



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

Release Date: **December 8, 2010**

For Immediate Release

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Jewel Cave National Monument Offers Off-Season Wild Caving Tours

Jewel Cave National Monument is offering Wild Caving Tours during the off-season. Commonly referred to as Spelunking Tours, the dates for the trips include the following: December 26, January 2 and 8, February 12, March 13 and 20, and April 9. Reservations are required and can be made up to 28 days in advance of the listed dates; however, the reservation deadline for each date is the Wednesday prior to the scheduled weekend tour.

The Wild Caving Tour is a three to four-hour trek that takes participants off-trail within Jewel Cave. The tour is strenuous, and all cavers are required to fit through an eight and one-half inch by 24 inch opening. Participants must be eighteen years of age or older; however, young adults sixteen or seventeen are allowed on the tour with parental approval. The tours begin at 11:30 a.m. and conclude around 4:00 p.m.

Superintendent Larry Johnson states, "Wild Caving Tours are mainly a part of the summer season programming schedule. However, we wish to offer local park enthusiasts a unique tour experience for those that may have more time during the winter season. Furthermore, with an assortment of friends and families in the area during the holidays, expanded programs complement visitor expectations." The Wild Caving Tour takes participants through maze-like openings, offering glimpses of rare cave formations. As compared to other parks and monuments, the wilderness areas of Jewel Cave lie mostly underground. Even more significant, the vast majority of visitors never witness this natural beauty within the second longest cave of the world.

Wild Caving Tours are limited to five participants on each trip. Interested cavers will be placed on a first come first serve basis. Johnson further comments, "Perhaps more so than any other tour in the Black Hills, cavers get up-close and personal with their surrounding resource. At times, visitors have even commented that the feeling of exploration and discovery is overwhelming. This is truly a part of the adventure experience within the National Park Service that creates lasting memories for visitors."

Jewel Cave National Monument also offers two Scenic Tours each day, occurring at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Scenic Tours are one hour and 20 minutes in length and take participants on a one-half mile guided hike through the cave. Discovery Tours take place at 9:05 a.m. 12:45 p.m., and 3:45 p.m. and consist of a 20-minute educational presentation inside the cave. The Monument will be closed on Christmas Day (December 25) and New Year's Day (January 1).

For Wild Caving Tour reservations and other tour information, contact the visitor center at (605) 673-8300 and select Option 1. Jewel Cave National Monument can also be visited online at www.nps.gov/jeca. The visitor center is currently open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (MST).

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