



FURTHER REVIEW

UNDERGROUND WONDERS

JESSE TINSLEY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW
Visitors look at various mineral deposits found inside Gardner Cave in Crawford State Park.

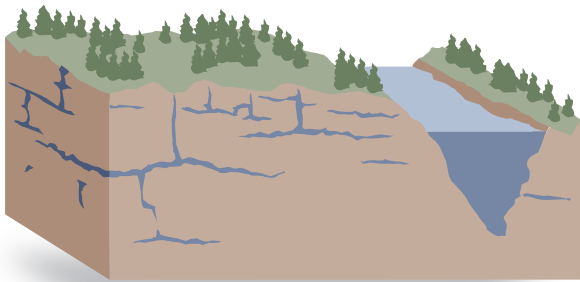
By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Tucked away in the extreme northeast corner of Washington is Crawford State Park, home of one of the longest limestone cavern formations in the state.

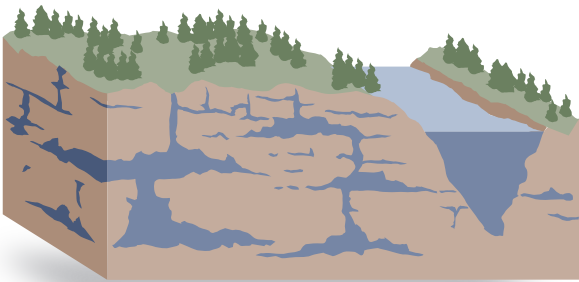
Limestone bedrock makes up about 25% of all sedimentary rock — that is, rocks formed by the minerals deposited on the ground and then pressed for eons by the weight of even more material above it and chemically altered by groundwater passing through it. Limestone can contain fossils of creatures long extinct on Earth. And most of the planet’s cave systems are found in limestone bedrock.

HOW LIMESTONE CAVERNS ARE FORMED

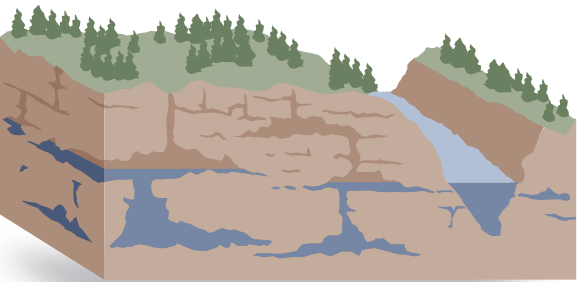
1 Groundwater and rainwater seep into cracks in the limestone beneath the surface.



2 Over hundreds of thousands of years, carbonic acid in the groundwater eats away at the limestone.



3 The water table lowers, leaving caves and cave systems behind.



NOTABLE CAVES, CAVERNS AND CAVERN SYSTEMS IN THE CONTINENTAL U.S.



U.S. FOREST SERVICE

2 Ape Cave WASHINGTON
Located in Gifford Pinchot National Forest just south of Mount St. Helens, this 2.5 mile-long lava tube is the longest continuous lava tube in the continental U.S. More than 170,000 people visit to hike the trails in a typical year.



