

THE CAVE CONSERVATIONIST

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The Cave Conservation and Management Section of the NSS

Chairman's Corner

By Rod Horrocks

Over the course of my career, it has been interesting to watch those that make cave and karst management a career path, grow from a mere handful to the dozens it is today, with the ranks ever increasing. We have seen a shift from where everything was done by volunteer cavers to the creation of many professional positions in Federal and State agencies, in cave conservancies, in universities, and in private conservation groups. We have seen cave restoration techniques refined and then published in such works as, "Cave Conservation and Restoration", edited by Val Hildreth-Werker. We have seen the training opportunities expand, as evidenced by the upcoming workshops sponsored jointly by the U.S. National Forest Service, NSS Conservation Division, and the National Cave and Karst Research Institute. For those particular workshops, two special courses have been designed to explain, explore and identify the unique challenges of protecting, restoring, conserving, and interpreting cave and karst resources. The first course will be held in Elkins, WV from June 20-24, 2011.

Whether you are a professional or a volunteer that wants to give something back to the caves you love, I think that anyone involved in the field of cave and karst management should attend the National Cave and Karst Management Symposium held every other year. The next symposium will be in Midway, Utah between October 3-7, 2011 (see the announcement in this issue of the Conservationist). At that symposium, you will have a tremendous opportunity to learn what others in the field are doing, recent techniques that have been developed, or be able to share what you have learned from your projects. I encourage everyone with something to contribute to submit abstracts for that symposium by the August 15 deadline. It is certainly an exciting time to be involved in cave and karst management and I hope that you will do

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chairman's Corner	1
Caving Close Calls	1
Compiling a Cave Inventory for Spring Mill State Park	2
High Guads Restoration Project Update	3
Cave & Karst Resources Management - Training Opportunities	4
Forest Service Working with Cavers for the 2011 NSS Convention	5
Cave Conservation and Management Section Contacts	6
Special Session Schedule - Cave Conservation & Management for Agencies and Cavers	7
C ⁴ (Creative, Clean, Caving Contests)	8

your part in continuing to move our field forward while protecting these valuable resources. See you in Midway!

Caving "Close Calls"

The NSS Safety and Techniques Committee is conducting a research project in conjunction with the Oakland University Occupational Safety and Health Program to determine the prevalence of close calls in caving.

For the purposes of this research, "close call" is defined as an event (planned or unplanned) in a cave that could have resulted in injury or fatality, but did not.

Based on anonymous responses from participants, a database of cave-related "close-call" events will be established in order to identify the most prevalent likelihoods of illnesses, injuries, and fatalities that may occur from visiting caves. This information will be used in caver education and cave exploration planning in order to help cavers avoid conditions and acts that may lead to undesired events.

Below is a link to the consent form of this questionnaire. If you are interested in participating, please go to the link below and review the consent form.

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/407591/Safety-Close-Calls-in-Cave-Exploration-Cave-Science-and-Cave-Conservation>.

Compiling a Cave Inventory for Spring Mill State Park

By Jill Vance, Spring Mill Interpretive Naturalist

In the summer of 2010, I began a major project to compile an accurate inventory of all the cave entrances contained within Spring Mill State Park. Due to our geographic location on the Mitchell Plateau, a major karst area in south-central Indiana, the park contains extensive cave systems and associated features.

Even before this land became a state park, several of the caves were widely known, explored, and written about. And during the last 150 years, caves have been discovered and rediscovered, sinkholes have collapsed to reveal new openings, and erosion and development closed up other entrances. Over time, the same cave might be given a new name by a new explorer, or someone would describe an entrance without providing very specific location information (or even a name).

In order to compile an accurate inventory of park caves, this confusion had to be resolved. The first stage of the inventory process involved lots of research – going through park files, university libraries, journals, geological reports, grotto newsletters, and survey maps. The result was a list of more than 50 caves (either names or location descriptions) reported within the park.

Using location descriptions, cave descriptions, historical notations, and context, I began matching

up names to entrances. Field verification was also an important part of the process. I already knew the locations of most caves on the list, but some were new to me, and others had been considered “lost” for 50 years or more.

The inventory process ran a lot more smoothly thanks to a major effort by members of the Indiana Cave Survey. From the 1980s up through 2005, ICS members had spent countless hours exploring, surveying, and documenting caves, sharing that data with the park. This allowed me to focus my efforts on the portion of the cave list not covered by ICS data.

The final result was that the original list was pared down to 28 separate, field-verified, cave entrances. In addition to matching up each cave with all of its known name variations, I also matched up any cave survey information and descriptions.

