

The TEXAS CAVER - 2nd Quarter 2011





The TEXAS CAVER

Written by Texas Cavers FOR Texas Cavers

Table of Contents

- **DFW Grotto Project at Spring Creek Cave** 3
by Bill Steele. Photos by James Jasek.

- **A Blast From The Past** 12

- **Satellite Sink Trip Report** 13
Submitted by Travis Scott.

- **Kicked by a Mule** 19
A Poem by Bill Steele.
Photos taken by Bill Steele (15), Paul Heinreth (3), and James Hunter (1)

- **Project Reports by Jim “Crash” Kennedy** 23
Punkin and Deep Cave/Colorado Bend State Park

- **34th Annual Texas Cavers Reunion!** 28
October 14-16, 2011 at Flat Creek Ranch, Johnson City, TX



The TEXAS CAVER

April—June - Vol. 57, Number 2

The Texas Caver is a quarterly publication of the **Texas Speleological Association (TSA)**, an internal organization of the **National Speleological Society**.

All material copyrighted 2011 by the Texas Speleological Association, unless otherwise stated.

Subscriptions:

- Single Membership - \$15.00 - Newsletter Online
- Single Membership - \$25.00 - Newsletter Mailed
- Family Membership - \$20.00 - Newsletter Online
- Family Membership - \$30.00 - Newsletter Mailed
- Student Membership - \$10.00 - Newsletter Online
- Student Membership - \$20.00 - Newsletter Mailed
- Libraries - \$20.00 - Newsletter Mailed

Submissions, correspondence, and corrections should be sent to the Editor:

The TEXAS CAVER c/o Mark Alman
1312 Paula Lane, Mesquite, TX 75149
texascavers@yahoo.com

Subscriptions, dues, payments for ads, and membership info should be sent to the TSA:

The Texas Speleological Association
Post Office Box 8026
Austin, TX 78713-8026
www.cavetexas.org

The opinions and methods expressed in this publication are solely those of the respective authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the TSA, or the NSS.

Submissions: Articles, announcements, artwork, photos, and material for publication are ALWAYS welcomed and may be sent at anytime. All submissions must be submitted to the Editor in electronic form, either via email or CD-ROM. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

The editor reserves the right to edit inappropriate material, errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation, and to edit for clarity. In the event of significant changes the author (s) will be given an opportunity to review changes prior to publication.

Deadlines: While submissions are welcomed at anytime, the deadline for consideration for inclusion in the next issue of each quarter is as follows:

- 1st Quarter issue — February 1st
- 2nd Quarter issue— May 1st
- 3rd Quarter issue — August 1st
- 4th Quarter issue — November 1st

Mailing: The editor is not responsible for lost or misdirected newsletters caused by failure to notify editor in writing of address changes.

Advertising Rates: Full page is \$50, a half page is \$25, and a quarter page is \$15. Full page color on back page is \$75.

Photo Credits:

Front Cover— Travis Scott photo from his trip to Satellite Sink.

Back Cover — Michael Harris (Bexar Grotto) photo that took first place in the Print category at the TSA Spring Convention in Ft. Clark Springs.

Inside Front Cover — Chris Vreeland's photos from the TSA Spring Convention in Fort Clark Springs. The cave is Kickapoo Caverns.

Inside Rear Cover — David Ochel's photos from the TSA Spring Convention in Fort Clark Springs.

2011 Texas Speleological Association Officers

Chair: **Mark Alman**

chairman@cavetexas.org

Vice-Chair: **Ellie Thoene**

vicechairman@cavetexas.org

Secretary: **Denise Prendergast**

secretary@cavetexas.org

Treasurer: **Michael Cicherski**

treasurer@cavetexas.org

Publications Committee Chairman -

The Texas Caver Editor:

Mark Alman

publications@cavetexas.org or
texascavers@yahoo.com

The Texas Speleological Association is a not-for-profit organization that supports cave exploration and studies in and around the state of Texas. It is comprised of both independent members and local grottos.

The TSA is an internal organization of the National Speleological Society and represents the greater caving community in Texas. The organization holds business meetings 3 times a year, organizes an annual convention for Texas cavers, and sponsors caving projects and events throughout the state.

Cave Emergency

FOR A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY IN TEXAS, CALL 911!

FOR CAVE ASSISTANCE, CALL THE CLOSEST NUMBER:

BEXAR 210-326-1576

COLLIN 214-202-6611

HAYS 512-393-9054

SUTTON 325-387-3424

TRAVIS 512-663-2287

DFW Grotto Project at Spring Creek Cave

by Bill Steele

Photos by James Jasek and Bill Steele.

Sometime in early 2008 I heard that the ownership of Spring Creek Cave, Kendall Co., not far north of Boerne, Texas, had changed hands and that the cave was open to cavers again. Back in the early late 70s I had gone to this cave a couple of times. I even did a cave dive there with Wayne Russell, who not long afterwards died while cave diving in Jacob's Well, and Bill Stone, who then, in 1977, was just beginning cave diving. Russell did the exploratory of an upstream sump in Spring Creek while Stone and I waited. Soon he came back to say that he had reached air-filled passage on the other side, and offered us virgin cave. I went through first, letting the thin nylon dive line pass through an "O" I formed with my left thumb and index finger. The sump was about 75 feet long. I remember it seeming like driving in a heavy fog with bright headlights, straining to see in the murk. All at once I ran into a corner and my mask flooded. Water poured in and my heart beat quickened as did my breathing. I maintained my composure, cleared my mask, continued and came

to the far end of the dive line in air-filled passage, looking into virgin cave. I signaled with the dive line that I was through and waited in chest deep for Stone. When he joined me we explored ahead a few hundred feet in neck deep water before returning to the sump, going through one at a time, and rejoining Russell on the other side.

Former Texas caver Mark Minton wrote:

In the summer of 1983 Texas cavers got a rare opportunity to explore and survey Spring Creek Cave. From May to October we had five trips into the cave. We started surveying right from the entrances, and covered all of the known cave plus explored a lot of new passage. Spring Creek has several sumps, and all of them were either dove or lowered in order to explore the passage beyond.

One of our main objectives was to follow the main stream passage upstream beyond a sump which Bill Stone, Bill Steele, and Wayne Russell had dove some years earlier. The original dive line was still in place. By notching a rimstone dam we were able to lower the water enough to get through a low airspace with diving. The stream passage continued to a waterfall. The entire stream was pouring down a dome. We called that place the Shower Stall, and there was so



The classic, large entrance to the cave. Jim Jasek photo



Cephas Wovencraft and Will Reinhart look through the cave gate . Jim Jasek photo

much water that one could not really tell what was at the top due to all the spray.

On a return trip with Mike McWhirter and Lisa Wilk, I brought a dive mask and free climbed the dome. I needed the mask in order to see the walls and handholds through the spray. Once at the top, which was 5 meters up, I popped through the water into a low, open room. There was an almost circular rimstone dam holding back the water, which poured over equally in all directions. I rigged a rope so that the others could follow.

Beyond was a stream passage, which we surveyed for 100 meters before turning back. I remember that the passage ahead was low but intriguing, and had good air flow. Unfortunately we lost access to Spring Creek Cave before we were able to pursue all of the

leads. We never got back to the Shower Stall, and I have wondered ever since where it might lead.

In those five trips, 9,200 feet was mapped, and several leads remained. Soon thereafter the ranch was sold to a developer and cavers were not welcome back. The map was never drafted, but the survey notes were kept, and archived at the Texas Speleological Survey (TSS) office in Austin.

A decade passed and the cave remained closed. Then, leading up to the 1994 Texas NSS convention, George Veni asked Duwain Whitis to draft a line drawing of the cave for the convention guidebook. Following that, for another 15 years, the cave myotis bats had the cave to themselves. To protect them, and to be sure cavers were kept out, the cave was gated with a well-made bat friendly gate, but years passed with the cave remaining off limits to further exploration and mapping.

The first thing I did to take a step toward our grotto having a project at Spring Creek was to call Mike Burrell and ask him about it. He was the right person to call. He is friends with the new owner and keeps a key to the cave gate. He told me that he would inquire with the owner about us having a project to thoroughly explore and map

the cave.

The second thing I did was go to the TSS office and make a copy of everything in their file on the cave. They had the original survey notes, copies of articles that had been published about the cave, and even copies of newspaper articles about the cave.

Our first grotto trip to the cave was on September 8, 2008 to acquaint ourselves with it. I brought a copy of Duwain Whitis' line plot "map" from the Caves and Karst of Texas 1994 NSS convention guidebook, laminated so it would not fall apart in the extremely wet conditions of the cave.

Basically the cave goes like this: The entrance is big and beautiful, in my opinion one of the best look-

ing cave entrances in the state of Texas. At the edge of darkness, as far as outside light reaches into the cave, is the gate. We unlocked it and took turns stepping through the trapdoor-sized hinged door. A couple of hundred feet beyond the gate you step off into water. It's knee deep at first, but eventually gets deeper. A few hundred feet before the major "T" intersection 1,200 feet in, you're swimming in deep water.

