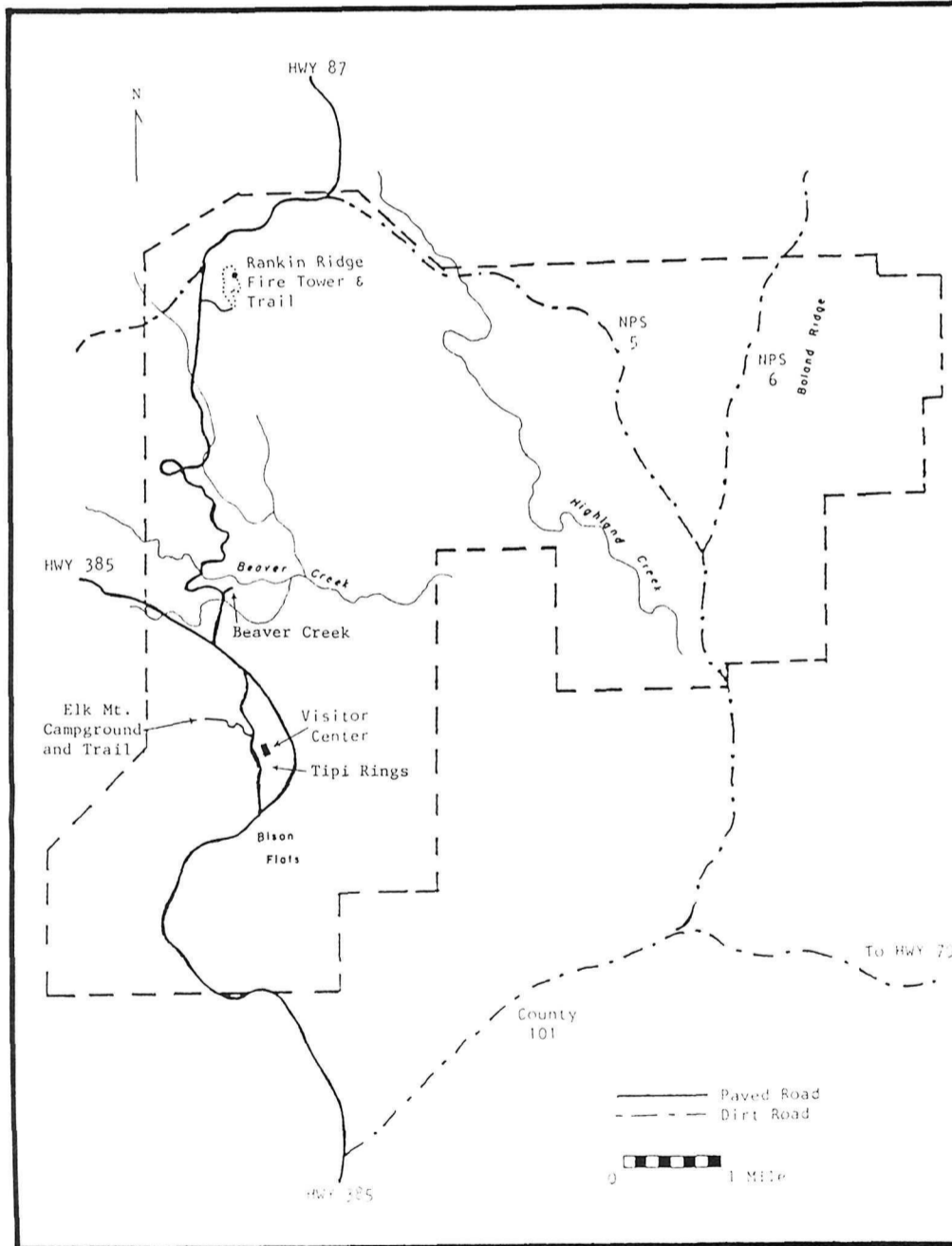
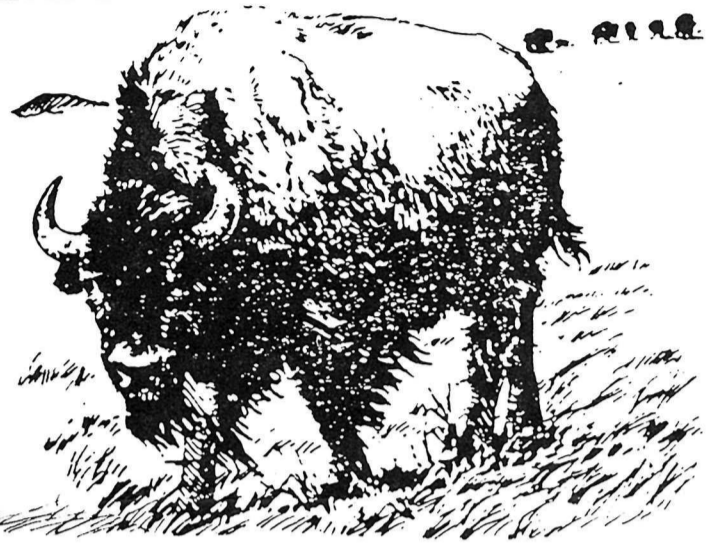


