

Carbide Dump



March 2025
Vol 60, No 02

The **Carbide Dump** is published monthly by the Blue Ridge Grotto of the National Speleological Society in Roanoke, Virginia. Distribution date is approximately the second week of each month. An issue may be skipped if insufficient material is received. Contributions of articles and artwork are invited and will be gratefully acknowledged. Art work originals will be returned. Contributions should be sent to the editor. Regular and associate grotto membership (\$10) includes a **Carbide Dump** subscription. Subscriber rate is \$10.00. Exchanges with other grotto and caving organizations are invited. Direct exchange mail to Mary Sue Socky.

EXCHANGE MAIL

Mary Sue Socky
6572 Woodbrook Dr
Roanoke, VA 24018-5402
H: 540-989-7693
email: sockvmss@cox.net

EDITORS

David & Mary Sue Socky
6572 Woodbrook Dr
Roanoke, VA 24018-5402
H: 540-989-7693
email: sockvdr@cox.net or sockvmss@cox.net

TRIP COORDINATOR

Susan Burr
4544 Cordell Dr SW
Roanoke, VA 24018
H: 540-989-5809
email: pondlady97@gmail.com

The Blue Ridge Grotto holds its monthly meetings every third Friday of the month at 6:30p at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke, VA 24012 (at least for Jan & Feb). See the Grotto meeting announcement in this issue.

GROTTO OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**Chair**

David Socky
C: 540-529-1591
sockvdr@cox.net

Vice-Chair

Susan Burr
C: 540-580-9409
pondlady97@gmail.com

Secretary

Mary Sue Socky
C: 540-529-3954
sockvmss@cox.net

Treasurer

Marian McConnell
C: 540-309-4707
marian.mcconnell@gmail.com

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Contributors: David & Mary Sue Socky, Marian McConnell, Susan Burr, Phil Lucas, Earl Suitor, Keith Sweeney, Bill Balfour, Tally Sepiol, and Jerry Fuller.

Cover: Group photo at Dixie Caverns Cleanup. L-R, Jessica Hester, Ben Hester, Marian McConnell, (f) Lauren Appel, (b) Trish Geiger, (f) Abby Arbeiter, (b) Rolland Moore, (f) Mary Sue Socky, (b) Bambi Marshall, (b) Alex Thompson, (f) Meredith Weberg, (b) Jeff Huffman, Nick Schmalenberger, Cyndi Hutchison. Photo by Susan Burr.

CAVERS CALENDAR

Mar 21: BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

Mar 22: *Tales From Dark Places*, an Explorer's Club/NSS event in New York City. See this [link](#).

Apr 1: 6:00 pm Roanoke County Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss rezoning the property above Dixie Caverns for high density commercial, with lots of drainage issues affecting the Dixie Caverns property. See page 15.

Apr 4-6: Sites Cave WV clean-up effort (Fallen trees). Vertical equipment required. Contact Earl Suitor 703-431-2661.

April 18: BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

May 2-4: SERA Cave Carnival, East Fork Stables Campground near Jamestown, TN. Hosted by East Tennessee Grotto. Pre-registration will close on April 1. After April 1, the adult registra-

tion price will increase from \$35 to \$45. <http://sera2025.subworks.com>

May 9-11: Spring VAR, at Spruce Knob, WV, hosted by Out of Bounds Grotto. See page 17 for more info.

May 18: Spring WVASS Meeting, at 10 am the WVACS Fieldstation near Frankfort. Contact Dave Riggs, Executive Director, at 304-685-7537 or driggs@speleo.us for more information.

May 16: BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

May 23-27: **Speleofest 2025 (Ye Olde Speleofair)**, Lone Star Cave Preserve, Bonnierville, KY. Hosted by Louisville Grotto. Registration is open! See <https://www.louisvillegrotto.org/speleofest/>

June 6-8: Karst-O-Rama, at the Great Saltpeter Cave Preserve, Mt. Vernon, KY. Hosted by the Greater Cincinnati Grotto. <https://karstorama.com>

June 13-15: Young Timer's Reunion (YTR), at the RASS Fieldhouse, Mill-

boro, VA. Organized by the VPI Cave Club. RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/SFiueiN56Jj8hvTJA>

June 20: BRG meeting, 6:00pm at Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke.

June 21 - 28: NSS 2025 Convention, Cobleskill, NY. Pre-register before April 10 to take advantage of the early sign-up discount of only \$275. [See link](#)

July-11-19: NCRC Weeklong classes, Mountain Gateway Community College, Clifton Forge, VA. For more info, including prerequisites, visit: <https://caves.org/ncrc/courses/ncrc-course-descriptions/>

July 20 - 27: ICS 2025 in Brazil. See <https://speleo2025.org/>.

