



Central Ohio Grotto Squeaks

August 2025



Cover photo by Tory Roland -flowstone in Monolith 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:

Email: exec@centralohiogrotto.com

Chair:

Andy Schofield
chair@centralohiogrotto.com

Vice Chair:

Wendy Orlandi
vice-chair@centralohiogrotto.com

Treasurer:

Aaron Deal
treasurer@centralohiogrotto.com

Secretary:

Bethany Widmayer
secretary@centralohiogrotto.com

Former Chair:

Aaron Deal
Aaron.Deal@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Ryan Braga
ryanbraga1007@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Tera Williamson
trwilliamson84@gmail.com

Member-At-Large:

Jennie Hawkey
jcgalletta@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.

August 1-3	Conservation Weekend	GSP – Misty Cave Cleanup
August 27	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church
August 29-Sept 1	Old Timer's Reunion	West Virginia – check Facebook for details
September 20,21	Caver Appreciation	GSP
September 24	COG Regular Meeting	Worthington Presbyterian Church

Contact Info for Questions regarding trips or meetings: exec@centralohiogrotto.com

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Join us for our next monthly meeting in the Worthington Presbyterian Church Youth Room on WEDNESDAY, August 27 at 7 PM in person or online. To join virtually, find Google Meet on COG's Google Calendar or facebook. You do NOT have to be a member to attend, everyone is welcome. After the meeting, we'll head over to Villa Nova Ristorante for pizza and drinks. Please bring cash to cover your share.

COG Monthly Meeting
 Wednesday, August 27· 7:00 – 8:30pm
 Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info
 Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/zfc-wktg-wzz>
 Or dial: (US) +1 662-674-1233 PIN: 431 213 899#
 More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/zfc-wktg-wzz?pin=8923801100058>

Our August speaker will be Ellen Trautner, a cave and karst specialist for the Bureau of Land Management. She will present Women in Cave Management and offer her unique perspective on the contributions women are making to the field.

Bio: Ellen Trautner has worked for the Department of the Interior since 2009 in various resource management roles for the National Park Service and currently the Bureau of Land Management. She is a cave/karst specialist and works with other resource specialists and project leaders on an interdisciplinary team to achieve the multiple-use mandate of the BLM where she is often the only woman in the room or the cave! She spends much of her time reviewing NEPA documents, karst reports and interacting with passionate project cavers. She encourages everyone to explore the fascinating underground world beneath our feet and also thinks bats are really cool!



COG PRESENTS

ELLEN TRAUTNER

WOMEN IN CAVE MANAGEMENT

AUG 27 - 7PM

Odds and Ends:**Grotto History**

The July-August 1975 issue of the Squeaks had a trip report about a through trip from Minton Hollow to the Martin's Creek exit of Sloans Valley Cave. Much of the trip had to be floated due to high water pools, particularly in the Martin's Creek section. The trip was a survey trip and they surveyed 1,545 feet!

COG Conservation Weekend @ GSP

Save the date for a weekend of conservation! On Saturday we will return to the RKC owned Misty Cave to check the preserve for remaining trash and debris and do some light cleanup if necessary. We will also take a trip through the cave which is an important hibernaculum for Indiana bats in the winter. On Sunday, we will explore GSP to identify and take inventory of pollinator plant species during their peak in the summer. More details to follow!

7/19 Trip to Monolith Cave

By Tory Roland

During the weekend of Everything but the Squeal, Ryan Braga, Nick Wayne and myself paid a visit to a cave down Crooked Creek Road called Monolith. Per the last trip report, it seemed to have not been last visited in about 13 years. It wasn't hard to tell why, as we made a long trek through tall brush to the far edge of the valley, and then a steep hike up the cliff side to the entrance of the cave. We stopped at two points on our way up to investigate what appeared to be other smaller caves; but not our cave, before reaching what we concluded must be the spot.

