

THE MSS LIAISON

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 7-8

July - August 2026

AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS:

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

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

Distributed free on the MSS website: <http://www.mospeleo.org/>

Subscription rate for paper copies is \$10.00 per year. Send check or money

order made out to the Missouri Speleological Survey to the Editor, Gary Zumwalt, 1681 State Route D, Lohman, MO 65053. Telephone: 573-782-3560.



Missouri Speleological Survey - President's Message September 2026

by Dan Lamping

Seventy years ago, in September of 1956, the first gathering of the Missouri Speleological Survey occurred. This wasn't a formal meeting, but rather it was a group of cavers from different parts of the state who had converged upon the entrance of Carroll Cave, CAM001, in Camden County, Missouri, to begin mapping. Along with their mapping efforts they documented the cave life and paleo remains found inside. Here we are, 70 years later, and we're still mapping in Carroll Cave and we're still gathering as cavers from across the state to work towards a common, shared objective and to expand upon our understanding of Missouri caves and karst. That same year, the Missouri Geological Survey published J Harlen Bretz's pivotal book, *Caves of Missouri* and for all it inspired, there was very much awareness of the fact that *Caves of Missouri* was woefully incomplete and was merely a start. Hence the creation of the MSS and the organization's early efforts at publishing in *Missouri Speleology*. So here we are, 70 years later with this as our origination's mission.

- A. To locate, record, conserve, and research the caves, of the state of Missouri
- B. To provide a permanent, non-profit non-sectarian, cooperative organization for the pursuit of speleology.
- C. To disseminate knowledge of caves of Missouri through publications, conducting public forums, lectures and other similar programs.
- D. To establish and nurture a professional atmosphere among Missouri's speleologists.
- E. To cooperate with all individuals and organizations consistent with the forgoing purpose.

As an organization, it is imperative to have a mission and to have structures in place to help accomplish that mission. While there's always room for growth and improvement, and there may be differing interpretations for what implementation looks like, it is the task of individuals to work towards fulfilling that goal. Recently, I am reminded that while systems and cultures may work well for some, they don't always work for all. With that in mind, if ever you've wondered how you can play a greater role or how you can get access to data you'd like to have so that you can expand upon it and contribute, please, reach out to those people whom you see listed in Ken Grush's Cave Files report in each *Liaison* to find out how it's worked out for them. Or, ask your grotto's director, or the officers of the MSS. Better yet, reach out directly to the MSS Cave Files Committee. Ours is a reciprocal system. Those who submit get what they need. But, getting started can sometimes seem daunting. Don't be afraid to ask for help or guidance.

Consistent with that goal of disseminating knowledge of caves of Missouri through publications, conducting public forums, lectures and other similar programs, the MSS was asked a few

months ago if we would be willing to do some talks on Missouri caves at different branches of St. Louis County libraries. I agreed to do so and volunteered to present on Mapping Historic Brewery Cave in the City of St. Louis. This is always a popular topic for area residents since it blends science, local history and natural history into a single package. I gave a total of four sold out presentations with plans to do another in November. To begin the presentation, I provided context on what constitutes a “cave” in Missouri along with an overview of the MSS. It was great to see so much interest in the topic and in our organization. In appreciation for the talks the St. Louis County library sent the MSS a \$150 honorarium.

Also consistent with our organization’s purpose, specifically nurturing a professional atmosphere among speleologists, I attended the National Speleological Society’s (NSS) Convention in Corydon, Indiana. Three Missouri maps were represented in the Cartographic Salon, with one appropriately being the U1 sheet of Carroll Cave, which includes T-Junction, Thunder Falls, the Backdoor Entrance, and UL2 / Convention Hall (so named because it was first explored at the 1968 NSS Convention held in Springfield, Missouri.) The map won a blue ribbon (Merit Award), despite not having a profile. But even more notable was the entry of two St. Louis County cave maps by Nathan Curran, one of which won a green ribbon (Honorable Mention). It’s great to see the amazing work of a young Missouri cartographer on display, highlighting the discovery, exploration, mapping, and documentation of new caves still happening in our state. Also, while at Convention, I attended the State Cave Survey Roundtable, sponsored by the Kentucky Speleological Survey (KSS). Other states represented included Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, California, Wisconsin and perhaps others. Discussions were had around data access and how open or restricted each survey is with their data, along with the pros and cons of each. It seems we’re generally more like Virginia and what California aspires to be as they progress.

