



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

Approved Management Plan Amendment
Record of Decision



Craters of the Moon National Monument Approved MMP Amendment Record of Decision

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Chapter 1. Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment Record of Decision

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1.1. Introduction

This Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Monument Management Plan (MMP) Amendment were prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Shoshone Field Office in Shoshone, Idaho. These documents are the culmination of a multi-year planning effort to amend the 2007 Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan. BLM prepared these documents in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA); the regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–08 and 43 CFR Part 46); the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA); the BLM’s land use planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1600), the BLM’s land use planning Handbook (H-1610–1), and other applicable law and policy. The management of BLM lands within the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (Monument) boundary is the subject of this document. This ROD documents the approval of the attached MMP Amendment, which provides direction for the management of livestock grazing on BLM lands within the Monument.

1.1.1. Purpose and Need for the MMP Amendment

The purpose of this MMP Amendment is to specify where and under what circumstances livestock grazing would be allowed on BLM-administered lands in the Monument, consistent with FLPMA’s principles of multiple use and sustained yield, and in consideration of high-quality information relating to livestock grazing and other uses and resources within the Monument.

The BLM published the original MMP in 2007. In 2008, Western Watersheds Project (WWP) filed a complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Idaho (Court) alleging the Secretary of the Interior and the BLM violated NEPA and FLPMA when the BLM issued RODs on 16 RMPs between 2004 and 2008, including the Craters of the Moon MMP. In 2011, the Court found that the BLM’s issuance of the 2007 MMP planning decision violated NEPA and FLPMA by (1) failing to consider a no-grazing alternative, by failing to (2) consider the recommendations for Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) conservation contained within a 2004 Nature Conservancy Report [Jurs & Sands, 2004] and the 2004 Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Conservation Assessment, (3) fully discuss the agency’s Special Status Species Policy and National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy, and (4) consider any alternative that would have reduced grazing levels. In November 2012, the Court ordered the BLM to correct these defects. The BLM has done so with two RMP amendment processes supported by EISs.

The first RMP amendment process focused on GRSG conservation. In March 2010, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) issued its finding that listing the GRSG under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was "warranted but precluded" by other priorities. Accordingly, the BLM, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, developed a landscape-level management strategy, based on the best available science, that was targeted, multi-tiered, coordinated, and collaborative. As part of this strategy, in 2015 the BLM issued the Idaho and southwest Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (GRSG ARMPA) which incorporated GRSG conservation measures into twelve BLM land use plans in Idaho and southwestern Montana, including the 2007 Craters of the Moon MMP. The GRSG ARMPA analyzed reduced-grazing and no-grazing alternatives at the regional level. The Craters of the Moon MMP FEIS/Amendment analyzes reduced-grazing and no-grazing alternatives at the local level for the planning area. The distinction between the two plan amendments is only the Craters of the Moon Plan MMP/FEIS Amendment evaluated reductions in AUMs for the Monument specifically.

At the completion of this MMP Amendment, the BLM will have a land use plan for the Craters of the Moon planning area that includes the following: (1) sage-grouse specific conservation measures that help to alleviate threats to sage-grouse in the Monument and (2) management actions and goals for livestock grazing within the Monument that will guide management of those BLM lands. In short, the GRSG ARMPA now addresses the Court-identified defects in the 2007 MMP.

Because the Court did not vacate the 2007 MMP management direction regarding livestock grazing and sage-grouse habitat found in the 2007 MMP did not change in the interim while the BLM undertook its two planning processes. In 2015, however, the GRSG ARMPA amended the 2007 MMP. The ARMPA and the Craters of the Moon MMPA/FEIS are complementary in that the current amendment addresses court-identified deficiencies in the NEPA analysis of livestock grazing in the 2007 MMP, whereas the 2015 ARMPA addressed deficiencies for Greater Sage-Grouse protection. This amendment process did not re-evaluate the planning decisions made through the 2015 GRSG ARMPA; accordingly, the No Action alternative for this Amendment is the 2007 MMP as amended by the GRSG ARMPA. The decisions in the Craters of the Moon MMP that were made through the GRSG ARMPA amendment process do not vary among the alternatives in this Approved MMP Amendment. The alternatives developed for this Approved Amendment are consistent and comply with the Desired Future Condition (DFC) found in the GRSG ARMPA and the 2007 MMP, except for Alternative D, which is not consistent with the 2007 MMP livestock DFC to “provide livestock forage on a sustainable basis for the life of the plan”.

The scope of the Craters of the Moon Approved MMP Amendment is narrower than that of the GRSG ARMPA. Specifically, the Approved MMP Amendment is focused on livestock grazing allocation decisions within the Monument. While the two planning efforts overlap to a limited extent, they focus on separate and distinct planning decisions to be made at different geographic scales. The GRSG ARMPA broadly addresses livestock grazing best management practices, set a prioritization scheme whereby grazing permits will be renewed to incorporate GRSG protections, and provides for sage-grouse conservation across Idaho and southwestern Montana. The Approved MMP Amendment specifically considers the allocation of AUMs within the Monument and the availability of Monument lands for grazing. The Approved MMP Amendment/FEIS does not change the decisions made through the GRSG ARMPA.

Purpose

The purpose of this MMP Amendment is to update the 2007 MMP’s grazing management direction to make it consistent with current laws, regulations, and policies, including Greater sage-grouse habitat conservation. More specifically, its purpose is to consider a range of reasonable management options for livestock grazing on BLM-managed lands in the planning area in a manner that maintains the Monument values listed in Proclamation 7373 and is consistent with the 2015 ARMPA.

The BLM analyzed a range of reasonable livestock grazing management alternatives consistent with goals, objectives, allocation decisions, and management actions in the 2015 ARMPA and the BLM’s current policies, the existing objectives for vegetation and wildlife resource management as identified in the DFCs in the 2007 Craters of the Moon MMP, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Standards), protection of Monument Values, as well as other relevant agency policies and guidance.

