
WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Autumn Meeting

Cave of the Winds

September 28, 2002 — 9:30 a.m.

A G E N D A

WELCOME

? Any general announcements or news. Complimentary donuts are courtesy of the Cave of the Winds.

WCP TREASURY REPORT

Discussion: Bob Stucklen

Update on project finances from Treasurer Bob Stucklen.

? *Discussion:* Account specifics, "Caves of Williams Canyon" loan repayment plans.

2002-2003 TRIP LEADERS APPROVAL

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart

Review of the trip leader applications for the 2002-2003 season. All trip leaders are encouraged to participate in the discussion and review of applicants. A vote of the trip leaders is necessary for approval. There is a limit of 28 trip leaders overall and 16 Breezeway Cave trip leaders. Individuals wishing to apply for status who have not previously held trip leader status will need to submit two letters of recommendation from other Williams Canyon Project trip leaders.

? *Discussion:* Review of all trip leader applications and determination of those approved by the Project for 2002-2003. The Cave of the Winds management will have final approval of the trip leaders following the submission of the applicants by the Project.

ASSISTANT TRIP LEADERS PROPOSAL

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart

Jeremy Stiles of the Cave of the Winds proposes establishing a formal category of "Assistant Trip Leaders" for young cavers under the age of 18. If approved, Assistant Trip Leaders will have the authority to co-lead a trip with an adult trip leader.

? *Discussion:* Is there interest in this proposal? Should Assistant Leaders be limited to cavers age 16-17? Should National Speleological Society membership be required? This category of leaders can be limited to two or three individuals per season.

CONSERVATION

Cave Restoration: Al Collier, Tom Dotter

Al Collier and Tom Dotter report they are prepared for an active winter of conservation activities in the caves of Williams Canyon. Activities will include graffiti removal in Huccacove Cave, removal of old lighting system bolts in Cave of the

Winds and completion of the restoration in Breezeway Cave. Cavers from throughout Colorado are encouraged to participate in this project, which will also include some overnight camps at the Cave of the Winds.

? *Discussion:* Timetable for restoration efforts in the caves of the canyon.

Breezeway Cave Conservation Video Project: Rick Rhinehart

Jeremy Stiles reports he is planning a trip into Breezeway Cave with a video camera in October to document the cave, specifically the restoration coordinated by Tom Dotter, Al Collier and Dan Sullivan. Any interested cavers should contact Jeremy at the Cave of the Winds to apply for the trips, which will travel into the cave as far as Stone River. Once the video is completed, the cave will reopen for active exploration and digging.

? *Discussion:* Project logistics, timetable.

Dig Restoration Proposal: Rick Rhinehart

Dan Sullivan proposed during the summer that digging efforts in the caves of Williams Canyon include clearly-defined restoration plans which are followed by the dig team at the completion of the dig. Such proposals have been made in the past and some digs (notably the Deepwater and Snider's Cave digs) have restored the area at the completion of the project.

? *Discussion:* What should the requirements be for any digging team? Who is responsible for the restoration? When is a dig considered "complete" or "abandoned"? What penalties should apply when a dig team does not restore a dig area?

WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT NEW PARTICIPANT BUCKSLIP

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart

To encourage greater participation in project activities by members of the grottos of Colorado, a "buckslip" handout promoting the project and the ColoradoCaves.org website was prepared and printed in July. This handout can be distributed at area grotto meetings by board members and trip leaders.

? *Discussion:* Should this handout be more widely distributed, perhaps in direct mailings to other grottos in the Rocky Mountain and Southwestern Regions of the NSS?

PROJECT LEADERSHIP: SHOULD THE CHAIR BE AN ELECTED POSITION?

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart

The Spring Williams Canyon Project Satisfaction Survey coordinated by Paul Burger provided several suggestions from cavers as to the direction the project should take in coming years. One suggestion was for the project to adapt a leadership system similar to the Colorado Cave Survey – that the chair position should be an elected position. When the WCP was formed in 1989, the project chair was rotated among board members at each meeting. Following reorganization of the project in the Spring of 1990, the chair was appointed by the Cave of the Winds and was a non-elected position, seemingly for life.

Should this topic be revisited by the Project? The project board of directors consists of elected representatives from each member grotto (Colorado, Front Range, Northern Colorado and Southern Colorado Mountain) plus three appointed members – Rick Rhinehart, Paul Burger and Carolyn Cronk.

The chair of the project conducts the three meetings each season, sets and prepares the agenda for each meeting and completes annual paperwork for the National Speleological Society. In addition, the chair is a primary contact for the management of the Cave of the Winds and a spokesperson for the project at area grotto meetings. If an elected chair is desired, the project will need to determine if the election is by the board only or by all authorized trip leaders.

? *Discussion:* Benefits and drawbacks of an elected chair. If concept is approved by the board, and the Cave of the Winds management, nominations can be taken for chair and a vote taken.

