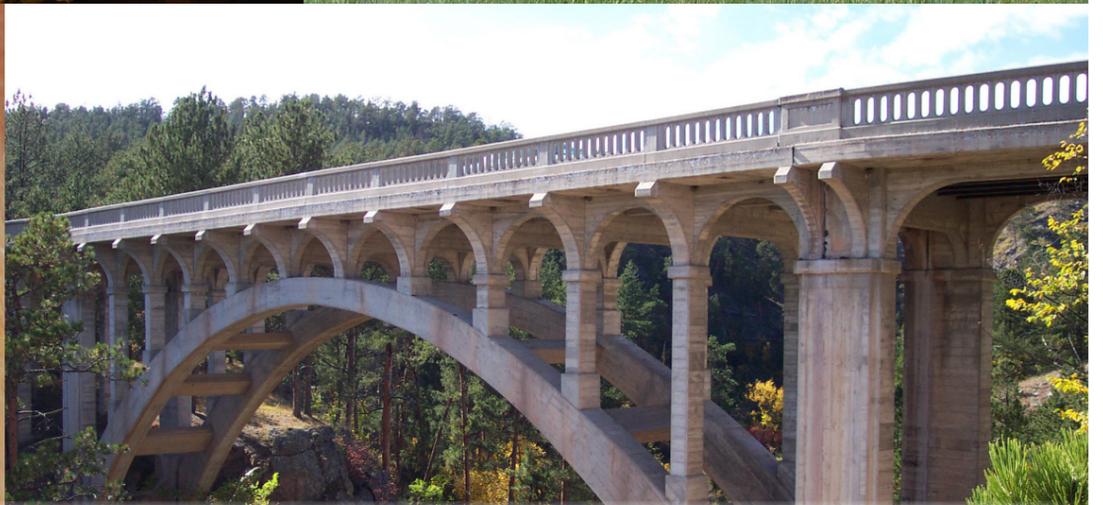
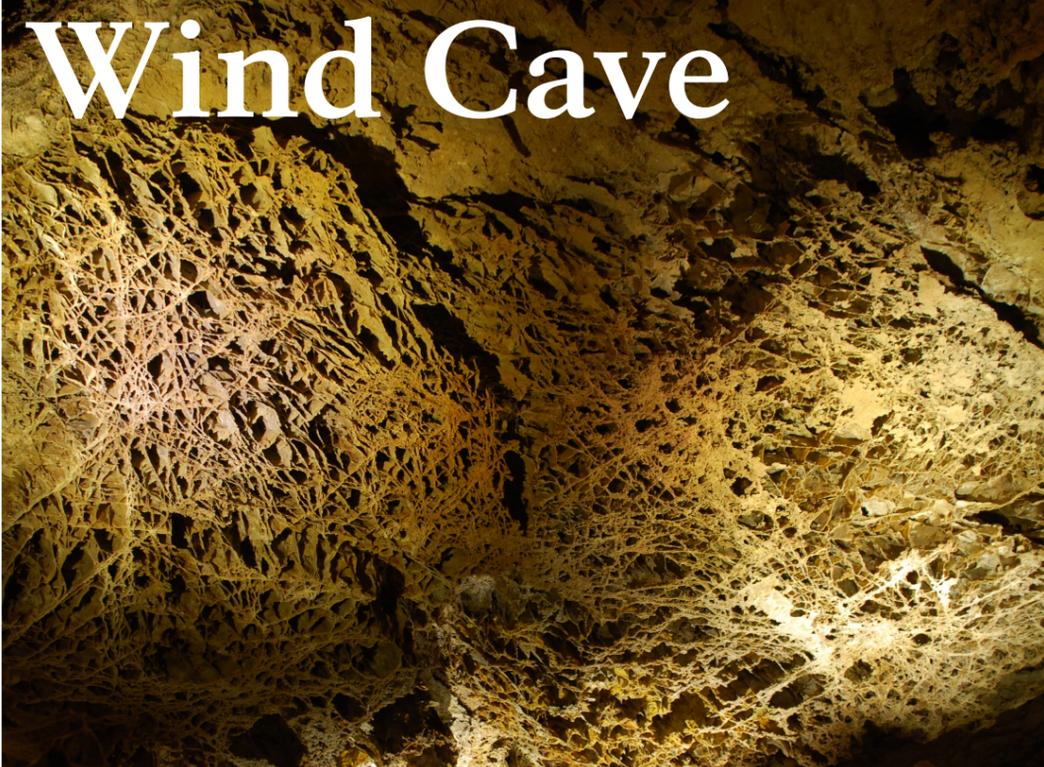




# Wind Cave



# FIND YOUR PARK

## Start with Wind Cave

One hundred years ago Congress established the National Park Service to care for America's special places. To celebrate the milestone, you are invited to explore over 400 parks, monuments, battlefields, and historic sites that preserve America's shared heritage.