Proclamation 7373 provides the basis for the protection, conservation, and enjoyment of Monument Values or Objects by declaring “Craters of the Moon holds the most diverse and youngest part of the lava terrain that covers the southern Snake River Plain of Idaho, a broad plain made up of innumerable basalt lava flows during the past 5 million years. The most recent eruptions at the Craters of the Moon took place about 2,100 years ago and were likely witnessed

by the Shoshoni people, whose legend speaks of “a serpent on a mountain who, angered by lightening, coiled around and squeezed the mountain until the rocks crumbled and melted, fire shot from cracks, and liquid rock flowed from the fissures as the mountain exploded.” The original Presidential Proclamation 1694, subsequent proclamations (1843, 1916, 2499, and 3506) and legislation, and the public planning process associated with the 2007 MMP, resulted in the identification of all Monument Values/Objects related to the importance of the Monument. For the purposes of this plan amendment, Monument Values/Objects, as identified through proclamations, legislation, and the public scoping process, to be protected will refer to:

- All volcanic features in the Monument, including, but not limited to kipukas, craters, cones, lava flows, caves, and fissures
- The Great Rift
- Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas
- Scenic vistas and great open landscapes
- Important habitat for Greater sage-grouse
- Historic and traditional relationships with the land including but not limited to traditional ranching, hunting, and all traditional Native American practices

Need

This MMP Amendment was needed to cure deficiencies identified by the Court in the 2007 MMP/EIS. The Court found that BLM failed to adequately address the current science and agency policies designed to protect sage-grouse habitat, primarily with regard to managing livestock grazing in Monument. The Court also found that BLM failed to consider a range of alternatives related to livestock grazing, including consideration of a no-grazing alternative or any alternative that reduced grazing. As discussed above, the GRSG ARMPA addresses the Court-identified defects associated directly with sage-grouse habitat conservation, while the need for the Craters of the Moon PMMP Amendment is to address defects in the range of livestock grazing management alternatives considered. Both amendments utilize and observe the 2004 Nature Conservancy Report [Jurs & Sands, 2004], WAFWA Conservation Assessment, BLM’s Special Status Species Policy, and the National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy.

The MMP Amendment also maintains compliance with FLPMA, the Monument values listed above, the objectives for vegetation and wildlife management identified in the DFCs in the 2007 MMP, Standards, as well as other relevant agency policies and guidance.

1.1.2. Lands within the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Administrative Boundary

The Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is located in south-central Idaho and is an administrative unit of the BLM’s Twin Falls District (Figure 1.1). The Monument’s administrative boundary comprises lands managed by the BLM, the National Park Service (NPS), the State of Idaho, and private lands. This MMP Amendment applies only to the BLM land within the Monument boundary. Table 1 shows acres of surface land ownership within the Monument administrative boundary.

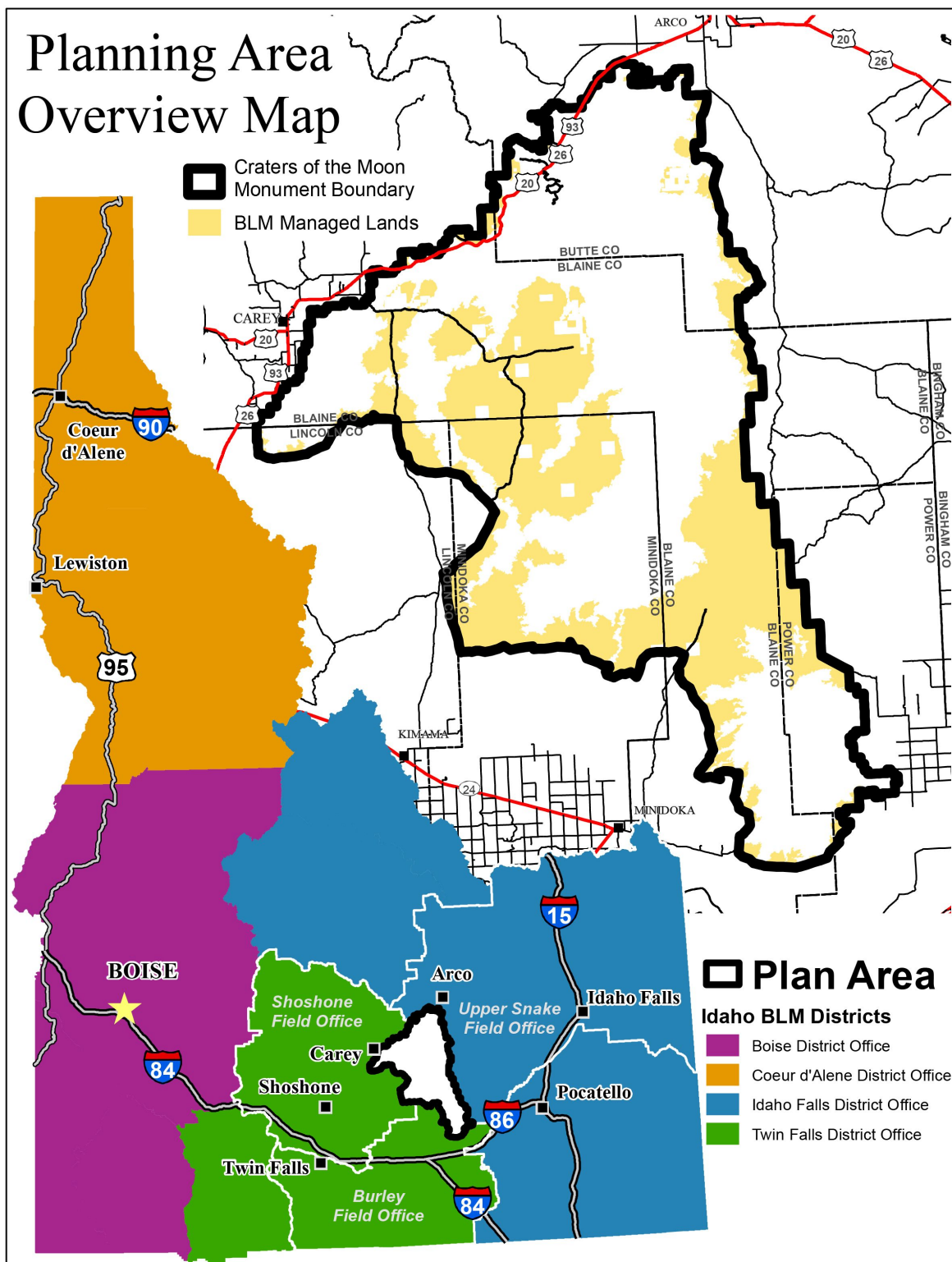


Figure 1.1. Location of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

*Chapter 1 Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment Record of Decision
Lands within the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Administrative Boundary*

