



BREAKDOWN

May 1995

Hosterman's Pit Update

By Keith Wheeland

On April 18, 1995, the Environmental Quality Board voted to eliminate Unsuitable For Mining (UFM) for the Hosterman's Pit area. The vote to rescind was 14 yes; 5 no.

This vote was taken after the UFM petition had gone through the regulatory review process, and been approved. (Stover Caves #1 and #2 continue to have protection under UFM.)

The Nittany Grotto and the Penns Valley Conservation Association contend that the EQB had no legal authority to re-vote on this issue. I was at the meeting and heard the DER lawyer try to explain why they had legal authority to act. His reasoning was rather feeble and was based upon the fact that the Attorney General had raised objections. However, the Attorney General did not raise objections, but did ask four questions. One question concerning the Mining Permit process showed that the Attorney General's office had not done their homework.

It's interesting to note that there were representatives on the Environmental Quality Board who raised the question of legality. Some members of the Board agree that the action was illegal and would encourage a suit be filed in Commonwealth Court. One member of the Board (favorable to Hosterman's) was called out of order by the Chair, even though the member made a legitimate motion. DER lawyers are looking into the matter.

The whole matter of rescinding the UFM has been a carefully orchestrated political maneuver. This was the first EQB meeting being chaired by the new Secretary of DER, James M. Seif. He had to win this vote.

The Board is made up of the Secretaries of Health, Commerce, Transportation, Agriculture, Labor & Industry, and Community Affairs. Also represented are the Fish & Boat Commission, the Game Commission, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Historical & Museum Commission. In addition there is a representative from the Governor's Policy Office, the Co-Chairs of the Senate and House committees which deal with environmental issues, plus five

representatives from the Citizens Advisory Council. The administration made sure that Senator Brightbill attended the meeting (it is often the case that the senators send alternates). Senator Brightbill is a senator who has powerful influence over the purse strings of several of the members of the Board. He spoke against using UFM to save Hosterman's Pit. Also affecting the outcome was the fact that the Director of the Governor's Policy Office attended in person. He was there to see that the Secretaries voted with the new administration.

"So, you can see that we have not given up on our efforts to save the cave and we will continue to do our part."

One member who voted for Hosterman's Pit, Dr. Brent Glass Executive Director of the Historical & Museum Commission, showed courage in his conviction. He could lose politically, for his vote. The others who voted for UFM were Rich Thomas representing Representative Camille George; plus three members of the Citizens Advisory Council, Mrs. Gail Rockwood, Ms. Cindy Dunn, and Mr. Bernard Hoffnar.

The Nittany Grotto is encouraged by the fact that there are persons in DER that agree that Hosterman's Pit should be saved. They also see the rescinding action as without precedent and without statutory authority. They think the action should be contested.

WHAT NEXT?

We have noticed that in this short time since the illegal vote, we have raised the consciousness of persons or groups who may be in a position to help us save Hosterman's.

The Nittany Grotto has sent thank-you letters to the five members of the Board who voted for UFM. In those letters, we also asked for their help in suggesting ways to save the cave.

A letter was sent to Senator Brightbill who, in the meeting, mentioned that there were other ways (besides UFM) to protect the cave. We have asked him to give us details on the procedures he mentioned.

We have sent a letter to the NSS asking if the Society would be open to being a signatory to a lawsuit to be filed in Commonwealth Court. (The Nittany Grotto can not file a lawsuit.)

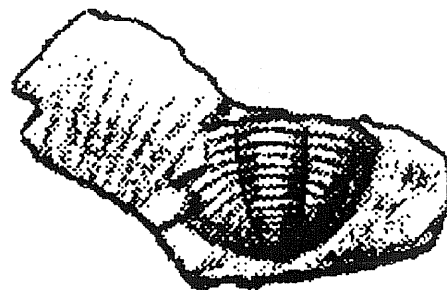
We will contact The Nature Conservancy to see if they could approach Con-Stone about purchasing the property. (The Nittany Grotto sent Con-Stone a letter in January 1994 to which there was no reply.) There is a feeling that Mr. Confer may respond to a group who has not been actively opposed to him. He is not fond of the Nittany Grotto nor the Penns Valley Conservation Association.

The last mailing we made to 512 cavers in Pennsylvania, cost us in excess of \$200. We hope that the response from cavers was substantial enough to show the new administration that there is interest in saving Hosterman's Pit.

So, you can see that we have not given up on our efforts to save the cave and we will continue to do our part.

We sincerely thank all of you who have done your part.

Keith D. Wheeland
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Spring M.A.R. Meet Outlined

By John Chengler

As you know, the Spring M.A.R. meet is coming soon May 19-21. The site location, nestled in the big woods of Fayette "don't forget your shotgun" County, is also perched above Pennsylvania's largest cave, Laurel Caverns.

Sponsors Jim Kennedy and I are making sure that this meet will be the best caver gathering at Laurel Caverns since the 1976 NSS Convention. To give everyone an idea of the event, below is a general agenda.

