

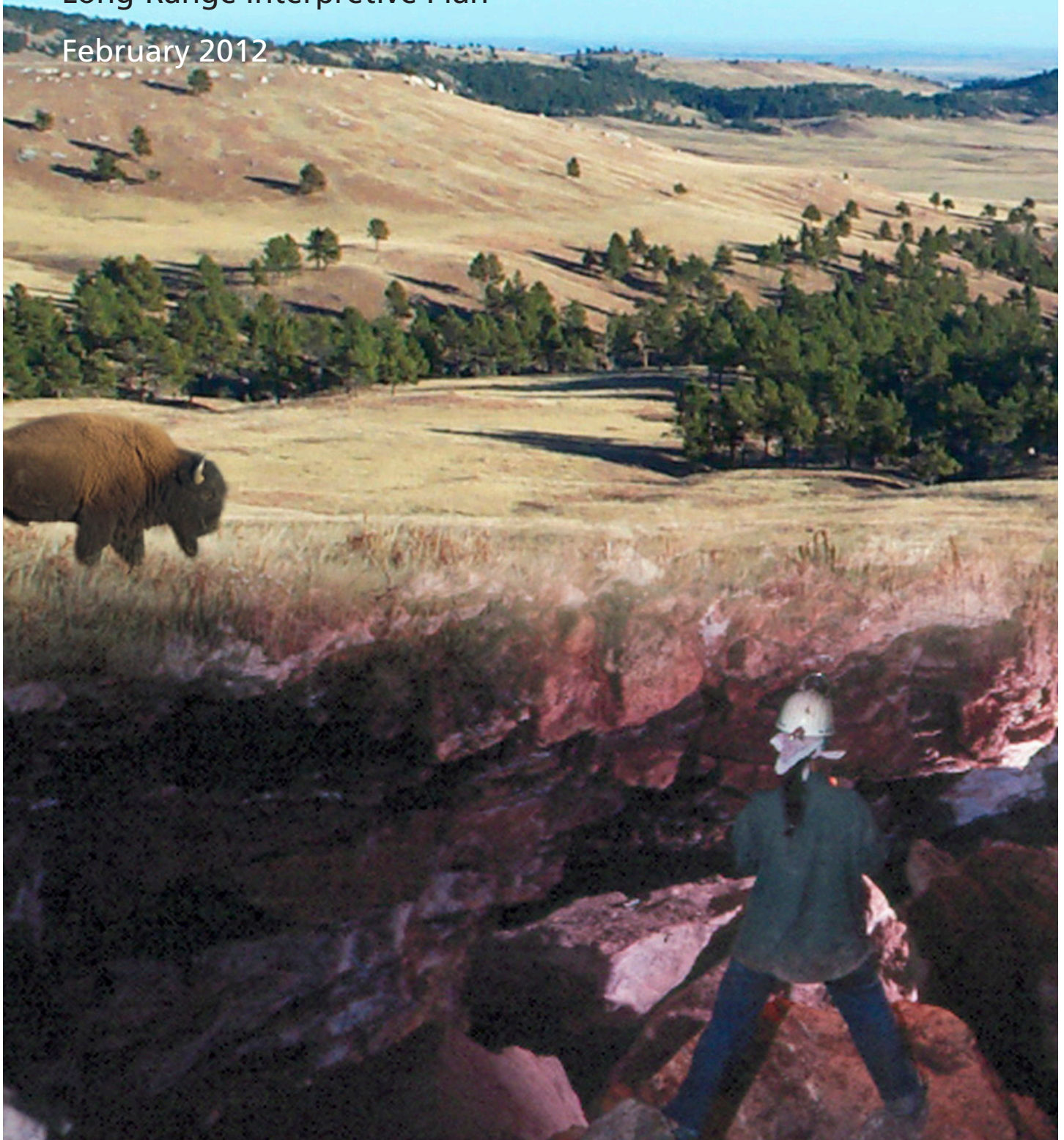
Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Wind Cave National Park

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

February 2012



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Prepared by

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Wind Cave National Park

Midwest Region

Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning

Plan Highlights

During the next seven to ten years, Wind Cave National Park interpretive services will provide visitors with opportunities to increase their understanding and appreciation for the park and its resources; to engage in local educational opportunities; and to participate in nationally significant events.

To provide an active, engaging interpretive program, park staff and partners will work together focused on the following goals:

- Encourage Every Visitor to Experience the Cave
- Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience
- Strengthen the Curriculum-based Education Programs
- Diversify and Promote Surface Opportunities
- Expand Use of Interpretive Media
- Increase Opportunities for Visitors to Experience American Indian Culture
- Expand and Improve Partnerships
- Expand the Volunteer Program
- Expand Existing and Develop New Opportunities to Engage Youth
- Explore Interpretive Opportunities for the Casey Property

The Planning Process

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. Park staff, partners, tribal leaders, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within Wind Cave National Park. Our goal is to promote Wind Cave National Park's resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next seven to ten years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the park purpose, significance and themes. Developed in concert with the park's Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database, it completes the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for the park, as established in Director's Order 6. In addition, this planning process has been customized to meet the needs for Wind Cave National Park, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

A scoping trip was conducted on March 9-10, 2011. The Project Agreement was signed in April 2011. A Foundation workshop was held March 11, 2011, with 21 participants and a Recommendation workshop was held September 14-16, 2011, with 22 participants. Those in attendance at both meetings represented park staff, partners, local community members, tribal leaders, and other regional NPS staff.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

Participants engage in a Foundation Workshop small group exercise.



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Foundation for Planning



Site Background

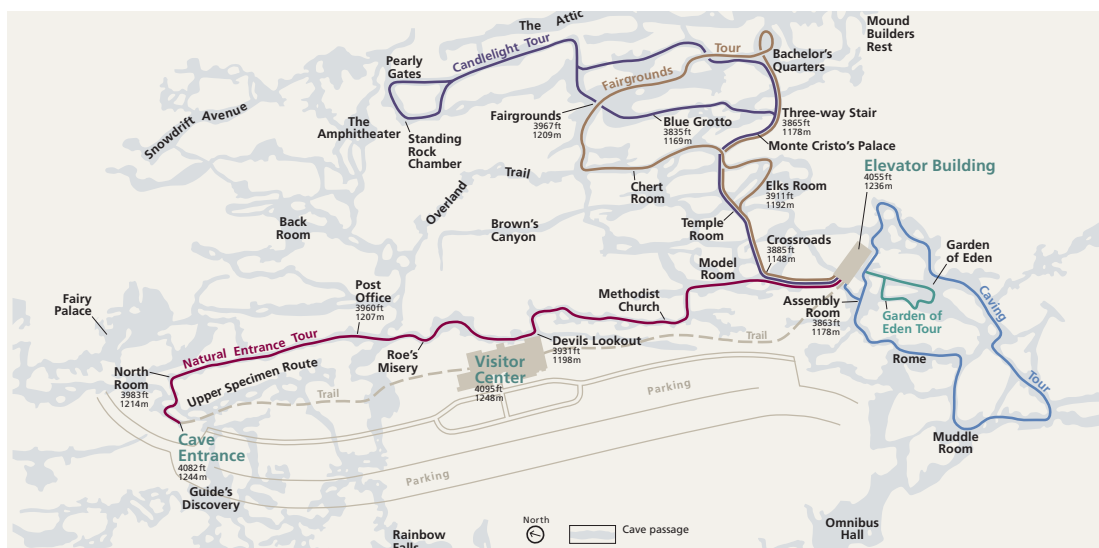
Established in 1903, Wind Cave National Park protects one of the largest, most complex caves in the world along with a mixed-grass prairie that is home to a wide variety of life. It was the eighth national park created and the first to protect a cave. Herds of bison, elk and pronghorn extirpated from the area prior to establishment of Wind Cave National Park have been re-established. Diverse human activities have taken place in and around Wind Cave. American Indians have known about the cave opening for thousands of years and many local tribal creation stories are connected to Wind Cave. In the late 19th century, the J.D. McDonald family began to offer cave tours and sold formations from the cave. Tourism was first promoted by The Wonderful Wind Cave Improvement Company in the 1890s and the Civilian Conservation Corps built most of the park's infrastructure in the 1930s.

Enabling Legislation

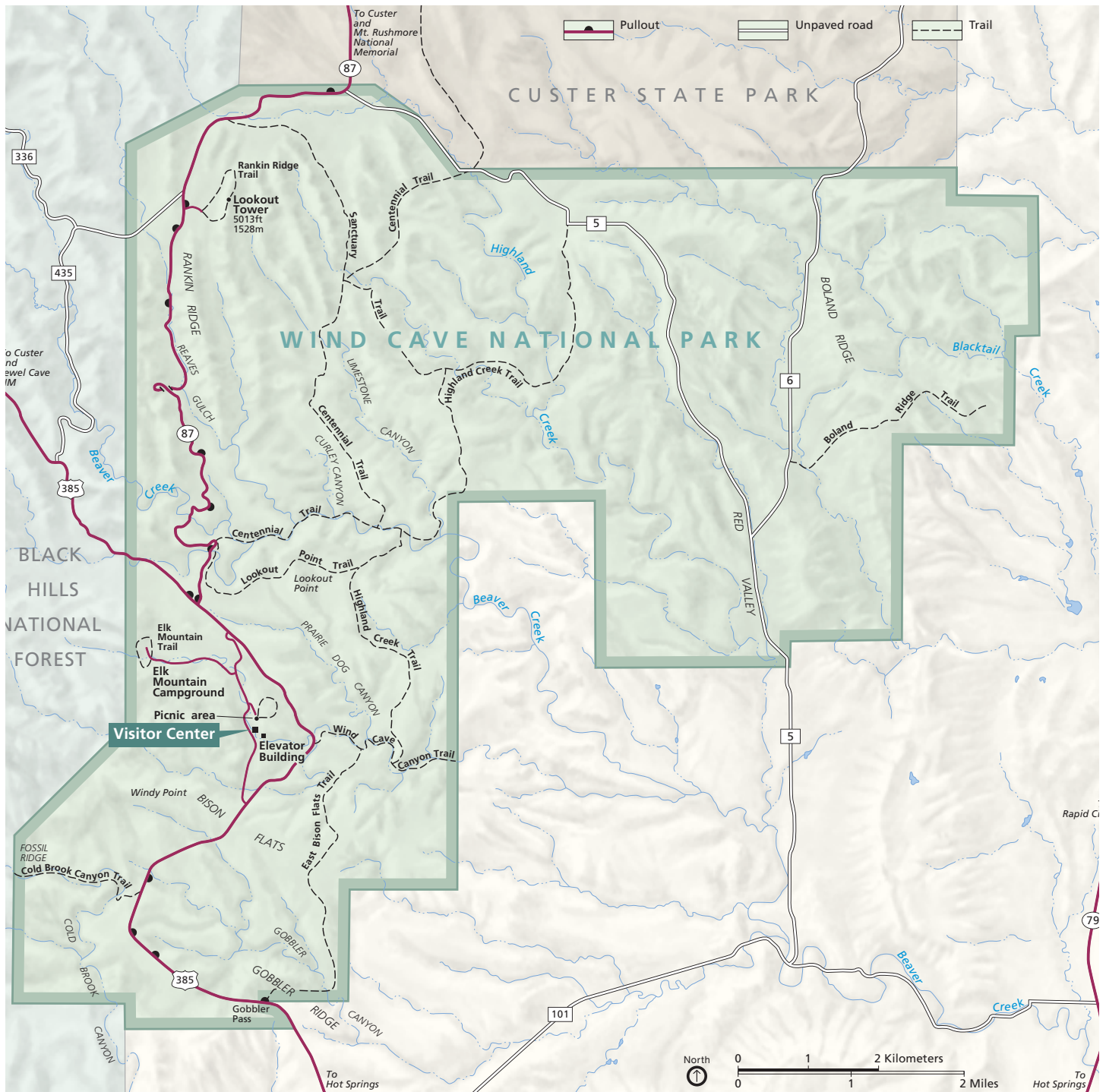
Each unit of the National Park System is created by Congress and the President of the United States. All park planning flows from the mission articulated in the park's enabling legislation. The enabling legislation is the specific piece of legislation through which Congress created the park and declared its

intent for Wind Cave National Park's interpretive services. Programs must support this mission and help the public understand the significance of the park.

