

The Maverick Bull



Maverick Grotto Information

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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of The National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed stamped envelope should accompany it.

Reprinting Articles: Internal organizations of The National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to the author as stated in the byline) first appearing in *The Maverick Bull* if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of *The Maverick Bull* at the address herein.

Exchanges: The Maverick Grotto will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact the editor.

Complementary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free issue to persons interested in becoming members.

Subscription Rates: Subscription rates are \$15.00 per year for non-members and free for members.

Membership Policy: Any individual with interests, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of The Maverick Grotto and The National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three trip requirement with at least three different grotto members. These three members shall act as sponsors. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

Meetings: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The location will be announced prior to each meeting.

Library: Support your Grotto Library. Dennis Welch will be accepting books and magazines on cave-related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. Bill and Diana will be temporarily bringing and setting up the grotto library on Dennis' behalf.

Photos & Map Credits

Cover Photo: Wayne Peplinski hold the painting he did for the Maverick 20th anniversary.—Photo RD Milhollin

Page 4—Front Gate at Colorado Bend State Park—photo Butch Fralia.

Page 5—TCR at Honey Creek Ranch, Comal County—photo Butch Fralia

Pages 8-9—Fort Stanton Cave—Pete Lindsley

Back Cover: Wayne Peplinski at Beer Cave—RD Milhollin.

Visit Our NSS Award-Winning Web Site! Butch has done an excellent job at constructing the grotto web site and keeping it up-to-date. You'll find information about getting into caving, trip photos and the PDF version of this newsletter (with color photos!):

[Http://www.maverickgrotto.org](http://www.maverickgrotto.org)

Cave Rescue: Call collect: (512) 686-0234

Cave Emergency:

FOR A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY IN TEXAS DIAL 911. FOR CAVE ASSISTANCE START BY CALLING THE CLOSEST NUMBER:

BEXAR: 210-326-1576 **COLLIN:** 214-202-6611

HAYS: 512-393-9054 **KENDALL:** 830-537-6111

SUTTON: 315-387-3424 **TRAVIS:** 512-663-2287

PARKER: 817 657-5780

Next meeting: September 12th, 2006 7:00 pm

Buck N' Loons 3517 South Cooper Street
Arlington, TX 76015-3410.

Program: The program for the September Maverick Grotto meeting will be presented by Diana Tomchick, on Fort Stanton Cave, NM. "From Don Sawyer Memorial Hall through the Mud Turtle to the Snowy River--the Dig Continues." . There will be a short video then pictures from a July 4 Fort Stanton expedition. This should be a great program so please come by and join us.

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Caving Calendar

Sept 12 Maverick Grotto Meeting—Buck N' Loons, 3715 S. Cooper St., Arlington.

Sept 16-17 Manhole Dig (Carlsbad region, NM): Cave diggers welcome, come see if this will be the next big one. **Contact:** Stephen Fleming swcaver@warpdriveonline.com

Sept 23-24 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM): On-going work amid spectacular scenery in beautiful caves of the Lincoln National Forest. Last weekend of the month, permits often include Three Fingers, Virgin, Pink Dragon, Pink Panther, Hidden, Wonderland, and Black Cave. Activities vary from month to month. **Contacts:** Susan Herpin or Jennifer Foote highguads@yahoo.com

Oct 07-14 Fort Stanton Cave Project (Ruidoso, NM): Join the folks working on extending the length of this cave on BLM lands. Weekends will be devoted to installing the new entrance into the Mud Turtle Passage, week-day trips will be scientific surveys. See article in this month's newsletter for more details of project activities. **Contact:** John Corcoran III john_j_corcoran_III@msn.com

Oct 10 Maverick Grotto Meeting – Buck N' Loons, 3715 S. Cooper St., Arlington.—**Annual nomination of officers.**

Oct 13-15 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

Oct 20-22 2006 Texas Cavers' Reunion (Honey Creek Ranch, near Spring Branch): Don't miss the biggest caving party of the year in Texas; typical attendance is around 350 people. Fun events include shopping for caving gear, speleolympics, clothing-optional hot tub, live music, Saturday night banquet, ramen-noodle wrestling and more. Trips into the longest surveyed cave in Texas will be available, check the web site for more details. **Info:** <http://www.oztotl.com/tcr>

Oct 28-29 High Guads Restoration Project (Carlsbad, NM)

Nov 10-12 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

Nov 14 Maverick Grotto Meeting – Annual Election of officers.