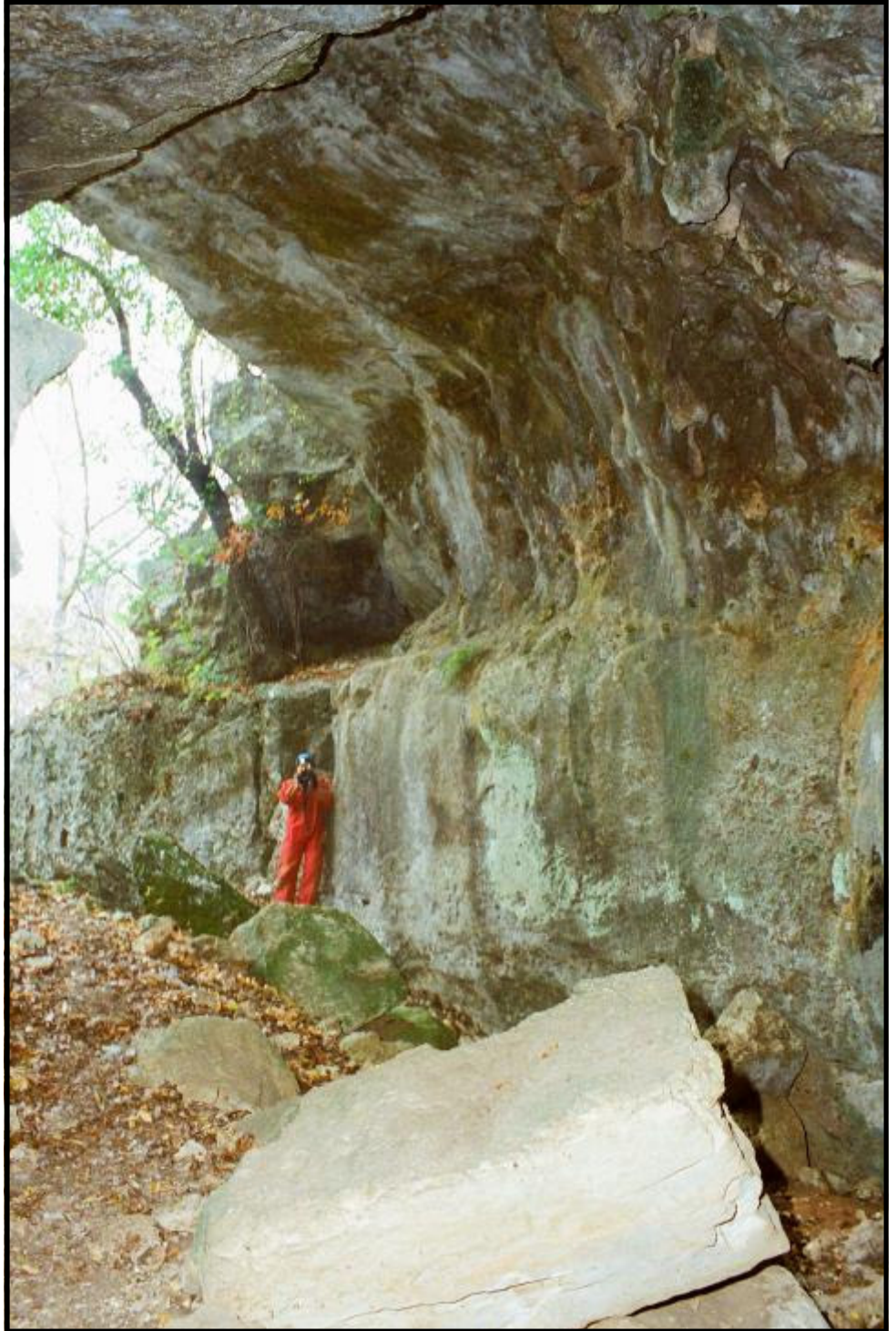
To the left at the "T" it goes about 600 feet to a sump. This was dived in 1983, appeared in their survey notes to be around 40 feet long, and around 600 feet of air-filled passage had been explored and mapped on the other side, which between the sump and another "T", was named the Bunnyhop.

Back at the main "T", to the right, is most of the cave. As we went along we noticed side passages on the right as we progressed through more swimming, some walking, some slogging in mud in knee deep water, and past lovely formations, definitely photo worthy.

After more swimming in deep water, and pulling ourselves along the walls, we eventually we reached the Shower Stall. This is one of the most dramatic places I've seen in a Texas cave. A steady stream of water falls down it. It's about 20 feet high and well decorated with flowstone and draperies. A rope was hanging down it that had been there for 23 years. We were amazed at how much calcite encased the 10mm rope. It was solidly coated and we doubted that it could be climbed with ascenders.

The next week I was called by a young woman who said she had always wanted to be a caver and had found our grotto website on the Internet. She lived in Dallas. I was the grotto chairman at the time, so my name and telephone number were listed on our website. I told the young woman what I tell everyone who calls about going caving, and that is to start coming to grotto meetings, get to know the people, get on a trip with them, buy some caving gear, and you will become a caver. She came to the next grotto meeting and her first trip was to Spring Creek Cave. Her name was Ellie Thoene, a.k.a. Ellie Watson.

Now acquainted with the cave, six weeks later we were back. Our trip was on a Sunday because we had a long trip the day before to another water cave that's nearby. Our objectives for the October 25, 2008 trip were to do a tank haul in support of Jean "Creature" Krejca, who was doing the dive. She planned to dive the upstream sump left at the "T" which is about 1,200 feet from the entrance. On the trip were James Brown, Udi and Katy Fuchs, Edwin Lehr, Charlie Emerson, Kurt Menking, Joe Ranzau, Christy Burrell, Mike Harris, Mark Albrecht, Ruff Daniels, Ellie Thoene, her friend



Charlie Emerson in the tall entrance. Jim Jasek photo



*Bill gives Diana a lesson on keeping book.
Jim Jasek photo*

Will Reinhart, Vivian Loftin, Grace Borengasser, Joe Datri, Geoff Hoeser and me.

Our objective was to support one diver, Creature, who was to do three things: 1) dive and determine the length of the sump; 2) go about 1,000 feet upstream from the sump and see if the cave continued past what had been explored and mapped in 1983, and 3) rig a pull rope through the sump. James Brown had decided to sit this one out because he was tired from the day before and also did not feel well.

Arriving at the cave at 11:00 a.m., we dressed in wetsuits and divied up Creature's dive gear. Everyone entered the cave and waded, swam, and salamandered to the sump. Once she was gone into the sump,

many people there left to go back to the "T" junction and upstream about a mile to the Shower Stall waterfall dome. Charlie, James, Joe, Grace, Geoff, Edwin and I waited for Creature in waist deep water.

In an hour and a half Creature returned, saying that the sump is 40 feet long, and that it should be rigged with a pull rope for cavers to go through it without fins or buoyancy compensators. She had taken off her gear and went to the upstream "T" which the 1983 survey showed to be about 600 feet upstream. There she said the passage to the left at the "T" quickly turned into a low crawlway. To the right, however, she came to a flagging tape survey station, presumed to be the end of exploration and survey in 1983, and she went beyond it approximately 250 feet. Where she turned around it was 10 feet wide and six feet high, and she was wading in water with mud beneath it. She was pretty sure it was virgin cave beyond the flagging tape.

As I paid out the rope to her, Creature went back through the sump, and rigged a 78 foot long, 10 mm PMI rope through it. She had problems setting a bolt on the far side, so the rope was tied off temporarily to less than acceptable natural holes on both sides of the sump.

Ellie Thoene was on her second caving trip, the first one having been the day before. In my years of caving I've known just a few who I call "happy cavers", who love being underground so much that they smile constantly. Ellie radiates with happiness when underground, and it's contagious. I snapped a photo of her big smile, her face beaming happily beneath a helmet and light I loaned her, and it ended up on the cover of

our next grotto newsletter. We had a new gung-ho recruit.

Ellie was on our next trip on November 8, 2008, with Bobby DeVos, Will Harris, and me. We drove down from Dallas with my 12 foot extension ladder, which extends to 18 feet long, tied to the top of Diana Tomchick's truck. Diana could not join because she had a department retreat over the weekend. We camped at the cavers' camp at Cave Without a Name.

In the morning Mike Burrell, the manager of CWAN, joined us and we drove together the short couple of miles to the cave. We stopped and talked to the owner, who lives on the hill before you descend to the

creek in front of the cave. We told him about our plan to retrieve the old, calcite-encased rope from the Shower Stall, and he said that he would like to have a piece of it. He also mentioned how he would like to see the cave end up among the top ten longest on the list of Texas caves. I promised him that it will be. The owner knew that "his cave," as he calls it, was at the time the 13th longest cave in Texas. I had looked at the TSS website and Texas' longest caves, and Spring Creek was 2,072 feet shy of being the tenth longest.

As we traversed the cave, we floated and carried my aluminum extension ladder, with four two seven gallon and two five gallon water jugs attached to it for floatation, all the way to the Shower Stall, over a mile into the cave. There was definitely question as to whether or not we could get it all the way there, through a couple of low airspaces, and if it was too long to stand up in the not-so-wide Shower Stall.

Strapped to the ladder was a two inch diameter PVC pipe into which we planned to feed two lengths of the calcite-coated rope to get it out without cracking the calcite. If we could succeed in getting a length of it out like we found it, I had in mind fastening it to a board to make an interesting and unique exhibit for the TSS museum in Austin.

All went successfully. The ladder floated along easily and was no problem as we passed through the cave. Two of us handled it fine. At the low airspaces we filled the floats with water until they and the ladder sank a foot or so underwater, deep enough to glide the ladder beneath the ceiling like a submarine.

At the Shower Stall we stood the ladder up, amazed that it was the maximum length that could be stood up there, but it worked. We extended it its full 18 foot length and I went up first. I united the rope that had been there for 23 years, left by Mark Minton in 1984, and lowered it down with the new rope.

We went upstream above the Shower Stall at first in a tight crawlway, which opened up to a wide, meter high passage with a lot of water. Soon we came to flagging hanging from the ceiling, which was the beginning of virgin cave. It was also the beginning of low airspace. As far as we could see with the beams of our LED lights it looked like the low airspace continued.



Ellie sketching. Jim Jasek photo

On the way out we used the ladder in a couple of domes and up the flowstone toward the entrance from the "T", where we left a rope to be used in the future to survey up there.