Wind Cave National Park was established on January 9, 1903, (32 Stat. 765-766, 16 USC 141-146) to protect Wind Cave and the underground resources of this unique site. The original legislation applied only to the cave and surface developments needed to manage and care for the cave. In 1912, the Wind Cave National Game Preserve was established to provide a permanent range for bison and "such other native American game animals as may be placed therein." In 1935, Section 601 of Public Law 148 (49 Stat. 383, USC 141b) transferred management of the game preserve from the Department of Agriculture to Wind Cave National Park. In 1946, Public Law 708 (60 Stat. 970, 16 USC 141a) expanded the park to over 28,000 acres to maintain a viable population of a variety of big game, especially pronghorn. In 1978, Public Law 95-625 (92 Stat. 3475) authorized adding approximately 228 acres to the southern end of the park. The land was added in 1987. On September 21, 2005, Public Law 109-71 (119 Stat. 2011 and 2012) was passed authorizing the expansion of Wind Cave National Park to include the Casey property adding approximately 5,556 acres to the park. On September 22, 2011, the property was officially added to the park.



The Wind Cave National Park underground trail system



The surface area of Wind Cave National Park

Mission, Purpose, and Significance

National Park Service Mission

A mission statement is a vision for the future and articulates, in broad terms, the ideas that the NPS strives to achieve.

The National Park Service mission is to preserve unimpaired natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Park Purpose

Park purpose statements describe why an area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for a park, and are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making. According to the September 2011 Foundation Statement: The purpose of Wind Cave National Park is to protect the unique Wind Cave resources and preserve and enhance the mixed-grass prairie and native wildlife, while providing for the enjoyment of the public.

Park Significance

Statements of significance describe a National Park System unit's distinctive natural, cultural, and recreational resources and values that are the factual rationale for national recognition of the site.

According to the September 2011 Foundation Statement, Wind Cave National Park is significant as a unit of the National Park System because: Wind Cave is one of the longest, oldest, and most complex caves in the world and contains the largest concentration of boxwork, a rare cave formation first described at Wind Cave.

- Wind Cave is one of the best places in the world to view remnants of ancient sediment-filled caves (i.e., paleokarst).
- Wind Cave is considered a sacred site for many American Indian tribes. This setting gives a sense of life and spiritually that fosters respect, cultural understanding, and an appreciation for the diverse cultures that have cared for this special place.
- Wind Cave National Park supports one of the most intact prairie wildlife communities in North America, with pronghorn, mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, prairie dogs, mountain lion, endangered black-footed ferret, and genetically diverse and brucellosis-free American bison.
- Wind Cave National Park supports one of the last remaining examples of mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine, and riparian plant communities found in the Black Hills.
- Wind Cave National Park provides one of the most expansive unobstructed beautiful natural vistas, night skies, and natural soundscapes found in the Black Hills region

Wind Cave contains the largest concentration of boxwork in the world.



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes capture the essence of Wind Cave National Park significance. They include the most important stories and represent core concepts and ideas that every visitor should have the opportunity to experience. Interpretive themes represent an important tool for organizing and creating interpretive programs, services, and media, but they should not be considered something that a visitor would have to repeat at the end of an interpretive experience.

While interpretation of any site could touch upon many stories, focused themes increase effectiveness. When well conceived, themes explore the meanings behind the facts. They open minds to new ideas and multiple points of view. When linked to commonly held emotions or universal human experiences, themes encourage visitors to see themselves in Wind Cave National Park's stories and significant resources, thereby discovering personal relevance.

A team of staff, stakeholders, and partners worked together to confirm these themes and associated stories/ topics during the Foundation workshop held in March 2011. They are based

on the themes identified in the 2001 draft Long-Range Interpretive Plan and the 2011 Foundation Statement. Appendix C lists the stories associated with each theme identified by workshop participants.

Vast Underground Frontier

Wind Cave, one of the oldest, longest, and most complex three-dimensional maze caves in the world, is a vast underground frontier that is still being explored and studied.

Cave Formations

Wind Cave has a large variety of cave formations, including 95% of the world's boxwork. These [formations] require great care and wise management to ensure their protection and survival for scientific enlightenment, human inspiration, and the enjoyment of future generations.

Sacred Site

The entrance to Wind Cave and its unique winds, a sacred site to many American Indian tribes, offers a sense of life and spirituality that fosters

Bison thrive again on the Wind Cave prairie thanks to the efforts of early conservationists and the continued dedication of resource managers.



respect, cultural understanding, and an appreciation for the diverse cultures that have cared for and about this special place.

Sky and Surface

Wind Cave National Park protects a spectacular night sky and some of the finest examples of mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine, and riparian plant communities. These natural resources are superb remnants of what once covered a large portion of the central North American continent.

Prairie Wildlife

The survival of the thriving prairie wildlife community at Wind Cave, including species that once came close to extinction such as bison, elk, pronghorn, and black-footed ferrets, is a result of the early efforts of conservationists, the establishment of the Wind Cave National Game Preserve in 1912, and the continued dedication of resource managers.

Connections

Exploring the park's diverse surface world, its mysterious subsurface, and their relationship to the human world provides insight into natural processes and the opportunity to investigate how everything is connected and how change has consequences.

Paleontology

The paleontological resources of Wind Cave National Park provide opportunities to explore the stories of ancient earth and the evolution of life.

Archeology

The many archeological sites amidst the abundant resources and sometimes harsh conditions of the Black Hills' landscape illustrate the lasting connections of native

people with the land and their instinct of survival and perseverance common to all human beings.

Humans

The park preserves evidence of human struggles, perseverance, and accomplishments illustrated by the fortitude of the American Indians, the passion of Alvin McDonald, and the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Preservation and Protection

The establishment, growth, and endurance of Wind Cave National Park, the first cave to be preserved as a national park, parallels the changing perspectives of how to preserve and protect the remarkable resources entrusted to the National Park Service.

Management Goals

2008-2012 Strategic Plans:

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, Wind Cave National Park developed a strategic plan and management goals through 2012. The following goals address recreation, interpretation, and visitor experiences.

The outcomes, or how well the park is achieving its visitor-related goals, are measured annually at every unit of the National Park System through survey forms that are distributed to visitors at each NPS unit. Visitors send their completed survey forms to the University of Idaho where the data is collected and compiled for each NPS unit. The survey results reflect visitor opinion about each park's facilities, services and recreational opportunities, and measures visitor understanding and appreciation of each NPS unit's significance.

Mission Goal IIa1:

By September 30, 2012, 95% of visitors to Wind Cave National Park are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Actuals: 2008 – 95%; 2009 – 99%, 2010 – 99%, 2011- 99%

Mission Goal IIb1:

By September 30, 2012, 80% of Wind Cave National Park visitors understand the significance of the park.

Actuals: 2008 – 85%; 2009 – 86%; 2010 – 82%, 2011 – 90%

Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Wind Cave National Park. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

At the natural cave entrance visitors will have the opportunity to experience and actually feel the wind.



Visitors to Wind Cave National Park will have opportunities to:

- Go crawling in the cave, listen to the silence, and experience the dark.
- Drive through the park to see and photograph bison, elk, and deer.
- Ask a variety of questions to a diverse park staff.
- Experience above and below ground landscapes and vistas not found in their daily life.
- Go for a long hike on a prairie trail to view wildlife with little to no sign of human disturbance.
- Discover the native prairie and the cave through programs, talks, and workshops.
- Hear American Indians speak of the importance and relevance of Wind Cave.
- Visit a bison jump.
- Explore the cave with a park ranger to understand cave geology and ecology.
- Feel comfortable underground.
- Feel the wind and the coolness of the cave.
- Come to Wind Cave for a sacred ceremony and be undisturbed.
- Experience a dark night sky.
- See the grass blow like waves in the ocean while watching a herd of bison graze.
- Use a digital device on a geology tour of the park.
- Experience Wind Cave via podcasts.

Park Visitors

This is a broad description of park visitors and their needs – including current and potential visitors. “Visitor” describes anyone who uses a park’s interpretation and education services whether in person or “virtually” through digital technologies.

Over 620,000 visitors come to Wind Cave National Park annually. This figure is based on a five-year average of monthly public use data taken during calendar years 2007-2011. About 16% of the visitors (96,328) have gone on cave tours annually during this same time period.

A comprehensive visitor survey was conducted at Wind Cave National Park from July 27 - August 2, 2010, by the Park Studies Unit of the University of Idaho. Survey questions helped determine the demographic make-up of park visitors, as well as what they did or did not like about their experience. The survey also addressed economic impacts to the region from park visitation. Many of the responses were very similar to those reported during the last visitor survey that was conducted in July 22-28, 1990. Of the 852 questionnaires distributed to visitors, 575 were returned for a 67.5% response rate. Some results noted in the survey’s summary concluded that:

- 87% were first time visitors.
- 87% of visitor groups were family groups.
- 31% of visitor groups made the decision to visit the park on the day of their visit.
- 26% decided to visit 2-7 days before their visit.
- 93% of the visitors were from the United States.
- 11% of the visitors were from Minnesota.



- 57% of non-resident visitors were in the area to primarily visit other attractions.
- 31% of the visitors were 15 years or younger; 27% were 36-60; and 6% were older than 60.
- Cave tours were the most common (77%) and most important (71%) activity.
- 50% of the visitors went on the Natural Entrance Tour.
- 20% of the visitors could not go into cave due to physical limitations.
- 56% of the visitors viewed the [upstairs] prairie exhibits compared to 15% who viewed the [downstairs] cave exhibits.

Roving rangers help increase visitor understanding and appreciation of park resources.

In the future, the park would like to create more opportunities to connect with:

- Visitors representing a greater range of ethnic, racial, cultural, and economic diversity
- Visitors who are looking for more ways to use their digital technology
- Youth
- Virtual visitors
- Distance learning education groups
- American Indians
- Visitors who are coming during the off-season and shoulder seasons

Issues and Challenges Affecting Interpretation

Wind Cave National Park has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and dedicated staff and supporters. It also faces a number of challenges. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome these challenges.

- 2012 Wind Cave National Game Preserve Centennial and the 2016 NPS Centennial will both occur within the lifetime of this plan. The park needs to plan early to provide appropriate activities. These special events will cause visitation to increase and may divert staff and funding from regularly scheduled programming and services. Staff burnout from hosting these events may become an unintended consequence.
- During the next 10 years there will be an increased number of retirees who will need interpretive services that require greater physical accessibility and may be looking for volunteer or seasonal employment.

With the Casey Property acquisition, future visitors will be able to learn more about the Sanson Ranch, an historic homestead and cattle ranching operation.



- Future audiences may have different expectations and needs for media and technology to better understand park stories and to make connections with park resources. Park staff will need to stay informed about changing technologies to create park stewards.
- Establishment of a Friends group will raise awareness of park issues and concerns, create fundraising opportunities, and increase advocacy opportunities.
- The population growth within South Dakota and the Black Hills will possibly change visitor demographics. Park staff will need to provide interpretive programming to meet the needs of new audiences, languages, and cultures.
- Natural systems will continue to be affected by light pollution, disease, insect infestation, the listing and de-listing of endangered species, and invasive exotics and non-native species. These changes to the resource may affect visitor experience. It will be incumbent upon park staff and partners to identify those changes and be flexible in addressing them.
- Due to budget shortfalls and curriculum mandates, schools may not be able to come to the park so outreach alternatives will need to be identified.
- Wind Cave National Park's location makes it highly susceptible to many external environmental threats that will require adequate planning and cooperation with local entities, tribes, and agencies to maintain the water table, water quality, viewshed, air, soundscape, and visitor experience.
- The Casey Property was acquired by the park in September 2011. Planning will be required to preserve the resource and to develop safe and memorable visitor experiences.

Existing Conditions



The following is a brief and generalized description of visitor experiences and interpretive services that existed in FY2010. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can help to justify some of the plan's proposed actions.

Arrival, Orientation, and Marketing

Marketing

The park informs the public of upcoming events and special programs through public service announcements posted on the park website as well as sent to area newspapers, radio stations and television stations. The park receives information requests on a daily basis via letters, phone calls, and e-mail messages. Most requests are for basic information about the park and/or directions to the park. In the past these requests came through the mail. Now the park is receiving more requests via e-mail.

