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Contact the editor @ 915-559-3297 after 8 p.m. Fax line and voice mail @ (915)694-1824, any time. E-mail: waltfeast@marshall.com



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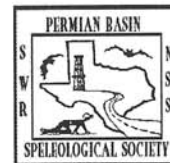
Next Meeting: PBSS

The next official meeting of the Permian Basin Speleological Society will be held on *Tuesday, March 11, 1997* at 7:00 PM in the back meeting room of Murry's Delicatessen. Murry's is located at 3211 west Wadley, Midland, Texas.

Our Agenda:



If you need more directions or information call our official contact person, Walter Feaster @ 915-559-3297, or 694-1824. E-Mail: waltfeast@marshall.com



PBSS Home Page

<http://www.apex2000.net/personal/bb2145/pbss.htm>

Web space donated courtesy of Bill Bentley and Apex 2000 ISP.

Future Cave Trips: Also other events from PBSS and other grottos.

- March 7-8, *TSA Colorado Bend State Park Project*: Contact Dale Barnard @ (512)453-3446 or <barnard@fc.net>. Or Terry Holsinger @ (512)443-4241 or <trhli@sprynet.com>.
- March 29-30, *Endless Cave Survey (New Mexico)*: Contact Jim Stephens @ (806)785-0427.
- April 12-13, *TSA Colorado Bend SP Project*: See above for details.
- April 18-20, *Earth Day Project*: @ Colorado Bend State Park. Trips into caves will be provided by the Central Texas Grotto. Contact Alvis or Dawn Hill @ (210)606-3988 or Pat Copeland @ home (915)643-2952, work (915)646-8354. Mother's e-mail: <copeland@web-access.net>.
- April 19, *TSS Cave Map Drafting and Data Processing Workshop*: This will be held at the TSS office in Austin. Space is limited. Contact Bill Elliott @ Texas Speleological Survey, 12102 Grimsley Drive, Austin, Texas 78759-3120. TSS office# (512)475-8802, home (512)835-2213, or <welliott@mail.utexas.edu>.
- April 19-20, *GypKaP (New Mexico)*: Contact Steve Peerman, 1757 Defiance, Las Cruces, NM 88001. Or <sspeerm@tesuque.cs.sandia.gov>.
- April 20-26, *CRF-Lincoln National Forest, Capitan Area Expedition*: Cave exploration and ridge walking. Contact Dick Venters @ (505)892-7370.
- April 26, *TSA Convention*: Site to be announced. The TSA is encouraging every caver in the state to attend.
- May ?, *O-9 Well Upstream Survey Project*: Date to be announced. Contact Robert Campbell @ (210)494-8201.
- May 10-11, *TSA Colorado Bend SP Project*: See above for details.
- June 23-27, *The 1997 NSS Convention*: In Sullivan, Missouri. Contact Pam Saberton @ (314)772-6956 or <pams107326@aol.com>. Read all about it on the web page at <http://www.umsl.edu/~joellaws/nss>.
- October 17-19, *Texas Cavers' Reunion*: Location to be announced.

Most all of this material was stolen from various and sometimes reliable caving newsletters in the Southwestern Region and surrounding area, including the TSA's "Activities Newsletter"
 ***** Denotes a PBSS club Trip...*****

