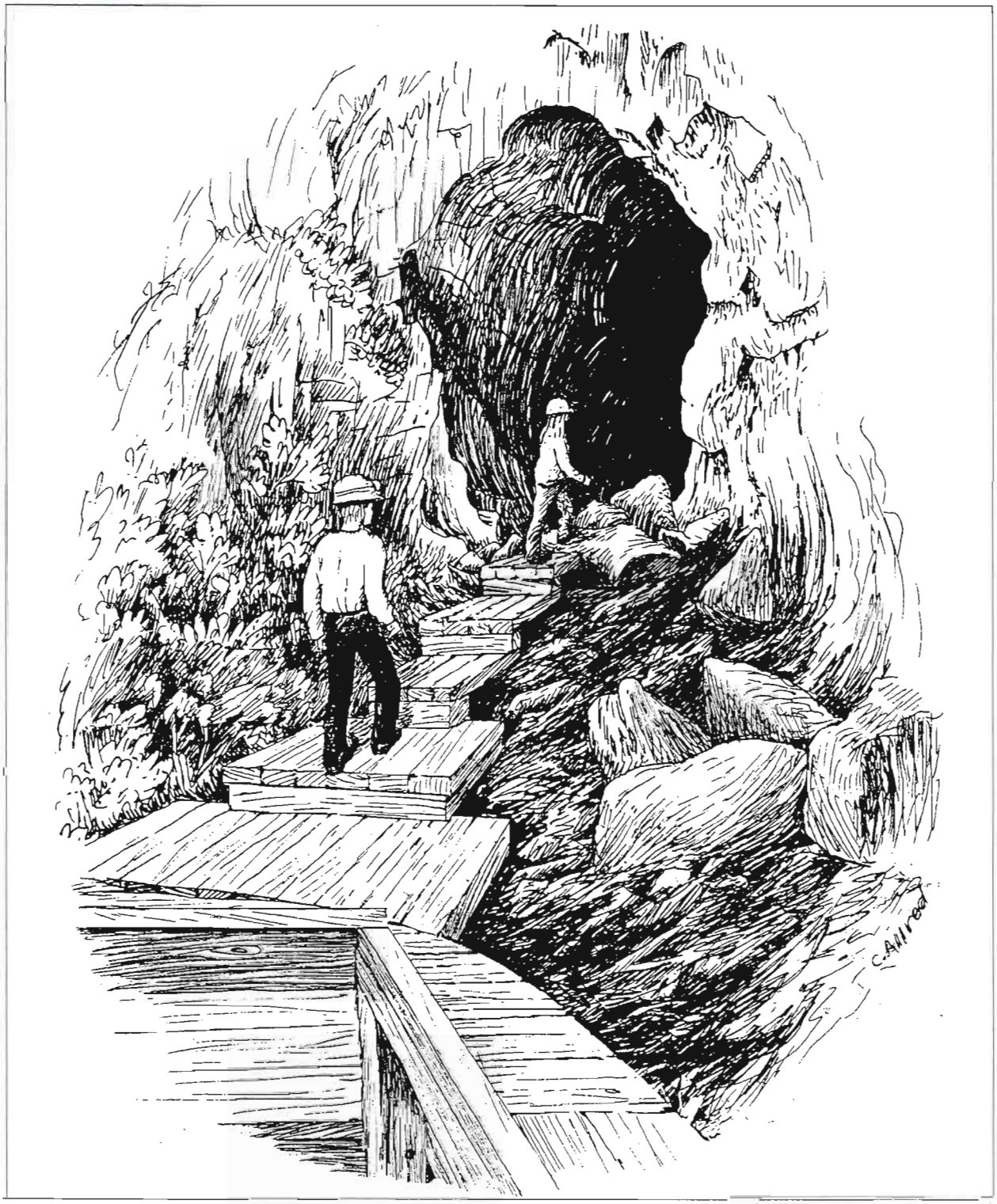
April 1996

Alaskan Caver Alaska Caver

Chuck Pease

The Alaskan Caver



The Alaskan Caver

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Dalene T. Perrigo - Editor

Volume 16 Number 2 April 1996

Table of Contents

Cover Drawing: El Capitan opening from the wooden walk leading up to the cave. Artist: Carlene Allred

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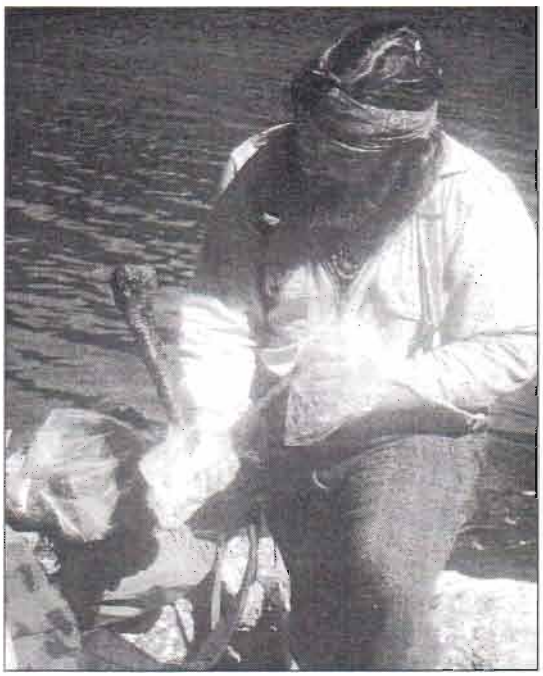
Annual dues are $15 for a single and $20 for a family membership. The Alaskan Caver is included in the membership fee. For an additional $8, six Cavers will be sent by airmail to overseas addresses. Institutional subscriptions are $20 per volume. Send dues to Glacier Grotto Treasurer.

- Anchorage Meetings: Call Jay Rockwell for details. (907)277-7150.
- Ketchikan Meetings: 7 p.m. the first Monday of the month at the Alaska Public Health Service Building, 3054 Fifth Ave., Ketchikan.
- Fairbanks Meetings: Call Steve Lewis for details. (907)479-7257

GG JOURNAL of the GLACIER GROTTO

February 1996

The ALASKAN CAVER



Jim Baichtal, Forest Geologist with Ketchikan Area Tongass National Forest, holds a bear bone found during cave exploration on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska. Photo: Marcel LaPerriere

CALENDAR

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

RECREATIONAL CAVING ON PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND

by Cat Woods
Recreational Planner for the US Forest Service

Prince of Wales Island contains a vast array of ecosystems which include steep forested mountains, U-shaped valleys, streams, lakes, salt water straits and a multitude of caves, sinkholes and underground streams. Practically all of the known caves on Prince of Wales Island are located on the Tongass National Forest and consequently, managed by the US Forest Service at Thorne Bay and Craig. I hesitate to say that caves are being "managed" as I believe, if left alone, caves manage themselves quite nicely. It is the aspects of human behavior that we ultimately try to "manage". Nevertheless, a few of the caves on Prince of Wales Island are being "managed" for recreational use.

Development of caves for recreational use begins with cave inventory and resource evaluation and ends with a strategy for individual cave management. Cave Management techniques are used throughout the Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management. Commonly used techniques include: 1) placing conservation messages in visitor registers, 2) installing interpretive signs to increase visitor appreciation of cave resources or to suggest appropriate caving techniques, 3) distributing brochures or handouts to increase public awareness of caves, 4) installing trails in caves to protect fragile resources, 5) establishing user limits and permit requirements, 6) mandating seasonal closures and/or road closures, 7) installing cave gates, and 8) providing guides to enhance protection of the cave.

Since 1987, the Forest Service has worked with cavers, volunteer groups and scientists to help explore, map, inventory and study caves on Prince of Wales Island. Primary contributors have been members of the Glacier Grotto and the Tongass Cave Project. During the inventory process, the known values of recreation, aesthetic quality, biology, geology/mineralogy, cultural resources, paleontology, and hydrology are described, as well

Continued on page 3

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Marcel LaPerriere

Recently I received a phone call from a past officer of the Grotto. During that conversation he expressed to me that a couple of our members were concerned that I was writing letters representing the membership of the Grotto.

Continued on page 2

Continued. from President's Corner page 1

As the President of this Grotto I believe it is my job to represent the membership as I have been directed by the majority. Unfortunately, I can only represent the views of the majority that I hear from. In other words, if I don't hear from you, I can not represent your views when writing letters, or speaking.

If I don't hear from members I can only assume you are a member of this Grotto because you are interested in cave conservation. Therefore, unless I hear otherwise I will be pushing a strong cave conservation message anytime I am writing a letter. If this is not what the membership wishes; 1) they need to let me know, or 2) they need to elect a different president.

In the past President's Corners I have asked for membership input, but have received very little. If there is anything dealing with caves, karst, caving, cave preservation, etc., that you believe the Grotto should be working on please let me know.

Any organization is only as good as the work its members put into it. During our last election only 1/4th of the membership voted. We didn't even get enough votes to validate the by-law changes, as all changes require a 2/3rds majority vote.

What I am getting at, is if the members want a good solid, effective Grotto we need to work together, and we all need to be active in the Grotto.

Charley Streuli, Acting District Ranger
Thorne Bay Ranger District
Box 19001
Thorne Bay, AK 99919

April 22, 1996

Dear Charley,

On April 15, 1996, I talked by phone with Ron Schoenbek of Alaska State DNR about Roaring Road Cave. Mr. Schoenbek once again stated his position that Alaska would retain ownership of Roaring Road Cave. Mr. Schoenbek also said he had recently talked to Bill Garry, Alaska State Parks Southeast Director about my idea of transferring ownership of the Roaring Road Cave to State Parks. I have not spoken to Mr. Garry, however, according to Mr. Schoenbek, Mr. Garry is not overly interested in adding Roaring Road Cave to the State Parks System. From past conversations with Mr. Garry I believe this is because the state currently has no other state parks on Prince of Wales Island.

