President’s Column
By: Kayla Sapkota

“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants” (Sir Isaac Newton, 1675). I, for one, have “seen further.” We have many so-called “giants” upon whose shoulders our organization and projects have been built. CRF was formally established as a nonprofit organization in 1957, and it has grown in many ways over the past 67 years. Many of us knew our founders, early explorers, and avid mappers personally, while many of us did not (or have-n’t) had the chance to meet them. We have been fortunate to have many influential forces in the years since our inception. As well, each of us has caved with “giants,” in our times and areas. Who are yours, and what wisdom did they share with you? Finally, who will be standing on your shoulders in years to come?

Let's twist Newton's statement: “If I have explored further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

Muddy Smiles,
Kayla Sapkota, President

Left to right: Wade Vagias - Superintendent of the Southern Idaho Parks (Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Minidoka National Historic Site). Sarah Rogers - Executive Director of Craters of the Moon Natural History Association. Todd Stephanic - Wildlife Biologist / Research Coordinator & Compliance Supreme Overlord for the Southern Idaho Parks (hey they let me pick my own title -Todd). Photo by Todd Stephanic, NPS.

On the Cover
Looking out of Jam Up Cave, Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Photo by Kirsten Alvey.
The winter promised plenty of good field time. The only drawback was that the severe piece of cold weather greatly impacted the main expedition of the entire time, as a solid week of highs below freezing, accompanied by the snow of the winter put a damper on major work in January.

**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.

**January 20, 2024:**

Kirsten Alvey and Tyler Skaggs monitored the middle entrance of Jam Up Cave on a very cold day.

**March 7, 2024:**

Mark Jones monitored a couple of cave gates and one un gated cave near Powder Mill, Shannon County.

**March 8, 2024:**

Mark and Scott House worked on cave data all day while waiting for the heavens to unleash upon us. The expected heavy rains and bad storm was pretty much a no-show, but we did get a lot of cave files updated.

See below for trips with the Missouri Department of Conservation to caves in and around the authorized boundaries of the Ozark Riverways.

**MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST**

CRF work on Mark Twain National Forest (U.S. Forest Service) is performed through a cooperative agreement covering inventory, survey, monitoring, and gating. The Mark Twain covers 1.5 million acres, and the bulk of it contains caves. Much recent work has been focused on four forest districts: Ava, Houston/Rolla, Willow Springs, and Eleven Point.

**December 16, 2023:**

Jim Ruedin, Alicia Wallace, and Mike Wallace monitored three caves near Whitten Landing in Oregon County, Eleven Point District. Elsewhere in the same drainage, Mick Sutton, Sue Hagan, and Megan Harder had worse luck, having a non-functioning GPS keeping them from finding their target (always bring a compass and map, part 2).

**January 18, 2024:**

On a cold and snowy morning, Kirsten Alvey and Kevin Tarbet monitored Camp House Cave on the Eleven Point District, Oregon County. The cave was fine and despite the tracks leading up to the cave, no bobcat was found inside. (The usual worry is whether the cave is being used as a bear den.)

**January 19, 2024:**

Kirsten Alvey, Keith Thompson, Kevin Tar bet, and Katherine Bouska monitored a couple of high priority caves in the Little Hurricane drainage in Oregon County on the Eleven Point District.

**February 3, 2024:**

Marissa Schorr and Jeff “Spike” Crews relo cated several old and new caves in Crossing Hollow, an area within the Rolla/Houston District.

**February 10, 2024:**

Marissa returned to the Crossing Hollow area accompanied by Megan Harder and Riannon Colton. This time they surveyed and monitored three caves, while continuing to sort the area out.

**February 24, 2024:**

Craig Williams led Kristen Carroll and Kathryn Krydynski on a cultural monitoring trip to Wildcat Chimney Caves 1 & 2 in the Eleven Point District. No evidence of recent visitation existed.

**February 28, 2024:**

Mick Sutton and Sue Hagan monitored Bluehole Cave, Oregon County, on the Eleven Point District. A wintering population of gray bats was noted, more than before, in a cave that may be a summer bachelor colony.

**March 6, 2024:**

Scott House, Mark Jones, Mick Sutton, and Sue Hagan ventured into the Hurricane Creek area of the Eleven Point District. Mick and Mark did extensive bio-monitoring in two caves that actually had streams while Scott and Sue monitored three smaller dry caves. Later the teams combined for a hike through the cedar copses and green briars to map and inventory a small cave that was unusually populated by a fair number of fishing spiders.

