

April 2008

Alaskan Caver, Volume 28, No. 2, April 2008

Carlene Allred

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Allred, Carlene, "Alaskan Caver, Volume 28, No. 2, April 2008" (2008). *Alaskan Caver*. 105.
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THE ALASKAN CAVER



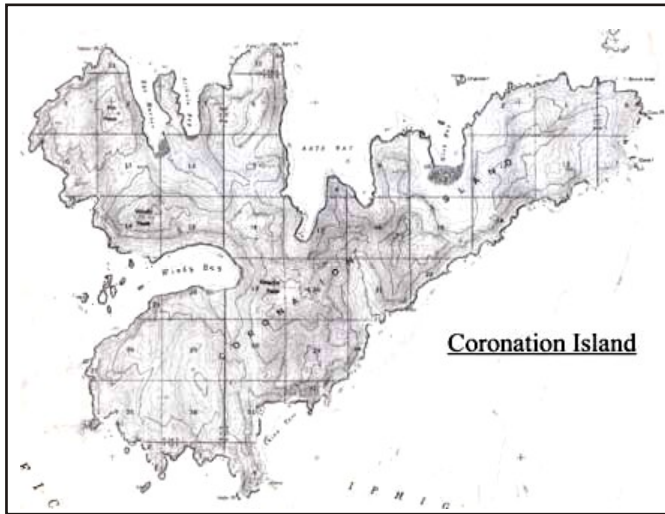
Volume 28, Number 2

April, 2008

CORONATION ISLAND 2007

By David Love

In August of 2007, cavers Steve Lewis, Dan Monteith and David Love assisted Tim Heaton (University of South Dakota) and Fred Grady (Smithsonian) on their return trip to Coronation island to continue discovery and exploration of caves containing paleontological resources.



8/10/07

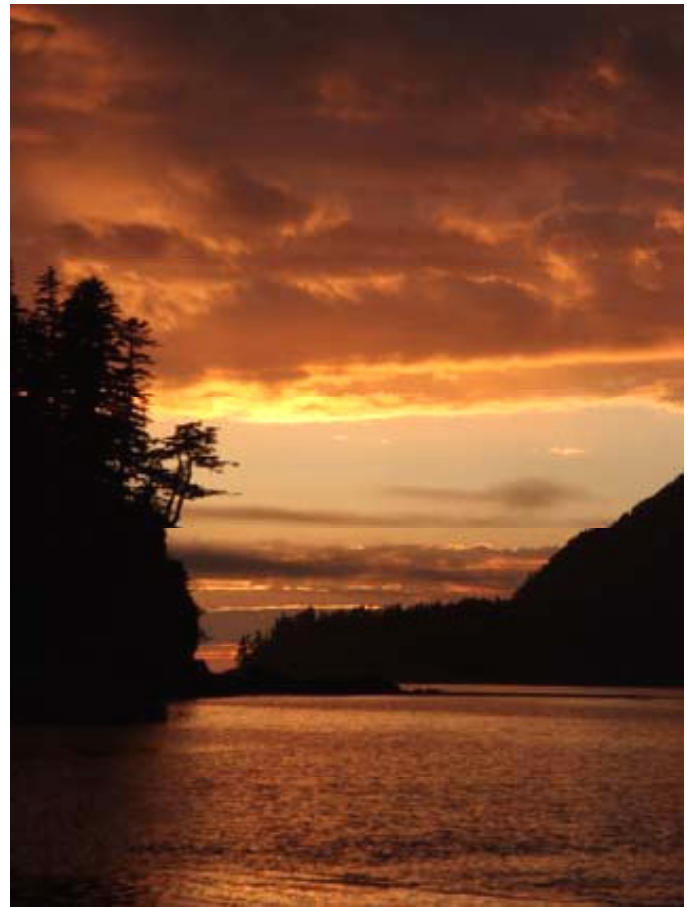
Alaska Airlines flight southbound to Ketchikan for Dan Monteith and I, where we met Steve Lewis and piled all of our gear into Kevin Allred's compact car for the fender grinding trip up the hill to his house. Tim and Fred had come in the day previous. We all waited for the USFS/Taquan Air flight to Coronation Island. Fog finally cleared to a beautiful, sunny day. We made a stop enroute at Hollis to pick up cook gear and a USFS radio from Jim Baichtal (which we discovered later didn't have enough batteries and couldn't hit any USFS



Southern tip of Coronation Island

repeaters unless we were on the very top of Needle Peak) then flew over half the Ketchikan and Craig seine fleet making their morning sets. We had excellent weather for the hour-long flight to Coronation island, where we landed in Windy Bay.

