

Natural Tunnel, A Natural Wonder

Welcome to Natural Tunnel State Park, home of the "Eighth Wonder of the World," as declared by famous statesman William Jennings Bryan around the 1880's. Since then Natural Tunnel has attracted sightseers from all parts of the country. It is said Daniel Boone was among the first explorers to see the tunnel, although Native Americans and long hunters had lived and explored in the region prior to that.

Natural Tunnel is believed to be about one million years old and started forming during the early part of the Pleistocene Epoch. The cave was initially formed at or near the water table by ground water bearing carbonic acid that percolated through the cracks and crevices and slowly dissolved the surrounding limestone and dolomitic bedrock. After the cave was formed and the regional water table lowered, Stock Creek, which flows south to join the Clinch River, was probably diverted underground. It has since used the tunnel as a path of least resistance through the end of Purchase Ridge. The Glenita fault line running through the tunnel, combining with moving water and naturally forming carbonic acid, are thought to be the major factors behind the formation of Natural Tunnel.

Today Natural Tunnel consists of an 850-foot tunnel with the southern portal exiting to Stock Creek Gorge, a limestone basin with spectacular 400-foot cliffs. Access to the tunnel is available via the park's chairlift or Tunnel Trail, which begins at the visitor center. An active railroad line runs through the tunnel carrying mainly coal to various locations in the southeast. Access through the tunnel is prohibited due to railroad safety laws.

To make your visit safer and more pleasant, we ask that you observe the following regulations.

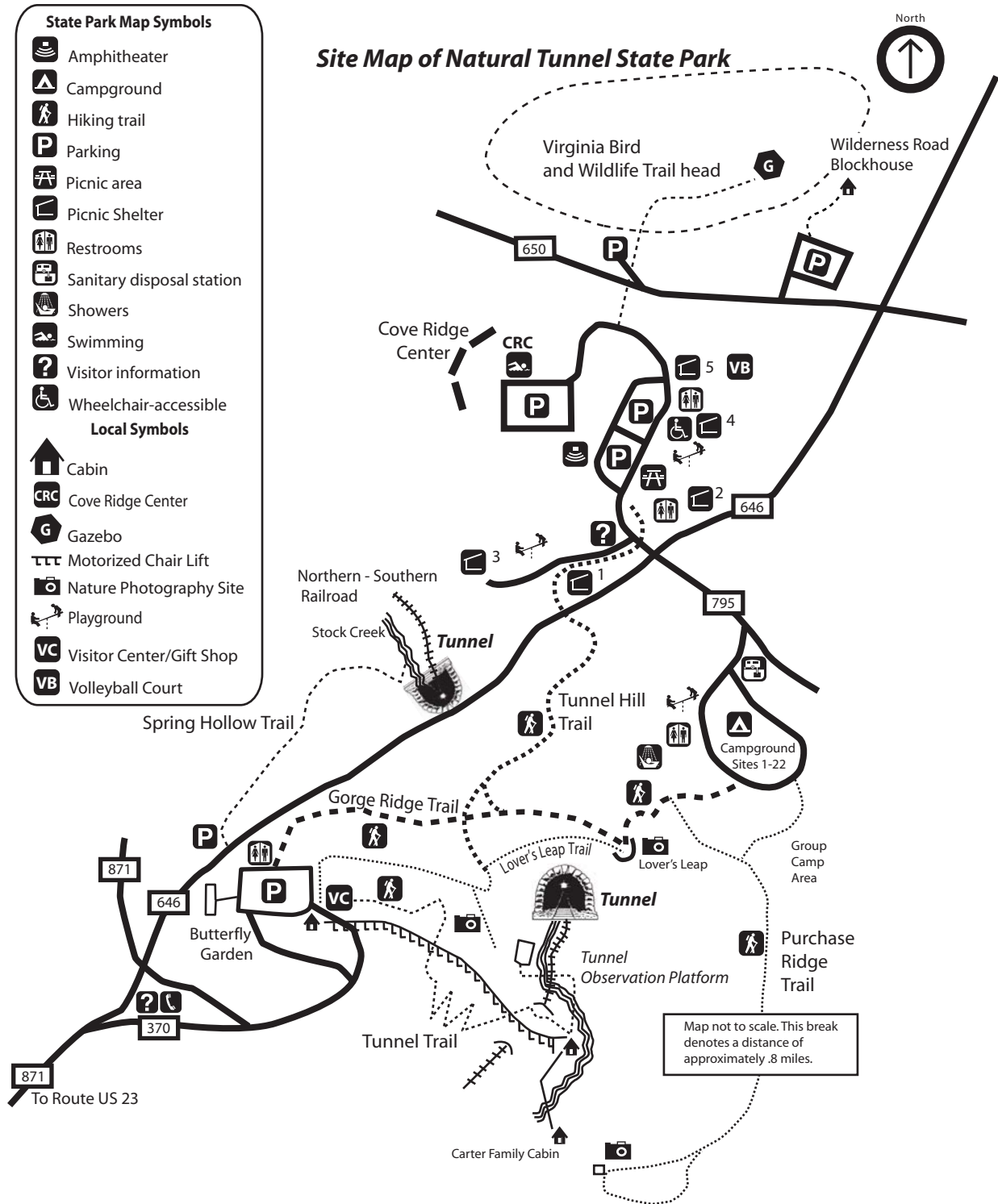
- Public use or display of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Help preserve the park. Please don't cut or mar any plants or trees.
- Pets are permitted in all state parks, but they must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Hiking trails are for pedestrians and bicycles. No motorized vehicles are allowed on park trails.
- Bicycles are permitted on most park trails.
- Bicyclists should use caution on park trails due to terrain and yield to hikers.
- The park is open for day use from dawn to dusk
- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited.

