A merica’s national parks are amazing mountain vistas, rolling rivers, glacier carved canyons, and underground mysteries. Yet they are more than that. They are places to engage our spirit and hike beyond our imaginations. They are the special places in our hearts that we visit when we need the renewal that the simple grandeur of the natural world can bring. We visit national parks not only to watch the river carve the canyon or to watch bison roam the prairie, we visit to let nature draw us back to simpler days when we had time to enjoy the sunrise, smell blossoms, and listen to the bird singing in the willow branches. We visit national parks to be as children again.

Wind Cave is one of those special places. As early as 1890 the unique formations of Wind Cave were dazzling visitors and geologists alike. The most unusual aspect of the cave is the boxwork that decorates the ceilings and walls. Geologists estimate about 95% of all the world’s boxwork is found within Wind Cave. As exploration continued, the underground maze revealed more rare and unusual wonders.

When Wind Cave was set aside as a national park in 1903, little more than eight miles of cave were known. It was not until a revived interest in exploration occurred in the 1960s that the full complexity and length of the cave began to emerge. Exploration continues today, and more than 108 miles of cave have been discovered, making this the sixth-longest cave in the world. All of these passageways fit underneath a one square surface mile, creating the most complex, interconnected, subterranean maze in the entire world. When added together these features make Wind Cave one of the world’s greatest underground treasures.

Above the cave, Wind Cave National Park preserves 28,295 acres of mixed-grass prairie and ponderosa pine forest. As the vast prairie of the Great Plains retreated to make way for farms and ranches, habitats for thousands of different organisms disappeared. In 1912, Congress established the Wind Cave National Game Preserve as a place for the return of bison, elk, and pronghorn to the South Dakota prairie. With the preservation of the wildlife came the preservation of the vanishing prairie. Eastern and western species of plants found across the country converge in this area, producing a diversity rivaled by few environments. It is this complex prairie ecosystem that allows the amazing wildlife to flourish once more in the Great Plains. In 1934, Wind Cave National Park and the Game Preserve merged, creating the Wind Cave National Park we know it today.

Wind Cave National Park is dedicated to preserving an internationally significant cave and a mixed-grass prairie ecosystem with bison and other native wildlife for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

"A national park is a place where nature should take its course."
Statement of a 5th grade student visiting the park.

The Oldest National Parks
1. Yellowstone, 1872
2. Sequoia, 1890
3. Yosemite, 1890
4. General Grant, now part of King’s Canyon, 1890
5. Mt Rainier, 1899
6. Crater Lake, 1902
7. Wind Cave, 1903

Contacting the park:
In case of Emergency dial 911
Visitor Center: 605-745-4600
www.nps.gov/wica/
Visitor Information

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

If you are planning your visit or doing a project about Wind Cave, look for us on the Internet at www.nps.gov/wica/. Our website has almost anything you might want to know about the park, the cave, the animals, or the plants. We have even included some animal sounds! If you want to know what is happening in the park, this is the place to be.

FOOD, LODGING, AND GASOLINE

Wind Cave National Park operates one campground and has limited food and beverage vending services in the visitor center. There are no lodging, gasoline, grocery, or restaurant services available in the park. These are available in the nearby towns of Hot Springs (15 minutes south) and Custer (25 minutes north). The town of Pringle (10 minutes west) has gasoline and limited food services. For information regarding services in Hot Springs, call (605) 745-4140 or (800) 325-6991. For services in Custer, call (605) 673-2244 or from out of state call (800) 992-9818.

WEATHER

Wind Cave National Park and the rest of the southern Black Hills are much warmer and drier than the northern hills. Winter snowfall averages 30 inches annually. The spring and fall can be warm and sunny or rainy and snowy with a chilly wind. Summer brings warm daytime temperatures with cool evenings.

Severe thunderstorms are common in June and July and occasionally in August. Thunderstorms can be dangerous and visitors should be prepared for them. Large hail is common and the storms can produce severe lightning.

Slow moving storms can dump great amounts of rain over a small area. The steep canyons, rock cliffs, and small creeks of the Black Hills are prone to flash flooding. Be cautious when camping near a creek bed even if it is dry.

