

“Wild” Caving Trips for Scouts & other groups

CAVERS DO NOT GIVE DIRECTIONS TO CAVES

Unless they are show caves! **You should first take your group on a show cave tour.** Request a “Science Tour”. Later, if your group is sincere about having a “wild cave” experience, the show caves and parks and recreation organizations below may be able to help them out.

See <http://caves.org/youth/YGLC%20Parents'%20Guide%20FINAL%20Jan%202009.pdf> to better understand your options for taking your group on a wild cave trip.

Show caves typically charge a fee for entry into their cave, and may or may not provide safety equipment such as helmets, lights, a/o lug soled boots. The group seeking a wild cave trip is responsible for asking questions pertaining to safety and equipment. Some wild tours may only be offered seasonally. Many of the commercial caverns have group rates, camping on premises, or can offer info on nearby facilities.

West Virginia

Lost World Caverns

Fairview Road, Lewisburg, WVa 24901

1-866-228-3778 or 304-645-6677

www.LostWorldCaverns.com

Wild tours are available year-round; advance registration required. Please call ahead.

On Fairview Rd, off I-64 exit 169 and Rt. 219 in Lewisburg, WVa. AAA member

Pennsylvania

Laurel Caverns

PO Box 62, Hopwood, PA 15445

800-515-4150 or 724-438-3003

www.laurelcaverns.com

Exploratory “wild” tour lasts 3 hours. Some equipment provided. Seasonally closed for hibernating bats.

Off U.S. 40, east of Hopwood, PA. NCA member.

Tennessee

Cumberland Caverns

1437 Cumberland Caverns Road, McMinnville, Tennessee 37110

931-668-5382

<http://cumberlandcaverns.com/>

Wild caving trip can last 14 hours, include sleeping overnight in cave. School trips last 4 hours, including candlelight tour and ghost story. 6 miles southeast of McMinnville, off State Highway 8. NCA member.

The Lost Sea

140 Lost Sea Road, Sweetwater, TN 37874.

423-377-6616

www.thelostsea.com

Has an Overnight Underground Camping Adventure. Scouts love it! NCA Member

Between Sweetwater and Madisonville off I-75 at Exit 60, then 7 miles E. on New Highway 68 (old Rt. 685).

Raccoon Mountain Caverns

319 West Hills Dr, Chattanooga, TN 37419

423- 821-9403

<http://raccoonmountain.com/>

or <http://www.wildcave.com/>

Wild Cave Tours from 2 hours to overnight trips. NCA Member

From I-24: exit 174 in Chattanooga, go NW on U.S. 41 about 1.3 miles to entrance sign on left side of highway.

Kentucky

Mammoth Cave National Park

1 Mammoth Cave Pkwy, Mammoth Cave, KY 42259

General Tours: 270-758-2180; 502 270-758-2328 Wild Tour Reservation Desk. NCA Member

The longest cave in the world! 250+ miles of passages. Many different tours, to various sections of the cave.

The Wild Cave Tour is 5 miles long and lasts 6 hours. Trip requires stooping and belly-crawling through tight passages. Hard hats, headlamps and coveralls are provided. There are age restrictions and several

regulations for the Wild Cave tour: <http://www.nps.gov/macaplanyourvisit/gocavetours.htm>

("Wild" Caving Trips for Scouts & other groups – cont.)

Virginia

Few show caves in Virginia currently offer wild caving trips, due to insurance liability.

Grand Caverns

5 Grand Caverns Drive, Grottoes, VA. 24441

540-249-5705 www.grandcaverns.com

From I-81, exit 235, take Rt. 256 East app. 7 miles to Grottoes, VA. Turn Right onto Dogwood Ave, follow signs. Grand Caverns is open year-round. Fountain Cave, a former commercial cave on the property, is open for wild tours from April to October. Fountain Cave is closed for hibernating bats in the winter. NCA Member

Natural Tunnel State Park

1420 Natural Tunnel Pkwy., Duffield, VA 24244

276- 940-2674 or 276-940-2696 <http://www.naturaltunnel.info/Outdoor-Adventure-Programs.html>

20 miles North from Kingsport, TN, 13 miles North from Gate City VA, Offers seasonal wild cave tours in Natural Tunnel and nearby Bowling Cave.

Roanoke City Parks and Recreation*

Directly contact Marian McConnell 540-309-4707 or marian.mcconnell@gmail.com (Marian helped create the caving program and leads trips through Roanoke City Parks & Rec.)

Blacksburg Parks & Recreation*

Outdoor Supervisor: Travis Coad 540-961-1133 tcoad@blacksburg.gov

(* I don't, as a rule, recommend Parks & Rec. outfits, but Roanoke City Parks & Recreation and Blacksburg Parks & Recreation are the area's exceptions to the rule. They use experienced cavers to lead their trips, they use only sacrifice caves or caves with tightly controlled access, and give the trip leaders the ability to evaluate and take steps to make certain the trip is safe for both the cave and the novice cavers.)

GO SEE A VIRGINIA SHOW CAVE!! Many show caves give discounts for groups and scouts. Like snowflakes, each Virginia Show Cave is unique and gorgeous in its own way. Many have additional on-site attractions that may interest your group.

Dixie Caverns, Salem VA www.dixiecaverns.com/

The Caverns at Natural Bridge, VA <http://www.naturalbridgeva.com/recreation/the-caverns-at-natural-bridge/>

Grand Caverns, Grottoes, VA www.grandcaverns.com

Endless Caverns, New Market, VA www.endlesscaverns.com/

Shenandoah Caverns, Quicksburg, VA www.shenandoahcaverns.com

Luray Caverns, Luray, VA luraycaverns.com

Skyline Caverns, Front Royal VA www.skylinecaverns.com

Take nothing but pictures, Leave nothing but carefully placed footprints, Kill nothing but time

National Speleological Society, 6001 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville, AL 35810. www.caves.org