

Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

Jewel Cave National Monument

South Dakota

May 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jewel Cave National Monument staff are dedicated to serving all park visitors to help them find meaning in the resources of the park and its stories. Recently, park staff embarked on a journey to ensure that key experiences are available to all visitors, regardless of race, nationality, socioeconomic status, or ability. Park staff conducted an accessibility self-evaluation of park facilities, services, activities, and programs and drafted a transition plan that identifies opportunities for improvement and outlines critical steps towards implementing responsive solutions parkwide.

This accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (SETP) resulted from the work of a National Park Service (NPS) interdisciplinary team, including planning, design, and construction professionals and interpretive, resource, visitor safety, maintenance, and accessibility specialists. The team developed site plans identifying the location of accessibility barriers and opportunities for each assessed park area and crafted an implementation strategy to assist park staff in scheduling and performing required actions and documenting completed work. The team also assessed park policies, practices, communication, and training needs to improve access to elements of the park that lie outside of direct physical and programmatic access. The goals of the SETP are to (1) document existing park barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities; (2) provide an effective approach for upgrading facilities, services, activities, and programs; and (3) instill a culture around creating universal access.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Jewel Cave National Monument staff have made many strides to improve physical accessibility throughout the park. Paved and mostly level routes lead to various facilities and experiences, such as the visitor center, trailheads, and picnicking. The Roof Trail provides an immersive forest hiking experience, with limited barriers to accessibility.

Park staff identified recurring findings related to the physical accessibility of parking areas, including accessible paths and trails and visitor information areas, such as the ticket counter and trailhead signage. Often, these facilities and features were incorrectly scoped for accessibility or had surfaces that were not firm and stable, slopes that exceeded allowable standards, or items that were out of reach range or heavy or difficult to operate. Restroom amenities often did not meet the required standards, and amenities for picnicking, such as tables, trash receptacles, and water hydrants, did not always meet appropriate access route and clearance standards.

Staff have opportunities to provide access to unique experiences in the park. Improvements of the Discovery Tour, such as level resting spaces near the benches, would allow more visitors to experience being immersed in the cave environment. Creative solutions for accessing the historic cabin would provide an improved visitor experience surrounding the park's historic resources.

PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY

Jewel Cave National Monument has made improvements to programmatic accessibility in recent years. On the park's website, visitors can find information about the accessible features in different park areas to improve trip planning, including detailed conditions of each cave tour and helping prepare all visitors for what to expect.

Park staff identified recurring findings related to program accessibility for park publications, waysides, exhibits, and programs. Many of the exhibits in the park visitor center had font and contrast issues and were difficult to read, alternative formats were limited, tactile exhibits were limited, and audio descriptions for tours were not available.

Significant ways in which programs could be improved include providing tactile models of more unique resources, such as the cave system itself. Additionally, improving trailhead signage parkwide would provide specific information about trail conditions, enabling visitors to decide for themselves if a trail is appropriate.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1916, the National Park Service has preserved, unimpaired, the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system, while also providing for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations.

Many national parks were founded because of their stunning views, extreme and unique geography, challenging and sensitive natural environments, and historic and fragile structures. Jewel Cave National Monument and other parks exist because of their history and resources. The NPS mission balances protection of resources (natural and cultural) with visitor enjoyment. Facilities, services, and programs were designed and built in parks to accommodate visitors and help them better understand each park purpose and significance.

However, many facilities were constructed before the passage of laws and policies requiring the National Park Service to provide access to the widest cross section of the public and to ensure compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The accessibility of commercial services in national parks is also governed by applicable federal laws. After 100 years of operation, the National Park Service continues to work towards a more inclusive environment.

Visitors today have unique needs and expectations, and the agency must adapt to meet changing demands. Modern scientific research and visitor trend analysis provide new insights into accessibility opportunities and challenges in the national park system. According to 2020 Center for Disease Control data, there are approximately 61 million people with disabilities in the United States, and this number is expected to rise in the coming years as more people reach retirement age (65 and older). This information helps the National Park Service understand changing visitation patterns, the nexus between resource stewardship and accessibility, and the impacts of managing visitors, resources, and infrastructure with the reality of unpredictable funding. Planning can help identify solutions to challenges and provide a trajectory full of opportunity for current and future visitors. The National Park Service is committed to making park facilities, services, programs, and employment opportunities accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

Jewel Cave National Monument's existing general management planning documents continue to provide relevant guidance, which may be supplemented through development of additional planning documents such as this one. The accessibility SETP is a component of the park's planning portfolio. This plan documents park barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities and provides an effective approach for upgrading park facilities, services, and programs. In addition, the plan helps inform management decisions regarding project prioritization, funding, and compliance.

ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN

The creation of a transition plan is mandated by regulations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as they apply to the US Department of the Interior, which states that “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.” The act requires parks to document architectural barriers and identify solutions, time frames, and responsible parties to improve and increase accessibility.

This plan was prepared to provide Jewel Cave National Monument staff with a tool for addressing overall needs associated with making the park accessible when viewed in its entirety. The plan is based on an understanding of key park experiences and establishes a methodical process that identifies, prioritizes, and outlines improvements to park accessibility. The plan proposes strategies for implementation over time and in a manner consistent with park requirements and protocols.

ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN PROCESS

The process for creating a SETP involves seven steps:



1. **Identify Key Park Experiences and Park Areas** – The interdisciplinary team began by identifying the key experiences available to visitors at the park. Key park experiences, which help determine the park areas to assess in step 2, are iconic and important experiences for visitors to understand the purpose and significance of the park. Park legislation is the foundation for key park experiences, which are identified through park purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and programs (available in the park's foundation document at <http://npshistory.com/publications/foundation-documents/jeca-fd-2016.pdf>). Key park experiences ensure that planned improvements are prioritized to best increase overall access to park experiences.

The key park experiences identified for Jewel Cave National Monument include the following:

- a. **Cave and Karst Features:** Experience the unique and unusual cave and karst features of Jewel Cave that represents a pristine and relatively unchanged underground environment.
- b. **Natural Processes:** Experience the natural conditions and processes on the park's surface and subsurface, which support unique habitats, including nine species of bats, and preserve cave resources.
- c. **Exploration and Discovery:** Experience the opportunities for exploration and scientific discovery that shaped the understanding of the cave environment today and will continue to shape it into the future.

- d. **Cultural Resources:** Experience the historic resources, including the historic ranger cabin and cave entrance, to better understand the history of early mining, development, and tourism at Jewel Cave.

To prepare for step 2, the team then listed all developed areas of the park in which visitors have access.

2. **Determine Park Areas to Assess** – In some instances, not all park areas can be assessed during this process due to time and funding constraints. Therefore, the interdisciplinary team determined which park areas to assess based on the number of key park experiences, visitation level, diversity of activities and programs, distribution, and unique characteristics. The areas selected for assessment provide the best opportunities for the public to access all key park experiences. Areas not assessed will be assessed and improved as part of future facility alterations or as components of a future planned construction project.
3. **Identify Facilities, Services, and Programs in Each Park Area** – The team identified all facilities, services, and programs in each park area to ensure that all physical and programmatic visitor amenities in each park area were reviewed for accessibility. The comprehensive lists of facilities, services, and programs were the basis for conducting assessments and documenting barriers.
4. **Conduct Accessibility Assessment** – On-site, the interdisciplinary assessment team assessed each park area and identified physical and programmatic barriers to accessibility. The team then reviewed possible solutions and explored options to provide universal access. In some cases, programmatic alternatives needed to be examined because eliminating physical barriers is not always possible due to historic designations, environmental concerns, topography, or sensitive cultural and natural resources. Therefore, a range of programmatic alternatives was considered to provide access to key park experiences for as many visitors as possible.
5. **Draft Transition Plan** – Following the assessment, the team added field results to an implementation strategy table and drafted conceptual site plans to display the locations of barriers and opportunities. An implementation strategy can be complex because of a large range of coordination efforts associated with scheduling accessibility improvements. All improvement efforts need to consider park activities and operational requirements. Improvement efforts need to consider park activities and operational requirements to determine how and when to implement a solution. While some changes can be done quickly at little or no cost, others may be integrated into existing projects or planned as separate projects, and more complex solutions may require advanced planning and requests for funding. Based on these considerations, the team identified an implementation time frame and a responsible park staff member for each barrier and solution. Implementation time frames are based on NPS staff's ability to complete the improvements within normal scheduling of park operations and planned projects and are as follows:
 - a. Immediate (0–1 year)
 - b. Short term (1–3 years)

- c. Mid-term (3–7 years)
 - d. Long term (longer than 7 years)
6. **Conduct Public Involvement** – Public involvement occurs at the draft stage of the transition plan; however, it is recommended that at the beginning of the SETP process, park staff initiate public outreach efforts with organizations representing people with disabilities. The draft plan will be released for a 30-day period to solicit input from the public, including people with disabilities and organizations that represent people with disabilities, to provide comments and thoughts on whether the document represents a reasonable review of the park’s barriers and a feasible and appropriate strategy for overcoming the barriers.
 7. **Finalize Transition Plan** – After the comment period has closed, park staff will analyze all comments to determine if any revisions to the plan are necessary. Those revisions will be made before the implementation strategy is finalized. Once finalized, a notification will be sent to the public to announce the plan’s availability.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