Hot Springs Area Chamber of Commerce

Park staff exchanges information with the Hot Springs Area Chamber of Commerce concerning opportunities for visitors to explore the park and attractions in the

During the summer the visitor center can become quite crowded.



surrounding area. The park advertised (using Black Hills Parks and Forests Association funds) in the Chamber directory to encourage town visitors to visit the park.

Signs

The park does not have a formal sign plan. New orientation and trailhead signs were produced by Harpers Ferry Center as part of the wayside exhibit project and the final sign was installed in 2011.

Interpretation staff maintain and update the four bulletin boards located at the Elk Mountain Campground. While there is no bulletin board plan, the Interpretation and Visitor Protection divisions have started to discuss ways to increase the interpretive effectiveness of the bulletin boards.

Website

The park website is a very popular way to gain information about the park. Virtual visitors access the website to learn about park history, interpretive programs, operating hours, and directions to the park. The park recognizes the importance of the website as a tool to reach "armchair" visitors, long distance researchers, and as a pre-visit information opportunity. Interpretive staff members work continually to upgrade this media.

Travelers Information System (TIS)

The park has one TIS station that can be heard from about Frog Rock on State Road 87 to the south entrance on US Highway 385. Interpretive staff members regularly update information about camping, safety, hiking, cave tours, and directions. Interpretive resource protection messages are also featured.

Facilities

Visitor Center

During FY2011, over 120,000 visitors came into the visitor center which serves as the primary facility for preparing visitors to go on a cave tour. All tours depart from the visitor center. During the winter season, fee collection and cooperating association sales are both conducted at the information desk which can cause lines to form for both functions during peak visitation periods. A series of orientation panels adjacent to the information desk describe programs and trails alleviating some of the pressure on the staff at the information desk. During the summer, the cave tour fees are collected at a separate desk located at the rear of the visitor center near the auditorium. There are exhibits and an interpretive film that offer more insight into surface and sub-surface resources and a bookstore and vending area. The visitor center is open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. daily with extended hours in the summer, and it is closed January 1, Thanksgiving, and December 25.

Elevator Building

All visitors touring the cave pass through the Elevator Building. Exhibits are located in the lobby area and allow visitors waiting to use the elevator their first glimpse of the world below. There is also a storage room that Wild Cave and Candlelight Tour participants use to get outfitted for their tours.

Trails

Prairie Vista Nature Trail – 1-mile loop located near the visitor center. Wayside exhibit panels are the primary interpretive method. The trail crosses the prairie and provides panoramic views and information about the grasslands.



Rankin Ridge Nature Trail – 1-mile loop located off Highway 87 goes to highest point in the park and has spectacular views. The focus of the trail guide is forest ecology.

While the underground resources are only accessible through guided tours, visitors are encouraged to hike the surface on their own.

Elk Mountain Nature Trail – 1-mile loop located within the campground and adjacent to the amphitheater. Visitors can explore where the grasslands and forest converge. A trail guide is available.

Eight hiking trails vary from 1.4 to 8.6 miles one way. The Wind Cave Canyon Trail is the only easy hike. Most trails are rated moderately strenuous to strenuous. The Boland Ridge Trail is the only trail along the east side of the park. Each trail offers a different viewpoint for scenic vistas, wildlife observation, and plant communities.

Elk Mountain Campground and Amphitheater

Evening programs are offered at and guided walks begin from the amphitheater during the summer. Equipment located in the project booth includes a digital projector, computer, and sound system.

Picnic Area

The picnic area is located $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north of the visitor center adjacent to the Prairie Vista Trail.

Interpretive Media

Digital Media

Over 12,000 visitors watch the park's interpretive film "Wind Cave – Two Worlds" annually. It is shown in the visitor center auditorium. The film reveals how Wind Cave National Park is actually two parks in one. The first is a diverse, sunlit prairie world, and the second is a mysterious cave secreted beneath the prairie. The film consists mostly of interviews and scenic views inside the cave and on the surface. While offering many facts about the park that help visitors think differently about this special place, the film provides few opportunities for visitors to feel differently. The underground scenes in the film do not reflect the 99% of the cave that is inaccessible to most visitors and do not adequately address the Vast Underground Frontier and Cave Formation themes.

Short video programs are available for download from the park website that show cave features and describe park history connecting the viewer to the vast underground frontier, cave formation, prairie wildlife, humans, and preservation and protection themes.

The cooperating association worked with the Black Hills, Badlands & Lakes Association to develop free travel applications about the park for the iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, and Android phones. The applications are more useful for orientation and information purposes rather than providing interpretive opportunities. The association sells a CD featuring a 360 degree tour of cave rooms both on and off of the tour route.

Publications

Official Park Map and Guide (2009) – Effective use of maps to show location within the Black Hills, surface features, and sub-surface features.

Elk Mountain (1992) and Rankin Ridge (2002) Nature Trail Guides are available year-round at trailheads. The guides may be used for free and returned to the box or purchased for fifty cents. Both guides emphasize the sky and surface theme and Elk Mountain also connects to the connections theme. When each guide was reprinted, revisions and updates were made; however, the original publication date was not changed.

The park newspaper, "Passages," is published annually and includes articles, program schedules, junior ranger information, plan your visit information, hiking information, as well as a cooperating association sales page.

Most of the park's publications are site bulletins that were written in 2008. The site bulletins are available upon request at the visitor center desk. They are also sent out with information requests especially to school children.

- Geology Driving Tour (no date) – Geologic features are described using a timeline. Interpretive techniques are used to help visitors connect to geologic features through connections to the vast underground frontier, connections, and paleontology themes.
- Vanishing prairie (no date) – Emphasis on the sky and surface theme and the importance of protecting the mixed-grass prairie.
- Geology (2/2008) – Emphasis on the vast underground frontier, cave formations, and connections themes. While front page is primarily informational, the back page explains how the cave is formed and the connections between the surface and sub-surface features.

- Environmental Concerns (1/2008) – Emphasis on the connections theme and how the surface, sub-surface, and human worlds are interconnected. Effective descriptions of how change that occurs in each world affects the other two.
- Wind Cave History (2/2008) – Emphasis on the prairie wildlife, humans, and preservation and protection themes. Brief descriptions of how Wind Cave was discovered and why as well as how it is being protected and preserved for future generations.
- Climate Change: Impacts of Warming on the Great Plains (10/11/2007) – Emphasis on the sky and surface and connections themes. Descriptions of how scientists are discovering the impacts that climate change is having on the Great Plains and specifically, Wind Cave.
- White Nose Syndrome (6/2010) – Emphasis on what White Nose Syndrome is and potential ways to mitigate the spread of this disease.

General information guides are available including Campground Information (1/2008), Horseback Riding (2/2008), Backcountry Camping (2/2008), and Sources of Information for the Black Hills and Surrounding Area (2/2008).

Checklists include Mammals (4/2004), Birds (no date), Reptiles and Amphibians (no date), and Woodland, Prairie, and Riparian Forbs and Shrubs (no date).

A basic park information sheet is available in German, Japanese, Spanish, and French.

Wayside Exhibits

There are 35 full-color fiberglass-embedded with digital print wayside exhibit panels throughout the park. Harpers Ferry Center produced the



wayside plan and exhibit panels, and the park finished installing them in 2011.

“Temporary” exhibits were created more than 20 years ago.

The wayside exhibits along the park road emphasize the sky and surface and the prairie wildlife themes. Wayside exhibits are used to interpret the Prairie Vista Trail located behind the visitor center and above the cave. The wayside exhibits emphasize the sky and surface and humans themes.

Exhibits

“Wind Cave National Park Preserves and Protects a Diverse Environment” (prairie wildlife, connections, sacred site, and preservation and protection themes) is the title of the exhibits that are displayed upstairs in the visitor center just off of the main lobby. The exhibits were created in the mid-1990s by park staff and focus on the surface resources of the park. These “temporary” exhibits are deteriorating due to the use of impermanent materials and construction.

“Cave Resources” (vast underground frontier and cave formations themes) is the title of the exhibits that are displayed downstairs. These outdated exhibits

from the early 1980s focus on the history of cave exploration, some cave geology, and mineral formation displays. The cave minerals display sends the wrong message to visitors about collecting park resources. The exhibits are deteriorating from age and lack details on current research and exploration, life in the cave, and the impact of surface conditions on the cave. They fail to provide visitors with an opportunity to develop emotional connections with cave resources. In fact, one visitor described the exhibits as “Rocks and pictures of rocks.” There is an emphasis on the timeline of events and early history, yet little information about cave etiquette or the world class nature of cave resources. The monitor that shows wind flow in and out of cave effectively reveals how the cave “breathes.” A portable exhibit (in the visitor center lobby during the summer and the vending area during the winter) does offer some cave etiquette guidance.

A schematic design exhibit plan was developed by Harpers Ferry Center in December 2007. Two separate, but inter-related, exhibitions are planned that interpret the cave and the park’s surface resources. The park lacks funding to fully design, fabricate, and install the exhibits.

A 2004 tracking study was conducted to determine how visitors use the visitor center, determine visitors’ wayfinding

needs, and visitors’ level of interest in the park’s interpretive themes. The study found that visitors have a limited amount of time to spend in the park and that cave tours were the primary reason for entering the visitor center. Interaction with new, more effective exhibits while they are waiting may enrich the visitors’ tour experience as well as introduce them to other park resources.

Junior Ranger

During FY2011, more than 2400 children participated in the program. The free booklet is available in the bookstore and is designed for children up to age 12. Depending on the child’s age, there are three different tracks that can be followed to successfully earn a certificate and badge. Junior Ranger hikes are offered two days a week in the morning during the summer season. The sky and surface, prairie wildlife, connections, and humans themes are emphasized.

The Junior Ranger hikes did not receive much participation because there were few families with young children using the campground. The park is currently exploring possibilities with the Boys and Girls Club of Hot Springs to offer environmental education programs once a week in the summer, along with adapting the Adventures in Nature program to attract home school children to the park in the summer.

Three age-specific Junior Ranger programs encourage young children to become park stewards.



Interpretive Media Assets

Media assets include other park resources available to interpretation that support the design of personal services programs or interpretive media.

Artifact Collection

A small museum collection is located in the visitor center that is available for interpreters to use when researching their programs. While these materials cannot be used in programs, there is a

small collection of antlers, rocks, and hides in interpretive storage that can be used.

Archives

Archives consisting of written material and photographs are stored in the park's museum collection and can be used for research or duplicated for programs.

Art Work

The park's art collection is very small. Two Works Progress Administration (WPA)-era prints are on display in the auditorium and depict park surface scenes.

Park Library

The park library contains approximately 4,000 catalogued publications including books, videos, research, and historical documents. The library has a vertical file system with many articles and research publications and a large music and sound recording file. Stored in the library are wildlife and bird sightings as well as historic press releases and superintendent reports.

Personal Services

Education

The park has two formal environmental education programs – Connections and Water in the Environment. During FY2011, 28 education programs were presented for 1,147 students, teachers, and adults. Reservations for these programs are accepted beginning March 1 and fill within a few days. The programs are offered late April through mid-May. Most of the schools have participated in the program many times and some have been participating since the programs started in 1988. The student/park ranger ratio for the program is 15 students to one park ranger. The Project Wild-



style activities encourage hands-on exploration of the environment. Each program is customized in cooperation with the teacher to support the classroom curriculum and to encourage the students to connect with the natural world. Teachers are provided with a pre- and post-visit activity packet for all of the Environmental Education programs so the students will be prepared for their visit to the park.

Connections is designed for grades K-8 and helps students discover relationships between the mixed-grass prairie, the ponderosa pine forest, the cave, the plants and animals that live in these environments, and themselves. These on-site programs last between 4 and 6 hours with most schools staying 4 to 5 hours. The programs begin with an introduction and a large group activity at the visitor center and then move out to the prairie with the students in small groups. The group returns to the visitor center for lunch and then goes into the cave. The program is concept based and supports National and South Dakota science standards.

An interpretive, non-archival, collection aids park staff in describing park resources.

Both environmental education programs encourage hands-on exploration of Wind Cave resources.



