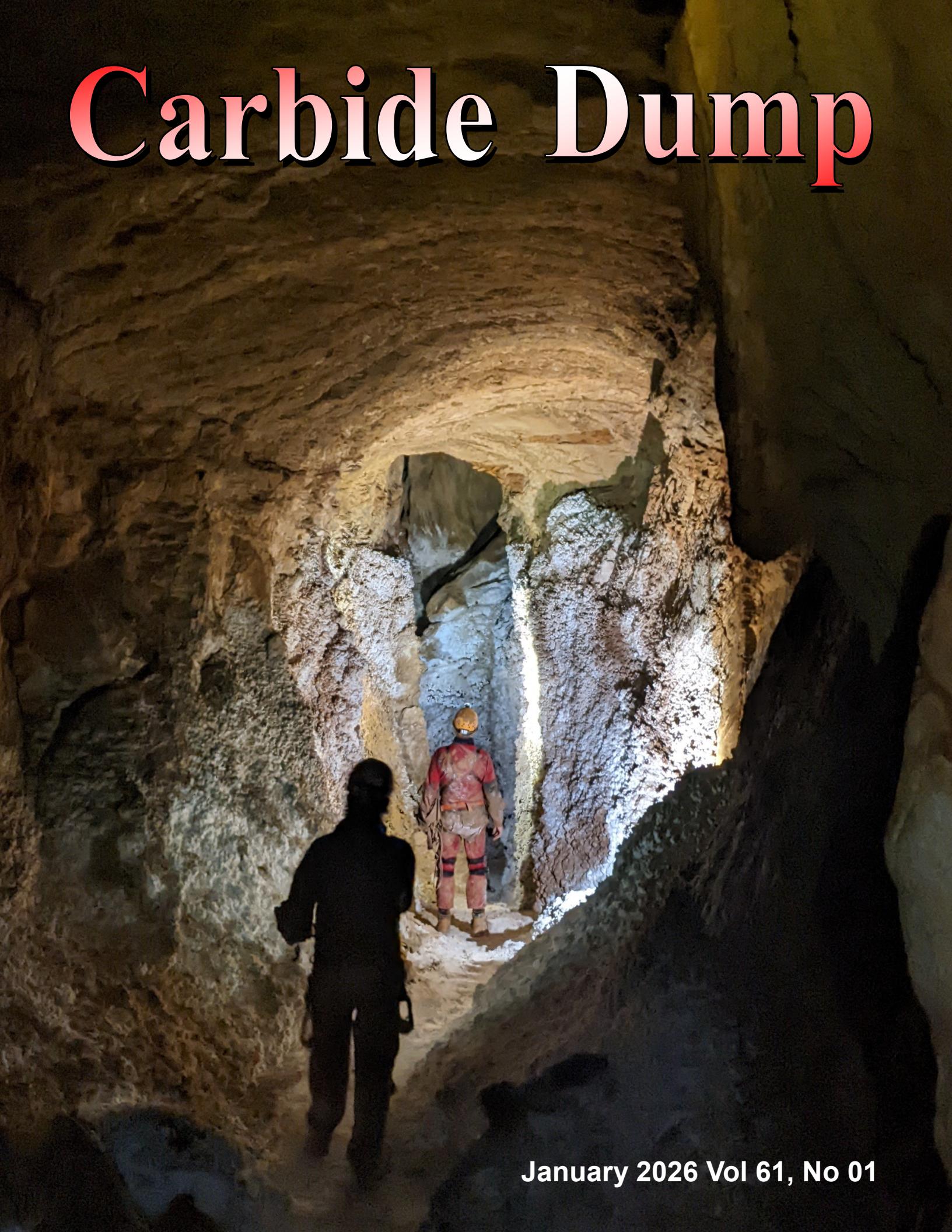


# Carbide Dump



January 2026 Vol 61, No 01

The **Carbide Dump** is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a **Carbide Dump** subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

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The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30 pm at Famous Anthony's-Brookside, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke, VA, 24019.

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You can access the **Carbide Dump** electronically at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>

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**Contributors:** David & Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, Philip Balister, Eli Meyer, Joe Zokaites, Ken Walsh, Mark Minton, Earl Sutor, and Jerry Fuller.

