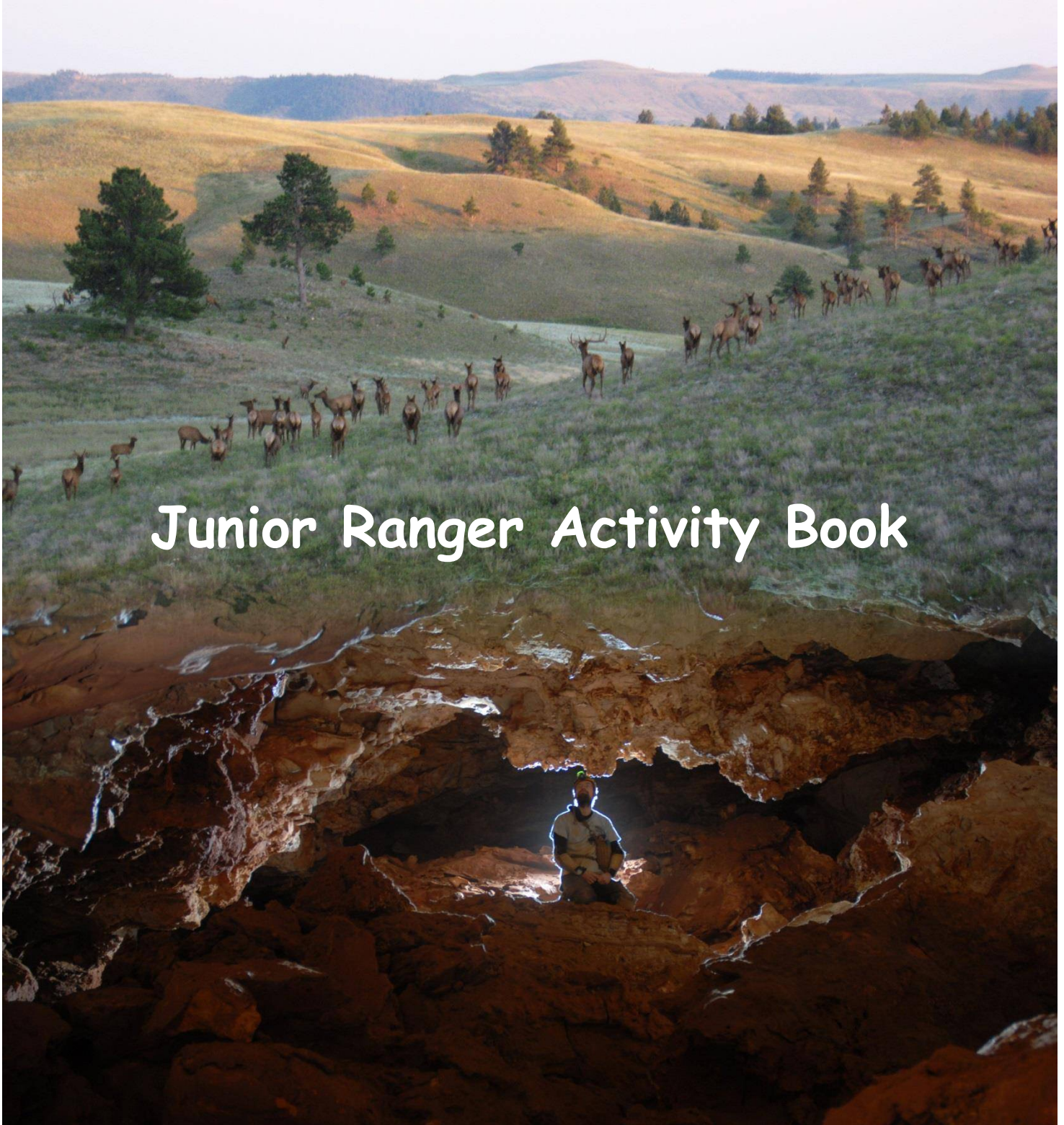


Wind Cave National Park

26611 US HWY 385  
Hot Springs, SD 57747



# Junior Ranger Activity Book

# Welcome to Wind Cave National Park



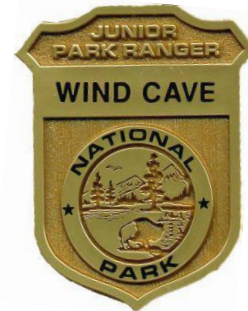
## DISCOVER TWO PARKS IN ONE!

