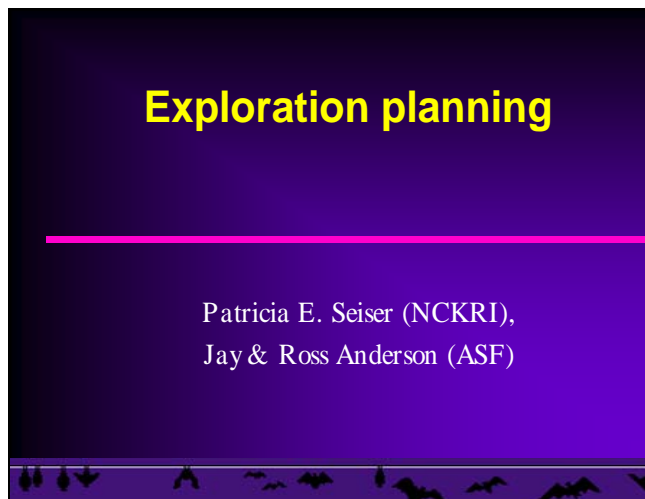


The Exploration Component of a Cave Management Plan

Patricia E. Seiser, Ross Anderson & Jay Anderson

Exploration activities are often overlooked in the development of management plans for caves, yet exploration can have a significant impact on a cave's environ. In addition, knowledge derived from exploration is a key component in the conservation and protection of caves. Few cave management plans can be considered complete without addressing cave exploration activities. Exploration management plans are not plans for how an expedition is to be run, rather they address policies and procedures for both in-cave and surface activities associated with exploration. Exploration management plans must address competency requirements of participants, ranging from necessary caving skills to required skill levels for surveying and inventory activities. Plans need to address a variety of activities including: survey procedures, the establishment of trails, and photo documentation. In addition to in-cave activities, plans must address surface activities including data management and cartography. It is important that all plans are region appropriate. Exploration can be a powerful tool in the conservation and protection caves, but only as long as it is conducted in a manner that conserves the cave and provides data and results to support conservation/protection efforts.

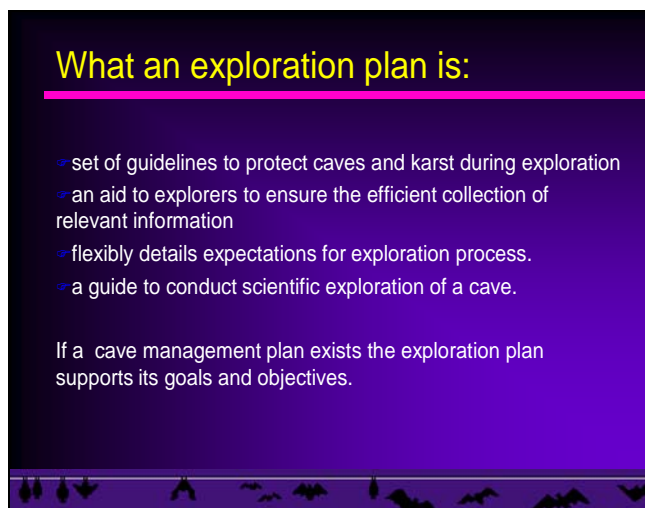
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Introduce Self:

- Most caving has been surveying.

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- Quick overview of what will be covered.
- Many ideas may be “controversial”. Many of these things have evolved over time.
- The idea is to point out need for changes and to provide food for thought.

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What it is not:

- game plan for running an expedition.
- static document, must be adaptable.
- tool to prevent access to a cave,

RPP

- Oh and then someone else can survey what we found.
- accuracy isn't that important.
- sketching to scale isn't that important.

SAYG

- Survey accuracy and sketch quality has become very important.
- Quality of survey has become a standard throughout much of the caving community, particularly in projects.

DNE

- evolving survey practices, heightened awareness among the average caver.

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Why have an exploration plan?

- **Improves**
 - ◆ Efficiency of data collection during exploration, especially that undertaken in remote areas
- **Professionalizes**
 - ◆ Showing a high degree of skill or competence.
- **Legitimizes**
 - ◆ Conforms to acknowledged standards, rules or traditions.
- **Authorizes**
 - ◆ Provides a way to give permission/condone activities (or not).

- Survey once viewed as a pretty basic activity -- just set a few stations and sketch the passage. How much thought is required - especially for station setters and instrument readers?
- But....survey activities can impact the cave, both during the survey and in the future.
- Responsible survey practices can lead to greater protection to the cave.
- Survey techniques to be discussed, after running through a few basic definitions.

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An exploration plan...

- addresses surface and subsurface exploration.
- details activities to occur during the exploration process and follow-up activities.
- addresses access policies related to exploration.

- A quick review of these definitions.

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Putting together a exploration plan

Skill sets for exploration

Required caving skills:

- ❖ basic horizontal skills
- ❖ vertical skills
- ❖ survey/sketching experience
- ❖ documentation skills
- ❖ minimal impact caving, track/ route marking techniques
- ❖ navigation skills

- First of all let's be honest:
- We all go into caves, so we ALL impact them!

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Are they Competent?