Is the list complete? Probably not! When you’re on top of karst, a new cave entrance can open any time – and it’s quite possible that other entrances already exist that have yet to be reported. But a lot of the confusion has been cleared up – and we now have a valuable tool for resource management planning.



Closeup of Wind Cave, Photo by Jill Vance

High Guads Restoration Project Update

By Jennifer Foote

High Guads Restoration Project (HGRP) is a National Speleological Society Conservation Task Force. This Project provides volunteer work related to the caves in the Lincoln National Forest in southeastern New Mexico. Since 1999, HGRP has contributed over 1/2 a million dollars of volunteer value to the forest. Typical activities we complete include monitoring, inventory, restoration, formation repair, trail flagging repair, and summer exit bat counts. In the past when less people were caving, trails were not often placed, and some areas had extensive mud tracking that is slowly being removed. In the Guads, caves are typically very dry, so impact is not erased by water flow. This year we concentrated more on monitoring and inventory of caves so the forest would have the information they need to help manage their cave resources. Caves that are visited by the general public also need to be monitored on a regular basis and have trail repairs maintained. We plan to have at least one trip a year with at least one trip to horizontal caves to provide beginner opportunities to learn restoration and cave conservation.

In 2010, we had 39 participants on six separate trip weekends. Jennifer Foote and Phyllis Boneau both made 5 trips, Tammy and William Tucker both made 4 trips, Brian Kendrick, Eddie Baker, Garrett Jorgensen, and Mark Bulman all made 2 trips on HGRP Projects in 2010. We contributed a total of 930 work hours and over \$40k in Volunteer Value to the Lincoln National Forest.

Challenges we have dealt with throughout the years include hail, floods, snow, discontinuous U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staffing, and White-Nose Syndrome related restrictions. Some of our achievements through the years include: the USFS reopening Black, Hidden, Pink Dragon, and Three Fingers Caves for recreation after restoration work was done, as well as and training and recommending new recreational trip leaders for several caves. Over the last twelve years, HGRP has taught restoration and conservation skills to numerous groups and individuals.

Future Dates for Project Work:

August 27-28, 2011

Oct 29-30, 2011

Things of Note:

If you are interested in helping, you must sign up at least a week prior to the trip so that permits and trip leaders can be arranged!

Contact highguads@yahoo.com for more information

To access caves in the Guads, volunteers often have difficult hikes.



Volunteers remove footprints from a previously restored area in Hidden Cave.



Cave & Karst Resources Management – Training Opportunities

Cave & Karst Resources Management Workshop

The U.S. Forest Service, NSS Conservation Division, and National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI), have designed two special workshops to explain, explore and identify the unique challenges of protecting, restoring, conserving, and interpreting cave and karst resources. The first course will be held in Elkins, WV from June 20-24, 2011. This is an intensive course which includes practical instruction in cave management practices. Topics covered will focus on the essentials of cave and karst resources management including federal cave laws, cave inventories and monitoring, developing cave management plans, cave conservation and restoration techniques, developing partnerships and agreements, and much more. The class is designed for state and federal land managers, private preserve managers, and members of cave conservancies.

Participants will have the opportunity to experience a day underground complete with all the cave conservation and ethics practices. The field trip will focus on implementing the information learned the previous days to reinforce lessons learned. Individuals will conduct a variety of inventories and evaluations in a field setting. Specific exercises will include cave significance evaluations, resource assessments, identifying cave conservation and restoration needs, and cave surveying. For more information, please contact Cynthia Sandeno, cmsandeno@fs.fed.us.

Cave Conservation & Management Special Session for Agencies and Cavers

Agency personnel may be given the responsibility of managing cave and karst resources with little background or training. While they often depend on volunteer cavers to help with this role, there is a need to facilitate the sharing of resources and knowledge. The U.S. Forest Service, NSS Conservation Division, and National Cave and Karst Research Institute, have designed a special session event to be held at the 2011 NSS Convention to explain, explore, and identify the unique challenges of protecting, restoring, conserving, and interpreting cave and karst resources.

Topics covered will focus on the essentials of cave and karst resources management including federal cave laws, cave inventories and monitoring, developing cave management plans, cave conservation and restoration techniques, and other tools. This special session will promote collaboration among state and federal cave and karst specialists and cavers. Participants in this workshop will be given the basic knowledge to carry out cave conservation and management tasks and the resources to develop meaningful partnerships. Schedule for this special session can be found in this newsletter on Page 7. This session will combine formal paper presentations and informal, topic-focused discussions.



