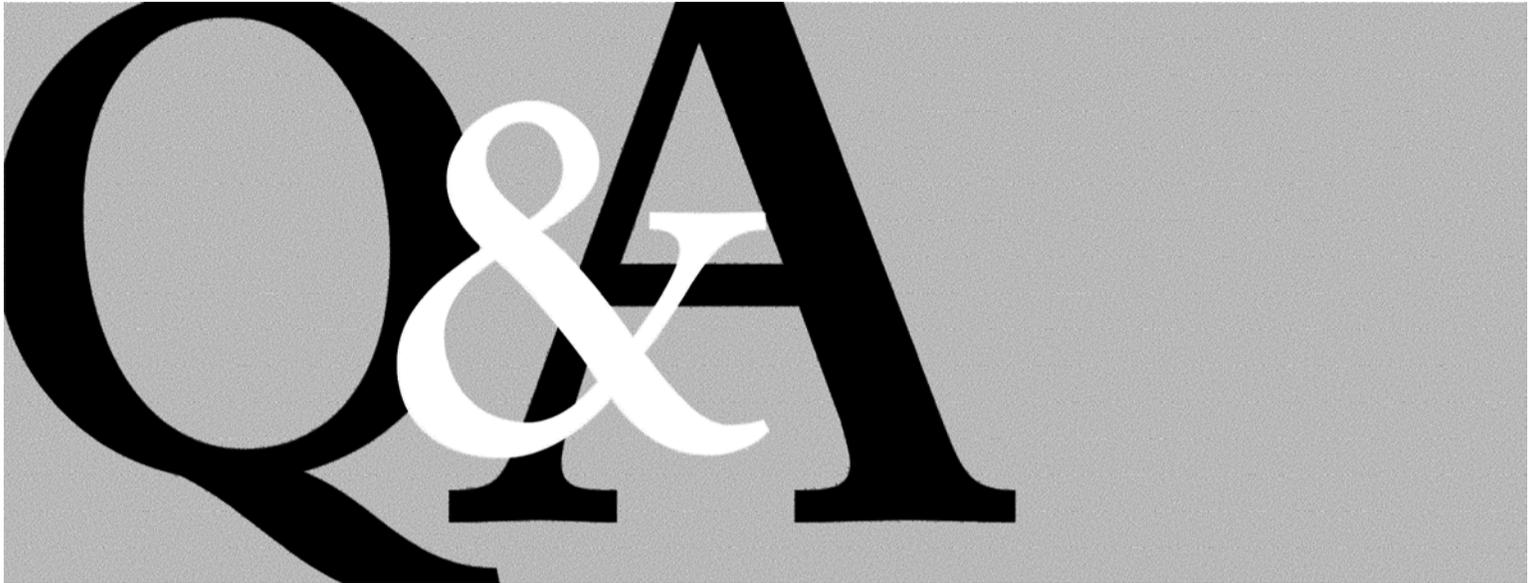




## Fact Sheet 2009



### What is in this park?

Mammoth Cave National Park encompasses 52,830 acres in south central Kentucky, commemorating the diverse geological, biological and historical features associated with the longest cave in the world. The surface landscape highlights rare plants and dense forest, a diverse aquatic ecosystem in the Green and Nolin Rivers, and hallmark geologic features of a classic karst terrain. Great Onyx Job Corps Center, under the U.S. Forest Service, is located in the park on the north side of the Green River.

### What is the history of this place?

Native Americans discovered Mammoth Cave about 4,000 years ago and continued to use it for 2,000 years. In the late 1790s settlers “rediscovered” the cave, and during the War of 1812 slaves mined saltpetre from the cave sediments to be used in the manufacture of gunpowder. Tours began in 1816, increasing the cave’s notoriety, and drawing visitors in ever greater numbers. Over a century of private ownership and exploration of the cave followed. Then, in 1926, Congress authorized

the formation of a national park in the Mammoth Cave area to protect the caves, hilly country, and scenic river valleys typical of south central Kentucky. The park was officially established on July 1, 1941. It later gained World Heritage Site designation in 1981, and became the core area of an International Biosphere Reserve in 1990.