Set up camp on the west shore of the creek using some supplies left over from a previous caving trip. Good water, good camping spots, dry day, so we were able to set camp while all was dry. Great way to start the trip. Red sky that night, sunset delight.



Windy Bay Sunset

8/11/07

Fred, Tim, Dan, Steve and I hiked to Phreada's Phreatic cave at the base of Needle Peak just at alpine. Tim and Fred dropped into the cave to dig a test pit. Could have used snow shovels to move the snow pile out of the way so that they could reach the more productive sediment at the bottom of the entrance drop. Dan, Steve and I hiked north to discover "Patience Pit" (17.5 m deep vertical pit) named for the patience we all exhibited in dropping the first pit Windy Bay Sunset of (continues on page 4)

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the trip. Once Steve dropped the pit, he discovered he had forgotten the instruments, an ascender, the notebook..... The next pit we named "Ha Shagoon", in honor of Jennifer Griffin. I just couldn't get her out of my mind, ever since we returned to Coronation island. The last time I was on this island she had just had brain surgery and was recovering at her sister's in Colorado Springs. She insisted she was in good care and that I go caving, as opportunities to go to Coronation do not come often, and I would be back soon enough. Six months after her surgery she passed away. "Ha Shagoon" in Tlinget means something like, "those who have gone before, or our ancestors". Here's to your memory, Jennifer. "Ha Shagoon" was a vertical pit (24 m deep) terminating in a small dome beyond an overhead bridge. Fine sediments holding the bones of at least 4 deer were found in the back of the cave.

8/12/07

Tim, Dan, Steve and I returned to Phreada's Phreatic cave. Fred stayed in camp to wash sediments carried down the mountain yesterday. Tim continued digging his test pit in Phreada Phreatic while Steve, Dan, and I continued our ridgewalk to look for caves.



Steve Lewis in "DosYDoes"

We found 18' Pit (6 m deep), "Dos Y Does Cave" (52 m total length) and "Mucus Fucus Cave" (estimated to be about 22 m in length). The last two had deer bones in them, which appeared to be everywhere, in every cave, cliff side and karst depression we looked at. "Dos Y Does" was a small horizontal cave, with deer bones scattered on top of cobble-sized breakdown. Why didn't they just walk out? Were they exhausted? Was the entrance buried in snow? It was a long day of hiking and we returned to camp tired but satisfied with the days' efforts.



Tim Heaton at "Three Blind Mice" pit

8/13/07

Dan, Steve and I hiked back up the mountain to Phreada's Phreatic cave to help Tim fill in the 1.5 m deep test pit he had dug. Only some deer, rodent and shrew bones were found. We picked up the remaining gear and hiked down to "Unfinished Pit" just at the base of a cliff face under Needle Peak, which turned out to be about 15.7 m deep with a tight squeeze below and beyond a lot of deer bone. Hiking further south along the bottom of the cliffs, we passed "Foggy Bottom cave" mapped in 2005, now filled with melting snow, and discovered "Three Blind Mice cave". Directly at the base of the cliff and nestled in shrubby mountain hemlock, this 17 m deep drop down a clean, fairly smooth pit terminating in a breakdown pile within a large room formed by the dissolution of the carbonate rock along an igneous dike. The walls of this larger room had delaminated in a concentric pattern around the bottom of the entrance sink. The bones of at least 5 deer were scattered along the south wall (i.e.- Bambi's Last Reunion) and the bones of a family of 3 mice in one corner of this large room (Three Blind Mice) provided the inspiration for the name of this cave. Back on the surface, the same igneous dike seen on the eastern,

(continues on page 5)

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back wall of the cave continued along the surface, making a flat trail along this ledge leading to the main deer trail down to base camp at the creek in Windy Bay.

8/14/07

The entire group decided to survey to the west of base camp in Windy Bay. Today we rediscovered several caves. We surveyed "CoroKleix Cave" today. Discovered in 2001 by Steve Lewis, this vertical pit, about 5 m deep and 13 m long, was never surveyed.