NCKMS - Karst Elevated

October 3-7, 2011

Midway, Utah

The National Cave and Karst Management Symposium will be held October 3-7, 2011 at the Zermatt Resort in the charming mountain-town of Midway, Utah. The National Cave and Karst Management Symposium is an important forum for promoting, advancing, and sharing concepts for effective management of cave and karst resources.

It is anticipated that 150 - 200 of North America's elite cave managers and researchers will gather at this event from federal, state, private, non-profit, and academic fields. For more information or to register, visit www.nckms.org/2011 or follow the event on Facebook.

Forest Service Working with Cavers for the 2011 NSS Convention

By Cynthia Sandeno, Ann Froschauer, Dianne Gillespie, and Carol Zokaite

A few caves that were closed last summer to protect bat populations may be temporarily reopened for this year's NSS Convention in Glenwood Springs. Those who choose to go caving will have to follow the USFWS decontamination protocols including **leaving caving gear, footwear, and clothing from White-Nose Syndrome (WNS)-affected states at home**. The motto for WNS decontamination on wild caving trips during the 2011 NSS Convention will be "Every cave, every person, every time."

In July of 2010 the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service implemented the Region 2 Emergency Cave and Abandoned Mine Closure Order R2-10-01 as a temporary one-year precautionary measure to prevent the inadvertent spread of WNS by cave visitors. During discussions leading up to the closure order, the Forest Service committed to the NSS to look closely at the potential for reopening some caves to recreational caving during the 2011 NSS Convention. In doing so, the Forest Service acknowledged the important relationship shared between the agency and the caving community, the impact this closure order would have on that community, and the opportunity associated with the convention to promote awareness and education about WNS.

In preparation for the 2011 convention, a working group was created which consists of NSS representatives, Colorado Cave Survey members, Colorado Division of Wildlife biologists, Forest Service biologists and recreation staff. Together, this group is diligently working to provide opportunities for caving at convention. While developing a list of suitable caves, the team agreed that caves known to have high congregations of bats during important life cycles including hibernation, swarming, and roosting would not be re-opened for convention related activities. After consulting existing data and collecting new information, the group agreed on a final list of caves that could be considered for entry by convention members through a short-term special use permit and a Regional Forester exemption of the Closure Order. The team also developed appropriate safeguards for proposed caving trips.

In order to move the possibility of reopening these specific caves, the Forest Service recently initiated an environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The process began with a letter to the public on March 8, 2011 which provided an opportunity for the public to help shape the proposal. While this is just the beginning of the analysis process, Forest Service employees and volunteer cavers have completed an extensive amount of work. This partnership has been vital to providing the potential for caving at convention.

If caves are reopened for convention, all USFWS decontamination protocols will need to be met or exceeded by all who participate in cave trips. And, we should begin to consider how we can get involved in helping make these caving trips a success. There will be opportunities to volunteer at the WNS Decontamination Booth and to develop creative ways to make sure that caving gear from WNS-affected states does not make its way to the West. The National WNS Communications and Outreach Working Group will be hosting two contests to encourage the use of creative, clean, caving gear (see Page 8 for more information). We hope you will join us in these imaginative efforts to bring clean caving to the forefront of convention.



Jeff Martin with Inner Mountain Outfitters poses with brand new caving gear to remind those coming to the 2011 NSS Convention to leave caving gear, clothing, and footwear from WNS-affected states at home.

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We're on
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<http://www.caves.org/committee/conservation/>

Please contribute to The
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Story of Interest - Explorers discover spectacular caves in Vietnam

Available Online at:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/yblog_thelookout/20110103/ts_yblog_thelookout/explorers-discover-spectacular-caves-in-vietnam

*Special Session Schedule - Cave Conservation & Management for Agencies and Cavers (as of 5/12/11)***Tuesday – Part I**

- 8:30 Introduction/Cave and Karst Resources Overview — Cindy Sandeno, Val Hildreth-Werker
 9:00 Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988
 9:30 Significant Cave Designation Process — Cindy Sandeno
 10:00 *Break*
 10:15 Cave Management — Dale Pate
 11:00 Cave Conservation and Restoration — Jim Werker and Val Hildreth-Werker
 12:00 Lunch On Site with Special Presentation — LINKING CAVE EXPLORATION AND DOCUMENTATION TO CONSERVATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN LAOS — Terry Bolger
 1:00 Cave Management Plans
 1:30 Inventory and Monitoring — Johanna Kovarik
 2:00 INCORPORATING PHOTOS AND SURVEYS INTO A CAVE AND KARST GIS FOR TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST, SOUTHEAST ALASKA — Erin Lynch, Johanna Kovarik
 2:30 TEMPERATURE DATALOGGERS REVEAL PATTERNS IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK CAVES — Gretchen M. Baker
 3:00 *Break*
 3:15 RESTORATION OF LOWER PASSAGE AT TIMPANOGOS CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT — Andy Armstrong
 3:45 CANDLELIGHT CAVE: FOR SALE ON EBAY — Cami McKinney
 4:15 Walk to Surveying and Mapping Salon
 4:30 Surveying and Mapping Presentation and Salon — Colorado Cave Survey