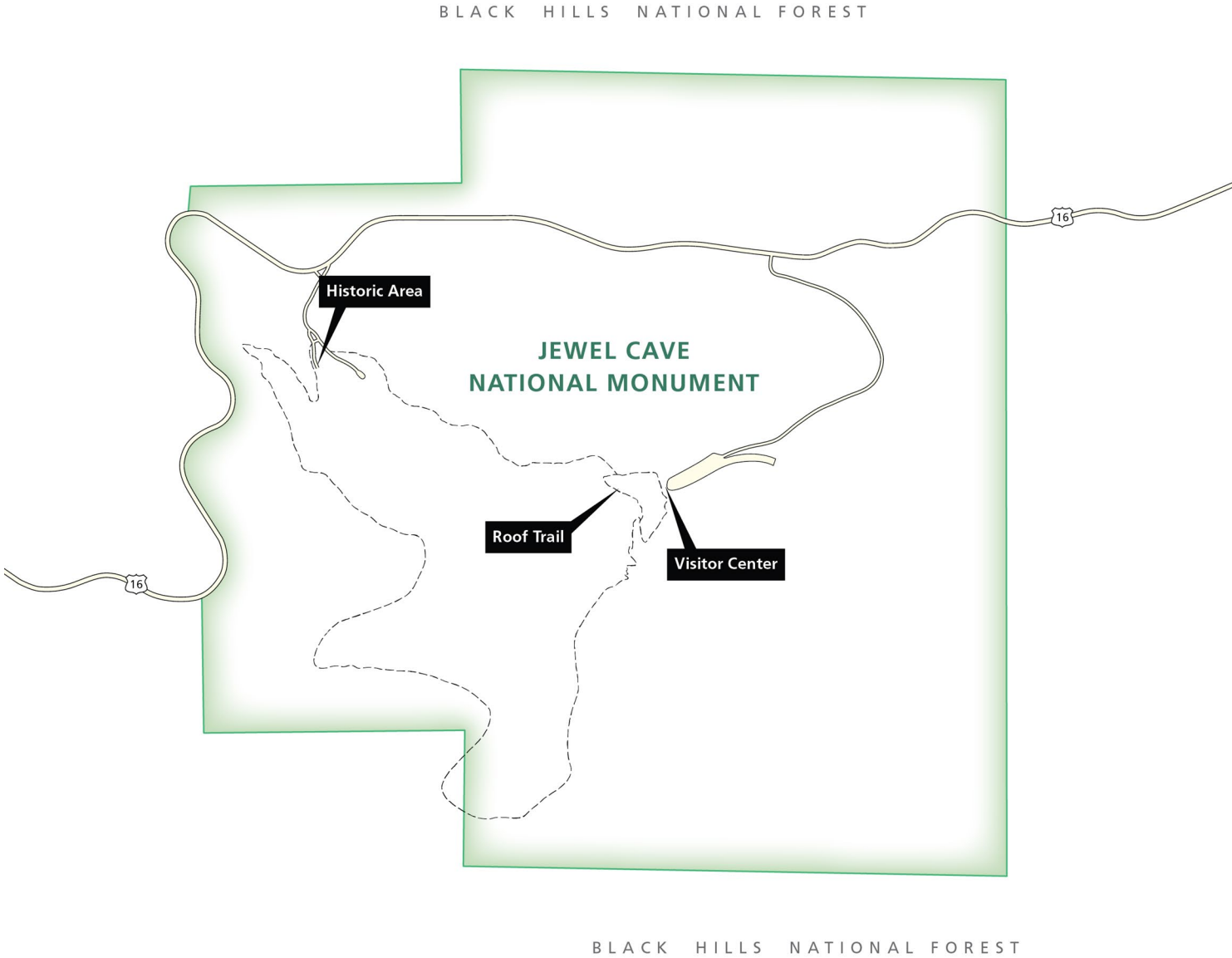
The park superintendent is responsible for implementing and integrating the accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan, and the accessibility coordinator assists the superintendent by documenting improvements, keeping the plan updated, and communicating to park employees. It’s recommended that park staff employ trained consultants and involve the disability community to assist with addressing accessibility improvements to ensure that design and implementation meet the needs of visitors with disabilities. Creating parkwide accessibility requires staff awareness, understanding, and appropriate action. Because of fiscal constraints and limited park resources, staff will need to determine which improvements will benefit the greatest number of visitors with disabilities. Suggested implementation time frames and relative costs need to be factored into all accessibility investment decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

PARK AREAS ASSESSED

The interdisciplinary team assessed the following park areas for accessibility during the planning effort:

- Historic Area
- Visitor Center
- Visitor Center – Roof Trail



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR PARK AREAS ASSESSED

The Architectural Barrier Act requires that any building or facility designed, constructed, altered, or leased with federal funds be accessible and usable by any individuals with disabilities. The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) were adopted for federal facilities in 1984 and 2006, respectively. Subsequently, in 2011, standards for recreational facilities were incorporated into ABAAS as chapter 10.