"Lost Cave" entrance drop

The exception rather than the rule, no deer bones were found. We also re-discovered and surveyed "Lost Cave" (34.5 m depth) which was discovered in 2003 by Steve Lewis and Jed and Kina Smith. After spending an hour clearing loose rock at the base of the entrance drop, setting webbing for a redirection around the first large boulder, rigging a rebelay above the second drop we finally began sketching these first two drops. Steve and Dan led the rappel into the slot canyon below which appears to be formed along a fault line which dissolved away leaving a half-moon shaped room below. About 9 m off the bottom of the floor, to the right of the main survey direction we found a small room full of stalactites, flowstone, cave bacon and soda straws that were two feet long. This void has been in existence for a significant period of time in order to form these formations, they being out of the way of the obvious

rockfall. The walls and passage in this lower section were much more stable than the loose rock above.

During the course of our survey out, Steve knocked the whole floor just below the second rebelay onto his head. Fortunately, he was just below it and was not injured, most of the rock just careened off his helmet. Way to use your head, Steve! The sound of rock fall sent me diving for cover below. Safely tucked behind a rock outcrop; rocks, gravel and dirt crashed all around me, ricocheting exploded limestone shrapnel against the opposite wall. I could smell fresh flaked limestone and could see sparks fly in the darkness. Dan was already up the pitch above Steve. The rope also was fine, so I climbed out and we completed the survey. On the way back to camp, we found 3 additional vertical pits: "19' Pit" (6.1 m deep) and "20' Pit" (6.2 m deep). We had already mapped "18' Pit". The last pit discovered that day we called "Bambi's Crash Test Dummy Pit", named for the small deer (no surprise!) that must have worked really hard to fall into it (surprise!). Of course, the other 2 pits also had deer bones in them.



Deer bones in "Teepee Cave"

8/15/07

Today we hiked along the southeast coast of Windy Bay, just above the cliff face to scout for caves in that area of the island. Lots of blow down, spectacular cliff faces, but few caves. We rediscovered "Teepee Cave" (29 m total surveyed length) found by Fred and Tim the day previous, of which we made a quick survey. This

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was a horizontal cave with an impressive walk-in entrance. Otter and fish bones back in the tight, winding passage to the right, and a deer skeleton in the large front room were all discovered. Cobble sized breakdown eventually filled the passage to the left of the main room. After a quick snack and water break we continued hiking above and along the cliff faces at 500' elevation, but found no other significant caves. On our return trip back to camp we discovered "Fish Bone Cave" (10 m estimated length), a body sized phreatic tubeway crawl containing fish bone and sediment, an 8.1 m deep pit named "Bumble Buck cave" for the fairly fresh 2-pt buck that managed to somehow squeeze-fall into it somehow, and another 5 m hole named "DistoDrop", named after Steve's very nifty laser-equipped distance meter we used to measure the depth of the drop. As we seemed to always find our caves at the end of the day, we also found 2 other small vertical caves that didn't go, but were barely large enough to squeeze into. These did not get surveyed or named.

8/16

Last day of caving before we leave the island. Tim, Fred, Dan, Steve and I walked around Windy Bay, enjoying the warm, south-facing beaches before beginning to survey the northwest side of Windy Bay. Before spreading out along a rough transect parallel with the slope, we stopped to look at a shelter cave discovered several weeks earlier, by a USFS recreational crew. Seal, bird, otter bones and mussel shells covered in flowstone can also be seen along the walls of the cave and on the floor. This cave would have made a comfortable shelter as would the overhanging cliff face along the same cliff face. Farther to the west along the bench of cliffs just above current sea level, Dan discovered a large arch (complete with deer skeleton) and a small fissure cave just big enough to squeeze into that we named "Anna's Bop". Above these Dan and I found a small insurgent stream that flowed



Pictograph at a shelter cave

in to a cave containing white Planaria. We named this "Planaria Pit" (6 m in length). This cave also had well developed moon milk in the back of the cave as well as small soda straws and stalactites. Dan and I were mapping "Alias Teaser Pit" when Steve showed up and claimed he had found it in 2001, according to his GPS. Sure, likely story Steve... But, it had not been mapped before, so we