The Ketchikan Area State Parks Advisory Board (I am serving my 4th year on the board) recently discussed adding Roaring Road Cave to the state parks system. We unanimously decided to use Roaring Road Cave as a catalyst to motivate us into action. We have decided to contact city governments and other agencies on POW to see how much interest there is in establishing a state park system on POW. If the board finds there is interest in establishing state parks amongst POW residents, the Ketchikan area board will work with them towards that goal. The Ketchikan Area State Parks Advisory Board will reassess Roaring Road Cave after we find out what POW people want.

During our phone conversation Mr. Schoenbek told me that currently the state has no plans for the property that Roaring Road Cave is within. However, Mr. Schoenbek also confirmed by fears that Roaring Road Cave is not safe from future harm from many sources of development. I am sure members of this Grotto would not find any resource development in, on, or around Roaring Road Cave acceptable.

It is still my contention that the USFS was in violation of the law when the ownership of Roaring Road Cave was transferred. It is my sincere hope that some equitable solution to this problem can be easily achieved. I do not believe there is any great urgency in solving this problem. However, as President of this grotto, I would ask that your office continue to look for any solution. Members of this grotto have talked about requesting the Governor's help, and or President Clinton's help. Ideally some way would be found to transfer ownership back to the United States Government, without litigation, or asking high placed politicians for their help.

If the Grotto can be of any assistance to the USFS in solving the Roaring Road Cave problem please let me know.

Thank you.

Marcel LaPerriere

Continued from page 1

as intrinsic hazards. With this information, caves can be classified. Management classes provide direction for public use and safety, and protection for cave resources. Hence, not all caves are managed for public use.

A second classification system, known as the Recreation /opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is used extensively for above-ground recreation management on Forest lands. The spectrum has application to all recreation regardless if it is above or below ground. The ROS is based on three principle components: the available activities, the setting, and the possible experiences. These components include spatial relations such as the size of passages, presence and intensity of fragile cave resources, evidence of human/social interactions and hazards such as pits and flooding.

Possible mixes of combinations of activities, settings, and probable experience opportunities are divided into five cave ROS classes. An entire cave may receive one ROS designation or portions of the cave may receive different class designations due to differing opportunities and settings. These classes include: 1) developed, 2) developed natural, 3) natural, 4) primitive, and 5) protected primitive. ROS classes are identified so that an initial classification can be perpetuated. For example, a cave with a rating of "primitive" would be managed to perpetuate "primitive" or pristine conditions and caves in this class are not developed.

Social encounters with other groups are very rare in "primitive" caves as visitation is very low or regulated/.

EL CAPITAN CAVE

by Cat Woods

Very few of the caves on Prince of Wales have been classified for recreational use or development. Many, if not most, are simply un suitable for the casual recreationist. They may be too small, too difficult to access, too hazardous, or simply, too wet and muddy to attract even the most avid cavers.

One of the exceptions is El Capitan Cave which is located on the north end of Prince of Wales, in the heart of "cave country".

El Capitan Cave has outstanding recreational attributes. Managed for recreational use, it is considered the recreational "show cave of Southeast Alaska". It is the longest known cave in the state with over 11,000 feet of mapped passage.

El Capitan Cave is a large, mazelike system with more than one entrance, numerous side passages, an underground river, many deep pits and tight crawlways, and a well-defined main corridor. Moon milk, fans and draperies, soda straw, flow stones, pop corn, hot fudge sundae, hoo-doos, small crystals, helictites, conulites, stalactites and stalagmites are found within El Capitan Cave. Notable speleogens are splash cups, boxwork and scallops. Undamaged cave formations become more abundant further into the cave. Prehistoric bear claw marks are imprinted on the walls along with hundreds of fossils of various shapes, sizes and origins.

The remains of at least three grizzly bears and rout black bears have been found, as well as remains of red fox, ermine, bat, otter, other small mammals and layers of fish bones. It contains the Alaska Room, a large, majestic chamber deep inside the cave with towering cathedral walls dripping with numerous soda straws and mud hoo-doos covering the floor. There are still some areas of

A visitor to El Capitan Cave needs to be in good physical condition for the climb to the entrance.

Continued from page 3 El Capitan Cave

the cave which have not been mapped.

For management purposes, El Capitan Cave has been divided into four sections with varying classifications and management strategies for each section . Previous visitation and unregulated use resulted in vandalism and degradation of fragile cave formations, particularly in the first several hundred feet. Areas in remote regions, such as the Alaska Room, still remain pristine. In 1993, the Thorne Bay Ranger district installed a gate 150 feet beyond the main entrance of the cave for protection of the remaining pristine portions and protection of visitors from known dangers, such as rapid flooding and deep pits. The gate was designed to allow bats ingress/egress to the cave. Bats have since been noted beyond the gate.

Visitation to the gate is available year round with no restrictions. Nearly 1,000 feet of the most spacious horizontal passage in El Capitan can be visited by a guided tour. The tours are offered from late May to early September. Visitors are led through the gate and pass by deep pits, clear pools, and a variety of speleothems. Cave guides answer questions and provide information about the cave. Currently, there is no fee for the guided tours. Group size is limited to six.

Reservations are highly recommended and may be made by calling or writing the Thorne Bay Ranger District at PO Box 19001, Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919, or phone (907)828-3304. Everyone should bring at least one light source, extra batteries, sturdy foot gear and hard hats or cave helmets.

This year's tours start at the following times: Wednesday: 3 P.M.; Thursday, Friday and Saturday: 8 am., 10 am., noon, 1 PM., 3 PM.: Sunday: 8 am., 10 am. and 1 P.M. Tours take about two hours.

Special use permits are required for all outfitters and guides who utilize El Capitan Cave and are currently limited to the guided portion of the cave. Additionally, a concessions operation for the cave is being considered.

A concessionaire would also require a special use permit.

Cave use restrictions would be specified on the permit and issued only to a highly qualified candidate. Cavers and the public would be consulted prior to development of a concession.

The remaining passages and deep cave zones of El Capitan Cave are temporarily closed pending further resource evaluation and planning. Use limits, group size and permit requirements are yet to be determined. Recreational entrance permits will be required for any portions of the cave which are not currently guided. Research permits and dig permits are required for further exploration and study of the cave.

Access to El Capitan Cave is provided by a 370-step wooden staircase climbing about 300 feet from the parking lot through second growth and unspoiled old-growth forest. The impressive wooden trail was constructed of locally milled Alaska yellow cedar. Visitors should be in good shape in order to enjoy the 1,200 foot trail and walking trip through the unmodified cave passage. A viewing deck at the cave entrance provides an excellent overlook of the salt water through El Capitan Passage and nearby Kosciusko Island.

For many recreationists, the trail provides a unique hiking experience. The surrounding epikarst is outstanding and provides scenic beauty along the trail with distinctive variety in rock formation, line, color and texture combinations.

Visitation beyond this gate in El Capitan Cave is limited to people on guided tours.

Another developed cave site is nearby Cavern Lake Cave. It is located at the outlet of well-known and easily accessible Cavern Lake on the north end of Prince of Wales Island, approximately 15 miles by road east of El Capitan Cave. This cave has been formed by the outflow of Cavern Lake through a low wall of Heceta limestone. Salmon spawning in the outlet creek, known as 108 Creek, migrate through the water filled cave into the lake.

The entrance of the cave is beautiful and unique. There is little speleothem development. The major part of the accessible cave is a very large room with an amazing low ceiling. The room contains a lake of varied depth,. Swimming through the cave is not recommended. Cold water and the possibility of entrapment are serious hazards.

A 300-foot gravel trail leads to the cave. A viewing deck along the trail is located just above a cascading waterfall which is frequently teeming with salmon and black bears. The deck provides an excellent picnic site and viewing area.

El Capitan Cave and Cavern Lake Cave are currently the only caves developed for recreational use but that doesn't mean there aren't other opportunities if you're willing to explore the undeveloped karst areas on your own. For some people, the best recreation experience is simply walking through the karst ecosystem and associated old-growth forests. Many areas are literally honeycombed with sink holes and cave openings which cover vast terrain. Often these places look somewhat like a lunar landscape especially where the epikarst is prominent. Hiking through these areas can be very rewarding as well as extremely challenging.

Each karst area offers a different caving experience and hiking opportunity. Beaver Falls Cave is popular locally and just getting to the cave is worthwhile. Perhaps more interesting than the cave itself is the associated above-ground setting. The trek to the cave begins in a large system of muskegs. It then meanders through a maze of animal trails, more like animal highways, nestled in an old-growth forest and terminates at the cave entrance. During heavy rainfall, huge trees circulate like tiny toothpicks in the raging water of the large insurgence, where flood waters enter the cave system.

Other areas like Sinkhole Lake and River's End offer exciting recreational experiences. At Sinkhole Lake, caves are everywhere. Deep openings and vertical walls such as the ones at Starlight Cave provide for activities ranging from hiking and dispersed camping to climbing and rappelling. River's End is another excellent hiking adventure through old-growth forest with a spectacular view of a stream flowing into the entrance of a large limestone cave. Pits over 100 feet deep are located throughout the forest. Hikers must be alert to these hazards at all times, as some are hidden by brush.

