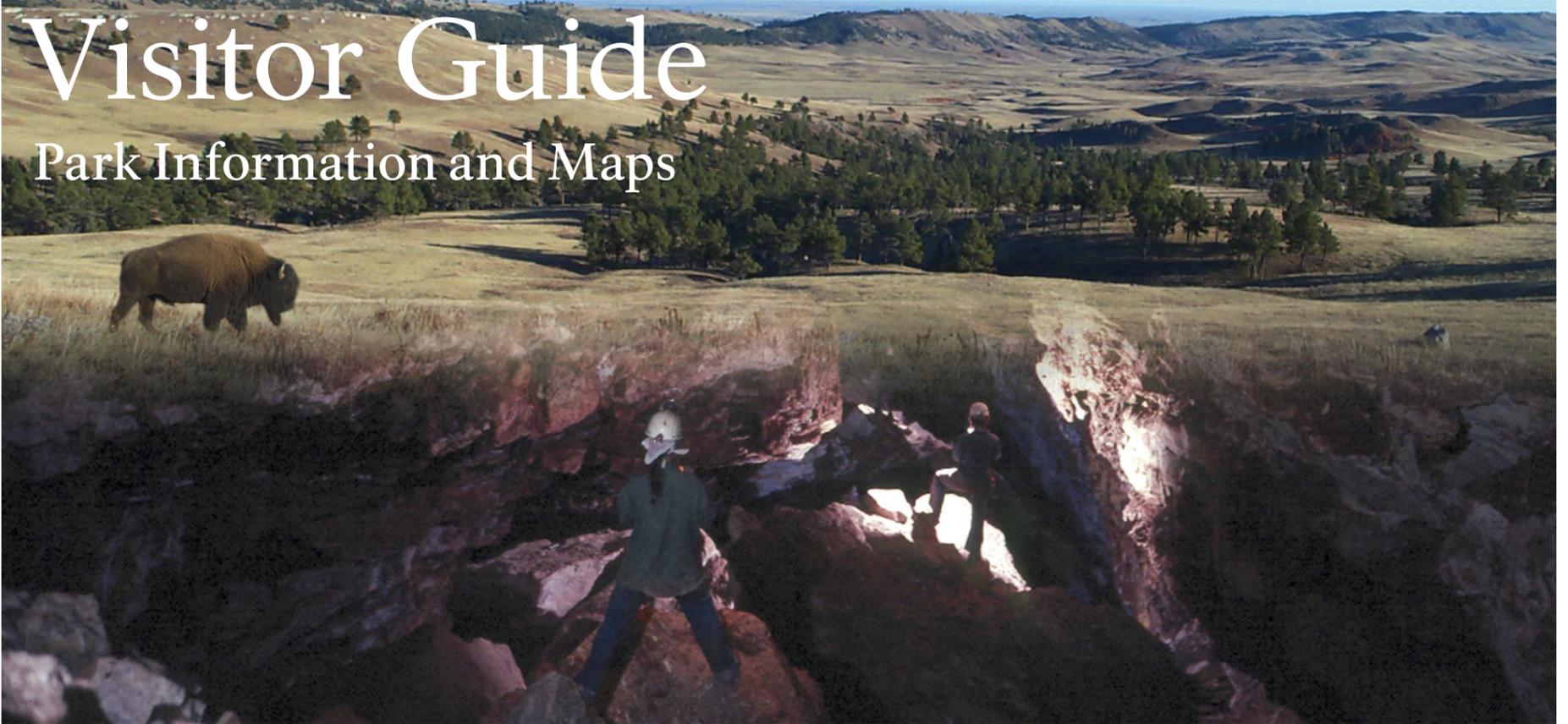




Visitor Guide

Park Information and Maps



Welcome to Wind Cave National Park!

This national park is one of the oldest in the country. Established in 1903, it was the eighth national park created and the first set aside to protect a cave.

While Wind Cave is the major attraction with its unique boxwork and significant underground cave passageways, the surface resources, including both natural and cultural resources, are also worth the stop. The buildings around the visitor center date back to the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps. The wildlife such as bison, elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, prairie dogs, and black-footed ferrets are also exciting to view.

Today, visitors from around the world come to see these two parks in one. Our hope is that you have a safe and enjoyable visit to Wind Cave National Park, take plenty of pictures, participate in our programs, and leave nothing but footprints.

Travel Safe,

Vidal Dávila
Superintendent

Call 911 for Emergencies

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The Best of Both Worlds

What Lies Below?

Wind Cave National Park is host to one of the longest and most complex caves in the world. Currently over 143 miles of twisting passageways reside under only 1.2 square miles of surface area, creating a maze of tunnels deep below the park's rolling hills. The cave is famous for a rare formation known as boxwork. More boxwork is found in Wind Cave than all other caves in the world combined.

Portions of Wind Cave are believed to be over 300 million years old, making it one of the oldest known caves in the world. The cave has undergone many geological changes and those processes continue today. Geologists have many questions yet to answer before we can fully understand the rich, incredible world below our feet.

Where Does that Hole Go?

What tempted the first explorers of Wind Cave to leave behind their safe, familiar world, and venture into the dark, unknown depths of Wind Cave? Cave exploration continues here for many of the same reasons humans have explored since the beginning of time: out of adventure, curiosity, and even the desire for riches.



After more than 100 years of exploration is there anything new to discover in Wind Cave? Amazingly, the cave still offers opportunities to venture where no one has gone before, making it one of the last frontiers on Earth.

From Tips to Tours

Wind Cave is considered sacred and culturally significant to many American Indians, and throughout the centuries, many tribes lived and traveled within what would become Wind Cave National Park. Who first discovered Wind Cave is lost to time, but in 1881, Tom and Jesse Bingham rediscovered the cave when they were attracted to the entrance by whistling noises coming out of the cave.

