

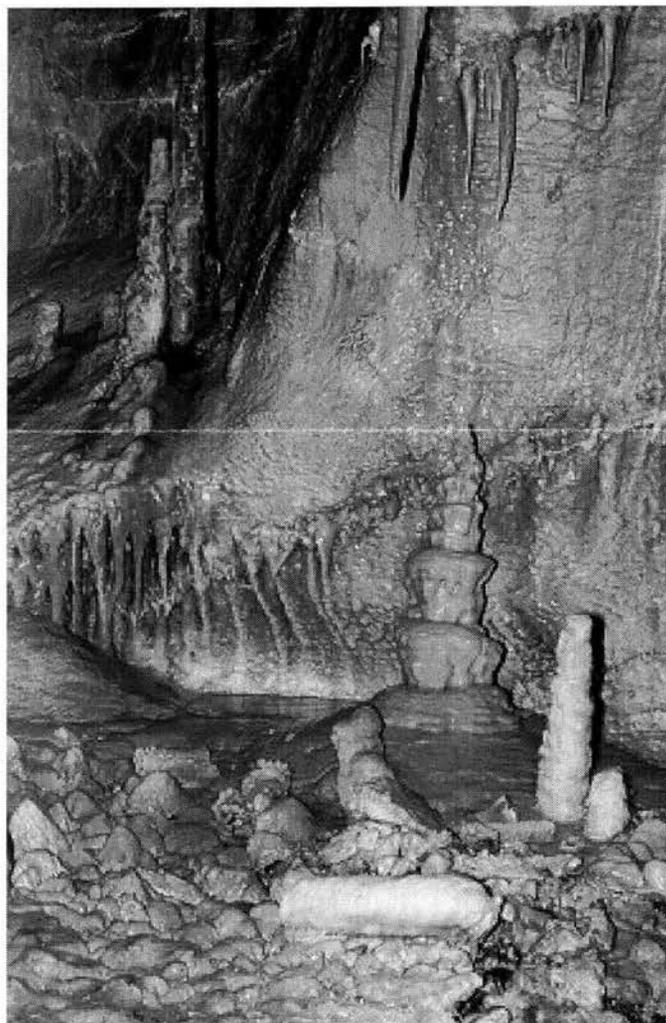


# *Cascade Caver*

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

January/February 1997, Volume 36 No. 1 & 2

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# Cascade Caver

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All material to be published, subscription requests, renewals, address changes, and exchange publications should be sent to the Grotto address.

## GROTTO MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Cascade Grotto is \$15.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is free to regular members. Membership for each additional family member is \$2.00 per year. Subscription to the *Cascade Caver* is \$15.00 per year.

## GROTTO ADDRESS

Cascade Grotto; P.O. Box 75663; Seattle, WA 98125-0663. This post office box should be used for both the grotto and for the *Cascade Caver*.

## GROTTO OFFICERS

Chairman	Mark Sherman	(206) 524-8780
Vice Chairman	Mike Fraley	(206) 934-7890
Sec/Treasurer	Lane Holdcroft	(206) 783-6534

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## MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the University of Washington, Room 119, in Johnson Hall. Please see the map on the back cover of this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Please notify Jim Harp at (206) 745-1010 of any upcoming trips.

Feb 21	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
Mar 21	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
April 18	Grotto Meeting 7:00 p.m.
May 23-25	NCA Convention hosted by the Gem State Grotto at the Lincoln County fairgrounds in Shoshone, Idaho. Jennifer Dorman (208)-331-0279
June 15	Big Four Ice Caves. Larry Mc Tigue (206) 850-8614
Aug 15-18	Eagle Cap Wilderness area. Searching the limestone in the Wallowa Mountains of Oregon for virgin caves. Jerry Thompson (360) 653-7390
October 7-10	1997 Karst and Cave Management Symposium Highlighting Forest Karst Ecosystems - Bellingham, WA Rob Stitt (206) 283-2283 Email: rstitt@halcyon.com

**COVER:** This photo was taken in Jewel Cave, South Dakota by Mark Sherman. These formations are located in the Never Never Spring area of Jewel which is noted for it's bottle brush formations.

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## New Officers For 1997

The newly elected officers for 1997 were announced at the January 17th grotto meeting.

They are:

Chairman: Mark Sherman

Vice Chairman: Mike Fraley

Treasurer: Lane Holdcroft

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## 1997 Karst and Management Symposium

### 13th National Cave Management Symposium

The 1997 Karst and Cave Management Symposium (13th National Cave Management Symposium) will be held in Bellingham, October 7-10, 1997, at the Best Western Lakeway Inn.

