

WIND CAVE

NATIONAL PARK



SOUTH DAKOTA

Wind Cave

National Park

THIS NATIONAL PARK, located on the southeast flank of the Black Hills of South Dakota, contains a limestone cavern noted for its unusual boxwork formations rarely found in other caverns of the world. The park is also the home of buffalo and other animals of the plains. The cavern consists of a series of subterranean passages known to be at least 10 miles in extent. These passages are lined with calcite crystal formations in various color shadings. The park was established by an act of Congress on January 9, 1903. It now includes about 27,893 acres of Federal land.

The Black Hills of South Dakota present many features of unusual interest. Rising like an island from the treeless plains, they culminate in Harney Peak, the highest point in the United States east of the Rockies. The variety of their minerals, rocks, and geological formations is exceptional.

Of the many caves found near the margin of the Hills, Wind Cave is most widely known. Its discovery, in 1881, is credited to Tom Bingham, a Black Hills pioneer who, while deer hunting, was attracted by a strange whistling sound which came from a clump of brush. Search disclosed a small opening in the rock about 10 inches in diameter from which issued a strong draft of air. It is located a few steps back of the present manmade entrance.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

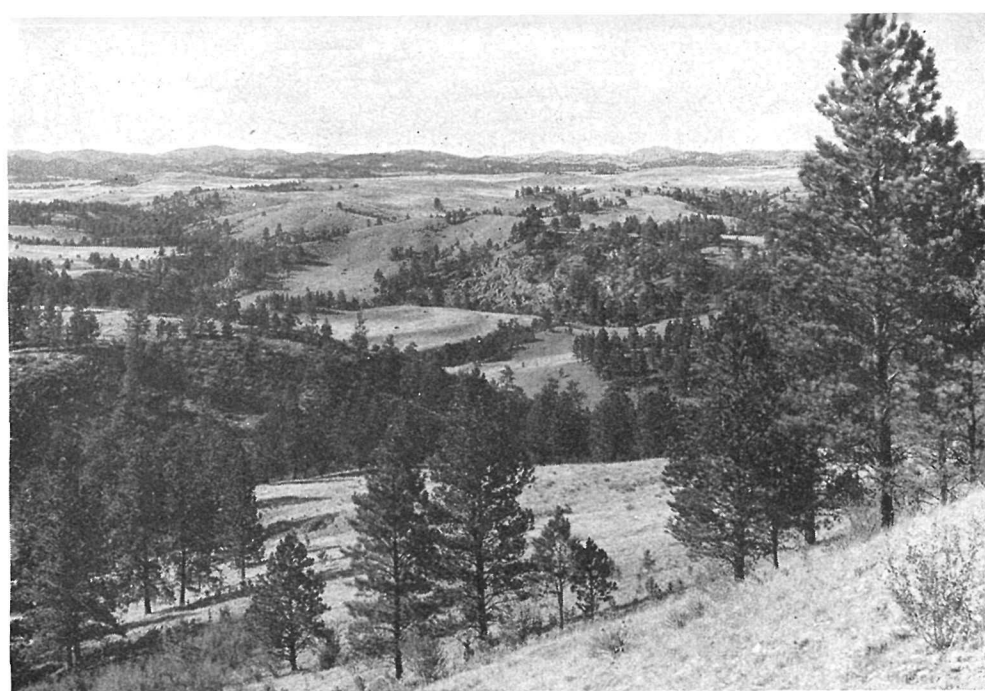
The strong currents of wind that blow alternately in and out of the mouth of the cave suggested its name. This strange phenomenon is believed to be caused by changes in the atmospheric pressure outside. When the barometer is falling, the wind usually blows outward; when it rises, the wind blows in. Many visitors enjoy stopping at the cave entrance to post themselves on weather indications.

Colorful History

IN ADDITION to its natural beauty and scientific interest, the Southwestern section of South Dakota has a colorful and picturesque history. Possibly a French explorer made his way into it as early as 1683, and the Verendrye brothers are said to have visited it in 1743.