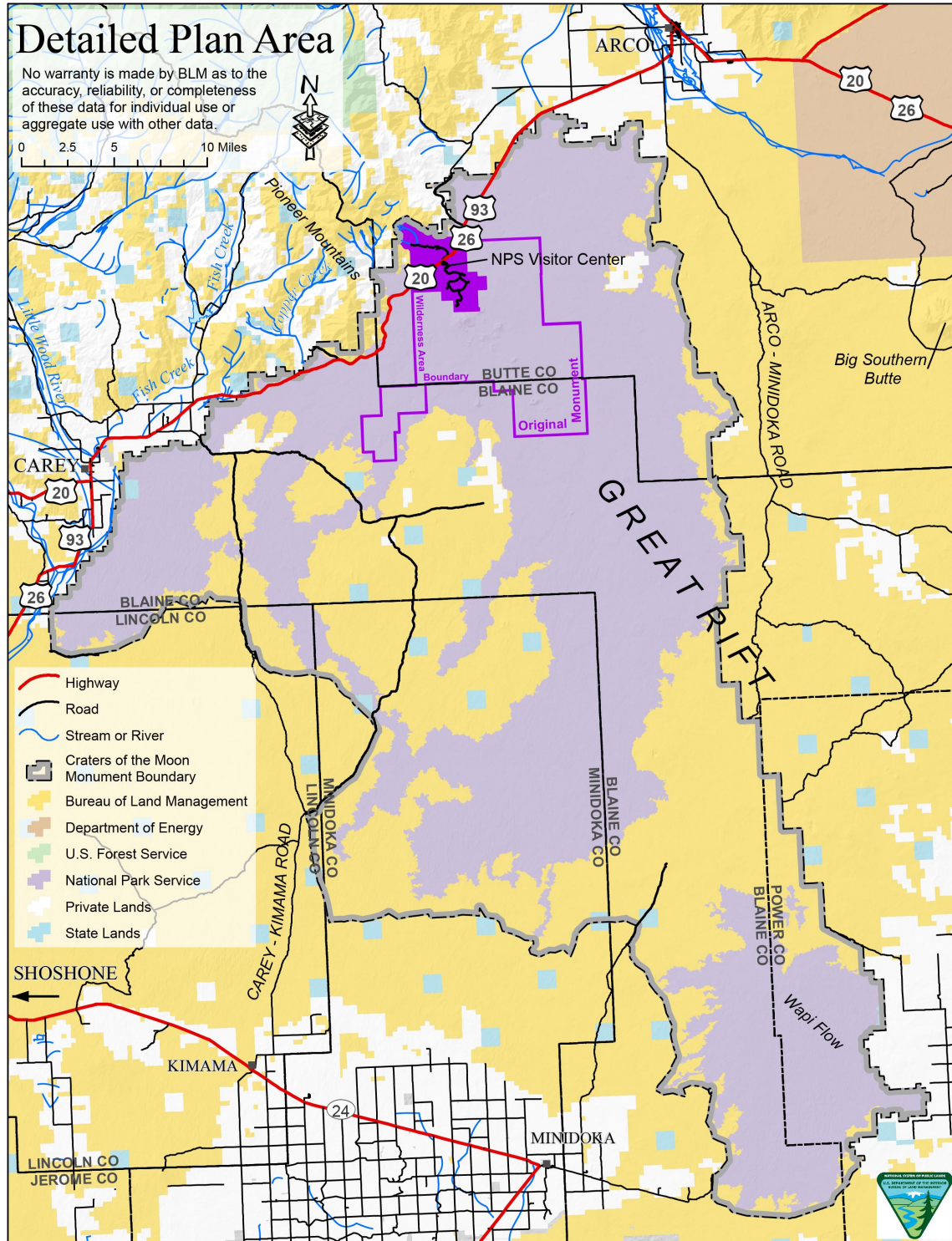


Figure 1.2. Detailed Planning Area

*Chapter 1 Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment Record of Decision
Lands within the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Administrative Boundary*

Table 1.1. Land Ownership within the Planning Area

Land Ownership	Acres	Percent
BLM	275,100	37%
NPS	463,300	62%
State	8,200	1%
Private	6,600	<1%

1.2. Alternatives

NEPA requires the development and consideration of a range of reasonable management alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to analyze impacts and guide decision makers in developing and selecting the Approved MMP Amendment.

1.2.1. Draft MMP Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Five management alternatives were developed for the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS to fulfill the BLM's purpose and need,. Each action alternative was designed to respond to the planning issues differently, providing a range of possible management approaches that the BLM could implement. That difference between alternatives was created by varying the levels of allowable use and management action decisions. Each alternative stood alone as a potential MMP Amendment.

1.2.2. Proposed MMP Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Based on substantive comments from other governmental agencies and the public on the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, the BLM prepared a FEIS, which includes identification of a Proposed MMP Amendment. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) in the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, was revised as the result of evaluating comments received on the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, and was identified as the Proposed MMP Amendment (Alternative C). The FEIS also incorporated the other alternatives (Alternatives A, B, D and E) analyzed in the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, with editorial changes, technical changes, and factual corrections made as appropriate. Planning decisions apply to BLM-managed surface only.

1.2.3. Alternatives Considered, but Not Further Analyzed

The following alternatives and management option described in Chapter 2 of the Proposed MMP Amendment were considered as possible ways of resolving resource management issues and conflicts, but were eliminated from detailed analysis because they were unreasonable or not practical for technical, legal, or policy reasons. A full rationale for each dismissed alternative can be found in the FEIS, Section 2.3. Specific alternatives considered, but not carried forward for detailed analysis are as follows:

- Close All Kipukas to Grazing
- Passive Restoration

- Aggressive Restoration
- The Idaho Governor's Sage-Grouse Alternative
- Western Watershed Project's Proposed Alternative
- Increased Grazing for Fuels Reduction

1.2.4. Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

The basic goal of developing alternatives is to prepare different combinations of resource uses and protections to address the identified major planning issues, enhance or expand resources or resource uses, and resolve conflicts among resources and resource uses. Alternatives must meet the purpose and need; be reasonable; provide a mix of resource protection and management use; be responsive to the issues; meet the establishing planning criteria, and meet federal laws, regulations, policies, and standards, including the multiple use mandates of FLPMA.