Back at the CWAN cavers' camp Mike Burrell had built a big campfire and many cavers who had been at Robber Baron in San Antonio for an open house had arrived. The evening saw a party highlighted by fajitas compliments of HEB. A highlight was the unveiling of the calcite-encrusted lengths of rope, dramatically slid out of the PVC pipe onto the grass near the campfire.

Two weeks later, Nov. 22, 2008 we were back. Jim Jasek showed up this time and took a group photo.



Diana in the Soda Straw Heaven and Wallow. Bill Steele photo

Though there was a large turnout, most people were there to tour the cave and not explore or survey. It's a good cave to tour. A wetsuit is a must for comfort and safety, but given that, a trip to the Shower Stall and back is an easy, enjoyable trip.

While Jim Jasek took photos in the entrance area of the cave, I gave Diana Tomchick and Ellie Thoene a lesson in "keeping book", which is caver slang for sketching and recording data on a cave survey. It's my belief that the best way to teach someone how to keep book, and it was the way I was taught by TAG caver Richard Schreiber, is to have them "shadow you" when you are keeping book, and in their own book do what you are doing. They ask questions and you answer them.

On this trip I took in a bolt kit and put in a bolt on the entrance side of the sump to the left at the main "T" junction. It was ready for a caving rope to be attached to it as a permanent sump line, which helps even cave divers because they can pull themselves through a sump with their hands, which lessens the amount of silt

that's stirred up that reduces visibility, and fins are not necessary.

With the bolt in, Diana, Ellie, and I went to the Shower Stall, climbed the rope, which surprisingly already had calcite on it, but not enough that ascenders did not work on it, and continued the survey of the low stream passage above. We mapped 392 feet before we started getting cold from immersion up to our chins. Ahead it appeared to continue with only about four inches of air space as far as our lights could reach.

The Valentine's Day trip on February 14, 2009 was a tank haul to the sump that leads to the Bunnyhop passage. Jean "Creature" Krejca and Vivian Loftin installed a bolt on the far side of the sump, we rigged a caving rope through it, and then off these two bold women went to explore and map beyond what had been done on August 30, 1983 by Wayne Russell, V. Parker, and J. Wilcox. The haul team waited for them. While we waited a crack was noticed above the sump pool on the other side of it from the sump. I boosted Ellie up into it and she probed around, reporting back that it ap-

peared someone had been up there before, but probably only one person. Nothing showed on the line plot for a passage there, so we decided to come back in the next day and survey up there.

After being gone for several hours, Vivian and Creature returned, having mapped 650 feet of virgin cave, to the right at the "T", which is about 600 feet up the passage from the far side of the sump. They had reached another sump. Creature said there was a chance that it could be bypassed by enlarging and squeezing through a crack along the right wall.

The next day, a Sunday, Edwin Lehr, Diana Tomchick, Ellie Thoene, and I went back to the cave and all four of us boosted and pulled each other up into the crack Ellie had checked out the prior day. Ellie led the way up a climb that we were amazed she had climbed the day before while up here all alone. It was a challenge, especially because it is muddy. We reached the remnant of an upper level which ended in breakdown on each end, and we mapped it, all the while thinking that there is the potential for climbing up and reaching additional portions of this upper level passage elsewhere in the cave.

The maternity colony of cave myotis bats return to Spring Creek Cave in April and the cave is off limits until they leave again in October. However, given high water and other caving projects, we did not return to the cave for a year and a half, returning on November 20, 2010, the weekend before Thanksgiving.

I announced the trip on Texascavers.com (as **everyone** should! - Editor) and there was a good turnout. I was to lead a group above the Shower Stall, and Sean Lewis, Devra Heyer, Steve Webb, and Cristina Estrada would go to the White Man's Passage, which in the notes indicated had a walking passage above a climb at its known end, and continued in it.

When caving at Mammoth Cave last summer with the Cave Research Foundation, I helped carry a deer stand ladder into one of the entrances of this, the world's longest cave. I'd never seen one before. They're



Rope tites- fungus that grew on a rope left in the cave for a couple of months. Bill Steele photo

lightweight, strong, the rungs are 8" wide, and they come 20' long and break down into five four foot sections. Not only that, but they only cost \$50 (<http://www.sportsmansguide.com/net/cb/guide-gear-20-mini-ladder.aspx?a=681075>). So I bought one, and five people had a section each that we floated back to the Shower Stall. I figured since the rope I had left there had been there for two years now, and it was already slightly coated in calcite after only two months, so now it might not be climbable.

A caravan of vehicles rendezvoused at the Cave Without a Name cavers' camp at 9:00 a.m. and we drove to the cave together. I talked to the owner and all was fine with him. At the cave the push teams went in



Diana, Bill Steele, Ellie Thoene when Bill is instructing them how to keep book. Jim Jasek photo

with just a few people ahead of us and floated the deer stand ladder back to Shower Stall. Before we got there the four person exploration-survey team of Lewis, Heyer, Webb, and Estrada took the last side passage to the right a few hundred feet before the Shower Stall.

At the Shower Stall we stood the ladder and found the rope to indeed be coated with calcite, but it was still a little supple, and probably climbable. Galen Falgout clipped in and climbed up, albeit slowly. I went next, with my Croll engaged as a safety in case the ladder failed, and climbed the ladder. I only got four feet off the floor before the ladder started sinking into the mud, or so I thought. It was actually buckling. James Brown got it on video. These ladders are rated at 200

pounds. I weigh 186 with no clothes on in the morning before I eat anything. Given a wetsuit, a cave suit, a cave pack, boots, vertical gear, and so on, I was quite a bit heavier than the rated maximum. And also, the ladder was not perfectly vertical. It was at probably a 60 degree angle. So it bent and I swung onto the rope. I fished for my frog foot loop and then climbed up the rope in the pouring waterfall.

At the top Ellie Thoene led the way with Edwin Lehr, me, and then Galen Falgout following in that order. Galen let us know that he does not care much for low airspace, and the airspace is very low above the Shower Stall. But what turned us around was not the low airspace, it was that we all got cold right away. The water seems abnormally cold up there, that and you are constantly in water up to your ears. We decided that we were too cold to survey this day and that we needed to come back with more neoprene on.

Ellie and Edwin had gone ahead to the flagging hanging from the ceiling, indicating the last survey station from our prior trip up here, and went a little bit ahead into virgin cave to see if the ceiling rose at all. It did not. Turning around, Galen, who had been bringing up the rear, was now in the lead. He did not get very far before he got off course and instead of staying in the middle of the passage where the available airspace was the most, he went perpendicular to it, and was heading into lower and lower airspace toward the right wall. Actually, this is not that hard to do when you've only got one eye above the water's surface, and half of your face is underwater. Realizing his mistake, he backed up and I grabbed his arm and got him out to the middle and the highest airspace, which was only four inches. He was wide-eyed, or at least his right eye was, his left one being under water. He asked me to take the lead.

Back at the Shower Stall I shot some photos of Ellie rappelling down it, as well as a video of Edwin rappelling. At the bottom Steve Webb and Cristina joined us. They had gone to the White Man's Passage with Sean Lewis and Devra Heyer, but were turned around at a very difficult climb. They said that Sean took two attempts to get up it, with it being only eight feet high, but overhung and with water falling down it. Devra, who is a practicing rock climber, had a lot of trouble with it, and only made it with an assist from Steve from below and a helping hand from Sean from above. With that Steve and Cristina decided to go to the

Shower Stall to see if they could help us. We exited together, taking the ladder with us.

Back at the CWAN cavers' camp a campfire blazed that night and we awaited Sean and Devra's return. Fairly late they showed up saying that they had mapped about 800 feet of passage, which was walking passage at first, and then became stoop walking. It went.

