

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Jewel Cave National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: JECA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Jewel Cave National Monument will preserve the Jewel Cave ecosystem unimpaired for future generations while providing opportunities for the pursuit of scientific interest and public enjoyment. With more than 139 miles of cave passages surveyed, Jewel Cave is recognized as the second longest cave in the world. There are vast areas of cave passages in pristine condition decorated with a wide variety of cave formations. Although Jewel Cave is not designated a Wilderness area, the monument strives to preserve the cave as de facto wilderness.

Jewel Cave National Monument will provide quality visitor orientation, information services, and interpretive programming to park visitors while implementing a cave research, impact monitoring, and exploration program aimed at protecting the cave environment.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Todd J. Suess

Site: JECA

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

This project would facilitate actions that would protect Jewel Cave as it lies under private land through the use of agreements, easements, land purchase from willing land owners, and Forest Service land exchange. Jewel Cave is currently the second longest cave in the world with over 139 miles of explored and surveyed passages. Research indicates that less than 10% of the Jewel Cave system has been "found". Exploration has revealed that Jewel Cave extends far to the south and east of the Monument boundaries beneath National Forest System lands and private lands. This presents some very serious problems for preserving and protecting Jewel Cave. As houses are built on land over cave passages, their sewage systems are likely to leach into the cave system and contaminate the water that both cave organisms and cave exploration teams rely on. Private land owners could build entrances to the cave allowing access to parts of Jewel Cave under NPS and USFS land. Cave features such as crystals, stalactites, and flowstone would be subjected to removal or destruction by vandalizing. Any artificial entrances blasted into the cave from private lands would change the delicate balance of air

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: JECA

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

The purpose of Jewel Cave National Monument is to preserve the Jewel Cave ecosystem for its scientific interests and for public enjoyment. At over 138 miles long, it is one of the most extensive and three-dimensional complex caves in the world, it is a pristine and largely unexplored frontier providing unique opportunities for scientific study, and it provides the opportunity to experience an internationally significant cave. Currently, contaminated runoff from a 150-space parking lot flows directly into a natural drainage and then into passages of Jewel Cave. This project seeks to capture contaminated run-off from the parking lot and treat it prior to being released. Run-off or fuel spills will drain into a large holding chamber. The contents of the chamber will be cleaned via oil/water separators and air strippers, removing petroleum hydrocarbons. This treated water will then be released back into the natural drainages, greatly reducing the probability of pollution entering the cave. Controlling runoff will require redesigning the parking lot. This will require an almost complete removal of the parking lot's present surface.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: JECA

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Produce a 10-12 minute orientation film to be shown in the monument's visitor center. This film would connect the cave to the basic human desire to venture into new frontiers, and encourage feelings of stewardship for Jewel Cave and other cave resources. To stress the interrelationship between surface and subsurface resources in the preservation of the cave, the film should provide a comprehensive view of resources beyond the developed areas both within the cave and on the surface. Currently the monument visitor center does not have an adequate space for a visitor viewing of a film and has outdated interpretive materials. A facility would be added to the existing visitor center without expanding development footprint within the park and thus eliminating any additional human caused surface disturbance effecting cave resources.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS