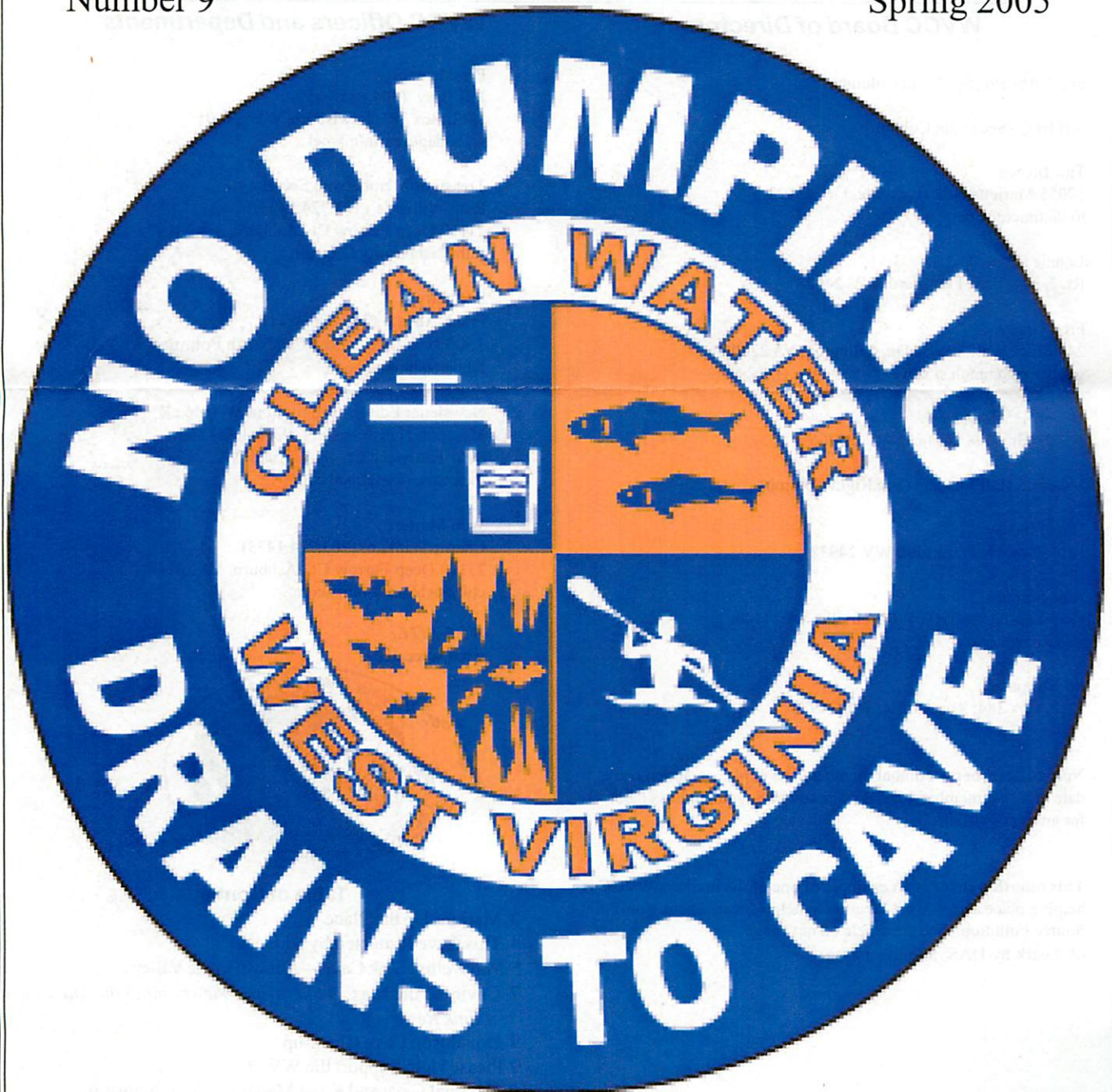


# The Open Cave

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Cave Conservancy

Number 9

Spring 2005



# WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

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*"Preserving the cave and karst resources of West Virginia for future generations"*

Number 9

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The West Virginia Cave Conservancy is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. All contributions to the Conservancy are tax-deductible. Please send all contributions and dues to: WVCC, Inc., PO Box 243, Frankford, WV, 24938. For more information on membership, visit our Web site at [www.wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net). Please send all contributions to the newsletter to the newsletter editor. Any internal organization of the NSS has permission to reprint materials in this newsletter with proper recognition given to the author and *The Open Cave*.

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**Note to Members:** Annual memberships expire on anniversary date of initial membership. Be sure to check your address label for anniversary date.