In 1889, the South Dakota Mining Company established a mining claim at Wind Cave and hired J.D. McDonald to manage it. The mining was unsuccessful, but McDonald realized the cave's potential as a tourist destination. One of J.D.'s sons, Alvin, only 16 years old, spent much of his time exploring the cave.

On January 3, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the bill creating Wind Cave National Park. It was the eighth national park created and the first to protect a cave.

The Endless Unknown

The park's underground frontier is matched by an equally vast wilderness over the prairie every night. The night sky is an important part of the Wind Cave National Park experience. The park's exceptionally clean air brings stars and planets shimmering to life as day fades into night. Even for those with limited knowledge of astronomy, the night sky is a memorable part of the park experience.

Experiencing the prairie while surrounded by the inky blackness of the night, interrupted only by the glow of the northern lights or a distant lightning storm, is a tie to our past. It gives us a place and time to sit back and enjoy what our ancestors would have experienced, peering into the endless unknown.

Back From the Brink

Many national parks are great places to view wildlife. However, that has not always been the case. In the early 1900s, many animal populations neared extinction because of loss of habitat or hunting pressures.



With the establishment of the Wind Cave National Game Preserve in 1912, wildlife that once flourished in the area were reintroduced back to their native habitats. Because of this and continuing efforts, such as the 2007 reintroduction of the black-footed ferret, Wind Cave National Park is home to ferrets, elk, bison, pronghorn, prairie dogs, and an abundance of other wildlife.

A Sea of Grass

Wind Cave National Park is a place where one can still see a remnant of a mixed-grass prairie and imagine the scene that greeted westward-bound 19th century pioneers – not farms and cities, as today, but open plains stretching across the middle of the continent. A piece of that prairie is preserved here in its natural state.

Within Wind Cave National Park you can find an excellent example of a mixed-grass prairie. A mixed-grass prairie is a meeting point - or *ecotone* - where species of the eastern tall grass prairie mingle with the short grass species of the western high plains. The convergence provides a home for a diversity of plants and animals and allows us to step back in time and glimpse the immensity of what was once the Great Plains.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wind Cave National Park

Located in the southern Black Hills of South Dakota, Wind Cave National Park encompasses 33,851 acres of mixed-grass prairie and ponderosa pine forest, as well as one of the longest, oldest, and most complex cave systems in the world.

Superintendent Vidal Dávila
Wind Cave National Park
26611 US Hwy 385
Hot Springs, SD 57747-0129 USA

Park Phone
(605) 745-4600

Website
www.nps.gov/wica

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wica_interpretation@nps.gov



This Visitor Guide is published by the Black Hills Parks and Forests Association, a not-for-profit organization that assists the National Park Service in its educational, interpretive, and scientific programs. For more information, see page (7).

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Planning Your Visit

Visitor Center

The Wind Cave Visitor Center is a great place to start your park visit. The visitor center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, with extended hours during the summer. The visitor center is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. All cave tours begin at the visitor center and are offered daily. Exhibits, maps, book sales, backcountry permits, horse permits, information about cave tours and ranger programs, lost-and-found services, and Federal Recreational Lands Passes are all available here.

Ranger Programs

When visiting the park, plan to attend a ranger-led program. Cave tours are offered year-round while other ranger-led programs vary seasonally. See page 4 for more information.



Campground

The Elk Mountain Campground is located one mile north of the visitor center. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis; **generally the campground does not fill**. Each site accommodates up to eight people and two vehicles. Two accessible sites are available. The fee for camping is \$18 per night, per site. In the off-season, when facilities are limited, the fee is \$9 per night. Holders of Senior or Access passes pay half price. Group camping is available by reservation; contact the park for reservations. The campground has restrooms with water and flush toilets but no showers, electrical hookups, or dump stations. Firewood is made available for campers as the collection of firewood is prohibited. During the summer months park rangers present campfire programs at the campground amphitheater.

Backcountry Camping

Wind Cave National Park's backcountry offers an excellent opportunity to experience and enjoy the abundant resources of the park. Backcountry camping is permitted in the northwestern part of the park. **Backcountry campers must have a permit**. Permits are free and can be obtained at the visitor center.



For your safety, and for the protection of park resources, follow all regulations during your stay. Leave no trace of your visit.

Hiking

When hiking park trails make sure to carry plenty of water; temperatures in the summer can exceed 100°F (38°C). Water is not readily available along the trails and any water found in the backcountry should be treated or boiled before drinking. Flies, mosquitoes, and wood ticks can be found in the wetter areas of the park. Be watchful for rattlesnakes throughout the prairie.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is a wonderful way to experience the park's backcountry. **All horse and pack animal use requires a free permit** available at the visitor center. Almost all of the park is open to riding, except: directly on hiking trails, near water sources, on roadways, and in the campground and picnic areas.

Bicycling

Bicycling is limited to roads which are open to public motor vehicle access. **Bicycling off road, on trails, or in the backcountry is prohibited**. When bicycling, be aware that animals roam freely through the park. Keep a safe distance from bison and all wild animals. Traveling the park's backcountry roads, NPS 5 and 6, provides a great opportunity to see the prairie area of the park.

Picnicking

The park's picnic area is located ¼ mile north of the visitor center and is open year-round. The picnic area contains tables, fire grates, and pit toilets. Drinking water is available in the summer months.

Restrooms

Restrooms are available year-round at the visitor center and in the summer months at the Elk Mountain Campground. Pit toilets are available at both the picnic area and the campground year round.

Trash and Recycling

Trash receptacles are available at the visitor center, the picnic area, and the Elk Mountain Campground. Recycling facilities are also available at these areas. The park recycles glass, aluminum cans, steel cans, and plastic containers with PETE 1 or HDPE 2 markings. Please rinse recyclables before placing them in containers.

