



A Newsletter of
Mammoth Cave
National Park

Superintendent's Message -

The Paradigm of Spring

By Ronald R. Switzer

Green and Orange are opposites in the color spectrum, and it seems odd that here at Mammoth Cave National Park we have had to place them side by side and compare them.

On the one hand, the park is greening with spring growth, and visitors are enjoying the cave and the natural beauties of the park in carefree fashion. After all, that is what the park is all about. On the other hand, the calamities of war and threats of terrorism have brought the park into a state of readiness called an Orange Alert.



Hepatica, an early spring show-off.

From the visitor's perspective park operations haven't changed much, although backpacks and containers are no longer permitted in the visitor center or the cave, and for security there are no-parking zones in front of the building. Otherwise visitors can enjoy the greenness of spring unencumbered.

Behind the scenes the park has implemented steps for heightened security of offices and identification decals for staff vehicles. In fact, an Incident Command has been established and plans are underway to address further steps to be taken in the event there is a major threat and we have to implement more tightened security under a Red Alert.

Green and orange, when compared, have different connotations in a time when the nation faces great uncertainty. My hope is that we can continue to provide an enjoyable venue for the public without further stressful contrasts. *- Ronald R. Switzer*

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Park News

Burning Soon

Rich Caldwell reports that the Cumberland Gap Fire Use Module (the proper title for the team of fire professionals who will plan and manage our prescribed fires) has been in the park to prepare for the first of the three fires planned for this year. Bruce Hollow Glade, 65 acres between Green River Ferry and the campground, will require a short closure of the campground, Green River Ferry Road, Green River Ferry, and Miss Green River II.

Birds, Blooms, and Controlled Burns

On April 26th, we'll celebrate spring with a day of special walks and events. Go on a bird walk to look for local and migrating species, or a wildflower walk through a recently burned area. The Glasgow Garden Club's exhibit will feature wildflowers from their gardens and provide helpful growing tips. The parks raptor program will exhibit the hawk and owl and discuss the role of birds of prey. The day's events are made possible by a dedicated group of Volunteers-in-Parks who return each year to share their knowledge. Call 270/758-2254 for walk times and additional information.

Mushroom Hunting in the Park

It's almost time for that tasty, woodland delicacy, morel mushrooms. The Superintendent's Compendium sets down the rules for collecting in the park. It states: "Down and dead wood may be used for fuel at any designated campsite. Reasonable quantities of the following may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption: any exotic fruits, grapes, walnuts, hickory nuts, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, morels, paw-paws, and buckeyes." Chief Ranger Wayne Elliott advises mushroom hunters to park carefully off the roadway to ensure traffic is not impeded in anyway.

Ginseng Recovery

On four occasions in 2002, rangers recovered ginseng roots from plant poachers – a total of 1,457 plants. Arrests were made, and trials are pending later this month. Can the plants be saved? Yes, according to Botanist Michele Webber, who heads up the park's plant recovery effort. After the rangers released the plants from evidence, Michele evaluated each root according to age and weight, then marked them with a non-toxic permanent dye. The youngest plant was one year old; the oldest, 44. The dye is absorbed by the root leaving a visible mark on its annual growth rings. If these plants are ever poached again, they can be identified as coming from the park. With the help of several volunteers, Michele replanted the ginseng in appropriate habitat. The plants will be monitored to understand how well the recovery process works and to determine the impact of poaching natural populations of ginseng. Michele can always use volunteer help. If you are interested, call for an application, or an electronic copy is available at www.nps.gov/maca/home.htm.

2,000 More Chestnut Saplings Come to Mammoth Cave

S&RM's Jenny Hewitt and Brice Leech, with help from Job Corps landscaping class, are planting 2,000 more American chestnut saplings on north-facing slopes in the park. The project looks toward a long-term result in that the trees are experimental; they will most likely contract chestnut blight and die. However, most will produce seeds in 5-7 years, and perhaps each generation of chestnut trees will develop a greater resistance to chestnut blight. Jenny noted the importance of the north-facing slopes – the blight attacks through cracks or lesions in the bark. Localized climate on north-facing slopes will produce less freezing and thawing, giving the young trees a better chance.

We're in the Zone

It's ozone season again – March through September. Ozone isn't emitted from a smokestack; it's created in a chemical reaction when bright sunlight "cooks" pollutants present in the air resulting in ozone. Ozone exacerbates breathing problems in humans and can damage vegetation. A U.S.D.A. Forest Service website has helpful information and photographs of how ozone effects tulip poplar, milkweed, black cherry and other plant/tree species native to Kentucky: www.fiaozone.net/gridhome.htm.

“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

– Teddy Roosevelt



Jenny Hewitt's chestnut crew.

*If you have a
modem...*

...then you have access to a wealth of information about Mammoth Cave National Park. Set your World Wide Web browser to:

<http://www.nps.gov/maca>

Reservations!

For cave tour, campground, and picnic shelter reservations online: reservations.nps.gov

More Park News

Family Roots at the Cave?