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Subsurface exploration

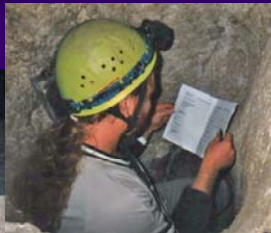
- Survey & mapping processes
- Documentation & inventory activities
- Other scientific activities
 - ❖ Collection of samples
 - ❖ Recording of environmental data
- Cave modification
- Cave diving
- Track and route marking

Impact is....



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Surveying

Walk to every wall?





What to leave behind?



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Speleothems

To go where none have gone before, or accept that not every lead needs to be pushed....??





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Biology

To disturb or leave in peace?



To collect or photo-locate?

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Historic/ Cultural




Maybe cultural artifacts will aid in conservation



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Trackmarking and route marking



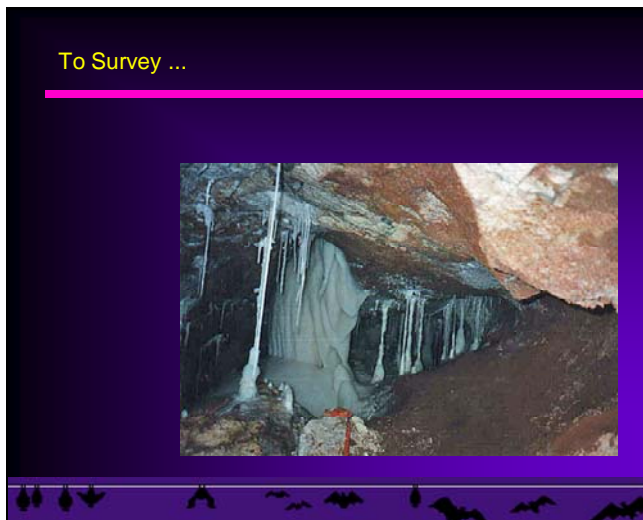
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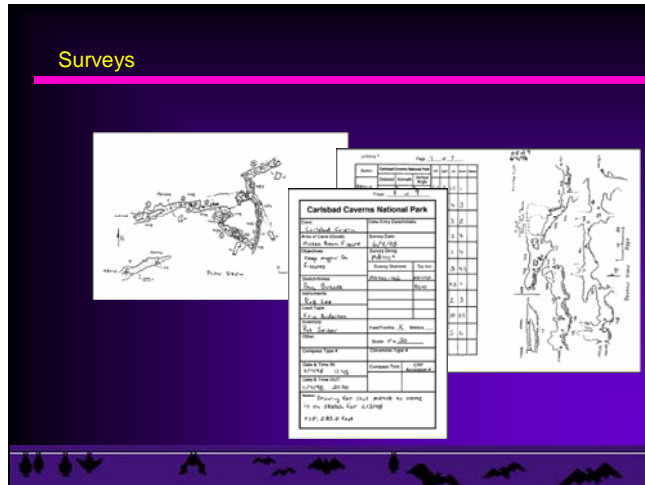
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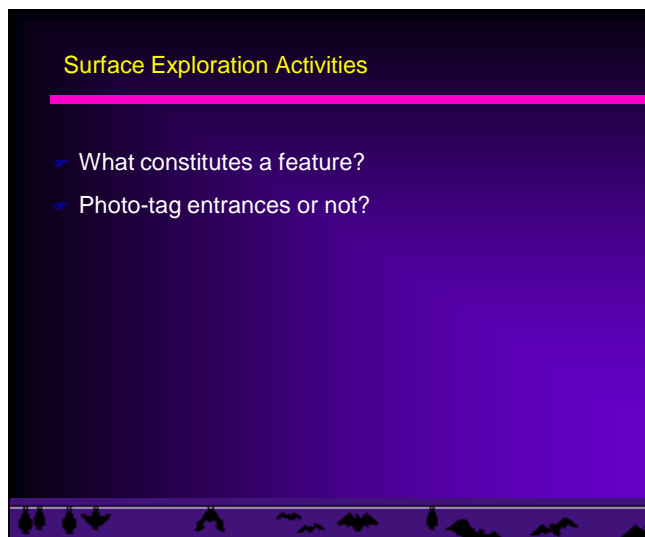
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- Preservation is...
- Ideal cave preservation is to close off a cave, never enter it (but this rarely if ever is going to happen!)

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In camp tasks and resources

- Survey notes, daily trip reports where is it to be stored and whom is responsible?
- Data entry on site or at home
- Task list
- Equipment
- Rescue equipment

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Why Have an Exploration Plan?

- **Professionalizes**
 - ◆ Showing a high degree of skill or competence.
- **Legitimizes**
 - ◆ Conforms to acknowledged standards, rules or traditions.
- **Authorizes**
 - ◆ Provides a way to give permission/condone activities (or not).
- **Negates**
 - ◆ Caves are private playgrounds for a bunch of odd, irresponsible people (Image is important – we are cavers not spelunkers!).

- Survey once viewed as a pretty basic activity -- just set a few stations and sketch the passage. How much thought is required - especially for station setters and instrument readers?
- But....survey activities can impact the cave, both during the survey and in the future.
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That's all...

