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# WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT, NSS

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## Spring Meeting

*Cave of the Winds,*

*May 3, 1997*

*10:00 a.m.*

### A G E N D A

#### **WELCOME + SEATING OF NEW DIRECTORS**

? Thanks to Mark Maslyn for his many years of service to the project.

? New Cave of the Winds appointed project representatives: Paul Burger and Carolyn Cronk.

? New Northern Colorado project representative: Bob Stucklen.

#### **CAVE UPDATES**

**Narrows Cave:** Jon Barker

Digging efforts this season have centered on the Millie's Office section of Narrows Cave. Good airflow suggest continuing passageways to the north and northwest toward the Cave of the Winds. Meanwhile, exploration of the breakdown of the Shakedown Street section has opened several new chambers and passageways, including the Moonglow Room. Surveying continues, with Narrows now ranking as the fourth longest known cave in the canyon with 3477 feet of passage. Continued surveying of only the known passages will bring Narrows to nearly 4000 feet of passage – nearly as long as the Cave of the Winds in the 1970s.

? *Discussion:* 1997/98 objectives; surveying timetable and distribution of data and maps.

**Breezeway Cave:** Randy Reck

**Little Mountain Room Dig:** The primary dig project within Breezeway during the last year, the Little Mountain Dig may be close to completion. Following the eastern wall of a large north/south corridor around a breccia pipe, cavers have excavated over 40 feet of crawlway in the hope of discovering the theoretical open continuation to the south. Recently, the fill has become much wetter, suggesting the possibility of open passage above. A rock ceiling suggests the dig may be following underneath a solutional canopy with breakthrough imminent.

**Celestial City Dig:** Following joint patterns evident on line plots of Breezeway, Randy Reck, Ken Headrick and others excavated the mud fill at the northern end of the Celestial City, the first great beaded helictite chamber of Breezeway. After only two days of work, cavers reached an open passageway with formations leading to a “drain” dropping to a lower level. Airflow in the passage suggests a continuation, perhaps

leading northeast beyond the known cave. Another possibility is a connection to unknown passages at base level, below the known cave.

**Recent Climbs:** Todd Warren and Mike Frazier have recently spent some time bolting to high leads within the known cave, notably high in the ceiling of Cowboy Heaven and in the D Survey Corridor near the Crystal River. Todd and Mike are also planning on climbing the “unclimbable” mud wall in Rattlesnake Canyon, one of the largest leads remaining in the known system.

? *Discussion:* project logistics; conservation concerns.

#### **East Wall Project:** Rick Rhinehart

The East Wall of Williams Canyon below the Narrows has long been suspected to contain an extensive cave system, leading east/southeast following the dip of the limestone bedrock. This is the most likely location for the legendary Hackleman’s Cave, along with the lost extension of the Manitou Cave commercial tour route. Geologically, the Williams Canyon stream drains through this cave. Unfortunately, preliminary digs along this wall offer no clear choice for an ideal dig site. There are many possible digs, each with an equal opportunity for extension. Geologic studies of the area this spring suggest a major mineral spring outlet just to the southeast of the East Wall, between the wall and Manitou Cave. Using the Cave of the Winds outlet near the upper parking lot as a model, it is likely there is extensive solution in the Manitou Limestone throughout this area. Using line plots of the known caves, and an enlarged topographic map of the canyon, Rick has roughly plotted major joints through this area, suggesting likely locations to dig. One of these – the so-called “Alpha Beta” site south of Huccacove – may be one of the better dig locations in the canyon. Excavation of this site has opened approximately 15 feet of crawlway at the junction of two major joints. This dig may lead into the next big cave south of Huccacove.

? *Discussion:* project logistics.

### **WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT SURVEY SECTION**

**Update:** Paul Burger

Survey projects this season have included additional survey in Narrows Cave and surveys of smaller caves. It has been suggested the Survey Section coordinate a laser theodolite survey in the canyon to establish a baseline linking the major caves. The Section might also develop a joint pattern map of the canyon, suggesting likely locations to open buried cave passages.

? *Discussion:* Current projects; available maps; scheduling of training sessions.