Nov 18-26 Proyecto Espeleológico Sierra Oxmolon (San Luis Potosí, México): Annual Thanksgiving caving/surveying/tourist trip to the Sierra Madre Oriental, west of Aquismón. Trip suited for beginners and veterans alike. **Contact:** Jerry Fant (512) 970-0456 Jerry.Fant@esotericvision.com **Info:** www.pesoproject.esotericvision.com

Dec 2 Metroplex Caver Christmas Party – In lieu of December meeting?

Dec 22-Jan 1 Purificación Caving Trip (Tamaulipas & Nuevo León, México): Annual end-of-year trip to the mountains of Old Mexico, dates are approximate. The search to go deep continues. **Contacts:** Bill Steele (speleosteele@comcast.net) Diana Tomchick (214) 418-5827 diana.tomchick@utsouthwestern.edu

2007

Jan 10-12 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

Feb 9-11 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

Mar 9-11 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

Apr 13-15 Colorado Bend State Park Project – This long running project is a Maverick favorite under new management this season. Contact: Rafal Kedzierski cbsp@maverickgrotto.org.

August 2006 Meeting Minutes

The August Meeting of The Maverick Grotto was held August, 8, 2006 at Buck N' Loons. Six members in all attended.

The intended program was a video of The Wakulla Springs Project. Tammy Cox, obtained the video from Diana before she left for the NSS Convention. The management at B&L decided to move us to the back room where there wasn't a television to show the video.

The program evolved into everyone sitting around, telling wild stories and enjoying a good meal.

A great time was had by all!

Chairman's Corner

Happy September, yep it's already that time. The good news is that it's almost time for people like me who don't like the heat to start caving again. I know that some of you didn't let that stop you nary a bit.

There's lots of stuff looking up, check out the calendar, it's pretty full this month. CBSP and TCR in October, stuff down in Mexico and New Mexico between now and then. There are probably trips in Texas if you ask around.

Looks like we're **NOT** going to get the 20th anniversary party set up due to lack of time or interest or both. Maybe we can have a belated one when we find a place. Technically we started in October though our first public meeting was held in November. Seems like it was a long time ago but here we are 20 years later, hanging in there.

Recently there was short discussion on the Texas Cavers list about youth at the NSS convention and how the overall convention looked a little older than it did last year. That apparently has been a subject amongst the NSS Board of Governors and at TSA meetings. I've mentioned it a few times at grotto meetings and in the newsletter. Something everyone needs to think about is how to get more young people interested in caving. I can't believe they are all so wrapped up in their video games they can't take any outside interest.

There's a caving bulletin board at <http://www.texascaving.com/> where there seems to be a lot of young folks who are interested in caving but are mostly intimidated when it comes to getting involved with a grotto. Most of these folks are in Austin and have a lot of fantasies about Airman's Cave. I've tried to get them interested in other things but don't get much response. Some of the older cavers check in on occasion to answer questions and try to steer them along.

As you'll see in this newsletter, Rafal has put together a short write up about The Colorado Bend project and the dates are already on the online Maverick calendar. We'll skip December because it always conflicts with various Christmas parties. It will again be open to all cavers, newbies and experienced alike with activities available for all experience levels. I've heard a couple of comments about the project being nearly complete with not a lot left to do. That's a misconception that needs to be corrected. This is a project that we can hand down to our grand children. Seems like every year we discover a hole that was closed in the past that has for whatever reason opened up into a cave. There are still surveys to do (maybe some to redo) and even some areas that need to be ridge walked. There have been controlled burns on the park and some areas that were covered with heavy brush and virtually inaccessible before need to be rechecked. If you haven't been to CBSP, there's a Google map on the website at: <http://www.maverickgrotto.org/maps/cbsp.html> that you can check out to figure out how to get there.

Speaking of Christmas, Bill and Diana would like to host a Metroplex Cavers Christmas Party again. It was a big success last year so I think it's a good idea to do it again. I've got some white elephant gifts in my garage that I need to get rid of! The only date they can do it is December 2.

