The Wonder of Caves

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Most Caves are found in Karst Areas.

KARST IS . . .

- A land system formed when rock [usually limestone] is dissolved in water
- and includes not only caves but other distinctive landforms, life, energy, water, gases, soils and bedrock

All of these . . .

- Interact in complex ways
- Alteration to any one will causes changes in many others

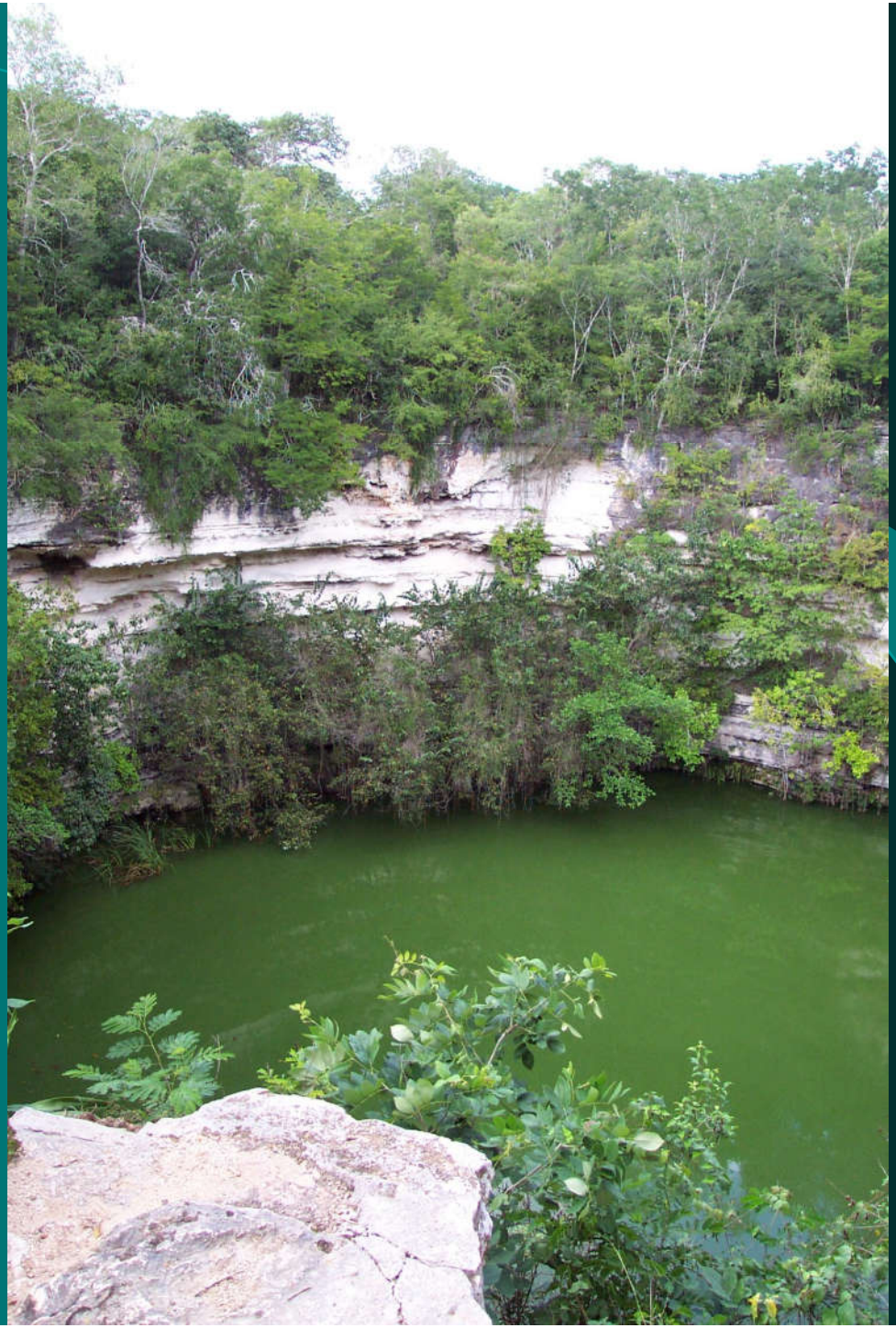
Which means that . . .

