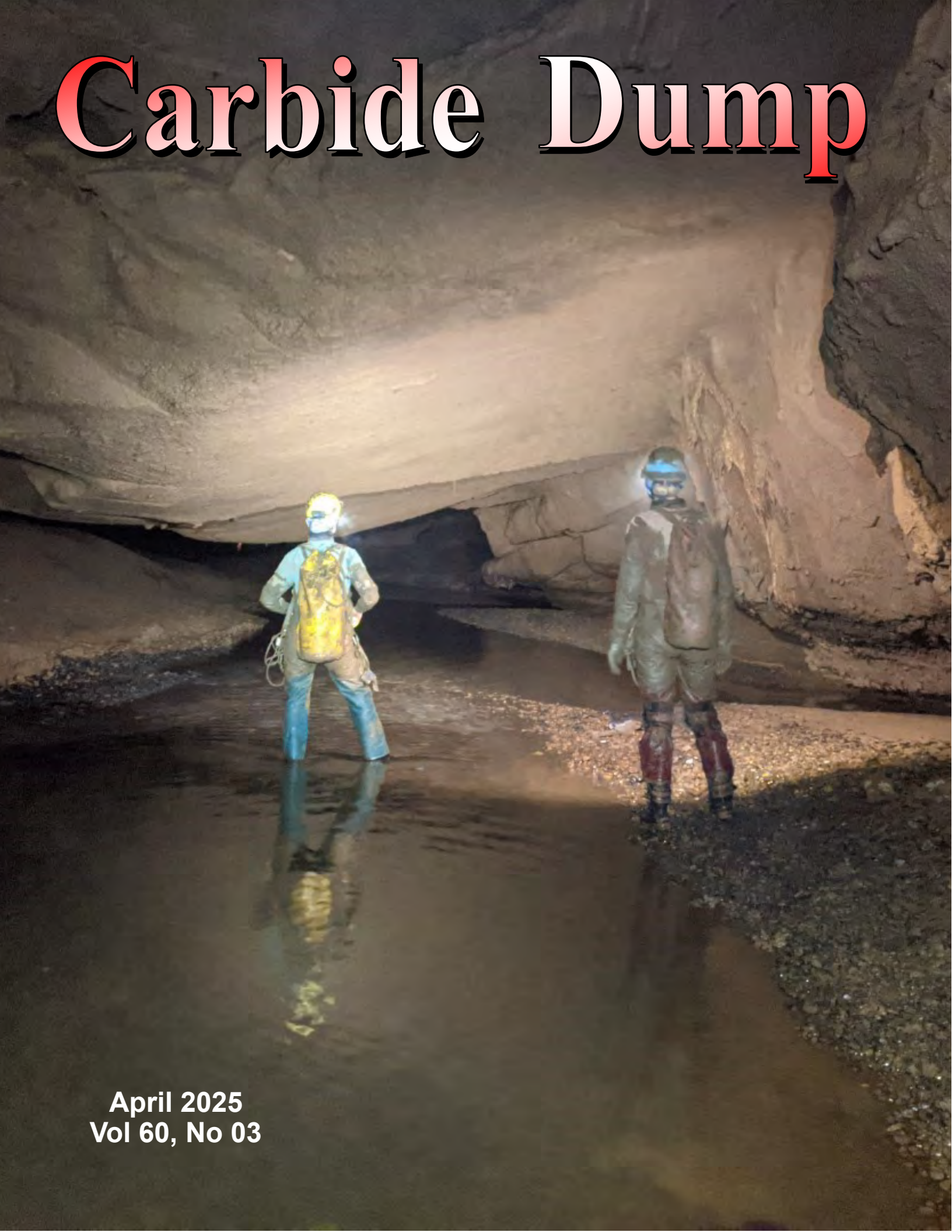


# Carbide Dump



April 2025  
Vol 60, No 03

The **Carbide Dump** is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a **Carbide Dump** subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30p at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke, VA 24012 (at least for Jan & Feb). See the Grotto meeting announcement in this issue.

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You can access the **Carbide Dump** electronically at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>

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**Cover:** Nikki Fox & Kelly McCarthy in Downstream Sweetwater (Maxwelton Cave, WV) on the way to the Electric Slide. May 1, 2021. Photo by Dave Socky.

# CAVERS CALENDAR

**April 12:** VAR Spring Project at Madison Saltpeper Cave, VA

**April 18:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke, VA.

**May 2-4:** SERA Cave Carnival, East Fork Stables Campground near Jamestown, TN. Hosted by East Tennessee Grotto. The adult registration price is now \$45. <http://sera2025.subworks.com>

**May 3:** Charlotte Lucas's memorial at Owl Cave, VA.

**May 5-8:** Level One Course NSS Vertical Training Commission is being planned for May at the Spruce Knob Mountain Center, WV. <https://caves.org/vtc/> Contact Kyle Mills [kmills@caves.org](mailto:kmills@caves.org) for more info.

