Executive Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Wind Cave National Park (NP) during July 27 - August 2, 2010. A total of 852 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 575 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 67.5% response rate.

- This report profiles a systematic random sample of Wind Cave NP visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables.

- Thirty-two percent of visitor groups were in groups of two and 29% were in groups of four. Eighty-seven percent of visitor groups were in family groups.

- United States visitors comprised 93% of total visitation during the survey period, with 11% from Minnesota and smaller proportions from 44 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors were from 12 countries.

- Eighty-seven percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time in their lifetime, and 98% were visiting for the first time in the past 12 months.

- Twenty-seven percent of visitors were ages 36-50 years, 31% were ages 15 years or younger, and 6% were ages 66 or older. Thirty-eight percent of respondents had completed a bachelor’s degree.

- Most visitor groups (76%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit. Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about the park through travel guides/tour books (45%), and most (93%) received the information they needed. To obtain information for a future visit, 67% of visitor groups would use the park website.

- For 57% of non-resident visitor groups, the primary reason for visiting the park area (within 30 miles of the park) was to visit other attractions in the area.

- Seventy-two percent of visitor groups stayed overnight in the area within 30 miles of the park, of which 26% percent stayed two nights.

- Of those visitor groups that stayed less than one day, 28% spent three hours visiting the park. Of those that visited for more than one day, 58% spent two days visiting the park. The average length of stay was 7 hours or 0.3 days.

- The most common activity was taking the cave tour (77%) and the most important activity was also the cave tour (71%).

- Seventy-seven percent of visitor groups took a cave tour, and 50% of them took the Natural Entrance tour. Of those that did not take a tour, 36% reported they didn’t because of lack of time and 20% reported they didn’t due to physical limitations.

- Fifty-six percent of visitor groups viewed the prairie exhibits, but only 15% viewed the cave exhibits. Of those that did not view any exhibits (30%), forty-three percent reported it was because they did not have time.

- Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Wind Cave NP as “very good” or “good.” Less than 1% of groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”