The Bellingham location provides a unique opportunity to add an international flavor to the National Cave Management Symposium. Both United States and Canadian individuals and agencies are actively involved in the Planning Committee, and we are encouraging international participation. The primary theme for this Symposium will be "Management of Karst Resources and Caves in Temperate Coastal Rain Forests." The rain forest ecosystem is not limited by international boundaries, and we do not want to limit the Symposium by any artificial constraints. The primary impacts on karst resources in this region result from timber harvesting, with associated road construction. Other pressures include recreational caving and commercial caving tours. In this Symposium, we hope to review past activities and their impacts and look ahead to different management techniques based on increased knowledge of the fragile nature of these resources.

Field trips are being arranged to provide participants with an opportunity to see first-hand some of the karst resources of the Pacific NW. These will include trips to a region of temperate coastal rain forest karst near the northern end of

Vancouver Island and to a karst area in the Chilliwack Valley on the mainland of British Columbia.

If you are interested in helping with the Symposium or would like further information contact Rob Stitt at (206) 283-2283, e-mail [stitt@wingedseed.com](mailto:stitt@wingedseed.com), or Paul Griffiths at (250) 923-1311, e-mail [pgriff@island.net](mailto:pgriff@island.net).

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## 1999 NSS Convention Announcement

By David W. Kesner

Taken from the Cavers Digest #5393

On November 2, 1996 the NSS Board of Governors unanimously voted to accept the Gem State Grotto's bid to host the 1999 NSS Convention. It will be held the week of July 12-16, 1999 at the Twin Falls County Fairgrounds in Filer, Idaho, USA. The closest major cities are Twin Falls, Idaho (eight miles to the north); Boise, Idaho (120 miles to the northwest); and Salt Lake City, Utah (230 miles to the southeast).

The Fairgrounds is an 88 site with buildings and large grassy areas for camping (you will be able to drive and park next to your camp). Motels are cheap and close with the average rate of \$40.00 a night (range \$26.00-\$250.00). All of the sessions will be held either at the Fairgrounds or at the Filer High School (a few thousand feet away from the Fairgrounds). The only bussing will be for the Photo Salon unless an Expo Building at the Fairgrounds is completed in time.

Caving will be in Lava Tubes and just 1/2 to two hours away. The farthest distance will be to Craters of the Moon National Monument which is 85 miles to the northeast. These will be no ordinary boring Lava Tubes, but highly decorated (both primary and secondary speleothems) and extensive (multiple level, tubes in a tube, and several over a mile in length). All but one of the caves is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Because of the delicate nature and pristine environment of these caves the vast majority of trips will be accompanied by a Resource Monitor. There will be a few open caves for those spur of the moment trips.

We would like this to be the best Convention ever held, but we can't achieve this goal without knowing what everyone feels makes a good Convention. Please write or email with ANY and ALL suggestions you may have. If there was something at a past Convention that you especially liked or disliked speak up. We know we can't please everyone all the time, but we will take the time to listen to everyone's suggestions.

It is still early, but if anyone is interested in helping plan and/or pull off this Convention feel free to contact us by one of the means below.

Thanks for the time and looking forward to seeing everyone in Idaho in 99,

David W. Kesner, NSS #28258  
Chair, 1999 NSS Convention  
12567 West DeMeyer Street  
Boise, Idaho 83713-1409  
drdave@micron.net

1999 NSS Convention  
PO Box 1334  
Boise, Idaho 83701

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## 1997 Regional

The Gem State Grotto will be hosting the 1997 Northwest Caving Association's Regional Meeting. It will be held over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-26, in Shoshone, Idaho at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds. I will be sending a registration form to each of the northwest grottos in the next couple months. If anyone would like to request information early or has any questions, you may contact me.

Jennifer Dorman  
NCA Regional Registration Chair  
Secretary Gem State Grotto  
1999 NSS Registration Chair  
2215 N. Raymand  
Boise, Idaho, 83704  
208-331-0279 (evenings)  
IdahoCaver@aol.com

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## Newton Trip-August 24th

by Bob Roel

Steve Hoefel, Wendel Pound, Scott Davis, Simon McClellan, John Wade, Bob Roel

"What am I doing here?" That was the question I was asking myself in the middle of this hot August afternoon as I was standing a short way up the trail to Cave Ridge. Burdened with a heavy pack which was weighted down with camping and caving gear, I was looking upward and contemplating if I really wanted to follow through with this. The question I had asked myself was one that I would repeat several times over the course of the next twenty-four hours.

