

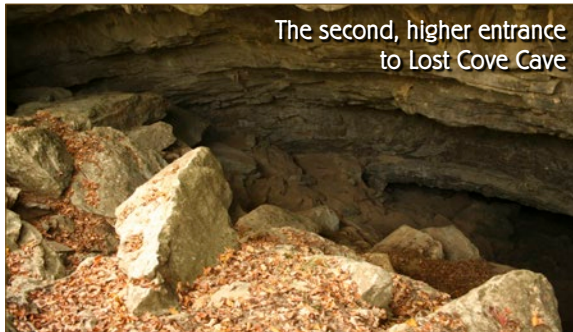
WHAT'S INSIDE BUGGYTOP CAVE?

NOTE: Please do not enter the cave, except during the months of June, July and August. Entering at other times will disturb and possibly infect the hibernating bats. Never go beyond the reach of daylight without pre-registering online with the Park Office, nor without proper headgear, headlamp and other essential caving safety equipment.

Donated to the State of Tennessee in 1976, Carter State Natural Area protects its most geologically significant feature – Lost Cove Cave.

"The {Buggytop} entrance to Lost Cove Cave is one of the most impressive cave mouths in the state. From the main entrance, the cave extends 375 feet through a stream passage 60 feet wide and 40 feet high.

A second, higher entrance is developed on the east side of the passage here. A rimstone-filled side passage extends for 175 feet opposite this second entrance and has a narrow branch which extends much farther.



The second, higher entrance to Lost Cove Cave

The cave continues for another 600 feet northward along the stream to a large breakdown [ceiling collapse], over which the explorer must climb. From the top of this climb one views the largest single chamber in the cave, a huge, sand-floored room 200 feet wide and 300 feet long, with the stream flowing through the middle.

An opening at the east side of this room leads out via the Peter Cave entrance. Thus, the cave has three entrances. From this large room to the point where the cave ends in breakdown – 2,200 feet from the mouth – it is necessary to climb up and down over

DID YOU KNOW?

Lost Creek is the stream that feeds into Lost Cove Cave at an enormous drain, or "sink", just north of the park. The stream changes names and emerges from the Buggytop entrance as Crow Creek, which flows all the way to the Tennessee River in Alabama.



University of the South Professor Bran Potter (in red), surveying the Lost Cove "Sink" after a significant flood.

large rocks and wade through the stream in order to traverse the remainder of the cave. At this point, the cave crosses under the saddle between Crow Creek Valley and Lost Cove, and breakdown is extensive. The stream has cut down along its left side and a steeply sloping pile of breakdown on its right. The cave stream is undoubtedly the same one that empties into the floor of Lost Cove at the Big Sink."

– Excerpted from the book *Caves of Tennessee* by Thomas Barr, Jr.



**WHAT YOU
NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT
THE PARK'S TRAIL
MILEPOST SYSTEM**

REPORT THE CODE ON THE NEAREST MILE MARKER TO EMERGENCY RESPONDERS WHEN YOU CALL 911. IT WILL TELL THEM EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE!

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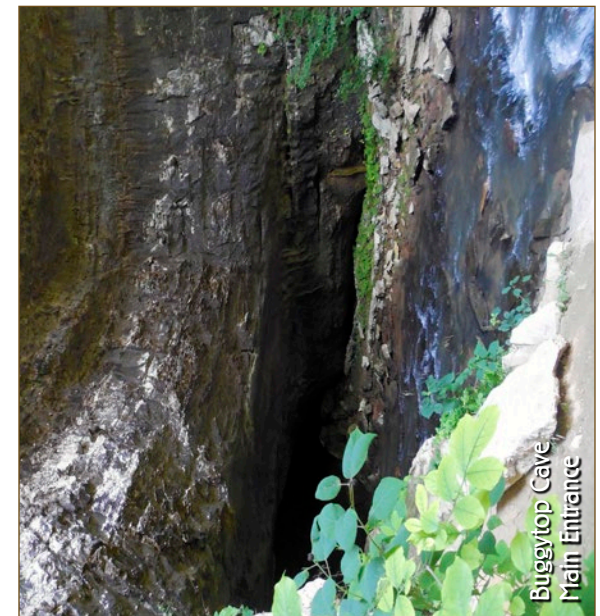
Friends of South Cumberland State Park

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South Cumberland State Park
T R A I L G U I D E

LOST COVE WEST

**INCLUDING TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS FOR:
the BUGGYTOP TRAIL**



Buggytop Cave
Main Entrance

RESEARCHED AND PRESENTED BY THE
TRAIL FRIENDS
OF THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH CUMBERLAND STATE PARK

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

BUGGYTOP TRAIL

The nearly 4,000 acre Lost Cove tract, named for the area's most prominent natural feature, includes both the Carter State and Sherwood Forest State Natural Areas, and is adjacent to the University of the South's Lost Cove Conservation Area.