Area Services

There are no lodging, gasoline, grocery, or restaurant services in the park. Snacks are available at the visitor center vending machines. Full services are available in the nearby towns of Hot Springs (15 minutes south) and Custer (25 minutes north), with partial services in Custer State Park (bordering Wind Cave National Park). For information on Hot Springs, call 800-325-6991; for Custer, call 800-992-9818; for Custer State Park, call 605-255-4515.

Hey Kids...



I've got horns like a bison but I shed them every year like an elk. My closest relative lives in Africa. Want to race? Bet I'll win...

Check out the Creature Feature on page 6.

Safety and Protecting Park Resources

Protecting the Park

Park resources are for everyone to enjoy. **Do not disturb or remove plants, wildlife, antlers, bones, rocks, or any other natural or cultural feature; they are protected by federal law**. These resources are all part of the park's ecosystem and are important to the park's history and to the survival of animals and plants. Please leave all objects undisturbed so the next visitor can enjoy them.

Pets

Pets are prohibited in the backcountry and on most hiking trails. Pets are permitted on the Elk Mountain Nature Trail and on the Prairie Vista Nature Trail. Please clean up after your pet. Pets may not be left unattended and must be on a leash at all times. **Do not leave pets in your vehicle for any length of time**. Kennel space is available in Hot Springs or Custer.

Weapons

Federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under federal, South Dakota, and local laws to possess firearms while visiting Wind Cave National Park. **Hunting and the use of firearms is prohibited**. It is the visitor's responsibility to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws. **Federal law prohibits firearms in public buildings within this park**. These locations are posted with signs.

Wildlife

Animals in the park are wild and unpredictable. Do not approach or attempt to feed them. Feeding animals causes them to become dependent on handouts and attracts them to highways. Bison roam freely within the park and can be dangerous. Stay a safe distance from all wildlife – at least 25 yards from bison and elk.

Traveling in the Park

All vehicles (including bicycles) must remain on roadways. Off-road driving or bicycle riding is prohibited.

Slow down and enjoy the view! When driving park roads, obey all speed limits as they are in place to protect you and the wildlife. Over eighty bison have been struck and killed by motor vehicles in the last twenty years. For your own safety, federal and state seatbelt laws are enforced.



Wind Cave through the Seasons

Like many national parks Wind Cave National Park is open year-round. Each season offers a unique experience in this special landscape.



Winter

Icy winds, short days, snow -- and solitude. South Dakota winters can be harsh, but the rewards of visiting Wind Cave National Park in the winter can be great. Photographers will find a special treat in the winter. Fresh snow enlivens the landscape. The sun sets early in the winter and provides a glorious range of color set against a muted prairie palette.

Meanwhile, bison, deer, and pronghorn remain active in the winter, along with prairie dogs. Coyotes grow a thicker coat of fur and are frequently seen prowling the prairies. Elk, normally shy and rarely seen, congregate in the park during the winter and are frequently seen in large herds at dawn and dusk.

Despite such weather, the Wind Cave National Park Visitor Center is open 362 days a year, only closing on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. Between Thanksgiving and late February, visitors generally find they only need to share the park with the resident bison. Luckily for those visitors, the weather is always good underground in Wind Cave, where temperatures stay near 54°F (12°C) regardless of the outside temperature and where it never snows (although you might spot some "frostwork" on the tour). The park also hosts special winter hikes and children's programs. Ask a ranger for details.

Spring

Spring is a season of change in the Black Hills and within Wind Cave National Park. Warm days and chilly nights are punctuated by sudden snow storms, only to be melted the next day. A foot of snow will be quickly replaced by green prairie grasses and wildflowers. Pasqueflowers, phlox, and coneflower are common.

Spring may well be the best season to view wildlife as animals become more active. Migratory birds move through the area on their way north, while

summer residents such as burrowing owls begin to arrive. Bison, elk, deer and pronghorn give birth in the spring and lucky visitors may see red-hued bison calves playing in the prairie.

Spring also brings more visitors to the park. Environmental education programs are offered for school groups. The cave tour schedule expands, though its still a good idea to arrive early. Hiking trails can be muddy, but spring is a great time to take a hike before hot summer temperatures take hold.



Summer

Long, hot summer days are shattered by sudden thunderstorms, while warm nights bring out a variety of wildlife. Summer is the season in the Black Hills when the most recreational opportunities are available, weather is the warmest, and wildlife is very active.

Wind Cave receives 75% of its visitation in the three summer months. For most of June through August the full range

of cave tours and other programs are available. Even on the hottest day, the cave is still 54°F (12°C) and provides welcome relief from outdoor temperatures. Summer is also a good time for hiking and camping for those that plan ahead. Dangers such as heat, thunderstorms, rattlesnakes, and ticks are at their height during the summer season, but the prairie is at its most splendid and sunsets can be magic.

Fall

Warm, dry days and cool nights, pierced by the haunting bugle of elk announce the arrival of fall. Temperatures begin to cool off after the hot summer, local attractions and parks are not as crowded, and the elk are entering their mating season, known as the "rut."

Fall is a pleasant time to visit Wind Cave National Park, with daytime

temperatures staying fairly moderate and with less chance of precipitation than during other seasons. However, as visitation slows down, so does the schedule of cave tours. Call ahead to check the schedule prior to visiting. A unique ranger-led program is offered only in the fall, the Elk Bugling Program, which gives visitors a chance to listen to and learn about the elk.



