Geography of Hawai`i
Fieldtrip to Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park
September 25, 2004

Near Kilauea Visitors Center

Halema`uma`u & `a`ali`i

Mahalo to Diane for the photos!

Lava molds, spatter ramparts & a fissure!
Your comments:

I really enjoyed this trip on Sat. Thank you so much for arranging it for all 28 of us to go. It was so much fun and I learned more new things by going up there.

What did I learn? Well I didn't know about Kulani cinder cone. I thought that was great. The new addition to the park and the suggestion of what should be done or allowed on it. It reminded me that we need to speak up and suggest things to the proper people and maybe it will be done. But if we just talk amongst ourselves it may never get done. The types of plants and about them. That was very interesting. I also enjoyed Mauna Ulu, it is one of my favorites spots in the park, and it never fails to amaze me of those mushroom looking rocks and how unique there

I also was surprised about Puhimau Geothermal Zone that it may have magma under it. That will be interesting to see what happens, maybe in our life time.

The other thing is the Jaggar Museum every time I go in there I see or read something more and seem to understand it better. Your class has helped me to do that also. Of course seeing the earthquakes going off was exciting.

The Thurston Lave Tube was neat, I never have walked through it that it didn't have water in it, today it was dry. It reminded me how dry it has been around the island, and we must be careful of fires.

Disappointments: Well I didn't get to see a Nene this trip. (Its ok)

Thank you again for a wonderful day.

- Diane

My trip to Volcano was pleasant. Kawehi kept asking me is this plant such and such? I was like, uh, I dunno. She did teach me to recognize the differences between ama’u and hapu’u. As a child or even a younger adult I did not have much interest in plants. Through you I have heard new names of plants I never knew for example pukiawe and kukaenene. I know I couldn't take my kids there tomorrow and recognize them, but I think I'd like to be able to. It was definitely neat to actually see for yourself the measure of activity on Mauna Loa.

I also can't get the name koa’e out of my head or the view of those birds flying in the caldera. I think we just might visit there more often.

- Vanessa

My day at the Hawaii volcano national park was a learning experience. i have always seen the park as a beautiful place to learn about volcanoes. On this trip I got to hear the native Hawaiians point of view and the conservation point of view. These two point of view do not necessarily coincide. one of the most interesting things was seeing the needle of the seismograph jump as it recorded earthquakes on the mauna loa road as they happened. i also have never had the opportunity to see the lave trees and learn
how they were formed, while they represent destruction they were oddly pretty.

-anonymous

My overall experience on this field trip was a very positive one. I felt comfortable with everyone and the pace, especially when caution was exercised at every observation stop.

The most fascinating and captivating part for me was the very obvious differences found throughout the park. Especially the distinction between the leeward and windward sides within a short distance. Evidence of this is at the Kilauea Caldera. The lookout on the windward side is dry with little or no vegetation, whereas, a mile or so away at the Volcano House, its much greener with an abundance of vegetation. On the Chain of Craters road, depending where you were, there was mild to strong gusts of winds to little or none.

I’d compare those differences to a pizza, one half justcheese, the other fully loaded. Big difference.

-Henri

Our Field Trip to Kilauea (Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park) was awesome. The sun was shinning and the coolness of the trade winds produced the most perfect weather conditions for our outing.

This was the first time I visited the Jagger Museum since it’s renovations. The displays of information and artwork were beautiful. However, it was and always has been the seismographs that fascinate me. I quickly noticed that Mauna Loa had the most activity going on. The thick blue patches of squiggly lines were apparent, showing the activity below the quiet mountain. Once outside, the view of Halema‘uma‘u was gorgeous. As I watched the koa’e birds gliding effortlessly within the craters walls, it gave me a sense of calmness.

The crater rim drive was very informational, with Jody as our tour guide (and may I add, she was very good at it…. Thanks Jody). The vegetation changed along the way from a lush green to a dry brown, with ohia trees scattered here and there.

Next, I found our little walk at Mauna Ulu to be quite interesting. This was the first time I ever been at this stop. The sound of shiny black cinders crunching under my shoes and just sitting down momentarily to observe the surroundings was awesome. I learned of and saw huge mushroom rocks (lava trees) and the spatter ramparts. The sights and the wind blowing against my face made me forget of all the hustle and bustle back at home.