As a Junior Ranger, you will discover what makes this park unique. You will learn how you can protect this park and its resources. You will also recognize what you can do at home to protect nature.

### How to Become a Junior Ranger

To become a Junior Ranger and earn your badge, complete the Learn with a Ranger page and then:

- Ages 5 and under: complete 3 additional activities
- Ages 6 to 9: complete 5 additional activities
- Ages 10 to 14: complete 7 additional activities
- Ages 15 and older: complete all of the activities



If you don't have time to finish the book today, you can send your book to:

Wind Cave National Park  
26611 US Highway 385  
Hot Springs, SD 57747

This book belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

# Learn with a Ranger

Attend a ranger-led cave tour, campfire program, or discovery talk. Get the park ranger's signature and complete this page.



Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ranger's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

-

What is one thing you learned from this program?

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-

Draw something memorable from the program you attended:

-

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing something memorable from the program.

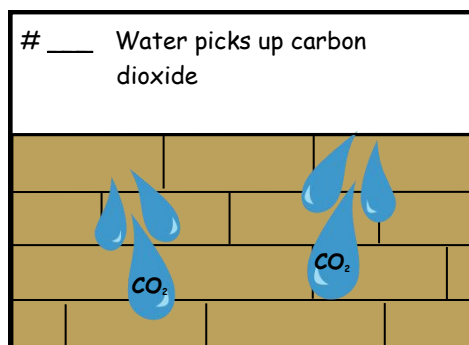
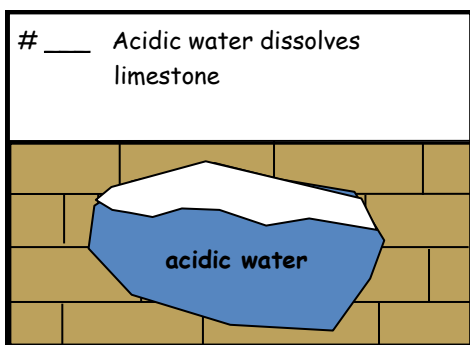
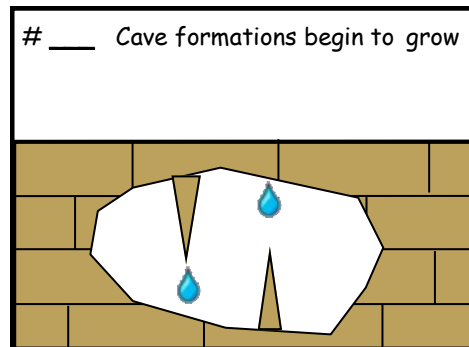
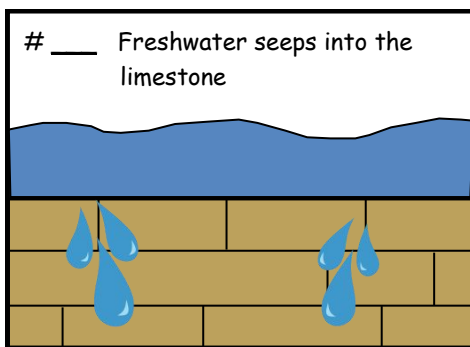
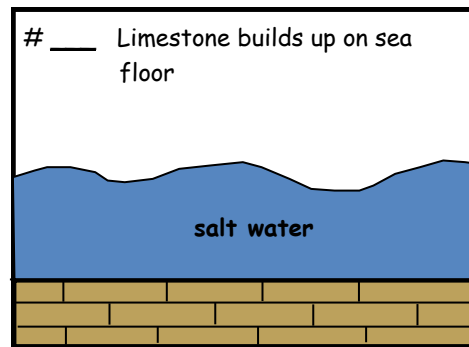
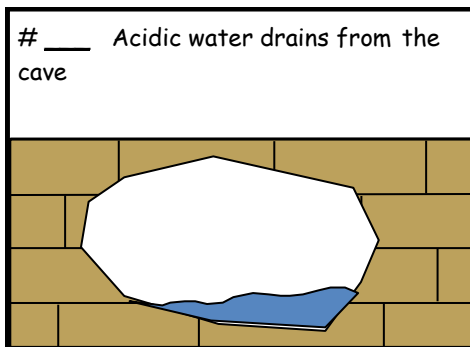


# Story in Stone

Scientists who study rocks are **geologists**. Wind Cave's rocks hold clues that tell geologists how it formed:

A long time ago, this area was a shallow sea where layers of limestone built up on the sea floor. The sea went away and fresh water started moving down into the limestone. The water picked up carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) and became acidic. The acidic water dissolved the limestone and created cave passageways. Next, the acidic water drained from the cave. Cave formations began to form and some are still forming today.