- Conservation must consider all of these and their effect upon the whole

In Particular . . .

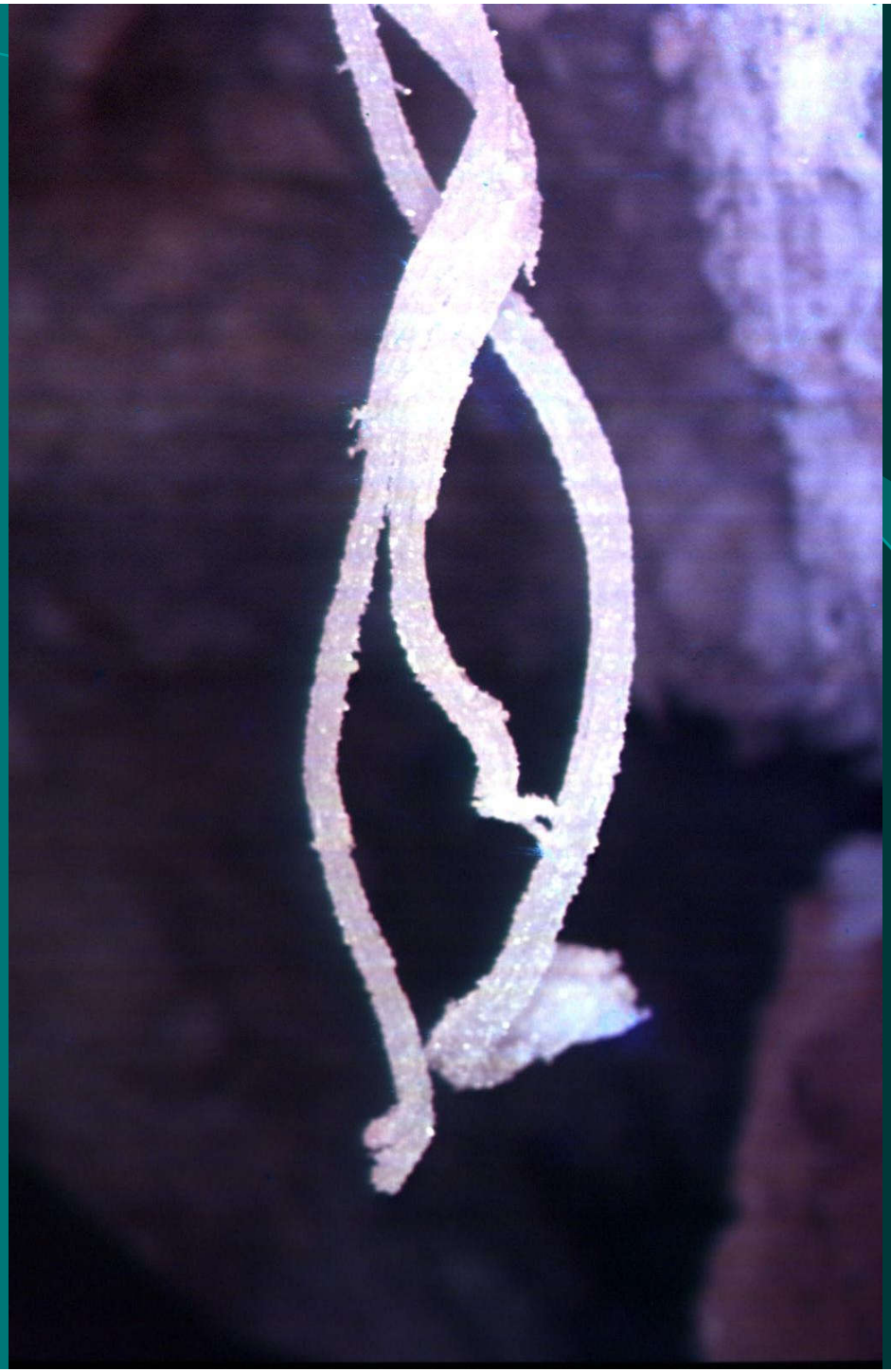
- Given that solution is basic to the formation of karst
- The relationship between water and the land is of the highest importance

Now, to look at some karst landscapes . . .



