TCMA PASSAGES
SPRING 2006

UT Caves Under TCMA Management

By Peter Sprouse, Linda Palit, and Joe Mitchell

TCMA announces the opening of 09-Well and Amazing Maze Cave for TCMA member visitation. These caves are located in west Texas on land owned by the University of Texas (UT) Land System. Because the UTS recognizes that caves are a valuable natural resource with scientific, environmental, recreational, educational and scenic value, the UT System authorized TCMA to manage its cave resources for 5 years, renewable with the written consent of both parties or subject to cancellation by either party with written notice. This agreement authorizes TCMA to manage all cave resources which exist on the 2.1 million acres of Permanent University Fund land.

TCMA has agreed to provide the following services:

- Cave management service, managing access to caves and providing release and waiver forms for entry to any cave,
- Development of cave management plans for UTS caves as determined to be necessary including cave evaluation, cave conservation, cave access procedures and savety guidelines,
- Coordinate cave access to protect the cave resource and the health and safety of the of the users,
- Provide other services as needed, including such things as inventories, geologic work, biological study, cave gate or repair,
- Additional insurance coverage as required by the UTS.

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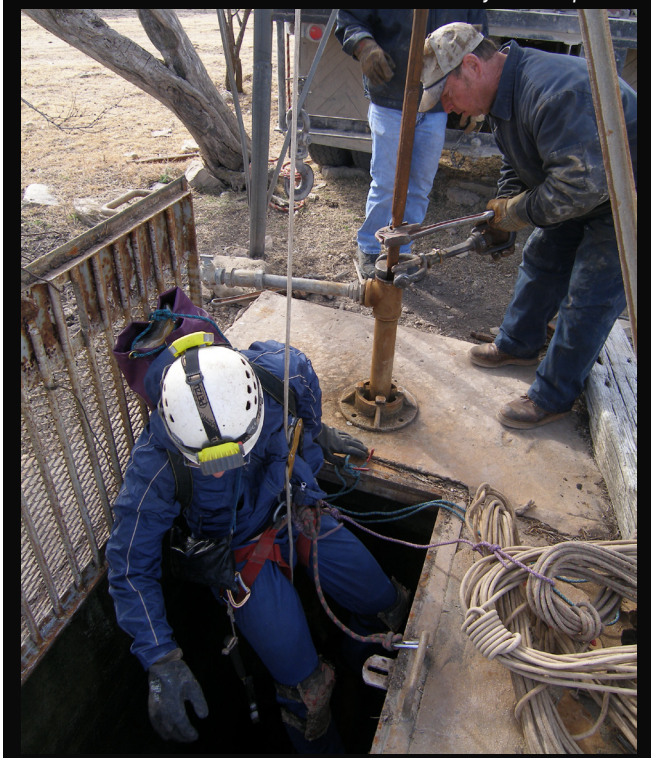
Photo by Peter Sprouse



Philip Rykwalder enters O9 Well as well service company personnel work on the rancher's well pipe.

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View from the Palit

By Linda Palit

Imagine a future where you could spend a weekend each month visiting a different TCMA cave or volunteering on a TMCA project. Imagine Texas cavers, through TCMA, owning more of the classic Texas caves, and managing them for cavers to visit, and so important scientific research might be started or continued.

We're not there yet, but we're closer. The new LIDAR project to map the Devil's Sinkhole will allow many Texas cavers to visit this classic cave and assist with the mapping of the sinkhole. TCMA's management of caves owned by The University of Texas allows cavers to visit O-9 Well and Amazing Maze Cave and to help with the mapping and other projects there. Deep and Punkin Caves are available for grotto trips, visitation, and there are ongoing mapping projects in both caves open for your participation. Whirlpool Cave in Austin and Robber Baron Cave in San Antonio are both open for trips. Robber Baron is still under renovation, and still needs your help in either participating or managing some portion of the project. During the coming year we may have work projects at the preserves of Ezell's Cave in San Marcos, Godwin Ranch in Georgetown, and Rolling Oaks in San Antonio.

The support and skills of TCMA members and non-members backing our projects has made progress possible. TCMA has substantial property and projects, and we have the possibility of more in the future. But we are depending on our members and friends and need all of you more than ever before. How?

- When we make agreements with other organizations to look for cave on their land or to supply volunteers for a project like to LIDAR Project, it is essential that we are able to muster the personnel to do the project. Beyond doing the project, we have to do it in a way that makes TCMA the organization they call on to do the next project because we are dependable, and aware of their needs and requirements.
- As we acquire caves, we need preserve managers, cave managers, and trip leaders so that we can use the caves in ways that give people access yet preserve the resource.
- We need personnel to accomplish all of the tasks of the organization, including looking for caves to purchase, working on articles for Passages, record keeping, etc.
- When we obligate the organization to purchase a cave property like the Punkin and Deep Preserve, we have to be able to pay for the property through means such as fund-raising, grant writing, and sound business practices.

I believe that TCMA will continue to grow with the help and support of Texas cavers. I am enormously thankful for all the support Texas cavers have provided thus far, and need you to continue to talk to me, the TCMA Board, and whoever might be able to help us make sure we are moving in directions supported by Texas cavers. An organization is useless without the support of those it is created to serve.

