

THE MSS LIAISON

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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 September 2025

by Dan Lamping

The Fall 2025 MSS & MCKC meetings and associated caving projects will be held the weekend of October 10-12 at Coopers Landing on the Missouri River in Boone County, Missouri. We will be focusing on two different projects on Saturday, October 11. **Project 1** will involve conducting bio inventories, getting written descriptions, and mapping of caves in the bluffs along the Missouri River and Katy Trail. Please plan to bring your bikes as many of the caves will be best accessed via the bike trail. Most of the caves don't appear to be very extensive so cavers won't need to wear full cave suits while peddling down the trail. This work will support a project to better document caves and cave life along the I-70 corridor with a particular focus on bats. **Project 2** will involve restoration of Rocheport Cave, a former commercial tour cave, also located off the bluffs along the Missouri River. This is a closed cave owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). This project is being planned in coordination with MDC and US Fish and Wildlife. The goal is to remove the remains of an old bridge and other debris left from the tour cave operation. Cavers will need to carpool as much as possible from Coopers Landing as parking will be limited. This project will require a hike and carrying heavy stuff out from the cave. Free camping and a group meal on Saturday night will be available for project participants. We have the north side of the campground reserved at Coopers Landing for Friday and Saturday nights. MSS & MCKC meetings will be held on site on Sunday with MSS meeting at 10:00 and MCKC meeting to follow. Arrive anytime on Friday. If planning to arrive Saturday morning, please arrive at Cooper's Landing by 8:00 AM. Scan the QR Code with your smartphone to sign up for the Saturday project caving or go to the URL

<https://bit.ly/MSSMCKCFALL25>.



Files Report for September 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. **Jim Cooley sent:** -8 cave Narratives, 150 Faunal records and 5 Use Monitoring forms for over 23 caves and 8 counties over the past 4 months. -New map of Tunnel and Tube Cave (CL=93 ft) in Carter Co. **Josh Cooper sent:** -A report of an ongoing study of cave formations in Crevice Cave in Perry Co. -An update on

Nelson Cave in Perry Co. Nelson is one of the many caves under Perryville; the entrance is being modified to facilitate drainage but will accommodate access too. -2 new caves for Perry Co.: Pilgrim and Boneyard Caves. Locations, photos, video and survey notes were included. -Confirmed a Perry Co. lead as a cave with 200 ft of survey so far; just entering the stream! Black Cat was first reported by Kent Bratton in 1988. -He sent two more going caves in the same area, he's waiting to see how many connect. So far, the team has collected almost 900 ft of survey on the first 3 caves. **Spike Crews sent:** -2 publications that described 5 of the diveable springs in Missouri, 3 maps were published.

