

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

William R. Elliott, Chairman & Editor

The 18th National Cave & Karst Management Symposium was held October 8 to 12, 2007 at the **Holiday Inn SW & Viking Conference Center**, St. Louis, Missouri. On the following pages are selected photos contributed by the editor and participants.

This was a well-attended symposium with 182 participants and a large Proceedings. Speakers presented a wide variety of talks, from the basic history of cave management in Missouri to the latest high-tech research—something for everyone! I was gratified to see cavers, managers, scientists, show cave operators, conservationists, and the public mingling all week.

On Monday Philip Moss led an **Illinois Karst trip**, and two workshops were given by Bat Conservation International's Jim Kennedy and Project Underground's Carol Zokaite. In the evening we had a welcome party with *hors d'oeuvres* and free beer from Schlafly Beer.

On Tuesday the main session began with a welcome from Bill Elliott and Jim Kaufmann, followed by a keynote address by Director John Hoskins of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). Paper sessions were punctuated with ample breaks and refreshments. Lunch was served in the lobby, where sponsors displayed exhibits. Speleobooks brought a complete store. Tuesday afternoon concluded with Cave Management by Cavers and a panel discussion. On Tuesday evening we bused to MDC's **Powder Valley Nature Center**, where we held a free public event, including the *Caves in Crisis* photo exhibit and a speaker panel on the subject of *Managing Caves & Karst in the 21st Century*. Then refreshments were served in the lobby, including a "cave cake." This photo exhibit has since traveled to other Missouri nature centers, and it is available for exhibit by educators and cave conservation groups.

On Wednesday we took a bus trip to **Meramec State Park**, with a geology narrative by Jo Schaper and walking tours of **Fisher Cave** led by Brian Wilcox, park naturalist, and his staff. We also had a speleothem repair demonstration by Jon Beard and Paul Hummel, caving at **Mushroom Cave** and

karst geology tours in the Hamilton Valley. We concluded the afternoon with *hors d'oeuvres* and refreshments. Some folks canoed down the Meramec River to meet us for a tour of nearby commercial **Meramec Caverns**, led by experts Tom Aley, Paul Hauck, and Dwight Weaver along with cavern guides Lee West and Ricky Barnes. A delicious dinner was served in the cave ballroom, prepared by caverns staff and owners Judy and Les Turilli, followed by a slide show about the restoration of nearby Bat Cave #1. Readers should know that Meramec Caverns was backflooded by the Meramec River in the spring of 2008, severely affecting their business. Feel free to send Judy and Les a note of appreciation at jat@fidnet.com, Meramec Caverns, Hwy W, Stanton, MO 63079, phone 573-468-3166.

Evenings at the hotel were full of convivial discussions and fun. We had a full day of sessions on Thursday, ending with a special showing of the video *Caves: Life Beneath the Forest*. There was a big poster session, then a banquet that evening with a wonderful speaker, Dr. Blaine Schubert, East Tennessee State University, who spoke on *Cave and Karst Paleontology in North America*. Marcelo Kramer was recognized as having the most comprehensive student poster on the caves of Rio Grande do Norte State, Brazil. Two of the posters were developed into papers for this volume.

Friday concluded with an Urban Karst session and an afternoon **Urban Karst field trip**, led by Dr. Bob Criss, Washington University. We car-pooled and visited points around St. Louis, which sits on a karst that has been generally poorly managed for 200 years. We visited springs, sinkholes, and the entrance of **Cliff Cave**, ending up at the Mississippi River. This visit later prompted me to conduct bat studies in the cave in cooperation with St. Louis County Parks.

This Proceedings volume has a photo album and other new features. Besides the printed index for this symposium, the included CD contains my general index and annotated bibliography of all NCKMS conferences since they began in 1975. To date, NCKMS has published 769 papers and

abstracts and more than 3,700 pages of scientific and management information, an important body of literature for cave and karst managers, conservationists, and scientists. One might think that all has been said on this subject, but over the years new technologies have been brought to bear on management problems, so many of the papers have become more technical and less conceptual/philosophical. Earlier authors pondered basic questions like “What is cave management?,” “What is cave wilderness?,” and how to classify caves or define

the limits on the number of visitors (“carrying capacity”). Today’s authors are working to actually measure, evaluate, and control human-caused changes in cave and karst resources. Please check the summaries of the symposia in the bibliographic spreadsheet to see how we have progressed.

Many thanks to all our sponsors, staff and participants for a wonderful symposium! Please feel free to contact the editor for further information.

William R. Elliott