



Wind Cave



Top 5 Wind Cave Activities

Welcome to Wind Cave National Park, a place that encompasses one of the last mixed-grass prairies in the country and one of the most complex maze caves in the world. With the unique mixture of above and below ground wonders, varied wildlife and cave formations, rolling prairie and soaring landscapes, there is something for everyone. Now get out and explore the park with these helpful hints!

Tour the Cave



Head underground to explore the park's namesake. Discover unique formations, including cave popcorn, frostwork and

boxwork, a formation rarely found in other caves. Wind Cave is accessible only by ranger-guided tour, and tickets for tours are sold on a first-come, first-serve basis the day of the tour at the visitor center. Tours often fill up early so expect a wait during the busy summer months. More tour information is available on page 4.



Hit the Trail



Although best known for the cave, the park features more than 30 miles of scenic trails. Wander through sweeping prairie grasslands and ponderosa forests, keeping a keen eye out for wildlife. Hike the short 1-mile trail to the Rankin Ridge fire tower, the highest point in the park, for a panorama of the Black Hills. For a more challenging hike try the Boland Ridge Trail on the east side of the park. Leashed dogs are only allowed on the Elk Mountain and Prairie Vista Nature trails. Please remember to pick up after your dog. More information on trails is available on page 8.

Become a Junior Ranger

Kids and adults alike can learn more about the park through our Junior Ranger program. Pick up the free booklet in the visitor center bookstore



and discover how the cave was formed, how to identify animal tracks and how to help protect the park, among many other activities. Complete the booklet and turn it in to a ranger at the visitor center to earn a Junior Ranger badge!

Take a Scenic Drive



While Highway 385 provides endless views of prairie and rolling hills, Highway 87 takes you into the trees for a chance to see another side of the park. The road winds north away from the visitor center, passing over bridges and by the Rankin Ridge Fire Tower. Explore the park off the beaten path by continuing your drive onto gravel roads NPS 5 and 6. Wonderful sunsets, wildlife and wide open night skies await. Several trailheads can also be found along these roads, including Boland Ridge and Highland Creek. If you are looking to explore more of the Black Hills, NPS 6 takes you directly into Custer State Park.

View Wildlife



Many animals call Wind Cave National Park home. Herds of bison, elk and pronghorn roam the prairie in search of fresh grass. Prairie dog towns are the hub of life, where prairie dogs scurry about and also attract wildlife. Coyotes often wander through the towns looking for their next meal, burrowing owls take up residence in abandoned burrows and black-footed ferrets sneak around at night hoping for a midnight snack. A prairie dog town can be viewed at the intersection of Highways 385 and 87. Other pullouts found along these two highways provide a safe place to view wildlife. Remember, you are visiting their home, so please do not approach or feed wildlife.



Park Hours

24 hours/day, every day

Visitor Center & Cave Hours

See page 4

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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 33,924 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
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. For information on group camping call 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

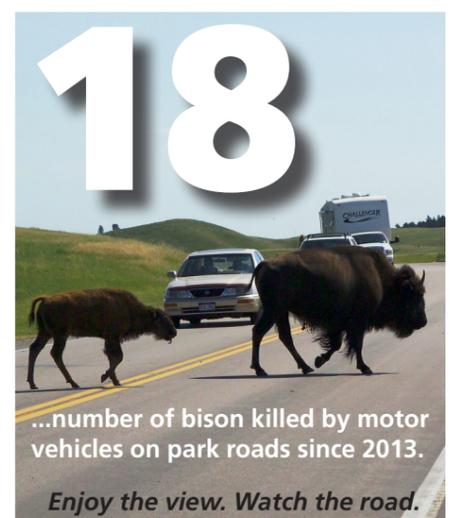
Pets are prohibited in the backcountry and on most hiking trails. Pets are permitted on the Elk Mountain Nature Trail and on the Prairie Vista Nature Trail. Please clean up after your pet. Pets may not be left unattended and must be on a leash at all times. Do not leave pets in your vehicle for any length 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, a site considered sacred by many American Indians. 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 2017 - April 15

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

April 16 - April 29

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

April 30 - May 26

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 27 - May 29, 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 30 - June 3

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 4 - August 19

Reduced tours August 6-12. Visit 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 20 - September 4

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 Weekends Only: Aug. 20, 26, 27, Sept. 2, 3
Campfire Program	Nightly, call for times.

