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AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS:

CAIRN – CHOUTEAU – DAEDALUS – KCAG – LEG – LOG – MCKC - MMV

MSM – MVG – OHG – PEG – SEMO – SPG - Stygian

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Missouri Speleological Survey - President's Message July 2025

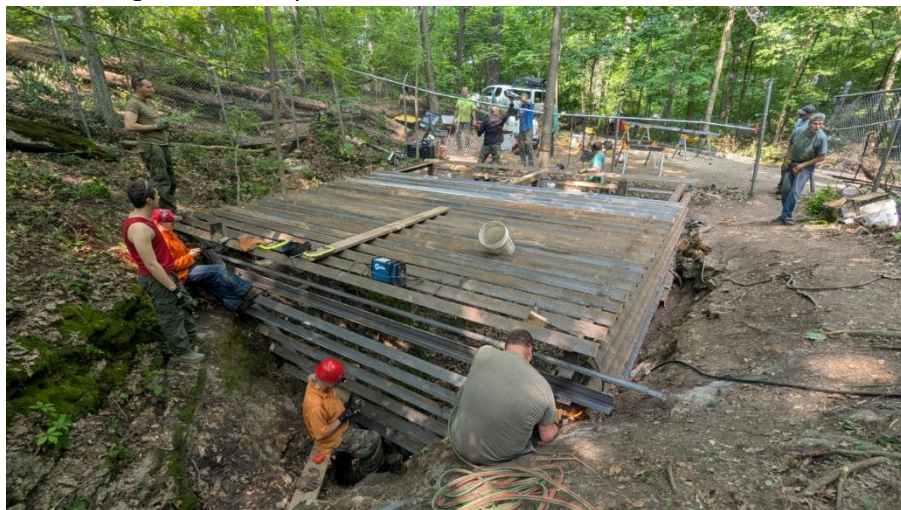
by Dan Lamping

Cavers are awesome and our community is strong. In late May, cavers converged upon Pleasant Valley Nature Preserve to install a bat friendly gate on Pleasant Valley Cave in Jefferson County. While cave gates are rarely a good idea, they're often unfortunately necessary. Access to the cave will eventually be open to vertically proficient cavers through our sister organization, the

Missouri Caves and Karst Conservancy (MCKC). The cave is best known for the bat sticker design, used by cavers across the U.S., which was created in 1968 to help protect this cave. Over 600 man hours and 17,000 lbs. of steel went into building the gate, with a lot of behind-the-scenes orchestration to boot. Kudos to Alex Litsch for drawing the gate plans, Mark Jones for sharing his expertise, and Tony Schmitt for leading the project and seeing it all through. All three of these guys were there each day along with a whole cast of volunteers. For the past several years, MCKC has expanded their role in the management and protection of caves and karst in Missouri due to having strong, committed

leadership. We tip the hat to you and are grateful for what you do.

I'm hopeful that we're going to experience better fortune with our next meeting than we did for the last, which had to be cancelled due to heavy rains and regional flooding around the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Our next meeting is scheduled to be held on October 12, in Boone



County, to be held along with the MCKC meeting. Note, this is a date change from the previous date published in the last *Liaison*. Our plan is to camp for the weekend, starting Friday night at Cooper's Landing on the banks of the Missouri River. Cooper's Landing is a private campground. We have reserved the northern cluster of camp sites. We are aiming to focus on two different projects. One is to remove the remains of a former tour cave operation from Rocheport Cave and the other is to expand upon our knowledge of caves along the Missouri River in the region. Rocheport Cave is a closed cave, owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and is home to a sizeable bat

population. We are working with both MDC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in planning this project. The goal will be to remove old hand rails, wiring, and a bridge. The cave is a sizeable 3,000 ft. of passage with much of it large, walking height. We are also hoping to send cavers out onto the Katy Trail by bike to better document caves along the Missouri River, accessed via the trail. This is in support of a project to gain greater knowledge of caves along the I-70 corridor. A major construction project is about to begin to widen the interstate. As a result, valuable bat habitat will be impacted, so a limited supply of funding was made available to support getting faunal records and better define the caves within the impacted region with cartographic surveys.