Nathan Curran sent: -A description of a horse tooth found in St. Louis Co. cave. -3 updated locations and 2 entrance photos for caves in Cliff Cave Park in St. Louis Co. **Bill Gee sent:** -AN updated map of one of the Cave Spring Caves (CL=3372) in Shannon Co. **Ryan Hoffman sent:** -A map for Boyd Cave #1 (CL=630) in Dade Co. **Scott House sent:** -Map of River Cane Cave (CL=33) in Shannon Co. -A map update on a Marion Co. mapping project (see Mitchell). -Revised maps of Little Pine Bluff (CL=170), Little (CL=75), Little Domepit (CL=30), Peter Renfro (CL=227) Rockpile (CL=65), and Two Prong (CL=60) Caves in Shannon Co. **Mike Kovacs sent:** -A preliminary map/profile and video of his 3D model of Copperhead Pit in Greene Co. **Dan Lamping sent:** -25 Use Monitoring forms and 63 Faunal records for a week of work at Winona by MVG working in cooperation with CRF to monitor caves in Texas and Shannon Counties. **Joe Light sent:** -A trip narrative and a Faunal record for Cliff Cave in St. Louis Co. - A report on "another" subsiding street in St. Louis, this one happens to be very near the Kerzinger Cave is suspected to be located. -Accounts of another failure of the Benton Park Lake in St. Louis. The city is investigating options. (The thought is that this lake may drain toward Benton Park/ English Cave.) **Alex Litsch sent:** -A map update for Kohms Cave in Ste. Genevieve Co. Cave length is now at 6535 ft; latest cave over 1 mile in length. **Andrew Mayer sent:** -2 new caves for St. Francois Co.; no names yet but placeholder in the owner's name. Locations, photos, a brief description were supplied along with 3 fauna records. A map was sent later with one of the caves, now called Aubuchon Pit (CL=45, VR=31). -Survey data for 3 new entrances to a Perryville cave system. More work is needed to see if and/or how they connect and whether one can physically make that connection. (see also Cooper). -Survey notes for the 3 new Perry Co. caves being investigated (see Cooper). **Chad McCain sent:** -A Narrative for a survey trip to 10 Degree Pit in Ste. Genevieve Co. and one for a survey trip to Crevice Cave in Perry Co. -A report on a survey trip to Kohms Cave in Ste. Genevieve to document significant changes to the cave (drainage in the cave seems tied to nearby work in a limestone quarry). **Kohl Mitchell sent:** -Survey notes for a mapping project in Marion Co. (see House). -New map of Wrangler Sink (CL=458) in Ralls Co. -2 new caves, Pinnacle Tunnel and Buzzard Bluff Shelter in Monroe Co. **Bob Oaks sent:** -Entrance photos and location for his cave in Texas Co., Old Boone Cave. **Jen Sutherland sent:** -A report on a visit to Kohms Cave in Ste. Genevieve Co. (see also McCain). **Bobby Swain sent:** -A new cave with a detailed report, photos and map for St. Louis Co.; cave is called Roy's Coral Chasm. **Craig Williams sent:** -Data supporting caves and rockshelters in Stone Co. that have been published elsewhere.

Kansas City Area Grotto (KCAG). July 12th: Bill Gee led a Carroll Cave trip consisting of Marty Griffin, Mike Kovacs, Peter Schnegelberger, Josh White and SPG's Jessica Wilson for his semi-annual data collection from the data loggers scattered throughout the cave. The team entered the cave at 9:30 a.m. and exited at 3:15 p.m. Carroll Cave has six data loggers. There is a rain gauge on the silo. Five more loggers in the cave collect barometric pressure data, and four locations measure water

depth. All of the loggers also record temperature. The loggers collect a data point every 30 minutes. At that rate their memory fills up in about 7 months. Visiting them twice per year ensures that a full



Large shield and formations in SHN-511

year of data is reliably collected. Rainfall amounts of over an inch on Friday and in the wee hours Saturday, did not substantially raise Thunder River, so all sites were visited. After exiting, Bill looked at the data to see what had happened in the last six months. There were two major floods in April. The first went to about six feet in Thunder River. The second went over 14 feet. Downstream from Thunder Falls the level was close to 24 feet. That was a pretty impressive flood! There was quite a bit of flooding evidence in the stream. There were many new sand banks and most of the footprints were washed away. A more complete report of this trip is on the Carroll Cave website. **Jul**