September 5 - September 23

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 5th, Tue., Thu., Sat.

September 24 - October 7

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

October 8 - Early 2018

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.

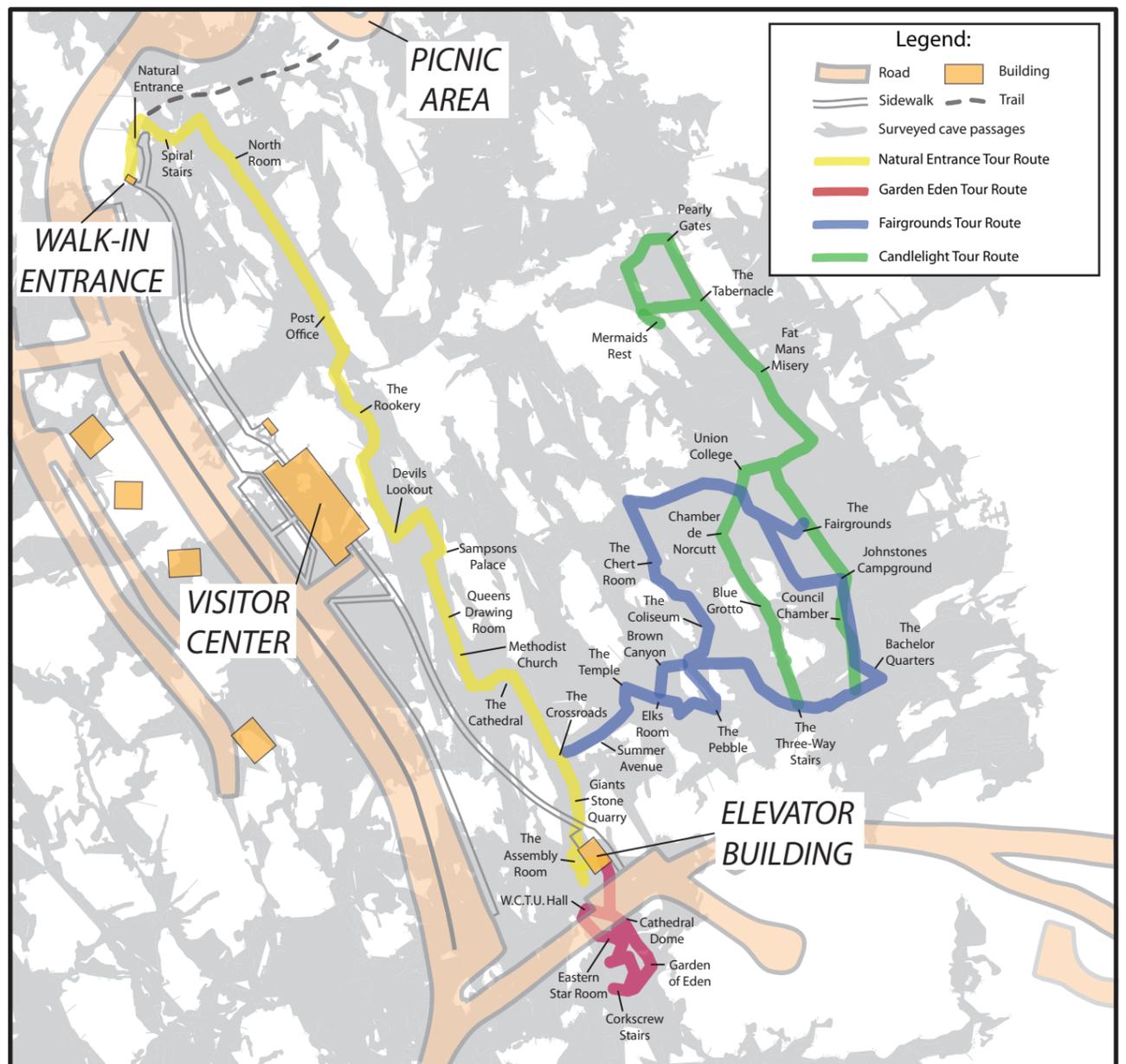
White-nose Syndrome



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.