Water in the Environment follows the flow of water through watersheds, plants, soil, rock layers, and into the cave. Together, park rangers and students investigate the critical issues surrounding water in our environment. Interpretive rangers also present *Fire, Fire, Fire*, a program on fire ecology, which investigates the role of fire on the prairie ecosystem. These programs are generally presented to sixth grade through college students.

For the last four years, the park has presented surveying and mapping classes to local middle and high school classes during the spring semesters. These programs help the students use the math skills they are learning in the classroom and help them understand the reasons the park inventories and maps the cave. The programs work well, but they are at capacity and the park cannot easily provide services to new schools. The program is designed to take four hours. Schools coming from long distances are tied to school bus schedules which means that they often cannot stay for four hours and consequently do not receive the full program. At one time programs were offered in the spring and the fall. The fall sessions were often more successful than

the spring sessions, because the teachers and students were more focused and the trip was not just an end of the year field trip. Due to park budget constraints, the fall programs are no longer offered.

The *Adventures in Nature* program is designed to provide an opportunity for young children and their caregivers to experience nature and nature play in an unstructured, safe environment. The program provides the opportunity for toddlers and their caregiver to learn about nature and explore the park, awakening a sense of wonder in the child, encouraging appreciation of the park, and promoting stewardship of the environment. The program includes an introductory activity, a short lesson which includes activities to focus the children's attention on the concept being taught, a hike, and a craft that they can take home. The program generally lasts one and a half to two hours and is presented on the second and fourth Tuesdays in January, February, March, and the first Tuesday in April. One of the challenges of this program is having enough supplies on hand for activities and crafts when the park does not know how many children will be attending. Reservations might be helpful, but they

would need to be taken in such a way that they do not discourage participants from attending. The program is an intensive personal services program and needs interested and experienced staff.

The Plus 50 program offered in cooperation with Western Dakota Tech (WDT) was designed to provide training for retirees interested in working at a park. Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, and Badlands National Park collaborated with WDT to present the program that involved two classroom days and a visit to each of the five parks. The program used the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands Interpretive Talk Module as its foundation. Each day-long trip included a tour of the park and sessions on developing an interpretive talk. The final day, students presented a 10-minute program on the park of their choice. The program is no longer offered because WDT no longer had the funding available to support the program and the classes never reached the projected enrollment WDT and the parks needed to make the program a success.

Traveling Trunk – *Water in the Environment* emphasizes the role water plays in shaping the world in which we live. Water is one of the oldest and most powerful forces in our world; it sustains life and sculpts the world around us. Trunks are sent free to local schools with shipping charged for schools outside of the area. The trunk includes a teacher's guide, activities, and a four-week program with one-hour periods each day.

Distance Learning – The Assembly Room and Middle Elevator Landings have been wired to allow internet access from inside the cave. Equipment has been purchased and the park is working with the Southeast Nebraska Distance Learning Contract for technical support and the advertisement of the programs. Distance learning classes could be broadcast from

anywhere a network connection exists. This includes broadcasting from the deck behind the visitor center or from the auditorium. Curriculum is being developed by a former seasonal employee who is working on her master's degree in education.

Personal Services Programs

During FY2011, 102,323 visitors attended the interpretive programs. 96,915 went on cave tours and 5,408 attended other programs. Each interpreter designs his/her own programs; however, all of the themes of these programs come directly from or support the primary interpretive themes of the park. Visitation can dramatically increase on cold, rainy summer days necessitating the need for extra tours to handle the increased visitation.

Cave tours – fees charged for all tours; approximately 25 to 40 people per tour; with 1 interpreter on each tour

- Fairgrounds – 1 1/2-hour tour through larger rooms in developed areas of the cave; tour limit of 40 people
- Garden of Eden – 1-hour tour through the upper level cave with representative features seen; only tour offered during winter season; tour limit of 25 people
- Natural Entrance – 1 1/4-hour tour through middle level of the cave; lots of boxwork; tour limit of 40 people
- Candlelight – 2-hour tour limited to 10 people and no younger than 8 years; reservations; less developed and unlighted part of cave
- Wild Cave – 4-hour tour is an introduction to basic caving. Special equipment provided. Reservations; 10 people and no younger than 16
- Special Tours – 45-minute tour to the Assembly Room offered upon request for visitor with mobility issues or special needs.

Wind Cave Walkers – A monthly hike led by a volunteer invites visitors to hike in the park off established trails. The audience for this program consists primarily of local residents who want to see hidden areas of the park during off-season months.

Prairie Night Hike/Evening Hike – Attracts local visitors who normally do not hike or use the park. The two-hour program begins with a short slide program at the Elk Mountain Campground Amphitheater and then the group caravans to the prairie for a ranger-led hike. It is offered on Tuesdays and Saturdays in late June and all of July.

Discovery Activity – Offered three times daily in front of the visitor center during June and July and once daily during August. The park ranger is available for an hour and the program is repeated several times during that hour. Topic varies by park ranger but are non-cave related to provide visitors an opportunity to learn about other park themes.

Prairie Hike – A two-hour ranger-led hike offered in the morning each day during the summer; location varies.

Campfire Programs – A 45-minute ranger-program held at Elk Mountain Campground Amphitheater. The program is offered every day in early June and August and every day except Tuesdays and Saturdays late June and all of July. (The evening hike is offered instead of the campfire programs on those days.) “A Sounds of Autumn” two-hour evening program is offered in September on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays so that visitors can listen for elk.

During FY2011, 4,213 visitors were contacted through informal interpretation. The interpreters rove on the paved highways in the park. Most questions are about wildlife and where the cave is located.

Wild cave tours offer visitors a basic introduction to caving.



Community off-site programs are presented to local service organizations that would like more information about resource management, interpretation, or administrative programs provided by the park. These programs are often presented when the park is changing or initiating a new resource management program or plan. The most recent of these programs were associated with the new elk management plan. These programs are generally presented by the chief or assistant chief of interpretation. During FY2011, seven community programs was presented to 405 people.

Staffing:

The Interpretation Division staff includes the GS-025-12 Chief of Interpretation, GS-025-11 Assistant Chief of Interpretation, one GS-025-9 Lead Park Ranger, five GS-025-5 Park Rangers, seventeen GS-090-4 Park Guides, two Student Conservation Association Assistants, and two interns.

The Chief of Interpretation oversees division activities (30%), cultural resources to include Section 106 submittals (30%), the park's museum collection (5%), media relations (10%), and projects assigned by the Superintendent (25%).

The Assistant Chief of Interpretation supervises the interpretive staff including auditing, evaluating, and training (40%), manages budget and payroll (15%), recruits and hires staff (15%), oversees daily operations (10%), creates brief videos and updates TIS (5%), oversees the fee collection program (10%), and is the park volunteer coordinator (5%).

The Lead Park Ranger schedules, trains, coaches, and audits staff (20%), facilitates daily operations (25%), develops and maintains interpretive media including park newspaper, website, library, and exhibits (15%), trains staff on the wild



cave tour ensuring tour leaders can effectively and safely lead groups (5%), provides basic visitor services (5%), presents cave tours and other interpretive programs (15%), and oversees and conducts fee collection (15%).

GS-5 Park Rangers spend their time as follows: 20% developing and presenting interpretive programs, 30% facilitating day to day operations, 20% coaching and training staff, and 30% collecting fees.

Summer GS-4 Park Guides, SCAs, and interns spend their time as follows: 45% presenting interpretive programs including roving, 40% staffing the information desk and collecting fees, and 15% completing collateral duties and providing additional cave tours.

Campfire programs and evening hikes help visitors to discover the nocturnal side of Wind Cave National Park.

Covering the information desk and collecting fees is a year-round responsibility for Wind Cave interpretive staff.



Partnerships

Friends of Wind Cave National Park

Established in 2011, the Friends will help support and promote Wind Cave National Park and will serve as citizen advocates for the park as well as reinforce the bond between the park and local community.

Black Hills Parks and Forests Association

The Scope of Sales was reviewed in 1998 and needs to be updated to reflect the current interpretive themes and new types of educational products now available.

Annual sales are approximately \$210,000. Best selling items include books, pins, and postcards.

The park receives an annual percentage

donation amount that is approximately 10-15% of gross sales. These funds are used to pay for housing and expenses for three interns (two summer and one winter), the park newspaper, exhibit and program supplies, travel funds for one interpreter to attend the National Association for Interpretation Workshop, and library books.

Volunteer Program

According to the FY2011 Volunteer Report 3,186 hours of service were provided for interpretation. Two interpretive Student Conservation Association Assistants and three volunteer interns (one winter, two summer) conducted guided cave tours, prairie hikes, demonstrations, evening campfire programs and staffed the information desk.

Recommendations



Interpretive planning assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future interpretive program. A long-range interpretive plan analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park’s purpose and significance.

The Goals for Interpretive Programming are designed to realize the vision, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences described in the Foundation for Planning section. The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Wind Cave National Park:

- All interpretation will address physical and programmatic accessibility.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects and documented personal stories to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, the park will partner with neighboring institutions to develop programs, media, and share research.
- The park will follow the standards of the National Park Service Graphic Identity Program as signs and interpretive media are upgraded.
- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view. It will respond to diverse audiences, varying levels of interest, and different lengths of time for a visit.
- Where possible, “virtual visitors” will have opportunities to view key park vistas and access new research, studies, management plans, and historical information.

- The park will stress personal relevance and meanings within its Interpretation and Education program.
- The park will strive to create experiences for new audiences.

Goals for Interpretive Programming

Workshop participants identified goals to enhance the effectiveness of the interpretive services within Wind Cave National Park. These goals and associated actions are representative of many ideas generated during the workshop. Action items are listed below each goal and were used to create the Implementation Plan located in the next section of this document. Over the next seven to ten years Wind Cave National Park will focus on the following goals:

Encourage Every Visitor to Experience the Cave

The park’s primary interpretive goal will be to provide a variety of opportunities for visitors to experience Wind Cave. The visitors may then choose the level of detail and immersion that best meets their needs, interests, time, and location. Experiences may be identified in many different ways. For example, some experiences may be seasonal, thematic, intensive, science-based, inside the cave, on the surface, or virtual. Some visitors may simply go to the Natural Entrance and feel the wind. For visitors going on a ranger-led tour of the cave, the park will strive to provide enough tours that wait times are one hour or less. Others may watch a video from their home computer.

Visitors will be encouraged to go on at least one of the five existing ranger-led cave tours that are offered June through August. While most people will be satisfied with one tour, to stimulate visitor excitement and interest in greater resource immersion as well as to



All visitors will be encouraged to engage in a cave experience that best meets their needs, time, interests, and location.

encourage return visitation, park staff may create a certificate or passport stamp for Wild Cave Tour participants. During the off-season, ranger-led tours will be offered at least three times daily to a cave destination such as the Garden of Eden, Natural Entrance route, or the Blue Grotto. Depending on the number of visitors and staff available during the off-season, more tours may be offered each day. For visitors who are unable to walk through the cave, they will continue to be escorted, upon request, down into the Assembly Room which is accessible from the Elevator Building.

Many visitors have a very limited amount of time to visit Wind Cave National Park. In response to that perceived temporal limitation, park staff will explore the possibility of offering short tours or programs in the cave especially during the shoulder seasons. There are challenges with this type of program including disappointment if a visitor feels the program was not long enough, the added congestion at the elevators, and safety concerns if the group size is

too large. The rewards may outweigh those challenges by reaching an audience that normally would not tour the cave. Research should be conducted to actually determine the number of visitors who are unable to go on a tour and why they are unable to go on a tour before actually implementing these programs. The park also needs to determine the carrying capacity of the cave and the parking lot.

Some visitors may not be able to enter the cave for a variety of reasons. Providing year-round access to the Natural Entrance so that visitors can feel the wind is imperative. Interpretive media will be available on-site and through the park's website to provide virtual experiences. The 360° cave tour, postcards, and publications will continue to be sold by the cooperating association so that the visitor can take the experience home and share it with friends and family.

To share the diversity of cave resources, especially those that are the most remote and least accessible, the park staff will develop a variety of interpretive

media that could include short videos using footage taken during survey trips and posting recordings made by a camera on the helmet of a survey team member. Even though the cave itself currently blocks live webcam access, future technology may allow live feeds to be offered. There may also be future opportunities for visitors to use technological advances to experience the cave from the surface.

Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience

An important goal for providing interpretive services over the next seven to ten years is to improve orientation and access to park information. Before visitors can have a meaningful park experience, they need to find their way to the park, determine where the experience begins, and take care of their basic needs. Visitor experience issues such as agency identity and orientation must be addressed before interpretation can begin. Effective signs as well as pedestrian orientation and information are the first steps toward satisfying these basic visitor needs. A unified sign system would clearly identify park sites as well as provide information and clear directions.

An improved sign system will direct visitors to the east side of the park, visitor center (because the visitor center is located off of the main park road), and the cave. With the Casey property acquisition completed, wayside orientation panels and the park Official Map and Guide will need to be updated to indicate the new park boundary and resources. Adding a Traveler Information System near Rankin Ridge will provide visitors coming from the north with better directions and include more insight into programs or activities that visitors may engage in.

Park staff will explore the possibility of collaborating with Hot Springs to establish a gateway sign at the south

entrance on US Highway 385 and they will work with Custer State Park to correct the inaccurate north entrance sign. These actions will aid in establishing park identity and help visitors better understand that they are entering a national park. A marketing plan will also help establish park identity, encourage visitors to come during the shoulder seasons, and increase opportunities for visitors to experience the east side of the park and the Casey property addition. Developing and improving an information sharing network between Black Hills NPS units and local area attractions will help visitors make informed decisions about how to best manage their time and experience all that the Black Hills has to offer.

Within the visitor center, park staff will consider how to re-orient and redesign the lobby to improve visitor flow. During peak visitation times, the lobby can become congested with visitors trying to purchase park passes and cave tour tickets. A flat-screen monitor that uses digital media technology may be an option to highlight the most frequently asked questions, display cave tour opportunities, and reduce the amount of time that visitors have to wait in either line. A system of colorful footsteps or lines may better direct visitors to the lower level and tour meeting areas, also reducing lobby congestion.

Strengthen the Curriculum-Based Education Programs

An effective park education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of Wind Cave National Park offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education programs in partnership with area schools, neighboring parks, historic sites, and affiliated areas.

The park's curriculum-based education program ties directly to state and national curriculum standards, and more schools want to participate in the program than the existing staffing condition will allow. Distance learning equipment and curricula is already in place. Two different programs, 7th-8th grades cave/geology and 1st-3rd grade cave homes and habitats, could be offered October through February to help offset the high demand for on-site programming. During the off-season, Wind Cave National Park Resources Management staff or members of the park's friends group may be able to provide staff support for education programs increasing opportunities for more programs to be offered in April and May as well as even re-establishing the fall schedule of programs. The park will also consider recruiting retired professional to serve as docents to lead additional education programs.

A well-designed and well-run park education program generally depends on establishing an Education Coordinator position. This role has been a collateral duty assignment for the GS-025-09 Park Ranger, but to be truly effective it needs to be a full-time position. The primary role of the coordinator will be to secure resources to facilitate the development and growth of the program. The Education Coordinator will also intensify collaborative efforts with local school districts and teachers to ensure that the park best meets the educational needs and interests of the schools.

While the park will continue to offer Water in the Environment and Connections, future growth of the park education program is primarily contingent upon increasing the involvement of educators from area schools directly in the development of both activities and curriculum guides, filling the proposed new GS-025-5/7/9 Park Ranger position, and establishing the Education Coordinator (see Staffing section). This would allow the park to:



- Conduct an education needs assessment and prepare an education plan that would provide overall direction for the education program. Target grades and schools will be identified as well as funding sources for transportation.
- Create a teacher advisory group to advise the park on the most useful ways to offer educational services to local schools and to develop new curriculum-based education programs.
- Conduct teacher workshops and offer continuing education credits to enable teachers to participate in on-site curriculum-based programs.
- Expand the distance learning program to include fire, wildlife, prairie ecosystem, homestead culture, and prehistoric culture.
- Increase off-site programming within the Hot Springs and Custer school systems.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing a field institute on the former Casey property.

Using digital media to answer frequently asked questions and to display cave tour opportunities may help reduce the time visitors spend in line.

Diversify and Promote Surface Opportunities

Many visitors drive through the park without even stopping to explore or look at the rich diversity of open prairie and abundant wildlife that makes up the surface area of Wind Cave National Park. This phenomenon is difficult to explain because many Black Hills visitors go specifically to Custer State Park to drive the Wildlife Loop. During the next ten years the park will seek to diversify and promote additional surface opportunities so that visitors will have opportunities to explore and discover the resources interconnected with the cave below. To generate visitor excitement and interest in greater resource immersion above and below ground as well as to encourage return visitation, park staff may create an “Experience Wind Cave National Park” patch or stamp program to encourage visitation to lesser visited areas of the park.

The east side of the park is largely undeveloped and the perfect place for visitors to have uninterrupted big sky and prairie vistas views. Establishing the “Prairie Byway,” a loop road that

The “Prairie Byway” loop road may encourage more visitors to explore the surface of the park.



will include parts of US Highway 385, State Road 87, and County/NPS Roads 5 and 6, may encourage more visitors to explore the entire surface of the park. County/NPS Roads 5 and 6 are unpaved and closed if weather conditions require it. For the majority of the year, these areas are open and infrequently visited. The park may explore the possibility of offering a guided evening bus tour during the summer season to visitors staying in Hot Springs in collaboration with local lodging businesses. A Prairie Byway driving tour may include printed and digital media as well as wayside exhibits. Lone Pine Point is a popular viewpoint on the east side of the park that would be perfect for outdoor interpretive media.

To encourage visitors to get out onto the trails, park staff will evaluate the current trail system and consider the possibility of creating longer parkwide loops within the Casey property addition. GPS-guided hikes and virtual geo-caching programs may also increase opportunities for visitors to experience the surface as well as identify below ground features. If a flat-screen monitor is installed in the visitor center, it might be used to highlight experiences on each of the trails.

As staff time allows, more informal interpretation may be offered at pullouts along the Prairie Byway. Summer season Prairie Night Hikes and winter Adventures in Nature programs will continue to be offered. Additional programming will be considered after a survey of local resident interest is conducted.

Park staff will increase website promotion of surface opportunities. Part of the promotion will include producing more online videos describing the variety of surface experiences available to visitors and installing webcams at select surface locations. Local gateway communities will also be enlisted to promote the Prairie Byway.

Expand Use of Interpretive Media

Digital media is well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. It can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also it can reach many visitors at one time and may be included in exhibits or posted onto the Wind Cave website, in addition to being shown in the theater.

Digital media can reach the many visitors who are now using computers, smart phones, cell phones, Global Positioning System (GPS) units, MP3 players, and a variety of other technological systems for entertainment, information, orientation, and interpretation. In response to the growing demand for these services, the park needs to include the use of portable “individualized” audio and/or audiovisual opportunities. Using new technology will create opportunities for a more diverse audience to experience Wind Cave than ever before. These services will allow visitors to access more meanings, information, and orientation at their convenience.

Once digital productions are created and made available, park staff must maintain, monitor, and update the programs. Local media outlets may be enlisted to air and/or print digital programs to expand the reach of interpretive opportunities related to Wind Cave.

Develop Digital and Social Media

- Establish a Wind Cave National Park social media policy and presence including the use of Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube.
- Create a digital interactive Wind Cave map that encourages visitors to click on a cave resource, see a photo of that resource, get the history of the resource name, who discovered it, and any associated stories.

- Produce online videos on a variety of topics for visitors who may never visit the park and to allow visitors to explore remote resources that are not accessible to any visitor.
- Use printed and digital interpretive media to share the stories of the historic buildings and bridges.
- Install a webcam on the fire tower.
- Use a combination of wayside exhibits and digital media at the fire tower to share the stories of fire protection and prevention as well as air quality.
- Develop a “Sounds of Wind Cave” digital program including wind sound, animals, and American Indian music.
- Develop a mobile application based on a GPS map that displays location above ground and below ground (cave) locations at different levels with video.
- Develop e-book versions of park publications including Alvin McDonald’s Diary, Black Hills Parks and Forests publications, brochures, and hiking guides.
- Share graphics, images, and historical information related to the “early” years of Wind Cave by setting up web-based resources for public to use during the 2016 NPS Centennial.

Update Traditional Interpretive Media

- Redesign campground bulletin boards.
- Update the park Official Map and Guide to emphasize the Casey property addition, surface activities, and American Indian culture.

- Develop a wayside exhibit on the Beaver Creek Trail that reveals where the water cycle is at this location (drinking water, aquifer, and then back to the surface).

Produce a New Park Film

- Produce a new 15-20 minute park film to be shown in the visitor center auditorium so that anyone unable to go on a tour has an opportunity to see and experience the cave. Because less than 1% of the cave is accessible through a ranger-led tour, a new film would also bring many off-trail wonders to all visitors. Given the limitations of the current film documented in the existing conditions section, a new film will most importantly emphasize the park’s primary interpretive goal to provide a variety of opportunities for visitors to experience Wind Cave. The production should emphasize opportunities for visitors to feel the wonder, awe, and beauty of Wind Cave as well as explore the vast underground frontier and geological formation processes. The film should help the viewer envision how the cave was formed, what it looks like today, and incorporate stories from American Indians, early explorers and guides, as well as contemporary explorers and researchers. Film

Replacing existing exhibits with experientially varied ones may encourage more visitors to explore park resources.



copyright will be maintained for use as a future sales item and for broad use in other interpretive programming. Open captioning and audio description will be addressed to meet current accessibility requirements.

Design New Visitor Center Exhibits

- Design, fabricate, and install new visitor center exhibits to replace the 1980 vintage exhibits described in the existing conditions section and to provide a broad overview of the park’s resources and significance. The media should provide enough varied experiences to reach a diverse audience and encourage visitors to further explore the park. For example, a 3-dimensional representation of Wind Cave National Park that could be walked through, crawled through, and incorporated into the center stairwell may reveal the connections between the surface and the sub-surface worlds. Exhibits allow visitors to explore at their own pace and select the content that is most meaningful to them. Through the use of new technologies, oral histories of American Indians, early explorers, and ranchers, and current research exhibits may encourage visitors to further explore the vast underground frontier not accessible on guided tours, better understand and appreciate the sacred nature of Wind Cave, and to become involved in the protection and preservation strategies used at Wind Cave National Park. Less text heavy, more visually and experientially varied exhibits may encourage visitors to go on a cave tour, drive the Prairie Byway, or hike in the backcountry.
- Create an exhibit that tells the stories of people who have lived and worked at Wind Cave National Park including American Indians, early homesteaders, cave explorers, park rangers, researchers, local residents.

Increase Opportunities for Visitors to Experience American Indian Culture

Park interpretive staff members are beginning to develop stronger relationships with the 20 American Indians tribes of the Northern Plains that have historical and cultural ties to Wind Cave National Park. Collaboration with the tribes is imperative to develop appropriate ways to communicate tribal history and stories through interpretation, art, storytelling, and interactive media.

Interpretive media offer opportunities for tribal members to reveal meaning and significance in their own words. A kiosk at the visitor center that features American Indian origin stories connected to Wind Cave as well as establishing links from the park website to tribal websites may provide visitors with access to American Indian teachings on the significance of Wind Cave to the respective tribe. The park may study the feasibility of using media to interpret the stone circles located near the visitor center. Interpretive media will allow visitors to access the meanings that American Indians tribes ascribe to the circles without damaging the archeological resource.

Programs featuring music, dance, art, and storytelling provide opportunities for visitors to experience American Indian culture onsite. Establish an Artist in Residence program that would allow the park to highlight the variety of tribal cultures. Share traditional ecological knowledge including star knowledge would increase visitor awareness of American Indian scholarship. The visitor center and the newly acquired buffalo jump would be two prominent locations to feature these and similar programs.

Expand and Improve Partnerships

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services. Partnerships are most effective when partners share a common goal and can leverage their efforts to accomplish the goal.

It is imperative for park staff to build upon existing “interpretive” relationships with Jewel Cave National Monument, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, and Badlands National Park as well as other local, state, and federal agencies. Strengthening these relationships will create opportunities for cross-promotion at Black Hills events, interpretive training, and information sharing. An annual interpretive partnership meeting would be an effective way to identify shared needs and interests. Continue cultivating the strong relationship with the Friends of Wind Cave National Park that will increase awareness of and advocacy for park resources and services and potentially provide volunteers to help with park programs.