Number the pictures below in the order that they occurred in the story.



# Track Detectives

Some animals are hard to find in the park. Rangers look for signs like scat (poop) and tracks to learn about them. Tracks can tell us about an animal, like where it was going and how fast it was moving. Have you seen any tracks in the park?



Solve the riddles below using the animals from the word bank. Then, draw the track of that animal in the box next to the riddle.

I am often found around prairie dog towns.

I howl to keep in touch with my fellow animals.

I am part of the canine family.

I am a \_\_\_\_\_

I am part of the feline family. I can retract my claws so they don't leave a mark.

I am rarely seen in the park.

I live about 12 years in the wild.

I am a \_\_\_\_\_

I am often food for other animals.

I have strong back legs that help me leap.

My young are called kits.

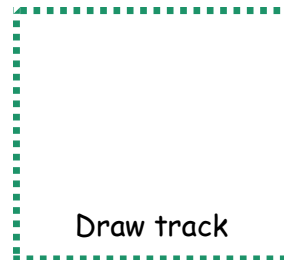
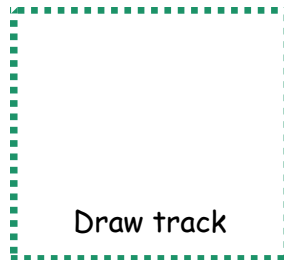
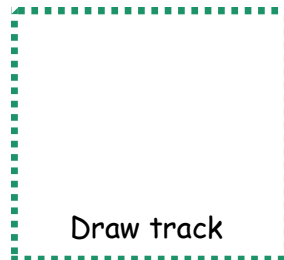
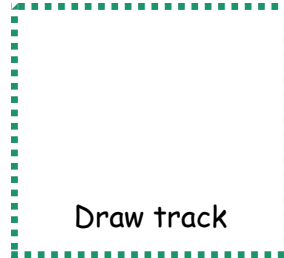
I am a \_\_\_\_\_

Males grow antlers every year and shed them during winter.

I live in herds.

My young weigh 30 to 35 pounds when born.

