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The **Alaskan Caver**

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October 1995



The Alaskan Caver

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Dalene T. Perrigo - Editor

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Cover Photo: Shunichiro Go negotiates water in Arabia
Cave on Heceta Island in 1995. Photo: Steve Lewis

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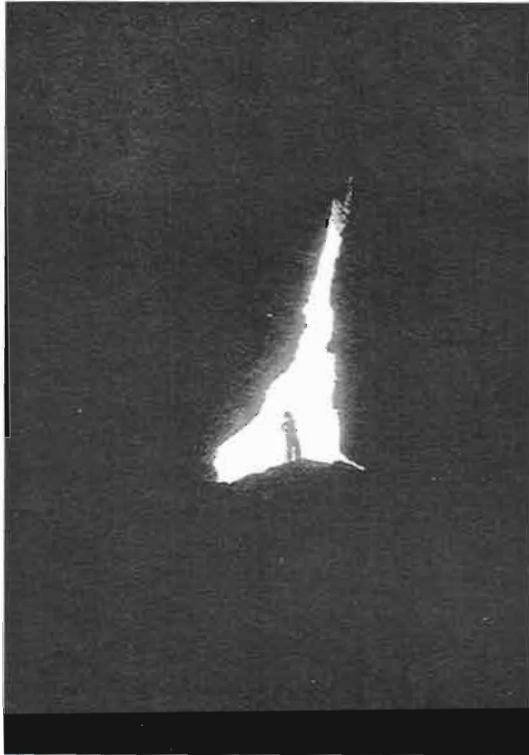
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The opening to Terra Nova Cave provides ample room for entry. Photo: Marcel LaPerriere

CALENDAR

- June 17-July 12, 1996** Ketchicave 1996, Alaska. (907)479-7257
- Aug. 1996.....**World Coastal Karst Environments Symposium. Details TBA.
- August 1996.....**Expedition on Chichagof Island Alaska (907)479-7257
- Aug. 3-9, 1996.....**NSS Convention, Salida, CO, 5404 S Walden St., Aurora, CO 80015.
- Aug. 4-14, 1996.....**International Geological Congress, PO Box 823, Beijing 100037, China
- Ketchikan Area Grotto** meetings are the first Monday, at 7 pm at Ketchikan Public Health Center 3050 Fifth Ave. 247-1559
- Alaska Cave Rescue** meets each Tuesday at 7 pm, at 819 Forest Ave., Ketchikan. Frequent rope practice sessions. Marcel 225-4094

1995 KETCHICAVE EXPEDITION/WRAP-UP REPORT

by Steve Lewis

The 1995 Ketchicave Expedition began on June 30, and ended Aug. 4, 1995. Total cave passage surveyed was 4466.51 meters (14,653.73 feet or 2.78 miles). An additional 4,467.2 meters (14,655.99 feet or 2.78 miles) of overland survey was completed to tie cave entrances in heavily karsted areas together. The expedition surveyed 52 caves on four islands. We discovered or were first to survey in all but four of the caves and numerous caves were located but not surveyed on Heceta and Dall islands. Approximately 2,680 man hours were donated by members of the expedition.

The expedition members spent the first seven days on Prince of Wales Island. Twelve caves were surveyed in the Control Lake Project Area. Many of these caves were relatively small and difficult to locate, involving long hikes. Nevertheless, most of them are hydrologically significant, and several are highly decorated. Six of the caves are located in a tight cluster and are all part of one hydrologic system. Additionally, a band of carbonate was located, extending between two groups of previously noted caves. Because of its relative inaccessibility and a lack of time, this area was not rigorously surveyed for caves. It appears to have significant karst

development and should be taken into account in future planning. Total passage surveyed in these 12 caves was 220,35 meters (722.9 feet) with an additional 218.71 meters (717.5 feet) of surface survey.

Of four other caves surveyed in the Luck Lake area the longest, White Sox Cave, is 27.24 meters (100.77 feet) in length. Karst is well developed in a few places, and White Sox Cave is a hydrologically and recreationally significant cave. This small group of caves is evidence that pockets of karst may occur just about anywhere on Prince of Wales Island. Total surveyed passage in this area was 63.04 meters (206.80 feet), with 228.43 meters (749.4 feet) of overland survey.

David Love and Jim Baichtal, U.S. Forest Service geologist surveyed Full of Baloney caves on Sumez Island. Evidence of heavy use by bats was noted in one of these caves. Again, a pocket of karst was discovered in an unexpected location. Total passage

Continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Marcel LaPerriere

During a recent teleconference between all the officers of the grotto one of the things we discussed was changing the term of grotto officers from one year to two years. In order to do this we must change our constitution, by a 2/3 vote of all members in good standing.

Continued on page 17

surveyed was 89.31 meters (293.0 feet)

In central Prince of Wales Island (POWI), three caves were explored. Joint Venture Cave is a deep shaft located in the densely karsted Bridal Veil Cave area. Hellsinky Cave, a maze of deep shafts and breakdown passage, was not completely surveyed. Mapping of Wishbone Cave was finished. Possible evidence of human use was noted, as well as evidence of use by bears. Total survey in these caves totalled 349.73 meters (1147.4 feet), some of which was completed during the last week of the expedition.

During this first week, cavers also assisted with biological inventories of the caves and karst by Kent Carlson, and completed a day of safety and technical training and several hours of air operations training.

Due to bad weather and boat problems, July 7 and part of July 8 were spent moving the expedition to Heceta Island. In the next 10 days a total of 3,418.03 meters (11,213.9 feet or 2.12 miles) of cave passage was surveyed in 26 caves, with an additional 4020.06 meters (13,189.0 feet or 2.5 miles) of surface survey used to link most of the caves in the system. Twenty-three of these caves are located in a magnificent karst basin and are all part of one very large cave system. We surveyed 1,544.07 meters (5,065.8 feet or 0.96 miles) of passage in Arabica Cave. Arabica is also deep, with a long entrance drop and downward leads. Total depth is nearly 150 meters (492 feet) at this point. Several tight muddy difficult to survey leads and flooding at the end of our stay reduced total survey. However, over a dozen good leads remain in this highly significant cave.

Vive Silva Cave was discovered above Arabica on the last day on Heceta. This cave is highly vertical, and was surveyed to a depth of 135 meters (443 feet). Passage continues down-

ward, and it is certain that the cave will be at least 20 meters deeper. At this point we were out of rope and time, but the cave appeared to continue in a large lead with active streamway. Surface features suggest that Vive Silva should connect with Arabica. If this connection is made, and if estimates of the elevation at the entrance of Vive Silva are close, this would make this the fourth deepest cave in the United States. Ninety more meters of depth would make it the deepest in the United States.

Several other major caves were discovered in this area. The initial drop of the Great Abyss is 85.2 meters (279.5 feet) with the cave being 101.33 meters (332.4 feet) deep with 155.24 meters (509.3 feet) of passage. Big Fatty contains 195.47 meters (641.3 feet) of passage. Icy Fate is 561.09 meters (1,840.8 feet) long with several good leads continuing. It contains a large chamber with floors and walls covered with ice and huge ice pendants dangling from the ceiling at the bottom of the deep twin entrance pits. Several other caves exceed 100 meters in surveyed length and a number have unexplored leads or good digs. In addition, there are many, unexplored leads with a large percentage of this extensive karst basin totally unexplored. Leads were discovered near the top of Bald Mountain although heavy rain and fog prevented much exploration there. Blowing leads were noted when expedition members took a recreational hike. It appears that several other parts of Heceta may possess a similar density of karst and cave features. This is definitely a world class caving area and warrants extensive exploration and protection.

The expedition moved to Dall Island, on the 19th of July. Plans were to push leads in Moonprobe and Enigma and explore the area further for caves. A daylong inventory of the slopes above the head of the bay net-

ted five new caves, but only one was surveyed. All the caves appear to be relatively small but the karst is, as previously noted, tremendously well developed. Travel in this terrain is extremely difficult, and obtaining precise locations without the aid of a GPS is next to impossible at times. The terrain is covered with dense medium to high volume forest, dissected with collapsed linear features, and pocked with literally thousands of huge, steep sided sinks. There is a huge system down there somewhere but we probably still haven't found the entrance.

