

# CASCADE Caver

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# Cascade Caver

Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society

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August 2010

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### COVER PHOTO:

Michael McCormack rappels into Big Horn Cave in Wyoming. Photo, "Bad Hair Day", by Jansen Cardy received an Honorable mention in the NSS 2010 print salon.

# A Trip to VICEG Cave

June 12, 2010

By Jerry Thompson and Jacob Earl



Figure 2: Jim Harp, Jake Earl, and Ginger outside the entrance. Photo by Marla Pelowski

**Outside the cave:** The ancients, Jim Harp and Jerry Thompson met the kids, Edd Keudell, Marla Pelowski, and Jacob Earl at the Mariner Park and Ride near exit 186 off of I-5 in south Everett. Jim and Jerry rode with Marla and Jake traveled with Edd. The group drove to a pit stop at a Department of Fish and Game boat launching area on the Sauk River on State Route 530 near Forest Service Road 26. On FS Road 26, the group stopped and paid tribute to departed elders of the valley. The cars then made their way up FSR26 to the recently repaired Boundary Bridge over the Suiattle River. They proceeded now on FS Road 25 to its current end near Circle Creek. The drive up took about two hours including the brief stops. A sixth participant scheduled to meet the group at the trailhead failed to appear. After an interesting log crossing over Circle Creek the cavers walked on old roadbed to a second stream crossing that was only a less challenging. After a few more minutes on the road the group turned off the road and scrambled steeply up a gully in old growth forest. Several hundred feet up the slope, they

found the small, unimpressive entrance pit to Viceg Cave. Thompson rigged Marla's new PMI caving rope and dropped far enough into the pit to give directions to Keudell who was to lead the survey effort. Jerry then scrambled up and out of the pit and let Jake and Marla descend.

**Inside Viceg:** Edd, Marla, and Jake descended into the cave, surveying as they traveled through the cave. Once at the bottom of the



Figure 1: Moonmilk formations. Photo by Marla Pelowski

pit, they evaluated which way to go. They soon came down a crawl and into a beautiful solution dome covered with moon milk. After another short crawl another room completely covered with moon milk and some nice fluted dolomite. At this point they were approximately at the deepest part of the cave. After pushing any little cracks or holes to see if it kept going trying to get more depth, they proceeded back up another crawl and into another room. Mind you the cave is mostly trending E-W along a steeply sloping headwall that must have been undercut and given way and created this cave. On the southern part of the cave is mostly talus, rock debris, while the northern side of the cave is solid rock (dolomite). The room was somewhat long in length and a few feet in wide, and more than 10 feet high. At the end of the room was a small down climb and a small hole at the bottom. Edd proceeded to get the last shot for the survey and found that that was the end of the cave.

Marla took some very nice pictures inside the cave, as Edd and Jake surveyed. Marla also got to try surveying with the DistoX, which is the only way to survey a cave!

They proceeded out of the cave and up the rope back to the surface where Thompson, Harp, and Ginger were waiting.

Viceg Cave is a neat cave formed in dolomite with some very beautiful moon milk formations.

**Back outside the cave:** Harp, Thompson, and Ginger (Edd's dog) chewed the fat and shot the bull for just short of two hours when they started hearing signs of life from down in the pit. The surveyors appeared pleased and happy with what they had seen and done. They found the cave to be fifty-nine feet deep with two hundred and twenty-eight and a half feet of passage. After packing up and scrambling back down to the road, the walk back to the car seemed a little longer than the same road had been earlier in the day.

On the way back, the group drove several miles up FS Road 2810 to explore an area that the Department of Natural Resources documents rumored some possible cave entrances. The bedrock was phyllite which normally is not cavernous and indeed, no caves were found, only a few small pits.

The two cars parted company back down on SR 530. Marla, Jim and Jerry dined at Denny's at Island Crossing and Marla drove the old codgers back to the Mariner Park and Ride. It seemed that everyone enjoyed the day's activity.

Viceg Cave, though small, is fairly close time-wise to the metropolitan areas of the Puget Sound Basin. With the repair of the Boundary Bridge and the reestablishment of access to the cave after a nearly ten year period of inaccessibility, the grotto might consider



Figure 3: Edd recording data and sketching. Photo by Marla Pelowski

scheduling beginner training trips there. There is a twenty-five foot pit at the entrance which would give a small group of vertical neophytes a real world practice site. The cave is small and a group of six cavers would be a real crowd there.

There are two old ladders that the grotto might consider removing. The upper ladder is an old boat ladder that is anchored with old yellow polypro braided rope. A rope ladder is located below and the rungs are rotting. At least one was broken on this trip. The removal of these would only make moving through the pit a little more challenging and would probably make ascending and descending much safer.

