

Butler Cave - Project Checking
Saturday, January 31, 2009

Trip participants: Keith Wheeland, Ed Kehs Sr., Ed Kehs Jr., Nate Walter, Tony Canike (reporter).

On Saturday, January 31, 2009, we entered Butler Cave at 11:30am to determine the status of a few digging projects for future expedition weekends. We checked out four idle dig sites, took detailed notes, and worked on one dig for about an hour. This was Eddie's first cave trip after his accident in the fall of 2008 and he was glad to get back caving. We had a good time and exited the cave at 6:30pm.

Big thanks to Keith for showing us around, telling interesting stories, and putting us up for the weekend.

TC

Photos by Ed Kehs Sr.



Zoe's Lion on the Needle



Keith Wheeland and Ed Kehs Jr. with the big sled at the Air Dig.



The narrow sled at the Air Dig.

Leads Checked:

1. Air Dig, which is located northwest of Sinking Creek trunk passage between the Moon Room and Pat's Section, and is labeled on Les's section map #5. The dig goes into a blank section of the map, and is sketched in on the 4/90 revision. At the face of the dig, the ceiling dips down and the dug passage turns around a corner, narrows, and slopes down. If you crawl to the dig face, your head is 2 feet below your feet and you barely have enough room to push handfuls of dirt back along your sides, like a sand crab. Next steps are to remove the rock corner and widen the passage to make room to work, and to dig the floor down to eliminate the need to dig with your head lower than your feet. Take drill, straws, short handled shovel, and an e-tool. The passage leading from Sinking Creek to the dig face first has 30 feet of hands and knees passage that takes a 12-14" wide sled, and then the remaining 60 feet take an 8-10" wide sled. There is a small alcove where the passage changes width, consider running two sled teams. There are two old metal sleds there, but the 10" wide sled is made from 3/16" steel plate and is heavy. There are lengths of old wire and 1/4" clothesline that are nearing the end of their usefulness. We noted slight air at the dig face, along with bat droppings on the floor and gypsum on the walls.

See the 1993 BCCS Newsletter (V19, p15 of the 2009 digital reissue) for a trip report about the Air Dig and the sand crabs.

2. Poke Hole, which is located on the right side of the Sinking Creek trunk passage as going downstream, just downstream of Pat's section. Climb up a little slope about 8 feet and you can see through the Poke Hole into a little room and/or passage. The Poke Hole is an oval about 8" in the vertical and 14" in the horizontal directions. Take a hammer, chisel, and crowbar to remove a little flowstone to make it passable.

3. In Feeder Dig at Evasor Gallery. This in feeder stream is at the entrance to the Evasor Gallery passage, just off the Sneaky Creek trunk passage downstream of the Pool Room. This dig has been worked by Nate Walter and others on and off for the last 10 years. We spent an hour moving gravel and gruel to lower the floor and drain the passage. We stopped where the passage narrowed to 6" high by 16" wide, with a clay floor and a few 18" sandstone blocks in the floor. After about 8 feet, the passage appears to widen and the ceiling appears to get higher. This dig is possibly leading under Rat Hole 1180 to the right of Nevin and Judy's driveway when you are driving in to the farm. Take an 18-24" pry bar to move the blocks, hammer and chisel in case the rocks are big, and an e-tool to lower the clay floor.

4. Gussy's Dig, which is located off the downstream end of the Trunk Channel Bypass, a loop passage that bypasses the Sinking Creek wet hands and knees crawl. The downstream end of the bypass loop connects to the trunk passage just downstream of station L22. The dig extends off of the bypass loop to the north east, and has been sketched on the 4/90 revision of Les's section map #5. On the 1985 section map the bypass loop is sketched in but the dig is not. We familiarized ourselves with the location but did not go the dig face. According to Keith, there is a rock flake at the end of the dig that needs to be removed before further progress can be made.

See Keith's report of the Downstream Bypass - Dig in the BCCS Newsletter Vol. 9, p. 16, 1983.