On day two cavers in Moon probe and Enigma, excavated the skeletal remains of a large 12,000 year-old bear discovered last year. By moving a few feet of breakdown, cavers connected Slightly Enigmatic and Enigma. This allowed bypass of some of the most fragile portions of Enigma while removing the bear. Also collected were remains of several otters and a deer from Enigma and Slightly Enigmatic Caves, now both parts of the Enigma System. We had time to locate a blowing dig nearby, and to explore the hillside above the cave for a new entrance to bypass extremely delicate portions of the cave that lead to all known leads. Meanwhile, a new lead was pushed deep in Moonprobe, opening up into several pits.

The hard work on Heceta and Dall began to catch up with us, with several minor injuries occurring in Moonprobe, and a generally lethargic air overcoming most of us. The lack of a boat made all work on Enigma far more difficult than in the previous year, and Moonprobe continued to require a 1,100 foot climb from camp just to begin descending into the cave. Nevertheless, those who felt up to it continued to push in Moonprobe and look for alternate entrances to Enigma. The blowing dig above Enigma went with just an hour of excavating. Can You Dig It Cave

opened up into some nicely decorated passage with blowing leads, but with an extremely tight section at the start. Two days of survey suggest that it will continue with the possibility of leads toward Enigma. The morphology of the cave is also suggestive of Enigma. We also dug into a sinkhole that is approximately over the high climbing leads in Enigma. We excavated down about 2.5 meters through muck to where the sink begins to bend. Heavy rains over the next few days washed things out more and we hope that perhaps after a few more years, nature will have completed our work for us. Heavy rains and low ceilings kept scheduled planes away until the 26th, when a plethora of planes arrived early, creating a frenzy of activity as we all scrambled to break camp in record time. Diver Bay netted 326.41 meters (1,070.9 feet) of new passage, not bad when one considers that all new leads in Moonprobe require many hours of hard work just to there and that much time and effort was spent looking for a way to continue survey work in Enigma without causing damage to delicate passages.

Most cavers stayed to participate in a two day cave rescue workshop led by Mike Christie, and planned to continue caving with members of the POWIE expedition on El Capitan Peak. The rescue workshop was a great success, but weather worked against us on El Capitan Peak. Helicopter flights had to be cancelled. Instead, cavers spent time searching for several leads near Calder Bay, and visited the Bridal Veil/Dragon's Breath area. Here we found debris from recent logging operations in the creek above Bridal Veil Cave. Volunteer efforts by TCP and Forest Service employees this fall have prevented this blowdown from washing into the cave this year. However, this is an area that will require frequent

monitoring and work for many years. Let's hope that such situations are going to be a thing of the past as new karst management standards and guidelines are put into place.

Cavers also continued working with Ward Serrill, and Kathy Turco who were photographing and recording various activities during the expedition for inclusion in a multimedia production on the caves and karst of southeast Alaska.

Although much of the last week was somewhat anticlimactic, it did give cavers from the two expeditions a chance to compare notes, and a chance to reflect on the previous month's activities. Consensus opinion was that those of us who wish to work with Forest Service support next year should:

- 1) Focus next year's efforts on Heceta Island, using the savings in aircraft costs to support a larger number of cavers.
- 2) Make next year's expedition even more international than this year's. We had the wonderful experience of working with Russian caver Sergey Levachev, and Japanese caver Shunichiro Go this year.

3) Require ourselves to take more real breaks next year. Alaskan caving requires one to be at the peak of performance for safety. We must remember that, even though we want to be in those new leads in the worst way, we need to give our bodies and minds a break now and again. The accidents on Dall Island were a wake-up call which we should not ignore.

4) Support and participate in a Chichagof Island Expedition next summer. This would probably be largely independent of the Forest Service.

Other cavers on this year's expedition included Marcel and Connie LaPerriere, Dan Monteith, Kris Esterson, Amy Russell, Eron Gissberg, and Rob Knotts.

We were delighted to have Cat Woods back with us at the rescue training session and to suffer under the able leadership of Mike Christie. We also enjoyed our last few days with the POWIE crew, which included Paul Hadfield, Pete Smith, and Kevin, Carlene, Ella, Soren, Flint, and Forest Allred.

Ketchicave 1996

June 17 - July 12
all on Heceta Island

Special Expedition

still in the planning stages
August
all on Chichagof Island

Steve Lewis 907/479-7257
ftswl@aurora.alaska.edu

KAZUMURA CAVE EXPEDITION, FALL 1995

by Kevin and Carlene Allred

Part I by Kevin Allred, Part II will be printed in the December edition

After a year of anticipation, I found myself at Mike Shambaugh's place in Mountain View on Hawaii's Big Island discussing our options for continued onslaught at the dig that would hopefully connect 5 Mile and Olaa Cave with the 29 mile Kazumura Cave. Mike revealed that he had worked alone at the site four times since the last expedition. When we went in the next day, I was amazed that he had managed to chisel down about four feet into the surface of the black intrusion which had flowed over breakdown I had excavated on the Olaa side. If my estimates were right, Mike should have broken through already, yet when I got on the Olaa side and we pounded back and forth against very dense rock, it still sounded a ways off. We still could not communicate vocally. After a couple more discouraging and unproductive days work, we found ourselves again in separate caves to try again at communication. Grasping at any possible alternative, I crawled to the only remaining spot in Olaa where a connection might be made. My pounding soon attracted Mike, and to our surprise, we could yell back and forth through a crack! This made things much better, and we decided to abandon the investment of 15 man-days work in the last dig, and take a chance on this new one. On September 22, four man-days of work later, we shook hands through

... and in 15 minutes the caves were united

a small hole, and in 15 minutes the caves were united. Carol Vesely showed up two hours later (she had arrived the day before and had planned to join us in the dig) and while Mike carried tools out one direction, she and I carried more tools out our direction and wrapped up some survey to the nearest entrance. This was definitely the toughest of the four major digs in the system.

A week into the month-long expedition, it was time to pick up Doug Strait, Alan Cressler and Andy Porter at the Hilo Airport. I did not know what to think when Alan showed up in a wheel chair. About two weeks before, he had messed his back up seriously lifting a table, and was in

terrible pain. But as he told the others, he would go on the expedition if he had to spend the whole time laying on a thermarest pad. We somehow got everyone and all the gear and both mountain bikes in and on the rent-a-car and booked up to the Allred place in Hawaiian Acres where base camp was located.

Alan rested from his back injury and took it easy for a couple days by gradually going mountain biking and hiking (he refuses to sit still) and the remainder of us continued the survey, carrying a 20-foot aluminum extension ladder up tube for the high leads and lava falls. Mike had gotten some sporadic days off work, and helped also, in addition to graciously providing hot showers, laundry, and even some meals. Thank you again, Mike! During her sojourns on the surveys, Carol would leave her towhead baby, Brian with mother-in-law Mary Farr, who is a truly great person.

The first real challenge of the survey occurred when Andy and Alan carried the ladder to the base of Wild Pig Drop, a 50 foot high lava falls. Unfortunately, the ladder barely even reached the drips of the overhang, leaving the majority of the face exposed. Doug and I were surveying an upper level passage and came out at the top of the spectacular chamber of Wild Pig Drop. Doug managed to climb up to a rubble-covered ledge which led to a point above the falls. With a short pull-down rappell, Wild Pig was surmounted. We were getting well on our way up the known portion of Olaa, before the arrival at the end of the second week, of Carlene Allred, Pat Kambesis, and Bob Richards. Pat and Bob would stay at the motel in Hilo with Carol and Mary, and Carlene would be with the rest of us at the Acres. We changed our access entrance to one nearer Volcano Village and started surveying in both directions using as many as four teams per day. The ratio of upper passages and side passages to the main passage went down, allowing us to go a lot faster up the mountain to our goal; the highway road fill, which we hoped we could get through.

BYRON VALLEY 1995

by Julius Rockwell, Jr.



Tad Rockwell stands in entrance to glacier cave at Middle Ice Field. Photo: Jay Rockwell, Jr.

A cold dry fall which we have had in South Central Alaska in 1995 is conducive to good glacier caving. Safety rules for the Byron Valley, near Portage Lake, are: "Don't go in until after freeze-up and until the third day after it stops snowing on the mountain top." Of course, one must get in before avalanches cover entrances. Some years conditions preclude caving in this most attractive Anchorage area.