For the more energetic hikers, Calder Mountain and Perue Peak offer the ultimate in alpine karst. These giant limestone monoliths extend from sea level to between 3,000 and 4,000 feet. The panoramic views are breathtaking, the hikes are challenging, and the alpine karst is outrageous!

Recreational caving on Prince of Wales Island includes a wide range of opportunities both above and below ground. There are fully developed sites such as El Capitan Cave and hundreds of places to go for a self-made trip or wild caving experience. The independent adventurer may work harder but the trip is usually well worth it.

The Forest Service is not at liberty to give out cave locations until specific management direction has been identified for that particular cave. Working with the Glacier Grotto and the Tongass Cave Project, the Forest Service is planning to identify several additional caves to which people may be directed. In many situations, caves which have been identified for directed access would have no developments or improvements. However, many wonderful ideas for cave recreation projects could be implemented. Two ideas include: 1) building a boardwalk trail over the muskeg to Beaver Falls Cave, and 2) constructing a dispersed campground along the shores of Sink Hole Lake and building an associated interpretive trail which would pass by many karst features and caves, including Starlight Cave.

An observation deck could be built over the edge of Starlight so that people could safely look into the giant hole below and view the beautiful limestone walls of the cave opening. Many ideas involve building extensive trail systems to alpine karst areas such as Perue Peak and Maggie Mountain. Another suggestion includes building a small karst interpretive facility at El Capitan Cave and a campground. There are many ideas and lots of enthusiasm for more cave recreation but the sad truth is there's not much money in the recreation budget and the future looks fairly bleak. One way to help get projects funded is by signing up as volunteers or contributing money or materials to a project. If you are interested in helping or have ideas which you would like to share, please contact Cat Woods at:

Thorne Bay Ranger District.....907-828-3304
Steve Lewis, President of Tongass Cave Project .....907-479-7257 or
Marcel LaPerriere, President Glacier Grotto ..... 907-225-4094).

Happy caving and may your light shine bright!

NEWSBRIEFS

Cleve-O-Grotto News 41(8) August 1995, p65. Media folks from all over Ohio attended the press conference August 1 at Indian Trails Caverns. The detachable spear point, found at Sheriden Pit, was fashioned by a hunter of the Clovis people and is the oldest human artifact found in Ohio. The exact species of animal from which the antler material was worked into a weapon is as yet unknown, but the dig that was scheduled to end this fall has of possibility of continuing for another year.

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Caves and Caving Issue 68 Summer '95, p19. It seems that eruptions of Icelandic volcanoes may affect what goes on underground in the British Isles. Like trees, speleothems can put on annual bands of growth rings. The bands are caused by seasonal differences in the amount and type of organic acids which are derived from soil overlying the caves and precipitated from the water along with calcite during stalactite formation. A well dated stalagmite from Uamh an Tartair has been shown to have much thicker bands at a time period (c1135BC) when a major Icelandic volcano is thought to have affected the UK.

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The Explorer February 1996, p19. One of the most exciting events of 1995 was a significant new discovery in Hurricane Crawl Cave. Included are several well decorated large rooms in which can be found a four to six-foot diameter shield, a 7-foot stalagmite, helectites, a huge wall of orange curtains and columns, and hundreds of square feet of multicolored flowstone and rimstone.

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The CIG Newsletter 40(3) March 1996, p36. The Indiana Karst Conservancy, Inc. recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. Starting with the modest goals of protecting the hibernating bats in Coon and Grotto caves, the IKC has branched out into numerous cave/karst conservation activities, working with a number of landowners, federal and state agencies, and private organizations.

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Cascade Caver 35(2) February 1996, p12. Fossils discovered within the Oregon Caves were identified as the skull and leg of an extinct ice age jaguar. An expert estimated the jaguar lived 20,40,00 years ago, based on the size of the skull. This jaguar, which became smaller as it evolved and disappeared from North America about 10,000 years ago, weighed from 450-500 pounds

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B.C. Caver 9(6) Nov - Dec 1995, p18. Three caves were recently discovered on Princess Royal Island. The caves are located 120 miles south of Prince Rupert which can best be traveled by float plane, but the walk to the caves from the embarkation point is only about 6 kilometers. For information contact Clive Keen at 960-5621 or keen@unbcc.edu.

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The Hollow Earth News March 1996, p3. It has come to my attention that our grotto should be paying more attention to the issue of liability and the possibility of being taken to court by people that may think we owe them money because of some future caving related accident or whatever. Mark Langenfeld and Dave Luckins have pointed out to me the importance of our group maintaining an incorporated non profit status with the state (this involves sending the Secretary of State an annual fee of $30, plus the completion of a fairly simple form each year). The reason for incorporation is to shield members' assets from lawsuits directed at the grotto as a whole. In general, only the clubs' assets would be up for grabs, not those of the individual members. Without incorporation, the members would be considered equal partners of our organization and equally responsible for grotto debts, including lawsuit settlements. Our incorporation status was recently renewed (after a lapse of three years, due to a mix up) and will be maintained every year as long as I have anything to do with this club.

Incorporation does not prevent individual members from being sued. Mark Langenfeld recommends that every member of the grotto, as well as guests invited on field trips, sign a liability release. These probably won't help you out if you do something really irresponsible that directly leads to someone else's injury, but they do offer a degree of protection never the less. Mark told me he has seen signed liability releases hold up in courts in our state (Wisconsin).

We will soon be presenting the members with a new by-law change to vote on, which will essentially state that one must sign a liability release as a condition of membership. Assuming the measure passes, new people will have to sign a release before they become members and those who are already members will have to sign one before it is time to renew.

People can be irrational and uncompromising when a tragedy occurs. I don't like having to make this a requirement for our members and I don't doubt that some will resent it, but in this sue-happy age, we would be foolish not to at least take some intelligent steps to minimize our risks.

This is for everyone's protection.

BROWN CANYON CAVE
GREEN CANYON CAVE

Prince of Wales Island, AK • Preliminary Report #275
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred
January 18, 1996

DESCRIPTION: Brown Canyon Cave

Formed in Heceta Limestone, the entrance of Brown Canyon Cave was discovered by Mark Fritzke in 1991 but not entered at that time.

The entrance is located 20 feet up the face of a 35-foot high cliff along the side of a scenic ravine which appears to be a former cavern unroofed by erosion or glaciation. Brown Canyon Cave was first entered July 22, 1995, by Pete Smith and Kevin Allred using a rope fixed at the top of the cliff. The entrance is a small crawlway from which a trickle of water dribbles. Heading south and parallel with the ravine, the cave opens up somewhat into a vadose modified, diagonal trending slot with one side branch which soon becomes too tight. Soda straws, popcorn, and moonmilk adorn the walls, and the way becomes too tight in a drafty crack after only 55 feet.

Surveyed height from the entrance is 5.5 feet.

DESCRIPTION: Green Canyon Cave

Green Canyon Cave was discovered and explored for the first 50 feet in 1991 by Mark Fritzke. It was not until 1995 that Pete Smith, Soren Allred, and Kevin Allred returned to further investigate and survey this cave.

Green Canyon is located in the west side of the cliff-walled gully opposite Brown Canyon Cave, about six feet above the gully stream runoff. Although the entrance to the cave is small, the way becomes more spacious inside. Passing a breakdown filled gallery on the right, the main passage, which is vadose modified, lowers to a slightly anastomosing network with a floor of noncarbonate cobbles. Perched banks of unsorted silt, gravel, and cobbles indicate that a stream has partially excavated sediment in the relatively recent past.

Fragile soda straws and moonmilk on the ceilings should be noted and avoided by visitors. After 80 feet, the cave opens up into a room nearly 20 feet high containing spectacular speleothems of soda straws, stalactites, stalagmites, moonmilk, and flowstone. A short, dead-end 18-foot climb extends to the west. Continuing northerly, a 10-foot drop is encountered, which can be passed safely without a rope. The drop was created by boulders jamming into the canyon-like passage with subsequent clastic debris infilling. The passage appears at first to end 30 feet beyond the drop, but a tight, low, and awkward crawlway continues over a pool and beyond for another 70 feet. We dug out a constriction at the very end of the drafty crawl, and entered a small, claustrophobic room containing a trickle of water. Prospects are poor for further continuation.

No invertebrates were noted, but they no doubt exist. Total surveyed passage is 265.9 feet, and the depth is 48.1 feet.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

As with other caves and karst in the same general area (see reports #102 [vol 13 no 5 november 1993] and #103 [vol 13 no 6 december 1993]), the karst and recharge areas of the caves should not be altered by surface activities such as logging or road building. both brown and green canyon caves would not be practical for directed access by the general public because of their constricted and delicate natures.

The Alaskan Cavers

Prices have increased for back issues of The Alaskan Caver.

As of June 1, 1996, each back issue will be $2.50 with the exception of those with fewer than 10 pages.