**Cover:** Virgin borehole in Warm River Cave, VA. Photo by Joe Zokaites. (NOTE: Warm River Cave is closed except for science and survey trips. See December 2025 Carbide Dump for article)

# CAVERS CALENDAR

**Jan 16, 2026:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019**.

**Jan 18:** BRG Winter Party, Noon - 5 pm, Pot Luck, BYOB, Dave & Mary Socky's house, 6572 Woodbrook Dr. SW Roanoke, VA 24018.

**Feb 20:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019**.

**Mar 20:** BRG meeting, 6:00pm for dinner, meeting at 6:30pm at **Famous Anthony's-Brookside, 6499 Williamson Rd, NW Roanoke VA 24019**.

**May 2-3:** VAR Graffiti Cleanup at **Lowmoor Cave, VA**. See page 5 for info and RSVP.

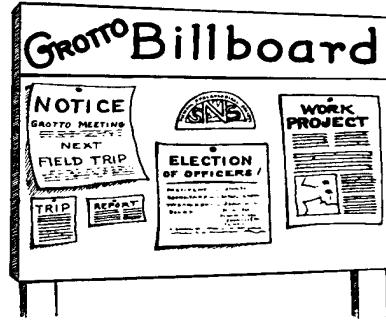
**May 15-17:** SCCi's Homecoming 2026 at the Little River Property (former TAG Fall Cave-In site). See page 6 for registration information.

**May 30 - June 6:** Virginia Cave Week.

**June 6:** Cave Day

**July 6-10:** 2026 NSS Convention, Corydon, IN (<https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/>)

**June 14 to 18, 2027:** 2027 NSS Convention. Del Rio, Texas



## Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

## VAR Limited Access Cave List

<https://var.caves.org/index.php/conservation/closed-caves/closed-cave-list>

## Treasurer's Report 01/08/2026

Cave Bucks	\$ 117.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$ 5,577.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,841.60</b>

## BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The **January 16, 2026** meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at **Famous Anthony's - Brookside** (6499 Williamson Rd). Come around 6 pm to order dinner with the meeting starting at **6:30pm**. Click [here for the location of Famous Anthony's](#).

The program will be a talk from the **Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center of Roanoke** about *bat rehabilitation*. If anyone wishes to, donations to the Wildlife Center will be accepted at the meeting. The program will be at the start of the meeting.



Dave Socky

### Grotto Trip

Paxton Cave, VA

**Date & Time:** Saturday, January 17, 2026. Meet at Hanging Rock Orange Market at 8:30 am.

**Leaders:** Jeff Huffman and Susan Burr.

**Coordination:** Susan Burr 540-580-9409  
[pondlady97@gmail.com](mailto:pondlady97@gmail.com)

**Requirements:** Beginner horizontal cave trip.

**Limit:** 12

#### Description

**Paxton Cave** is a large multi-level maze cave, mostly dry with many very nice formations. Taking a compass along is recommended if you are not with someone who knows the cave. Paxton's is horizontal with a few areas of exposure. Be prepared to crawl in some areas, and scramble in others!

## BRG Winter Party

The Blue Ridge Grotto Winter Party will be held Sunday, January 18, 2026.

- **Where:** Dave and Mary Sue Socky's house at 6572 Woodbrook Drive SW Roanoke, VA 24018.
- **Time:** Noon to 5 pm.
- **Details:** Pot Luck, BYOB, cavers, family, and friends welcome!

Of course, caving photos and videos will be shown!

Stay for the duration, or just for a little while; we would love for you to drop by!

Contact Mary Sue Socky at [sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net) or 540-529-3954 if you need directions.

Click here for a [Google Map location](#)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**BRG Meeting Minutes** – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.



**NSS Membership:** Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.

**Discussion on Cave Sim:** Dave Jackson must drive across half of the USA to share CaveSim with the East Coast. Should cavers begin lobbying the Commonwealth of VA to purchase a CaveSim for use throughout VA? John Pearson offered to draft a letter encouraging Virginia to buy a CaveSim trailer, once we hammer out the language of what we want to request.

**T-Shirts:** There are 12 remaining T-shirts! \$12.00 each. L or XL, various colors: red, gold, grey, green, light blue, etc. Contact Susan Burr [pondlady97@gmail.com](mailto:pondlady97@gmail.com) for more information.