Oct 6-10: National Cave and Karst Management Symposium, Ely NV. Hosted by the Western Cave Conservancy. See: <https://ely2025.nckms.org/>



BRG Meeting & Trip Notice

The March 21, 2025 meeting of the Blue Ridge Grotto will be held in a private room at **Logan's Roadhouse, 4740 Valley View Blvd, Roanoke VA 24012**. Dinner or appetizers with socializing starts at 6:00 pm with the meeting starting around 6:30 pm. This is a new location for BRG. Click [here for direction from Jersey Lily's to Logan's Roadhouse](#).

The program will be announced at the meeting.

Grotto Trip

Rapps Cave, WV

Date & Time: Saturday, March 22, 2025. Meet at Hanging Rock **Orange Market at 8:30 am**.

Leader: Riley Stalnaker.

Coordination: Susan Burr 540-580-9409
pondlady97@gmail.com

Requirements: Beginner horizontal cave trip.

Limit: No limit

Note: The trip to Rapps Cave is contingent on Riley confirming she can lead the trip. If not, an alternative will be determined and announced via the BRG list serve.

Description

Rapps Cave is gated with access controlled by the West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC). This cave contains a paleontological site and protected Native American glyphs and artifacts. Permission is required in order to visit this cave.

The Rapps Cave entrance, 4 feet high and 10 feet wide, slopes into a large room (20 feet high by 80 feet wide, and 100 feet long), with a floor of smooth clay and flowstone and some columns on the east side of the room. The cave consists of two main passages. One extends approximately 2400 feet to the west and is intersected by numerous small dead-bottom pits and long low rooms. The other passage extends about 1000 feet to the NW as a broad passage, floored with huge slabs of breakdown covered with

formations. The cave may continue, but no way through the breakdown choke has been found. The far end of the Breakdown Room connects with another room where prismatic jointing is prominent in the ceiling.

There are multiple levels within the cave. There are pits, a lower level with a long, 4-foot-tall room containing a slippery mud floor. In another area of the cave there is a dome pit with a waterfall. There is a big canyon, and 1,375 feet of upper-level passage.

Rapps Cave is formed in the Union limestone, with over 5000 feet of surveyed passage. It is hydrologically connected to nearby Buckeye Creek Cave, WV.



Rapps Cave Feb 17, 2018 - Photo by Dave Socky

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRG Meeting Minutes – can be read on the BRG webpage at: <https://blueridgegrotto.org> under the 'BRG Organization' button.

NSS Membership:

Would you like to join or renew with the NSS? See this [link](#) for details.



BRG meetings. It was decided that BRG will hold its monthly meetings at **Logan's Roadhouse in Roanoke, VA**. Marian McConnell worked with the Logan's management and has BRG booked for the third Friday of each month for 2025, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in their Garage Room.

NSS Grotto IO Updates: Due to technical problems, it is currently impossible to update I. O. information. As soon as the NSS fixes the system, the BRG Internal Organization info will be submitted. (Paul Winter).

Membership Proposals: Helene Ferguson, NSS 60182 is BRG's newest Regular member! Helene was voted in 1/17/2025. Congratulations!

Dixie Donation: Thanks to Dan O and Marian McConnell for donating \$120.00 to Dixie Caverns in addition to the upcoming volunteer BRG conservation effort!

BRG Online Payments: BRG can now accept payments through ZELLE, a 'free' cash app. Use the following email through your banks' ZELLE app: blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com.

BRG will also continue to maintain the BRG PayPal account (which charges fees). Anyone who pays BRG through the PayPal account will be charged a \$1.00 convenience fee for the transaction. Use blueridgegrottoofficers@gmail.com for PayPal.

T-Shirts: If you ordered one, Pay Up! There are 17 remaining T-shirts! \$12.00 each. Medium to XL, various colors: red, gold, grey, green, light blue, etc. Contact Susan Burr at pondlady97@gmail.com for more information.

Gary & Kim Drewry are moving to Panama! They are selling the farm and everything. Gary has 90 or so old USGS topo maps (circa 1990-2000) that he is willing to part with for \$100. If you are interested, please give Gary a call @ **540-280-3186**. They're moving soon!

NSS Vertical Training Commission May 5-8, 2025: Save the Date! A VTC Level One Course is being planned for May at the Spruce Knob Mountain Center. The Spring VAR will start right after the course ends, so if you want to spend a week caving in one of the prettiest spots in WV, get in touch!

(Continued on page 14)

Dixie Caverns Conservation Project

Article by *Susan Burr*, Photos by *Meredith Weberg*

The Blue Ridge Grotto held a conservation project in Dixie Caverns on Saturday, February 22, 2025. We had 15 volunteers: Mary Sue Socky (organizer), Marian McConnell, Trish Geiger, Cyndi Hutchinson, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Meredith Weberg, Jessica & Ben Hester, Rolland Moore, Abby Arbeiter, Alex Thompson,

telling us what formations and where the cave manager/owner wanted us to clean. We carried the gear up into the cave & set up a staging area for all the supplies we brought in. Mary Sue then explained & demonstrated how to clean the different areas. We then left to tour the rest of the caverns and to see the areas that needed cleaning. Afterwards we returned to the supply area and gathered what we needed to clean the area we wanted.