Weather

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Average High Temp.	38°F 3°C	42°F 6°C	50°F 10°C	61°F 17°C	71°F 22°C	81°F 27°C	89°F 32°C	88°F 32°C	78°F 26°C	66°F 19°C	50°F 10°C	40°F 6°C
Average Low Temp.	11°F -12°C	15°F -9°C	21°F -6°C	32°F 0°C	42°F 6°C	51°F 11°C	57°F 15°C	55°F 13°C	45°F 7°C	34°F 1°C	23°F -5°C	14°F -10°C
Average Precipitation (snowfall)	0.3" (6.6")	0.4" (5.9")	0.9" (7.4")	1.8" (7")	3.1" (2")	3.2" (0)	2.4" (0)	2.1" (0)	1.5" (0.5")	1.5" (1.5")	0.5" (5.1")	0.4" (6")

Cave Tour Information

General Information

All cave tours are ranger-guided and leave from the visitor center. The cave temperature is 54°F(12°C) year-round. A jacket or sweater is recommended. Shoes are required. Sandals are not recommended. Any clothing, footwear, or gear worn in caves outside

the Black Hills in the last 5 years is not permitted on any cave tour due to white-nose syndrome. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis at the visitor center. **Tickets must be purchased at least five minutes before tour times.**

EASY

Garden of Eden Tour 1 hour; 1/3 mile

This tour is the least strenuous, with only 150 stairs. It is a wonderful sample of Wind Cave. Many of the beautiful cave formations – boxwork, popcorn, and flowstone – are seen along the trail. The tour is ideal for people with limited time or abilities. This tour enters and exits the cave by elevator.

MODERATE

Natural Entrance Tour 1 1/4 hours; 2/3 mile

The most popular tour at Wind Cave includes a visit to the natural entrance of Wind Cave, giving visitors the opportunity to see how the cave got its name. Participants enter the cave through a man-made entrance and journey through the middle level of the cave. Wind Cave's famous boxwork is abundant throughout this trip. Popcorn and frostwork can also be seen along the trail. Most of the 300 stairs along this route are down. This tour is moderately strenuous and exits the cave by elevator.

STRENUOUS

Fairgrounds Tour 1 1/2 hours; 2/3 mile

This tour explores both the upper and middle levels of Wind Cave. Boxwork is abundant along the trail in the middle level of the cave. In the upper level, the trail winds through large rooms and into areas where popcorn and frostwork can be seen. This is the most strenuous walking tour. There are 450 stairs along the route with one flight of 89 steps up. The tour enters and exits the cave by elevator.

Candlelight Tour 2 hours; 2/3 mile Reservations strongly recommended.



Experience the cave by candlelight. This tour takes place in a less developed, unlit part of the cave. Each participant will carry a candle bucket. Shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandals of any kind are permitted. This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 8. This strenuous tour covers 2/3 mile of rugged trail.

Wild Cave Tour 4 hours Reservations required.



Explore the cave away from the developed trails. On this strenuous tour, visitors will be introduced to the basics of safe caving while also getting to see many of the formations which are common in Wind Cave. Wear old clothes and gloves, as much of the trip includes crawling. Long pants, long sleeved shirts, and sturdy, lace-up boots or shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandals of any kind are permitted on this tour. The park provides hard hats, lights, and kneepads. Please do not bring jewelry, watches, or other valuables on the tour. Clothing worn on the Jewel Cave Wild Caving Tour is not permitted in Wind Cave. Clothing and gear used in areas with potential white-nose syndrome contamination are not permitted in the cave. This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 16. We require a signed parental consent form for participants 16 and 17 years old.

Accessibility Tour



The cave is partially accessible to people with limited mobility. Please call ahead to make arrangements or ask at the information desk for an accessible tour. Limited areas of the cave are accessible to wheelchairs. The fee for the tour is \$5.00 for adults and half price for Senior or Access pass holders. Sign language tours are available with prior notice.

Interagency Passes Issued Here



Cave Tour and Program Schedule	
January 1, 2015 - April 18	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:00, 1:00, 3:00
April 19 - May 2	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	9:30, 11:30, 1:30, 3:30
May 3 - May 22	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, 4:00
May 23 - May 25, Memorial Day Weekend	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:00, 12:00, 2:00
Natural Entrance Tour	8:40, 9:20, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30, 5:00
Fairgrounds Tour	11:00, 1:00, 3:00
May 26 - June 6	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 1:00, 2:00, 4:00, 5:00
June 7 - August 2	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:40, 12:40, 2:40
Natural Entrance Tour	8:40, 9:20, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00
Fairgrounds Tour	9:40, 10:20, 11:40, 12:20, 1:40, 2:20, 3:40, 4:20
Candlelight Tour	10:30, 1:30
Wild Cave Tour	1:00
Campfire Program	9:00 p.m.
August 3 - September 7	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:30, 1:40, 3:40
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00
Fairgrounds Tour	9:30, 11:20, 1:20, 3:20
Candlelight Tour	1:30
Wild Cave Tour	Weekends Only: Aug. 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, Sept. 5, 6
Campfire Program	Nightly, call for times.
September 8 - September 19	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, 4:00
Evening Activity	7:00 p.m., starting on September 8th, Tue., Thu., Sat.
September 20 - October 10	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	9:30, 11:30, 1:30, 3:30
October 11 - December 31	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:00, 1:00, 3:00
Early 2016	
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	10:00, 1:00, 3:00
Schedule subject to change; please call 605-745-4600 for current schedule.	

Reservations

Tickets for cave tours are sold on a first-come, first-served basis with the following exceptions:

- **Large groups or schools:** Reservations are *accepted*.
- **Candlelight Tour:** Reservations are *strongly recommended*.
- **Wild Cave Tour:** Reservations are *required*.

Reservations are accepted beginning one month before the tour and must be made by phone. Call 605-745-4600 for information or reservations.

Cave Tour Fees					
Tickets must be purchased at least five (5) minutes before scheduled tour time.					
	Garden of Eden Tour	Natural Entrance Tour	Fairgrounds Tour	Candlelight Tour	Wild Cave Tour
Adults (17+)	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$30.00
Children (6-16)	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	**	Not Permitted
5 and Under	Free	Free	Free	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Senior/Access Pass*	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	
* Price applies <i>only</i> to cardholders.					
** Minimum age for Candlelight Tour is 8 years old . Tickets for children 8-16 cost \$6.00					

The Wonders of Wind Cave

Wind Cave is unique from many other caves in that it has less active water flow. Less water means fewer dripstone formations, or speleothems, such as the stalactites and stalagmites common in other caves. However, in Wind Cave many speleothems can

still be found, often hidden amongst other cave formations. The following covers only a small percentage of the many formations found within Wind Cave. While some are buried in the far reaches of the cave, many can be seen along tour routes.