Mileage for Natural Tunnel State Park Trails

Trail Name	Miles	Difficulty
Tunnel Hill Trail	.7	Easy/Moderate
Tunnel Trail into Gorge	.3	Difficult
Lover's Leap Trail	.4	Moderate
Gorge Ridge Trail	.5	Moderate
Purchase Ridge Trail	1.1	Difficult
Spring Hollow Trail	.3	Difficult
Birding and Wildlife Trail	.7	Moderate

Trail Designations;

- **Easy-Fairly level, minimal amount of incline and/or steps**
- **Moderate-Frequent changes in elevation, steps and switchbacks**
- **Difficult-Major changes in elevation, numerous steps and switchbacks**



While at Natural Tunnel...

Drop by the visitor center and gift shop and see exhibits on the geological, railroad, and cultural history of the park. The park also offers hiking, camping, picnicking, a modern swimming complex with concession and an outdoor amphitheater. The Cove Ridge Center offers environmental education and conference meeting facilities with overnight group lodging available. Be sure to check park bulletin boards for special events at the amphitheater or interpretive programs ranging from guided canoe trips on the nearby Clinch River to wild cave tours. The Wilderness Road Blockhouse, a re-created historical structure, displays exhibits interpreting frontier life when Daniel Boone and the early settlers were blazing and traveling the Wilderness Road. Visitors today can retrace the footsteps of these early pioneers by taking the scenic Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail, a self-guided driving tour, stretching from Kingsport, TN to Cumberland Gap, VA. Along this route visitors can see Martin's Station a re-created frontier fort at Wilderness Road State Park in Lee County, VA. The park's birding trail is part of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail statewide network.

Virginia State Parks;

"A tonic for the mind, body, and spirit..."

While in the Region...

Other interesting attractions include the Southwest Virginia Museum, the John Fox Museum, the June Tolliver House and Harry Meador Coal Museum and Virginia's State Outdoor Drama "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine." All of these attractions are located 20 minutes from the park in Big Stone Gap. The Jefferson National Forest, to the north of the park, offers a variety of camping and hiking opportunities. At Wilderness Road State Park, located approximately 50 miles west on Rt. 58, the story of the Wilderness Road is told through living history exhibits and an authentically constructed frontier fort.

Duffield, 5 miles north, Gate City, 13 miles south, and Kingsport, TN, 25 miles south of the park offer such services as grocery and beverage supplies and licenses, entertainment, lodging, and worship services. Contact the park office for more detailed information.

In case of emergency, notify a park ranger or dial 911. Hospitals are located in nearby Big Stone Gap and Kingsport with a volunteer rescue squad located in Duffield.

Join us in the parks-

Virginia State Parks Volunteer Program

State Parks offer many diverse opportunities for volunteers throughout the state. Contact the park office for more details.

Frequent Visitors Save Money-

Annual passes for parking, swimming, and chairlift offer great savings.

For State Park Campground, Cabin, and Picnic Shelter reservations; Call 1-800-933-PARK (7275)

For more park specific information, contact;

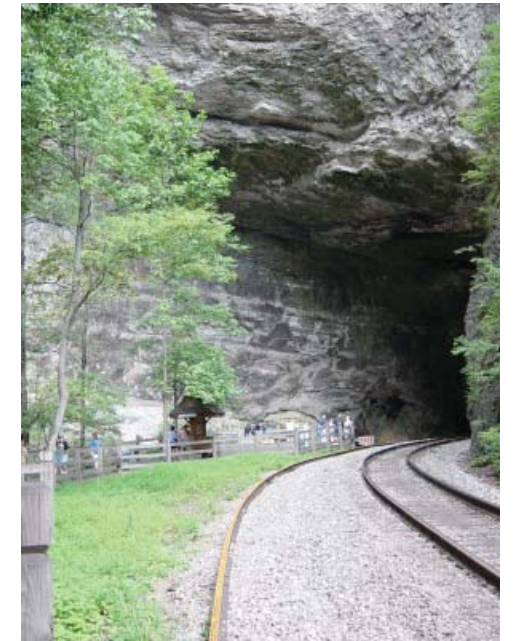
Natural Tunnel State Park
Route 3 Box 250
Duffield, VA 24244
(276)940-2674

Website Resources;

www.dcr.virginia.gov
www.naturaltunnel.info

Natural Tunnel State Park

Duffield, Virginia



Virginia State Parks provide

A Natural Legacy

of outdoor activities and programs. They are an important part of DCR's effort to promote a strong conservation ethic. These efforts ensure that the best of Virginia's natural resources will be protected and available for the future generations.



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

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