On Friday, Dec. 1, 1995, there had been no snow during the week and the temperatures had hovered around -0 degrees F. My son, Tad, and I lost no time in getting started.

No snow on the 50-mile road to Portage, only a dusting in the parking lot, and an easy quarter-mile trail made for pleasant going. The Small Snow Field, the eastern most of the three and which sometimes contained caves had completely melted during the summer. At the end of the trail we could see across on the south side of the valley an opening in the northeast end of Middle Snow Field, and a smaller one immediately adjacent to it. We crossed the stream coming out of Byron Glacier on the ice. Moderate avalanches had already occurred this year but not near the entrance of this cave.

The 6 meter wide by 2 meter high opening, lead to a handsome passage with scalloped walls, 7 meters wide by 5 meters high. It swung to the southwest (right) and continued parallel to the toe of the mountainside the way it had previously (O'Hara, Doug, 1990, p. 9). About 50 meters in there was a chimney to the surface and decorations. On the left a wide side passage rose steeply up mountain. At its upper end another skylight revealed a small patch of fresh snow in the cave. Continuing on past the decorations the floor rose, required crawling, and turned gradually to the left. My knee pads proved useful on the rocks. To the right the passage pinched out, the ice resting on the floor. Apparently, within the year this portion of the main passage had collapsed. Swinging further to the left the new main passage went up-mountain about 60 meters and finally lead to the skylight seen at the top of the first side passage. Just before reaching the cross-passage the going was quite steep and the rocks on the floor were mixed with large blocks of freshly broken ice. The flaking may have coincided with the avalanche which may have occurred a week or two earlier during a snowfall on the mountain top.

We had lunch by the skylight looking down the first side-passage to the decorations. Tad checked two more passages from his point. One went straight up the mountain and was found to be plugged with fresh snow in its upper end. (Rich Hall later said that on an earlier trip, before the snow, they had exited the cave at the top of this passage.) The other continued from the 15-meter long cross-passage and he could see only that it went. We wanted to check other ice fields for caves so we headed out, down the first passage for the first time. This one was the easier of the two.

Out side we continued up along the edge of this Middle Ice Field, as I was wondering what had become of the rest of the cave. Near the northwest corner was an 8-meter long and 1/2 meter wide horizontal crevice running parallel to the stream about two feet above the ground level. A look inside revealed a low parallel passage that seemed to get larger to the left. I asked Tad if he thought it went anywhere. With an "I'll check," he went in, then silence. The length of the silence gave me the answer.

Eventually he was back with, "Dad, you've got to see this!" Aufeis was on the floor, but the crawl to the left

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MOONPROBE

Dall Island, Alaska • Cave #10-5-1-25 • Preliminary Report \$199, Addendum to #161 Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Steve Lewis
October 27, 1994

DESCRIPTION

Exploration and survey in 1994 extended total length of Moonprobe to 394.4 meters (1293.6 feet) with overall depth now 150.4 meters (493 feet). This still leaves approximately 135 meters (443 feet) of depth potential before reaching sea level. The cave continues to be primarily vertical in nature.

The high pendulum lead at about -18 meters (-59 feet) was dug out and led into a series of small chambers. Leads still remain and the whole sequence needs to be surveyed. It appears to offer ways up but not down.

The 54.3 meters (145 feet) of passage were surveyed in the pendulum lead approximately 30 meters (100 feet) down the first drop. Passage dropped about 15 meters (50 feet) with a side lead climbing about 5 meters (16 feet). However, the tie-in shot for this survey needs to be verified (it appears to be incorrect) and another side passage has no tie-in shot. Therefore, this passage will be resurveyed and sketched in 1995, and remains off the map this year. The 54.3 Meters are not included in overall cave length either. Some very tight leads still remain unpushed in this section.

A briefly pushed but unsurveyed passage beyond the tight down climb among loose boulders at the -88 meters (-290 feet) level (now called Windy Way) extends nearly 30 meters (100 feet) to the south via walking and stooping passage. A blowing dig offers great potential for the 1995 expedition.

The main excitement for this year was an extension to the north at the -88 meter level. Apparently a mud and gravel plug washed out over the winter allowing us to push on in what had been a dead ended muddy passage. On the other hand, bug collecting may have led to contortions that last years crew failed to make. Kent Carlson and Amy Russell found this new lead while collecting invertebrates. Dan Monteith, Kris Esterson, Rob Knotts, and I assumed the task of surveying and extending their discovery.

A short squeeze led to Made for Tiggers, a moderately steep and very slick bedrock slope pocked with slots and holes and with occasional stalagmites that must be avoided. This led to Pooh's Picnic Palace, the first extensive and large horizontal passage mapped in the cave. It wasn't the 75 meters (246 feet) we had been prom-

ised but in this cave, moving 25 meters (82 feet) without having to crawl or climb is a pleasure. It also offers the most extensive speleothem development yet discovered in the cave. Rimstone dams, moonmilk, bacon, stalactites and soda straws are especially prevalent in the upper section. Passage led off in all directions. However, like the rest of the cave, these quickly began running mostly straight up and straight down.

Kris and I followed the Big Wall Passage. This dropped dramatically out of the bottom end of Pooh's Picnic Palace. A nearly 25 meter (82 feet) descent required almost 50 meters (164 feet) of rope. The rock was generally sound but very muddy. A debris bottomed room at the bottom was choked at the lower end. A massive and relatively insoluble monolithic and slightly overhanging slab formed the east wall. At the upper end of the chamber a very tight passage dropped down. With some work, enough rock was removed to allow safe access and we descended another 12 meters (40 feet) down Tabid Drop into a tiny chamber stopping on a group of choked boulders. Descending under these I was horrified to note that the whole cluster was apparently suspended with magic - only a tiny projection seemed to hold up the entire structure. Passage was very narrow in a joint both sides of which seemed to be composed of the same relatively non-soluble rock as the Big Wall above. A short down-squeeze over cobble fill led to a small muddy pool with poor prospects for continuing down. The joint led back up, very tight and muddy, a potential lead when all other leads quit. High leads beckoned on our way out. One led straight up out of sight above the final drop while another led up over the drop to the Big Wall Room. Both of these will require protection and dynamic rope for belaying. We placed a bolt on another climb leading out of the center of Pooh's Picnic Palace, but abandoned the climb when it became evident that a dynamic rope would be needed for safety here too.

Meanwhile Dan and Rob were pushing other leads off Pooh's Picnic Palace. All roads seemed to lead to Heffalump's Abyss, although not all ways were negotiable by people. Squeezes and Wozzles is a tight crawl which leads off from the Picnic Passage and drops 10 meters (33 feet) into Heffalump's Abyss. En route, a tight

lead drops 10 meters (33 feet) into the Skippy Passage. This room connects via a too tight passage to the Heffalump's Abyss. The floor is covered with breakdown with potential for a difficult dig at the lower end of the room. Heffalump's Abyss is a relatively spacious chamber with a steep difficult lead ascending up the eastern wall and climbing above Pooh's Picnic Palace. A tight hole near the top of the Picnic Palace leads directly into this high lead. The high lead remains unexplored.

RIGGING

Rigging needs are substantial. A 60 meter (200 foot) rope is needed for the first drop. Directionals are needed to align the rope correctly at the top. The side passage midway down needs another 30 meter (100 foot) section. A 40-45 meter (130- to 145-foot) rope is needed to rig the second drop and another 20 meters (66 feet) for the very awkward third pitch. For rescue this would certainly require a bolt placement to set up a directional or rebelay. The Big Drop requires about 60 meters of rope. A handline is very helpful in the unsurveyed Windy Way. Thirty-meter (100-foot) ropes were used to access Heffalump's Abyss. A 40-meter (135 foot) line was used to drop into the Big Wall Room. Twenty to 30 meters (66 to 100 feet) are needed to drop the tight section beyond the Big Wall Room. This section requires a mini-rack or figure 8 due to its confined nature.

GEOLOGY/SPELEOGENESIS

Moonprobe still generally appears to conform to patterns associated with invasion vadose caves (Fort and Williams 1989, p.268) or solution chimneys (White 1988, p.22). Passages drop precipitously down large joints. The apparently relatively insoluble walls of several of these joints, notable the Big Drop and Big Wall sections, are especially interesting in light of adjacent areas that evidence high degrees of solutional modification.