Our lunch at Kealamoko was a windy one. However, overlooking Apua Pt., Pu‘u Kapukapu and South Pt. was well worth it. The vog from Pu‘u ‘O‘o was visibly blowing directly towards us and out towards South Pt. All in all, our lunch break was full of tasteful food, sights, stories and laughter.
Our final stop was Kilauea Iki trail. I found this stop to be more of a tourist attraction, compared to the other stops. Perhaps it was the presence of the tour buses and people hustling around. What I appreciated here most was the lush vegetation and the sweet sounds of the birds. Nowhere else can one hear the beautiful songs of the ‘apapane.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Drew Kapp, for re-opening my eyes to our islands beauties. Not only was this field trip informational, but very much enjoyable. Mahalo Nui

-Kawehi

One part of my learning experience on this Volcano National Park field trip was having first hands-on experience observing lava particles, formations and development at the Jagger museum, tools utilized to measure the lava temperature, the formation of magma through its plume and the vegetation adaptations to the volcanic environment and climates. Interestingly, the pukiawe and mamake could be seen growing along the craters and cracks. The adaptations for this endemic plants represented a short grounded, discoloration of leaves from green to yellow, and smaller leaves compared to the mamake leaves on saddle road which is much bigger. I noticed the lava at Mauna Ulu had distinctive shapes of a mushroom as pointed out and shapes of rectangular lava with an empty hole in it. The cinder cones were soothing to the feet and gave off a crunching noise effect.

The most FUN part of this trip was cruising with the wahine's in Jodi's vehicle! They made me laugh so much, I felt like I was about to cry! Everyone in her car was sociable, friendly and demonstrated the "aloha spirit." I would like to say thanks to JODI for letting me bum a ride in her car, to Mary K u r so sweet, to Vanessa, Darlene, Kawehi, Rochelle u folks all made the trip worthwhile and lots of FUN! Oh! and to the teacher DREW Mahalo for allowing us this opportunity to do this field trip!

- Carrie

Aloha everyone,

The most interesting thing is that only 1/400 of the earth we all live on is cool or solid. According the Uwekahuna information center, the rest of the earth is molten lava beneath the thin surface that we live on.

I enjoyed getting to know my classmates and my professor better and appreciated the anticipations by all. Eating together and sharing was a pleasant experience.

Finally, the 1924 violent explosion was something to remember "one blast hurled a 8 ton of boulder within 1000 feet" that was right here in the Big Island.

–Kam-Ling

What most impressed me about the venture up to Volcano, was what I learned about the plants, animals, and birds. I already knew it was true of the people of Hawaii.
Picturing the Islands emerging as volcanos from under the sea, it became obvious that non of the above were on the lava mountains. All plants, animals, birds and people came from elsewhere on this planet. I discovered that as millennia went by, they gradually evolved into some distinct species, which are now considered indigenous. I realized that it is a fact we do not often contemplate, and perhaps we should. The animals and plants could teach us something about living together on the islands in a human, more homogenous blend of mind, body and spirit of aloha.

Now I have more questions about indigenous. Centipede? Brown black and green lizard? My neighbors and I recently enjoyed watching a hawk/owl mix keiki fly with its hawk mother, and land in the top of an Ohia tree here, in my yard to rest. We were mesmerized. Both men, of several generations Hawaiians, said they never heard or saw one before. I also had a cardinal with an all white plume head live on my land for a while.

Secondly, I found the earthquake machines in the museum very interesting.

Wonderful day! Mahalo

-Mary

Aloha Drew,

I would like to express a big mahalo for giving me opportunity to see and explore the serenity and extremes of the Hawaii National Park. The park is a unique experience of its own. My visit at the park gave me a better understanding at the outlook on how formed and made magnificent creations. For me it wasn't just a stroll in the park but to understand why and what is there made my visit a learning experience and to appreciate its uniqueness. I've gain so much knowledge in a days time I was able to leave our exploration with information on:

- Vegetation- scrubby are like dwarf version. Fern, uluhe: stag horn native fern "Poly Morph". The Hapu'u seems to be richer, greener, and bigger. Roots to the hapu'u grows from within unlike your ordinary plant from the ground
- Rainfall on the leeward side averages 40 inches due to the fumes from the volcano that causes less rainfall. On the other side of park area there are approx. 100 inches rainfall. "Scale Grading".
- Puhimau Geothermal Dead Zone- Possible eruption site, magma forming underneath causing vegetation to die.
- Animal life-"Nene" considered a tropic bird, Ko'ae white tailed tropic bird.
- Sandalwood Trees- Yellowish in color endemic from Hawaii mainly used for exporting.
- Montane rainforest- usually is colder to freezing.
- Lava tree molds-lava that molds itself around trees causing different shapes leaving a hole where the tree actually once was.
- Spatter Ramparts-wall, a crack was created fissure. Orographic-mountain causes rain/wind.
- Geometrically regular shrinkage fractures radiate through basalt on the shore at poi'pu.
- The southern part of the island is still volcanically active and building out along much of the coastline.
- Dome of rare rock-North of pu'u Kahawai is almost on the axis of Kohala's northwest rift zone.
- The line in the landscape represents the boundary Kapapala on the left and Kahuku Ranch became part of the National Reserve that is right of the boundary line.
- 1970s had the most violent volcanic eruptions.
- Seismometer-Maunaloa strip southeastern of park measured approx. within 1 1/2 hr. since 11:35am to next earthquake activity.

Mahalo,

-LoriLynn

I really enjoyed my trip to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. As I told you I have an annual pass for the park and I visit the park every year, but you pointed out things that I never noticed before. I firmly believe that we learn something new everyday. However, on Saturday I learned many new and interesting things about the island on which I live. One of the things that I found interesting was the lava tree molds. I was fascinated by the fact that the hole where the actual tree was looked so small compared to the mold. It was interesting to see how the lava went around the tree and built up making it look like a mushroom.

Mahalo for sharing your knowledge with us. I look forward to our next field trip.

-anonymous

Thank you for the wonderful excursion this past Saturday. I really enjoyed the Jaggar Museum and all the information there. I thought it was so cool the way the canoe in the mural on the wall could change its direction when approaching or leaving. It must take some skill to create that illusion for us to see. I especially enjoyed observing the seismograph which made a lot of conversation among the tourist I stood next to. And then the Pele's tears that I saw on display there was seen in the lava trees area at Mauna Ulu. I probably wouldn't have recognized them if I didn't see the display earlier. Thank you again Drew.

-anonymous

I truly enjoyed our trip to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park with our Geography class last Saturday. It has been many years since I've taken a trip up to the park and explored the splendor and mystery of it. The beauty of lush green forest, barren lava flows and steaming vents provided me with moments of deep reflection about our island and its landscape. I was able to experience the cool gentle winds which nourished the beautiful forest and vegetation, as well as the warm harsh winds that slammed my body as it raced out toward the sea. I enjoyed the scenic view of the ocean from the crater rim drive and the pavilion where we sat for lunch. The craters, calderas and lava flows were true tell-tale signs of the force of a volcano and of our Goddess Pele. It is such a sacred place and respectfully so. There is so much knowledge to gain by understanding the geography within the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. It gave me a
wonderful opportunity to use my knowledge that I now have and also to renew my appreciation of our majestic island. Thank you Drew, Jodi and Vanessa!

-DA

My life has always been here on the Big Island. Going to the volcano was an event that happened occasionally when other family members, from other islands, came to visit and we all played “tourist”. We knew what we would see there, but it was always exciting to know that we would see these sights of interest. The volcano museum, the devastation trial, the warm steam from the vents along the side of the road, the stinky sulphur banks, the long, long, long drive along the many, many craters and the finale, the walk thru the lava tube.

Although the walks that we did this past Saturday were familiar walks and not much seem to have changed, the focus on different items were pointed out and noticed. The most interesting area that I enjoyed was the walk along the fissure. Drew pointed out how lava would spurt out from this fissure and created spatter ramparts. Due to this ramparts (like our national anthem) red glare, it created a wall of lava and cinders that were glassy, shiny and crunchy under our walking shoes. There was one glob of lava that resembled a mushroom that I wondered how it got its shape. I imagined watching it being formed as the lava bubbled up, but how did it “freeze” into that shape? Just a wondering thought.

Thanks for pointing out some geological facts and adding to my knowledge things that I have always seen but “neva” know how it got to be.

– Rochelle

It was a privilege to experience the overall beauty, and vastness of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Walking through trails, forests, and roadways, feeling the ohia trees, ama’u, pahoehoe and a’a lava, the subtle scent of foliage, and sulfur in the air, made me appreciate the simple things that bring enjoyment, and added knowledge into my life. I felt a warm family-type bond amongst my classmates, and instructor, an addition which made this field trip even more enjoyable and memorable!