### What is there to do in the park?

The park has 14 miles of developed cave trails, 31 miles of the Green and Nolin Rivers to canoe and fish, 101 miles of roads to drive, and 85 miles of hiking trails, some for horses and bikes. Visitors can participate in ranger-led cave trips and surface walks, campfire programs, children’s activities; hike; picnic; backpack; camp; ride horseback; bike; boat; and fish. School groups can participate in the Environmental Education

program, or go on a regular cave tour. Reservations are strongly recommended for cave trips and are required for school group programs. Concessioners operate canoe and horse liveries. Overnight accommodations and a campstore are available within the park. Many facilities are handicapped accessible.

### What lives in the park?

Mammoth Cave National Park is one of the greatest protectors of plants and animals in Kentucky – underground and on the surface.

**In the cave:** 130 animal species use the cave on a regular basis, some as visitors and some for their entire life cycle. Twelve are eyeless, unpigmented cave dwellers, such as fish, crayfish, beetles and harvestmen. Three are endangered species – Kentucky cave shrimp, Indiana bat and Gray bat – call Mammoth Cave home.

**On the surface:** While most of the park consists of second-growth woodland, a number of special plant communities – upland ponds, prairie remnants, hemlock groves and sinkhole microclimates – harbor many of the

park’s rare species. The park’s diverse plant communities support deer, raccoon, opossum, gray squirrel, rabbit, woodchuck, muskrat, beaver, red fox, coyote, beavers, hawks, owls, and wild turkey – just to name the most common creatures. The Green River supports more than 80 species of fish (drum, bluegill, catfish, bass, muskie), and more than 50 species of freshwater mussels (six endangered species) live in the river sand, gravel and mud. This bounty of life makes the Green River one of the most biologically diverse river habitats in the National Park System.

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**By the numbers:*****In 2008, the park hosted:*****How many people use the park?**

584,118 visitors in the park

353,868 visitors on cave tours

47,501 visitors in the campgrounds

**What's the weather like?**

15,027 backcountry visitors

6,328 horseback riders

3,651 bicyclists

17,089 hikers

11,881 boater/canoists

Kentucky has a moderate climate, characterized by warm, yet moist conditions. Summers can average in the mid-90s(F), while winters average in the low 40s(F). Much of the park's average annual 52 inches of precipitation falls in the spring. Storms happen year-round, through most occur March – September.

Year-round, the cave temperature in interior passages fluctuates from around 54°(F) to 60°(F). Winter temperatures, however, can be below freezing at the cave entrances.

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**What does it take to run this park?**

The budget in 2008 for Mammoth Cave National Park was \$6.3 million. The park collected \$3.7 million in fees for cave tours and camping; 80 percent was allotted to the park for facility upkeep, like the visitor center renovation project.

The park employed 81 permanent staff and 69 seasonal/temporary staff in the spring of 2008. Volunteers-in-Parks, both individuals and groups, contributed 26,036 hours of park work in 2008.

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**How much cave is down there?**

Nobody knows. As of 2008, the Cave Research Foundation had mapped and surveyed more than 367 miles of passage, but exploration and re-survey continue. In addition to exploring and mapping the cave, CRF also contributes to our knowledge of the cave through many research projects.

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**How can I get more information?**

For park information, call (270)758-2180 or write:

Superintendent  
Mammoth Cave National Park  
1 Mammoth Cave Parkway  
P.O. Box 7  
Mammoth Cave, KY 42259-0007

Online, go the park website at:

for general information—

**<http://www.nps.gov/maca>**

for information about science and nature—

**<http://www.nps.gov/maca/naturescience/index.htm>**

for information about the park's history—

**<http://www.nps.gov/maca/historyculture/index.htm>**

for downloadable brochures and maps—

**<http://www.nps.gov/maca/planyourvisit/brochures.htm>**

for downloadable photos of the park—

**<http://photo.itc.nps.gov/storage/images/maca/maca-Thumb.00001.html>**

For area information, dial (800)346-8908.

For **cave tour, campground, and picnic shelter reservations**, contact the ReserveAmerica at (877)444-6777. Or, reserve online at:

**[www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)**

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**UTM coordinates for the Mammoth Cave National Park visitor center:**

Northing: 37 degrees, 11 minutes, 12.8 seconds

Westing: 86 degrees, 6 minutes, 4.4 seconds