We may have had a minor setback with the water situation, but we managed. The pipes inside the cave were frozen, so Trish, Abby, Jeff & I took all the sprayers and water bottles back outside the cave to find and fill them up with water. Carrying them all back into the cave was not fun! Mary Sue then started mixing her hydrogen peroxide solution as the rest of us began cleaning the sections we had chosen.

I chose the section next to the “Turkey” formation and asked Jeff to help me. It had 2-inch moss growing toward the light which I found funny looking. Removing that was my favorite part of the cleaning. Jeff and I both scrubbed the area. I did leave Jeff for a few minutes to take pictures of everyone cleaning. Because I get bored easily doing the same thing, I started scrubbing a few other places in that same room.

When someone came around and told us to wrap it up because pizza would be there soon, Jeff rinsed the area we had been cleaning and then sprayed the hydrogen peroxide solution. While we waited the 15 minutes for the solution to do its thing, Jeff helped me gather clay to fill in around one of the lights on the other side of the room we were in. Trish and Lauren had both worked on removing the green around it but ended up stopping because it was removing too much of the clay that was holding up the light. Jeff and I spread out the clay to help cover the leftover green and to fill in the holes



Getting organized.

Bambi Marshall, and me. Our goal was to help clean the caverns but especially remove the “green” from around the lights and on formations, especially the “Wedding Bell” formation.

After everyone was ready, we all grabbed some supplies and headed into the cave. Once inside Mary Sue started



Green Lampenflora on the Wedding Bell.



Trish happily cleaning

around the light fixture itself. Then Jeff did the final water rinse to the area we had cleaned.

As we headed out of the cave, we got to see the work everyone had done. It was FANTASTIC!!! Luckily, everyone had before & after pictures of their areas they cleaned. We went out and had a great pizza lunch together provided to us by Jenna, the owner/manager of the caverns.

After lunch we all did a final walk-through with Jenna to show her our work. She was very pleased and thankful. We did not get everything cleaned, so we are probably going to organize another trip one day. 🐿️



Lots of green Lampenflora on the Wedding Bell.

Ridge Walk and Burruss Cave #2

Article by *Keith Sweeney*, Photos by *David Socky*

Warm Springs Anticline Cave Survey & Karst Assessment Project Trip Report January 15, 2025. Keith Sweeney reporting.

Recent snowfall followed by freezing rain and single digit temperatures had transformed the Falling Spring Valley into a nearly impenetrable blanket of ice. Access to their projects through unbroke-



Keith & Jason tromping through the snow and ice.

ken fields and lanes was out of the question.

On Tuesday, Keith posted these local weather conditions to the WSP group, essentially declaring that the digging & logger replacement priorities would not be possible and that the only thing a person could possibly do in such conditions was to throw on some crampons and field walk looking for snow melt around steam vents. Keith envisioned a relaxing day staying warm by the wood stove since a nighttime low of 9° was forecast for the valley and figured no sane person would want to venture out in such weather.



Burruss Cave #2 after clearing the trees and vines.

When Dave Socky & Jason Sargent responded with interest, they decided that doing Something was better than doing Nothing, so an 11:00 a.m. meet up time was agreed upon.

Keith text-notified 4 property owners of potential intent and the next morning he and Dave drove to the Hoover property to look at a feature there. Jason pulled in right behind them, so they all entered the small sink-hole. Even though Keith & Rick Lambert had evidenced air there before, no opening was visible in the snow.

From here Keith led the way to the John Mitchell property hoping to walk a couple areas where steam vents had been reportedly seen by Joe Massie thru the years. But first they started at the back of the property near Black Widow Pit &

Burruss Calf Hole, hoping to find something that was missed in earlier forages.

Keith was also hoping to hear a reply from Bill Wilson allowing permission to search his land for a known cave that Keith & Rick Lambert had failed to find during their geologic surface mapping many months previously.

As they were wrapping up their unsuccessful search for new openings, Bill Wilson's truck drove by heading to his house. Keith had no cell phone service, so after having Dave and Jason sign the waiver that Keith had brought with him, he drove up to Bill's house and gained permission to search his land for the elusive "Burruss Cave No. 2".

After a 20-minute search the 3 foot by 6 foot opening was located!!

Lots of underbrush, vines and broken limbs were strewn across two 10 foot long logs spanning the entrance. Keith GPS'd the location and marked it with orange survey ribbon while Dave & Jason hiked the short distance back to the vehicles to get a hatchet and webbing. The logs were pulled out, brush thrown to the side and plans for rigging the vertical entrance from trees was discussed before leaving to search one last area on the way back out. This is an excellent find and it made their day of walking on ice very satisfying.

VSS data lists this cave as having been first reported in 1945 and last updated with an estimated, unsurveyed map in 1954. It will require a survey. It appears to them as possibly being unnoticed and untouched since 1954.

