

Cascade Caver

Newsletter of the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

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Cascade Caver

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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. Subscription via email is \$11.00 per year.

GROTTO ADDRESS

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MEETINGS

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00 pm on the third Friday of each month at the Shoreline Community Center in the Hamlin room. The Community Center is at 18560 1st Ave NE in Shoreline. Please see the back cover for directions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 17 Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m.
Shoreline Community Center
October 25 Newton Cave – Contact Jon Crouch
at (206) 709-9209.
October 25-26 Inspect Possible Bellingham NSS
Convention facilities. – Contact Dick
Garnick at (360) 671-1066.
November 1-2 Gem State Grotto Halloween Party
Contact Jennifer Dorman at
idahocaver@gemstategrotto.org
November 21 Grotto Meeting. 7 p.m.
Shoreline Community Center
July 12-16 NSS Convention, Marquette, MI.

COVER: Mike Fraley is shown rappelling into Newton Cave on Cave Ridge. Michael McCormack took this photo.

Getting Involved with the Grotto

By Michael McCormack

I don't know you, I don't believe we've met in the year that I've been chairman. At least that's the case for over half of the readers of the Cascade Caver.

When I assumed the responsibilities of Chairman, I had no idea how many members the Cascade Grotto had. I knew there were more than showed up at a regular meeting, but I had no idea that there were over 70 regular and associate members of the Cascade Grotto. Some I've met once, possibly twice, but I'm a poor politician, and I don't have a memory for names, so to you my apologies. Some I have never met and regret the loss of your input, friendship and guidance.

In my tenure as chairman I have tried as best I know how to encourage people to activity. I've been active, creating trips and events for the Grotto membership, trying to ensure that these were advertised, trying to ensure that people's opinions were respected at the meetings and that the business of the Grotto got done. I attempt to represent the membership as a whole on issues and that means I take the responsibility for decisions that were made throughout my tenure. As people make their opinions known to me, I try my best to represent those opinions, even when those people can't make the meetings. Tell me how you feel and I will try and represent your opinion.

Nothing gets done unless someone volunteers to do it. Because the Cascade Grotto is a volunteer organization we require volunteers to continue operations. I would like to suggest to everyone that there are at least three positions that any member can run for currently, Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer. Nominations are at the November meeting and I would strongly suggest that you attend and nominate your choice of chairman and board. If you wish to

truly affect the future and direction of the grotto, this is your best opportunity.

Additionally, there are several appointed positions that volunteers are required for. These positions are appointed by the Chairman, and in my experience this is to the first (and usually only) qualified volunteer that shows up. Unfortunately, people are not chomping at the bit to do the volunteer work that is necessary for continued operations. This list of appointed positions includes the editor of the Cascade Caver, the one and only national voice of the Cascade Grotto (a task which Mark Sherman has been admirably completing for many years). Here is a complete list of leaders that are suggested by our bylaws in no particular order. I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for the volunteer effort that you are providing the grotto.

New Membership -	Erin Robert
Program Director -	Robert Mitchell
Cave Resources -	Steve Sprague
Field Trip Coordinator -	Chauncey Parker
Conservation -	Hester Malone
Safety -	Dave McElmurry
Cave Register and Information Program -	Aaron Stavens
NCA Representative -	Van Bergen
Grotto Librarian -	Stu Adler
Cascade Caver Editor -	Mark Sherman

It's our responsibility to get people actively pursuing all aspects of caving from conservation, to safety and electronic participation. At times this has proved easy and at other times I have given up and just done what needed to be done. It isn't, in my opinion, that people don't want to protect and serve the needs of caves and caving, but is in fact a lack of leadership and experience in these arenas. People are stepping up to the job and volunteering regularly. If they were not, we would cease to exist as a grotto of the National Speleological Society.

However, the active membership, and by active I mean those that have shown up to at

least three meetings or have organized any grotto trips or events, is about 60% of cavers with 5 years or less of active grotto caving experience (a rough guess). This number includes me. Those longtime cavers who do regularly participate are of great service to the community since they can help drive the efforts of the Cascade Grotto and guide the organization to a bright and productive future. This will continue to be reflected in the future generations of cavers, with NSS numbers in the 1,000s or the 40,000s.