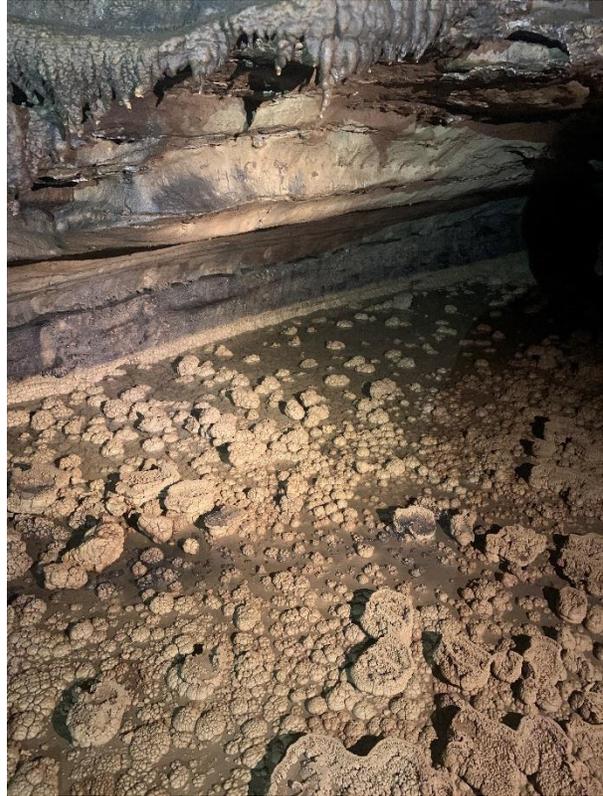


Photo courtesy of Tory Roland

We rested for several minutes to cool off and to admire the formations right at the entrance of the cave. We made note of the lack of any footprints, the ground looked pristine so we think it's safe to say that we were likely the first to have been there in a while. Not too far off from the entrance the passage opens up into a large room of wall-to-wall rimstone dams, which we expected to see per description in prior trip reports but were awestruck to see in person. We peered down a couple of smaller passages that looked to lead to some pits on the map that we were interested to see later, but wanted to get the dicier portion of our trip first.

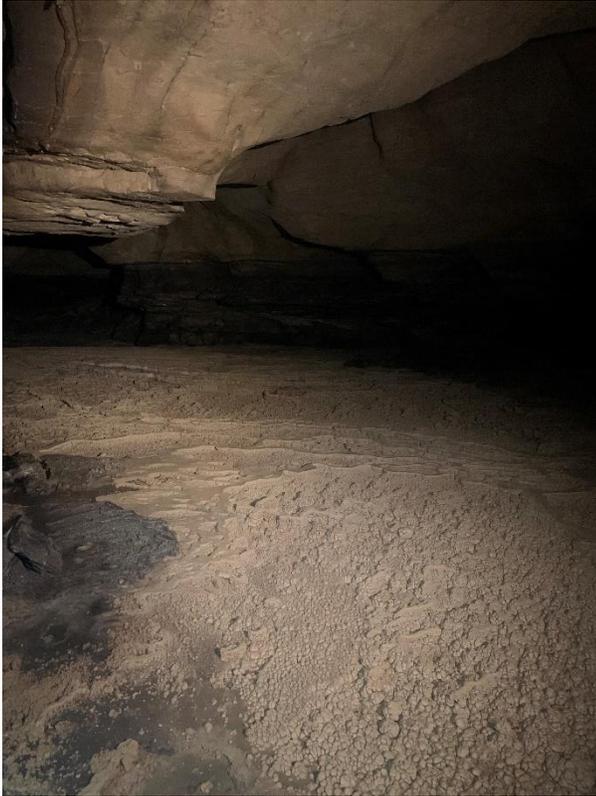


Photo courtesy of Tory Roland

After sliding down feet first through tight passage, we approached what looked like a platform of composite jutting out of the right wall and stretching forward for about 15 feet. We did our best to hug the wall where the ledge looked sturdiest. At the other end of this section there was a climb down where once reaching the bottom, we were able to see just how empty the space below what we had just crossed really was, although from touching it we could feel that the composite seemed mostly solidified. We then followed a canyon that gradually narrowed and lowered into a belly crawl, abruptly ending in standing passage that led to the Missile Silo. Missile Silo was a wide pit with a very old wooden ladder propped up against the edge. Only wanting to take a look around, one person climbed down while another held the ladder steady, but they found that a couple of the rungs at the bottom were missing! It did appear that there was another lead adjacent and partway up the pit, but we were not equipped to make both the descent and the climb up that day.