Look for a sign up to be shared sometime in September along with further details. In the meanwhile, save the date. It should be a good time of caving and camaraderie.

Files Report for July 1, 2025 by Ken Grush. If you have **new information** on any Missouri caves, my email address is slak@grush.org . We need your help to improve the database and make it more complete. I can and do work with Facebook entries, but for information or photos to be incorporated I need to be “private messaged” with the cave name and county. **Matt Bloes sent:** -An email with 4 Faunal records for 3 caves in Perry Co. **Jim Cooley sent:** -A new map for Joe Cave in Camden Co. The upper level of the cave has finally been added to the map, cave length (CL=960 ft, CD=20 ft); length more than doubled. **Nathan Curran sent:** -Two maps for Bainey (aka Chimney) Spring Cave (CL=29 ft) in Washington Co. and for Thermometer Cave (CL=164 ft) in Madison Co. -A college report he did on the sinkhole plain at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis Co. Among the 54 sinkholes he examined, he high graded 11 as, at least, leads and one he thought should be a cave. **Scott House sent:** -A map of Little Archway Cave (CL=32) in Texas Co. -About 43 modifications to the Main Table of the database, adding comments about cultural resource, geology, hydrology, directions and descriptions for (primarily) Pioneer Forest, the LAD properties in Shannon Co. -4 maps for Shannon Co.: Glory Crawl (CL=56), Thurston (CL=92), Top Shelf (CL=85) Caves and Top Shelf Shelter (CL=41). **Mark Jones sent:** -(Via Scott House) 165 Faunal Records mostly in Shannon Co., but also including Dent, Jefferson and Carter Counties, for 53 caves overall. There were of course then 53 Use Monitoring and 55 cave Narratives. **Candace Kovacs sent:** -Over 100 photos of Carroll Cave in Camden Co. -400 photos of Skaggs Cave in Pulaski Co., along with 6 Faunal records. 170 photos/videos of Joe Cave in Camden Co. **Mike Kovacs sent:** -A new map for Stalactite Cave (CL=184, CD=32) in Greene Co. He included survey notes, LIDAR 3D model, ceiling height map and Walls data. The new map includes a profile which the previous “vintage” map did not display. **Dan Lamping sent:** -An updated map on a cave in Crawford Co., now at almost 9000 ft. **Joe Light sent:** -Three maps of the City of St. Louis showing proximity of infrastructure to sinkholes. An analysis that he created. **Andrew Mayer sent:** -3 new maps of Moccasin (CL=21), Short Dig (CL=27) and Trepidation (CL=25) Caves in Texas Co. **Ben Miller sent:** -A final map of Mosquito Squadron Pit Cave (CL=249, CD=152) in Barry Co. **Kohl Mitchell sent:** -5 maps of Easter Egg Spring, (CL=95), Obstacle Course Pit (CL=44), Rubicon Canyon (CL=34), Wet Willy Spring (CL=115) and Xtreme Recon Pit (CL=44) Caves in Ralls Co. -3 more maps for 4 caves: Rimstone Mound (CL=26), Tight Trickle Tube (CL=33), Right Fork (CL=42), and Left Fork (CL=42) Cave; all in Callaway CO. -1 map for Pike Co.: Shale Spring Cave (CL=74). -1 map for Shannon Co.: Wine Cave (CL=136). -An updated map of Wicczorek Cave (CL=1297). **Marissa Schorr sent:** -15 Faunal records, 2 Use Monitoring forms and a Trip Report for both Pittman and Little Pittman Caves in Laclede Co. - Map of Duplex (CL=25) and Dead Armadillo (CL=41) Caves in Shannon Co. **Shawn Williams sent:** -A narrative for a survey trip to Fourteen Forty Cave, 11 Faunal records, and a collection of photos and videos from team members (Nathan Curran, Jessica Shew and Shawn’s).

Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG). **May 8th** --Kartchner Caverns (near Tucson, Arizona) tour by Jon and Alicia Beard while on vacation. They saw the Rotunda and Throne Rooms. This is a state park developed specifically to protect the cave from unauthorized human disturbance. Bruce Herschend of Talking Rock Cavern helped to design the surface trails, and Tom Aley of the Ozark Underground Laboratory did some groundwater studies of the area to prevent contamination of the water in the cave. **May 18th** -- Blanchard Springs Caverns (of Stone County, Arkansas) tour by Jon and Alicia Beard, Eric Hertzler, and Mike Wood (the latter two are employees of Bridal Cave). They took the Dripstone Tour, still one of the most spectacular cave passages in the Midwest. Later, the three of them took the Bull Shoals Caverns tour.--Report by Jon Beard (submitted by Max White).

Lake Ozarks Grotto (LOG). **June 10th** – Ken Long did a program at our meeting, showing years of caving history. The Spring issue of the *Speleograph* was published by Ken. **June 17th** – Ken Long & Klaus Leidenfrost worked at Goodwin, mowing and weedeating the property for about 4 hours. **July 8th** – Gary Zumwalt did a program at our meeting, very old slides shown on a very old Montgomery Ward slide projector. – Alberta Zumwalt

Kansas City Area Grotto (KCAG). **May 3rd**: Bill Gee led a Carroll Cave trip consisting of Mike and Candace Kovacs, Shane McCurdy, Jack Rufener and Jerel Waters to service the rescue cache in upstream Thunder River. The complete trip report, written by Mike Kovacs, is on the MCKC website. They entered Carroll Cave via the silo, proceeded to the Round Room, the SLUG Cairn, and ultimately

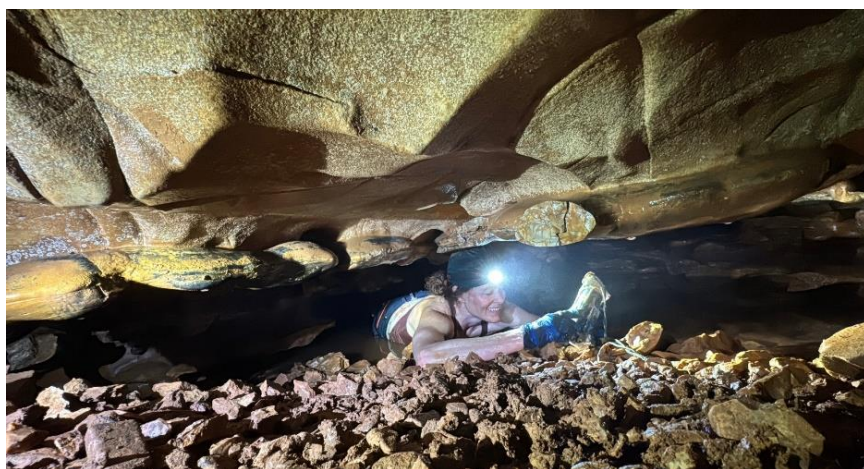


Buzzards-in-Waiting in Elisha Estes Cave

to the Rescue Cache at/near the Breakdown Barrier. They removed defective lighters and old matches in the rescue cache which were replaced with new lighters and matches in dated, vacuum sealed bags. Time in cave was 6.5 hours. **May 17th**: Jim Cooley and Ray Petersen met with the new landowners of Spring Cave (BEN-007) and Flippen Cave (BEN-009). The introduction to the new Spring Cave landowner was facilitated by our old friend Bill Drefs, now on the Board of Directors of the Forbes Lake of the Ozarks Landowners' Association, who is the owner of Booger Allen Cave (BEN-006). Survey efforts in BEN-007 and BEN-009 are on-going. **May 18th**: Jim Cooley showed Ray Petersen the state of the survey in Robbers Cave (BEN-011), and then Ray and Jim set all stations in Limb Line Cave (BEN-056). This would have gone better with wetsuits. **May 21st**: Jim and Julie Cooley checked boat navigation to and the entrance of Spring Cave (BEN-007)

and Elisha Estes Cave (BEN-004), from a boat. BEN-004 is rumored to be the front entrance to Robbers Cave (BEN-011). **May 23rd**: Jim and Julie Cooley returned to Elisha Estes Cave (BEN-004) and checked for bat activity in this known gray bat cave. A small area of concentrated guano consistent with 85 bats was found. No bats were seen. We did see four turkey buzzards, two of whom had not left the egg yet. **May 25th**: Jim Cooley led a team of Mike & Candace Kovacs, Sarah Peterson and Jessica Wilson to do a QC check on the remap of Joe Cave (CAM-022), after which we visited with the landowners at their nearby home. **Jun 5th**: Jim & Julie Cooley's capacity for caving was severely compromised when the Batvan was stolen out of their driveway, on the night before they were to leave on a 12-day expedition. The trip had to be canceled, as the theft netted much of their caving