Depending on the date of a building's construction or alteration, different design standards apply. The interdisciplinary team used ABAAS to conduct the transition plan facility assessments. Although a barrier may be identified by the current assessment for improvement, facilities are only required to follow the standard in place at the time of construction and/or alteration. Therefore, barriers may not be in violation of ABAAS. However, any renovation or upgrade of that building is required to meet the most current standard at the time of work. In addition, Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media were followed for facility and program assessments.

This document does not include strategies for transitioning employee workspaces to be accessible. In the event that an employee with a disability is hired at Jewel Cave National Monument, the supervisor and employee will discuss the employee's needs. The supervisor will then determine what accommodations are reasonable in the given work environment and determine a plan of action to meet those needs.

For each park area, this document provides an overview of findings and recommended solutions in a brief narrative and bulleted list and provides corresponding site plan(s) that illustrate existing conditions. For details on each barrier, solution, and time frame, see the companion implementation strategy table (<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=123750>). It is important to understand that the site plans and recommendations are conceptual and will require further design development and historic and environmental compliance before construction. SETPs are not to be used as a section 106 compliance review submittal. Consult with cultural and natural resource staff before proceeding with recommended actions. During the implementation phase, the interdisciplinary team must reassess the project site conditions, refer to ABAAS, and consult with the local disability community to ensure that specific design and programmatic solutions are correctly addressed.



HISTORIC AREA

Visitors arriving at the Historic Area by vehicle park in a shaded, paved parking lot with access to a picnic area and vault toilet, surrounded by ponderosa pine trees. The historic cabin, built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, is up a steep crushed stone surfaced path from the parking area. The cabin is only open to visitors who are on the Historic Lantern Tour. A small gathering area with wood log benches is just beyond the cabin, where additional tour information is provided to visitors before embarking on the journey to the historic entrance to Jewel Cave, used by the Michaud brothers and park rangers to enter the cave since 1900. To get to the historic entrance, visitors must hike a 0.25 mile paved portion of the Canyon Trail, with stone stairs along the way.

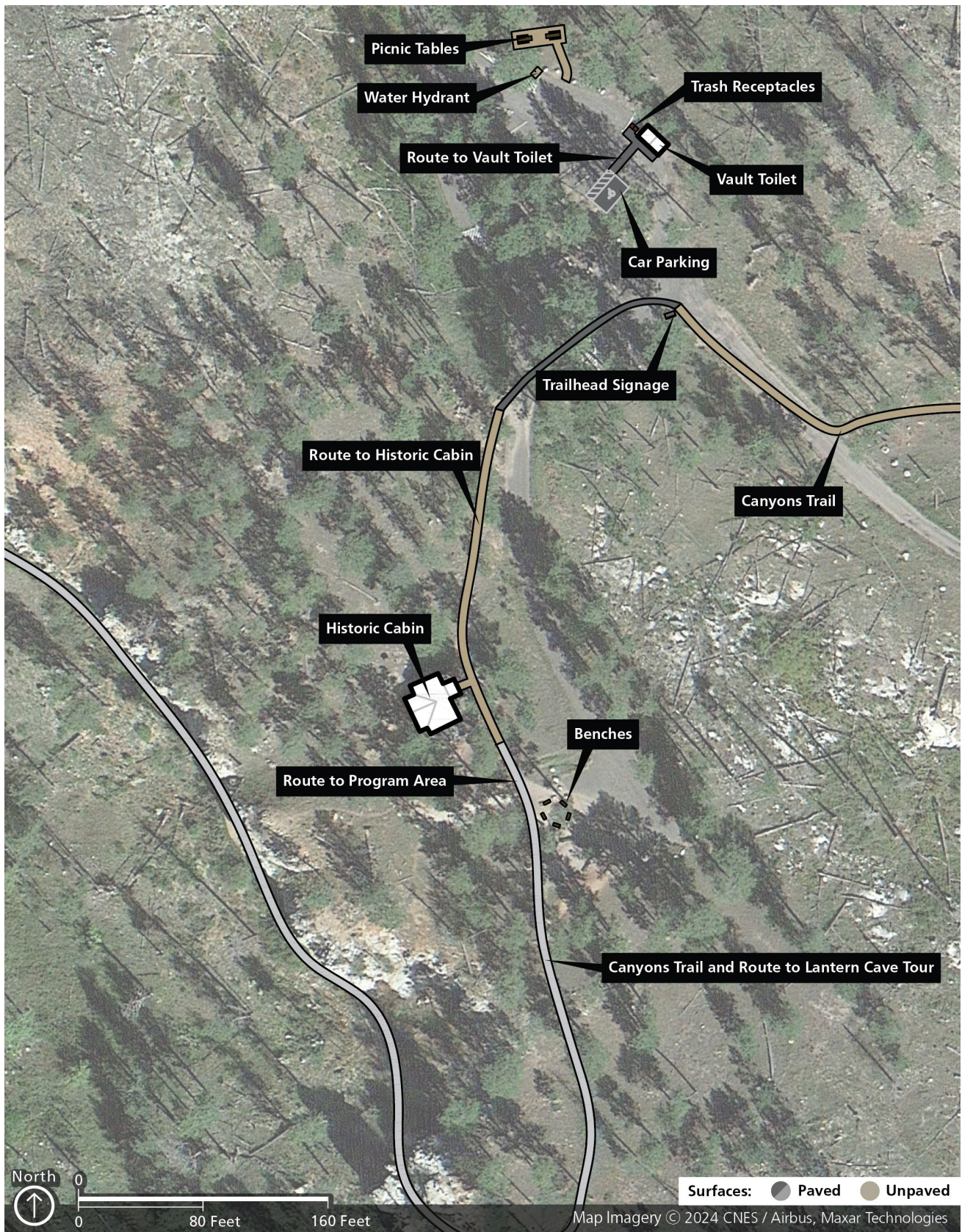
Improvements to the route up to the historic cabin, such as reduced slopes and surface material, and providing an accessible entrance to the cabin itself would allow more visitors to experience this unique historic resource. Other improvements to parking, picnic facilities, and trailhead information would remove all barriers to accessibility. Park staff have an upcoming project to improve the picnic area, including providing a shaded picnic pavilion.