We are not a large group; we only have about 20-40 "active" members. Leaders for this group are even rarer, and experienced individuals should and, in fact, must participate in order for this grotto to remain active and relevant. As everyone knows it's the votes and discussion that occur at the meeting that ultimately set the policy and direction of the grotto, I would strongly encourage you to show up to as many meetings as you are able. Participate in the web discussion, and set up cave trips and grotto functions that will help teach the next generation of cavers.

As a grotto we do the best we can. I am sure you have learned much in your time as a caver and could offer many different stories and viewpoints as well as techniques and tips to myself, and everyone else at the grotto. Those of us with experience often had to learn from experience and we share our lessons in the Caver through trip reports, which examine mistakes small or large, adventures, and excitement. Each person reading this has stories and lessons to share. Share them with your community and make us stronger and better cavers for it.

I would, in parting, like to offer my personal invitation to once again become active and pursue with abandon those areas you feel passionate about. Come to the meetings and teach those people who are new the respect and ethic you believe in and wish to see more of. Teach new and long time cavers alike the

safety lessons that you feel are important and drill in the ethic of safe caving to everyone willing to listen.

Finally, participate and help guide this grotto down a path that respects all viewpoints, all caves, and each individual caver.

Could You Help Your Friends?

By Aaron Stavens

As you are climbing along a ledge, going up and down ropes, crawling through tight places, or hopping from one breakdown boulder to the next, have you ever stopped to think about the problems that could occur? What would you do if one of your caving buddies fell off that ledge, got her hair caught in her rappel device, got stuck where he *thought* he could fit, twisted an ankle, broke a leg, or received a deep gash? Do you feel like you could help them? What if it was you? Do you think your friends would know what to do?

Fortunately, major caving incidents in our neck of the woods are few and far between, but let's face it. The potential for all kinds of problems is there. The environment is unforgiving and things do happen. In my caving experience I've seen cavers hit by rock fall, caver falls, cavers stuck on rope, lost cavers, and cold cavers. One of the situations was a major rescue. The other situations were less involved, but all had the potential to be worse.

Further complicating the situation is our climate. The average temperature in Western Washington is relatively chilly. In our alpine caves, the temperatures are down right cold. It all depends on the circumstances, but a patient might not have time to wait for the "real rescue team". Hypothermia could be a life-threatening concern. The real rescue team could very well be the others cavers the patient is with.

Hopefully, I have at least got you thinking. Perhaps caving problems are not just theoretical? Perhaps it can happen to you? So where can you learn more? There are multiple sources.

The National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) puts on an annual, 8 day, national Cave Rescue Operations & Management Seminar. The focus is on organized cave rescue operations, but the information and techniques are definitely applicable to small-party self-rescue situations. Hester Mallonée and I attended this year's seminar in Carlsbad, New Mexico as Level 1 students. The NCRC covered the cave environment, medical considerations, vertical equipment, 2 ropes-single rescuer pick-offs, patient packaging, horizontal litter movement, haul systems, lowering systems, vertical litter movement, psychological considerations, hazardous atmospheres, Incident Command System (ICS), documentation, water problems, and cave search. The last segment of the course was a mock rescue staged by the instructors, but run by the students. We "rescued" 5 patients from a cave during the course of the day.

Don't have the time/money to be running around the country taking rescue courses? There are plenty of local resources. The following are a few I am personally aware of:

- John Punches, current NCRC national coordinator, has told us he can arrange as much training as we can handle. The NCRC Orientation to Cave Rescue takes only a weekend and, in my experience, exposes you to most of the stuff taught at the national seminar; albeit there is necessarily less information presented and you have less time for hands-on practice. John can also provide small party self rescue training and did so this summer.
- Dave McElmurry is acting as the focal point for the Washington Cave Rescue Resources (WCCR). His goals include

training the local cavers in cave rescue techniques.

