President’s Column
By: Kayla Sapkota

There's just something special about getting together with fellow cavers. Comradery, good stories, and common goals make for a nice escape from the challenges of day-to-day life. Of course, we can also add in tall-tales, inappropriate jokes, and memories of “that watercrawl that just wouldn't end.”

I always get this special sense of homecoming when I turn the corner to the trailhead, campground, or cabin where everyone is meeting. I breathe a sigh mixed with relief and excitement for catching up with others and getting ready to go underground.

In case it isn't already on your calendar, I want to encourage you to attend the CRF Annual Meeting and Expedition in Carlsbad, NM, later this year. The general meeting will be held on Saturday, November 4th, at the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in town. There will be updates, presentations, posters, and maps; reach out if you want to get involved (maybe share about a project, show off a map, etc.). During the week preceding the meeting and on the Sunday after the meeting, we plan to have field trips, including some mapping projects. Our VP John Lyles, local Project Leader Janice Tucker, and Board Member Mark Jones are working hard to plan an exciting stay for us. Stay tuned for more info, including details on lodging and food options, cave trips, and meet-ups. Sure hope we see you there!

Muddy Smiles,
Kayla Sapkota, President

CRF Received $1,585 from Amazon Donation Program
By: Bob Hoke, CRF Treasurer

CRF signed up with Amazon.com’s AmazonSmile donation program in 2014. The program allowed Amazon customers to designate a nonprofit organization to receive a donation from Amazon of 0.5% of their purchases. The program ended in early 2023, but during its existence CRF received $1,585 in donations. The donations were used to help defray the Foundation’s administrative costs.

On the Cover

CRF’s Hamilton Valley Facility Transitions to Long-Term Maintenance
By: Bob Hoke, CRF Treasurer

The Foundation’s Hamilton Valley (HV) research facility in Cave City, Kentucky has completed the transition from its construction phase into a long-term maintenance mode. The land was purchased in 1992, and the buildings were constructed in 2000 and 2011. Funding for purchasing the property and for constructing the building came from internal Foundation funds and from many individual donations, including several very large donations.

For many years, the CRF accounting system has maintained two HV-related accounts. One was for development of the property (meaning construction of new buildings) and the other was for ongoing operation and maintenance of the buildings and grounds. The development account has been inactive since 2011. The operations account receives income from rentals and donations, and pays for utilities, maintenance, insurance, and other routine expenses. The operations account operates at a deficit most years.

There are no plans to construct additional buildings, roads, or parking areas, or to make significant improvements to existing structures on the property in the foreseeable future, so at the CRF Annual Meeting in November, the Board voted to merge the development and operations accounts. They also voted to self-insure the buildings on the property and retain the savings for future repairs. Merging the two accounts will provide funding for ongoing operations. It is anticipated that increased rental usage and other changes will soon make the facility self-supporting, and the account balance will begin growing to fund the inevitable building repairs.

Google Group for Eastern Operations
By: Karen Willmes, Eastern Operations Mgr.

We have a Google Group email list for CRF’s Eastern Operations. This group was set up in 2006. If you would like to belong to the group, please email Laura Lexander, the Personnel Officer for Eastern Operations at laura.lexander@caveresearch.org.

If you used to belong to the group, but are no longer receiving the emails, please sign in to Google Groups at http://groups.google.com and edit your membership settings for the group. If you changed your email address, we can't modify it for you, only you can do that!

REGIONAL EXPEDITION REPORTS

Elmer’s Trench and Lower Cave Loop, Lava Beds National Monument, April 19-28, 2023
By: Ed Klausner

Summary of Elmer’s Trench:
The Elmer’s Trench project is now finished. The definition of what’s a cave has changed since the start of the project. It was initially 40 feet then changed to 25 feet. Some of the original leads found when the limit was 40 feet had some caves that were more than 25 feet, but were not surveyed as they were too small by the standard at the time. Many of those have now been surveyed, but there may be some caves in Elmer’s Trench that would now qualify as caves but were ignored at the time.

There were 84 known caves when the project started. All but one have been surveyed; I could not find “Spiders and Snakes and Planks, Oh My”. During the project, 66 new caves were found and mapped.

It took 16 expeditions to complete this project that started in 2011. I drove to Lava Beds for all but one of these expeditions for a total of 58,155 miles.

Summary of Lower Cave Loop:
The survey of the caves in Lower Cave Loop stemmed from surveying Post Office Cave as one of the Inventory & Monitoring caves the Monument requested to be surveyed. When that was completed, the Monument requested that I just keep surveying downflow of Post Office Cave. Post Office Cave was started in 2012 and survey was done during the same expeditions as in Elmer’s Trench. 16 maps from this flow have been produced. Of those, 3 were new finds. During the past expedition, 7 new caves were surveyed from previous leads. This project is not finished as there are many known caves that have not been surveyed, plus a large area has not been systematically searched for additional caves.