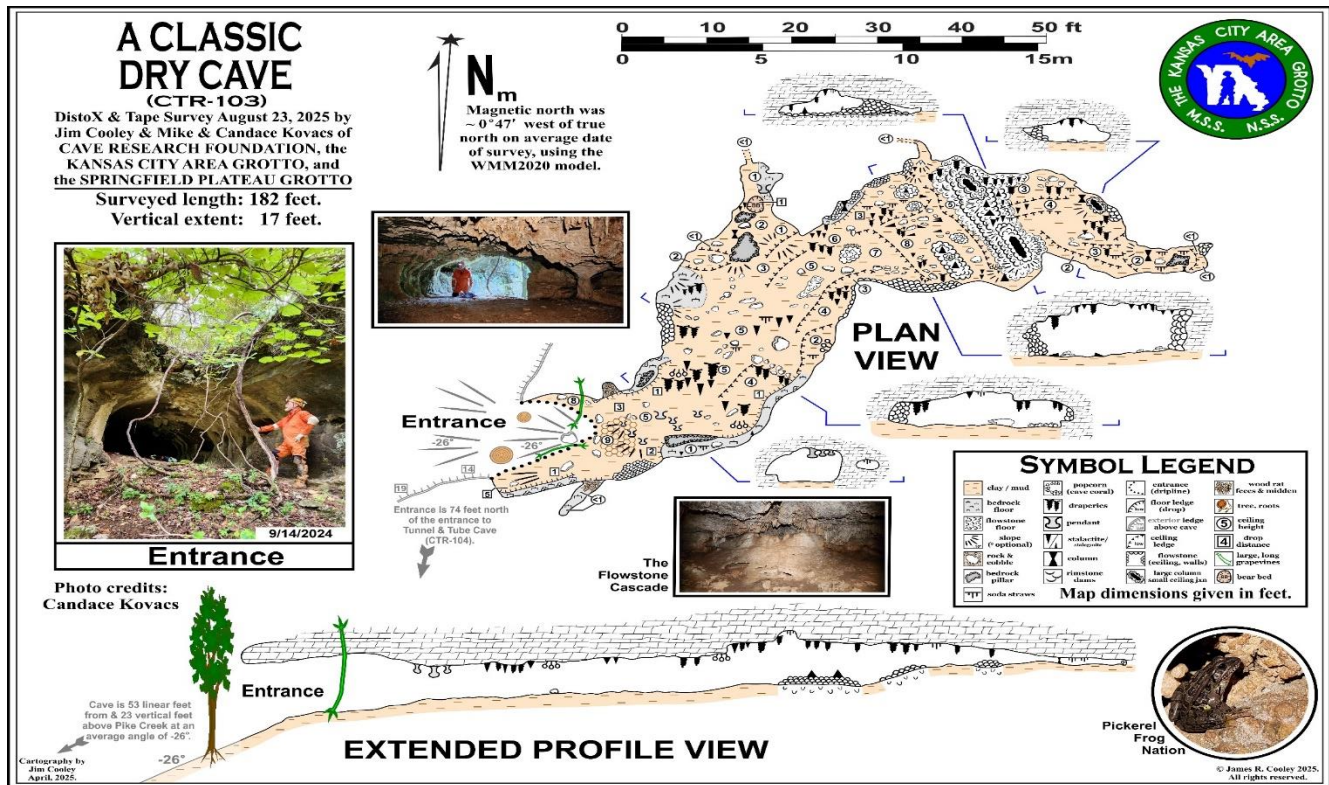
26th: Jim Cooley led a team consisting of Mike & Candace Kovacs, Chouteau Grotto's Jerel Waters, and Jessica Wilson back to a recently located cave on Missouri Department of Conservation's Sunklands Conservation Area, now identified as Chrisco Bank Cave (SHN-511). The team continued to push the survey of this (so far) 416-foot-long cave, which has a very small, extremely obscure entrance and is entered by rappelling down a short shaft. Jerel got his first experience sketching and did an *excellent* job. A second team consisting of Bill Gee, Peter Schnegelberger and Josh White continued the survey of a nearby long spring cave (3,666 feet at this point) on an adjacent private landowner. **Jul 27th:** Jim Cooley led a team consisting of Bill Gee, Mike & Candace Kovacs, Peter



Mike Kovacs dogs the frogs in CTR-103

Schnegelberger, Jerel Waters and Josh White back to the long spring cave, where the crew split into two parties, one which did exploration (setting stations) in a back, mazy section while the other sketched already-marked passage. Candace Kovacs pushed a low, tight passage that ended up intersecting a previously surveyed passage thought to be several hundred feet away, creating a large, unexpected loop closure. **Jul 28th:** Jim Cooley continued sketching on a resurvey of a long spring cave on a different landowner, while Bill Gee and Peter Schnegelberger set stations in a different passage of the cave. We have 1,346 feet in this one so far, with much more anticipated. **Jul 29th-**

