

# ***The FLOWSTONE***

Vol 25 Issue 9

October 2018



## ***Whiteside 2018***

*A Monthly Newsletter of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society*

# CULLMAN GROTTO FLOWSTONE

October 2018

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**The Flowstone** is published monthly by the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Items submitted for publication must be received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.

The Cullman Grotto will exchange by request with any publishing grotto. Republication of items within **The Flowstone** is allowed provided credit is given to author and source.

Membership to the Cullman Grotto is fifteen dollars (\$15) per year for individual or twenty dollars (\$20) per year for family. Dues are payable at the first grotto meeting of each year (January) and includes subscription to **The Flowstone**. Subscription rate for non-members is fifteen dollars (\$15) per year.

The Cullman Grotto meets on the first Monday of each month unless the first Monday falls on a holiday or otherwise noted. In those cases the meeting will be held on the second Monday. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held at the old L&N train depot, Arnold St., Cullman, AL. All visitors and prospective members are welcome.

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**Front Cover:** Terri Leonard  
manning the top rig point at  
Whiteside Mt., Highlands, NC

**Photo by:** Teresa Cline Lingerfelt

## ECHO)))) CHAMBER

### SCCi Science Award

By: Robert Handford (Huntsville, Alabama)



The Southeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc. (SCCi) announces that the Annual Science Awards program to help fund scientific and conservation research projects on SCCi preserves is now soliciting grant proposals for 2018-19. As the nation's largest and most successful land conservancy devoted to acquiring and protecting caves, SCCi understands that scientific research must be part of our mission. We firmly believe that research is essential to conserving karst resources and it is a foundation upon which good stewardship must depend.

We aim to have a well-rounded research program with focus mainly towards cave/karst topics in geology, geochemistry, hydrology, biology, environmental science and archaeology. SCCi currently protects 171 caves on 31 preserves in 6 states. Any one of these would be worthy of various types of scientific investigations.

SCCi is now accepting grant proposals from non-profit caving groups, independent scientists, university/college faculty members, and undergraduate-graduate students for conducting research projects at SCCi properties, beginning in the Fall of 2018. Funds can only be given to a not-for-profit organization or educational institution. For this year, there are as many as 3 grants of up to \$1,500 each for (1) geology, geochemistry, or hydrology, (2) biology (zoology and botany) and (3)

environmental/archaeological projects.

All proposals must be submitted using the SCCi research proposal online. The deadline for submissions is November 1, 2018. A team of reviewers will evaluate all proposals and base their decisions on scientific merit. Decisions will be announced by November 15, 2018. Awardees from the previous year are not eligible. Results from the research must be submitted to SCCi as brief quarterly reports followed by a final written report or thesis. We encourage publishing in scientific journals but SCCi reserves the right to review each report for approval/disapproval prior to publishing.

To submit a grant request visit <https://permits.scci.org/annual-science-awards>. You must register to complete a grant request. For more information email: [robert.handford@scci.org](mailto:robert.handford@scci.org)



### Caving access on Pigeon Mountain

By: Andy Zellner (Marietta, Georgia)

Hi folks, I know a lot of cavers may want to visit the Pigeon Mountain area around the upcoming Cave-In, and I wanted to clarify the new regulations about access there.

As of 2017, all visitors to Georgia WMAs (like Pigeon Mountain) must purchase a License. There is no

caving/climbing/hiking license, but you still must have something. So the least expensive route for us is to buy a hunting/fishing license.

This can be done online at any time at this link:

<https://license.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com>

One-day licenses are available for \$5, and additional days cost \$1 apiece (so \$8 for a 4-day weekend, for example). Annual licenses can be bought for \$25.

Every individual must have their own license, no group licenses are available (which kinda hurts). If you are NOT a GA resident, the above prices will be doubled (which really hurts).

This includes popular caves such as Pettijohns, Ellisons, Ulla Cave, Nash Waterfall, Anderson Spring Cave, Richards Cave, Four Kings, etc.

Caves in Cloudland Canyon are not part of the WMA and do not require a license (just a waiver/permit).

On a different note, we're still in dire need for a few volunteers to help lead trips during the upcoming Cave-In -- especially on Saturday. If you'd like to help out, or don't mind a few extra people tagging along on your own trip, please let me know directly.



## CaveNet: The NSS Webinar Series

### Upcoming NSS Webinars



#### Salt, Smoke, and Sketchy Slopes: 11 Miles of Survey in Grand Canyon Caves

Presented by: Beth Cortright

Date: October 2, 2018 at 9:00 PM EDT

In Grand Canyon National Park, expedition teams have surveyed over 11 miles of new cave passage in the past 2 years. A new cave with large passages and impressive calcite, gypsum, epsomite, and mirabilite formations, called Gryffindor Cave, was discovered in 2016. The following year, surveyors mapped a connection between Gryffindor Cave and Double Bopper Cave, which was already the longest and deepest cave in Arizona.