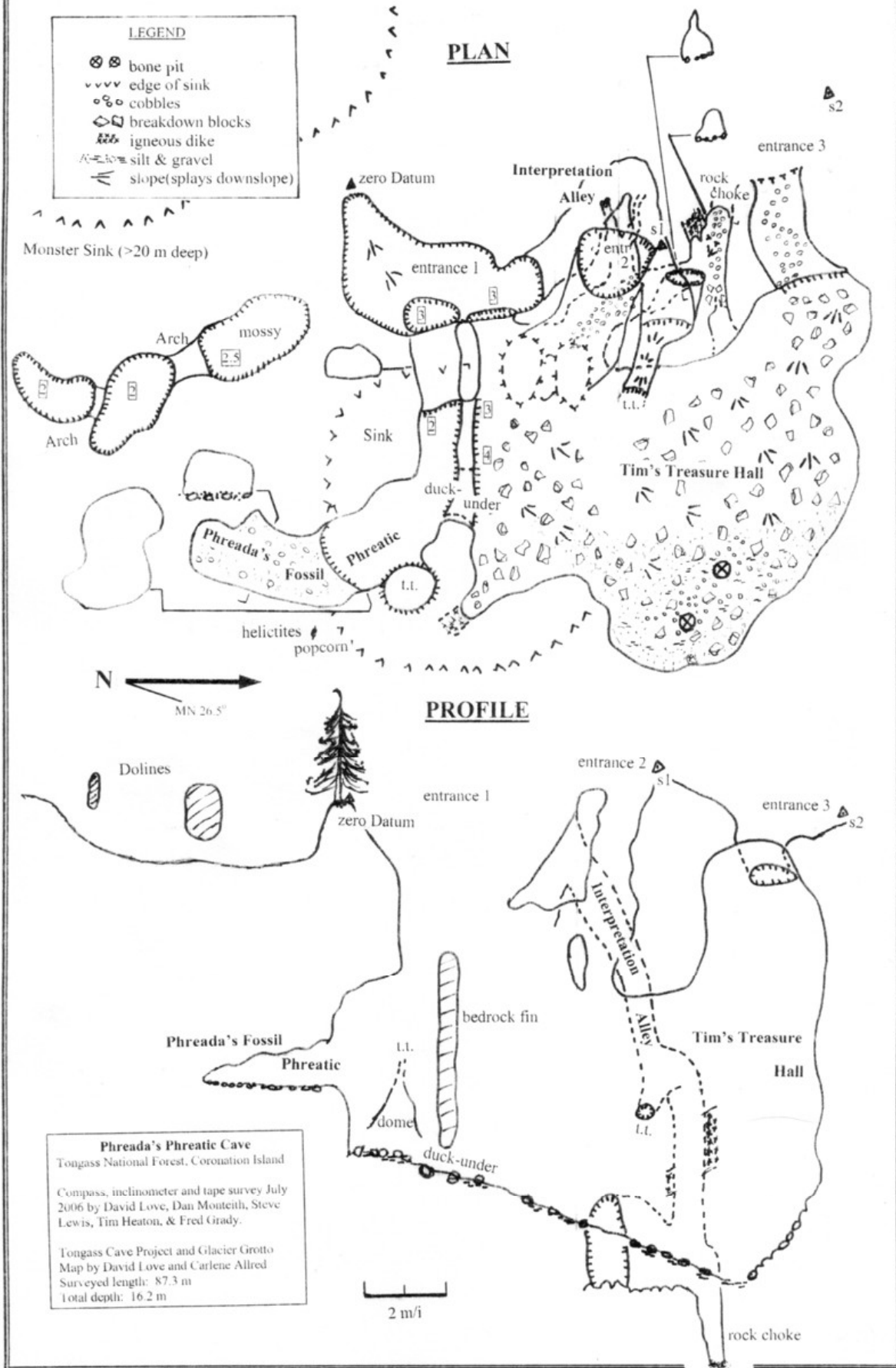
continued with our survey. This cave appears to take in a small stream which pools in the back of the cave when it rains (which amazingly it hasn't done here in 7 days!) Met up with Tim who was upslope of us and we beach-combed our way back to camp after 4 PM. No glass balls, but plenty of floats for Tim's collection, and one deflated soccer ball that I attempted to kick and fell flat on my back amidst howls of laughter from Steve, Dan and myself.



Waiting for the plane

Flight out in the morning was cancelled due to fog. We could hear the pilot on Tim's radio in Egg Harbor, but he turned around at the last minute. The USFS radio was of no use because we could not reach a repeater to call out. A few hours later in the morning Tim and Fred made it out, but USFS didn't send two planes to pick all of us up at once, so Dan, Steve and I waited for the next flight, which showed up about 3:30 PM. Charter operator Misty Fjords Flying, operated by Dave Doyon and his son, Dave Jr., flew out to pick us up. On the first fly-by, the plane flew right past us about 20' above the water but didn't see us. Off the plane flew out Windy Bay. Many minutes later, he returned from the China Cove direction and again flew by us as we were waving our bright yellow dry bags at him. On the third try he finally saw us and dropped down to pick us up. Dan wanted to give him the phone number to his former eye doctor in Ketchikan but refrained; I wish he had! Quite the sinking feeling to see the pilot fly by at about 20' off the water then fly off around toward China cove, fly back again and then toward the north end of the island. We thought we were going to end up staying the night. Back in Ketchikan we again met up with Tim and Fred at the Allred's house before we all went to the airport for our respective flights south and north that evening. Overall we had a successful trip! ▲

Phreada's Phreatic Cave



HAWAII 2008!