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Young Turks at Punkin and Deep Nature Preserve

By Graham Schindel and Stephen Bryant

We have been fortunate to have been involved with the Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve from the beginning of the acquisition by the Texas Cave Management Association. Not only have we developed as cavers and trip leaders, but also as project managers. We have been the lead, along with Paul Bryant, in helping Venture Crew 410 get involved at the property. The Venture Crew, part of the Boy Scouts of America program for coed youths 14 to 21, has unofficially adopted the property. The Crew has had two Boy Scout eagle projects at the property and have also helped build the bunks, painted parts of the building, improved the wiring, helped to hook up the water system, built rock walls and fire pits, removed brush, cleared campsites along with the arduous task of removing and replacing the insulation in the attic (a really nasty job). All real character builders (we've been told we've become real characters).

After the required training, we have also been designated trip leaders for the Deep and Punkin caves. We have had the pleasure of leading many trips to the two caves on the property. Since, October 2004, we have been on or have lead more than 30 trips into the caves and have participated in several survey trips.

We have lead groups ranging from Venture Scouts to college students, to elderly with walkers (note Deep is not wheelchair accessible but Punkin might be if you're not careful) and of course cavers. Trips to the caves are divided into groups with a 5:1 ratio of cavers to leaders to avoid damage and traffic jams in the narrow passages of the caves. A series of trails have been established to direct people through these tight spots and help to minimize the impact the cavers have on the many delicate formations found throughout Deep Cave.

Graham Schindel (left) and Stephen Bryant (right) have been active leaders at Deep and Punkin.

Most guided trips into Deep Cave include a trip to the Bat Room, Helictite Room via the Forest of Columns, and other passages like the Miller-Time Passage.

As trip leaders and from assisting with the survey of Deep Cave, we have been able see many parts of the cave. On a recent survey trip lead by Jerry Atkinson, a new room was surveyed after Stephen Bryant had discovered it only two weekends before. He returned to guide them to the new room and helped survey it. The survey team was comprised of Linda Palit, Jerry Atkinson, Paul Bry-

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Devil's Sinkhole Mapped with Laser System

By Allan Cobb & Geary Schindel

All cavers are familiar with the traditional cave maps. These maps have a plan, profile, and cross-sections that represent how the cave looks. The accuracy and detail in the map is dependent on the survey techniques, the skills of the sketcher, and person who drafts the map. While these maps are useful for getting an idea of what a cave looks likethe pattern of the cave, direction of passage, and major features and obstacles, , they often do not have sufficient detailed enough information for advanced uses such as measuring volume of the cave or surface area of the walls, floor, ceiling, or other features. One of the emerging technologies is to createing a 3D image maps using non-invasive LIDAR (LIght Detection And Ranging) mapping. The LIDAR process removes many of the limitations of a traditional map and as the technology becomes cheaper and easier to use, may become a standard tool for surveying caves in the future.

Photo by Allan Cobb

Jerry Bellian using LIDAR to create 3D map in the upper level of Deep Cave.

The TCMA is entering into a cooperative project with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (BEG) to create a full 3D reconstruction of the Devil's Sinkhole. This would be one of the first and the most complete subsurface model for any park facility at the federal or state level. The 3D rendering of the cave will have many uses and will be widely distributed.

The Devil's Sinkhole State Natural Area is the most important tourist attractions in the region thanks to the efforts of TPWD and the staff at the Devils Sinkhole Society (DSS). The dedicated volunteers at the DSS have been conducting public outreach programs over the last several years emphasizing the importance of bats in Central Texas. Public education of the complexity and connectivity of central Texas caves is critical to popular understanding of how both natural and human actions can adversely affect these sensitive environments.

The public can observe the sinkhole from a viewing platform built on the edge of the 145-foot drop to the top of the central talus. Although this view is spectacular, it pales in comparison to the massive conical room that extends below the first restriction. There is currently no way for observers from the viewing platform to fully grasp what lies below, or visualize the magnitude and beauty of this natural Texas treasure without the luxury of entering this impressive natural wonder.

The LIDAR scan of Devil's Sinkhole will produce an excellent computer 3D model of the cave for viewing on a computer. This will give everyone a unique opportunity to see the Devil's Sinkhole from a fresh and new perspective. In addition, the data may be used to calculate the area of the bat roostsing on the ceiling. The precise measuring capabilities of the data will allow the volume of the chamber as well as the volume of the debris cone to be estimated. The data also provides accurate information about the water level for groundwater studies. The LIDAR Survey will also provide a base line for comparison of future LIDAR surveys. A comparison of surveys over time can possibly be used to compare changes in the size of the bat colony, rate of collapse and formation of the cave, and rate of movement of the debris cone. Once the data is collected, new uses may also be found.

The mapping of the Devil's Sinkhole using LI-

DAR will be performed by the BEG with assistance from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and volunteers from the TCMA. The BEG will be responsible for providing and operating the mapping equipment and all data processing. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will provide access to the cave and provide over site and assistance while work is being performed on the property. The TCMA will provide volunteer labor in helping to move and secure equipment and personnel into and out of the cave. The TCMA will also provide photo documentation of the mapping process for use by the TBEG and the TPWD in reports and displays.

