



The Resto Report



Aug. 2015 edition

Well, it's that time of year! A couple dozen cavers gathered once again at the Maple Springs Research Station over the first week of August to participate in the 2015 Mammoth Cave Restoration Field Camp.

Cavers have been helping the Park Service for nearly three decades now, and proud accomplishment that evidences the love and respect we all have for the history of the world's longest cave.

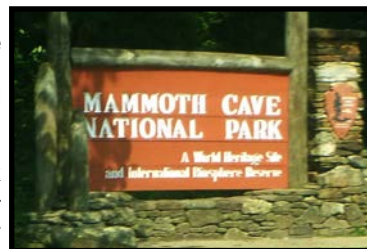
This year's activities began by the Mammoth and watermelon

It was a welcome into camp. He and week-long restoration from another week-noe and kayak ex-Turkey and Mississippi-

This was Mark's of the nicest guys Chefs de Cuisine As-



with a nice Sunday evening meal paid Cave National Park Association. on a warm summer's eve... perfect! sight when professional chef Mark his good friend, caver Chuck Shution camp commitment despite traveling event. The Great River Rumble cursation that this year went 106 miles from Elkader, Iowa, to Savanna, Illinois, along the pi Rivers. Thanks, Mark and Chuck, for your commitment and sacrifice! third year planning the menu and running the kitchen at resto camp. A true pro and one you'd ever meet, Mark is a member of the American Culinary Federation's nonprofit sociation of St. Louis.



that's certainly a significance and

for and prepared Grilled burgers

Williams drove bert, made the elling directly is an annual ca-

Williams drove bert, made the elling directly is an annual cursation that this year went 106 miles from Elkader, Iowa, to Savanna, Illinois, along the pi Rivers. Thanks, Mark and Chuck, for your commitment and sacrifice! third year planning the menu and running the kitchen at resto camp. A true pro and one you'd ever meet, Mark is a member of the American Culinary Federation's nonprofit sociation of St. Louis.

Day One

Monday morning dawned with a 7am breakfast of scrambled eggs and sausages. Forging the River for the first of dozens of times throughout the week, the group then drove over to the Historic of Mammoth Cave.

The 24 cavers split into several work teams: those digging old wire out of the ground, the dust-crew and four people working on a drainage project.

Your humble narrator was part of the third group, working at a site located a couple hundred the cave from the entrance.

Years ago, it was thought that the Mammoth Cave air flow also could help cool the hotel main passage. So a 10-foot-diameter ventilation shaft was drilled. For the first two or three idea worked. But then, officials noticed that the moist air was causing mold to grow on all the hotel. The shaft then was plugged at the top.

The drilling had passed through a layer of shale that routed a trickle of water that even today lightly rain down the shaft. Officials noticed that historic logs previously used for water pipes in the salt petre operation now were starting to grow white mold, presumably from the humidity and moisture.

It was thought that the water drip- the now-useless shaft The water had been ing into the ground.

Leave it to the resto saker, Scott McGlamery, under a constant shower Brian's dogged persever- 18-inches below the sur-

We tried poking a foot- with sand and muck. We the appropriate paperwork hole we dug gradually



filled with muddy waters but never quite overflowed into the main passage. Stay tuned!

The resto cavers all emerged and enjoyed lunch outside the Historic Entrance before returning to their crew jobs inside the cave. A couple hours later, everyone returned to Maple Springs.

Dinner was a delicious pasta meal, with pesto bowtie and fettucine bolognaise.

But the day's work was not yet done. After dinner, about 17 cavers went back to the Historic Entrance to meet Dr. George Crothers, who is the Park Archaeologist, a researcher and professor at University of Ken-

George met us at the entrance and walked us down to the Rotunda Room, where about the salt petre mining operation that took place in the 1800s. It was a wonder- and we were honored to hear it from the man who likely is the preeminent authority Mammoth Cave's history. (--thanks, George!)

Caver manpower was needed in order to move some very large and heavy logs the trail to the other. By sizing up the average log, and by the grunts I involuntarily carrying them, we figured each log weighed nearly half a ton. One by one, we more than a dozen of the monster logs and transported them a few hundred feet new locations.

At first, we lifted the logs and didn't fully realize that some cavers are taller than others fellas dangling from the middle). In short order, we lined up the workers by height and shared the load some-

After a couple hours of work, we then drove back over Green River ferry (which closes at 9:55pm), promising to be back the next evening.



Green Entrance

bunny

feet into

above the months, the wood in the

continues to mining operation

ping down the ventilation shaft was not helping the problem. Although reportedly had a brass drain at the bottom, it was buried in sediment. forming a shallow pool at the bottom of the shaft and gradually dissipat-

crew to attack the problem! With a few rudimentary tools, Brian Hun- Ken Dejonge and I went to work. After nearly an hour of digging while of water, I voiced my skepticism that the drain even existed. But it was ance that finally uncovered the prize: a shiny brass drain-head, about face. Truly an "ah-ha" moment. Way to go, Brian!

long length of rigid wire down the drain, but it was thoroughly clogged reported the findings and were told that maintenance staff would file and seek the go-ahead to clear the drain pipe. In the meantime, the



tucky.

he explained all ful education, on this aspect of

from one side of emitted while carefully lifted to their designat-

(which left shorter what equally.



But it was not to be, that day, as Bill Copeland had given the wrong key to get into the cave. He tried and tried, but it just wasn't happening.

The look of disappointment on everyone's faces, as we about-face down the hill and take the treacherous drive back through the over-foliated road.



disappointment on everyone's faces, as we about-face down the hill and take the treacherous drive back through the over-foliated road.



been

But the non-cave-trip and now-diminishing drizzle could not dampen our spirits. We headed back to Mammoth and met back at Historic Entrance at 10:30am. Cavers split into three crews: lint, wire and wall anchors, and headed underground.



I joined those who were being supervised by (former resto camp director) Roy Vanhooser, hiding and removing wire near the trail leading down from the feature known as the Giant's Coffin. After first eating our sack lunch in an out-of-the-way alcove at the bottom of the stairs, we got to work.

Next was a return to the Great Relief Hall, where some of us removed wire from a maintenance area located behind the (closed) bathrooms. After that, we removed a few wall anchors from a low-ceiling area near the bench seating area at River Hall.

Traditionally, Wednesday is a day when the camp cooks are given a break from preparing a full dinner for the cavers. After exiting the cave, we headed for an enclosed (and air-conditioned) pavilion located in the picnic area near the Visitor Center parking lot to enjoy an early dinner of pizza, salad and desserts.

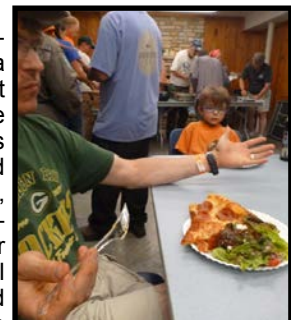
This also was time when the group posed for the annual camp photo of participants. (Photo by Ken... well done!)

While some cavers then returned underground for an 'educational trip' to see Miller Avenue, a few of us stayed topside to see a slide show and lecture from Ranger Kennetha Sanders at the campground amphitheater.



It was excellent! Kennetha explained about the history of the many families who were in and around the Park, showed photographs from her own personal collection and finally revealed to the audience of 30 people that she herself is a fifth-generation Guide. Wow.

There was another 'wow' when we all returned to Maple. In gratitude for everyone's help with the logs at the salt petre area, George had brought over a couple cases of beer for cavers to enjoy. And it wasn't just the cheap stuff... there was Summer Shandy, Guinness and Budweiser. He later told us that, for cavers, beer is the 'universal currency.' Thanks again, George! If you ever need help with other tasks, just whistle!



Day Four

Food, to me, was a major factor of the week-long camp. And I can't forget the breakfast of French toast and bacon that was served Thursday morning.

Following the previous day's disappointment, Bill was given the correct entrance door key and we went down into the cave.



It's only a couple hundred feet long, very nicely decorated. Brian and John the hill at the end of the cave and (re-) small back room. Meanwhile, Bill, Ken impromptu on-site cave photography shot a bunch of tripod photos. Our official being there was to evaluate what it would move any existing old wire in the cave, environmental evaluation.

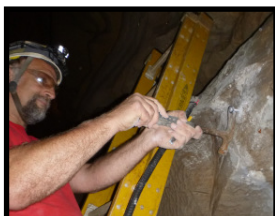
After an hour or so in the cave, the group then exited the Mammoth Cave elevator entrance patio for lunch. We then went down into the cave, passed a group of people from AmeriCorps in the Snowball Room



all drove back

but the cave is clambered up discovered a purpose in take to re-prior to an

group then exited the Mammoth Cave elevator entrance patio for lunch. We then went down into the cave, passed a group of people from AmeriCorps in the Snowball Room



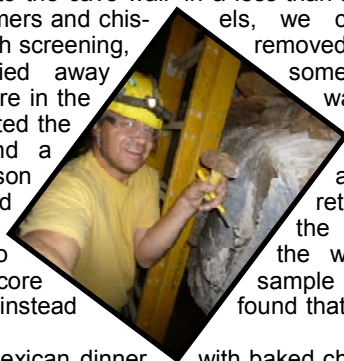
and hiked down to Boone Avenue.

Our job was to improve areas where electrical cable had been plastered to the cave wall in a less-than-aesthetic fashion. Using hammers and chisels, we chipped away plaster and mesh screening, removed a bit of old wiring and pried away some non-lead anchors that were in the walls.

The group exited the cave some hours later, and a couple of us

met George and Park Ecologist Rick Olson at the cave's Violet City entrance. The drizzle rain had did a 'grid search' and I was able to find mark that was located about 30-feet into roadway. George also tried getting a soil core mouth of a nearby spring feature but instead the hole. Oh well.

Back at camp that evening, it was a Mexican dinner with baked chicken enchiladas, steak tacos and a delicious apple enchilada dessert.



found that there was an old concrete pad beneath the dirt in front of

Day Five

Today was the best breakfast of week, in my opinion, because Mark and Chuck served grits as well as two kinds of scrambled eggs (plain and Mexican).

Bill had announced that Friday would be light day of work that would end before mid-afternoon. We parked at the elevator entrance, pressed the "CL" (cave elevator level) button on the pad and descended on down.

Some cavers had expressed interest in return- ing to the unfin-Boone Avenue, group wanted to the one-hour work. I opted for the Echo River. I

The work strenuous. I

der along the wall, chipped away at the ugly plaster. It was a good thing we were told to wear safety glasses, as there were plenty of plaster chunks and nasty dust thrown in all directions. We positioned a tarp at the bottom of each work area to catch the detritus and swept-up any crud that splattered off to the side.

I ate my sack lunch in the peaceful solitude of an open area near the Mammoth work site. Before long, it was time to clean up and say good-bye to Cave for the week.

The en- tire group was out of the cave by 2pm. Having the afternoon 'off', some enjoyed a shower and some took a well-deserved afternoon nap.

Dinner that evening was pork chops with asparagus, salad and strawberry shortcake for dessert. A few pitched-in to help clean the kitchen and mop the floor. When the Chef Mark finally declared the kitchen to be 'closed,' he sat down and gave the Awards ceremony.

First was a thank-you to the only 'first-timer' who helped with resto camp, which was Bill's grandson, Jeremy Copeland. He was given a small geode and a couple other items suitable for a 9-year-old. Thanks for helping, 'Germinator'!

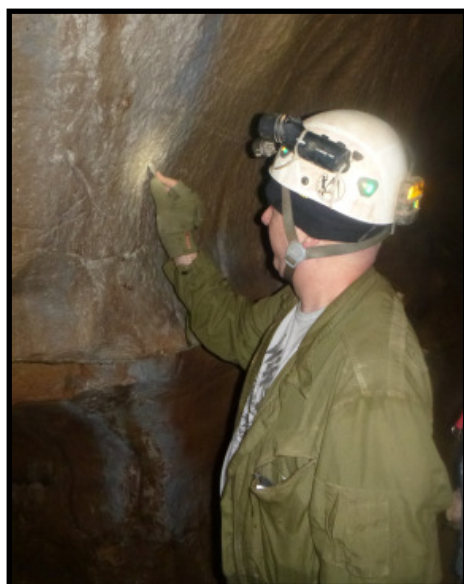
Another thank-you went to Maggie Mudd, a Park employee who helped with resto camp activities, who received a commemorative t-shirt. Recognition next went to Chuck and their hard work throughout the week. A well-fed caver is a happy caver, after all! Each was given a bottle of wine as well as a rousing round of applause from the group.

Next was an award for work done to replace the shower drain covers in two of the camp bathrooms. I don't know how he did it, but Eric Buckelew somehow created a bronze (-looking) award figure in the shape of a drain, mounted on a wooden base. This was given to Brian and



nounced that Friday would be light day end before mid-afternoon. elevator entrance "CL" (cave elevator level) button on the pad and descended on down. Some cavers had expressed interest in return- ing to the unfin-Boone Avenue, group wanted to the one-hour work. I opted for the Echo River. I

itself was not too positioned a ladder and climbed up and was a good thing plenty of plaster chunks and nasty dust thrown in all directions. We positioned a tarp at the bottom of each work area to catch the detritus and swept-up any crud that splattered off to the side.



award for work done

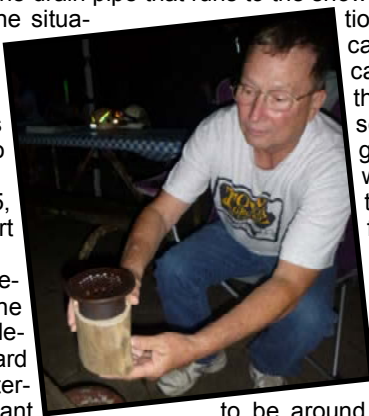


shower drain covers in two of the camp bathrooms. I don't know how he did it, but Eric Buckelew somehow created a bronze (-looking) award figure in the shape of a drain, mounted on a wooden base. This was given to Brian and

John for their diligence to replace the cracked plastic drains in the showers. They also found that the wrong size drain had been installed on the drain pipe that runs to the shower floor, a condition that causes the plastic drain to not allow water through the holes fast enough. The situa-

The two
Next
sented to
always is
or who
hardest

For 2015,
is, in part
technique
wall. Where-
providing the
tainly is de-
his hard
to camp inter-
and pleasant
done, Jon!



tion was solved by drilling one additional small hole through the center of the new drain. cavers were instructed to share the award and take possession of it one year at a time. came the restoration camp top accolade, the Sack Rat Award. This traditionally is pre- who cave

the Sack Rat was given to Jonathon for his guidance in showing the proper for removing lead anchors from the as everyone did a great job pitching-in teamwork to do everything we did, Jon serving of the recognition. In addition work, he also is webmaster of the net web page. He's always very up- to be around, funny, intelligent and a friend to all.



Low-
cave and
cer-
to
res-
beat
Well

Bill summarized all the work done throughout the week, including four bags of lint picked up by the 'dust bunnies', a dozen lead anchors removed, three relief Hall, installing one evaluating the wire logs at the salt petre camp bathroom show-everyone. That's quite

Next, Park Ecologist al Park Service. He vides invaluable help

"It's phenomenally guys come from long also really appreciate With that, Rick stainless steel water logo. Thanks, Rick!

Bill then told Rick Bishop Award as Rick and his wife

Finally, a drawing quilt contained lots Grass, who took it home :)

With that, cavers began saying their good-byes, with hugs all around. To cap off the evening, cold libations included beers, wine, tequila and Fireball whiskey, to the background of lively conversation and guitar-playing.



Rick stood up and thanked everyone on behalf of the Nation-said it's our ongoing commitment to conservation that pro- for maintaining the world's longest cave.

impressive what this army does, every year," he said. "You distances to be here. And, as Colleen has said, the Guides it."

shook the hand of every caver and presented each with a bottle emblazoned with the date of the camp and the NSS

to not sit down just yet, and gave him the annual Stephen well as the gift of a small tour guide's oil lamp, which is an item Colleen collect and have display in their beautiful, rustic home. was held for a beautiful quilt that Linda Bundy had sewn. The of bats and was glow-in-the-dark, too! Congrat's to caver Tim

Day Six

Saturday was a day for Onyx Cave, led by Bill, and Cave (which has been

Participants on the Great Onyx Trip included Bill, John, Roy, Jonathan, Larry Matiz, Dave Ruth and Brian Lantz. According to Bill, "we basically followed the tour route up Edwards Avenue till we got to the rimstone dams, then down Cox Avenue. Larry showed everyone where the tour took off to do the in-cave boat ride. We were in the cave for 2.5 hours."

(There has been no word from anyone on how the trip to Salts Cave went.)



'reward trips', including a visit to Great a longer trip to the seldom-visited Salts connected to the Mammoth system).



Summary

All in all, it was another great restoration camp. I've participated in every single camp for the last five years, and I've observed that each one always has new elements... from swinging a sledgehammer, to helping at sinkholes and other area caves, to picking up candy wrappers and lint. There's no doubt that you all agree how fulfilling it is to be part of this. It makes us feel good knowing that we're helping the cave, helping our National Park Service and setting an example... to visitors from across the country and around the world who come to see this 'grand, gloomy and peculiar' place. See you at the Nov. 7 camp!

-- Gary Gibula