Bill Steele informs me that John Crosswaithe is being shipped off to Iraq so the war should be over soon. According to Bill, John has seen all the Rambo movies so should be able to handle it.

Next month's meeting (October) is when officers for 2007 are supposed to be nominated. Think up who you'd like your next set of victims to be and be ready to nominate them. I'll be happy for someone to take the Chairman's job; I was nominated and took the job for nostalgic reasons since I was one of the founders and it's the 20th year. I'm not sure people enjoy listening to me that much since meeting attendance has dropped off. I'd rather work behind the scenes anyway.

-- Happy September



The Colorado Bend State Park project dates for year 2006-2007 will be October 14-15, November 11-12, January 13-14, February 10-11, March 10-11, April 14-15, on the second Saturday of these months, as in the past. What is new is the leadership taking over, with Rafal Kedzierski as project manager, with support from Butch Fralia, Mark Gee, and Keith Heuss. The goals of the project have not changed from the past - they are still to locate, survey, and produce maps of all the caves on the 5400+ acre property. By last count, we have 380 caves and karst features in the park, and no doubt many more that still have not been found. For those who think that everything has been done - we have finished maps for less than half of the caves on the park. Even some 500 meter long caves have escaped the pencil of the sketcher, so it's time to end that!!!

Feel free to contact us at CBSP@maverickgrotto.org, or look for directions at <http://www.maverickgrotto.org/maps/cbsp.html>. We need participation of all Texas cavers to continue the success of this project, and without a doubt will find something for everyone to do - from the beginner to the most experienced caver!!! Just show up before 9 am on Saturday at the caver's campsite (or look for notices on cavetex for cold weekends when we maybe lucky enough to stay at the Gorman Falls conference center), and bring your gear.

Please forward this to all the newsletter editors in the state...
Rafal Kedzierski and company



The Maverick Grotto camping area at the last Honey Creek TCR—2003

2006 Texas Cavers Reunion



Honey Creek Ranch October 20-22, 2006

Come one, come all, y'all are invited to the 29th Annual Texas Cavers Reunion. This year, we return to Honey Creek Ranch near the Guadalupe River State Park. Click [here](#) for directions.

Be sure to join the fun...

[caving](#)

[swimming, hot tub, and sauna](#)

[competitions](#)

[great food](#)

vendors

Why You Don't Want to Have A Stroke

by Dale Ellison

My friend, Butch Fralia stated that he wasn't proud about accepting newsletter articles and suggested he would welcome something from me about having a stroke. Well, since actually having a stroke last June 16th, I have informed anyone who will listen that you don't want a stroke. Trust me on this. Unfortunately, 15% of the folks who have a stroke will die. 6% of stroke victims who receive the "clot busting" drug within the first three hours from the onset will die just because of the drug itself. Personally, I didn't like the 6% chance so I refused the drug in the Emergency Room. After 12 days in the hospital, I finally talked them into letting me go home. My out patient recovery therapy began the very next day. Since, I figured up that I've had about 100 hours of physical therapy (I call it torture instead). Learning how to walk all over again is more difficult than you can possibly imagine. It has been almost 12 weeks after my stroke and my right hand is roughly 50% useful. I continue trying to gain use of my hand and perhaps I'll gain 100%. So why do I write of these horrid details? I hope this information will help you get into a frame of mind so you can avoid a stroke or heart attack. The percentages are too high that you will not make it or you will spend the rest of your days in a nursing home. Please take your own health very seriously.

What is Stroke?

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America and the No. 1 cause of adult disability.

80% of strokes are preventable; you can prevent a stroke!

A stroke or "brain attack" occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery or a blood vessel breaks, interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. When either of these things happens, brain cells begin to die and brain damage occurs. When brain cells die during a stroke, abilities controlled by that area of the brain are lost. These abilities include speech, movement and memory. How a stroke patient is affected depends on where the stroke occurs in the brain and how much the brain is damaged.

For example, someone who has a small stroke may experience only minor problems such as weakness of an arm or leg. People who have larger strokes may be paralyzed on one side or lose their ability to speak. Some people recover completely from strokes, but more than 2/3 of survivors will have some type of disability.

