

THE MSS LIAISON

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AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS:

CAIRN – CHOUTEAU – DAEDALUS – KCAG – LEG – LOG – MCKC - MMV
MSM – MVG – OHG – PEG – SEMO – SPG - Stygian

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Missouri Speleological Survey President's Message January 2024 by Dan Lamping

With 2024 upon us, Missouri cavers will continue to do what we've always done; locate, record, conserve, and research the caves of the state of Missouri. Please keep sending in those reports, maps, faunal records, GPS locations, descriptions, etc. Even if it's a recreational trip, learn what you need to know so that you can properly document what you saw and turn a

great trip into a productive trip that will better help us understand the caves of Missouri and the life within it. Within the nation we have an exceptional cave database, and exceptional data custodians who put great time and effort into organizing and preserving what we learn about and experience within our caves. To me, the state of caving and speleology in Missouri is looking pretty good, as reflected in this photo of energetic, mostly young, cavers after mapping virgin passage in Ste. Genevieve County's Gegg Cave, now the 9th longest cave in the state, at over 5 miles long. I encourage you all to do what you can to get new cavers involved and excited to explore and document the stygian world of the Missouri underground.



We are planning to hold the Spring 2024 MSS board meeting at the Missouri Geological Survey in Rolla on Sunday, April 14. The MSS board meeting is scheduled to begin at 11:00 AM with the MCKC meeting scheduled for 1:00 PM. The weekend will be centered around field work at Paddy Creek Wilderness in Texas County to focus on mapping and inventorying caves on the Mark Twain National Forest. Likely, cave trips will begin on Friday, April 12 and continue on Saturday, April 13. We will have use of the campground at Paddy Creek (hopefully, exclusively) for the weekend. Paddy



Creek is a beautiful chunk of the Ozarks with quite a few caves. CRF will cover the cost of meals for the weekend. Though we're looking for someone who's willing to take on or help with meal prep. Caving will be coordinated by Michael Bradford, Marissa Schorr and Scott House. Contact them if you're planning to go.

Top photo likely taken by a waiter at the Mexican restaurant. Bottom photo of Alex Litsch and Nathan Curran sharing an intimate moment. Photo taken by Garrett Bell.

Missouri Speleological Survey Files Report for January 1, 2024 - By Ken Grush

As an end of year report, here's a comparison with the end of 2022. The database ended 2022 with 3954 monitoring forms, 6344 map records, 25744 reports, 42259 faunal records. Today, at the end of 2023, the database has 4306 monitoring forms (8.9% increase over 2022), 6575 map records (3.6% increase), 27821 reports (8% increase), 44939 faunal records (6.3% increase). A little explaining here: we show 216 new map records, but keep in mind only 119 caves (with new maps) have been submitted 2023. That difference is in multiple records recorded for a single cave. For example, I submit 3 maps with each of my submissions; I provide a standard map and 2 that highlight the LIDAR application. Others submit multiple plates with long maps, and sometimes, color and B&W versions are submitted for one cave.

People want a cave count but those numbers can fluctuate quite a bit, so I'll only report we have between 7775 and 7825 caves; that is, we're close to 7800 caves. About 4510 of these are mapped. We found about 112 new caves last year with lots of great work being done north of the Missouri River!

If you have **new information** on any Missouri caves, my email address is slak@grush.org. We need your help to improve the database and make it more complete. I can and do work with Facebook entries, but for information or photos to be incorporated I need to be "private messaged" with the cave name and county.

Allan Breite sent: -A note that the Devil's Boot is for sale in Warren County. No, not a real one!