Expeditions in fall 2017 mapped 5.7 miles of new survey in this system and brought the length of Double Bopper Cave to 36.7 miles. Several accomplished cave photographers were present on these expeditions, providing spectacular photographic documentation of the passages, formations, and the antics of the cavers involved.

This presentation was given in the US Exploration session during the 2018 NSS Convention in Helena, Montana. Join us for another look at recent discoveries in the newly discovered caves in Grand Canyon National Park.

Presenter: Beth Cortright has been caving for about 11 years. She began exploring underground while attending college and primarily caved in south central Kentucky, where she learned to survey. During this time, Beth also got involved with

a group surveying caves in collaboration with archaeologists at Maya sites in the Yucatan, Mexico. Through her adventures with the caving group in Kentucky and Mexico, Beth was invited on a weeklong expedition into Lechuguilla Cave in Carlsbad Caverns National Park in 2011. Beth has since returned to Lechuguilla many times, and to many other New Mexico caves as well, for more day trips and expeditions. Beth also participates in expeditions to Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness and Grand Canyon National Park.

#### Managing a Major International Caving Project:

##### Proyecto Espeleologico Sistema Huautla

Presented by: Bill Steele

Date: November 13, 2018 at 9:00 PM EST

Our presenter, Bill Steele, will explain what it's like managing such a huge project as the exploration of Sistema Huautla. (Proyecto Espeleologico Sistema Huautla, or PESH)

Bill is now busy organizing the 2019 expedition of PESH, which is an official NSS project. During these expeditions his team will be exploring, mapping, conducting speleological studies, and publishing information about one of the world's greatest caves, Sistema Huautla. The cave is located in southern Mexico and is the deepest cave in the Western Hemisphere. PESH 2019 will be the 23rd expedition Bill has made to Huautla in 42 years. These expeditions have been his lifelong passion. What's it like managing such a big project? Watch and find out.

Bill Steele, NSS 8072 LB-FE-CM-AL is a co-leader of PESH. His first trip to Huautla was 38 years ago in 1977. He joined the NSS in 1964 at age 16. Steele lives

in Dallas, Texas. He caves in Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mexico, and China. He's a member of the NSS Awards Committee and an officer of the Dallas/Fort Worth Grotto.

Go to [http://caves.org/webinars/Coming\\_Attractions.shtml#Canyon](http://caves.org/webinars/Coming_Attractions.shtml#Canyon) for information on how to sign up and participate.



## TAG Calendar

**October 1**

**Grotto Meeting**

L&N Train Depot, Arnold St 7:30PM

**October 6**

**Grotto Trip**

TBA

**October 4-7**

**TAG Fall Cave-In**

Lookout Mountain, GA

**October 20**

**Bridge Day 2018**

New River Gorge, WV

## Whiteside Mountain Rappel

By Harold Calvert

Pictures by Teresa Cline Lingerfelt



No, it's not a caving report. But it is about vertical cavers doing what they love, ropework.

It was time once again to take the VBATS team new members to Whiteside mountain to qualify them for the Bridge Day rappel in October.

Whiteside is in North Carolina, and is a 660 foot rappel from our rigpoint. We do this for new members every year to let them get a good sense of what they will be in for when they rappel the New River Gorge bridge during the Bridge Day festival in October. It is about an 876 foot rappel, depending on the rig spot that is assigned to your team.

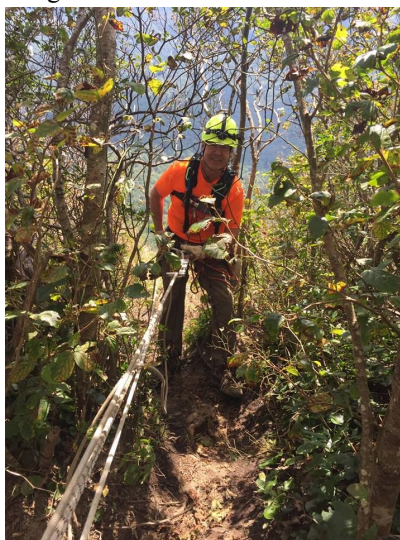
We had to reschedule our original trip this year, due to the hurricane that hit North Carolina. This turned out to be unnecessary as the area did not get any rain. But it's better to be safe than sorry. I have been on a long rope in severe conditions. It's not fun, and very dangerous.

We had rented a nice cabin for the weekend, but lost it when we rescheduled. Camping for us this time. When we arrived at the primitive campground, it looked like

a small city, or at least a refugee camp. Would these people be evacuees from the storm? No, they were other Bridge Day teams. We had to split our group between three small campsites to have room.