The Sioux, an Indian tribe conspicuous for strength and bravery, long occupied the region and only submitted to white settlement after a bitter and tragic struggle. Some of their descendants are today living on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations, a short drive from Wind Cave.

According to an Indian legend, the four winds were major deities of the Plains tribes; hence the Cave of the Winds was a sacred spot to them. This was one reason why the Sioux fought so hard for the Black Hills when they were invaded by white men.



Wooded and plains country, typical of the southern Black Hills

The war clouds that ended in the conflict of 1861-65 and Indian uprisings, under the leadership of Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, Spotted Tail, and other great warriors, hampered the development of this region, but in 1874 an expedition through the Black Hills led by Gen. George A. Custer resulted in the discovery of gold on French Creek and settlement followed rapidly. From 1879 to 1886 were boom days that made legendary figures of such pioneer characters as Wild Bill Hickok, Deadwood Dick, Calamity Jane, and Preacher Smith.

Geological History of Wind Cave

THE BLACK HILLS are a great dome-shaped uplift of the earth's crust from which the younger strata have been removed by erosion. This has exposed the ancient sediments and granites of the core and has left the truncated edges of the younger beds encircling the core in concentric ridges and valleys.

The old granites may be 1,000,000,000 years old. The ancient sediments, into which the granites intruded as molten rock, are even older. Thus there are exposed, in and adjacent to the Black Hills, rocks which may represent more than half the entire age of the earth.

Wind Cave is a limestone cavern, dissolved out through long periods of time by ground waters containing carbonic acid. The great limestone bed, in which the cave occurs, encircles the Black Hills. It is known to geologists as the Pahasapa. It is a deposit formed in an ancient ocean which covered this region some 300,000,000 years ago. Seashells, proof of its origin, are still seen embedded in it.

The major passages of Wind Cave were formed by solution along fractures in the limestone. These fractures were probably formed by the same earth pressures which uplifted the Black Hills region.

The beautiful boxwork, one of the striking features of the cave, is due to the de-

posit of delicate veins of calcite in intersecting crevices. These veins, as the more soluble limestone between was removed by solution, have been left projecting from the surface. Crossing each other, they form small compartments, or boxwork, and in their fragile beauty resemble the tracery of lace.

Other interesting cave features are frostwork, flowstone, and crystal-lined cavities. At one point a "black light" demonstration brings out the colorful fluorescent qualities of a frostwork ledge. The process of solution has produced many strange shapes, some of which resemble plants and animals.

Surface Features

THERE ARE OVER 28,000 acres of prairie grasslands and forests within the boundaries of the park. Also to be seen is wildlife, which is representative of the species that roamed the Black Hills in the early days.

You can usually get close, unobstructed views of the buffalo (bison) herd from the main highway which winds through the rolling hills of the park. Please remember that the buffalo are wild and cannot be treated like domestic animals. *It is not wise, therefore, to get out of your car or to go near any of them.*

Small groups of antelope may often be seen by the careful watcher. The elk frequent the open parts of the park during the night, late afternoon, and early morning. During the day they return to the forested sections. The deer usually remain in the woods, but may sometimes be seen crossing the grasslands. Prairie dogs (ground squirrels, *Cynomys ludovicianus*) have several of their "towns" in the park. These towns once covered many square miles of the Great Plains. On a main park road, a roadside exhibit has been placed near one of the towns to help you understand the habits of these interesting little animals.

Specimen and Wildflower Displays

SPECIMENS of formations from the cave are displayed in the headquarters building for your close examination. You may not, however, handle or remove specimens from the cave.