It is interesting that the floor of the Big Wall Room and Big Drop are at a virtually identical level in the cave and that both are choked with clean breakdown. Explanations of these phenomena await further exploration and study. We still believe that there is great potential for downward extension of the cave, perhaps through high leads and especially via the blowing dig.

BIOLOGY/ANIMAL REMAINS

Several small skulls, probably of rodents, were noted in the still unmapped Z-passage, approximately 30 meters below the surface. A profusion of scat (probably rodent but perhaps bat) was noted in the upper level of Pooh's Picnic Passage. The phreatic tube at -90 meters contained skeletal remains of small rodents and feces which could have been from bats or small rodents. It appears that the

cave has significant activity with many sites probably being washed clean of biological evidence frequently.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

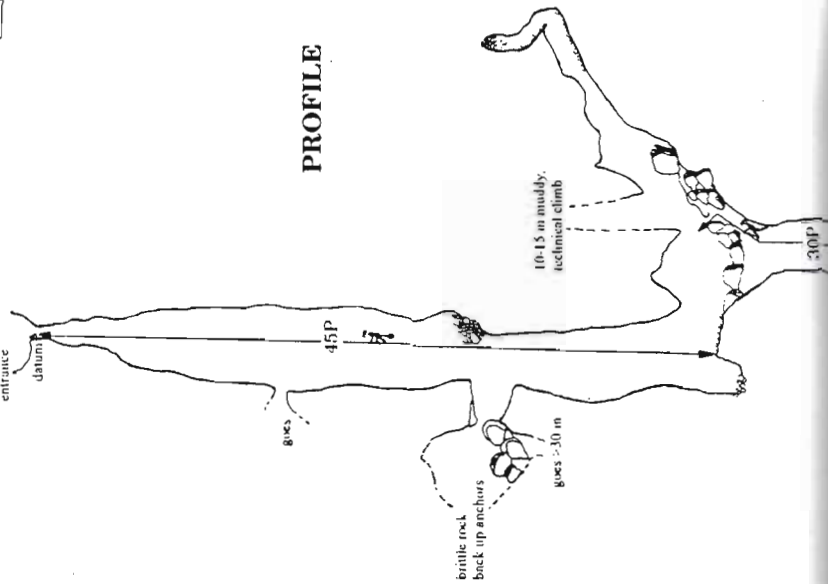
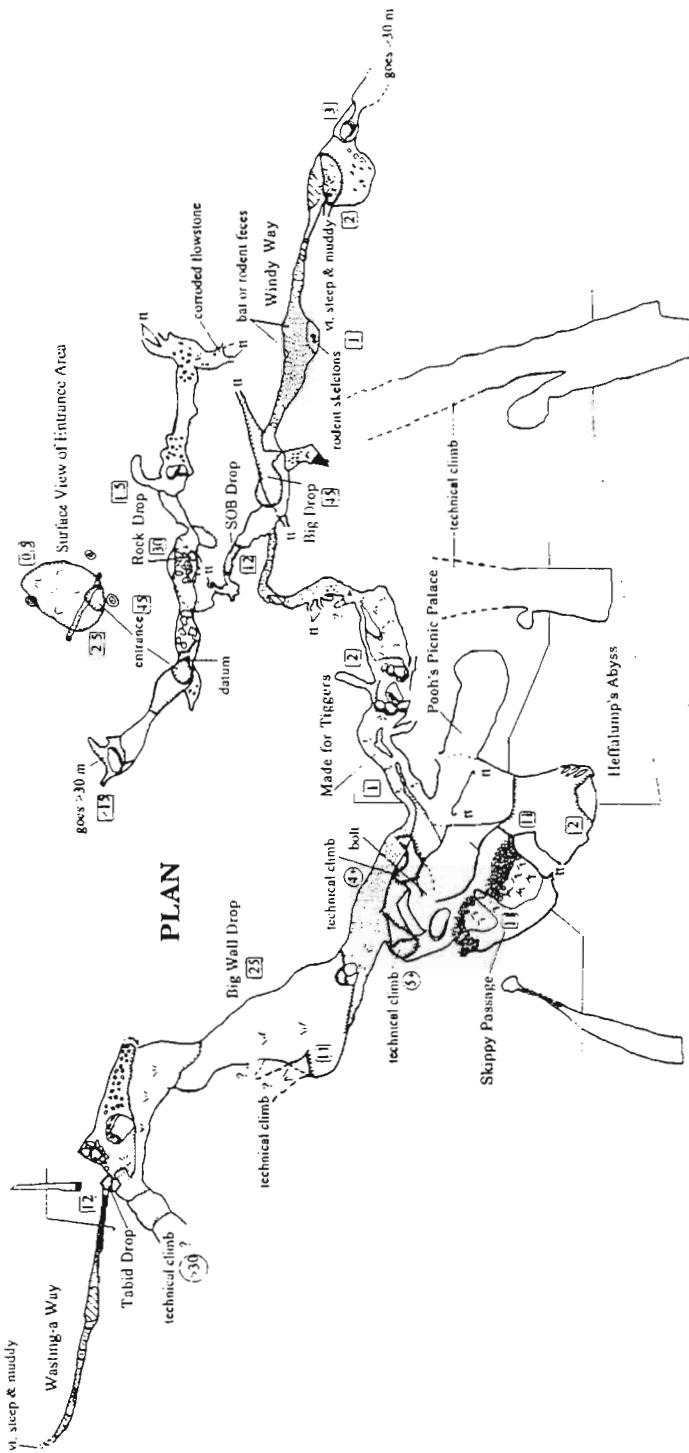
Management recommendations remain the same as last year. The cave itself is very difficult to locate. The entrance is small and would be difficult to fall into accidentally. No one without good vertical skills should enter the cave, nor are they likely to. The karst is highly developed throughout the entire plateau with a very high density of large sinks and grikes. We feel that this development almost guarantees the existence of large cave systems although access to them may be difficult. The pristine nature and superb development of the karst in this area gives it international significance. Further exploration, inventory, and study are necessary, but at this stage it appears that the karst resource here warrants total protection from timber harvest, mineral extraction, and road building.

REFERENCES

Fort and Williams, 1989, White 1988



Dan Monteith ascends out of Moonprobe Cave in 1994. Photo: Steve Lewis



MOONPROBE

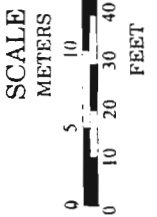
Tongass National Forest
Dall Island, Alaska