Proposed accessibility improvements at the Historic Area include the following:

- **Parking:** Reduce slopes on accessible parking spaces, and update signage.
- **Routes:** Reduce thresholds and the slopes on the route from the parking area to the historic cabin.
- **Restroom:** Improve the accessible features in the vault toilet.
- **Picnic Facilities:** Improve surfaces, and add an accessible table, trash can, and water hydrant.
- **Trailhead:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail conditions.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Historic Area Site Plan





VISITOR CENTER

The visitor center is the main destination for most park visitors coming to Jewel Cave National Monument, as three of the four guided cave tours start from inside the visitor center. These tours include the Discovery Tour, the Scenic Tour, and the Wild Caving Tour. The visitor center area also has restrooms, a park theater, exhibits, and a bookstore. Outside the visitor center are a picnic area and trailheads for accessing the park's trails. Providing more tactile elements in the exhibit space, providing accessible elements in the restrooms, and designating wheelchair spaces in the theater would greatly improve the accessibility of the visitor center.

The Discovery Tour is the most accessible cave tour offered at the park and can accommodate wheelchairs. Visitors start by taking a large elevator in the visitor center, which goes underground to access Jewel Cave. A stable, hardened surface leads visitors to the Target Room, a large opening in the cave, where a park ranger leads the tour. Benches are provided in the cave room, along with a metal constructed bridge to a platform that allows visitors to get closer to the cave walls. Improving slopes in front of the benches and reducing openings on the metal surfaces would increase the accessibility of the Discovery Tour.

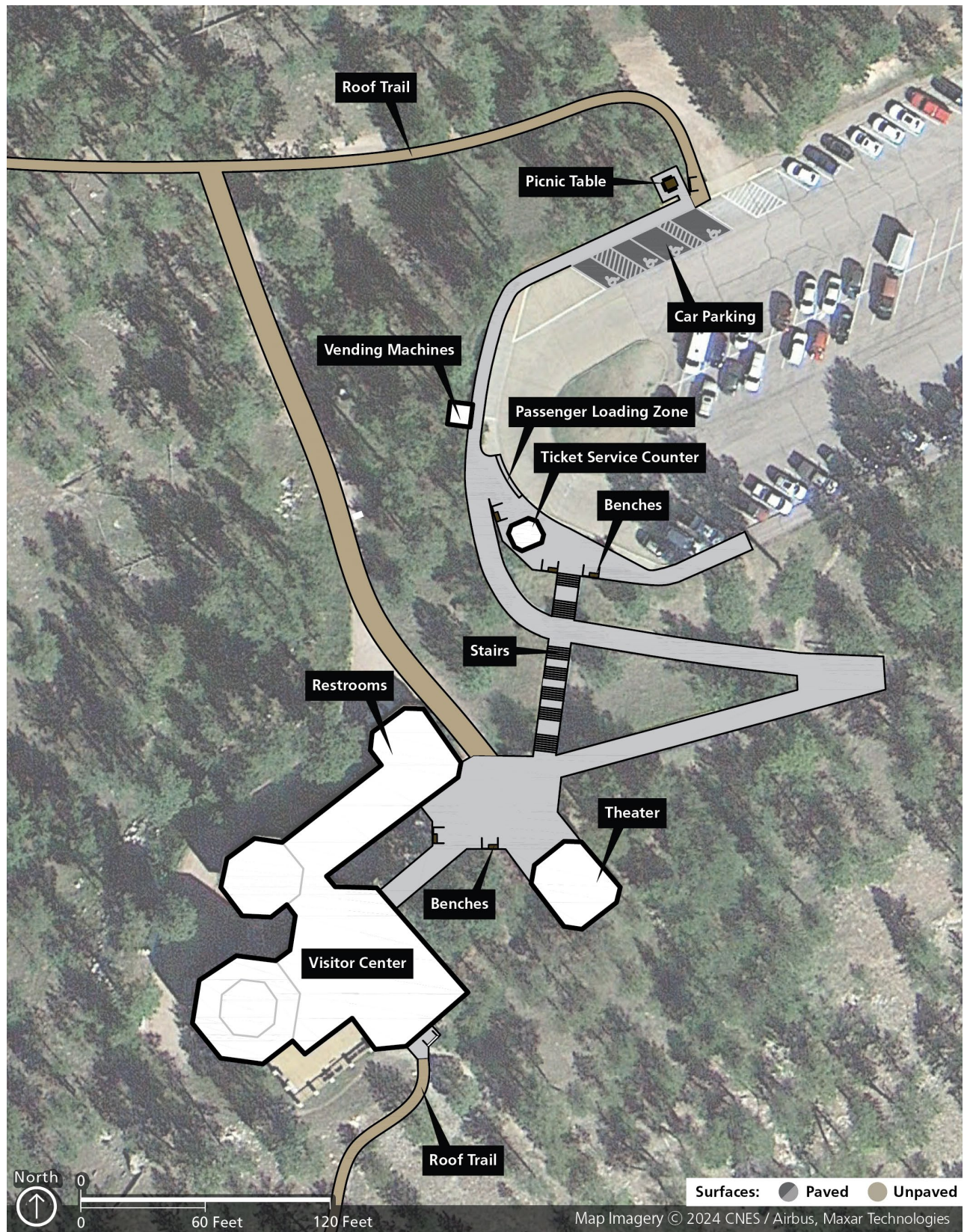
Proposed accessibility improvements at the Visitor Center include the following:

- **Parking:** Improve the slopes and widths of accessible parking spaces.
- **Site Features:** Improve the clear ground space in front of site features, such as vending machines and benches.
- **Exhibits:** Improve knee clearance, the operability of exhibit, and the clear width of circulation space, and improve tactile elements.
- **Retail Items:** Distribute items to be accessible within a seated reach range.

- **Theater:** Provide designated wheelchair spaces and improve the width of the route inside the theater.
- **Restrooms:** Improve the placement of accessible restroom components.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames can be found in the implementation strategy table.