Boxwork

One of the most common sights in Wind Cave, boxwork is extraordinarily rare elsewhere. In fact, over 95% of the known boxwork worldwide is found within Wind Cave. Adding to boxwork's mystique, it is not a true speleothem, but a speleogen, having formed before the cave itself!



Dripstone

Dripstone is a general term for a whole class of cave formations, all of which are formed by water as it drips into a cave. Dripstone formations include stalactites, stalagmites, columns, popcorn, flowstone, and draperies (cave bacon), most of which are rare in Wind Cave, a relatively dry cave. Dripstone features can be seen in a few places though, including along the Garden of Eden tour route and off-trail areas such as the aptly named Dripstone Delight.



Calcite Rafts

A lump of calcite, like most rocks, would sink in water. But calcite rafts are paper-thin sheets of calcite that coalesce around specks of dust floating atop perfectly still pools of water inside a cave. If the sheet of calcite becomes too thick (more than 1mm) or ripples form in the water, this floating rock formation will sink, piling with other sunken rafts on the floor.



Gypsum Flowers

Gypsum is a common mineral found in drier areas of limestone caves. Under the right conditions, gypsum can form incredibly delicate crystals, including gypsum flowers. Gypsum flowers are curling gypsum crystals which appear to be "blooming" out of the cave walls!

Speleothem or Speleogen?

Both words refer to cave formations and are rooted in the Greek word for *cave*. The difference depends on when the feature formed. Those that form when the cave formed are *speleogens*.

Those that form by minerals deposited after the cave formed are *speleothems*. To remember the difference recall that *speleogens* had their *genesis* or creation with the cave, not after.



Vugs

Vugs are pockets in the limestone cave walls lined with crystals. The ornate crystals can be large or small, clear or colored, quartz or calcite, dogtooth spar or nailhead spar. Visitors with sharp eyes will spot these formations hidden in the walls along all tour routes.



Moonmilk

Moonmilk's origins are almost as strange as its name. It has been hypothesized to be either the result of bacterial action on limestone or hydrated calcite precipitates. This cave formation looks somewhat like cottage cheese splattered on the cave walls.



Frostwork

Frostwork forms as airflow interacts with droplets of mineral-rich water. Frostwork is formed from a mineral known as aragonite, whose crystals form delicate branches of needles or frost-like structures. Some Wind Cave frostwork has grown 8-10" tall crystals resembling frosted Christmas trees!



Popcorn

Though resembling its buttery namesake, cave popcorn could be more accurately described as petrified cave sweat! Popcorn forms as water rich in calcite beads up on the surface of cave walls. The calcite crystallizes and, given time, the crystals come to resemble a kernel of popped corn. Popcorn can be found throughout Wind Cave and along all tour routes.