The price of individual issues may be obtained

Glacier Grotto Librarian Jay Rockwell
2944 Emory Street
Anchorage, AK 99508-4466

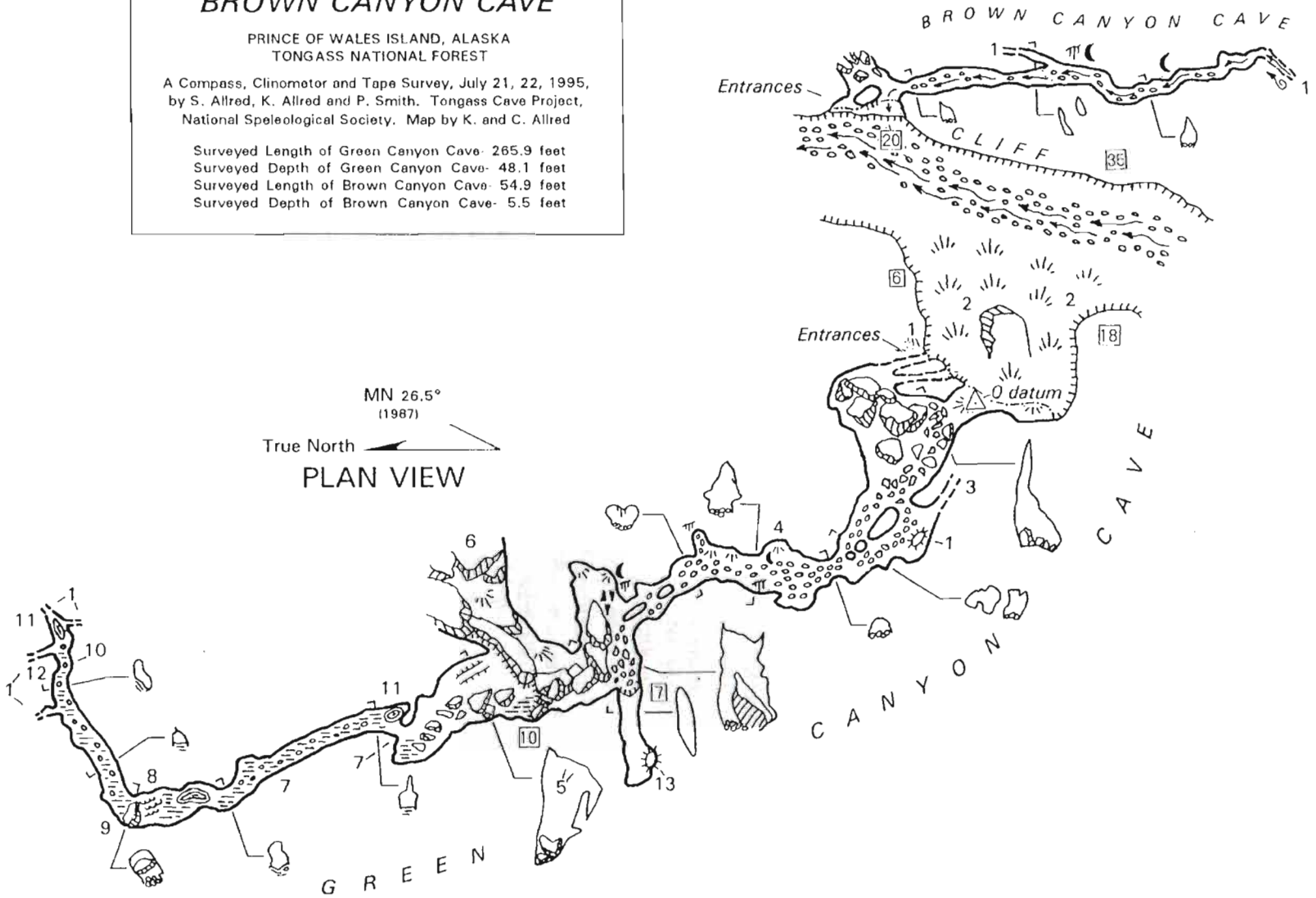
The price of a complete set of The Alaska Caver is also available. Ask Jay for the details. His phone number is 907-277-7150.

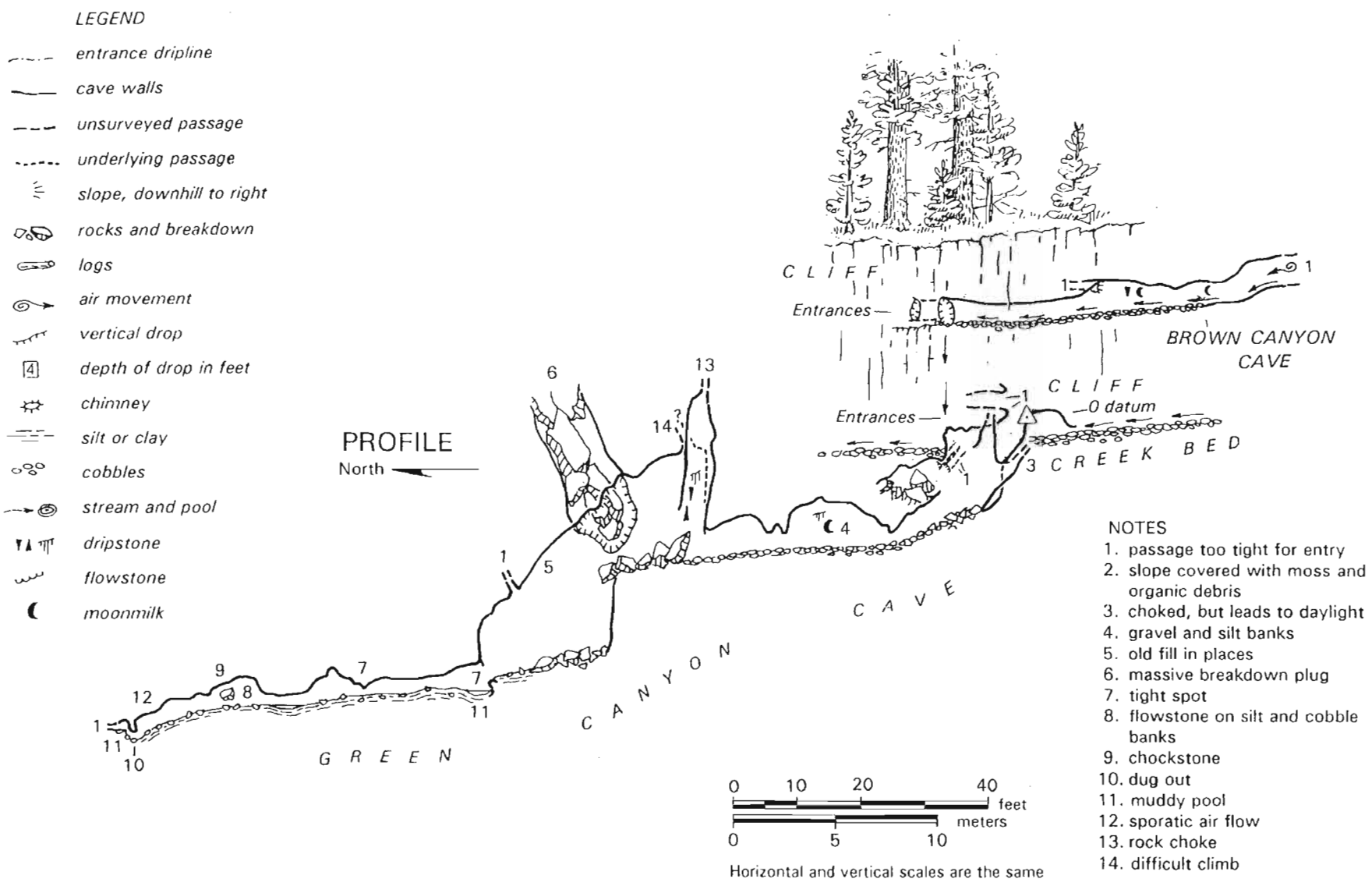
GREEN CANYON CAVE
BROWN CANYON CAVE

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, ALASKA
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

A Compass, Clinometer and Tape Survey, July 21, 22, 1995, by S. Allred, K. Allred and P. Smith. Tongass Cave Project, National Speleological Society. Map by K. and C. Allred

Surveyed Length of Green Canyon Cave- 265.9 feet
Surveyed Depth of Green Canyon Cave- 48.1 feet
Surveyed Length of Brown Canyon Cave- 54.9 feet
Surveyed Depth of Brown Canyon Cave- 5.5 feet




LEGEND
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cave walls
unsurveyed passage
underlying passage
slope, downhill to right
rocks and breakdown
logs
air movement
vertical drop
4 depth of drop in feet
chimney
silt or clay
cobbles
stream and pool
dripstone
flowstone
moonmilk
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North
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BROWN CANYON CAVE
CLIFF
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0 datum
CREEK BED
CAVE
CANYON
GREEN
0 10 20 40 feet
0 5 10 meters
Horizontal and vertical scales are the same
NOTES
1. passage too tight for entry
2. slope covered with moss and organic debris
3. choked, but leads to daylight
4. gravel and silt banks
5. old fill in places
6. massive breakdown plug
7. tight spot
8. flowstone on silt and cobble banks
9. chockstone
10. dug out
11. muddy pool
12. sporatic air flow
13. rock choke
14. difficult climb

JOINT VENTURE

Prince of Wales Island, AK • Preliminsty Report
Tongass Cave Project • National Speological Society

by Steve Lewis
January 15, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Joint Venture Cave is a deep fissure cave located in the highly developed karst near Bridal Veil Cave. An inconspicuous surface slot drops nearly 40 meters to a narrow rock stream ledge before plummeting another 25 meters to steeply sloping breakdown and another 6 meter drop. The initial drop is snug in places, although always quite wide. Several portions of the fissure were very wide but none of these extensions contained negotiable passage. At the first ledge, The Buck Stops Here Ledge, the skull of a 3-point buck was discovered. Slings were used to redirect and rebelay the rope for the second drop. There is extreme rockfall danger - not so much because of loose rock but because the cave offers very few safe hiding places. The remaining skeleton of the deer was noted amidst the rubble on the floor of the And Here Room. Slings were used to anchor a 25-meter rope for the final drop, which ended in a too tight, muddy stream channel in the Capitalist Break Down Room.

