



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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Free Cave Tours and Volunteer Opportunities at Jewel Cave on National Public Lands Day

Custer, SD – On Saturday, September 24, over 170,000 volunteers, including park enthusiasts at Jewel Cave National Monument, will visit their favorite parks, beaches, wildlife preserves, or forests and chip in to help improve these treasured resources. They will be taking part in National Public Lands Day (NPLD), the largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands in the country. Free cave tours will also be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

This year marks the 18th Annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD), an event that brings together thousands of volunteers from coast to coast to improve and restore the lands and facilities that Americans use for recreation, education, and enjoyment. Last year, over 150,000 Americans participated at sites in all 50 states.

Several federal agencies will participate in this special event, along with numerous partners and a host of nonprofit groups, including the Boy Scouts of America, The Girl Scouts of USA, and Student Conservation Association. The purpose of this day is to expose volunteers to public lands, while also making connections between the participants and resources. For more information related to activities in the local area, visit www.publiclandsday.org.


In celebration of the event, Jewel Cave National Monument is offering volunteer projects for interested visitors and groups. All participants will be assigned one of three main project locations: visitor center, Historic Ranger Cabin, or Canyons Trail. Projects range from general trail maintenance to collecting litter along the roadways, picnic areas, and parking lots. Smaller maintenance-related projects will be available based on participant numbers and interest.

Participants should plan to work at least three hours in the field between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., under a variety of weather conditions. Volunteers should also wear appropriate work clothes, provide their own sun protection, and bring their own snacks and beverages. Project equipment and materials will be provided by the Monument. To ensure a sufficient number of projects, interested volunteers should call

Over

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the Monument at 605-673-8300 and select option 2. Reservations are not required; however, a limited number of projects and materials will be available.

NPLD is also a fee free day within the National Park Service. For this reason, the Monument is waiving all cave tour fees on Saturday, September 24. Tour tickets will be provided to visitors on a first come first serve basis. Reservations will not be accepted for the Discovery and Scenic Cave Tours; however, due to limited space, Wild Caving Tour reservations will be accepted seven days in advance.

The ever popular Scenic Cave Tour is offered eight times, starting at 9:20 a.m. and ending with the last tour at 2:40 p.m. This one hour and 20-minute tour takes visitors along a one-half mile paved path that includes 723 stairs. This tour is considered moderate to strenuous. The Discovery Tour is a 20-minute interpretive talk that exposes visitors to the cave resource. This tour is available for individuals with physical limitations or families with young children. Discovery Tours are offered four times, beginning at 9:35 a.m. and ending with the last tour at 3:35 p.m. The Wild Caving Tour starts at 11:30 a.m. and is a strenuous tour that takes participants off-trail for three to four hours. Interested cavers need to be able to fit through an eight and one-half inch by 24 inch opening.

Superintendent Larry Johnson states, “While volunteers can possibly break a sweat while working to improve their parks on NPLD, they can also explore and enjoy America’s natural wonders. NPLD can be a gateway to discovering the beauty and opportunity for recreation at our parks and on all of our public lands.” Over 2300 sites are expected to offer volunteer projects across the country. Johnson further comments, “Jewel Cave is proud to honor the celebration by offering some unique visitor experiences, as well as waiving cave tour fees during the early fall season.”

For more information, contact the Monument at 605-673-8300 and select Option 2 or visit www.nps.gov/jeca and select the Volunteer Opportunities Quicklink. The Monument is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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