- anonymous

It was an awesome, fun-filled day with the class and so much I’ve learned on the trip to Volcanoes National Park. From the various vegetation to the landscaped mountains, there is still so much to be learned. On our way to Kealakomo Overlook along Chain of Craters Road, a portion of the land was brown and almost barren than its surroundings where it was green and definitely with more life to it. It was interesting that the scientists predict a possible eruption in the future from their studies of the magma beneath the earth. You also created a vivid picture in my mind as you spoke of the "spatter ramparts" at Mauna Ulu. It’s amazing how the seemingly never-ending depth of the fissures filled with Pele’s wind-blown wrath created those shapely rocky mounds. I’m very thankful for your expert guided tour which explained to me the many fascinating
wonders and beauty of what I use to perceive as a mere tourist attraction. This was literally an eye-opener for me. Maybe next field trip I won't forget my camera!

-Evelyn

Having lived on the island my entire life, I realize that I don't know a lot about it. For example, when we were standing in the parking lot of the Jagger Museum, you told us to look at the line on the mountain, sorry but I thought it was the diagonal line from the lava flow. What you were pointing out was the line between the ranch land and the National Park. The ranch land had no trees and the grass was all yellow. The National Park on the other hand had trees and green vegetation. It shows how the ranch land is over used (my opinion).

I especially like going to Mauna Ulu and seeing the tree molds. I have never been there before and I found the "mushroom" looking lava formations amazing. I also went near the spatter ramparts and took a close look at them. The lava is smooth and very shiny and so interesting to see all the "droplets" of lava that has been built up by a splattering effect. This area did not have much vegetation, a few shrubs here and there, but I did notice that in the fissure (crevices), ferns were growing. I should note that some of these fissures were quite deep but I stood at the edge and looked in anyway.

At the Kilauea Overlook, I learned the names of some of the plants that were seen there like the ama'u, mamane and of course the ohia trees. Also, it was interesting to note that there is a symbiotic relationship between birds and plants. If a plant species should become extinct, it will also affect the bird species that depends on the plant for survival.

The best part of the trip for me was getting to know my classmates a little better. Having us get into different cars to minimize the number of vehicles we traveled in was a good idea. I made new friends and I am looking forward to our next excursion.

-Sharlene

My family and I enjoyed the drive along the Crater Rim Road. It's been 8 years since our last trip to see the areas.

It was interesting to learn about the fissures and how the ramparts were formed. Another interest was looking out at the different areas from Kealakomo Overlook. The (Apua Pt.) was most unusual because it was situated close to the shoreline and the grass was green there, probably from an underground spring.

-Marilyn T.

The fieldtrip put a new spin on the Park. It was always a beautiful, famous place to go and hang out in. But this trip was beautiful and historical. I got to learn a lot of new things and apply it to the places. It was very eye-opening to hear so many different opinions about the Park. I never thought that the Park could be very controversial. I really enjoyed this fieldtrip. I enjoy learning things and being able to see them also.

-Carrine
Although I live just minutes from Hawai`i Volcanoes National Park, it is a special occasion for me to visit there with a group of enthusiastic students, whom I usually see in a totally different and perhaps less scenic setting…! Highlights during the day for me include seeing the incredible turnout of students and their friends and family members all assembled at the visitors’ center! I also enjoyed witnessing the students’ appreciation of the different features of the natural landscape — among them, native plants successfully colonizing the sere volcanic landscape near Uwekahuna, koa`e gliding gracefully over the caldera, the impressive slopes of Mauna Loa in Ka`u, the edge of the Pacific thousands of feet below Kealakomo, the otherworldly lava formations and fissures near Mauna Ulu, the songs of native birds in the montane rain forest. I was pleased that everyone seemed to get along quite nicely, that people were not only respectful and curious, but also very lively and entertaining! Most of all, I appreciate everyone’s contribution to the knowledge (cultural, historical, botanical, geologic, etc.) shared about those special landscapes and help in creating a very pleasant day for all. It is inspiring for me, as a teacher and a person, to have days like this in the company of people with so much knowledge and aloha. Mahalo to you.

-Drew

Mahalo for all of your comments.