CENTRAL
OKLAHOMA
GROTTO
OF THE NATIONAL
SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,INC

C.O.G.nizance

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Google Meet
Friday, April 14, 2023
At 8:00 central time
Becky will send you an invitation

HAPPY SPRING!
See you Friday evening online.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*No trips planned at the present time.

*Next meeting may be April 14, 2023 on Google Meet. Becky will send out invitations.

MINUTES

CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GROTTO MEETING, MARCH 10, 2023

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

Presiding: Crown Prince Jon Woltz (presiding because he had a newsletter to work from and Dale didn't)
Start time: 8:07

OLD BUSINESS

1. The projected trip to two caves didn't happen. We discussed going to Grotto Cave and other caves in its area during April with no consensus and an uncertain list of the three cavers we require to cave.
2. Becky and others continued to discuss the relative merits of caving headlamps.

NEW BUSINESS

1. We discussed the past and current COG websites.
2. Andrew and John Van Dyke reported their upcoming trip to Alabaster in April. Six Scouts have signed up to clean the cave on April 14 -16, camping at the state park. There are some lads on this trip younger than the required age of 14 who will do things other than this cave work.
3. We're not certain if we created a stick-map of Grotto Cave or not. But Sue is currently drawing its map from survey notes, and Jon will digitize it. The maps from the past surveys of Cherylsbad Cavern and Broken Horn Cave are also in the gradual process of being drawn.
4. Jon and Dale discussed laser distance sighters and how much of an improvement they are over pulling tape.
5. I suggested the possibility of having "blended meetings". What this is, is simple: a COG member *volunteers* to host an in-person meeting at their house, and those who can't attend in person attend virtually as we have successfully met during these last few COVID years. I moved the question; we voted all Yea, no Nays. John and Andrew Van Dyke volunteered to host a future meeting at their house.
6. Becky still wants us to go to Carlsbad Caverns and take their tourist trips, such as Slaughter Canyon Cave and Spider Cave; wonderful trips that I've taken, well worth the effort. I suggested that we can also always head to Arkansas and Missouri, especially to Blanchard Caverns in Arkansas that has a wonderful wild cave trip that I've taken, also well worth the effort.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Treasurer Emeritus John Talbot delivered his report.

Meeting ended 9:02
Report by S. Beleu, Secretary and Sergeant at Underarms

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL, October 2020

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 2020/2021 White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance Season

Summary

The USGS National Wildlife Health Center has released updated guidance for bat diagnostic submission 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 2023 TREASURERS'S REPORT

INCOME		**EXPENSES**
Dividends	$ 0.19	
TOTAL	**$ 0.19**	
CASH	$ 106.05	
CHECKING	$ 341.88	
SAVINGS	$ 1,433.53	
TOTAL	**$ 1,881.46**	

4/7/2023

PREPARED BY TREASURER JOHN TALBOT NSS #30254

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report for March 18, 2023 -- Grotto Cave
Cavers: Dale Amlee, Jon Woltz, Noah Zinn
Written by Jon Woltz

We had two goals on our trip to Grotto Cave: The first was for Dale and I to reacquaint ourselves with Grotto Cave and the area around it after a three-year cave surveying hiatus. We particularly wanted to visit possible inflows east of the cave and see if any of them were worth surveying. Our second goal was to give Noah, who had not caved before, the opportunity to explore a gyp cave with us.

Dale and Noah carpooled from Moore to Weatherford, and then the three of us took my truck to the cave. On the way to Grotto Cave we stopped at Alabaster Caverns State Park to stretch our legs and suit up. Alabaster was very busy -- there were lots of families with kids taking advantage of Spring Break and the warm weather to enjoy the park and its caves.

The ranch road from the Grotto property gate to the cave has added some deep new ruts since our last visit. The last few hundred feet of ranch road wraps around the hill near the cave and then slopes down to the pasture. The descent to the pasture is now so steep and eroded that we didn't attempt it. Instead, we parked on a hillside pull-out and walked the rest of the way.

When we arrived at the cave property, a large herd of angus was grazing near the gate. When the cattle saw the truck, the entire herd paused its grazing and filed

(Continued on page 3)

in behind the truck as we drove. As soon as we parked the herd surrounded the truck, so we had to shoo cattle away to have enough space to finish gearing up. Fortunately nobody got stepped on and the herd gave way when we walked down the hill to the cave's entrance. Not much has changed since our last visit around Grotto Cave's ravine and entrance, though erosion continues to eat away at the earthwork around the cave mouth and the creek.

The interior of Grotto Cave looks largely unchanged since our last visit three years ago. As we moved through the cave, we passed some of our old survey points. A few of the points have survived high water and, where we left points with marker tape, nibbling by cave critters. We pushed the passage to the end of our last survey marker. Beyond this point the cave ceiling drops very low and, as best as we can see, finally sumps out. In contrast to the extremely dry conditions in Jester that we saw during February's bat count, the water level in Grotto Cave looks about the same as I remember it.