**Moonmilk** (sometimes called **mondmilch**, erroneously (influenced by "mountain") **montmilch** or rarely **mundmilch**; [German](#) for moonmilk, mountmilk, and mouthmilk, respectively) is a white, cheese-like substance found inside [caves](#). It is similar to other deposits, but its unique quality is that it does not harden or turn to stone. It is a [precipitate](#) from [limestone](#) comprising aggregates of fine [crystals](#) of varying composition usually made of [carbonate](#) materials, e.g., [calcite](#), [hydromagnesite](#), [monohydrocalcite](#) and [gypsum](#).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moonmilk>

# VICEG Cave

Snohomish County, Washington  
A DistoX A3 Survey

June 12, 2010

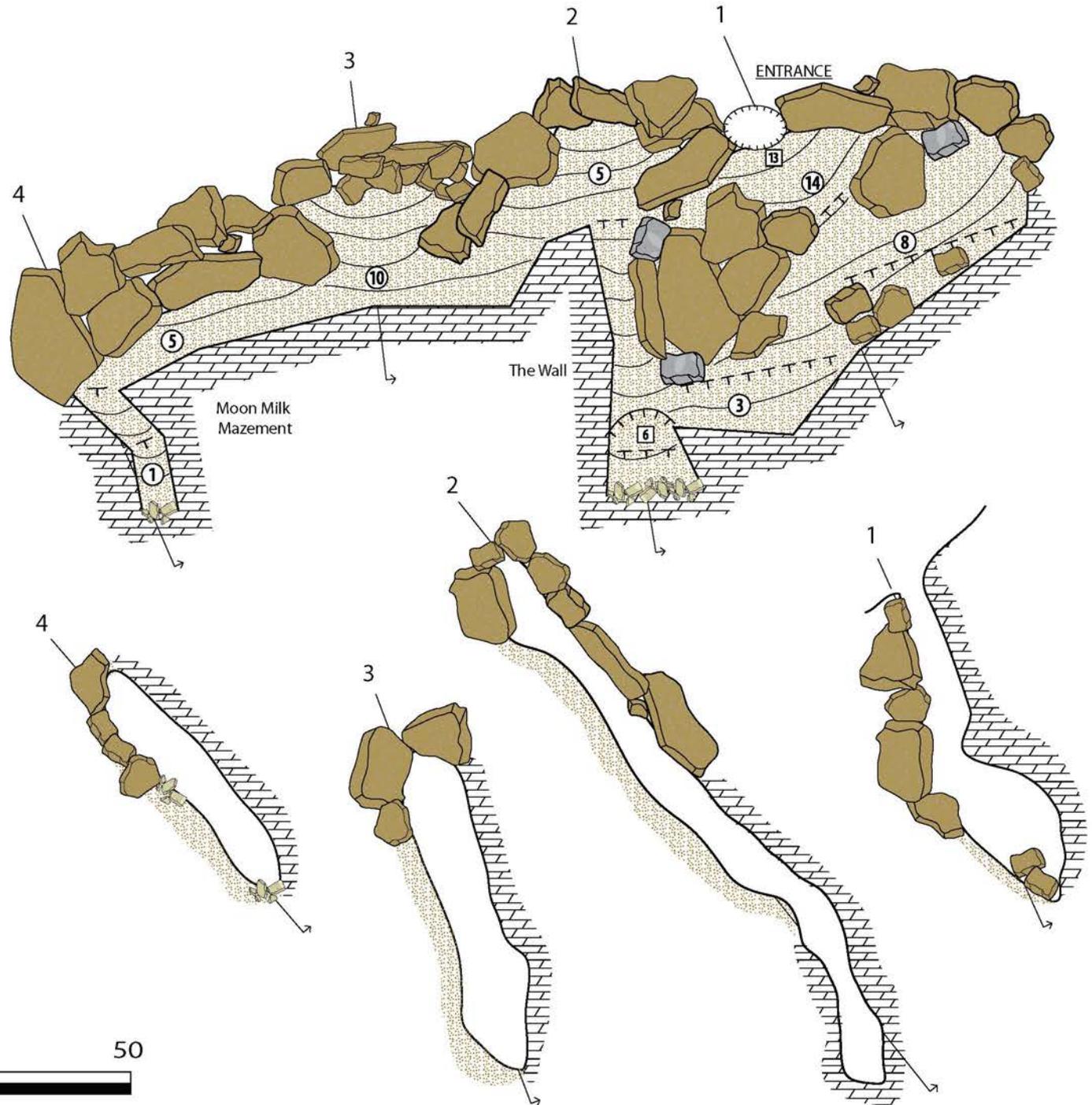
Surveyed by:

Jake Earl, Jim Harp, Edd Keudell,  
Marla Pelowski, Jerry Thompson

Plotted in Winkarst v12.5

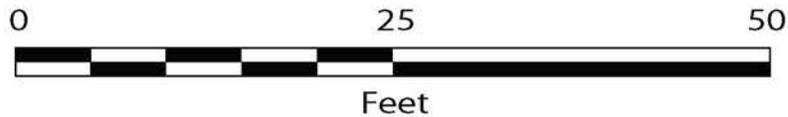
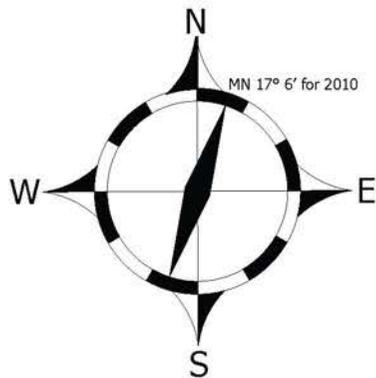
Drafted in Adobe Illustrator CS4

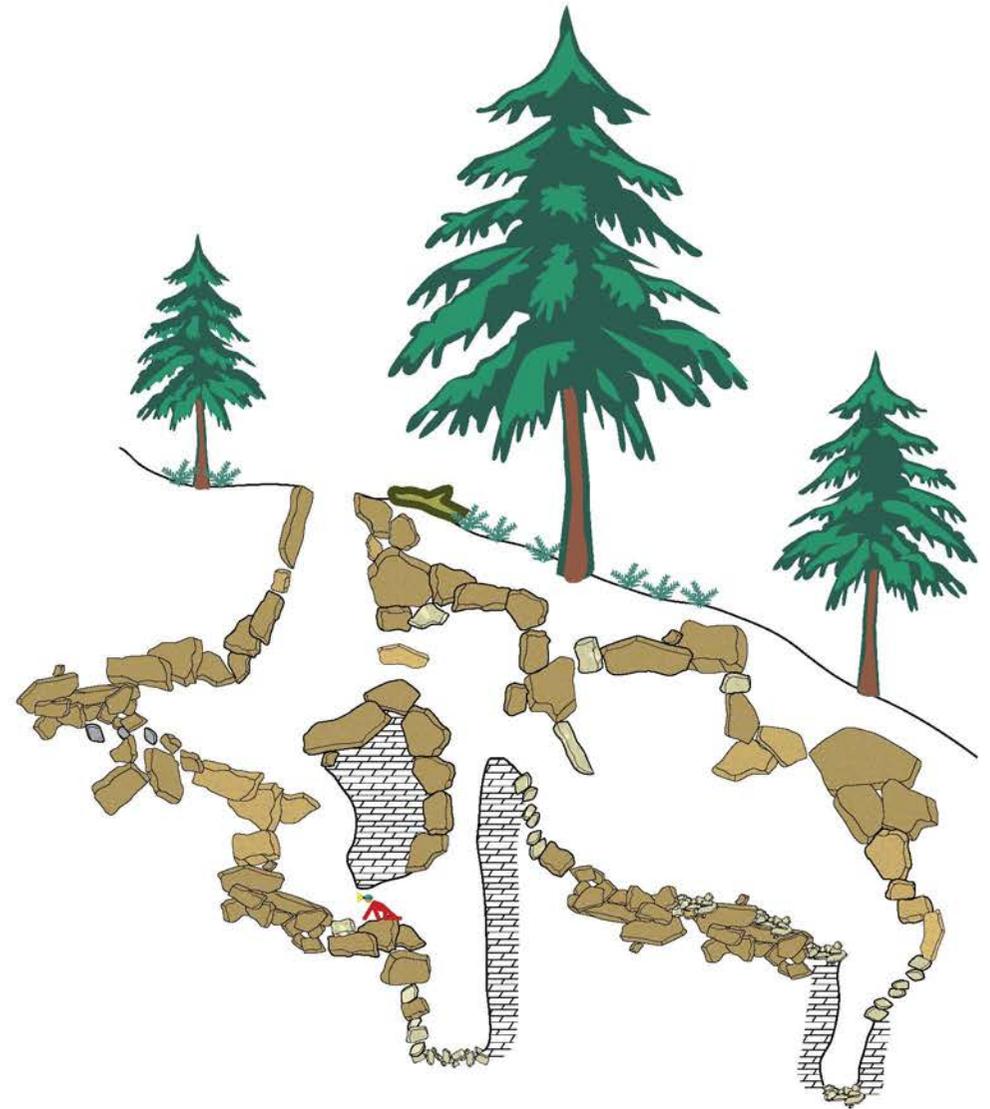
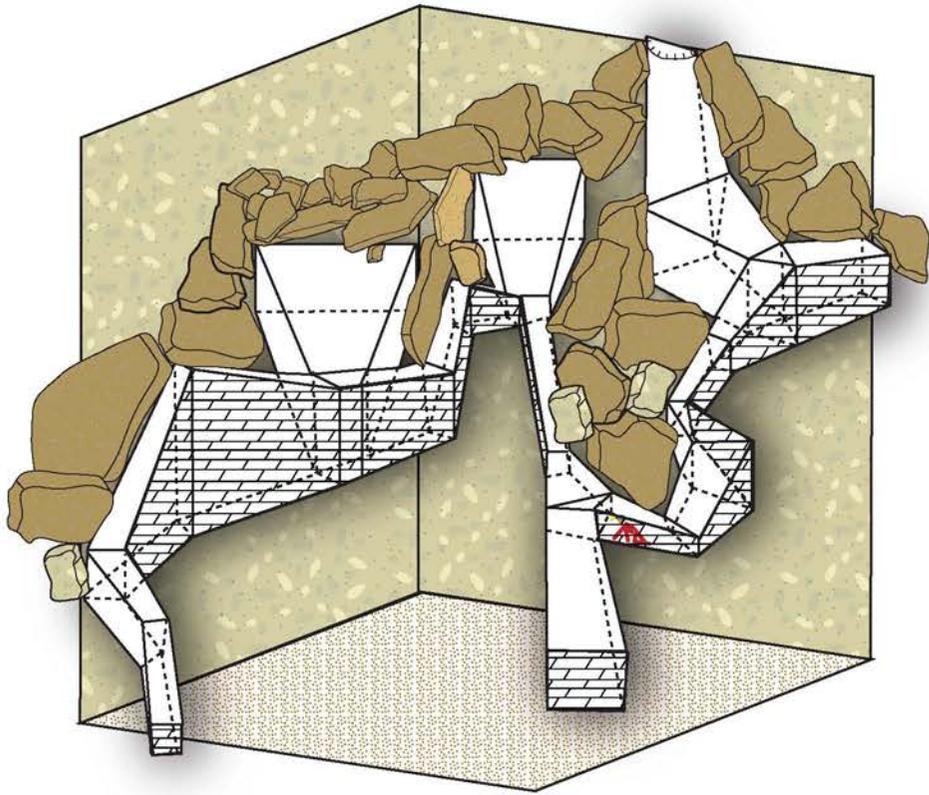
© 2010 Mapperhead (Edd Keudell)



