
WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Spring Meeting

Cave of the Winds

April 27, 2002 — 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

WELCOME

? Any general announcements or news.

WCP TREASURY REPORT

Discussion: Bob Stucklen

Update on project finances from Treasurer Bob Stucklen. Regarding the loan for printing the Williams Canyon Project book last summer, Bob reports a second payment is anticipated sometime this summer.

? *Discussion:* Account specifics, repayment plans.

WCP SATISFACTION SURVEY

Discussion: Paul Burger

Last winter, reports were received of caver dissatisfaction about the management and practices of the Williams Canyon Project. Paul Burger offered to coordinate a survey of project participants and non-participants regarding their feelings about the Project. Printed surveys were distributed at area grotto meetings and through the Internet. Paul will present the results of this survey.

? *Discussion:* Does the Project need to make changes or do we continue the same course?

CONSERVATION

Huccacove Cave Restoration: Al Collier, Tom Dotter

This winter, Al Collier has organized trips into Huccacove Cave to remove painted graffiti placed on cave walls by vandals in September 2001. The trips have successfully removed all graffiti in the Mammoth Extension and has begun work in the Historic Section, which contains much spray painted graffiti from the 1970s. Care will be taken to avoid removal of historic (pre 1950) graffiti in this project.

On April 20, materials stolen from Huccacove in September were discovered buried in a small shelter hole in the gully below the entrance. These materials include the rope from the Lechuguillan Traverse in the Hub, the bolt cutters donated by Mark Tornblom, a pry bar and a hacksaw. Also found buried in the shelter was a small pack containing fishing line, apparently used by the vandals to find their way through the cave.

? *Discussion:* Timetable for restoration efforts in Huccacove.

Breezeway Cave Restoration + Protection: Al Collier, Tom Dotter, Dan Sullivan

Installation of the new Hallowed Ground ladder bypassing the Upside Down Staircase has been underway in Breezeway during April. The ladder will allow the Staircase to be abandoned as the route and the stalactites at the top of the climb to be repaired.

Unfortunately, unauthorized visitors to the cave in early February tracked mud throughout the restored regions of the cave, including Hallowed Ground, Stone River, and elsewhere. This negates the hundreds of person hours of restoration work accomplished over the last year.

Following discovery of the unauthorized visit, the Cave of the Winds worked with John McLean and Tom Dotter in developing an electronic alarm system for the Breezeway entrance gate. This alarm system is now installed and will require training of all trip leaders in the disarming of the alarm during scheduled trips. It is likely this alarm system will also be installed on other cave gates in the canyon.

? *Discussion:* Restoration at Breezeway. Alarm systems.

Cave of the Winds Restoration: Jeremy Stiles, Al Collier

Restoration continues in the Cave of the Winds, coordinated by Al Collier and Tom Dotter. Cavers are encouraged to participate in the efforts, which includes removing of bolts and hardware used for old lighting systems.

? *Discussion:* Project logistics, timetable, other areas needing restoration.

GEORGE WHITE TUNNEL: INSTALL A GATE OR BURY?

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart, Jeremy Stiles

The October discovery of the forgotten George White Tunnel in lower Williams Canyon near Manitou Cave brings responsibility: should the excavated mine tunnel be buried for its protection or should a gate be installed?

? *Discussion:* Benefits and drawbacks of gating, burying the tunnel.

INTERACTING WITH CANYON HIKERS

Discussion: Jeremy Stiles

Warm weather brings out more hikers and visitors to Williams Canyon. How should cavers interact with these visitors, most of whom do not sign in at the Cave of the Winds gift shop? Also, what should cavers do if geocaches are found within the canyon on Cave of the Winds property? (A geocache near the Pike National Forest boundary in upper Williams Canyon was removed in March and returned to the geocacher.)

? *Discussion:* How to act when meeting other canyon visitors.

CAVE PROJECTS

Huccacove's Sand Castle Room Dig: Jon Barker

Digging east from the Little Grand Canyon in Huccacove Cave's Mammoth Extension, Charles Lindsey, Jon Barker and Jim Braswell were hoping to find some new passage. After only a few days of work, their efforts successfully discovered the largest extension to the cave in a decade. From a low crawlway passing below the NSS Room discovered in the early 1990s, the passage opens into a large new chamber. At the northern end of this new room, cavers found a promising dig in soft sand, descending to a lower level. In all, about 200 feet of new passage was found and surveyed, bringing Huccacove over the one-mile mark in surveyed length.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Huccacove Suicide Dig: Rick Rhinehart, Donald Davis

The Suicide Dig in Huccacove's Historic Section excavated approximately 40 feet of passage before going on hiatus in February owing to the implementation of the Huccacove wild tours. Leading north and east from the top of the Funnel Pit, the dig crosses above a high dome at the north end of the Stovepipe. Continued digging to the east and north may prove interesting, particularly if parallel passageways are discovered.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

History Mystery and Other Preliminary Digs: Rick Rhinehart, Donald Davis

In about 1991, cavers discovered an abandoned dig on the canyon wall north of the Huccacove entrance. Several rock walls were built below the strongly-blowing dig, which suggested the original diggers were careful to not drop rocks on the Williams Canyon road below. This January, cavers returned to the dig to see if it has any relation to Huccacove's Mammoth Extension. Excavation of large rocks at the surface revealed a tight, descending cave passage choked with rubble. This passage contains strong airflow, presumably coming from the Hub area of Huccacove. Surveying indicates the cave may eventually come into the Hub through a high ceiling dome, provided much additional digging is accomplished. At this time, the dig has been abandoned and will be sealed.

Another preliminary dig has been underway at a curious dig prospect along the Williams Canyon stream just south of the sealed pit entrance to Manitou Cave. This dig, called the 1921 prospect, may be at the location of an opening in the canyon wall observed in 1921, following a 100-year-flood in the canyon. The floodwaters washed open an entrance, which allowed observation of a cave room below and a pool of water. Could this be a part of the historic Manitou Cave tour route?

Yet another preliminary dig has been at an unnamed shelter cave in the gully above the Huccacove Cave entrance. This dig, called the Sandite Cave dig, has lowered the dirt-floored chamber by several feet, discovering unusual "sandites" in the sediment (these are little understood mineral deposits found only in Sandite Cave, the entrance to the Yukon Trail in the Manitou Grand Caverns, and in Eagle County's Lost Mascot Cave). This cave has potential to parallel the known passageways in Huccacove Cave.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Additional Digs

Other dig projects from this and next season can be discussed.

WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT SURVEY SECTION

Update: Paul Burger

Another small cave in the canyon was surveyed this spring, Molar Cave near Manitou Cave. This well-known cave had surprisingly yet to be named or surveyed and contains about 25 feet of passage.

Surveying in Huccacove Cave in early April added the Sand Castle Room.

? *Discussion:* Maps.

CAVE OF THE WINDS TOPICS

Discussion: Jeremy Stiles

Jeremy Stiles of the Cave of the Winds may have some topics for review and consideration by the Board and Project Trustees.

OTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

? Topics from the Floor

? Date for next meeting: September 28 (last Saturday)