Visitor Center Site Plan





VISITOR CENTER – ROOF TRAIL

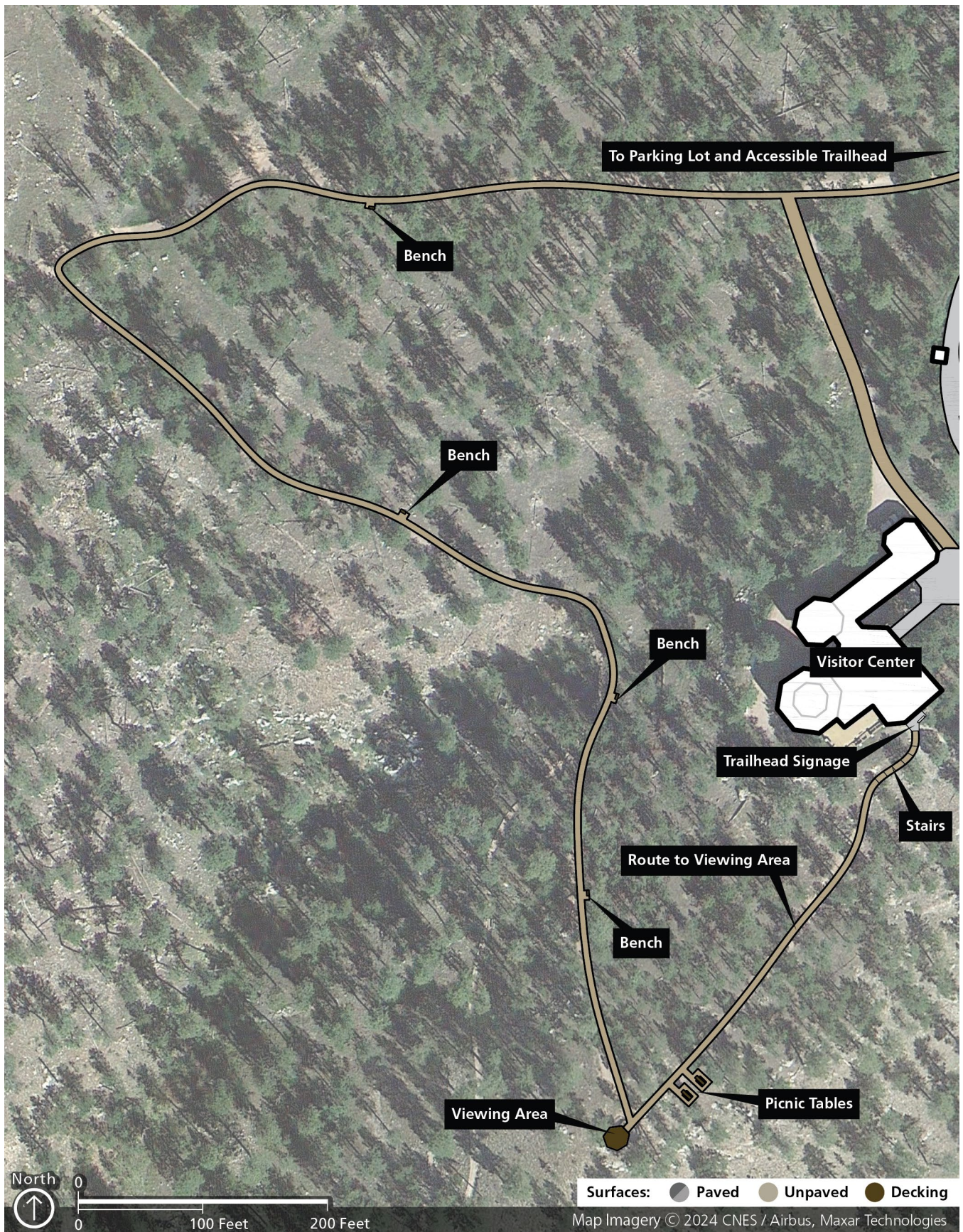
The Roof Trail is a quarter mile looping trail that starts from the visitor center and loops back to the main parking area. The trail allows visitors to discover how the monument's surface and subsurface resources interact as it winds through the ponderosa pines. An overlook, located approximately 100 yards from the visitor center, provides a magnificent view of the forest and canyons, and some picnic tables are also nearby. Reducing rock and tree root protrusions along the trail surface, removing stairs to access the viewing area and the start of the trail, and providing trail conditions at the trailhead would allow more visitors to experience the Roof Trail.

Proposed accessibility improvements at the Visitor Center Roof Trail include the following:

- **Trailhead:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail conditions.
- **Trail:** Improve stairs, reduce slopes, and harden surfaces with fewer obstacles along the trail.
- **Viewing Area:** Provide a lower railing at the viewing area.
- **Site Features:** Provide accessible picnic tables and benches along the trail.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames can be found in the implementation strategy table.

Visitor Center – Roof Trail Site Plan





JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT PROGRAMS

Jewel Cave National Monument showed strengths in the accessibility information on its park website, which is listed by disability type on a dedicated accessibility web page. The park does not currently offer alternative formats for printed materials. Unique opportunities exist to offer assistive listening devices for cave tours to engage staff and further support visitors with disabilities. Jewel Cave National Monument staff are aware of these areas for improvement and are committed to addressing them.

Proposed accessibility improvements to parkwide programs include the following:

- **Publications:** Add parkwide and site-specific alternative format publications.
- **Website and Social Media:** Provide alternative text for all images shared online, and provide contact information for visitors who have an accessibility question or are wanting to make an accommodation request.
- **Walks, Talks, Tours, and Special Events:** Add assistive listening devices for tours and special events and audio description for tours, and add more and relevant tactile exhibits.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames can be found in the implementation strategy table.



JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT POLICIES, PRACTICES, COMMUNICATION, AND TRAINING

Jewel Cave National Monument showed strengths in its routine accessibility training provided to all park staff. The park does not currently offer standard operating procedures for some park policies. Unique opportunities exist to offer more outreach opportunities to local groups with disabilities to engage staff and further support visitors with disabilities. Jewel Cave National Monument staff are aware of these areas for improvement and are committed to addressing them.

Proposed accessibility improvements to policies, practices, communication, and training include the following:

- **Staff Training and Park Protocols:** Add standard operating procedures for park policies, such as around other power-driven mobility devices in the park.
- **Communications and Partnerships:** Conduct outreach to local groups with disabilities, and provide guidance to partners and outside groups regarding accessible programs.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames can be found in the implementation strategy table.

