B
400 West F Street
Shoshone, ID 83352-1522

E- mail comments:

ID_Craters_Plan@blm.gov

Telephone calls are welcome anytime:

NPS: 208-527-3257 ext. 106
BLM: 208-732-7200