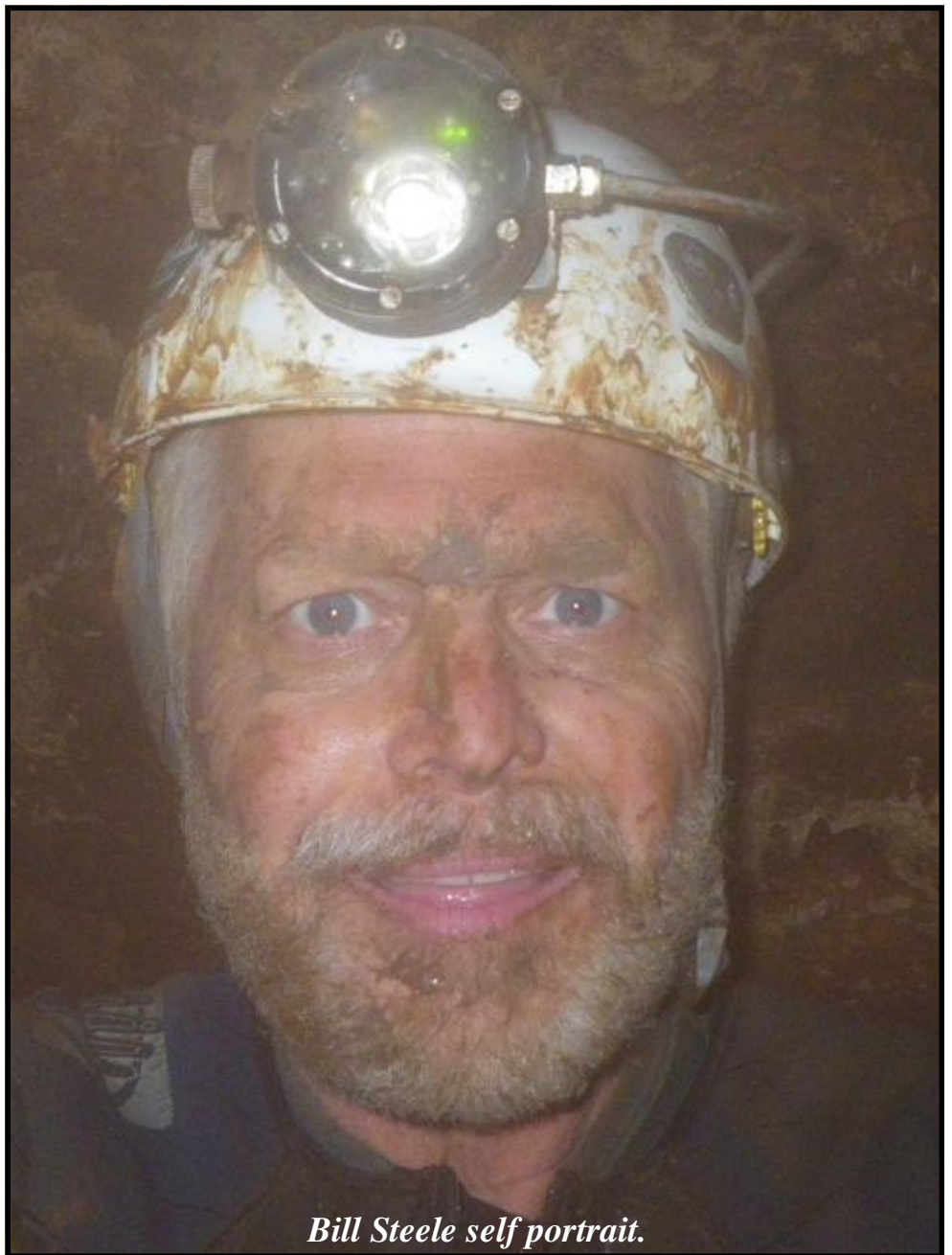
The next trip was a "set-up" trip on January 30, 2011. This was the Sunday following the big Honey Creek Cave trip with 93 cavers doing the through trip, and Ed Goff leading a trip to the end of the Mile Long Crawl. The purpose of the Spring Creek set-up trip was to take two sections of my deer stand ladder to the climb in the White Man's Passage to see if that was enough, and rig a rope. I took a bolt kit along and a 40 foot caving rope.

For floats on the deer stand ladder we had learned on our November trip that the five gallon water jugs did not work nearly as well as a child's tube float. I had two in the garage at home, so I strapped a tube to each of the two four foot sections, and they floated along nicely.

The side passage leading to the White Man's Passage was named the Grovelling Glub by Jerry Atkinson and Brian Burton when they first entered it and mapped it in 1983. What a perfect name. Not far into it is a very low airspace, but it's short. This is followed by some narrow walking passage, which leads to a hands and knees crawl in soupy mud. The four foot long section of ladder I had was not difficult to manage through here. I had experimented and bought a bag of 20 cheap tennis balls at Walmart, poked a slit in eight of them, and hoped they would stay on to protect the ends of the ladders. It was a failed experiment. Hopefully we'll find those tennis balls on subsequent trips (we have found two of them).

At the climb up to the White Man's Passage the 8' of ladder was perfect. I looked at placing an expansion bolt but then found a way to rig the rope to a natural rig point.

Deciding it was too late in the day and we had a five hour drive home, we explored ahead to see what



Bill Steele self portrait.

the cave was like beyond what Sean and Devra had mapped. Their 800 feet of survey was a long way and we did not reach their last survey station where they had said that had tied a length of webbing.

On February 26, 2011, we were back and had two objectives. One was a sump dive by James Brown of a sump at the end of the first side passage after the main "T" junction 1,200 feet into the cave. Steve Webb and Cristina Estrada went with James to help get his gear to the sump, which appeared in the survey notes from 1983 to be only 150' from the main passage.

In the White Man's Passage above the deer stand ladder who had just begun to survey beyond where Sean and Devra had surveyed to prior November when we heard Steve and Cristina coming. They said that the sump was too tight for James to go very far into it. So, they joined us and two survey teams consisting of

Michael Cicherski, Edwin Goff, and Steve Webb in one, and Diana Tomchick, Cristina Estrada, and me in the other, explored and mapped ahead from the webbing strap that signified the end of Sean and Devra's survey. Not far beyond what Sean and Devra had explored we entered a 250' long section of the passage we dubbed Soda Straw Heaven and Wallow. That's what it is. The ceiling is Heaven to behold in the splendor of the thousands of soda straws. One was two feet long. However, it's nerve wracking to stay low enough beneath them to not break any. The two foot-long one you have to very slowly pass beneath, inching slowly and watching the end of it is less than an inch from your chest.

And wallow? Oh yes, it's a wallow. There is mud that looks like and has the consistency of chocolate pudding on the floor.

Our two teams surveyed toward each other and racked up about 500 feet. We needed 423 feet for Spring Creek Cave to become the 10th longest cave in the state of Texas. Back at the owner's house I knocked on his front door and when he opened it I said, "Congratulations!" He looked puzzled. Then I told him Spring Creek Cave was now the 10th longest cave in the state, which gives him bragging rights, and it was something I had told him over two years before we intended to do for him. He smiled big and said, "Thanks."

I sent Butch Fralia with the TSS the new surveyed length, but before he got it posted on their website's list of the longest caves in Texas, Punkin Cave also turned a new length, knocking Spring Creek Cave back to 11th place.

We do have going leads. The White Man's Passage beyond Soda Straw Heaven and Wallow goes. The passage Creature and Vivian explored and mapped beyond the Bunnyhop sump goes, and a cave dive of a second sump back there will happen late this year. The low airspace about the Shower Stall continues, and we're talking about a tank haul to its known end and have a cave diver explore ahead and see if there ceiling rises. That is an excellent lead. There is air flow, lots of water comes out of it, and it goes the south toward a wide sinkhole plain that is bound to have many miles of cave beneath it.

Award winning cave cartographer Mark Gee, a member of the DFW Grotto, has begun making a map of the cave. It should be ready to be seen publicly at the 2012 TSA convention.

Once the bats leave with their young this fall, we will resume our project and have another season. We were there briefly, and it is fleeting these days to keep a cave in the list of the ten longest caves in Texas, but I made a vow to the landowner, and I think in the end I will make

Wapati

March 29, 1965

Centerville High School, Ohio

Explore Post Specializes in Speleology

Into the sunless depths a light penetrates and boyish voices break the silence. All ears and eyes are listening and looking about the dirty, misty crevice as Explore Post 116 investigates.

Inside a cave there is plenty of room for explorations and adventure and it was just the type of thing the Senior Boy Scouts needed to revive interest in their explore group.

Last summer with membership at a minimum, the senior scouts decided that they would specialize in speleology, the study of caves. After the news spread about the Post's speciality, membership grew rapidly. Now 25 boys belong to the group.

Bill Steele, Pete Poppleton, and John Montello, the most experienced members of the group, are members of the National Speleological Society. One hundred hours cave experience qualifies a person for membership. This summer Bill, Pete, and John will attend the annually held Speleological Society Convention which will be held in Bloomington, Indiana.



SPELUNKERS BILL STEELE AND PETE POPPLETON CONSULT various books and maps as they discuss plans for future expeditions for their Explore Post within the coming months.

This article above has nothing to do with the Spring Creek Cave trip report, but, I included it anyway because I thought it was cool! Bill sent me this and it shows to go you what can happen when you get youth interested in caving. You never know where it might lead!

Satellite Sink Trip Report

Submitted by Travis Scott

Participants: Jerry Atkinson, John and Jill Brooks, Zach Broussard, Joe Mitchell, Travis Scott, Mary Theisse, TJ Tidwell, and Drew Wendeborn.

about 530 meters away. I didn't quite make it to the tank however, because just over the ridge from the small cave entrance I was stopped by a massive collapse-like sinkhole with cliff walls. Using Google Earth to measure the feature, it appeared to be about 66 meters long and 29 meters wide; -HUGE!

Dumbfounded, I looked through my files for any features I had forgotten about. I downloaded and looked at many different aerial photo sources to compare the fea-



180 degree panoramic from center of NE sinkhole showing entrance to NE chamber

Sometime in the last year, Google, working their way to taking over the world, graciously released a new set of higher definition imagery for most of the State of Texas. Being the map dork that I am, I found myself playing on Google Earth, checking out all the large cave entrances that I have been to, just out of curiosity. While looking at a few of the large cave entrances out in the Hill Country, I poked around at a few of the smaller ones too, just to see if anything would give them away. I looked at a cave with a small open entrance near the top of a hill which we had visited a few times before. I viewed at it maximum resolution and was unable to note an entrance vs. juniper trees, so I began to pan away from the cave to look at an old water tank we had once visited while touring the ranch. The tank was over the crest of the hill from the cave entrance, down a valley, and over the crest of the next hill

ture and make sure I was seeing this thing right. Google had the best resolution hands down. Overlaying the 7.5 topo maps revealed a change in the topography around this apparent sinkhole also, how had it gone unnoticed? I was also amazed because on separate occasions while LOOKING for caves, we had searched on both sides of the draw directly adjacent to this feature, yet nobody had crested either hill and looked into this specific area. Had I taken a few more steps at one point, and gazed upward, I very well might have seen it a few years prior. I was also surprised that a feature of this magnitude could be unknown to the owners on a ranch that pays close attention to caves.

Nonetheless, it was a significant feature that would require an on-site visit. Unfortunately, with other projects in the works, it took several tantalizing months before we could get out and visit the feature. Thankfully, we



Profile of area showing cave and tank we had visited as well as areas we had ridge-walked, compared to sinkhole location.

Intended to show just how close we had come to finding it before.