For current forecasts and warnings, listen to NOAA Weather Radio on 162.425 MHz in Rapid City or 162.450 MHz in the southern Black Hills or 162.550 MHz in Rapid City.

RANGER PROGRAMS

When planning your visit, consider attending a ranger-led program. There are many interesting programs each day. Programs include a hike on the prairie or in the forest investigating the natural history of the park. Topics might include edible plants, the relationships of the park's animals and plants, the effects of exotic plants, or the importance of fire to the park's ecosystems. For more information, please ask at the visitor center information desk.

 nightly, during the summer months, park rangers present campfire programs. These are great opportunities to learn about the park. Again, the topics vary. Check with the campground hosts or at the visitor center information desk for more information.

Cave tours are offered daily (except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day) throughout the year. Tours provide opportunities to discover the unique features of this unusual cave. Tour schedules vary throughout the year and are listed on page 7.

VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS

The visitor center is a great place to start your park visit. Whether you are intrigued with the cave, prairie, or both, it is easy to discover more about the park by exploring the exhibit rooms.

The upper exhibit room has displays ranging from how the Plains Indians used the bison to how the park manages the prairie. The cave exhibit room explains cave formations and the colorful history of the park. In the lower exhibit room, a slide program explains the development of the cave. A video about the cave, the prairie, and the park is shown in our auditorium.

Stop in the visitor center for information about cave tours or to explore the exhibit rooms or for maps, book sales, backcountry permits, and Golden Age and Golden Access Passports, or National Parks Passes.

THE CAVE

Wind Cave is quite different from other caves. Instead of stalactites and stalagmites, the cave is decorated with boxwork (pictured below). Boxwork is a crystalline formation that probably predates the cave. We believe that it formed in tiny cracks within the limestone. Later, when the cave formed, the water dissolved the limestone and the delicate crystal fins that filled the cracks were revealed.

Wind Cave is also known for the maze-like configuration of its passageways. Few caves are longer or more complex. All of the known cave passageways lie beneath a land area of about one-square mile.

To see the cave, stop at the visitor center. A complete schedule of available tours for the year is on page 7.


THE CAV E

The cave exhibit room has a video about the cave, the cave entrance, and the development of the park. The cave is decorated with boxwork, a crystalline formation that predates the cave. The boxwork consists of tiny fins that formed in tiny cracks within the limestone. Later, when the cave formed, the water dissolved the limestone and the delicate crystal fins that filled the cracks were revealed.

Wind Cave is also known for the maze-like configuration of its passageways. Few caves are longer or more complex. All of the known cave passageways lie beneath a land area of about one-square mile.

To see the cave, stop at the visitor center. A complete schedule of available tours for the year is on page 7.
Hiking, Camping, and Backcountry

PROTECTING PARK RESOURCES

Park resources are for everyone to enjoy. Antlers, bones, rocks, and plants are part of the ecosystem and important for the survival of some animals. Please do not collect or remove anything from the park.

Please do not feed the wildlife. When you feed animals they become attracted to highways where they can be struck by passing vehicles. They also may become dependent on handouts and may not survive the winter. Bison frequent prairie dog towns. They can run 35 mph and may weigh a ton! Rattlesnakes may also be found in dog towns and in rocky areas of the park. Do not approach any wildlife. Animals in the park are wild and unpredictable. Please respect them and give them plenty of space.

When driving park roads, obey all speed limits. They are designed to protect you and the wildlife. Do not do anything that will disturb the park experience for everyone.

Hiking Trails

Wind Cave National Park includes 28,295 acres of prairie grasslands and ponderosa pine forest. The park is a fascinating combination of ecosystems where eastern and western habitats meet. They support a diverse assortment of life.

Hiking any of the 30 miles of trails can help visitors better understand the park. You may want to leave the trails and travel cross-country along the ridges, through the canyons, or across the rolling prairie. A topographic map is recommended and can be purchased at the visitor center.

CENTENNIAL TRAIL

An excellent example of the park’s diversity is Wind Cave’s six-mile section of the Centennial Trail. This trail crosses the prairie, climbs forested ridges, and explores the wetter, riparian habitat of Beaver Creek. This 111-mile trail meanders from Wind Cave National Park north through the Black Hills.

NATURE TRAILS

There are three self-guided nature trails in the park. The Rankin Ridge Nature Trail leads to the highest point in the park, where the views are spectacular. The Elk Mountain Nature Trail explores an ecotone, or meeting zone, where the grassland and forest converge. The Prairie Vista Nature Trail starts at the visitor center and explores the prairie grasslands. Booklets are available at the trailheads. The trails are about one mile in length.

Camping

Wind Cave National Park maintains a developed campground one-mile north of the visitor center. The campground is open from the first Monday in April until the last Monday in October. The campground rarely fills to capacity. Occupancy is on a first-come, first-served basis. Each site accommodates up to eight people. There are two sites accessible for campers with disabilities. Restrooms have cold water and flush toilets, but no showers or dump stations.

The fee for camping is $12.00 per night from mid-May to mid-September. From April to mid-May and mid-September to late October, facilities at the campground are reduced. The fee is $6.00 per night during these times. Visitors holding a Golden Age or Golden Access Passport pay a half-price fee. The campground is closed from late October until the first Monday in April. Group camping reservations are available. Contact the park at (605) 745-4600 for information or group reservations.

Backcountry Camping

The backcountry of Wind Cave National Park offers visitors an excellent opportunity to experience and enjoy the abundant resources of the park.

Backcountry camping is permitted in the northwestern part of the park. Within this area are several different habitats - prairie, forest, and riparian - with a variety of plants and animals living there. Backcountry campers must have a permit. Permits are free and can be obtained at the visitor center or at either of the Centennial Trailheads. Please leave no trace of your visit.
Wind Cave Timeline: 1881-1911

1896
Tom and Jesse Bingham described finding Wind Cave.
Charlie Crazy credited as the first person to enter Wind Cave.

1897
The South Dakota Mining Co. established claim on Wind Cave.
South Dakota became a state.

1902
The South Dakota Mining Co. hired J.D. McDonald as manager of Wind Cave.

1903
J.D. McDonald and the older children of the family (Mary, Alvin, and Elmer) moved to Wind Cave.

1904
January: Alvin McDonald discovered the Assembly Room.
July: Alvin McDonald discovered the Coliseum, Tabernacle, and Pearl Gates.
Regular tours of Wind Cave began with Chris Jenson establishing a stagecoach route from Hot Springs.
The Stabler family acquired homesteads near cave entrance.

1905
March: Alvin McDonald discovered the Fairgrounds.
May: Alvin McDonald discovered the Columbian Hall.
John Stabler bought part interest in the cave, creating the Wonderful Wind Cave Improvement Company.
The Wind Cave Hotel built.

1906
William Jennings Bryan visited Wind Cave.
Professor Paul Alexander Johnstone found a hatpin hidden within Wind Cave.

1907
Alvin McDonald discovered the Hot Springs Star that he still has an account of Wind Cave.

1908
Prominent geologist Luella Agnes Owens visited, creating her theory that ancient geyser activity formed the cave.
Stabler reported to the Hot Springs Star that he still has an interest in Wind Cave no matter what McDonald says. This was the first of many disputes spanning the next several years.

1909
Alvin McDonald and Stabler defended their ownership of the cave against the South Dakota Mining Company.

1910
Prominent geologist Luella Agnes Owens visited, leaving a written account of Wind Cave. Her experiences were compiled in the 1898 book: "Wind Cave: An Account of a Great Natural Wonder."

1911
Permanent Guide of Wind Cave
Alvin Frank McDonald, at the age of sixteen, was the first person to systematically explore and later guide tours through Wind Cave. He came to the area with his family in 1890. With nothing but a ball of twine and a candle, he entered the cave almost every day to explore or guide other people. He kept a journal of his discoveries.