Wednesday – Part II

- 9:00 Photo Inventory, Photo Documentation, Photomonitoring — Val Hildreth-Werker
 9:30 Education Resources: Project Underground Intro — Carol Zokaite
 10:00 Cave and Karst Outreach: How to do your own PR — Dianne Gillespie
 10:30 Partnerships & Agreements
 11:00 CAVE RESCUE PRE-PLANNING AT WIND AND JEWEL CAVES, SOUTH DAKOTA — Marc Ohms, Rene Ohms, Anmar Mirza, John Panches
 11:20 CAVE RESCUE PACKS IN WIND AND JEWEL CAVES, SOUTH DAKOTA — Marc Ohms, Rene
 11:40 CURRENT CAVE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS AT JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT, SOUTH DAKOTA — Rene Ohms, Mike Wiles
 12:00 Session Wrap-up and Forest Service Database Presentation

Cave Conservation and Management Special Session - White-Nose Syndrome: A Western Perspective

- 1:00 Caver relationships with government agencies: A Colorado perspective, Carl R. Bern
 1:10 Colorado Division of Wildlife response planning For White-Nose Syndrome, Tina Jackson
 1:25 Monitoring bats for White-Nose Syndrome in Colorado: On the ground efforts, Dan Neubaum
 1:40 The use of abandoned mines by bats in Colorado: The other part of the WNS issue, Kirk W. Navo
 1:55 A temperature-based GIS model suggesting risk for White-Nose Syndrome in the West, Lara M. Juliusson
 2:10 Microclimate conditions in Ft. Stanton Cave -- A hibernaculum for Townsend's big-eared bat, Debbie C. Buecher
 2:25 **BREAK**
 2:40 WNS impact evaluation for 2011 NSS convention caving trips, Phil Nyland
 2:55 BLM state offices respond differently to WNS threat, Marikay A. Ramsey
 3:10 Friends of the cave? Michael McEachern
 3:25 The U.S. National Park Service responds to White-Nose Syndrome in bats, Kevin T. Castle
 3:40 Current status of the research and management of bat White-Nose Syndrome, Jeremy Coleman
 3:55 Eastern lessons for western consideration, Peter D. Youngbaer
 4:15 Panel discussion
 Kevin Castle – National Park Service
 Paul Cryan – U.S. Geological Survey
 Marikay Ramsey – Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico
 Elaine Rybak – U.S. Forest Service
 Peter Youngbaer – National Speleological Survey
 To Be Announced – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

C⁴ (Creative, Clean, Caving Contests)

Contest 1 – Submissions Due July 10, 2011

Hosted by the National WNS Communications and Outreach Working Group, this contest will occur before convention and is based on the creative thinking of cavers. We want to hear your suggestions on ways to keep contaminated clothing, gear, and footwear **from WNS-affected states at home**. The most creative (yet still practical) submission wins! To enter this contest, simply email your most creative solution to Cynthia Sandeno at cmsandeno@fs.fed.us. Please keep your suggestions practical, tasteful, and fun! All submissions will be reviewed by members of the communications working group. And, the winner will receive a \$30 gift card to Karst Sports.

Here are a few ideas to help spark your creativity:

- Contact your friends in the West and arrange to borrow their clean caving gear (don't wait till you arrive at convention to secure loaner gear).
- Go to your local Goodwill and purchase new to you caving gear (note the possibilities of a noteworthy caving costume are endless.....).
- During your next hospital procedure, ask if you can borrow the Doctor's scrubs.

Contest 2 – Fashionista Fun

Forget Milan, Paris, and London. This year's hottest fashion show will be held in Glenwood Springs, CO. The second C⁴ contest will be a fashion show like none other. Cavers are encouraged to hit their local goodwill, thrift store, or even a costume shop to create a caving costume that would only be acceptable at an NSS Convention. Let your inner fashionista take the reins and start shopping now. The fashion show will be held during convention (time and place will be announced soon). And, the "best dressed" caver will win a \$75 gift card to Inner Mountain Outfitters.

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