View of the entrance to the south chamber

had business to take care of nearby so a weekend was chosen with the main focus being photography in another cave. A visit to the feature would have to wait

until the Sunday morning before departing for home. That Saturday however, John and Jill decided to stay on the surface, along with the ranch owner and his son, and

they set off to locate this cave and hike around while we were taking pictures. Unfortunately, the GPS coordinates we gave them were apparently a little off. At first, they could not find this “monster of a sink”, and they began to doubt, even when standing at the exact GPS location provided. They continued to hike



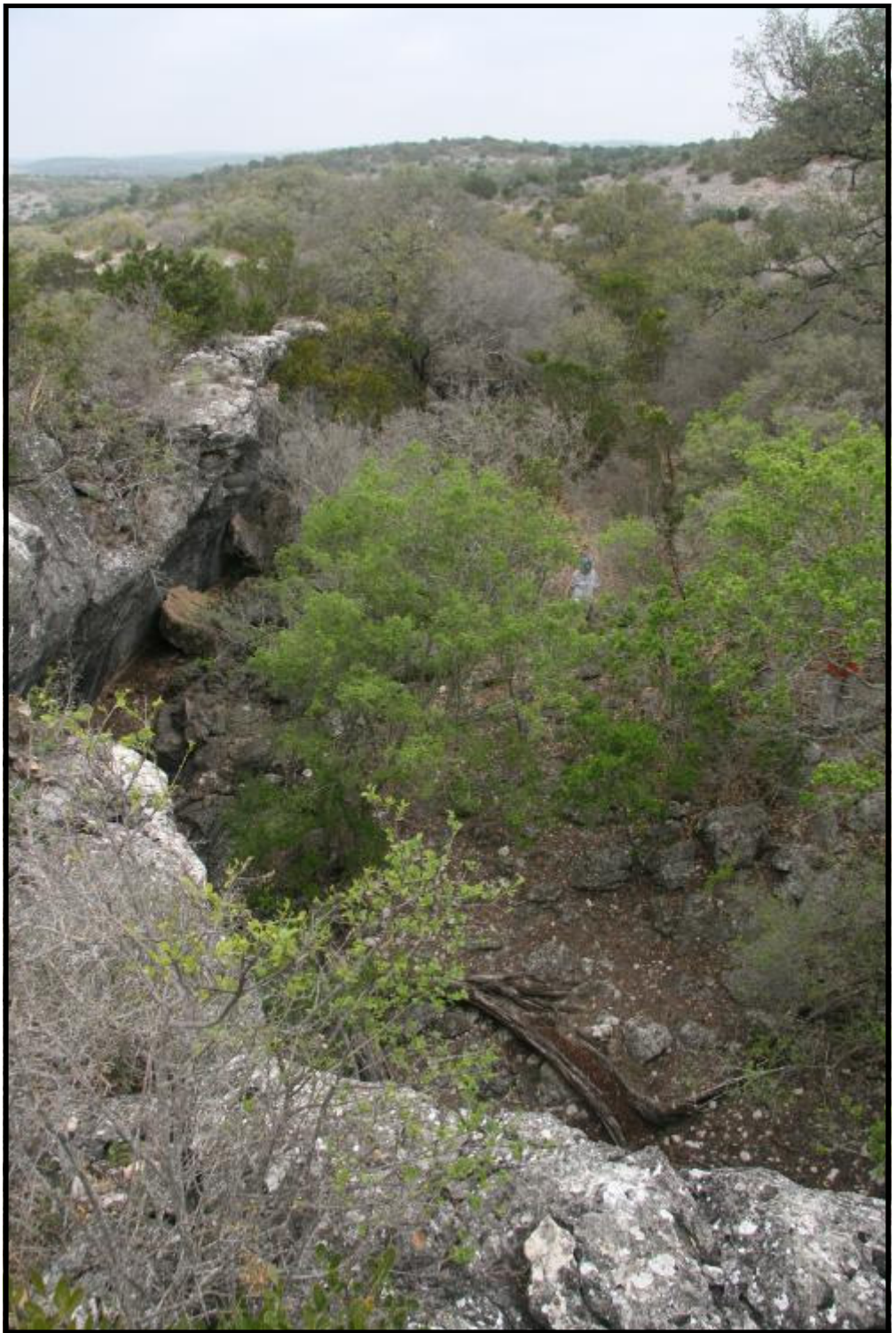
Northeast chamber

around the area, eventually heading over and onto the hill across the draw. Once at the top, they turned around and finally spotted the large hole!

Knowing where it was now, they hiked right to it. Meanwhile, they watched the GPS location we had provided them. It turns out that the location was within 7 meters of the sinkhole, and they had hiked all around it, yet did not see it due to the very thick; and misleading vegetation growing in and around the sink. They did a quick recon, respectfully not pushing too far after my pleading request for it not to be 'too scooped' when we all arrived Sunday morning. When we all regrouped late that Saturday night, John excitedly told us about what they had found, keeping us excited about the next morning.

Sunday morning we headed straight over to the feature. I decided to leave the group as we hiked to the sink and follow the GPS coordinates since I was the one that created them and I was frustrated that they were 'off'. As we hiked, I arrived at the digital location, looked back and was unable to see the rest of the group. I looked around, frustrated, when I heard someone yell, "We're Here" from far away. I turned, took just a couple of steps toward the voice, and realized that I was standing at the rim of a cliff, highly concealed by brush and trees, just a few feet from the GPS location. At first I was confused because the voice I heard was so far away, there was no way I was standing at the same feature! Alas, I had underestimated the size of this huge sinkhole, and looking around I realized that I was at the opposite end of a large ring of cliffs; -very cool! I had been surprised that John and Jill could not find the sink while standing a few feet away, but I was now a believer. That will teach you to go running off without looking where you are going in karst areas!

We proceeded to find the way down and explore the sinkhole. Three fourths of the oval shaped sinkhole is rimmed by vertical cliffs, and one long side can be eas-



View from the west rim.

ily climbed. The central portion of the sink is full of trees and brush of various sizes; so much so that it is hard to recognize that you are even in the middle of a sinkhole. Both ends of the oval sinkhole open into darkness. We explored the southwest side first. An easy climb over the large boulders leads down into a large chamber with nicely curved walls and a flat, dirt floor. At the far end of the room, the dirt floor unfortunately meets the walls, sealing any going passage beneath. Within this room, some of the cavers found some odd skulls, of which nobody could identify. Un-



On this page: Views of the south chamber.

fortunately no photos were taken of them, and they will remain a mystery until a return trip. The group then headed around to the northeast end of the sinkhole, to find an approximate 180 degree opening into void be-

neath. This void opens up into breakdown-sloped floors leading into a dirt-floored room similar to the other room. One small crawl might be pushable but will probably require enlarging, and no airflow was found.



This room was a nice cold-air trap as well. Unfortunately, no going passage was found on this side either. Seeing as how it was Sunday morning and we all had long drives ahead, we decided that we would return in the coming months to complete a detailed survey of the feature.

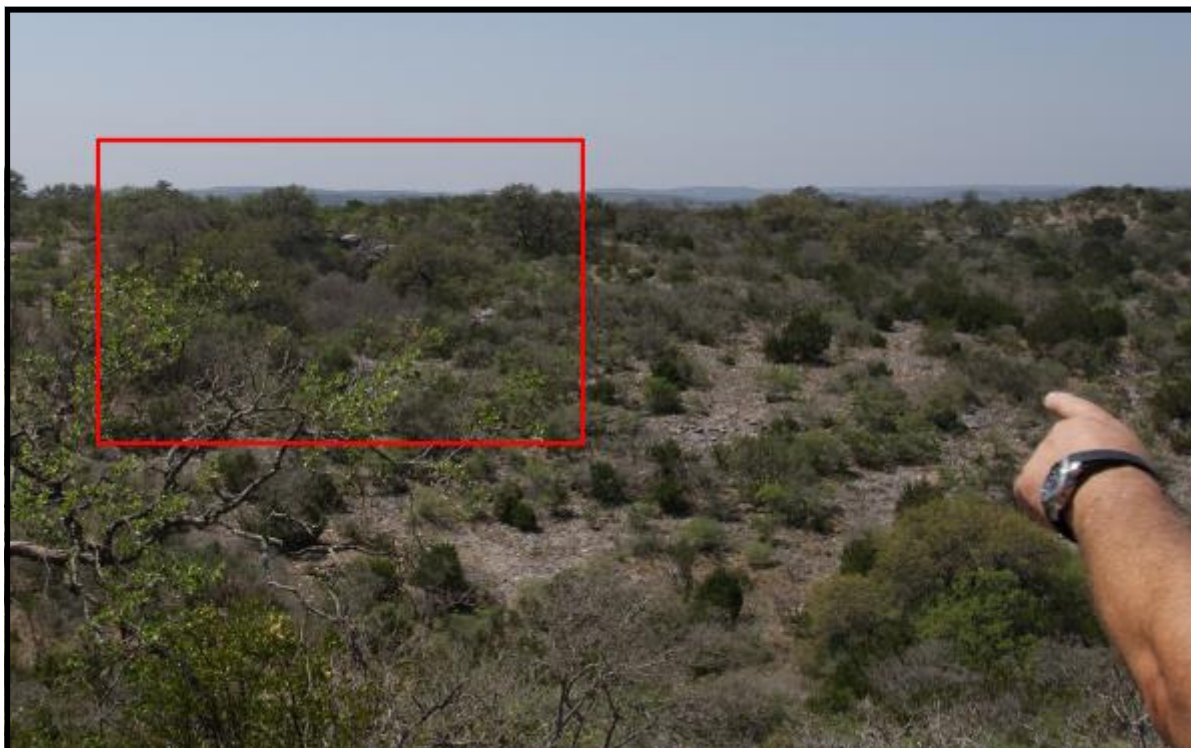
It is unfortunate that there



Within the Northeast chamber.

is no access to the original cave which collapsed and created the large sinkhole; it was probably a significantly large passage with a lot of potential. However it was definitely fun to 'find' such a significant karst feature. A find like this should remind us just how easy it is for a feature or a cave, even a HUGE hole in the ground, to be overlooked or simply not known about by

the current generation (it turns out that the 'the large sink' had been known by older generations of owners, it had just never been mentioned or shown to cavers before). It also serves to show how new technologies, or access to any new information, can lead to fun new discoveries. So keep looking, it pays off!!