Following the close of the public scoping period in 2013, the BLM began developing alternatives by assembling an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists in the Shoshone Field Office. The BLM coordinated with cooperating agencies beginning in 2013 and continuing throughout the planning process. Five management alternatives were developed to fulfill the purpose and need, to meet the multiple use mandates of the FLPMA, and to address the Court Order. The five alternatives included the following: the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives, Alternatives B, C, D, and E. The following sections provide some key components of the alternatives. The alternatives offered a range of management options that address the issues identified in the scoping process and other outreach activities, including, but not limited to, input from Cooperating Agencies and the Twin Falls Resource Advisory Council.

The Proposed MMP Amendment and alternatives proposed direction for livestock grazing management based on the development of specific management actions to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the 2007 MMP. Specific direction influencing land management with an emphasis on different combinations of allowable resource uses and protections to address issues and to resolve user conflicts were included in each alternative. Resources or resource uses not tied to planning issues or mandated by laws and regulations often contain few or no differences in management between alternatives. Alternatives may also result in different long-term conditions.

Based on substantive comments from other governmental agencies and the public on the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, the BLM prepared a FEIS which included identification of a Proposed MMP Amendment. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative C in the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS) was revised as a result of evaluating comments received, and was identified as the Proposed MMP Amendment (Alternative C). The Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS included all the alternatives analyzed in the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS, and incorporated editorial changes, technical changes, and factual corrections as appropriate. Summaries of the management alternatives from the FEIS are presented below. A complete description of all decisions proposed for each alternative was included in Chapter 2 of the Proposed MMP Amendment.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The "No Action" alternative, Alternative A, is the continuation of present management direction and current prevailing conditions based on existing planning decisions and amendments. This alternative meets the requirements of the NEPA (40 CFR Part 1502.14) that a no-action alternative

be considered. “No action” means that current management practices, as well as goals and objectives, based on the 2007 MMP, MMP amendments, and activity- or implementation-level plans, would continue. The emphasis would be on maintaining the existing land management direction for physical, biological, cultural, and historic resource values along with recreational, social, and economic land uses. Direction contained in laws, regulations, and BLM policies superseding provisions of the existing MMP and amendments would be implemented.

The appropriate development scenario for livestock grazing would stay the same. There would be no change in goals, objectives, allowable uses, or management actions that are allowed, restricted, or prohibited on BLM lands and mineral estate. The BLM would not establish additional criteria or change present criteria to guide the identification of site-specific use levels for implementation activities.

Alternative B

Alternative B would reduce Animal Unit Months (AUMs) allocated for livestock grazing by approximately 75% to 9,432 AUMs, and close six areas to grazing: Little Park kipuka, the North Pasture of Laidlaw Park Allotment, Larkspur Park kipuka, the North Pasture of Bowl Crater Allotment, Park Field kipuka, and a portion of the Craters Allotment. This alternative would adjust two allotment boundaries and make 21,000 acres (about 8% of those currently available) unavailable for livestock grazing, for the protection of Monument values.

Alternative C (Proposed MMP Amendment)

Alternative C uses the Alternative C from the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS as its foundation. Alternative C would make 273,600 acres available for livestock grazing and adjust two allotment boundaries, which would set the maximum number of AUMs at 37,792 (approximately 1% reduction). Where appropriate, livestock grazing could be used as a tool to improve and/or protect wildlife habitat. Guidelines for livestock grazing management would be set based on vegetation and wildlife habitat conditions and needs.

Alternative D

Alternative D would remove livestock grazing from BLM-managed lands within the Monument boundary (100% reduction) and adjust two allotment boundaries. All livestock-related developments would be removed and some fences may be required to exclude livestock from the Monument.

Alternative E

Alternative E would reduce AUMs available for livestock grazing by approximately 50% to 19,388 AUMs and close Larkspur Park kipuka to grazing, for a total of 2,200 acres unavailable. Where appropriate, livestock grazing would be used as a tool to improve and/or protect wildlife habitat. Guidelines for livestock grazing management would be set based on vegetation and wildlife habitat conditions and needs.

1.3. Notice of Clarifications and Modifications

The following clarifications and modifications are made to the information included in the Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS. The clarifications and modifications are reflected in the attached Approved MMP Amendment.

Editorial and Technical Changes to the Approved MMP Amendment and Appendices

Geographic information systems (GIS) information (e.g. acreage and the associated quantifications) were checked and updated. Editorial changes were made to improve clarity and technical changes were made to correct any inaccuracies or inconsistencies. For example:

- Section 1.4.5 Issues and Concerns Considered but Not Analyzed in Depth was amended to include rationale regarding air quality and geology.
- Section 2.3 Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail was amended to include an alternative that would increase grazing AUM levels for the purpose of reducing fuels within the Monument. While several groups suggested landscape fuels reduction could be achieved by livestock grazing, the planning team determined it was not feasible due to the extremely high levels of grazing it would require and the lack of livestock infrastructure within the Monument to support such levels.
- The Fire and Vegetation Management portion of Section 2.2.3 Vegetation Resources was edited to include the results of the 2016 Fire Season. Four wildfires burned approximately 46,800 acres within and adjacent to the Monument. Figure 3.4 Fire Frequency was adjusted to reflect the location of the 2016 fires.
- Section 3.2.1 Soil Resources was edited to add more information about biological soil crusts. Section 4.2.1 Soil Resources was also edited to provide additional analysis specific to biological soil crusts.
- Figure 3.7 Biotic Integrity (Habitat Assessment Framework (HAF) Data, 2012–2013) was edited to indicate the 2016 fire perimeters and the associated text in Vegetation Condition was edited to reflect that there will be future changes to the HAF data due to those fires.
- Table 3.5 in Section 3.2.4 Wildlife was updated to reflect special status species that were added to the list after the publication of the Draft EIS and the associated text was edited to reflect those additions.
- Text in Section 3.2.4 Wildlife — Special Status Wildlife and Fish was updated to provide more accurate Key Habitat figures for sage grouse as a result of the 2016 fire season. Table 3.5 Site-Scale Suitability Summary of Occupied Greater Sage-Grouse Habitats on BLM-Administered Lands in the Monument was edited to explain future changes to the data are anticipated as a result of the 2016 fire season.
- Section 3.3.4 Socioeconomic Values was edited to include information on State Endowment lands and the economic contribution of those lands. Section 4.2.13 Socioeconomic Values was also edited to include impacts to the State Endowment lands under the various alternatives.
- Section 3.3.5 Climate and Section 4.2.14 Climate was edited to incorporate additional references on climate change in the Great Basin.
- Section 4.1.1 Impact Analysis Descriptors were edited to clarify the definitions of moderate impacts to Native American Rights and Interests and Cultural Resources.
- Section 4.1.5 Chapter Organization was edited to clarify that each resource analysis section in Chapter 4 begins with a section that discusses general impacts to each resource, non-specific to the analysis. After that, specific analysis by alternative for each resource is presented.

