National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

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Jewel Cave National Monument Celebrates National Trails Day®

On Saturday, June 2, 2012, join the National Park Service, American Hiking Society, and outdoor enthusiasts across the country in celebrating the 20th annual National Trails Day (NTD)®. This recreational event is a long-standing celebration of America's amazing trail system and its countless supporters and avid volunteers.

Since 1992, National Trails Day has inspired thousands of individuals and community groups to take part in activities that promote healthy living and mental well being, protect green space, educate youth and adults on the importance of trails, and instill excitement for the nation's most treasured resources. More than 1,500 events will take place around the country, including trail maintenance, hiking, paddling, biking, horseback riding, bird watching, running, and trail celebrations.

On behalf of the National Park Service, Jewel Cave National Monument is proud to host two hiking events. Come out, and enjoy the scenic views of Lithograph and Hell Canyon, as park rangers tell the story of the ponderosa pine forest, wildland fire scars, and wildlife that live above the second longest cave in the world. No pre-registration is required for either event; participants simply meet at the visitor center located 13 miles west of Custer, SD and 24 miles east of Newcastle, Wyoming on Hwy 16.

A ranger-guided family hike entitled Healthy Parks Healthy People on the Roof Trail will start at 10:30 a.m. and take participants through a one-quarter mile of ponderosa pine forest, with scenic views of Lithograph and Hell Canyon. The trail meanders along an easy natural path. Along the route, hikers have the opportunity to witness the natural features that are symbolic to the Black Hills: dense timber stands, open meadows, and wildland fire scars that run through the rocky limestone canyons.

For the ardent outdoor enthusiast, Trekking Hells Canyon (Canyons Trail) begins at 1:00 p.m. This adventurous three-mile hike into the backcountry of Jewel Cave National Monument ventures along a natural trail with interpretative stops highlighting the surface activities that affect the cave deep below. Ranging from the obvious fire scars caused by the largest wildland fire in recorded South Dakota history to the hands-on management practices on site, a ranger will offer insight into the story behind the scenery. Participants should wear sturdy hiking shoes and bring water and snacks.

Jewel Cave National Monument offers guided ranger hikes throughout the summer season, beginning Sunday, June 10 and ending in late August. For more information, call the visitor center at (605) 673-8300 – Option 2 or visit the Monument online at www.nps.gov/jeca. For other NTD hikes in the local area, visit the American Hiking Society online at www.americanhiking.org and select South Dakota.

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 395 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.