



NEWSLETTER

Notes from the President

Whenever I think about the 266 street (road) the Friends of Wind Cave paid for, I am elated. When we began our fundraising, I was hopeful this wasn't just wishful thinking. What a job our Friends did. And, what an improvement to Wind Cave National Park. When the covid-19 crisis is gone, or at least under some control, the National Guard can do the planned work inside the Park boundary. The public can then use this road to visit the Sanson Ranch, and the historic buffalo jump. My thanks again to key board personnel and Wind Cave staff who kept pushing and working to accomplish this fundraiser. Our Friends are terrific, many donated money, and a few stepped up with extra generous donations to make the road a reality. The work the South Dakota National Guard did was super, and we greatly appreciate it.

Next summer we are all hopeful the National guard can work inside the Park, with parking, additional road work, and bathrooms for the public. The pandemic put a lot of this work on hold for this past summer. After the work is done inside the Park boundary, we will finally be able to celebrate the road project being completed, and properly thank the key donors with a plaque. We already have the plaque, but need safer conditions to unveil it, and celebrate.

Don

Work Day

On August 13 we accomplished what is hopefully the last erosion control project on the 266 St. road of the Sanson Ranch Project. There were areas in the right of way where some bare ground was still exposed. These spots were reseeded and matting was placed over the top of the seed to hold everything in place.



There was a willing crew of old duffers that showed up to do the work and a Kestrel was also supervising. Do to extenuating circumstances the project had to be completed during the week, when most people who have jobs are unavailable. I would love to share a flowered report of how much fun we all had, but honesty is always the best policy. It was very hot and

tedious work and one comment sort of summed up the experience “I have not had this much fun since my last root canal”. Others went out at later date and placed more of the pins that hold the matting in place. In the words of Larry the cable guy “we got’er done” and are one step closer to completing this project and opening up the newly acquired Sanson Ranch to the public.



New Board Member

We are pleased to welcome new member to the board of directors of The Friends of Wind Cave National Park - Colin Keeler.

Colin Keeler found out about the Friends of Wind Cave when, as a member of the Black Hills Grotto, he heard about the work day on 266th road and wanted to participate. He has always had an interest in caves and has visited many throughout the Black Hills. Colin lives and works in Pierre where he serves as the Director of Financial Systems for the Bureau of Finance and Management. He and his wife Mary have 3 recently grown daughters.

Colin recently agreed to serve on the board of FoWC, something he hopes will give him even more reason to spend time in the Hills, where he has a cabin near Keystone and spends most weekends. His hobbies include mountain biking, hiking, and skiing.

We still have openings on our board! We need YOU to help us preserve, protect and promote this National Treasure. If you are interested, please contact a board member today!

Wind Cave National Park News

Our annual park wide wildlife surveys are coming up shortly, and we need eyes to flood every corner of the park. If you need an excuse to hike a new (or favorite) part of the park, please find the information below.

What: Counting mainly pronghorn, bison, and monarch butterflies, but take note of anything you see!

When: Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 8:00 am

Where: Meet outside RM offices by yellow maintenance shed; there are various survey units that will focus on the open prairie.

Who: Anyone who wants to hike.

How: Please email me by Friday, September 11 with your interest and how much time and distance you are willing to dedicate.

Equipment:

Please bring binoculars, writing

utensil, park radio, water, lunch, and anything else you may need for a day in the field. We will provide you with a map or iPad and a datasheet.

Tom Farrell tom_farrell@nps.gov

Elevator Update

The contract has been awarded and hopefully will be completed by September.

Friends' Stories (*The newsletter section where stories are shared*)



I want to talk about the cave part of Wind Cave in this newsletter. As Don DeVries has mentioned there are two parks, one above ground and one below. If you have paid attention to my newsletters you will know that I am an above ground type of Wind Cave user. I like to take pictures without a flash. This being said I have been in wind cave and the story of my first experience, when I was a kid, has become an old family story, one that has evolved and aged. It's the good kind of story that makes my brother and sister laugh, while our children roll their eyes,

It was 1965. My father had purchased a baby blue 1963 Ford custom 300 (for the car freaks out there it is a Galaxy without the chrome). This was my father's first new car, but it was a Minnesota car and rust slowly took over. The first sign that it may be time to invest in a different car occurred when the gas tank fell off in downtown Minneapolis. Dad was handy enough to put the gas tank into the trunk, hook up the fuel line and drive off. This bucket of rust became "my ride" in my college years. It earned the name the "Smuda Cuda". Many stories were generated behind the wheel of this legendary vehicle.