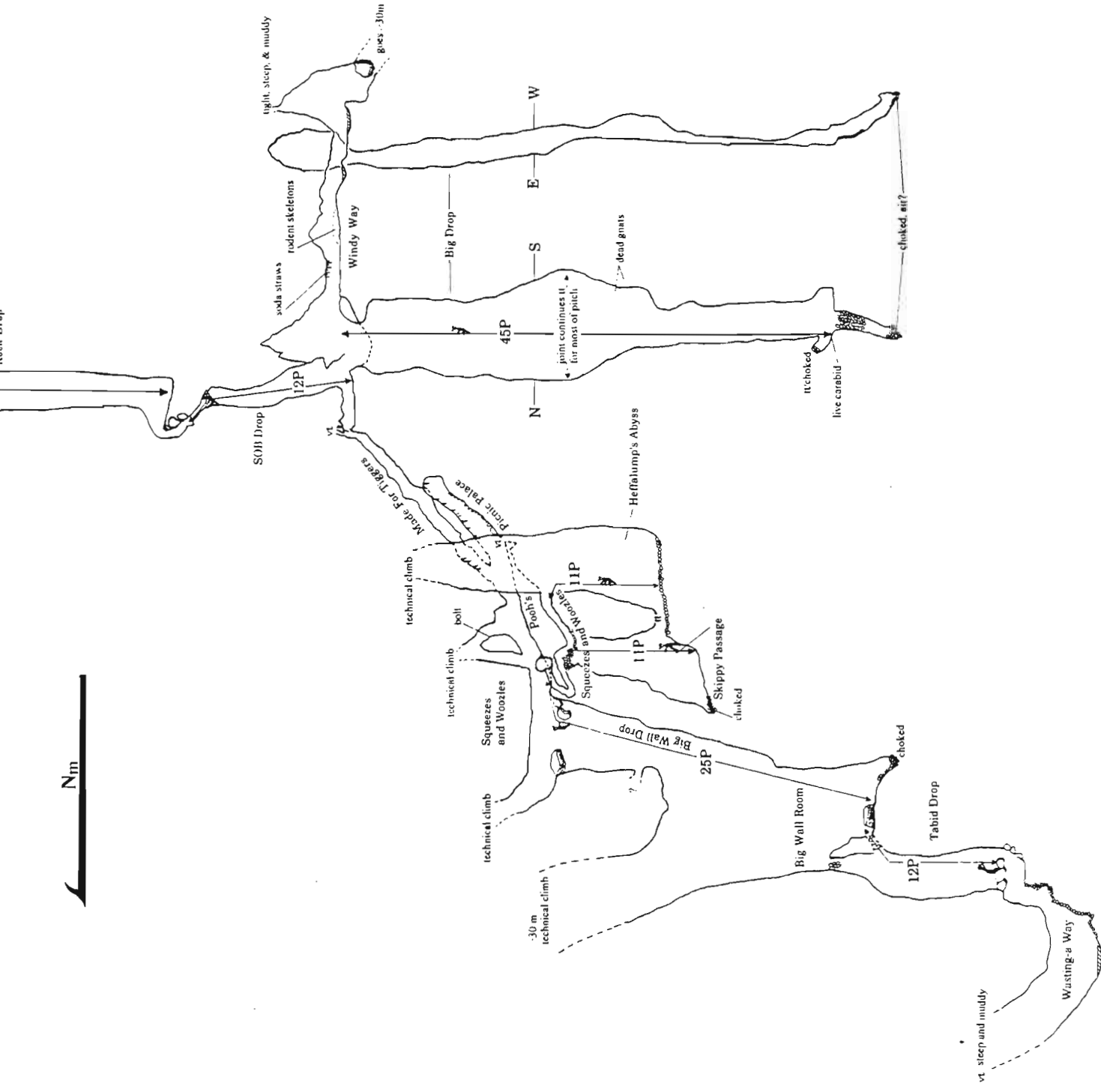
Surveyed Length: 394.4 m (1293.6 ft)
Depth: -150.4 m (-493 ft)

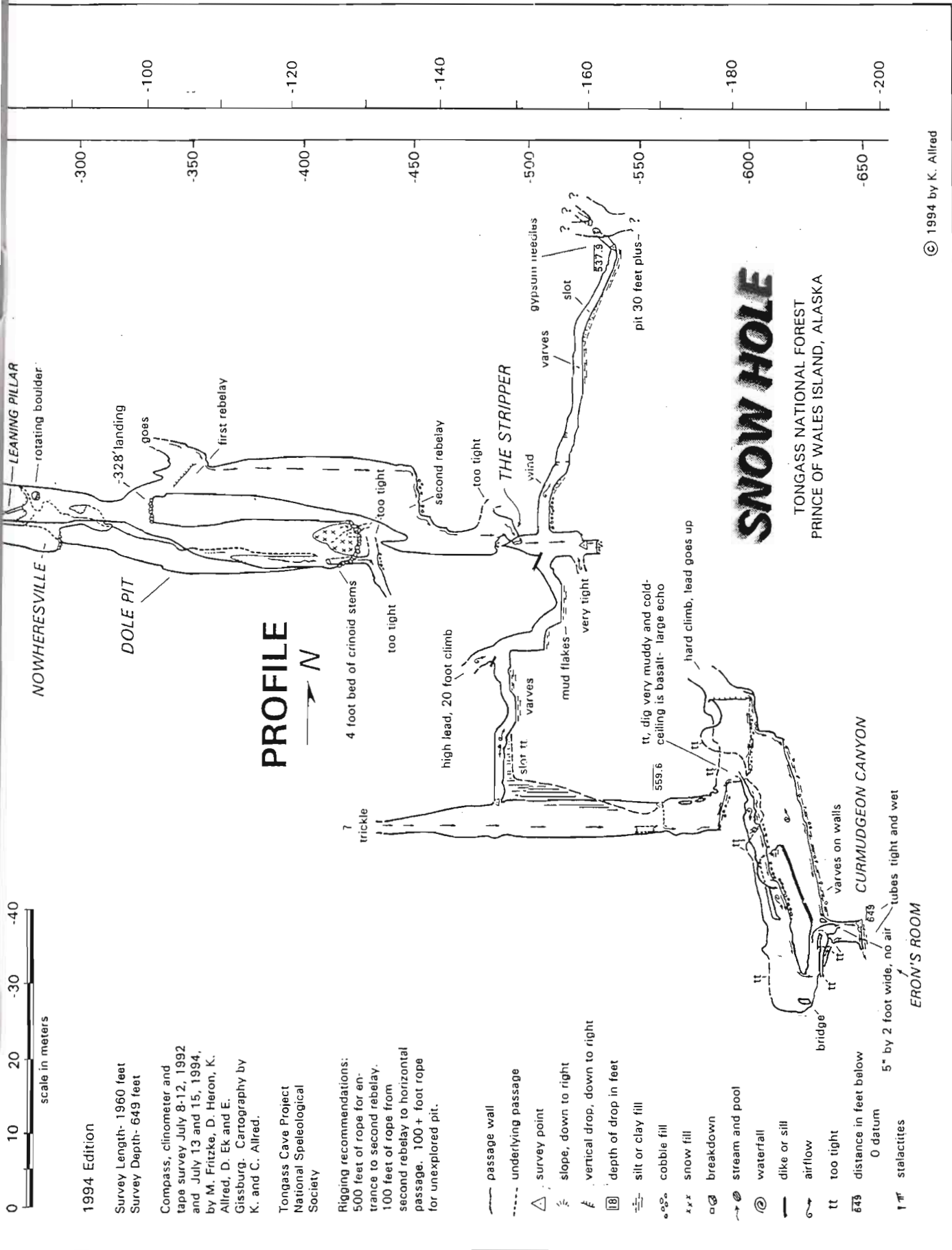
Compass, clinometer, and tape survey
July, 1993: D. Aldridge, R. Kochler, S. Lewis,
D. Smith, and B. Christensen
July, 1994: G. Bowles, K. Esterson, R. Knatts,
S. Lewis, and D. Monteth
Dredged by S. Lewis, © 1995

TONGASS CAVE PROJECT, NSS

Data in Meters







SNOW HOLE

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, ALASKA

1994 Edition
 Survey Length- 1960 feet
 Survey Depth- 649 feet
 Compass, clinometer and
 tape survey July 8-12, 1992
 and July 13 and 15, 1994,
 by M. Fritzsche, D. Heron, K.
 Allred, D. Ek and E.
 Gissburg. Cartography by
 K. and C. Allred.

Tongass Cave Project
 National Speleological
 Society

Rigging recommendations:
 500 feet of rope for an-
 trance to second rebeley.
 100 feet of rope from
 second rebeley to horizontal
 passage. 100+ foot rope
 for unexplored pit.

- passage wall
- - - - underlying passage
- △ survey point
- ↘ slope, down to right
- ↙ vertical drop, down to right
- ▣ depth of drop in feet
- ≡ silt or clay fill
- cobble fill
- x,x,x snow fill
- breakdown
- stream and pool
- ⊙ waterfall
- dike or sill
- airflow
- tt too tight
- 649 distance in feet below datum
- ⊥ stalactites

5" by 2 foot wide, no air
 ERON'S ROOM

© 1994 by K. Allred

SNOWHOLE

Prince of Wales Island, Alaska •
 Preliminary Report #170
 Addendum to reports #10 and #108
 Tongass Cave Project • National
 Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred
 November 16, 1994

FURTHER EXPLORATION

On July 13 and 15, 1994, one lead was investigated in Snowhole below "The Stripper". Some 510.8 feet more passage was surveyed from a previously unexplored 70 foot deep shaft. The shaft drains into a very tight, muddy, meandering stream canyon (Curmudgeon Canyon). The way through must be chosen carefully by negotiating the widest cross sections of this canyon. Ropes are needed in two drops along the way. Rope is best taken through the canyon by trailing it behind rather than having it in coils.

Curmudgeon Canyon drains into a small chamber called Eron's Room. Two tight, wet leads remain in this room (see map). At a nice display of speleothems, an incoming feeder canyon (again very narrow and muddy) leads back over part of Curmedgeon Canyon and finally becomes too tight at a draughting possible dig with large echoes ahead.