- Phil Whitfield of the British Columbia Cave Rescue (BCCR) group has done small party training in the past and I bet he would be willing to do so again.
- The American Red Cross provides basic first aid and CPR training.
- The Mountaineers provide Mountaineering Oriented First Aid (MOFA) courses throughout the year. Although I haven't yet taken MOFA myself, I suspect it is more relevant to cavers than the Red Cross training considering the remote locations we often visit.

Remember, just because you participate in the above training does not mean you have to join a cave rescue group. It is simply unrealistic to assume everyone has the time or even wants to be involved in that way. The point is to raise your skill level. Every time you learn a new technique or think through a new scenario, the probability that you'll be able to fix a problem in the field increases. Even better, you might be able to see an accident in the making and prevent it from ever happening. How's that for helping out your friends?

NCRC Small Party Vertical Rescue Class

Troutdale, OR & Horsethief Lake State Park, WA 5/31/03 – 6/1/03

By Van Bergen

Last spring, with Dave McElmurry's assistance, Jon Punches organized a Small Party rescue class. Phil Whitfield and Rob Wall of British Columbia Cave Rescue came down to help instruct. Willamette Valley Grotto hosted the class. About a dozen Washington and Oregon cavers participated, along with three mountain rescue members from the area. On Saturday we met at the Troutdale Community Center, site of Vertical

Bob's regular vertical training sessions. Of course Vertical Bob also participated in the class. First came the gear check and basic vertical skills checkoff. A large, high-ceilinged room had been rigged with plenty of ropes. Punches and the Canadians described and demonstrated a variety of pick-off and hauling techniques, and after each one the class participants had a chance to try their hand(s).

From time to time over the past few years, I've heard criticism that the NCRC (National Cave Rescue Commission) was slow to adopt innovations and had a rigid curriculum. That wasn't the case when I took classes in the Central Region a few years ago, and it certainly wasn't the case with Punches' Weekend Orientation class at Trout Lake last year. The Small Party class continued this trend; much of what we learned was new. Some of the techniques were similar to those described in the new English translation of *Alpine Caving Techniques*. Some were introduced by the Canadians. The class's favorite pickoff technique was one that Phil showed Punches the day before the class started, and Punches liked it so much he added it to the curriculum. We liked it too – the rescuer pulls up the tail of the rope, attaches his descender to his seat maillon, rigs the rope for lowering, attaches the end of the rope to the patient, locks off, stands just long enough to remove the patient's last ascender, and lowers the patient. That's an oversimplification; I hope we have a practice session soon so I can see if I remember it well enough to demonstrate!

We spent a long Saturday picking each other off and hauling each other up and lowering each other down. The emphasis was on improvisation with minimal gear – what you happen to have in your pack. Hardly a rigid curriculum. Maybe Punches' position as National Coordinator of the NCRC allows him to experiment more. Carrying another person up and down ropes by yourself is tiring, especially for an old guy. I had recently

damaged my ulnar nerve and didn't have full use of my right hand. I guess I over-used the few functioning muscles, because after the last pickoff I was unable to open my own Croll to change over, so I had to be let down. It's better now.

After class we ran for fast food and caravanned to Spearfish Park, just across the Columbia River from The Dalles. Dave found it, and it was pretty and free; very nice, except for the loud trains. Earplugs work well there. We slept in our cars. Next morning we had a short drive to Horsethief Lake State Park. We hiked out to the basalt cliffs of Horsethief Butte and split up into small groups to improvise with our new skills. The instructors gave us the scenarios, such as a party of three with one injured at the bottom of the cliff and two others with minimal gear and no extra rope at the top. We put together mechanical-advantage haul systems with mini-pulleys and accessory cord, used packs and clothing for pads, and hauled really hard. The coolest hauling method was the counterbalance, in which the rope is derigged and run through a pulley at the top (you hope it's about twice as long as the drop). Then the rescuer attaches the patient to himself and to one end of the rope, and climbs the other end. Brian Gaas is a Texas caver who was living in Trout Lake as an Americorps volunteer; we had met him in February during our "snow" trip. He's young and strong but I'm at least 30 pounds heavier. Using the counterbalance, he hauled me up a 40' cliff by himself. Cool stuff.