**BRG Online Payments:** BRG can now accept payments through ZELLE, a 'free' cash app. Use the following email through your banks' ZELLE app: [blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com](mailto:blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com).

BRG will also continue to maintain the BRG PayPal account (which charges fees). Anyone who pays BRG through the PayPal account will be charged a \$1.00 convenience fee for the transaction. Use [blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com](mailto:blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com) for PayPal.

**ROCKS** - the **Warm Springs Valley Project** meets every Wednesday, and some Saturdays. Contact Dave Socky if you would like to participate at the following email: [sockydr@cox.net](mailto:sockydr@cox.net).

**Bat Monitoring Tool** - An interesting tool for bat species occurrences made possible by the **North American Bat Monitoring Program**. This application enables you to explore bat monitoring data for 43 species across North America, allowing you to explore seasonal trends in species detections and explore bat activity for a particular location. For the tool, go to: <https://batamp.org/>. (Compiled from Mark Minton and Jerry/Southwestern Cavers of the NSS.)

**Dixie Caverns** – Blue Ridge Grotto has an ongoing conservation project at Dixie Caverns, VA. Small groups are working to remove green lampenflora from cave formations and clean the show cave, document in-cave species. Most

work is done on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. A grotto conservation trip in 2026 is being planned. Contact Mary Sue Socky [sockymss@cox.net](mailto:sockymss@cox.net) to sign up.

**Under Pressure!** Mary Sue Socky recently purchased a 1-gallon Chapin hand pump, and a 2-gallon Smith Professional hand pump. Both pumps have been assembled & await testing in Dixie Caverns.

**Ed & Marianne Saugstad** new Address: Lower Prescott  
Rackenford Road  
Tiverton EX16 5NB  
Devon, UK  
Ed [suunto1942@protonmail.com](mailto:suunto1942@protonmail.com)  
Marianne [waterwitch@protonmail.com](mailto:waterwitch@protonmail.com)

**VAR Limited Access Cave List** can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at [blase@virginiacaves.org](mailto:blase@virginiacaves.org) or Dave Socky at [sockydr@cox.net](mailto:sockydr@cox.net)

**Winter Bat Closure** for some caves. These closures are primarily for hibernacula.

- ◆ WV: closed Sept 1 - May 15
- ◆ VA: closed Oct. 15 - Apr. 15

## Tawneys and Links Cave, VA

Article by *Susan Burr*

Blue Ridge Grotto Trip, 12/20/2025

Participants included Jeff Huffman, Susan Burr, Bambi Marshall, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, and Tim Boone.

We started out in Tawney's and did the normal "tourist" trip. In the Moon Room we saw several Sculpins in the water. Once we got down the "Toilet Bowl" we noticed that there wasn't water in the one section, just some semi hard mud. Crossing the stream in the cave was not difficult today.

In the back section, I went to check out the area that is often a bat hibernaculum. There were no bats in there, so I went back to get the rest of the group. There are still some remaining cow bones from the cow that died in there years ago. Once in the sinkhole entrance area I told the group they could go up and check out the sinkhole, but could not leave it.

After our little break we headed out the sinkhole the other route. Then headed to find the Emerald Room. We found the passage needed to get in there and only a few of us made it through the really tight awkward passage. We found another passage that was filled with water & lots of mud. No one really wanted to crawl through that. I attempted to straddle it, but it became too difficult to stay out of the water and mud. I also saw about five

tiny baby salamanders in this section and didn't want to squish them, so I aborted. Maybe another trip we can find the Emerald Room.

Next we headed over to the section with Fat Man Squeeze and the Claymation Room. I had a few takers on trying Fat Man Squeeze, but I did not go with them this time. I did, however, give them instructions on how to get through. Once everyone was done with the Fat Man Squeeze, we headed out.