Mark Brooks sent: -Latest update on the Onyx Cave map in Howell Co. -Narrative, survey notes and photos on Blue River Cave in Howell Co. **Jim Cooley sent:** -A new GPS for Camp Cave in Oregon Co. A side note: less than half our caves have a GPS location for them; doesn't mean we don't know where caves are, just not as precisely as a GPS. We have about 1000 caves that their location is unknown or we know is "wrong." Providing a GPS on every trip to a cave is a good thing and especially as GPS devices improve...presumably their precision will improve also. -16 Use Monitoring forms (16 caves) and 388 Faunal Records for CRF work on the MTNF in Oregon Co **Josh Cooper sent:** -2 Faunal Records for Tom Moore Cave in Perry Co. -9 photos and 4 Faunal Records for Soehl Cave in Perry Co. On same trip, 2 new caves for Perry Co: On Your Side Cave (surveyed) and Seventy Six Spring Joint (close to 76 Spring Cave, which had "current" GPS location confirmed). Lots of photo documentation for both, brief descriptions and naming rationale. And got a GPS location for nearby Deer Stand Cave. -A Faunal Record for Klump Cave in Perry Co. **Logan Down sent:** -Survey notes for Hot Tub Cave (see Grush). **Ken Grush sent:** -A map of new cave, Hot Tub Cave (CL=82 ft), in Perry Co. -A map of Oakshire (Garavaglia) Cave (CL=335) and Shawneetown Cave (CL=270) in Franklin Co. While scanning we collected GPS locations and entrance photos for both caves. **Derik Holtman sent:** -250 photos of a new MCKC managed cave in Jefferson Co. -A bunch of photo collections: 157 photos for Berome Moore Cave from 2023 in Perry Co; 18 photos for Welch Spring from 2013, 13 for Big Cave from 2017 and 16 for Bealert Spring Cave from 2018 in Shannon from 2013; 21 photos for Onyx Cave in Pulaski from 2017; 20 for Cliff Cave from 2013; and 64 from Mossy Spring Cave in Washington Co. -Trip Narrative to Berome Moore along with 6 photos for the archives. **Scott House sent:** -While working in the operative database at the Winona facility (for CRF), he collected 125 new Faunal Records (ONSR and MTNF), 24 (24 caves) Use Monitoring forms along with 3 new caves in Shannon Co. -A map of Hourglass Cave (CL=28) in Shannon Co; map of Cool Breeze Cave (CL=23) and Fisher Lair (CL=19) in Oregon Co; Ralph Ridge Pit Cave (CL=39) in Howell Co. **JJ Huelsing sent:** -A new cave location for Trefoil Cave in Lincoln Co. Besides the GPS, he included photos, description and entrance dimensions; all things necessary to list a cave as opposed to a lead. -A cluster of information on 5 new cave leads (undoubtedly caves, just not easily entered); well, at least based on the 6 other new caves they

actually got into on the same property in Lincoln Co. He included GPS, entrance/length dimensions, entrance photos for all, and 6 faunal records. -3 more caves for the previous location in Lincoln County, he included GPS, 8 Faunal Records, entrance/length dimensions, and entrance photos for each. **Mark Jones sent:** -A location for Fisher Lair in Oregon Co. He included brief directions and description and 5 Faunal Records. **Mike Kovacs sent:** -A 3D model (obj file) of Cricket Hole Cave in Greene Co. Followed by Mule Shoe Bend Cave 3D model in Hickory Co. Bend Cave came with additional imagery and text to describe the cave and the model. -A LIDAR based map of Cache Cave (CL=23) in Christian Co. **Joe Light sent:** -2 newspaper clipping: one from 1903 on an exhibit at the World's Fair and an exhibitor wanting to feature Blind Salamanders from Marvel Cave in Stone Co.; and one from 1962 linking to a sinkhole lead in St. Louis Co. **Alex Litsch sent:** -His archives for the Valles Mines map, his Walls (field survey books) data and field sketches. Altogether, he sent some 600 files, 1.4 GB of data, which represent the 25 survey trips from 2//25/17 to the most recent on 10/21/23. Map stands at a little more than 4 miles. **Chad McCain sent:** -2 cave Narratives and 9 photos for Eagle Eye and Big Rock Bluff Caves in Shannon Co. Survey and biology were collected (see Isaac Smith also). -Late cave Narrative for Roaring Well Cave, last visited in 2018 but caught up in 2023! -Cave Narrative, date for Use Monitoring form and 2 Faunal Records for Oure Cave in Washington Co. **Kohl Mitchell sent:** -2 cave Narratives, 4 photos, 2 Use Monitoring forms, and 11 Faunal records for 2 "Roadside" Caves, one in Pike Co. and the other in Lincoln Co. He also sent 3 survey reports and 3 Use Monitoring forms for Keaton Pit and Wieczorek Cave in Ralls Co. Wieczorek is the second longest cave in Ralls Co. at 1010 ft surveyed. The longest cave in Ralls is one of the maze caves near Hannibal, all of them exceed a mile in survey length. -New maps for Roadside (CL=61) and MoDoT Roadside Spring (CL=51) Caves in Lincoln and Pike Counties respectively. -A lead on a "drive-by" cave in Ralls Co. Need to resolve ownership and access before determining status. -Updates for the database addressing several caves on Mark Twain Lake in Ralls and Monroe Counties; mostly the caves can't be found and are assumed flooded. But all that work, turned a lead into a new cave; Puddle Pit (CL=21, CD=17). **Tony Schmitt sent:** -A trip for Salamander Cave in Shannon Co. **Marissa Schorr sent:** -A Trip Report, Use Monitoring, 15 Faunal Records and 21 photos of Onyx Cave in Pulaski Co. **Isaac Smith sent:** -via Chad McCain, 22 Faunal Records for Eagle Eye and Big Rock Bluff Caves in Shannon Co. -via Tony Schmitt, 21 Faunal Records for a Jefferson Co. Cave. -15 Fauna for a cave in Crawford Co. **Bobby Swain sent:** -10 Use Monitoring forms, 12 Fauna Records and 2 photos for 8 of the 11 different caves on "one" of the Vilander Bluffs in Crawford Co. Swain has sorted out the different names for caves along this section of bluff owned by DNR (had prior permissions), however, the other bluff still requires sorting out all the names and locations on the "other" Vilander Bluff. It's the other bluff with 12 different caves along its length that still eludes clarification! **Richard Young sent:** -Cultural assessments of Soehl Cave and Klump Caves in Perry Co. This included an entrance photo and GPS location (confirming the current GPS of the cave). He also had 5 Faunal Records for Soehl and 3 for Klump Cave that dealt with "critters" in the entrance passage. **Gary & Alberta Zumwalt sent:** -4 photos and a GPS location for Sunrise Shelter in Cole Co., a location they sent in almost 50 years ago.

Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG). Nov.- Sarah Peterson assisted Jon Beard on 3 of the 18 restoration trips into Fantastic Caverns (Greene Co.) **Nov.-** Jon Beard conducted 4 restoration trips in Bridal Cave (Camden Co.) **Nov. 4---**Jon Beard and Sarah Peterson explored and photographed some of the less traveled areas in the northern sections of Breakdown Cave. **Dec.---**Sarah Peterson

assisted Jon Beard on 3 of the 13 restoration trips into Fantastic Caverns (Greene Co.) At the end of December, the total count of formations that had been repaired in Fantastic Caverns was 1,159.

Dec.--- Jon Beard conducted 2 restoration trips into Bridal Cave (Camden Co.). At the end of December, the total count of formation that had been repaired in Bridal Cave was 24. **Dec. 2**--- Thirteen cavers supported the continuing CRF mapping project of Mary Lawson Cave (Laclede Co.). They formed 4 teams with 2 teams working in Bear Passage and 2 teams working in Surprise Passage. Matt Beeson, Nathan Burton, and Sarah Peterson from SPG formed a team and mapped about 350' at the end of Bear Passage, trying to finish it, but didn't quite make it. **Dec.**---Jon Beard and Eric Hertzler took measurements for a new cave gate to be installed in Neongwah Bear Cave (Camden Co.) **Dec. 27**--- Matt Beeson, Nathan Burton and Kayla Sapkota did a winter bat count at Devil's Den Pit on the Buffalo River and also mapped an additional 300 ft. of Passage.--Report by Max White. Content provided by Jonathan Beard and Matt Beeson.



11/12/23 Pleasant Valley Cave overall 5

Meramec Valley Grotto (MVG). Nov. 11th-12th - Tony Schmitt led a monitoring trip into Pleasant Valley Cave. Dec. 2nd - Dan Lamping led another Nameless Cave survey with cavers from various grottos. Dec. 10th - Chad McCain led a survey in Gegg Cave with Isaac Smith, Jen Suthelrand, and Shelby Proctor (SEMO) Dec. 16th - Karamea Christofferson led MVG Members



Bear Cave

on a monitoring trip to Big Bear Cave. Also, Chad McCain led another Moore Cave System survey where 13 cavers from MVG and other grottos surveyed 2,575.3 feet.

This pushed the total cave length past 26 miles.