**March 9, 2024:**

Marissa Schorr, Jeff Crews, and Miles Jacques returned again to the Crossing Hollow area to continue surveying and inventorying...
caves. They surveyed four caves, two of which were new records.

**March 10, 2024:**
Isaac Smith, Chad McCain, and Jen Sutherland monitored Chimney Cave in the Potosi District, Washington County. This has a vertical entrance yet has seen lots of visitation from amateur explorers. Among other findings was a homemade climbing pole of doubtful usefulness which will have to be removed on a future authorized trip. Otherwise about fifteen pounds of trash was removed from the cave.

**March 18-20, 2024:**
Dan Lamping, Henry Lamping, Margaret Lamping, Steve Kaub, Loretto Ray, and Bob Lerch spent three days floating on the North Fork of the White River to monitor caves. In addition to finding a new cave, a large number of caves were monitored and bio-inventoried.

**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.

**February 3, 2024:**
A big CRF and Meramec Valley Grotto trip was held in the remote Pioneer Forest area of Big Creek. Dan Lamping, Henry Lamping, Margaret Lamping, and Derik Holtmann were joined by LAD staffers Neal Humke and Nolan Sipe in monitoring two caves in the Big Creek drainage of Shannon County. In the same drainage, Nathan Curran, Bobby Swain, and Amanda Swain monitored four caves including one large one that will need some additional survey to finish the map. Meanwhile, Tony Schmitt, Rick Haley, and Mary Kausch monitored two caves in another part of the drainage. Joe Sikorski, Rick Ihnat, Meredith Wolf, and Vitali Larko mapped one cave and briefly monitored another. Joe Light, Steve Kaub, Rob Lawson and Dani Lotz monitored two other caves noting cultural materials and counting a few bats.

**March 15, 2024:**
Another big trip with CRF and Meramec Valley Grotto to continue monitoring and mapping caves in the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry Wilderness. Dan Lamping, Henry Lamping, Margaret Lamping, Valerie Lamping, and Tony Schmitt mapped Tim Harrison Cave on Blair Creek. Tony and Dan also found two new small caves nearby. Also on Blair Creek Rick Haley, Mary Kausch, Mike Bennett, Steve Kaub, and Derrell Rout, visited Twisting Spring Cave, Stroup Spring Cave, and Double Opening Cave while Nathan Curran and Rob Lawson monitored Holmes Hollow Pit and mapped Lidar Pit Cave
and Lidar Cave. A short hike from camp at the Himont Tower site and also on Blair Creek Adele Ayres, Rachael Lawson, and Loretto Ray monitored Laxton Cave. Returning back to Big Creek Joe Light, Jake Bennett, Shawn Williams, JJ Leibel, and Adrien Burch monitored Mossy Falls Cave and could not relocate Cueva Millar do. Plans are underway to return next winter and continue to continue mapping and monitoring caves in this remote part of the Ozarks.

**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.

**December 12, 2023:**
See above for a trip near Alley Spring.

**December 13, 2023:**
Scott House and Kevin Tarbet took MDC biologists to two caves north of Van Buren. These are bat caves on MDC property but within the boundaries of Ozark Riverways.

**February 8, 2024:**
Scott and Patti House attended part of the Missouri Natural Resources Conference courtesy of MDC. Scott gave a presentation on caves in Natural Areas in the Lower Ozarks area.

**February 9, 2024:**
Jim Cooley and Nate Nesteruk took three MDC staff, Kristin Goodrich (regional manager), Lance Bushan (forester) and Dilan Simmons (biologist), on a monitoring trip to six caves on the Fiery Forks Conservation Area in Camden County. A couple of cave maps were given last touches as well. The staffers were introduced to cave management and biology, which is a very useful thing for land managers.

**February 19, 2024:**
Kirsten Alvey and MDC biologist Katherine Bouska monitored a bat cave in Pulaski County for both visitation problems and a bat census. The gate had been violated and bat numbers were down; a cave that had more than 5,000 *M. sodalis* forty years ago had none this time.

**February 20, 2024:**
Kirsten and Katherine were joined by Tyler Skaggs on a monitoring trip to Money Cave, Dent County, for a monitoring trip. The bulk of the bats noted were big browns that were enjoying the cold climes inside the large entrance. The cave is being well-visited despite the agency closure and a small amount of trash was removed. The cave very much needs a detailed bio survey and a new map.