### Map Legend

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| = Breakdown          | = Dirt/Sand        |
| = Ceiling height     | = Dolomite         |
| = Ceiling transition | = Floor transition |
| = Cross section      | = Ledge height     |
| = Depth below datum  | = Slope            |





**VICEG Cave**  
Snohomish County, Washington

Profile and 3D Views

# Work trip to Colorado

## Summer of 2009

By Jacob Earl

My job as a surveyor entails that I travel occasionally. This last summer the company that I work for landed a big job in Colorado with Williams Natural gas Pipeline. Working out of a town called Rangeley, in Northwestern Colorado. The area that we were working was covered with juniper, sage brush, and lots of sandstone and sand. The area is rich with petroglyphs, which are very neat to see. Some of them had color and were still very well preserved.

One of our days off I headed out towards Dinosaur National Monument to see the fossils they have there. On my way out there along the side of the freeway was a somewhat deep canyon with a couple big openings which appeared to be caves.



*This is a picture of one of the rock shelters from a distance. Photo by Jake Earl*

I just had to go down there and see what was there. I parked in a small pull off on the side of the road and heading down the side of the canyon towards the; what appeared to be a cave. I got to the first one that I thought was a cave, but turned out to be a huge shelter,

almost 200 to 300 feet wide, and in some spots almost 100 feet deep.



*Here's a picture from inside the rock shelter. Photo by Jake Earl*

The floor was completely covered with sand, and there were some neat solution formations on the ceiling; which would mean that canyon gets a lot of water at certain times of the year.



*Solution carving in the ceiling. Photo by Jake Earl*

I headed down the canyon looking for openings on the way to the next big shelter. I found a small opening which appeared to go back a ways, but I did not enter it because I was alone and who knows what may be hiding inside.



*Some neat crystallization in the ceiling. Photo by Jake Earl*



*One of the vertical shafts in the shelter. Photo by Jake Earl*



*Small Cave in the canyon. Photo by Jake Earl*

I reached the second big shelter which was just about as big as the lost. The floor was covered with sand, and a few spots there with vertical shafts that went up to darkness.