By Olivia Round

Samantha held on tightly with her fingertips. She could hardly hold on any longer, and felt her fingers starting to slip. As she writhed wildly, her legs kicking at the empty air, the expanse of beautiful blue ocean was spread out below, incongruously peaceful and impassive.

SPLAT!
The End.

But wait....

Samantha was really an animorph and transformed into a sea cucumber- which is not really alive- so it can't die! well...Olivia gives them the credit of being alive, but in fact there is so little as far as a mind goes in sea cucumbers that various people have decided...

In March of 2008 The Ketchikan Caving Club embarked on its expedition to the Big Island of Hawaii. Our base camp was in the Puna area, at the Allred's field house, situated in the midst of lemon, banana, macadamia trees and native forest. It was a divine place for us to spend our Spring Break.

Our group consisted of ten individuals primarily, with a few additions as our trip went on. There were Taira and Mira Wilhelm, Samantha Barnes, Kevin, Carlene, Flint, and Forrest Allred, and myself from Ketchikan, Alaska. Josiah Heustis from Whale Pass, Alaska, and Ketchikan's Matthew Perry from his university in Moscow, Idaho completed the Ketchikan Caving Club. Additional people included Tristen Graham, originally from Australia, his friend Rachelle, and Rick Royer from Maryland. We spent an amazing two weeks exploring and surveying Hawaii's lava tube caves... as well as enjoying local beaches, attending a square dance, and sampling fresh, exotic produce from the Farmer's Markets in Hilo and Keauu.

The most exciting cave we entered was Beach Park Cave, where we spent two days of our trip continuing Kevin's previous survey, conducted in November of 2005. Situated on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean, the entrance was wide and spacious with plenty of room to stand up in. As the lava tube continued, however, the size varied from tiny crawlways to hallway-sized tunnels. On our journey to the first survey point, about a mile into the cave, we

spent as much time on our hands and knees as we did on our feet.

The main attraction of Beach Park Cave is a phenomenon dubbed "snow" by Carlene. It is a soft, powdery, yet three-dimensional white "fluff" coating the walls, ceiling, and floor of many passages. We called all of it "snow", but soon found the need to make new names and categories. The wetter, more dense fluff was deemed "cheesecake", the



Olivia Round and Tiara Wilhelm are "moved" by all the "snow" that adorns the surfaces in the Tropical Winter section of Beach Park Cave. Photo by Mira Wilhelm.



An example of "Shredded wedding dress" formation hanging below some cotton-like "snow". Photo by Tristan Graham.

delicate satin, lace-like formations were dubbed "shredded wedding dress", and the chunky caramel-colored piles were "sawdust". I wished desperately to name one of the tunnels "Cheesecake Passage" or "Dessert Delight" or some other humorous title. Perhaps I still can... I'll ask Carlene when she does the cartography.

On the first day in the cave we had just one surveying group: myself, Mira, Taira and Kevin. Kevin instructed and helped us extensively because it was our first time surveying in an actual cave, though we had practiced many times in the Allred's home during Caving Club. It turns out that measuring from the kitchen stove to the living room couch, however, is much different than selecting and sighting along survey points in a cave. We found ourselves inching on our bellies through tunnels, instruments in one hand and survey tape in the other, trying not to disturb the "snow", and contorting ourselves in the most outrageous ways in order to get at a decent angle to read the inclination. We entered the cave at about 3pm and didn't return to our beach camp until 2 or 3am. Our total distance surveyed for the eleven hours was 880 feet.

We had enough people on the second day to form two survey teams, which was a huge help. Taira, Tristen, and Kevin were Team 1, and myself, Mira, and

Rick made up Team 2. Our group called ourselves the "Avocado Panthers", but I am not sure what Team 1 called themselves originally... could it have been the "Bloodthirsty Scalawags"? It seems plausible. Both teams began surveying at the last point from the previous day. This was located in a large passage which we had stumbled across while surveying a winding maze of leads off the main lava tube. This new, spacious passageway was arguably as big as the main passage, and we were excited at the possibility of it being the master tube of the flow. Team 1 headed up the tunnel, and Team 2 headed down.



Mira Wilhelm positions herself for a compass reading. Photo by Tristan Graham.

Mira and I had a blast surveying with Rick. It was slow going, however, because we took foreshots and backshots for each survey point, and had only one set of instruments to share. This meant a lot of stumbling back and forth between the points, swapping instruments and checking readings. After an hour or two, however, we developed our own pattern and rhythm to the process, and it went smoothly. The passage continued to be spacious as we continued down-flow. There were a few leads which we surveyed dutifully, but all ended or became too narrow to continue. As our time was dwindling, the passage suddenly became filled with... dirt! Fine, moist, brown soil now covered the lava tube floor, in some places as

HAWAII, 2008..., continued from page 8

deep as 3 inches. We also observed a few very small roots dangling from the ceiling in places. We mapped about 70 feet past the first dirt before our time constraint forced us to end our survey and return up the tube to meet the others.

Taira, Tristen, and Kevin, surveying up the passage, eventually connected it with the main passage. They left us (Team 2) a message at the designated meeting spot reporting their find. They then continued to survey the main passage until our groups were reunited hours later. We were all very excited that the large tubes intersected, and felt the survey had been a great success. In roughly 8 hours we had mapped over 2600 feet of cave!



Josiah Heustis observes some “sharktooth” stalactites in Kazumura Cave. Photo by C. Allred.

During our stay in Hawaii, we had the opportunity to tour other caves, including Kaumana and Kazumura. We also located a few other caves in the Puna area and embarked on short afternoon excursions inside.

We were able to witness the current Kilauea eruption, and had the opportunity to watch the steam cloud rise from the Kilauea Crater in the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. We were incredibly fortunate to be one of the last groups allowed into the Park before it was closed due to the poisonous fumes being emitted by the volcano. Our group made two trips to the lava viewing platform on the shoreline [near Kalapana], one during the daytime and one after dark. Watching the lava flow into the ocean was an awesome sight during the day, but at night it was breathtaking. The bright lava stood out in the darkness, coloring the plumes of vapor rising from the ocean a brilliant orange. We took some excellent photographs.

The members of the Ketchikan Caving Club greatly enjoyed this tropical adventure. We learned an incredible amount about the geology and formation of lava tubes and volcanic islands, as well as the flora and fauna of the Hawaiian islands. The trip was an enormous success for all involved, and we owe it to the hospitality of the islanders and the support from our Ketchikan fans. ▲



This is the only group photo taken of the Ketchikan Caving Club in Hawaii; They just wouldn't stand still! Photo by C. Allred.



Color and fumes are emitted from skylights that open into the roof of the active lava tube that flows beneath them.

MARCH 2008 KILAUEA VOLCANO ERRUPTION

Island of Hawaii

Photos by C. Allred



The world's youngest land was created when lava overflowed out of a skylight, emerging from the lava tube below. This new ground is in the process of turning from red-orange to black.



Kilauea Crater spouts steam and fumes after many years of inactivity



Lava tubes empty their hot, red liquid contents into the Pacific, creating great clouds of steam

PRINCE OF WALES CAVERS TAKE ON THE SNOW!

By Johanna Kovarik

The Prince of Wales Cavers had their first cave trip on March 29th, 2008. Laura, Sam, and Nathan Wilson, Sam Giroux, Kristen Lease, and Johanna Kovarik hiked into the woods to check out "Wingate Cave".

The day was beautiful; not a cloud in the sky, plenty of sunshine which turned out to be good thing. The six cavers spent an hour post-holing through, at places, waist deep snow, and another hour plowing through drifts that were mounded higher than their heads to climb up into a beautiful old growth watershed. The long hike uphill was cold and tiring, and at places a little heart-stopping, as it was easy to slide back down pretty deeply through the snow. However, with Nathan's untiring spirit and overwhelming excitement, he kept the spirits of the rest of the group quite high.

At first glance, it appeared the cave entrance was full of snow and inaccessible, but after a short hike around the area the real entrance was located. Our group carefully descended into Wingate Cave. The entrance was filled with long icicles and the first five meters were covered in sheer ice.

As the group moved carefully down through the canyon-like passages of the cave they were amazed by the height of the ceilings and the beauty of the untouched flowstone. The group took a quick climb up a dusty bit of passage to see a small pool decorated with a myriad of stalactites and soda straws. Extreme care was taken to not disturb the dust around the pool.