**February 28, 2024:**
Ken Grush, Sam Grush, and Rich Orr visited an area of St. Louis County to straighten out cave locations all believed to be on private property. Relocating all the features showed that at least one of them was on MDC property so the data has now been fixed.

**March 5, 2024:**
Scott House led a large group of MDC staffers (including biologists Katherine Bouska and Susan Farrington, and forester Steve Paes) into a cave area within the Angeline Conservation Area, Shannon County. We monitored several caves while discussing cave management and protection of cave areas.

**March 7, 2024:**
While checking the entrances of a couple of NPS caves, Mark Jones visited the entrance of Powder Mill Creek Cave where he did maintenance work on the lock.

**March 9, 2024:**
Scott House, Mark Jones, and Tyler Skaggs mapped four caves in a remote area of the Rocky Creek Conservation Area, Shannon County. Three of them were as small as expected, but the fourth opened up into a fascinating cave feature.

**MISSOURI DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION**

CRF and MSS work under a permit to collect survey data on MODoT rights-of-way.

**December 31, 2023:**
Karamea Christofferson, Isaac Smith, Logan Dowd, and Kenneth Cochran monitored and

mapped a cave along a roadcut in Jefferson County.

**ELSEWHERE**

This includes trips done on some agency 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.

**March 5, 2024:**

Mark Jones, Dennis Novicky, and Krista Bartel went to Baxter County, Arkansas, in order to measure a bat cave for a gate. This project is being arranged by the Arkansas Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**March 7, 2024:**

As a follow-up to a gating project, Krista Bartel, and Dennis Novicky monitored Low Water Bridge Cave in Greene County MO. The cave was quite active with life, including Ozark cavefish (a new site) and salamanders. There were at least a couple hundred gray bats that were either leftovers from winter hibernation or already showing up for transient season. There may have been more bats deeper in the cave but the trip was terminated at those clusters.

**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**

**December 27, 2023:**

Matt Beeson, Nathan Burton, and Kayla Sapkota mapped in Devil’s Den Pit, netting 290 ft of survey on this project, as well as the winter bat count.

**December 28, 2023:**

Kayla Sapkota, Matt Beeson, Claty Barnett, and Aaron Thompson counted bats and did a bio inventory in Len House Cave, Novak Spring Cave, Novak Joint Cave, Novak Shed Cave, Flea Cave, and Small Ladder Cave.

**December 29, 2023:**

Kayla Sapkota, Erik Stinnett, Matt Beeson, and Bryant Galloway counted bats and did bio inventories in Broken Bone Pit, Stockman Cave, and Tom Watson Bear Cave.

**December 30, 2023:**

Kayla Sapkota, Jim Harmon, Meghan Gallo, Derek Thompson, John Davis, and Jessie Bridges counted bats in Copperhead Cave and Skull Pit. Later that evening, Kayla Sapkota, Jessie Bridges, and John Davis counted bats in Milk Cow Cave.

**December 31, 2023:**

Kayla Sapkota and Jessie Bridges counted bats and did bio inventories in Hutchinson's Waterfall Cave and Walnut Cave.

**January 27, 2024:**

Kayla Sapkota, John Davis, River Redmon, Taylor Mackey, Ron Redmon, Blake Sasse, and Doug Barron counted bats at Cave Mountain Cave.

**February 17, 2024:**

Kevin Liow, Elizer Ugarte, Annabelle Eddings, Shane O’Riley, and Josh Jones mapped Tea Table Pit and Tea Table Ridge Cave. The crew did bio inventories at Tea Table Pit, Sitting Room Only Cave, Fault Line Karst, Musty Breakdown Cave, and Tea Table Ridge Cave. Jessie Bridges, Riannon Colton, and Emily Roberts finished mapping Buffalo Point Cave. Kayla Sapkota, River Redmon, Jacina Crockett, and Jenna Shanks counted bats in Willis Cave, Fitton Cave’s Bat Entrance, and Ice Box Cave. Ron Redmon, Taylor Mackey, Aubree Sullivan, and Joanna Cooke counted bats in Horseshoe Cave. Mike Slay, Zach Font, Josiah Gardiner, and Cain Beal searched for invertebrates of interest, including cave harvestmen, in Mud Cave. Ben Damgaard, Gene Damgaard, Ethan Smallwood, and Ryon Coursen mapped Mortar Shelter and another small feature. Erik Stinnett, Jack Linburg, Thomas Stewart, and Gabe Whitman bio-inventoried Iron Pipe Shelter, Mud Dauber Shelter, Hanging Tree Cave, Rain Cave, Wiggle Cave, and Plus-Two Cave. They mapped Plus-Two Cave.