While the interpretive staff has been working informally with local communities, historical societies, museums and grottos, these relationships need to be defined and formalized to strengthen the park’s ability to provide visitors with more opportunities to understand and appreciate Wind Cave. Part of this effort may include using volunteers to provide staff support at the Hot Springs Depot, Maverick Visitor Center, Custer Museum, and Mammoth Site when possible, as well as developing and offering interpretive training in cooperation with local communities and area attractions.

There are also opportunities to build new relationships and establish new partnerships. A list of potential new partners could include local non-profit agencies, local community organizations, recreational organizations, and media outlets.

Expand Volunteer Program

The Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program could be expanded with more dedicated NPS supervision, providing VIP accommodations, and an increase in VIP funding. The Coordinator role has been a collateral duty assignment for the Assistant Chief of Interpretation. To be truly effective, this position will need to be given more scheduled duty time to expand the program and increase training opportunities. The primary role of the coordinator is to develop a strong foundation for the volunteer program and facilitate the retention of current volunteers as well as the development and growth of this program.

Specific recommendations include:

- Develop and implement a retention strategy that will include creating and maintaining a database of volunteers; updating position descriptions and determining how many volunteers are needed for each task; communicating the length of assignment when recruiting volunteers to minimize turnover; working with partners to reduce competition for volunteers; and working with park staff to ensure that there is adequate oversight and support for volunteers. Recognize volunteer achievements.
- Develop a needs assessment for volunteers. Identifying what tasks park staff need volunteer help with will provide the coordinator with the necessary information to successfully recruit. The assessment also would help identify potential individuals or group skills that might be needed. For example, volunteers who may be interested in the reading program or serving on a support team.
- Develop a volunteer recruitment plan that clearly identifies roles and functions in park operations that volunteers could either support or actually manage.

- Utilize the Friends of Wind Cave National Park to conduct volunteer recruiting and make presentations to outside sources.
- Establish volunteer support teams tentatively called the Prairie Rovers, Elk Bugle Corps, and Horse Patrol that provide park orientation and informal interpretation on backcountry trails, during the elk rut, and along the Prairie Byway.

Expand Existing and Develop New Opportunities to Engage Youth

Most interpretive services are developed for a general audience. During the lifetime of this plan, Wind Cave National Park must address Secretary of Interior Salazar’s “Youth in the Great Outdoors” initiative to best meet the needs of young people and provide them with opportunities to discover the significance of park resources. In this planning document, youth programs are designed for pre-kindergarten to age 25.

“Youth in the Great Outdoors” encourages parks to employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with and preserving America’s natural and cultural heritage. Through employment and educational opportunities, youth will play a key role in tackling climate change issues, empowering American Indian communities, building trails, enhancing wildlife habitat, and restoring cultural and historic landmarks. The initiative includes outreach to underserved populations to ensure that these resources are enjoyed by all Americans and transform the lives of young Americans to create the next generation of conservation and community leaders.

Much of the park’s current youth programming is associated with junior ranger activities, special events, and special projects like the Range Day at

Whitney Preserve, Jake Day at Cold Brook Canyon, 4-H project judging, Boy Scout eagle projects, a National Park Foundation-sponsored overnight camping trip with tribal youth, and the cave activity at the Friends of the Library Carnival. The Custer Museum sponsors an annual field trip for YMCA youth to visit the park. The Black Hills Parks and Forests Association sells an Explorer Pack to encourage young visitors to become immersed in the park's resources.

The park will continue to connect with youth through off-site special events. Building on the success of the junior ranger program, the park will seek funding to conduct a focus group of young people and parents, update the existing program based on the focus group findings, and develop a family backpack for use while visiting the park.

Because scouting is very popular with local youth, the park will help develop a cave merit badge in cooperation with the National Speleological Society and NPS cave parks.

While most programming makes connections with elementary and middle school age youth, there are many pre-Kindergarten children in the neighboring communities. The park will offer more programming specifically targeted to these very young children including establishing a toddler corner in the visitor center. Volunteers and Friends Group members will be recruited to establish a youth reading program in cooperation with local libraries. At the other end of the youth age range, the park will participate in college career fairs and seek to offer college credit for youth participating in service learning projects and assisting with Resource Management projects.

To provide opportunities for nearby tribal youth to connect with the park's natural and cultural resources, staff will explore opportunities to continue

the youth camp/experiential learning program started in 2011 with a National Park Foundation grant.

Explore Interpretive Opportunities for the Casey Property

In late 2011, the park acquired 5,556 acres formerly known as the Casey property. The new lands include the Sanson Ranch, a buffalo jump, and the only known cave in the Minnekahta Formation of the Black Hills. Beginning in early 2012, an Environmental Assessment (EA) will focus on backcountry trail use and visitor experiences at the buffalo jump that dates to 1030 A.D. and the homestead built in 1918.

Potential interpretive opportunities that the park may explore in anticipation of the EA's preferred alternative will emphasize homestead culture stories at Sanson Ranch and prehistoric and American Indian culture stories at the buffalo jump. Possible interpretive services may include:

- Collect oral histories from tribal members and ranchers.
- Use costumed interpretation to depict life on a homestead and a working cattle ranch at the Sanson Ranch.
- Develop a walking trail and wayside exhibits that describe Great Plains ranching operations and how the bison jump was utilized and later studied by archeologists.
- Offer trail rides.
- Develop digital media applications that describe the history of bison, how prehistoric peoples and American Indians used the buffalo jump, and the ways the bison were used in daily life.
- Produce a buffalo jump visualization using digital media technology.

Digital media applications may help visitors better understand the significance of the buffalo jump.



Research and Evaluation Needs

All interpretive programs and services must be solidly grounded in research. In order to fully accomplish the actions included in this plan and support the interpretive themes, the park needs research on the following topics:

- With the addition of the Casey property, there is a need to learn about buffalo jumps and American Indian life on the plains as well as historic and modern-day ranching culture. Even though the park recently completed an historic resource study that provides background on these two topics, more needs to be done including conducting oral histories with tribal members and area ranchers, acquiring books for the park library, and securing funding for historic structure reports for the buildings within the addition.

Evaluation also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. Front-end evaluation

will inform the project team about what visitors already know about the site before they come, what understandings they may have about the significance of the site, and how to fulfill the visitor's interest in visiting the site. This type of evaluative study is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations allow the team to get feedback on project content before it is fabricated. Knowing how potential visitors react to stories and information or even how the message is displayed can inform and enhance the media product and the overall visitor experience. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs – i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected. Summative evaluation may even be a necessary follow-up for certain sources of funding such as foundation grants.

- Evaluate current interpretive programming and services to meet the changing needs of visitors (revisit tour structure, accommodate special needs, and more).

Staffing and Training Needs

In order to fulfill the vision of this plan, additional funding will be required to hire additional interpretive staff. Staffing needs include an Education Specialist and an additional GS-025-5/7/9 Park Ranger position. This new park ranger position would allow the park to meet existing needs for additional education programs given both in the park and through distance learning and develop new interpretive media. The park will also need additional seasonal staff to provide interpretive services at the Casey property once it is opened to the public. Operations Formulation System (OFS) funding requests will have to be submitted to acquire these additional positions. Park staff will continue recruiting efforts to hire a diverse seasonal staff with special emphasis on contacting nearby tribal members.

The following table shows the current and projected staffing plan required for full implementation of the recommendations in this Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Funded</i>	<i>Unfunded</i>
Chief of Interpretation	GS-025-12	PFT	ONPS	1	
Assistant Chief of Interpretation	GS-025-11	PFT	ONPS	1	
Park Ranger	GS-025-9	PFT	ONPS	1	
Park Ranger	GS-025-5	Seasonal-1040 hours	ONPS/ Cost of Collection	5	
Park Guide	GS-090-4	Seasonal-1040 hours	ONPS/ Cost of Collection	17	
Education Specialist	GS-1717-9/11	PFT			1
Park Ranger	GS-025-9	PFT			1
Park Ranger	GS-025-5	Seasonal-1040 hours			2

Training

A trained and motivated workforce is necessary for any successful park operation. Emphasis should be placed on accountability for interpretive standards to be applied or adhered to when any park employees or volunteers present interpretive programs, design publications, media, and exhibits, or present curriculum-based educational programs. Ensure that all staff members who provide interpretive services are held to the appropriate NPS standards as defined in the Interpretive Development Program and be trained accordingly.

Wind Cave will continue to be a “training park” through continued recruitment of interns and SCAs to be engaged in interpretive services and to provide the opportunity for these students to learn the job of interpretation. Because volunteers are an important part of the workforce, interpretive staff members require an appropriate level of volunteer supervisory training.

Implementation Plan

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, park management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. The park interpretive staff and key park partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is

extremely important to allow park staff and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

During the 2011 Recommendation workshop, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into on-going, short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-6 years), and long-term (7-10 years) goals. While some action items can be implemented immediately within existing funding and staffing levels, others will require additional funding and staffing before action can be taken.

Wind Cave National Park Priorities and Action Items	On-going	Short-term (Year 1-3)	Mid-term (Years 4-6)	Long-term (Years 7-10)
Encourage Every Visitor to Experience the Cave				
Continue offering 5 cave programs June - August	x			
Continue offering 1 program during off-season (winter)	x			
Provide “special” tour on request year-round	x			
Explore possibility of offering a short program		x		
Research the number of visitors who did not go on a tour; determine the carrying capacity of cave and parking lot		x		
Create a certificate or passport stamp for wild cave tour participants			x	
Experience the cave from the surface using interpretive media			x	
Use a recorded or live helmet cam to reveal least accessible cave resources				x

Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience				
Continue to operate existing Traveler Information System	x			
Update sign plan to improve directional signs		x		
Work with Hot Springs to establish a gateway sign on US Hwy 385		x		
Work with Custer State Park to correct inaccurate sign before north entrance		x		
Consider opportunities to re-orient/redesign visitor center lobby to improve visitor flow		x		
Install a flat screen monitor with digital media panel technology that will highlight the most frequently asked questions		x		
Devise system (footsteps/colorful lines) to better direct visitors to lower level and tour meeting area		x		
Update wayside orientation panels and the park Official Map and Guide to reflect Casey property addition			x	
Develop and improve information sharing network between Black Hills NPS units and local area attractions			x	
Develop a marketing plan			x	
Add a Traveler Information System at Rankin Ridge to increase range to the north				x

Wind Cave National Park Priorities and Action Items	On-going	Short-term (Year 1-3)	Mid-term (Years 4-6)	Long-term (Years 7-10)
Strengthen the Curriculum-based Education Program				
Continue existing on- and off-site programs	x			
Conduct an education needs assessment to develop an education plan		x		
Activate the distance learning program October - February		x		
Add more educational opportunities April - May			x	
Conduct teacher workshops			x	
Establish a formal cooperative education program between local sister parks and agencies to augment existing programs			x	
Expand distance learning program to include fire, wildlife, prairie ecosystem, homestead culture, prehistoric culture			x	
Establish an education specialist position				x
Increase off-site environmental education programming				x
Explore feasibility of establishing a field institute on the former Casey property				x
Re-establish fall education programs				x

Diversify and Promote Surface Opportunities				
Continue offering summer season Prairie Night Hikes	x			
Increase informal interpretation on the surface		x		
Increase website promotion of surface opportunities		x		
Evaluate current trail system and consider the possibility of creating longer parkwide loops		x		
Offer a guided evening bus tour along the proposed Prairie Highway during the summer season			x	
Develop and implement “Experience Wind Cave National Park” award program			x	
Develop GPS-guided hikes			x	
Establish the “Prairie Byway”			x	
Install webcams at select surface locations			x	
Produce more online videos describing a variety of surface opportunities			x	
Produce Prairie Byway Driving Tour			x	
Offer Adventures in Nature programs during summer season			x	
Develop a virtual geo-caching program			x	
Develop and install interpretive media at Lone Pine Point				x
Develop wildlife wayside exhibits on the Prairie Byway				x
Offer guided full-day 8-10 mile hikes on and off established trails				x