Having gone through Grotto as far as possible, we left the cave and began hiking to the east to look at the possible inflows that Sue had marked for us on a Google Earth map. The three closest points on our map were too small and choked with rubble to be worth exploring or surveying. However, the fourth location didn't disappoint us. The map marked a location in a steep gully near a well pad. After finding a place to clamber down to the bottom of the gully, we pushed through the brush and found an enterable cave. Dale and I vaguely recalled this entrance from one of our long-ago trips, but I had no recollection of the cave beyond.

The well pad cave's entrance opens into a chamber with ceilings probably 8-10 feet overhead, with a narrow ceiling channel cutting through it. There were quite a few bats (myotis velifer) hibernating only 20-30 feet from the entrance and within view of daylight. The cave is fairly small. After the bat chamber, the passage meanders a bit before breakdown covers the streambed. From that point, the ceiling channel makes an enterable passage over the breakdown; Noah was able to climb into this part of the passage. The main passage becomes crawlable after the breakdown, but quickly pinches down and sumps out.

On our Google Earth map there's one other area to investigate for inflows. This is an area close to the property fence and north of the gate and cattle guard. We considered exploring this after we got out of the well pad cave, but decided to save this task for a future trip -- we were wet, muddy, and the temperature was falling.

The cattle back at the truck had wandered off while we were away, though as soon as they saw us return, the whole herd began to reconverge. We hustled getting our gear off and drove away with disappointed cattle bellowing and trotting in our wake.

We had a delay on the drive home thanks to a flat tire south of Mooreland. I pulled over near the Hwy. 50 and 270 junction just as the last air wheezed out of one of my truck's rear tires. Fortunately, my spare had air and, after taking turns trying to loosen an overtightened lug nut (Dale got it free!), we mounted the spare and continued to Seiling. We stopped at Delizioso for dinner and coffee, and then headed back to Weatherford. It felt good to be back to caving, and I think Noah enjoyed his first caving trip -- we hope he'll be able to join us on our future trips. Surveying the well pad cave will probably be our project for the next couple of trips, along with looking for inflows around the area north of the gate.

POTPOURI

Baigong Pipes: The Strange Ancient "Pipes" Found In The Caves Of Mount Baigong

Conspiracy theorists believe they are pipes left by an ancient civilization.

James Felton, Senior Staff Writer, April 4, 2023

http://www.iflscience.com/igong-pipes-the-strange-ancient-pipes-found-in-the-caves-of-mount-baigong-68304

Inside the caves of Mount Baigong, and in the surrounding area, there are dozens of strange pipe-like structures, subject to all sorts of conspiracy theories and rumors.

Known as Baigong Pipes, the first references to the structures appear to be from the Chinese state media affiliated news site Xinhua News Agency. According to the article, the pipes were made up of "30 percent ferric oxide [iron oxide] with a large amount of silicon dioxide and calcium oxide", while 8 percent of the makeup of the pipes could not be identified by the scientists studying it.

The intrigue of 8 percent material being unidentified, large amounts of iron oxide deposits, and the fact that they do sort of look a lot like pipes, has led to wild speculation from conspiracy theorists. According to various YouTube videos, and articles from websites that also do a lot of Sasquatch content, the pipes are evidence of advanced but ancient civilizations or, equally ancient aliens.

So what actually are the Baigong pipes? Well, they do appear to be ancient, as conspiracy theorists would have you believe. But that's because they were likely formed by geological processes.

Structures similar in look and/or composition to the Baigong pipes have been found in south Louisiana, and elsewhere.

The "pipes" found in south Louisiana, like the Baigong pipes, are most likely fossilized trees according to the geologists who studied them.

"The cylinders are inferred to be tap-root casts of fossil trees in which sediments replaced wood and pedologic and diagenetic processes caused the external form of the tree root to be preserved while the internal structure was lost," one team explained in a 1993 study. "The characteristics of cylinders developed in the different stratigraphic materials were contrasted to assess the influence of time and lithology in their development and preservation."

Minerals formed around the roots, before those roots rotted away inside, leaving the hollow pipe effect. This explanation has also been given for the Baigong pipes, according to Atlas Obscura, with experiments confirming that the "pipes" themselves contain organic plant matter.

Another explanation suggests that the pipes were made in a sort of natural cast. According to that theory, fissures were left in sandstone by the Tibetan Plateau uplift, which were then filled with iron-rich sediment during flooding of the area.

Either way, neither process requires aliens, or pipes to take away their alien waste.

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!* Website: http://www.okcavers.com

Friday
April 14, 2023
There will be a virtual meeting.
See you online!

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