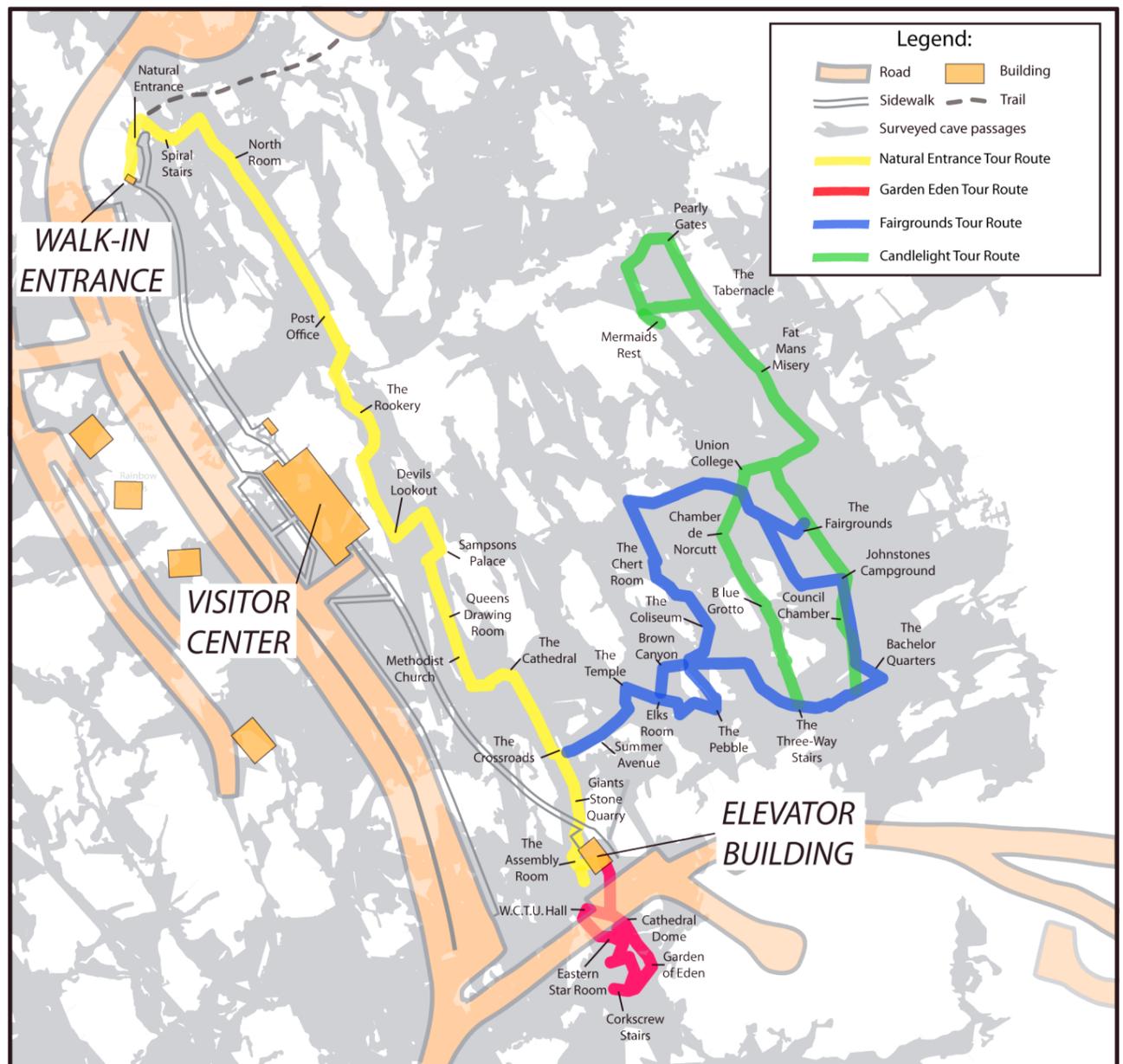
White-nose Syndrome



A disease called White-nose Syndrome (WNS) is spreading through the United States, killing more than 6 million bats since 2006. WNS is linked to a fungus that forms a white growth on bats' muzzles and other body parts when they are most vulnerable--during hibernation. Affected bats wake and use up energy reserves before spring comes, resulting in death by starvation or freezing.

First identified in a cave in New York State, the disease has spread as far west as Iowa. Its appearance in western states may only be a matter of time. Although this disease does not affect humans, people may contribute to its spread by unknowingly transporting spores from an affected cave to others on clothing or objects used in affected caves.

You can help protect the bats in Wind Cave by not wearing any shoes, clothing or other items that have been in another cave or mine outside the Black Hills within the last five years.



Learn More About Wind Cave



Bring Your Class to the Park

Students can participate in regular cave tours or the park's *Connections* or *Water in the Environment* program. These free programs are offered in May. Reservations are required.

Teach outside the Black Hills? No problem! Bring the park to your classroom with a distance learning

program, available to any school with a high speed internet connection.

Contact the park at 605.745.4600 for details.

Join Us on Facebook

Keep in touch with what's happening in the park. Wind Cave's Facebook page allows you to explore the park from any location. See what is happening throughout the year, learn about special activities, and watch the wildlife and landscape as the seasons change.



Explore Our Website

Learn about the adventures of current and past explorers of the cave,

understand the history of wildlife in the park, or discover more about local plant communities.

www.nps.gov/wica.

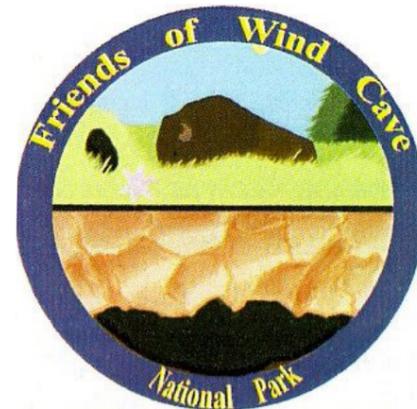
Friends of Wind Cave National Park

Friends of Wind Cave National Park (FoWC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support and promote Wind Cave National Park as a natural and cultural treasure and to expand the awareness of the unique value of the park to the Black Hills community and the nation.

Friends groups provide community based fundraising for various projects to enhance the local park's interpretive programs or to maintain or install

new infrastructure. Friends groups can receive and administer your earmarked donation for specific projects. For more information visit the Friends' website at

www.friendsofwindcavenp.org



Ranger Programs



Ranger-led programs are offered throughout the year. Contact the visitor center at 605.745.4600 for scheduling and more information on any of the following programs.

Campfire Program



Evening campfire talks are presented nightly during the summer at the Elk Mountain Campground amphitheater. Topics vary and programs last about 45 minutes.

Sanson Ranch Hikes



Explore a historic homestead with a ranger, including a moderate 1.5 mile cross-country hike to a bison jump used by American Indians. Meet at the visitor center and caravan to the ranch. Offered select Saturdays in summer.

Discovery Talk



During the summer, join a ranger for a short talk or demonstration explaining aspects of the park. Topics and times vary.

Prairie Hikers



Discover seldom-seen areas of the park with Wind Cave Prairie Walkers. Open to anyone, these hikes last 3-4 hours, cover up to 2 miles off-trail, and are held the last Monday of every month.

Adventures in Nature



Adventures in Nature is a fun and interactive way for you and your children to learn about nature. The program is held during the winter and encourages children 3 to 13 to actively explore the natural world around them.

Kids Corner



Become A Junior Ranger

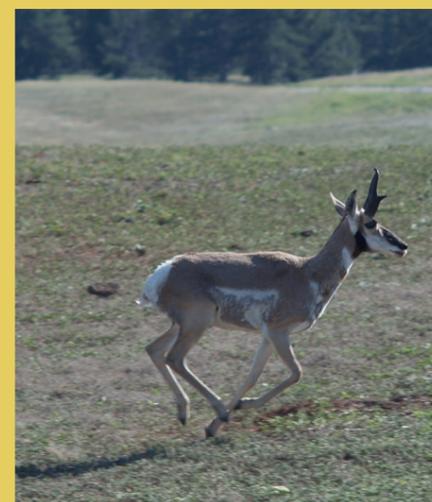
The Junior Ranger program is a great way to learn about the cave, ecosystems, and wildlife of Wind Cave National Park!

Free Junior Ranger booklets are available in the Park Store.

Creature Feature - Pronghorn

What do you get when you cross an Olympic sprinter with a long-distance runner? The pronghorn -- able to run up to 45 mph for several miles! Also known as *antelope*, they can outrun any predator by 6 weeks of age.

About the same size as a deer, pronghorn have dark, curved horns, a pair of white stripes across the throat, and a bright white rump patch they flash when running away.



Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

The Park Store is a collaborative partnership with Wind Cave National Park and Black Hills Parks & Forests Association (BHPFA). Operating sales outlets in Wyoming, South Dakota, and the Nebraska Panhandle, each BHPFA outlet offers a variety of materials and products for learning more about the natural scenery and rich history of our public lands. Proceeds from purchases support environmental education programs, interpretation, and research.

Interested in supporting public lands?

Annual Membership \$29.95

Black Hills Parks & Forests Association membership enables public land enthusiasts to support the goals of the organization and its partner agencies. Members receive:

Newsletters - Discounts - Specials
Reciprocal program with savings nationwide

Other BHPFA Store Locations:

- Black Hills National Forest sites
- National Grasslands Visitor Center
- Custer State Park
- Jewel Cave National Monument
- Nebraska National Forest

To order online visit:
www.blackhillsparks.org

To order by phone call:
605.745.7020

Expanding the knowledge of public lands through our partner agencies



Black Hills Parks & Forest Association has awarded more than \$90,000 over the last five years to Wind Cave National Park.

Alvin McDonald Diary \$49.95

Known as Wind Cave's first explorer, Alvin McDonald chronicled his adventures in the labyrinth cave's passageways. Finely crafted in exact replica, this journal offers a glimpse of this young man's remarkable life and explorations of nearly 10 miles of cave.

Other Alvin McDonald products:

Magnet \$4.99
Bookmark \$2.50

Wind Cave: One Park, Two Worlds \$19.95

Journey into two vastly different landscapes of uncompromising beauty -- the prairie surface and cave below -- with the movie shown in the park visitor center. Approximately 20 minutes long.

Jewel Cave / Wind Cave 2-sided Puzzle \$15.99

A must-have for any puzzle enthusiast! This 500 piece double-sided puzzle features Wind Cave National Park's boxwork formation and Jewel Cave National Monument's Formation Room. Finished puzzle is 15" x 22".



Wind Cave: An Ancient World Beneath the Hills \$11.95

The geologic story of one of the most complex cave systems is told in simple, yet technically detailed text. Full of informative graphics and photography, this book is sure to be a wonderful addition to any cave and geology enthusiast's library.

These products available exclusively through the Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

National Park Neighbors



Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Mount Rushmore is located approximately 50 miles from Wind Cave. Carved from 1927-1941 by Gutzon Borglum, the memorial depicts the portraits of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. Today, Mount Rushmore is host to almost three million visitors from around the world. Over the decades, Mount Rushmore has grown in fame as a symbol of America - an image of freedom and hope.

(605) 574-2523
www.nps.gov/moru



Jewel Cave National Monument

Jewel Cave National Monument is located approximately 35 miles from Wind Cave. Immerse yourself within one of the longest caves in the world. With over 175 miles of mapped and surveyed passages, this underground wilderness appeals to human curiosity. Its splendor is revealed through fragile formations and glimpses of brilliant color. Its maze of passages lure explorers, and its scientific wealth remains a mystery.

(605) 673-8300
www.nps.gov/jeca



Badlands National Park

Badlands National Park is located approximately 145 miles from Wind Cave. The park consists of 244,000 acres of sharply eroded buttes, pinnacles, and spires. It protects the largest mixed-grass prairie in the United States. Its wilderness area covers 64,000 acres and is a site of the reintroduction of the black-footed ferret, the most endangered land mammal in North America.

(605) 433-5361
www.nps.gov/badl



Devils Tower National Monument

Devils Tower is located approximately 135 miles from Wind Cave, a geologic feature protruding out of the rolling prairie that surrounds the Black Hills. The site is considered sacred to the Lakota and other tribes that have a connection to the area. Hundreds of parallel cracks make it one of the finest traditional crack climbing areas in North America. Devils Tower entices us to explore and define our place in the natural and cultural world.