- Section 4.3.1.4 Cumulative Effects to Wildlife and Fish was edited to update the fence collision risk estimates.
- Chapters 1 and 5 were updated to include information regarding continued consultation and collaboration with the public, Tribes, and other agencies.
- Appendix L Response to Comments on the Draft Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment EIS was edited to correct a response to Comment Letter 23, xxvii. It should read “Retirements are analyzed in Alternative B”, rather than “Alternatives B, C and E”.

1.4. Decisions in the Monument Management Plan Amendment

Land use plan decisions for BLM fall into two categories: 1) desired outcomes (goals and objectives), and 2) allowable (including restricted or prohibited) uses and actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes. For the purpose of this specific land use plan amendment, livestock grazing management was the only allowable use analyzed. The Desired Outcomes of the 2007 Monument Management Plan were not remanded by the Court and still apply to this plan amendment. The Approved MMP Amendment identified surface lands where livestock grazing use is allowed, including any restrictions that may be needed to meet goals and objectives of the 2007 MMP. The Approved MMP Amendment also identifies lands where specific uses, in this case livestock grazing, are excluded. Alternative C was selected at the Approved MMP Amendment because it provided the best balance between conservation needs and the needs of the local economy.

Land use plans also identify the actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes, including actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health. These actions can include proactive as well as measures or criteria that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities occurring on public land. Major decisions for livestock grazing management uses included in the Approved MMP Amendment are as follows:

Wildlife and Fish, including Special Status Species

Any future small-scale construction and routine maintenance activities will be scheduled to avoid or minimize disturbance to priority species and their habitat during important seasonal periods.

Water Resources

Actions to restore all riparian areas to Proper functioning condition would be implemented.

Vegetation Resources

During permit renewal, where possible, grazing systems will be adjusted to focus livestock use on non-native perennial seedings.

Directing grazing for sagebrush recovery and/or to benefit the diversity of seedings will be considered.

Scientific reference areas will be identified and implemented to study the effects of livestock grazing on different vegetation communities/conditions. Each reference area would be paired with an adjacent grazed area in a similar vegetation type and condition to monitor the effects of livestock grazing on a variety of plant communities. The absence of grazing would be the only difference between management of reference areas and that of adjacent areas with similar

vegetation. Each reference area would be a minimum of 40 acres, and the total acreage of all reference areas would not exceed 1,000 acres. Fencing would vary depending on the objective of the treatment, but would be built to meet BLM standards.

Livestock Grazing Management

BLM land available for livestock use totals 273,600 acres. BLM land not available for livestock use totals approximately 1,500 acres.

Total permitted livestock use is 37,792 AUMs. The current livestock use authorizations would be maintained until Idaho Standards evaluations or similar NEPA-compliant decisions identify the need for adjustments in livestock use to meet Standards, vegetation, wildlife, livestock, resource objectives, or plan AUM levels.

The Poison Lake and Kimama Allotment boundaries are adjusted to coincide with the Monument and Preserve boundary.

Any new salt, minerals, supplements, troughs, reservoirs, and holding facilities would be located more than 200 meters from lava edges and playas, to ensure that they avoid conflicts with cultural resources. Existing water developments and corrals will be evaluated to identify conflicts with cultural resources, and prioritized for removal or relocation if a conflict exists.

During permit modification, monitoring information and Land Health Assessments (LHAs) will be used to develop specific management objectives and grazing management plans designed to maintain, enhance, or restore vegetation condition.

When livestock management practices are not meeting or making progress towards Standards, changes in grazing management will be implemented through grazing authorization modifications, or Allotment Management Plan (AMP) implementation. Season or timing of use, duration and/or level of use (AUMs), and grazing schedules (including rest or deferment) must be analyzed.

Within sage-grouse nesting or early brood-rearing (i.e., breeding) habitats, the permittees will be coordinated with to manage grazing use to avoid the sage-grouse breeding period (March 15–June 15), such as through rotations, scheduling, or managing water sources when practical.

During implementation (i.e. permit renewal) and when/where necessary, BLM will provide flexibility in grazing permit terms and conditions to allow annual/seasonal adjustments in the intensity, timing, duration and frequency of grazing use over time that best supports management objectives.

Conversions in kind of livestock may be allowed as long as the following are addressed through an appropriate environmental review:

1. Concerns of other permittees in the affected allotment would be considered in analysis of the conversion proposal
2. The number of AUMs converted from one livestock kind to another would be in proportion to the allotment's suitability for grazing that kind of livestock
3. All conversions would be initially conservative (50% conversion for the first 3 years as modified by suitability and water availability)
4. Necessary range improvements would be completed prior to livestock use

5. Results of ongoing monitoring studies would determine whether the new AMP and level of conversion is satisfactory
6. Final conversion levels will depend on the desired season of use, initial balance between spring and fall sheep use, and resource response to that use

1.5. Mitigation Measures

All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm, commensurate to the landscape-level of planning, are included in the Approved MMP Amendment and appendices. In developing the alternatives, BLM used a variety of management methods and tools, including the identification of allowable uses, temporal, spatial, and/or methodological restrictions on uses, where specific uses would be prohibited, and specific actions that are needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the 2007 MMP. Restrictions on land uses include seasonal closures, stipulations on surface disturbances, and the application of required design features (RDFs).