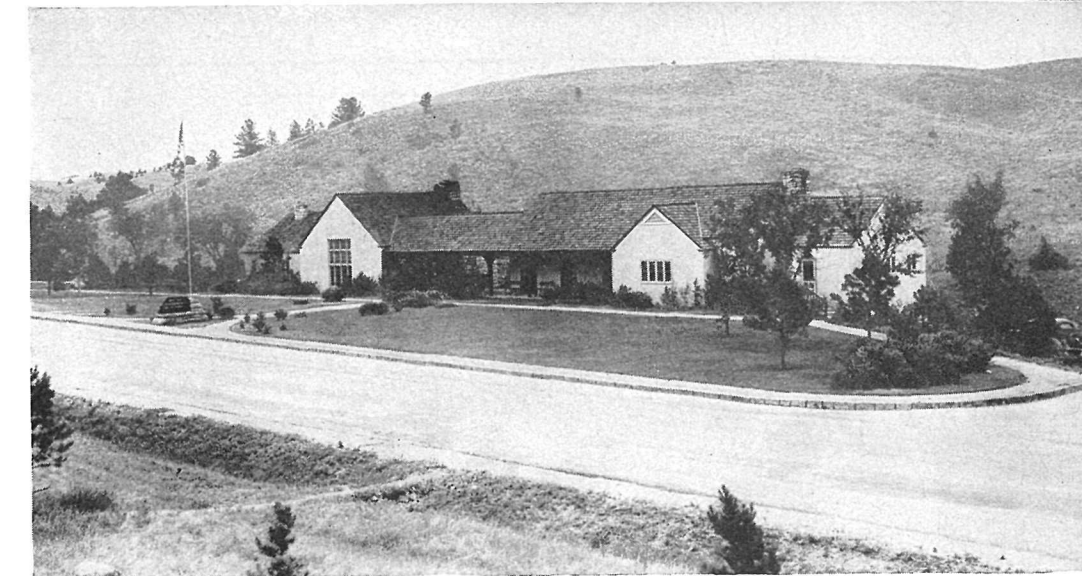
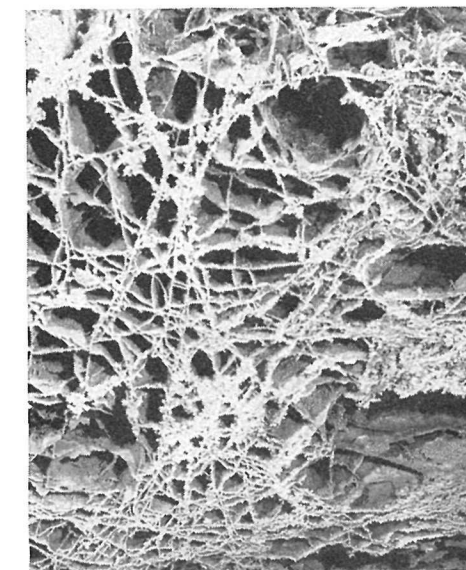
During the summer, a wildflower display is also maintained. It includes the common species of Black Hills flora. *You are requested not to pick flowers in the park.*

Cave Trips

ALL TRIPS through the cave are under the guidance of park rangers. The entrance fee, including Federal tax, is 75 cents, except for children under 12 years of age who are admitted free.

The fee includes the use of the elevator on the outgoing trip. Children must be accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct while in the cave. Groups of school

Boxwork formation, tipped with white aragonite crystals, on ceiling in Elks Room



Administration Building

children 18 years of age or under are admitted free.

The trip through the cave is not unlike the average hike over a mountain trail. Comfortable walking shoes should be worn. The temperature is 47 and does not vary winter or summer. It is advisable to take a light sweater or jacket. The cave is electrically lighted.

Schedules of cave trips are dependent on the availability of guides. Trips require from 1 to 1½ hours.

From June 1 through August 31—Trips every hour of the day, starting at 8 a. m. and ending at 5 p. m.

September, October, April, and May—8:30 a. m.; 10 a. m.; 1:30 p. m.; 3 p. m.

From November to March, inclusive—Any time between 8 to 11 a. m. and 1 to 3:30 p. m. During these months, you should notify the superintendent a few days in advance to assure availability of guide service.

How to Reach the Park

HOT SPRINGS, S. Dak., is the southern entrance to the Black Hills. It is 10

miles south of Wind Cave National Park on U. S. 18 and 85A and State Route 79.