Full Report:
I arrived at Lava Beds on April 19th. I got in by 2 PM, and with lots of daylight left, Mark Jones and I headed out at 3 PM to work on 3 of the leads at the NE section of Elmer’s Trench. The first, Rabbit Brush Cave, was only a bit over 10 feet long, so we didn’t survey it. The next two leads were above the 25 foot limit, so we surveyed both of them (Dead Cedar Cave and Shallow Dome Cave.)

Mark and I were the only ones around on the second day. There were 6 more leads on the
west side of the road in Elmer’s Trench. The first two were surveyed together. The first was named Curbside Cave for the nice lava curb and it was a 40 foot cave. The other was only 13 feet and was mapped as an annex, but not assigned an accession number as it was too small. The next two leads were two entrances of the same cave, named Just Enough Cave. Another lead was surveyed and named Broken Blister Cave, later determined to be in the Balcony Flow (Dave West’s project.) The last lead was not a lead at all. There was a shadow as seen from below, but it was only a shadow.

Fred Wilkinson was able to join me on this 3rd day at Lava Beds and we hoped to finish up Elmer’s Trench. The first lead was a 25 foot cave named Coyote Tube. The second was a 36.6 foot cave named Sunlit Cave as it had a nice skylight. And the last was a nearby cave of 27.2 feet named Little Moss Cave as there was a little moss around the entrance. We spent the remainder of the day ridgwalking, but did not find any additional caves. There was one remaining lead in Elmer’s Trench.

Day 4 was dedicated to the Balcony Flow and Dave West will report on that separately.

On day 5 of the expedition, Emma Sutphin, Mark Jones, Paul McMullen and Fred Wilkinson joined me in the continuation of the survey of Bertha’s Cupboard in Modoc National Forest. We completed the survey of the cave that was started in the summer of 2022 by adding 521.5 feet of survey. Emma Sutphin sketched part of the cave with the help of Mark Jones.

Fred Wilkinson and Paul McMullen joined me in the Lower Cave Loop on day 6th. We found and surveyed 4 of the leads found last year. Comfortable, Tree Stump, Rejected by Coyotes and Lizard on Top Caves were surveyed. Comfortable Cave was the longest at 103.1 feet of survey. One lead was found to be one of the entrances of Lighter Lizard Cave, a previously surveyed cave.

On April 25th (day 7 of the expedition) six of us went to the Balcony Flow to work on Dave West’s leads (he will report on that.) Dave Hays (Natural Resource Program Manager at the Monument) joined us for some of the survey.

Fred Wilkinson joined me on the 8th day of surveying. We worked on leads in the Lower Cave Loop and finished the leads from last year plus found several new leads. Three caves were
 surveyed, the longest was 137 feet (Surprise Cave). The remaining lead in Elmer’s Trench was found to be one of the entrances of a previously surveyed cave, Amber Dome Cave.

**Elmer’s Trench new caves surveyed:**
- Dead Cedar Cave 48.6’
- Shallow Done Cave 28.9’
- Curbside Cave 40.3’
- Just Enough Cave 26.3’
- Coyote Tube 25.0’
- Sunlit Cave 36.6’
- Little Moss Cave 27.2’

**Lower Cave Loop Flow new caves surveyed:**
- Comfortable Cave 72.5’
- Tree Stump Cave 103.1’

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<th>Length</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rejected by Coyotes Cave</td>
<td>32.0’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lizard on Top Cave</td>
<td>36.1’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise Cave</td>
<td>137.0’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cemented Breakdown Cave</td>
<td>38.7’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cave with a Basement</td>
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**Participants:**
Dave Hays, Mark Jones, Ed Klausner, Paul McMullen, Mike Spiess, Emma Sutphin, John Tinsley, Karen Willmes, Dave West, and Fred Wilkinson.

Our thanks to Superintendent Chris Mengel, Natural Resource Program Manager Dave Hays, and the rest of the Monument staff for the great support given to this project.
Ozarks Operations cavers have been very busy this spring/summer season, as for a few months there was leaf-off at the same time as bat counts. A number of trips were taken in geographically dispersed areas. Many of these trips involved folks from our cooperating agencies.

OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS
CRF Ozarks works with the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (NPS) under a cooperative cave management agreement. Trips usually originate from the NPS/USFS shared field office at Winona.

April 15, 2023:
Joe Light led a large contingent on a float trip on the upper Jacks Fork to do basic monitoring. Along the way, eleven caves, or their entrances, were monitored. Participants included Dan and Henry Lamping, Steve Kaub, Mike Bennett, Rick Haley and others.

April 16, 2023:
The next day, Dan Lamping led most of the above contingent into Round Spring Cave for a trail maintenance project. Gravel was added where the trail was washed out, the lock exercised, and muddy trail locales had pea gravel added to them for visitor safety.

May 3, 2023:
Kirsten Alvey attended Junior Ranger Day along with her Missouri Bat Census display, teaching area kids about bat and cave conservation.

May 19, 2023:
Scott and Patti House participated in NPS interpreter training on the upper Current River with about 13 people working at the park. We first visited Welch Spring, then Devils Well, emphasizing the genesis of caves and springs. Later, Scott led the interpreters on a tour of Round Spring Cave, giving all involved a background on the nature of caves in general and why this one is so special.