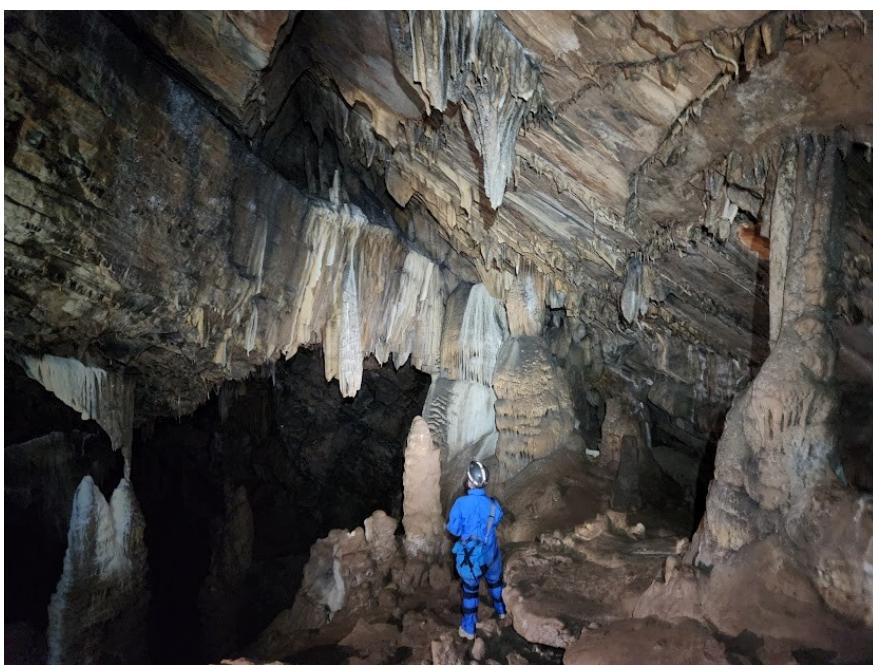
Our next adventure was to hike to Links Cave. I had no idea where the cave was other than behind the Bat Ranch barn somewhere. Luckily Jeff had been there more recently than me and he managed to find the entrance. The only thing I had remembered about this cave was ALL the bugs and that still holds true! We saw lots of spiders, crick-



**Tawneys - Susan trying to stay out of the mud (Jessica Hester)**

ets & other bugs. What was exciting was all the really pretty formations we saw. I did not remember that. I think we all had a great time exploring this cave even though it was small. It had plenty of pretty formations to see.

Next stop: the Mexican Restaurant in Blacksburg! 🐠



**Tawneys Cave - Jessica in the entrance area with all the formations (Ben Hester)**



**Formations in Links (Jessica Hester)**

## VAR Graffiti Cleanup at Lowmoor Cave

### May 2 - 3, 2026

Brush up on your conservation goals. Pack up your elbow grease and some grotto members, and then join the VAR Conservation Committee efforts to scrub graffiti from a much-maligned Virginia cave near I-64's Low Moor exit.

Camping is available Friday & Saturday evening at the RASS field station.

Lunch and water will be provided Saturday, but please bring your own snacks and extra water. The cave is mostly dry and much warmer than most Virginia caves.

Sponsored by VAR Conservation Committee—we need and appreciate volunteers!

#### Supplies to Bring

- Wire and plastic brushes
- Extra toothbrushes
- 1- to 3-gallon containers
- Spray bottles for water
- Rags

Details and sign-up can be found at [this link](#). Please RSVP to help us plan lunch and how many cave walls we may be able to clean. Ken Walsh

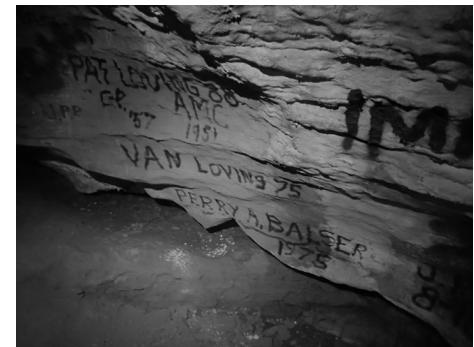


Photo credit: Mark Daughtridge

## New River Cave Preserve Update

*I wouldn't thought this email was necessary, but apparently it is ...*

*Everyone going to New River Cave needs a permit (and electronically sign a waiver) to be on the property. Even if you are going to walk to the entrance and back. (Don't worry, you can get a surface permit, so you are not taking up valuable cave permits).*

*Everyone, means everyone!*

*If you are under 30, the VPI Cave Club publicity committee prepared a helpful video, which everyone should watch. (Looks like you can click thought to watch without joining Instagram): [Video Link](#).*

*Philip Balister*

Hello cavers.

The access restrictions for New River Cave , VA have been adjusted.