Friday, May 19 6:00 p.m.-12:00 am. Follow signs to Laurel Caverns Park from Route 40 east of Uniontown. Drive through the half-closed gate at the campground. Stop in at the lighted picnic pavilion and register. This is where you can sign up for Saturday and Sunday's trips, pick up the guidebook, make friends and find old ones.

There is free camping in the designated MAR area. Do not pull into the commercial campground unless you wish to pay an additional charge. Follow signs to the MAR camping area. There will also be a designated "quiet" camping area.

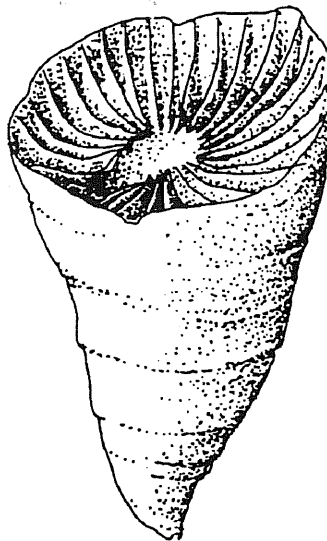
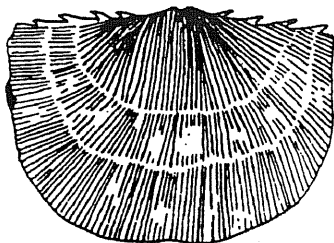
All MAR vehicles MUST ultimately park in the gravel overflow parking lot after unloading. This helps our security watch over them, and helps Laurel Caverns manage their self-guided explorers.

Saturday, May 20-- 8:00 Registration opens again with coffee in the picnic pavilion. At 10:00 at least three trips will organize and depart from the picnic pavilion, including a fossil hunt, Laurel Caverns cleanup, and another local cave trip. During the afternoon the climbing wall on the visitor center will be open with some loaner gear available. There is no fee for these activities.

Saturday night will feature dinner (BYOB), door prizes, at least two cave gear suppliers, and a guest speaker.

Sunday May 21-- 9:30 a.m. a special guided tour of Laurel Caverns will depart. Once again, there is no fee for this activity. At 11:00 a.m. a group will leave for Ohiopyle State Park for a half-day whitewater tour. There is a small outfitting charge per person.

If you have not yet registered for the M.A.R., please do so that we can plan a more efficient meet. Contact Jim Kennedy (412) 246-9838 for more information.



M.A.R./P.G.C. gate access update

By Jim Kennedy

Bert Ashbrook is heading an MAR committee to draft a management plan for caves on State Game Lands. These areas, managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), are home to Schofer Cave (Berks Co.), Askon Hollow Cave (Fayette Co.), and Strangford Cave and Little Wood Pussy Cave (Indiana Co.). All four of these caves have been gated to protect their contents, especially threatened species of wildlife. None are currently open for visitation.

The Non-Game Section of the PGC's Bureau of Wildlife Management has requested cavers of the Mid-Appalachian Region to develop a preliminary management plan for all caves on Game Lands and the four gated caves in particular. This draft will then be reviewed by biologists, land managers, and legal experts within the PGC. Hopefully a suitable comment period will allow further input from cavers before final adoption.

Ashbrook and committee members Jonathan Daniels and Derek Flaig have been busy reviewing the proceedings from past Cave Management Symposia and existing management policies from caves owned by the NSS, The Nature Conservancy, the federal government, other states, and private groups such as the Butler Cave Conservation Society. Ashbrook and Daniels also assisted with the PGC bat count this year in Schofer Cave, allowing them to interact directly with PGC personnel.

The new policy will address caves as geological, hydrological, biological, historical, and recreational resources. Impacts of recreational caving as well as specific hazards will be addressed. The final policy will be partly general and partly specific, as each cave has unique attributes. Cavers are taking an active part in developing this management plan to ensure both the protection of the resource and continued access by responsible users.

Invertebrate Update

The following is excerpted from a letter to Jim Kennedy from John Holsinger. It is included as an update to last issue's cave invertebrate article.

Just a quick note to inform you of my determination of the amphipods you sent to me from Lemon Hole in Westmoreland Co., PA. The three specimens belong to *Stygobromus allegheniensis*, a widespread subterranean species fairly common in Pennsylvania and New York. However, your locality in Westmoreland marks a new county record for the species.

The small critters that you found in the water film in Schofer Cave are all collembolans, representing three families: Entomobryidae, Onychiuridae, and Isotomidae. All three families are represented in caves. None of the specimens you collected appear to be modified and are probably troglonexes or accidentals.

Thanks for the amphipods.

