



## **Embracing Tennambo'i: The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' Connection to Craters of the Moon**

**Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Language and Cultural Preservation Department**

*Note: This is the second in a series of six Guest Opinions commemorating the Craters of the Moon National Monument Centennial*

Our ancestors bore witness to the geological transformations of this land, observing the ebb and flow of nature's forces with reverence and understanding. Through generations of storytelling and observation, Shoshone and Bannock peoples infused this land with our collective memory, expressed through place-names that reflect our unbreakable relationship with our homeland.

We call the land of the lava flows and buttes where Craters of the Moon now exists, *Tennambo'i*. Translated as "Antelope's Trail," *Tennambo'i* evokes the journey of our people guided by *Tenna*, the antelope, through the fiery landscapes of *waihya ogwaide*, the flowing fire, thousands of years ago. It symbolizes resilience, adaptability, and the indomitable spirit of survival that has defined our existence for thousands of years.

*Tennambo'i* isn't merely a name; it's living evidence to our ancestral connections and the paths forged by our ancestors and more-than-human relatives across the Snake River Plain. In recent years, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' collaboration with the National Park Service has strengthened, fostering mutual respect and understanding. Through joint initiatives such as the development of new outdoor interpretative exhibit signage, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes strive to amplify our voice and narratives within Craters of the Moon National Monument's broader historical context, emphasizing inclusivity and a shared mission of preserving and sharing our cultural heritage with visitors.

One aspect of our shared history is the significance of travel routes through Craters of the Moon. For millennia, Shoshone and Bannock peoples crossed these rugged landscapes, creating paths to vital destinations like the salmon and buffalo hunting areas near central Idaho and Southwest Montana, and camas and wild carrot digging grounds such as the Camas Prairie near Fairfield, Idaho. These journeys were not merely passages but narratives of survival, resilience, wellness, and our way of life. When settlers came to this area, they too traveled these paths, observing the volcanic landscape with a limited perspective. In the mid-1800s, emigrants described these lava flows as "black vomit." In 1912, a newspaper identified this landscape as the "Devil's Playground." From the trails of our ancestors to the observations of settlers, the land has been a canvas for varied experiences and perceptions. Yet, through it all, the enduring relationship and connection to the land remains steadfast, a relational foundation we build upon together by moving beyond limited perspectives and embracing the opportunity for collaboration and listening.

Today, as we confront the challenges posed by invasive species threatening the delicate balance of ecosystems here in Idaho, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' commitment to conservation and collaboration with entities such as the National Park Service and Idaho Fish and Game remains resolute. The rampant spread of Garrison's Creeping Foxtail, a non-native invasive grass, poses a significant threat to camas habitats, essential to our cultural practices and traditions. Through concerted efforts, we're actively engaged in combating this *woho sonipe*, or enemy grass, by employing traditional knowledge and modern techniques to safeguard our ancestral lands in the Centennial Marsh on the Camas Prairie.

In light of these ongoing conservation efforts, commemorating the Centennial year of Craters of the Moon becomes particularly meaningful. Through collaborative efforts with the National Park Service to share previously untold stories of our people, we are forging a path towards visibility, understanding, and wellness, much like the antelope once did for us. By placing these narratives along our ancestral and contemporary travel corridors, including Craters of the Moon, we take vital steps towards ensuring the longevity of our relationship with the land and fostering a shared understanding of our history.

We invite you to celebrate the histories that have shaped the legacy of Craters of the Moon. In doing so, together we write the next chapter of our intertwined history—one that honors the past, embraces the present, and preserves the enduring legacy of *Tennambo'i*. As we continue to travel through the lands our ancestors named, we carry them with us, ensuring that their stories, place-names, and traditions live on for generations to come.