

The Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning (MCICSL) was created in 2004 as a partnership between Mammoth Cave National Park and Western Kentucky University (WKU). Both partners share equally in the funding, logistical support, and governance of the Center. MCICSL is part of a national network of research learning centers located within the National Parks. All Research Learning Centers:

- Facilitate the use of parks for scientific inquiry.
- Support science-informed decision making.
- Communicate the relevance of and provide access to knowledge gained through scientific research.
- Promote science literacy and resource stewardship.



A Geoscience-Teacher-in-the-Park intern assists park scientists by recording the GPS coordinates of springs located within the park.



Ohio State University students determine the speed and direction of prehistoric rivers by documenting the shape and size of scallops found on cave walls.

Specific ways that MCICSL accomplishes these goals include:

- Coordinating scientific research and research permitting at Mammoth Cave National Park,
- Assisting researchers with arranging research logistics in the park,
- Participating in research projects,
- Presenting at scientific and educational conferences,
- Providing written internal and external research summaries,
- Hosting teacher training workshops,
- Offering public workshops on research occurring within the park,
- Coordinating or co-coordinating research-based internships, and
- Teaching high school and college groups about current research issues and providing them with hands-on experiences.

Research

MCICSL coordinates scientific research and research permitting at Mammoth Cave National Park and consults with the park on scientific issues. MCICSL staff also provide technical expertise, links to outside researchers, and co-lead several research projects.

Scientists wanting to conduct research within the park can contact the Research Director for assistance in obtaining permits, housing, and other logistics. For those looking for a source of project ideas, MCICSL can help identify research needs within Mammoth Cave National Park.



MCICSL Research Director and park staff discuss using light detectors to monitor the use of backcountry caves.



A Northern Kentucky University professor and student work together to map a cave passage.

Education

The Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning provides research-based education for people of all ages and backgrounds. MCICSL's educational efforts highlight research at the park and serve a variety of internal and external audiences. The methods employed to reach such diverse audiences include workshops, internships, research-focused field opportunities, internal educational presentations, and internal and external research summaries.

Location

MCICSL is located in Mammoth Cave National Park in south central Kentucky. Western Kentucky University is approximately half an hour away in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Mammoth Cave National Park preserves a world class cave system, a portion of the Green River, and a diverse forest ecosystem. In 1981, the park was named a World Heritage Site. Then in 1990, it became the core area of an International Biosphere Reserve.

Facilities

The Maple Springs Research Center provides a low-cost housing option for researchers and educational groups working with MCICSL. Located on the north side of Mammoth Cave National Park, the Maple Spring Research Center offers quiet, rustic housing with easy access to several backcountry trails. Small groups and individuals can be accommodated.

Contact Us

Please contact us to learn more about MCICSL research and educational opportunities.

Research Director: Rick Toomey, (270) 758-2145,
rick_toomey@contractor.nps.gov

Education Program Specialist: Shannon Trimboli, (270) 758-2422, shannon_trimboli@contractor.nps.gov



Participants in a weekend Karst Field Studies workshop visit a pumphouse built by the CCC while learning about Mammoth Cave's rich African-American history.



Local teachers learn how to involve their students in national citizen science projects.

Website: www.wku.edu/mcicsl

Mammoth Cave International Center for Science and Learning
Mammoth Cave National Park
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Partners

To learn more about the following partners, please visit their websites.

Mammoth Cave National Park: www.nps.gov/maca

Western Kentucky University: www.wku.edu

The Research Learning Center Network: www.nature.nps.gov/learningcenters/