News from Lechuguilla

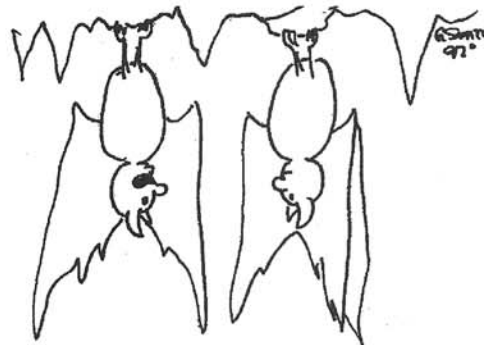
DR. LARRY MALLORY, in a recent talk to park staff, elaborated on his microbe studies in Lechuguilla Cave to date. Approximately 1200 strains of microbes have been collected from the cave. Though he still is in the process of collecting microbes from the cave, initial testing of a number of them for medicinal qualities has produced some exciting results. Six of the microbes, which have all been collected from the least visited areas of the cave, have shown positive results when combined with human breast cancer cells. Of these six, one has been selected for continued testing because of its ability to kill all cancer cells, but leaves normal cells intact. This particular microbe is excreting a chemical that is responsible for the die-off of cancer cells. It is hoped that this chemical will be identified within a couple of months. If all goes well, a new drug could be ready for use on humans with breast cancer within five to ten years. Dr. Mallory is in the beginning stages and plans to conduct additional tests on the microbes found in Lechuguilla Cave and from other caves, particularly Mammoth Cave and caves in and around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

This article was taken from "Canyons & Caves" a newsletter from the Natural Resources Offices, Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Dale Pate editor.

Cave Rescue Numbers
 U.S.A. 1-800-692-0234
 MEXICO 1-210-686-0234 (call collect)
 NEW MEXICO, U.S.A. Try "911" First

Flip & Flop The Two Bats

By Gary Smith



Bugs, bugs, bugs! Every night we eat our weight in bugs.
 The heck with this, I want a cheese burger!

TRIP REPORTS: and other lies and stories



Colorado Bend State Park Tip Jan. 11-12, 1996

Cave: Sore Toe Cave

Cavers: Marcus Barksdale, Jennifer ?, Tom Kaler, and Rebecca Lee.

Tom and I volunteered to help with the on going T.S.A. project but I must admit we had a hidden agenda. We arrived at the T.S.A. campground at 9:30 AM Saturday morning and met a small group of cavers including Terry Holsinger, Melynn Conway, Meliene Davis, and Bill Sawyer braving the terribly cold weather with the help of a campfire. After much talk, everyone was finally divvied in to groups and assigned certain caves in which to work. Meliene, Melynn, and Bill decided to go to White Face Cave with Pat Copeland but that plan eventually-fell through when it was discovered that no one had a rope. Tom and I went with Marcus and Jennifer to survey Sore Toe Cave and it ended up being a frustrating experience.

Due to downed power lines on the road, we had to hike to Sore Toe Cave but with the sun beaming down on us we warmed quickly. When we found the cave after a little search, Marcus the sketcher gave us a brief lesson on surveying. Then Tom rigged the rope. At 2:00 PM, I was the first to drop the 15 foot entrance pit which has a thin crevice opening. Warned of the bad air that filled the cave in summer, I flicked my Bic often.

Marcus told me where to position the rope and pad for the second drop of 35 feet which was tied off on top. But when I got down there, it didn't seem right. It made getting on rope and starting the rappel dangerous. Further more, the rope didn't touch bottom. Marcus and Tom unwrapped some of the loops on top but it was still too short. Finally after some rerigging, it touched bottom and I descended the pit testing for bad air along the way. At bottom, I searched for the dig that is also down there and found a family of mice huddled together in a crevice. I found the dig and began pulling the rocks away while I waited for someone to join me. This is where I realized cave surveying is not for me. Marcus, Jennifer, and Tom had to survey as they came down leaving me in the cave longer than anyone. I came to a point in the dig when it was no longer productive without tools and I stopped digging just as Tom reached the bottom. He took over the dig and we waited for Jennifer and Marcus.

Marcus also thought the position of the rope and pad for the 35 foot drop was dangerous and he spent time repositioning it. Marcus is a new sketcher so he was being careful to get it right. Marcus and Jennifer reached the bottom, the surveying was done, and Marcus continued to sketch as I ascended the rope in to the freezing temperatures. The cave wasn't very warm and this was quickly becoming a cold caving experience. Slowly, everyone exited the cave as I waited/shivered anxiously. At 8:30 PM, we were finally headed back to the parking area. On the way, Terry and some other cavers met us as they were coming to look for us. Ed Young with his truck met us farther along and gave us a bumpy ride the rest of the way.