By Automobile.—Wind Cave National Park is on U. S. 85A. From Custer, it can also be reached by U. S. 16A and State Route 87 through Custer State Park.

By Railroad.—The park is accessible from Hot Springs on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Chicago & Northwestern Railroads.

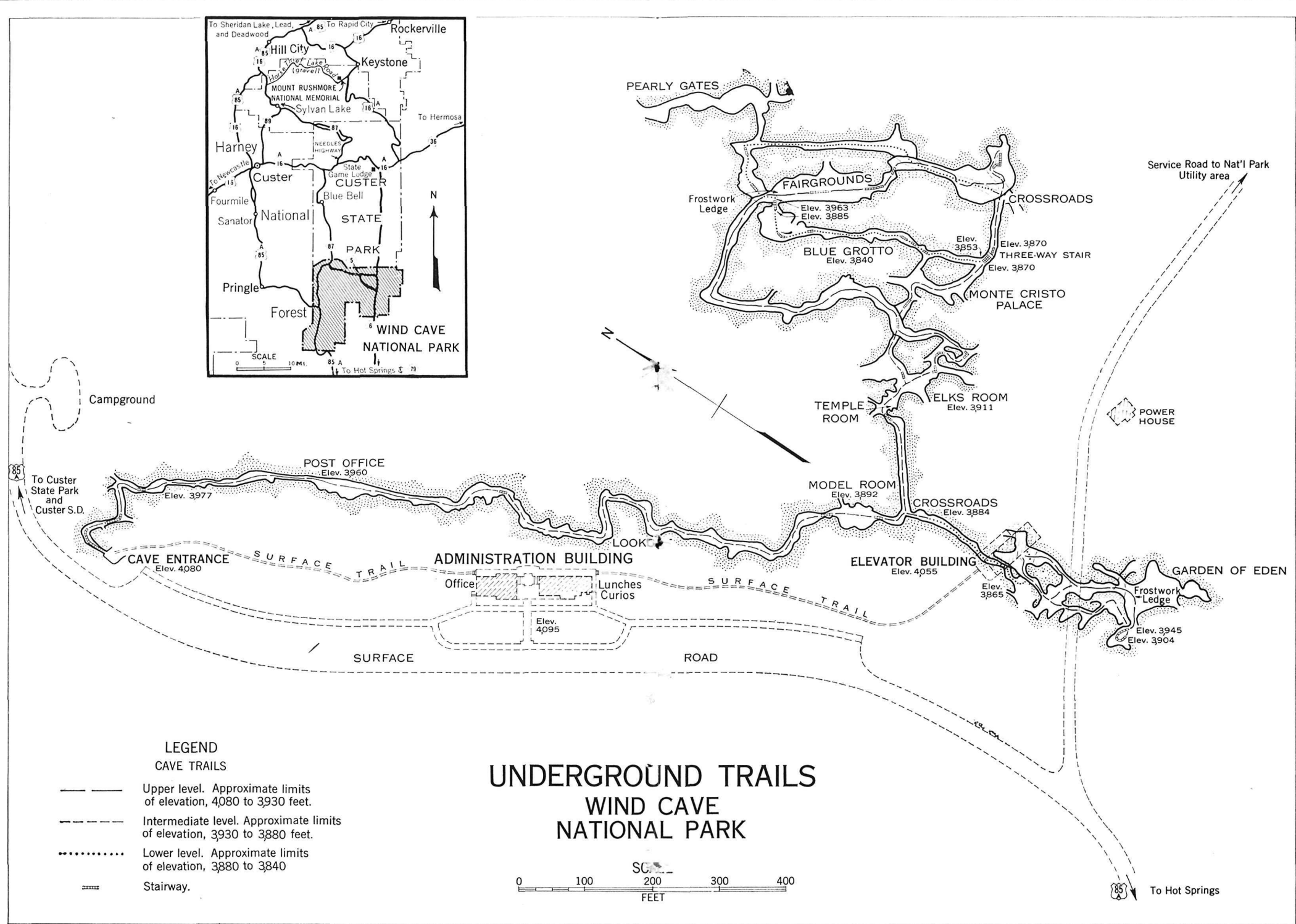
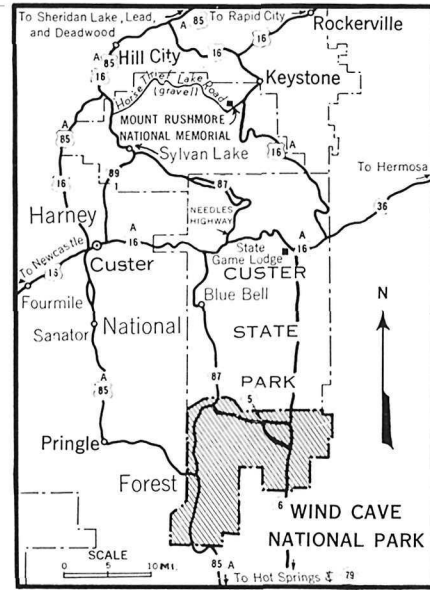
By Bus.—Wind Cave may be reached by bus from Hot Springs, Custer, or Rapid City.