On October 10, 11, and 12 Mammoth Cave will host a genealogy weekend concentrated on the families who lived in the area prior to the park's establishment. This weekend will feature a beginning genealogy workshop, an opportunity to exchange data with fellow researchers, a cemetery workshop, and a cemetery walk. A number of activities are still in the planning stage. If you are interesting in participating, volunteering to help, or have ideas and suggestions to offer, call Mary Anne Davis, 270/758-2254, maryanne_davis@nps.gov.

Environmental Leadership Conference

May 20-22 will be days for Mammoth Cave brag on its Environmental Leadership accomplishments at the Environmental Leadership Conference, Mammoth Cave Hotel. Topics include:

- Rebuild America program (reps from U.S. DOE and KY D.O.E.)
- Green Purchasing (reps from EPA and Green Seal)
- Roundtable re: alternative fuels and transportation
- Environmental Leadership and Concessionaires (rep from Forever Resorts)
- Environmental Leadership and Interpretation/Educational Outreach
- Green Facilities

We Are Completely Green-Fueled

Mechanic Rusty Drake reports the park has just refilled its regular un-leaded gasoline tank with E-10, a mix of 90 percent gasoline and 10 percent ethanol. E-10 can be used in all gas-powered engines. We don't do just plain old gasoline anymore!

From Three to Two

Three canoe liveries serviced the park last year – two will do the job this year. In January, Diane Meffert of Barren River Canoe Rental submitted the business' resignation as an Incidental Business Permit in Mammoth Cave NP. Green River Canoe Rental in Brownsville and Mammoth Cave Canoe and Kayak Rental on the east boundary will continue rental and transport services for visitors again this year.

Bob DeGross is USDA Exec Leadership Grad

Bob DeGross, Everglades ranger and past MACA guide, recently completed the one-year USDA Graduate School 2002 Executive Leadership Program. Bob and the ten other participants explored management practices with the NPS and other federal agencies through 30-and 60-day work assignments, shadowing assignments and interviewing a variety of current leaders, focusing on 27 competencies that are recognized as imperative for federal managers to possess.

University in the Park

The 2003 Karst Field Studies at Mammoth Cave NP are listed below. Contact the WKU Center or Cave and Karst Studies at 270/745-3252 for more information.

- June 8-14, Karst Geology, Dr. Arthur Palmer
- June 9-12, Management of Karst Aquifers (San Antonio, TX), Dr. George Veni
- June 15-21, Cave Surveying and Cartography, Ms. Patricia Kambesis & Dr. Nicholas Crawford
- June 15-21, Exploration of Mammoth Cave, Dr. Stan Sides
- June 15-21, Karst Hydrology, Dr. William White & Dr. Nicholas Crawford

Planning Via Web

The Kentucky Department of Travel reports an increase of 6.2% in overall inquiries for 2002. The

The Flashlight is produced by the Division of External Programs and Communications. Our Web Page address is www.nps.gov/maca. Please contact us if you need further information. – Jim Carroll, Vickie Carson, Tres Seymour, and Mary Anne Davis, Mammoth Cave National Park, P.O. Box 7, Mammoth Cave, KY 42259; by telephone at (270)758-2254, or (270)773-2111; by e-mail at Vickie_Carson@nps.gov.

People

boost is based on a dramatic shift from 800 number inquiries to web inquiries and further supports the trend in tourism towards Internet use in travel planning. –KDT's *Travel Insider*

Temporary Hires: Jennifer Hewitt, biological science tech-STEP program.

Permanent Hires: William Moore, ecologist with an EOD of 2/09/03.

Promotion: Russell E. Galipeau, Jr. chief of resource management, Yosemite NP, to superintendent, Channel Islands NP. (Russell was a split-ranger at MACA in the 1980s.)

Calendar

Feb 1 – April 30	Prescribed burn window at Mammoth Cave NP
March 1	Headquarters Campground, picnic area, and Houchins Ferry opened for the season
April 26	Wildflower Day at MACA
May 10	ACCA annual sinkhole cleanup
May 20-22	Environmental Leadership Conference, MACA Hotel
May 22	Kentucky Clean Fuels Coalition meeting
May 25, 1926	Mammoth Cave NP authorized by Congress (Shenandoah and Great Smokies authorized May 22, 1926)
June 3-6	International Karst Conference, Bowling Green, Ky.
June 8-21	University in the Park
June 9-12	Seasonal training
July 1, 1941	Mammoth Cave NP established
July 6-25	Earthwatch volunteers at MACA
July 21-25	River Institute, EE/WKU
August 25, 1916	NPS Founders Day
September 25-27	Kentucky Folk Festival in Frankfort
September 27	National Public Lands Day
October 5-24	Earthwatch volunteers at MACA (tentative)
October 13-17	National Cave and Karst Management symposium, Gainesville, Florida
October 10-12	“Roots at the Cave” Genealogy Weekend at MACA



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