Curmudgeon Canyon and the feeder canyon both contain dikes which with faulting and jointing control the trend and govern the steepness. Dikes and sections of impure limestone seem to be what makes it possible for such extensive horizontal development in a karst which would normally be almost completely vertically oriented.

Surveyed length is now 1960 feet. The depth was increased to 649.2 feet which makes Snowhole the deepest cave in Alaska.

MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations remain the same, with the suggestion that further exploration take place to better understand the nature and speleogenesis of this cave and the alpine karst development on El Capitan Peak.

TERRA NOVA CAVE

Southeast Alaska •
 Preliminary Report #190
 Tongass Cave Project •
 National Speleological
 Society

by Kevin Allred
 November 17, 1994

DESCRIPTION

Terra Nova Cave was named after Connie and Marcel LaPerriere's sail boat which was used to get out to this remote wave-swept coast.

The cave consists entirely of one huge main canyon-like passage which extends over 400 feet into Silurian Marble. Primary speleogenesis is probably littoral.

High tide level is presently approximately 18 feet below the furthest point in the cave. Driftwood is scattered in the mid point of the passage. Miscellaneous bones are scattered in many places, but especially notable are the many incredible conulites up to three inches across in the sandy floor. These are by far the largest and best examples ever seen by the author.

In the passage walls over 100 feet into the cave, littoral karst karren pitting is still noticeable after an unknown period of isostatic rebound. Remains of ancient acorn barnacles are preserved for some distance into the cave.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The general public should not be directed to this cave because of the fragile conulites. Some of these have been flagged off, but careless footing could still easily crush them.

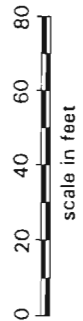
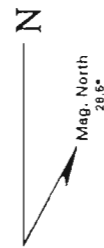
The bones should be studied by a paleontologist.

TERRA NOVA CAVE

Survey Length- 428.4 feet
 Survey Depth- 13.7 feet

Compass, inclinometer and tape survey,
 July 21, 1994 by C. LaPerriere, M. LaPerriere
 and K. Allred. Tongass Cave Project.

cartography © 1994 by Carlene Allred

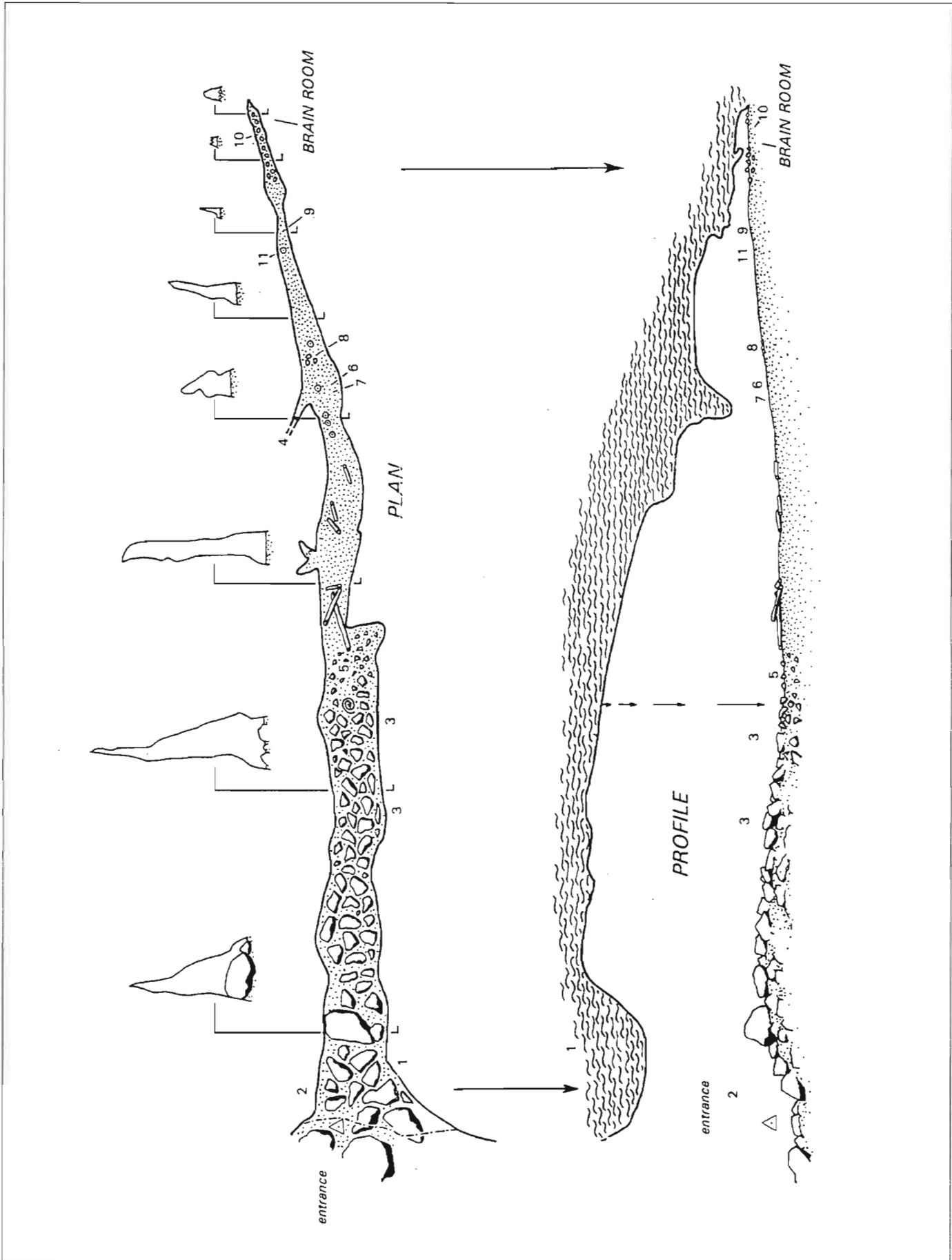


LEGEND

- passage wall
- bedrock of marble
- breakdown
- sand fill
- entrance dripline
- log
- conulites
- trickle waterfall
- 0 datum, about 10 feet above mean high tide

NOTES:

1. bedrock of bluish marble (Silurian)
2. high littoral pitting
3. noticeable pitting and acorn barnacles from ancient littoral zone
4. too tight, five inch hole
5. eight inch leg bone
6. large bones
7. possible tip of crab or pincher
8. rocks and fallen speleothems
9. possible wing bone
10. bird bones
11. fantastic conulites flagged off



HAIR TRIGGER PIT

Prince of Wales Island • Preliminary Report #182
 Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society
 by Kevin Allred
 November 16, 1994

DESCRIPTION

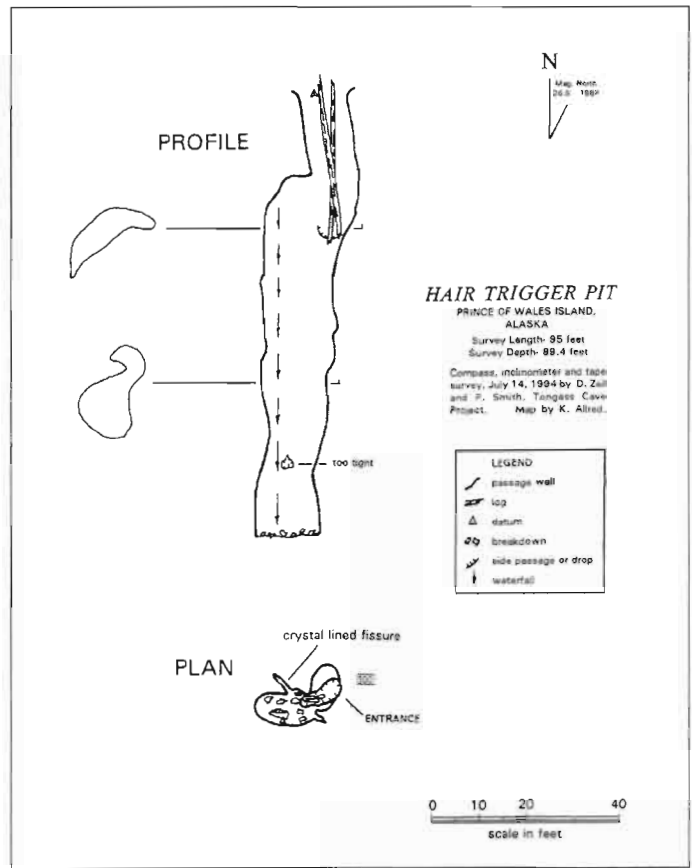
Located in a clearcut, Hair Trigger Pit was discovered several years ago by Mark Fritzke who reported loose rubble at the top of this pit.