It had all started the year before, when I'd made a solo hike up the ridge to reconnoiter the entrances to some of the caves I'd heard about. I was particularly interested in Newton Cave, which I was able to locate on this initial trip. I'd even dropped down into the entrance room, but being by myself I realized discretion was the better part of valor, so I retreated back out of the cave. That experience did not in any way alleviate my curiosity, and I desired very much to see what lay beyond the entrance room. That's why I was excited when I saw in the Cascade Grotto newsletter that, on August 24th of this year, there was an expedition forming up with the intention of pushing Newton Cave's known depth limits. Even though that goal was a little beyond my particular interest, skill, or endurance level, I still reasoned that it would be a great opportunity to see, at least some of, Washington State's deepest, and greatest karst system.

After contacting the guys in the Cascade Grotto, I arranged to meet Steve Hoefel and Wendel Pound up on Cave Ridge on Friday, August 23rd. Simon McClellan and John Wade would go ahead of us and rig the first two pitches in the cave. They would meet us somewhere up on the ridge Friday night. Scott Davis would join us the next morning.

I had to break out and dust off my old backpack that I hadn't used since I was a Boy Scout, twenty-five years before, but by the designated Friday I was packed and ready to go. After dropping the wife and kids off at my Brother-in-law's house in Wenatchee, I made it up to the Alpental parking

area and was on the trail by 1:40 PM. After a few minutes of toiling under the hot afternoon sun, and looking upwards, I could tell it was going to be a long journey. In my enthusiasm, I'd forgotten just how far up and steep this sucker really is. Sometimes I'd take ten or fifteen steps then rest five or ten minutes. After three hours of this, I finally emerged out of the trees and into the alpine meadow at the bottom of the hanging valley. I had been hoping that there would be some water in the creek bottom of the valley, but it was bone dry. I continued up the valley to the saddle between Snoqualmie Peak and Cave Ridge where I dropped my pack, and set out to re-reconnoiter the area.

I quickly re-located Newton Cave, and the ponds in the Valley, east of Cave Ridge. I was hoping to find John and Simon, but there was no sign of them anywhere. I then gathered my water bottles and filter pump and dropped down to the ponds to quench my thirst and replenish my water supply. I then set myself up on a flat grassy area which was strategically located in a place where I could watch the approach coming up the valley. I then commenced to gorge myself on blueberries until dark when I started a campfire and made dinner.

I was already thinking that maybe this was a canceled trip, when sometime after 9:00 PM, I spotted what appeared to be flashlights shining in the dark forest area, down near the meadow at the bottom of the hanging valley from which I'd come earlier. At first I thought I was hallucinating, but after a while I could tell that whoever was using those lights was definitely coming my way. I signaled them with my flashlight, and in a short time, I was introducing myself to Steve and Wendel. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but they explained that there's an easier trail to our destination, than the one we had come up. They had inadvertently missed it, and instead came up, like me, through the Hanging Valley. Of course, their misfortune turned into a very fortunate event for me, as I would have otherwise been sitting out there in the dark, wondering if anyone else was going to show up.

After repacking my things, we continued by moonlight over Cave Ridge to see if we could locate John and Simon. After making a detour to obtain water, we found them, encamped on the flat

next to Lookout Cave. We talked for a while, then set up, and went to bed. I hadn't bothered to bring a tent since the weather was so hot. It was a bright, clear, moonlit, and bug free night.

The next morning, I woke up early and went to look at the spectacular view from our campsite. Seeing Snoqualmie Pass below us, with the jagged peaks of the Cascades surrounding us, and Mt. Rainier in the distance, I almost forgot about the toil I had endured the day before in order to get here. After a while, everyone was up, and short time after that, Scott arrived.

In our morning discussion, we realized that because of circumstances, it was going to be unrealistic to achieve the goal of a new depth record on this trip. Nonetheless, as some of us had never really seen the cave, we still decided to make a go of it, and see what we could come up with. Scott had the most experience in this cave, so it naturally fell on him to explain some of the peculiarities that we would be facing. I must admit that his descriptions of Colin's and Lightning crawls, had my hair on my neck crawling.