We were all beat by the end of the day, but we all agreed that it had been a great class. It's the best I've attended. The "standard" NCRC classes are geared toward rescues with large callouts. This one was geared toward rescuing another member of your small party – even a very small party – without calling for additional help. The remoteness of the caves in this area, and the small number of cavers scattered around, means these skills are the ones we are most likely to need. From what I've heard, the BCCR class in Idaho was

similar. Phil and Rob are willing to come back, and Punches is willing to do another class. I think every caver in the region should take a class like this. Learn how to carry an old fat guy up a rope by yourself. I'll be glad you did!

Southern Washington Caves Trip Reports

By Claude Koch

Skamaniac Cave 9/26

Cavers: Kim Luper, Chris Molyneux and Claude Koch

Chris had wanted to go up to the Falls Creek area and do a little bit of caving up there so I contacted him and asked him where he was going. He didn't have a preference so I asked him if he had ever been to Skamaniac Cave. He hadn't so we scheduled a meeting time for 1:30 on Friday afternoon up in the mountains.

Chris and Kim met me a few miles from the cave so we stopped off at the caves of Breakdown Mt. Cave, Ponderosa Arch and Pica Ice Cave. They GPS'ed the caves and we walked back to the cars.

We drove a little further and parked at Skamaniac Cave. The cave is located in a relatively large entrance sink with a cave leaving both ends.

The uphill cave goes for about a thousand feet and is primarily breakdown floored and has walking sized passage. The lower cave going downhill from the sink is Skamaniac Cave.

The cave starts out by dropping down a steep breakdown rock slope and then climbing back up a breakdown slope. This pattern continues for about 1500 feet in a passage that is always walking sized. At the end of the cave is a patch of original floor with a few lavacicles that have been broken by pieces of the ceiling breakdown that have fallen and bounced down the slope. There are a few though that have

been missed by the breakdown and are still intact.

Chris and Kim took some pictures and then we headed out. Kim made it out of the cave before us and got a few nice pictures of a pika near the entrance.

After we were out of the cave and said our good-byes, I drove over the pass at the Pacific Crest Trail crossing and the northwestern edge of the Big Lava Bed. The road from there skirts the northern edge of the flow in places and takes you down to the northeastern edge of the Big Lava Bed at Goose Lake. The Big Lava Bed is the largest lava bed in the state.

Only a few short caves are associated with the lavas of the Big Lava Bed with the only exception being Datus Perry's New Cave. I then drove the 'back way' into Trout Lake and met up with Jim Harp and Doug Knapp at the Trout Lake Creek Campground as it was getting dark.

They and some other cavers from the Cascade Grotto were going to meet up with me for a trip to Happy Cave the next morning. They had picked a nice group campsite away from the creek, which were crowded with a Boy Scout troop and a group of Environmental Activists.

After setting up camp a nice young lady named Regan Smith of the Northwest Ecosystem Alliance came over and talked with us for awhile. She was waiting for her friends to show up and had already been roaming around up there for a few days checking out some future timber sales.

We told her that we were cavers and how we were also concerned with logging practices near the caves that we visit. This surprised her since she had no idea that organized cavers even existed in this area. We exchanged emails and I asked her to keep me posted on future timber sales in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

After Jim and Doug offered me a pork chop, which I gladly accepted, John, his five-year-old son Robert, and his friend Ron cruised on into camp.

Happy Cave September 27, 2003

Cavers: Jim Harp, Doug Knapp, Ron Miller, John Benson, Robert Benson, Michael & Nikki McCormack, Erin Robert & Claude Koch

The next morning we met up with Michael, his wife Nikki, and Erin at the Trout Lake Store. The weather was great so we drove up to the upper part of the Snow White System and walked down the flow, looking for more new caves. We didn't find any and made it down to Happy Cave.