*Here's a picture of a small opening on the side of the canyon. Photo by Jake Earl*

All in all this was a fun stop on my day off in Colorado. Here are a few pictures of the petro glyphs.



*This is the petro glyphs of Kokapelli. Photo by Jake Earl*

# Cave Ridge Bop

Saturday, July 24, 2010

By Michael McCormack

I decided at the spur of the moment to head up Cave Ridge. OK, that isn't really true. What happened is I thought it was the first weekend in August and so I had arranged with my friend Rick to head up to the caves with me for his first ever cave trip thinking there would be other people there. That's the kind of friend I am, don't know if you'll like caving? Let's go up the ridge, we'll know for sure after that.

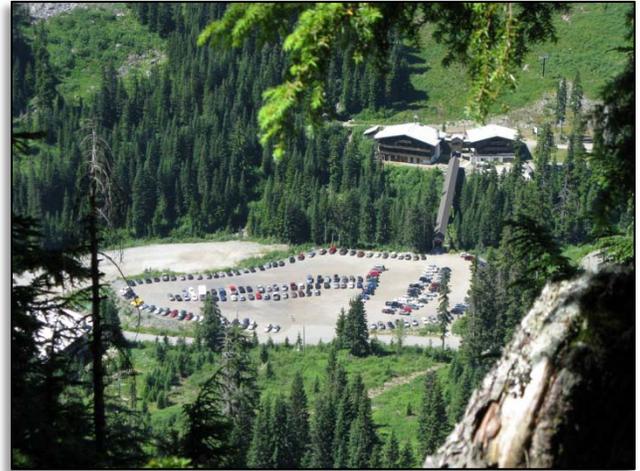
So in the spirit of all good cave trips, we started it with a party the night before. Though neither of us drank especially much, neither of us is a young as we used to be. After leaving the party a little early (10:30), I warned that I was waking up at 5am and I'd see him after that. He was staying at the party.

Five AM came and went, but I got up somewhere around 5:30. Packed all of the necessary gear and by seven I called him and warned him I was coming. We didn't set any land speed records on this trip, but we were at the trail head at 10:50. The sheer number of cars at the trailhead was astounding. I have never seen more than 10 or 15 cars at the trailhead, and today it looked like opening day at Alpentel, fortunately most had alternate destinations.

The trail was hard and hot, not something you want to do hung over. The biting flies were out and I had forgotten the bug spray. But it turned out that they were attracted to my sunscreen, and Rick wasn't overly bothered by them. If you forget the bug spray, remember to be the LESS tasty hiking companion.

By 1pm, we were at the top, and I showed Rick around the ridge. The ridge was mostly clear of snow with Hellhole, Cascade, Lookout and Danger all being open and clear. There was a hand line in

the back door of Hellhole. I almost removed it,



*The Parking lot at the trailhead was packed, but we only saw 2 people on the way up, and 3 on the way down. Photo by Michael McCormack.*

but we decided against it, as someone may have felt it was necessary and actually be in the cave. There was some snow on the east side of the ridge towards Danger, but it was melting fast. The area is starting to become heavily impacted by visitation. There are fire rings everywhere, and it seems that the number of visitors to the area is increasing dramatically. Sadly it appears that there is not a "Leave No Trace" ethos in place.

Upon returning from the tour, we prepared for entry into Cascade. Since we were effectively alone on the ridge, and Rick was going in for the first time, I was being especially cautious. Having prepped him during the morning, I knew what gear he had, and though it was at the bottom of acceptable, I still felt it was safe. I ran down many of the safety aspects of caving, as we prepared. By the time I was done we were both broiling in full cave regalia. 85 degrees doesn't seem that hot until your standing in full polypro and nylon caving suit, then you realize it's hot enough to cook lobsters given a long enough timeframe, and the right gear.

We jumped into the cave to get out of the heat. Cascade was deliciously cool. The entrance to Cascade however has been marred by the presence of an overly large sisal hand line, and lots of visitation. Considering the large number of people that are starting to visit the ridge, I would suggest that this hand line be removed. It is unnecessary, leaves biological debris in the cave, and lines block the easy climb.

Someone had tied off a nylon string to the hand line, further adding to the confusion of ropes and knots. We immediately decided to follow the string line to the end and remove the debris. Looking around the seriously out of date sign was still in place and the register container, although empty, was still in place.

Cascade is a popular cave, and I would like to see four things done to help us manage the current visitation, and determine the appropriate management technique should this area become wilderness.

1. Removal of all hand lines, the bolted steel cable should remain in place.
2. Update the sign.
3. Replace the register with an updated register asking useful information.
4. Add a light register to Cascade Cave below the twilight zone.