and camping gear, and all of their vertical kit. As Jim had anticipated, the Batvan was located and recovered by the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department 22 days later – at 10:30 p.m., on the night before they were to leave on the *rescheduled* 12-day expedition. Most of the caving, camping and vertical gear was still in it. It had apparently been abandoned within two days of the theft, after the thieves realized that caving, camping and vertical equipment doesn't generate much enthusiasm at the pawn shop. **Jun 28th:** Jim Cooley, Bill Gee, Mike Kovacs, Shane McCurdy, MDC biologist Katherine Bouska, and Peter Schnegelberger sketched part of the 336 feet of line plot in the main passage of Logger's Lead Cave, which we are now pretty sure is Chrisco Bank Cave (SHN-511). Ms. Bouska and Mike Kovacs also did a comprehensive bio-inventory of this cave. This adventure was complicated by heavy rain, which made the tight, muddy vertical entrance very slippery and extremely challenging to negotiate. **Jun 30th:** Jim Cooley, Bill Gee, Shane McCurdy and Peter Schnegelberger continued the survey in the far (and low, and in Bill and Shane's case, quite wet) nether regions of a large, privately owned spring cave in Shannon Co. We also met with the landowner, who remains enthusiastic about our effort, even though we've been working on this one since 2016. **Jul 2nd:** Jim & Julie Cooley and Peter Schnegelberger surveyed a 28.8-foot cave that had recently been dug out with a backhoe by the landowners, in Shannon Co., in hopes that the eleven-foot-deep terminal pool would reveal going passage. The removal of the large mud plug didn't help much, as the now five-foot-deep terminal rise pool is at the same level as the big creek 30 feet away. The cave didn't get any longer. **Jul 4th:** Jim Cooley, Mike Kovacs, Jessica Wilson (SPG) and Peter Schnegelberger surveyed Hole in the Bluff Cave (CTR-107), which was 15 feet above the base of a bluff and 20 feet below the lip of the bluff. The team rappelled into the 23.8-foot-long cave from above, after using a chainsaw to remove a



Jessica Wilson explores newly opened spring passage.

dangerous fallen tree that was hanging over the bluff edge directly above the cave. Later that day, Mike, Jessica and Peter explored a spring cave that one of the area landowners gets his water from, while Cooley talked with the landowner. They discovered the gravel-bottomed constriction at the beginning of the right branch of the cave, which is where the spring issues from, had been enlarged by recent flooding. This allowed

Jessica to enter and investigate the low, wet lead, thereby extending the remit of this 247.4-foot-long cave for at least another 100 feet. Finally, that evening, Mike, Jessica and Peter conducted a comprehensive bioinventory of Midco Cave (CTR-008). **Jul 5th:** Jim Cooley, Mike Kovacs, Jessica Wilson and Peter Schnegelberger conducted a bioinventory of a recently mapped shelter, while Jim gave instruction on sketching using the survey notes from that effort. The team then proceeded up the bluff line along the creek to Tunnel & Tube Cave (CTR-104), where we set survey stations and took 14 survey shots in this two-entrance, 101.3-foot-long cave. **Jul 6th:** The team returned to Tunnel & Tube Cave and completed the survey of it.--Jim Cooley.

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Cave Files Committee: Scott House (Chairman), Ken Grush, Mick Sutton, Dan Lamping, and Jeffrey (Spike) Crews.

CALENDAR:

September 10th - Next Liaison deadline

October 12th – Fall MSS Meeting, Boone Co.

MSS Affiliate Fees were due in January. Please send check or money order for \$25.00 to: MSS Treasurer, Don Dunham, 6104 Valley Creek Ct., Imperial, MO 63052. **Still owing for 2025: OHG.** You might want to pay for 2025 & 2026 at this time.