31st: Jim Cooley led a team consisting of Peter Schnegelberger and Josh White to monitor caves on the Eleven Point Ranger District of the Mark Twain National Forest, in an area where some 800 to 1,000 free spirits had camped the week of July 4th during the annual Rainbow Family Gathering. Heat indices north of 100 degrees plus high humidity made this a challenging effort. Caves visited included ORE-068 Camp House Cave, ORE-095 Cropper Cave and spring, and a side trip to Camp House Spring. It turned out that the campers did NOT impact any of the caves, if indeed they even visited any of them. There was, one might add, a fairly significant law enforcement presence at the event, which may have kept folks out of the closed caves, which were marked as such. **Aug 23rd:** Jim Cooley and Mike Kovacs sketched CTR-103, A Classic Dry Cave, a 182-foot-long cave on a private landowner in Carter Co. Mike did most of the sketching, and did an *excellent* job. **Aug 25th:** Jim Cooley joined



Nathan Burton and cave owner Kevin Bright at Smallin Civil War Cave (CHR-006), a commercially operated show cave near Springfield, to design a bat-friendly cave gate to replace the existing substandard rebar gate that secures the off-trail section of the cave. Cooley will provide a design and materials estimate for a new gate. While there, we also visited



***Lithobates clamitans* in CTR-103**

nearby Sonrise Cave, where Cooley saw his first green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*) ever in a cave. **Sep 6th:** Jim Cooley led his trusty, highly talented team of Mike & Candace Kovacs and Jessica Wilson back to Carter Co., to complete the survey of privately owner CTR-100, Pennington's Spring Cave. This is the cave from which landowner Pennington draws his drinking water. This cave had originally been described by our enthusiastic, caver-friendly landowner as "a couple of little ol' holes that don't really amount to much." (Pennington also has directed us to 12 other caves previously unknown to the MSS). This 403-foot-long cave turned out to be a two-passage cavern with a 46-foot-wide, 16-foot-high entrance. On our last visit, we discovered that heavy spring rains had blown out enough gravel and cobble from the

right (wet) passage to allow Jessica to gain entrance. This passage is the source of Pennington's drinking water. This trip, Jessica and Candace donned wetsuits and completed a survey of the wet side using a DistoX and sketching on a cell phone using Topodroid software. Landowner Pennington said not to worry about making his drinking water a little cloudy, as that happens with every hard rain anyway. He just asked us not to poop in the spring passage. We assured him that we religiously followed the motto of the National Speleological Society, which is: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time – and *never, EVER* shit in your landowner's water supply." As an added bonus, Cooley saw his second green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*) ever in a cave,

in the dry-side passage. We didn't poop in that passage, either. **Sep 7th:** Cooley convinced the Mod Squad (the two Kovacs and Wilson) to transport a 40-foot extension ladder down Pike Creek on Dave Turley's property, to gain entrance to the newly discovered CTR-115, Honey Hole Cave (the girls named it). This 58.4-foot-long cave was located 20 feet up a sheer rock face under a five-foot-long bluff overhang, making the ladder mandatory. It had an active beehive in an alcove right beside the apparent entrance of the cave, adding some potential excitement to the survey effort. The bees did not dim the enthusiasm of the survey team one iota. It is not likely this cave had ever been entered before by humans, although the wood rats have crapped throughout it (not members of the NSS, apparently). To continue our theme for this weekend, which was "finding unusual frogs in caves," this grotto proved to be the home of a brilliantly cave-camouflaged, chameleonic Cope's gray tree frog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*), who had the cutest little suction cups on its piggy toes and a characteristic yellow stripe on his hind leg. Jessica and Candace also checked out CTR-031 Massey Cave, since we were already in the area and did have permission from the normally caver-averse private landowner.