CCLUM PROJECT UPDATE

By Jim Kennedy

(from phone conversations with Keith Christenson)

Several exciting events have occurred since the brief write-up on the Upper Susquehanna Basin MAR Bulletin was announced in the last issue of the *MAR Breakdown*. Nicknamed the CCLUM Project after the counties being investigated (Columbia, Clinton, Lycoming, Union, and Montour), most of the recent fieldwork has centered on Sugar Valley in Clinton County. Digs spearheaded by a group of eager Nittany Grotto members known as Foom and the Boonehole Rangers have so far yielded two caves.

Boone's Shower Cave is a new cave situated in a large, active sink. So far, 350' of passages have been surveyed and about 200' of known passage is left to be mapped. The cave has 71' of relief and the lowest point is 102' below the surface. A few tight leads are still going.

Spider Sink Cave is an old cave that has been reopened and pushed. Also in an active sink, lots of trash and debris had washed into the entrance over the past few decades. About 120' of passages have been surveyed so far with another 50' or so to mop up. There is lots of airflow with great potential in the lowest portion of the cave.

More work is being done in the area between Logan Mills and Tylersville. All of Sugar Valley has great cave potential. Upper Nittany Valley and Nippenose Valley also have their secrets. Anyone interested in fieldwork in this area or anyone having information to share please contact Keith Wheeland or Keith Christenson.

SPRING '95 N.R.O.

MAY 12-14, 1995

NEWTON, NEW JERSEY

HOSTED BY:



NORTHERN NEW JERSEY GROTTTO

of The National Speleological Society

REGISTRATION INCLUDES:

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SEMI-RUSTIC CAMPING FROM FRIDAY THRU SUNDAY NOON
SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER HOSTED BY THE NJ-IRT
SATURDAY NIGHT BONFIRE
SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST HOSTED BY THE MET GROTTTO
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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

MARK SKOVE
21 HUNT'S SCHOOL ROAD
NEWTON, NEW JERSEY 07860

TELEPHONE: 201-383-8048
201-579-5864
FAX 201-383-0049

DAY PASSES WILL BE AVAILABLE FRIDAY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY @ \$5.00/DAY

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NOTE: IF MEALS ARE NOT DESIRED ADULT PRE-REGISTRATION WOULD BE \$9.00 (\$11.00 AT GATE) CHILDREN WOULD BE \$3.00 (\$4.00 AT GATE)

Upcoming Events:

May 12-14, 1995 SPRING V.A.R. MEET, Camp Kidd, Parsons, WV. Contact Doug Moore (304) 594-2600.

May 12-14, 1995 SPRING N.R.O., Newton, NJ. Contact Mark Skove (201) 383-8048.

May 19-21, 1995 SPRING M.A.R. MEET, Laurel Caverns, Farmington, PA. Contact Jim Kennedy (412) 246-9838.

May 19-21, 1995 S.E.R.A. SUMMER CAVE CARNIVAL, LaFayette, GA. Contact Don Hunter (706) 788-2051.

May 26-29, 1995 SPELEOFEST '95, Fort Knox, KY. Contact Glenn Drifkill (502) 862-4054.

June 17-25, 1995 ER-NCRC WEEKLONG CAVE RESCUE SEMINAR, Dailey, WV. Contact John Appleby (215) 541-4994.

July 12-15, 1995 RASS PRE-CONVENTION FIELD CAMP, Bath County, VA. Contact Mike Friedenberg (804) 282-5138.

July 17-21, 1995 N.S.S. CONVENTION, Blacksburg, VA. Contact Carol Tideman (410) 792-0742.

August 18-21, 1995 42ND ANNUAL INDIANA CAVE CAPERS, near Spring Mills State Park. Contact Bill Greenwald (317) 783-1692.

August 31-September 4, 1995 OLD TIMER'S REUNION, Dailey, WV. Contact Bill Wolford.

August 3-9, 1996 N.S.S. CONVENTION, Salida, CO. Contact Skip Withrow (303) 693-0997.

June 23-27, 1997 N.S.S. CONVENTION, Sullivan, MO. Contact Pam Saberton (314) 772-6956.

M.A.R. Bulletins Available

No.	County in Pennsylvania		Cost (without postage)
8	Blair	89 caves, 40 maps	6.50*
9	Huntingdon	94 caves, 36 maps	(Out of print)
10	Snyder	20 caves, 14 maps	2.00*
11	Centre	71 caves, 56 maps, 1 large map	9.00**
12	Mifflin	47 caves, 31 maps, 5 large maps	7.00**
13	Perry	13 caves, 6 maps	5.00*
14	Bucks	24 caves, 6 maps	3.00*
15	Lehigh	25 caves, 13 maps	3.25*
16	Northampton	24 caves, 13 maps, 1 large map	5.50*
17	Norumberland	20 caves, 10 maps	5.00*
18	Berks	64 caves, 32 maps	7.00**
19	Bedford	54 caves, 33 maps	5.50*

* Add U.S. Postage \$1.25 each copy; \$0.50 each additional to same address.

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Non-U.S. postage is \$2.00 each copy; \$1.50 each additional to same address.

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