CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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Google Meet
Friday, April 12, 2024
At 8:00 p.m. central time
Becky will send you an invitation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips planned at the present time.

*Next meeting may be April 12, 2024 on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO MEETING, FEBRUARY 9, 2024

In attendance: Dale Amlee, Sue Bozeman, Levi Carter, Duane Del Vecchio, Becky Hunsinger—virtual meeting facilitator, John Talbot, Lil Town, Andrew and John Van Dyke, Jon and Kelley Woltz, Noah Zinn, Steve Beleu.

Presiding: Augustus pari iure Jon Woltz
Start time: 8:07

OLD BUSINESS

1. Correction to my minutes of last month – Pearl Cave is not on Mr. Vogt's land.
2. Addendum to my minutes of last month – Sue wrote and submitted the annual Internal Organizations report to the NSS as required for our grotto to exist.
3. Noah will write one trip report about this year's bat count; the Van Dykes will write another.
4. I gave an update about the April 19-21 fun trip to the Mountain View area caves down in the Arkansas.
5. Andrew gave a report about bat count. John Van Dyke noted that the total count was 11,643 bats (no Big Ear bats). He believes that the count is down from last and previous years. He also told us that Homestead Passage has collapsed.
6. Lil asked about the remounted website. It is still okcavers.com

NEW BUSINESS

1. We discussed converting our 2019 slide show about gypsum caving that Jon revised to mount on our website.
We agreed by consensus to so proceed. Jon will accomplish this.
2. Sue asked if we wanted to continue to maintain the emergency beacon that we bought some odd years ago. Jon reminded us what it is, how it works, and what it requires to operate efficiently in sending an emergency "Help!" signal to a national satellite and hence on to a national rescue service. We agreed by consensus that Dale Amlee will keep the beacon and Kelley will be its contact person.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John gave his treasurer's report.

Meeting ended 9:00
Report by S. Beleu, Secretary and Sergeant at Underarms

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL, September 2018

This is the latest formal revision of the national decontamination protocol to prevent spread of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome. This document is the product of a collaborative effort with multiple federal and state agencies and several non-governmental organizations. Go to this website to view the detailed suggestions listed to help stop the spreading of WNS
https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/static-page/decontamination-information

Wildlife Health Bulletin 2022-01
National Wildlife Health Center
Jonathan Sleeman, Center Director
January 31, 2022

Winter 2021/2022 Bat Submission Guidelines and Highlights of the 202/2021 White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance Season

Summary

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center has released updated guidance for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season.

During the 2020/2021 surveillance season, WNS was detected for the first time in Wyoming and Montana, increasing the number of states where WNS has been confirmed to 37.

Field testing of several vaccine candidates to prevent WNS in susceptible bat species is ongoing, and field vaccination has proven to be safe in WNS susceptible animals.

Updated guidance from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) is now available for bat diagnostic submissions for the 2021/2022 white-nose syndrome (WNS) surveillance season. These guidelines are posted on the NWHC WNS web page and replace all previous NWHC bat submission criteria.

TREASURER'S REPORT

March 2024 TREASURERS'S REPORT

INCOME		EXPENSES
Dividends	$ 0.19	
Unposted check	$ **12.00**	
TOTAL	**$ 12.19**	
CASH	$ 6.05	
CHECKING	$ 212.43	**PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254**
SAVINGS	$ 1,434.25	
TOTAL	**$ 1,652.73**	

4/5/2024

TRIP REPORTS

JESTER TRIP REPORT
DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2025
CAVERS: Noah Zinn, Dale Amlee, Jon Woltz, Becky Hunsinger, John Van Dyke, Andrew, JT
WRITTEN BY Noah Zinn

"No Hunting No Trespass No Caving"

Pairs of legs swing over a fence adorned with the above words. "Without written permission" generously accompanies the command; the group of helmeted and head-lamped fence-jumpers were not there for terranean activities. With waivers signed and next-of-kin notified, they embark on their perilous quest: the annual bat count at Jester cave.