May 20, 2023:
Scott and Patti worked out of the Winona Work Center, preparing to-do lists and gear maintenance.

June 1, 2023:
Scott and Patti spent another day at Winona doing support work for both the NPS and the USFS. They also prepared gear for an NPS trip the next day. Matt Beeson kept us company, working on a cave map.

June 2, 2023:
Scott and Patti were joined by Dan, Henry, and Margaret Lamping as we all led an NPS trip on the Jacks Fork River. This was an effort of Superintendent Jason Lott to get his administration staff out into the resource. A three-mile length of river was tackled, along with visits to about seven caves, which offer different perspectives on cave management including bats, visitation, and cultural features. A very good time was had by all. In addition to Superintendent Lott, biologist Derek Saffle attended along
with about ten other admin staff. Matt Beeson, recovering from some surgery, manned the Winona front while working on a cave map.

**June 3, 2023:**
Ingloriously, Scott and Patti worked on cleaning all the gear loaned out on the previous day’s trip. It is amazing how much sand and gravel can attach themselves to helmets, lights, packs, and clothing.

**June 4, 2023:**
Scott and Patti monitored several caves near Alley Spring before returning to Winona for data entry and database maintenance.

**June 5, 2023:**
Another NPS field trip day. This time a large NPS contingent along with Scott and Patti traveled to the upper entrances of Jam-Up Cave in order to examine the area’s management problems. Trash was collected from the upper entrance while the interior of the middle (sink) entrance was examined by several of the trip members including biologist Derek Saffle and Superintendent Jason Lott. The climb in was fairly stable and not muddy, facilitating the ability of the monitoring party to enter and exit. Evidence was noted of transient gray bat use. Other attendees included three division chiefs plus several LE rangers.

**June 6, 2023:**
Another day was spent by Scott and Patti at Winona, cleaning all the loaner gear from the day before, cleaning the truck top to bottom, and entering data.

**June 8, 2023:**
Scott and Patti were joined by Don Dunham as we visited cave sites on the upper Jacks Fork, looking at a reported graffiti problem plus monitoring parts of two other caves.

**June 9, 2023:**
Scott and Don monitored a cultural cave on the upper Current River which has had severe visitation problems, including ATV traffic. This pattern of misuse resulted in the NPS blocking the illegal trail with large boulders. This has had a very good effect, with much less visitation noted on the trip.

**June 14, 2023:**
Mark Jones and Kirsten Alvey monitored a number of caves south of Van Buren on the lower Current River. After counting a lot of fence life in the caves, they ended the day at a fenced gray bat cave where Kirsten set up the infrared camera to count exiting bats. There were a very good number of mama grays going out to feed.

**June 15, 2023:**
Mark and Kirsten were joined by Tyler Skaggs. After a trip to a FS cave (see below) they went to the graffiti-marked cave on the upper Jacks Fork. Wire brushes, elbow grease, and vinegar got the best of the graffiti, while the lock on the gate was cleaned and exercised. At dusk, the video camera came out and documented a small number of grays. The number was not high but expected since this is primarily a transient site.

**BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER**

**CRF work at Buffalo National River (NPS) is facilitated through a cooperative cave management, survey, and bat monitoring agreement.**

**Reports by Kayla Sapkota**

**April 8, 2023:**
Jessie Bridges, Maya Robles, Tiffany Taylor, Treavor Bussard, Jessica Shue, Erik Stinnett, and Hypatia Mereviglia mapped Blind Pit Cave and monitored Middle Creek Spring Cave and Stonework Contortion Cave, as well as found a new feature.

**April 22, 2023:**
Dustin Middleton, Jarod Ozee, Nathan Winder, and Max White continued their ridgwalk objective in the area of the upper Clark Creek and other drainages to search for undocumented caves. The crew found two, aptly named Clark Creek Cave #1 and Clark Creek Cave #2 for the time being. A return trip will need to be taken to map the caves and search any remaining parts of the area.

**May 29, 2023:**
Laura Baumann, Claty Barnett, Jessie Bridges, Riannon Colton, Ben Damgaard, Emily Roberts, Kayla Sapkota, and Erik Stinnett visited the Helictite Passage in Fitton Cave to finish the remaining leads, save one, in the area. Dillon Freiburger, Treavor Bussard, and Jessica Shue visited the New Maze in Fitton Cave to continue mapping the winding passages there.

**ARKANSAS STATE PARKS**

**Report by Kayla Sapkota**

**May 4, 2023:**
Kayla Sapkota, Claty Barnett, and Aaron Thompson continued mapping in War Eagle Spring Cave, netting another 420 ft before bowing out due to impending storms, as the cave poses a water risk on the exit. The cave now sits at 3,525 ft and counting.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**May 22, 2023:**
Josh Glazebrook met with Richard Stark (of the Ozark Plateau National Wildlife Refuge) to ridgwalk areas for features containing Ozark Big Eared bats in eastern Oklahoma. The crew added a new Ozark Big Eared bat site as a result of their efforts, along with several others not containing the target bats.
March 18, 2023:
Marissa Schorr and Jeffrey Crews monitored two caves on the Gasconade River in Laclede County, Rolla/Houston District. They noted a lot of visitation plus some looting in one of the caves and cleaned up trash. The other cave had small numbers of hibernating bats. After these two caves were done, they followed up on a LIDAR lead in Phelps County which turned out to be a distinctive short bluff with no cave in it.

