



# NEWSLETTER

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## Notes from the President

We have had an interesting last year, not fun, but interesting. 2020 was a once in a lifetime year. Covid-19 stopped construction on the portion of the 266 road project inside the east part of Wind Cave National Park, and we are told the National Guard will not be able to get back to this project in 2021. We were hopeful of having the thank you plaque installed and celebrate the 266 road being done as early as last summer, but now we have to wait even longer. It is hard having to wait, but when things are beyond your control, there is no sense worrying, and letting it bother you. We are constantly thankful for the many donations that were made to enable the one mile of road being built outside the Park boundary. With the National Guard doing construction, and with the many donations paying for materials, we are about 99% done with the access road outside the Park. Next will be the final little stretch of road, bathroom facilities, and the parking lot, all inside the Park at the Sanson Ranch. We are a little hopeful things might change for the Guard, but don't expect they will be able to get to the work this fall. We are all tired of covid-19.

At our last Friends of Wind Cave board meeting, we welcomed Leigh Welling as the new Park Superintendent. We also appointed a new board member, Marcy Dimond. A short Bio for both of them is included in this newsletter. Our board meeting was held by Zoom, as we were doing our part to help with social distancing. It seems like we are always wanting another board member or two, so if there are any questions regarding what this might involve, please let us know. Our mission to help Wind Cave National Park is a worthy one. For example, there is no way the Park could have built the access road to the east side of the Park without the Friends group, and the many donations we received to pay for materials. Now that this project is nearly complete, we are working on making a list of smaller projects where we can help the Park.

If any Friends members have any questions I could answer, please contact me. I certainly don't know all the answers, but I will try to get any information I can for you. Please don't hesitate if you have questions or suggestions, and Thank You for being a Friends of Wind Cave National Park member.

[devries27512@gmail.com](mailto:devries27512@gmail.com)

Don De Vries

## Friends of Wind Cave News

We would like to welcome Marcy Dimond as our newest board member. She sent us a few words about herself.

My name is Marcy Dimond, I am the mother of 3 adult children & 6 grandchildren ages 8-2 all who live in Alaska. While I have a Degree in Forestry & Wildlife Management, I have spent nearly 25 years working on the field of organ, eye & tissue donation. I have been the CEO for Dakota Lions Sight & Health since 2014, prior to that I joined the organization as the Director of Clinical & Regulatory Compliance in 2012. Prior to that I was the Clinical & Quality Director in Alaska. I serve on several nonprofit boards, to include the AATB, EBAA and SFAC. I have also worked closely with the Paha Sapa Grotto on several projects. I have a great passion for the outdoors. In my spare time I enjoy hiking, bicycling, skiing & caving in the Black Hills, Alaska & wherever my next adventure takes me. I'm honored to be a part of this organization & look forward to serving with you all.

We are looking forward to Marcy's input as we move to a new chapter of the Friends of Wind Cave.

## **Wind Cave National Park News**

### **The elevator is fixed and tours of Wind Cave began on March 20.**

To provide for the safety of visitors and staff, tour sizes are limited to fifty percent to allow for social distancing in the cave. Masks will also be required in the visitor center, while in the cave, and outside if people are closer than six feet.

Tours of the seventh-longest cave in the world will be offered at 10 a.m., 1p.m. and 3 p.m. this spring. Beginning Sunday, May 2, the number of tours will be increased to 6 per day.

To avoid disturbing hibernating bats in the cave's Walk-In Entrance, all tours initially will enter and exit the cave via elevator. Tickets are first come, first served on the day of the tour. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early to purchase tickets because of the limited number of spaces available. The cave is a constant 54 degrees. A light sweater or jacket is recommended, as are good walking shoes.

