

RKC News

Volume IV, Issue III

Summer 2008



Rockcastle Karst
Conservancy

www.rkci.org

The Rockcastle Karst Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of caves and karst in Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

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Photo Credits:

Front Cover: Entrance to Arthur Singleton's Cave. Photo © by Tony Anders

Back Cover: Cover of the Great Saltpetre Cave book from the 1960's.

Tell people about the RKC!
Give them a brochure!
 GET YOUR BROCHURES AT:
www.rkci.org/brochure.htm

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For more information about the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy, please visit our website at www.rkci.org. Membership is open to anyone interested in protecting the caves and karst of Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

The *RKC News* is published quarterly for members and other interested parties. The purpose of this publication is to keep members aware of RKC activities. Articles published in the *RKC News* do not necessarily represent the opinions or policies of the Rockcastle Karst Conservancy or its represented members.

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RKC has educational material for lending.
 See the website:
<http://rkci.org/library/index.htm>
 or contact Tammy Otten:
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RKC Quick News:

- The gates to Goochland and Waterfall Caves are now unlocked.
- Access to CCIC has changed. See page 8 for more information.
- Karst-O-Rama is July 17-20 at the Great Saltpetre Preserve. For more information: www.karstorama.com.
- The RKC Fundraising Committee needs a chairman. Contact Werner if interested.

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From the Editor...

The lament of all newsletter editors—"Send me articles!" To put out a good quality newsletter, I need articles from you, the members! So, send me articles!

I want to thank Ron Fulcher for the great article on the exploration of Cove Branch Cave and the accompanying map. I also want to thank Chairman Werner for the progress report and strategic planning articles. Finally, I want to thank that nameless caver who submitted the Sinks of the Roundstone Cave trip report. Unfortunately, I don't have the author's name. So, please let me know who you are and I'll make sure you get credited in the next issue!

Until next time,

Mike Hood
RKC News Editor

RKC GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT, JUNE 2008

(Issued due to cancellation of June 14, 2008 meeting)

Board of Directors:

Chairman: Werner Jud
Vice Chairman: Pat Hutson
Secretary: Howard Kalnitz
Treasurer: Mike Rzesutock
Director: Jim Perkins

Committees:

GSP - Bob Dobbs:

Equipment lease between GSP and GCG has been ratified.

Bill Carr has signed a caretaker's lease with RKC.

There is lots of activity and planning underway for long term benefits, resource management, and strategic planning. Subcommittees are working on grant acquisitions, improving community relations, and maintaining the preserve for its valuable assets: historical, cultural, scientific, environmental

and recreational benefit for cavers. Lots of stuff going on and GSP needs input and fresh perspectives. Want to know more? Attend a GSP committee meeting.

Membership - Alan Leach:

Working on ways to effectively promote new membership and renew former members. We are looking for input.

Fund Raising Committee – RKC needs a chairperson for this position. A committee exists which is willing to split efforts between RKC and GSP fundraising. Grants are being investigated.

Election Committee - Howard Kalnitz:

RKC will be forming an official committee in the near future.

RKC's first official election of board of directors will be end of this fiscal year. (March 2009) If you are interested to be involved or have a desire to be on the board of directors, contact Howard.

Land Acquisition Committee - Bill Addington:

This subject has been given a great deal of attention with postings on the RKC director yahoo site.

A recent committee meeting in Mt. Vernon, KY presented new policies which will establish better procedures and coordinate efforts. Please see the three proposals under new business below.

Reports were also presented on potential land purchases, leases, easements, etc. A few active leads are being pursued.

Next Land Acquisition Committee meeting is scheduled for Sunday Sept 7th, 10:00 AM at GSP shelter. This is Caver Appreciation weekend.

Old business

RKC had a booth coordinated by Mike Deitmaring at GSP Open House last month. It was successful.

Robert Coomer provided excellent help in reprinting our RKC handout flyers for the occasion.

Per our understanding with DBNF, Goochland and Waterfall cave gates have been unlocked for the summer season.

Continued on page 8

Answering the Cove Branch Question

By Ron Fulcher, NSS 44076RL, RKC #69

When did we first explore this cave? Cove Branch Cave and Spring has been a well known source of public water in the general area since early settlement. Today it still provides for several households just downstream of the spring itself and is a major portion of Cove Branch Creek. Members of the Dayton Underground Grotto and probably several other groups had visited and even studied this cave before and during the 1990s.

When did we first explore this cave? Clay Abernathy took us to the upstream resurgence for the cave during the first annual DUG Groundhog's Day outing. It is just down the nearly abandoned gravel road parallel to interstate 75 and serving the old Quarry just off exit 59. The resurgence is collapsed in appearance and is at the bottom of a sink-hole just west of the Interstate 75 embankment and fill. David P. Leo studied and published his work on Cove Branch Cave and Spring in 1990 as part of his Master's thesis with Eastern Kentucky University (1).

Our first mapping trip was November 12th, 2005 and followed up a trip Scott Sweet had made several weeks before when he met the closest property owner, Mr. Owens. We stopped by and picked up Dale Hensley and headed off to Cove Branch in the downtown underground exploration van. The spring remains hidden behind the trees for most of the year but once the foliage is gone it is visible from the county road. We could just make it out as we passed it, and then parked at the top of the hill.

The spring emerges at the base of a small cliff face and amongst the breakdown is black PVC piping for private water supplies. A strange small and key shaped passage leads into the darkness with just enough room for us to slither along. Pushing your bag in front of you keeps it out of the stream just below you in the narrowest part of the crack. It gets wider and then you are in the entrance room with passages going this way and that. It took us six stations to get this far in the cave on the first trip. Our ceiling is just over three or four feet in this area and the passage is wide and covered with sand and cobbles.

Scott worked the instruments. Dale took point with the tape and I followed with paper and pen into a right hand lead. We were chasing a small stream through the gravel and a series of pools until it was down to a foot or less of cave height and with a shrinking ceiling. This gave us a few hundred feet of survey and sketch and then we looked around to see where else that the survey might go.

Ken Thomas, Tim Deady, Steve Greene and Trish Forman, joined the second trip to Riddle Farm Cave. We met at the Rockcastle Inn for breakfast I think well at least that is the way I am going to tell it. The Entrance Room or Owen's Octopus had several leads off of it and we were there to put a tape to them. At least two streams come together to form the resurgence but the passage from the South West is the probable conduit from the sink on the other side of Interstate 75. This gets deep quick so we surveyed to a bend and then surveyed down another side passage to a possible dig.

We dug for a bit and got Trish through the growing hole, and she began digging from the opposite side then too. The team soon joined her in this virgin walkway 4 to 5 feet high and ten or so feet wide. It zigged, it zagged a couple of times and then abruptly ended at a small crack of a passage running at right angles to what we will name after Trish. This pretty much sums up our second trip into the Cove Branch Cave and Spring (proper) or Riddle Farm Cave (slang) and left us wondering how to continue upstream in the deep water.

We were fortunate. We had both time and intellect combining, to put together our boating and floating needs for what could be an endless journey. May 24th, 2006 saw all of our expert planning come together in an all out assault on the ever-growing cave. Ken was ready with a raft fit for a king of underground exploration, Tim and Trish both carried some of the best pool floaty pads they could find but, Scott and I....

Well, we had the best-flowered pool mattresses by Coleman Industries that \$9.99 could buy. The team met at Jean's for a hearty breakfast and cof-

fee break before the short drive to our parking area. Inside the cave we all worked diligently at assembling our worthy portion of the Flotilla. The Christening and launch of the now assembled "Rockcastle Navy" began its' journey of discovery. All but one that is...

As I pushed off from the shore, a lonely and foreboding pinnacle of rock found its way to the underside of the best-flowered pool mattresses by Coleman Industries that \$9.99 could buy. It was destiny; and as the air began its' rapid escape from captivity, the floatation capability began to shrink. Bailing could not help, and finally this captain was forced to abandon his "ship" on the shore.

Alone.. Stranded on the shore with the lights and voices from the "survivors" disappearing into the dark. A light, a rescue, a witness to the devastated best-flowered pool mattresses by Coleman Industries that \$9.99 could buy. Trish returned and we left for our journey of a hundred and fifty feet. We were at the "Drop-Off Dock" and on a dry spot for a minute. Tim and Trish found an albino crayfish and photographed it in a series of rimstone pools.

The rimstone made a great dam with the two-foot high passage "Long Muddy Crawl" waiting just beyond. We all had our wetsuits on so the plunge into the brown watery trough was prepared for. On we went with ledges of silted clay on our left and right and little ceiling above the water too, but we pushed for three hundred feet in a foot or more of cool spring water. We eventually found some deeper water and a great place to stand up in it too.

To the left was a small dome in a side room kind of spot and on our right was a great flowstone formation and active water filtering all over the display. We were now somewhere under Mr. Owens property and maybe even close to a series of sinkholes in his side lot. We were standing in knee deep water and the passage height was shrinking to the same conditions found in the "Long Muddy Crawl".

The best description of this cave, was from Pam Carpenter; who, after looking the map over said, "Got you a nice little death trap there." The cave is so close to the surface and is fed by a series of valleys rather quickly during precipitation events,

creating an environment where the passages must nearly fill to capacity. At high flow conditions the spring moves a great deal more water than some of the other drainage systems we have studied.

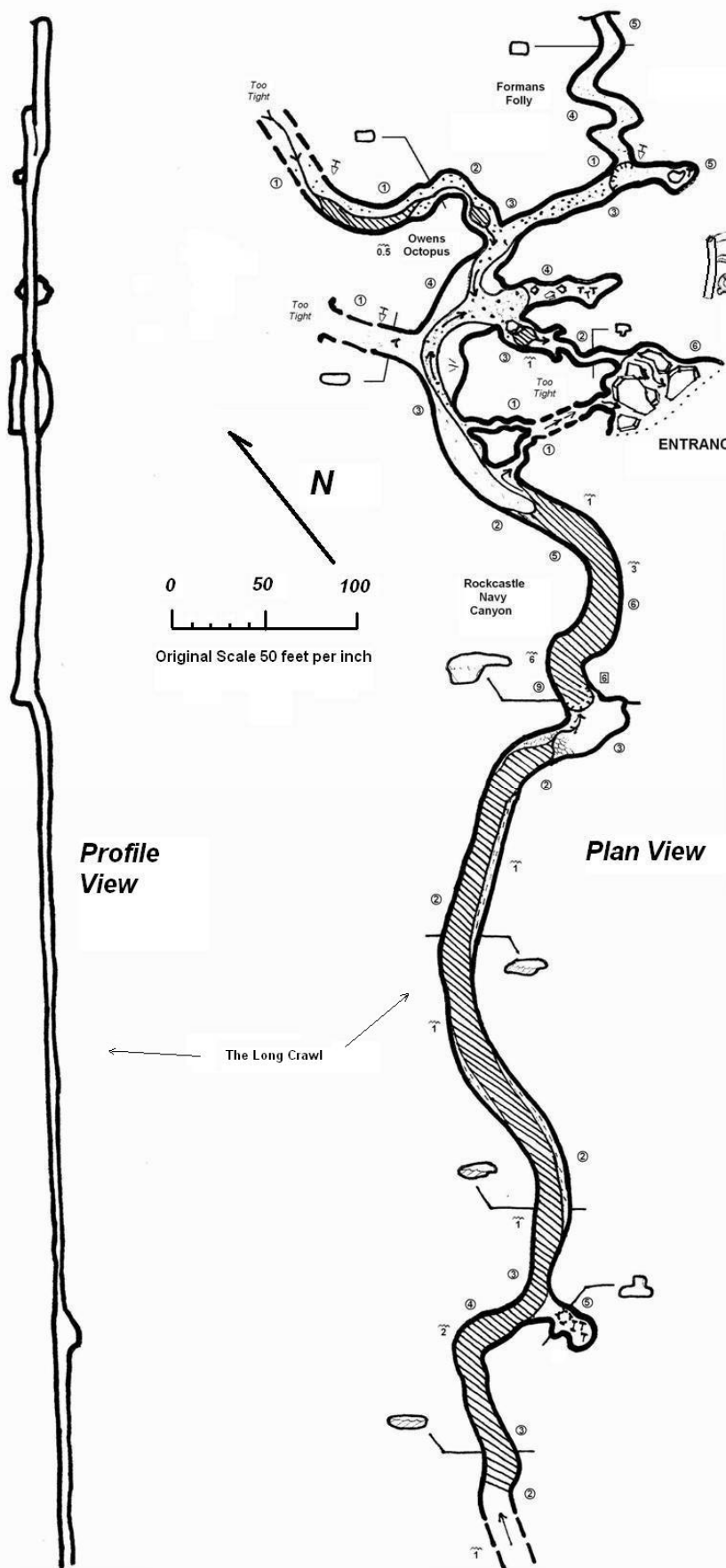
I suspect that waiting in the surrounding Newman limestone is a collection of pits and active cave streams that feed Cove Branch Cave. We surveyed over a 1/4 mile and plan to continue on a dig there in the future. Clay had asked a dozen years before where the water went from that sinkhole just down from the quarry. We had wondered where the water came from that formed the spring. A little work and research helped answer both questions.

Since the original investigation by David P. Leo there has been an additional burdening of the watershed with construction of housing and the Rockcastle Speedway. Any contaminant or increased affluent waste discharge enter this aquifer and spring very quickly. Travel time for the polluted water within this watershed to the spring could be seen in a matter of minutes or hours depending on the flow conditions and soil saturation rate.

Why did we explore this cave? More often than not we ask when, who and, how in talking about cave exploration instead of why. We researched this cave before committing to exploring it and find it is part of a larger area we have been looking at for 15 years. This effort will become a key part of our Cove Creek Valley Survey project.

(1) Leo, D.P., 1990, Hydrogeology of a limestone spring and its recharge area in southeastern Rockcastle County, Kentucky: Richmond, Eastern Kentucky University, Master's thesis, 81 p.





COVE BRANCH

CAVE & SPRING
 Rockcastle County, Kentucky
 Mount Vernon Quadrangle
 KGS 669 AKGWA 90001263



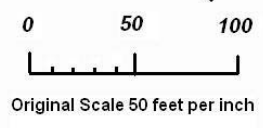
This is the working map based on the mapping efforts of:

- Tim Deady
- Ron Fulcher
- Dale Hensley
- Ken Thomas
- Patricia Forman
- Steve Greene
- Scott Sweet

Cartography by: Ron Fulcher

Profile View

Plan View



LEGEND

ENTRANCE	DRIP LINE
SAND	BEDROCK
CLAY	UNEXPLORED PASSAGE
COBBLES	UNMAPED PASSAGE
LARGE BREAKDOWN	MAPPED PASSAGE
SMALL BREAKDOWN	UNDERLYING PASSAGE
ANASTOMOSES	SLOPE
BEDROCK FLOOR	STATION
FORMATIONS	PASSAGE HEIGHT
COLUMNS	VERTICAL DROP
SUBSTRANS	DEPTH BELOW DATUM
FLOWSTONE	HEIGHT ABOVE DATUM
RIMSTONE POOLS	SMALL STREAM
DIG	LARGE STREAM
FLOOR SLOT	WATER DEPTH
CURTAINS	BONE
CEILING CHANNEL	PIF
UNDERCUT LEDGE	

CROOKED CREEK ICE CAVE ACCESS

Attention covers:

Due to some concerns about liability issues, the property on which CCIC (Crooked Creek Ice Cave) is located has been posted. Personal contact has already been made with the landowner about this in hopes to allay their concerns and explain the protection they are afforded by the KY cave laws. The outlook appears positive. In the meantime, respect the wishes of the landowner by refraining from cave trips to CCIC until further notice. It is hoped that regular access to the cave will soon be restored.

Thank you,

Werner Jud
RKC Chairman

RKC General Progress Report (Continued from page 4)

New business:

Nicely made, durable, KY Cave Law signs have been made by DUG representative Ken Bonenberger and others. Very similar signs have been used successfully by other conservancies in cooperation with landowners. RKC should endorse using the signs with our logo and put in caves where there is no objection. See attached image.

With regard to Land Acquisition: There are three proposals to be presented as acts of the board and voted on. They have been posted on the RKC's Directors yahoo group for review by the membership: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RKCDirectors/>. Your comments to the directors are welcome.

1. To establish a Land Acquisition Fund. Actually such a fund was set up from the beginning of RKC when I was treasurer. This is to formally recognize such a fund and fold in the emergency provisions in case there is a shortage of normal operating funds.

2. To restructure the Land Acquisition Committee: Basically this is to formally recognize those that worked in this capacity. It names those who

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are officially on the committee and lays out a cooperative framework for present and future committee members.

3. To establish a case manager policy for land owner contacts. This provides a precise way for communicating with landowners without duplicating or overlooking important matters. It taps on all RKC members who may in be in a good position to help in our mission.

I believe those are the highlights. If you have any specific questions or concerns which you feel need to be addressed, please contact one of the RKC board members.

We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Sincerely,



Werner G. Jud
RKC Chairman
6/7/08



GREAT SALTPETRE PRESERVE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic Planning

Is a process of defining the direction of an organization and making decisions on allocating resources (people, money, natural resources) to pursue this strategy.

Strategic Planning is pro-active: thinking about various possibilities and deciding ahead of time how we are going to handle them when they arise. This process will allow us to focus our energy, to ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals, and give us guidelines to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. This is different than being reactive (tactical) which will bounce us around addressing each new concern or suggestion and use excess energy trying to figure out what we should do.

Strategic Planning involves defining:

Where are we now?
Where do we want to go?
How do we get there?

Strategic Planning involves determining who we are and formalizing that into the following statements:

A Vision
A Mission Statement
A Statement of Values

During the process it is important to look internally at the organization's Strengths and Weaknesses, and externally at the Opportunities and Threats provided by the Political, Economic, Social, and Technological Environments. We need to address at least one of the following three key questions: What do we do? For whom do we do it? And how do we excel? (or maybe – what makes us unique?)

There are benefits to be gained from the actual planning process, as well as from the final planning document. The very activities involved in the planning process empower the participants to be more effective in their roles—more informed leaders, managers, and decision makers. In addition, the final planning document becomes a tool that can be used to effectively and efficiently manage the organization.

Similar Terms and Explanations

Long-Range Planning is generally considered to mean the development of a plan for accomplishing a goal or set of goals over a period of several years, with the assumption that current knowledge about future conditions is sufficiently reliable to ensure the plan's reliability over the duration of its implementation.

On the other hand, **Strategic Planning** assumes that an organization must be responsive to a dynamic, changing environment (not the more stable environment assumed for long-range planning). Strategic planning, then, stresses the importance of making decisions that will ensure the organization's ability to successfully respond to changes in the environment. Strategic Planning identifies and targets internal goals, but provides only general guidance on how they will be met.

Master Planning may be an alternate term for Long-Range Planning, but it is most commonly used in the context of a built environment.

A **Management Plan**, such as what we have for GSP, is a document created to communicate the management aspects of an endeavor in order to establish a coordinated effort. It consists of an introduction, a description of Roles and Responsibilities, and frequently a Schedule.

Facilities Management is the action of taking care of existing facilities, frequently in the context of a built environment. It is only one aspect of implementing a Management Plan.

A **Project Plan** is a short term focused effort on a specific topic. It is developed as it is needed and includes the resources available at the time of planning and implementation. When the project is completed the project plan goes away.

The **Mission Statement** is a concise description of the purpose of the organization. It answers the question: Why does our organization exist? When answering this question, include all aspects of the property, and the people served through our management of, and programs at, GSP. The mission statement should provide continued direction and focus to our plans and operations.

The **Vision Statement** is an inspirational, compelling answer to the question: What do you hope for our organization, the people we serve, and the land that we protect? Ideally, it should be written in a compelling, inspirational fashion.

The **Values Statement** depicts the priorities in how the organization carries out its activities. The GSP Management Committee should regularly reference the values statement to provide guidance to the nature of how the organization should operate.

SINKS OF THE ROUNDSTONE CAVE TRIP - JUNE 10, 2008

This is our second trip, in as many days, so we left about 10 a.m. this morning and got to the Sinks Parking area about 11am. Suited up and into the cave, we began yet another adventure into Kentucky's underground.

The caves rear entrance seemed wetter than usual today. I guess the storm the night before must have put some water into this entrance overnight. We moved through the stoop walk area to our first crawl. On top of the shelf and down to the first underground stream; this area was drier than we have ever seen it before. We contemplated trying the new section, but with the kids, we decided it would be best not to this time. Up the next little grade, then came the climb.

David and I made our way to the top to get the rope ready for the boys to use on their way up. David took the opportunity to take some pictures here as the boys made the climb up to the shelf. I anchored in and held the rope for the boys to use to aid them in climbing the wall and each took their turn, with the rope assisting them.

Up on top, we stopped for a break and ate a snack. We sat long enough that we began to get chilled. We got packed back up and headed on to the next crawl.

David made his way up ahead and set up for more photos. This crawl was about a 20" belly crawl. This was Shawn's first time at this end of the cave, so he enjoyed the climb on the rope and now this crawl. I used a strap and drug my pack behind me, with it being attached to my ankle. I couldn't

believe how much easier this made crawling.

After the crawl, we made our way to the top of the next section and slid down the small grade to the next section where there was a long groove cut in the grade. This slide was made memorable from a previous trip about 15 years ago. A friend of ours, named Mike, slid down and hit the puddle at the bottom, splashing his buddy. Ever since, we have called this particular part of the cave the 'Mike Bales Slide'.

David went on down first to set up again for another photo op. Each of the boys took turns sliding down. When it came Shawn's turn, he decided he wanted to ride on Dad's lap. So he and I slid down the slide together; or should I say scooted.

Now at the bottom, we started moving on toward the middle of the cave. We came to the 80 foot high dome with water constantly dropping down into a barrel. This is marked on the map as the 80 foot water fall. Stopping there momentarily, we looked up at what appeared to be a shelf at the top of the dome. We were wondering what was up there, but knew we will probably never find out. I think that is part of the thrill of caving. I have lost count of the times I have been in this cave; however, I had never noticed that shelf or apparent opening eighty feet above us. I guess you see something new each time you go into a cave, that is, if you take the time to look.

Closer to the middle of the cave, the cavern is getting much taller now, averaging twenty to thirty feet and some places probably fifty plus feet high. This cave is truly worth going through more and more, no matter how many times you have been in it before.

Here, the cave has a lot of side passages and shelves up high. There must be some way to get there, because someone had been in there painting names and what have you on some of those high up areas. Too bad this awesome cave has so many people wanting to desecrate it. I guess that is why I want to try to get the club more active in talking to the press and educating everyone about the importance of not doing that. This cave has been known as a party cave too. I guess because it is so easy to access from the main entrance.

Anyway, we moved on towards the entrance and down close to the sump and stopped to look around. The boys tried climb a rock and Shawn slipped and fell on his hand. He was okay, but now he thought he was ready to go on home. We made our way on to the entrance which was definitely wet. I went into the creek and stood to help the boys rock hop on out of the cave. I am glad I had my water proof boots on. Not that it would have mattered, with it being almost 90 outside, I am sure they would have dried quickly. We made our way to the entrance and dressed down to our hiking clothes there. Up and out and to the railroad tracks, we walked. Walking the tracks back to the vehicles. Those tracks are dead by the way. Shawn wanted to walk through the railroad tunnel. He thought that would be cool. So we went through the tunnel that was just past the entrance we had gone into about three hours earlier.

Back at the trucks, we had some snacks and drinks and left for home. On the way home, we decided to do a little recon for a few more caves that I had remembered the coordinates to from looking at a map previously. We drove around for a little while and saw some over-hangs and possibly a new hole or two to come back later and check.

Another great way to spend a vacation.....taking the little guys caving.

Hope everyone enjoys reading about it as much as we enjoyed going.



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Collins' 1878 Historical Sketches Of Kentucky History of Kentucky 1878

Rockcastle County

Salt peter Caves.- Among the Rockcastle hills are numerous salt peter caves, at which large quantities of salt peter were manufactured during the war of 1812. One of these, called the "Big Cave" or the "Great Salt peter Cave," 4 miles N. of Pine Hill station on the railroad, and 8 miles N. E. of Mount Vernon, extends entirely through a spur of the mountain or "Big Hill," over half a mile. It was discovered by John Baker, who, in company with his wife, commenced exploring it with a torch-light. At the distance of about 300 yards; their light went out, and they were forced to crawl about, in perfect darkness, for 40 hours, before they found the place at which they entered. The arch is from 10 to 20 feet high. Large rooms branch off several hundred yards long, and the end of one has not been reached. Some of the rooms cover an area of several acres. The salt peter manufactured here, before and during the war of 1812, gave employment to 60 or 70 laborers. There is a fine, bold running stream of water in the cave, and works were constructed inside, for the manufacture of salt peter by torchlight. Carts and wagons passed through, from one side of the mountain to the other, without difficulty. The way is so level and straight, that oxen were soon taught to pass through in perfect darkness, without a driver. Visitors through it find a succession of grand and startling views. Dr. Graham calls it a twin to the Mammoth Ledge in Edmondson county, only less extensive. He writes to the author that in some of these caves he has traveled for three miles, without finding an end. The formations being limestone, there is but little crumbling or giving way.





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FIRST CLASS

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