The TBEG will provide a LIDAR map of the Devil's Sinkhole along with a software viewer that will allow the data to be manipulated and used for educational and scientific purposes.

TCMA is soliciting donations to pay for the cost of the mapping and data processing. If you are interested in donating to the project, contact one of the project managers below. Caving support on the project will be provided by volunteers.

If you would like to donate or volunteer, contact either of the TCMA project managers:
Geary Schindel 210-479-2151 <gschindel@mindspring.com>
Allan Cobb 512-945-5433 <ac@oztotl.com>

UT LANDS *(from p. 1)*

UT Lands are located in Hudspeth, Culberson, Loving, Ward, Winkler, Andrews, Martin, Crane, Pecos, Crockett, Terrell, Upton, Regan, and Schleichner Counties.

Peter Sprouse manages the UT Lands caves for TCMA as of our agreement with the UT lands systems. This means that 09-Well is open for visitation, and Amazing Maze Cave will be open for visitation after replacing the gate on the cave, which will be done as a TCMA project.

Because of insurance demands, any visitation to these caves requires you be a TCMA member. This is not the requirement on other TCMA properties, but TCMA does not own the UT caves, so we must follow the guidelines of the agreement. UT insisted we increase our insurance, and that any visitation be only by TCMA members.

We are very excited to be able to visit these caves again, and excited about the upcoming mapping and scientific projects which will be a part of our management of the caves.

YOUNG TURKS *(from p. 3)*

ant, Graham Schindel, and Stephen Bryant. The passage to the new room was a tight fit, as several of the people found out during later trips. One of these was Geary Schindel (Preserve Manager), he had trouble in one particular spot (which was later named the Geary filter) because he couldn't proceed to the other side and unfortunately for him, the filter was only 10 feet away from the entrance to the room. It turns out that this room is the second largest room in the cave. This room is very different from the other rooms in the cave. It contains no formations with the exception of several gypsum flowers and a few small helictites near the entrance of the room. Another strange aspect is that the entire room is covered with many layers of thick dried mud, measuring in total up to 2 feet thick in some places thus gaining its name the Mud Crack Mansion. The skeleton of a ring tail cat(?) was also found in the bottom of the room.

We have also helped to organize and manage work crews of Venture Scouts at the property. There have been several eagle projects on the preserve such as Stephen Bryant's trail from the cabin to deep cave. There was also a wildlife watering pond/ caver swimming pool built by David Vega to improve wildlife habitat on the property. Venture Crew 410 has also built the trail from Punkin Cave to Deep Cave. We would recommend that you hike these fine trails when you get a chance and see some of the nice above ground features of the property.

The experience at the TCMA's Deep and Punkin Nature Preserve have taught us leadership skills, allowed us to associate with some incredible cavers that will influence our caving as well as professional careers in the years to come. We have been fortunate enough to mentor under several unique (certifiable) cavers, and have played the roles of lackey-toadies, sherpas, minions, gofers, buffoons, cronies, zealots and cohorts – yes, thoroughly indoctrinated into the ways of the underworld. Thank you TCMA – what a long strange trip it's been.

The Deep and Punkin Cave Survey Project - 2005

By Jerry Atkinson

In February 2005, the TCMA Deep Cave Survey Project was initiated in order to continue the exploration, survey, and resource assessment of the caves on the Preserve. The project initially focused on surveying the areas immediately adjacent to the preferred visitation route through Deep Cave so as to assess and potentially open those areas to future visitation. Deep Cave can best be described as a 3-dimensional maze in both breakdown and bedrock that requires a good deal of crawling and climbing. Punkin Cave has two down-trending rift mazes that remain to be explored and surveyed. Both caves contain numerous leads with air flow.

During the past year, the project has held five weekend trips to both Deep and Punkin Caves involving 39 participants. Deep Cave is presently 2548.4m (8361 feet) long and 77.6m (255 feet) deep. Punkin Cave is 44.7m (147 feet) deep and approximately 400m (1300 feet) long. The following is an abbreviated report of the project's efforts during the past year.

March 18-20th, 2005

Trip Personnel : Jerry Atkinson, Darla Bishop, John Brooks, John Crosthwait, Clark Giles, Ed Goff, Jim Kennedy, Pete Lindsley, Marvin Miller, Linda Palit, Joe Ranzau, Philip Rywalder.

Deep Cave Team 1 : Jerry Atkinson, Darla Bishop, John Brooks, and Philip Rywalder surveyed 112.4m (369 feet) in the Lost World (LW survey). Passage consisted of extensive breakdown maze with sizeable rooms separated by nasty crawls. Team attempted to follow good airflow but all such leads ended in tight squeezes that would need enlarging. Surveyed area underlies Swiss Cheese Corridor and Bat Room. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Team 2 : Marvin Miller, Ed Goff, Linda Palit, and Joe Ranzau surveyed 123.8m (406 feet) in the Miller Time Room area (CF survey). The team completed the survey of the Miller Time Room and extended the breakdown maze northward to connect into the Helictite Room. They then continued the survey to the southwest along the rift that forms the corridor leading to the Crystal Waterfall area. The breakdown maze continues with numerous leads. Airflow was noted in many of the passages.

