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The Alaskan Caver

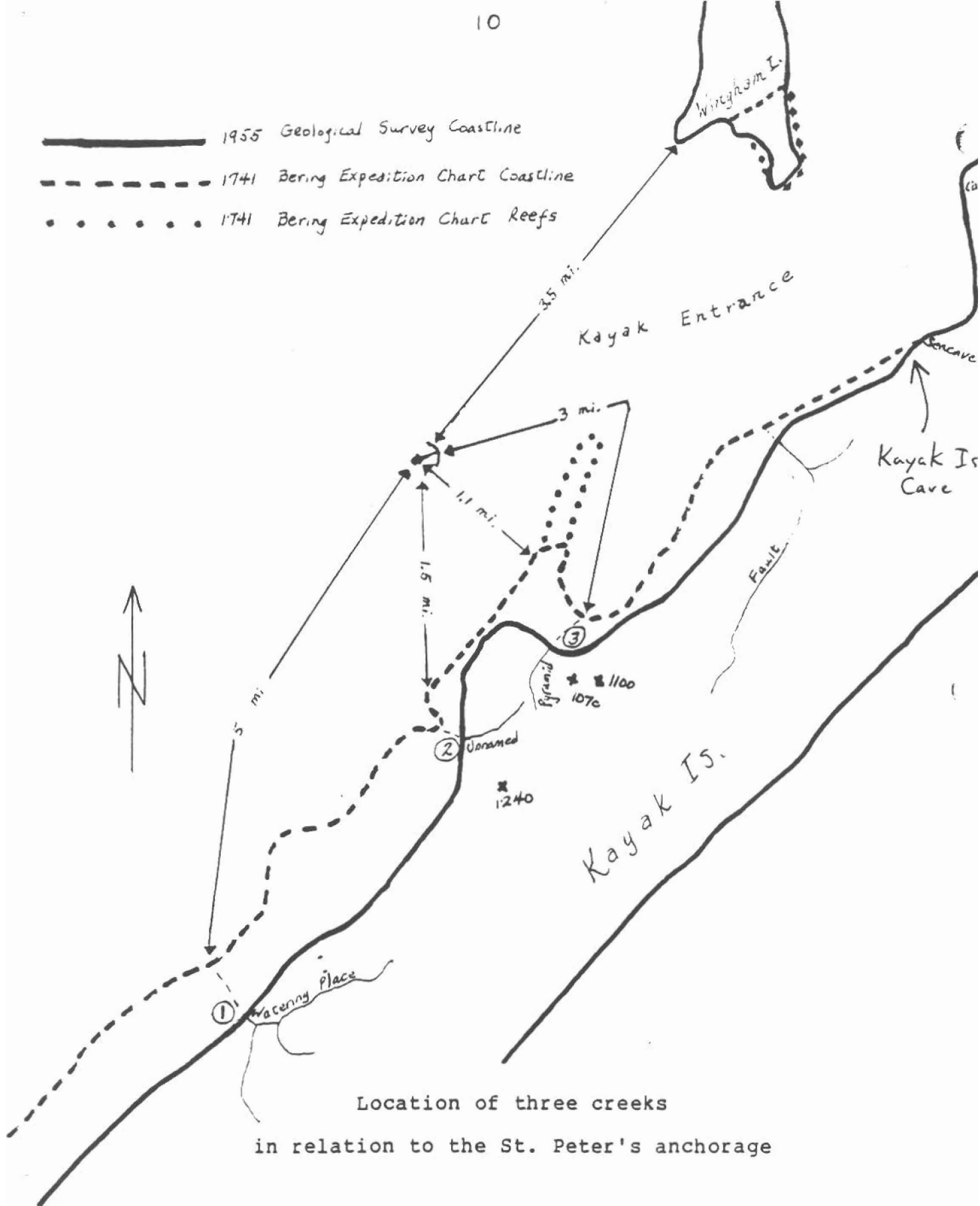
Volume 8 Number 4

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Kayak Island Cave

"High and Dry" this 20 foot high cave on Kayak Island's northwest shoreline was a scenic shelter for author/photographer Dr. O.W. Frost.