**March 9, 2024:**

Jessica Walden, Riannon Colton, Kayleen Lemen, Anna Moore, and Shane O’Riley monitored several caves along the Indian Rockhouse Trail.

**March 14, 2024:**

Claty Barnett, Aaron Thompson, and Kayla Sapkota completed winter bat counts in two pits.

**Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission**

**February 17, 2024:**

Jessie Bridges, Riannon Colton, and Emily Roberts mapped Star Destroyer Pit, a reported vertical lead at the Slippery Hollow Natural Area. This afternoon trip was a perfect complement to the morning's mapping at the Buffalo National River, making this team superstars!
This page: Buffalo National River, Arkansas, clockwise from upper left: Jack Linburg, Thomas Stewart, Gabe Whitman, & Erik Stinnet set out to map caves. Selfie by Erik Stinnet; Jenna Shanks, Zach Font, Josiah Gardiner, Cain Beal, Jacina Crockett, River Redmon, Mike Slay, and Kayla Sapkota set out to perform cave inventories. Selfie by Mike Slay; Claty Barnett and Kayla Sapkota on a bat counting trip. Photo by Kayla Sapkota; Ben Damgaard maps a cave with a tight entrance. Photo by Gene Damgaard.

Next page: Ozark Activities, clockwise from upper left: CRF crew heads into a roadcut cave in Jefferson County MO. Photo by Karamea Christofferson; Scott House looks at a miniscule cave entrance in Shannon County MO. Photo by Tyler Skaggs; Macrocera nobilis, a fungus gnat larva. Photo by Kirsten Alvey; A CRF crew in a Forest Service cave, Oregon County MO. Photo by Kirsten Alvey; Aaron Thompson on a bat counting trip in Buffalo National River. Photo by Kayla Sapkota.
Mammoth Cave: Labor Day Expedition, September 1-4, 2023
By: Bob Osburn, Expedition Leader, JoAnne Osburn, Camp Manager

On Saturday, September 2, nine parties went caving. There was one off-park trip to Lost River Cave in Bowling Green. Pat Kambesis is starting a project there and wanted to get a start on the survey. Mykah Carden and Justin Marenko went with her. They found that too much iron and too many tourists impeded progress. 14 stations were set and a decision that a transit survey was necessary in the entrance region due to excessive amounts of iron.

Mick Sutton took Karen Willmes and Kevin Downs to Salts Cave to continue the running profile which they extended from T59 to T75 for 1132 feet.

Two trips went to Proctor Cave, downstream Logsdon River. Ian Flom led Michael Raymond, Maya Robles, and Lane Roberts to the right hand fork to attempt an upstream dive in the Right Hand Fork. Ian laid ~130 feet of line before retreating due to cold. Michael then surveyed the stations Ian left and put in several more stations but did not survey them before exiting the sump. The sump continues as a wide passage from 10 to 20 feet high and approximately 20 feet wide. The sump is fairly shallow but does not have air bells at least yet.

Rick Toomey with Mike Conover and Tom Gracanin went to the Right Fork Junction and assisted by Ian’s team attempted to install new water condition monitoring pumps. These were to be brought down from the surface already attached to their hoses rather than being laboriously carried into the cave and then attached. The point is to have them in a space where there is well-mixed water rather than in the pipe. It was found though after lowering the pumps that the holes in the pipe were inadequate to allow them to be gotten out and positioned in pools nearby. The Park radio did not work but the Hawkins River casing allowed enough verbal communication that the attempt could be canceled until a new plan can be devised.

Chad McCain led Fish Brooks, Shelby Proctor, and Cathleen Yung to Fritsch Avenue to attempt to climb a dome they had surveyed to on a prior trip. They called it Ozark Dome. Chad managed to get up to the first chert level at about 20 feet above the floor and then surveyed what passage could be reached from there with a solo Disto-x survey. While he was packing up to go down, he looked up and realized that the ceiling channel above looked likely to go, so he climbed up and managed to get up about 6 feet into this and consequently along at least 100 feet of passage. He turned around in going cave and exited, leaving ropes rigged to both levels. They plan to return and may have by now since this report is so late.