**May 9-11:** Spring VAR, at Spruce Knob, WV, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto. See page 17 for more info.

**May 18:** Spring WVASS Meeting, at 10 am the WVACS Fieldstation near Frankfort. Contact Dave Riggs, Execu-

tive Director, at 304-685-7537 or [driggs@speleo.us](mailto:driggs@speleo.us) for more information.

**May 16:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

**May 23-27:** Speleofest 2025 (Ye Olde Speleofair), Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnieville, KY. Hosted by Louisville Grotto. Registration is open! See <https://www.louisvillegrotto.org/speleofest/>

**June 6-8:** Karst-O-Rama, at the Great Saltpeper Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon, KY. Hosted by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto. <https://karstorama.com>

**June 13-15:** Young Timer's Reunion (YTR), at the RASS Fieldhouse, Millboro, VA. Organized by the VPI Cave Club. RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/SFiueiN56J8hvTJA>

**June 20:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

**June 21 - 28:** NSS 2025 Convention, Cobleskill, NY. Pre-register before April

15 to take advantage of the early signup discount of only \$275. [See link](#)

**July-11-19:** NCRC Weeklong classes, Mountain Gateway Community College, Clifton Forge, VA. For more info, including prerequisites, visit: <https://caves.org/ncrc/courses/ncrc-course-descriptions/>

**July 20 - 27:** ICS 2025 in Brazil. See <https://speleo2025.org/>.

**Oct 6-10:** National Cave and Karst Management Symposium, Ely NV. Hosted by the Western Cave Conservancy. See: <https://ely2025.nckms.org/>

## Treasurer's Report 04/10/2025

Cave Bucks	\$ 112.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$5,892.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,151.76</b>



## BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The April 18, 2025 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at **Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke VA 24012**. Dinner or appetizers with socializing starts at 6:00 pm with the meeting starting around 6:30 pm. This is a new location for BRG. Click [here for direction from Jersey Lily's to Logan's Roadhouse](#).

The program will be a slide program on Nick and Dave Socky's *Adventures in Africa climbing Mt Kilimanjaro*.

### Grotto Trip

**New River Cave, VA**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 19, 2025. Meet at Hanging Rock **Orange Market at 8:30 am**.

**Leader:** Jeff Huffman & Susan Burr.

**Coordination:** Susan Burr 540-580-9409  
[pondladv97@gmail.com](mailto:pondladv97@gmail.com)

**Requirements:** Beginner horizontal cave trip.

**Limit:** No limit

### Description

This trip will be through the main trunk passage, down the China Slide, through the stream passage, and finally to the waterfall (We will not be going up the handline at the waterfall). And then, of course, back out.

**New River** is an extensive, interesting cave with some really nice large walking passage, but also a lot of challenging sections. Besides the easy part of the cave, there are crawls, stoop walks, tight spots, slippery spots, and exposure in a few areas. There is the 'China Slide' to the lower levels and the stream passage to slog through on the way to the waterfall. A handline assisted climb up the waterfall leads to a lot more cave, but to get to the majority of it, you must pass through a tight spot called the Tuxedo Junction. If your chest is thicker than 10 inches, you may not be able to get through. However, in the front section of the cave, there are many formations in some areas; unfortunately, vandalism has destroyed many of the more fragile speleothems. **New River is now owned by the NSS (Spring 2014)**. The cave is open to all responsible cavers. Please contact the Preserve Management Team via email at: [NewRiverPreserve@caves.org](mailto:NewRiverPreserve@caves.org)

**VAR Closed Cave List** can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at [blase@virginiacaves.org](mailto:blase@virginiacaves.org)

**Bat Cave Closures** for some caves. WV: closed September 1 to May 15. VA: closed October 15 to April 15.

**NSS Grotto IO Updates:** Updates to the NSS IO listing for the Blue Ridge Grotto have been successfully completed.



## Area Cave Closures

Please do not mistreat cave owners! Do not block their driveways, gates, or tear up their fields. Contact (phone or email) cave owners beforehand to ask permission for each trip, pick up around your parking area, and please carpool.

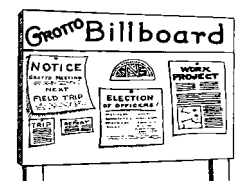
**BoarHole, WV.** Visitors must contact Carroll Bassett at the following:

[bmsrescue@frontiernet.net](mailto:bmsrescue@frontiernet.net) or  
304-646-4080

to arrange a cave trip (**Radio Entrance**) **at least 1 day in advance** to receive **permission**. Park across the street from Carroll's driveway Do NOT block owner's driveway or park on the Friars Hill Rd right of way. WVCC owns the **Cowan Entrance**; you must contact Carroll Bassett for access and parking instructions as well. Violators may be towed. Respect Landowners generosity!

