

CAVE FEST 2015

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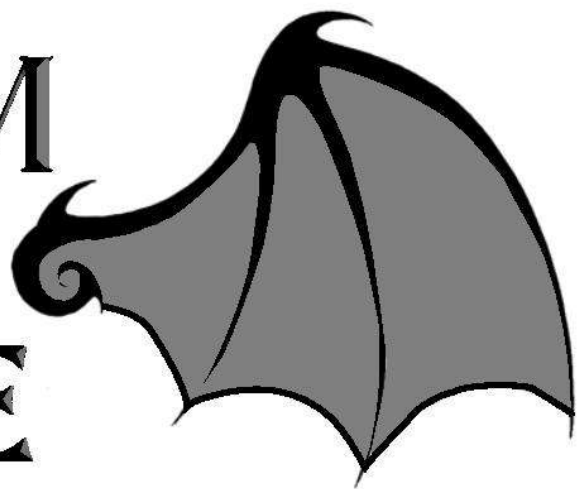
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SHAWANEE MOUNTAIN GROTTO



## TAG Caver ~ Volume 6 Issue 3

### **Fall 2015 – Cave Fest Issue**

TAG Caver is the official newsletter of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto & is published on a quarterly basis. Sewanee Mountain Grotto is a non-profit internal organization of the National Speleological Society dedicated to the exploration, mapping and conservation of caves. If you are interested in joining the Sewanee Mountain Grotto we invite you to attend one of our monthly grotto meetings. Meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at various locations in the heart of TAG. A typical meeting starts with a potluck dinner at 6pm CST, followed by the meeting at 7pm. On occasion we also have special presentations following our meetings. Annual dues are \$10 per person and are due in January. Please email [sewaneemountaingrotto@caves.org](mailto:sewaneemountaingrotto@caves.org) or one of our editors for more information on the location of our next meeting. You may also visit our website at <http://www.caves.org/grotto/sewaneemountaingrotto/>

### **2015 Sewanee Mtn Grotto Officers:**

Chairperson: Jason Hardy  
Vice Chair & Programs: Kristine Ebrey  
Treasurer: Blaine Grindle  
Secretary: Bambi Dunlap  
Member at Large: Hali Steinman  
Conservation Chair: MaureenHandler  
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Email articles and photos for submissions to one of our editors. Content may include articles/photos from non members as well as other caving regions. Statements and opinions expressed in the TAG Caver do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the Sewanee Mountain Grotto or the NSS.



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Welcome to  
Sewanee Mountain  
Cave Fest 2015

### **Front & Back Covers**

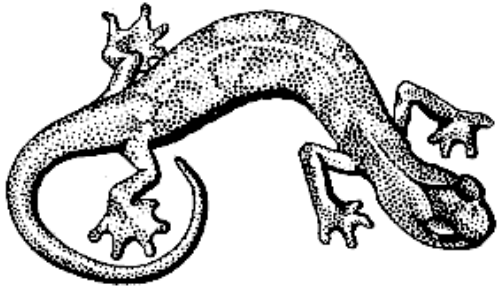
**Front Cover:** Sewanee Mountain Grotto Cave Fest 2015  
Tshirt and Beer Cup design by Jason Hardy.

**Back Cover:** Thank you to all of the donors who support  
the Sewanee Mountain Grotto and our annual fundraising  
auction!

# Calendar of Upcoming Events

\*All times are CENTRAL\*

September 12, 2015 – **Sewanee Mountain Grotto Meeting** at the property of Jason Hardy and Kelly Smallwood on South Pittsburg Mountain. Potluck begins at 6pm cst, followed by the business at 7pm. The presentation will be CAVE LIES told around the campfire following the meeting. The day of the meeting Kely will lead a hike into the cove below the property to a few nearby vertical caves. Bring vertical gear or just come along for the hike. Contact Kelly for more info: rowland7840@bellsouth.net







Spetember 19 & 20, 2015 – **TAG Fall Cave in work weekend**. This is the weekend that they build the BONFIRE and clean up the property in preparation for the cave in. This is a very fun weekend filled with work, great people and great food!

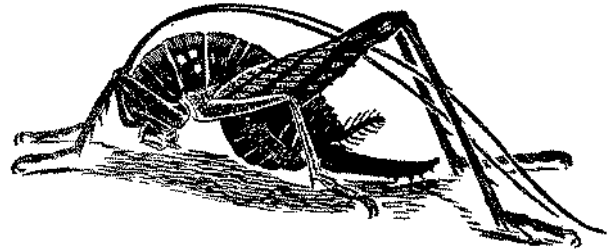
September 26, 2015 – **Tennessee Cave Survey Fall Business Meeting**. The spring meeting will be at Johnson Hall at Tennessee Tech University. Doors open at 8am cst and meeting begins at 9am.

October 8-11, 2015 – **38<sup>th</sup> Annual TAG FALL CAVE IN**. Pre registration is OPEN. Discount ends 09/01. To pre register online or to print a paper form go to: <http://tagfallcavein.org/>.

## Connect with the Grotto

If you're new to the Grotto, here are a few ways you can get to know other members:

-  Join us on a Grotto Trip, Survey Trip or a Cleanup.
-  Sewanee Mountain Remailer: After you have joined the grotto, join our mailing list to keep up to date with cave trips and meetings. Go to: [http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/sewanee\\_mountain\\_grotto](http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/sewanee_mountain_grotto) and click join. Please provide your real name so we'll know who you are.
-  Facebook – Join our official unofficial Facebook Page to meet other area cavers and plan trips. Search for Sewanee Mountain Grotto under groups.
-  Grotto Merchandise: The Grotto has 3" patches for \$5 and KOOZIES for \$1. Both items have our grotto logo on them. Please contact Kelly Smallwood at rowland7840@bellsouth.net to purchase.



## THE TAG SCOOP

**\*\*2015 Dues are due.** You can download an updated membership list from the Yahoo group. Membership dues are \$10. You can pay Blaine at a meeting or send them via snail mail. Send check payable to Sewanee Mountain Grotto, 669 Old Sewanee Road, Sewanee, TN 37375. Make sure to include your contact information (name, address, phone #, email address, & NSS #).

# Welcome to the 2015 Sewanee Mountain Cave Fest

2015 is our 13<sup>th</sup> year and we are glad you are here to join us. As always we strive to provide a great party while raising funds to continue our conservation, survey and exploration efforts within our region. The potluck and Auction are both on Saturday night and as always we have lined up a lot of led trips for you to join in on. Something new this year, MUD WRESTLING on Sunday night! Thank you to everyone who has helped again this year pulling off the event, thank you to all of our sponsors and we hope you all have a great time and thank you again for joining us.

## CAVE FEST – SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Friday 09/04/15

All Day – Caving!

All Day – Ropes Course

5:30– Kids Bat Flight to Nickajack Cave

Dark 30 – Karaoke & Beer

### sunday 09/06/15

All Day – Caving!

All Day – Ropes Course

10:00am – Kids Caving Trip

5:30 – Canoe Trip to Nickajack Cave

Dark 30 – DJ Music/Dancing & Beer

11:00pm – Mud Wrestling (Adults ONLY)

### Saturday 09/05/15

All Day – Caving!

All Day – Ropes Course

10:00am – Kids Activities: JR Ranger Karst Booklet, Cave Clay Art Project & Hike/picnic at Russell Cave.

5:00pm – Potluck Dinner

7:00pm – AUCTION!! & Beer

10:00pm –Stargazing for the Kids!

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Sign up & Meet for Cave Trips and Float trips at Registration (Only sign up for Float Trips if you need a boat).**
- **The Ropes Course is located in the Party Zone near the Hot Tub & Sauna**
- **Beer served to those who purchase a CUP and are over 21**
- **Do not SPEED. Please be mindful when you are driving around the campground as there are kids and dogs at play**
- **Keep your campsite free of trash and make sure all food is secure from animals**
- **Recycle all glass, plastic (no caps), and aluminum in the bins provided**
- **Watch for snakes and spiders around wood piles.**

# The Caves of Sinking Cove

## Franklin County, Tennessee

The Southeastern Cave Conservancy (SCCi) manages the caver access to the Sinking Cove area (also known as Compartment Four of the Carter Lands) under a lease agreement. There are 73 caves in the preserve with several well-known and many lesser known caves. Some of the more popular caves included in the lease are Sinking Cove Cave, Cave Cove Cave, and Custard Hollow Cave. The area was previously closed to cavers in February, 2001 when it was leased by a new management group. By executing a sub-lease of caving rights from Deep South Outdoors, the SCCi re-opened the area to cavers for access outside of Tennessee deer and turkey seasons and with limited access during those seasons. Access to the preserve by SCCi members and guests is limited to the dates and periods determined and announced by SCCi and Deep South Outdoors.

During those periods, access for caving and camping is allowed as defined in the Management Plan, which can be found on the SCCi website. In a nutshell, you must email ahead and notify them that you would like to visit. The SCCi lease requires that the individual named on the permit be a current member of SCCi and large groups (more than 16 people) need to request special permission at least two weeks in advance. You will receive a letter in response that will serve as your permit and the combination to the SCCi lock on the gate at the end of Sinking Cove Road will be provided with your permit letter. The combination is changed frequently by the preserve managers and special lock codes may be assigned for the duration of group permits.

Deep South Outdoors (DSO), the primary lease holder for the area including Sinking Cove and Custard Hollow, requires that all permit holders must carry their permit with them while on the property and be prepared to show it when asked by any of the staff or other users. This policy was instituted by the DSO to control unauthorized access, poaching, and vandalism. It was designed for the hunters, but we have to abide as well.

Caver's situation is a little different as we are allowed to take guests where the hunters are not. In our case, the caver who requests the permit must be a SCCi member and must have the permit letter. The other members of the group are regarded as guests of that member. The permit holder is responsible for knowing the rules and conditions of the permit and making sure that all members of the group abide by them. Cavers should carry a copy of their permit letter with them (one copy per group) when hiking to entrances remote from their parking area.

The SCCi pays a substantial annual fee for this lease. Contributions and donations to help cover the cost of the lease are very much appreciated.

*NOTICE:* To help prevent the spread of the deadly White Nose Syndrome (WNS) affecting bat populations, please read the SCCi Cave Visitation Policy and follow the guidelines.

### Preserve Information:

For more information, contact the SCCi property manager, Buddy Lane at [sinkingcove@scci.org](mailto:sinkingcove@scci.org) or visit the SCCi webpage at [www.scci.org](http://www.scci.org).

On the next few pages are descriptions, maps and images from some of the caves located in the Sinking Cove Preserve.



## SINKING COVE CAVE FR25

With 9 entrances, Sinking Cove Cave is by far the most visited & popular cave in Sinking Cove. The main caver's campsite is located just a few hundred yards from two of the entrances, one of which continually blows a stream of cool air down into the campground all year long. This makes it a very popular camping area for cavers and local grottos throughout the summer months. The mapped length of Sinking Cove Cave is 28,248'. The most popular trips are the Boulder Entrance Vertical Pull Down and the Wolf Cove Entrance Horizontal Trip.

Located 3 miles east of Sal City, at the head of Sinking Cove. The stream comes from the cave entrance. The Sinking Cove Cave system is one of the most extensive cave developments in the southern part of the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. The pattern of the system is illustrative of the manner in which coves may extend headward into the plateau by underground solution and karst development. Above and west of the head of Sinking Cove are three large, uvala-like depressions separated by saddles. Progressively headward (west) these are known as Wolf Cove, Farmer Cove, and Cave Cove, respectively. The trunk channel of the system begins at the lower end of Cave Cove at an elevation of 1320 feet and emerges 2 miles to the east at the head of Sinking Cove, at an elevation of 850 feet. At least five tributary branches to the trunk channel have been recognized. Three caves may be entered---Sinking Cove Cave and Farmer Cove Cave (FR10) along the trunk channel and Waterfall Cave (FR29) along one of the tributaries. Additional caves are said to occur in Cave Cove, but these were not visited by the writer, and accurate reports were not available. Sinking Cove Cave is the lowest and largest cave in the series. The main passage is approximately 7,000 feet long and is very sinuous: from the lower to the upper mouth the cave trends slightly south of west. At the base of the plateau (elevation 850 feet) are three mouths, close together, which open to the cave stream. The lowest one is a round hole 20 feet above the middle one and opens vertically downward for 25 feet to the cave stream. One mile due west of these entrances is a sinkhole mouth to the upper end of the cave (Wolf Cove Entrance, E9). It is at an elevation of 1010 feet, in part of the Waterfall Cave tributary. The main passage in Sinking Cove Cave is readily traversed for most of its length, except for three large breakdown chambers, each about 100 yards long, and one or two short crawls. The first breakdown is 600 yards from the lower end of the cave. For this distance, the passage averages 25 feet wide and 10 feet high and contains several small but attractive formations. Beyond the last breakdown, the cave opens up into a passage 30 feet high and 40 feet wide, then narrows to a canyon eight feet wide and 20 feet high. At 1,950 yards from the lower end is a fork to the right, which extends for 150 yards to the upper sinkhole entrance. A short distance past the fork is an upperlevel passage 250 yards long, with several adits. Helictites may be seen in one of these adits. The main passage finally becomes impenetrable, owing to breakdown, at about 2,300 yards from the lower mouths. If one could circumvent this breakdown, he would be in Farmer Cove Cave.



*The Boulder Entrance to Sinking Cove.  
Photo by Kelly Smallwood*

One of the upper entrances to Sinking Cove Cave is the Boulder Entrance (E6). One must do five pits (23, 37, 53, 25, and 23 feet) in 2,000 feet of passage, plus a 200 feet-long wet crawl, to connect with the lower cave. The pull-down trip is complicated and may require a wetsuit in the wet season. The Boulder Entrance requires a steep climbdown which many people choose to rig and rappel as a 23-foot pit. There have been some nasty falls here. Corkscrew through the breakdown to a stream channel which you then follow to the second pit, 37 feet deep, which is rigged from a natural bridge. At the bottom, climb up into a large dry room and go to the right until it ends. Climb down through a slot into another room and bear right. Climb down through breakdown to the top of a black canyon. Work back to the right and down about 30 feet to the bottom, then walk back left to the third pit, 53 feet, which is rigged from some bolts. At the bottom follow the stream channel to the next pit, a short 25-foot rappel rigged from a single bolt. Just beyond is a 23-foot pit which is rigged from a sling through a solution hole. At the bottom you walk a few feet to the start of a crawl. After 50 feet you must get down into the water and paddle along 150 feet of low passage. At the end is a small room and a tricky 13-foot climbdown in the waterfall. A handline is strongly recommended.

Follow the water out to the left and into the main Sinking Cove Cave borehole. It is about 1000 feet downstream to the spring entrance. Tennessee cave salamanders (Pale salamander) (*Gyrinophilus pallescens pallescens*) and stygobitic blind crayfish (*Cambarus hamulatus*) live in the cave stream. Cave salamanders (*Eurycea lucifuga*), orange color with black spots, were also observed in the cave. Sinking Cove Cave is the type locality for the Tennessee cave salamander. (Barr, 1961; Gerald Moni, 1978, 1979 *SERA Guidebook*)



## CUSTARD HOLLOW CAVE FR7

On the west side of Custard Hollow, 1.2 miles above the point where the hollow joins Sinking Cove. Custard Hollow Cave has 18,300' of mapped passage and three entrances a short distance apart, all of which open on the west side of the cove. From the southernmost of these, the cave stream has worked northward along the west wall of the cove, issuing at a progressively lower mouth. The main stream passage is 5400 feet in length and trends north-northwest. Just inside the northernmost mouth the cave stream occupies a shallow incised trench, which bypasses a breakdown and mud fill at the back of the entrance room to lead into a large, gravel-floored passage. The cave makes a swing to the southwest before turning north for most of its length. About 900 feet from the mouth the cave becomes rather low for a short distance but then opens out into an avenue which averages 15 feet high and 25 feet wide. The stream meanders about over the floor, crossing and recrossing from one side to the other. There are several pools in the stream, and a small amount of breakdown is encountered. A few stalactites and a small amount of flowstone constitute the only formations. The last 500 feet of the cave is a crawlway in the stream; near the beginning of this crawl is a branch crawlway, 250 feet long, to the right. (Barr, 1961) The main entrance (E1) is 25 feet wide by 12 feet high. E2 is a spring, 15 feet wide and high, E2 is 25 feet to the right of E1. E3 is 50 feet left of E1. E3 is 20 feet wide by 12 feet high. (Gerald Moni, 1999) Tennessee cave salamander (Pale salamander) (*Gyrinophilus pallescens pallescens*) has been observed in the cave stream.



Jason Hardy at the entrance to Custards Last Stand Cave. Photo by Kelly

## CUSTARDS LAST STAND CAVE FR212

Located on the west side of Custard Hollow, 0.5 miles northwest of the entrance to Custard Hollow Cave (FR7). The cave is 4000 feet northeast of Cold Spring and is estimated at 1,500' long (unmapped). The entrance is a large sink in gully with a large stream flowing into cave. There is a gigantic sink 100 vertical below the entrance sink. Two parallel 15-foot climbdowns lead off the right of the sink, through breakdown, to the main stream. The waterfall coming down from the surface flows into a dome room and disappears into small cracks. Another 10-foot climbdown leads to a walking-sized canyon passage that slowly lowers to a flat-out belly crawl. After 300 feet you come to a large chamber, maybe 50 feet across. Most of the floor was taken up by a big pit, 69 feet deep with a major ledge towards the bottom. At the bottom, there is at least 700 feet of passage. The main stream goes down a wet 30-foot pit into an 80-foot diameter room. The water pours into the breakdown and probably reappears in Custard Hollow Cave. (Gerald Moni, 1979; Andy Zellner, 2004)

## SNOWFLAKE PIT FR136

The pit is located directly in a streambed. There is water flowing in, but the pit can be rigged out of the water. The pit sits on the east side of Custard Hollow, approximately 1,500 feet northwest of BM MLB640. The cave is located in the 4th ravine on the right side of Custard Hollow as one passes Custard Hollow Cave. The elevation change is approximately 400 feet. The pit was named after the snow falling all the way to the bottom of the pit. The original exploration crew was G. Will Chamberlin, Rick Buice, Fran Formby, and Bob Snyder. Rigging the low side, the main pit is 98 feet deep.

From the bottom of the main pit, in order to see the rest of the cave one must complete a 12 foot pit and a 15 foot pit which are both wet. All three drops can be rigged using a 200 foot rope. There is a ledge that one can tarzan over too 64 feet down the main pit. Traverse approx 150 feet to a 40 foot pit that has one bolt in the ceiling. Once down the 40 foot pit you meander another 50 feet through a canyon passage to a 20 foot wet pit. There is a large room at the bottom of the 20 foot pit that is at the same depth as the bottom of the main pit. (G. Will Chamberlin, 1978, Jason Hardy, 2015)

## GESTAPO DROPPA FR149

Located 2000 feet northwest of Lick Hollow on a secondary bench below a wide prominent one and 1500 feet east and slightly south of the confluence of Custard Hollow and Narrows Hollow. The pit is divided by wedged boulders and bridges making a double pit part of the way down. A side passage part of the way down the pit leads into a large formation room with 60 feet of walking passage. The pit is 106 feet deep divided into 2 pits, 18 and 88 feet. There is a parallel 53-foot pit. (Lin Guy, 1978; David Cole, 1998)



# Gestapo Droppo

Franklin County Tennessee

TFR# 149

Total Vertical extent 107.4 Feet (32.7 Meters)

Total Horizontal extent 290.2 Feet (88.5 Meters)

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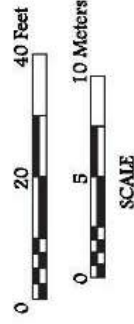
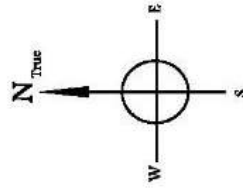
National Speleological Society

September 7, 2013

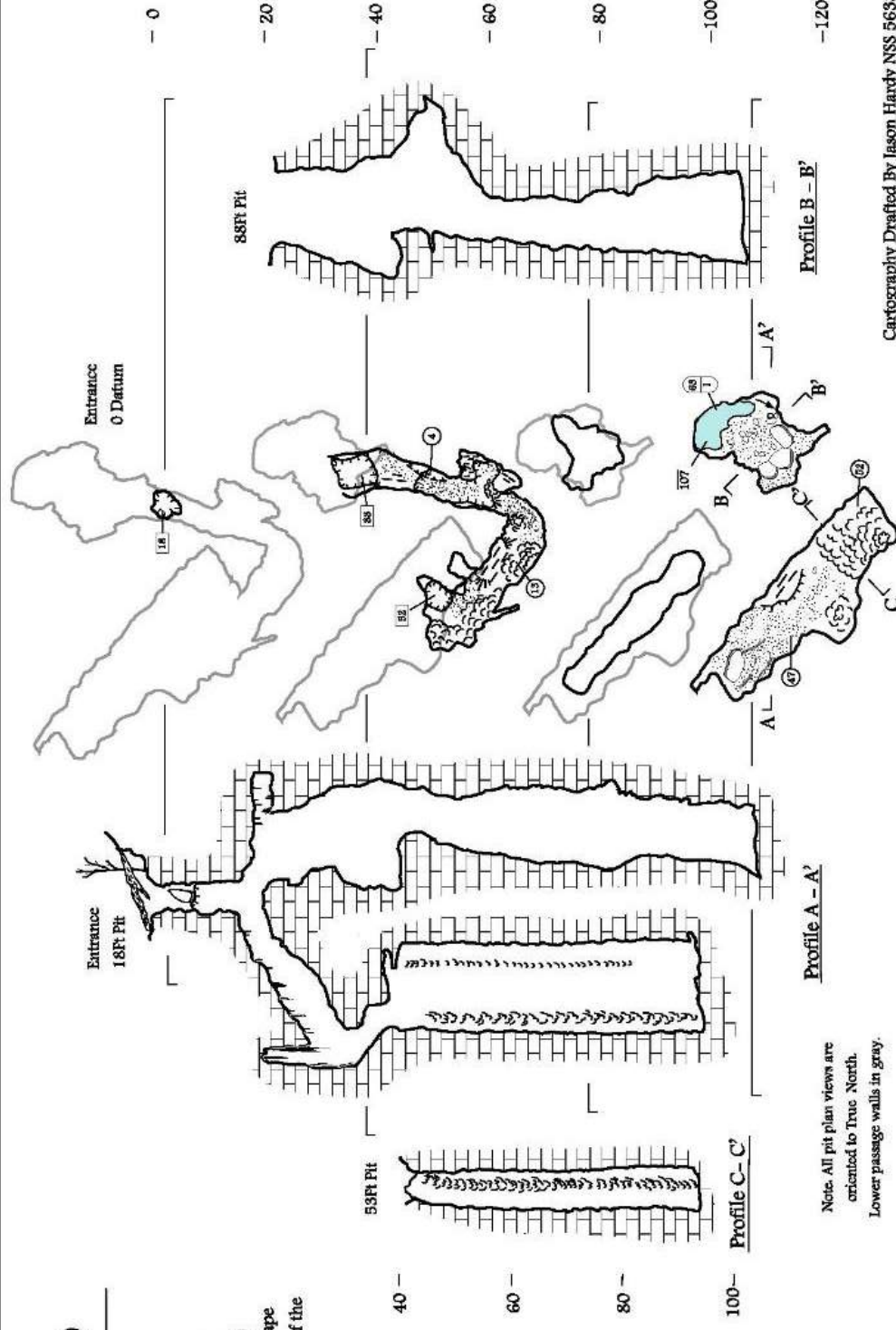
Jason Hardy

Kelly Smallwood

Sasha Skiturna



All Ceiling Heights & Depths Are In Feet



Cartography Drafted By Jason Hardy NSS 56383, 2014



TFR# 136

Total Vertical extent 135.6 Feet (41.3 Meters)

Total Horizontal extent 719 Feet (219.2 Meters)

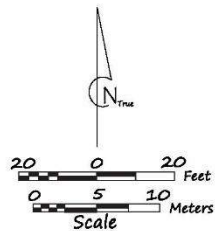
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National Speleological Society

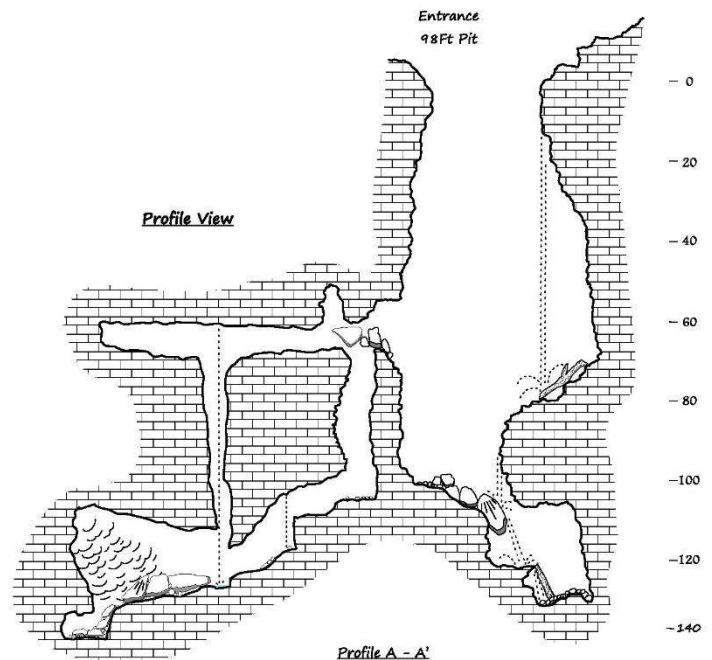
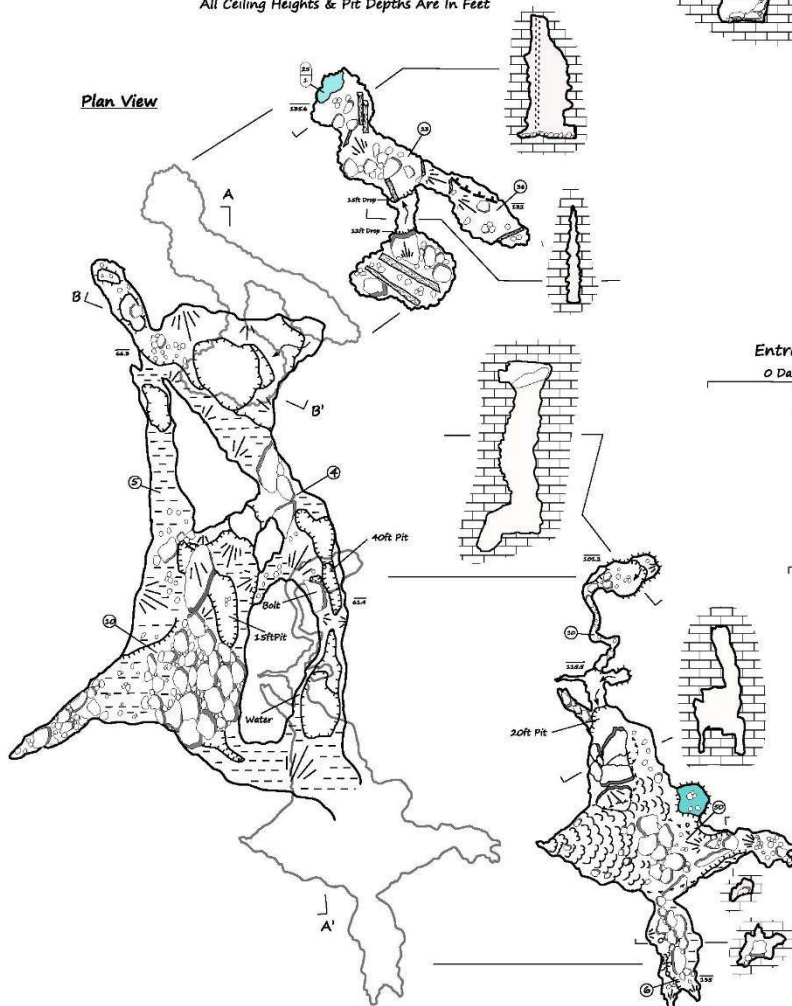
August 10, 2013

Jason Hardy

Kelly Smallwood

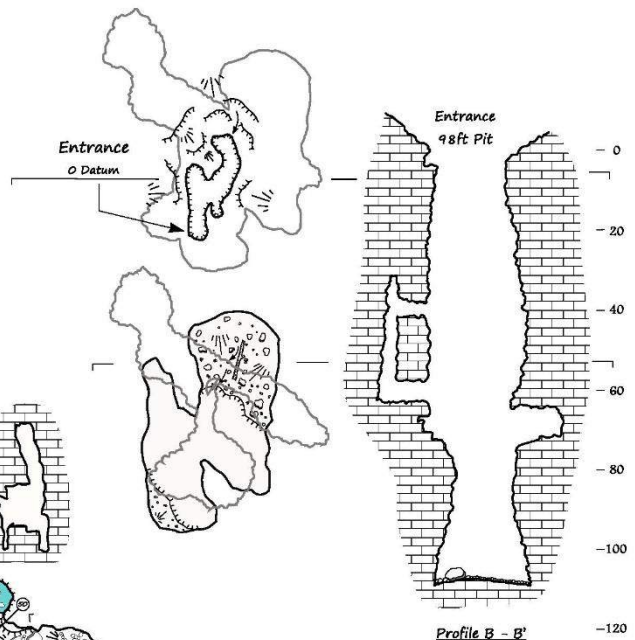


All Ceiling Heights & Pit Depths Are In Feet



Profile A - A'

Note. All pit plan views are oriented to True North.  
Lower passage walls in gray.



Profile B - B'

## RAWHIDE HORROR HOLE FR254

Located on the south side of Dry Creek between two major gullies. The main entrance (E1) is 6,000 feet west of Sherwood and 250 feet northwest of a large sinking stream which is the entrance to Rawhide Cave (FR107). E1 is a tiny hole on the south side of a shallow sink 40 feet across and 600 feet above the valley floor. The main entrance is 3700 feet southeast of the confluence of Dry Creek and Cane Hollow. Forgotten Cairn entrance (E2) is 400 feet northwest of E1, on the west side of a ravine, 20 feet above and 40 feet from a streambed.

Found by Ted Wilson, Danny Dible, and Kevin Bruno on January 29, 1984. The entrance is a blowhole dug open, but not entered until July 14. The entrance is a small, body-sized hole (1.5 feet wide by 3 feet long) separated by a rock wedged in the pit 8 feet down. A 20-foot crawl at the bottom leads to a free 109 foot pit with stoop walk stream passage at the bottom. Passage size soon increases to impressive proportions that ends at a large room. A 50-foot crawlway to the left leads to more passage and another big room with nice orange dripstone formations, along with some nice quarter-size cave pearls. The cave was pushed to its end November 3, 1984 by Indiana cavers. The large passage at the bottom of the 109-foot pit is formed in a shale layer at the top of the Hartselle Formation. The left crawlway continues 200 to 300 feet through breakdown and down two small pits (9 feet and 25 feet) through the Hartselle to the top of the Monteagle Limestone. The next four pits (9 feet, 40 feet, 13 feet, 15 feet) are connected mainly by narrow, fissure walking passage. The tops of these canyon passages could have side passages leading to significant cave. Above the ninth pit (118 feet) a large stream enters from the left and doubles the water flow. The 118-foot pit is very wet. At the bottom, you go 25 feet to the last, 31-foot pit. The bottom cave has deep pools separated by large mud banks. Southern cavefish (*Typhlichthys subterraneus*) live in these deep pools.

The pit depths are 45, 109, 9, 25, 9, 40, 13, 15, 118, and 31 feet. The ropes needed are 75, 150, 25, 50, 40, 70, 45, 40, 180, and 50 feet. The Forgotten Cairn Entrance (E2) is a 15-foot pit (2 feet wide by 2.5 feet long) that goes 80 feet to a second pit (33 feet). A third pit, 30 feet deep, connects to the large passage at the top of the Hartselle Formation. This passage is between the 109-foot pit and the 9-foot pit that comes in from the main entrance. (Kevin Bruno, 1984; Gerald Moni, 1984 & 2010) The entrance to Rawhide Horror Hole is 1.5 feet wide by 3 feet long. The tight entrance pit bells out slightly and is 45 feet deep. A crawlway leading off the base of the pit starts off with a tight crack in the floor, but after 30 feet this crack bells out to a nice 109-foot freefall pit. Rig to a flake of rock before the crawl and then rebelay to another flake right above the second pit. At the bottom, the main stream from Rawhide Cave (presumably) is reached. This stream is usually almost bone-dry. This stream can be followed as a nice walking passage for a few hundred feet downstream before it dumps down a 10-foot climbdown and disappears into a tight crawlway. By traversing around this climbdown and through a breakdown pile, another stream is reached and can be followed through another few hundred feet of nice-sized passage. Eventually all the water disappears underneath a large, brown flowstone mound. Apparently you can stay up in the big, walking borehole for a long way, but it eventually ends. Following the water leads through a crawlway 300 feet long which starts off as a belly crawl and gradually enlarges to more or less walking passage. This was the only grim thing in the entire cave and it never got to be low airspace. Then the cave drops through a layer of shale via a 9-foot pit. A larger passage at the bottom goes another couple hundred feet to where the water goes down a pit about 20 feet deep. By traversing on some slippery ledges out over this pit, a dry bypass pit of about 45 feet depth can be reached. This descends through the last layer of Hartselle shale. Next the water drops through a breakdown pile and another 15-foot pit. Bypass this pit by doing an exposed climb high and to the left. Soon a 15-foot flowstone climbdown is reached, and then the main water. Follow the water through some really nice canyon passage for 1000 feet, descending short pits of 9, 40, 13 and 15 feet along the way. Eventually a larger stream comes pouring out of a hole in the left wall and joins this passage, then goes down a really wet 118-foot pit. This large stream is likely the same one that disappeared higher up in the cave. The wet 118-footer can be bypassed by going up a 30-foot muddy climbup on the right, 50 feet back up the main passage. This leads to a short handline drop of about 20? feet, and then a large ledge is reached that overlooks the 118-footer. This pit has not been taped but is probably about 80 feet deep. At the bottom all the water goes down one last pit of 31 feet, this one through almost solid chert. A passage continues for few feet beyond this pit to the final sump of the cave. Be prepared for lots of water in the wet season, apparently not much at all in the summer. (Andy Zellner, 2010)

## CAVE COVE CAVE FR33

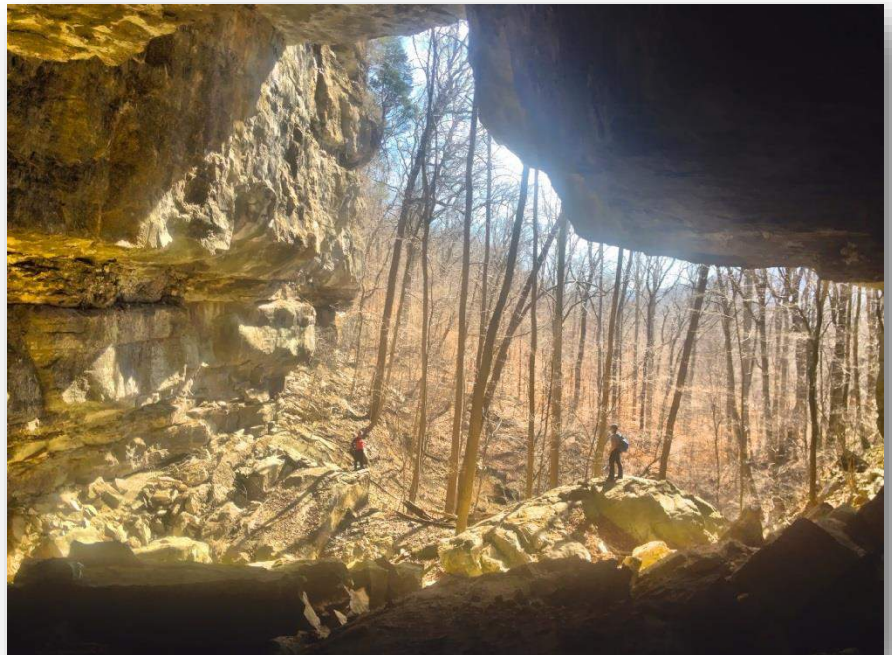
From the Carter Mountain Wildlife Management Checking Station on the Winchester/Scottsboro Road (Tennessee Highway 26), turn east and follow a gravel road 0.7 miles to a fork. Bear right onto a dirt road and follow it 0.9 miles out to the edge of the mountain and around to the left to its end. The end is a wash-out road leading down into a large stream gully. Park here and follow road down into the large stream gully and up the other side. Follow road 200 feet past gully to junction. Turn right and follow this road 500 feet vertically down into the Cave Cove sink. Stay on