The hand lines are unnecessary, and offer a false sense of security for unprepared cavers. If you need a hand line, bring it. The Cascade Grotto should never leave ropes at the first drop of a cave, removal should in my opinion be standard policy.

Rick had never been caving, but it only took 10 minutes before he figured out that caving was something that he wanted to continue to do. We explored Cascade vigorously, looking in nooks and crannies, trying to understand all aspects of the way that the cave was laid out. There is flowstone in Cascade. Not a lot, but it is pure white, and quite beautiful. Delicate, bright white soda straws can be found by the observant, though they are only a fraction of an inch.

Nearby, flowstone of a different color exists, decorating the interior of a small flute.

We explored many parts of the cave, familiarizing ourselves with the general layout and letting Rick learn about the different requirements of a caving environment. At one point, I asked him if he wanted to check out a squeeze. After initially checking it out, he decided that the best choice was

to leave it be.



*Delicate Flowstone and box work decorate hidden areas of the cave. Photo by Michael McCormack.*

Of course, trying to show off, I decided that I would show him how easy it was. There were obvious signs of people pushing into this area of the cave, and after testing I thought “No problem”.

Well getting in was no problem, but the rocks were definitely arranged into a one way configuration, three rocks with points all pointing inward. I didn't catch that until I was already all the way in. After exploring, I made an attempt to clear the most painful rock and when that failed, just tried to push hard and get out. Eventually I made my way through. While I spent the 10 or so minutes struggling with that part of the cave, I explained about panic in small spaces, and how it made you bigger. Talked calmly about a meditative state of mind that helped reduce the struggle and push through the squeeze (all while trying to calm the momentary panic and breathing calmly to make myself as small as possible.)

After getting through we got to the hairy climb down and decided that without a hand line here we weren't going to attempt it. The climb is actually quite simple, but it's highly exposed and the footing is tricky if you don't know where it's at. We settled in here and had a bite to eat before heading back out.

As we exited, I grabbed the end spool of the string and started to wind it up. The owners of the idiot-line were kind enough to leave the handle and the spool in the cave so I had something to wind it up

into. We exited the cave with no difficulty, and entered the blast furnace of an afternoon.

Upon existing, I noticed that three people were about to enter Lookout cave and decided to do an impromptu survey. Of the three, only one had ever been caving before, and he “Caves on the ridge every year”. They were all local and just headed on up. The caver in the group had no idea that there was organized caving and seemed surprised when I asked him if he had participated in organized caving. This is consistent with every other contact I have had on the ridge. For every Cascade Caver on the ridge, there is likely 4 NON-grotto members actually caving. This is particularly disturbing, since they are going in with sweatshirts and jeans, using bicycle helmets and not enough lights. At least this time, they were going into lookout.

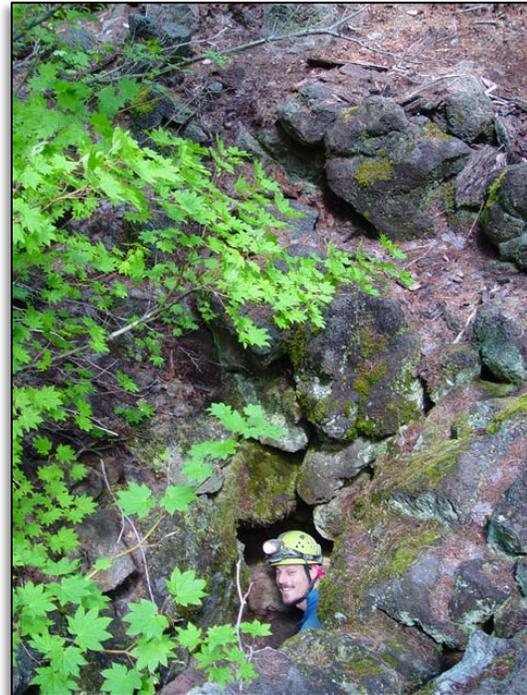
By the time we got off the mountain, an hour and a half later. We had to make a stop at the boulder field to get one of my favorite photographs so far this year. After the hike Rick understood why I had warned him repeatedly about Cave Ridge, we were sore, but we had a great time. The best news of all is that we’ll be headed up to the ridge again Sunday next week, the first weekend in August when everyone else is going to be there.

## New Discoveries in the Smokey Creek System

By Garry Petrie

During the summer of 2004, a friend from Colorado, Carl Bern wanted to visit the caves in the Trout Lake area and we decided to see the Smoky Creek System. Blair Petrie, Edd Keudell, Carl and I did a quick tour of Goose Cave and headed up slope. After passing Asher Cave, we came to a strange out cropping of rock just poking through the soil. I realized the rocks formed a linear line, like maybe the ledge over an entrance collapse of a cave. I began to dig and soon the exposed rock face interested the others into sharing shifts at the dig face. After about two hours, we reach a point

where instead of digging down, we were going underneath the rock face and into the cave. Breaking through we stampeded into the new cave. The cave consisted of two branches with interconnecting passages, we called it Stampede Cave and agreed to return to survey the new discovery.