Bill Koeschner led Russel Conner and Jeremy Reedy to the farther reaches of New Discovery to replace an A survey and close a loop that had been neglected. They surveyed about 385 feet of survey, 250 of which was new.

Rick Olson led JoAnne Osburn to Cascade Hall to take in another kayak for the next day, re-inflate others, and check the condition and location of gear.

Dave West led Sue Hagan and Elizabeth Winkler to Hidden River Cave to survey the new walkway. They surveyed about 480 feet of resurvey and returned with the opinion that a few shots in middle need to be done with a transit due to too much iron in the swinging bridge section.

Spike Crews lead Marissa Schorr and Jenny Tison to Mather Avenue where they surveyed about 400 feet, 140 new in the Waterfall Room area.

On Sunday, September 3, Ian Flom with Maya Robles and Wil Strehl returned to the Hawkins Logsdon convergence to collect gear that had been left behind on the previous day's trip. They had been too tired to carry it all on that trip. Downstream sump was inspected and party and all gear exited the cave.

Rick Olson, Tom Gracanin, and Jenny Tison went to Cascade Hall and then Mystic River on a fossil collecting trip (legitimate and for the scientist working for Park). They did not find their prime objective but did find and collect several other things.

Mary Schubert led Mykah Carden, Mike Conover, and Justin Marenko to South Cave to finish an upper level which they apparently did.

Bill Koeschner led Tim Green and Marissa Schorr to Franklin Avenue just off Cleveland Avenue. They surveyed various things for a total of just over 500 feet, 50 of it new.

Dave West, Karen Willmes, Elizabeth Winkler, and Dick Market went to Great Onyx Cave to replace survey data only. They replaced 560 feet and quit when the party rebelled at a canyon/pit crossing.
Mammoth Cave: New Year’s Expedition, December 29, 2023-January 1, 2024

By: Jenny Tison, Expedition Leader

I’ve divided this into three sections:
• An overview of the expedition and subsequent rescue
• Expedition party lists/mini-trip summaries
• Thank you’s and logistical advice

This was my first year EL’ing the New Year’s expedition and it was one for the ages – by Karen’s best estimate, it was the largest Mammoth expedition since the 1980s. Many thanks to Ed Klausner and Elizabeth Miller who stewarded the New Year’s expedition for so long and were really helpful getting me ready.

There were 55 people who attended, with 51 people caving on Saturday and 29 caving on Sunday. We had a variety of cavers ranging from long-time Eastern Operations JVs to highly experienced personnel familiar with CRF West to members of the MIT Student Caving Club recruited by Lee-Gray Boze.

In total, the group surveyed 5,423 feet with 3,568 feet of “new” survey! Please see below for a full accounting.

The large attendance, with a number of very skilled project cavers, ended up being of pivotal importance when we were notified late on New Year’s Eve of a nearby cave rescue in Fisher Ridge that required our assistance. At this point, all CRF cave trips had concluded. Many members of the CRF expedition moved to provide support: either by joining an initial response team in the cave, returning to Hamilton Valley later to run communications wire or carry the litter, or offering their expertise in various fields. Karen Willmes and Dave West were incredibly helpful wrapping up the expedition as we moved into “rescue mode” and offering CRF resources, and Pat Kambesis was instrumental in allowing Hamilton Valley to be the rescue’s base of operations. I was grateful to Michael Raymond’s work as CRF Safety Officer, as we had well-stocked hasty kits that could be used right away in support.

I, and many of the other rescue participants, were helped by our prior training – National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) Small Party Assisted Rescue (SPAR) and Wilderness First Responder (WFR) were of utmost importance, in addition to other NCRC and Search and Rescue expertise. Knowing how large our expedition would be, I had generated a list ahead of time with Michael Raymond of who possessed these skillsets at the CRF expedition. I was able to transition fairly seamlessly from the EL position to providing surface support for the rescue as I had SPAR and WFR training, and I’d encourage any EL or CRF participant who is interested to get this training too.