General recovery guidelines show:

- 10 percent of stroke survivors recover almost completely
- 25 percent recover with minor impairments
- 40 percent experience moderate to severe impairments requiring special care
- 10 percent require care in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- 15 percent die shortly after the stroke

Controllable Risk Factors

Many of the things that increase your stroke risk can be controlled. The diseases that increase risk can be treated. Lifestyle choices such as eating and exercise habits can be changed.

Treatable Diseases That Increase Stroke Risk:

High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Blood pressure is the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. If you have high blood pressure, your heart is pumping harder to move blood through the body. This can weaken blood vessels and damage major organs such as the brain. Left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to stroke.

Blood Pressure Guidelines

- A blood pressure reading below 120/80 is considered normal. In general, the lower the blood pressure, the better.
- A blood pressure reading of 120-39/80-89 is considered pre-hypertension. People with pre-hypertension are at an increased risk for high blood pressure, or hypertension.
- A blood pressure reading of 140/90 or above is considered high blood pressure, or hypertension.
- High blood pressure is a common condition, affecting 65 million Americans - 1 in 3 adults
- High blood pressure increases stroke risk 4-6 times
- High blood pressure is the most common cause of stroke

-High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms

Atrial Fibrillation (AF)

Atrial Fibrillation (AF) is caused when the two upper chambers of the heart (atria) beat rapidly and unpredictably, producing an irregular heartbeat. AF raises stroke risk because it allows blood to pool in the heart. When blood pools, it tends to form clots which can then be carried to the brain, causing a stroke. Long-term untreated AF can also weaken the heart, leading to heart failure.

-AF affects approximately 2.2 million Americans

-AF increases stroke risk up to 6 times

-About 15% of all people who have a stroke have AF

-AF is most often found in people over the age of 65 and in people who have heart disease or thyroid disorders

High Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fatty substance in the blood that our bodies make on their own, but we also get it from fat in the foods we eat. Certain foods (such as egg yolks, liver or foods fried in animal fat or tropical oils) contain cholesterol. High levels of cholesterol in the bloodstream can clog arteries and cause a stroke or heart attack. It can also increase stroke risk by putting you at greater risk for heart disease -- another important stroke risk factor.

-Combined HDL and LDL cholesterol should fall below 200mg/dL.

-Nearly 107 million American adults have a total blood cholesterol of 200 or higher.

Diabetes

In people with diabetes, the body either doesn't produce enough insulin or the cells ignore the insulin. Without insulin, the body can't process sugar, which is the basic fuel for the cells in the body. In addition to their diabetes, most diabetics have other health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity/excess weight. These problems increase their risk of stroke even more.

-According to the American Diabetes Association, there are 20.8 million Americans with diabetes

-2 out of 3 people with diabetes die from stroke or heart disease

-Diabetes increases stroke risk 2-4 times

Lifestyle Choices That Increase Stroke Risk

Tobacco Use/Smoking

Among other things, smoking damages blood vessel

walls, speeds up the clogging of arteries, raises blood pressure and makes the heart work harder. Smoking doubles the risk of stroke. Smoking women have special concerns. If a woman smokes, has a history of migraines, and takes oral contraceptives, her stroke risk is increased as much as 34 times.

Alcohol Use

Drinking lots of alcohol has been linked to stroke in some studies. Drinking more than 2 drinks per day may increase stroke risk by 50%.

Obesity/Excessive Weight

Excess weight puts a strain on the entire circulatory system. It also makes people more likely to have high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes -- all of which can increase your risk for stroke.

Uncontrollable Risk Factors

Some risk factors are controllable while others are not. The following are the things you can't control but that do increase your risk for stroke.

Age. A stroke can happen to anyone, but your risk of stroke increases with age. After the age of 55, your stroke risk doubles for every decade.

Gender. Stroke is more common in men than women. But more women than men die from stroke.

Race. If you are African American, your risk is twice the rate for whites. If you are Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander, your stroke risk is also higher than Caucasians.

Family History. If someone in your family has had a stroke, you have a higher risk of stroke yourself.

Previous Stroke or TIA. If you have already had a stroke or a transient ischemic attack (ministroke), you have a 25-40% chance of having another stroke in the next 5 years.

Having one or more of these risk factors does not mean you will automatically have a stroke. But because your stroke risk is higher, it's even more important that you ask your doctor about changes you can make to prevent a stroke.

Remember, 80% of strokes are preventable. Which means that every year, up to 600,000 Americans could have prevented their strokes. You can prevent a stroke!

