

Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

May 2024



Cover photo by Sanae Rogers – Waterfall in Bone-Norman Cave

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)

The Central Ohio Grotto (COG) of the National Speleological Society meets at 7:00 p.m. the fourth Thursday of most months at the Presbyterian Church on the Square in Worthington, Ohio. Please contact a grotto officer to confirm meeting time and place or better subscribe to the COG list server at cog @ ontosystems.com by sending an email to cog @ ontosystems.com with the subject "subscribe." The meeting site will be announced there and on the Grotto Facebook page.

Check out our Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/centralohiogrotto/>

Check out our website:

<http://www.centralohiogrotto.com/>

Grotto Mailing Address:

C/O Pat Gibson, 4211 Caswell Rd
Johnstown, OH 43031 614-496-5345
Email: kd8ion@gmail.com

Grotto Membership Dues:

\$20 per individual or \$25 per family.

The C.O.G. Squeaks

The C.O.G. Squeaks is emailed to dues paying members and to grottoes with which the COG exchanges newsletters. Please send trip reports, caving articles, cave fiction, cave poetry, and cave photos to Mark Swelstad for publication: mswelstad@gmail.com

NSS organizations have permission to reprint material from the C.O.G. Squeaks so long as the author and Squeaks are given credit, unless otherwise stated.

COG Executive Committee:

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vice-chair@centralohiogrotto.com

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Suzanne Gagnon
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Aaron Deal
Aaron.Deal@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Joe Chaput
jchaput@gjpepsi.com

Member-At-Large:

Mark Swelstad
mswelstad@gmail.com



Upcoming COG Events – Note: Details of our events can be found on [our Facebook page](#). You do not have to be a member to be in our Facebook group.

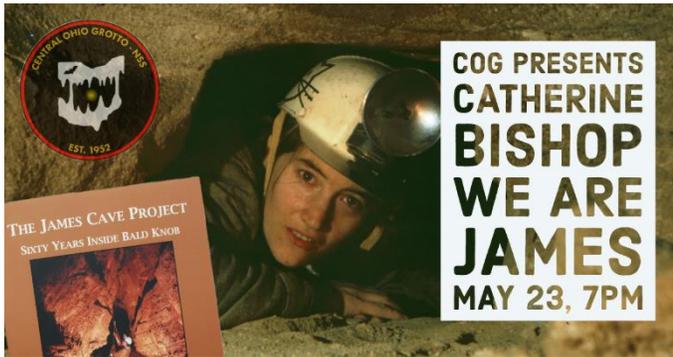
May 4-5	COG/CIG Weekend	Contact: Wendy Orlandi
May 4-5	Open House Work Weekend	Contact: Pat Gibson
May 18-19	Open House	Contact: Pat Gibson
May 22-28	Speleofest	Hosted by the Louisville, KY Grotto
May 23	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
May 31-June 2	Bear Heaven and Kees Cave: Intro to Vertical (or not)	West Virginia – contact: Wendy Orlandi
June 21-23	Karst-o-Rama 2024	GSP Preserve – hosted by Greater Cincinnati Grotto
June 27	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
July 1-5	NSS Convention	Sewanee, TN
July 25	COG Monthly Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church

Contact Info for Trip Organizers:

- Wendy Orlandi - wenlo0319@gmail.com
- Ryan Braga - ryanbraga1007@gmail.com
- Pat Gibson - patrickrgibson@yahoo.com

+++++J
 Join us for our next monthly meeting at Worthington Presbyterian Church on THURSDAY, May 23rd, 7pm in person or online. To join virtually, find remote meeting information in the Discussion in Facebook. You do NOT have to be a member to attend, everyone is welcome. Contact Wendy Orlandi if you need help with the link.

Our May presenter will be Catherine Bishop, bio below. After the meeting, we head over to Villa Nova Ristorante for pizza on 5545 N High St, Columbus, OH 43214. Please bring cash to cover your share.



Cat Bishop will present "We Are James" featuring James Cave in Edmonson County, KY. She will also speak on the culture that has grown up around the group that has been exploring and surveying there since the late 1950s.

Catherine "Cat" Hayden Bishop is a native Kentuckian who has participated in the discovery, exploration and survey of cave systems in the Bald Knob and surrounding areas since 1971. As a member of the National Speleological Society

(NSS), she led the Youth Group Liaison Committee from approximately 1972 to 1975, co-chaired the 1985 NSS Convention in Frankfort, Kentucky, and was named an NSS Fellow in 1986. More recently, she wrote and submitted two cave ballads based on her caving experiences in James and Coach Caves to the NSS Cave Ballads Salon. In 2010, the NSS honored Catherine and her husband Charlie Bishop with the prestigious Lew Bicking Award. This annual award recognizes NSS members who have made outstanding contributions to the exploration, study and conservation of caves. Catherine was employed for nearly 20 years as a technical writer for Kentucky Equine Research. In 1988, she and Charlie began competing in Masters-level sports including track and field and long-distance running events where both garnered many awards at local, state, and national competitions. They both also enjoy outdoor recreation including hiking, backpacking, whitewater canoeing, and of course caving, which still includes visiting Bald Knob several times per year.

CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO 5-YEAR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**75 MEMBERS ON OUR
75TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2027**

Why
More members mean a larger pool of volunteers, leaders, and trip planners. Younger members mean that we can continue our grotto into the future.