Our next meeting will be held the weekend of September 11-13 at Cuivre River State Park. Caving will take place Saturday, September 12, and the MSS board meeting will take place Sunday, September 13, which serendipitously also happens to be UNESCO’s International Day of Caves and Karst. Cave trips may also be arranged for Friday, September 11 if enough people express interest. Cave trips will leave at 9 AM on Saturday, and the MSS meeting will be held at 10:00 AM on Sunday. Cave trips will focus on survey in Mayes, Lost and Dwyer Caves, all of which are large caves with multiple different passage types to suit different preferences. Free camping at the Cuivre River State Park Special Use Campsite A will be available Friday and Saturday nights. Showers and bathrooms will be available on-site. This site can accommodate tent camping and small camper vans, but not large RVs or travel trailers - participants bringing those will have to reserve a spot in the general campground. We have access to the campsite beginning Friday at 3 PM - arrive anytime after that. Free meals will be provided for attendees. Dinner will be served Friday and Saturday evenings, and breakfast will be served Saturday and Sunday mornings. If you’re planning to camp, cave, or partake in the meals, please [click this link](#) and fill out this Google Form. We will also have some free MSS stickers available to commemorate our 70th anniversary.

Lastly, this will be my final meeting as MSS president. Having served for the past 11 years, I have had the privilege of being MSS president for nearly ¼ of my life. It feels good to be stepping down with organization in such a good



place, free of controversy and full of opportunity to move forward into the future. I'd like to thank my fellow officers, Alberta Zumwalt, Don Dunham, and Kohl Mitchell, as well as my fellow Cave File Committee members. Alberta has served the MSS longer than I've been alive. While I've been the president, she's been the one who's promoted continuity of elections and appointments, printed agendas, and generally kept me on track all while providing me solid words of encouragement along the way. Don's role as treasurer and editor of *Missouri Speleology* has been invaluable. His wisdom, calm demeanor and good humor have made being president a relatively easy task. Simply put, we have been fortunate to have such steady personnel overseeing the affairs of our organization. Eventually, their shoes will also have to be filled, and when that time comes, they'll be big shoes to fill, indeed. MSS vice president Kohl Mitchell has agreed to run for the office of president. I can't think of anyone better suited to lead the organization and hopefully breathe some new life into it. I still intend to be a strong supporter and active cooperator of the MSS and will continue to serve on the Cave Files Committee, along with updating the website and responding to data requests and inquiries from the public provided the next president so wishes. Lastly, many thanks to all of those who've had confidence in my leadership over the past decade. It's meant a lot.