I am an \_\_\_\_\_



Word Bank

Coyote

Rabbit

Elk

Mountain Lion

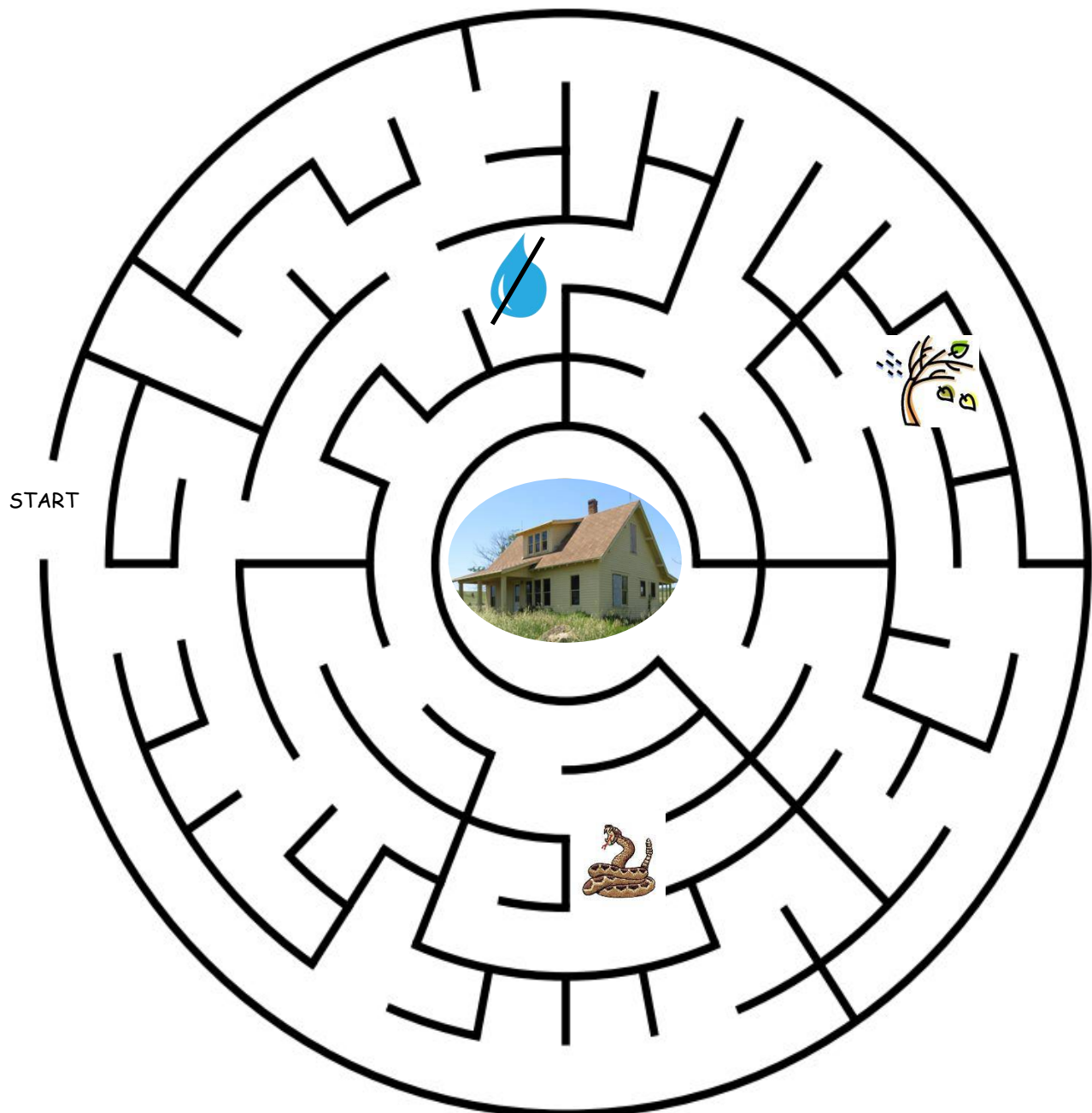


Track Bank

# Home on the Range

Many people from America's eastern cities moved out west in the 1800s to farm and start a new life on undeveloped lands called **homesteads**. Pioneers faced many struggles including lack of water, bad weather, disease, and snake bites. Life was so difficult that many moved away, and these lands later became part of Wind Cave National Park. One homestead, the Sanson Ranch, is preserved in the park today.

Avoid the obstacles as you find your way to the Sanson Ranch homestead.



# A World Wide Web

Many plants and animals in Wind Cave National Park rely on each other for survival — they are connected in a web of life. Scientists call this web of life an **ecosystem**, which is a large community of plants and animals that interact in an environment.

Using the pictures on the right, make as many as you can by drawing lines between plants and/or animals that depend on each other to survive.

After making connections, answer the questions below.

How many connections did you make? \_\_\_\_\_

Prairie dogs are an important part of Wind Cave National Park. They are a **keystone species**, meaning many other species in the park depend on them in some way.



List two animals that are connected to the prairie dog:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ and

2) \_\_\_\_\_

What might happen if the prairie dog was removed from the web?

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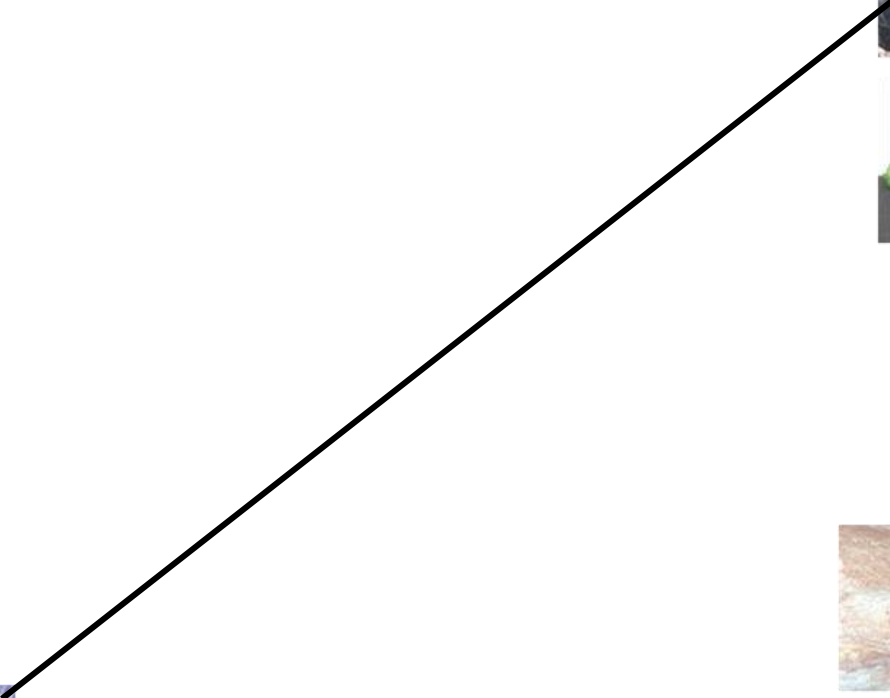
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Why is it important to preserve and protect all parts of an ecosystem?