A coyote watches the trundling cavers from a ridgeline as they follow a muddy and meandering path, memories of bygone trips hoping to direct them towards their destination. Turning tail, he decides to do his hunting and trespassing somewhere else, leaving the caving to them. Continuing along cow trails and ranch roads, they wade through prairie grass that tugs at their pant cuffs, until eventually they arrive upon a sinkhole. Skirting down the dimple in the earth, they're met with an entrance to Jester in the side of the hill. Flicking on their headlamps, they start their way into the cave. Cool air and the musty smell of dirt greets them as they walk down the

(Continued on page 3)

entrance passage. Quickly they reach a crack overhead that arcs from wall to wall, and it is there where the count begins. Furry bodies, ears and noses fill the gap, a mammalian moss decorating the split in the rock. A notebook and pen is pulled out, and soon numbers echo across the cave and onto the page, each bat (approximately) tallied. And so it went, from solitary pips to massive mats of myotis, the bat accountants filled the ledger. Upon reaching a depth in the cave unbecoming of a bat's sensibilities, they retreat outside to explore other entrances.

Sliding under a barbed-wire fence, they take a short walk through "train tunnel". After jotting a few bats down (unfortunately none of the big-eared variety), they head to the final entrance at the opposite end of the system. They continue much like before, counting off smaller groups and measuring the larger mats.

Deeper into the cave and nearing the end of their task, the cavers are met with the previous days' rains. The way forward is a sea of mud and chilling water, but the group is unwavering, pushing through the mire to accomplish their goal. The mud claws and sucks at their boots, the struggle stirring the still pool. An opaque homogeneity spreads from each footstep, the silt hiding whether the next will lead to a wet waist or wet ears. Rounding a corner hoping for respite, they are only met with more mud, more water, and no bats. Yet undaunted they continue deeper into the frigid river, the water crawling up their shins, past knees and to the hips, relentless. Finally, the winding tunnel straightens, and the group sees that they have been rewarded for their patience.

With more water. Water that is getting deeper. Deciding they have been thorough enough, they turn around, sloshing back the way they came.

With the character-building portion of the trip knocked off the itinerary, all that is left is to return to earth, clean up and get some grub. The cavers exit through a secondary opening that connects to the stream, saving them the pleasure of wading all the way back. Emerging from the ground, they are thankful for warm weather instead of freezing winds that would have made their watery escapade harder to forget. Wringing socks and pouring out boots, they shed their gear and embark for food.

They descend upon Luigi's, where the menu tortures its readers with tales of three-foot calzones. After dining on more modestly sized 'zones and 'za, they part ways into the night, exhausted but satisfied with the day's work.

Cave Trip Report: Skylight Cave
Date: March 23, 2024
Cavers: Dale Amlee, Jon Woltz, Noah Zinn, and Harry
Written by Dale Amlee

It had been a few months since our prior caving trip. The weather in the morning was still cool, with a light frost on the windshield as we packed up our gear for the drive west. Noah and Harry joined me at my house, and we drove to Jon's to meet up with him. This was Harry's first time in a cave, so we loaned him some gear to get him outfitted correctly. Harry is a climbing buddy of Noah's.

The four of us first drove to Alabaster caverns to get into our caving outfits, and check our batteries and other equipment. By the time we arrived at the ranch gate, the weather had already warmed up into the 50s. The ranch gate was padlocked, so we parked the truck there and just walked the short distance to the entrance to the Skylight cave. Skylight had not been mapped before, and while we had done some poking around in it on previous trips, we still felt there was possibly more exploring to do. We had the survey gear with us, but decided to just spend time initially just exploring the extent of Skylight. This was also Harry's first time in a cave, and so doing some fun exploring might be a better way to introduce him to caving rather than starting with the complexities of surveying.

Skylight is relatively short, and pretty much starts with just a breakdown jumble, followed by a semi-open room in the middle, and another breakdown jumble at the end. There were a few times when I would turn around and get myself momentarily confused as to where I had just co5)me from, because the boulders and rocks all started to look the same from different angles.

Noah and Harry were both eager to explore, and proceeded to poke their noses into every possible opening in the cave, trying to determine if there was more to this than we could

(Continued on page 4)

see. Towards the back of the cave, Harry found another skylight opening above us, but it was so far up, and through a narrow convoluted rock opening, that it did not appear possible to use this as an actual exit.

Generally, I do think that this is another continuation of the cave system that started with our exploration of Grotto cave to the west. The cave system appears to be a generally east-to-west line from Grotto cave, wellpad cave, and skylight cave, but if this is one continuous cave system, the majority of that distance is not human passable.