View of sink-hole from other hillside, can you see it in the red box?

Other cave entrances visible in Google Earth



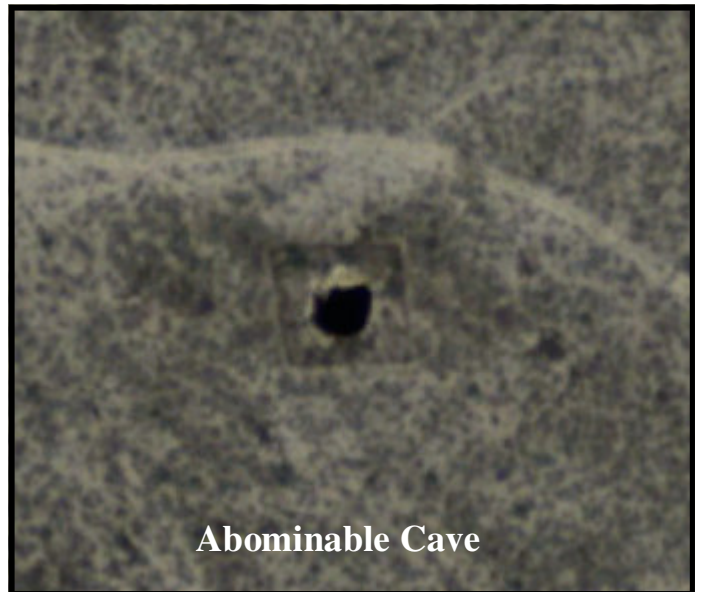
Punkin Cave



Fern Cave



Bracken



Abominable Cave



Devils Sinkhole

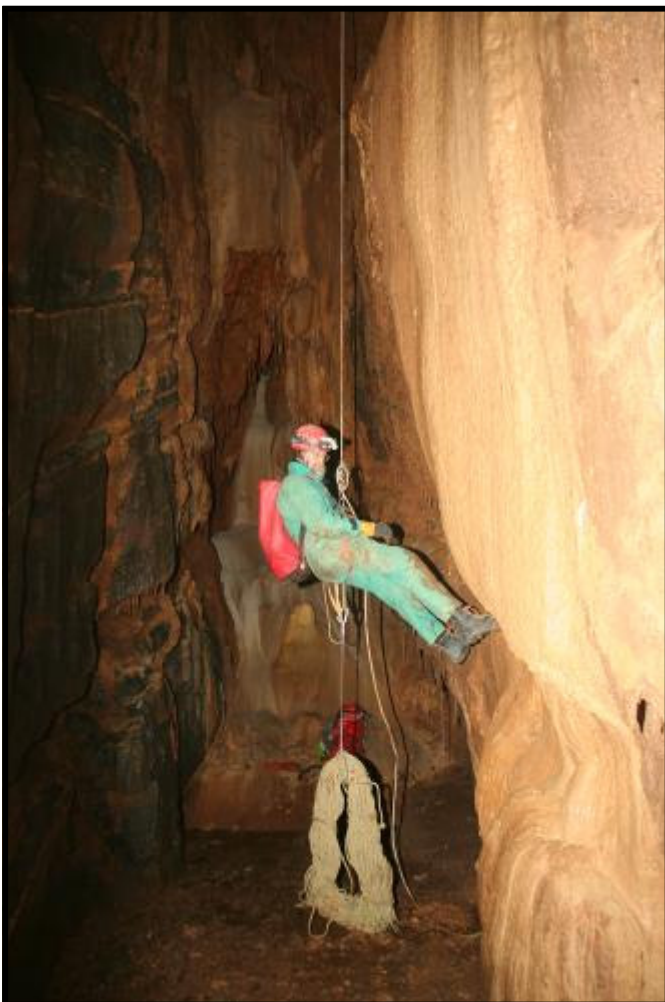
Kicked by a Mule

A Poem by Bill Steele

We were at Soplo



To go Planned a cave dive too



Paul Heinreth to explore
The probable resurgence
900 meters down the mountain

Way down
In a canyon



A burro and a mule



Led the way
We followed their droppings



Like organic flagging
Staying on track
Where to camp



The big question
And we found a place for a tent



Camp Nostove became the name
Open fire cooking



Ellie had a throne
At the edge of a cliff
We checked out the sump



Before hauling the dive gear there
And we mapped the cave



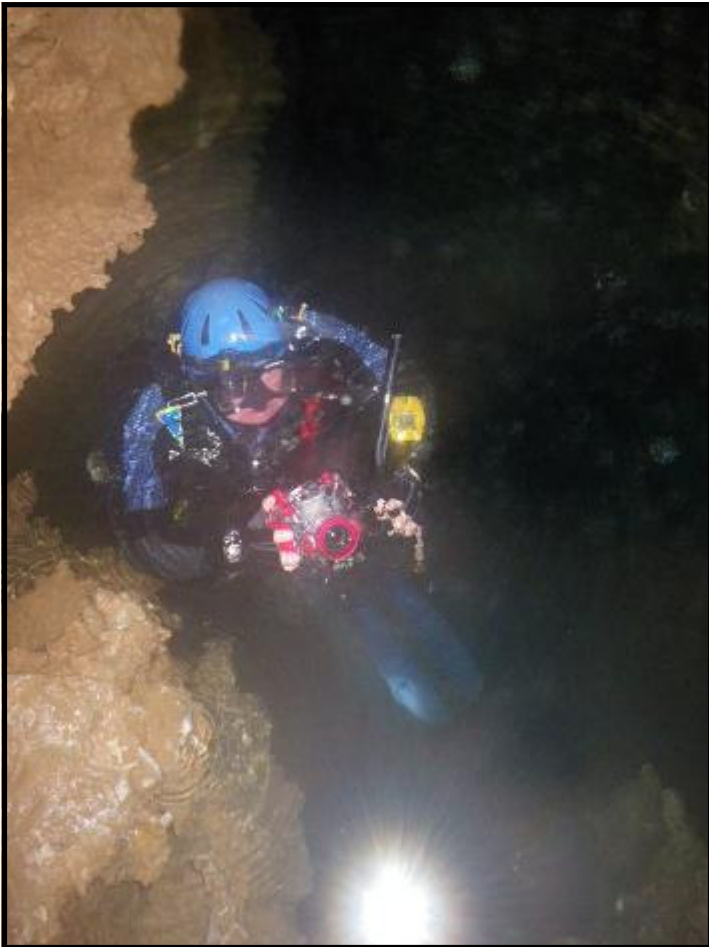
And the
Hall of
the
Mountain
King for
Paul



To the sump
And the Prow watched



Everything we did
Paul dressed in all his stuff



Dove deep and was gone
We waited in the thick darkness



Maybe worrying in our heads
But Paul returned saying



200 feet to air-filled cave
Bringing back a photo of an isopod
With a shrimp body
And a cockroach head



We carried everything back



And learned not to do that!



Up to Camp Nostove

Except the heavy steel tanks
Hoping the burro/mule drivers
Would go get them and we'd pay
And they did and we waited
And while we did
Ellie walked up behind a mule



Photos taken by Bill Steele (15), Paul
Heinreth (3), and James Hunter (1)

Project Reports by Jim “Crash” Kennedy



Flowering Claret Cup (Echinocereus triglochidiatus) near Deep Cave. Photo by Yazmin Avila.

Punkin Cave Survey Expedition #15, 18-20 March 2011

Reported by Jim “Crash” Kennedy, expedition leader

[For general background on Punkin Cave and previous survey expeditions, please refer to past postings on CaveTex.]

Introduction: Punkin Cave lies near the tiny community of Carta Valley in Edwards County, Texas, and is currently the 14th longest cave in the state. It is rapidly growing due to the dedicated efforts of a fairly small group of cavers. We estimate that at least 1km passages remain unsurveyed, which, when eventually completed, will place the cave firmly in the top 10 list of longest caves in Texas. That is not bad for a long-neglected cave previously thought to just be a large entrance room and some crawls! Following is a brief report of the most recent trip.

After the wildly successful multi-day survey trip this past winter (28 December through 1 January), it was clear to me that the massive 5-6 team survey expeditions were no longer as effective as smaller trips with people intimately familiar with certain parts of the cave. I planned this trip for a maximum of 12 surveyors, but in the end only had 10. This worked out fine, with three teams tackling different areas of the cave, mopping up leads, and surveying into virgin passage. I would still like to plan another multi-day expedition, and am currently looking at the Easter weekend. The March expedition was made up of 5 Punkin Cave veterans and 5 cavers new to the project, a nice mix. We

saw 3 species of bats hibernating in the cave, tri-colored bats (*Perimyotis subflavus*), cave myotis (*Myotis velifer*), and Townsends big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*). I estimate probably 400-500 cave myotis, a few dozen big-eared bats, and upwards of a thousand or so trikes in the entire cave during the winter months.