Hair Trigger was explored and surveyed July 14, 1994, by Darcie Ziel and Pete Smith. They report unstable entry, and recommend at least 130 feet of rope to rig it.

The fissure is lined with crystals; presumably the same type as are found in nearby LaCherie Cave.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

We suggest restricted access due to the hazardous entry. Slash is present and a problem.



WARRIOR LOOKOUT CAVE

Southeast Alaska • Preliminary Report #189
 Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society
 by Kevin Allred
 November 17, 1994

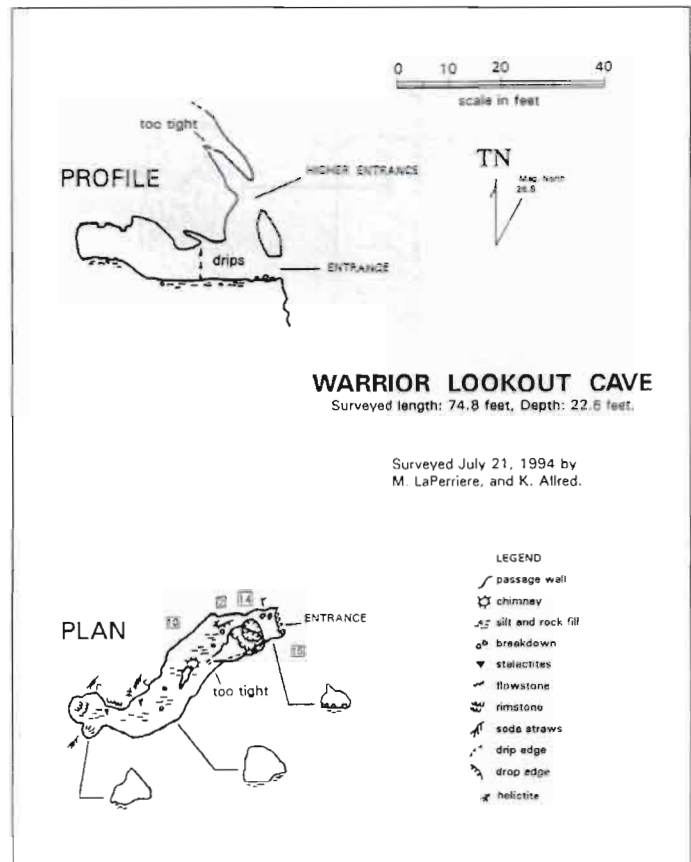
DESCRIPTION

Formed in Silurian Marble, Warrior Lookout Cave was discovered by Connie LaPerriere, Marcel LaPerriere, and Kevin Allred. It was explored and surveyed by Marcel and Kevin on July 21, 1994. The cave entrance is accessed by climbing 15 feet up a cliff. Another higher entrance is directly above and accessible by an awkward climb just inside the main entrance. Above the high entrance, rock climbing equipment would be needed to access an unexplored cave entrance further up the mountain.

Upon entering Warrior Lookout, the walking size passage heads southwest 50 feet to a blind end decorated with rimstone and speleothems. Cave coral is found along the passage walls. Origin of the cave appears phreatic.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The general public should not be directed to this cave because of its delicate speleothems.



LIGHTS OUT

by Connie LaPerriere

As I lay on the hard surface of the ambulance bed, I looked across at Darcie, and wondered how we had gotten ourselves into this position. It had not started out as a bad day. My husband Marcel, Darcie and I had been assigned as part of the Tongass Cave Project to complete the map of Scallop cave.

Scallop cave was special to me because it was the first wild cave I had entered. It had been suggested that the cave was a good beginner cave. After we had gotten over the initial trepidation and exhilaration of the seventy foot repel, we had gone approximately 30 feet when Marcel had gotten stuck in a very narrow repel. It took him thirty minutes to extract himself, as there was nothing, and no way for any of us to help. The seventy foot accent was grueling to a beginner, and the whole experience had proved daunting. Still the caves had worked their spell, and we returned the next day to have a great time surveying and mapping.

So it was time to finish what we had begun. We started the day with the usual paperwork- our trip sheet. Where were we going, who was going, how long would we be gone, what were our objectives? Then it was time for the long drive down the island, and through the back roads high into the remote area, arriving at last at Scallop.

More caves had slithered across my body and it was with greater confidence that we slid into the cave, passed the tight repel now known as Chechacko Pit, and proceeded to our last survey station. We completed the days survey, climbed up the ropes, shrugged off our dirty gear and headed back to the truck.

In high spirits we jumped into the truck, and listened to the silence of the high mountain air. The lights had been left on and the batteries were dead. At this point we realized that the truck was parked in a slight depression, not much hill was in our way before the long road down. We pushed the truck up but could not quite get it out of the depression. This depression was to become our own depression as we tried pushing the truck up and down, trying to overcome the gravity of the situation. We did tag relays, changing places thinking that perhaps a change in position would make a difference. We looked around the clearcut for a log to lever with, no logs. We calculated how long it would be before someone began to worry about us. We decided to save ourselves, and in the spirit of togetherness we started hiking.

We started racking our brains trying to remember where the last person we had seen along the road had been. It was not a pleasant thought. It was however a beautiful day, and our walk was, with the exception of

the slight depression, all down hill.

I don't know how long we walked, but at a happier moment we later found out that we hiked 6 miles until we found a lone Winabago in a desolate campground. We knew that a Winabago could not make it up to the truck. This couple, probably thinking that if they assisted, this weird looking trio might not render them bodily harm, drove us to Chet. Perhaps they hoped that Chet was probably as weird as we were, and could handle the situation. We knew Chet was not all there because the first words out of his mouth were "so you and your daughters need a jump". Darcie was young enough to be Marcel's daughter, but to anyone with normal eyesight I have enough wrinkles to cause a plastic surgeon to rub his hands in glee. Chet may have been blind but he was kind.

So it came to pass that Marcel rode in front with Chet and learned his life history. Darcie and I ended up flat on our backs in the back of Chet's converted Dodge Powerwagon, ambulance. It might have been the atmosphere, but Darcie and I spent the time comparing past and present injuries and pains.

That ambulance made it up the hill to revive the dead battery.

The moral of this story is that you can't dodge your responsibilities if you drive an old ambulance.

PILLARS OF HERCULES CAVE GATED

On September 23-24, the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument placed a gate on Pillars of Hercules Cave. Following an inspection tour by Monument Manager, Lynn Roberts, the decision was made to control visitation. The decision to gate the cave was based upon increased visitation, new foot prints through a sand castle area, and the discovery of a car-

bide dump in the right-hand passage.

Gate construction included helicopter support to sling materials, and welding equipment to the remote site, one-mile from the nearest road. The goal of gating is to prevent future damage to this most sensitive of caves at Mount St. Helens. Future access to the cave will be by permit only. The Speleograph, vol 31, no 11

HECETA ISLAND

by R.R. Knotts

Heceta Island. How can mere words describe the experience? The truth of the matter is, they can't.

Ketchicave was more than just a caving expedition this year, it was like a religious experience, a grand ol' time, and a family reunion all rolled into one.

Foremost in the experience would have to be the caves. Heceta is more like one huge cave itself, than an island. Everywhere we went there were caves, hundreds of them, everywhere. It was unbelievable. You think I might be embellishing the facts, but it's true. Heceta is the most cave infested rock I've ever set foot on - and I've stepped on lots of rocks.

Here's a for instance for you. One morning Marcel LaPerriere, Dan Montieth and I went out to connect three known caves together with an overland survey. These caves were fairly close together as it was less than a quarter of a mile from one end of the survey to the other. By the time we finished our survey, we had added six new caves to the list to be mapped. And that was just one instance.