How can you help?
If every current member brings in just 1 new member over the next 5 years, we will be close to meeting our goal. Recommendations from active members is the best way to build a solid group of cavers. But showing up to a meeting or two isn't enough! We are looking for people committed to maintaining ACTIVE membership within the grotto.

Additional recruitment ideas (we NEED volunteers to make these happen!)

- Lead **trips** intentionally geared toward recruitment
- **Sponsor local events** or participate as vendors in events that get exposure
- Put together a **guest information packet**
- Teach **classes** at REI
- Hold **joint meetings** with related groups in the community
- Work with students who need **volunteer opportunities**
- Ask me about caving **stickers**

Odds and Ends:

Newsletter Editor

I have been the newsletter editor for over 10 years now and am interested to see if anyone else is willing to take it over for me. I will keep doing it for the rest of 2024, or until we have a replacement. If you're interested, let me know. No experience is required! Thanks!
~Mark Swelstad

Dues

Individual Dues \$20
Family Dues \$25

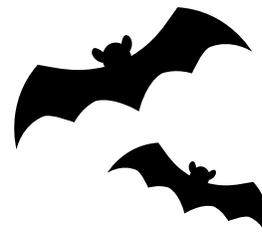
Dues may be paid during the Grotto monthly meeting, mail, or Venmo and should be paid by the end of March.

Suzanne Gagnon
10548 Elderberry Drive
Plain City, Ohio 43064

Venmo: @suzgagnon (Suz with red helmet)
<https://venmo.com/u/suzgagnon>

2024 Budget

Central Ohio Grotto - 2024 Budget	
<u>Income</u>	<u>2024 Budget</u>
Dues	
Individual - \$20	55 \$1,100.00
Family - \$25	15 \$375.00
Donations/Gifts	
Total Income	\$1,475.00
Expenses	
Meeting & Website	
Domain Name Registrar	(\$10.14)
Online Meeting Expense	
Meeting Location	(\$125.00)
Web Hosting	(\$95.95)
Memberships/Awards/Recognitions	
Ohio Cave Survey Membership	(\$30.00)
RKC Membership	(\$25.00)
Joe Gibson Award	(\$25.00)
Volunteer Recognition	(\$100.00)
Community Outreach	
Conservation	(\$50.00)
Community Support	(\$100.00)
Marketing	(\$100.00)
Events	
Grotto Events	(\$200.00)
Survey	(\$50.00)
Other	
Library	(\$100.00)
Survey	(\$150.00)
501(c)(3) fee	(\$275.00)
Total Expenses	(\$1,436.09)
2023 Net Profit (Loss)	
	\$38.91
From Savings	
Vertical Gear	\$900.00





COG History

50 Years Ago

The May 1974 Squeaks included a trip report, and some additional writing, about a survey trip to Buckner Spring Cave in Hart County, KY. There is the continuation of a short story, written by Paul Rowley, and some newspaper clippings about proposed repairs to the Wolf River Dam and a rescue out of the Post Office Entrance of Sloan's. There was also a trip report about ongoing efforts in Sulphur Mountain, and a map of Sawmill Hill Cave in Wayne County, KY.

30 Years Ago

The May/June 1994 Squeaks contained a lengthy trip report by Lou Simpson on a trip to Zarathustra Cave in Tennessee, and also a bit about Triple S Cave in Wayne County, KY.

20 Years Ago

Cat Whitney writes about a trip to Stream Cave in which one of her fellow cavers is acting really nervous as they cross an open field. The reason for his unease? He has a real phobia of cows. Fortunately they didn't really encounter any issues with our bovine friends and they enjoyed a fun trip to Stream Cave in Wayne County, KY.



SAVE THE DATE!
Washington, DC Grotto Presents:

SPRING VAR 2024

The DC Grotto Turns 85!
Celebrate by getting down and dirty with us!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
Led Caving Trips
We need trip leaders! If you're interested in leading a trip in Pocahontas County or the surrounding areas, please email Donnie Hammond at theglobetrottingdonnie@yahoo.com

Saturday Night Dinner
Catering provided by the local Elks Club

Birthday Party
When DCG has a birthday, we do the surprising! You won't want to miss the epic activities we have in store.

PRICING AND REGISTRATION To Be Announced
Mark your calendars!

SPRING VAR 2024
85th Birthday Celebration Washington DC Grotto

MAY 3-5 2024
EAST FORK CAMPGROUND
RT 250 MAIN STREET
MEADOW LANE DRIVE
DURBIN, WV 26264



Crawdads & crickets & bears, oh my!

~ Danika Mayback



This past weekend, I took my first visit to GSP, tagging along for all sorts of adventures. On Saturday morning, Tory Roland and I tail gunned with the ultimate mudman himself, Darryl, while assisting brave scouts and their parents in Sinks while climbing over breakdown, wriggling through fun side passages, and searching for cave critters. I managed not to lose a kid (or adult!) along the way despite it being my first trip in the cave.

Following the scout trip, our exciting journey continued as we met up with Ryan Braga leading a fresh-faced group of OSU geology club students, visiting for the full GSP experience. We broke in the students by exploring Across-the-Road, where we found all sorts of amphibians, crawled around different mazes throughout the cave, and Tory and I took a side adventure exploring the borehole and seeing beautiful flowstone formations. Once far into the cave, we challenged the students to lead us back out. The hangry group led the way to daylight after many, many wrong turns, and we celebrated our journey at the Limestone Grille. Our evening took an unexpected turn when we had a run-in with a black bear catapulting itself at the van on the way back. Luckily, we didn't hit it and lived to tell the story (although

we had some doubters back at camp). For those of us who hadn't had quite enough adventure yet, we took an evening trip to the show cave with a tour from Ryan, who made up all sorts of imaginative cave stories featuring a snake grave and perilous girl scout trips, to fool us. I otherwise loved hearing the history of the cave and appreciated the beautiful geologic formations.