**Friar's Hole, WV – ALL entrances on the Mothes' property are closed.** This includes Toothpick, Crookshank, Staircase, Saltpeter, North Stream Entrance and North Canyon Entrance.

**Norman Cave, Greenbrier Co, WV.** The WVCC (cave manager) has announced there has been an issue with parking at Norman Cave. It is advised not visit this cave entrance until this matter has been resolved. There are plenty of other Greenbrier caves that can be visited instead, so plan accordingly.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**BRG Meeting Minutes** – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.

**NSS Membership:** Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.



**BRG meetings.** It was decided that BRG will hold its monthly meetings at **Logan's Roadhouse in Roanoke, VA**. Marian McConnell worked with the Logan's management and has BRG booked for the third Friday of each month for 2025, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in their Garage Room.

**Roanoke Outdoors:** Marian McConnell worked with **Roanoke Outdoors** to update BRG and show cave info on their regional website. Thanks, Marian!

**T-Shirts:** There are 17 remaining T-shirts! \$12.00 each. Med. to XL, vari-

ous colors: red, gold, grey, green, light blue, etc. Contact Susan Burr [pondladv97@gmail.com](mailto:pondladv97@gmail.com) for more information.

**BRG Online Payments:** BRG can now accept payments through ZELLE, a 'free' cash app. Use the following email through your banks' ZELLE app: [blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com](mailto:blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com).

BRG will also continue to maintain the BRG PayPal account (which charges fees). Anyone who pays BRG through the PayPal account will be charged a \$1.00 convenience fee for the transaction. Use [blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com](mailto:blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com) for PayPal.

**NSS Vertical Training Commission May 5-8, 2025:** Save the Date! A VTC Level One Course is being planned for May at the Spruce Knob Mountain Center. The Spring VAR will start right after the course ends, so if you want to spend a week caving in one of the prettiest spots in WV, get in touch! <https://caves.org/vtc/> Contact Kyle Mills [kmills@caves.org](mailto:kmills@caves.org) for more info.

## Paxton Cave, VA

By *Susan Burr*

March 1, 2025

Participants: Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Kelly Perkins, Abby Arbeiter, Abbey Mays, and Tim (Abbey's friend)

This was a pick up trip Jeff organized for his birthday. We did the normal tourist route. There was a lot of water flowing into the cave. This caused a fairly deep pool where we normally climb down so we headed in the alternate way.

There were a few new things we noticed. In the "Barbie Room" there was a Mr. Potato Head. Of course the Barbies and other things had been rearranged from the last visit. Also, near the "Double D Crawl" there was a group of cool looking clay figures.

After doing the normal loop, we headed to the "Anthodite Gallery". That place is a little difficult to get into but is worth it. Next we headed to the "Historic Section" but only to see the formation at the beginning.

As we arrived at the pool near the entrance area we found 2 frogs. We took a bunch of pictures, but decided we could

not get them out safely so we left them.

I decided I wanted to see if we could climb out at the regular place without getting wet. I threw a big rock into the pool to use as a stepping stone. I did manage to climb out, but with all the water coming down, one of my boots got fairly wet as I was climbing up. Still not bad and the end of a great trip! I believe the others all came out that way as well.

## Rapps Cave, WV

By *Susan Burr*

March 22, 2025

Participants: Riley Stal-naker (leader/WVACS/Greenbrier Grotto caver), Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Brian Williams, Alex Thompson, Ben Hester, Erin Van Hon, Logan Van Hon, Bambi Marshall, Isaiah Hall, and Andrew Minarik (Greenbrier Grotto).

We had a fairly large group this month. Luckily the two gate locks were not difficult this time. We had several people who had never been to this cave before.

Immediately upon entering the cave we showed them the petroglyphs in the low ceiling. The entrance area is fairly wet & we found lots of salamanders. There were babies, juvenile & adults, including a Long-tailed salamander.

After exploring the entrance section and taking many pictures we headed into the cave. We stopped and explored around the section with lots of pretty formations. Next we headed further



The group taking a break in Rapps Cave.  
Photo by Brian Williams

in exploring different areas. On the way out we did the high scary ledge into what I feel is the best passage. This passage has some really cool geology and the "Uvula" formation. Of course on the way out, you have to cross the scary ledge once again.

We arrived back at the entrance area and started exploring the other direction. There are some nice formations and what Nick likes to call the "Turtle" formation, a chuck of whatever it is called. We also saw more salamanders.

Our last section we did had the neat looking ceiling and flooring in one area. Also, if you continued on stoop walking/crawling some, you get to another nice section of formations.

