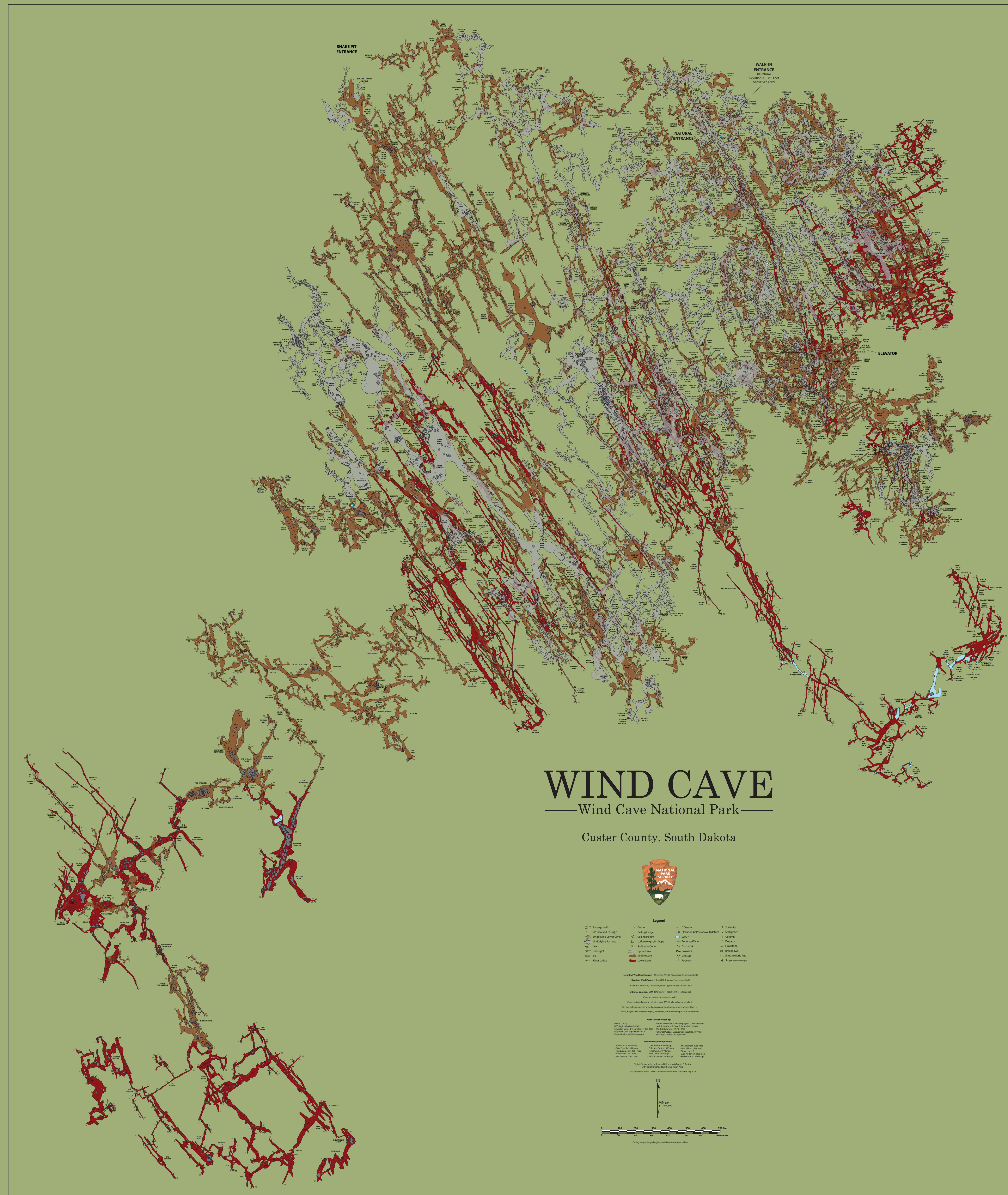




Wind Cave

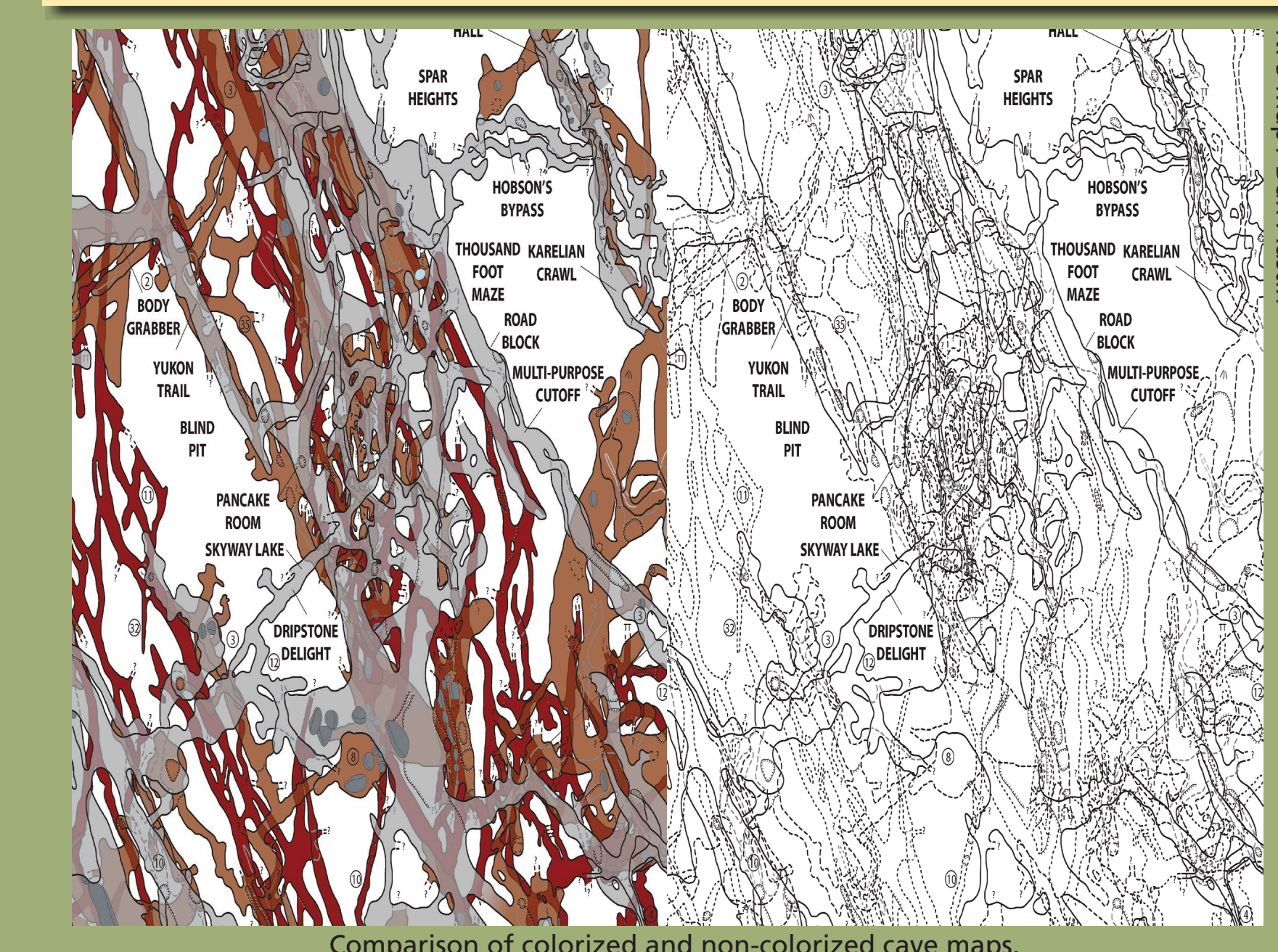


Quick Numbers for Wind Cave	
Cave Length	132 miles (212 Km)
Cave Depth	651 feet (198 m)
Years of Known Exploration	1891 to Present
Visitors per Year	88,000 people

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New Digital Cave Map

For the last 2 years, cartographers have been digitizing the map of Wind Cave. Last week, Dan Austin and Rod Horrocks finished the map using Adobe Illustrator. The new map will make it easier for explorers to understand the maze of passages.



Comparison of colored and non-colored cave maps.

New Geologic Map

A precise geologic map of the park has never been completed. Starting last year, geologists from the South Dakota Geological Survey and Albion College, MI have been mapping the geologic contacts throughout the park.



Brian Fagnan mapping geological units in Wind Cave National Park.

Climatology

Wind Cave breathes barometrically. For the last seven years, Dr. Andreas Pflitsch has been studying the climatology of the cave. Using anemometers and temperature probes, Dr. Pflitsch has proven that 6 blowholes are connected to Wind Cave.



Dr. Andreas Pflitsch and Julia Ringeis inspecting a blowhole for barometric winds.

Cave Lighting

Over the last two years, most of the old wiring and bulbs in Wind Cave have been replaced. By next year, all the bulbs in the cave will be LED or compact fluorescent. This will lower the voltage and drop the energy consumption by 70%.



NPS employees carrying new wire into Wind Cave.

Exploration

Exploration is active at Wind Cave National Park. Cavers survey about 4 miles of new cave each year. This year there were 2 trips to Wind Cave's new exploration camp. It is a permanent camp with most of the gear stationed in the cave.



Carl Bern, Andrew Blackstock and Evan Blackstock at Camp Cosmos in Wind Cave.

Restoration

Restoration is a continuous process in Wind Cave. Every year dedicated volunteers clean portions of the tour routes. This year, NPS employees cleaned a section of the cave called the Blue Grotto. This revealed a unique blue boxwork found there.



Chris Evers and Torben Stasch vacuuming the Blue Grotto in Wind Cave.

Biological Inventory

Wind Cave NP has started a biological inventory of the lakes deep in the cave. Zara Environmental and Dr. Hazel Barton are completing the study. Results show that there may be no macrobiotic species and very few microbiotic species in the lakes.



Jean Krejca searching for macrobiotic species at Calcite Lake in Wind Cave.

Hydrology

At the lowest levels of Wind Cave, there are two lakes and a flowing stream. Last year the sites were dye traced to show they are connected. This year hydrologists are using environmental tracers to track the water and determine its age.



Calcite Lake after a positive dye trace.