**This month's cover** is an example of one of the markers WVCC is helping place across West Virginia to help educate about Non-Point Source Pollution. See the article on next page.  
(Artwork by DAS, Manufacturing)

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## Markin' Up the Place

Jeff Bray

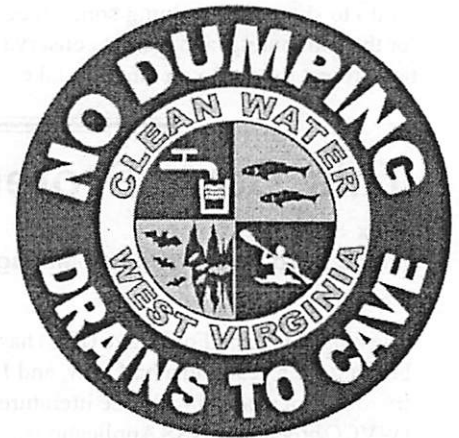
While on a recent business trip to Indiana, I visited some caver friends in Bloomington. While there, I took notice of storm drain markers that were placed on many street-level drop inlets in popular walking areas of town. While enjoying some delicious microbrew in town, Kriste Lindberg of the Indiana Karst Conservancy filled me in on the project that she helped execute in Bloomington. This sounded like a good idea! I had seen storm drain stencils before, but the markers were much nicer, and since the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) needed to find ways to get grant money and our mission was to help educate, marking storm drains seemed like a good idea.

Some of you may ask (actually, a couple of you did ask) how marking a storm drain is educational. It's quite simple actually. Whenever it rains, all the oils, gas, animal crud, and anything else that falls on the road gets washed into the storm drains. This is called Non-Point Source Pollution. If not thought of in the big picture, this may not seem like a significant source of pollution. But step back and think about the number of cars, people, storms, and finally, water that goes into our groundwater via these drains. There are tons of opportunities to pollute, so there are tons of opportunities to educate. Many municipalities across the country already do this, including some in Virginia. But most use stencils to mark the drains. And guess what they use to make these marks with their stencils....Spray Paint—a source for non-point source pollution!! How incredibly ironic!! On top of that, we all know that spray paint on a road only lasts for a couple years maximum before it needs to be reapplied. So these markers in Indiana (designed to be easily legible for up to 15 years) seemed like a very logical pursuit.

Back home I decided to see what kind of interest I could find locally. Sharon Brinkman-Windle of COOTers bartending fame, helped write an introductory letter about the program. I went to a Stormwater Management meeting for the City of Lewisburg and pitched the idea to them.

They loved it! Not only that, they supported it, excited to be able to be the pilot city for this project in West Virginia. At that point, I realized that if the response here was so good, maybe this should be a program that should have a goal of being state-wide and even regional? So I started to send e-mails out, mostly to cavers. I got some response in West Virginia, but very little in Virginia (possibly because it has been stenciled so much). The cavers responding in West Virginia were mostly interested in the message. Meanwhile, Ed Swepston, John Pearson, and I continued working on the decision makers in the Greenbrier Valley. We were able to secure commitments from the City of Lewisburg, City of Ronceverte, the Greenbrier Valley Airport, and the West Virginia State Fairgrounds. All this before any other folks in the state decided to help out. Finally, Brain Henthorn (you can always count on the friends) volunteered to actively try to involve the City of Morgantown, home to West Virginia University. Just by chance, he ran into a member of a conservation organization (Friends of Deckers Creek) that was about to stencil Morgantown. He passed along their contact info to me, and I called to convince them otherwise. Within a day, they were convinced that the markers were better, and within a week, we had the Morgantown Utility Board contributing significant funds to our cause. Now we've got a larger city involved! What other ones could we get?

From the onset, I had a goal of involving the Greenbrier Valley and the Eastern Panhandle. No volunteers were coming forward in the Eastern Panhandle, and I was just playing a game of long-distance phone tag with the utility board up there. This game continues to this day. But, in the meantime, I had sent an e-mail out to many utility boards and watershed associations statewide, thanks to the help of the WV Department of Environmental Protection (while also continuing to try to rally the caving community). That next day my e-mail was flooded with folks interested in taking part. And one, the City of Beckley, was ready to take part



right away! Since Morgantown jumped on board, we now had enough commitment to place our order. We had set a date to order of March 7 so the markers could be placed during the spring. The City of Beckley, within one week, was able to commit enough money to double the number of markers being ordered! This was a complete surprise, and of course a very welcome one. Ed and I also met with the local WV-Department of Highways director for our district, who promised not only support in the form of permission to place the markers on state routes, but also said that he thought the idea was good enough to present to all the directors at a state-wide meeting the following week, with the hopes that they would be able to include some monetary support for the markers.