The cave is wet and drips continuously. At the bottom is one room with two short passages going in opposite directions. It was much smaller than expected but the drops are scenic. There is some flowstone running down the walls. It's a cold and tedious trip which took away from the enjoyment for me, but it was supposed to be a work trip. It was my first experience with cave surveying and I learned it's just too slow. I'll leave that to the more patient and laid back cavers. About the best thing I can remember about this weekend was the hidden agenda I mentioned. I married Tom Kaler in Gorman Cave Sunday afternoon and to have access to this cave we had to volunteer to work. If it wasn't for that, this would have truly been the trip from hell.

Submitted by Rebecca Lee NSS #42075

From the Secretary/Treasurer

Below and the next page is some information from the National Forest Service concerning there Fee Demonstration Project. A representative from the NFS was suppose to present this at one of our meetings, but time did not allow it. The Forest Service would like our ideas, comments, and constructive criticism on this subject. Send any comments to: Mike Baca, District Ranger, Federal Building room # 159, Carlsbad, NM 88220. Or send them to me and I will relay it. Deadline 3-13-97.

WHITE PAPER
SOUTHWEST CAVE FEE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
JANUARY 29, 1997

SHARED VISION

To provide a high quality experience in world class wild caves by developing a world class wild cave management program of excellence; wherein unique cave ecosystems are protected and owner public opportunities are accommodated. This program of excellence will be achieved by innovative methods of collaborative stewardship, research, education, interpretation, restoration and protection to enhance our unique, sensitive cave ecosystems.

CURRENT STATUS

The current ability to manage the cave resource is unacceptable. The lack of budget resource (financial) will result in the degradation of the unique sensitive cave ecosystems. Access and recreation opportunities could be diminished.

FEE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Agency cave managers of the Southwest Region, USDA Forest Service, held a meeting January 29, 1997 in Alamogordo, NM.. to address the current proposal for a Fee Demonstration Project on the Lincoln National Forest. This meeting was designed as a strategy session to provide opportunity to review various options for implementing the cave fee denomination project. Since the initial proposal was approved as one of the 50 Forest Service projects, opportunities to implement the project on a different scale was a viable alternative that needed discussion.

In attendance were: Brent Botts, Jeff Saari, Buddy Stewart (Southwest Regional Office) Johnny Wilson, Mike Baca, Ransom Turner, Richard Carlson, Merle Glenn (Lincoln M.F.) Par Spoerl, Jeanne Wade, Jerry Trout (Coronado N.P.) Paul Happel (BLM).

Initial discussion created general guidelines the group felt would be necessary for the fee demonstration project, regardless of the specific implementation process that is developed.

- 1) Protection of all unique, sensitive cave ecosystems.
- 2) Economic viability.
- 3) Enhance volunteer collaborative stewardship and customer service.
- 4) Fulfill the mission of cave ecosystem management direction.
- 5) Protect the integrity of scientific cave research opportunities.

Within the above guidelines a cave fee demonstration program would benefit the management of cave resources in a number of ways.

- 1) Fees would be returned to the local unit of the fee demonstration project. A minimum of 80% of the money would be available for enhancement, protection, restoration, and management of these caves. An additional 15% may be retained to offset the administrative cost of collecting the money.
- 2) There is no existing funding for cave management in the Forest Service. Most funds for cave resources currently come from Recreation Management. This project would provide a separate funding for just the management of caves.
- 3) The Forest Service has made a commitment the Congress to carry out a cave fee demonstration project. By using the guidelines presented earlier, we have the opportunity to enhance the importance of this valuable resource.
- 4) This is a demonstration project that gives us the chance to explore new and innovative ways to fund cave management and we should take advantage of the opportunity.
- 5) Only the caves that we identify as part of the demonstration project will be available to receive the benefits of any fees collected. By involving other Forest Service units, we have the opportunity to select specific caves that may be better suited to a certain fee opportunity ie: horizontal caves, or gated caves.
- 6) Volunteer efforts are essential to Forest Service cave management and will continue to be of fundamental importance to the program. Work that provides for restoration, mapping, monitoring, etc. of caves will be subject to a fee waiver.