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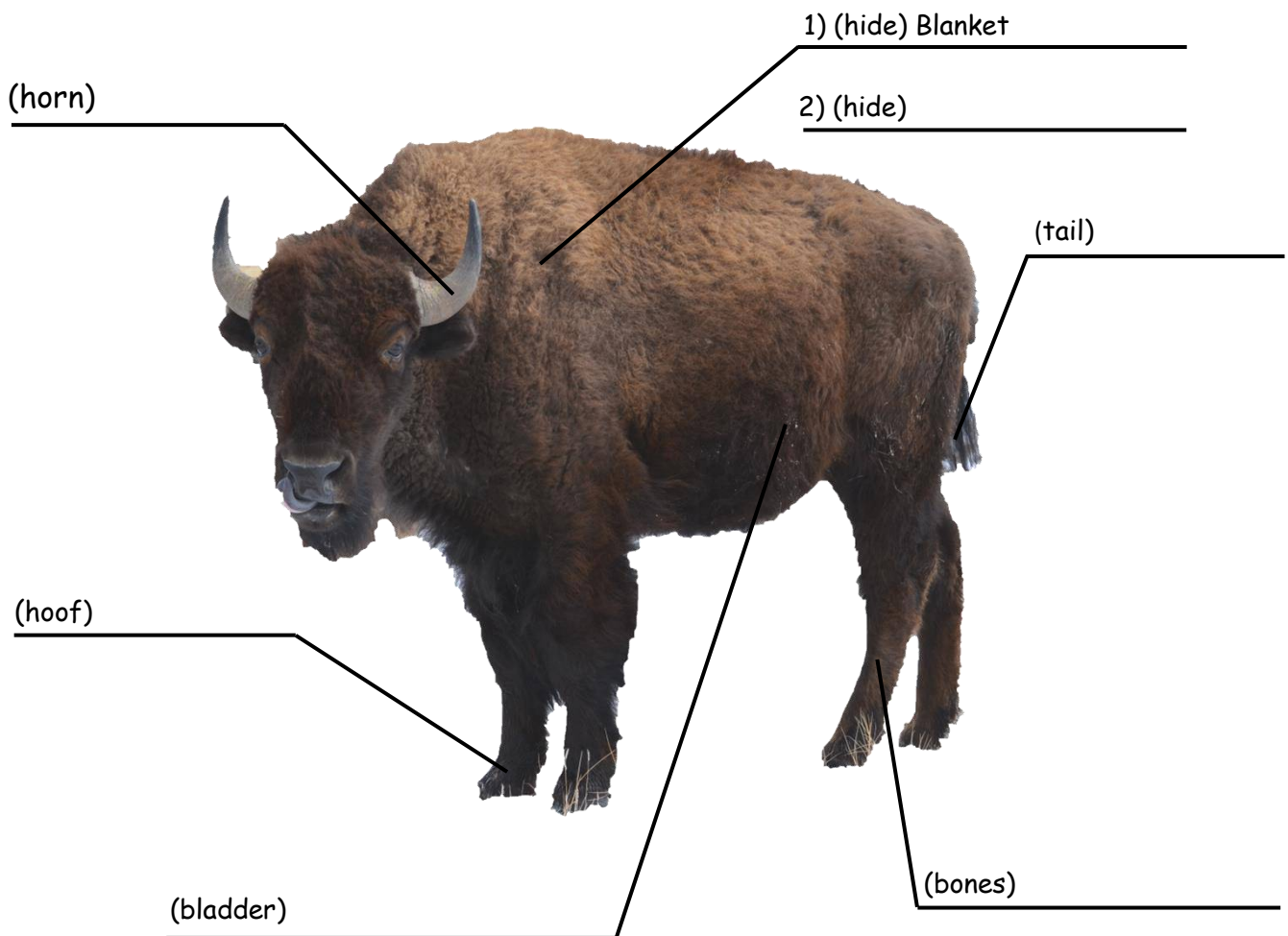