road, bearing left at each junction to the main cave entrance. The whole cove drains into the main entrance of the cave, but normally the streambed is dry. To find E2 walk up the cove from the main entrance to the large valley coming in from the northeast. Follow this up to the streamsink (normally dry) which is E2. E3 is easily seen on the hillside near the streamsink (E2). The main entrance (E1) is 100 feet wide and 25 feet high with a major streambed draining into the entrance. The cave is generally large walking passage with minor stream flow which is over 1 mile long. This cave is the major drainage conduit for this part of the cove. Near the end is a 52-foot pit (taped) that connects with lower wet passages. The bottom continues both upstream and downstream. A 10-foot high canyon passage leads to a large deep pool. About 400 feet from the entrance is an obscure hands and knees crawl on the right wall. The crawl had been dug out and quickly opened to a walking canyon passage that leads to an 8-foot climbup to a walking higher level passage. A room was found in this area that had been dug. Piles of sandstone rocks and mattock marks were found in the room. This was a minor saltpeter operation. The other two entrances can be reached by going upstream in the main stream passage of the cave. This left passage is 800 feet from the entrance and turns to crawl before reaching the other 2 entrances. E2 is a streamsink. You crawl in to a 40-foot pit/climbdown. At the base is a tight passage leading to a major stream passage which can be followed downstream to the main passage. E3 is a climbdown which drops into a dome complex. Under one wall is a crawl into a walking canyon passage leading to the main part of the cave. Tennessee cave salamanders (Pale salamander) (*Gyrinophilus pallescens pallescens*), stygobitic blind crayfish (*Cambarus hamulatus*), and surface crayfish (*Cambarus tenebrosus*) were observed in the cave stream. (Barr, 1961; Jerry Davis, 1983; Alan Cressler, 2004)

## HEAP BIG HOLE IN BLUFF FR82

An entrance well worth the hike and visit just to see. Marked as a cave on the topo map. In a large bluff northeast of the floor of Custard Hollow, 2.09km northeast of Cold Spring, and 1.05km south-southeast of Posey Field. The entrance is a huge opening about 30m wide and 20m high. The entire cave is floored by large blocks of friable breakdown and maintains the entrance dimensions for 75m, at which point the passage ends in a stone wall. Numerous holes in the breakdown floor are apparently blind, but one narrow hole down at the right side of the entrance (8m deep) has cool air and was not explored due to loose rock. A short surface continuation of the former cave passage is also breakdown floored and includes the small sinkhole marked on the map below the entrance. (John Smyre, 1976)

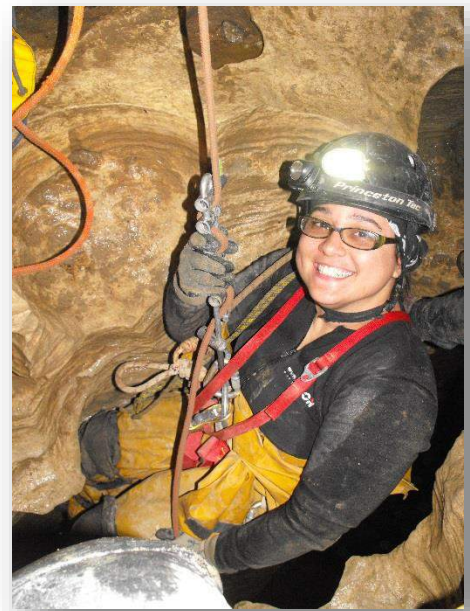


*The entrance to Heap Big Hole in Bluff in winter. Photo by Kelly Smallwood*

## TIBIA CAVE FR240

The cave is on the west side of Burned Stand Ridge and is mapped at 557'. Follow the four wheel drive road toward Sinking Cove Cave (FR25)/Custard Hollow. At the Custard Hollow/Sinking Cove split, follow the road to the right towards Custard Hollow until the road splits again around a small patch of trees (approximately 500 to 700 feet). Tibia Cave is located 50 feet uphill from the road. Although the cave has a large entrance, it is not visible from the road. A few feet farther down the road and 30 feet below the road is a small sink which takes water from the streambed above. Tibia Cave is a small cave consisting of two passages. The right fork quickly ends in a wide dirt-filled crawl. There is a small stream that flows at the beginning of the right passage, but even after a heavy rain the night before, it was still just a trickle. The left fork is mostly walking (eight to 10 feet high) with a small animal nest located near the end of the passage. The cave was not virgin---there were footprints located throughout the cave, and logs with notches in them. The logs appeared to be useful in diverting a small flow of water from a large flowstone drip near the entrance. There were numerous dates smoked throughout the cave, especially down the left fork. The dates appeared to be from the 1800s, but it was hard to be sure. The cave was mined for saltpetre. The cave gets its name from the fact that G. Will Chamberlin from Athens, GA, broke his tibia the day after this cave was located. The cave was entered on March 9, 1985. (Rick Buice, 1985)





Random photos from Sinking Cove.  
 From top left: A Sewanee Mountain Grotto campout, Kelly Smallwood at drop three in the Boulder Entrance Pull Down, Looking up at the Waterfall Entrance, Looking out of the Waterfall Entrance, a view of the campground.