Expand Use of Interpretive Media				
Produce online videos on a variety of topics	x			
Establish a park social media policy and presence		x		
Redesign campground bulletin boards		x		
Use printed and digital interpretive media to share the stories of the historic buildings and bridges			x	
Develop a “Sounds of Wind Cave” digital program including wind sound, animals, American Indian music			x	
Develop a mobile application based on a GPS map that displays location above ground and below ground (cave) locations at different levels with video			x	

Recommendations

Wind Cave National Park Priorities and Action Items	On-going	Short-term (Year 1-3)	Mid-term (Years 4-6)	Long-term (Years 7-10)
Share graphics, images, and historical information related to the “early” years of Wind Cave by setting up web-based resources for public to use during the 2016 NPS Centennial			x	
Create a digital interactive Wind Cave map				x
Design, fabricate, and install new visitor center exhibits				x
Create an exhibit that tells the stories of people who have lived and worked at Wind Cave National Park including American Indians, early homesteaders, cave explorers, park rangers, researchers, local residents.				x
Produce a new film				x
Use wayside exhibits and digital media at the fire tower to share the stories of fire protection and prevention as well as air quality				x
Develop e-book versions of park publications				x
Develop a wayside exhibit on Beaver Creek Trail that discusses the water cycle				x

Increase Opportunities for Visitors to Experience American Indian Culture				
Connect to tribal websites		x		
Install a kiosk at the visitor center that features American Indian origin stories connected to Wind Cave		x		
Invite tribal artists and storytellers to be guest speakers for summer campfire programs		x		
Study the feasibility of using media to interpret the stone circles located outside of the visitor center			x	
Host a star knowledge seminar utilizing American Indian scholars			x	
Offer cultural demonstrations				x
Establish an Artist in Residence program featuring tribal artists				x
Host an American Indian culture day				x

Expand and Improve Partnerships				
Strengthen interpretive partnership with the Friends of Wind Cave National Park		x		
Update Black Hills Parks and Forests Association Scope of Sales		x		
Develop interpretive partnerships with all Black Hills NPS units in the Black Hills region			x	
Improve training with local area attractions			x	
Use volunteers to provide staff support at locations outside of the park (the Hot Springs Depot, Maverick Visitor Center, Custer Museum, and Mammoth Site)				x

Expand Volunteer Program				
Develop and implement a retention strategy		x		
Conduct a volunteer needs assessment. Identify what tasks park staff need volunteer help with to successfully recruit.		x		
Develop a volunteer recruitment plan		x		
Update existing and create new position descriptions		x		
Improve volunteer incentives and increase recognition of volunteer achievements		x		

Wind Cave National Park Priorities and Action Items	On-going	Short-term (Year 1-3)	Mid-term (Years 4-6)	Long-term (Years 7-10)
Provide more time for volunteer coordinator to expand program and increase training opportunities		x		
Utilize the Friends of Wind Cave National Park to conduct volunteer recruiting and make presentations to outside sources		x		
Establish volunteer support teams: Prairie Rovers, Elk Bugle Corps, Horse Patrol				x

Engage Youth				
Host a booth at the Black Hills State College career fair	x			
Hire a Junior Ranger Ambassador		x		
Develop a family backpack for onsite use		x		
Offer more programming specifically targeted to pre-K youth		x		
Develop a partnership with the Hot Springs Boys and Girls Club		x		
Offer a youth reading program in cooperation with local library systems using volunteers and/or Friends Group members			x	
Create a toddler corner in the visitor center				x
Offer college credit for young people assisting with Resource Management projects				x
Participate in the annual Merit Badge Midway				x
Develop a cave merit badge in cooperation with the National Speleological Society and NPS cave parks				x
Establish a youth camp/experiential learning program				x

Explore Interpretive Opportunities for the Casey Property				
Begin tribal members and ranchers oral history project		x		
Develop wayside exhibits that describe Great Plains ranching operations and how a bison jump was utilized			x	
Use costumed interpretation to depict life on a homestead and on working cattle ranch at Sanson Ranch				x
Offer trail rides				x
Develop digital media applications that describe the history of bison, how American Indians used the buffalo jump, and the ways the bison were used in daily life				x
Produce a buffalo jump visualization using digital media technology				x

Appendices



Appendix A: The Planning Team

National Park Service

Wind Cave National Park

Eric Allen, Fire Management Officer
 Vidal Davila, Superintendent
 Tom Farrell, Chief of Interpretation
 Ted Firkins, Assistant Chief of Interpretation
 Karri Fischer, Administrative Officer
 Don Frankfort, Seasonal Lead Interpreter
 Jeri Frederick, Seasonal Lead Interpreter
 Toni Gould, Park Guide
 Rod Horrocks, Physical Science Specialist
 Mary Laycock, Lead Park Ranger
 Mike Laycock, Seasonal Lead Interpreter
 April Mogen-Frankfort, Seasonal Lead Interpreter
 Rick Mossman, Chief Ranger
 Josh Nelson, Park Guide
 Steve Schrempp, Facility Manager
 Greg Schroeder, Chief of Resource Management
 Randall Weiss, Museum Technician

Jennie Albrinck, Chief of Interpretation, Badlands National Park
 Bradley Block, Chief of Interpretation, Jewel Cave National Monument
 Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center (Team Captain)
 Pam Griswold, Chief Ranger, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site
 Aaron Kaye, Supervisory Park Ranger, Badlands National Park
 Blaine Kortemeyer, Deputy Director of Interpretation and Education, Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Park Partners

Steve Baldwin, Executive Director, Black Hills Parks and Forests Association
 Don DeVries, Mayor, City of Hot Springs
 Dana Q. Dupris, Cultural Preservation Specialist, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
 Russell Eagle Bear, Historic Preservation Officer, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Bonnie Benson Exton, National Resource Specialist/Park Ranger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Brad Exton, Seasonal Employee, South Dakota State Parks
 Conrad Fisher, Historic Preservation Officer, Northern Cheyenne Tribe
 Lana Gravatt, Historic Preservation Officer, Yankton Sioux Tribal Business and Claims Commission
 Colleen Hennessy, Board Member, Black Hills Parks and Forests Association
 Bryce In The Woods, Council Representative, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
 Patti Ressler, Operations Manager, Black Hills Parks and Forests Association
 Ben Rhodd, Contract Archaeologist, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.”
 NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>.

Appendix C: Interpretive Themes

A team of staff, stakeholders, and partners worked together to confirm these themes and associated stories/topics during the Foundation workshop held in March 2011. They are based on the themes identified in the 2001 draft Long-Range Interpretive Plan and the 2011 Foundation Statement. Many of these stories were identified during a brainstorming exercise and were not fully developed by the participants.

Vast Underground Frontier

Wind Cave, one of the oldest, longest, and most complex three-dimensional maze caves in the world, is a vast underground frontier that is still being explored and studied.

- Geology of cave
- Outstanding paleokarst
- Exploration + safety
- Image of bison in the cave map
- Research of cave
- Stories of past and present exploration
- Stories of mystery and what lies beyond
- Complexity of cave and our understanding of it
- Underground wilderness
- Undiscovered secrets of the earth
- The mystery of lost
- History
- New (frontiers)
- Old
- Evolving
- Cave resource
- Immensity
- Evolution of exploration
- Math
- 3-d scan
- A world within
- Lakota creation story
- The Unknown
- Small part of larger system (mapped)
- Underground lakes

- Purity of water and power of water (creating the complex nature of the cave)
- Possible contamination from surface water

Cave Formations

Wind Cave has a large variety of cave formations, including 95% of the world's boxwork. These [formations] require great care and wise management to ensure their protection and survival for scientific enlightenment, human inspiration, and the enjoyment of future generations.

- Origins of cave formations
- Underground resources
- Research (on-going)
- Managing the cave resources
- Protection of cave resources
- Human stories/exploration
- Protection/stewardship for future
- Preservation of unique environment
- Scholarships to study
- Looking away from the objective and look to the connection
- Being the observed and the observer
- Simply the uniqueness of cave environments
- Preserve versus enjoyment
- Comparison with other caves
- How this cave differs from other dark holes in the ground
- Preserve and enjoy without exploitation (always preserved)
- Public access or lack of it and why
- Dichotomy of the "scientific" versus the "sacred"
- The power of water creating these unique formations

Sacred Site

The entrance to Wind Cave and its unique winds, a sacred site to many American Indian tribes, offers a sense of life and spirituality that fosters respect, cultural understanding, and an appreciation for the diverse cultures that have cared for and about this special place.

- Sioux creation story
- Lifeway
- Origin
- Oceti Sakowin
- White buffalo calf women
- Mitakuya Ayasin
- Star knowledge
- Connection to all other sites!
- Oral history
- Active use
- Barometric caves (winds)
- Relationship to buffalo nation/people (original buffalo here at Wind Cave?)
- Diversity of creation stories among tribes
- Comprehensive interpretation
- Breath of the cave that can forecast weather
- Volume of space potential
- Cultural side of unique winds
- Environmental connections to breath of earth
- Early history of the park/changing perspectives throughout the park's history
- Landscapes
- Never ending sea of grass and open space
- Human-caused changes to the landscape and skyline and soundscape (historic, future)
- Star knowledge/what are the constellations above Wind Cave
- Wind Cave as an example of undisturbed landscape, without invasive species
- Unobstructed vistas
- Air quality – clean
- East meets west = plants and animals from other parts of the country converge here
- Transitional ecotypes

Prairie Wildlife

The survival of the thriving prairie wildlife community at Wind Cave, including species that once came close to extinction such as bison, elk, pronghorn, and black-footed ferrets, is a result of the early efforts of conservationists, the establishment of the Wind Cave Game Preserve in 1912, and the continued dedication of resource managers.

Sky and Surface

Wind Cave National Park protects a spectacular night sky and some of the finest examples of mixed-grass prairie, ponderosa pine, and riparian plant communities. These natural resources are superb remnants of what once covered a large portion of the central North American continent.

- Grasses, plants important to Native America tribes
- Night sky reveals the intimate connection of the cosmos and this land
- Plants and animals (all) interdependent
- Eco-system and management
- Native “vignettes” of ecosystem pre-humans
- Bio-diversity
- Night sky for urban people
- Interconnected with spiritual ceremonies and park management
- Connections of night sky to humans and their cultures
- Bison DNA, bison round-up
- Elk management plan
- Black-footed ferrets reintroduction, biology, hikes
- Stories of the buffalo – survival of 2 leggeds and their culture
- Endangered species – importance/success stories
- Biodiversity
- Eco-systems and management
- Government conservation efforts
- Partnerships and other disciplines (i.e. tribes, biologists, agencies, ranchers, etc.)
- Consequences of extinction
- Park management history
- Evolution of park management at Wind Cave
- Ecosystem survival
- Individual species lifecycles
- Getting to know the spirit in all living things the relationship

- Wind Cave as part of broader ecosystem supporting a web of life
- Management directions to restore native species – also manage non-native
- Discuss location of preserve headquarters
- Missing pieces of the ecosystem (predators)
- Cooperation with other land managers (public and private)

Connections

Exploring the park’s diverse surface world, its mysterious subsurface, and their relationship to the human world provides insight into natural processes and the opportunity to investigate how everything is connected and how change has consequences.

- Interrelationship
- Connections
- Web of life
- Origin of life
- Management acts
- Research
- Results of action
- Natural process (fire, wildlife, global warming)
- Evolution
- Multiple perspectives on the process of life
- Diversity
- Understanding the 4 directions
- Balance
- Surface and sub-surface connections
- Getting to know more on medicinal use/spiritual use of natural resources
- Process of observation of first peoples
- National parks are systems composed of interconnecting resources
- Global interactions/influences
- Eco-system management
- Climate change and its impacts
- Human impacts vs. natural processes

Paleontology

The paleontological resources of Wind Cave National Park provide opportunities to explore the stories of ancient earth and the evolution of life.

- Time
- Early life
- Geologic
- Evolution
- Paleo
- Spiritual
- Trails
- Star knowledge
- Fossilization
- Thematic continuity/cultural memory
- Research reporting
- Evolving ideas
- Changes in cultural perspectives
- Climate change

Archeology

The many archeological sites amidst the abundant resources and sometimes harsh conditions of the Black Hills’ landscape illustrate the lasting connections of native people with the land and their instinct of survival and perseverance common to all human beings.