GEOLOGY / SPELEOGENESIS / HYDROLOGY:

Joint Venture Cave is a fine example of deep vertical passage formed by water films flowing along the walls of a joint. Although the cave takes sufficient water at times to back up (muddy lower level), this laminar flow has been the primary mode of speleogenesis. There were no speleothems noted in the cave except some soft brown "organic flowstone".

BIOLOGY / PALEONTOLOGY:

No cave adapted organisms were noted during two survey trips. The bones of one deer were all the remains noted, although the cave appears to be an ideal trap.

RECREATIONAL / AESTHETIC VALUES:

This cave is a challenging and exciting vertical trip for those properly prepared. It is part of a dramatic and well-developed karst/forest ecosystem with great aesthetic and recreational value.

RIGGING NEEDS:

Cavers will need 75 meters of rope (left 1 meter excess) for first drop, with directionals at Buck Stops Here Ledge. A 25-meter rope and slings were used for the final drop. A directional is necessary at the surface as well to avoid chafing and rock fall.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Joint Venture Cave could be a limited access cave for the highly proficient vertical caver, capable of dealing with cold temperatures and cognizant of rockfall hazards. The environs of the cave deserve complete protection as part of one of the best developed karst forestlands on Prince of Wales Island.

YOUNG BUCK'S DEMISE

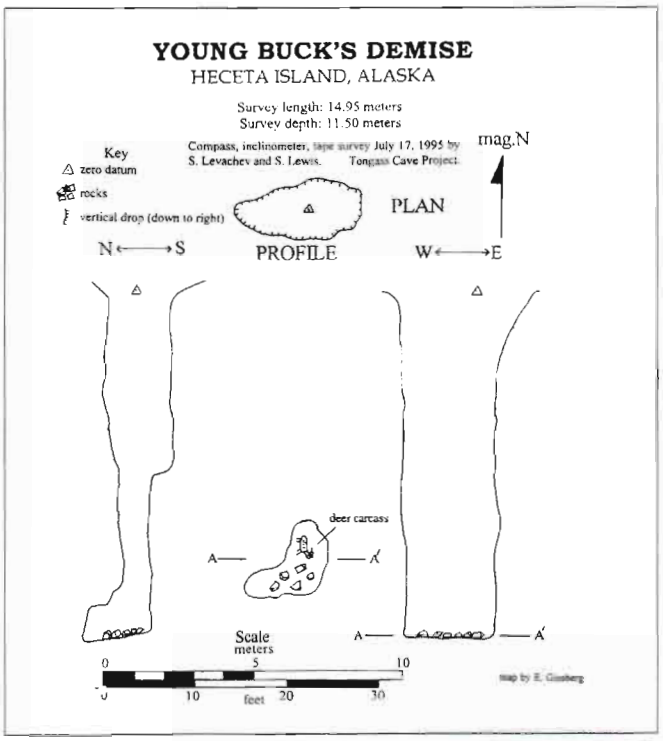
Heceta Island, AK • Preliminary Report #
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society
by Steve Lewis
January 15, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Young Buck's Demise is an 11 meter deep pit located in low volume old-growth just off a muskeg. There were no speleothems noted during the very quick survey. The cave takes water during rains and drains out through the breakdown covered floor. A very rotten and smelly dead deer at the bottom made an extensive inventory unpleasant. No evidence of biological or cultural resources were noted in a rapid survey.

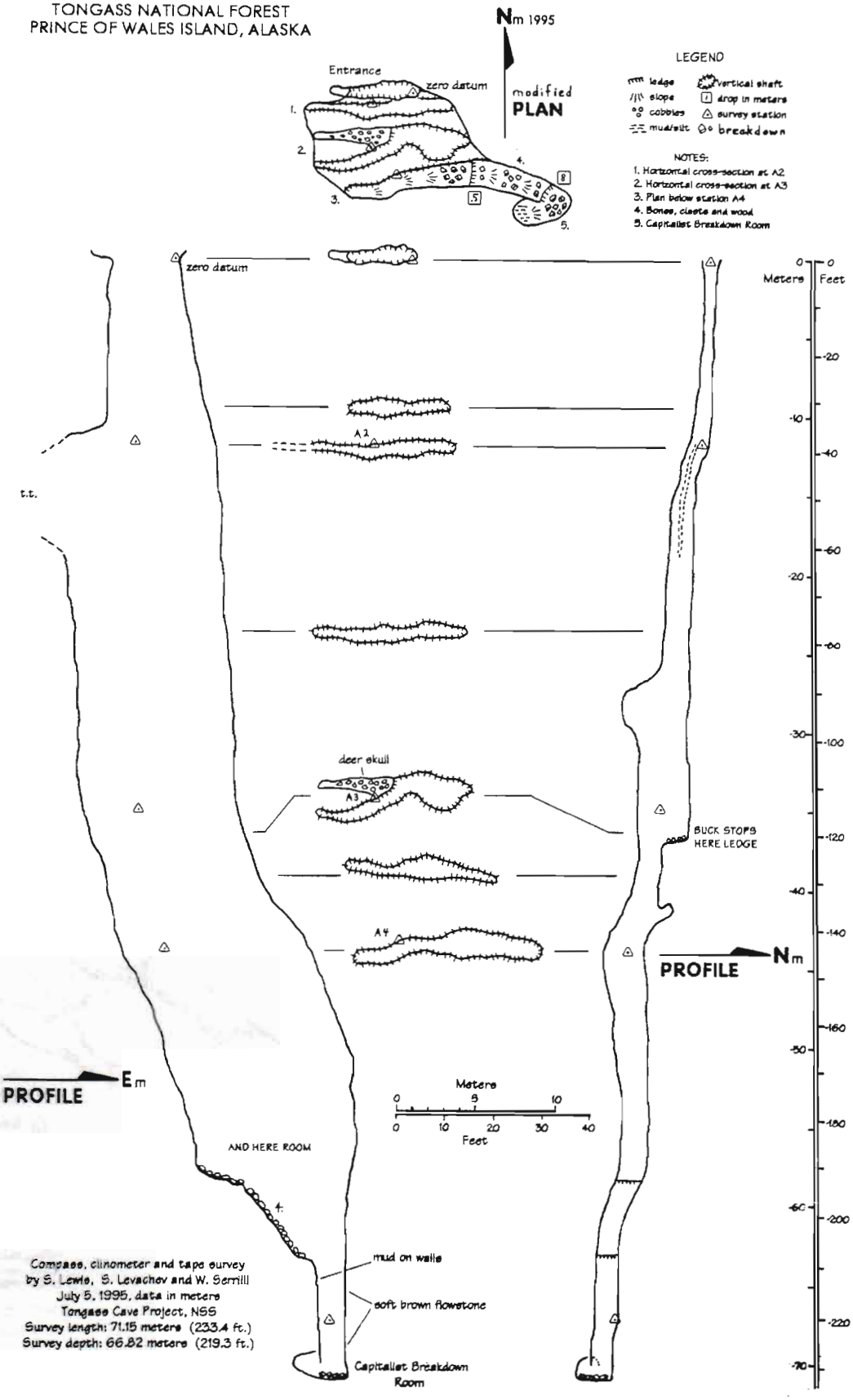
MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

A 20 meter rope is necessary for exploration of Young Buck's Demise. The cave is suitable for directed access for vertically proficient cavers.



JOINT VENTURE CAVE

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, ALASKA



Compass, clinometer and tape survey
by S. Lewis, S. Levachov and W. Serrill
July 5, 1995, data in meters
Tongass Cave Project, NSS
Survey length: 71.15 meters (233.4 ft.)
Survey depth: 66.82 meters (219.3 ft.)

BROKEN PROMISE PIT

Kuiu Island, AK • Preliminary Report #S2
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Pete Smith
January 18, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Broken Promise Cave was formed in Silurian Limestone near a contact with Quaternary and Tertiary rocks to the east. The cave was visited by Everett Kissinger (USFS soil scientist), Pete Smith, David Love, and Rob Knotts on August 8, 1995.