(Editor note: As I remember, we had been digging on a potential cave upslope approximately 200 feet and had given up on it and were walking back down hill when Garry suggested we try digging along the cropping of rocks. While walking down to the rocks we intersected a small herd of cows that were free-ranging, startling them into running off, thus a “stampede”.)

We returned the next week with Bob Roe replacing Carl. We surveyed about a 1000 feet of nice walking passage, but at the down flow end the passage ceiling narrowed to the floor. Edd looked down the pancake passage and we dared him to push the crinkly lava floor beyond where we could see. Soon Edd disappeared, for a very long time, only to return from the way we had already come! He had managed to get through the tight crawl and made a connection with Asher Cave. Completing the survey

of Asher Cave, to total length of Stampede-Asher was 2200 feet.



"Wait a second let me get a waypoint first!"

"Oh yah, it goes! And, it's walking passage!"

*Edd reports to Carl that there's going passage.  
Photo by Garry Petrie.*

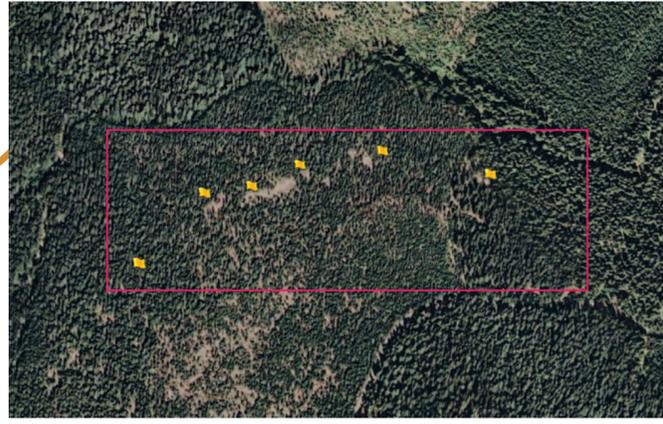
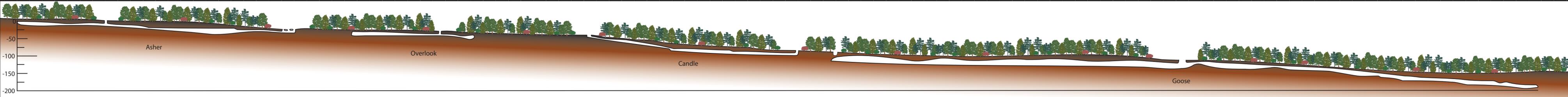
(Editor note: My recollection of the event is the connection was made during the survey of Asher Cave. Blair Petrie and I were making a shot up a parallel side passage to one Bob and Garry were surveying and came to a very low and wide passage approximately three feet above the floor. We surveyed our way through and had gone a significant distance when I recognized the arrangement of breakdown and shape of the passage as being from Stampede Cave.)

We decided to re-survey completely the entire Smoky Creek System. First was Overlook Cave, which the earlier pioneers only marginally noted on the old map of the system, some 820 feet long.