### **WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT WEEKENDS**

**Discussion:** Rick Rhinehart

This season, the Project held three work weekends that were open to the caving community of Colorado. The weekends were as follows:

**FEBRUARY:** Rick Rhinehart coordinated a morning of trash pickup along Serpentine Drive between the main entrance gate and the junction with the Williams Canyon Road. Numerous bags of trash were collected, much of it 20 to 30 years old.

**MARCH:** Mark Maslyn coordinated a day of cave hunting in Williams Canyon and Cavern Gulch to locate and identify cave and solutional features both known and unknown. Using an enlarged topographic map, numerous cave features were identified at the start of the day. Later, one group of cavers examined and identified features along the eastern wall of Cavern Gulch from the Manitou Grand Cavern entrance north to the Dilation Cave area. Another group worked the east wall of Williams Canyon between Huccacove Cave and the Manitou Cave area. Many features were noted in both areas.

**APRIL:** Fred Luiszer coordinated excavation and removal of an old rock wall (circa 1885) near the entrance of the Crystal Palace in the Cave of the Winds. This wall consisted of debris from the original commercial trail construction through the cave in 1885. Using wheelbarrows, a front loader and a dump truck, several tons of rock and dirt were removed from the cave. Surprisingly, the wall also held up a huge amount of loose

dirt that stopped upward into the Old Maid's Kitchen directly above. In this dirt and debris were numerous historical artifacts, including old tickets, hair pins, brochures, combs, and even an old Coca-Cola bottle. An obscure unmapped side lead from the opposite end of the Crystal Palace provided entrance to the blocked continuation of this walled passageway. Removing debris from the entrance of this small squeezeway, cavers were able to enter a small chamber with a pile of cement debris, apparently from an earlier failed commercial tour trail floor in the Old Maid's Kitchen. Much of this debris was removed from the cave. With visitor traffic increasing in the cave during the afternoon, continued excavation was suspended. However, this passage may provide access to previously unknown cave to the south of the current tour route.  
? *Discussion:* Continue work weekends? Should 1997/98 weekends to be set?

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**Discussion:** Rick Rhinehart, Mark Maslyn, Paul Burger

Donald Davis has raised concern at the plans to develop a Williams Canyon Project Annual Report. He encourages restraint in such a project. From an e-mail message dated April 13 Donald writes:

"There are aspects of this [publication] that seem to me to call for discussion among the participants of the Project. Who made all these decisions, how and when? I recall first hearing of this plan, in more general terms, at the last [October] WCP meeting. I was surprised at the time that, as a major author of previously published material, whose work the compilers may expect to use, I had never been consulted about it. I still have not.

"I have reservations about the thousand-copy printing of the proposed report. Would it not suffice to target the Colorado caving community, not the national one? Will it sell on that scale in any case? Until the Convention guidebook, no Colorado cave book had been nationally distributed in this way since *Caves of Colorado*. Is it really in the interests of the caves, cavers and COW to have so many copies of maps and descriptions of the Williams Canyon caves in circulation? Has the copyright holder of the maps agreed to their publication?

"Would the 'smaller version' for public sale omit those maps and descriptions for the wild caves, especially for Breezeway and inner Huccacove? The WCP cavers have worked for years to control traffic in the wild caves, and it would be highly imprudent to provoke the public by presenting tempting details about the caves they are not allowed to visit.

"Finally, some of my own materials were republished in the Convention guidebook without my knowledge of authorization. I gave that the benefit of the doubt concerning deadline pressures and let it pass. In this case, I want to be asked in advance and offered participation I planning before any of my work is used."

Note: Donald is currently in Lechuguilla Cave and could not make this meeting.

## **CAVE OF THE WINDS TOPICS**

**Discussion:** Susan Berdeaux, Grant Carey

The management of the Cave of the Winds may have topics for discussion and consideration by the board and project personnel.

? Season end and summer season trip regulations and considerations.

## **OTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

? Topics from the Floor

? Reminder for new 1997/98 Trustee applications to be submitted to the Board during the summer months for consideration at the October meeting.

? Upcoming Meetings – October 4; February 7, 1998. Annual Trustee Training Day: October 11?