Of particular interest is its location compared to Warm River Cave's eastern trending line plot and 4 drops totaling 110 feet into unexplored territory!



Massie Cave #2.

Unfortunately, and somewhat disappointingly they noticed that the snow was not melted around the entrance rim like they hoped it would be. The opening is large, and air movement would not be readily noticeable of course but they're still excited!

They drove back towards Rt. 220 and parked in Joe Massie's driveway to access the final slope exploration in search of snow melt vents, but none were discovered. They took pictures of Massie Cave No. 2 as they passed by before reaching their vehicles for the ride home at 3:45 p.m.



Volunteer with the Eastern Region NCRC

Want to help with cave rescue?

Once a cave rescue is initiated, Eastern Region NCRC will contact you by text & email and ask if you can help.

To get on the Emergent Volunteer contact list (TexCom) they will need the following information:

- Your name
- Email address(s).
- Cell phone number and carrier (AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon, etc.).
- Special skills and training you have.
- Geographical area you cave in, and/or live in.
- Caves you know well. And any other information you feel is relevant.

Send everything to:

Earl Suitor
wvcaver216@gmail.com

Thank you for volunteering. 🐾

VAR Giveaway

1/31/2025 Tally Sepiol (FaceBook)

We're so excited to announce that the [Out of Bounds Grotto](#) has partnered with Karst Sports to donate an estimated 100 Petzl Boreo helmets to any Grotto that attends VAR!

How does this work?

When you sign in at VAR we will track your Grotto in attendance. On Saturday night, we will divide up the inventory to each grotto represented. You will be able to pick up your helmets either Saturday night or Sunday morning. Each grotto may only have 1 representative and individuals may not collect inventory for more than 1 grotto. This is not limited to grottos in the VAR region!

Make sure you register for VAR, we cannot wait to see you in May!

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-spring-var>

For more information about the event, check out <https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var> 🐾



Long Cave Lists

A legacy of Bob Gulden, now maintained by Paul Berger

<https://cave-exploring.com/index.php/long-and-deep-caves-of-the-world/>

John Guilday Cave Preserve Bat Counts 2025

Earl Suitor (NSS Preserve Manager)

On Saturday February 22nd, 2025, the annual bat counts took place for Hamilton, Trout & New Trout Caves on the John Guilday Cave / Nature Preserve of the N.S.S. in Pendleton County, West Virginia. Please note that Trout Cave is only counted every other year on odd years since COVID-19.

The NSS wishes to thank all those who took their day to help with this count on a cold yet sunny February day.

191 Total (all 3 caves) live bats were counted.

Trout Cave was counted by Earl Suitor, Erin Brook, Barbara Douglass, William Ponder, Gretchen Uhrinek, and Allie Shellhammer.

Hamilton Cave was counted by Amber Nolder (Pennsylvania Game Commission), Ashley Likourgos, Chris Coates, Tyler Giblin, and Tom Griffin.

New Trout Cave was counted by Dave West, Karen Willmes, Kevin Hughes, Blake Bremer (Virginia Tech), Olivia Ondo, and Sage Levy.

(Complete historical data for all three Preserve caves is available at <https://dgc.caves.org/bat-count>) 🐾

BRG Spreads the Word - NSS Caving Brochures

Several folks in Blue Ridge Grotto conduct cave outreaches. Here are a few:

Cave owner and author Marian McConnell (NSS# 37358) holds cave outreaches at regional libraries and assisted living facilities. Marian & DanO McConnell own Catawba Murder Hole, an (in)famous vertical cave. Numerous local residents 'snuck into' Catawba Murder Hole over the decades – Marian's outreaches, with an outstanding video of the cave and detailed book, have been well received by the community. Many people show up to tell of their harrowing experiences while spelunking in the cave decades earlier! (Note: Catawba Murder Hole is currently closed)

Caver Brian Williams (NSS 43870) is always entertaining, whether it's his cave outreaches, trout programs with local schoolkids, or if he shows up with a group of friendly snakes and skinks for a herpetology 'meet and greet'.

Former educator Mary Sue Socky (NSS 24206) has done countless cave and bat talks with area (Roanoke VA) scouts and school groups for decades.

Caver Meredith Weberg (NSS 21477) keeps everyone well-supplied with boxes of "Virginia Cave and Karst Trail" brochures she helped develop when she was a member of the Virginia Cave Board.

Caver Joey Fagan (NSS 10666) works with Scouting groups in the New River Valley, VA.

In October 2024, Blue Ridge Grotto, VPI Cave Club, and New River Valley Grotto helped host CaveSim at the Roanoke GO-Fest. In addition to helping CaveSim' Dave Jackson get thousands of people through the portable cave in two days, Blue Ridge Grotto also maintained a well-stocked "Cave Information" booth extolling the beauty of nearby show caves, how to find a grotto, landowner relations, etc. We handed out

(Continued on page 13)

(Brochures continued from page 12)

“A Guide to Responsible Caving”, “Fragile Underground”, “Bats”, “Caving Courtesy”, and the “Virginia Cave and Karst Trail” brochure (developed by the Virginia Cave Board).