1912
During his time exploring, he found about eight miles of cave and later guide tours through Wind Cave. He stayed in the area with his family in 1890. With nothing but a ball of twine and a candle, he entered the cave almost every day to explore or guide other people. He kept a journal of his discoveries.

1913
Tom and Jesse Bingham entered the cave, creating the Fairgrounds.

1914
Alvin McDonald, chief guide at Wind Cave, died from complications of typhoid fever. The Hot Springs Star reported: "He has spent most of his time in exploring and opening up that great natural wonder."

1915
Alvin McDonald, chief guide at Wind Cave, died from complications of typhoid fever. The Hot Springs Star reported: "He has spent most of his time in exploring and opening up that great natural wonder."

December 15th, 1893
Alvin McDonald, chief guide at Wind Cave, died from complications of typhoid fever. The Hot Springs Star reported: "He has spent most of his time in exploring and opening up that great natural wonder."

A Windy Cave
Hunter Freighted Out of His Wits

Although holes in the Black Hills that blew wind have been known by American Indians for centuries, the first written account of Wind Cave came from a hunter in 1881. Tom Bingham sat down to rest and was startled by the sound of rushing wind on a calm day. While looking for the source of the noise, he experienced a hair-raising sensation as his hat was lifted from his head and thrown into the air.
Tom declared afterwards that, although frightened nearly out of his wits, he was determined to find the cause of his alarm.

Turning slightly, he discovered a hole about eight by twelve inches in size through which a roaring wind was issuing. Tom spent an hour laying his hat across the opening and watching its projection into the sky; soon after he set out to tell the world of this wonderful discovery.

He Found The Pin!
Professor Paul Alexander Johnstone, a famous mind reader, adventured to Wind Cave to display his special abilities on June 9, 1893. Deep within the cave, a lady's hatpin had been hidden by Hot Springs residents.
Blindfolded, Johnstone proceeded to search for the pin using only his mind-reading abilities. Three days later, Johnstone found the pin!
Upon completion of his task, his physical powers gave way and he fell prostrate and unconscious. He was carried from the cave on a stretcher, but later fully recovered from the ordeal.
It was activities such as this that propelled Wind Cave into the newspaper headlines and helped make the cave famous.

Frostwork
Geologist Visits
Prominent geologist Luella Agnes Owen visited Wind Cave on August 16, 1896. During her stay, she created the first theory about how the cave was formed.
Luella’s theory: 1) fissures in the earth were opened by volcanic activity, 2) groundwater filled the fissures, 3) geyser activity ceased and the geyser activity ceased and the groundwater drained from the cave. Her experiences were compiled in the 1898 book: "Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills.
Ms. Owen’s book helped the world to see how unusual this cave is.

Boxwork

Wind Cave a Reserve
Secretary of the Interior Decides

On December 7, 1900, the Secretary of the Interior affirmed the decision in the case of South Dakota Mining Co. and the Black Hills Wind Cave Co. against Jesse D. McDonald. The decision declared that neither party was entitled to the cave.

After years of feuding, the land office decided that in the first place, the cave had no mineral value and the mining companies had no claim to it. In the second place, J.D. McDonald did not comply with laws related to his homestead and his entry was cancelled.
The Secretary directed the land be held in reserve until Congress shall have the opportunity to create a permanent reserve.
Because of this court case, the lands around Wind Cave remained in federal ownership. Local citizens, recognizing its value, appealed to the government to protect the cave by making it a national park.
1912-1966

A Game Preserve is Established

The Bison Arrive

On November 28, 1913, a herd of fourteen bison arrived at Wind Cave National Park after traveling from the Bronx Zoo in New York. Through the early efforts of the American Bison Society, bison roam the Wind Cave prairie.

Elk and Pronghorn

The Wind Cave National Game Preserve received a herd of twenty-one Rocky Mountain elk from Jackson Hole in 1914. Later that year, thirteen pronghorn antelope arrived from Brooks, Alberta, returning these species to prairie prominence.

Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) Construction: 1934-1942

Improving Wind Cave National Park

Spillway Found

In 1964, crawling under an unpromising ledge, explorers Dave Schnute and Herb and Jan Conn stumbled across the most important passageway in the cave. This passageway, later named “Spillway,” has led to more than sixty miles of cave. Another route to the cave’s “Western Wilderness” was not found until 1986.

Spillway

Another route to the cave’s most important passageway in the Wind Cave National Park was named “Spillway” by explorers Dave Schnute and Herb and Jan Conn in 1964. This passageway led to more than sixty miles of cave, providing a new route to the cave’s “Western Wilderness.”

Trapping Bison

On May 1, 1912, the last grazing permits were canceled and a bison and elk reduction program started. Massive wooden doors were placed at the Walk-In Entrance. A fire tower was erected at Elk Mountain. The CCC camp closed.

Wind Cave National Game Preserve was established within the existing park boundary.

CCC stoneworking

---First Lakota encampment in park.
---Trap door entrance to cave opened.
---First Spelunking Tour was given.
---The Organic Act created the National Park Service.
---The superintendent reported Wind Cave was 100 miles long, and 1,500 feet deep.
---Custer State Park Game Preserve created.
---The first bison round-up to reduce herd size occurred.
---Park Service Director, Stephen T. Mather visited the park.
---Norbeck Dam was constructed as a water source for the Game Preserve.
---Elk Mountain Campground was presented at a campground area.
---A fire tower was erected at Elk Mountain.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.75.
---Trap door entrance to cave reopened.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
---A major park boundary expansion from 11,818.94 to 28,059.36 acres occurred.
---The original cedar pole fire tower at Rankin Ridge was built.
---Disney’s Vanishing Prairie filmed at Wind Cave.
---The one-millionth visitor entered Wind Cave.
---Highway 87 opened, connecting Custer State Park with Wind Cave National Park.
---The second elevator was installed in Wind Cave.
---The first campfire program was presented at a campground located at what is now the picnic area.
---The superintendent reported the cave tour fee was $0.75.
---The CCC camp closed.
---Cave tour fee: $0.50.
LEARNING ABOUT THE CAVE

Cave Tour Information

All tours are ranger-guided and begin at the visitor center. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis at the park visitor center. Tickets must be purchased at least five minutes before tour times. The cave temperature is 53°F (11°C) year round. A jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended.

Garden of Eden Tour

This 1-hour tour is our least strenuous tour. It is a wonderful sample of Wind Cave. Small amounts of all of the beautiful cave formations - boxwork, popcorn, and flowstone - are seen along the ¼-mile trail. The tour is designed for people with limited time or abilities. It enters and exits the cave by elevator and has 150 stairs.

Natural Entrance Tour

This tour includes a visit to the natural entrance of Wind Cave where visitors can learn how the cave got its name. Participants enter through a man-made entrance and journey through the middle level of the cave before exiting by elevator. Wind Cave's famous boxwork is abundant throughout this half-mile walk. Most of the 300 stairs along this route are down. This moderately strenuous tour lasts 1¼-hour.

Fairgrounds Tour

This 1½-hour tour explores both the upper and middle levels of Wind Cave. Boxwork is abundant along the trail in the middle level of the cave. The upper level of the cave offers visitors the opportunity to travel through larger rooms where popcorn and frostwork can be seen. This is our most strenuous walking tour. The tour enters and exits the cave by elevator and there are 450 stairs along the route with one flight of 90 steps up.

Candlelight Tour

Experience the cave by candlelight in a less developed, unlighted part of the cave. Each participant will carry a candle bucket. Shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandals! This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 8. This more strenuous tour covers 1 mile of rugged trail and lasts 2 hours. Reservations are strongly recommended and accepted no earlier than one month before the tour. Please call the park at (605) 745-4600 for more information.

Wild Cave Tour

Explore the cave away from the developed trails. On this 4-hour tour, visitors will be introduced to basic, safe caving. Wear old clothes and gloves, as much of the trip will include crawling. Long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and sturdy, lace-up boots or shoes with non-slip soles are required. 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 Cave Tour is not permitted in Wind Cave. This tour is limited to 10 people, and the minimum age is 16. A signed consent form for participants 17 years and under is required. Reservations are required and accepted no earlier than one month before the tour. Please call the park at (605) 745-4600 for more information.