As everyone was arriving Friday evening, I led a short trip to Deep Cave to the Forest of Columns and Helicite Room. We got there right at dusk, and briefly admired the bat emergence before rushing through the cave. We got to see at least one tri-colored bat and a black scorpion up close before exiting. Joining me were Yaz Avila, Lydia Hernandez, and Aubri Jenson. The next morning we got up, had a fabulous breakfast, and broke into survey teams.

The first team, **TEAM SUPERSTITION**, went back to some leads left since 2006 near the beginning of Superstition Maze. Some of these were obvious leads, unsurveyed and passed up by many teams over the years heading deeper into the cave. Matt Zappitello, a veteran of many Superstition surveys, ably led the team to various leads, interpreting the old survey notes and setting stations. David Ochel admirably sketched this complicated section, and Aubri Jenson logged time with the Suuntos. There are still more leads to map in this area, and everyone on the team indicated that they want to return some day. They put in an eight-hour day, and made 21 survey shots, gaining an additional 61.11m of passage (average of 2.91m per shot).

The second team, **TEAM WEST MAZE**, headed off to the large and growing section of cave on the western side of the Entrance Room. Team leader Lee Jay Graves has been working in this part of the cave for about 4 trips now, and continues to discover large rooms and a butt-load of passages. This time he was assisted by Justin Shaw in his first time at keeping survey book in Punkin, and Galen Falgout and Angela Edwards scouting and setting stations. It was the first Punkin survey trip for all three. They placed 23 stations in a remarkable 10 hour trip, adding 72.38m to the length of the cave. This is an average of 3.15m per shot. They extended the survey downwards a lot, to the new fourth deepest point in the cave. There is a heck of lot more to do in this area, and everyone is fired up for the next trip.

The third team, **TEAM AREA 51**, consisted of trip leader Crash and veterans Yazmin Avila and Lydia Hernandez. They began their survey slowly, mopping up a couple of small leads left from the December surveys off of Superstition Maze. They connected back to the room near the Woost Woom (now named the Widdle Woom) and another room east of that one (now called the West Woom). Finally stopped by too-tight leads and the lack of a hammer, they went back through the Widdle Woom to finish another lead left by Jim,

Tone Garot, Jen Foote, and Lydia in December. It quickly connected back to previously surveyed portions of Superstition Maze. Poking around this section, they soon found large unsurveyed virgin leads. They took a 45 minute break to retrieve the Disto which was accidentally dropped down an impenetrable fissure (enlarged by pounding on it with big rocks), then cranked up the MP3 player and started reeling out long shots. The survey took them way out into a complex multi-level area of previously unknown cave heading southwest, although it was not apparent at the time. They soon heard voices from other surveyors. Thinking it was Team Superstition, they were totally surprised to learn it was Team West Maze! A major connection was made, crossing under the floor of the Entrance Room. The connection was made to station WM51, and the inclination of that shot was +51°, so the new section has now been named Area 51. Mopping up some more leads (and gaining more footage) resulted in another connection being made, this time near WM43. Lots and lots of leads are left in this area, filling in a large blank spot on the map and making the plan view even more complicated that it was be-

fore. 117.76m was surveyed in a whopping 33 shots, for an average of 3.57m per shot.

Altogether, the three teams made 77 survey shots, averaging 3.26m per shot, and increased the length of the cave by 251.25m. Punkin Cave is still the 14th longest cave in Texas, with a current surveyed length of 3232.9m. The depth has not changed since the discovery of Fifty Fathoms (62.4m, 28th deepest in Texas), but downtrending leads in the West Maze give us hope for greater depth. The people on this trip were awesome, hardworking, and a lot of fun to be around. We had Movie Night on Friday, and ate very well, despite the power company having a region-wide blackout on Saturday afternoon, forcing us to cook an entire meal over the charcoal grill. Nevertheless, it turned out great! Don Arburn and Gill Ediger stayed at the cabin the entire weekend working on the plumbing, and they were able to have the showers running for us by the time we exited the cave, even if they were cold and the pump was powered by the generator on Don's welder!

Thanks to all who attended, and I hope to see you back on the next trip!



A side-by-side comparison of two common central Texas cave bats, the cave myotis (*Myotis velifer*) on the left and the tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) on the right.



Cave scorpion (*Pseudouroctonus reddelli*) in Deep Cave.

Colorado Bend State Park Project

Reported by Jim “Crash” Kennedy, expedition leader

Project date: 8–10 April 2011

Report date: 4 May 2011

Person-hours: 210.75 hours (119.75 work, 91 travel)

Personnel: (18 folks) **Adam DeWitt, Angela Edwards, Galen Falgout, Lee Jay Graves, Lydia Hernandez, Marc Jorgenson, Jim Kennedy, Bryan Lasen, Karen Masters, Richard McKillip, Kris Peña, William Quast, Scott Serur, Justin Shaw, Steve Soter, Sloan Thompson, Matt Turner, Logan White**

The weather was grand, the participants enthusiastic, and the Park lovely and welcoming in the springtime. We had four teams on Saturday with the addition of a Venture Scouts group from the D-FW area. Teams pushed Radish Run Grotto, Marshmallow Cave, the Lost Petzl Cave System, and a poorly-documented cave near Marshmallow that turned out to be the long-lost Centennial Cave. The perfect spring weather also lured most to Spicewood Springs for a refreshing afternoon swim. Sunday morning saw a team heading to the Wedge and Debris cave area to clarify some unlabeled data points.

Team 1 - Jim Kennedy, Kris Peña, William Quast, Steve Soter, Logan White.

After turning in the Project paperwork at the Park office, this team drove out to the Lively pasture and walked to the Lost Petzl Cave System (SAB075). They first did the surface tour of all the entrances, including Chimniers Delight Entrance (SAB075h), Last Gasp Entrance (SAB075i), Not Last Gasp Entrance (SAB075i), Lemons Pit Entrance (SAB075a), Cave of Many Names Entrance (SAB075c), Jim and Chris Entrance (SAB075d), Fissure Entrance (SAB075b), Bears Breath Entrance (SAB075f), Golden State Motor Oil Can Cave Entrance (SAB075g), Blackburn Memorial Entrance (SAB075e), and the new, unnamed entrance we dug into last March (SAB075k). We haven't done any surveying in Lost Petzl in a year, and it was time to restart the survey again.

Jim led the group in through the Last Gasp Entrance, and everyone, including scout Logan and leader Steve, did great. Everyone was assured that there were no tighter places that they would go through in the cave that day. Jim then took everyone downstream to continue some unsurveyed leads. Unfortunately, last summer's heavy rains must have flooded that part of the cave to the ceiling, depositing a lot of leaves and other organic material, and totally obliterating almost every survey station. Jim had survey notes for the area leading to the passages to be surveyed, but year-old memories and the lack of labeled survey points caused him a lot of confusion and frustration. After frantically pushing leads and searching around for over an hour, he

**Yaz with a cave myotis (*Myotis velifer*).
Photo by Crash.**



gave up. The team was given the option of returning the way they came, or continuing upstream to one of the other entrances. Everyone opted to see more cave, so off they went. The Wretched Connection was as bad as ever, but everyone made it through with minimal complaints. Jim has been through that spot at least six times now, and vows this was the last. Jim climbed out the Jim and Chris Entrance, and climbed back in to coach Steve and Logan out, while William and Kris navigated their way out through the Cave of Many Names Entrance. Despite the scrapes and bruises, everyone had a great time.

Jim needs to spend a LOT of time with the Lost Petzl survey notes and update the working map before venturing back to the downstream part of the cave. Survey stations will have to be relocated from the notes, and relabeled.

Team one's hours: 27.5

Team 2 -Justin Shaw, Galen Falgout, Angela Edwards, Sloan Thompson

Team "More Fun" headed back to Lively pasture to finish their survey of Radish Run Grotto (SAB187). They were thoroughly excited about returning to this cave, which turned out to be much deeper and more complex than initially thought. They set 5

additional stations, adding another 12.2m to the survey and completing a loop between the first and second level. At the bottom of the cave they revisited the drain, which at first appeared to not go. But on second look, it turned out to be just filled with rocks and looked potentially diggable. Some time was spent removing the fill, and they opened another 4m of passage leading to a 7.4m pit. The pit needs to be rigged, and is not free-climbable. Air quality in the pit was good at least 2m below the lip. It looks like one more trip will be needed to complete this "insignificant" little cave, that is now more than 50m long!

Team two's hours: 24.0

Team 3 - Lee Jay Graves, Lydia Hernandez, Karen Masters

L. J. and the girls drove out to Lively pasture to drop and survey the big unknown pit previously called unnamed cave SB231 (no SAB number) and was an unknown point in our data set. Despite the trail that he and Jim cut on a previous trip, they still got a little disoriented and thrashed through the thick underbrush for a while before finding the right area. They rigged the large overhanging tree with a 20m rope, and Lydia rappelled the offset entrance pit to a nice sized room containing another 3m pit. There was no evidence of previ-

ous surveys, so a survey was started. 11 stations were set to a 15m depth. Later, after looking at old maps from that area, it was determined that they were actually surveying in Centennial Cave (SAB239), a cave that we had two sets of coordinates for and which were both waaaaay off! No fewer than three teams previous had searched for Centennial Cave to no avail. So it was great that this cave turned out to be Centennial, giving us (finally) an accurate set of coordinates. It is also great that it is being resurveyed, as the previous map lacked a profile, something that is critically important in this complex, multi-level cave.