- Food sources
- Shelter
- Spirituality
- Birthplace – home
- Communities working together for survival
- Economic sustainability
- Use of resources i.e. all parts of the buffalo
- God’s country – in eye of American Indians
- Use of native lands and resources for survival
- Balance of nature – abundant resources versus harsh conditions
- The parallels between the lives of the native populations and the anglo settlers
- Explain active use of landscape to historic sites, sacred sites, resources, wildlife, etc.

Humans

The park preserves evidence of human struggles, perseverance, and accomplishments illustrated by the fortitude of the American Indians, the passion of Alvin McDonald, and the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

- CCC structures
- Archeology
- Lessons learned during depression
- Historical perspectives i.e. tribal
- Alvin’s diary
- Conservation practices learned during CCC era
- Environmental concerns
- Cave conservation + exploration
- Man’s undying thirst for knowledge through exploration
- Destruction of natural resources
- CCC transformation of individual, park, and nation
- Stories found within the Casey property “Buffalo Jump, early ranch, homesteading”
- Contrasting and comparing American Indian perspectives versus American perspectives
- Evolution of our understanding of natural processes and the idea that all things are connected
- Survival on the prairie – use of plants, animals
- Stories from the past – struggles and successes
- On-going story of the tribal interaction
- The historical relationship between the US and native tribes – what we’ve learned from it?
- Coming full circle, American Indian origin, American Indian removal, and then return
- Chronology of land agreements/ treaties
- Historical land status/ancestral claim today

Preservation and Protection

The establishment, growth, and endurance of Wind Cave National Park, the first cave to be preserved as a national park, parallels the changing perspectives of how to preserve and protect the remarkable resources entrusted to the National Park Service.

- First national park set aside to protect a cave
- Understand medicinal use of plants, tree, relationship with wildlife
- Connection between surface and sub-surface resources
- History of the NPS
- Vision of preservation and protection
- Prevent exploitation
- Government has led conservation efforts in the country
- Re-thinking federal policy and including tribes in changing perspectives
- Post processing archeology
- Economic, public and other interests
- Recognizing uniqueness of park
- Evolution of the ideas of what a national park is
- Protect and preserve for future generations
- Understanding and mitigating past mistakes and looking to the future
- Model for future management of cave resources
- Understanding the balance
- McDonald/Stabler feud
- Managing people not animals
- Bring people to resources

Appendix D: Wind Cave National Park Interpretive Services by Theme and Location

<i>Vast Underground Frontier</i>	
Exhibits	Cave Resources (Visitor Center)
	Cave Research and Exploration (Cave) Kiosk (Visitor Center)
	Film (Visitor Center)
Digital Media	Online Videos (Website)
	Helmet Cam (Website)*
	Flat-screen Monitor (Visitor Center)*
	Sounds of Wind Cave*
	Mobile App*
	Early WICA (Website)*
Personal Services	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Garden of Eden (Cave)
	Natural Entrance (Cave)
	Candlelight (Cave)
	Wild Cave (Cave)
	Discovery Program (Visitor Center)
	Campfire Program (EM)
	Short Program (Cave)*
Publications	Official Map & Guide (Visitor Center)
	Geology Driving Tour (Visitor Center)
	Geology (Visitor Center)
	Park Newspaper (Visitor Center)
	Early Cave Explorers (Website)
	1959 Expedition Reports (Website)
	Mazes and Marvels (Website)
	Alvin McDonald's Diary (Website)
	Cave Exploration (Website)
	Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills (Website)
	Defining Moments (Website)
	Trip Reports (Website)
	Trip Abstracts (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
Waysides	Concealed Maze (Prairie Vista Trail)
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Water in the Environment

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Cave Formations</i>	
Exhibits	Cave Resources (Visitor Center)
	Wall Exhibits (Elevator Building)
Digital Media	Film (Visitor Center)
	Online Videos (Website)
	360° Tour (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Helmet Cam (Website)*
	Flat-screen Monitor (Visitor Center)*
	Mobile App*
Personal Services	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Garden of Eden (Cave)
	Natural Entrance (Cave)
	Candlelight (Cave)
	Wild Cave (Cave)
	Short Program (Cave)*
Publications	Official Map & Guide (Visitor Center)
	Geology (Visitor Center)
	Early Cave Explorers (Website)
	1959 Expedition Reports (Website)
	Mazes and Marvels (Website)
	Alvin McDonald's Diary (Website)
	Cave Exploration (Website)
	Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills (Website)
	Cave/Karst Systems (Website)
	Trip Reports (Website)
	Trip Abstracts (Website)
	Caves and Karst Research Abstracts (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
Waysides	A Concealed Maze (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Sight Unseen (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Where Wind Blows (Park Road)
	Orientation (Park Road)
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Water in the Environment
	Adventures in Nature (Visitor Center)

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Sky and Surface</i>	
Digital Media	Film (Visitor Center)
	Flat-screen Monitor (Visitor Center)*
	GPS-guided Hikes*
	Webcams*
	Sounds of Wind Cave*
	Mobile App*
	Early WICA (Website)*
	Fire Tower*
Personal Services	Wind Cave Walkers
	Prairie Night Hike
	Prairie Hike
	Evening Hike
	Discovery Program (Visitor Center)
	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Bus Tour (Park Road / Prairie Byway)*
	All Day Hike*
Publications	Official Map & Guide (Visitor Center)
	Rankin Ridge Trail Guide (Park Road)
	Elk Mountain Trail Guide (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Vanishing Prairie (Visitor Center)
	Climate Change (Visitor Center)
	Junior Ranger (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Defining Moments (Website)
	Environmental Factors (Website)
	Geologic Features (Website)
	Prairies and Grasslands (Website)
	Watersheds (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
Waysides	Life in the Shadows (Prairie Vista Trail)
	More Than Meets the Eye (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Vanishing Prairie (Prairie Vista Trail)
	On a Clear Day... (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Geology (Prairie Vista Trail)
	East Meets West (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Lone Pine Point (Prairie Byway)*
	Fire Tower*
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Water in the Environment
	Adventures in Nature (Visitor Center)
	Prairie Ecosystem*

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Prairie Wildlife</i>	
Exhibits	Diverse Environment (Visitor Center)
	Elk and Black-Footed Ferret Kiosk (Visitor Center)
	Film (Visitor Center)
Digital Media	Online Videos (Website)
	GPS-guided Hikes*
	Sounds of Wind Cave*
	Early WICA (Website)*
Personal Services	Prairie Night Hike
	Prairie Hike
	Evening Hike
	Discovery Program (Visitor Center)
	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Bus Tour (Park Road/Prairie Byway)*
	All Day Hike*
Publications	Official Map & Guide (Visitor Center)
	Wind Cave History (Visitor Center)
	Junior Ranger (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Park Newspaper (Visitor Center)
	Defining Moments (Website)
	Animals (Website)
	Plants (Website)
	Environmental Factors (Website)
	Fire (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
Waysides	More Than Meets the Eye (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Bring Back Bison (Park Road)
	Prairie Dog Town (Park Road)
	Early Game Preserve (Park Road)
	Elk (Park Road)
	Fire (Park Road)
	Wildlife (Prairie Byway)*
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Fire, Fire, Fire
	Adventures in Nature (Visitor Center)
	Prairie Ecosystem*
	Wildlife*

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Connections</i>	
Digital Media	GPS-guided Hikes*
	Mobile App*
Personal Services	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Garden of Eden (Cave)
	Natural Entrance (Cave)
	Candlelight (Cave)
	Wild Cave (Cave)
	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Short Program (Cave)*
	Bus Tour (Park Road/Prairie Byway)*
	All Day Hike*
Publications	Elk Mountain Trail Guide (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Geology Driving Tour (Visitor Center)
	Geology (Visitor Center)
	Environmental Concerns (Visitor Center)
	Climate Change (Visitor Center)
	Junior Ranger (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Park Newspaper (Visitor Center)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
Waysides	Sight Unseen (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Water: The Critical Link (Park Road)
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Adventures in Nature (Visitor Center)
	Prairie Ecosystem*

<i>Paleontology</i>	
Exhibits	Exhibits (Visitor Center)*
Digital Media	Film (Visitor Center)*
	Online Videos (Website)*
	Early WICA (Website)*
Publications	Geology Driving Tour (Visitor Center)
	A Lost World Discovered (Visitor Center)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)*
	Site Bulletins (Website)*
Waysides	Waysides (Park Road)*
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Prehistoric Culture*

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Sacred Site</i>	
Exhibits	Wall Exhibits (Elevator Building)
	Exhibits (Visitor Center)
	Origin Stories (Visitor Center)*
Digital Media	Film (Visitor Center)
	Online Videos (Website)*
	Sounds of Wind Cave*
	Early WICA (Website)*
	Stone Circles*
	Bison Jump*
Personal Services	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Garden of Eden (Cave)
	Natural Entrance (Cave)
	Discovery Program (Visitor Center)
	Short Program (Cave)*
	Bus Tour (Park Road/Prairie Byway)*
	All Day Hike*
	Tribal Artists/Storytellers at Campfire*
	Star Knowledge*
	Cultural Demonstrations*
	Artist in Residence Program*
Publications	Cave Exploration (Website)
	History of the Black Hills (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
Waysides	Where Wind Blows (Park Road)
	Bison Jump (Casey Property)*
Special Event	American Indian Culture Day*
Education Materials / Programs	Prehistoric Culture*

**Potential Future Interpretive Service*

<i>Humans</i>	
Exhibits	Exhibits (Visitor Center)*
Digital Media	Online Videos (Website)
	GPS-guided Hikes*
	Historic Buildings/Bridges (Website)*
	Sounds of Wind Cave*
	Early WICA (Website)*
Personal Services	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Short Program (Cave)*
	Bus Tour (PR/PB)*
	All Day Hike*
	Life on a Homestead/Cattle Ranch (Casey Property)*
Publications	Official Map & Guide (Visitor Center)
	Wind Cave History (Visitor Center)
	Junior Ranger (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	CCC at Wind Cave (Website)
	Early Cave Explorers (Website)
	Homesteaders (Website)
	1959 Expedition Reports (Website)
	Mazes and Marvels (Website)
	Alvin McDonald's Diary (Website)
	Cave Exploration (Website)
	Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills (Website)
	Defining Moments (Website)
	Trip Reports (Website)
	Trip Abstracts (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
	Historic Buildings/Bridges (Website)*
Waysides	Conflicting Lifestyles (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Early Days at Wind Cave (Prairie Vista Trail)
	CCC's Enduring Legacy (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Early Game Preserve (Park Road)
	Ranching (Casey Property)*
Education Materials / Programs	Prehistoric Culture*
	Homestead Culture*

**Potential Future Interpretive Site*

<i>Preservation and Protection</i>	
Digital Media	Online Videos (Website)
	GPS-guided Hikes*
	Early WICA (Website)*
	Fire Tower*
Personal Services	Fairgrounds (Cave)
	Garden of Eden (Cave)
	Short Program (Cave)*
	Community Programs
	Campfire Program (Elk Mountain Trail)
	Bus Tour (Park Road/Prairie Byway)*
	All Day Hike*
Publications	Wind Cave History (Visitor Center)
	Junior Ranger (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Rankin Ridge Trail Guide (Rankin Ridge Trail)
	Wind Cave Defining Moments (Website)
	75 Years at Wind Cave (Website)
	Cave Exploration (Website)
	Defining Moments (Website)
	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)
	Prairie Byway Driving Tour (Prairie Byway)*
Waysides	Early Days at Wind Cave (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Sight Unseen (Prairie Vista Trail)
	Early Game Preserve (Park Road)
	Fire Tower*
Education Materials / Programs	Fire, Fire, Fire*
	Wildlife*

<i>Archeology</i>	
Exhibits	Exhibits (Visitor Center)*
Digital Media	Film (Visitor Center)*
	Online Videos (Website)*
	Early WICA (Website)*
	Bison Jump*
Publications	Books (Black Hills Parks and Forests Association)*
	Site Bulletins (Website)*
Waysides	Waysides (Casey Property)*
Education Materials / Programs	Connections
	Prehistoric Culture*

**Potential Future Interpretive Site*

Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Wind Cave National Park

26611 US Highway 385
Hot Springs, SD 57747
605-745-4600

www.nps.gov/wica