I forget the actual number of bats we saw, but I believe it was around 11. We were in the cave for approximately 3 hours 45 minutes. This is also the first time I have been that we made it to the field house without wandering around trying to find the route back. They had flagging tape along the path which was a great help!

Good fun trip with lots of stuff to see.



Paxton's Butterfly Formation.  
Photo by Susan Burr





## Butler Cave - Sand Canyon Snake Box Dig

By *Mark Minton*

With Mark Minton, Victor Bennett, Yvonne Droms, Mátyás Gyimesi, Dave Socky, and Gabriella Wong.

After a wonderful pancake breakfast at the very well attended 2025 BCCS Pancake Weekend, the six of us entered Butler Cave, VA just before 11 am on Saturday, March 15. Just outside of the SOFA entrance we encountered a freshly fallen block that was separating into extremely thin slabs. We headed for the Snake Box Dig, downstream at the first hard bend in Sand Canyon, arriving at the dig site shortly thereafter.

Much had changed since Yvonne and I were there last. There had been at least two more dig trips, and the passage had progressed considerably. The dig face was now at the beginning of a low, wide, 'pancake' room where the ceiling had risen a couple of inches higher, and a small, dry water course had developed in the floor (apparently flowing into the dig). There were even a few small formations adorning the left wall. This was encouraging except for the fact that we could see no obvious exit from the room. The ceiling came back down to within an inch or two of the floor around the entire perimeter, and it was not obvious where to go. There was bet-

ter airflow than I have noticed in the past, in spite of it being a relatively neutral-temperature day.

We opted to follow the water course, which headed slightly to the right of

sled along, and one person pulling and emptying sleds. Where the spoils enter Sand Canyon there used to be a vertical wall of fill, but it has now subsided, leaving behind a steep ramp.

Working the front was quite satisfying, as the compacted dirt could be pried up in large slabs, placed in trays cut from a water jug, and passed back for dumping into the sled. There were few if any cobbles in the upper foot or so of sediment, although we did encounter some farther down, a few of which were quite large.

We rotated through the various positions until about 3 pm (with a break for lunch). At that point, Gaby, Mátyás, and Victor left for a tour of the Crystal Gallery, Moon Room, and Hanging Dong. Dave, Yvonne, and I continued digging a while longer. Our improvements (removing humps and smoothing corners)

made it possible for a single person to pull the sled out without any intermediate help. We worked until we were worn out, around 5 pm. We estimate that we advanced the front by about 11 feet. We still can't tell what happens at the back of the pancake room, but the air is enticing. The dig goes on.



Dave, Mark, Mátyás, Victor, and Gaby at the beginning of the dig (Yvonne Droms)

straight ahead toward one of the higher gaps at the back of the room. (What had previously appeared to be a junction at this spot was really just subtle variations in the mildly undulating ceiling and floor of the pancake room.) We made good use of everyone, with a couple of people at the front, a few people along the route making improvements and helping the



Yvonne and Dave emerging from the dig with the sled at the end of the day (Mark Minton)



The pancake room and dry water course (Yvonne Droms)



## Warm Springs Project - Jenga Cave Dig

By *Dave Socky*

### March 26, 2025

On Wednesday, March 26, 2025, Jason Sargent, Dave Socky, Bill Koerschner, Jim Schurman, and Keith Sweeney met in the Falling Spring Cove, Warm Springs Valley, Alleghany County, Virginia. Their mission was to continue the new dig near Hobbit Hole. The time was 10:30am. The Geology crew had already left to replace temperature loggers at several locations, including Dunn's Cave. In the late afternoon, the geology crew showed up at the dig and helped move rocks late in the afternoon.

Everyone made their way to the new dig, just below Fault Cave dig (which is just below the Hobbit Hole dig). It was a sunny, but cold and windy day. It was better to be in the cave digging than outside in the wind. Because of the wind, the air movement in the cave would al-



**Rick Lambert in Jenga Cave.**  
Photo by Jason Sargent

ternate between blowing out or being pushed in. When it was blowing out, the air was warm and moist.

Much progress had been made since the start of the dig on March 12, 2025. The dig is long enough to be considered a cave now. It is about 25 to 30 feet long and slopes downward at an angle of about 20 degrees. When everyone ar-

rived, the dig face was a long narrow slot about five inches wide.

One person worked at the dig face with a helper right behind. Then another at the bottom of the entrance and a bucket dumper at the surface made up the rest of the actual digging crew. Work tasks were rotated between everyone on a regular basis.

About a dozen straws were employed in order to make progress down through the rock. A small bucket was used to remove spoils, but the larger rocks were just rolled up to the entrance by hand. Some of the rocks were large enough that Jason was directly recruited since he was the youngest among us and had a strong back!