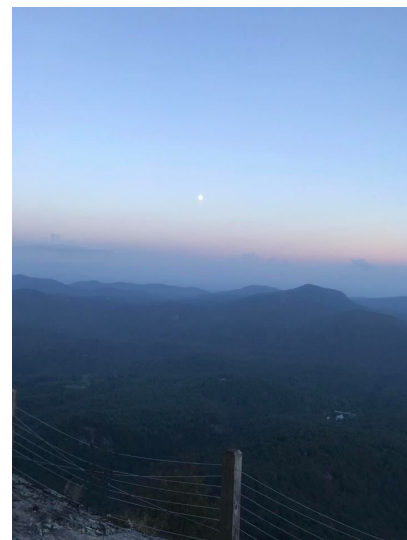
When we hiked to the top of the mountain, I had expected to not have a rigpoint because of the number of people that was there. Luck would have it, Dustin hiked the day before and claimed a spot for us. The group next to us had five ropes rigged. We put down three. A third group had another rope down. The mountain gets pretty crowded this time of year with rappellers qualifying for the Bridge.



We had perfect conditions for the day. Temperature around 78, light

wind, and sunny. Terri Leonard manned the top rigpoint, and sent people down to me on the first ledge. When they got to me, I had them derig and transfer to the main rappel rope. They would then back down a slope to Chuck Tice, where he would assist them over the edge. His job was also to relay messages from the bottom belayers to me and the top. Dustin Humphrey was the belayer. As they would go down, we would send them back up a steep trail to the top, where they could go again if they wished to. Several took us up on the offer. Tiny rigged a second rope for us, and many decided to climb instead of hiking. It's faster and easier in my opinion.

Everything went as well as could be expected, all that went down had good rappels. After we derigged, everybody met in town for a good Mexican meal. A good way to end a good day.



## Gross Skelton Cave

By Harold Calvert

Our trip last month was to Gross Skelton cave. And yes, it's Skelton, not skeleton. There are two entrances to the cave, one was originally owned by the Gross family, the other by the Skelton family. There were never any gross skeletons in the cave. That we know of...



This trip had grown in size since I planned it, and now had nineteen cavers, from three different grottoes. Cullman, Montgomery, and Birmingham grottoes were represented that day.

We were instructed to park up the mountain road by the landowner, Mr Albrecht. There were several cars stashed near the trail past the lower entrance.

We hike in to the upper entrance and exit the lower, then out a trail around the backwater to the cars.

As we hiked to the upper entrance, we got a little sidetracked. The area had not been bush hogged this year, and we went past the entrance. After a short back track we found the right spot. This cave takes a lot of water at

times, as evidenced by the brush and debris in the first sections of the cave.

Soon you come to a short drop, which is made much easier with a short handline. This drops you into the first section of water. And now we are glad that we had wetsuits. The water is cold!.

It's hard to keep this many people together in a cave like this, we began to get strung out. At least this keeps people from standing in water waiting to move onward. There are several sections in this cave that have deep water and require swimming. I tell everyone to add a dry bag to their packs, this helps with flotation if needed. Soon we came to the upper section, where there are some nice formation areas. And also other cavers! Kuenn had not been able to make the trip but had come to the lower entrance to go in and surprise us. Just past this area there is a low airspace section with deep water. The water is a little higher this day and several cavers were nervous about going through but all did good. From this point it's all easy caving with a few swims mixed in for fun. And without warning you turn a corner and see daylight, but feel the heat and humidity.

Makes you want to turn around and go back through.

I always enjoy this trip, but it seems that the cave is always a little different every time I go through. Maybe the high water levels rearrange the sandy rocky stream bed. Or maybe, I just forget. Not saying which. It's a very enjoyable trip anyway.



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society

September 10, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Cullman Grotto of the National Speleological Society was called to order on Monday, September 10, 2018 at 7:45 pm by Harold Calvert, Chairman. 7 members were present. (Eight if you count the caution cone wearing Harold's hat...it was dark...we're not sure.)

The minutes from the August meeting were stumbled thru by Sharon Clayton (again, it was dark...braille would have been appreciated!) in the absence of Evon Thompson, Secretary. A motion was made by Harold Calvert to accept the minutes as read and was seconded by Perry Clayton. The motion was approved.

The Treasurer's report was given by Harold Calvert in the absence of Tracy Calvert, Treasurer. (we're pretty sure there's money in the bank, but it was too dark to see the register)

The Flowstone editor asked for submissions for the newsletter. Photos, articles and anything else that you would like to send are welcome.

The Webmaster is gradually updating the website.

### Announcements:

TAG – October 4-7

Bridge Day – October 20

### Old Business:

None

### New Business:

The idea of some kind of reunion event for the Grotto's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was brought up.

October 2018

Cullman Grotto Flowstone

Everyone was in favor.

**Upcoming Grotto Trips:**

Kuenn proposed Byers Cave as our annual Black Friday caving event. Everyone was in favor.

Trip reports were given of the Grotto Picnic, Gross Skelton and the recent Valhalla trip with the Veterans' Adventure Group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