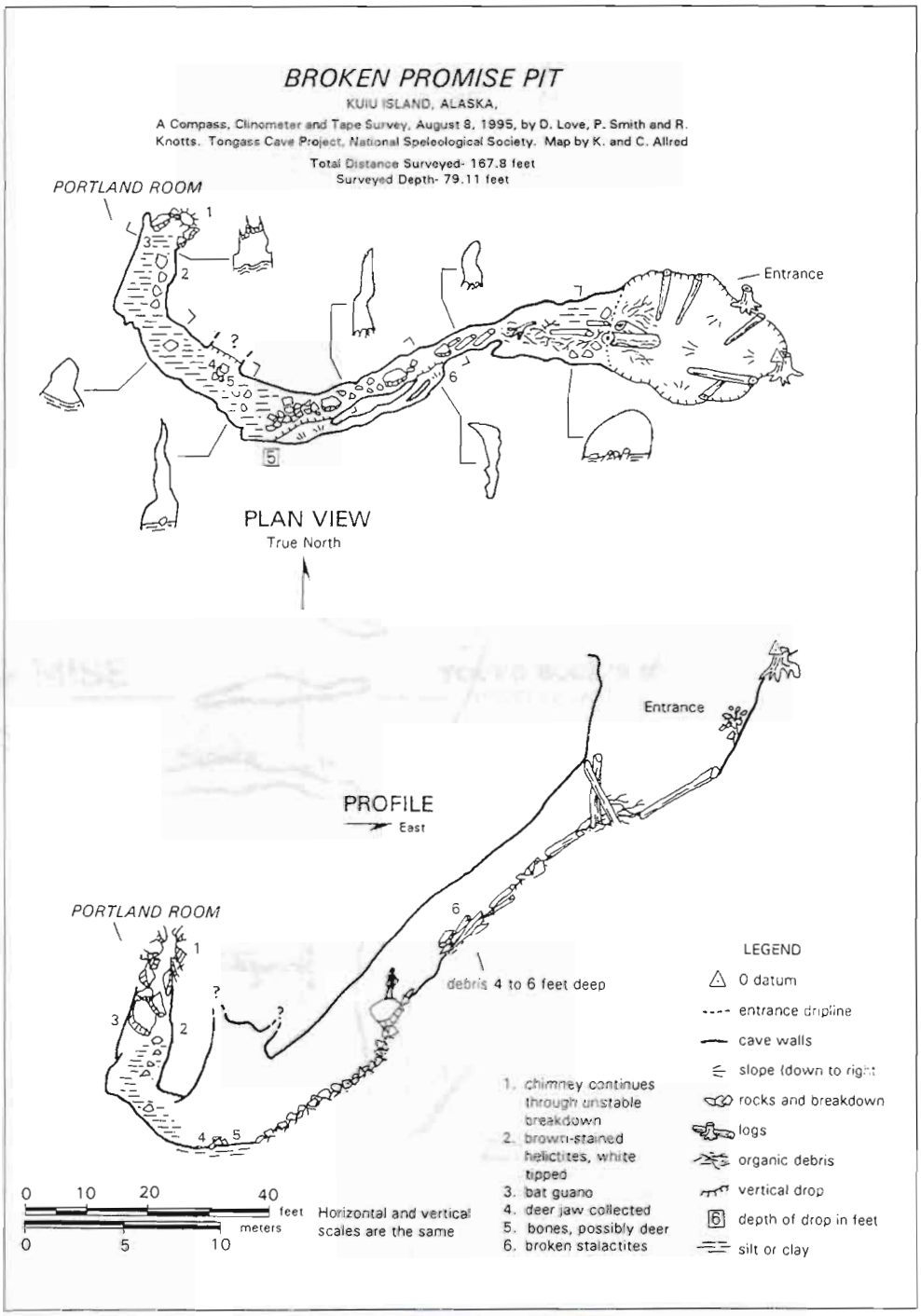
The entrance to this cave is located in a sink in a clearcut. There is a substantial amount of logging slash in the entrance which is being gradually fed into the cave.

The entrance to this cave is a 40-foot down-climb. The walls and floor are covered with silt, showing evidence of recent flooding of this cave system.

There is a deer skeleton on the bottom of the main room, of which part of the jaw was taken for carbon dating. The next room has numerous fine helictites, all of which are covered with silt from flooding. The massive breakdown in this room precludes further exploration in this area. Bats have left significant amounts of guano in this room, indicating a hibernation site.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This cave could prove useful in monitoring logging impacts to the underground. Also the animal remains could shed light on prehistoric events. For these reasons we classify this cave as limited access.

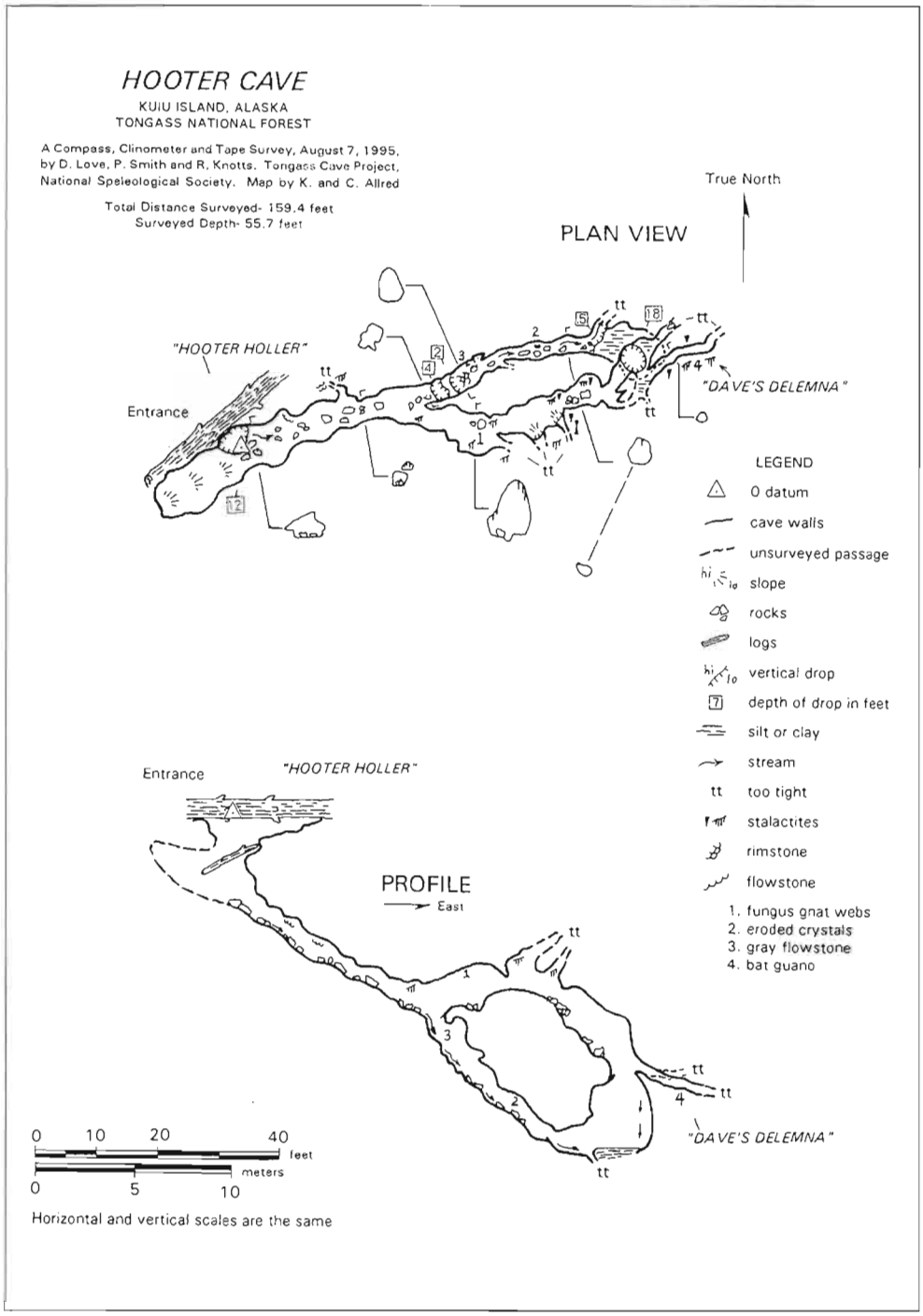


HOOTER CAVE

Kuiu Island, AK • Preliminary Report #S6
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Pete Smith
January 18, 1996

DESCRIPTION:
Hooter Cave was visited by USFS soil scientist, Everett Kissinger and Tongass Cave Project members Pete Smith, David Love, and Rob Knotts on August 7, 1995. The entrance to this cave is located in old growth forest close to the edge of a recently harvested unit. There are several wind-borne trees around this cave including two directly over the cave entrance.



Everett reported that the Hooter Cave entrance is the first depression in a line of depressions located along a contact. The cave is located in heavily fractured Silurian limestone and is of past and present vadose development. It contains calcite crystals, gray flowstone, moonmilk, stalactites, and soda straws which make moving around difficult without causing damage.

Bat guano and fungus gnats show active biological use and the glacial sediments could have prehistoric geological value.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:
It is recommended that the cave be classified as restricted access due to its fragile nature. If the fallen trees across the entrance are removed, it is very probable that the cave will be heavily impacted by sedimentation and other factors, therefore the surface should be left as is.

SALMONBERRY CAVE

Prince of Wales Island, AK • Preliminary Report #277
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Carlene and Kevin Allred
January 18, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Formed in Heceta (Silurian) Limestone, Salmonberry Cave was discovered by Amy Russell of the US Forest Service. It lies beneath an extensive 30-year-old clear-cut near Starlight Cave approximately 200 feet from a logging road. A narrow karst canyon of unknown length, running from northeast to southwest drains into the cave. The entrance sink contains logging slash and takes in a small stream.,