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CONCLUSION

Jewel Cave National Monument staff are committed to providing all visitors with the opportunity to connect with and learn about the park's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Accessibility improvements identified in the Jewel Cave National Monument SETP will make it easier for individuals with cognitive, hearing, vision, and mobility disabilities to discover, understand, and enjoy the range of experiences available at the park. Park staff will continue to work towards accommodating all visitors while sustaining the park's legacy to preserve and protect its unique cave ecosystem.

The primary goal of the plan is to consider universal design strategies and document modifications needed to provide access to park facilities, services, activities, and programs for all visitors. As park staff work towards implementing the plan, physical access to and within assessed park areas will be improved, and park information and programs will be enhanced or created for all visitors across the breadth of key experiences at Jewel Cave National Monument. Experiences such as the accessible Discovery Cave Tour, trail informational signage to help prepare visitors for hiking, and picnicking opportunities will be improved to enhance the visitor experience.

The Jewel Cave National Monument SETP is a living document intended to be used as a guiding reference for the park as park staff implement accessibility upgrades and documents accessibility accomplishments. As barriers to accessibility are removed and/or improved, changes will be updated in the implementation strategy table. Park staff will conduct periodic reviews to evaluate and update conditions to reflect accomplishments and document new programs or other changes that occur over time. Revisions to the plan may include conducting additional assessments for areas not originally conducted as a part of this plan.

Over time, the results of this collective effort will make Jewel Cave National Monument a truly welcoming and accommodating place for all visitors and will provide equal opportunity to access the places, resources, stories, and experiences at the park.

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APPENDIX A: ACCESSIBILITY LAWS, STANDARDS, GUIDELINES, AND NPS POLICIES APPLICABLE TO JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

As a national park, Jewel Cave National Monument is required to comply with specific federal laws that mandate that discriminatory barriers be removed to provide equal opportunities to persons with disabilities. The following laws, design guidelines, and director's orders pertain to Jewel Cave National Monument.

LAWS

- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 – <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides>
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.550>
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – <http://www.section508.gov>
- Effective Communication – <http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm>
- Reasonable Accommodations – <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/reasonable-accommodations>
- Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices – <https://www.ada.gov/opdmd.htm>
- Service Animals – https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
- 43 CFR, Section 17.549 Program Accessibility: Discrimination Prohibited – <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.549>
- 43 CFR, Section 17.550 Program Accessibility: Existing Facilities – <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.550>
- 43 CFR, Section 17.551 Program Accessibility: New Construction and Alterations – <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.551>

NPS DIRECTOR'S ORDERS AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

- Director's Order 16A: *Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants And Employees with Disabilities* – https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/DO_16A_5-4-1999.pdf
- Director's Order 42: *Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities* – https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/DO_42_11-3-2000.pdf
- National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.9.3 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities – <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1548/upload/ManagementPolicies2006.pdf>

GUIDELINES

- Draft Accessibility Standards for Public Rights-Of-Way – <https://www.access-board.gov/prowag>
- Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media – <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/accessibility.htm>

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

Many of the resources listed below for trainings, accessibility assessments, project development, and implementation are currently located on the Pacific West Region Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Planning SharePoint site (<https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/nps-PWR-AccessibilitySETP?CT=1649343052705&OR=OWA-NT&CID=204c2563-b913-0894-1cae-52bc8f021fcf>). In the near future, this information will be available to all NPS staff and will be uploaded to the Park Facility Management Division's "Accessibility for Visitors and Employees with Disabilities" web page (<https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/nps-pfmd/SitePages/Access-for-Visitors-and-Employees-with-Disabilities.aspx>). This information includes specific accessibility resources for concessions, facilities and maintenance, interpretation and education, and law enforcement staff. Resources include the following:

- A glossary of accessibility terms
- Reference information and links to laws and policies
- Accessibility assessment checklists and videos
- Accessibility training links and materials
- Templates that help track and document accessibility actions and an accessibility guide
- Guidance for making historic sites accessible
- Guidance for service animals in parks, accessible publications and programs, signage, and audio description
- Disability dialogue information and trainings
- Guidance for preparing PMIS packages for accessibility improvements
- Trail assessment protocols and summary sheets

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APPENDIX C: CONTRIBUTORS

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

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JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN MAY 2024

This accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan has been prepared as a collaborative effort between Jewel Cave National Monument staff, Regional Office staff serving Interior Regions 3, 4, and 5, and Denver Service Center staff and is recommended for approval by the superintendent.

Approved

Date

Kevin Tillman, Superintendent, Jewel Cave National Monument



As the nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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