As a quick summary of the rescue effort (more information is available elsewhere online), on the afternoon of New Year’s Eve, Paul Walko broke his leg and cracked two ribs due to a routine breakdown shift on day 4 of a 5-day planned trip into Fisher Ridge. His location was about 8 hours into the cave for an able-bodied caver with a light pack. Through the many efforts highlighted above (including Paul’s own), largely using SPAR techniques in advance of a fuller “call out” on January 3, Paul was out of the cave at 11:59 p.m. on January 3. He is currently doing well in his recovery. Additionally, the team is working to analyze lessons that we may bring forward to interested EL’s.

Sean Lewis, a participant on the Fisher Ridge trip, wrote on the CRF EO Facebook page, “I would like to personally extend my thanks to the CRF for participating in a challenging and complex cave rescue. In particular to the expedition leader Jenny Tison for stepping up to leadership and command of the rescue. Cavers are family - you all showed that with flying colors. Thank you. We couldn’t have done it without you.”

It was an honor to be a part of a team of cavers working together so well to use their skills to help this rescue!

Now, back to the CRF Expedition itself - as mentioned above, it was really successful - here is what each team got up to.

Saturday trips: 51 cavers, 14 cave parties
(alphabetical order below)

East Salts “Wilcox’s Lost Ocean” (Christian DeCelle, Alex Fischer, Reilly Blackwell, Michael Ketzer, Maggie Brosky) This team went through the Feil Entrance to Wilcox’s Lost Ocean, which hadn’t been visited (to our knowledge) since 1973/74ish. They surveyed 2300 feet in total at a T-intersection and both directions kept going! According to Jim Borden, they are now within 950 feet of Roppel!

Echo River Boardwalk (Rachel Saker, Stephanie Suen, JJ, Amelia Fatykhova) Looked into leads off the boardwalk at Echo River that required advanced vertical skills. They climbed and tied to a survey above from Abo Avenue. More leads exist!

Ferguson (Aaron Bird, Matt Mezydlo, Michael Raymond, Megan Harder) The objective of this trip was to re-rig the entrance drop, with permission from the landowner, to remake it for long-term use and to divert the rope away from
the waterfall. This team took out old bolts, made a small traverse, and added a new anchor.

Great Onyx (Dave West, Karen Willmes) Dave surveyed a small known chamber that had never been included on the map (“new” 34 feet) and then redrew part of the Edwards Avenue plan view to incorporate a ceiling ledge found between Hanging Gardens and Cox Avenue. They found several holes down to another level that seemed to be ~20 feet deep; they did not go down due to not having a handline. Also got some cross sections in Cox Avenue.

Great Onyx, Ninety Foot Pit (Alea Moore, Chris Bauer, Garrett Bell) This team replaced the survey starting at the bottom of the Ninety Foot Pit and investigated some leads that the older survey didn’t have much information on. They pushed as far as they could and found a 7.5-inch squeeze with no airflow. They do not recommend prioritizing this.

Hidden River (Bill Koerschner, Liz Sutherland, Charlie Alavi) Completed survey of a pit at the end of Wheet River (60 feet). It was very muddy (an understatement).

Northwest Passage (Kohl Mitchell, Corey Ellis, Mandy Harris, Kate Coleman) Continuing work started at the July 2023 expedition, this team connected the N survey in Canyons of Absolon to the W survey in the Northwest Passage for 233 feet of resurvey. They added 17 feet of believed new survey from a small cut-around and also noted a couple leads.

Powell Trail (Chris Durai, Tommy Brucker, Ashley Adkins Irons, Aaron Irons, Brian Hockaday) The major goal of this trip was for Chris to familiarize himself with his new map sheet, which was a part of the cave that hadn’t been visited since the 1960s. They accomplished some resurvey as well.

Proctor (Niles Lathrop, Anastasiya Razumovska, Will Strehl, Weston Hennion, Elizabeth “Boof” Truchan, Felipe Barsevicius) Went down the T-Junction to check out Davis Way and Maya’s Meander. They repurposed ropes from Hawes Creek for a 40-foot pit in Maya’s Meander. Turned around in southern end of Frost Avenue in a steeply descending walking passage. There is a lot more to do. 500 feet of survey.
Roaring River (Rai Bosch, Cole Kostelac, Brandi Boze, Tyler Bosch-Bird) This trip measured bedrock level changes at 4 micro-erosion monitoring stations in the Roaring River passage in support of Rai’s research, which installed the stations in 2019-20. Cole, an engineer by trade, and Brandi did a great job reading the micrometer. The water levels were low, which stood out versus the last time, when the last station was submerged in sediment.