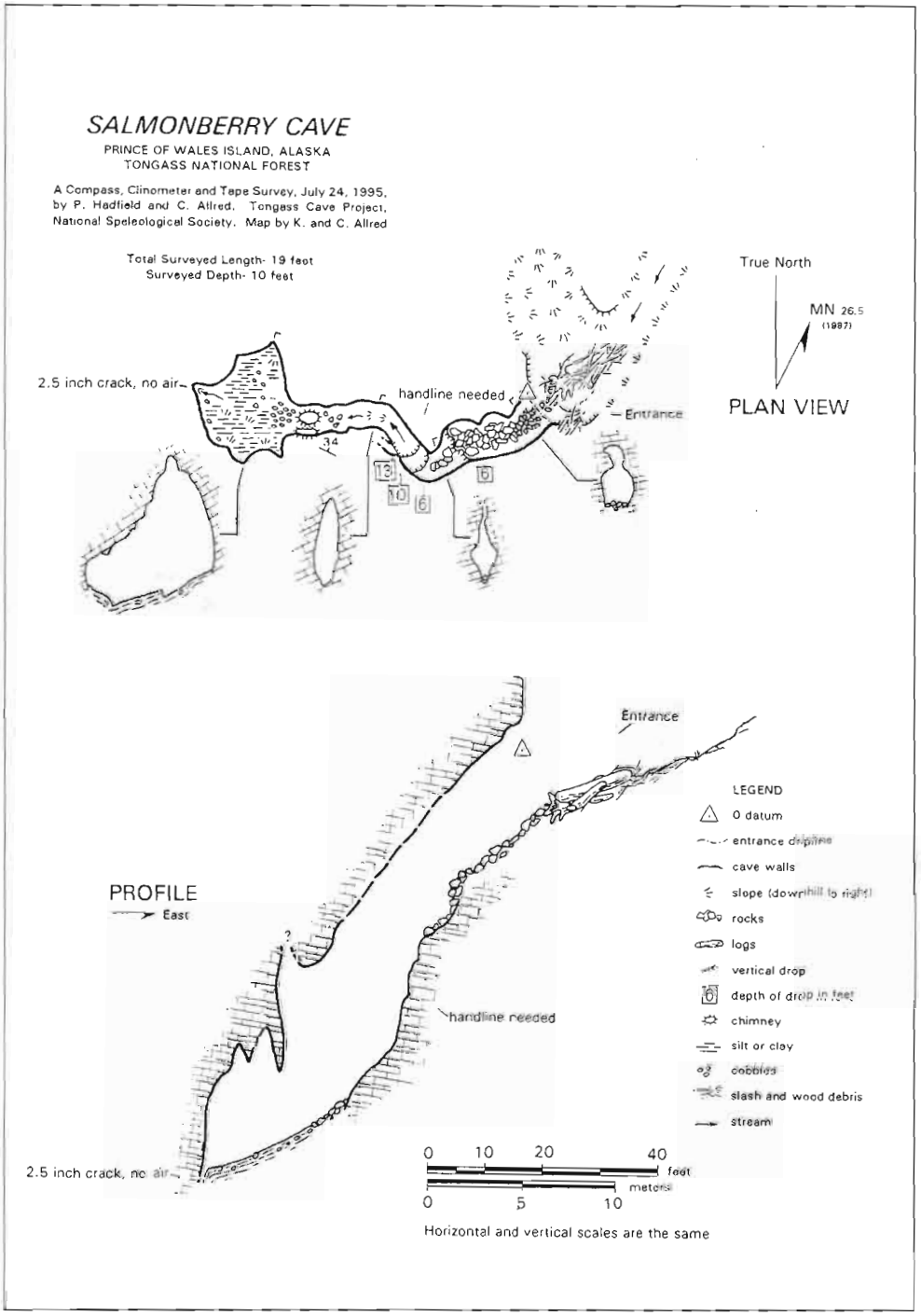
By following the winding main passage down a slope of rock rubble, several short drops are encountered, and require a handline. The cave ends in a spacious gallery 18 by 20 feet wide and 20 feet high. The room contains various sediments on the floor and includes a bank of varves. The streamlet disappears into a 2.5 inch wide fissure in the floor where the sediment fill has not completely sealed the passage.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

There has already been significant negative impact to this and other nearby caves from logging and road building activities. No more logging should be allowed here to protect the remaining hydrologic, biologic, an geologic ecosystems.

Salmonberry Cave may provide opportunity for limited recreation, since it is relatively clean, spacious and easily accessible from the road. However, since the sloping rock floor just inside the entrance has not yet been stabilized, care must be taken when entering.

The varve bank (a glacial deposit) inside provides a convenient opportunity for study since it is in such an accessible cave.



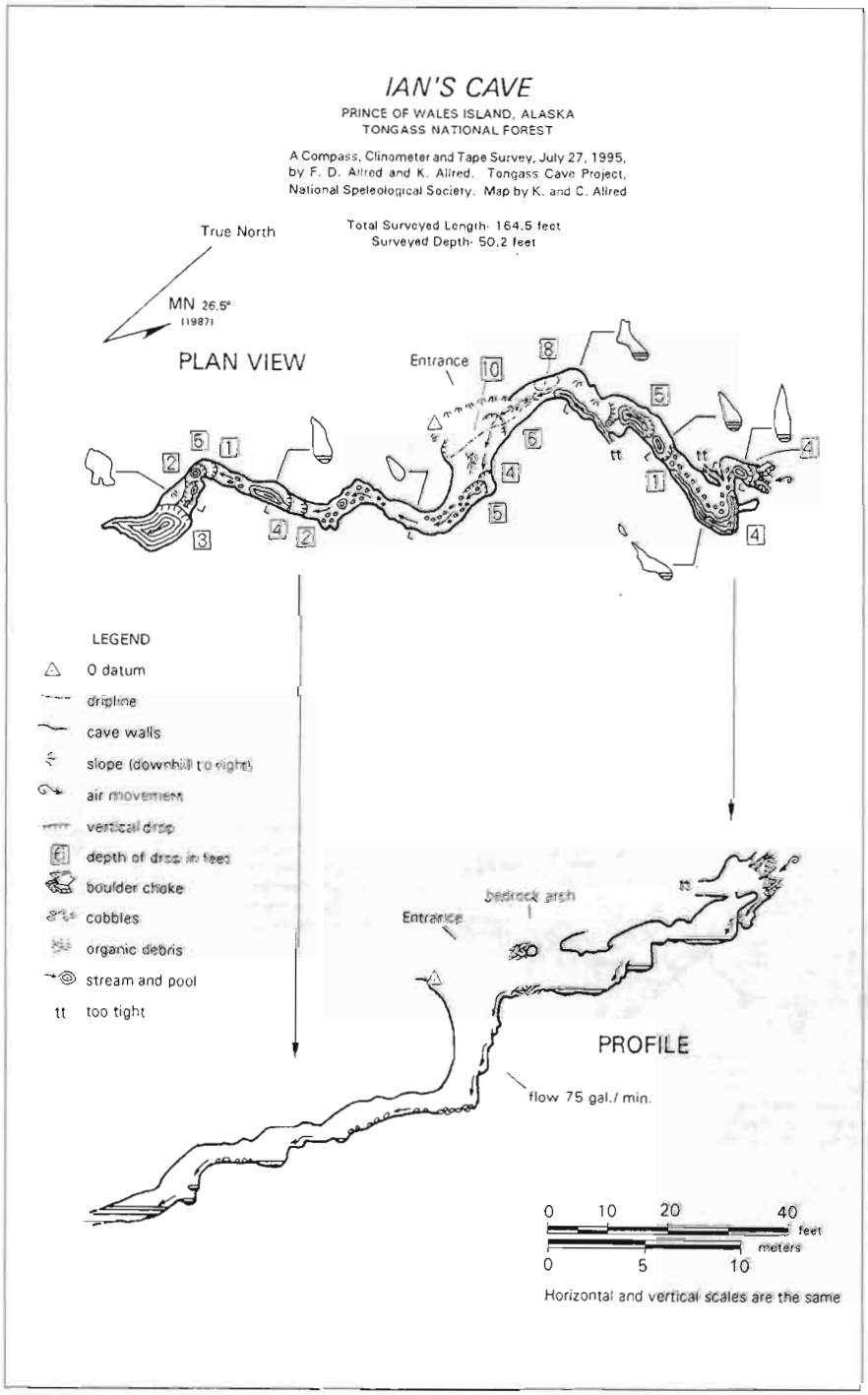
IAN'S CAVE

Prince of Wales Island, AK • Preliminary Report #276
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Kevin Allred
January 18, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Ian's Cave was discovered by David Klinger in 1994, and is named after his grandson. It was later surveyed by Flint and Kevin Allred on July 27, 1995. The cave is one of several in a string up a steep Heceta marble hillside in old growth forest just west of El Capitan Creek. Unfortunately, the area is presently being considered by the US Forest Service as a clear-cut. The caves are listed as follows starting from the top known one: 1) Annie's Cave, 2) Martin's Cave, 3) Kitsie Pit, 4) Ian's Cave and karst window, and 5) Wood's Cat Cave and karst window.



Some deposits of popcorn in Ian's Cave, were promoted by strong air currents, along with minor speleothem development. We saw no invertebrates, but they are probably present.

Ian's Cave is entered through a 10-foot deep karst window. Accessible passage can be followed in both directions. Total passage surveyed is 164.5 feet with a depth of 50.2 feet. During the survey, the stream flow was estimated at 75 g/min. The entire cave can be traversed without ropes or handlines, however, cavers should expect to get wet, and drysuits or wetsuits are recommended.

Going in an upstream direction, a vadose streamway is mostly walking passage, but crawling is necessary in a few places. Floor fill is noncarbonate cobbles and limestone fragments. Several small pools are present. The stream issues from a boulder choke with a strong breeze blowing out.Downstream, the majority of the cave is also a vadose canyon with several short waterfalls up to 5 feet high into plunge pools. The cave ends in a sump.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This well drained marble hillside was originally thought to be noncarbonate until David's discovery. The hill is susceptible to hydrologic and biologic damage from some surface activities. We strongly recommend that this karsted slope not be harvested for timber, and no road building occur. The area is valuable as a recreational caving area with the aesthetic old growth forest left in place. These caves are recommended to those prepared both vertically and with proper clothing.

FULL OF BALONEY CAVE

Suemez Island, AK • Preliminary Report #252
Tongass Cave Project • National Speleological Society

by Nick Olmsted
January 15, 1996

DESCRIPTION:

Full of Baloney Cave is surrounded by clear-cut. The sinkhole entrance leads to a large walking passage. Speleothems are present, including soda straws, stalactites, flowstone and draperies. The gradual incline of the main passage ends in several tight leads. A side passage mid way into the cave end in several tight leads. A side passage mid way into the cave goes up to two more tight leads. There was evidence of people and dog use, i.e. footprints, in the cave and on some formations. No rope is needed in the cave. Surveyed length is 50.66 meters (166.2 feet), and depth is 24.57 meters (80.6 feet).