Show Cave Brochure distribution:

- 1) Dixie Caverns, VA.
- 2) The Caverns at Natural Bridge, VA (now closed, purchased by Virginia State Parks, Natural Bridge State Park, VA)
- 3) Lost World Caverns, WV.
- 4) (pre-2021) Grand Caverns, VA.



Area Cave Closures

The Caverns at Natural Bridge (orig. Buck Hill Cave), Rockbridge Co. VA Show Cave closed in 2024. CNB now part of Natural Bridge State Park. No other details. It is unlikely that CNB will open in 2025.

Catawba Murder Hole, Botetourt Co. VA is closed to visitation.

Giant Caverns, Giles Co. VA is now owned by the West Virginia Cave Conservancy. A management plan is being developed. The cave will be open for qualified vertical cavers. Stay tuned!

Norman Cave, Greenbrier Co, WV. The WVCC (cave manager) has announced there has been an issue with parking at Norman Cave. It is advised not visit this cave entrance until this matter has been resolved. There are plenty of other Greenbrier caves that can be visited instead, so plan accordingly.

Moler's Cave, WV, is currently closed until the property's legal matters are resolved due to Dr. Latterells's passing. Any attempt to visit the cave could negatively impact the outlook for future visitation. There is a working group on the property keeping an eye on the property.

Organ Cave, Greenbrier Co. WV show cave continues to be closed for renovations.

Giant Caverns has a new owner - the WVCC

Bill Balfour

2/2025: Today was a good day. We closed on a property & now have our 3rd Virginia cave preserve. The WVCC is pleased to announce the acquisition of Giant Caverns in Narrows, Virginia. Early in the 20th century this was a commercial cave but has been dormant for 80+ years. The entrance is in a 40' nearly vertical sink that opens into pit about 50' deep. The pit drops into a large heavily decorated room (similar to Lost World) with passage heights around 60'. The cave is not known to be extensive but a mapping project may change that. There was a horizontal tourist entrance at one point that has since collapsed. We will evaluate whether it is feasible to reopen it. In the meantime, access will be via the pit entrance by vertically competent cavers.

The WVCC was able to cover the cost of the purchase through our acquisition fund that our members have generously funded. We have depleted a good portion of it and now need to replenish it so we can work on our next acquisition. Your donations are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

We will develop a management plan in the near future. The cave will be maintained as open to qualified vertical cavers. Dan Crowder, from the VPI Grotto, has volunteered to be the preserve manager. Much thanks to Wil Orndorff for facilitating the entire process of acquiring the property.

See WVCC [Facebook post](#).



Remembering Charlotte Lucas

Save the date

**Remembering Charlotte Lucas—
May 3, 2025 – Owl Cave at the Water Sinks**

Sadly, Charlotte Lucas passed away this past December. Although not a caver, she was a significant contributor to speleology. She installed much of the VSS cave data and initiated a karst spring database.

During a cave trip, she pointed up to a small alcove a short distance from the Helictite entrance, saying, what a great place to put our ashes It will allow our

spirits to watch over those entering our cave.

Saturday, May 3, 2025, at 2:00, we will celebrate Charlotte's life with friends and cavers in the meadow in front of the Owl Cave. Rock Ward is our storytelling facilitator. Charlotte's ashes will be carried into Helictite and sealed in one of the pair of urns I put in the cave 22 years ago.

Please join us. It will be a beautiful spring day.

Philip Lucas

Grotto Trip Log

12/5/2024: Trish Geiger visited the **Cave of Wonders** on Catalina Island in the Dominican Republic. Pretty show cave! See this [link](#).

12/21/24: Jerin Manalel and a friend who is a marathon runner visited **New River Cave, VA**. They went to the waterfall and explored the lower level rooms. They saw 6 bats: mostly big browns.

1/1/2025: Dave Socky went to a *Southern Colorado Mountain Grotto* meeting in Colorado Springs, CO. The meeting was in a private room of a Mexican restaurant starting at 7pm. There were about 30 cavers in attendance. Dave Jackson says hi!

1/4/2025: Bob Alderson attended the Allegheny County (VA) Warm Springs Project to work in **Warm River Cave, VA**. Bob, Corey Hackley, Mark Minton, Vonny Droms, and three grad students encountered low (3") air space. They did the bypass and some sightseeing in the Historic Warm Branch of the cave. They saw many interesting climb-ups that should be checked. (NOTE – *Warm River Cave is CLOSED except to science and mapping.*)

1/11/2025: **McClung Cave, WV**. Participants included David Socky, Nikki Fox, Eli Meyers, Nick Socky, Jason Sargent, and Marissa Loftus. We were almost snowed out of the trip. There were only 10 people at the field station for WVACS project weekend. Six of us went into Historic Entrance to the Little and Big Muddy's to mop up leads. Nikki, Eli, and I started with the left-hand lead in the access passage to the Muddy's. This was the longest piece we did. Then we cleaned up two small leads on the right in the Little

Muddy's. Nick and team finished off leads in the Big Muddy. By the time we finished, around 9pm, we had finished off all the leads. The Muddy's are done! We came out to a 20 F evening around 12:30am. We had changed in the cave. We didn't get stuck in the snow, and we had surveyed 267 feet for a 12.5-hour trip.