By Air.—The nearest transcontinental air terminal is Hot Springs, S. Dak., to which two flights are made daily by Western Airlines.

For further information regarding transportation to Wind Cave National Park, consult your local travel agencies.

Accommodations

NO HOTELS or tourist cabins are located in the park, but a campground, with free wood and water, is maintained near headquarters. Lunchroom facilities and soda-fountain service are provided during the



UNDERGROUND TRAILS WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

LEGEND

CAVE TRAILS

- Upper level. Approximate limits of elevation, 4080 to 3930 feet.
- - - Intermediate level. Approximate limits of elevation, 3930 to 3880 feet.
- Lower level. Approximate limits of elevation, 3880 to 3840 feet.
- ===== Stairway.



summer. Curios and miscellaneous articles are obtainable. Good hotels, motels, restaurants, and garages are located in Hot Springs, Custer, and other nearby towns.

Administration

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Hot Springs, S. Dak., is in immediate charge of the park.

Help Us Protect This Park

PARK REGULATIONS are designed for the protection of the natural beauties and scenery as well as for your comfort and convenience. Park rangers will help and advise you as well as enforce regulations. If you need information, or are in any difficulty, see a park ranger.

The following synopsis and suggestions are for your general guidance. Full regulations may be seen at the office of the superintendent and at the ranger station.

Preservation of Natural Features.—In order that future generations may enjoy the park in its natural state, you are asked to refrain from collecting rocks, minerals, or plants, and from marring the walls and formations in the cave in any way.

Guide Service.—No person is permitted to enter the cave unless accompanied by a park ranger.

Fires.—Light carefully, and in designated places. Extinguish completely before leaving camp, even for temporary absence. **Do not guess your fire is out—know it.**

Camps.—Please use the designated campground and keep it clean. Combustible rubbish must be burned in campfires, and all other garbage and refuse should be placed in garbage cans or pits provided for the purpose.

Trash.—Do not throw paper, lunch refuse, film cartons, chewing gum paper, or other trash on walks, trails, roads, or elsewhere. Carry until you can burn in camp or place in receptacle. Don't be a litterbug.

Automobiles.—Careful driving is required at all times for protection of yourself, other visitors, and the wildlife. Obey traffic rules. **Do not drive car off the highway.** Tractors with lugs or vehicles without tires are strictly prohibited.

Wildlife.—You should remain on the highway and in, or very near, your car in the park because the buffalo are not confined by fences. These animals are dangerous to persons on foot.

Firearms.—Unless adequately sealed, cased, broken down, or otherwise packed to prevent their use while in the park, firearms are prohibited, except upon written permission from the superintendent.

Wind Cave is open every day throughout the year



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fred A. Seaton, Secretary
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, *Conrad L. Wirth, Director*



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