Appendix C of the Approved Plan provides a list of the RDFs from GRSG ARMPA that are applicable to livestock grazing activities authorized by the Monument. Required design features are mitigation measures that may be applied on a site-specific basis to avoid, minimize, reduce, rectify, or compensate for adverse environmental or social impacts of land use activities. The RDFs included in this MMP Amendment are not intended to be a complete list but are displayed to show land use project proponents examples of commonly used practices the Monument may require to reduce impacts of surface-disturbing activities, use or occupancy. More explicit RDFs based on local conditions and resource-specific concerns could be developed once a specific proposal is being evaluated through the environmental analysis process. Additional RDFs can be proposed by project applicants for activities on BLM land.

1.6. MMP Amendments, Evaluation, Maintenance and Monitoring

1.6.1. MMP Amendments

MMP decisions are subsequently changed through either a plan amendment or another MMP revision. The process for conducting plan amendments is basically the same as the land use planning process used in developing or revising MMPs. The primary difference is that circumstances may allow for completing a plan amendment through the environmental assessment (EA) process, rather than through an EISs. Plan amendments (43 CFR 1610.5–5) change one or more of the terms, conditions, or decision of an approved land use plan. Plan amendments are most often prompted by the need to consider a proposal or action that does not conform to the plan; implement new or revised policy that changes land use plan decisions; respond to new, intensified, or changed uses on BLM land; and consider significant new information from resource assessments, monitoring, or scientific studies that change land use plan decisions.

1.6.2. MMP Monitoring

Land-use plan decision monitoring is a continued process occurring over the life of the MMP. The aim is to maintain a dynamic MMP. Monitoring data are collected, examined, and used to draw conclusions on 1) whether planning actions have been implemented in the manner prescribed by

the MMP (implementation monitoring), 2) whether MMP allowable use and management action decisions and the resultant implementation actions are effective in achieving program specific objectives or desired outcomes (effectiveness monitoring), and 3) calculating the cost of delivering a service or product (efficiency monitoring by program elements). Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or determine what changes need to be made to implementation practices to better achieve MMP decisions. Indicators, methods, locations, units of measures, frequency, and action triggers can be established by national policy guidance, in MMPs, or by technical specialists in order to address specific issues.

Based on staffing and funding level, monitoring is annually prioritized consistent with the goals and objectives of the MMP. BLM may work in cooperation with local, State, and other Federal agencies or use data collected by other agencies and sources when appropriate and available.

1.6.3. MMP Evaluation

In accordance with the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1), the approved MMP will be evaluated periodically to determine whether the land use plan decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid and whether the plan is being implemented effectively. More specifically, the MMP will be evaluated to determine if 1) the decisions remain relevant to current issues, 2) decisions are effective in achieving or making progress toward achieving the desired outcomes specified in the plan, 3) any decisions in need of revisions, 4) any decisions that need to be dropped from further considerations, and 5) any areas requiring new decisions.

In making these determinations, the evaluation will consider whether mitigation measures, such as those presented in the Approved MMP Amendment are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, and whether there is significant new information.

In addition to periodic evaluations, special evaluations may also be required to review unexpected management actions or significant changes in the related plans of Native American tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments, or to evaluate legislation or litigation that has the potential to trigger an amendment or revision to the MMP. Evaluations may identify resource needs and means for correcting deficiencies and addressing issues through plan maintenance, amendments, or revisions. They should also identify where new and emerging issues and other values have surfaced.

1.6.4. MMP Maintenance

During the life of the MMP, the BLM expects that new information gathered from the field inventories and assessments, other agencies studies, and other sources will update geographic information systems (GIS) data, and best management practices or RDFs. To the extent that this new information or actions address issues covered in the plan, the BLM will integrate the data through plan maintenance. BLM regulations in 43 CFR 1610.5-4 provide that MMP decisions and supporting actions can be maintained to reflect minor changes in data. Maintenance is limited to further refining, documenting, or clarifying a previously approved decision incorporated in the plan. Maintenance must not expand the scope of resource uses or restrictions or change the terms, conditions, and decision of the approved MMP. For example, adjusting the parameters of special status species habitat based on new inventory information or adjusting fire management polygons due to changes in fuel source would be reasonable maintenance actions.

Maintenance may be especially necessary to update acreage figures presented throughout the MMP. Acreages are based on GIS data, which are subject to constant refinement. Any potential discrepancies within the acreages figures or future refinements in the data may be corrected or updated in the MMP through plan maintenance.

1.7. The Planning Process

1.7.1. Policies and Legislative Constraints

FLPMA is the primary authority for the BLM to manage public lands. This law establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisitions and disposition, administration, rangeland management, rights-of-way, and designated management areas, and for the repeal of certain laws and statutes. NEPA provides the basic national charter for environmental responsibility, and requires the consideration and public availability of information on the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. In concert, FLPMA and NEPA provide the overarching guidance for all activities on BLM lands.

MMPs are the primary mechanism for guiding BLM activities so that the mission and goals outlined in the BLM Strategic Plan are achieved. See the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1) for program-specific guidance. MMPs ensure that BLM lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in the FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

As required by FLPMA, as well as by BLM policies and guidelines, the public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; and that, where appropriate will:

- preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition;
- provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals;
- provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use; and
- recognize the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands [Sec. 102 43 U.S.C. 1701 (a) (3)].

In addition to FLPMA and NEPA (and their associated regulations), the BLM must comply with all the laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies that apply to BLM-administered lands and Federal mineral estate. The planning process is intended to develop MMP decisions that resolve conflicts between program priorities, policies, and guidelines, and that meet the multiple use and sustained yield mandates of FLPMA.

1.7.2. Relationship to the Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments for the Great Basin Region, including the Greater Sage-Grouse Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwest Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah

In response to a 2010 determination by the USFWS that the listing of the Greater sage-grouse (GRSG) under the ESA was "warranted, but precluded" by other priorities, the BLM, in coordination with the US Forest Service, developed a landscape-level management strategy, based on the best available science, that was targeted, multi-tiered, coordinated, and collaborative.