Photo courtesy of Tory Roland

Heading back to the main room, we decided we only had time for one more stop, which was to follow a mud slope up and around to Monolith Pit. After examining and talking amongst ourselves about whether there were appropriate natural anchors to rig our rope to, we decided that it would be safe for us to each take turns bouncing the pit. It was about 40 feet deep and lined with large flowstone formations, though not with much to see at the bottom. We did notice off to the right a potential lead about halfway down the descent but decided to save this along with Toad Hole for another visit. We began the long voyage back to the cars to arrive back at camp in time for the pig to be served.



Photo courtesy of Tory Roland

Roundstone: The first sink

By Nick Wayne

On the weekend of June 27th I had my second annual non-caver caving weekend! The event is a weekend of camping and hanging out with my friends from high school, college, and Columbus friends who do not cave. Last year we went into Boat Dock Springs (Jennifer's) and this year decided to go into Sinks of the Roundstone so I could get more familiar with it to be able to lead scout trips. Altogether we had 12 people including myself with 6 of them not having caved before! Immediately on entering the cave I had forgotten how to get from the high entrance to the main passage, after embarrassing myself a few times and turning the whole party around we eventually made our way into the main trunk passage. Everyone was extremely impressed by the gargantuan nature of sinks (Jennifer's is a small narrow cave). It was much more slippery than I expected on the mud slopes so some struggled in places to ascend the mud slopes, but that created many funny moments of people slipping and sliding! I wanted to do a through trip but was not going to take them through the Pancake as people were getting tired but I forgot how squirrely the bypass is so I decided to take us back out through the main passage which had some great teaching moments about cave biology, geology, and hydrology. After making our way back to the car I got a few people to go look at Rollercoaster. Sadly, It took a while to again remember which entrance was for Rollercoaster and when I did find it I realized that I would need a handline with how slippery the climb up was. We got some Mexican food in Mt. Vernon and then went back to GSP to relax by the fire and roast some marshmallows later in the night. I love introducing caving to new people and can't wait for next year's caving weekend! Remember to always invite your non-caving friends until they tell you to stop asking them



Photo courtesy of Nick Wayne



Photo courtesy of Nick Wayne



Photo courtesy of Nick Wayne

Longnecker / Gibson Family Camping Weekend – July 2025

- By Mark Swelstad

On the weekend of July 12th, a large group of new cavers invaded GSP, hosted by Pat Gibson, Mark Swelstad, Joe Chaput, and Michael Longnecker. Many of us arrived late on Thursday and set up camp up top. I bought a new tent and decided to go all out with external lighting to make sure I attracted every insect within a mile.



Photo courtesy Mark Swelstad

On Friday, we did a very easy trip through John Griffin Cave. I always enjoy sending new cavers through some of the small crawls that loop around. Great photo opportunities abound. We visited the column room, and made our way back to the room that has the big rock with the coral formations. Everyone had a great time, and agreed it was a good intro for our new cavers, many of whom were under the age of 10.

A quick side trip to Mullins Springs found a few cavers doing the famous wet trip, entrance to entrance. This was some people's first time and everyone had fun once they stopped yelling and screaming from the cold water.

Saturday, the rest of our group had arrived and we did a fun trip through Climax Cave. This was fun as well but proved slightly more challenging to some. Not everyone gets a

kick out of belly crawls, even short ones, but we all made it through and had a good time.

After, some of the new cavers decided they wanted to try out the previously mentioned Mullins Springs trip, so back we went.

Saturday night, Caroline Chaput led a liar's trip through GSP Cave – the kids absolutely adored her and followed her around like ducklings. On the way back out, I told the true stories, with her help. Everyone was duly impressed with the cave, and Caroline's storytelling abilities.



Photo courtesy Mark Swelstad

Sunday before heading out, my son and Etruscan Warrior, Jon, cut down a small dead tree in the backfield and stacked the wood (kind of...loosely stacked) nearby for future burning. We cut down a few dead limbs in the upper camping area that were threatening my tent as well.



Photo courtesy Mark Swelstad

I find this neighborhood trip to be very rewarding. Several COG cavers got their start on this trip, and I truly enjoy seeing people pushing themselves to do new things. Most importantly, kids and parents have to interact with one another without wifi. This weekend always makes me feel like it's 1997 again. We will do it again next year!

Huge thanks to everyone who helped out, especially the Chaputs: Joe, Caroline, Molly.