Punkin Cave Team 1 : Pete Lindsley, Jim Kennedy, Clark Giles, and John Crosthwait surveyed 178.4m (585 feet) from the entrance of the cave down through the rift passage developed at the south end of the entrance room (R survey). Four permanent brass nails were set : one at the entrance lip datum, and three on breakdown blocks near the bottom of the main drop in the entrance room. The team surveyed down the steep rift passage at the south end of the entrance room to a large, 11m (35 feet) wide by 20m (65 feet) long, flat-ceilinged room averaging 2m (6 feet) high (Mortuary Room). Goat bones were observed in the Mortuary Room. Numerous leads with good airflow remain to be surveyed.

Weekend Survey Results : 414.6m (1360 feet)

June 17-19th, 2005

Trip Personnel : Jerry Atkinson, Don and Jenni Arburn, Clark Giles, Jim Kennedy, Kerry Lowery, Milo Marks, Linda Palit, Joe Ranzau, Geary Schindel, Annette Summers Engel, Chris Vreeland, and Kelly Willson.

Deep Cave Team 1 : Jerry Atkinson, Don Arburn, Linda Palit, and Joe Ranzau surveyed 121.6m (399 feet) in the Crooked Broomstick Passage (J survey). A good portion of the effort was resurvey of the original CF survey of 2001 as no survey markers were left by the original survey team. Once the resurvey was completed, the team surveyed up into Bear Scratch Hall, a relatively large upper level passage that parallels the Crooked Broomstick Passage. The area is well decorated with live flowstone, draperies, helictites, and normal stal. Numerous bear scratch marks are found throughout the passage and appear to have been made by several different bears.

From Bear Scratch Hall, the team then surveyed through a 3D spongework maze to connect into the room above the Forest of Columns area. Dark organic debris is found in the spongework maze, suggesting that it connects to the overlying Entrance Maze which is floored with bat guano and surface soil. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Geology Survey Team: Geary Schindel, Milo Marks, Annette Summers Engel, and Kelly Willson conducted a survey of the corrosion features throughout the entrance area, the Bat Room, Swiss Cheese Corridor, and the Forest of Columns Room. Samples of gypsum were collected from

the Bat Room area for isotope analyses. Annette conducted her PhD research on the Kane Caves of Wyoming while at UT Austin, and is presently an assistant professor of geomicrobiology at LSU at Baton Rouge, LA. Her specialty is the microbiology of sulfuric acid caves and hot springs. Kelly is a graduate student at LSU under Annette.

Punkin Cave Team 1 : Jim Kennedy, Clark Giles, Kerry Lowery, and Chris Vreeland surveyed 267.9m (879 feet) in the northern part of the entrance room (ER survey). The team was surprised to find an extensive maze area that slopes downward into a rift. They surveyed a loop in the maze noting airflow and a thermocline layer, below which the air temperature was noticeably cooler. Numerous leads with good airflow remain to be surveyed in an area named the Superstition Maze and the Nightmare on Maze Street. The team then surveyed back into the entrance room and along the northwest wall, noting several down-going leads that appear to open into mazes.

Weekend Survey Results : 389.5m (1278 feet)

September 16-18th, 2005

Trip Personnel : Jerry Atkinson, Don Arburn, Aimee Beveridge, John Brooks, Paul and Michelle Bryant, Allan Cobb, Clark Giles, Geoff Hoese, Jim and Cat Kennedy, Joe Mitchell, Linda Palit, Joe Ranzau, Geary and Graham Schindel, and Bob West.

Deep Cave Team 1 : Jerry Atkinson, Linda Palit, Geary Schindel, and Paul Bryant surveyed 98.8m (324 feet) in the upper Bear Scratch Hall area (J survey). Several loops were made into previous surveys. An upper level above Bear Scratch Hall was pushed through some relatively small passage into a larger area of descending breakdown mazes. The area is well decorated with flowstone, draperies, small helictites, and normal stal. This survey, and the nearby G survey, are both pushing into a new area below the Entrance Maze which appears to be quite extensive. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Team 2 : Aimee Beveridge, Geoff Hoese, John Brooks, and Joe Mitchell surveyed 78.3m (257 feet) in the maze near the top of the Forest of Columns Room (G survey). The team pushed the survey through a 3D maze area into the Hearing Voices Passage which was connected to the E survey near the Bat Room. They then surveyed up into the Mixed Messages Room which was well decorated with long bacon-rind draperies, helictites, flowstone, caramel-colored dogtooth spar, and normal stal. At the end of the room, a pit connects down to the E survey. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Team 3 : Allan Cobb, Michelle Bryant, Don Arburn, and Joe Ranzau surveyed 95.7m (314 feet) in the breakdown maze underneath the Entrance Hall area (E survey). Several loops were made with the D and G survey teams. At one point, a very large breakdown block shifted below Don Arburn which could be heard by all the other teams in the cave. The room was then called Eat Your Lunch Crack in his honor.

The team then began surveying above the Bat Room until they discovered they were resurveying portions of the A survey that had not been flagged. Several small down-trending leads remain which will require enlarging.

Deep Cave Team 4 : Jim and Cat Kennedy, Bob West, and Graham Schindel surveyed 39.9m (131 feet) in the breakdown maze underneath the Entrance Hall area (D survey). Unfortunately, multiple closures with other surveys indicate that the survey had unacceptable loop closure statistics throughout and will have to be resurveyed. The survey was not counted in the corrected length of the cave.