(307) 467-5283
www.nps.gov/deto

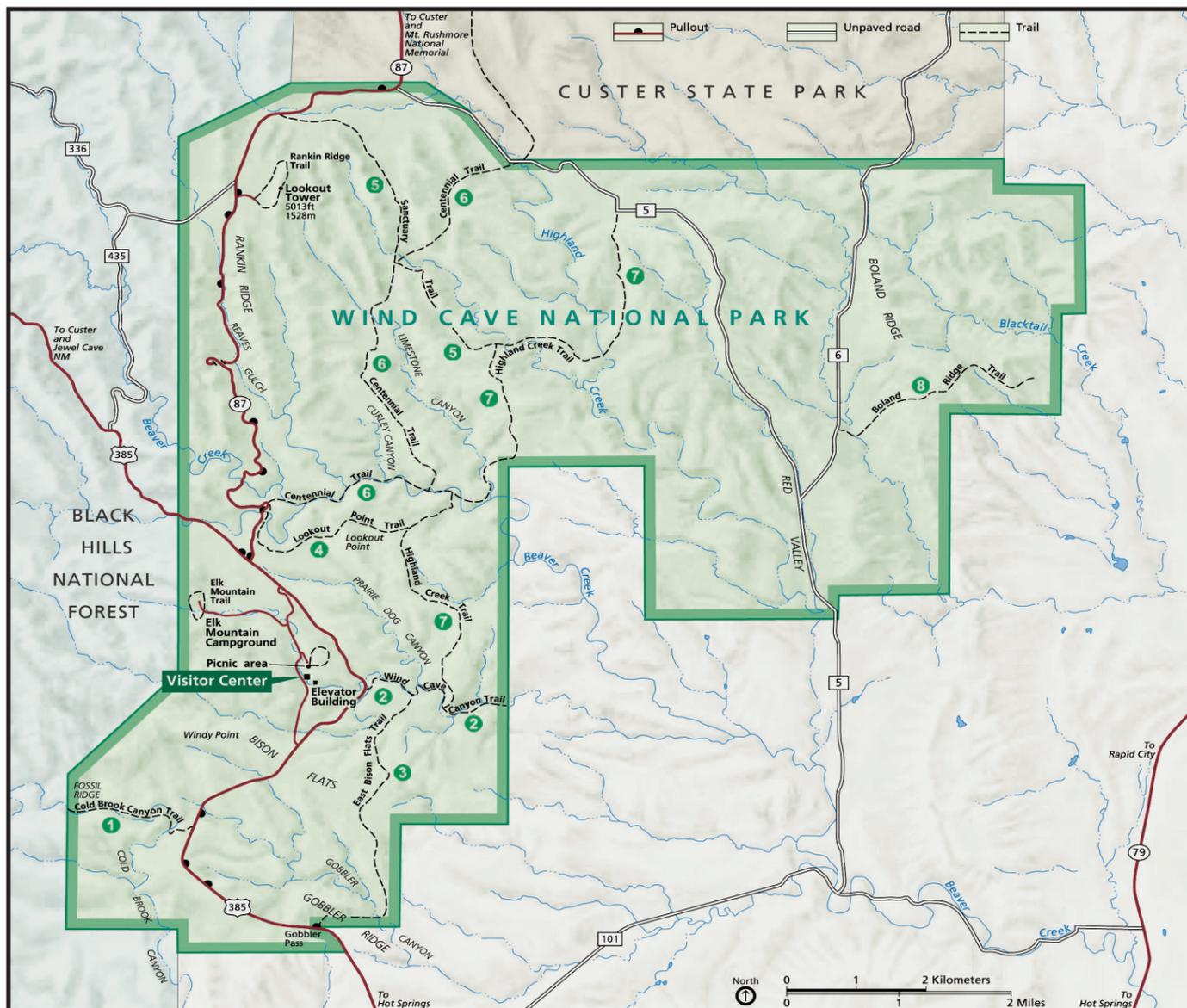


Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

Minuteman Missile is located approximately 121 miles from Wind Cave. The Minuteman Missile was an iconic weapon in the American nuclear arsenal during the Cold War, the defining historical event of the last half of the 20th century. A visit to the park is an opportunity to explore sites rarely seen by civilians and explore the Minuteman II system's role as a nuclear deterrent that maintained peace and prevented war.

(605) 433-5552
www.nps.gov/mimi

Hiking



Hiking in the Park

Wind Cave National Park offers more than 30 miles of trails to explore prairie grasslands and ponderosa forests. Go prepared:

- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Check the weather forecast before starting and bring extra layers.
- Off trail hiking is allowed. Watch out for wildlife.
- A topographic map is recommended and can be purchased at the visitor center bookstore.

Hiking With Pets



Leashed pets are allowed only on the Elk Mountain and Prairie Vista Nature Trails. Please clean up after your pet. *Do not leave your pets in your vehicle for any length of time.* Kennel space is available in Hot Springs or Custer.

Short Walks

Not up for a day hike? Three short nature trails offer a great way to explore for those with young children or little time. Each trail is about 1 mile in length. Informational signs or booklets are available for each trail.



Rankin Ridge Nature Trail - Gain spectacular views from the highest point in the park.



Elk Mountain Nature Trail - Explore an ecotone, or meeting zone, where the grassland and forest converge. Leashed pets allowed.



Prairie Vista Nature Trail - Stroll the prairie grasslands from the Visitor Center. Leashed pets allowed.

Hiking Trails

Trail	Difficulty	Trail #	One-way Distance	Description
Wind Cave Canyon	Easy	2	1.8 mi 2.9 km	This former road follows Wind Cave Canyon to the park boundary. Limestone cliffs provide nesting areas for cliff swallows, canyon wrens, and great horned owls. Look for Red-headed and Lewis's woodpeckers among the snag trees of forested hillsides.
Cold Brook Canyon	Moderate	1	1.4 mi 2.3 km	The trail winds through Cold Brook Canyon to the park boundary. Along the way a ponderosa forest gives way to the open prairie and crosses a prairie dog town, a good place to see prairie falcons and other raptors.
Lookout Point	Moderate	4	2.2 mi 3.5 km	Follow the rolling hills of the prairie across Lookout Point to Beaver Creek. A side trip up Lookout Point offers views of the American Elk Prescribed Fire from 2010. This trail can be combined with part of the Highland Creek and the Centennial trails to create a 4.5-mile loop.
Sanctuary	Moderately Strenuous	5	3.6 mi 5.8 km	The trailhead is about one mile north of the Rankin Ridge fire tower turnoff. This trail follows the rolling hills of the prairie, crosses a large prairie dog town, and ends where it meets the Highland Creek Trail.
East Bison Flats	Moderately Strenuous	3	3.7 mi 6 km	Hike one-half mile down the Wind Cave Canyon Trail to reach the East Bison Flats Trail where a brief, steep climb leads to the rolling hills of the prairie. Panoramic views of the prairie, Buffalo Gap, and the Black Hills await.
Centennial	Moderately Strenuous	6 (89)	6 mi 9.7 km	This 6-mile trail can be reached from SD Hwy 87 or NPS 5. This section is the southernmost part of a 111-mile trail through the Black Hills, ending at Bear Butte State Park. Here it crosses prairies, ponderosa forests, and winds along Beaver Creek.
Highland Creek	Moderately Strenuous	7	8.6 mi 13.8 km	The trail can be reached by a 1-mile hike down the Wind Cave Canyon trail or from the northern trailhead on NPS 5. This trail is the longest and the most diverse in the park, crossing mixed-grass prairies, ponderosa pine forests, and riparian habitats of Highland Creek, Beaver Creek, and Wind Cave Canyon.
Boland Ridge	Strenuous	8	2.6 mi 4.2 km	The trail begins at a small parking area on NPS 6, one mile north of the junction with NPS 5. A series of climbs offer panoramic views of the Black Hills, Red Valley, and the plains beyond. Elk are often seen from this trail.