1/15/2025: Burruss Cave #2, VA. Participants included David Socky, Keith Sweeney, and Jason Sargent. We went ridge walking in the snow and ice with 18 Degree F weather. We also found **Burruss Cave #2** which was known but only had a sketch map from 1954. See the article on page 11.

1/18/2025: BRG trip to **Lowmoor Cave, VA**. 14 people signed up, but only Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Alex Thompson, Trish Geiger, Sharon Mohny, Ben Hester and Abby Arbeiter made it to the cave. The old ladder over the scary spot has not yet been replaced. Good trip!

1/19: BRG Winter Party. Dave Socky, Mary Sue Socky, Alex Thompson, Susan Burr, Jeff Huffman, Hillary Huffman, Doug Feller, Cheryl Feller, John Pearson, Lyn Pearson, Lauren Appel, Nick Schmalenberger, Bob Alderson, Trish Geiger, and Joey Fagan. Fifteen cavers showed up with nice things to eat, we watched old cave videos and had fun with Nick Schmalenberger's new squeezebox.

1/20: Nick Schmalenberger, Angela Rao, and Alicyn Gitlin did some of the **Higginbotham Caves** near Frankford, WV. Probably #1 and #4.

1/23: Dave and Mary Sue Socky attended the Virginia Cave Board meeting in Natural Bridge SP, VA. Dave later visited the now-closed **Caverns at Natural**

Bridge, VA. Very icy entrance.

1/25: Nick Schmalenberger reported on a cave rescue in **New River Cave, VA**. A VPI trainee was climbing on rocks near the Lunch Room, slipped and broke his leg (Fib-Tib fracture). VPI and Blacksburg Cave Rescue Group (BCRG) responded. Some BRG were on standby. Injured caver is going to be OK.

1/27: Shenandoah Wild Cave, VA. Participants included David Socky, Dave Hubbard, Blaine Schubert, Greg McCoy, Davis Gunnin, Casey Tucker, Eric Zieg, and Carl Amundson. Carol Tideman, Mary Sue Socky, and Janet Tinkham were surface support. The visit to **Shenandoah Wild Cave** was with landowner permission and paleo permits. They removed one Long Nosed Peccary skull (Pleistocene, extinct) and various bones; more peccary skeletons are still in the cave.

1/27: Carol Tideman and Mary Sue Socky visited **Shenandoah Caverns, VA**. Beautiful cave!

2/1: Nick Schmalenberger & Martin DiLeggi visited **Padlock Cave, Rockbridge Co VA** – one of Martin's digs.

2/15: Meredith Weberg attended the SVG weekend. They rented Mark Hodge's old mill house (now Airbnb) in McDowell, VA for the weekend. Went to **Crossroads Cave, VA**, which had ice everywhere. Nope! Visited the two caves on the mill property: **Cedar Knob Cave** (vertical) entrance is in a shed, and the horizontal **Solid Rock Cave** with its wooden door.



(Announcements continued from page 9)

<https://caves.org/vtc/> Contact Kyle Mills kmills@caves.org for more info.

VAR Closed Cave List can be found at this [link](#). Please send changes and updates to Brad Blase at blase@virginiacaves.org

Bat Cave Closures for some caves. WV: closed September 1 to May 15. VA: closed October 15 to April 15.

Please respect all cave closures.



Treasurer's Report 03/13/2025

Cave Bucks	\$ 112.96
Conservation	\$ 2.00
Equipment	\$ 144.12
General	\$5,935.84
Total	\$6,194.92

Dixie Caverns Threat

NOTE: This proposed rezoning goes before the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors on April 1, 2025, at 6 p. address: 5204 Bernard Drive, Roanoke, VA 24018

The person who owns the Caverns Mart at I-81 X 132 wants to put a 4-story hotel behind his convenience store – he wants to rezone the property from residential to high density commercial and overdevelop it.

For a Roanoke Time article on this issued dated 2/25/2025, [see this link](#).

The proposed hotel would tower over the Dixie Caverns property and cause excessive runoff from the proposed hotel property onto the Dixie Caverns Campground and buildings.

- Fallbrooke Drive-(gravel road) would become the only expanded, enlarged, paved delivery/access road to the hotel.

- Fallbrooke Drive and other easements have been greatly expanded in the proposed plan, to the detriment of adjoining landowners.
- Where would the construction and parking lot runoff go? Downhill is the Dixie Campground. Dumping water into a culvert on the Dixie property below the site does not seem adequate.
- This hotel runoff, in addition to the 150% increase in runoff from the planned I-81 construction, will overwhelm the Dixie Caverns property, campground, parking lot, and building during rain events and floods.
- Doesn't off-ramp realignment of I – 81 affect this proposed site?