The team then decided to reconnoiter the area in search of larger passage. They succeeded in finding the J survey team and followed them out of the cave. Many leads remain in the D survey area, some of which are relatively large.

Weekend Survey Results : 312.7m (1026 feet)

December 9-11th, 2005

Trip Personnel : Jerry Atkinson, Don Arburn, Darla Bishop, John Brooks, Paul, Steve, and Michelle Bryant, Kevin Lillie, Linda Palit, Geary and Graham Schindel, Bev Shade, Vickie Siegel, Bill Stephens.

Deep Cave Team 1 : Jerry Atkinson, Linda Palit, Graham Schindel, Paul and Steve Bryant surveyed 166.7m (547 feet) in the Mud Crack Mansion (MCM) Room area (Z survey). The MCM Room was recently rediscovered by Steve Bryant and has probably only had one previous team ever visit it back in the 1960s. The room measures 30m long, 20m wide and 12m high; probably the second largest room in the cave. The breakdown in the room is

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DEEP SURVEY *(from p. 7)*

covered with a 0.6m (2 ft) thick coat of multi-layered mud which is extensively cracked. Small gypsum flowers were noted on the walls of the room near the bottom. The MCM survey connected back to the Miller Time Room via a very tight and nasty rift passage which contained rim vents. On the way out, the team surveyed The Tube, which connects the Miller Time Room to the Forest of Columns Room. A few nasty crawls remain to be surveyed in the MCM area; one of which is known to connect to the Helictite Room.

Deep Cave Team 2 : John Brooks, Don Arburn, Darla Bishop, Michelle Bryant, and Geary Schindel, surveyed 73.8m (242 feet) in the Mixed Messages Maze (G survey). The team pushed the survey northward through a 3D maze area and connected to the E survey underneath the Entrance Hall. They then surveyed to the southwest; nearly connecting to the Bear Scratch Hall survey. Several velvet draperies were noted in the maze. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Team 3 : Bev Shade, Kevin Lillie, Vickie Siegel, and Bill Stephens surveyed 149.7m (491 feet) in the extensive breakdown maze (the eVENTful Maze) off of the bottom of the Entrance Hall area (A survey). Several loops were made within the maze which generally trended to the southeast along a known rift zone. At one point, the survey passed within a few meters of the end of the Lost World survey. Gypsum crusts with a later calcite coating were observed on the walls throughout the maze as were several rim vents. The team surveyed into an area called Yoda's Eventful Room, which is trending away from the known cave with several good leads. Numerous leads remain throughout the maze.

Weekend Survey Results : 390.5m (1281 feet)

March 17th-19th, 2006

Trip Personnel : Jerry Atkinson, Don Arburn, Darla Bishop, John Brooks, Jon and Weston Cradit, Sara DuBose, Kevin Lillie, Pete Lindsley, Joe Ranzau, Geary, Sue, Graham, and Aspen Schindel, Travis Scott, and Bill Stephens.

Deep Cave Team 1 : Jerry Atkinson, Geary and Graham Schindel, and Travis Scott surveyed 57.1m (187 feet) in the passage leading down to the lowest known point in the cave below the Helictite Room (V survey). Previous surveys from the 1960s had reported a depth of 91m (299 feet) for the cave, but the processed data from our recent surveys indicate a depth of 77.6m (255 feet) instead. Unfortunately, this bumps Deep Cave to the 20th position on the Texas Deep Cave List. It's not too surprising, however, as all the known lower passages in both Deep and nearby Blowhole bottom out at the same elevation suggesting a similar hydrological control at the time of formation.

The surveyed passage was tight and gnarly in places, but was not coated in mud like the other deep sections of the cave such as Mud Crack Mansion and the Rim Vent Room. Small gypsum flower were noted on the floor and rim vents were observed in the entry to the passage. The team then proceeded to survey the connection between the Helictite Room and Mud Crack Mansion Room (MCM), a tight and somewhat decorated crawl that provides an alternative access route to MCM. No leads of consequence remain.

Deep Cave Team 2 : John Brooks, Darla Bishop, and Sue and Aspen Schindel surveyed 25.5m (84 feet) in the Mixed Messages Maze (G survey). The team pushed the survey westward through a 3D maze area. Nice draperies and gypsum crusts were noted in the Root Beer Drapery Room. Numerous leads remain.

Deep Cave Team 3 : Bill Stephens, Kevin Lillie, Joe Ranzau, and Sara DuBose surveyed 47.1m (155 feet) in the eVENTful Maze off of the bottom of the Entrance Hall area (A survey). The team surveyed onto a balcony overlooking the 20m (60 foot) deep pit that leads to the Rim Vent Room. Numerous leads remain throughout the maze, the best one blowing air from a downward trending chimney that will require a hammer.

Punkin Team 1 : Jon and Weston Cradit, Pete Lindsley, and Don Arburn surveyed 311.8m (1023 feet) in the entrance room of Punkin Cave. They completed the survey of the circumference of the room and tied in the side passages from past surveys. Additional floor detail will be added on a future trip.