Shortly after 11:00 AM, we dropped into the entrance room and the first thing I noticed was how the vapor from my breath obscured my vision in the cold, moist air. We continued downward through dripping passages, over several drop-offs, and under low lying passages until we came to the first major pitch, which had been rigged the day before by Simon and John. From where the rope was tied off, it angled down a few feet to where it was hooked up to a carabiner which was hanging from webbing attached to the ceiling. This in turn let the rope hang directly straight down into the pit. Simon explained how to hook up your descender and walk down to the carabiner. After arriving at the carabiner it was necessary to unhook it and rehook it above your descender, then continue down to the bottom of the pitch. When I arrived at the point passed the carabiner and peered down into the pit, I could see those who had gone before me, waiting down there. I'd guess that the pit was 40' or 50' deep and maybe 20' in diameter. I won't hesitate to say, that it's quite a thrill to descend down a shaft in a cave like this, and this was exactly the kind of caving I'd come here to experience.

At the bottom of the pit we continued on down deeper through narrow crawling passages until we came to the second pitch, which had also been rigged by John and Simon the day before. This one was a bit shorter than the previous one and looked to be only about 15' or 20' deep.

After descending pit #2 we continued ever deeper with Steve leading the way. Quite a ways further, at the end of a narrow passage Steve came to a halt, saying that he was at the edge of the third pitch. I was right behind him, and in the narrowness of the passage I had to let someone else come forward and help him rig it for descent. In the meantime, I noticed to my left, a passage angling upward, so to satisfy my curiosity and make room at the same time, I started up it. I climbed for a few minutes and found that it widened out as it went upward. At the top was some standup chamber, with leads going off in other directions. By this time I figured they'd have the pit rigged so I returned back down. As I recall, this was the pit where we had to drop to a ledge a few feet down, hook up to a bolt with a cowstail, and re-attach the descender below another bolt which was re-directing the rope directly into the shaft. After doing all that it was a straight shot down into the bottom of the pit. I don't remember how deep it was, but it wasn't as deep as the first one we'd done, but it was deeper than the second.

At the bottom of this pit, we passed a short ways through some narrow passage and over a short drop-off to the fourth pitch, which was being rigged for descent. This was the deepest of the drops that we were to do that day. My guess was that it was 60' deep, and that it was about the same width as the other pits we had previously dropped.

The passage that continued onward, sloped down towards the crawl spaces that Scott had described earlier. Here we discarded our climbing gear, since we knew we would not be doing anymore pits after this. Steve and Simon lead the way, with me and Scott following a short time later. By this time we had about four hours behind us, and Wendel and John elected to start back toward the entrance.

As I was catching up to Steve and Simon I followed them through a maze of horizontal and vertical passages. These were long corridors, just barely wide enough to fit through, sprinkled with debris

and boulder sized objects which had to be negotiated to get through. I dragged my body through this vertical crack and over some of these obstacles, with the narrow crack falling away below me. I soon found myself above Steve and Simon, who were standing in a wide spot inside this maze.

They were contemplating their next move onward, since the vertical crack we were following, narrowed, though we could see open space beyond. A few feet above our heads a kind of keyhole passage widened a part of this narrow crack we wanted to go through, but it looked to be just barely big enough to admit a slender person. Steve had already made one attempt to drag himself through it and had turned back. Scott soon arrived and confirmed that this was the notorious "Colin's Crawl". He said the trick was to put your downward shoulder into the crack, and rest your body on the walls of the crack. Your upward shoulder and arm were supposed to be extended out in front and above you, and with that arm you were supposed to pull yourself along by grasping what was a sort of ledge above your head that paralleled your route. Steve made another go of it, but again returned. This time Scott attempted it, but he also failed. He decided to make another attempt, and this time decided to push his helmet along in front of him. We would help light the way. A short time later, I heard and watched as Scott's battery pack and helmet went crashing down into the crack below him. He made it to the other side, as Simon and I attempted to see if we could find a way into the crack where Scott had lost his helmet. We decided it was impossible from our side, but Simon decided to have a go at the crack. He seemed to make it all right, then it was my turn. As I was dragging myself through this thing with my right arm, that same old initial question kept popping back into my head, "what am I doing here?" This particular passage was not necessarily a tight constriction in the strict sense of the word, but as Scott said "it's just bazarr".

We all reunited in the space beyond "Colin's Crawl" and found ourselves standing on the pointed edge of some boulders, beneath which, was the chamber that led to the notorious "Lightening Crawl". We descended down about ten feet and were standing on the chamber floor, one side of which was the "Lightening Passage". In another

part, the bottom of the crack that had swallowed Scott's helmet emerged. Looking in we could see the helmet and battery pack, just a few feet inside, but there was some protruding rock which prevented us from immediately reaching it. Simon grasped a large rock, and began pounding the obstruction, knocking some of it off. Scott then attempted to reach inside, but the gear remained just out of reach. Being smaller than those guys, I tried it next and was able to recover both the battery pack and helmet.

