

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between
The National Park Service, Department of the Interior
and
The Cave Research Foundation

I. AUTHORITY

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into pursuant to the Act of August 25, 1916, 39 Stat. 535, as amended, and is for the purpose of permitting the Cave Research Foundation to conduct scientific research, cartography, and interpretive activities on lands administered by the National Park Service.

II. AGREEMENT

- A. The National Park Service (the Service) and the Cave Research Foundation (the Foundation) agree that the Foundation is authorized to conduct studies and related projects to develop scientific understanding of cave and karst features in the National Park System, subject to the provisions of specific operating agreements or permits to be issued by the Service or its subdivisions, and that the Service may use the results of the Foundation studies and projects in its development and application of cave management practices and procedures and in its interpretation of the natural and historic features of the National Park System for the public.
- B. The Foundation shall provide to the designated Park Service managers reports on its work and its other activities in the parks and, upon request of the Service shall provide draft maps of caves that the Foundation has surveyed and any other information acquired from its activities on lands administered by the Service that the Service considers helpful in the preservation, management or interpretation of caves and karst.
- C. During the performance of this Memorandum of Understanding, the participants agree to abide by the terms of Executive Order 1 1246 on non-discrimination and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The participants will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
- D. The permission granted herein to the Foundation to conduct research and cartography and to interpret caves and other karst features within lands administered by the Service is nonexclusive. The Service reserves the right to permit any person or organization which it deems qualified to conduct research and interpret caves or other karst features within any lands administered by it.
- E. The Foundation hereby agrees that the United States shall not be responsible for personal injuries, death, and/or property damage or loss sustained by third persons (including the public) or by the Foundation personnel working on or under any lands administered by the Service pursuant to this agreement that is caused by or results from the acts or omissions of the Foundation, its employees or agents, and the Foundation agrees to save and hold the United States harmless from liability, and to indemnify the United States, therefore. Except as provided herein nothing shall restrict the rights of the United States or the Foundation as provided by law.

III. OBJECTIVES

The National Park Service and the Cave Research Foundation agree to pursue a number of objectives within this Memorandum. To the extent feasible, the parties agree that --

A. The National Park Service will:

- 1. Provide access to lands administered by the Service for cave research.
- 2. Advise the Cave Research Foundation of opportunities for cave related research.

3. Advise the Foundation of Service research policies.
4. Acknowledge the work products and data gathered by the foundation in its publications and in any transmittal of such material outside the Service.

B. The Cave Research Foundation will:

1. Conduct research in caves in the Park System.
2. Establish or continue field operations in selected areas of the National Park System.
3. Provide Cave Research Foundation Annual Reports and occasional publications (such as management reports) to the Service as they become available.
4. Acknowledge the assistance of the Service in its publications and other works resulting from Cave Research Foundation (CRF's) activities under this agreement.
5. Encourage graduate research in caves through fellowships and ~ants. (Proposed projects shall be selected by peer review.)
6. Make no public statements on cave and karst-related matters relating to National Park Service lands or policy without first gaining Service approval, in writing, from the Park Superintendent.

C. The National Park Service and the Cave Research foundation will:

1. Coordinate publicity concerning the Foundation's discoveries, findings, or other activities on lands administered by the Service.
2. Sign amendments to this Memorandum of Understanding as needed. These may include, but are not limited to, local operating agreements (e.g. special use permits) for field operations and other projects. They will include any policy agreements between the Foundation and the Service regarding research activities on the Service administered lands.

IV. TERMS AND DURATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding and the accompanying Declaration of Interest will become effective upon approval by both parties, and will extend for a period of five years thereafter. It will be formally reviewed every five years and renewed/alterd as appropriate. This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated at any time upon the mutual agreement of both parties or upon the 180-day prior written notice by either party to the other.

V. KEY OFFICIALS

National Park Service:
Dr. F. Eugene Hester
Associate Director, Natural Resources
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20023

Cave Research Foundation:
Mr. Philip DiBlasi
CRF President
1244 South Brook
Louisville, KY 40203-2718

If any changes in key official should occur, the other party will be notified in writing.

VI. GENERAL

All obligations of the National Park Service hereunder are subject to the availability of funds and to such direction and instructions as may have been or are hereafter provided by Congress.

During the performance of this agreement, the participants agree to abide by the terms of Executive Order 11246 on nondiscrimination and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability. The participants will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability.

No member of or delegate to Congress, or resident commissioner, shall be admitted to any share or part of this agreement, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom, but this provision shall not be construed to extend to this agreement if made with a corporation for its general benefit.