Weekend Survey Results : 441.5m (1449 feet)

Jerry Atkinson, Deep Cave Survey Coordinator
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Robber Baron Cave Restoration Project Update

By Joe Mitchell

Construction of the new fence around TCMA's Robber Baron Cave property is ongoing. An old chain link fence has been falling apart and was largely torn up along the alley side during previous phases of the project. The alley fence was replaced during two work days in Nov. and Dec. 2005. On the Nov. work day, the old fence was removed, brush was cleared out along the fence line, and posts were set for the new chain link fence. On the Dec. work day, the chain link was installed and the area cleaned up.

Plans are now underway for construction of the section of fence along the front facing Nacogdoches and Camilla. Since the cave is in a residential neighborhood, we want this highly visible side of the property to have an attractive fence. The plan is to build a welded wrought-iron fence, the construction of which is expected to be coordinated as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Meanwhile, the next step is to build steps in the steep trench into the sinkhole. This can be a treacherous decent when wet and erodes fill material into the cave. The steps will be constructed to allow water to flow into the sinkhole, but in a more controlled and less eroding manner. Work on this task is expected to begin in June.

There are still many tasks remaining to be completed on the surface of the property and your help is needed to organize these tasks and carry this project to completion!

To find out how you can help, contact either:
Linda Palit - 210-699-1388 - lkpalit@sbcglobal.net
Joe Mitchell - 210-679-8408 - joemitchell@satx.rr.com

TCMA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTES
Meeting Date: Sunday, October 16, 2005 / Location: Flat Creek Ranch, Blanco County

Treasurers Report - Approx. Assets: $711,000; Checking account: $65,000;Deep & Punkin Fund: $79,000 ($49,000 needed for pay-off of mortgage); Land Assets: $411,000. Sue S. notes that all cave acquisition monies are going to D&P directly.
Land Acquisition Committee - Linda P. reports on the various properties that TCMA has been looking at: Flea Cave in Edwards Co. – not a good cave to buy; Brehmer's Cave – hasn't worked out so far; Fairy Cave – Owners want $150,000 for what is a $50,000 lot. Linda asks everyone to keep their eyes open for caves for sale.
Fundraising Committee - Allan Cobb reports that $400 were raised at the fundraising breakfast ($300 cleared). He is looking for new ideas. He notes that auctions have worked well with $3000 raised the 1st yr. and $4000 the 2nd yr. which is better than NSS auctions. One idea being considered is another calendar to be done by either Kate and Kathy or Ernie and Allan.
Grants - Linda asks for any grant writing help that can be provided. She reports that the Magnolia Foundation recently gave us $3000 to work on the Robber Baron fence.
Robber Baron Preserve Report - Linda reports that Joe M. will be doing the alley side fence while Geary Schindel, along with the Venture Scout group will be coordinating the Camellia side.
Deep & Punkin Preserve Report - Geary S. reports that now that the cabin work is largely done, work will focus on trip leader training and caving trips. Heavy equipment is needed for the road. It is noted that Mike Warton is moving to Rocksprings and has heavy equipment access. We can also work with the neighbors.
Ezell's Preserve Report- Jon C. reports that the pump in the lower room was moved to the upper room to sample the aquifer. Andy Gluesenkamp will use the cave among others for salamander study. There may be another work project there this winter. The lot at the corner of the property was sold and we need to talk to the new owner. Terry Holsinger has offered to make TCMA property boundary markers.
Village of Western Oaks Report - Bill R. reports that there are still issues with the wet pond but its being slowly solved.
Bullis Contract - Linda reports that the new contract has more complex reporting requirements.
UT Lands - Walter Feaster reports that we now have this property and that hunting leases are still occurring (though lambs are not run anymore). We need to contact the lessee for Amazing Maze. In order to visit the property, people must be TCMA members due to insurance requirements with UT. We will be able to look for additional caves. We can coordinate the TSS to see what's there and ridgewalk.
Board Elections - Terms expiring: Linda Palit and Kurt Menking. The Nominating Committee recommends that Linda and Kurt be re-nominated. Tom Brown states that he would like to resign as Board member and nominate Joe Ranzau to take his place. He states that his resignation is due to his inability to be present at most meetings.
Motion to vote (Libby O./Bob C.) – Linda Palit, Kurt Menking, and Joe Ranzau APPROVED to Board.
Web Page - Joe R. reports that the web site programmer is back so progress can resume. The programmer will set up templates so that Joe R. can just add/modify content as needed.

TCMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING NOTES
Meeting Date: Saturday, January 22, 2006 / Location: Texas Speleological Society Office, Austin, TX