Files Report for August 25, 2026 - By Ken Grush. Update on "mapped" caves in our database: we currently have 4945 mapped/sketched caves in our 70th year of the MSS; to be specific we have 4945 different accession numbers with at least one drafted map or sketch. Some sketches are ready for drafting; and the spectrum range includes memory sketches. In some cases, sketches have already been drafted just to demonstrate that all sketches are not created equal! Furthermore, we do have more map records (almost 7300 separate documents) than accession numbers; that is many caves have more than one map. 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. Report seems light this time around, sorry if I missed adding your report here. **Jim Cooley sent:** -A map of Enloe Cave (CL=675 ft, not finished) in Shannon Co. -MCD exports for easy imports to the database for 5 new Morgan Co. (see Kovacs and Wilson below) caves and 1 new (nearby) Camden Co. He had earlier sent entrance photos for all the new caves. -Map of Behind the Rock Cave (CL=130 ft) in Shannon Co. Jim includes his FSB (survey book), Walls and Xara file. **Josh Cooper sent:** -A new found entrance to one of the longer caves in Perry Co., while working with the city of Perryville. He sent report, videos and photos. **Nathan Curran sent:** -17 Faunal records for Cliff Cave in St. Louis Co. -5 Faunal records for Pleasant Valley Cave. **Ken Grush sent:** -Maps for relatively new Quartz Cave (CL=25) and Little Lost Creek Shelter (CL=130 ft dripline, 40 depth behind it) in Warren CO. -3 found maps from last centuries' MVORs: Barnett Cave (MCL~1900) in Miller Co. and Cotton Creek (MCL~246) and Trantham (MCL=275) Caves in Oregon Co. These were measured cave lengths, not survey length. Regrettably, these aren't the first found maps! **Ed Klausner sent (yes from Iowa!):** -Several maps, all in McDonald Co.: Freedom Gate (CL=174), Cord (CL=42) and Tube Ledge Cave (CL=112). Maps were surveyed by Mark Jones and Kirsten Alvey. **Candace Kovacs sent:** -A final map for a 2013 surveyed cave! Scott Sawmill Cave (CL=45 ft) in Camden Co. -Over 130 photos and 6 Videos for Taylor Cave in Christian Co. -(via Mike K.) 1 Use monitoring and 9 Faunal records for Taylor Cave. -Candace does send Walls data and kml files for his new maps to further document the cartography. **Mike Kovacs sent:** -Map for 4 new caves in Morgan Co. (see Cooley above): Wing Tunnel (CL=69 ft), Hideaway (CL=25), Hissy Bird Nursery (CL=35) and Double Ought (CL=31) Caves. -Description, Directions and entrance photo for Cache Cave in Christian Co.

-A trip report adding new passage, about 570 ft, to Bright Hollow Blowing Cave in Christian Co. **Dan Lamping sent:** -7 Faunal records and a monitoring form for a trip to Williams Ford Cave in Shannon Co. **Chad McCain sent:** -3 new caves: 2 in Ste. Genevieve Co., Bettys Pit and Rons Pit; plus 1 in Jefferson Co., Pattersons Cave. He provided complete Main table entries for each cave: location, directions, descriptions, entrance photos and more. His report has the 2 Ste. Gen pits surveyed. -About 150 Trip Reports for Berome Moore, the narratives for all the survey work done over past years. These reports span last the last 10 years. **Kohl Mitchell sent:** -A preliminary map for one of the longer Katy Trail caves in Boone Co. -A final map for Frankford Cave (CL=3620) in Pike Co. **Richard Orr sent:** -A new cave found on the Bourbeuse River in Franklin Co.: Quint Cave. He included several photos, brief description and location. **Marissa Schorr sent:** -Maps of Crossing Hollow (CL=76), Blooming Rose (CL=105), Cricket Tube (CL=19) Caves in Phelps Co.; Breakdown Shelter (CL= and Swarm Squeeze (CL=22) Caves are in Pulaski Co. **Mick Sutton sent:** -10 new Faunal records for Cookstove Cave in Shannon Co. -11 new Biologic Assessment for caves in Phelps Co. -24 new Faunal records: 5 tied to above Assessments; 9 for Round Spring; 10 for Cookstove Cave in Shannon Co. -10 Narratives from 1997 in Carter, Oregon and Shannon Counties. -19 more Narratives from 1997-1998 in same counties above, plus a few in Hickory and Reynolds counties. -14 more Narratives from 1998; same counties. -18 Biological Assessments for as many caves in Phelps Co. on the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF). -7 more Biological Assessments in Phelps and Pulaski Counties on the MTNF. -17 more cave Narratives from 1998-1999 in Carter and Shannon Counties. -14 more bio-assessments for Pulaski Co. on the MTNF. **Bobby Swain sent:** -Boulder (CL=21), Hole-In-The-Wall (CL=61) and Little Mouth (CL=26) Caves in Crawford Co. **Jessica Wilson sent:** -A map for new cave in Laclede Co.: Cub Cave (CL=29). -Treavor Bussard's 3 Use forms and 19 Faunal records for a trip to 3 MTNF caves in Taney Co. She also submitted the text for a Trip Report for the cave. Part of trip was a survey of one the caves. The cave was apparently mapped long ago, but the final map or notes never showed up! -A map for Decker Cave (CL=220) in Taney CO. She is sending Walls data and kml files to further document the cartography. **Richard Young sent:** -4 Photos of a 1977 trip to Cave Hill Cave in Gasconade Co. and 1 of Baby Crevice Cave in Perry Co.