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Cascade Grotto	P.O. Box 75663	Seattle, WA 98125-2663	
Cave Cricket Gazette c/o Doug Stecko	149-A Delrose Apts.	London, KY 40341	
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Philadelphia Gr.Digest c/o A. McKown ED #2	Yellow Springs Ed.	Chester Springs, PA 19425	
Pholeos c/o H.H.Hobbs III, Dept.Biol.	P.O.Box 726, Wittenberg Univ.	Springfield, OH 45501	
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Members interested in reading about caving in the exotic places listed above should contact me (Ph:277-7150). When the articles are not in English, the abstracts sometimes are.

All members are urged to write up their experiences (it does not have to be fancy) and send them to our fourth editor, Mike Mauser, 6631 Teshlar Dr., Anchorage, Alaska 99507. Without articles there can be no issues.

The NSS has an annual contest (with prizes) for the best grotto publication cover, so even if you can't write send in that favorite caving photo or graphic art. Who knows?

Seacave Rock is a prominent 20th-century landmark on the northwest coast of 21-mile-long Kayak Island. The cave itself is about 20 feet high, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet deep. Nowadays it is "high and dry" above a sandy beach, well above floodtide.

The base of the inner cave is strewn with fallen rock, but toward the front it is possible to pitch several small tents well out of the rain. The cave also provides shelter for a sizable bonfire and a panoramic view of 4-mile-long Wingham Island just 2 miles across a channel, called Kayak Entrance, to the west. In July of 1984, a party consisting of Dr. John Thilenius, Research Wildlife Biologist of the Forest Sciences Laboratory, Juneau; Dr. John Mattson, Archeologist of the Chugach National Forest; and the present writer all camped in and near Seacave Rock.

No cave is mentioned in records of the Vitus Bering Expedition of 1741-42. Indeed, soundings taken then in the channel between Kayak and Wingham islands suggest that substantial elevation of both islands has occurred in the intervening 246 years. The cave, if it then existed, must have been below sea level. Georg Steller, Bering's naturalist, may have scaled the rock face (above the invisible cave) to reach the top of the Rock to get a good view of the mainland and the north end of the island. His journal indicates that Seacave Rock was the turn-around point of his 6-hour exploration on what Bering called St. Elias Island.

--O. W. Frost
Research Professor
Alaska Pacific University

About "The Alaskan Caver" by J. Rockwell Jr.

The Glacier Grotto uses "The Alaskan Caver" to keep each other and our parent organization, the National Speleological Society, informed of our activities. It's cumulative reports and references represent all our available knowledge on Alaskan caves. The following "Alaskan Cavers" have been published to date:

Volume 1, Nos. 1,2
Volume 2, Nos. 1,2
Volume 3, Nos. 1,2
Volume 4, Nos. 1,2,3
Volume 5, Nos. 1,2,3,4,5,6
Volume 6, Nos. 1,2,3,4,5,6
Volume 7, Nos. 1,2,3,4,5,6
Volume 8, Nos. 1,2,3

Please note - Volume 8, No. 3 was printed as Volume 9, No.1 by mistake. This issue is Volume 8, No. 4. There will be six issues per volume and they will be published whenever there is sufficient material.

Copies are sent to the following locations:

Consortium Library at the University of Alaska, Anchorage
Resources Library in the new Federal Building, Anchorage
U.S. Geological Survey Library at the Alaska Pacific University, Val
Alaska State Library, Juneau
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Proposed Trips - call the trip leader ASAP if you are interested

* Gull Rock Sea Caves or Eklutna Glacier (Cave?) - late May - call Mike Mauser

This is an either one or both selection depending on interest and the amount of snow on the Eklutna Lake trail. The Gull Rock Sea Caves by Hope are described in Vol. 4, No. 3 and Vol. 5, No. 3 of the "Alaskan Caver". Hope is a 90 mile drive from Anchorage and both the drive and the short hike from Hope to Gull Rock are scenic. There are at least twenty caves, including two 50-footers and a 70-foot tunnel.