President Report - Linda P. gives a brief review of last years activities and states hope of getting more caves, more members, and continuing on current track.
Secretary Report - Joe M. reports on lack of membership letters will do in next few weeks.
Treasurer Report - Sue S. gives the Treasurer Report for all of 2005: Cash: $263,285; Total Assets: $724,385 (Cash + $461,100 Land + $180,154 Investments); Punkin & Deep mortgage remaining: $50,471; Cave Acquisition Fund: $7,129; Total income for previous year: $114,315; Total expenses for previous year: $32,598
Discussion about Edward Jones investments and about property values – it is suggested that we re-check those for value. Discussion ensued about fundraising items. Further discussion ensued about moving some money to savings to see if we can make some money off of it. A suggestion was made to use a money market account which makes more interest. A question was asked about whether we can move Edward Jones money to Compass Bank to get a better deal with interest? Sue S. notes that we must keep accounts separate but we could do it. A BCI item noted on Treasurer report is incorrect – it is an Edward Jones reconciliation. Sue S. notes that we are switching over from Quicken to Quickbooks. She wants to transfer the Treasury materials in the next year and since most people want Quickbooks used, then we go ahead with the transition.
Database Committee - Aimee B. notes that the committee membership has changed with Joe R. leaving and Jerry Atkinson joining. There have been some updates to membership and some tweaks to the database. There are about 100 memberships currently (more actual members as many of those are families.) We will have a report added to the database to get a member list for trips to UT lands – everyone on those trips must be a member. Aimee B. notes that she would like to pass the job along to someone else within a year so she can focus on being a Preserve Manager.
Website Committee - Joe R. discusses whether we want to further enhance our website, or if its good enough as it stands? The Board's opinion is that it should be more professional looking. The goal of the site is to attract groups and individuals, which want to learn more about who TCMA is. Important items are preserve pages, org. info, land trust links, and important documents with minimal updating. We need to determine our organizational focus and website vision. Let's focus on getting our preserve pages up by March 31. Preserve managers will need to provide standard info and photos. Let's think about moving on toward website 2.0 after we deal with a mission statement. Jay J. discusses server issues – SPAM filters, etc.
Fundraising Committee - Allan C. discusses future fundraisers options – The general opinion is that the auction at Texas Speleological Association spring convention is very popular - "an institution" - and should continue. A date has not yet been set. We need an auction organizer. Aimee offers to help out – Joe R. notes that Sarah can take on organizing it, but needs help with contacts. Discussion held about silent auction – needs to be located near the talks in order to be more successful. Allan asks for additional ideas – he notes that we will continue doing breakfast. Christi Bennett will continue to organize.
We need to organize donor monies and how we are logging, accounting, and crediting them. We need to follow up better with monthly donations and promote them more. Discussion ensued about large ticket donations. We need membership numbers, not so much for dues but to get more people involved. We need to find people who are good at fundraising to make the corporate contacts. Grantwriters are also needed – a person who is knowledgeable and who can make the connections. Discussion ensued about contract grantwriters – they get a percent of the grant. Grants would give us financial stability. Allan will look into pro grant writers to see what the industry standards are. Discussion ensued about caver grant writers vs. non-caver writers. Jay J. reports on CDs from Barb McCloud and that they are selling very well. We get $8-9 for every $14 disc sale. We also have a video DVD which could be sold also – which still needs to be produced. Jay will pursue that. A wishlist of things we need will be prepared and sent out.
By-laws Committee - By-laws revisions will be evaluated and discussed with Board – need to be consistent with other land trust organizations.
Acquisition Committee - Geary S. reports that Travis Scott has been added to the committee. Several pieces of property have been checked out for sale, but the caves have not been found worthwhile. Nothing substantial yet, but we are still looking. Geary has contacts through several real-estate groups. Linda notes that we are still looking into Brehmer's. Discussion ensues about making a wish list of the caves we want (also discussion about what the focus of what the wish list should include.) We need to focus on long term contacts and pursue those over the years. Further discussion about long-term organizational planning and our goals. Also discussion about potential for Federal law changes and how they may affect TCMA. Further discussions about land acquisition goals. The committee will prepare a list of priorities.
Deep and Punkin Preserve - Geary S. reports that the property is in great shape. Many projects have been held out there. A water system has been installed including a hot water heater, and pump system for running water and wildlife water trough. There is an average of one trip every 2 weeks. One idea is to add a second water storage tank to get a total of 900 gal of water available. Also a trail from Deep to the cabin has been completed. We also need to look at selective removal of wild hogs. Most vegetation out there has been determined to be native. A&M Galveston group visited and had a good time. Idea of

adding a kiosk near the cave or a clipboard for communications. The road is good. We still need waste management improvements - looking into septic tank. We have a concrete pad already and can use a holding tank for now - will cost $650 – 700 plus shipping to get one out there. The adjacent property owner asked about road improvements with $2-3k being our share. It is noted that we have a responsibility but it needs to be more than a 2 way split. Drilling water wells in the area have required about 600 foot depth – at a total cost about $15k. Further discussion ensued about property taxes. Jerry is taking care of getting us a property tax exemption – they have not dealt with this in Edwards Co. before.

Jerry A. reports on survey goals including recent significant discoveries. Punkin bee issues need to be evaluated. It is not yet a problem, but a danger for those on rope if Africanized. Pete Lindsley has volunteered to lead a survey in Punkin

Godwin Ranch - Aimee B. reports that things are going smoothly and that changes have been made in the investment portfolio. A set of rocks were dumped over our fence. A cost estimate for fence repairs has been submitted in budget. Aimee also discussions issues of neighbor relations. She is planning an open house for neighbors and TCMA. Also a possible cave lead exists on the property. Motion to accept budget of $10k (Aimee B./Bill R.) - APPROVED

Rolling Oaks Preserve - Joe M. reports that there continue to be calls from people interested in purchasing the property. There will be a cleanup project on the trash filled sinkhole cave on the property at some point. Discussion ensues about getting a determination on the amount of land in easement and the limitations. Much discussion about conservation easements and TCMA's responsibility toward the property. It is determined that we should look into getting an environmental assessment of the property and do things such as fire ant eradication.