The group crawled into the cave. They weren't used to stirring up so much dust in a lavatube cave in Washington. This actually is not a condition that usually is found in lavatubes in Washington but is a common occurrence in some of the central Oregon High Desert caves.

Most of the new Snow White System of caves start out as dusty dirt crawls for the first 30 or 40 feet though. Happy Cave has the easiest entrance crawl of the bunch. We all congregated down at the first room and the start of the mostly original floored cave, where we were met by a harvestman that Robert didn't like. Harvestman look like bigger daddy long leg spiders so he and his dad John went back out of the cave and had lunch and then went back in the cave later. It was a good plan because the harvestman had moved and they got to go down to the pillar room later on.

While the harvestman was moving the rest of the group went down to the pillar room in duckwalking-sized passage. The passage goes along the left-hand wall through some breakdown rocks and goes to a lower level room. A small trickle of water has formed a little stream with some 3-inch deep drip

holes in the hard packed dirt streambed.

A mid shelf side passage comes into this stand up room and has some tiny rimstone dams in some very shallow pools in this mid shelf side passage.

The main passage from here leads up through the keyhole and into the next stand up room. This is a very nicely decorated area of differently colored microgours on the walls. There are orange, white, black, yellow and rust colored ones. Above the wall microgours, orange and white sharks teeth shaped secondary mineralization deposits have formed in the ceiling cracks.

The characteristic of the cave changes to a taller and narrower type of passage with almost all walking passage from here to the end of the cave. Some little lavacicles and remelt wall pendants are seen in the next stretch of passage. The floor has some beautifully formed railroad types of flow lines in the next room. A perfectly formed hole in the ceiling leads 12 feet up into a blister room. Another mid shelf upper side passage is seen but only goes 25 feet before ending in a lava seal. A pile of breakdown is encountered, where some lavacicles are hiding out of view from the original floored main passage. A small as yet undetermined animal skeleton is seen down the main passage, 700 feet from the entrance. This critter went a long ways in the wrong direction before finally giving up.

The cave goes a few hundred feet further before ending in a small room and a lava seal. We turned around and made our way back to the entrance, admiring everything all over again.

Nikki pushed a small upper side passage near the entrance. I told her that nobody yet had been able to gain entry into that part of the cave. She barely squeezed through the virgin passage and reported back to us that the passage went around a pillar and then got too small. I thanked her for pushing it since it

was the only uphill lead that still needed to be checked out.



Orange microgour wall in Happy Cave.
Photo by Kim Kanigel.

Everybody had a good time so we walked up the hill and I took them to Sleepy Cave on our way back to the cars. I was going to show them where Bashful Cave and Cross Cave were but walked right past them. We thought about going into Sleepy Cave but some of the group had to leave so we decided to save it for the next trip.

When we got back to the cars Michael had a flat tire so I stuck around in the case that they didn't have everything, like a lug wrench, air in the spare, a jack, etc. He had everything so it got changed and off they went. The rest of us went back to camp and barbecued some ribs that John had brought. After breaking up my camp I went back to Portland and slept in my bed, only to find myself back in Trout Lake the next morning.

Bashful Cave Survey - September, 28
Cavers: Doug Marchant & Claude Koch

The next morning Doug Marchant and I went back up to Trout Lake area and mapped some more of the Snow White System of caves. We went to Bashful Cave and resumed the survey in an upper level passage that is found in the second room of the cave. This crawly passage leads to a wet section of sloping passage that has tiny gray rimstone dams in the middle of the floor that you have to straddle in order not to damage them.

At the end of the passage it levels out and a 3 or 4 inch pool of water is seen ahead. Doug thought he could make it through past the 6-foot long pool of water. Since it was a hot day outside and we could go out and get warmed up after pushing the water squeeze he went for it. I tried it but couldn't quite make it. I told Doug to go ahead and scoop the passage and find out what it did. He told me that it went a couple of hundred feet in mostly duck walking sized passage but ended in a lavaseal.

While waiting for him I started getting cold so when he came back I told him that we should head back out and dry out a little bit. We only had mapped a little under 200 feet of Bashful Cave but we were also there to push Cross Cave, another nearby cave that is 100 feet parallel to Bashful Cave.