Jay Rockwell will inspect the road to Eklutna Glacier from the air the weekend before the proposed trip. If it looks good I would like to take bicycles in from the parking area at the end of Eklutna Lake to the face of the glacier along the old lake side road. The road is about 9 miles long and has been closed to regular vehicle traffic for some years now. Although the road has some bad spots in it, it is very level and for the most part still in good shape. It is currently closed to motor vehicles except for Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays when off-road vehicles are permitted. The scenery is outstanding. On a warm spring or summer day you can hear and see avalanche after avalanche come down the steep canyon walls. Eklutna Glacier is reportedly the fastest retreating glacier in the Chugach Mountain Range.

* Chitistone Cave Entrance Survey - middle or late July - call Sam Dunaway

The next important job in the Exploration of the Caves of the Chitistone (see Vol. 3, No. 2 and Vol. 6, No 1) is the tying together of all known cave entrances with a survey. When pushing leads we need to know where we are with respect to the passages for the the other known caves. The objective here is to establish the relative locations of the four springs of Lime Springs Creek, and the entrances of Black Star, Bucklegrind, Chitistone Junction, Sweetwater, and Forty-Foot Caves. The details of this trip have yet to be worked out but call Sam Dunaway if interested.

* Chitistone Caving Trip - late August -call J. Rockwell

We are reserving the last week or so in august to push the Chitistone Caves. We need a Trip Leader. We can fly in from either Gulkana or McCarthy. The round trip in the Cesna 206 (with four passengers) costs about \$175/person from Gulkana when the plane returns empty. The last time we went in from Gulkana we had trips back to back and it was a bit cheaper. For a week long trip the total cost for food and transportation was just over \$200/person.

Leaving Fairbanks or Anchorage at 5:00 P.M. Friday gets you to Dry Creek Campground, nearly across from Gulkana Airport, by 11:00 P.M. Taking off between 7:30 and 8:30 Saturday morning gets you to Peavine by at least 10:00 A.M. We then have time for two trips to set up base camp at Star Cave Creek and to take a look at Black Star Cave. Some may prefer to set up camp at Peavine.

Each group is responsible for their own gear, etc., but some sharing between groups saves on logistics. Payments should be made well in advance for transportation. The Geneva Pacific mining company which owned the buildings at Peavine gave them to the Park Service. Their use can be obtained by request, so a solid base camp is assured if we apply in advance, and if we want it. All interested in this trip (or series) call J. Rockwell, as we need to plan this one well in advance.

* Chulitna River Cave Trip - mid-September to early October - call J. Rockwell

This is a nice day trip for the fall. We meet on the Parks Highway and walk in from near Mile 166. It is an opportunity for another Fairbanks-Anchorage meeting. See the trip report in Vol. 8, No. 2 of the "Alaskan Caver".

*Chitna (Cave?) Trip - June 19-21 - call Jay Rockwell

A cave-seeking trip is planned to follow up a lead given by Nels Finestad several years ago. He reported a "good cave" not far from a road north of Strelna which is on the road to McCarthy. The previous trip was thwarted by a mudslide. (See Vol. 7, No.5.)