White-nose syndrome (WNS) was detected in South Dakota (Custer County) in 2018 and confirmed in Wind Cave earlier this month. To help protect bats from WNS, it is important that you decontaminate your caving and hiking gear and boots after visiting any cave, or use gear that has never been used in WNS-affected areas. All cave tour participants will be required to walk across a mat containing hydrogen peroxide to kill any fungus on their shoes that could inadvertently spread WNS to other areas. Visit [www.whitenosesyndrome.org](http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org) for more information.

For more information about tours and the cave, visit the park's website at [www.nps.gov/wica](http://www.nps.gov/wica).

### **Leigh Welling started as the new Park Superintendent on November 8, 2020.**

We are pleased to welcome Leigh Welling as superintendent of Wind Cave National Park. Leigh was born in Crawford, Nebraska, about 50 miles south of Hot Springs. She grew up as the youngest child in a ranching family.

She is happy to be coming back to the Black Hills and Pine Ridge area. When asked about her new position Leigh stated; "Wind Cave National Park is truly special, for the wonders of the cave itself, for the unique mixed-grass prairie ecosystem it protects and for the historical, cultural and spiritual meaning it holds for many Native American tribes. I have vivid memories of time spent at Wind Cave when I was a child and feel a strong connection and sense of place to the people and the land here."

Leigh has worked for the Alaska Regional Office, first as the regional chief scientist and then as the associate regional director for science, communication, and partnerships. She began her career with the NPS in 2002 as director for the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center at Glacier National Park in Montana. In 2007, Leigh moved to Fort Collins, Colorado where she served as the national lead for climate change, eventually helping to establish and lead the NPS Climate Change Response Program in 2010.

Leigh earned an undergraduate degree in Geology from the University of Colorado Boulder and a Masters and PhD in Oceanography from Oregon State University. Prior to her career in the NPS, she held positions at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, where she worked on practices to increase diversity and inclusion in earth science curricula, and at the University of North Dakota, where she was director of the Regional Earth Science Applications Center.

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

Well, I have struggled to climb out of my Covid cave. For those of you that actually pay attention, you noticed there was no winter newsletter. For some reason, as I was staring out my window, playing solitaire and watching movies I could not find the time to do a newsletter. It was not a complete waste; I did watch all of the Marvel movies which did spur some discussion with my granddaughters.

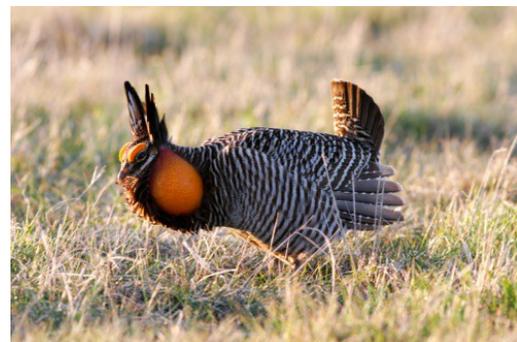
As I arose from my “long winters nap” Wind Cave, again, helped me to get outside. I decided to wander through the Park and look for sharp-tailed grouse. It came as no surprise to me that the horny little buggers were dancing their little brains out. As I watched, it got me thinking of the other grouse species I have had the opportunity to interrupt their intimate rituals.

My first experience occurred in Minnesota while working on a research project studying black bears in the Superior National Forest. I heard this sound. It was like something was beating a drum inside my head. I had no idea what it was. I looked around and found nothing. I returned to the lodge I told my colleagues about the strange sound. After shooting some condescending looks in my direction, the more experienced crew members informed me that it was a ruffed grouse “drumming”. The male Ruffed Grouse's will position themselves atop a low log, stump, or rock and rapidly rotate their wings back and forth. The drumming sequence lasts 8–10 seconds, during which the wings may beat up to 50 times. I have spent hours trying to see and photograph a ruffed grouse drumming. It is still on my bucket list.