Now that March 7 is around the corner (at the time this was written), we have four cities involved (two large ones), the State fairgrounds, our local airport (that seems to get a lot of press lately), and WV-DOH seems to be in support. Along with the markers is a little door hanger that explains what the markers are all about, which will be placed on doors in the vicinity of the markers. This is also just the beginning, as Morgantown and Beckley will continue to place orders with us over a long period of time (there are literally thousands of drains in those towns). We are also going to continue to spread this program throughout the state.

Of course, the goal of this project was to educate. But we need our WVCC supporters to go out there and help us

educate. We need you to volunteer to help place these markers in your area. It's a great publicity opportunity for your grotto to show you're doing some good for the community, and a great conservation project for grotto members to take

part in. That said, the WVCC would like to have a special opportunity to help the Cities of Lewisburg, Ronceverte, and Beckley place their markers during the upcoming Spring VAR in Lewisburg (at the State fairgrounds). Folks interested in placing markers should stop by the WVCC

booth on Friday or Saturday at VAR and sign up, and plan to work as long as you like on either Saturday or Sunday (Sunday is available so you can cave on Saturday if you like). More information will be available at the booth.

## This Cave Protected by Video!

Alex Sproul

Island Ford Cave Property Manager

The kiosk in Island Ford Cave (IFC) has been up for a year and a half now, and I try to keep it stocked with free literature (WVCC brochures, NSS Applications, Fragile Underground and Safe Caving folders, maps of the cave, etc.). The clear indication that someone cares about this well-known and heavily-trafficked cave seems to have done much to deter vandalism.

At first, I was pleased to see how fast the brochures were disappearing. I had to refill the bins about once a month. But then I discovered, far back in the cave, a little campfire where someone was taking all the literature and burning it!

Annoyed at this senseless waste of our effort and expense (and that of the NSS, which provides most of the materials), I cast about for ways to stem this loss. Historically, the worst vandalism at IFC occurs in the fall, notably during prom weekends at the local high schools. Hoping to deter partying in the cave, John Pearson, Bill Balfour, and I spent the evening there on prom night. Our feeling was that our presence, and that of our vehicles, would cause the party crowd to find another spot, or perhaps we'd even catch our campfire culprit in the act. The former proved to be true; though it was a pleasant evening, no one stopped in, and no car even slowed to look at us.

While sitting around in the cave, we bounced around other ideas for thwarting the evil-doers. John mentioned that he had a couple of security video cameras that were obsolescent, and wouldn't it be great if we could catch the bad guys on tape. He volunteered to donate a camera to the cause, and a few weeks later, he installed it high on the east wall, with a clear view of the kiosk

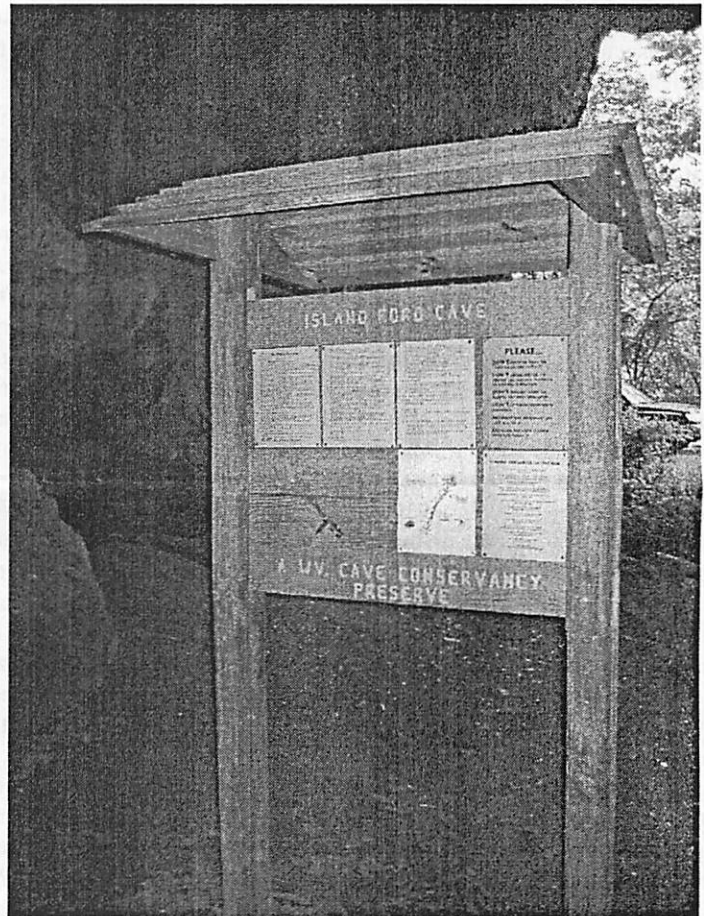
and the entrance. Since it's hardly noticeable, save for a little red LED that looks like a pigeon's eye, a small sign was placed on the kiosk, noting that the area was under surveillance and that acts of vandalism would not be looked upon kindly.