Robber Baron Preserve - Linda reports that we have about $5000 of money left to spend, Need to complete fence along other sides of property – probably enough to complete fence and steps into trench.

Whirlpool Preserve - Bill R. reports that visitation is down a bit – 700 visitors last year. The sewer line on the property was modified by city but is not yet completely cleaned up. USGS has an observation well on the property.

Lost Oasis Preserve - We had a new entrance installed and it controls airflow better. Potential exists for sale of some of the property. There were about 4 visits last year.

UT Lands - Discussion was held about the proposed management plan for Amazing Maze and O-9 Well and reporting requirements as needed by the UT Lands agreement. The reports must come through the Board. Walter F. has visited O-9 – Amazing Maze will have to be un-welded.

Camp Bullis - The contract was renewed again until this year but expires at the end of September. No other issues.

Insurance - Jay reports that 700 acres of UT Lands are covered at any one time under our insurance. There was no problem getting it renewed. There was a concern recently with Chubb about some specific questions about caves but this appears to have been resolved.

Village of Western Oaks - It is noted that there are still issues with wet pond. Money is piling up – one thing we could spend it on is a fire ant remediation tool.

Devils Sinkhole Society - We are donating $100 to be a golden bat. It was approved but needs to be send out. Relations are good, plus we are doing additional volunteer work for them.

Passages - Caver profiles will be included for volunteers and to publicly recognize them. Also articles are suggested about little known preserves, an up and coming volunteer, auction into, and a D&P update.

Southwest Land Trust Conference - Will be held at the Downtown San Antonio La Quinta Inn and Convention Center in May 4-6. Linda can send out info for those who want to attend. It is suggested that TCMA make a presentation.

TSS Data Request - George V. reports on a large folio that Walter F. gave him on UT Lands caves. TCMA has applied for data request for UT Lands and near-UT Lands caves and it was approved and it is nearly complete. George discusses what was found from the data request.

2009 International Congress of Speleology - Exhibit space will be available but we may have to pay for it. There could be fundraising opportunities such as selling lanyards, bottomless coffee mugs, etc. We could also sponsor daily campground breakfasts. Another option is to run the consignment sales operation, which the "vendor" will staff the room and take care of sales – the "vendor" gets a percentage of the sales. Discussion about whether TCMA should run the consignment sales – typically a 10-20% cut. The opinion of the Board is that we will not have people to staff it and it will not be worthwhile.

Misc. Business

- TCMA received an offer of a free laptop with printer – we will accept it.
- Discussion about material archiving standards. Jay will look into it. TCMA needs an archivist.
- Discussion about voting on Land Trust Standards – the Board must review before vote.
- Ethical Standards/Conflict of Interest – Allan will provide a draft version for us.
- Linda announces that the next Board meeting will be at TSA convention. Plus a Strategic Planning Session in spring or early summer.
- Discussion about NSS convention and what level of involvement TCMA wants to have.
- Geary wants to revise the D&P management plan. It will be done by email.

TCMA is turning 20 years old!

Help us celebrate our anniversary - we are looking for designs for a commemorative T-shirt, stories about our past for a special fall issue of the Passages, and ideas for ways to celebrate!

Contact Linda Palit at 210-699-1388 or lkpalit@sbcglobal.net

TCMA Is Looking for Caves

The TCMA Acquisition Committee headed by Geary Schindel needs your help! Have you seen caves for sale in your area? We are interested! It is important that we make connections with real estate agents, organizations, and individuals who have caves for sale or who may have caves for sale in the future. Please DO NOT abuse these people just to visit caves, but do let them know we are interested in purchasing caves, and that we are serious.

Remember our resources are limited, but we can raise money to purchase more caves if the caves are significant, either in their size, location or importance to Texas Caving and Texas Cavers.

Geary should be kept informed of your activity, but is the coordinator of the acquisition activities; he does not have to visit every cave or be part of all efforts to find caves. We need a central person who knows what is happening in the state so that we do not make cave owners, real estate agents, or other organizations hostile because too many of us are contacting them.

Please help TCMA explore possible acquisitions, and keep Geary informed by emailing him at gschindel@mindspring.com or give him a call at 210-479-2151 and let him know.

MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION INFORMATION

The Texas Cave Management Association invites you to be part of a statewide conservation effort by participating as an active member. TCMA needs your generous contributions and your help in its management activities and for cave acquisition. Your contributions are tax deductible and are used to support caves, cave science, conservation, and educational activities. Caves are a unique and non-renewable resource. We urge you to join with TCMA to protect our Texas caves and karst.

☐ Regular: $15.00 ☐ Associate: $10.00 (Students under 21) ☐ Family: $22.50

☐ Business: $100.00 ☐ Institutional: $50.00 (Non-profit)

☐ Sustaining Contribution for lifetime members: $10.00

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone #'s _____ Date _____

Make checks payable to: TCMA / Mail to: P.O. Box 202853, Austin, TX 78720-2853

Cavers can buy caves ! Donate to TCMA

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☐ Donate to a TCMA Preserve: _____ Preserve Name