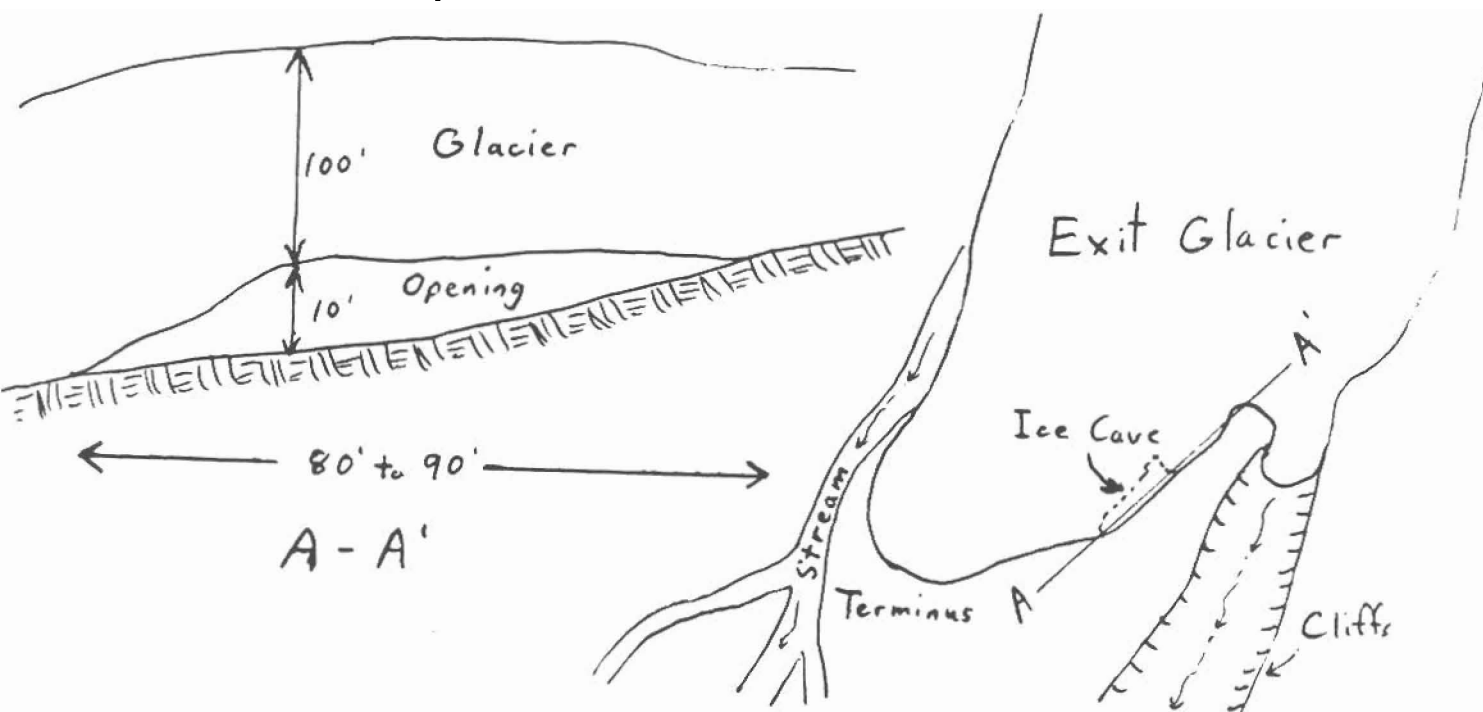
Chitna is about the same distance from both Fairbanks and Anchorage and thus provides an opportunity for a joint trip. If we leave on or before 5:00 P.M. Friday, it is possible to (1) assemble at the entrance of the campground just across the bridge over the Copper River at 10:00 A.M., Saturday, June 20, (2) pool up, and (3) leave for the cave as soon as possible.

At that time there will be an active dipnet fishery for sockeye salmon there with as many as 2,000 people fishing, etc. Some of your party may wish to do that, and there should be no problem if they do, as we plan to be back to the campground by 2 or 3 P.M. Sunday, the 21st, at the very latest. Those preferring to stay in a lodge or motel should make arrangements well in advance.

Those interested please call Jay Rockwell (277-7150), mornings or evenings (but not afternoons).

EXIT GLACIER GROTTO by Scott McGee

On September 27, 1986 six students from Alaska Pacific University travelled to Exit Glacier near Seward, Alaska for a weekend Outdoor Program trip. Upon exploration around the glacier's terminus we discovered a glacier cave in the left flank (looking downstream). The opening was approximately 80 to 90 feet wide and 10 feet high at the highest point. The interior of the cave had approximately the same dimensions as the opening, however the roof gradually sloped down until it reached the ground approximately 30 to 50 feet in. There were several smaller passages that lead deeper inside the glacier but these were too small to allow entry. There was water flowing through these passages. There were several crevasses in the ceiling, the largest of which was about 3 feet wide and continued up into the glacier approximately 20 to 25 feet. The upstream portion of the glacier has many interesting features which merit further exploration.





Looking out from Kayak Island Cave towards Wingham Island.

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