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.

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

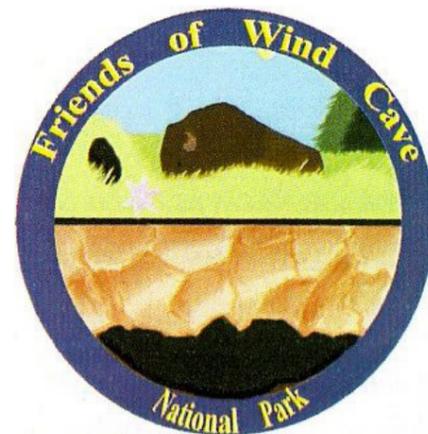
Friends of Wind Cave National Park

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 ear-marked donation for specific projects. For more information visit:

www.friendsofwindcavenp.org



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. Check at the visitor center information desk for details.

Adventures in Nature



Adventures in Nature is a fun and interactive way for you and your children to learn about nature. The program is offered during winter and includes activities that encourage children 3 to 12 to explore the natural world.

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 - *Bison*

Bison are the largest mammal in North America and were named America's national mammal in 2016. They are often found munching on grass for 9 to 11 hours a day to keep that heft!

But don't be fooled by their calm nature -- bison are fast! They can run up to 35 miles per hour, spin around

quickly, and jump high fences.

In 1913, the American Bison society donated 14 bison to Wind Cave and sent them here on railroad cars. These 14 were the foundation of the current herd numbering more than 500.



Baby bison are born in April & May (left). Male bison can weigh close to 2,000 pounds (top), and sometimes fight each other for dominance (above).

Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

Black Hills Parks & Forests Association (BHPFA) is a 501(c)3 organization that partners with Wind Cave National Park to operate the park store. Revenue generated from store sales supports interpretive, educational, and resource management programs at Wind Cave National Park.

BHPFA operates 15 retail locations throughout South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Visit our stores at:

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

Adopt-a-Bison Program

Would you like to support Wind Cave's special herd of bison? Your Adopt-a-Bison contribution provides updates on events in your bison's life and supports bison research and special activities.

Ask a park store staff member for details.



Black Hills Parks &

Forests Association

www.blackhillsparks.org

Education Interpretation Conservation

www.blackhillsparks.org

605.745.7020

Since 1946 - Enhancing YOUR public lands experience

Become a Member!

In addition to operating retail stores for public land agencies, BHPFA is a member organization.

Annual Membership \$30
Annual Business Membership \$50

Members support the educational mission of Black Hills Parks & Forests Association, including:

- wildlife research projects
- habitat preservation
- Junior Ranger programs
- publication of inspirational and educational books and materials

Membership benefits include:
Discounts at all BHPFA National Park and National Forest locations in South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, and online at www.blackhillsparks.org.

- Reciprocal discounts at select National Park association stores in the area and across the country.
- Member-only online sales.
- Invitations for volunteer opportunities.
- BHPFA newsletters



These products available through the Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

In the last five years
BHPFA has given over

\$123,000

to Wind Cave National Park
in support of education

One-of-a-Kind Merchandise

Black Hills Parks & Forests products offer many educational opportunities you can't find anywhere else, including:

- apparel
- books
- puzzles
- magnets
- ornaments
- water bottles

Every item tells a story about the culture and heritage of Wind Cave, the Black Hills, and the National Park Service.