The next morning, we managed to see three more caves: Railroad, Rollercoaster, and a thru-trip of Sinks, all before 1 pm. Rollercoaster was my personal favorite from the weekend as we climbed up and down different canyons, bracing ourselves between the narrow walls, zigzagging back and forth over and under each other, searching for routes. Overall, we had an exciting weekend seeing so many caves and I already look forward to my next trip back.

Bone-Norman Through-Trip

Report by Tory Roland, photos shared by Sanae Rogers of Cleveland Grotto

In mid-April, several members of COG met up with some members of the Pittsburgh Grotto in Greenbrier, West Virginia for a combined trip to explore the Bone-Norman cave system. The West Virginia Association for Cave Studies (WVACS) was kind enough to let us use their facilities for our weekend stay. New member Danika Mayback and I chose to go on the advanced trip, which was a through trip from the entrance of Bone through to the entrance of Norman. Zack Carson of the Pittsburgh Grotto led the expedition and Sanae Rogers from the Cleveland Grotto accompanied us as well.

The trip was completed in about 7 hours, with the beginning of the trip being dry dusty crawls and ending in a crawl through a stream at the foot of a huge waterfall. We first crossed a series of small rooms that each were filled with inactive formations. Then came what we were told was the most difficult part of the trip, The Devil's Pinch; which

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naturally had been about a 7 inch squeeze during a belly crawl but has now been chipped away so that there are a few more inches of clearance. We all agreed that the long crawl after the pinch aptly named SOB Alley was far more daunting.

As soon as we entered the wet portion of the cave we could hear the waterfall roaring from a distance, which was making us all a bit nervous. While Norman had minimal crawls it was not without challenge, as there were a number of points we had to spot each other to get across slick slopes and make short leaps across gaps. The effort was rewarding as while we pushed toward the exit we got to visit the Trolls in the Totem Room and poke up into the Great White Way. When we reached the waterfall and sat to rest and admire, it just so happened that the cavers that had taken the intermediate trip were

above us. We all exited Bone-Norman as a united front and libations were had for better or worse at Mi Tequila.





All photos courtesy of Sanae Rogers

Red River Gorge Intermediate Backpacking Trip

29-31 March 2024

Trip Leader: Aaron Collier

Trip Report: Joseph Hayes

Photos: Joseph Hayes

Eight members reserved a spot, but with short-notice cancellations, only four attended: Wendy Orlandi, Aaron Collier, David Long, and Joseph Hayes.

The group set out from Martin's Fork Parking about 10:30 AM on Friday with the goal of hiking the entire 7-mile length of the Rough Trail (Forest Service Trail #221) with a few side trips to see features of note. The first stop was Gray's Arch, one of the most well-known arches in the Daniel Boone National Forest, with a height of 50 feet and a span of 80 feet. Here we paused for snacks and hydration.



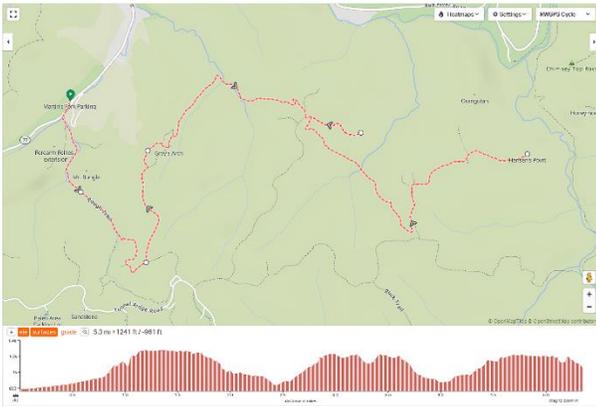
From there, the group continued down the Rough Trail another mile and then turned off onto an unmarked and unmaintained trail. After another third of a mile, we arrived at The Veranda, a scenic overlook.



After taking in the view, we back-tracked to the Rough Trail and hiked another mile southwest. Here, we once again turned off onto an unmarked and unmaintained trail to make our camp at Hansen's Point. After setting up camp and making a quick run out to the point to experience the view, we hiked a mile back to a water source to top-off our bottles. Returning to camp, we made a fire, we ate dinner, and discussed the goals for Saturday before retiring for the evening.

Not counting the mile out and back for water, we hiked roughly 5.3 miles and 1,241 feet of elevation.

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Saturday morning, we walked out to Hansen's Point to see the sunrise. Afterwards, we ate breakfast, struck camp, and headed out.



With an indeterminate goal for the day, we continued west on Rough Trail. After hiking about 1.5 miles on relatively level ridgeline, we descended into the gorge cut by Chimney Top Creek. At the intersection of Rough Trail and Koomer Ridge Trail, we debated making the 4-mile round trip to Hidden Arch versus continuing on Rough Trail. Remembering the hike to get water the night before, we decided to pitch camp there along the stream, drop our packs, and then head to Hidden Arch unburdened. Along the way, we also made a side trip to observe some waterfalls.