By mid-afternoon a lot of progress had been made. But the back wall and left was made up of large blocks that had been fractured and were loose and wobbly. But try as they might, the rocks could not be moved. They were wedged in like Jenga blocks, like a 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. The group spent an hour or so trying to get them loose, but they were pinned securely in place. They finally used a straw on the bedrock block below the puzzle and after cleaning out the debris, were finally able to take the puzzle apart. Again, Jason's back was a great asset for getting the larger blocks out of the cave.

By the end of the day the group had dug down about four to five feet. The dig face was mucked out to the point where there was a small triangular opening that was blowing a gale force of warm moist air! By laying down face first, down slope, it was possible to get your head into the small opening and see a 2-foot-wide crawlway heading off into darkness. It was a horizontal crawl with a dirt and cobble floor. It was hard to see how big it really was, but it would be easy to dig if necessary.

The group finished the day off at 6:30pm with high hopes that they would break



**Bill Koerschner making the dig face larger.**  
Photo by Dave Socky

into real cave on the next dig trip.

### March 29, 2025

On Saturday, March 29, 2025, Dave Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Keith Sweeney met in the Falling Spring Cove, Warm Springs Valley, Alleghany County, Virginia. Their mission was to

*(Continued on page 23)*



**The dig face on 4/2. Photo by Jason Sargent**



*(Jenga Cave continued from page 22)*

continue the new dig near Hobbit Hole. The time was 10:30am.

We decided that the name for the dig near Hobbit Hole would be Jenga Cave. This name was chosen because of the big flat rock that was loose but was wedged into place in the ceiling. Bill spent 40 minutes trying to get it loose – which he eventually did. And, of course, it was named for all the blocks that were wedged in place, like locked Jenga Blocks, on Wednesday that were finally removed.

The day started out with Bill at the dig face, Dave passing buckets from the dig face to the bottom of the 6-foot entrance drop, and Keith pulling them up and dumping them on the spoils pile outside. After 25 buckets of dirt and rock, Bill and Dave switched places.

Progress was made. The crew could now look into the lead, but it was really awkward getting in, so the floor was lowered even more. By midafternoon, Keith's back was hurting too much so he took off. Bill and Dave continued to dig for another few hours.

Bill and Dave kept at it until about 6 pm. They hauled 60 buckets of dirt and rock out without using a single straw. Once the floor was lowered enough, they were able to crawl in nearly 10 feet where there was a small 15-inch-high alcove on the right. But the dirt came to within inches of the ceiling at the far end of the alcove. It looked like the dig should continue at the left side of the alcove. It wasn't really obvious, but the air – throughout the warm day, the cave sucked a good amount of air.

It will take more digging to continue. The floor is still just dirt and cobble, so digging should be easy. They finished the day by using a 4-inch straw on an offending loose rock that was 'in the way' just below the entrance. This was also when Bill spent so much time on the Jenga rock in the ceiling while Dave cleaned up and packed tools.

Even though the dig didn't lead to big walking passage, it was still a good day – and we know it goes someplace because of the air. Expect more digging this coming Wednesday.

### April 2, 2025

On Wednesday, April 2, 2025, David Socky, Terry McClanathan, Jason Sargent, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman continued work on the Jenga Cave dig. Before the dig, though, Terry and Dave went into Rushing Waters Cave and successfully changed out the air and water temperature loggers at the start of the first near siphon.

Jason did most of the digging, but Dave had a go at the dig face for an hour or so.

It was more or less a mission to lower the floor to make digging further in easier. The air temperature outside was about 50 degrees F, but no wind. The cave was blowing a LOT of warm air. Because there was no wind outside, the air flow was consistently blowing out all day. And strong!

They found the air was coming out of a small constriction going straight ahead along the left wall. It looked like it might get a little larger past the constriction.

They also discovered a crack up higher on the left wall just before the constriction that was also blowing a lot of air. They could look in and see that it went to the same place that the crawl constriction went. They conjectured that it might be easier to straws on the left wall/ceiling to continue rather than down at the crawl constriction.

The digging continued until about 4:30pm. With the amount of warm moist air blowing out, this dig is really intriguing. The possibility of a back door into Warm River induces a lot of enthusiasm. To be continued in a week.



Some of the dig team on April 2. L-R: Terry McClanathan, Dave Socky, Keith Sweeney, and Jim Schurman. Photo by Jason Sargent. Rick Lambert is in the cave.

