

# NEWBERRY'S PROTECTION LEGISLATION

In Celebration of Newberry National Volcanic Monument



Dedication at Lava Lands - Photo Courtesy of USFS

## Ensuring a Protected Future

*Written by Amy Jensen*

*“There is hereby established the Newberry National Volcanic Monument in the State of Oregon as a component of the National Forest system in order to preserve and protect for present and future generations Newberry’s remarkable geologic landforms - and to provide for the conservation, protection, interpretation, and enhancement of its ecological, botanical, scenic, recreational, cultural and fish and wildlife resources.” (Public Law 101-522).*

In 1990, there was a unified effort from a coalition of citizens and stakeholders throughout Central Oregon to protect the area now recognized as the Newberry National Volcanic Monument. This was not, however, the first attempt to add protective measures to the use and management of the area. In fact, attempts had been made in 1903, 1920, 1940 and again in 1970 before finally having success in 1990. The Monument was created in November of that year by the 101st Congress, and would be signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. The new designation would protect the more than 54,000 acres of land extending from the top of Newberry Volcano, and reaching all the way down the northwest flank of the volcano - 4,000 feet to the Deschutes River. The Newberry National Volcanic Monument is esteemed as containing the widest variety of volcanic features of any National Park or Monument.

Following the Monument's designation, the United States Forest Service held an internal vision retreat to get a better understanding of the landscape and best management practices. During that retreat, the team developed a formal vision. Here is an excerpt from their produced documents:

*“From that effort came a statement of principles - a guiding light as we accept the responsibility for managing this special place:*

- This national monument is a magical place, alive with the spirit of the past.*
- The Monument is a crossroads that connects us in time and space. It breathes the past into the present and future.*
- From it, we learn of peoples, of plants and animals, of the living rock. It is a museum of life - a place where individuals and families can touch, explore, and imagine.*
- The Monument offers the gifts of solitude, discovery, and understanding to all.*
- We use our imagination and our creativity to be responsible stewards.*
- With respect, we preserve and protect its unique treasures and spirit. It has been a special place for the past 10,000 years. We intend to keep the spirit alive for the next 10,000 years.”*

The team also set out to develop monument management goals to be carried out in oversight. From the original legislation, here is what they developed:

*“These goals reflect the Monument Legislation and other applicable laws, rules and regulations of the National Forest System, as well as the key issues identified during scoping for the development of this plan...*

- Ensure that the values and resources for which Newberry National Volcanic Monument was designated are protected, conserved, enhanced and interpreted.*
- Sustain or restore ecosystems and ensure ecosystem resiliency within the Monument and Special Management Area, while providing for natural and ecological succession of vegetation to the maximum extent practical.*
- Protect the health and safety of visitors to the Monument.*
- Provide for scientific research consistent with the purposes for which the Monument was established.*
- Keep the Monument a beautiful place, where people enjoy playing, exploring and learning about nature.*
- Provide a diversity of high-quality recreational experiences while significantly increasing opportunities for interpretation and education, including participating in research activities where appropriate.*
- Manage the surface of Newberry Special Management Area and of the Transferal Area Adjacent as part of the Monument, while allowing appropriate subsurface exploration for and development of geothermal resources.*
- Manage the Transferal Area and Transferal Corridor, to the extent practicable and consistent with the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 and existing rights under geothermal leases, in a way that preserves the natural values which would qualify this area for designation as a national monument.*
- Provide equal opportunity for all people to enjoy the Monument.*
- Ensure that tree diseases, insect infestations, fire hazards, and fires within the Monument and Special Management Area do not seriously threaten resources outside the Monument and Special Management Area boundaries.”*





*Monument Dedication in 1991- Photo Courtesy of USFS*

Upon reflecting on the importance of special designations for incredible places like the Newberry National Volcanic Monument, Michelle King, current Deputy District Ranger for the US Forest Service - Deschutes National Forest commented, “During my career with the Forest Service, I have had the great pleasure of working at two National Volcanic Monuments in the Pacific Northwest; Mount St. Helens and Newberry. National Forest lands provide multiple uses to the American public with a wide range of benefits across the United States. The designation of National Monuments, in this case the Newberry National Volcanic Monument, provides an additional layer of preservation to an area protecting it into the future. The monument status allows the Forest Service to provide a unique suite of cultural, scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities for generations to come that may not have been possible otherwise. Visitors can travel to the Newberry National Volcanic Monument and explore an area where we believe humans first visited nearly 11,000 years ago. From historic sites to natural obsidian flows, students and scientists alike can enjoy stepping back in time and experiencing history. Many Native American tribes around Central Oregon have special ties to areas within the designated Monument. These include the Klamath Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and the Burns Paiute Tribe. Visitors are not only able to learn and appreciate the volcanic wonders of the monument, but also the cultural significance to current and ancestral inhabitants.”

The preservation of these lands began with the initial inhabitants, maintained thousands of years of use by occupants and visitors from both the plant and animal kingdoms, and the designation of this space to be under the care of the US Forest Service seeks to provide the opportunity for all to experience vast cultural, natural and geological histories for generations to come.

*“[The Newberry National Volcanic Monument] has been a special place for the past 10,000 years. We intend to keep the spirit alive for the next 10,000 years.”*



*Unveiling of the Sign - Photo Courtesy of USFS*

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