Permits will be issued to up to 4 trips per day, however the daily max of 15 people entering the cave per day has not changed. Consistent with guidelines

published by the US Fish & Wildlife Service the "Hibernation Caution" period during which access to The Attic within the cave is prohibited, is now November 1st - April 15th.

Please remember to fill out a permit and collect waivers for ALL individuals on the trip if you want to visit the cave. To get a permit follow the below link, select the NSS for "Organization" and New River Nature Preserve for "Preserve".

<https://permits.saveyourcaves.org/new-permit.html>

"Visitation is permitted year-round, but limited to 4 trips per day with a minimum of 2 well-prepared cavers and a maximum of 15 persons entering the cave per day. This is to help reduce the amount of traffic to help in the conservation and preservation of the preserve, the cave, as well as the flora and fauna that live there.

**NOTE: Special caution is required for the New River Cave Preserve during bat hibernation season from November 1st through April 1st. Groups should move quickly and silently from**

**the entrance to the main trunk passage as to not disturb the hibernating Big Brown bats; the Attic area past the BFR (Big Friendly Rock) should be avoided all together as to not disturb a group of endangered Little Brown bats."**

Furthermore, if anyone wants to help with management activities please get in touch with me. In particular I'd like to have more experienced cavers out there so that when you run into a crew of unpermitted spelunkers (and you will, if you go on a weekend) they can be edumacated.

Other tasks on my to-do list are more invasive plant removals, including tree work to fell some large dead trees by the parking lot. Improvements to the trail, more visible signage, improvements to the nearby river parcel, etc.

Let me know if you have any questions

Regards  
Eli Meyer  
Preserve Manager  
VPI #496  
NSS #71099



## 2026 SCCi Homecoming

Many of you plan your calendars well in advance, so we wanted to give you an early heads-up about a special event we are hosting.

**Introducing SCCi's Homecoming 2026. May 15–17, 2026 | Little River Property.** (former TAG Fall Cave-In site)

Homecoming is a new SCCi gathering designed to bring our community together for a relaxed weekend of caving, camping, and connection. Whether you've been involved with SCCi for years or are newer to our work, this event is about spending time in the places we protect and with the people who make that protection possible.

Set on the Little River Property, Homecoming offers an easygoing weekend to cave, camp, and reconnect with fellow members or get to know them better. There's no packed schedule or rush from one activity to the next. Just time to go caving, share meals, swap stories, and enjoy being together.



This weekend is about returning to a place and a feeling many of us know by heart. Three days of caving, camping, and unhurried time with people who understand why these places matter. It's a relaxed, come-as-you-are gathering that celebrates connection, conservation, and the community that keeps showing up.

Saturday night, we'll host a live bluegrass and folk jam, serve craft beer in our souvenir mugs (yes, just like TAG), and hold a huge raffle stacked with great prizes. A limited number of meal tickets will be available for the Saturday night community dinner, so you'll want to grab yours when registration opens.

We'll also hold our **Annual Members' Meeting on Saturday morning**, kept intentionally brief so it doesn't take away from the weekend experience.

Homecoming is open to SCCi members, past members, and their guests. Space will be limited.

Come home to SCCi. Reconnect with your caving family. Help protect the places that keep us connected.

We're happy to share some good news  
[registration for SCCi's Homecoming 2026 is officially open - just click here!](#)



## 2026 NSS Convention Info

Howdy Cavers!!!

On behalf of the 2026 NSS Convention crew, we are excited to welcome you to historic Corydon, Indiana for the big event - July 6-10! Join us in the Ohio River Valley for a week of great times, amazing friends, and the beautiful caves and wild places of southern Indiana and



Kentucky! Hundreds of caves within an hour's drive await, as well as the longest cave in the world just three hours away in Mammoth Cave National Park! Other excursions include hiking in Hoosier National Forest and other nearby state parks (O'Bannon Woods, Clifty Falls, and Spring Mill State Park), floating on the scenic Blue River, or visiting one of the many beautiful commercial caves in the region. Other sights worth visiting include downtown Louisville, West Baden Springs Hotel, Holiday World, and the National Cave Museum, to name a few!