## Membership

### Welcome Back!

Keith and Lisa Goggin

PO Box 98, Catawba, VA 24070

K: [kegoggin@gmail.com](mailto:kegoggin@gmail.com) c/985-373-1449

L: [lrgo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lrgo@sbcglobal.net) c/985-630-2658



## Two Threats to Dixie Caverns

By *Mary Sue Socky*

Update on widening of I-81 and how it will impact **Dixie Caverns and New Dixie Cave, VA**. I-81 widening will take place in center of roadway; however, side work will come VERY close to part of New Dixie Cave. New Dixie needs a resurvey ASAP! The concrete culvert (along path to New Dixie) will be modified, since **estimated runoff from I-81 will increase 150%**

**Another Threat to Dixie Caverns!** Adjacent property owner, Cavern, LLC has petitioned Roanoke County to rezone his property so he can build a 4-story hotel overlooking the Dixie property.

Dixie Caverns & Campground owners want their property protected from over-development, light pollution, and excessive storm water discharge.

- 4/1/2025, 7:00 pm - Roanoke County Planning Commission open meeting on this rezoning and development. Several people sent in letters against the proposed project.
- Roanoke County Planning Commission voted YES to proceed with rezoning.

The Planning Commission has an info 'Packet' for reference. To see the Dixie Caverns info packet click on the [website link](#). Then click on 'most recent packet'. For direct access to the PDF click [this link](#) (the PDF is big - 233 MB!)

A hotel will likely be built next to the Dixie Caverns property. It is important to ensure:

- Dixie Caverns property will be protected from increased stormwater runoff from nearby developments.
- Roanoke County needs to redesign a better culvert along Dixie Caverns Creek to prevent area flooding
- Dixie Caverns residents' viewshed and rights to privacy must be protected.
- Hotel developers and contractors must use greenspace and will install Dark Sky Friendly Lighting on the hotel property. Hotel lights must be directed away from the Campground.
- Hotel developers & contractors must be compliant with the new laws concerning development in karst areas.

- no "grandfathering in" of existing inadequate stormwater systems for new development.

**Virginia Stormwater Management Handbook, Version 1.1**, effective July 1, 2024. **Appendix E: Site Assessment and Design Guidelines for Stormwater Management in Karst**, discusses building in karst (limestone) areas specifically. You can find it at [this link](#).

We will keep you posted on how this development will proceed. The next open meeting of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors will be held on **4/22/2025 at 6:00 pm**. They will be having the final vote on the rezoning of the Cavern, LLC property and planned hotel. Roanoke County residents and property holders are welcome to comment via email or speak at the meeting.

Comments can be submitted using the form found at [this link](#). Follow all directions.

Get your comments in ASAP!



## Conservation Trip to Dixie Caverns

By *Bambi Marshall*

February 22, 2025

We all started our trip gathering together outdoors by the Old Cabin. Each of us grabbed different conservation items that needed to be carried inside. We also made note of the big browns and tri-colored bats as we entered the caverns.

Once inside, we all sat our supplies down in the Cathedral Room where the natural entrance was. Before carrying on we walked around that big room and admired the baby salamanders.

We then walked through the rest of the cave, and everything was pointed out to what we all were going to do. A lot of work was to be had. Everyone split up. Rolland recruited Nick and I for the Wedding Bell formation. Nick also

tackled the moss on the rock around the light fixture pointing to the Wedding Bell.

Between the three of us I think we tackled her head on! It was definitely a group effort, and I had a blast! The pizza was a great bonus. Everything that was done was awesome! Dixie Caverns really needed this trip. Conservation trips are vital.

*Into the Cave I go to be  
Mystified, satisfied, there is a peace  
There is a love, you can  
Get lost inside.  
Into the Cave I must go.*

*Bambi*



## Virginia Cave Week! June 1-7, 2025

On or about the last week on March, Steve Ahn (NSS 65662) of the Virginia Cave Board contacted Mary Sue Socky on behalf of the Blue Ridge Grotto. He wanted to know if BRG would be interested in hosting some kind of cave/caving event for Virginia Cave Week. Cave week is scheduled for June 1 - 7, 2025.

BRG has not hosted a Virginia Cave Week event for several years. The last VA Cave Week event was at Center In the Square, Roanoke VA. Some people expressed interest with helping. Dates would be Sunday June 1, or Saturday, June 7. Jenna Fidler suggested something could be held at Dixie Caverns. BRG has time to think of sites, volunteers, etc.

Are you interested? What kind of activity would you suggest? Stay tuned!





# Grotto Trip Log

**2/1/2025: Boarhole Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Greg Spinger, Lucy Ogle, and Abby Doench. Surveyed in the old K survey section. Lots of dome pits and dripping water. Lots of breakdown. We stayed up high and avoided some of the more sketchy climbs. The survey was pretty slow because this was Abby's first cave trip and we were using Brics instead of DistoX2s. We got around 25 stations and surveyed 394 feet in 8 hours.