It's amazing how quickly word gets around. Brochure consumption has slowed dramatically, as has trash left in the cave. The camera is still there and doing its job. It would be difficult to deter it from

its duties, as the commotion of bringing in the 20-foot ladder needed to reach it would surely draw attention.

I've even heard it said that legitimate cavers are now much more reluctant to change clothes in the entrance area, for fear of finding themselves on the internet.

A hearty thanks to John Pearson for striking another blow in the name of cave conservation—high-tech style.



(Photograph by Meredith Hall Johnson)

# Maxwelton Sink Cave—A Jewel in the Valley

Jeff Bray

By now, we all know the history of Maxwelton Sink Cave, and have probably heard a great deal about the dig. But for many, the fun had not even started yet. Now that the cave was open, and safe, the survey and exploration could begin. And it did!...

Almost one year after beginning what was to be the final digging attempt to get into the cave from the property WVCC leased from local caver Dave Scott and friends, the resurvey of Maxwelton Sink Cave officially began on October 9, 2004. Since then, project participants have been able to stay in touch, post reports on our project Web page, view our progress, and of course, survey some great cave on a regular basis. Trips are relatively long, and the cave is vertical, but the crew has been dedicated, which is not too surprising since most teams are coming out with large amounts of data and trips that are not only fun and exciting from an exploration point of view, but also giving folks a good physical workout as well. The latter is definitely something I know the diggers are happy to be taking part in since the dig lasted so long and most of us didn't cave much during that time period since we were always digging! Thank goodness for progress!

We knew we were digging into a beautiful cave when we started. All the reports we had heard (mostly from past surveyors like Bill Balfour, Chuck Hempel, and Dennis "Pancho" Regan) had described the cave as one of their favorites in West Virginia. One even said it was his favorite cave hands down. Then, after pointing out to Chuck Hempel where we were digging in, we were told we were going to end up in a very well decorated part of the cave, that was only visited one or two times due to the climbing and vertical work involved to get there from the original Cove Creek entrance. But we had no choice on where we were digging if we wanted to get in, and we went above and beyond expectations to be sure we took great care of what we were to find. And sure enough, when we got in, we soon realized this would be a chore!

The Heaven passage, which is now part of the new entrance passage, is

just caked with gypsum! And not just little gypsum flowers on the walls, this cave has gypsum flowers on the breakdown and the floor, as well as the walls. Travel through here was definitely difficult, despite the comfy size of the passage. Work on trails started immediately. A beautiful flowstone-filled section of passageway a few hundred feet in led to the first of many drops expected in the cave. This first drop is a short one, only about 15 feet, and is rigged with a cable ladder. Most now bypass this drop and follow an upper level down to where it meets the stream at the base of the ladder just a little bit past the ladder. From the ladder, going upstream leads one to some more recently historic parts of the cave (remember, this dig was very active for a total of three years). During past phases of the dig, we had actually gotten into the cave, briefly, but it was found to not be a safe way in, so it was abandoned for safety reasons. But one can see this one-time passage (now marked with a skull and crossbones in the mud at the point where it intersected the cave) clearly from below now, and can almost relive the excitement we had when first hearing the sound of the stream we can now travel safely in. Also upstream from the ladder drop is our well, which we drilled between the first and second years of the dig. The well was a product of the microgravity survey that was performed which is partially responsible for determining the location of the passage.

Downstream, one travels through the stream toward the second drop. Along the way, the caver passes some delicate parts of the cave. Small helictites cover some of the walls, completely elaborate and random. Fossils are evident throughout much of the cave so far, and this passage is not an exception in that category as well. In many areas, parts of the passage are flagged to dissuade cavers from accidentally bumping formations. Finally, in what was originally found to be quite the shaky passageway, a beautiful 35-foot free drop puts the caver in the midst of some choices. So far in the resurvey, all trips must travel to at least this point to go further in the cave, but

teams can branch off in a couple of directions from here. Much to our surprise, the surveyors from the '70s had left us a present at the base of this drop! We found a climbing pole sitting near the bottom of our rope, which verified this was in fact the main way to the Heaven passage in earlier days. We told Chuck Hempel of the climbing pole, and, not one bit surprised, he responded by pointing to another spot where we'll see another climbing pole! We have yet to get to that point. One passage choice from this room takes cavers to the base of a waterfall (the stream from the Heaven passage), with a passage continuing downstream to another more annoying drop before intersecting the main stream in the cave, Cove Creek. The other main choice, the main thoroughfare into the cave, leads one to a number of options, many of which are still being surveyed or resurveyed. These passages are combinations of trunk passage, climb-downs, crawlways, and canyon passages. Just about any type of caving you like is possible in this cave.