# Supermarket of the Plains

Native Americans hunted bison in this area. These animals were important for survival, providing food as well as other useful items that we find in stores today. Below are some of the uses Native Americans had for different parts of the bison.

For each part of the bison, write down a use from the list below.

<del>Blanket</del>	Water storage	Cups	Tools
Clothing	Glue	Fly swatter	



# Expedition Wind Cave

When exploring new passages inside Wind Cave, cavers have to map the rooms they find. Use the grid and the formation key below to map a new cave room. Does your room have stalactites, popcorn, or boxwork?

Add the formation symbols to the room, like the examples below.

**Formation Key**

- ▼ Stalactite
- ⌵ Column
- ▲ Stalagmite
- ▩ Boxwork
- ⌄ Frostwork
- Cave Popcorn

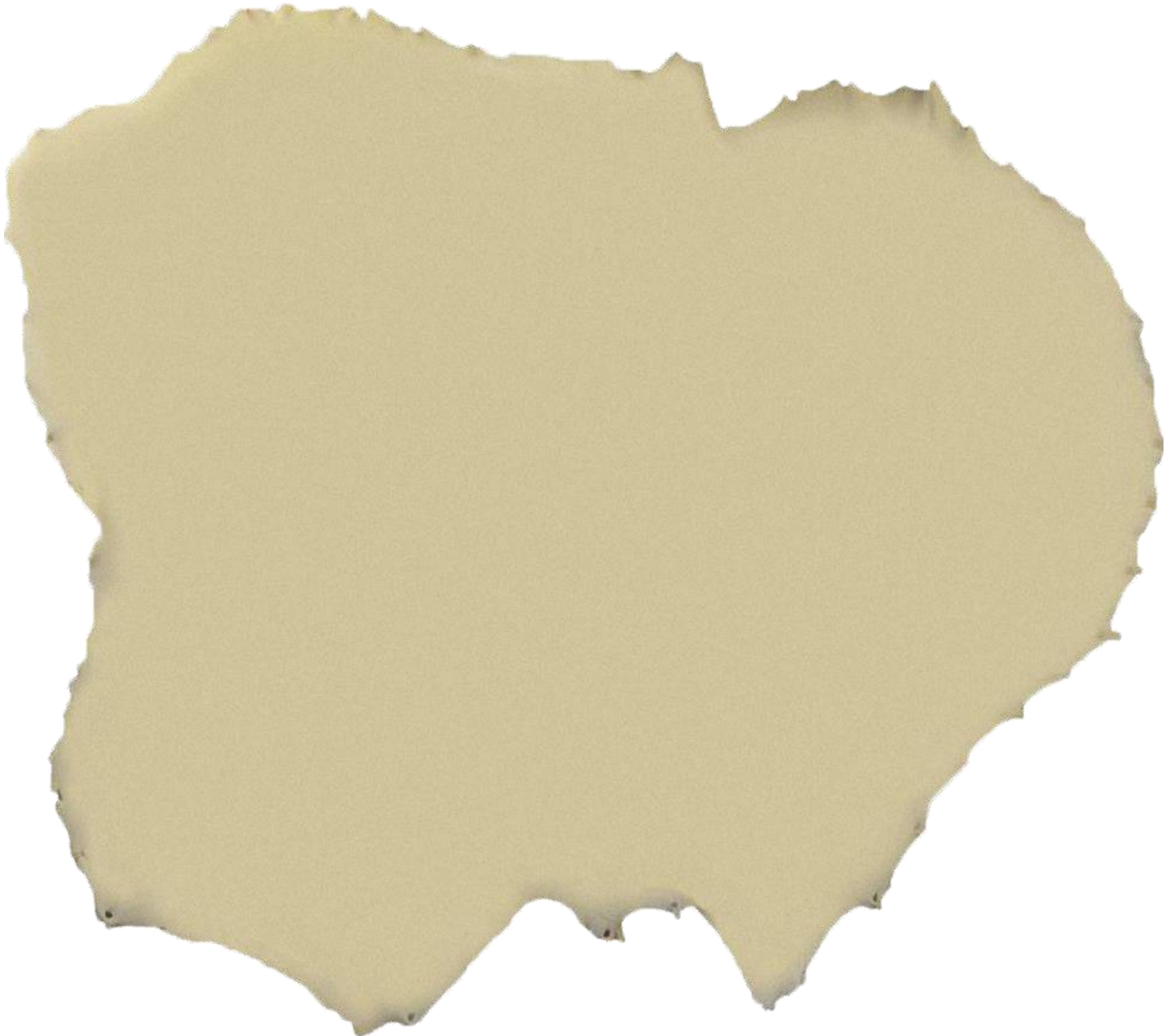
Name your room:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Study the cave map downstairs in the visitor center. Write the name of a room that you would like to explore:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## What's Your Story?