As the group wound down to a ledge overlooking a short waterfall, everyone agreed the crazy hike through the deep snow was worth the trip into Wingate Cave! The hike out was much quicker than hike in. On the way out, it was discovered that this was Sam Giroux's first cave, and Nathan claimed that it was "the best day of his whole life!"

The Prince of Wales Cavers plan to do a little more vertical training, and then once the snow melts, head to the north end to check out a few of the vertical caves Prince of Wales has to offer. Plans for a Rescue Workshop with the National Cave Rescue Commission are in the works for August!

A yahoo group has been started to post pictures and send messages concerning caving trips. If you are interested in joining send an email to ravishingplum@yahoo.com. ▲



Wingate Cave group; (clockwise, from top) Sam Giroux, Kristen Lease, Sam Wilson, Nathan Wilson, and Laura Wilson. Photo by J. Kovarik)

UPCOMING AUGUST CAVE RESCUE WORKSHOP

Howdy Alaskan Cavers!

The Forest Service is putting together a Cave Rescue / Small Party Cave Rescue weekend workshop put on by the National Cave Rescue Commission, affiliated with the National Speleological Society. It will take place in Thorne Bay, Alaska on Prince of Wales Island.

The cost for the workshop is FREE to you - and limited inexpensive lodging will be available on the Forest Service compound for a small fee (around 6 dollars a night). There are a few commercial lodges and bed and breakfasts located here in Thorne Bay - and I'm sure we can drum up some floor space/ someplace to put a tent for those of you as poor as I am!

Attendees will be responsible for travel to Prince of Wales Island and Thorne Bay . Float planes arrive in Thorne Bay on a daily schedule via Promech or Pacific Air, and travel to Prince of Wales via Inter Island Ferry is also possible and slightly cheaper.

The workshop will be three days long, beginning on Friday and going through a Sunday evening. Typically, this involves classroom work, practice with ropes and rigging haul systems, and one full day of in cave mock rescue.

Generally, you should be able to ascend, descend, and change over on a rope before attending. As much of our caving here in southeast Alaska is vertical, there will be many vertical elements to the workshop. Also - you should have your own set of vertical gear to bring. If you are not vertical and would still like to attend, please let me know and I'll check with the instructors - we'd like to include everyone!!



As of right now, we are planning for the third weekend in August - August 15th, 16th, and 17th.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING!

We are attempting to figure out group size and to decide if we even have a large enough group to put this on! If you would like to attend, please send me an email OR give me a call and let me know:

1. Name
2. Address and Phone number
3. Vertical system you use (frog/ ropewalker, etc.) - OR if you are not vertical yet and would like to be before this workshop, let me know that as well!
4. Previous Medical / Rescue training

For more information, email me or give me a call at 907 828 3224 or 269 932 8681. This should be a pretty fun event, as well as practical - plus it would be great to get all the Alaskan Cavers together!

I hope everyone can make it.

Cheers,

Johanna Kovarik
Geologist, Karst Resource Specialist
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LETTER

April 28, 2008
PO Box 53, Tenakee Springs, AK 99841
tenakeetwo@yahoo.com

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
709 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Gentlefolk:

I write this letter regarding HR 3560, as the Conservation Chair of the Glacier Grotto, a member group of the National Speleological Society, and as a director of the Tongass Cave Project, a project of the National Speleological Society. Thus, I comment only on the bill as it relates to the karst and cave resources of the Tongass National Forest.

While I laud the bill's intention of fulfilling ANCSA claims, I believe that, there are areas that must be excluded from selection. Currently, Sealaska is proposing 74,000 acres as economic development areas, slated for industrial scale timber harvest. Of these, over 52,000 acres, or 71%, lie atop karstlands, areas of soluble bedrock that contain caves and underground drainage.

The Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988 (FCRPA) directs Federal land managers to "secure, protect, and preserve significant caves on Federal lands for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people". Caves are an integral component of the karst systems that contain them, and thus, protecting the caves implicitly mandates protecting the karstlands that surround them.

I believe that conveyance of karstlands and caves to a private entity violates the FCRPA and that all karstlands should be removed from those areas permissible for selection and conveyance from the Tongass National Forest to Sealaska Corporation.