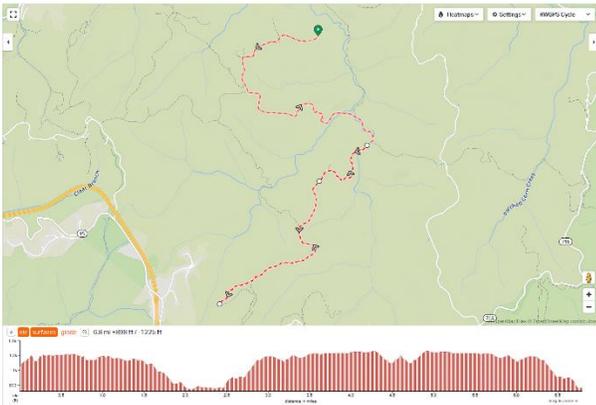


Heading back to camp, we made a fire and ate dinner before heading to bed.

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



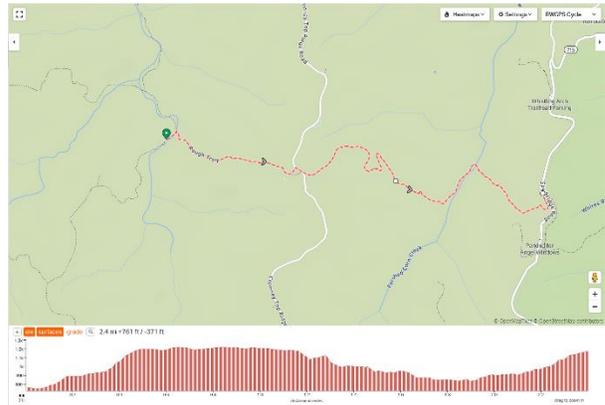
We ended the day with 6.8 miles traveled and 898 feet of elevation.



Sunday morning, we broke camp and continued west on Rough Train to the Swift Camp Creek Trailhead, where we had a vehicle staged. The hike out was mostly level to downhill, with the last half mile being one last punishing uphill slog. This was probably the most scenic section of the trail, with terrain that varied from ridge line, to exposed cliffs, to creek bottoms.



After 2.4 miles for the day and another 761 feet of elevation, we made it to the end of our trip.



Loading gear and personnel into the truck, we headed back to Martin's Fork to the rest of our vehicles. We then drove to Miguel's Pizza in nearby Slade, Kentucky, for some well-deserved pizza before saying our goodbyes and heading home.



A Weekend Getaway Around a Wild Cave
Location

March 29, 2024

By: Tera Williamson

All Photos courtesy of Tera Williamson except where noted.



Photo by Eric Arbaugh

Who else plans a weekend vacation getaway with their non-caving significant other at a location near a wild cave? Surely, I am not the only one! I hadn't until recently when I figured I should probably plan a trip for my boyfriend (Eric) and I since most of my weekends are spent with my caving family. So here I was searching around on Google maps and Airbnb trying to find a cheap place to stay with something fun to do for the weekend. As I am searching around for attractions on Google maps, I run across one for Island Ford Cave in Covington Virginia. I began to read more about the cave, and I learn that it's like a roadside cave attraction but is actually managed by the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) and has a beautiful turquoise filled pool. Island

Ford Cave is the most readily accessible non-commercial cave in Virginia. It receives a fair amount of local visitation by flashlight cavers. As I am planning our weekend getaway, I read the google reviews, found a cave map on the WVCC website, and learned that the cave is approximately 1400 feet long. With the boyfriend not being a caver, I wasn't expecting much during our stop to Island Ford Cave, but who doesn't make a pit stop at a nearby cave while road tripping. As a typical caver, I pack the normal boots, knee pads, elbow pads, helmet, light, and an extra battery and knew that we would at least enter the cave for a few feet if nothing else. While we were traveling towards Covington Virginia, I decided to search you tube and watched a couple videos of the cave. As I start to watch the first video and get about 30 seconds into it, I begin to realize that there was probably a slim chance that there would be much caving, as there was a narrow canyon stream passage near the beginning of the cave, and I knew Eric wouldn't be up for that kind of an adventure.



Along the travels we stop at Sandstone Falls in West Virginia which provides a riverside scenic drive leading to the beautiful falls that spans across the New River. From there we continued on towards Covington Virginia, with a pitstop at the Humpback Bridge, then we made our way to Island Ford Cave.



A few minutes after we parked, I start changing into the basic cave gear; then we notice another car pulls into the parking area, a young lady gets out and says hi and continues talking on her phone, and Eric and I continue on into the entrance of the cave. As you enter the cave you are in a large room about 150 feet long and 50 feet wide and all walkable. At the end of that room, I climb up over a big boulder, then down under a boulder to where I could see the short climb down into the stream passage. At this point, I knew for sure that Eric wasn't going to continue much further or if at all. I jump down into the stream passage and wonder about 15 to 20 feet down the passage to check things out while Eric wait back towards the entrance room. A few minutes later in walks the young lady (Jessica) that arrived a few minutes after us. We chatted for a few minutes, then I decided to tag along with her for a little bit while Eric went back to the truck to wait.



Jessica and I were both excited to have someone to explore with since we were alone, so we took off down the stream passage. As we walked through the stream canyon passage for a few minutes, we came to a short wet muddy crawl that led to a T split. At this split we went to the right and it led to non-human size squeeze, we went to left and it led to a dead end. We saw an upper passage that we could have gotten too, but it would have been a slick muddy climb up and neither of us were interested in tackling that climb on this trip. So, we tracked back through the stream passage a little bit and came to an upper-level passage to the left that checked out for a little bit. We could hear the water getting louder, but this led to a challenging stepping obstacle that neither of us were interested in doing at the time. So, we decided to call it a trip and made our way back to the entrance. We thanked each other for showing up to the entrance at the same time so that neither of us had to cave alone. Even though we didn't make it to the beautiful turquoise fill pool, it was a fun little trip through a new cave and left us with a reason to come back and explore Island Ford Cave again.



