

The Trailhead Register

Spring
2009



The Comprehensive Trail Management Plan Newsletter of Mammoth Cave National Park



Where We Go Next

Dear Park Friends,

Thank you all for your continued interest in the Comprehensive Trail Management Plan that has now been approved for Mammoth Cave National Park. The Plan is a strategic tool to plot the course of trail management over the next ten years and will provide for both use and

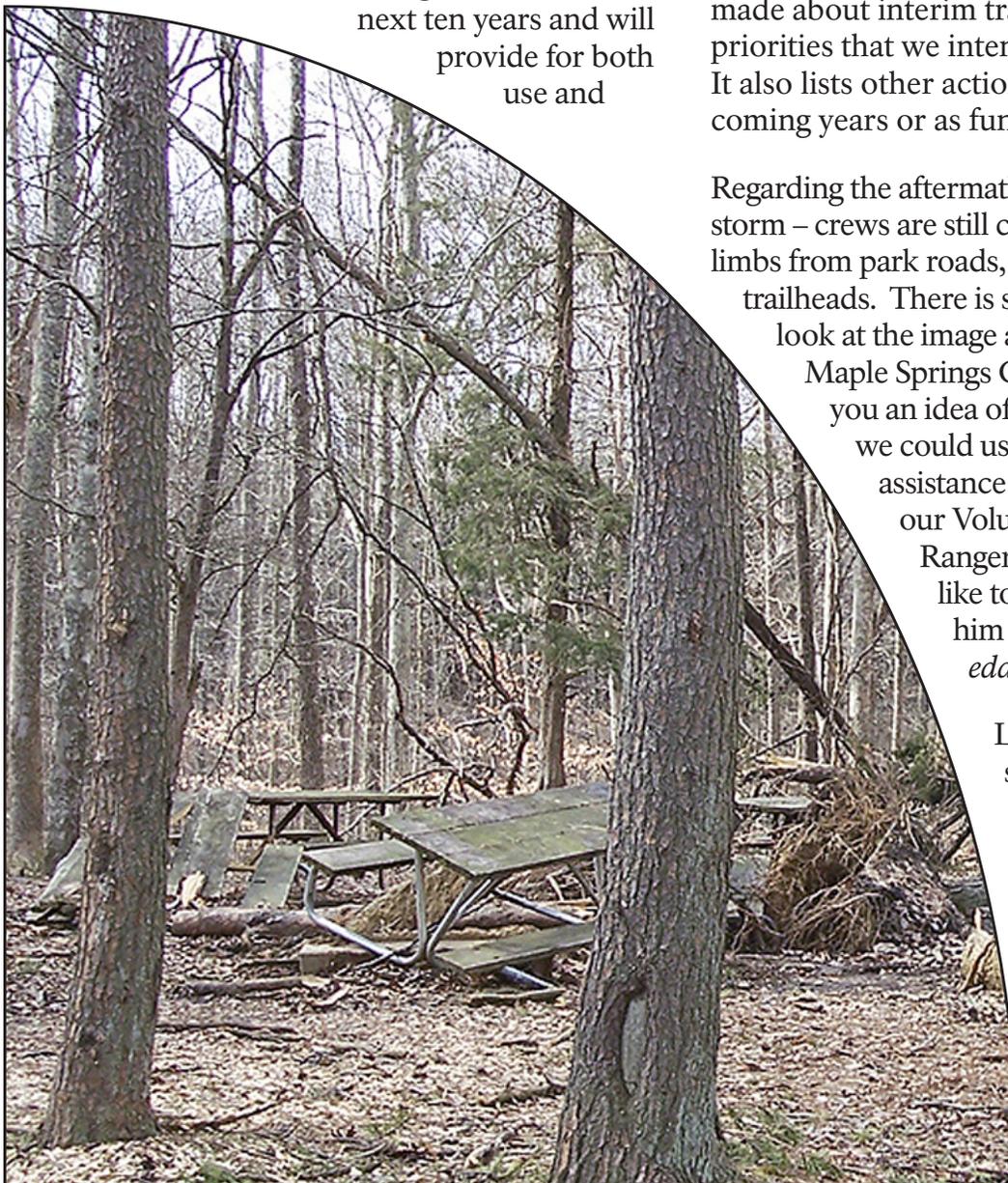
protection of park resources. I consider its development to be a true partnership between the park and trail users.