--Jim Cooley



Hyla chrysoscelis in CTR-115.

Chouteau Grotto. Aug 2 - Rita Worden and Shawn Williams went into Onondaga Cave to hear a string duet concert and saw lots of old cavers. **Aug 10** - Kohl Mitchell, Sean Zimmerman and Jack Rufener completed the 118ft survey of Tower Cave (BNE-022) after being denied, due to possible rain, their continuing survey in Spring Cave (BNE-021 or WBBCW). **Aug 23** - Kohl, Preston Hunter and Jerel Waters completed the survey of Wrangler Sink, a new cave in Ralls Co. The surveyed passage totaled 458ft, with about 350ft of that through a low and grim water crawl. --Rita Worden



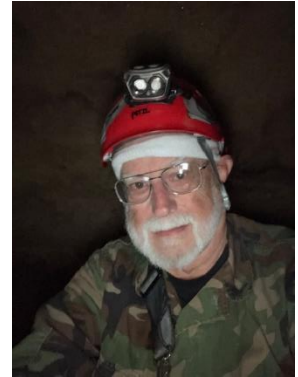
MSM Spelunkers. A big "THANK YOU" goes out to the members of the MSM Spelunkers Club for allowing me to fulfill a goal of mine. Several years ago, I wanted to end my "wild" caving career in the same cave where it all began, on my 80th Birthday. Well, Covid hit and everything fell apart. I jokingly said that I would have to wait until my 85th. That first cave was Rollins #2 on Sept. 24th, 1960 near Waynesville, MO.



Subsequently, I returned on several surveying trips and ended up being the Cartographer of the cave map. In 2015, at the NSS Convention in Waynesville, I had the honor of being selected to receive the Fellow Award in the NSS. Was Rollins #2 Cave the greatest cave? No! But my



caving career seemed to revolve about it. So, the last weekend in April (MVOR), I returned to fulfill my goal just 5 days short of my 85th birthday on May 1st. Upon leaving the cave, one of the young cavers asked, are we doing this again on the 90th??? Whoever went in a cave at 90 years of age? But, on second thought that is only five years away! I have been blessed in two ways, with



good health to allow me to make the trip and excellent caver friends that made the arrangements for completing this goal. A "Thank You" to all. --Richard F. Raber

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Research Committee -Dr. Robert Lerch, Dr. Michael Sutton, Bob Weck and Jeffrey Crews.

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

CALENDAR:

October 12th – Fall MSS Meeting, Boone Co.

November 5th – Next Liaison deadline

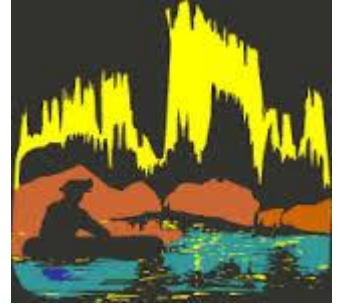
NOTE: MSS Affiliate fees of \$25 for 2025 were due in January. Not yet paid – OHG.

Missouri Speleological Survey

FALL Board Meeting Agenda – October 12, 2025

Cooper's Landing

11505 Smith Hatchery Rd, Columbia, MO 65203



Board meeting begins at 10:00 AM

Administrative Business

- Roll call – Officers and Board
- Secretary's Report and approval of last meeting's minutes – Alberta Zumwalt
- Liaison – Gary Zumwalt
- Treasurer's Report – Don Dunham
- *Missouri Speleology* – Don Dunham

Old Business

- Cave Files Committee

New Business

- Appointment of Bob Weck to replace Doug Gouzie on the MSS Research Council

Projects and Announcements

- Cave files / Database
- Agency Reports
 - *Mark Twain National Forest*
 - *Ozark National Scenic Riverways*
 - *Missouri Department of Conservation*
 - *State Parks*
 - Others
- Affiliate Organizations Project Reports
- Public Outreach

Next meeting

Adjournment