Plains tribes like the Lakota have oral histories of the Black Hills dating back a long time. Another way they recorded history was through winter counts—pictures drawn on bison hides. Each year one picture was added to show the most important event of the year.

**Create your own Winter Count. Draw pictures on the hide below about your life or your trip to Wind Cave. Look at the Winter Count exhibit downstairs in the Visitor Center for some ideas!**

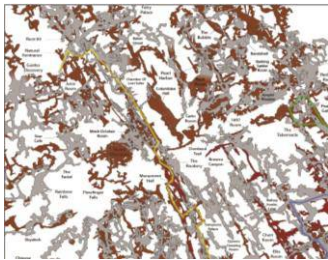


# Scavenger Hunt Bingo

Wind Cave National Park is home to two worlds, one above ground and the other below. As you explore the park, look for the things in the boxes below. Remember to leave plants and rocks where they are and keep a safe distance from animals.

Make a check in the box next to each item you find. Try to find four in a row.

Cave map



Flag



Deer



A natural sound.  
Describe it here:

An animal track.  
Draw it here:

Bison



Wildflowers



Boxwork



Prairie dog

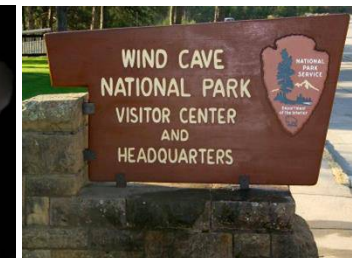


Park stamp:

Cave popcorn



Park sign



Frostwork



Grass



A park ranger



Pronghorn



# Help Protect the Park

It is important to protect natural places everywhere. Animals, plants, and people need space, clean air, and clean water. What can you do to help take care of Wind Cave National Park?

Unscramble the letters in ( ), then fill in the blanks to complete the sentence.

- 1) Recycle ( ) \_\_\_\_\_, paper, and aluminum cans in the recycle bins. (satlpcsi)
- 2) Throw away regular waste in the ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ bins. (rhsta)
- 3) While inside the cave, do not ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ the cave or formations. (uhotc)
- 4) Stay on the ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ while inside the cave. (tlair)
- 5) Do not feed or approach \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_. (ldewfli)
- 6) Leave rocks, plants, and \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ where you find them. (tartsifac)
- 7) Reduce plastic waste by refilling your \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ bottle at the visitor center. (tware)

Now use the circled letters to finish this sentence:

By taking care of everything within the park, you can help us preserve and \_\_\_\_\_ it!

1    2    3    4    5    6    7



Help us keep the park clean! Mark how many pieces of trash you found and threw out!

I found \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of trash

# Certificate of Completion

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Has Completed the  
Junior Ranger Program  
at Wind Cave National Park

---

Park Ranger Signature

---

Date



Find us on social media!



Your purchase has a purpose!



BLACK HILLS  
**PARKS &  
FORESTS**  
ASSOCIATION

### Supporting Wonder & Exploration

Continue your experience beyond the park boundary! Black Hills Parks & Forests Association (BHPFA) provides a curated selection of books, toys, and games that help people of all ages engage with and interpret the natural world.

As a non-profit organization, a portion of every purchase in the park store goes to supporting Wind Cave National Park with their critical mission of sustaining and preserving our natural and cultural legacies. The printing of this book is a tangible result of that partnership.

Book text and design by Wind Cave National Park