The ROD and approved RMP Amendments are for the Great Basin Region Greater Sage-Grouse Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah. The Craters of the Moon planning areas falls within the Sub-regional Idaho and Southwestern Montana Approved Amendment area. The Amendments include habitat management direction that avoids and minimizes additional disturbance in sage-grouse habitat management areas. Moreover, they target restoration of and improvements to the most important areas of habitat. Management under the approved Amendments is directed through land use allocations that apply to sage-grouse habitat. These allocations accomplish the following:

1. Eliminate most new surface disturbance in the most highly valued sagebrush ecosystem areas identified as Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs)
2. Avoid or limit new surface disturbance in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA), of which SFAs are a subset
3. Minimize surface disturbance in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA)

In addition to protective land use allocations in habitat management areas, the Amendments include a suite of management actions, such as establishing disturbance limits, sage-grouse habitat objectives, mitigation requirements, monitoring protocols, and adaptive management triggers and responses. They also include other conservation measures that apply throughout designated habitat management areas.

The cumulative effect of these measures is to conserve, enhance, and restore sage-grouse habitat across the species' remaining range in the Great Basin Region and to provide greater certainty that BLM land use decisions in sage-grouse habitat across the species' remaining range in the Great Basin Region can lead to conservation of the sage-grouse and other sagebrush-steppe associated species in the region.

Although both planning decisions amend the 2007 MMP, the scope of the Craters of the Moon MMP Amendment/EIS is narrower than that of the GRSG ARMPA. Specifically, the Craters of the Moon MMP Amendment is focused on livestock grazing management decisions within the Monument. While the two planning efforts overlap to a limited extent, they focus on separate and distinct planning decisions to be made at different geographic scales. The GRSG ARMPA broadly addresses livestock grazing best management practices, sets a prioritization scheme whereby grazing permits will be renewed to incorporate GRSG protections, and provides for sage-grouse conservation across Idaho and southwestern Montana. The Craters of the Moon MMP Amendment/EIS specifically considers the allocation of AUMs within the Monument and the availability of Monument lands for grazing.

1.8. Public Involvement in the Planning Process

The BLM decision making process is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Department of the Interior regulations implementing NEPA, BLM policies and procedures implementing NEPA, and BLM land use planning regulations. NEPA and the associated regulatory and policy framework require Federal agencies involved the interested public in their decision making. The Craters of the Moon planning team has made open, public dialogue integral to the MMP amendment planning process. In doing so, the Craters of the Moon planning team recognized the interests of a wide range of public, private, and governmental representatives in the management of BLM lands. The various opportunities for public input are identified below.

1.8.1. Public Scoping

The formal scoping period began with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on June 28, 2013. The Scoping Report documented the results of scoping by summarizing the individual comments received and describing the issues that were raised, and is incorporated by reference. Four Plan Amendment public scoping meetings were held in the planning area in 2013: Rupert, Idaho on July 30, Carey, Idaho on August 1, Arco, Idaho on August 6, and American Falls, Idaho on August 9. The BLM provided the local media with timely press releases announcing the time, location, and purpose of the meetings. The format for the scoping meetings featured a presentation followed by one-on-one discussions between BLM representatives and members of the public.

1.8.2. Public Review of, and Comment on, the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS

BLM published the Notice of Availability for the Craters of the Moon Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS in the Federal Register on September 30, 2016. The BLM set a 90-day public comment period that ended on December 29, 2016. The BLM also hosted two open house meetings to provide the public with opportunities to ask questions about the amendment and planning process, to meet the planning team members, and to offer comments.

1.8.3. Public Review and Protest of the Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the Craters of the Moon Plan Amendment planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest the proposed planning decisions within 30 days from the date the NOA is published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency. The 30-day protest period ended on June 25, 2017. BLM received two protest letters. The BLM Director and his staff reviewed and resolved the protests relating to the proposed planning decision, concluding that the BLM Idaho State Director followed applicable laws, regulations, and policies, and considered all relevant resource information and public input in developing the Proposed MMP amendment. The BLM Director resolved the protests without making significant changes to the Proposed MMP Amendment. The BLM acknowledges an error in the Protest Report in response to comment letter 23, comment number xxvii, stating that grazing permit retirement was analyzed under Alternatives B, C, and E. In fact, it was only analyzed under Alternative B. The BLM Director's decision constitutes final agency action for the Department of the Interior.

1.8.4. Results of the Governor's Consistency Review

The BLM regulations in 43 CFR 1610.3–2(e) required an up-to 60-day Governor's consistency review period for the Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS to ensure consistency with State and local government plans. The BLM initiated the Idaho Governor's Consistency Review by letter from the BLM State Director dated May 24, 2017. The State Director received a timely consistency review letter from Governor Otter on July 21, 2017. The letter identified no major inconsistencies with the MMP Amendment but did identify important areas to further promote State policies and programs that provide land managers with the flexibility to responsibly manage the public lands.

1.9. Coordination and Consultation

1.9.1. Cooperating Agencies

To integrate the special expertise and jurisdiction by law of these and other agencies, BLM invited local, State, Federal, and tribal representatives to participate as Cooperating Agencies for the Plan Amendment. These organizations were incorporated into the planning process as their jurisdiction and expertise warranted, resulting in their direct contribution to and improvement of the planning effort and the resulting Plan Amendment. The agencies that agreed to participate as formal cooperating agencies for the Craters of the Moon National Monument Plan Amendment and that signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are listed below:

- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Blaine County
- Power County
- City of American Falls

1.9.2. Tribal Consultation

Tribal consultation regarding the Craters of the Moon MMP Amendment began in August 2013. American Indian tribes and organizations consulted to date are the following:

- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Shoshone-Paiute Tribes

American Indian trust resources are legal interests in assets held in trust by the Federal government for federally recognized Indian tribes or nations or for individual Indians. These assets can be real property, physical assets, or intangible property right. Examples are lands, minerals, water rights, hunting and fishing rights, other natural resources, money, or claims. The BLM has no trust administration responsibilities in Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve.

1.9.3. Consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer and Interested Native American Tribes

The BLM relies on the 2012 National Programmatic Agreement entered into between the BLM, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Idaho State Protocol for compliance with the requirements of Section

Preservation Officers, and the Idaho State Protocol for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. 306108, and its regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. The National Programmatic Agreement and the Idaho State Protocol set forth the alternative process and stipulations for satisfying Section 106, including a required process for State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) involvement during the development stage and all subsequent phases of land use planning in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.3 and Idaho State Protocol (2014). The Idaho State Protocol also provides for a process of engaging Native American tribes and other consulting parties. In 2013, BLM invited two tribal governments to participate in the MMP amendment process. Both tribes accepted the invitation. The BLM coordinated with SHPO and a copy of the Draft MMP Amendment/DEIS was sent to the SHPO for review and comment. The BLM sought information from the tribes regarding cultural resources of importance, and integrated the information into the development of the Proposed MMP Amendment. The BLM also requested information from local governmental entities and the public. The MMP Amendment includes the information received from all interested parties and will inform future review and consideration of implementation-level decisions.