We were now at a point, just a few feet away from the lip of the 90' pit, the bottom of which, Scott said is farthest known limit of the cave. We had all desired to at least make it to the top of this pit, but the "Lightening Crawl" was obstructing our progress. We looked into the space, which was only inches high. Luckily it was somewhat dry, as Scott had said that there's usually water running through it. I attempted the crawl which made a sharp zig to the right and I made it to the left turning zig without too much problem. Seeing the shape of this thing I now knew where it's name originated. The sharp protrusion which makes up the left turn was preventing me from making that turn. As I lay there on my stomach, I could see a few feet down the turn to a small constriction which looked makeable, but the problem was in getting past this protrusion to get there. Beyond the constriction, the cave appeared to open up. I tried to get my legs through, but it was a futile effort. I was able to get myself turned around and come back out head first to where Scott and Simon were waiting. Simon decided to try it, but he didn't get very far neither. Scott then took a look inside and noted that there appeared to be more gravel debris clogging it up than when he had been there last time. An E-tool probably would have been handy right then.

Well, now we were at the limits of this trip and we had a grueling four hour trip upwards back to the surface ahead of us. We immediately climbed upwards and renegotiated the "Colin's Crawl". It was somewhat easier this time, now that we had the dragging technique down. We made it back to the bottom of the last pitch and started our ascent. Steve, had already gone on up ahead of us. After arriving at the top, we de-rigged and continued upward. Every inch seemed to be a struggle as I could feel my endurance ebbing from me. At one

point I told Scott that I had to stop and eat something in order to go on. Unfortunately, all my cheese and crackers in my pack had been turned into inedible, soggy mush from the banging, wet abuse my pack had gone through. Luckily, I still had a can of vienna sausages, and even though they tasted horrible, they gave me some strength to continue on. I won't ever laugh again about those funky tasting, high energy bars that people eat. Now I know what they're for. Right then I'd of given my next paycheck for just one.

At the next pitch, Simon ascended first, and was waiting when I got up there. I hadn't realized it on the way down, but on the top lip of this pitch, the rope passes through a slot in the rock, which is difficult to pass your ascender through. My first attempt to make it through failed, after I had almost pulled my entire body above the lip. At the last second, I wasn't able to get my left leg up and over, so I fell back to my original starting position. It was a little discouraging to expend so much valuable energy on a futile effort. I re-assessed the situation and decided that I was going have to get the ascender above the slot, and in order to do that, I was going to have to push up with my legs against the wall under the over-hang. I did exactly that, and this time with another burst of effort I got the ascender past the slot and managed to pull my entire body over the lip. Simon told me to continue on to the to the next ascent, but I was too wacked with exhaustion to hear him. I did continue, and ended up struggling through a short, narrow drop-off. I ended up having to take off all my gear and try it again after I failed the first time.

We all made it up this pitch, which was short and de-rigged it. Simon continued on ahead and was at the top of the next pitch, when Scott and I got there. He continued on out of the cave with Steve, while Scott and I brought up the rear and de-rigged the last pitch. The last leg of this journey out was grueling, but with the end somewhat in sight, I began to pick up strength, knowing that this ordeal would soon be over. At last we made it up into the entrance room and took one last rest before attempting to climb up the log and up the sloping rock face to the entrance. After doing this, we finally emerged into the sunlight. It was just past 7:00 PM. We had been underground for eight hours.

Making our way back to camp, we found everyone there talking about the day's events. It was almost dark, so I set up my sleeping bag on the ground, and after a dinner of one bagel and a carrot, I fell asleep. I had originally intended to leave the mountain Saturday afternoon, but with the length and hardship of the days work, I decided to get a good night's sleep first. At 6:00 a.m. the next morning I got up, and arranged my pack. Everyone was still asleep, so I didn't get to say thanks or goodby. At 6:30 I took off down the mountain. Even though I got off my intended route through the Guye peak trail, and ended up in the hanging valley, I still made it to the parking lot at 8:10. By 8:30 I was enjoying a breakfast of steak and eggs at the pancake house on Snoqualmie pass.

In the last twenty-four hours, during my many times of delirium, I had asked myself "what am I doing here?". Well, I never did answer that. Instead, on my way home I began to ask myself something else: "What am I going to do different, the next time I come here"? Once it's there, it seems we never can get it out of our system. Oh well, I guess we'll just have to keep coming back until I find the answer to all these questions.

