

NEWS



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR NEW CAVE AND KARST MANAGEMENT PLAN AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

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Contacts

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Superintendent Todd Suess announced today that Jewel Cave National Monument is soliciting public comments on an environmental assessment (EA) prepared for a new Cave and Karst Management Plan. The plan was written to establish and formalize specific direction and appropriate policies for science-based management of the cave and karst resources of Jewel Cave National Monument. The EA's comment period runs until September 7.

Superintendent Suess said, "In this EA we are looking at two alternatives. One would be to continue using our current, mostly informal, policies. Our preferred alternative would result in clearly written policies that provide for better management of cave and karst resources, greater public access, and limited use of herbicides for noxious weed control, based on the local geology, hydrology, and soil conditions. It important to control the weeds, but we want to ensure that herbicides do not enter the cave ecosystem."

Planning for this EA began in April 9, 2002, with a notice requesting public input regarding alternatives or issues related to the proposal. Initial public scoping meetings were conducted between then and July 25, 2002. Additional meetings have been held with local caving organizations and the National Speleological Society in 2002-2005, and in July 2007.

"It's been a long process," Suess said, "but we're excited about the changes that will be made. The plan will be a great tool for managing and protecting cave and karst resources, and for providing more, and better, opportunities for the visiting public."

The environmental assessment can be found on-line by following the links for Jewel Cave National Monument at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

Comments can be submitted via that website or they can be mailed to Superintendent; Jewel Cave National Monument; 11149 U.S. Highway 16, #B12, Custer, South Dakota. Printed copies of the EA are available upon request.

Names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Photo Caption: Small draperies on calcite crystals: the "jewels" of Jewel Cave. Photo by Art Palmer.