After lunch we went over to Cross Cave, a cave that we named before we came up with the Snow White theme, and continued pushing dirt down the entrance crawl. After a few hours Doug was successful in squeezing through and passed the dirt to an original floored small tube. He thought that it might continue as a tight crawl but a rock ten feet ahead would need to be gone around.

Since it was starting to get late we decided to wait until the next weekend to push the 1-foot tall cave. Air was noted so maybe it opens up

further down the passage. We will find out if it goes or not next weekend.

So ends another exciting weekend of caving in the lavatubes of southern Washington.

Indiana Cave Capers

Delaney Creek State Park, IN

June 20-23, 2003

By Van Bergen

For the past four years, I've been pleased to play music with the Terminal Syphons at the Wednesday night campground party at NSS Conventions. We do it for fun, and for free, and because we're going to Convention anyway. This year, for the first time in the Syphons' almost 20-year history, we got paid for playing! The organizers of Indiana Cave Capers, the longest-running regional caver gathering in the country, hired us to play at their Saturday night party. The pay wasn't nearly enough to cover our travel expenses, but they gave us a nice cabin to stay in, treated us wonderfully, threw a great party – and had limestone!

I arrived Friday evening in time to check in and look up some old Midwest caving buddies. The organizers invited us to go caving on Saturday morning, but for some reason the band members wanted to rehearse. I suppose that would have been a good idea for a band that hadn't seen each other for a year. But hey, it was limestone. The rest of those guys don't live in lava tube country! The harmonica player also ditched rehearsal and we joined some nice Indiana folks for a trip to Mill and Middle caves. They were small but pretty Indiana stream caves – sculpted walls, waterfalls, lots of wading, some crawling in water, not too cold. Nirvana. We climbed up a slippery mud bank and explored a huge upper passage for a while. We didn't want to make our ride wait, so we headed out, only to be told that that passage went on & on & on. Maybe I'll make it back there some day....

We thought we'd get back in time for at least some of the rehearsal, but like all cave trips we were later than expected. We played OK, I think; the crowd had a good time. There were hundreds of cavers there, including many talking about their last trip to Cheve and Huautla and Golondrinas. I commented that there seemed to be a lot of Indiana cavers going to Mexico. They answered that there are just a lot of Indiana cavers. Going everywhere.

I thought I'd go caving again Sunday with some of my Ohio friends, but they were too hung over and decided to go for a hike instead. A hike??? I guess when you live in limestone country you don't feel compelled to cave every day. There was a ropes course set up in a huge oak tree, so I spent a few hours trying to get from one end of the tree to the other via nylon highway. All in all, a totally fun weekend. I hope they ask us back next year. Cave Capers is hosted by Central Indiana Grotto, Eve's new grotto. I'm sure she's having a fun time there. Right, Eve?

Charlottes Caves Yield Ancient Artifacts

By Larry PynnCanWest News Service
Wednesday, October 15, 2003

(Ed. Note: The following article was taken from the Times Colonist of Victoria)

VANCOUVER -- A caving expedition to the Queen Charlotte Islands is believed to have found the massive ancient bones of a grizzly bear – a species no longer found on the islands -- and the base of a spear point that could represent the oldest human artifact on the B.C. coast.

The quartz spear point could be up to 11,000 years old, based on the sediment layer in which it was found, lending further credence to the theory that early humans migrated down the coast of North America by watercraft rather than travelling inland along an ice-free corridor.

"Certainly, on the B.C. coast, it would probably be the oldest site," said Parks Canada archeologist Daryl Fedje, comparing it with similar ancient human sites dated to about 10,300 years on Prince of Wales Island in Alaska, 10,500 years at Charlie Lake near Fort St. John, and almost 11,000 years on Santa Rosa Island, Calif. "It's a very interesting, very exciting find. But it's still preliminary. We're a long ways from knowing how it fits together. It's a complex story -- the cave, and the sediments."