Wind Cave was one of the few parks established before there was an agency to oversee them. In 1903 it became the eighth national park with the stroke of Theodore Roosevelt's presidential pen. From the beginning it was different. Not as celebrated as its predecessors, it offers no geysers, towering sequoia trees, or glacier-capped summits.

Even without the fanfare or iconic scenery of better-known parks, Wind Cave holds much that is

sought in national parks – rare and fantastic natural features, wildlife, compelling human dramas, and open space to wander and wonder.

Think there's no place left on earth to discover? After more than a century of exploration, Wind Cave is still a 145-mile underground maze without end. It offers the best place in the world to see the rare and beautiful cave feature known as boxwork.

Curious about the past? The Lakota have called this region home since time immemorial. Wind Cave's Natural Entrance is a sacred site in

Lakota heritage, the central part of the Lakota Emergence story.

Appreciate the craftsmanship of a bygone era? The Visitor Center and Elevator Building, constructed 80 years ago by the grateful hands of CCC laborers desperate for work,

still welcome visitors to the park today. The soaring bridges and winding parkway of Highway 87 shape journeys to and through the park decades after their completion.

Long for the glimpse of rare wildlife? Through the prairie's waving sea of grass roam herds of bison, elk, and pronghorn. The American bison's

recovery at Wind Cave and other national parks may be wildlife conservation's greatest success in the last hundred years. Will the black-footed ferret, reintroduced at Wind Cave in 2007, be the success story of the next century?

So much to enjoy in just one park. Come and see what Wind Cave has to offer in this centennial year of the National Park Service. And if Wind Cave isn't your park, just know there are over 400 more waiting for you to find them.



For information on centennial activities at Wind Cave:  
[www.nps.gov/wica/getinvolved/2016](http://www.nps.gov/wica/getinvolved/2016)  
nationwide:  
[www.findyourpark.com](http://www.findyourpark.com)

### Park Hours

24 hours/day, every day

### Visitor Center Hours

See page 4

### Table of Contents

Planning Your Visit .....	2	Learning More About the Park .....	6
Wind Cave Seasons .....	3	National Park Neighbors .....	7
Cave Tour Information .....	4	Hiking Trails & Map .....	8

### Emergencies Dial 911

**Park Info**  
605.745.4600



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## 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

### Wind Cave National Park

Located in the southern Black Hills of South Dakota, Wind Cave National Park encompasses 33,970 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.

### Contact

Wind Cave National Park  
26611 US Hwy 385  
Hot Springs, SD 57747-0129 USA  
(605) 745-4600  
[www.nps.gov/wica](http://www.nps.gov/wica)  
[wica\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto: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 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

Cave tours are offered year-round while other ranger-led programs vary seasonally. See page 4 for more information.



## Campground

Located one mile north of the visitor center, the Elk Mountain Campground is open year-round and offers 62 campsites on a first-come, first-served basis. Two accessible sites are available. The campground generally does not fill.

Campsites are \$18 per night regularly, \$9 per night in the shoulder season when facilities are limited. Senior or Access passholders pay half price. Group camping is available by reservation at 605.745.4600. Drinking water and flush toilets are available in summer, but no showers, electrical hookups, or dump stations. Firewood is made available for campers as the collection of firewood is prohibited. Campfire programs are held at the campground amphitheater throughout summer.



## Backcountry Camping

Backcountry camping is permitted in the northwestern part of the park. Permits are required and available for free at the visitor center. Ask a ranger for suggestions on routes and destinations.

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.

## 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.

## 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, picnic areas, and around the visitor center.

## Picnicking

A 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.

## 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.

# 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.

## 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.

## Pets

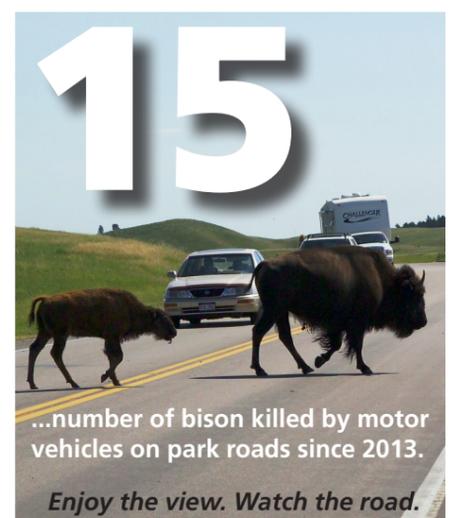
Pets are prohibited in the backcountry and on most hiking trails. Pets are permitted on the Elk Mountain Nature Trail and on the Prairie Vista Nature Trail. Please clean up after your pet. Pets may not be left unattended and must be on a leash at all times. Do not leave pets in your vehicle for any length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

## Weather

Hazardous weather can strike at any time of year. Severe thunderstorms, common in the summer, bring lightning and the potential for damaging hail and possibly a tornado. Check the forecast before heading out and avoid the open prairie when severe weather is expected.

## Traveling in the Park

All vehicles and bicycles must remain on roadways. Off-road driving or bicycle riding is prohibited. Obey all speed limits as they are in place to protect you and the wildlife. For your own safety, federal and state seatbelt laws are enforced.



## 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 – regulations require at least 25 yards from bison and elk.

# Wind Cave through the Seasons

Wind Cave National Park is open year-round, offering a unique experience with each season.

**Winter** can be harsh, but the rewards of visiting the park in winter can be great. Fresh snow enlivens the landscape while early sunsets provide a glorious range of light for photographs. Bison, deer, pronghorn, and elk remain active in the winter.

The Visitor Center is open 362 days a year, closing only 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.

Regardless of surface weather, underground the cave's temperature stays near 54°F (12°C). The park also hosts special winter hikes and children's programs. Ask a ranger for details.



**Spring** brings warm days and chilly nights. Sudden storms may drop a foot of snow only to melt a day later, giving way to green prairie grasses and wildflowers. Pasqueflowers (pictured), phlox, and coneflower are common.

Spring may well be the best season to view wildlife. 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 -- look close for glimpses of red-hued bison calves playing in the prairie.

Visitation increases and the cave tour schedule expands, though it's still a good idea to arrive early. Environmental education programs are offered for school groups. Trails can be muddy, but temperatures for hiking remain pleasant.



**Summer** days are shattered by sudden thunderstorms, while pleasant nights bring out a variety of wildlife.

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 days the cave is still 54°F (12°C), providing welcome relief from outdoor temperatures. Hiking and camping are popular activities, but plan ahead: heat, thunderstorms, rattlesnakes, and ticks are at their height during the summer season.



**Fall** is marked by the haunting bugle of bull elk announcing the start of the rut. Autumn's moderate temperatures and dry days make it a special time to visit the park.

As visitation slows down, so does the schedule of cave tours. The Elk Bugling

Program, providing a chance to listen to and learn about the park's herd of elk with a park ranger, is offered select evenings in the fall. See page 4 for more information.



## 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)	0.4" (6.6")	0.6" (5.9")	1.0" (7.4")	1.9" (7")	3.4" (2")	3.1" (0)	2.5" (0)	1.8" (0)	1.4" (0.5")	1.2" (1.5")	0.6" (5.1")	0.5" (6")

# Cave Tour 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, foot-wear, 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.**

**Strollers, backpacks, helmets, and other large items** are not allowed in the cave. These items cannot be left at the Information Desk or anywhere in the Visitor Center. Please secure all large items with your vehicle before your tour.

## EASY

### Garden of Eden Tour 1 hour; 1/3 mile

This tour is the least strenuous, with only 150 stairs. Boxwork, popcorn, and flowstone formations 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

This moderately strenuous tour is the most popular at Wind Cave. It includes a visit to the cave's largest natural opening, providing 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, exiting via elevator. Wind Cave's famous boxwork is abundant along this route. Popcorn and frostwork can also be seen along the trail. Most of route's 300 stairs are down, making it great for kids and families.

## 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 with 450 stairs, including one flight of 89 steps up. The tour enters and exits the cave by elevator.

### 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. Tours are \$5.00 for adults and half price for Senior or Access pass holders. Sign language tours may be available with prior notice.

Interagency Passes Issued Here



### 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 developed trails on this strenuous tour. Learn the basics of safe caving and see many of Wind Cave's common formations. 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. Hard hats, lights, and kneepads are provided. 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. A signed parental consent form is required for participants 16 and 17 years old.