**2/8: McClung Cave, WV.** Participants included David Socky, Daniel Wilson, Alex Corrigan, and Spencer Adams. The goal was to go to Venti Muddy and survey the stream passage under the main trunk. It had rained a bunch and everything was flooding. As a matter of fact, Maxwellton, Lightner, and Friars Hole trips were all aborted because of high water. It was raining when we entered McClung historic entrance at 10:30am. There was water running into the sinkhole entrance. I had never seen so much water in McClung Cave. All the in-feeders were pumping. At the climbdown after the first canyon section, we did not go the usual route along the ledge because we would have been soaked from the waterfall. We climbed down into the canyon before the ledge. It took us four hours to get to the start of our survey. This was Spencer's first time doing vertical in a cave, but he did ok. I got turned around at NAN4 and ended up going through the crawlway again and heading back out instead of into the cave. Yikes. I confirmed my mistake with a disto and the map. That was embarrassing! We soon found NAN21 and the way into the stream. We surveyed upstream toward the way we came in. It was a wet and noisy survey. 26 shots and it seemed we averaged 20 feet per shot. At station 26 Daniel crawled in the stream only to find it got too tight. We finished the survey, happy to have finished off the lead!

We got out at 10:50pm for a good 12 hour trip with 649 feet surveyed.

**2-22: Dixie Caverns Cleanup** -Bambi Marshall had a great time in Dixie Caverns! See her article on p. 24 and Susan's article in the March Dump. In addition, Nikki Fox published Susan Burr's Dixie Caverns report in the Region Record.

**2-24: Dixie Caverns, VA.** Mary Sue Socky returned to Dixie Caverns to return brooms & apply a dusting of baking soda on the cleaned horizontal cave surfaces in the hope that a pH change will hinder plant growth from returning.

**March 2025:** Wes & Bryce Drake, and Layla Wright (Marlena's daughter) – Wes lost a drone near Meadow Creek Falls, off Rt. 42 near Newcastle, VA. Wes reported he discovered a 150 yard crack in the rock behind the falls. This crack goes back to a "Small room behind the curtain." Water has made potholes in the bedrock, active stream, water, and multiple drops (to lower levels?).

**3-1: Paxton Cave, VA.** Pickup trip for Jeff Huffman's Birthday. See article on p. 20

**3/12: Warm Springs Project, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Rick Lambert, Keith Sweeney, and Jim Schurman. This was a day to recover and replace temperature loggers in numerous caves and then to dig on Jenga Cave. The caves we visited were Wave Function, Triplet Cave, Wares Cave, Hoover Cave, Hoover Pit, Good Reception Cave, Glass Menagerie, Rushing Waters Cave, and finally Jenga Cave. This was the first time we worked on this dig. Lots of air. See articles on Jenga on page 22-23.

**3-15: Nick Schmalenberger** - Did some ridge walking above Greyledge Road with Martin DiLeggi, plus Zach, Eve, and the dog Alpine from the James River Grotto. They also visited **Shadow Cave**.

**3/15: Butler Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Mark Minton,

Yvonne Droms, Mátyás Gyimesi, Gabriella Wong (Gaby), and Victor Bennett. See the article by Mark Minton on page 21.

**3/26: Jenga Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, Keith Sweeney, Jim Schurman, Jason Sargent, Rick Lambert, Marissa Loftus, Wayne Perkins, plus one other. See article p 22-23.

**3/29: Jenga Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Bill Koerschner, and Keith Sweeney. See article on page 22-23.

**4/2: Rushing Waters Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Terry McClanahan, Jason Sargent, and Keith Sweeney. Terry and I were the only ones to go in. We were to try and get to and replace the air and water temperature loggers at the start of the first near sump. I went in first. When I got past the ladder I was looking to my right, following the sloping mud. I didn't realize it, but I'd headed downstream where the passage goes into little crawls and breakdown fills. I thought that the way on had filled up from the flooding and we would have to do a short crawl to get the stream. I squeezed around until Terry said: "uh, the big trunk passage is this way, to the left". Oh sh\*t - how embarrassing! We trudged down the very muddy and slippery passage and soon got to the first near sump. It was open by about a foot. I successfully changed out both loggers and replaced the wire for the water logger. We were in the cave for about 20 minutes.

**4/2: Jenga Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Terry McClanahan, Jason Sargent, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman. See article on p 22-23.

**4/9: Jenga Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Jason Sargent, Keith Sweeney, Rick Lambert, and Jim Schurman. See article on p 22-23.



# Summer Karst Studies

Friendly reminder: We are about one month away from the Summer 2025 Karst Field Studies registration deadline. Reserve your spot in the course now! □

Course can be taken as non-credit workshop or for CEU, undergraduate, or graduate academic credit. Information for each process can be found on the Karst Field Studies website ([www.karstfieldstudies.com](http://www.karstfieldstudies.com)).

This summer we will be offering three classes:

- Karst Hydrogeology, June 2-6
- Cave Survey & Cartography, June 8-13
- Karst Geology of Mammoth Cave & Surrounding Area, July 13-18

New this year, each course will have a separate registration link, each provided on the course's page on our website. You may also access the registration links below.