Once our exploration of Skylight was complete, instead of starting the survey of Skylight, we chose instead to do an overland trip to check out another cave the landowner had told us about previously. The landowner had provided us with a simple map showing the directions to the cave that they had been calling “Room-to-room” cave, roughly a mile or so northwest of us. Luckily the weather was still warming some, so we checked the map and started walking.

POTPOURI

Curators and cavers: How a tip from a citizen scientist led to deep discoveries in Utah's caves

November 21, 2023
University of Utah

Scientists from the Natural History Museum of Utah have taken a deep dive into the not-so-distant past thanks to a friendly tip from Utah's caving community. In a paper published this week by the Journal of Mammalogy, five scientists from the Natural History Museum of Utah (NHMU) and colleagues from Utah's caving community have published the first research from their collaborative field work effort deep in Utah's caves.

The journal's feature article reveals why caves make such compelling research archives; what was uncovered in Boomerang Cave in northern Utah; why skeletal remains provide new access to hard-to-get data from the recent past; and offers a new zoological baseline for mammalian changes in an alpine community.

"To understand the impacts of climate on alpine ecosystems, we record current mammal species -- mostly through trapping. But that method doesn't tell us anything about the mammalian diversity in the recent past," said Kaedan O'Brien, lead author and anthropology PhD candidate at the University of Utah.

"So not a lot of study has been done on past alpine ecosystems because they are harder to get to, and when you do there is a slim chance of finding older skeletal remains intact."

In NHMU Chief Curator and paleoecologist Dr. Tyler Faith's words, "We want to know what animals were there in the 1800s, but that's nearly impossible in the absence of historical records. How do we document the recent past without a time machine?" An out-of-the-blue email from local caver and study co-author Eric Richards offered an unexpected method of time travel: repelling hundreds of feet down into Utah's caves to find what may have fallen in -- and when.

In early 2019, Richards emailed NHMU Curator of Paleontology Dr. Randy Irmis to ask if he or the museum had any interest in the animal bones that he'd been finding on Utah cave adventures, and he sent photographs.

Irmis replied right away, including colleague Dr. Tyler Faith and O'Brien, a PhD student in Faith's lab.

The group met, hit it off, and after a couple of trial outings for equipment training, Faith and Irmis were lowering themselves into caves to collect bones of by-gone animals.

"To be clear, this project would have never happened without the cavers reaching out to us, and investing time, and training with us. Eric and his wife Fumiko literally 'showed us the ropes.'" said Faith.

"I hope people realize that research isn't just done by scientists who work at the museum, it can be public collaboration -- in this case with trained experts (do not try this at home)."

After Faith obtained a research permit from the U.S. Forest Service in September 2019, Richards took the team to Boomerang Cave in the Bear River Range where they collected specimens for lab analysis at the museum. *(Continued on page 5)*

O'Brien managed the lion's share of that work, upon which the paper is based.

"Identifying skeletal remains is painstaking work, because you just go bone by bone, sorting by size and element, and then comparing them with regional museum voucher specimens," said O'Brien.

But the result is exciting.

Using radiocarbon dating, fossils found in Boomerang Cave were shown to span the past 3,000 years, with the bulk from the last 1000 years or so. Comparison of these fossils to museum records and present-day mammals collected by co-authors and NHMU zoologists, Dr. Eric Rickart and Katrina Derieg, showed that the cave provided a faithful reflection of mammal diversity in the area.

Perhaps most exciting is that the fossils also revealed the presence of species unknown to the region, like Merriam's shrew.

The full list of fossils is in the current Journal of Mammalogy, along with more on why this research matters.

"Our work highlights the value of collecting skeletal remains from caves as a convenient and accurate method for understanding the mammal communities" said Irmis.

"Caves help us create comprehensive and long-term records and better understand how animals have changed in the recent past."

Faith, Irmis, and O'Brien credit the ongoing success of this research to the curiosity and generosity of Utah's caving community.

Scientists still baffled from giant human skeletons up to 10 feet tall decades after initial discovery

By Snejana Farberov

Published April 4, 2024, 2:11 p.m. ET

Scientists still baffled from giant human skeletons up to 10 feet tall decades after initial discovery (nypost.com)

A series of mysterious giant skeletons up to 10 feet tall reportedly discovered in and around Nevada caves last century — dubbed the "Giants of Lovelock" — are still baffling scientists decades later.