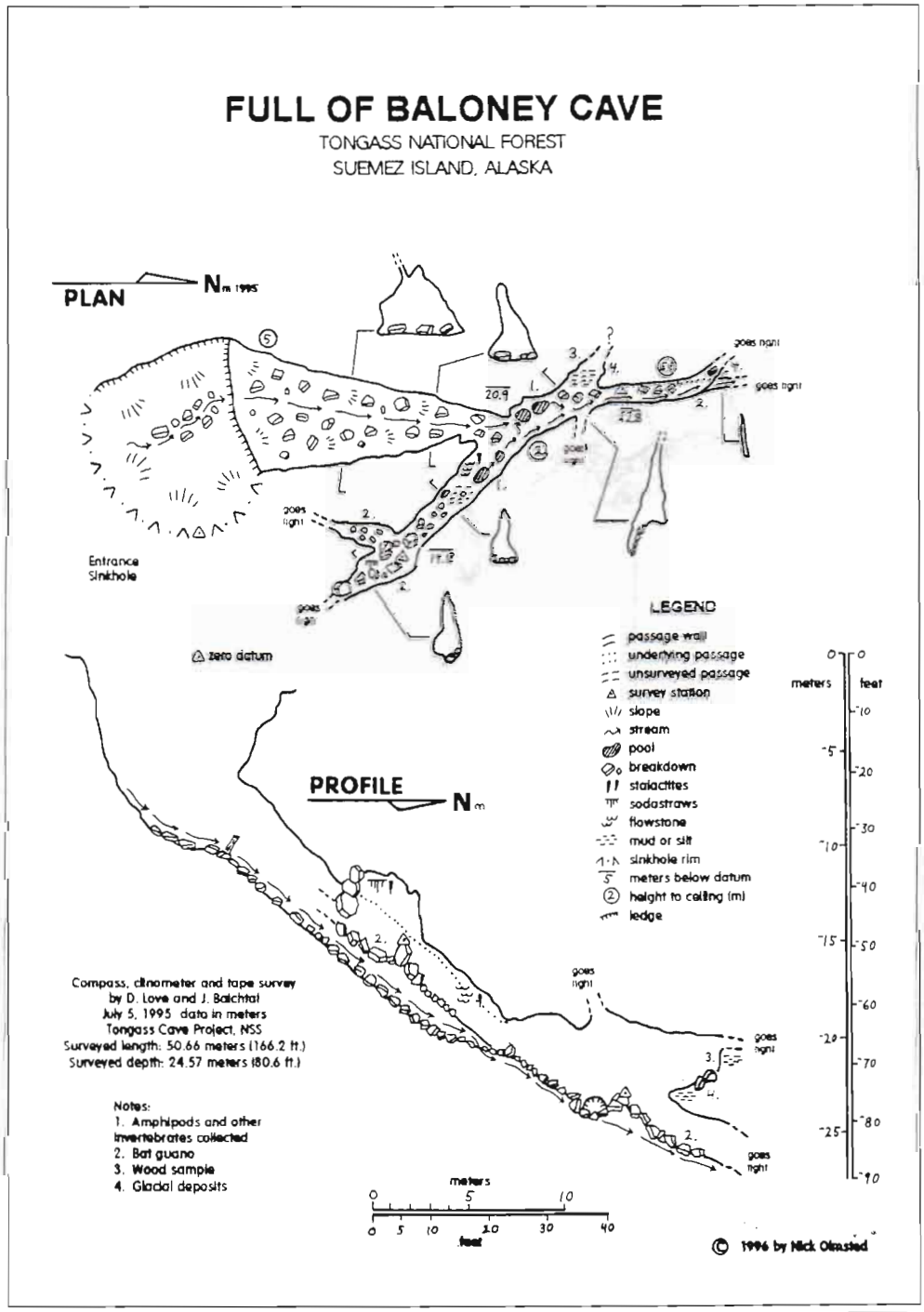
GEOLOGY:

An active stream along a fault is intersected by the entrance passage. Glacial sediments and mud are found in some sections of the cave. Fragments of wood in sediments were collected for dating. Active speleogenisis is occurring.

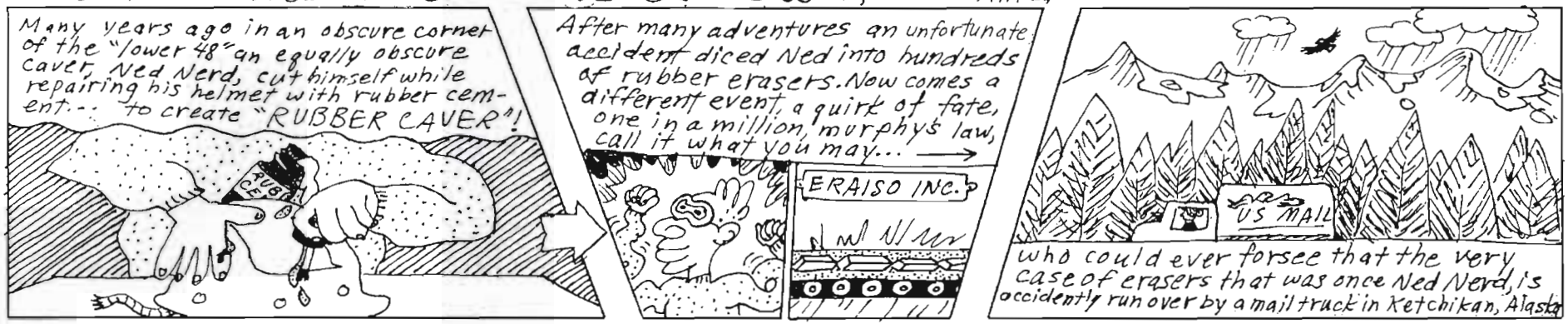
BIOLOGY:

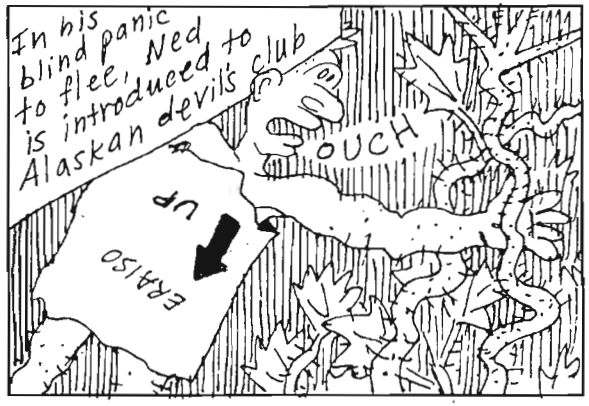
Substantial quantities of bat guano indicate relatively heavy use. This cave probably provides important winter shelter for bats. Numerous aquatic invertebrates were noted and samples collected for identification by Kent Carlson. These samples are the first invertebrates collected from a cave on Suemez Island.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: The existing buffer at the entrance of Full of Baloney Cave is too small, and future problems with wind throw are likely. Public access to this cave should be limited to prevent disturbance of bats and invertebrates, and to protect fragile speleothems.



The Adventures of RUBBER CAVER by K. & C. Allred





TO be continued

TREASURES OF THE TONGASS

The CAVES OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA

A dramatic large screen multi-image production and soundscape

The Caves of Southeast Alaska opened in late spring to rave reviews from speleologists and interested fans in Alaska.

After a showing in Ketchikan, it was taken to other Southeast Alaska towns before going to Fairbanks and Anchorage. It is now available for viewing at other locations in and out of Alaska.

This dramatic multimedia slide production introduces the audience to the breathtaking beauty and mystery of Southeast's underground. With the sounds of dripping water, water rushing along an underground stream and music filling the auditorium, viewers watch the big screen as scenes change from cave paintings to big rooms and speleothems to bear bones dating to 45,000 years before the present. Although the presentation stresses visual impressions with accompanying sounds and music, the human element is used for explanations of cave phenomena and the people who formerly used them and those who are exploring them today.

In the past few years over 500 caves have been discovered in the rainforest of Southeast Alaska. Yet, this is considered just the "tip of the iceberg" as thousands more are believed to exist in the area. Explorers have located caves high in the alpine, deep in the forests, on the plateaus and along the seacoast. Some consist of a single pit while others like El Capitan Cave wind for miles under the forest and hills of Prince of Wales Island.

Cave experts from around the world deem Alaska's caves to have national as well as international significance. Some archeologists associated with the caves say these caves may hold secrets to the earliest peopling of the Americas. Some caves show evidence of human activities in the distant past.

Producer and Glacier Grotto Education Chair, Ward Serrill of Juneau and his team spent last summer photographing the caves and recording sounds of the underground. The soundtrack features soundscape works by Fairbanks composer John Luther Adams, interviews with cavers, scientists, and Native Alaskan elders, and music recorded in the caves by Seattle composer Ed Hartman. In all, 16 artists and musicians from Alaska and the Lower 48 have had a hand in the project.

The production was sponsored by the University Southeast in Ketchikan,, Ketchikan Arts and Humanities Council and the Tongass Conservation Society. Major funding was provided through the University of Alaska Natural Resources and, the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Bullitt Foundation. the National Endowment for the Arts. On the Boards, Holland American Westours, and Taquan Air.

For further information on this production, contact Ward Serrill, PO Box 22112, Juneau, AK 99802. His telephone number is (907)463-4291.

The Alaskan Caver
1921 Congress Circle, Apt. B
Anchorage, AK 99507

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