1.9.4. Resource Advisory Council

A Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) is a committee established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1). A RAC is generally composed of 15 members of the public representing different areas of expertise. The Twin Falls RAC includes members appointed to represent constituent public land users and provides input on public management issues to the BLM's Twin Falls RAC Designated Federal Officers. Recommendations are based on consensus-building and collaboration.

The Twin Falls RAC was involved in developing the preliminary planning issues and draft alternatives for the MMP Amendment.

1.9.5. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

As required by Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, as amended, Biological Assessments (BAs) were prepared to determine if the management actions in the ROD for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve MMP Amendment may affect ESA-listed or species proposed for listing or their proposed or designated critical habitats. The effects analysis in the BAs considered the potential for direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the species identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as potentially occurring in the MMP Amendment area (Consultation Code: 01EIFW00-2016-SLI-0090; April 24, 2017). The Service's list is based on species occurrence by county. Therefore, all six of the species and/or habitats on the Service's list are not present within the MMP Amendment area. The BLM's Special Status Species List (IM-ID-2015-009, Change 1) was also used to determine species occurrence within the MMP Amendment area.

The BAs determined the management actions in the ROD for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve MMP Amendment would have no effect on any ESA-listed or proposed or candidate species or their proposed or designated critical habitat. The no effect determinations were discussed with the Service on August, 23, 2016. Federal actions that are determined to have no effect to ESA-listed and proposed species or their proposed or designated critical habitats, or species that are candidates for listing, do not require Section 7 consultation (*Streamlined*

Consultation Procedures for Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (July 1999). Therefore, concurrence from the Service is not required.

If new information becomes available, new species are listed, or there are any changes to the Approved MMP Amendment that alter its implementation or the extent of anticipated impacts, then BLM would re-initiate Section 7 consultation with the FWS, as appropriate.

1.10. Considerations in Selecting the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment

1.10.1. Management in Accordance with FLPMA Under the Principles of Multiple Use and Sustained Yield

The Approved MMP Amendment seeks the best combination of management decisions to meet the purpose and need for a land use plan amendment in consideration of the planning issues and management concerns identified throughout the planning process. It is prepared to ensure that the public lands in the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve are managed in accordance with FLPMA under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Section 103(c) of FLPMA defines “multiple use” as “management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people...” The combination of planning decisions is driven by the diverse resource values on the public lands and how to best realize the broad spectrum of available opportunities. This combination of decision also recognizes the limits of the ecosystems’ sustainability and is within the constraints of applicable laws and regulations.

BLM’s allocation of uses, through land use planning, is specifically provided for under section 202 of FLPMA, and is consistent with FLPMA’s definition of multiple use, which includes providing for the “most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources...” and “the use of some land for less than all of the resources...” and accounting for “the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources.” Through the planning and NEPA processes, the BLM analyzed and disclosed the trade-offs resulting from the BLM’s allocation of resources, providing for an informed decision.

1.10.2. Consistency with Existing Plans and Policies of Local, State, and Federal Agencies and Local Native American Tribes

Management decisions in the Approved MMP Amendment are made compatible and consistent with the existing plans and policies of the adjacent local, State, and Federal agencies and local Native American tribes to the extent consistent with the purposed, policies, and programs of Federal law and regulations applicable to BLM lands and Federal mineral estate. No formal comments were received from Federal or tribal governments indicating the Proposed MMP Amendment was inconsistent with other existing plans or policies. However, the State of Idaho Department of Agriculture commented that the Proposed MMP Amendment was not consistent with the Idaho Governor’s Plan for sage grouse. The BLM operates under the Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments for the Great Basin Region, including the Greater Sage-Grouse Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwest Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah. The State and Federal Plans differ slightly on restrictions to protect sage grouse.

The Governor's Office did not identify any inconsistencies concerning State or local plans, policies, and programs following the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS.

1.11. Availability of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Plan Amendment

Electronic copies on CD of the Approved MMP Amendment are available by request at the BLM Shoshone Field Office at 400 West F St., Shoshone, Idaho, 83352. The Approved MMP Amendment is also available online at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName=dispatchToPatternPage=46686>.

1.12. Plan Implementation

The Approved MMP Amendment will be implemented as funding and workforce allow. The BLM developed an implementation strategy to identify and prioritize the work needed to meet the goals and objectives of the 2007 MMP. Most of the land use plan decisions are effective upon approval of this document. However, some decisions will take a number of years to implement on the ground. Implementation monitoring will track which decisions have been implemented and when.

1.13. Approval from Authorized Official:

The Approved MMP Amendment carries forward the land use planning decisions presented as Alternative C in the Proposed MMP Amendment/FEIS released to the public on May 26, 2017 with some minor modification. Specific management decisions for public lands under the jurisdiction of Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve are presented by resource in Chapter 2 of the Approved MMP Amendment. The Approved MMP Amendment makes substantive revisions to the livestock grazing management under the original 2007 MMP.

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached Approved MMP Amendment for the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. This ROD serves as the final decision for the decisions in the Approved MMP Amendment and becomes effective on the date this ROD is signed.

Monument Manager Recommendation

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated impacts, and public and agency input, I recommend the adoption and implementation of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Approved Monument Plan Amendment.

Recommended:

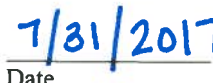


Signature

Holly Crawford

Monument Manager

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve




Date

District Manager Concurrence

I concur with the adoption and implementation of the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Approved Monument Plan Amendment.

Concurrence:


Signature

Michael C. Courtney
District Manager
Twin Falls District


Date

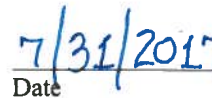
State Director Approval

In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Approved Monument Plan Amendment.

Approved:


Signature

For Timothy M. Murphy
Idaho State Director


Date