Zaleski Backpacking Weekend March 2024

- Jennie Hawkey

Earlier this spring, several members of our grotto went to Zaleski State Forest for a beginners backpacking weekend trip. We called it a beginners trip in that we hiked low mileage, only stayed one night, and there was potable water and outhouses available. It turned out to be a bit more gnarly though because it was bitterly cold and windy. The temperatures dropped throughout our hike and at nighttime, it went down to 23 degrees! Many of us also had new or barely used gear that took some time getting used to. Add in lots of elevation changes, and this trip felt a little challenging! We met at the Iron Furnace parking lot and started the hike counterclockwise in order to get to the campsite that would have potable water. We hiked nearly 10 miles in and got our tents set up around dinnertime. We did a lot of foraging for firewood knowing it was going to be a very cold evening. We had a nice set up far away from other backpackers and despite the cold, it was a nice night with a full moon. My lesson

learned from the trip is to bring more snacks! My sleeping pad failed during the night as did Aaron's, so come morning, we were happy to hike the last 2 miles back to our cars and civilization. On the way back we saw some points of interest on the Olds Hollow Trail including an old graveyard and a cave/rock shelter. Overall, it was a great trip which helped several of us get ready for more backpacking trips to come!



Photo courtesy Jennie Hawkey

Climax Cave Survey April 2024

- Jennie Hawkey

On April 13th, I joined GCG's Climax Cave survey to help continue the project to redo the cave map. This has been an ongoing project since last fall when it was kicked off with the Intro to Survey class put on by Stephanie Suen and Beau Gergel. I sketched the survey while Stephanie and Sonny Ernst did front and back point. We finished a section of the cave by completing some passages off the ACX1 section. Those two passages were labeled JS and HE (Jennie/Sonny,

Hawkey/Ernst). I hope Stephanie already has a passage named for her! We also ran into Ava's scout trip in the cave and showed them a passage they were looking for, and lastly, we input data for the left passage off the B survey so I could get some practice in with the BRIC5 device. After we had our fill of surveying, I went shopping at On the Rocks and the Shell gas station. Then I headed back to GSP and took a wildflower and birding stroll while also checking out the work-in-progress hot tub from afar. I helped Stephanie and Mike Wuerth put together the new rescue cache by daisy-chaining some webbing, and then I spontaneously tailgunned a GSP tour for one of Darryl Marsh's scout trips.



Photo by Stephanie Suen



Photo by Stephanie Suen

Sinks of the Roundstone Annual Cave Cleanup April 2024

- Jennie Hawkey

On April 14th, I participated in GCG Conservation's annual cleanup of Sinks of the Roundstone Cave. This cave is often dubbed "the sacrificial cave" because it is well known by the locals and used as a party cave. It has large amounts of graffiti and trash, the latter of which can turn up some pretty disturbing things as you can imagine.



Photo by Stephanie Suen

It is really unfortunate, because this is an amazing cave!! The entrance alone is breathtaking, with limestone green water cascading towards the mouth of the cave. Inside, you are met with enormous passageways, a running stream, and what would have been beautiful rock formations if it weren't for the copious amounts of graffiti on them. Rachel Bosch, GCG's conservation chair, brought us bags, gloves, buckets and brushes to use to collect trash and cover up the worst offending graffiti with a mud slurry we made in the cave. We were very fortunate to have Wendy's scout trip going to the cave at the same time as us, and they agreed to help out with the trash collection (thanks guys!). We spent a great deal of time picking up shattered glass from beer bottles and doing our best to put a dent in the graffiti. It was clear that there was some pretty recent graffiti, with one wall containing a date of only 2 days prior to the cleanup! Anyway, it was pretty satisfying to see the before and after and the cave looks so beautiful when trash and graffiti are nowhere to be seen. Whilst this will be a continuous effort, I do believe that if people see that we care about the cave and are doing something to preserve it, it will rub off on them and we will see less and less destruction of the cave. If you are interested in conservation and preserving our treasured past time, check out COG conservation's Trashlympics (information included in this newsletter) which anyone can participate in. COG conservation also has a cleanup trip planned for late summer. Details to come!



2024 Trashlympics

A green and white poster for 'The 2024 Trashlympics' hosted by COG Conservation. The text includes: 'COG Conservation Hosts The 2024 Trashlympics', 'Preserving nature, one cave at a time', and a list of four instructions on how to become a trashlympian. A speech bubble on the right says 'Clean caves, grand prizes!'.