**Karst Hydrogeology:** [Link](#)

**Cave Survey & Cartography:** [Link](#)

**Karst Geology of the Mammoth Cave System & Surrounding Area:** [Link](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Leslie North at [leslie.north@wku.edu](mailto:leslie.north@wku.edu).

Stay up to date on all the latest KFS news and announcements by following us on social media through:

Instagram @karstfieldstudies

Twitter @KFSWKU

Facebook @WKUKarstfieldstudies.

Please help us spread the word about the program by forwarding this message and sharing our posts with your colleagues, grotto members, staff, students, friends, and any other parties you feel may be interested in the program courses!

We hope to see you this summer!

**Leslie A. North, Ph.D.** (she/her/hers)  
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## VAR Giveaway

1/31/2025 Tally Sepiol (FaceBook)

We're so excited to announce that the [Out of Bounds Grotto](#) has partnered with Karst Sports to donate an estimated 100 Petzl Boreo helmets to any Grotto that attends VAR!

How does this work?

When you sign in at VAR we will track your Grotto in attendance. On Saturday night, we will divide up the inventory to each grotto represented. You will be able to pick up your helmets either Saturday night or Sunday morning. Each grotto may only have 1 representative and individuals may not collect inventory for more than 1 grotto. This is not limited to grottos in the VAR region!

Make sure you register for VAR, we cannot wait to see you in May!

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-spring-var>

For more information about the event, check out

<https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var>



**Rick Lambert and Keith Sweeney**  
at the entrance to Jenga Cave  
on April 9, 2025.  
Photo by Dave Socky





### Basic Info

- **Dates:** Friday, May 9, 2025 - Sunday, May 11, 2025
- **Location:** Spruce Knob Mountain Center, [18 Woodlands Way, Circleville, WV 26804](#)
- **Pre-Registration:** \$50 (includes dinner). Individuals under 18: \$20.
- **Contact:** Email Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG) at [outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com](mailto:outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com)
- **Proceeds:** Proceeds support the Virginia Region (VAR), Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG), Germany Valley Karst Survey, Vertical Training Section of the National Speleological Society (NSS), and Central Appalachian Cave Rescue Team.

### Camping and Accommodations

- **Camping:** Ample space available with bathhouses (toilets & showers).
- **Dorms:** 40 beds per dorm. Additional \$30 per night.
- **Yurts:** Guest yurts available (sleep 4). Additional \$70 per night.
- **Pets:** Not permitted on-site.
- **Fire Policy:** Fires allowed only in designated fire rings with local wood.
- **To Reserve Dorms or Yurts:** Contact OBG at [outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com](mailto:outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com).

### Caving Opportunities

### Vertical Caves:

- Shoveleater Cave: Technical skills required. Includes rebelay, J-hangs, traverses, and drops up to 215 ft.
- Ruddle: Vertical with tight spaces
- Thompson Pit: Vertical
- Con Cave: Vertical
- Harper's Pit: Vertical
- Sites: Vertical
- Sites Attic: Vertical

### Horizontal Caves:

- Hamilton Cave
- New Trout Cave
- Kees Cave (optional easy vertical)
- Stillhouse Cave
- Sinks of Gandy
- High Meadow Cave
- Cave Rat Cave

### Other Activities

**Meteor Shower:** Eta Aquariids – Perfect viewing location at the campsite.

### Hiking:

- **Whispering Spruce Trail:** Easy, ½ mile, stunning sunset views
- **Seneca Creek Trail:** 5.5 miles, waterfalls, natural springs, and bridges (expect wet feet)
- **Huckleberry Trail:** 11 miles, high meadows and backcountry vistas
- **Piper Apache Plane Crash Site:** 10 miles, easy hike on old logging trail
- **Seneca Rocks:** Hiking (1.5-mile ascent) & rock climbing (400+ routes)

### Event Schedule

#### Friday, May 9, 2025

- Registration Opens: 2:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Trip Sign-Ups: 8:00 PM
- Campfire: After Dark

#### Saturday, May 10, 2025

- Guided and Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Dinner: 6:00 PM
- Evening Program: 7:30 PM. Presentation by Kyle Mills: *"Three Carabini-ners and a Whole Lot of Guts: Early Vertical Exploration in Pendleton County"*

#### Meteor Shower Viewing

#### Sunday, May 11, 2025

- VAR Business Meeting: 9:00 AM
- Site Closes: 12:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips Continue

### Additional Information

- **Vendors:** To Be Announced.
- **Waivers:** Must be signed on the OBG website.
- **Stay Updated:** Follow OBG or VAR on Facebook for the latest updates.

Registration: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-spring-var>

Info: <https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var>