Decide if you personally have any of the risk factors and do something about it now while you have a chance. Again, trust me on this, I had a stroke and I have the T-shirt and I cannot play the Native American Flute this year at the Texas Cavers Reunion. Strokes suck.

Fort Stanton Cave Expedition

June 30-July 4, 2006
Diana Tomchick

Metroplex cavers Pete Lindsley and I attended the Fourth of July Fort Stanton Cave Project weekend and helped with the Mud Turtle Dig to regain access into the Snowy River Passage of the cave. We had a great time, met old friends and made new ones, helped out on the dig and the potential location of new caves, and we plan to attend again.

Fort Stanton Cave is located in the Fort Stanton Recreation Area and is under the jurisdiction of the Roswell Field office of the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico. The nearest town, Capitan, is about 4 miles away but the nearest town of any significant size is Ruidoso, about 20 miles distant. The driving distance from Dallas is 580+ miles, or about 11 hours. Pete Lindsley and I chose to attend this expedition weekend for several reasons. Pete was an active participant in the FSC project around 30-some years ago, but hadn't visited the cave in decades. His son Steve, who lives in Albuquerque (but who has now moved to West Virginia) has been active in the project in recent years, and has filled Pete in on some of the latest discoveries. I'd been hearing a lot about the Snowy River Passage and the Mud Turtle Dig and was curious to see how these cavers were digging a vertical shaft of over 40" in diameter and over 20 feet deep inside the cave. The Snowy River Passage contains a unique cave formation that can best be described as a "river of calcite." This multi-mile long, meandering, nearly level, pristine-white calcite formation is unlike any cave formation known in the world, and was discovered only after an extensive digging project on a passage that blew a huge volume of air. Unfortunately, the dig was through unstable brecciated limestone (which is essentially a lot of limestone rocks in a dirt-like matrix). After one minor collapse pinned a caver's legs in the "Priority 7" dig

passage, the BLM decided to close caver access to the passage, effectively closing access to Snowy River. The new digging project, commenced in Don Sawyer Memorial Hall, is meant to provide a stable, lined shaft into the Mud Turtle passage (which connects to Snowy River). The BLM has dictated the shaft must be at least 36" diameter (when finished), which would be big enough to haul an injured caver out on a rescue stretcher (SKED).

The project director is John Corcoran, and he has been involved since 1962 with FSC. Wayne Walker is his main assistant, and they both traveled to the spring TSA Convention to give a great presentation on the dig. I was also able to meet Donald Davis during this trip. Donald resides in Denver but has caved in the Guads and NM for decades. Donald may be the one caver in the world who has seen more passage in Lechuguilla than anyone else. He is extremely knowledgeable about cave geology and biology, and it was fascinating to listen to his theories of how different passages in FSC were formed.

We left Dallas early on Friday, June 30th, and reached the bunkhouse after dark. I'd never been to this area of New Mexico, and was pleasantly surprised the next morning to see the large number of pine trees and lack of agave and cactus. The bunkhouse provided by the BLM was spacious and luxurious, by caver standards. Electricity, a full kitchen, bathroom and shower facilities and simple beds were provided. Several people who would attend the full 10-day expedition brought trailers so they could sleep in relative peace and quiet, though I must say that the facility was so large I never found lack of privacy to be a big problem. Though the expeditions run for 10 days, most people attended for one of the two weekends, and many local NM cavers came only for the Saturday dig. We needed to be self-sufficient for most of our meals, except on the days devoted to working on the dig when we contributed some money for the excellent group dinners that were ready and waiting for us when we



Carrying building materials down the sinkhole to the entrance to Ft. Stanton



Steve Peerman assembles the next section of the wooden casing for the shaft.

arrived back at the bunkhouse.