The resurvey of the cave is happening in an orderly fashion. We are working generally from the north to the south, resurveying all that is known, and dealing with virgin cave as we find it. Some good digs have also been found, and have been worked on from time to time, but we mostly are surveying right now (we've been digging too much the past few years!). We decided to work on the northern part of the cave so that we could have good data to share with Oak Hall, who is now the new owner of the Maxwelton Cliff, home to the original Cove Creek Entrance and another dig to regain access to the cave from this property. One trip I was on stands out in my mind, at the far northern end of the cave.

Since we started trying to get back into this cave in 1997, I had heard from many that the Cove Creek Entrance passage was a complete pain in the ass! It was tight, small, wet, loose, and generally not pleasurable. It is called the Turnpike on the old map. The Turnpike eventually became larger, and joined Cove Creek in the Airplane Room. I was not part of the crew surveying the Turnpike, which was

surprisingly long, but didn't get too terribly low 'til you could go no further due to collapse, which is certainly the other side of the collapse you can see from Oak's dig from the surface. But I was on the trip where three survey teams used the Airplane Room as a general starting point for their day's work. The Airplane Room had always been described as one of the most beautiful parts of the cave, but this seemed odd since there are no major formations, little or big, that we've found there yet. But, if you take a moment and put yourself in the shoes of the cavers from the '70s, you'd quickly see that the Airplane Room is the first good borehole you come to in the cave. And it is not small by any means. This booming trunk, with the sizeable Cove Creek running through it, goes for thousands of feet as a very large stream borehole. This had to be the beauty. The previous cavers had spent a great deal of time digging as well, and when their dig was finished, they were not able to immediately see pretty formations, and walking passage like we did. They had to muck through some nasty, collapsing, flood-prone passageway before getting to stand up at all. And I'm sure it was quite windy too! But, once getting into the trunk, which gets a little smaller before booming even larger downstream, there had to have been much rejoicing! I'm not sure how it got its name, I can't imagine anyone hearing an airplane that would be landing or taking off from nearby Greenbrier Valley Airport. Some say it was named that way due to its size. Regardless, they thought fondly of it, and even designed an airplane propeller, presumably burned from a carbide lamp, on one of the breakdown blocks in this room. It was exciting to finally see a part of the cave I've been hearing about for years!

Currently, just over 4 miles of the 10+ known miles have been resurveyed since October 9, 2004. This does include some virgin cave, although we are hoping

that we are yet to find a majority of the virgin leads as we get farther from the original entrance. This is also the first time I've been involved in a survey that has an old map to work from! This adds a whole new dimension to planning trips. The map has some detail to it so we can guess where we are about to encounter drops, streams, and leads that may be virgin. There are also some really cool names to the passages and rooms, which leave one to only imagine what may be there until we get to them. For example, one section of Cove Creek called "Le Mudge" on the original map has persuaded many survey teams to comically survey around this section, hoping some unlucky team will run out of other options and push through this passageway, interpreted to be very, very muddy—potentially the type that will eat boots, or gloves since you'd be crawling. When the first group started to survey the passage, it was found to be a low, wide, flat, muddy crawl, that still has probably a half an hour's worth of surveying left to do in it. It's funny to look at the map and see all the resurveyed passage around it, and all of us have procrastinated on "Le Mudge." Looks like we may have a cave passage "lottery" in our future!

The survey is also being conducted as if the cave were virgin. Most of the cavers who have volunteered to take part in the dig and survey are either involved in the Monroe County Cave Survey, WVACS, or are others who share in the "survey as you go" philosophy. This practice, while certainly not the only way to conduct a survey, does seem to keep the mystery alive for future survey teams since a variety of folks are working in this cave and often pick up where others left off. It's just nice knowing that someone at home on the couch doesn't already know what your survey team will encounter. Especially when those surveys turn a little nasty!