If you can, please show up at the public hearing for the project on 4-1-2025 rezoning meeting and voice your opinion on the rezoning and development and its

impact on nearby properties. You don't have to be an expert, or a county resident. You DO have to sign up ahead of time to speak at the Board of Supervisors Public Hearing. Contact <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/FormCenter/Board-of-Supervisors-17-17/Request-to-Address-the-Board-93-93> or call 540-772-2006.

The Roanoke County Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing for the project April 1, 2025.

All public hearings will be held in the Board Meeting Room, Roanoke County Administration Center,

5204 Bernard Drive, Roanoke, unless otherwise notified. Planning Commission Public hearings start at 7:00 p.m. Board of Supervisors Public Hearings start at 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise notified. 🐾

MS Socky



2025 Cave Rescue Operations and Management Seminar by the National Cave Rescue Commission

The seminar will be held July 11th - 19th at Mountain Gateway Community College in Clifton Forge, VA.

The seminar consists of extensive classroom instruction and fieldwork in all phases of cave rescue including the underground environment, search problems, extrication techniques, patient evaluation and care, patient packaging, horizontal and vertical patient movement, rigging, hauling and lowering systems, communication systems, and the organization and management of cave rescue operations. Students typically include cavers, emergency services personnel, and emergency managers. The training will total nearly 100 hours of classroom and fieldwork.

Courses Include:

- Level 1 - Task Force Member
- Level 2 - Task Force Leader
- Level 3 - Vertical Specialist
- IQ - Instructor Qualification (Invite only)

*Additional classes may be added (details TBD).

Registration Information:

- **Opens:** February 2nd, 2025, at 12:00 pm Eastern
- **To Register:** Visit <https://caves.org/ncrc> and scroll to "Upcoming Training".
- **Spaces fill quickly!** Be sure to register early. A waitlist will be available.
- **Additional details** will be posted on the registration page soon (including the cancellation policy).

Lodging:

- Space for tent camping and small campers included (no hookups).
- Showers & Restrooms provided.
- A limited number of air-conditioned bunkhouse-style tents, complete with cots and bed rolls, will be available at no extra cost. Additional details available during registration.

Cost - \$1,168 (includes all meals starting with breakfast on July 12th through breakfast on the 19th)

Scholarships will be available. Details on how to apply will be provided on the registration page.

For more information, including prerequisites, visit: <https://caves.org/ncrc/courses/ncrc-course-descriptions/>

Questions? Contact: eastern@ncrc.caves.org 🐾

Vote for your Favorite Five

These **CARBIDE DUMP** covers from 2024 are eligible to be entered in this year's NSS Cover Art Salon.

Send your votes by email to Mary Sue Socky at sockymss@cox.net.

Selected **CARBIDE DUMP** covers will be displayed at the NSS Cover Art Salon during the NSS Convention, June 21-28, 2025 in Cobleskill, NY.


Anyone can vote. Any number of times!

Vote 5 times for your favorite. Or, vote only for sketched artwork. Vote for any photo that has green in it. Vote against your previous

vote – we don't care! BRG knows how to pick 'em!

Voting ends April 25, 2025.

The covers are much more stunning in color – look at them on-line for the best viewing at <https://blueridgegrotto.org/carbidedump.htm>.

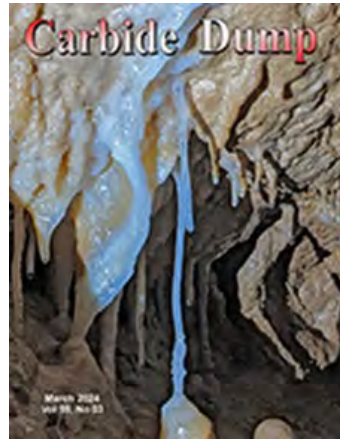
Below are covers from the 2024 **CARBIDE DUMPS** 