The week-long July expedition, the results of which were presented Tuesday to CanWest News Service, involved a combination of nine cavers, archeologists, paleontologists, and Haida natives, who know the Queen Charlottes off northwest B.C. as Haida Gwaii. "This was an ambitious program of excavation," said Paul Griffiths, B.C.'s leading caver, in Campbell River. If everyone's hunches play out, he added, the ancient person who used the spear "could be among the earlier humans on the coast, possibly on the hemisphere."

This is the fourth annual expedition to the cave -- known simply as K-1 -- located on remote Moresby Island outside Gwaii Haanas National Park in old-growth forest at least 500 metres from the shoreline.

To date, just over one kilometre of cave passageway -- ranging from a tight squeeze to vast chambers -- has been mapped or explored. Water flows through the cave from a sinkhole above, and features waterfalls of up to five metres in height. The exact location is not being released to protect the cave from unsupervised exploration and the potential removal of valuable artifacts.

In 2001, an expedition to the same limestone cave found the bones of a black bear dating back 17,000 years -- the oldest such discovery in B.C. That finding raised the potential for bears having survived the last ice age in a

"glacial refugium" on the Queen Charlottes, Griffiths said.

This summer's expedition unearthed the grizzly bones at least 50 metres inside the cave. The spear point was found close by, but in shallower sediments, suggesting it might have been used to kill another bear as long as 11,000 years ago. The quartz used to make the spear is not known to occur on the Queen Charlottes.

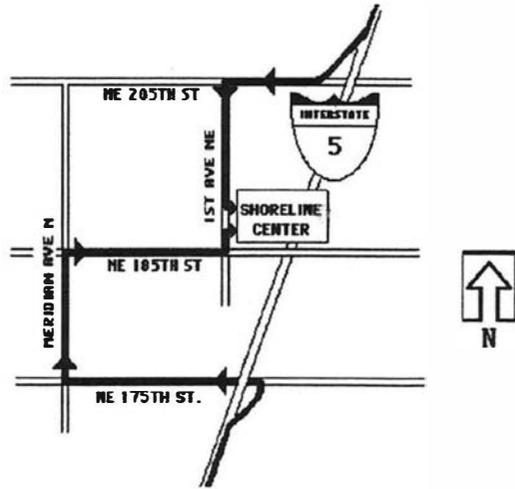
Researchers are still awaiting radiocarbon dating and DNA testing, but are confident that a massive humerus (leg bone) and mandible (lower jaw) suggest a grizzly that weighed perhaps 700 kilograms.

No one knows for certain why only black bears, and not grizzlies, still live on the Queen Charlotte Islands, but one theory is that after the last ice age the tundra terrain favoured by grizzlies eventually yielded to forest habitat preferred by black bears. Certain islands in southeast Alaska are exclusive to black bears, and others to grizzlies. However, humans may have hurried the grizzly's demise. New research in France suggests competition for caves may have led humans to exterminate an ancient cave bear.

Carol Ramsey, a former Island resident who visited the caves as part of her University of Victoria studies, said she used to view caves as nothing more than "geological void spaces that contain bones." But her appreciation for karst limestone landscapes has grown over the years. "I now take a holistic approach that extends to the greater karst landscapes," she said.

As part of last summer's expedition, the team measured turbidity caused by the excavations to ensure that fish downstream were not negatively impacted, and took cave readings for temperature, carbon dioxide and wind speed, Ramsey said. Future expeditions will extend to high-elevation caves.

The Cascade Grotto meets at 7:00pm on the third Friday of each month at the Shoreline Community Center. The Community Center is located at 18560, 1st Ave NE in Shoreline. To get to the Community Center from Seattle, take Exit 176 on Interstate 5 (175th St. N) and turn left at the light at the bottom of the off ramp. At the next traffic light (Meridian Ave. N) turn right. Turn right at 185th St. N (the next light). Turn left on 1st NE, which again is the next light. The Community Center is on the right. Don't get confused with the Senior Center, which is on the end of the building. Enter the building on the southwest corner and find the Hamlin Room.



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