March 23, 2023:
Scott House and Mick Sutton spent the afternoon meeting with MTNF staff at the Supervisor’s Office in Rolla MO.

March 24, 2023:
Scott House, Craig Williams, Mick Sutton, and Kirsten Alvey along with a variety of MTNF staff visited two caves on the Rolla/Houston district. Management of the area was discussed and one of the two caves was thoroughly monitored. Visitation is a problem at this area.

March 25, 2023:
Ben Miller and Bob Lerch continued their dye tracing work, delineating the sources of Roaring River Spring in Barry County. Much of the source is on national forest land in the Cassville subdistrict. Today they performed two injections of dye.

March 26, 2023:
Shawn Williams, Krista Bartel, Kohl Mitchell, Jessica Shoffner, and Lawrence Ireland mapped and monitored in Spanish Steps Cave on the Rolla/Houston District. This is a rare sinkhole cave on the upland that takes in a tremendous amount of water and sends it to one of a variety of candidate springs.

March 27, 2023:
Ben Miller and Bob Lerch continued their dye tracing efforts. Ben visited Roaring River SP while Bob looked at the dye injection site from two days earlier, noting that the dye had left some, but not all, of the area. The question remained as to whether or not the dye made it to the groundwater level.

April 4, 2023:
Jim Cooley gave a presentation on cave gating to MTNF staff at the supervisor’s office (headquarters) in Rolla. In the afternoon they visited potential gating sites associated with mining activities.

April 5, 2023:
Jim’s field trip was extended to mine sites at Silver Mines in the Fredericktown subdistrict. Jim reports the day was mostly spent behind the wheel.

April 22, 2023:
Marissa Schorr took two new folks (Chris Landis and Jan Morton) to monitor two caves along Roubidoux Creek in the Rolla/Houston District. Several new potential cave leads were also identified.

April 26, 2023:
Jim and Julie Cooley monitored two caves on the Eleven Point District in Oregon County. A surface survey was also run at one of the caves. Later, they experienced great disappointment as the Alton Burger Palace was closed for the season.

April 28, 2023:
Jim and Julie surveyed in a small cave in the Irish Wilderness, Eleven Point District, Oregon County. Logistics ate up most of the day with access being only available via car, canoe, and then extensive hiking.

April 29, 2023:
Karamea Christofferson led a monitoring trip to two caves on the Potosi District, Washington County, with Carl Watkins, James Watkins, Mick Sutton, Sue Hagan, and FS biologist Andy Radomski. The trip served as a good biology training session for all concerned.

Jim and Julie were joined by Dustin Schmidt retrieved data from a light intrusion detector on a bat cave in the Eleven Point District, Carter County. They then replaced a lock on a private cave in Ripley County that Jim helps manage.

May 25, 2023:
Mark Jones stopped at the cultural caves site in Pulaski County (Rolla/Houston) to examine an upcoming gate fix job.

June 7, 2023:
Mick Sutton and Scott House spent the better part of the day meeting with FS staff at the Winona Work Center.
June 12, 2023:
Mark Jones, Kirsten Alvey, Dennis Novicky, and Jessica Shoffner spent the day fixing (enhancing) a cave gate on the Rolla/Houston District, Pulaski County. They were aided by a large MTNF crew of aiders and abettors, more so because the site is a sensitive cultural locale.

June 13, 2023:
The same crew worked on another nearby cultural cave, fixing its gate as well. Again, a large contingent of FS staff helped. The large numbers of USFS folks available made it possible to fix both gates in two days.

June 15, 2023:
Mark Jones, Kirsten Alvey, and Tyler Skaggs surveyed and monitored a small pit cave on the Willow Springs District, Howell County. The cave had not had an official monitoring visit in over 40 years and had been on the to-do list for that entire time.

L-A-D FOUNDATION
CRF works with L-A-D Foundation and their wholly-owned arm, Pioneer Forest, to help manage caves on their lands.

May 18, 2023:
CRF attendees at the annual LAD/Pioneer Forest Cookout and get-together included Scott and Patti House, Mick Sutton, and Sue Hagan.

MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION
CRF and MSS work under unfunded permits to collect survey data on MDC lands. Ancillary support comes from CRF and cooperating federal agencies.

March 1-2, 2023:
See further above for Matt Beeson-led trips to USFS caves for MDC bat counts.

March 15, 2023:
Gary Johnson and Steve Potter searched an area of Mule Shoe Conservation Area, looking for suspected caves. Most of the suspects turned out to be juvenile caves, too small to be listed as caves.