Springfield Plateau Grotto (SPG) - July 24--- Cheryl Paulson and Max White, with the help of photos furnished by Roy Gold (SPG), presented a presentation to summer students at the Lawrence and Barry County Library. **July 25---** Berome Moore (Perry Co.). Gretchen Asselmeur, Melissa Meyer and Jessica Wilson surveyed 437 feet of the Hammer Drop Passage heading due south. The goal is to connect this passage to Dorothy Taylor Cave, which would add roughly a mile of passage to the Berome Moore Cave System. **August 15---** Candace Kovacs led a biota trip to a Christian Co. Cave. Team members Mike Kovacs, Jessica Wilson and Max White assisted with the biota count. The group observed amphipods, salamanders, and pipistrelle bats, documented recent graffiti and trash, and explored both main passages. Candace and Jessica also located a continuing passage that warrants future exploration. The group exited at approximately 1:30 p.m., ahead of the 2:00 p.m. call-out. Report by Max White, Content Provided by Candace Kovacs and Jessica Wilson

Lake Ozarks Grotto (LOG) – LOG chairman, Ken Long, worked with Klaus Leidenfrost at Goodwin Sink on Aug. 22nd, weedeating. There will be another work day for more cleanup at the site. At our Aug. meeting, Dillon Bond gave an awesome program on Kiesewetter with LOG members; Robbers Cave with Jim Cooley, Noah Ayers and himself; Estes Cave and Spring Cave.—Alberta Zumwalt

Chouteau Grotto: July 18 - Rita Worden and Matt Chasen accompanied Bill Gee and several others on the biannual data logger trip into Carroll Cave. This was Matt's first Carroll trip. **Aug 2** - Kohl Mitchell, Quintin Heaton, and Kyle Mann finished the survey of Pike county's Frankford Cave (PIK-013) with just over 300ft of survey for the day in watery passage and questionable air quality. **Aug 9** - Kohl, Caleb Mundwiller, Jerel Waters, Anthony Orazio, Matt Chasen, Evan Ma, and Nevin Dubinski began a survey of Lewis & Clark Cave (BNE-027). With 2 survey teams they were able to get over 1500ft of passage mapped. **Aug 23** - Kohl, Quintin Heaton, Jack Rufener, Ian Pelletier, and Levi Pardoe returned to survey Lewis & Clark Cave, netting another 1000ft of passage, mainly in wide water crawl. --Rita Worden

Kansas City Area Grotto (KCAG). July 11th: Jim Cooley and Noah Ayers visited Limb Line Cave (BEN-054) to assess it for survey challenges. This cave is reached by boat. **July 12th:** Jim Cooley and Noah Ayers led a "ridgewalking" trip ("ridge-boating" trip was more like it) to the bluff across the lake and slightly upstream from Ayers's cabin on the Lake of the Ozarks, which he refers to as Plenty of Caves Bluff. The crew included Mike Kovacs, Jessica Wilson, and Julie Cooley. Ayers's dad, David,



moved the crew up and down the lake using the Ayers' 24-foot Suncruiser with a 150hp motor on it, while Cooley ferried cavers to shore from the Suncruiser in his 16-foot jon boat with a 10hp Yamaha outboard. (The fiberglass Suncruiser could not safely tie off against the base of rocky bluffs. Heavy wakes from large lake traffic would have bashed the Suncruiser against the rocks, destroying its fiberglass hull.) This bluff had no reportable caves known to the MSS. It does now! The team located, explored and mapped four new caves on this bluff: Double Ought Tunnel Cave (MGN-032), cave length 31 feet; Hissy Bird Nursery Cave (MGN-033), length 32 feet;