The claims about supersized humans who roamed the area around Lovelock, a remote town 90 miles northeast of Reno, thousands of years ago are rooted in Native America lore, which tells of fierce, redheaded, pale-skinned giants who arrived from Central America by boat and attacked local tribes.

After years of war, the foreign invaders were chased into a cave and slaughtered en masse, according to stories passed down by the indigenous Paiute people.

Dozens of giant human skeletons were reportedly found in a cave in Lovelock, Nevada, nearly a century ago.

Experts believe the tale of the giant warriors' violent extermination is likely a legend, but reports of discoveries made in the area of Lovelock decades ago have continued to raise many unanswered questions.

The first foray into the Lovelock cave was made in 1911, when a pair of miners searching for guano, or bat excrement used as fertilizer, allegedly unearthed 60 human skeletons, including some measuring between 7 and 8 feet tall.

The extraordinary find was mentioned in a 1935 biography of mining engineer John T. Reid, but no evidence proving the existence of the gargantuan remains ever materialized, reported the magazine Archaeology World.

However, two subsequent excavations that were carried out in 1912 and 1924 brought to light thousands of ancient artifacts, among them a well-worn sandal measuring an astonishing 15 inches in length, which is the equivalent of a modern-day size 29 shoe.

For comparison, retired NBA star Shaquille O'Neal, who stands 7 feet 1 inch tall, wears size 22 shoes.

Later excavations uncovered a well-worn 15-inch sandal, further fueling the legend of the "Giants of Lovelock."

Radiocarbon dating later placed human bone fragments and plant material found in the cave between 2030 BC and 1218 BC.

Another surprising discovery made inside the Lovelock cave was a handprint embedded in the rock face that measured twice the size of an average human palm.

Some years later, an article published in the Nevada Review-Miner in 1931 announced the discovery of two mummified skeletons in a dry lake bed outside Lovelock.

The remains reportedly measured at 8.5 and 10 feet, respectively, and were described as having red hair.

Although some experts believe the red tint to the hair could have been caused by exposure to the environment, the appearance of the skeletons dovetails with the Pauite tribe's stories about a group of giant, redheaded barbarians known at the Si-Te-Cah.

Paiute tribal legends talk about a race of redheaded giants who invaded the indigenous people's territory in modern-day Nevada and waged war against them for years.

Legend has it that the Si-Teh-Cah came to Nevada from a distant land some 3,000 years ago after crossing the ocean in boats made from the bulrush plant.

The fierce newcomers were said to have attacked the local inhabitants, unleashing a bloody, years-long conflict.

Finally, the various tribes in the area joined forces to hunt down and exterminate the barbarians, according to the Paiute stories.

The last of the red-haired giants were said to have sought refuge in the Lovelock cave, but the shelter ended up being their tomb after the natives fired arrows at them and started a fire at the mouth of the cavern.

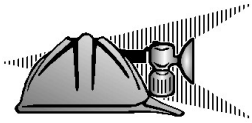
The story goes that all the giants were slaughtered in that attack.

The tale of the towering, auburn-locked barbarians echoes a legend that Spanish conquistador Pedro Cieza de Leon recorded in the 16th century, retelling an ancient Peruvian tale about a race of giants who "came by sea in rafts of reeds after the manner of large boats."

"Some of the men were so tall that from the knee down they were as big as the length of an ordinary fair-sized man," de Leon wrote in "Cronicas del Peru."

Central Oklahoma Grotto is a non-profit organization and a chapter of the NSS (National Speleological Society), 6001 Pulaski Pike, Huntsville, AL, 35810-1122 USA. Phone (256)852-1300. Dedicated to cave conservation and safety, C.O.G. publishes general information in a monthly newsletter ($6.00/year) and detailed cave surveys and related Speleological items in a yearly publication, *The Oklahoma Underground* ($3-$8/issue) Membership is by sponsor and is $12 per year for adults, $6 for spouses and students, and $3 if under 18. Central Oklahoma Grotto meets once a month on the second Friday of each month. For information, write Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: All submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the editor: Lil Town, 25692 Mosier Circle, Conifer, CO 80433: Telephone: (580)471-1238: E-mail: cavemoose@gmail.com. The deadline for submissions for any particular month's issue is the 20th day of the previous month. If you wish material returned, please include an SASE with submission. All materials in this newsletter are available for reproduction, provided proper credit is given with the article when you print it. Trade publications are welcomed. *Cave softly and safely!*

Friday
April 12, 2024
There will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!



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