May 13, 2023:
Jim Ruedin and Adele Ayers monitored two caves near the Current River, one of which lies within the Ozark Riverways boundary. One of the caves again showed signs of transient gray bat use (piles of guano), while the other sported a cluster of 25 unidentified myotis. Neither cave was suffering from visitation.

May 20, 2023:
Gary Johnson returned to Mule Shoe CA along with Bill Gee and Corey Ellis. The purpose was to access one cave lead high on a bluff. The rope work didn’t quite work, but they vowed to return with a complete vertical crew.

June 7, 2023:
Ken Grush, Sam Grush, and Jim Cooley spent the day monitoring and surveying caves on lands around Truman Reservoir, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but leased to and managed by the Department of Conservation. This day’s work got three caves finished, all in Henry County in western Missouri. All was facilitated by a motor-powered boat and a drone with camera.

June 6, 2023:
The same crew mapped and monitored several more caves along the bluffs of the Truman Reservoir lands. One feature could not successfully be relocated.

MISSOURI DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
CRF works under an unfunded permit to collect survey data on MODoT rights-of-way.

April 17, 2023:
Kirsten Alvey, Martin Carmichael, Caleb Mundwiller, and Bryn Downs-Ward investigated a pit cave in Boone County which had no natural entrance and was uncovered during a bridge replacement project. The cave is along Bonne Femme Creek, a losing stream that drains to nearby Devils Icebox Cave, a state park feature that hosts a number of species of concern.

April 19, 2023:
Gary Resch, Kirsten Alvey, and Josh Cooper surveyed a new pit alongside state right-of-way in Cape Girardeau County. The cave was 116 feet long and about 40 feet deep.

May 6, 2023:
Kirsten, Bryn, and Caleb returned to the pit along with Kohl Mitchell and surface support in the person of Diana Dawson. They completed the survey of the cave, and Kohl has since drawn the map. The cave is reportedly slated to be capped, but not filled.
**ELSEWHERE**

This includes trips done on US Army Corps of Engineers lands and private lands. Some of this work is funded and some is not. Some of the protection efforts may be funded by CRF, MO Dept. of Transportation and other sources.

**April 2, 2023:**
Jim and Julie Cooley were joined by a host of other cavers including Bill Gee, Kohl Mitchel, Bryn Downes-Ward, and Diana Dawson in a survey of a new cave in Camden County MO.

**April 16, 2023:**
Bob Weck, Mick Sutton, and Sue Hagan, along with Jerry and Salida Lewis, went to Cliff Cave in St. Louis County to locate specimens of *Caecidotea stygia* from the cave. While the prime suspect was not located, other isopods were identified, as well as a rare flatworm.

**April 24, 2023:**
Chad McCain, Mark Brooks, Brian Biggs, Gretchen Asselmeier, and Shelby Proctor worked at the Berome Moore Cave reserve, doing maintenance and clean-up work both in and out of the cave.

**April 26, 2023:**
Mick Sutton and Sue Hagan went to a reported spring cave in Reynolds County. All was as reported except the thing was only passable for a single body length, too small to be reported as a cave.

**June 11, 2023:**
Dan Lamping, Chad McCain and Danielle Marie continued work in Nameless Cave, Crawford County, setting up some additional surveys, doing some survey ties, and improving the route safety.

**June 17, 2023:**
George Bilbrey and Mark Jones serviced equipment, especially generators, at the Winona Work Center.

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

CRF works with the Missouri and Arkansas Field Offices on a wide variety of funded projects. Some of these are funded through agreements with other entities, but all work is in accordance with FWS standards and cooperation.

**May 16-24, 2023:**
Mark Jones led a great effort to build several gates in Devils Den SP south of Fayetteville AR. The caves are critical habitat for the Ozark big-eared bat, which can hibernate in a variety of habitats, including, in this case, relatively shallow caves and fissures. Co-gaters Dennis Novicky and Krista Bartel were there for the duration while others, including Aaron Thompson and the Fennel Family were there for additional help and logistics.

**May 25, 2023:**
Mark Jones towed the CRF gating trailer from Devils Den SP AR to Hannibal MO in preparation for more gate work.

**June 5-8, 2023:**
Mark Jones, Kirsten Alvey, and Dennis Novicky spent a week working on improving gates on the Sodalis Nature Preserve. They were aided by crews from the City of Hannibal parks department, which has title to the property. Work included adding additional bars to gates, adding anti-digging screen, and removing vegetation from overgrown gates, including chute gates. After days of work, nine gates had been improved, fixed, or maintained. These were major fixes and a lot of inglorious work.

Tiffany Taylor checks out a cave entrance. Photo by Jessie Bridges.
Mammoth Cave: Earth Day Expedition, April 21-24, 2023

By: Bob Lodge, Expedition Leader

Best laid plans go awry. As of the Wednesday before the expedition we had 19 signed up for caving. We lost one on Thursday, one on Friday and five sent their regrets or no showed on Saturday morning. This reduced the expedition to 12 participants, significantly reducing not only the number of participants, but also objectives that could be addressed. Several participants left after caving Saturday or Sunday morning reducing the number allowing only one team to go out on Sunday.