## Cave Tour & Program Schedule

Schedule subject to change -- call 605.745.4600 for current schedule.

### Early 2016 - April 15

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Cave Tour*	10:00, 1:00, 3:00

### April 16 - April 30

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Cave Tour*	9:30, 11:30, 1:30, 3:30

### May 1 - May 27

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 28 - May 30, 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 31 - June 4

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Garden of Eden Tour	1:30, 3:30
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00

### June 5 - August 20

Reduced tours August 7-13. Visit [www.nps.gov/wica](http://www.nps.gov/wica) for schedule

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 21 - September 5

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	1:00 <b>Weekends Only:</b> Aug. 21, 27, 28, Sept. 3, 4
Campfire Program	Nightly, call for times.

### September 6 - September 24

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Natural Entrance Tour	9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30
Evening Activity	7:00 p.m., starting on September 6th, Tue., Thu., Sat.

### September 25 - October 8

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Cave Tour*	9:30, 11:30, 1:30, 3:30

### October 9 - Early 2017

Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Cave Tour*	10:00, 1:00, 3:00

\*Garden of Eden or Natural Entrance Tour

## 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 *only* 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.

Many speleothems can still be found, often hidden amongst other cave formations. The following represent only a small percentage of the many formations found within Wind Cave.

## 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 revealed 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.



### Boxwork

One of the most common sights in Wind Cave, boxwork is extraordinarily rare elsewhere -- 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 formations made 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 including along the Garden of Eden tour route.



### 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 curling crystals, including gypsum flowers that appear to "bloom" out of the cave walls!



### 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. Look close to spot these formations hidden in the walls along all tour routes.



### Moonmilk

Moonmilk's origins are almost as strange as its name. It is 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.