Back to 1965, my family (mom, dad my older sister Patti, younger brother Tom and myself) loaded up the Cuda and headed west. I was 12 years old, and this was our first vacation that we ventured out of the State of Minnesota. We always had done the traditional Minnesota vacation of renting a cabin "up north" on one of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes. This trip was a real adventure. With much planning, we decided to make a loop from Minneapolis to Yellowstone National Park then north to Glacier National Park and back home. We took in as many sites as humanly possible along the way. One of our destinations was Wind Cave National Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The brochure said it was established in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, it was the seventh national park and the first cave to be designated a national park anywhere in the world. The five of us went on a cave tour that started at the natural entrance.

My father was one of life's true characters, known as "big jack." As I look back that was sort of a sort weird name because he really was not that big and his name was John. He was a fun loving guy capable of about anything, but I would not classify him as a person that would seek attention. One of the mantras that my brother, sister and I heard over and over in our youth was "be seen and not heard." We were taught, as my parents were taught, to be "Minnesota nice" speak when spoken to and any public display was just was not a good thing.

It was a hot day and the "Cuda" did not have air conditioning and the cave was a welcome break from the heat. Being a biology nerd even then I was on lookout for bats. The vivid memory of the cave occurred when the ranger turned out the lights. I am sure this was my first experience with total darkness.

I sincerely believe there is a God and he/she has a sense of humor. There are things that happen in this world that cannot be explained any other way. There are spirits, gremlins that there entire

being is spent just messing with you. I could give you numerous examples from my life because I believe I am being trained for this mission in the afterlife. For example, in college, I was biology major, and took advantage of every situation to educate the non-majors about the natural world. So naturally when a robin flew over while we were drinking beer in the park, I blurted out its scientific name *Turdus migratorius*. The phrase had not cleared my lips and a deposit from the robin appeared on my shoulder. I do not care what anyone thinks there was nothing random about that.

During our cave tour, my family was in the back of the line because that is just the way we always did things. After the ranger turned the lights back on, the tour reversed its direction and moved to our end of the line. It was one of those “the first shall be last and the last shall be first” moments. Before exiting the cave there was a person who was walking next to the ranger and asked “how well does sound travel in the cave?” At that very moment, my father farted very loudly. My brother, who was very young and very short, turned and very loudly exclaimed “right in my face!”

Did my father seize the moment and let fly a resounding answer to the question, “How well does sound travel in the cave?” Or did my father try to slip one by and the spirit world seeing a golden opportunity to just plain mess with us, turn a simple attempt to silently relieve pressure into a very loud noise in the face of a young child?

I know which is true for me, but that’s just me. What do you think? And while you’re deep in thought and you happen to recall any other cave stories to share I would love to include them in the newsletter. I’m out of below ground stories and this newsletter can only be improved by some real cave people sharing some real below ground stories.

Please contact Bob Hodorff at bobhodorff@gmail.com



Become a Member of the Friends of Wind Cave Park Today!

If you are not currently a member of the Friends of Wind Cave Park, we, the Board, wanted to request your support by becoming a member today, or by renewing your current membership if you have not already done so! If your renewal is passing in the mail, thank you in advance for your support!

Wind Cave National Park is truly one of our National Treasures. There are many reasons to become a Friend of the Park;

- Receive regular newsletters
- Be the among first to receive press releases concerning the Park or the Friends group
- Receive invitations to Members Only events planned for this year, such as hike with the Superintendent, private tours, VIP guest at the Road dedication, and others

Most of all, you can be a member of a group of like-minded folks whose only mission is to protect, promote and support this national treasure!

Over the past couple of years, the Friends have provided the materials necessary to construct a safe, attractive access road to the Sanson Ranch property. See the before and after pictures above. There is still some erosion control and culvert work required to completely finish this road, but with that project mostly behind us, we will move on to support the park in other areas, plus provide opportunities for our members to participate in unique conservation and interpretation activities planned for this summer.

You can become a member today for 2020 today. Use the form below to mail in your dues or, if you wish, you can do it online with just a couple of clicks. Simply log in to <http://www.friendsofwindcavenp.org/howtohelp.html>, and use the first dropdown window to select your membership level, or if you wish to become a life member, use the second dropdown.

We hope you will consider this request to join us in our efforts to preserve, protect and promote this unique resource.

Friends of Wind Cave National Park Membership form:

_____ \$20/year Single _____ \$250 Business (annual) _____ \$100 Supporting membership
_____ \$30/year Family _____ \$500 Life membership (single) _____ \$700 Life (couple)

_____ \$1000 - \$5000 "1903 Society" _____ \$5000 + "Legacy Donor" _____ Donation

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone #: _____

Home Email Address: _____

Complete and mail with check to: Friends of Wind Cave National Park
PO Box 336, Hot Springs, SD 57747 or complete online at: www.friendsofwindcavenp.org

Current Board Members

President: Don DeVries **V. President:** Steve Baldwin **Treasurer:** Steve Sewell

Secretary: Bob Hodorff **Members:** Jim Brickey, Jennings Hustad,