COG Conservation Hosts
The 2024
Trashlympics

Preserving nature, one cave at a time

How to become a trashlympian:

1. Bring trash bags on all your adventures
2. Collect trash while having an amazing time
3. Flaunt your trash for bragging rights
4. Report your trash amounts (by bag) to Jennie Hawkey at jcgalletta@gmail.com for a chance to win a grand prize at the end of the year

2 Pictures from the Dillon Cave survey & cleanup:

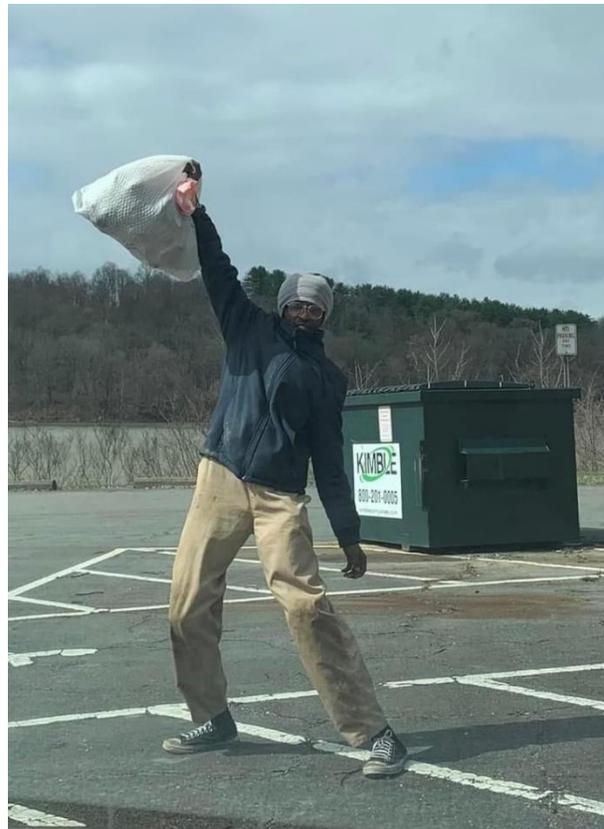


Photo courtesy of Jennie Hawkey



Photo courtesy of Jennie Hawkey

Con Cave Twice Eluded and Ruddle Improvements 4/13/24

– Zach Williams

Having decided to move our Con Cave trip in March due to heavy rain and possible snow that Sunday to April in hopes of better weather, I was quite excited for this weekend. I had gathered up the team and got them excited to see a new cave for all of us with some potential leads to work. Unfortunately, on the drive over Friday evening we encountered constant hard rain, which did not bode well for our trip on Saturday. On our way through Harman we could see water just pouring out of the hillside springs. Bryan and I stopped at the fieldhouse Friday evening and visited for a while. Andy Schofield joined us a little later and we chatted about our planned activities. Jason and Mike Shank had planned to visit Harper Pit on Friday afternoon and had a callout time, we waited a little while after their time and departed down to the parking spot to ensure they did not have any issues. We found them warming up and eating dinner in Jason's van, crisis averted.

By the next morning the rain had stopped, and the skies cleared. Andy, Jason, Mike, Bryan and I all suited up after breakfast and were on the hill by 10. None of us had been to Con Cave but had a general idea of up the stream from Ruddle on the same side with a barrel after asking others who had been there. We found it but unfortunately it was taking water from the stream. We attempted to divert the water from the entrance with a makeshift rock dam but that did little to help the issue. Additionally, water was seeping in from under the entrance. We instead shifted our plans to Ruddle to re-rig the dig drop and look at a lead down near the cable ladder drop. The rope down the dig drop had a bad spot in it potentially from rubbing on the rock from water hitting it? That rope was just replaced during the summer before Convention. Regardless we had come armed with a 30 foot rope plus we left a 120 outside that we had planned to use in Con Cave to replace that rope. We also had a small array of bolts and hangers with us.

We decided to rig the dig drop properly to use vertical gear and remove the need to use the rungs in the drop. Mike went down and we worked out where to rig it to prevent as much contact as possible and Andy drilled the holes for the bolts. We determined our 30 foot rope would be too short for a proper setup with safety line so Bryan volunteered to exit and retrieve the 120 footer. While that drop was being rigged Bryan, Jason and I went down to the Best Room to place a rung on that 7 foot drop down, unfortunately we only had a 3/8 bit and the rung could not be pounded in. We also were short a couple of regular bolts to rig the upper drop in to the big room so Mike went all the way out of the cave and to the vehicles to retrieve a few more bolts and a 1/2 drill bit.

Andy finished rigging the dig drop, Mike and Jason worked on the drop down in the big room and Bryan and I got the rung installed in the Best Room so it is now much easier to climb down and out of that small pit so no handline is needed. Ruddle now has 2 drops, the entrance climb down now has an optional rope that can be used or if one so chooses

you can also use the pre-existing rungs and the second drop being the dig drop, we removed one of the rungs on that drop so now it would be advisable to use the rope and not attempt to free climb that.

Having those chores done we then descended down in to the dig, down the cable ladder drop (which has rungs and no cable ladder) and down to the connection area. We looked at the small dig in the Dome just in the connection crawl and determined it was not worth pursuing but we did look at the small hole right below the dome room and we could see and hear water flowing. First, however we wanted to see a little more of the cave so we continued down the crawl and came to an intersection. We did not quite know which way to go so we chose the route with the air (the right side). Mike also looked in the left hand passage and I believe he also mentioned feeling air movement (slight). We crawled and climbed around projections and got slimed in another crawlway and moved past delicate formations and eventually popped into a much larger room (Hydra Room) with multiple ways to go. Since we were not quite sure where we were going and we wanted to work that lead we decided to stop there and return. I ventured up the upper level crawlway to JKM26 and noted that the passage looked very inviting compared to what we had just endured. I thought we had done contortion canyon but after getting back we looked at the survey data and saw we were in the connection crawl side and that the passage would have improved! Oh well, that is a trip for another day.

