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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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Jewel Cave Offers Free Cave Tours on Holiday Weekend

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT, S.D. – In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, all National Park Service areas will waive entrance fees. Jewel Cave National Monument will offer free cave tours to all visitors to celebrate this special weekend, January 15 – 17, 2011.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar encourages all Americans to make a New Year's resolution to visit a national park this year. "Many people have made resolutions to spend more quality time with loved ones and to get outdoors and unplug in 2011," said Secretary Salazar. "There's no better place than a national park to help keep those resolutions. Parks offer superb recreational opportunities, making them perfect places to enjoy our beautiful land, history and culture, and nurture a healthy lifestyle."

Jewel Cave visitors may choose the Scenic Tour or the Discovery Tour. Scenic Tours are offered at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and provide an opportunity to view a variety of beautiful, colorful, and rare cave formations for which Jewel Cave is famous. This one-half mile tour is moderately strenuous, following a paved, lighted trail with over 700 stair steps and lasting approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. The Discovery Tour will be conducted at 9:05 a.m., 12:45 p.m., and 3:45 p.m., and is a 20-minute introduction to the cultural and natural heritage of Jewel Cave. This wheelchair and stroller accessible program is conducted in one large room of the cave.

Due to the off-season, tickets are limited and only available on a first-come, first-serve basis at the Jewel Cave National Monument Visitor Center. Cave temperature is approximately 49 °F. A light coat or sweater and sturdy walking shoes are recommended. All tours begin at the visitor center.

For more information, please contact Jewel Cave National Monument at 605-673-8300 or online at www.nps.gov/jeca.

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