Saturday and Monday were “dig days.” Building materials (plywood sheets, 2-by-4’s, cans of screws, etc.) and tools (drills, batteries, pry bars, etc.) were hauled into the cave from the sinkhole entrance and taken to the dig site. Fortunately that trip is not long (about 45 minutes, on average), the passages are large and the traverse is relatively easy. Once at the dig site, one or two people worked on constructing the next wooden module to be inserted into the ever-deepening shaft. The crumbly, unstable nature of the brecciated limestone makes the digging relatively quick and easy, but results in a shaft of dubious stability. The wooden “liner” to the shaft provides protection from rocks falling from the walls of the shaft, and provides a scaffold for the diggers to climb up and down to the dig site. A bucket of rocks is pulled out of the dig site on a pulley system rigged over the top of the shaft, the bucket is removed from the pulley and passed in a bucket brigade by several cavers down the short passage to the “bucket tram.” The contents of this bucket are dumped into a bucket attached to a rope and pulley system that allows the bucket to whiz downhill to a dumpsite. A caver dumps the bucket, being careful not to dump the contents on their feet, then the bucket is pulled back up from the dumpsite, and the process repeats. It repeats for hours—for many hours. On the first day, the diggers “in the hole” kept ignoring our requests to rotate positions. In some ways, digging is more fun than dumping buckets. This situation improved on Monday, and we were able to rotate every 20 minutes to relieve boredom and sore muscles. The dig was halted prematurely on Saturday, due to the unexpected discovery of an animal bone. How on earth a single well-preserved animal bone found its way into this section of cave, into this dig, was deemed a mystery. The terms of the BLM agreement with the FSC project stipulated that the discovery of fossils or historical artifacts during the dig required assessment of significance by either a paleontologist or archaeologist, meaning the dig must be shut down. Multiple photos were taken of the bone to provide documentation to Bill Murry of the Roswell Field Office of the BLM. Everyone was elated when Bill notified us on Sunday afternoon that the dig could continue; apparently the discovery of one medium-sized animal bone wasn’t significant enough to halt our efforts.

Sunday projects included a photo-documentation and survey of the cave paintings in Feather Cave by Mike Bilbo (Socorro BLM Field Office) and other volunteers, and resistivity measurements by John McLean (former US Geological Survey geologist, now residing in Colorado). Pete and I, along with Allan White (another NM caver) volunteered to help John. The resistivity measurements are used to identify potential shallow subsurface



cavities. This technique is used commercially not only by geologists but also by civil engineers. For example, when an engineer is locating a landfill site, they need to know that there are no subsurface cavities that may cause the landfill to pollute the groundwater. The method is simple; run a current between two or more electrodes and measure the change in resistance (or drop in current) between them. If there is solid ground between them, then there is little change. If there is a void, the resistance rises (and current drops). Since the electrodes used aren’t driven very far into the ground, and the homemade setup used by John is limited in the amount of current it can provide, these measurements are typically useful to only about 20 meters. Everyone at the project is a fervent believer in this method for finding potential new cave passage, as John’s resistivity measurements predicted that the Priority 7 dig would be successful, though John modestly predicted that only about 1,500 feet would be found. The survey of the passages beyond the dig are at 2+ miles, with several known borehole leads that were left due to the closure of the dig by the BLM. Working with John on the resistivity measurements is a lesson in patience for those not familiar with performing scientific experiments. Every measurement requires about 45 minutes to properly place the electrodes along a straight line of known compass bearing, to attach the wires to the electrodes and to pour salt water (to increase conductance) at the base of each electrode. Once the apparatus is properly placed, the measurements require another 45-minute wait. Fortunately the weather and the company were pleasant, and the time flew by. When we returned to the bunkhouse, John transferred the raw data to a modern-day laptop with up-to-date, sophisticated resistivity data analysis software. In a few minutes he was able to show us color-coded cross-sections along the four lines of resistivity measurements we’d made that day. The maps showed both known cave passage plus some tantalizing indications of nearby voids. This information would be later correlated with cave survey data to see if a promising dig location could be identified.

On Monday we continued to dig, but with a reduced number of people (about 10 vs. approximately 15 on Saturday). Great progress was made, but the smaller group meant fewer, shorter rest breaks, so when the agreed-upon stop time (6:30 p.m.) rolled around there were no complaints.

The next day Pete and I spent a short amount of time in a meeting with Bill Murry discussing the future of the FSC project, but we had to cut out early and start the drive back to Dallas. We both agreed that we had a great time in a great cave with some fun cavers, and we plan to do it again soon. The next expedition is October 7-15th, so if you’re interested in carpooling then let Pete or I know you’d like to go.



Wayne Peplinski—rigged out for Beer Cave—Photo RD Milhollin

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