A moderately difficult 4-mile round trip hike to one of the largest cave openings in Tennessee. Watch your footing as you descend into Lost Cove and enjoy the cool air at the opening of the Buggytop entrance to Lost Cove Cave. The entrance is 100 feet wide and 80 feet high, and opens at the base of a 150-foot overhanging bluff. The cave stream cascades down from the mouth and drops 40 feet in less than 100 yards. A cold draft of air blows from the cave in summer and can be felt in the creek valley nearly half a mile from the entrance.

Be sure to bring lots of water to stay hydrated for the climb back out, and make sure you have sturdy footwear! There is no camping along this trail, or in Lost Cove Cave.



The Buggytop entrance to Lost Cove Cave is one of the largest cave openings in Tennessee.

Trail Log with Mileage

This strenuous trail climbs from the trailhead to the top of Spur Ridge, follows the top of the ridge for 3/4 mile, then descends into Lost Cove.

The trail divides at the top of a 150-foot limestone bluff with the right fork descending steeply to the Buggytop entrance to Lost Cove Cave, and the left fork leading to other cave entrances over more moderate terrain.

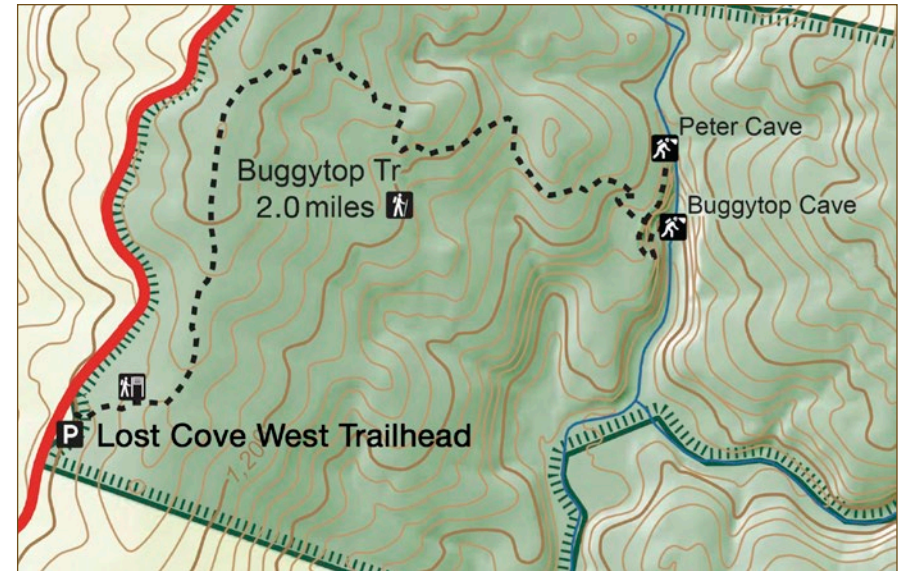
The descent to the Buggytop entrance is a total of 620 vertical feet. The return climb is challenging.

0.0 Trail begins at the pull-off parking lot on Hwy. 56. The trailhead kiosk is 500' uphill, ahead on the trail.

0.3 Top of Spur Ridge.

0.5 Big Sinkhole to right.

1.2 Sandstone boulders above a sinkhole.



1.7 "Face-shaped" formation at bottom of low bluff to left of trail.

1.8 Old Lost Cove/Sherwood Road – just past road crossing is top of 150' bluff and trail split. Trail splits right descends 0.2 mi. to the Buggytop entrance. The left split leads 0.2 mi. to the Peter Cave entrance and overlook.

2.0 Lost Cove Cave entrance, one of the largest cave openings in Tennessee.

NOTE: This is an out-and-back route; after your visit to the cave entrance, please return on the trail, the way you came in.

continued on reverse

BE KIND TO OUR BATS!

White Nose Syndrome has been found in bats hibernating in Lost Cove and other Tennessee caves, and is named for a white fungus that appears on the faces, ears, wings and feet of hibernating bats.



Once a colony is infected, the fungus spreads rapidly and can have devastating effects on the colony. For that reason, the interior of Lost Cove Cave is closed from September through May. Rare and endangered species of salamanders and bats are found inside the cave.