INCREASED PROJECT SECURITY

Discussion: Rick Rhinehart

A series of unlawful canyon events in the last year have brought increasing worry that project activities are not particularly confidential. In the year since Labor Day 2001, many caves in the canyon have been under assault from unknown persons:

- The Huccacove entrance gate was breached in September 2001, with spray-painted graffiti placed throughout the cave, including the Mammoth Extension. Materials were also stolen from the cave, but recovered from a hidden stash below the entrance in April 2002.
- Unknown persons dug open the sealed entrance to Twin Wall Cave several times in 2001. Finally, the excavated shaft was sealed by heavy machinery in October 2001.
- Unknown persons have apparently been visiting Breezeway Cave, possibly for several years. Although the visits were suspected by lawful trips owing to tracked mud and other subtle signs, the clear signal that other persons were visiting Breezeway was the January 2002 discovery of a rogue lock on the gate and widespread tracking of mud throughout the cave.
- An evening restoration trip to Cave of the Winds in early Spring 2002 was visited by unknown persons, who stole several packs and items from Canopy Hall.
- A group of teenagers were arrested by Manitou Springs police in August after they were found tampering with the Breezeway Cave alarm box. They claimed they knew nothing of the cave and were simply hiking.
- After completion of exploration in December 2000, Big Alcove Cave was completely sealed by Project cavers. In July 2002, cavers caught a group of teenagers digging at the entrance; they were caught by Manitou Springs police but not charged. Within a month, it was found that the entrance had been opened by unknown persons. After learning of the breach, cavers resealed the entrance in early August, only to find it nearly reopened a few weeks later. Large rocks now block the route into the cave, though continued monitoring will need to assure the cave remains sealed.
- Unknown persons dug under the steel door entrance to Narrows Cave. This route was completely blocked soon thereafter by Project cavers.
- Although it was unrelated to caves and caving, in July 2002, a group broke into the Cave of the Winds pavilion building late at night and stole an ATM.

Given the state of continuing lawlessness in the canyon, the Williams Canyon Project and the Cave of the Winds may want to increase security for project activities. Some steps have already been taken.

- Cave keys must be signed in and out from the management. The keys are kept in a lockbox and are not out in the open. Jeremy Stiles, the manager, keeps the Breezeway key on his person.
- The trip log should be moved from the ticket counter to the lower manager's office. Trip archive files currently kept in the open on shelves near the upstairs offices could be moved to a more secure location.
- Cave gate locks should be regularly rotated with spare locks.
- Cavers in the canyon should report any suspicious persons or activities to the Cave of the Winds management, either in person or by cell phone.
- Cave of the Winds should restrict access and maps about canyon caves to only the most trusted employees. Caving trips by guides should be reconsidered.
- Additional alarm systems should be installed at Huccacove, Narrows and Manitou caves. A motion detector alarm system should be strongly considered in the Cave of the Winds (with units in several locations).

? *Discussion:* Other ideas on increasing cave security.

CAVE PROJECTS

Huccacove's Sand Castle Room Dig: Jon Barker

Jon Barker and Chas Lindsey are interested in returning to Huccacove's new Sand Castle Room. Located in the Mammoth Extension not far from the Hub, the passage has excellent potential for major eastern extensions. However, the dig has run out of room to dump tailings. One suggestion is to place the tailings in plastic sacks for storage and stability.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Huccacove Suicide Dig: Rick Rhinehart

The Suicide Dig in Huccacove's Historic Section excavated approximately 40 feet of passage before going on hiatus in February 2002 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 through the Sand Castle Room dig.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Sandite Cave: Fred Luiszer, Donald Davis

Donald Davis and Fred Luiszer have managed a continuing dig immediately above and east of the Huccacove Cave entrance. The dig has excavated 40 feet or more of passage, ending in a dome with small amounts of gypsum. The passage is not directly connecting to Huccacove – it is above and to the west of the main passage near Angel Falls. It is possible the dig will eventually connect into Huccacove through a high ceiling lead, but it is also possible the cave will cross over known Huccacove and drop into the presumed parallel passageways east of the main passage.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Longview Cave: Daniel Laos

Daniel Laos is interested in resuming the abandoned dig at Longview Cave in the upper canyon. This west side cave, located between Sipapu and Octagon Caves, has good potential if a passage leading west can be found.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Breezeway Cave: Randy Reck, Tom Dotter

With the reopening of Breezeway scheduled for this autumn, there has been talk about resuming digs at Twin Tulip (at the end of the Celestial City) and in the Little Mountain Room. There also is interest in a few other dig locations, including the long-abandoned lower-level dig below Rattlesnake Canyon.

? *Discussion:* Dig logistics.

Additional Digs

Other dig projects from this season can be discussed.

WILLIAMS CANYON PROJECT SURVEY SECTION

Update: Paul Burger

Surveying of Fluting Cave is scheduled for 2002. This cave, originally known by nineteenth century photographer James Thurlow as “The Abbey,” is a complex multi-entrance cave not far from Frank Hill’s Cave. Most sketchers have been greatly intimidated by this cave, which is why it has remained unsurveyed.

Paul also is interested in releasing electronic versions of his cave maps in the next year, possibly in CD-Rom format.

? *Discussion:* Maps.

NEW CAVE OF THE WINDS VIDEO

Discussion: Gerry Estes

The new video about the Cave of the Winds has been completed. It will be available for purchase in VHS and DVD formats. The Cave of the Winds will host a premiere party and cookout on Saturday evening, October 12 at the Cave of the Winds. All cavers are invited but must RSVP with Gerry Estes.

CAVE OF THE WINDS TOPICS

Discussion: Cave of the Winds Management Representative

A management representative 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: January 2003 (last Saturday)