Saturday, April 22:
Small Caves: Bill Copeland and Elizabeth Winkler headed out to the area of Wondering Woods Cave to locate McGowen’s Pit. The pit had previously been outside the park, but with the most recent border survey the pit is shown to be within the park. The pit was located and a 65’ rope was rigged with the intent of dropping the pit to check cross passages at the bottom. The rope did not reach bottom and it was determined, using the same tree as an anchor, a rope of 120’ will be needed to safely descend the pit. They then went to Union City Cave and Eli roped down and reported there was a large tree limb approximately 6’ above the bottom and below that she felt the pit was mud plugged. They then located Two Tub Cave #2 and determined that the there was good air movement. Bill will request of the park that the cave be assigned a number for the Small Cave Inventory.

Ian Flom led a team to the Snowball Dining Room and proceeded to tie in at station EA25 in El Ghor. A total of 499.1 feet of resurvey was accomplished. The team noted that they observed a nearly two degree discrepancy, at a couple of stations, between front and back sights using their Disto. They felt that this was due to magnetic interference but were unable to find any obvious cause.

Leanne Bledsoe and Jeremy Reedy went to Great Onyx to exchange charcoal dye receptors both in the upper and lower cave levels. This was done in support of hydrology studies being done by Western Kentucky University. Before entering the cave, they traversed overland to Great Onyx Spring and changed receptors there. Upon entering the cave and proceeding down Cox Ave., five receptors were exchanged in the upper level. They then rigged a pit that accessed Lucykova and realized the rope was too short to reach bottom. They returned to Hamilton Valley, retrieved a longer rope and returned to the cave and rigged, dropped and changed out the receptor at the bottom of the pit. They proceeded to Halloween Crawl and exchanged the last in cave receptor.

Tom Brucker led a team to Crystal Cave. Their first objective was to locate good rigging points for Frenchman’s Pit. They found what was thought to be a good natural anchor and noted that a 140’ rope would be necessary for the drop. They then took the Turnpike to Bottomless Pit and then to Scotchlite Pit which needs to be surveyed. It was noted that the Y survey out of Bottomless Pit seems to have potential leads off it and should be explored.

Stan Sides, Joyce Hoffmaster, Dan Greger, and John Feil ran testing on Stan’s new antenna for his cave radio. Stan and John stayed above ground with Joyce and Daniel heading underground. The newer antenna worked very well and is smaller and lighter than the previous antenna. Stan feels it should be useful up to a 350’ depth.

Sunday, April 23:
Ian Flom led a team to Mystic Junction in Mammoth Cave. Using the elevator to enter the cave they proceeded down Mary’s Vineyard to El Ghor, down the ladder Emily’s Ave., through Emily’s Puzzle and then to Mystic Junction. At that point, they changed into wetsuits to begin their surveying. They were able to survey 1107.6 of passage ending at survey station MW32. At that survey station they noted a small gap in a sandbank and crawled through revealing a small dome complex. They suspected that this gap was opened during a recent flood and may not be on the original survey of the area. One of the domes was free climbed by Megan Harder and it emerged into an upper level passage that appeared to go quite a distance in several directions. Being out of time, they did not attempt to survey the passage and left the cave. Mick Sutton believes this upper level passage is an old N survey, but a return trip will be required to confirm this and tie into the MW survey...then again it may be virgin cave there for taking!

On Sunday evening we were able to “loan” several CRF members to Park. On the Saturday following the expedition Mammoth Cave was host to the Louisville Orchestra for a concert, featuring the cellist Yo-Yo Ma, in Rafinesque Hall. On Sunday evening of the expedition, the orchestra began to move equipment into the cave and the Park needed to have those bringing in the equipment supervised to help protect the cave. All went well and I’m told by those lucky few who were able to attend the concert that it was exceptional.

I’d like to thank all those who assisted at the expedition. Jeremy Reedy met me at Hamilton Valley upon my arrival on Friday and helped with opening the facility, setting up the tables,
getting the computers up and running and went with me to Science and Natural Resources to pick up the cave key, radios and car tags. Joyce Hoffmaster stepped in as Camp Manager, doing an excellent job and I’m sure no one went home hungry. Also, my thanks to John Feil and Dan Greger for the work did around Hamilton Valley and the time they and Stan Sides put in shoring up the Feil Entrance in the valley. And my thanks to Bob Osburn for his patience in walking Jeremy Reedy, Bill Copeland and myself thru the procedure for scanning the survey books and then uploading the expedition information to the server.

In attendance:
- Bob Lodge, Expedition Leader, Joyce Hoffmaster, Camp Manager, Dan Greger, John Feil, Troy Walls, Shannon Zalo, Leeanne Bledsore, Bill Copeland, Stan Sides, Bob Osburn, Elizabeth Winkler, Rick Toomey, Jeremy Reedy, Matt Mezydlo, Tom Brucker, Ian Flom, Megan Harder, Ashley Adkins, Ashley Heslip

Mammoth Cave: Memorial Day Expedition, May 26-29, 2023

By: Holly McClintock and Matt Mezydlo, Expedition Leaders
Krista Bartel, Camp Manager

The weather cooperated completely throughout the week leading into the expedition and remained beautiful through the expedition, allowing for good-to-go conditions for all lower-level trips planned, no weather concerns for all cave trips, and allowed for enjoyable outside time too.