Another was the clear-cut directly in front of the camp. The camp had been chosen for its proximity to Icy Fate, Arabica and a couple of others caves that Jim Baichtal, Steve Lewis and Marcel found earlier in the season. None of these known caves were actually located in the clear-cut itself, except Icy Fate, which was just below the unit in muskeg. The trail to Icy Fate went through the clear-cut, and from the trail, there were a half dozen possible leads visible in the logged over area. Of those half dozen leads, Amy Russell and I mapped three caves, and could have mapped two more very small ones.

And then there was Arabica. Holy smokes, what a cave. The entrance along was worth the visit. The first drop descended 50 meters or so into a huge open air sink, and then the second drop went down a narrow slot about the same distance, with a funky rebelay at the top of the pitch. At the beginning of the expedition the second pitch had a small trickle of water dribbling down the face, but after a few good showers that dribble had turned into a high pressure power wash. Our cave suits were very clean at the end of the day.

Arabica also had a weird effect on the cavers, or maybe it was just Skippy. Whatever, after a few days of surveying in Arabica the team members developed a strange sense of lethargy and their energy levels fell dramatically. A day or two of pushing leads in other caves would snap a caver right out of it. We call it the Arabica syndrome.

It might have had something to do with the sheer size of the cave, and the fact that after a few days of surveying it took an hour or more just to reach the last survey point. Or it might have been the nature of the cave itself. Arabica is such a raw, unexplored space, that it is intimidating in a way. It was physically draining just to be there experiencing it. Sergey was the only caver that seemed to be unaffected, but of course, those Russian cavers are tough ol' birds anyway.

By the end of the expedition we were all beat, no matter what caves we had been working in. There were just so many caves to be mapped and such a small amount of time to do them. By my recollection we mapped about 28 caves in 10 days, and several of those were quite large.

One of the best finds of the trip occurred on the last day out.

The entire group wanted to spend some time exploring the alpine, in the hopes of discovering a system similar to that in the El Capitan alpine area. For two or three days in a row the weather refused to cooperate, shrouding the peaks in a hazy fog and raining just enough to result in cancellation of the trip. Finally, we decided to go for it, fog or no fog.

We divided into two teams. Amy Russell, Eron Gissberg, Kris Esterson and I began at the southern end of the island, while Steve Lewis, Sergey Levachev, Shunichiro Go and Dan Monteith started closer to camp. The plan was to do a hasty search of the area, not spending too much time on any one cave that we found. By the end of the day we planned to meet somewhere in the middle and walk back to camp together.

Our team started toward the alpine by 8:00 A.M., finding one small cave on the way, (Helmets are for Wusses) which we hurriedly mapped. By noon we were on top of the alpine proper, and working our way toward camp, or so we thought. I'll not lay the blame on any one individual, but the duties of navigation were originally assumed by the one person in our group who was quite accustomed to the use of a compass in the normal course of her duties at the USDA, Forest Service.

In spite of the fact that we spent several hours on the wrong side of the mountain, we still managed to find five or six new entrances and note their locations in plenty of time to meet up with the other group. Along the way (while on the other side of the mountain), we even had the chance to observe a fresh wolf

kill, so recent that the meat was still warm to the touch.

We came out of the alpine wondering what had become of the other team, and as we made our way down through the muskeg we found out. Kris and Eron decided that the muskeg we were traveling through looked like a very likely spot for a cave entrance. Kris is a geology student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and it was his theory that a flat muskeg at the base of a steep limestone peak was the ideal place for karst development.

He was right.

We spread out in a loose line through some high probability area. I honestly don't recall who it was that discovered the packs piled at the entrance, but it was Amy and I who ventured inside to see where the other team was. We had only gone about 20 yards when we encountered Shun on his way out. Right behind Shun was Dan. They had been inside the cave with Steve and Sergey since about an hour after we left them at 7:30 A.M. that morning. Viva Silva

(Long Live the Trees) was the name given that cave, and by midnight that night nearly 1,400 meters of mapped passage were attributed to Viva Silva.

Our team didn't stick around to watch the entrance with Shun and Dan, who were so cold by then (around 6:00 P.M.) that they couldn't handle anymore surveying. They stayed right there and visited us every hour via the VHF radio until Steve and Sergey decided they'd had enough abuse for one day. We went on back to camp and marveled at the other teams endurance as we ate our dinner and they enjoyed a nice hot sauna.

There are just so many wonderful things to say about Heceta that I could go on for hours. It's something you just have to experience for yourself. No amount of words can do it justice. I hope that other cavers have the opportunity to go there with us on another Ketchicave expedition. I know that I'll be there, and I can think of several others who won't miss it either.

Con't from President's Corner page 1

The proposed changes are as follows:

●●●●●●●●

Article IV. Executive Council

a. The Glacier Grotto shall be governed by an Executive Council made up of the following, (all NSS members) elected *annually* by the members:

Change: annually **to** (biennially)

●●●●●●●●

Article V. Elections

The election of officers *for the following year* shall be held in December. Officers who are elected shall take office in the following February, unless otherwise provided by vote of the membership.

Change: for the following year **to** (will be held each odd numbered year)

These changes will be on the ballot that you should all be receiving in December. By holding elections every two years instead of each year we will cut out some of the burden of running this grotto. As one officer recently pointed out "one year is just enough to learn the new job."

I recently received a phone call from a past member of the Glacier Grotto who lives in Fairbanks. He suggested that possibly there should be more than one grotto in this state. This is not a new idea. The reason I am bringing this up is to solicit comments from you the members of this grotto. I personally can see benefits, but also disadvantages. What do you think? Should we have a debate over this issue in the Alaskan Caver? Should we put this out for a vote?

Please let me know what you think.



Marcel LaPerriere used a hammer during camp set-up on Heceta Island.
Photo: Steve Lewis

Continued from page 5

was brief. Then, in 15 to 20 meters we were in a magnificent hall. This had to be the blocked passage to the second cone. It was very dark but as our eyes became used to our feeble lights we saw we were in a T-shaped room with northeast leg of the top pointing to the first cave entrance. The shaft of the "T" was a side passage measured by 10.7 meters wide and at least half that height. It sloped up steeply for over 50 meters and turned out to be the other end of the unexplored lead of the lunch stop.

Out again, our time was nearly gone, but Tad ran up to the Large Ice Field. It was in its collapsed phase. He said he found nothing of note but that an avalanche had already covered one section, leaving one small hole into the darkness which he did not check. (It was later learned that Rich Hall had been there about three week earlier, before the avalanches. He reported a large opening that lead to a huge passage that went up the side of the mountain.

Other observations of the area were that Explorer Glacier Cave (Izumi, 1982, p. 2-6 & cover) was open and visible from the parking lot. It is just up to the left of the lowest "V" of ice and appeared enterable. Also, last summer during a boat ride on Portage Lake another obstruction cave was observed at the toe of the Postage Glacier. This one was above the exposed rock at the terminus, about 5 meters above the lake level, perhaps 3 meters in diameter, and had water coming out. Now, it may be possible to skate or ski over to it. Rich Hall also pointed out this would be a good time to visit the Worthington Glacier (Steven and Stevens, 1983, p.4 & cover), as it is cold there and there has been a rare lack of snow in the Thompson Pass area.

Unfortunately we did not go to Byron equipped to survey and so the above dimensions and sketch were

estimated from memory. The cave is worthy of a more careful survey while it is still available. When you go take survey equipment, plenty of light for those large rooms, and bring back a map. This is a great year for glacier caving.

Izumi, Masataka 1982. Report on investigations of glacier caves in Chugach National Forest, Alaska. The Alaskan Caver 7(4):2-7.

O'Harra, Doug 1990. Ice Caving - Underneath a glacier snowfield in Byron Valley. Anchorage Daily News, We Alaskans November 5, 1989 and reprinted in The Alaskan Caver 10(1):3-11 with Harvey Bosers map on p.9.

Stevens, Paul and Stevens, Lee 1983. Alaskan Caving - an outsider's view. The Alaskan Caver 8(1):2-7.

CAVES OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA

This 14-minute video on the caves at Prince of Wales Island is available from

Marcel LaPerriere
P.O. Box 9062
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Send \$15 plus \$2 for shipping to the Glacier Grotto in care of Marcel.

Also ask about the Glacier Grotto patches. These are \$5 each.

The Alaskan Caver

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