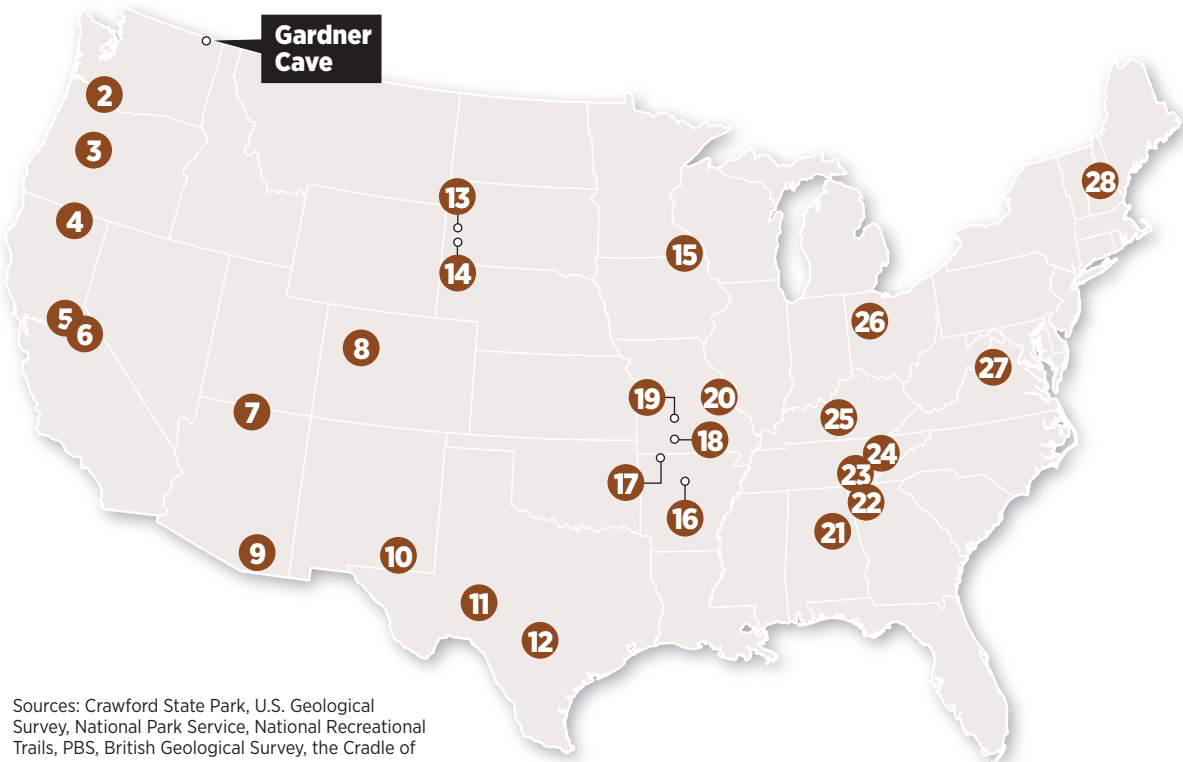
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10 Carlsbad Caverns NEW MEXICO
The highlight of this expansive, 119-cave complex is “the Big Room” — nearly 4,000 feet long, 625 feet wide and 255 feet high. Tourists line up to watch an estimated three-quarters of a million bats fly out of cave each evening.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

25 Mammoth Cave KENTUCKY
As you might expect from its name, Mammoth Cave is the world’s longest cave system, stretching for more than 420 miles. The National Park Service offers 10 separate tours of the complex, including a boat tour along an underground river.



- 7 Antelope Canyon, Page, Arizona
- 16 Blanchard Springs Caverns, Mountain View, Arkansas
- 5 Black Chasm Cavern, Volcano, California
- 11 Caverns of Sonora, Sonora, Texas
- 17 Cosmic Cavern, Berryville, Arkansas
- 24 Craighead Caverns, Sweetwater, Tennessee
- 21 DeSoto Caverns, Childersburg, Alabama
- 22 Ellison’s Cave, Pigeon Mountain, Georgia
- 19 Fantastic Caverns, Springfield, Missouri
- 8 Glenwood Caverns, Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- 13 Jewel Cave, Custer, South Dakota
- 9 Kartchner Caverns, Benson, Arizona
- 4 Lava Beds, Tulelake, California
- 3 Lava River Cave, Bend, Oregon
- 27 Luray Caverns, Luray, Virginia
- 18 Marvel Cave, Branson, Missouri
- 20 Meramec Caverns, Stanton, Missouri
- 6 Moaning Caverns, Vallecito, California
- 12 Natural Bridge Caverns, San Antonio
- 15 Niagara Cave, Harmony, Minnesota
- 26 Ohio Caverns, West Liberty, Ohio
- 28 Polar Caves, Rumney, New Hampshire
- 23 Ruby Falls, Chattanooga, Tennessee
- 14 Wind Cave, Hot Springs, South Dakota

Sources: Crawford State Park, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, National Recreational Trails, PBS, British Geological Survey, the Cradle of Humankind, Filipino Cave Divers, TravelZoo.com, BestLifeOnline.com, Attractions of America, VacationIdea magazine