This newsletter includes the decisions we have made about interim trail use and lays out several priorities that we intend to implement in 2009. It also lists other actions that we will pursue in coming years or as funding becomes available.

Regarding the aftermath of the January 27 ice storm – crews are still clearing downed trees and limbs from park roads, campgrounds, trails, and trailheads. There is still much more to do—a look at the image at left of damage at the Maple Springs Group Campground will give you an idea of the storm's fierceness—and we could use your help. Volunteer assistance will be coordinated through our Volunteers-In-Park Coordinator, Ranger Eddie Wells. If you would like to lend a hand, please contact him at 270.758.2143, or eddie_wells@nps.gov.

Let us continue in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration as we move into implementation of the trail plan. I see good things ahead for the park and its users.

Patrick H. Reed
Superintendent



Interim Trail Use Decisions

The park will submit a draft special regulation to the Washington office which would authorize bicycle use on one existing trail—the Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike & Hike Trail—and two new trails soon to be constructed north of Green River. These include a new 6-mile, single-track, multiple loop trail for bicycles and hikers to the east of the Green River Ferry Road North, and a new 1.5-mile connector trail between the new bike trail and Maple Springs. A Special Regulation normally takes 12 to 24 months to complete the agency process in Washington.

In the meantime, the park is proceeding with planning and design for the new trails.

Implementation priorities for 2009

- Establish a trail monitoring program which park staff will use to effectively evaluate trail conditions. Information from this program will be used to prioritize trail maintenance, identify volunteer projects, and address unacceptable impacts on park resources and visitor experiences.
- Initiate a trail stewardship program, engaging all trail users in caring for the trails and practicing responsible use.
- White Oak Trail, an administrative road north of Green River, will be authorized for mountain bike use. The 2.4 mile road/trail would remain open to hikers and horseback use.
- The park will construct a new 1.5 mile connector trail running from the new bike/hike trail east of Green River Ferry Road North to the Raymer Hollow Trail, to Maple Springs Trailhead, to Maple Springs Group Campground, and to the Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning. Horse use, bicycle use, and hiking will be authorized on this trail.

Once the required planning and compliance for new trail construction are completed, construction of the new trails will run concurrent to the development of the special regulation. Bicycle use will not be allowed on the new multiloop trail until the special regulation is approved.

The multiloop trail east of Green River Ferry Road North will lie within a 1,136-acre area, with elevations ranging from 425 to 780 feet. Horses will not be permitted on this trail.