The 2026 Convention will also feature copious learning opportunities at various sessions and workshops throughout the week as well as dozens of fantastic cave vendors, Junior Speleological Society activities, and more! Guests can have the joy of listening to tunes and enjoying a cold beverage at the campground each evening with old and new friends. Pre and post-convention camps are also being planned for those arriving early or staying late in the area. There are plenty of adventures for everyone! Stay tuned as more information will continue to be

added to the website ([caves.org/convention](https://caves.org/convention)) and social media pages ([facebook.com/NSSconvention](https://facebook.com/NSSconvention))

Questions? Want to volunteer? Email us at [2026convention@caves.org](mailto:2026convention@caves.org)

Can't wait to see y'all there!

Sincerely, Your 2026 NSS Convention Team. "Hundreds of Caves, Hundreds of Miles"



<https://caves.org/convention/2026-nss-convention/>

## Eastern Region NCRC Emergent Volunteers

In addition to several cave rescue teams in our 6 State area (PA, MD, VA, WV, DE & NC) the Eastern Region of the NCRC maintains a list of Emergent Volunteers (volunteer cavers who have expressed a desire to be utilized to assist in a cave rescue). If you are on this list it is because you, at some point, expressed a desire to be. Emergent volunteers are taking on the job of helping, knowing that they are not insured, except by their own personal insurance.

- Our freeware texting and email notification app (TexCom) is now completely and permanently out-of-service. Group texting is no longer possible as freeware.
- The Eastern Region NCRC has set up an email list server to replace TexCom. The ALERT ERNCRC Cave Rescue email address is: [ern-crccoms@gmail.com](mailto:ern-crccoms@gmail.com). If you get an email from [erncrc-coms@gmail.com](mailto:erncrc-coms@gmail.com), it will either be a real cave rescue that we are looking for help with or occasionally a test message.
- It is a very good idea to put [erncrc-coms@gmail.com](mailto:erncrc-coms@gmail.com) in your phone address book and assign it a special sound that will make it stand out when an email comes in on it, if possible. I believe most smart phones have a way to do that.

The message will be clearly given, example:

*"This is ER-NCRC, there are overdue cavers at XXXX cave. A search for them is underway. Advise if you know the cave well enough to lead a search party. If you can help, please respond to this email. Additional details to follow".*



If you get an email alert from us and you can't help, simply do nothing. Only reply if you can help. If you can help reply with your name, and location. And in this example, that you know XXX cave well enough to lead a search team.

- Please let me know if you wish to be dropped from the list.
- Also, if you know of a caver that wishes to be added to the ERNCRC alerts have them send me ([wvcaver216@gmail.com](mailto:wvcaver216@gmail.com)) the following: Name, location, cell phone number, email address, caves you know well, and anything else they

wish to add, such as vertical competency, first aid, NCRC courses, ICS classes, etc.

PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES TO:  
Earl Suitor [wvcaver216@gmail.com](mailto:wvcaver216@gmail.com)  
Deputy Resource Coordination Section  
Chief ER-NCRC

After this message, [erncrc-coms@gmail.com](mailto:erncrc-coms@gmail.com) will only be used in emergencies and tests.

Thank you,  
Earl Suitor



## Grotto Trip Log

**12/3: Triplet Cave, VA.** Participants included David Socky, Rick Lambert, Andrew Newton, Mia Blyseth, and one other caver from RASS. We had two teams again. Rick pretty much took care of the keyhole slot to the dig face, but he'll still take off a few corners on the next dig trip. The second team worked on the dig face. We made progress on the dig face, maybe a 3rd of the way there. Can't tell what it does, but the floor could drop down. There is still air!

**12/13: Sea Ice Cave, Antarctica.** Dave Socky didn't go into this sea cave, but took a picture:



**12/20: Tawneys Cave and Links Cave, VA.** Participants included Jeff Huffman, Susan Burr, Bambi Marshall, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, and Tim Boone. This was the December Blue Ridge Grotto trip. See article on page 4 of this issue.

**1/3/2026: Paint Mine Cave, CO.** Dave Socky, Peter and Ben Udall. At

the end of this very beautiful area (that looked like Utah and New Mexico) was an cave like section. Admittedly, there wasn't much of a roof, but it was echoey ☺.



**01/07/2026: Dunns Cave, VA.** Participants included Dave Socky, Joe Zokaites, and Bill Koerschner. We started the survey of the smaller northern branch of the cave. We got a total of about 400 feet over a 5 hour day, finishing up about 4:30pm.