Jan 2024 v59 n1



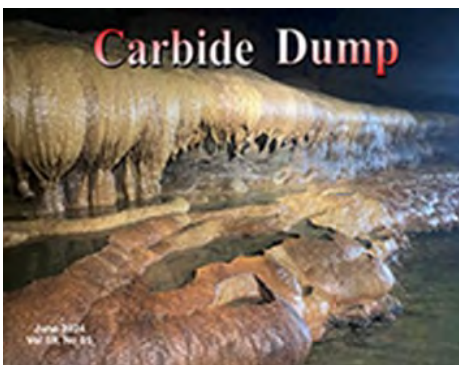
Feb 2024 v59 n2



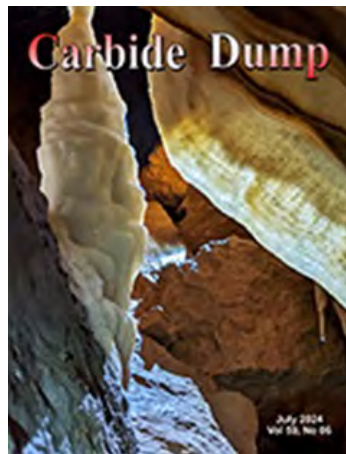
Mar 2024 v59 n3



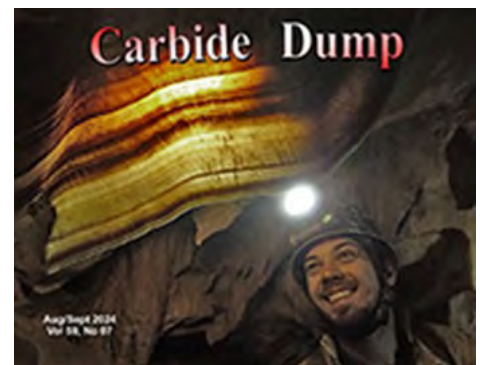
May 2024 v59 n4



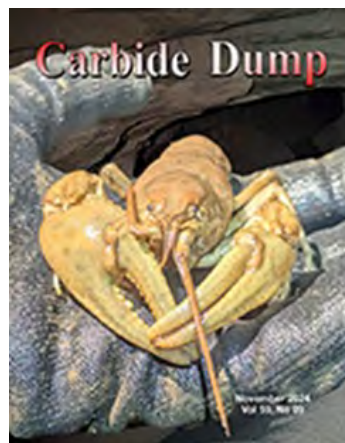
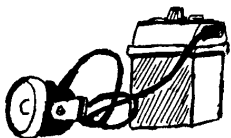
June 2024 v59 n5



July 2024 v58 n6



Aug/Sept 2024 v59 n7



Nov 2024 v59 n9



Dec 2024 v59 n10





Basic Info

- **Dates:** Friday, May 9, 2025 - Sunday, May 11, 2025
- **Location:** Spruce Knob Mountain Center, [18 Woodlands Way, Circleville, WV 26804](#)
- **Pre-Registration:** \$50 (includes dinner). Individuals under 18: \$20.
- **Contact:** Email Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG) at outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com
- **Proceeds:** Proceeds support the Virginia Region (VAR), Out of Bounds Grotto (OBG), Germany Valley Karst Survey, Vertical Training Section of the National Speleological Society (NSS), and Central Appalachian Cave Rescue Team.

Camping and Accommodations

- **Camping:** Ample space available with bathhouses (toilets & showers).
- **Dorms:** 40 beds per dorm. Additional \$30 per night.
- **Yurts:** Guest yurts available (sleep 4). Additional \$70 per night.
- **Pets:** Not permitted on-site.
- **Fire Policy:** Fires allowed only in designated fire rings with local wood.
- **To Reserve Dorms or Yurts:** Contact OBG at outofboundsgrotto@gmail.com.

Caving Opportunities

Vertical Caves:

- Shoveleater Cave: Technical skills required. Includes rebelay, J-hangs, traverses, and drops up to 215 ft.
- Ruddle: Vertical with tight spaces
- Thompson Pit: Vertical
- Con Cave: Vertical
- Harper's Pit: Vertical
- Sites: Vertical
- Sites Attic: Vertical

Horizontal Caves:

- Hamilton Cave
- New Trout Cave
- Kees Cave (optional easy vertical)
- Stillhouse Cave
- Sinks of Gandy
- High Meadow Cave
- Cave Rat Cave

Other Activities

Meteor Shower: Eta Aquariids – Perfect viewing location at the campsite.

Hiking:

- **Whispering Spruce Trail:** Easy, ½ mile, stunning sunset views
- **Seneca Creek Trail:** 5.5 miles, waterfalls, natural springs, and bridges (expect wet feet)
- **Huckleberry Trail:** 11 miles, high meadows and backcountry vistas
- **Piper Apache Plane Crash Site:** 10 miles, easy hike on old logging trail
- **Seneca Rocks:** Hiking (1.5-mile ascent) & rock climbing (400+ routes)

Event Schedule

Friday, May 9, 2025

- Registration Opens: 2:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Trip Sign-Ups: 8:00 PM
- Campfire: After Dark

Saturday, May 10, 2025

- Guided and Self-Guided Cave Trips
- Dinner: 6:00 PM
- Evening Program: 7:30 PM. Presentation by Kyle Mills: *"Three Carabini-ers and a Whole Lot of Guts: Early Vertical Exploration in Pendleton County"*

Meteor Shower Viewing

Sunday, May 11, 2025

- VAR Business Meeting: 9:00 AM
- Site Closes: 12:00 PM
- Self-Guided Cave Trips Continue

Additional Information

- **Vendors:** To Be Announced.
- **Waivers:** Must be signed on the OBG website.
- **Stay Updated:** Follow OBG or VAR on Facebook for the latest updates.

Registration: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/2025-spring-var>

Info: <https://var.caves.org/index.php/events/spring-var>