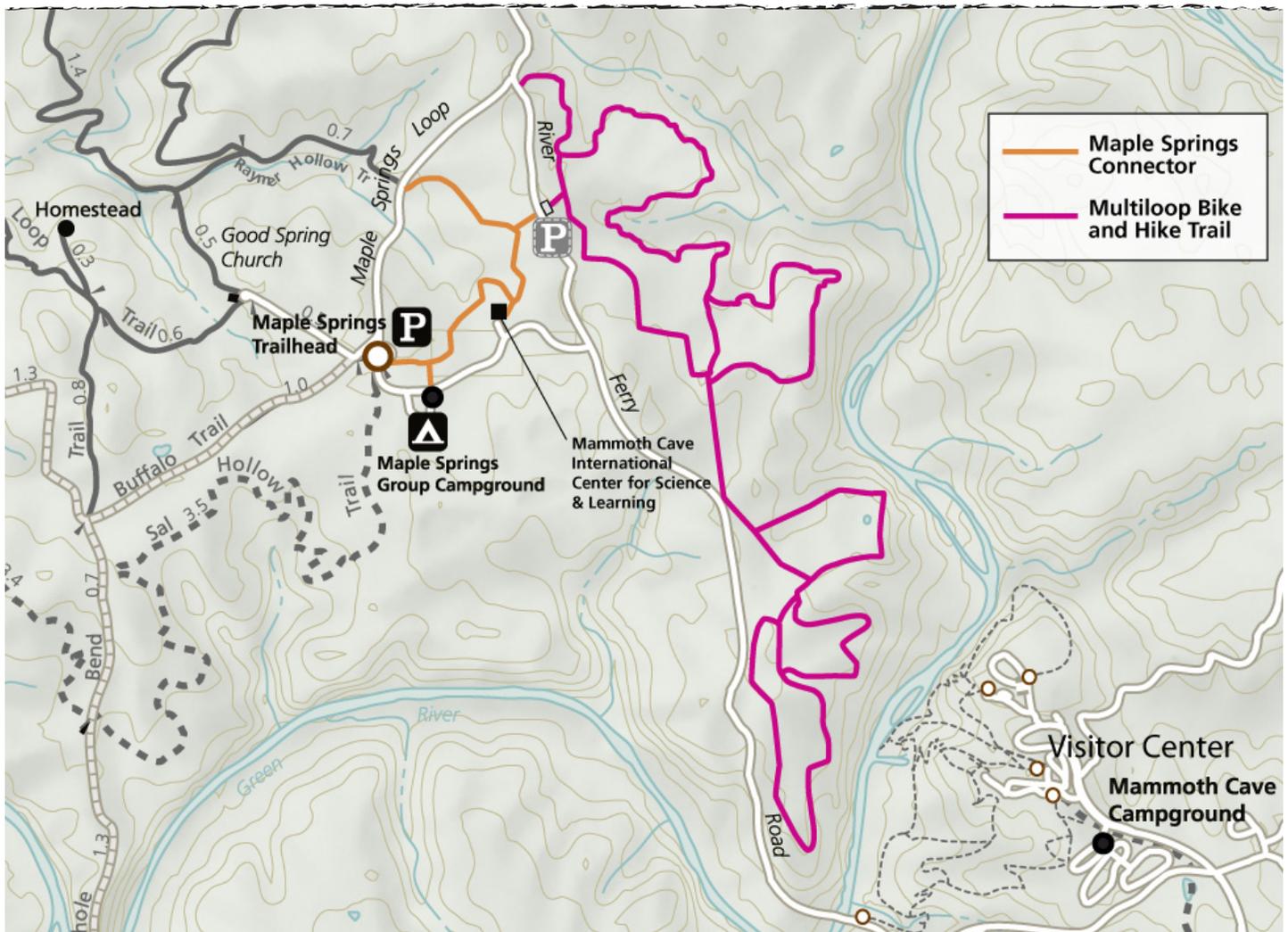
The Maple Springs connector will link this new 6-mile trail with the Raymer Hollow Trail, Maple Springs Trailhead, Maple Springs Group Campground, and the Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning. Horseback riding, bicycling and hiking will all be authorized on this trail.

As an interim measure until the new multiloop trail is complete, bicycles will continue to be allowed on Sal Hollow Trail, Buffalo Road, and a portion of Turnhole Bend Trail for a period not to exceed August 31, 2011; horses will not be allowed on Sal Hollow during this period. When the new multiloop trail is completed, or on September 1, 2011, whichever occurs first, Sal Hollow Trail, Buffalo Trail, Buffalo Road and Turnhole Bend Trail will close to bicycles. After that date those trails will be designated for horses and hikers only.



REMEMBER...

Your cell phone may or may not make a connection in the backcountry! Be sure to sign in at the trailhead registers or at the Visitor Center before going out.



Future Implementation Actions

- Increase parking at Maple Springs Trailhead.
- On the Green River Ferry Road-North, construct a new parking area and trailhead for the new bike/hike trail east of Green River Ferry Road North.
- Improve the short connector trail between Lincoln Trailhead and Collie Ridge Trail.
- Eliminate trailhead and trail access from the Good Spring United Baptist Church.
- Implement modest improvements to the existing trailhead parking areas at Lincoln, First Creek, and Temple Hill.
- Construct small parking areas at the administrative roads where bicycling is permitted: Crystal Cave Road, Great Onyx Road, and White Oak Road.

**Questions? Contact Vickie Carson,
Park Public Information Officer,
270.758.2192.**



Comprehensive Trail Management Plan Timeline (Updated)

February 28, 2009	Design charette.
March 6, 2009	Draft Special Regulation submitted to Washington
April 28, 2009	Deadline for public input from trail user groups regarding design of the new trail
Summer 2009	Superintendent determines trail route, design elements, parking areas, and trail development plan. Develop partnerships for trail project (funding, volunteers, etc.) Finish environmental and cultural compliance requirements.
Fall 2009	New trail construction begins
Spring 2010-Spring 2011	The Park receives the decision on the draft Special Regulation.
September 1, 2011	No later than this date, Sal Hollow Trail, Buffalo Road, and portions of Turnhole Bend Trail will be designated for horseback riding and hiking only.



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