Various alternatives for the cave fee demonstration program were discussed:

- 1) Permit Fees (Single, Group, Annual, Semi-Annual, etc.)
- 2) Guided Tours (Forest Service, Volunteer, Contracted)
- 3) Donations
- 4) Memorandums and Agreements
- 5) Non-Profit Associations
- 6) Adopt-A-Project or other volunteer programs.

After the benefits of each of these alternatives were discussed. The group decided that all of these tools could be used within the SW Cave Fee Demo Project. It would be left to each National Forest to decide which cave to include in the program and which alternative or alternatives would be best to use for certain caves.

The Lincoln National Forest and Coronado National Forest agreed to brief the grottos in their area before the end of February. Comments from these meetings would be used to shape the overall SW Fee Demonstration Project. On March 13, 1997, the agency group will meet again to determine the specific caves to include in the program, appropriate fees and other aspects of project participation. A business plan describing the operation of the project and proposed use of fees, will then be developed and shared with the caving community.

The group addressed the questions from the September 21, 1995 public meeting in Carlsbad that announced the Cave Demonstration Fee Program:

- 1) Would vandalism and illegal entries increase as the result of charging a fee? Ans: Fees have traditionally decreased vandalism in areas where fees were previously not charged. It is doubtful that illegal entries will increase because of the reasonable rates expected to be charged.
- 2) Will collecting money increase the Permit issuance problem? Ans: The administrative cost to issue a permit is about the same regardless if money is collected or not. The Fee legislation allows for up to 15% of all money collected to be retained to offset this administrative cost. This is money above the 80% that is returned to the project.
- 3) Will security of the collected funds result in additional problems? Ans: The Forest Service has a very strict procedure for collecting current funds from campgrounds, firewood permits and other fiscal activities. The same security measures will apply to any money collected from the fee demonstration Project.
- 4) Would requiring a fee jeopardize the honor system? Ans: On caves that have no gates this could be addressed by 'no gate, no fee' otherwise it may be a problem. The same problem is faced at campgrounds where campers are expected to deposit their fee in a tube. The Fee Demonstration authority gives our law enforcement officers the authority to fine any person who does not comply with the fee process.
- 5) The Cavers' that volunteer their time; would be the ones charged? Ans: No fee will be charged to Cavers' carrying out volunteer agreements.
- 6) A pilot project that works in one place may not work in another. Ans: This is true. By expanding the projects to other National Forest, we can determine better where it may or may not work. The Fee Program is not intended to be a success in every case.
- 7) Charging a fee will increase the Forest Service liability. Ans: True, a person only has to prove negligence instead of gross negligence. However, this is not any different than existing developed campgrounds or the entrance fee charged by the National Park Service for entering the park.
- 8) People may not feel a need to inform the FS about locations of newly discovered caves. Ans: The protection of the cave resource is the number one consideration in this program. Trust must be built through cooperation and time. Historically, keeping cave locations from land owners or land managers has resulted in resource damage.
- 9) A cost analysis should be considered to determine the real value to any fee program. Ans: A business plan with a cost analysis for the project will specifically address the expected cost of implementing a cave fee demonstration project.
- 10) Generated funds from the cave project may be offset in the agencies budget. Ans: Congress has agreed to not offset the revenue generated from the Fee Demonstration Project during this three year trial period. Permanent legislation is currently being drafted that might change the method for fee sites beyond 2001. Currently there is no cave line item in the budget and any revenue generated is new money for management of the cave program.