Dec. 15th – 17th - Tony Schmitt, Dan Lamping, and Korey Hart

found and surveyed some new caves in Shannon County.- Alex Litsch



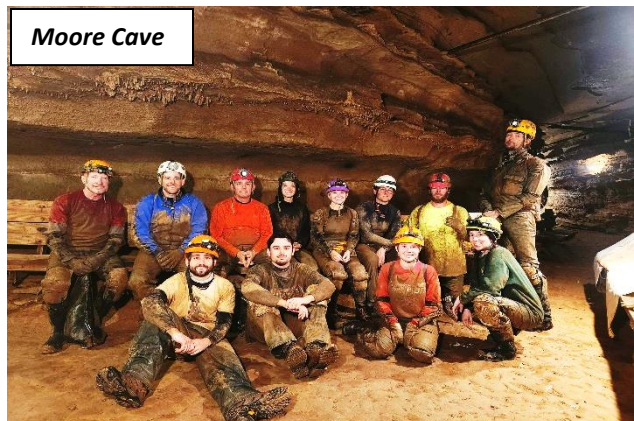
Virgin Shannon Co. cave



Nameless Cave



Grega Cave



Moore Cave

Kansas City Area Grotto (KCAG). **Nov 17-19:** Rick Hines led a large crew to work for three days on the Pic Walenta Memorial Pavilion and other tasks at the Carroll Cave silo, consisting of Jim Cooley, Bill Gee, Tristan Whetstone, Candace & Mike Kovacs, John McGuire, Peter Schnegelberger, Kevin Feltz (Chouteau), Jack Rufener (Chouteau), and Bill Copeland. A great deal was accomplished, including receiving, placing, and wiring up the new shipping container storage unit, and building shelves in the back of it; repairing steps on the sky crapper; finishing the board and batten siding on the four eight-foot window walls; starting construction of four four-foot-wide, nine-foot-tall walls on the 20-foot ends that will be covered in oak siding, which will stiffen the structure and block the wind; wiring a second, post-mounted RV power hookup; building new furniture, including a second picnic table with benches and an Adirondack chair with side table; cut thorn bushes and locust trees; training operators on and cutting the grass using the new electric Cub Cadet 46"-radius industrial mower; transplanting several cedar trees; and planting another oak tree. A special thanks to Bill Copeland for donating the funds to purchase the shipping container. **Nov 23-26:** Jim Cooley led a team consisting of Nathan Taylor, Andrew Erickson and MTNF Forest Biologist Andy Radomski on a float down the Eleven Point River for four days, monitoring and surveying caves on the Irish Wilderness. The trip kicked off with the rescue of a local hunter and his four-year-old son, who were hunting deer while floating down the river. The hunter had shot a deer, but while gutting his kill, accidentally slashed his leg badly. We evacuated the wounded hunter, his son, the field-dressed deer and their canoe and camping equipment by vehicle from Whitten Access to the Riverton Access, where we loaded out his canoe and gear into his pick-up truck for him. He, then, headed off to seek medical attention and get that leg sewn up. Afterwards, we floated down to White's Creek float camp and established a base camp. Hiking out of there for the next three days, we finished the map of White-Niche Shelter, and monitored White's Creek Shelter, Creekbed Cave, Porifera Cave, White Cave, Niche Cave, Coffin Cave, Saddle Cave, Amphitheater Cave, Thorn Cave, Scree Slope Cave, Camp Cave, Rover Cave, Beaver Pond Cave, Den Cave, Hummingbird Cave, Phoebe Cave, and Salamander Cave. We also checked the recently breached White's Creek Cave gate, which is currently intact and chained shut. **Dec 10:** Bill Gee led a six-hour biological inventory trip to upper Thunder River in Carroll Cave. Participants included Jamie Eules, Charlie Rey, Terry Sherman and Mark Kershey. The team counted one ringneck snake, two grotto salamanders, and 23 cavefish.--Jim Cooley

Chouteau Grotto. **Nov. 4** - Kohl Mitchell, Jack Rufener and JJ Huelsing surveyed Roadside Cave (61 ft) and Roadside Spring Cave (51 ft) in Lincoln and Pike Counties, respectively. Meanwhile - Rita Worden and Bryn Downes-Ward hiked up Crooked Branch creek in Devils Backbone Wilderness in Ozark Co. This was a failed attempt to find a swallow-hole to explain the total absence of water x6 yrs. **Dec. 2** - Rita Worden participated in the multi-team, ongoing survey of Nameless Cave in Crawford Co. **Dec. 10** - Kohl Mitchell, Bryn Downes-Ward, Nevin Dubinski and JJ huelsing surveyed 173 feet in Magee Cave in Pike Co., with about 200 feet remaining to survey. --Rita Worden

