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## Midwest Region News Release

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### **Larry Johnson selected as Superintendent for Jewel Cave National Monument**

OMAHA, Neb. — Lawrence (Larry) E. Johnson, currently Chief Park Ranger at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Empire, Mich., has been selected by the National Park Service (NPS) as the new Superintendent of Jewel Cave National Monument in Custer, S.D. He will assume this new post on July 4, 2010, succeeding Todd Suess, who took an assignment as Deputy Superintendent of Olympic National Park in Port Angeles, Wash., in February 2010.

“Larry’s well balanced knowledge of all aspects of park operations developed throughout his career will serve him well in this new assignment,” said Ernest Quintana, Regional Director of the NPS Midwest Region. “His experience in parks encompassing a wide variety of natural resources, including cave systems, makes him an ideal manager for Jewel Cave.”

A 27-year NPS veteran, Johnson began his Federal career in 1976 as a seasonal Forestry Technician with the U.S. Forest Service at Superior National Forest in Isabella, Minn. In 1979, he became a Park Ranger with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Lake Red Rock in Pella, Iowa. Johnson accepted his first NPS assignment as a Park Ranger in 1983 at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch, Iowa, before moving on to Supervisory Park Ranger positions at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, Wisc.; Yellowstone National Park, Wyo.; and Voyageurs National Park, International Falls, Minn. He was named Chief Park Ranger at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in Harpers Ferry, W.V., in 1998; and Chief Park Ranger at Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Van Buren, Mo., in 2001, before taking his current position at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in 2004. Johnson also served as Acting Chief Ranger at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, St. Louis, Mo., in 2008, and as Acting Deputy Superintendent at Badlands National Park, Interior, S.D., for 7 months during late 2008 and early 2009.

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Johnson has held an NPS Law Enforcement Commission for 26 years; is an instrument rated, single-engine airplane pilot as well as a certified SCUBA Divemaster; possesses his U.S. Coast Guard Captain's License for 100 ton vessels; and has been a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician for 28 years. He was the Midwest Region's Harry Yount Award (for excellence in rangering) recipient in 1995, and was also awarded the Midwest Regional Director's Safety Achievement Award in 1990.

"I am thrilled about the opportunity to work with the great staff and community to protect and showcase such a unique park that is literally a hidden jewel. We are looking forward to getting to know the community and the area," said Johnson of this new assignment. Johnson will be relocating to the Black Hills area with his wife Jan, an artist and writer.

A native of Des Moines, Iowa, Johnson earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Outdoor Recreation Resources Management, with minors in Geology and Biology, from Iowa State University. He has also completed coursework in Pre-Medicine through Utah State University.

Jewel Cave National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation in February 1908. With more than 150 miles of cave passages surveyed, Jewel Cave is recognized as the second longest cave in the world, second only to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and airflow within its passages indicates a vast area yet to be explored. This limestone cavern consists of a series of chambers connected by narrow passages with fine calcite crystal encrustations. Other varieties of speleothems to be viewed include stalactites, stalagmites, draperies, frostwork, flowstone, boxwork, and hydromagnesite balloons. The cave is also an important hibernaculum for several species of bats. The park encompasses an area of 1,273 acres.

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