[signed] Director, National Park Service

[signed] President, Cave Research Foundation

Attachment: Declaration of Mutual Interest

**DECLARATION OF MUTUAL INTEREST
BY
The National Park Service, Department of the Interior
and
The Cave Research Foundation**

INTRODUCTION

Superb examples of caves and karst are found among the natural resources which are protected in the more than 300 National Parks, Monument, and other properties within the National Park System. By far the longest cave in the world, the one with the most diverse ecosystem, and the premier model karst system is found in and around Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky. Farther west, some of the world's most exquisite cave formations are found in Carlsbad Caverns and Lechuguilla Cave, New Mexico, and Jewel Cave and Wind Cave, South Dakota.

The National Park Service has recognized the importance of the caves and karst features within the system and has sought to understand further their value and their unique management needs. To meet its legislated goal of protecting and preserving our nation's natural resources, the Service is committed to furthering research on caves and karst, managing these natural resources effectively, and developing ways to educate the public about them.

The Cave Research Foundation, a non-profit volunteer organization incorporated in 1957, is dedicated to conducting research on caves and karst features throughout the world. It is also concerned about the conservation and interpretation of these resources. It has conducted most of its work in the United States on Federal lands, particularly National Park Service lands. The caves of the National Park System represent unique natural laboratories for the Foundation and other researchers.

The Cave Research Foundation has worked with the National Park Service to develop understanding of caves and karst. The Foundation has conducted research, including exploration and mapping, and has advised the Service of its findings. Much of this research has been concerned with long-term objectives that require organizational commitment and continuity. The information acquired has assisted the Service in the development of cave management practices and procedures that are in use today.

The National Park Service and the Cave Research Foundation have entered into a new agreement that is a recognition and description of their continuing partnership in understanding the caves and karst features within the National Park System. This partnership has provided and will continue to provide data for the Service. Just as importantly, it will continue to provide the Foundation access to the natural laboratory in which it may conduct research and cartographic projects.

The National Park Service encourages volunteer contributions within the national parks. The Cave Research Foundation is a highly respected and successful volunteer research organization. The partnership of the Service and the volunteer Foundation has been and will continue to be of mutual value.

The Cave Research Foundation and the National Park Service have been working together in continuous cooperation since 1959. In 1969 the Foundation and the Service signed a Memorandum of Agreement. This new agreement is designed to update and continue our working arrangements.

In addition to the specified objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Service and the Foundation recognize and support the following efforts of each party to protect, study and interpret caves and karst resources.

A. The National Park Service will make best efforts to:

1. Protect the caves of the Park System for their values as natural laboratories.
2. Advise the Foundation of Service activities related to caves or karst on lands where the Foundation has established a field operation or other projects, where these Service activities could affect the Foundation's research or alter underground resources.
3. Inform the NPS managers of the Foundation's accomplishments and capability through the distribution of Foundation publications and other appropriate activities.
4. Inform university scientists and others of the opportunities for support from or collaboration with the Foundation, such as fellowships or field support in parks.
5. Make available to the Foundation, as required, information compiled by the National Natural Landmarks Program on caves and karst features.
6. Consult with the Foundation on identifying individuals qualified to prepare onsite evaluation reports and peer reviews of potential National Natural Landmarks.
7. Consult with the Foundation on identifying and preserving significant caves on National Park Service lands in accordance with the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act.

B. The Cave Research Foundation will make best efforts to:

1. Advise the Service on cave-related matters, including research projects, resource management, interpretation and education programs, cave-related park management, and other matters.
2. Upon request, provide the Service "peer review" of proposed research activities, of the qualifications of proposed researchers, or the advisability of proposed research and other activities on the Service lands.
3. Upon request, conduct onsite evaluations of caves or karst features that are potential National Natural Landmarks, and prepare onsite evaluation reports for those sites.
4. Upon request, participate as peer reviewers of onsite evaluation reports on potential National Natural Landmarks sites that contain caves or karst features.
5. Function as a National Natural Landmarks Patron, monitoring assigned natural landmarks and reporting annually on the condition of assigned caves or cave resources that are designated

National Natural Landmarks, especially for the purpose of contributing to the Secretary of the Interior's annual report to Congress on threatened and damaged natural landmarks.

6. Suggest to the Natural Landmarks Program staff any caves or karst features that have potential national significance.
7. Upon request, assist the Service in identifying and preserving significant caves on National Park Service lands in accordance with the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act.