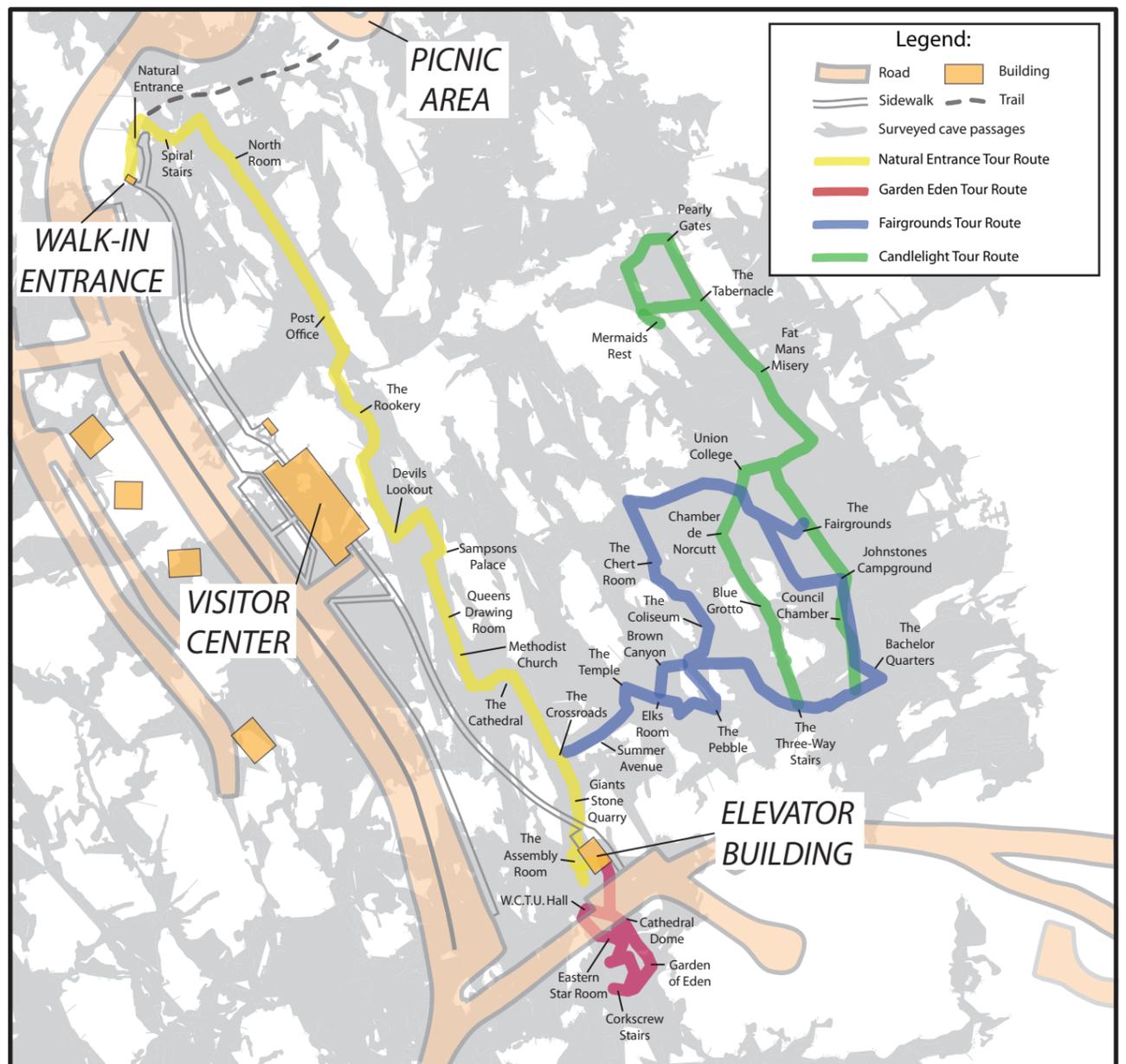
## White-nose Syndrome



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 west to southeastern Nebraska. 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



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 Online

Keep in touch with what's happening in the park anytime, anywhere. 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](http://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: [www.friendsofwindcavenp.org](http://www.friendsofwindcavenp.org)



### 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 April and May. Reservations are required.

## Ranger Programs

Ranger-led programs are offered throughout the year (see page 4). Contact the visitor center at 605.745.4600 for 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. See page 4 for times.

### 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. Offered select Saturdays in June and July.

### Discovery Talk



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

### Prairie Hikers



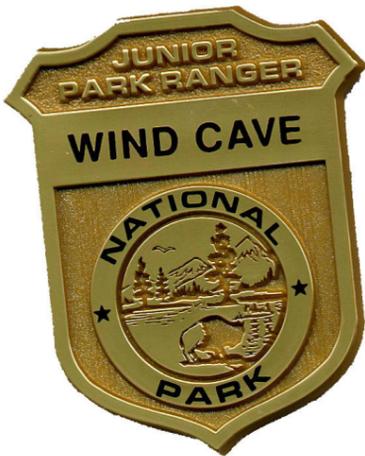
Discover seldom-seen areas of the park with Wind Cave Prairie Hikers. Open to anyone, these hikes last 3-4 hours, cover up to 2 miles off-trail, and are held the last Monday of every month.

### 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 12 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 - *Black-footed ferrets*

Hide by day, hunt prairie dogs by night. That's life for Wind Cave's BFF, the Black-footed ferret.

Think you're a picky eater? BFFs eat prairie dogs and almost nothing else! If prairie dogs go away, so do the ferrets.

That almost happened -- at one time less than 20 ferrets were left on Earth.

Several were reintroduced at Wind Cave in the last ten years. Today more than 30 call the park home...and call the prairie dogs lunch!



# 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.

## Purchases Support 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
- Custer State Park
- Jewel Cave National Monument
- Nebraska National Forest & Grasslands sites
- National Grasslands Visitor Center

To order online visit:  
[www.blackhillsparks.org](http://www.blackhillsparks.org)

To order by phone call:  
605.745.7020

**Black Hills Parks & Forests Association has awarded more than \$100,000 over the last five years to Wind Cave National Park.**



## Books

From technical detail to inspiring legend, the park store has books for everyone. Titles include:

*Tatanka & the Lakota People*  
*Return of the Buffaloes*  
*Wind Cave: An Ancient World Beneath the Hills*

## Apparel

A variety of hats and shirts is available to keep the memories of your visit close. \$17.99 - \$36.99

## Centennial

Celebrate 100 years of the National Park Service! Items include magnets, stickers, and pins. \$2.99 - \$4.99



## Gifts

Glimpse the remarkable life of Alvin McDonald, one of Wind Cave's earliest explorers, with a magnet, bookmark, or replica journal (available summer 2016).