Wind Cave

National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Exploring the Surface World



Wind Cave National Park was established in 1903 to protect a major limestone cave system. Today the 28,232 acre park also includes one of the best examples of a natural prairie grassland in America along with ponderosa pine forests. The park is rich in wildlife and plants, geology, and Native American cultural features.

SAFETY

Wildlife is free to roam throughout most of the park. You may encounter bison, and though they may appear docile, they are unpredictable. They may charge without warning and with surprising speed. If you encounter bison, give them plenty of room. Climb a tree if necessary.

Wind Cave National park protects two different, yet interrelated worlds - the surface and the cave. Remember as you explore the surface world that all features - plants, animals, rocks, as well as bones, antlers, horns and cultural artifacts are protected. Take home only pictures and memories.

TIPI RINGS

Native American tipi rings are stone rings, 10 to 14 feet in diameter, marking the sites of former camps. The stones were used to secure the edges of the tipis and keep them warm. Several rings are located on the north side of NPS 5, two

miles east of its junction with highway 87. You can see other tipi rings near the visitor center. Rangers at the visitor center will direct you to this site.

ELK MOUNTAIN NATURE TRAIL

This self-guided nature trail winds along the edge of the prairie around the Elk Mountain Campground one mile north of the visitor center. The trail begins at the small parking lot across from the campground

amphitheater. A brochure available at the trailhead, describes features seen along the trail.

BEAVER CREEK

Beaver Creek flows across Wind Cave National Park. You can hike along Fire Road 8 from Highway 87 to reach the grassy valley floor of Beaver Creek Canyon. The valley, often shaded by high cliffs, is a good place to find wildflowers. Mule deer, pronghorn, elk and bison are often seen along the stream. Two miles east of Highway 87 Beaver Creek abruptly

disappears underground through a cave opening. This is typical of many streams in the southern Black Hills that flow across limestone bedrock.



RANKIN RIDGE TRAIL

The 1.25 mile Rankin Ridge Nature Trail climbs to the highest point in the park. A trail booklet available at the trailhead discusses various features you will see. During the summer, the ranger in the fire tower at the summit can

show you some of the instruments used to spot fires. From Rankin Ridge, you can see much of Wind Cave National Park, Buffalo Gap, Custer State Park, and in the distance, the Needles and Harney Peak.

ROADS NPS 5 AND 6

Follow roads NPS 5 and 6 to see the eastern portion of the park. NPS 5 leaves Highway 87 near the north boundary of the park, exits the park and joins Custer County road 101. A right turn onto 101 leads you back to Highway 385 just south of the entrance to the park.

NPS 5 and 6 are gravel and dirt roads, not recommended during or immediately after rainstorms. Please do not drive off the roads. Elk and bison can often be seen in this area during the early morning and evening hours.