We wormed our way back to the cable ladder room and decided to have a go at that small lead with the stream trickling down it. We did a couple of hoorahs and it opened up considerably enough to get your head down into the hole to look around. The straight lead continued narrow but taking water and to the right was more tight canyon but looked like it dropped down considerably and the sound of water could be heard. I believe the right hand side of that dig may be worth pursuing as it could be a drain for the water in the adjoining dome down the crawl to the left of the

connection crawl. We decided to call it a day after that and worked our way back to the entrance. We were out of the cave by around 8:00pm making for a nice 8 hour trip.

Side notes:

- When we got into the big room in Ruddle we heard several thumps during the afternoon. It did not sound like when the lid is opened/closed at the entrance. We could not quite figure out what was making that thump/rumble unless it was the mine working on Saturday?
- It was mentioned that a little after noon, a few people had visited the Con Cave entrance and the water was flowing. By late evening another group visited the entrance and the stream had dried and had even dried the rocks near the entrance. Rick mentioned he had never seen the stream flowing in that part until Saturday.
- We plan on re-attempting our Con Cave visit in the near future, third time is a charm!

A few pictures are included, all courtesy of Zack Williams.



Bryan at big room climb down

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO (COG)



Entrance to Chewy's room



Jason and Andy in cable ladder room



Andy rigging with Jason looking on



Cable ladder drop (now with rungs)

A Huge Mammoth Day of Caving

- Ryan Braga

On April 20th, Aaron Bird, Matt Mezydlo and I left for the Turley Entrance in Morrison cave (mammoth cave system) at 8:45am after our morning briefing at Hamilton valley. This would be a CRF expedition where our goal was to both resurvey old survey from the 80s to get better data while also getting new survey to add and increase the length of mammoth cave. With this objective, we have our call out time of 11:59pm and hit the road. To get to the Turley entrance, you have to walk through a field with cows and a new bull that might become hostile and then down a hill. Having a large red pack on did not make me feel the best... after getting to the entrance, you get on rope where you rappel roughly 20 feet through a TIGHT squeeze and then you hit a rebelay. The squeeze wasn't awful on the way down since gravity is your friend. Not so much on the way up... after hitting the rebelay and conquering that, you'll rappel another 50ft into a new room. After this you'll do a slightly sketchy crawl and end up at a nuisance drop. After rappelling the 17ft nuisance drop you'll be at the via Ferrata! This is what I was most excited about and let me tell you, it did not disappoint. A via Ferrata for those who don't know is a grouping of rungs that serve as hand and foot holds placed in the wall so you can traverse horizontally and or vertically while also having rope rigged along it to clip your cows tail into (rope attached to your harness with carabiners at the ends). This via Ferrata served the purpose of helping cross over a pit into a slightly upper level across the pit. While still clipped into the via Ferrata and reaching the passage on the other side, you continue to the next rope you'll rig into. This consist of around a 20ft drop into a rebelay which then takes you down a roughly 40ft drop. In this section you can see old ladders from the 1910s I believe? This cave is rich in history and I know the other two on my trip would love to tell you about the unique history of the cave if you asked. Once at the bottom of the last drop, we could finally take off our vertical

gear and leave it there as we wouldn't need it further for where we were going. After this we went for roughly an hour and got to avalanche dome where we'd tie into the previous survey. With Aaron on sketch, Matt on instruments and myself on point, we were ready to get to work. Working the DD survey, we pushed a canyon passage for a ways until as I was waiting to set the next point I noticed a tiny hole in the floor. After moving some rocks, I could stick my head in and see that there's going passage. After the others caught up, we looked to see if we could move this large rock to get in but sadly it'd take some greater negotiations. Moving on we found a lead on the left and as we started to survey into that, wouldn't you know, it connects to where we couldn't get into! Feeling satisfied, we finished up this side passage and got back into main passage and carried on. After following the same canyon for a ways where it's a consist 10 feet of walking followed by 20 feet of crawling, we noticed that the stream passage is accessible and might be worth checking out. Aaron walked around 40 feet down it and saw that it goes, albeit not as pleasant as our dry walking canyon passage so we opted to note it and possibly come back. Luck or misfortune, depending on how you look at it would have us surveying into a tight left bend and as I am setting point in the bend, I put my hand on the left wall in the crawl and a large rock, 3ftx5ft comes peeling right off. After this I make a comment on how it's a sketchy room and I quickly set a point and move on out. After hanging out at the next station as matt shoots to it, Aaron looks at where Matt is laying in this crappy left turn crawl and seeing an absolutely massive death rock just above him ready to come down if you blow on it. Turns out to was a crappy room! We quickly get back to our previous standing canyon passage before the death rock and reassess. After this we decided we'd best not test our luck so we went back to check out the lower level stream passage a hundred feet back. As we head back and are more alert, we see a lot of loose sketchy rock that we are crawling under and realized how quickly we could have issues here. For reasons omitted, I elected we