Finally, the WVCC encourages anyone who has an interest in working in

this cave to contact us. We would love to encourage cave geologists, biologists, and any other scientist associated with caves to spend some time in the cave and see if there are any projects they can develop using the cave. The survey crews generally assemble on the second weekends of the month, and operate out of WVACS, which makes for a very simple and comfortable meeting place. For more information on Maxwellton Sink Cave, there are a variety of locations you can visit. First, donations are always welcome. There is a little work to be done to the entrance once the summer rolls around, and we would also like this cave to be a method to encourage more general donations to the WVCC, which always has needs for money, if for nothing else but to be able to purchase the next property that comes our way. For more information on the cave and donating, visit and follow the links for Maxwellton Sink Cave. For survey and project information, visit: <http://www.maxweltongeosolutions.com/caver/resourcesSinkCave.html> and be sure to send me an e-mail if you have interest in a particular survey weekend. We can accommodate all the willing, so if you are interested, it's your call!! There's plenty of booty for all down here, but, remember, we ask that you plan to survey or conduct some project-related work. Sport trips have been discouraged so far, mostly due to the plentiful opportunities we have made available to anyone interested in visiting the cave as part of the project. Also, stay tuned to our Web site for the most up-to-date information, as well as any news that comes out in ours, or various other newsletters! Finally, a huge thank-you goes out to the many (who will certainly be publicly recognized on the property, on the Web, and elsewhere) who have helped dig, survey (both originally and currently), and support this cause. We certainly could not have done it without any of you!

## Cavin' To The Max—

*A Surveyor's Viewpoint of the Maxwellton Sink Resurvey*  
Ed Saugstad

As was pointed out in a recent article by Jeff Bray, Maxwellton Sink Cave in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, was reopened last October after a 30+ year hiatus. That long pause was precipitated by collapse of the original entrance caused by post-hurricane flooding. The new opening is a 40-foot vertical culvert that drops into a passage known as Heaven (see Jeff's article for details). This is a semi-walking/stooping gypsum-encrusted passage that in a couple of hundred feet changes to a narrow flow-stone-draped hands-and-knees passage that quickly leads to a short ladder drop, now usually bypassed by stepping over it to a passage that parallels the stream passage. Once in the stream passage, surveyors proceed a thousand feet or so, following a trail laid out to safeguard the numerous formations that festoon the right wall.

At a point where the water noise is noticeably louder, the passage forks, and one takes the right hand (upper) passage, as staying with the stream would result in walking over a 30-foot waterfall. The upper passage is, for the most part, a breakdown-choked canyon, but with plenty of walking room once you are on top. Soon, you are at a place where deep holes in the floor become more numerous, and a traverse line is in place for one to clip in if one is so inclined. At the end of the traverse, a permanent rope is in place for a quick 28-foot trip into a pit where a choice of travel direction is available. (This is where the first teams to reach this spot found the climbing pole that the original surveyors had used to reach the upper passages.) All the trips that I have participated on have climbed up out of the pit on the side opposite the rope drop and then proceeded in a northeasterly direction, so my report obviously is going to neglect a good deal of the resurvey that has gone off in a more westerly fashion. Ask Tom Malabad about the school-bus-sized killer rock with the reblay.

Anyway, after gaining entry to the passage past the pit, one encounters a series of annoying crawls interspersed with walking to nearly walking passage.



One of these 'nearly walking sections' goes quite some distance with a height of just about 5 feet—and as the cross-section is very reminiscent of a subway tunnel, the name "Metrognome" has been suggested for it, but not officially accepted. The last crawling section has a lot of cobble and seems to go on forever, so "Wowbagger" (after a character in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) has been suggested. Shortly after completing this crawl, a side passage appears on the left. It's not very long, but quite twisty and gnarly, and took a fair amount of time to survey through. Once through it, another junction room is encountered. As all the trips beyond this point that I have been on have taken the passage leading off to the right, my comments will be limited to that area.

This passage leads to an area where a pool with calcite spar and floating mats has been cordoned off with flagging tape. Stepping carefully by it on the right, one stoops down into a room sloping off to one's right. There is a rope handline in place, but nearly everyone now hugs the right wall and slides into the passage below the room. This room at one time likely was almost purely dazzling white with a calcite spar floor, and even after human traffic has created a muddy swath on the floor, it still retains much of its

original beauty. The passage continues as a partially floorless crawl that eventually emerges in trunk passage. Again, at this point several choices of direction present themselves. The main trunk trends southwest-northeast; if one heads northeast, a deep canyon with the sound of rushing water is encountered, but easily stepped across (more about this later). The first trip in this area that I was on (led by Dave Socky) followed the northeast trend (towards Cove Creek) for some 1500 feet and lasted about 14 hours. For the most part, this passage is quite spacious, but several places are encountered where masses of breakdown nearly choke it off. Shortly before terminating this survey (we ran out of flagging tape), we encountered an area where the ceiling was extremely shaky, and care was taken not to disturb it.

