Craters of the Moon

This volcanic landscape in the Snake River Plain was created by a handful of lava flows over time, most around 15 million years ago. The lava here didn't erupt out of volcanoes, but rather oozed out of fissures in the earth and occasionally spewed out of vents. Sometimes a flow would partially cover a previous lava bed, other times it would create new ones. The result is 618 square miles of cinder cones, lava tubes, tree molds, lava rivers, spatter cones, and lava beds as far as you can see.

In addition, NASA researchers use the site for space mission training. In 1969, Apollo 14 astronauts prepared for their trip to the moon, by learning how to select volcanic samples to bring back to earth and how to navigate a lava environment.

By exploring images of this national park, students can ask questions about the geophysical processes that created these rock formations, design models to test their predictions, and create explanations.

Additional Resources:

- National Parks Foundation Craters of the Moon
- National Parks Service Craters of the Moon History and Culture

Performance Standards

2nd Grade	4th Grade	Middle School	High School
2-ESS-1.1. Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly.	4-ESS-1.1. Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers for changes in a landscape over time to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.	MS-ESS-2.2. Construct an explanation based on evidence for how geoscience processes have changed Earth's surface at varying time and spatial scales.	HS-ESS-2.1. Develop a model to illustrate how Earth's internal and surface processes operate at different spatial and temporal scales to form continental and ocean-floor features.