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## CAVE RESTORATION PROJECT MARSH CREEK CAVE, B.C., Sept. 27-28, Oct. 4-5 & Oct. 12

by Larry McTigue

At the Sept. 20th Cascade Grotto mtg., I had volunteered to help with the bat conservation /gating project at Christmas Tree Cave in the Mt. Adams/Trout Lake area east of Mt. St. Helens. It would take place the following weekend. But, a few days later, I had to change my plans. I got an email from Dick Garnick in Bellingham with news that the Canadian Ministry of Forests had finally appropriated funds for restoration of the entrance of a cave we had found in southern British Columbia.

When originally discovered, the cave entrance was a deep shaft plugged with logging debris from the clear-cut area that surrounded it. We were able to enter the cave by climbing down thru the large pile of dead trees the loggers had dropped down into a

balcony-like room overlooking the main pit. It was here where we originally tied a rope around one of the huge logs to descend the 50ft shaft at the far end of the balcony.

While dropping the pit, we got completely soaked by the waterfall pouring into it. The shaft dropped into a 50ft high room directly beneath the logging road that had been built above the cave. Large logs could be seen stuck in the ceiling high up above our heads.

Apparently when the road was first constructed, another deep pit connecting to the cave was encountered by the loggers on the surface directly above this room. Not being able to fill such a deep hole, they decided to jam it full of tree trunks, cover it with gravel and then drive fully loaded logging trucks over the top of it!!!

At the bottom of the shaft, we had to follow the water thru a tight hole in the floor and drop about 7ft to the floor below along a slippery log, all the while being pounded and soaked by the ice cold water pouring in on top of us.

Beyond the small room that we dropped into was another larger balcony-type room over-looking another pit. This time, we were able to rig a rope and climb down along one side of the shaft to stay out of the waterfall. This pit turned out to be about 25' deep. It belled out into a good-sized room whose floor was composed mostly of a huge quantity of gravel and sand. No way on could be found from the bottom of this shaft.

The stream that drops down the entrance flows under the log road that was built over the top of the cave. The cave is at approx. 4500' elev. and is covered by deep snow in the winter. It isn't accessible until about July due to the heavy snowmelt pouring into it from the surrounding mountains.

During the Fall and Winter when the temperature rises above freezing the snow pack can melt suddenly and heavy rains can flood the area. When this happens, the stream over-tops the log road and erodes it away. All the gravel, sand, logs and other debris was being washed into the cave and plugging it up. The road had started washing out in several

other places along the route to the cave and could no longer be considered a logging road. It had turned into a rough road accessible only to 4x4 vehicles.

The cave is part of a system of sinks and caves nearby whose resurgence is about one mile away. The potential size of the cave is quite obvious just by looking at the surrounding karst features. Recently, the water opened up a hole in the floor of the gravel in the bottom of the 25' pit. It dropped down a fissure into a short segment of large trunk passage which was cut off at both ends by two narrow fissures plugged by sand logs and rocks. Another hole high up on the wall of the 25' pit was explored also. After so many years of being clogged, the cave was finally starting to wash open again.

The amount of water pouring into the cave must be rather incredible at times. Last year, we found that it had washed a rock weighing several hundred pounds down the bank of the roadbed and deposited it on top of the pile of logs clogging the entrance to the cave. The logs were now broken and starting to collapse into the pit threatening to seal the cave to further exploration.

Dick contacted the Canadian Ministry of Forests to see if funds could be appropriated to remove the logs, boulders and other debris from the pit and try to restore it to something like its original appearance prior to the logging. Stabilizing the surrounding slopes was a major concern also. Otherwise, heavy rains would continue to wash in any loose debris.

They were agreeable but, didn't have the money at that time. Several months went by without anything being done. But then, toward the end of Sept. word came to us that a backhoe operator had been contracted with to do the work. We would meet him and an official from the Canadian Ministry of Forests at the cave on Fri. Sept. 27th to start the work of removing the debris from the pit.

Dick and I brought picks, shovels, leather work gloves, our caving suits, vertical gear and ropes. We wouldn't just be there to watch but, to actually help do the work. On the first Friday, they didn't get started until late afternoon and we were late

arriving also. Dick had dental lab work to catch up on and his 4WD Subaru station wagon had its water pump go out so, it was in the shop for repairs. So, when Dick finished running the errands he needed to do, we took my 4x4 truck and headed on up.

We spent part of the time watching the backhoe operator rechannel one of the streams that ran into the cave, back into its original streambed. Dick had brought along his video and still cameras and used some of this free time to video-tape the backhoe operator at work. We also met Ruben Medeiros from the Ministry of Forests and talked about what would be done later in the day and the following day on Saturday when, the real work for us would begin.