Hideaway Cave (MGN-034), length 25 feet; and Wing Tunnel Cave, length 69 feet. Hissy Bird Nursery contained – you guessed it – two thoroughly agitated turkey vulture chicks (*Cathartes aura*). In addition, we located and reported a cave that has a house built into its entrance on this same bluff, which we called Ivy Bend Cavehouse Cave (MGN-036). Then Ayers led the crew to another new cave he knew about, two miles further up the river, which we named T.J. Painter Memorial Cave (CAM-209). The 15-foot-wide, seven-foot-tall entrance to this cave is eight feet above a 22-foot-high ledge on a bluff face, which is a popular spot from which to jump into the lake. We used a telescoping ladder to climb up from the ledge into the cave. This 70+-foot-long cave also contained two angry, hissing turkey vulture chicks. We named the cave in memory of the 41-year-old daredevil who jumped to his death off the bluff in August, 2021. **July 18th:** Bill Gee led his semi-annual data logger download trip (permit #2101), and Kristen Vogel led a biological survey trip (permit #2239) on upper Thunder River, entering through the Carroll Cave shaft entrance (CAM-001A). Participating on the data logger trip were Quentin Brown, Matt Chasen, Seth Colston, Jocelyn Morris and Rita Warren.

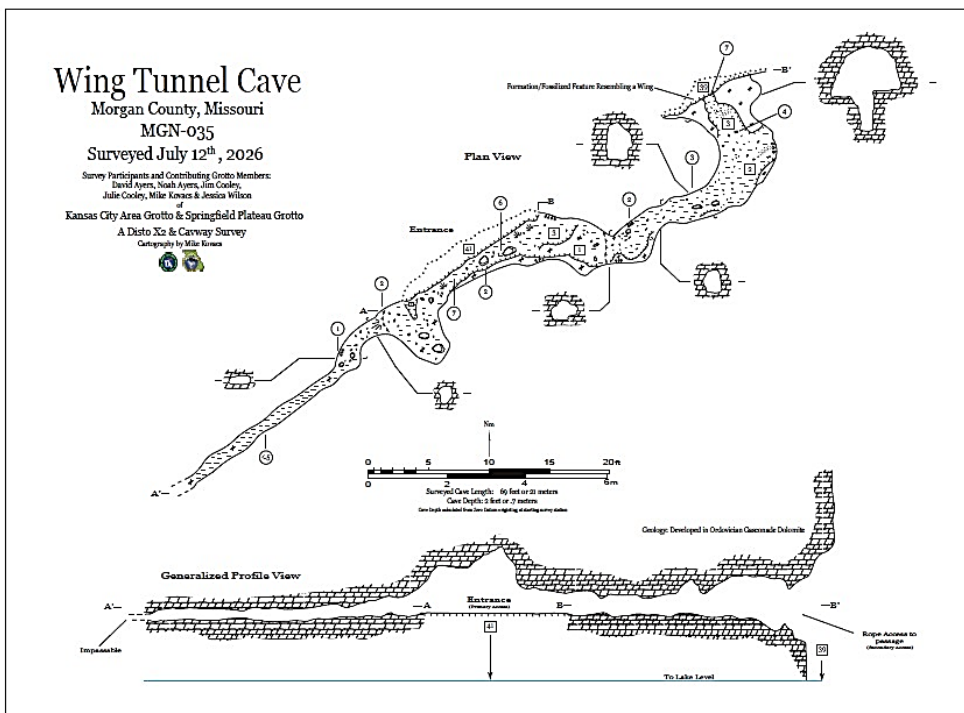
Supporting the bio trip were Marty Griffin, Mike Kovacs, Jason Maulrico, Peter Schnegelberger, and Jessica Wilson. Several people who had signed failed to appear, but fortunately enough folks did



Ayer's Suncruiser in front of TJ Painter Memorial Cave

show up that neither trip had to be canceled. Gee arrived at the site at 6:30 a.m. After Gee, Griffin and Schnegelberger did mowing and other yard work around the property, everyone assembled and started rappelling into the cave at 9:20 a.m. It took about an hour to get everyone down the shaft. The last person was in by 10:20, and the two teams split up. Gee explained to his group how the data loggers work, then demonstrated the download process with the barometric pressure logger. They then downloaded the data logger on Thunder Rive below the shaft, the data

logger at the Rimstone Room, the UL2 data logger, and the data logger below Thunder Falls. They also changed the battery and memory card in the cave intrusion detector. Kristen's team did bio inventory. Everyone reconvened at the ladder and was out of the cave by 3:15. Gee noted items that need attention around the Pavilion. The detailed trip reports are on the MCKC website. **Jul 27th:** Jim Cooley, Bill Gee, Shane McCurdy, and Jason Jakary completed the field work for the survey of Roanoke Park Cave in Kansas City, Missouri, conveniently located 528 meters from Cooley's house.