Team three's hours: 17.25

Team 4-Matt Turner, Scott Serur, Adam DeWitt, Marc Jorgenson, Bryan Lasen, Richard McKillip

Matt and the group went to Marshmallow Cave (SAB733) with the intention of opening a paleo-entrance to assist with air circulation and improve air quality in the bottom of the cave. Scott led Adam and leader Mark and Venture Scouts Bryan and Richard to the end of the upper level to pound on the rock walls for Matt to refine the digging area on the surface. Air quality in the cave seemed to be worse than on previous trips, but this might have been because of the warmer temperatures outside. Along the way, they saw a mouse inside the cave. The surface dig seems to be a filled sink with at least two feet of soil. Scott quickly opened a small vent hole which started blowing air. The amount of dirt fill was discouraging, so Matt entered the cave with his hammer drill to make more noise. The surface team was able to pinpoint the sound even better than before, but soon became frustrated by digging so much soil, and soon quit.

Afterwards, the entire group headed to Peps Pit (SAB315) to lower Matt's new downhole camera and check for rattlesnakes. The camera worked great, although the snakes could be heard but were apparently out of the camera's sight. The pit is 13.7m deep and appears climbable, but rigging would be preferable. There is definitely a lead in the back that was visible with the camera.

Team four's hours: 36.0

Team 5-Jim Kennedy, Scott Serur, Kris Peña, William Quast, Adam DeWitt

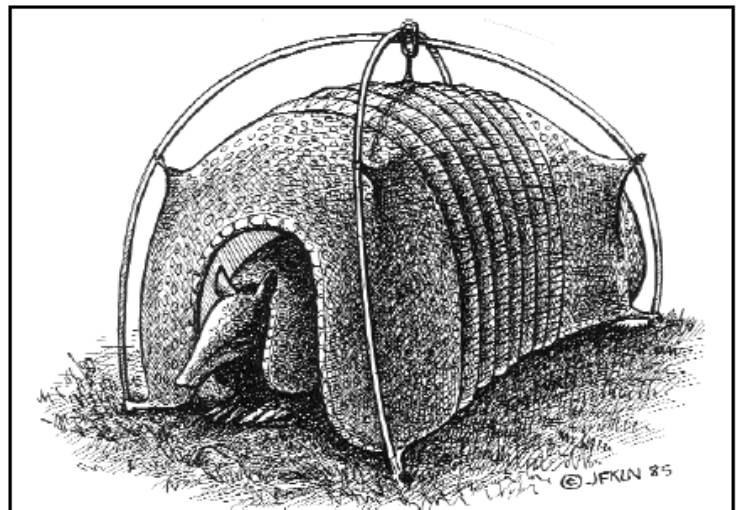
Jim wanted to field check some data to answer some questions about some data points, names, and locations around Debris Cave (SAB560) and Wedge Cave (SAB171). A few month's back, David Ochel was sent to survey nearby GPC002 unmapped cave (SAB378). However, someone has mistakenly put the SAB378 tag on Debris Cave, so David remapped that instead, not knowing the difference. It was only after the map was drafted (much better than the original, by the way!) and compared to the Debris Cave map that the

question of identity arose. So Jim and crew had a lovely Sunday morning hike out to that area, which turned out to be spectacularly beautiful. The identity crisis was solved, many new karst features were found and GPSed, and GPC002 unmapped cave remains to be mapped on a future trip, along with many of the other features in this area, both new and previously known.

Team five's hours: 15.0

Still to be done from the past few months:

- Re-tag Sharis Diet Cave (SAB205), which currently has a "K11" tag on it.
- Continue to enlarge Rebeccas Rift (SAB704), and survey it.
- Re-find and map MM Hole (SAB191).
- Finish mapping Marshmallow Cave (SAB733).
- Finish mapping Radish Run Grotto (SAB187).
- Map unnamed cave (SAB198).
- Map Peps Pit (SAB315).
- Push (with really tiny people) Don't Fit Pit (SAB199).
- Tag Great Gaspys Cave (SAB682).
- Re-find and re-label survey stations in Lost Petzl Cave System (SAB075); continue downstream survey.
- Dig on numerous more leads in Lively Pasture, and map more caves there.
- Tag all new finds since November.
- Go back to Wedge/Debris area and map, map map!



Travel and Outdoor Outfitters
since 1970

- Climbing, Camping and Expedition Gear.
- Remarkable Clothing and Footwear.
- Luggage and Packs.
- Travel and Nature Guides.
- Beautiful and Unusual Gifts and Toys.

**Whole Earth
Provision Company**

2410 San Antonio Street	AUSTIN	512-478-1577
1014 North Lamar	AUSTIN	512-475-1414
South Lamar at Westgate	AUSTIN	512-899-0992
Quarry Market, 255 East Base	SAN ANTONIO	210-829-8888
2934 South Shepherd Drive,	HOUSTON	713-526-8226
5400 East Mockingbird Lane,	DALLAS	214-824-7444



34th Annual Texas Cavers Reunion!

**October 14-16, 2011
Flat Creek Ranch,
Johnson City, TX**

Howdy Y'all!

This is the first announcement for the 34th Annual Texas Caver's Reunion!

This year TCR will be on the 500+ acre Flat Creek Ranch in Johnson City, TX (www.txsranch.com) on the weekend of October 14th-16th, 2011. There will be lots of shady camping, swimming,

Flat Creek Crossing Ranch is a 500+ acre ranch/retreat site owned by the non-profit Child, Incorporated. It is located in the Texas Hill Country immediately adjacent to Pedernales Falls State Park. Flat Creek Crossing Ranch is a 500+ acre ranch/retreat site owned by the non-profit Child, Incorporate. It is located in the Texas Hill Country immediately adjacent to Pedernales Falls State Park.

A Bit of History—The Texas Old Timers' Reunion was organized in 1978 by Gill Ediger, Chuck Stuehm, and Mike Walsh in order to fill a need created by the absence of a TSA Labor Day Project during most of the previous decade. It was felt that the TSA needed a fall caving event to bring Texas cavers together for fun and frolic and social interaction, an all important part of most cavers' caving education and experience.

Over the years, the event grew from the original 90 participants at Luckenbach to well over 500 at recent gatherings. A few years ago the name was quietly changed from TOTR to TCR--the Texas Cavers' Reunion--to avoid confusion with the "original" OTR--Old Timers' Reunion--in West 'by God' Virginia. Although many cavers help with the event, the general philosophy is to try to make the Reunion appear that it just happens spontaneously without any or much direction from anybody.

As always, well behaved dogs and children are welcome. We have obtained special permission to allow dogs as the park generally prohibits pets.

Because of this, TCR asks that you please pick up after your dog.

For the latest information about TCR 2011, visit the website at www.oztotl.com/tcr.

A few general rules and fine print:

- Please remember to bring your own reusable eating utensils to the Grand Feast and to come prepared to take your garbage home.
- Well behaved dogs, friends, and family members are welcome, in that order, those that may tend to be obnoxious should be left elsewhere.
- Port-a-Potties will be provided.

- **JOIN THE TSA!** - As a convenience to cavers and in support of the Texas Region of the NSS, the TSA will be collecting dues for the 2011—2012 membership year. If you are not a TSA member, this is a very good opportunity to join and to show your support for the organization that cares about cavers and caving in Texas. *The TEXAS CAVER*, and the many caving projects are obvious benefits provided to you and other cavers by the TSA. The TSA provides many other benefits that aren't so obvious--so please join and support the TSA.

- Vendors of caving equipment and publications will be set up.
- The TCR staff is not in the police business. That means everyone should police themselves and those in their clan. In other words.....you are responsible for the behavior of your children and your guests.
- Using Common Sense and Common Courtesy is the best policy.
- Remember, this is primarily a caver event. People who will contribute to the general craziness are encouraged to attend, those who will detract are discouraged.

Directions to The Ranch at Flat Creek Crossing
(From Austin) Estimated Drive Time: 1 Hour

1. Take 290 West out of Austin, through Oak Hills, Drippings Springs and then Henley.

2. Turn right on 3232 -- this turn is very easy to find: It is just over a mile past the small town of Henley and is marked by a sign pointing the way to Pedernales Falls State Park.

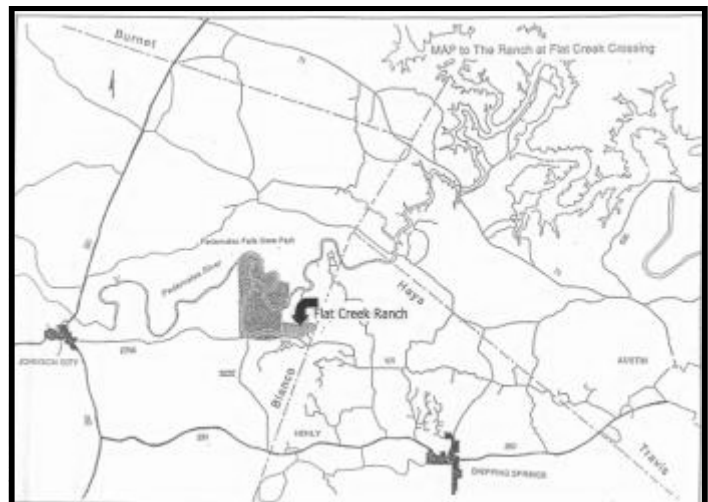
3. Stay on 3232 until it "T's" into FM 2766 (almost at the park entrance - FM 2766 becomes County Road 201 at this point).

4. Turn RIGHT (a left will take you to Johnson City) and go past the park entrance - DO NOT go in the park gate.

5. Continue a little over 2 MILES down County Road 201 (you'll notice that even though you did not go through the park gate, you are still traveling through the park). You will pass an electrical power transfer station on your left at about 1 mile - at 2 miles you will cross a cattle guard and notice the ranch's white wooden fence on your left.

6. Continue a few hundred yards over a slight hill.

7. Take a left at the ranch entrance: You'll see a sign that says "FLAT CREEK CROSSING."





BEER
O'clock



Texas Speleological Association
1312 Paula Lane
Mesquite, TX 75149

Attn: Editor