On to Wyoming, where I got the chance to watch sage grouse “do their thing” on Bureau Land Management lands near Rawlins. This is a spectacle. The boys battle and the girls wander around deciding which one is the most desirable. One of the more experienced people on the crew I was working with smiled at me and said “pay close attention to the females after the sex act.” Post copulation, the female does this little dance. I could never decide if it was a dance of delight or a shake of disgust, but they did it every time.



While working in the Dakotas I was able to watch Prairie chickens “boom” on the Fort Pierre National Grasslands in South Dakota and on the Sheyenne National Grasslands in North Dakota. If I was asked to pick out three of my favorite sounds in nature, they would be a wolf howling, an elk bugling, and a prairie chicken booming. The booming sound is a low sound that is similar to blowing air over an empty soda bottle.



Last are the sharp-tails. They dance in Wind Cave National Park and I have watched them year after year when I worked on the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands around Hot Springs. In my head they are a combination of ruffed grouse and prairie chickens. The males beat their wings and inflate an air sac in their throat while being crazy active on the display grounds. The females on the other hand wonder

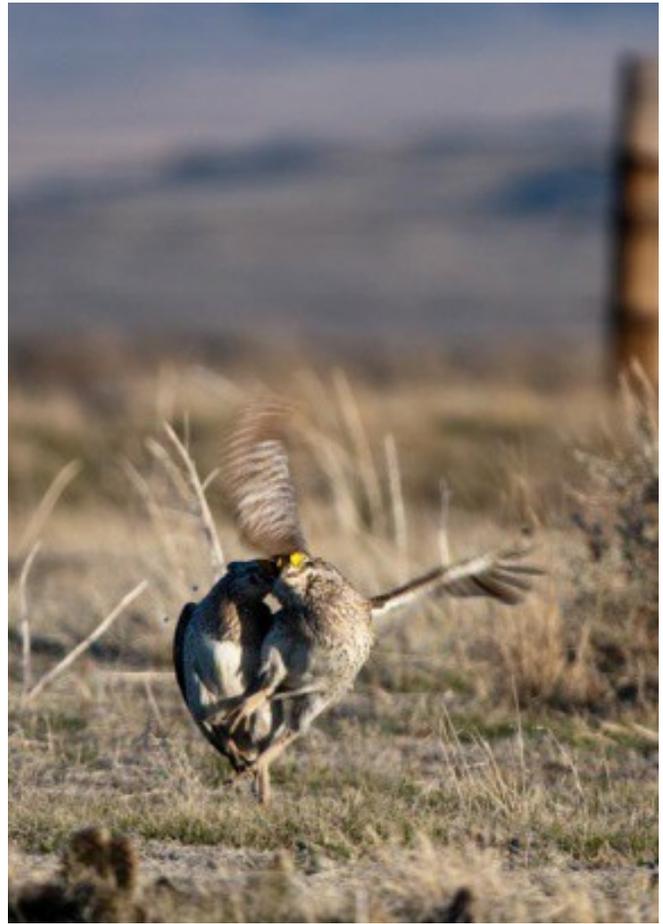
through the dancing grounds and appear to look disinterested. Sometimes they fly off; sometimes they walk back through the grounds, sometimes, it appears to me, that they huddle up and discuss what they can get the boys to do on the next pass. Interestingly enough, I have observed similar activity at human gatherings.

Anyway, if you get a chance to watch any of the displays please do it. It will be well worth it. I know various entities have blinds set up to watch including the Fort Pierre National Grasslands and the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands.

We are still looking for others to submit some Wind Cave Stories. It is an incredible place above and below the ground.

You can write one up and send it to us. If you don't like to write, I would happily chat with you and do the writing. I promise I will not put anything in this newsletter that you have not proofread and given me the "OK".

Give me a call - Bob Hodorff 605-890-2329.





## **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, you should be! Please consider becoming a member today, or, if you are a member in the past, but have not renewed for 2021 please do so today. 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 in the planning stages for this year, such as hike with the Superintendent, private cave 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 are still a few items necessary 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

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](http://www.friendsofwindcavenp.org)