Roppel “Transgressions” (Krista Bartel, Dennis Novicky, Marissa Schorr) This trip was down Transgressions Trail, near Grand Junction, off of Topoﬁll Link. The survey passage was a 3-foot tall x 1-foot wide rock drain, where they surveyed 214 feet. Before turning back, they pushed 150-200 feet further ahead to conﬁrm that they could indeed drop down into walking passage (Upper Elysian). This last part remains to be done.

Sand Spring Lower Cave (Bill Copeland, Rory Knight, Gabriel Kammer, Kat Jander) Bill led a team of 3 MIT cavers to ideally ﬁnish the survey of Sand Spring Lower Cave to resurvey a 1969 survey. Bill stayed warm enough at the surface with a Palmer furnace. The MIT cavers went in to explore, and made it past the extent of Aaron Bird’s survey though not to the very end, which appeared blocked. It was muddy and slick. They saw gastropod fossils, bats and cray ﬁsh.

Snowball (Ed Klausner, Lee-Gray Boze, Michelle Touma, Eugeniya Artemova) This team succeeded in making 5 ties from new to old survey (where there were multiple survey lines going through a passage) in order to eliminate the previous El Ghor and Emily’s Avenue surveys.

Sunday – 29 participants, 8 trips

Bridge Avenue (Stephanie Suen, Garrett Bell, Liz Sutherland, Cole Kostelac) Went down Doyle Valley to check several wet leads shortly after turning onto Bridge Ave. Installed a permanent station and surveyed down one of them.

Crystal, 5 passages / Madison Avenue
(Tommy Brucker, Lee-Gray Boze, Eugeniya Artemova, Gabriel Kammer) Introduced new surveyors to surveying, began survey in leads in canyon beyond Ebb & Flow Falls.

Great Onyx (Dave West, Corey Ellis, Michelle Touma) Data from one FSB didn’t match two others FSBs: this trip reshoot all stations to determine what was correct.

Lee’s Cistern (Rachel Saker, Felipe, JJ, Megan Harder, Amelia Fatykhova) Went down from the top (Gratz Ave) of Lee’s Cistern to tie to a passage below with an old survey A. Connected the top of Lee’s Cistern to the bottom for the first time.

New Discovery, Canyon of Shadows (Kohl Mitchell, Marissa Schorr, Kat Jander, Brian Hockaday) Surveyed a side lead off Canyon of Shadows, pushed ~70 feet before they determined it was too dangerous to continue.

New Discovery, Upstream / Roaring River
(Chris Bauer, Brandi Boze, Ashley Adkins-Irons, Rory Knight) Replaced the old S survey heading upstream.

Snowball (Michael Raymond, Alea Moore, Kate Coleman) Resurveyed the C-Survey near the Snowball Dining Room.

Thank you’s and logistical advice
A major thanks goes to many cartographers who provided ample objectives with detailed lead sheets to supply every person with a meaningful caving experience. I did my best to facilitate trip leader – cartographer contact in advance of the weekend for longer or more complicated trips to ensure a better rate of success. A special shout-out to Dan Lamping, who while not attending got on the phone with trip leader Kohl Mitchell to review the route ahead of time and whose detailed lead packet allowed me to proactively recruit suitable cavers. Thanks also to Ed Klausner, who worked with Rachel Saker and team ahead of time to ensure they were prepared for their challenging vertical trip. Thanks also to Bob Osburn, who sent through detailed notes for his Bridge Ave leads when I had follow-up questions – this allowed the party to get where they needed to go! And finally, a thank you to Bill Koerschner, whose lead packet and advice enabled two teams to get good work done in New Discovery without him physically being there.

Thank you to Pat Kambesis and Laura Lexander for being in early contact about people signing up as new JVs.

A big thanks to Rick Toomey and others who kept us informed about the elevator status (we’re glad it was ﬁxed right in time!), and to Mary Schubert for cooking for this many people – and to his sous-chef Zach, and Aaron and Ashley for pitching in in the kitchen. And to Eli Winkler, who made sure we were good-to-go on cave snacks before her vacation.

Thanks again to everyone for a successful expedition and subsequent rescue effort, and I look forward to New Year’s 2024-25!
Mammoth Cave: President’s Day Expedition, February 16-19, 2024

By: Jeffrey Crews, Expedition Leader

I would like to thank everyone who attended and made the President's Day Expedition a success.