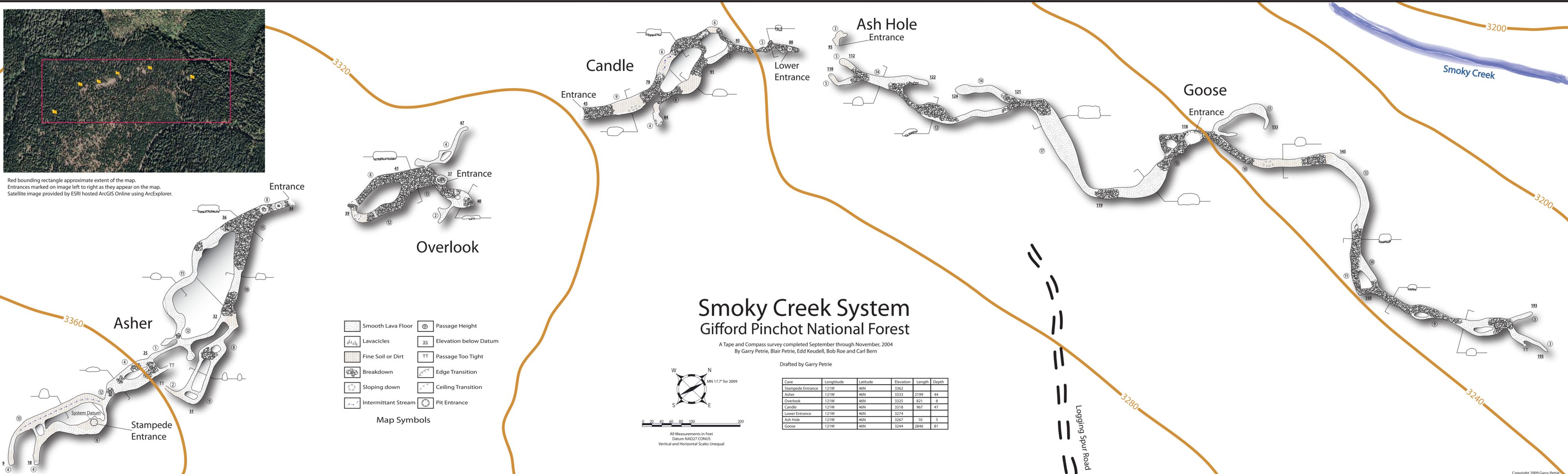


Next was Candle Cave. The old map indicates a skylight maybe a 100 feet in, but we could not locate, rather we found a nice chamber with lavacicles. Toward the end as indicated by the old map, I could see passage through the massive breakdown. Crawling on the heavy blocks, pushing aside a dozen or so rocks along the way, I advanced 100 feet past the old end. Amazingly, I reached a skylight with a large log blocking the way. Calling the team forward, we manage to undermine the soil under the log and pull it into the cave. Clearing the log allowed us to exit the new lower entrance of Candle Cave. The new surveyed length of the cave is now 970 feet.

The fall passed into the upcoming winter with our last survey trips in November. Our re-survey of Goose Cave yielded no new discoveries, but the satisfaction of finishing the entire system shown on the old 1974 map by Jim Nieland. We measured Goose at 2850 feet, giving a system total of 6843 feet. We revisited Ash Hole and concluded its dirt fill floor is unlikely to connect to the upper end of Goose. Left for an adventurous caver is pushing the breakdown at the lower entrance of Candle for a connection with the upper end of Goose. The distance on the map is less than 100 feet, who is up to the challenge?



Red bounding rectangle approximate extent of the map.  
Entrances marked on image left to right as they appear on the map.  
Satellite image provided by ESRI hosted ArcGIS Online using ArcExplorer.



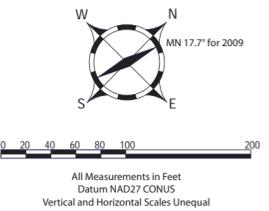
- Map Symbols**
- Smooth Lava Floor
  - Lavacicles
  - Fine Soil or Dirt
  - Breakdown
  - Sloping down
  - Intermittent Stream
  - Passage Height
  - Elevation below Datum
  - Passage Too Tight
  - Edge Transition
  - Ceiling Transition
  - Pit Entrance

# Smoky Creek System

## Gifford Pinchot National Forest

A Tape and Compass survey completed September through November, 2004  
By Garry Petrie, Blair Petrie, Edd Keudell, Bob Roe and Carl Bern

Drafted by Garry Petrie



Cave	Longitude	Latitude	Elevation	Length	Depth
Stampede Entrance	121W	46N	3362		
Asher	121W	46N	3333	2199	44
Overlook	121W	46N	3325	821	8
Candle	121W	46N	3318	967	47
Lower Entrance	121W	46N	3274		
Ash Hole	121W	46N	3267	10	5
Goose	121W	46N	3244	2846	81

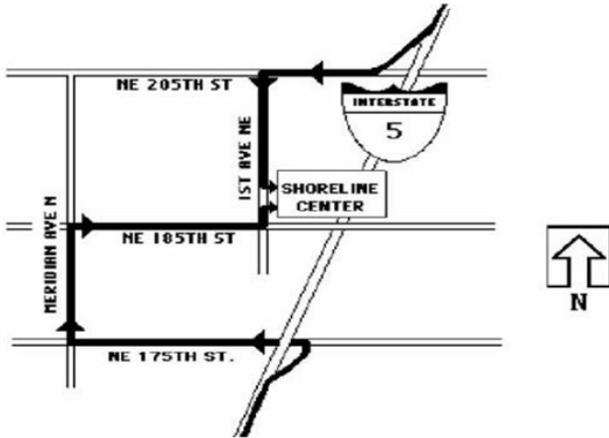
**MEETINGS:**

Regular grotto meetings are held monthly at 7:00 pm on the third Friday at the Shoreline Community Center, Hamlin room. 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 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. Enter the building on the southwest corner and find the Hamlin Room.



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