Other great gifts include:

Jewel Cave / Wind Cave 2-sided Puzzle - 500 pieces. \$15.99

Wind Cave Christmas Ornament - \$9.99

Plush Animals: Bison, Prairie Dog, Bat, or Elk - \$9.99 - \$12.99

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

**Expanding the knowledge of public lands through our partner agencies since 1946**

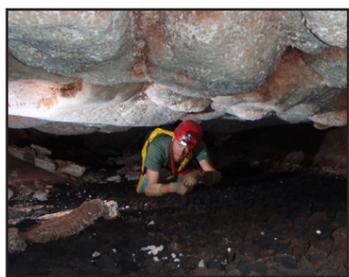
## National Park Neighbors



### 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) 574-3165  
[www.nps.gov/moru](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nps.gov/deto)

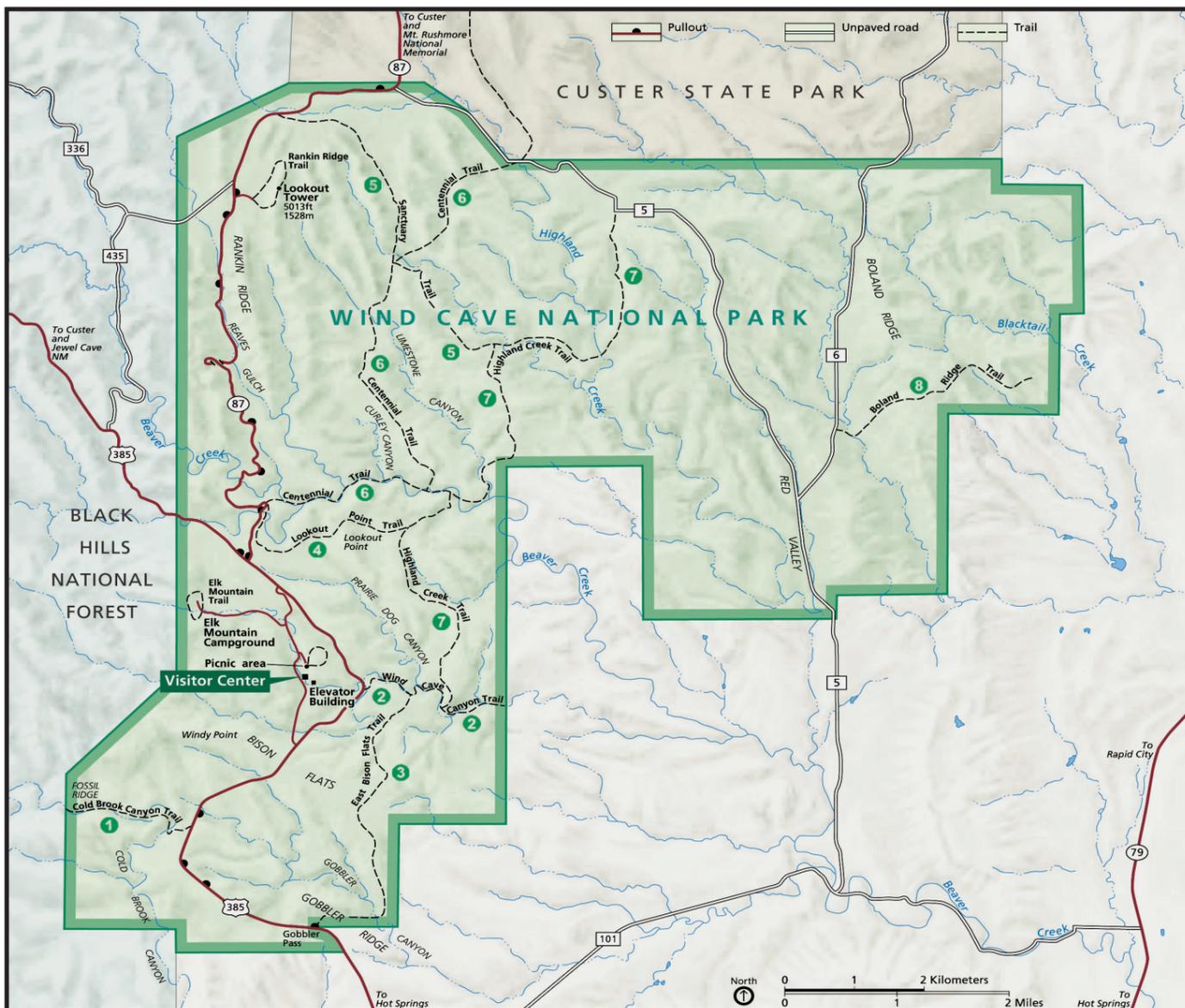


### Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

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](http://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 are 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** - The grassland and forest meet on this trail around the campground. 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.