We had an amazing turnout. Between the C3 celebration and the expedition proper, we had 72 cavers sign in to camp. I'm not sure how many I can claim to have been around Saturday morning (more Bruckers than you could shake a stick at!) but 49 CRF participants fielded 18 parties into Mammoth Cave and its vicinity. Six parties went to Flint Ridge, three trips to Great Onyx Cave, one to a small cave, and the remaining eight in Mammoth proper. A total of 2868.17 feet of survey was accomplished, of which 1758.97 feet is resurvey and 1109.2 feet is new survey.

Saturday, February 17:

In Mammoth Cave, Ed Klausner led Jim Ruedin and Elizabeth Winkler to knock off some leads and fix some tie-ins around Mary's Vineyard and beyond. They found an overlooked side passage got some new survey with a few leads. Scott House and Matt Beeson worked on making proper ties near Thanksgiving Hall via the Frozen Niagara entrance. Chad McCain led Isaac Smith, Michael Bradford, Shelby Proctor, James Dowd, and Jennifer Sutherland on a route to a window into Edna's Dome from the top of Cathedral Domes. Much survey was replaced here, but they were unable to make the tie to below. Bob Osburn led Diana Tomchick, Dakota Roberts, Konnar Jones, and Abigail Creech to Marion Avenue to work on a profile.

In Flint Ridge, Marissa Schorr and Kohl Mitchell led Gunnar Wurst, Matthew Craighead, Charlie Carter, Adele Ayres, Rory Knight, and Eugenia Artemova to resurvey routes in Grund Trail. Dan Lamping led Ben Miller, Nathan Brucker, Garrett Bell, Joe Sikorski, Brent Williams, Kyle Mann, Derik Holtmann, LJ Risteski, and Nathan Curran to the Bogli Shafts area. Joe Sikorski and team worked a high passage off Canyons of Absolon and Dan and the rest took a stab at Penck Trail and the Blue Tube.

The Blue Tube was wetter than hoped for but routes were relearned. I did wonder though if with such a large party, if Dan and the others could have laid in the water to absorb as much of it as possible or at the least warm the water a few degrees so that crack two-man Brucker/Miller team couldn't have gotten a few hundred feet of quick survey in the books before heading out. Next time an advanced team will be sent in with instructions to warm the water hours before the arrival of the elite surveyors. I intend to lead future expeditions from the front, so to speak, so these great ideas can be but in practice on the spot, rather than being the hindmost, as is our current practice.

Christian DeCelle led Jacob Lieber, Amelia Fatykhova, Michael Ketzner, and Reilly Blackwell into the Feil Entrance to work in East Salts. This trip had rocky beginnings to say the least. Reilly aggravated an injured shoulder and was led out of the cave less than an hour into the trip. Jacob became nauseous an hour or so later and exited with Amelia. Michael stayed with Christian and they worked on rigging and route finding.

In Great Onyx Bert Ashbrook led Mike Conover and Matt Mezydlo to survey a low room in the vicinity of Piano Rock. Dave West led Matthew O'Neal and Karen Williams to survey leads near the Hanging Gardens.

Bill Copeland and Tim Green worked on seeing if an overland route to Taylor Coates Hollow is viable. It looks like water access will be preferred for quite a while. Some cave locations were verified and plans for future survey initiated.

Sunday, February 18:

In Mammoth Cave, Scott House and Matt Beeson led Jim Ruedin into the Frozen Niagara Entrance to do some survey in the Jack Chapman Pit passage, fix a tie, and check a blunder. Ed Klausner led Elizabeth Winkler and Karen Willmes to knock off some leads and fix some tie-ins around Snowball Dining Room. Jenny Tison led Eugenia Artemova and Mike Conover to work on the leads left by Ed the previous day. Bill Steele, Rory Knight, and Diana Tomchick finished off the rest of Ed's leads.

In Great Onyx Dave West led Dakota Roberts, Konnar Jones, and Abigail Creech to survey at the end of Edwards Avenue.

Thanks to:

Megan Harder for being a great camp manager in Isabel's place, Dave West and Karen Willmes for handling much of the expedition work at the close during my illness, Scott, Marissa, and others for stepping up as always to make sure things run smooth and get done.