When the log road had been built about 15 years before, a stream used to come down off the hillside and flow down a gully about 250' up the present road, completely bypassing the cave to the north of the big entrance sink. During construction of the road, the stream was diverted into a ditch alongside the road. The heavy snowmelt and rainwater flowed down the road right into the sink carrying road fill gravel and other debris along with it. This contributed a portion of the material that had plugged the bottom of the cave after the loggers had left.

A second larger stream came directly across the path of the road being built by the loggers and dumped directly into the cave. They placed a large metal culvert pipe under the road at this point to carry the water and prevent the road from washing out. This worked fine for the short amount of time it took the logging company to strip all the high grade timber off the surrounding mountain-side. What they didn't want, they left on the ground to rot. Some of this lower grade timber was felled into the sink and simply left there.

When Dick Garnick, Rob Lewis and I showed up on the scene several years after the loggers had left, we found the road starting to wash out at this point. Dick got curious as to where all the water and road fill was going one day and went to investigate. He climbed down the road embankment and found a large pit clogged with logging slash and the stream flowing into it.

In subsequent years, the road continued to deteriorate at this point until the gravel over and around the culvert pipe was carried away exposing the pipe completely. It was at this point that we became concerned that the cave might become completely filled and inaccessible to further exploration. We were hoping it would wash open more passage in the bottom of the cave, not get clogged up with more debris.

If we couldn't get down the entrance shaft, it would remain only an unfulfilled dream. With several kilometers of potential cave awaiting us, we weren't about to give up and go home without a fight. We wanted to save the cave, if we could and at least attempt to restore it to something like its former glory.

When the backhoe operator finished rechanneling the stream located up the road from the cave, he moved his Kubota tractor down to the area directly above the cave. Here, he began dredging the streambed that runs over the road and into the entrance sink at that point. He removed all of the large boulders and gravel that was lying in it and threatening to wash into the cave and plug it up. There was a lot of material to be removed so, when he finally finished with this, we all called it a day.

He left his tractor there and he and Ruben drove home for the night in Ruben's pickup and would return in the morning to continue the work. Dick and I planned to spend the night in the hunters' cabin located nearby. But, Dick wanted to eat a hot dinner so, we drove down the mountain to the Fraser Valley and got our fill of a good hot meal at one of the restaurants in the small town of Sardis just off Canada's highway #1.

Bright and early the next day, we could hear the tractor start up about 7am and we knew it was time to get up. So, we hurriedly got dressed to join Ruben and the backhoe operator down by the cave. When we got down there, we found the Kubota building a short trail down off the side of the road and thru the brush to get down below the entrance to the cave so, he could reach the big logs hanging over the pit. Eventually, he was able to work his way around to the pit. But, just before he got there, one of the tracks on his machine came off and it took us 4hrs. to put it back on.

Finally, we were able to get the Kubota going again and he positioned it directly over the pit. So, with the ropes and vertical gear we had brought along, Dick rappelled into the pit and began to set the choker cables around the huge logs for the backhoe operator to pull out. I was surprised to see Ruben roll up his sleeves and work right along side of us doing what needed to be done.

Removing the logs, boulders and other debris from the pit took most of the rest of the day. I was hoping more of the road fill material could be pulled back from the edge of the sinkhole so it wouldn't be flushed in by snowmelt and rainwater. But, Ruben had only budgeted two days tractor time for the work, not counting on the 4 hours of down time when the track came off the Kubota.

I was a bit disappointed that more couldn't be done but, Dick and I were both glad for what had been accomplished. So, we packed up our gear and said good-bye and thanked them for their help. We again drove down the mountain and into town for dinner before heading back across the border to Washington and home.

I don't know if Ruben was impressed by the work we did or by our sincerity and commitment to the project. But, imagine my surprise when Dick emailed to say that he had talked to Ruben and another full day of tractor time had been budgeted to pull back the road fill further away from the sink, terrace the slope and plant grass seed to stabilize it. So, we were off again for another weekend of work up at the cave.

On Friday, Dick and I arrived to find them hard at work pulling back the road fill. Eventually, the backhoe operator worked his way down to where he could reach the streambed again and began scooping out more loose material that would otherwise have washed into the cave. More large boulders were encountered underneath the gravel surface bed of the road and these had to be pulled back as well.

Later, after moving tons of rock and gravel, he terraced the slope. It was also necessary to close the road with a dirt berm located about 100' back from the cave to prevent vehicles from falling into

it, if the road should collapse. When this was finally done, Ruben walked around with a 5 gallon bucket of grass seed spreading it by hand over the disturbed soil to help stabilize it.