Lake Ozarks Grotto (LOG). Gary Zumwalt visited Sunrise Shelter, Cole Co., to get a GPS reading and pictures. He had turned in the location and map many years ago. **Kiesewetter Cave** – Ken Long, Gary & Alberta Zumwalt met the adjoining landowner, Larry, at the field to be the parking lot for the cave. He brought lots of neat equipment. The fence was cut and double gates placed in the opening, with Larry welding the crosspieces to secure the ends of the gates.—Alberta Zumwalt

MSS OFFICERS:

President – Dan Lamping, 4501 Clarlane Dr., St. Louis, MO 63128 314-775-8584 danieljlamping@gmail.com

Vice-President – Krista Bartel, 4205 S. 160th Rd., Halfway, MO 65663 816-812-5206 kbartel1088@gmail.com
Treasurer - Don Dunham, 6104 Valley Creek Ct., Imperial, MO 63052 402-203-3191 don_g_dunham@yahoo.com
Secretary - Alberta Zumwalt, 1681 State Route D, Lohman, MO 65053. 573-782-3560 Gzumw@aol.com

MSS DIRECTORS:

CAIRN – Craig Williams, 2865 Laclede Station Rd., Apt. 2S, Maplewood, MO 63143 314-695-1012 cwilliams@cairstl.org
Chouteau – Rita Worden, 22762 Valley Dr., Jamestown, MO 65046. 573-673-3388 wordenrl2323@yahoo.com
DAEDALUS – Jeff Fennell, 3344 Dakota Hills Dr., Pacific, MO 63069 636-575-0669 kavman87@yahoo.com
KCAG – Jim Cooley, 819 West 39th Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64111-4001. 816-763-8111 coolstoi@kc.rr.com
LEG – Al Quamen, P.O. Box 292, Carbondale, IL 62903. 618-967-9085 qallan28@gmail.com
LOG – Gary Zumwalt, 1681 State Route D, Lohman, MO 65053. 573-782-3560 Gzumw@aol.com
MCKC – Tony Schmitt, 1 Ferndale, Fenton, MO 63026 314-482-0516 Tonymary2601@yahoo.com
MMV – Vacant
MSM – Emily Reimer, 36232 N. Falcon Dr., Ingleside, IL 60041 847-533-8527 Emireimer19@gmail.com
MVG – Alex Litsch, 1912 Autumn Ridge Rd., Festus, MO 63028. 314-914-7010 alitsch6@gmail.com
OHG – Charley Ray, 3561 S. Cox Ave., Springfield, MO 65807 417-234-6820 hoodooman63@hotmail.com
PEG – Lorin O’Daniell, 4515 Faraon-Apt. F, St. Joseph, MO 64506. 816-273-4634 lorinodaniell@gmail.com
SEMO – Gary Resch, 6151 Farthing Rd., Odin, IL 62870 681-780-3799 gjresch@gmail.com
SPG – Max White, 2748 W. Maplewood, Springfield, MO 65807. 417-880-8475 bildmwc@aol.com
Stygian – Allan Breite, 51 Atwater Dr., St. Peters, MO 63376 636-278-0291 stygiangrottostl@gmail.com

Note: Al Quamen’s cell phone has changed. MMV’s Director position is vacant.

Other important information:

Missouri Speleology circulation & MSS store –Don Dunham, 6104 Valley Creek Ct., Imperial, MO 63052. 402-203-3191 don_g_dunham@yahoo.com
Cave Files – Ken Grush, 32 Circle View Dr, Fenton, MO 63026. 713-825-0914 slak@grush.org
MSS Liaison Editor - Gary Zumwalt, 1681 State Route D, Lohman, MO 65053. 573-782-3560 Gzumw@aol.com
Research Committee -Dr. Robert Lerch, Dr. Michael Sutton, Dr. Doug Gouzie and Jeffrey Crews.
Cave Files Committee: Scott House (Chairman), Ken Grush, Mick Sutton, Dan Lamping, and Jeffrey (Spike) Crews.

CALENDAR:

March 5th – Next Liaison deadline.

April 14th – MSS meeting on Sunday, 11 am, at the Geological Survey in Rolla. The MCKC meeting will follow at 1 pm. See the President’s column for info on work to be done on days preceding the meeting.

FIRST CLASS

MSS Liaison
Gary Zumwalt
1681 State Route D
Lohman, MO 65053