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



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 x 635
www.nps.gov/deto

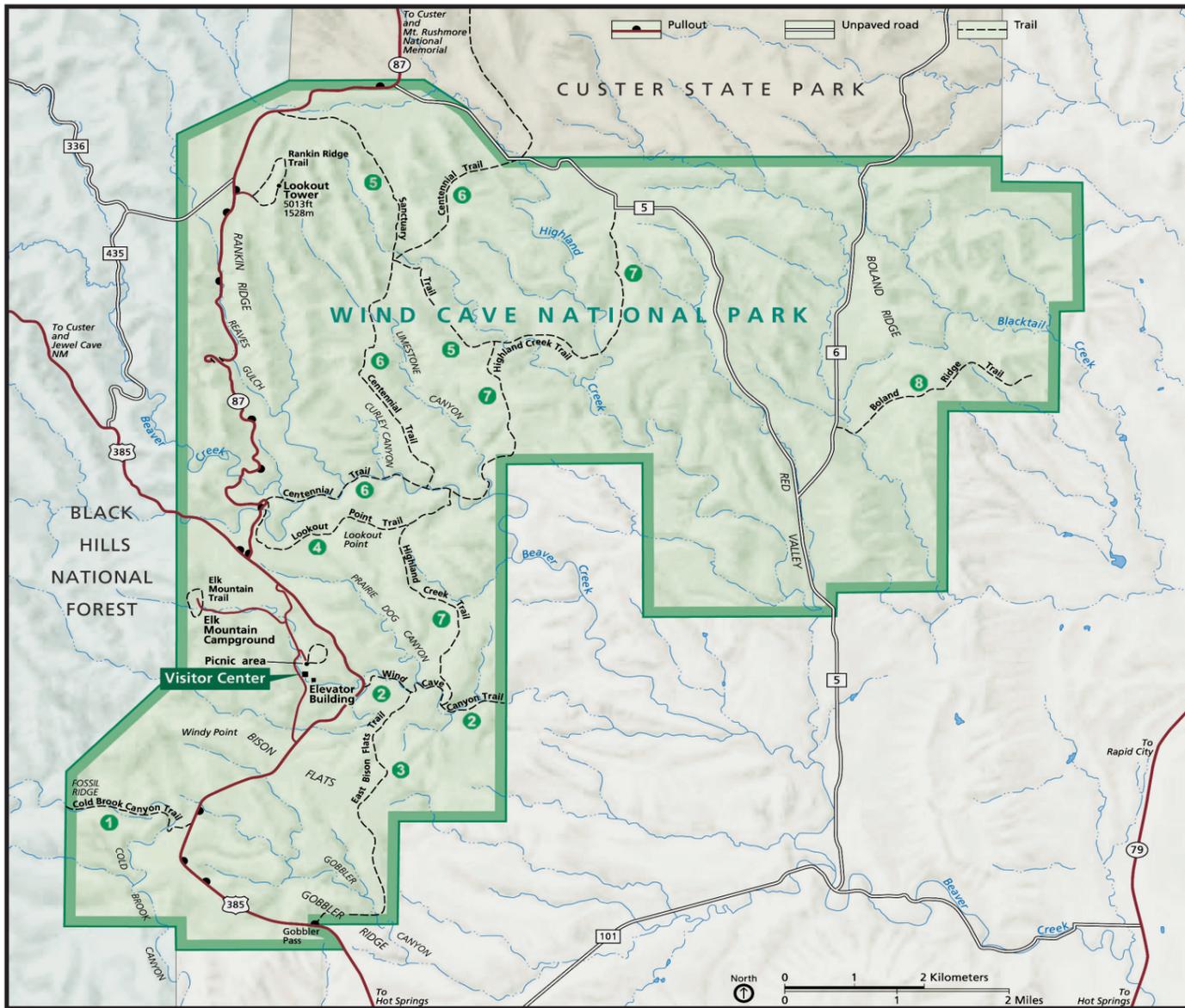


Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

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 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.