call the water level we were heading to the P Level survey. With this, we began the PL survey in the stream level that was roughly 3 feet high hands and knees crawling that would meander across the stream. As I am going and setting point, I start to hear water dropping which gets me curious. Is this a miniature waterfall where the water disappears into the floor? Does the water come from the ceiling and connect us back to upper passage past the death rock? Looking at part of the stream we were following, it seemed to be mostly stagnant which made me think, the water is either coming from the ceiling or it's not connected to this stream. Pushing onward and getting hands and knees along with shoes wet, I pushed a muddy/Sandy and heavily saturated belly crawl that sucked you in just like quick sand. As I got closer and closer to the water I got more and more excited. Once I reached it I quickly got out of a crawl and into a MAMMOTH dome complex! Okay... maybe it wasn't mammoth but it felt like it after being in stream level and a tight canyon for most the day. I quickly yell back to the team, "BOREHOLE! DOZEN LEADS! GET UP HERE!" I can hardly hear them as I'm standing over this waterfall and they're back before the belly crawl roughly 40 feet away but I can faintly hear them say, continue the survey. I'm saying we can just shoot out of where I am and connect back to the PL survey on the way out as I'm too excited however they insisted we continue the survey. So after a nice boom shot through the entire belly crawl, Matt and Aaron come into the dome complex and are both as excited as I am now. After looking for quite some time in the main complex, there were no survey stations and we saw none in the stream passage. While thinking we found something massive, we start to look into the most promising lead. After getting back into it, we see the worst thing imaginable. J9. A survey station from the 1980s survey. After a collective sigh, we regrouped in the dome complex and checked the time. Once realizing that we've gotta start to head back to meet our callout time, we set one last nice

station that will allow for an easy pick up for the next sketcher to start with. After heading back out we got our vertical gear and did the climbs out. Let's just say that tight squeeze in the entrance drop was not so nice when gravity is fighting against you. Overall it was a great trip where we got some good work in.

Stats:

- 13 Hours 30 minutes in cave
- 48 Stations set
- 570ft of total survey
- 0 Bull incidents



Photo courtesy of Aaron Bird



Photo courtesy of Aaron Bird



Photo courtesy of Aaron Bird

Ohio? Caves? Ohio Cave Survey!

- **Ryan Braga**

Earlier in the month I, with the help of my non caver best friend, Edgar Garcia surveyed Briggs Dam Cave 1 in Franklin county, Ohio. After this survey and putting data into the computer I realized I forgot cross sections so I went back a week later and met up with Joe Hayes where we talked Ohio caves while I grabbed cross sections. With this ensued my first endeavor to do my own cartography. With this I've had zero experience with so luckily Beau Gergel from the Greater Cincinnati Grotto has a multi part series on getting started with cartography up to the half way point. After that, I had to work through the final steps which, being in a version of adobe illustrator that came out in 2005, was not very intuitive. With this and many hours of clicking every button and option on the screen, I wrapped up my first ever cartography project. While I don't love my first work, it's good enough to serve as a base point and push on to more cartography. My goal is to continue

working these smaller Ohio caves so I can get my feet wet and then hopefully jump into some of the Kentucky survey projects I have brewing.

The map is on the next page.

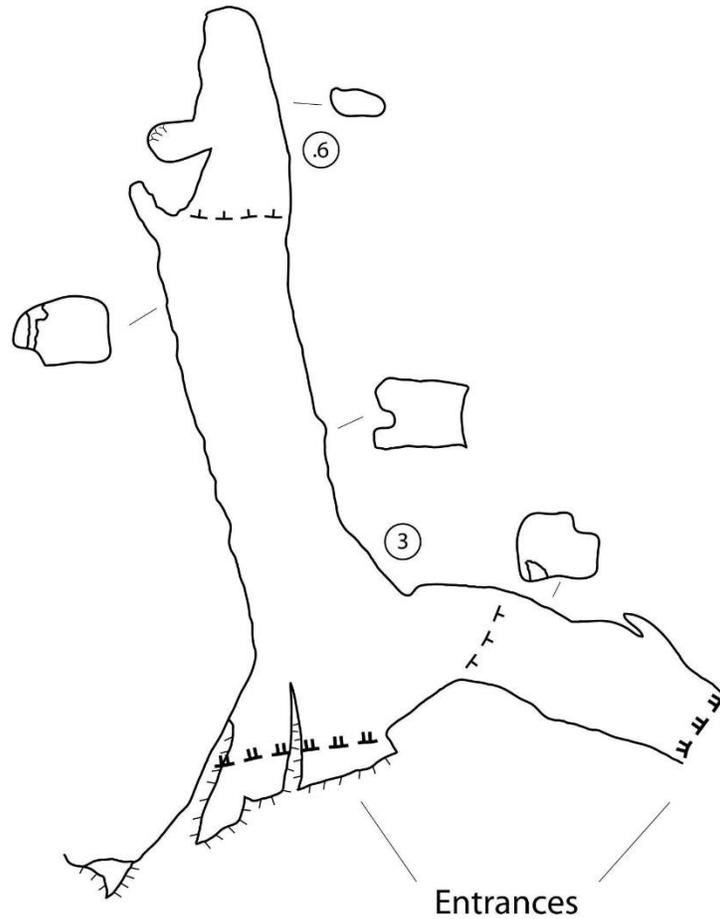


Photo by Ryan Braga



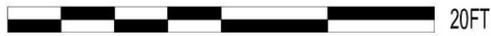
Briggs Dam Cave 1

Franklin County, Ohio
Central Ohio Grotto
04/03/2024



North

55 Feet of
Total Passage
Disto Survey



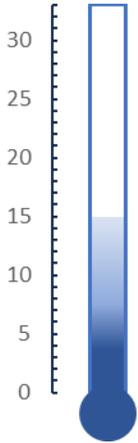
Legend

Drip Line	TT
Stalactite	Y
Ceiling Height	(3)
Ceiling Drop (Hachures point towards Low side)	T
Ledge (Hachures point towards drop)	T

Survey:
Ryan Braga
Edgar Garcia

Cartography:
Ryan Braga

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