The next trip in this general area (led by Tom Malabad) lasted about 15 hours, and resulted in nearly ½ mile of survey. More areas of shakiness were encountered, and the trip terminated at the point where the passage leading to Cove Creek intersects the Airplane Room borehole. We got out of the cave about 0300, in time for a very late dinner at the WVACS Field Station. Actually, getting out was rather interesting in itself, in that at the top of the culvert, I discovered that the mud in my upper ascender had frozen solid, thus

causing a slight delay (and bad language) in getting off rope. Since then we have come up with the procedure of having a tarpaulin cover the culvert while we are in the cave, leaving it in place while climbing out. If left uncovered, frigid air literally whistles down the shaft in below-freezing weather.

At some point, the long trips were interrupted by two shorter ones. One time, a Tom Malabad-led adventure led to a dig at the end of a passage that parallels the one containing the nuisance crawls. The digging lasted for several hours and resulted in a massive five feet of previously unseen passage. Progress was slowed by the intractable nature of mud the consistency of taffy mixed with peanut butter—it often took two people just to get it off the shovel. However, it did enable Kristen Matak to make some very entertaining sculptures...

The other short trip was led by Jeff Bray to mop up another side lead off one of the crawly sections. We only spent about three hours in cave and surveyed all of 60 feet in very low, very wet passage. Ask Jeff about the bathtubs. I think that Pam Malabad was giggling while keeping book.

The next long trip was led by Errol Glidden, with the objective of trying to get as close to the original entrance as possible, looking for any sign of the horizontal culvert that had been emplaced there, and killing off the side passages in that area. We set off from the junction with the Airplane Room, which involved quite a bit of scrambling, as the passage had seen considerable water erosion and potholing. Vanessa Krabacher got to show off her rock climbing skills, and at one point had to keep me from falling off my perch while I took a compass reading. All the passages we encountered (save one) ended in a breakdown choke or surface collapse, and we saw no sign of the culvert. The one exception was a phreatic tube that blew quality air, but was too constricted for anyone but Vanessa to enter. A 'thin team' push may be in order here. Once back to the Airplane Room, we terminated the survey and headed out, a little short of a 700-foot effort.

Dave Socky then got volunteered to lead another trip in which the goal was to see if a stream passage truncated with a

question mark and squiggly arrows on the old map continued through, and then head downstream from the Airplane Room towards Le Mudge (see Jeff's article again), leapfrogging with another team in the cave. The stream passage did go through, but the water (knee-deep to yodeling depth) was cold, and for the first time on any of these trips, I felt compelled to put on another layer of polypro. Catching up with the others, we found them at the base of a massive flowstone formation that had a thin film of water flowing down it, and series of very pretty pools at its base. As there appeared to be passage going off from the top, Vanessa, along with Errol, again demonstrated Spider Man moves in scaling the slippery slope, only to find the passage illusionary. The survey terminated not long after reaching the Le Mudge area, mainly because Socky had run out of blank pages in the survey book, but not before logging well over 1000 feet.

The last trip (March 12, 2005) again was led by Dave Socky (some people just are slow learners!). This time, we were to proceed upstream in the canyon passage that leads off to the east towards the Airport entrance. This is the passage that is stepped over on trips to the northeastern parts of the cave. We first tried climbing down near where the canyon emerges from the left (west) side of the trunk passage, as we could see a couple of survey stations flagged off there. However, once down at stream level, we were quickly stymied by a waterfall. It wasn't that high, but it was overhung and had a deep plunge pool at its base. One of the team (Aaron Moses) was able to climb it without getting soaked, but he reported that a short distance upstream, an unclimbable 30-foot waterfall lurked!

So, we retreated back up to the trunk passage level (this was not as easy as going down—at one place, I used my head as a point of contact while reaching for a handhold), and headed east. Dave had gone down this way while I was climbing out, and reported that there might be a step-over above the waterfall. Just before getting to the waterfall, the crack in the floor (that is the ceiling of the stream passage) widens. Stepping over to the right side, a scary sight beckons. A few feet below, a steeply sloping wall leads to the drop immediately below the waterfall.

It looked as if a couple of quick steps would enable one to gain the passage immediately above the waterfall, but that a slip would, at the least, lead to a long and painful rescue. On the left and a slightly higher level, a projection of rock juts out over the abyss. It slopes slightly towards the drop, and has a mud coating. By stepping down on a ledge at the edge, Dave was able to get his right foot on the rock projection and then, using a nice bucket handhold, pull himself safely onto the left bank. Being somewhat shorter of both arm and leg, I insisted on a belay before attempting the maneuver, and even then wasn't entirely happy about it. And even once across, getting to the stream above the waterfall involved about a 10-foot down-climb where a slip could place one at the lip of the waterfall.