Thursday, May 25:
Jim Borden and Stan Sides met to discuss Sides Cave. Matt and Holly swept in front of all the bunkrooms and did some general cleanup. Matt donated new whiteboards for all bunkrooms and hung them on the bunkroom doors.

Friday, May 26:
Holly McClintock asked Stan Sides to assist with a carpenter bee problem in the outdoor ceiling of bunkrooms 3, 5, 8, 10. The holes were filled in, this made Holly happy. Attempt to make Holly feel guilty made by Stan but she didn’t care. Jokes a side, this will remain an ongoing problem which will need to be addressed from time to time to prevent damage.

Jeff Fennell used loppers and cleaned up the low hanging branches on the trees in front of the buildings at HV as requested by Stan. Krista Bartel, Matt Mezydlo, Jeff Fennell, Holly McClintock worked together to load the small brush piles into the scoop of Stan’s tractor for removal. This made Stan happy.

Krista and Holly placed a chair outside of each bunkroom. We later high-fived each other when several chairs were pulled out onto the grass and people were hanging out and using them on Friday evening. Small Things.

Stan Sides, Roger McClure, John Feil, Kay Sides, Madisyn Orr worked on Feil Entrance in the valley.

Chad McCain, Mark Brooks, Charley Rey went to Doyle Valley to rig a rope for Saturday’s trip and to check water level and confirm our good-to-go expectations. They were back on sight at HV quickly and had no troubles. Water level conditions confirmed and positive attitudes revving to go.

Charley Rey noticed most of the screens on the doors of the bunkrooms needed repair caused by occupants continuously over time pushing on the screen of the door versus the wood while exiting bunkrooms. He had the tool needed to fix the screens in his truck and was able to repair all bunkroom door screens.

Holly and Krista served eight racks of ribs on Friday evening. Four racks of sweet jalapeno and four racks of sweet BBQ. Ribs were donated by Holly’s son, Nick McClintock.

Matt assisted cavers with calibrating BRIC’s and DistoX’s.

Saturday, May 27:
7am Breakfast began on time. Krista Bartel and Jeff Fennell prepped and served an outstanding meal. Cavers began meandering in for coffee and food. The 8am meeting began and since I am a nervous talker in front of crowds and turn into an auctioneer speaking faster and faster, the meeting was over in no time at all. All proper info was still provided during the meeting, such as... get out there and get us LOTS of good numbers and data, be productive, and stay safe too.

Ten groups of cavers were assigned to be sent out to various places in the Mammoth Cave System. With the first group signing out to leave as early as 0826. It was known I brought a bullwhip so that I could snap it at lollygaggers. I had said I would get it out if needed and was surprised how quick it was requested, by 0930. Note to EL’s, cavers appear to like it when you strike a whip and demand they go caving. We had all teams off the property by 1100.

Chad McCain led a team to Fritsch Ave where they surveyed through a 100’ low air, ear dip and floated into a dome.

Eric Landgraf led a team to Kaemper Ave dealing with some complex vertical and tight passage survey.

Christopher Durai led a team to Hunts Sink Pit however summer foliage prevented them from locating the pit. The team then went to their back up plan in Mammoth and worked on the map in El Ghor.

Dave West led a team to Great Onyx Cave to correct data and work on profiles.
Two teams entered the Khan entrance with excitement from recent permissions to enter the entrance. This entrance has been off limits for years due to landowner not allowing because of a neighbor dispute. Bill Koerschner’s team worked near Ghengis River and Bunnell Ave. James Borden’s team worked off the D-survey in the vicinity of Prediction Junction.

Ian Flom led a team to Mystic River but had to turn around. They returned to HV, gathered GPS coordinates and other Hunts Sink Pit info, they set out to find the missing pit believing the previous team didn’t put effort into finding the pit. Determinedly, and after 3 hours of collecting ticks and catching poison ivy they located and entered Hunts Sink Pit to survey.

Leeanne Bledsoe led a team to Blindly River for dye tracing.

Tom Brucker led a team to Colossal Cave surveying in the HH survey and taught his team the route the Vaughn’s Dome and Ruins of Carthage.

Stan Sides team worked in the valley on the Feil Entrance, hauling many loads of spoils.

While all the cave teams were caving, Krista Bartel and I began focusing on cooking food for the hungry cave dwellers. Our noise caught Kay Sides’ attention as she reentered from working with the Stan’s Well Team. She quickly decided us girls giggling and cooking in the kitchen was more fun than moving sediment and rocks, surprisingly she wasn’t tired from moving sediment and rocks, and she jumped right in and started helping and giggling along with our delirious-ness cooking. The earlier expected teams began staggering in.

Krista Bartel and Jeff Fennell served up another breakfast devoured by cavers roaring in with fun cave tales from the day before and excitement towards the day’s adventures. Matt Mezydlo led the morning meeting at a slower pace than our previous morning meeting, allowing for team trip reports and talks of the day’s plans for all. While cave talk was happening, I prepped the days cave keys, road keys and car tags for 6 teams.