By now, the day was pretty well gone and we again thanked them for their help and watched as they drove the tractor back down the mountain. Dick and I were left alone in the silence of the wilderness to spend another night in the hunters' cabin. We busied ourselves shoveling dirt, gravel and other debris out of the streambed and picking out smaller rocks the backhoe could not get.

While doing this, Dick made a startling discovery. In the bed of the stream underneath a layer of gravel, he discovered flowstone. On first examining it, I thought it was probably just a tufa deposit left by the stream as it cascaded down the slope to the pit. When water flows across limestone it dissolves the rock and can become saturated with it. Upon encountering a waterfall, the agitation of the water causes the calcium carbonate to precipitate out and be deposited as flowstone.

But, upon closer examination the following weekend, I found the supposed tufa deposit to actually be terraced rimstone dams with some stalagmites on its surface. Also, I found sodastraw remnants scattered about its surface and still attached in vertical slots in the streambed beneath a layer of gravel. Apparently, this had once been a roofed section of the cave. It may have been blasted away during road building or simply collapsed at an earlier time and been carried away by the stream during floods. We'll probably never know, since, we arrived after the loggers did their work here.

Eventually, I got bored with all this hard-rock mining and went to my truck to get my ax. There was about half a cord of firewood that someone had cut with a chain saw back in the forest near the hunters' cabin. They had a nice woodstove installed in the cabin and since, we were using their cabin, I figured the least I could do was split some wood for them to use. My enthusiasm got the best of me and I ended up splitting the entire half cord of logs. It should keep the snowmobilers happy who use the cabin during the winter-time.

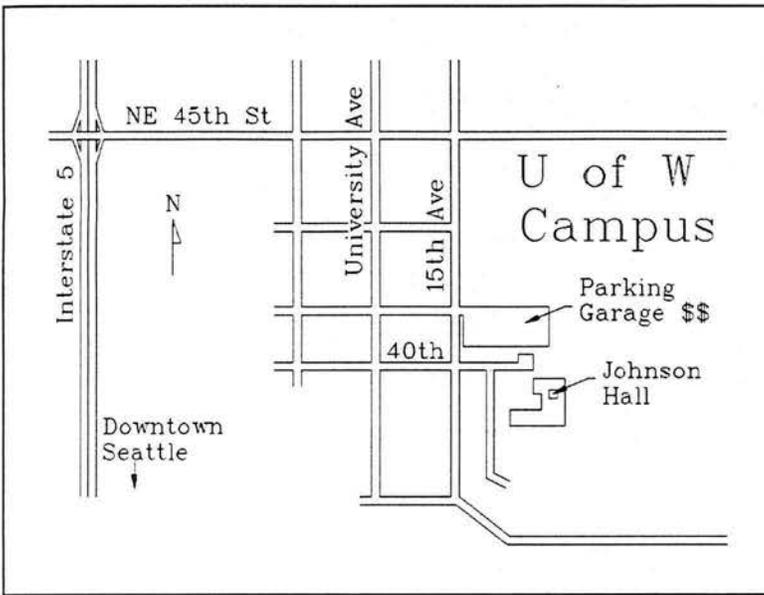
After spending another night in the cabin, we got up early the next day and began the serious work of replanting the area that was disturbed by the tractor around the cave with small trees and shrubs. We had hoped more cavers would show up to help us with this part of the work. But, it rained heavily both weekends and this probably chased away most of the American and Canadian cavers who had expressed interest in lending a hand.

We spent several hours digging up small trees, wildflowers and other shrubbery in the woods and transplanting it along the roadbed and down the slopes of the sinkhole. Dick and I did some more dredging with pick and shovel in the streambed. Then, we quit early and packed up all the gear and headed for home.

A third weekend was needed to remove small logs, rock and other debris from the top of the pit and loose rock and gravel from the streambed that the backhoe could not get. So, we returned to finish the work the following Saturday. Mike Fraley came along to help us with this.

Dick rigged up a pulley system above the pit. Mike rappelled down and attached the haul line to the logs and then Dick and I pulled them up and out of the hole. We used a 5 gallon plastic bucket to raise some items like small rocks and pieces of wood that were lying around loose at the top of the pit.

We had hoped the Canadian cavers would show up with a portable winch and generator they said they could bring. But, they weren't able to make it up. So, one large log is still down in the hole poised to drop down into the pit with the first big rainstorm that hits this Winter. We tried to haul it out with our pulley system but, it was jammed in and too heavy to lift.



The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month in room 119 in Johnson Hall on the University of Washington campus.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings

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