Thankfully, the passage then became a lot friendlier, and the pace of survey picked up considerably. After several hundred feet, we encountered a large junction room, with passages leading off more to the south-southwest. We continued up the main stream passage, and eventually came to yet another waterfall, this one being at the shale/limestone contact, and as result, severely undercut. With a good deal of effort, Aaron was able to chimney up and over it, to report that the passage from that point became much narrower, and one would have a hard time staying dry. At this point, we decided to retreat. Somewhere in this area, I lost the mechanical pencil I had been using to write survey numbers on tape, but almost at the same time found a lead pencil in the mud! This was used to mark the last few stations, and once back home, I cleaned it off to find it inscribed "University of Pittsburgh." So, this pencil is now one of the very few participants in both the original survey and the resurvey!

Back at the junction room, we set a few stations as starting/tie-in points for future surveys, than began our exit. Going back across the step-over was more unsettling for me psychologically than before, as (1) I could not see the ledge where I needed to place my left foot after placing my right foot on the projection, and (2) I could not reach it without letting go of that beautiful bucket handhold—oh, for a few more inches of limb length! This time, I think that we were out by 0100, with another 1500 feet of survey in the bag. As



at least a few more trips likely will be needed to complete this section of the cave, I suggest that (1) a traverse line similar to the one in place at the 28-foot drop be installed at the step-over (which, by the way, is NOT indicated on the old map), and (2) a bolt and hanger be

installed at the last waterfall to enable an etrier or similar aid to be put in place to assist vertically challenged (i.e., short) folks up and over.

As things stand right now, I think that the resurvey is just shy of five miles and much more booty awaits! My apologies

for not mentioning all the other members of the teams I was on—to the best of my knowledge, these include (in addition to those already appearing in the narrative): Barbara am Ende, Carrie Blankenship, Tim Bleech, Oak Hall, Harry Fair, Kristn Matak, Chris Michie, Brian Perkins, and Chris Printz.

## Donaldson Cave Clean Up

Pauline Apling

The Donaldson Cave Clean-up will be on Saturday, August 6, 2005. Meet at the cave at 11:00 a.m. Contact person: Pauline Apling, [papling@verizon.net](mailto:papling@verizon.net), 301-604-0764

# Please Help Support the WVCC

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

The West Virginia Cave Conservancy's (WVCC) Board of Trustees is asking you to please support WVCC with your generous donations. We have been very successful in our past efforts of cave protection and conservation.

**Through your generous donations we have been able to:**

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*Develop* a Storm Water Drain Marking Program

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*Continued next page...*

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## THE WEST VIRGINIA CAVE CONSERVANCY

WVCC is a non-profit corporation dedicated to "Preserving the cave and karst resources of West Virginia and Virginia for future generations." WVCC is a recognized 501c corporation making your donation a tax deduction. Membership is open to any interested party. Donations can be sent to WVCC, P.O. Box 243, Frankford, WV 24938. Applications may be obtained from our Web site: [www.wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net)

Oct 31 - Nov 4, 2005 - National Cave And Karst Management Symposium - in Albany, New York.  
Hosted by The Northeastern Cave

Conservancy, Inc., the Symposium will showcase both the accomplishments of decades of cooperative cave and karst management research, and the path

towards the future. For more information visit the website:<http://www.nckms.org/> 2005/ (From the NSS Web site)

## MEMBERSHIP

### Classes of Membership in the West Virginia Cave Conservancy

If you would like to become a member of the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, all you need to do is click on the membership application that can be found on the WVCC Web site, [www.wvcc.net](http://www.wvcc.net). Fill out the form and mail it to our membership chair at the following address:

WVCC Membership  
P.O. Box 243  
Frankford, WV 24938

#### Membership Descriptions and Special Benefits

##### Heritage Society

Membership in the Society is available to any person or family who has included the Endowment Trust Fund in their will, insurance program, charitable trust, or an outright gift of cash, stocks, bonds, or real-property to the WVCC's Endowment Trust Fund.

Heritage Society Membership includes a Lifetime Membership to the West Virginia Cave Conservancy, a subscription to *The Open Cave*, special recognition at the WVCC annual dinner, a special appreciation plaque and certificate, and one of our current limited

Minimum contribution of \$1000.00 restricted to the Endowment Trust Fund.

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\$65.00 per year, for five years

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# The Open Cave

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**Maxwelton Cave:** Some of the virgin passage discovered in the cave since surveying restarted.  
*(Photograph by Chris Printz)*