The Forest Service has located, documented, and mapped many thousands of karst features within the limestone and marble bedrock of the Forest. Cavers have spent many months underground, mapping extensive systems with great hydrological significance. These caves contain the only good paleontological record of ancient animals and humans in Southeast Alaska due to the stable environment found in caves, and the chemically basic nature of the bedrock and water that preserves bones, unlike the acidic surface materials. They also contain important archeological records, including the oldest human remains in Alaska.

Disturbance of the caves or the karst containing them would have serious negative consequences for these deposits, which are providing important insights into how the America's Ire peopled, and the routes humans used in migrating to North America. They also provide important insights into potential effects of climate change.

The Karst and Cave Resource Significance Assessment, Ketchikan Area, Tongass National Forest, Alaska, prepared in 1993 by the Ozark Underground Laboratory under contract with the US Forest Service, Tongass National Forest, determined that the karst and caves of Southeast Alaska (specifically the Ketchikan Area of the Tongass National Forest) are internationally significant because of their unique archipelago setting in largely undisturbed high latitude temperate coniferous rainforest, the only place in the world this occurs. In addition, there is a tremendous diversity of karst features present that are well preserved and at very high densities. Finally, the report cites the presence of internationally significant paleontological and archeological deposits important in determining prehistoric colonization of the continent and in understanding climatic changes and their effects.

The report continues by listing important aspects of the Tongass caves and karst that are significant at a national level. These include dissolution rates of 4-8 times that of most of the rest of American karstlands, meaning these caves are growing extremely rapidly. They contain abundant and unique mineral deposits including moonmilk. There are also unique species of invertebrates associated with these systems and the caves are used by large mammals to an extent not seen in the lower 48 states.

Economically critical is the fact that waters flowing from these areas support some of the most productive fisheries streams in Southeast Alaska, much more productive than comparable streams emanating from adjacent non-carbonate areas.

Finally, the recreational potential for exploring these largely untouched caves and karstlands is of great national significance, with great potential draw for many independent travelers.

The Forest Service has developed a management program designed to protect all these resources while attempting to extract resources where and when appropriate. The Forest Service has developed this program over 15 years of intense effort, collaborating with scientists, cavers, and land managers

(continues on page 15)

in a process that is ongoing. Studies of the dynamics of the systems are just beginning to provide good data, as is monitoring of the effects of past harvest. This management plan, as incorporated in Standards and Guidelines in the Tongass Land Management Plan and its appendices relies on the FCRPA which, as noted above mandates Federal Land Managers to "secure, protect, and preserve significant caves on Federal lands for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people". Caves are an integral component of the karst systems that contain them, and thus to protect caves, it is essential to preserve a functional karst system. Very special management practices are required to provide this protection.

under the FCRPA. Furthermore, public access for recreation in conveyed lands containing caves and karst will no longer be guaranteed

HR3560 attempts to finalize land selection and conveyance to Sealaska Corporation, a laudable goal that needs to be completed. Whether such selections should be allowed out of the "ANCSA Box" is beyond the scope of this letter. However, it is clear to us that if lands "outside-the-box" are selected, that the FCRPA requires that karstlands and their caves be excluded from selection. I approve of the effort to finish the ANCSA process, believe that it would be illegal for lands containing karst and caves to be included in the conveyances that fulfill this Federal obligation to the native corporation.

Stephen W. Lewis,
Director, Tongass Cave Project
Conservation Chair, Glacier Grotto ▲

Of Sealaska Corporation land selections proposed under h.r. 3650

Sealaska Corporation boasts that their proposal under H.R. 3560 is good for the environment and good for the taxpayer. They state correctly that they could, without Congressional action, claim lands in the federally mandated Sealaska withdrawal area. They then go on to claim that by returning these lands to the Federal government and selecting outside these areas that they will avoid selecting in roadless areas and can return many acres of productive forestland to the American people, while selecting lands that are more suitable for timber harvest.

people." Conveying such lands to private entities does not meet the requirements of the FCRPA.

Furthermore, the American taxpayer has already invested significantly in roads, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure on these lands. There are 340 miles of road already built at taxpayer expense within the selection areas proposed by Sealaska. At a conservatively estimated cost of \$100,000.00/mile, this means that the American taxpayer would be bequeathing Sealaska Corporation over \$34,000,000.00 of infrastructure, plus the cost of bridges and culverts, which are not included in the cost per mile estimate.

We believe that this is a significant sum and that it should be taken into account when considering the amount of land that Sealaska is due under any bill allowing selections outside of the ANCSA mandated withdrawal areas. ▲

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Address Service Requested

