

STREAM TRACING

Butler Cave - 30 June 1976

Fred Wefer, Nevin W. Davis

Fred and I crawled through the Frothingslosh to investigate the Dynamite Section and the Christmas passage. We were doing this to answer the question of whether any water in this area could be diverted from flowing into Slippery Creek to flow instead down pits into Marlboro Country. We really didn't come to any conclusions about that; however, we did find a hole in the ceiling which appeared to lead to a large passage above. Only one or two bolts would be necessary.

On our way out we placed bugs at the Frothingslosh, Hanging Rock Room, Last Hope Shaft, and Last Hope Siphon. At seven o'clock that evening, we dumped 100 gm. of flourescein in the stream behind Nelson Lockridge's blue trailer.

Nevin W. Davis

SHECK TRIES AGAIN

Butler Cave - Breathing Cave - 3 July 1976

Breathing Dye Team

Fred Wefer
Lee Critchlow

Dive Team

Nevin W. Davis
Sheck Exley
Judy Davis
Danny Mundy
Tom O'Helleran
Sandy O'Helleran

Retrieval Team

Fred Wefer
John Wilson
Rich Ganjon
Al Grimm
Jeff Horowitz
Lee Critchlow

This trip was supposed to have happened on 26 June but because the diver, Sheck Exley, became ill on his way north from Jacksonville, Florida, it was called off. At the NSS convention in Morgantown, after Sheck had recovered, I recruited a crew to accomplish the twin objectives of diving the Siphon beyond Last Hope Siphon and dye tracing the stream from Breathing Cave to where it intersects Slippery Creek beyond Last Hope Siphon.

The whole expedition got underway with Fred and Lee leaving for Breathing early in the morning. Imagine that! Fred was up early enough to be at the Pseudopsysphon in Breathing at noon to dump the rhodamine B dye.

The dive party entered the cave at 12:20 P.M. and arrived at Dave's Lake at 2:00 P.M. That's pretty good time for a crew carrying a tank and diving equipment traveling 9000 ft. in a cave with a vertical drop of 500 ft. N. Davis, Sheck, and Danny continued across Dave's Lake to Last Hope Siphon. Sheck had all of his equipment on and tested by 3:00 P.M. and was off on the dive. In addition to his normal diving equipment, he had a writing board, a underwater camera, and a compass. He had a lot of jobs to do including: look for the dye, dive the second siphon, take a few pictures, and map the passage he explored. That's a lot to ask of one person, but Sheck is a very strong, organized person.

Danny and I sat around a while before we fired up the Svea stove to prepare hot Jello. After warming up with this, I left Danny to go up Slippery Creek to the Frothing Sloss to pick up bugs I had left there on 30 June in an attempt to trace water from a surface sinking stream into the cave. An hour passed before I returned to Danny and had another cup of that good hot Jello. At about 6:00 some bubbling sounds emerged from the passage at Last Hope Siphon so I went to investigate. Sheck emerged from the black water but didn't appear too happy. Under a bombardment of questions he answered, "no I didn't dive the second siphon, yes I got some pictures, no I didn't see any pink water."

About this time the noise of rocks rolling and a hardhat contacting the ceiling announced Fred's arrival. That wasn't a bad trip for Fred and Lee: The ends of Breathing and Butler in one day!

We packed the diving equipment and headed back to Dave's Lake where we met the retrieval party. Here all the heavy equipment was transferred to the fresh cavers for the trip out. We emerged into the warm night at about 9:00 P.M.

The results of this trip are as follows:

1. The dye dumped in the surface stream in Nelson's Hollow showed a strong trace to Last Hope Shaft and a very weak trace to the Frothing Sloss and Last Hope Siphon. The Hanging Rock Room was negative. (Bugs placed in these four places during the dive trip were all negative on 24 July when retrieved).
2. The stream from Breathing does not emerge in the Good News Passage.
3. It is difficult if not impossible for one diver to drag a 72 cu. ft. tank to the Bad News Siphon. There is a long stretch of crawlway leading to this siphon which Sheck had forgotten about. He needs a smaller tank for this siphon and/or possibly two divers.
4. We have about six photos of the Good News Passage beyond Last Hope Siphon. It's not surprising that this passage looks much like the passage leading to Last Hope Siphon.
5. The sandstone ceiling at Last Hope Siphon dips below the water and forms the siphon. On the other side of the siphon the sandstone again rises out of the water and forms the passage ceiling. That is, the passage is following the bedding and ceiling remains the upper Clifton Forge Sandstone.
6. We now have a better map of the Good News Passage but no traverse line data has been taken.
7. We have developed an effective method of carrying heavy equipment to and from Last Hope Siphon. All it requires is a little organization.

Nevin W. Davis

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