Ian Flom’s team returned to Hunts Sink Pit figuring it would best to do so while they knew how to find it.

Bill Koerschner led a team to New Discovery working off KW survey which leads to Roaring River.

Rick Toomey led a team to Colossal Cave and Long Cave to place NPS UV-C 2022 microbiology sampling spots on maps of the cave area.

Dave West led a team back to Great Onyx Cave to work on the passage connecting Cox to Stairway Crawl.

Two teams went to Crystal Cave. One led by Tom Brucker working on Bottomless Pit area. The other team led by Madeline Brosky working in the vicinity of Lost Passage.

ELs took over kitchen duties from Krista Bartel around 2100 and had hot food ready for all teams who arrived back at HV on time, warm food for those running a little late. All teams were back on site with no real issues by 0200, and Matt and I had everything cleaned up and put away by 0300. Krista was back up and at it again by 0600 and had the clean-up / close down procedures wrote on the board. I joined in to help around 0700, Matt was already up and working on an EL report.

Other cave trips supported by this expedition were two educational trips to Crystal led by CRF trip leader, Tony Kroes, for the Louisville Grotto’s cave event Speleofest held Memorial Day weekend in Bonnieville, KY. Twelve Speleofest guest and an additional CRF member per trip enjoyed the beauty of Crystal to Scotsman’s Trap and back out.

In addition, a route learning trip in Salts Cave for Bruce Hatcher, who is taking over teaching an upcoming class for Chris Groves. Bruce, Matt, Quintin, and Holly enjoyed seeing some of the amazing history Salts has to offer. Bruce, Matt, Quintin, and Holly enjoyed seeing some of the amazing history Salts has to offer. Also, a trip in Outlaw Cave to the lower level to the downstream constriction at the end of the map. Matt and Holly will be going back to persuade on the constriction soon.

Cavers worked together to get reports in, fee payments done, all keys, tags, survey gear turned in. Jeremy Reedy assisted with all the garbage. Holly cleaned survey gear returned and straightened up the gear and EL office. Matt closed the computers down and returned the keys to Rick Toomey. Holly and Krista stayed till all last-minute cleaning was done and locked up all the bunkrooms and buildings leaving HV by 1500 on Monday.

Sunday, May 28:

Krista Bartel and Jeff Fennell served up another breakfast devoured by cavers roaring in with fun cave tales from the day before and excitement towards the day’s adventures. Matt Mezydlo led the morning meeting at a slower pace than our previous morning meeting, allowing for team trip reports and talks of the day’s plans for all. While cave talk was happening, I prepped the days cave keys, road keys and car tags for 6 teams.

Ian Flom’s team returned to Hunts Sink Pit figuring it would best to do so while they knew how to find it.

Bill Koerschner led a team to New Discovery working off KW survey which leads to Roaring River.
**Fritsch Ave:** Chad McCain, Mark “Fish” Brooks, Gretchen Asselmeier, Shelby Proctor, Isaac Smith

**Kaemper Ave:** Eric Landgraf, Madeline Brosky, Michael, Ketzer, Charley Rey

**Hunts Sink / El Ghur:** Christopher Durai, Elizabeth Winkler, Mary Schubert, Ashley Adkins Irons

**Great Onyx:** 1) Dave West, Karen Willmes, Ljubomir Risteski; 2) Dave West, Bob Alderson, Karen Willmes, Elizabeth Winkler

**Roppel / Khan:** 1) Bill Koerschner, Bob Alderson, Philip Balister, David Socky; 2) Jim Borden, Marissa Schorr, Em Michael, Laine Roberts

**Mystic River / Hunts Sink Pit:** Ian Flom, Melody Ni, Ray Kautzman

**Blindfish River:** Leeanne Bledsoe, Jeremy Reedy, Matt Mezydlo

**Colossal Cave:** Tom Brucker, Lee-Gray Boze, Brian Hockaday, Izzie Sonora

**Stan’s Well:** Stan Sides, Roger McClure, Kay Sides, John Feil, Madisyn Orr

**Hunts Sink Pit:** Ian Flom, Melody Ni, Jeremy Reedy

**New Discovery:** Bill Koerschner, Philip Balister, Eric Landgraf, Marissa Schorr

**Colossal / Long Cave:** Rick Toomey, Chad McCain, Mark “Fish” Brooks, Gretchen Asselmeier, Isaac Smith, Shelby Proctor

**Crystal Cave:** 1) Tom Brucker, Brian Hockaday, David Socky; 2) Madeline Brosky, Michael Ketzer, Lee-Gray Boze

*Upper left:* Saturday morning meeting. Photo by Gretchen Asselmeier. *Upper right:* John Feil and Roger McClure on the tractor. Photo by Kay Sides. *Bottom:* Chad McCain, Isaac Smith, Mark “Fish” Brooks, Shelby Proctor, Gretchen Asselmeier. Photo by Chad McCain.