Tours For Visitors with Special Needs

The visitor center and the cave are accessible to people with limited mobility. Some areas of the cave are accessible to wheelchairs. Please call ahead to make special arrangements or ask at the information desk for a special tour. There are fees charged for these services. Please call the park (605) 745-4600 for more information. The park has a TTY for the hearing impaired available at the same number.
Cave Safety Information

All tours are ranger-guided and leave from the visitor center. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis, except for the Candlelight and Wild Cave Tours. During peak summer visitation, long waits for tours may be encountered. To avoid waits, the best time to visit the cave is during the early hours of the day. During the summer, weekends are good times to visit; Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the busiest days. Reservations for organized groups are available. For more information please call (605) 745-4600.

A light jacket or sweater is recommended for all cave tours, as Wind Cave is 53°F (11°C) throughout the year. Cave trails are dimly lighted and trail surfaces may be uneven, wet, and slippery.

Reservations

Most cave tours are first-come, first-served. However, reservations are either strongly recommended or required for the Candlelight and Wild Cave Tours. We accept reservations for these tours no earlier than one month before the tour. Reservations are also accepted for groups. Please call (605) 745-4600.

Tour Fees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Garden of Eden</th>
<th>Natural Entrance</th>
<th>Fairgrounds</th>
<th>Candlelight</th>
<th>Wild Cave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 17-61</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>***$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Age**</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6-16</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>***$4.50</td>
<td>Not Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 6</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Not Permitted</td>
<td>Not Permitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Holders of a Golden Access Card receive a 50% discount on tours.
** Person must possess a Golden Age Passport to receive the discount.
*** Minimum age for Candlelight Tour is 8.
****Minimum age for the Wild Cave Tour is 16. The fee is $20.00.

In case of an emergency:

Contact any park ranger or call the visitor center at 745-4600. After hours call 911.
Wind Cave Timeline: 1967-Present

Understanding the Park

Pushing the Limits
In August 1970, during a three week Wind Cave expedition trip, eighteen Windy City Grotto members spent more than 1,300 hours in the cave. These cavers surveyed more than 10,000 feet of cave passageways. They discovered a large underground lake which they named Windy City Lake, and found an helictite bush that measures nearly six feet in height. Until this time, cavers thought surveying Wind Cave would be a fairly easy task!

Big Rooms Found
The Windy City Grotto launched its second major surveying assault on the massive Wind Cave complex during August 1971. Exploration and survey took place in two major areas of the cave. During the two weeks of work, they surveyed 20,415 feet of cave. They found some of the largest rooms ever discovered in the Black Hills. Half-Mile Hall, (pictured above) the largest room discovered, is 2800 feet long. These discoveries help park managers understand the complexity and unusual resources of Wind Cave.

Caver Lost!
During a mock cave search and rescue exercise in October 1989, a student participating in the National Outdoor Leadership training session became lost. Over one-hundred cavers and emergency personnel assisted in the search. After thirty-six hours, rescuers discovered the student in a previously unexplored portion of Wind Cave. This experience again emphasized the complexity of the cave and the need to understand it.

Cave exploration

Prescribed fire

The Park Bookstore

The Black Hills Parks & Forests Association sells books, maps, and other park related publications in visitor centers at Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Custer State Park, and the Black Hills National Forest. The association publishes books and materials about these areas.

Cooperating associations are non-profit, tax exempt organizations authorized by Congress to promote educational and scientific activities within national parks. All profits from association sales support the educational, interpretive, and research activities of these agencies.

Many different types of publications are available in the bookstores including books specific to Wind Cave National Park and others about local natural and human history. The association will also be carrying many different types of publications, maps, and items are available at the bookstore, by mail order, or from the association web site, www.blackhillsparks.org. Membership in the Black Hills Parks and Forests Association supports the organization and entitles members to a 15% discount on all purchases. The membership is $15.00 per year. For more information call (605) 745-7020.