Map of the new Wing Tunnel Cave (MGN-035)

The cave turns out to be 234 feet long. The last 158 feet of this cave is a low, wet, muddy crawl, frequently befouled with hydrocarbon fumes. **July 31st:** Jim Cooley and Shane McCurdy shot 13 stations (109 feet) in the right primary passage of Robbers Cave (BEN-011). Robbers Cave is conveniently located about 500 meters from Cooley's cabin at the Lake of the Ozarks. This cave is reached by boat. **Aug 1st:** Back in

Robbers Cave, Jim Cooley sketched the survey shots taken the prior day. Meanwhile, Bill Gee, Shane McCurdy and Jack Rufener continued the survey beyond the "Plug Hug", a large flowstone

obstruction 402 feet from the entrance that prevents Cooley from entering the cave beyond that point. They took 20 survey shots covering 288 feet of cave, and sketched the plan and profile views plus the cross sections for this area of cave. **Aug 2nd:** Jim Cooley, Shane McCurdy and Jack Rufener racked up 161 feet of interior and 31 feet of exterior survey at Limb Line Cave (BEN-054). Jack then sketched the very small-passage, far reaches of this cave, which is reached by boat. **Aug 14th:** Jim Cooley, Bill Gee and Shane McCurdy continued the survey of a large, privately owned cave in Shannon Co., with Bill and Shane sketching in the area of a recently discovered 57-foot dome. **Aug 15th:** Jim Cooley and Shane McCurdy did map quality control (QC) work in another large, privately owned cave in Shannon Co., while Bill Gee and Jack Rufener sketched the far back end of the cave, pushing it as far as was humanly passable. This completes the survey in that direction. They did QC work in a very challenging side passage, hoping to, also, reach the end of this passage and finish off the reported last 100 feet or so beyond station B55-31. However, they only made it to station B55-21, before cold and fatigue forced an end to their day's efforts. **Aug 16th:** Jim Cooley and Shane McCurdy did more map QC work in the same privately owned cave in Shannon Co., while Bill Gee and Jack Rufener attacked another large, privately owned cave, on a different landowner, focusing on small and extremely small passages. **Aug 17th:** Shane McCurdy helped remediate and install a new, bat-friendly cave gate on the entrance to Wind Cave (MDD-024), in Jane, Missouri. This entrance is owned by the Missouri Department of Transportation. The crew removed a major portion of a concrete and block wall, allowing sediments and standing water to now clear the entrance, rather than damming up. They then constructed a BCI/ACCA-standard cave gate. Project was led by Jim "Crash" Kennedy of the environmental consulting firm of Kennedy Above/Under Ground LLC (cavegators.com) out of Austin, Texas.-- Jim Cooley

Stygian Grotto.

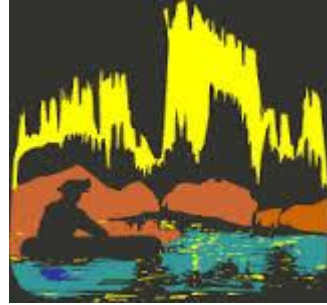
The photo to the right is sked packaging a patient for the mock rescue that was held at Cathedral Cave on June 27th, 2026. The photo was submitted for the last issue but was inadvertently left out.



Missouri Speleological Survey

Fall Board Meeting Agenda – September 13, 2026

Cuivre River State Park



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

New Business

- Elections for President and Vice President
- Appointment of Secretary

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

Please note: Affiliate fees for 2026 were due in January.

Not paid: Cairn, Daedalus, and OHG. The fee is \$25.

Next meeting

Adjournment