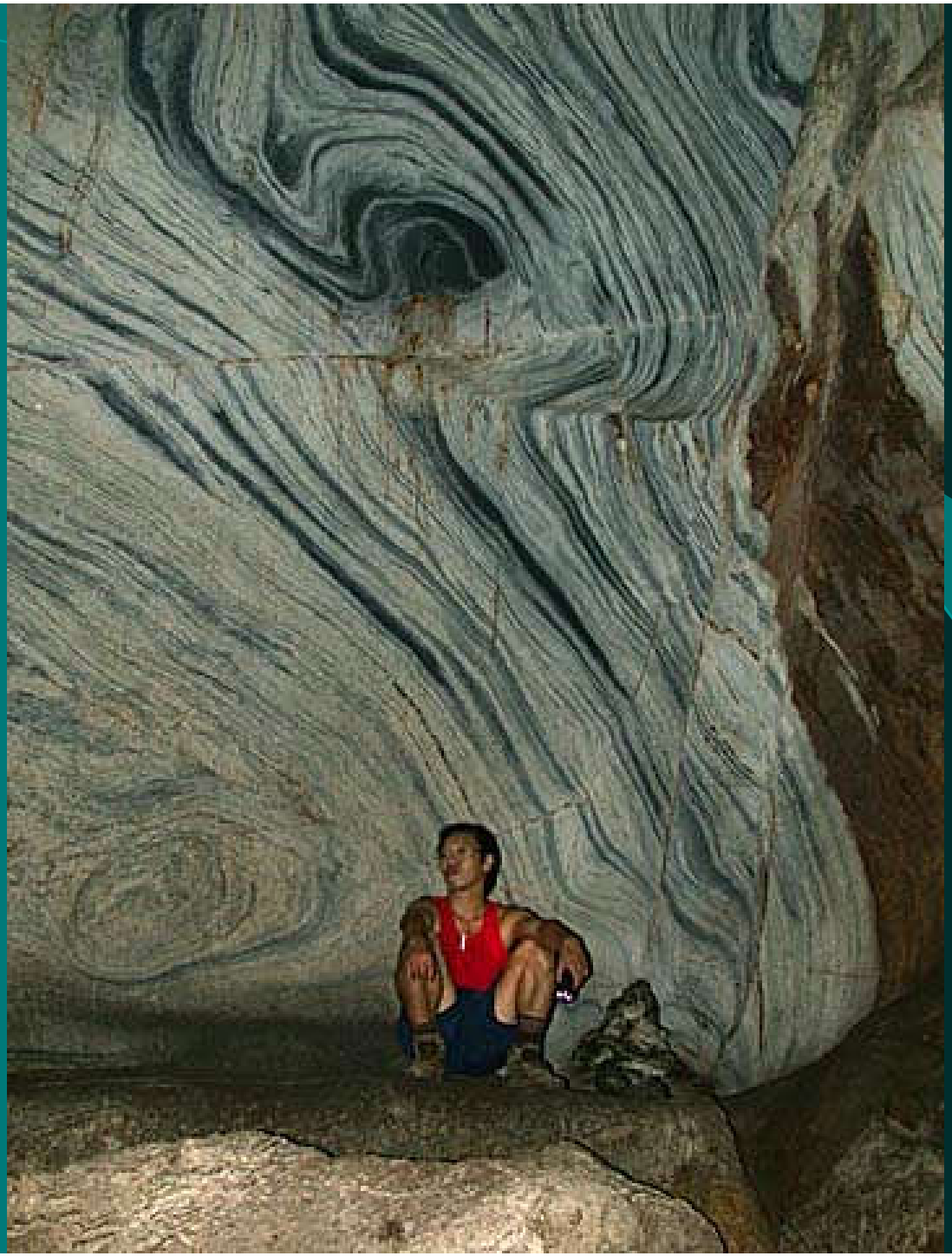
Next, we turn to why caves and karst are important . . .

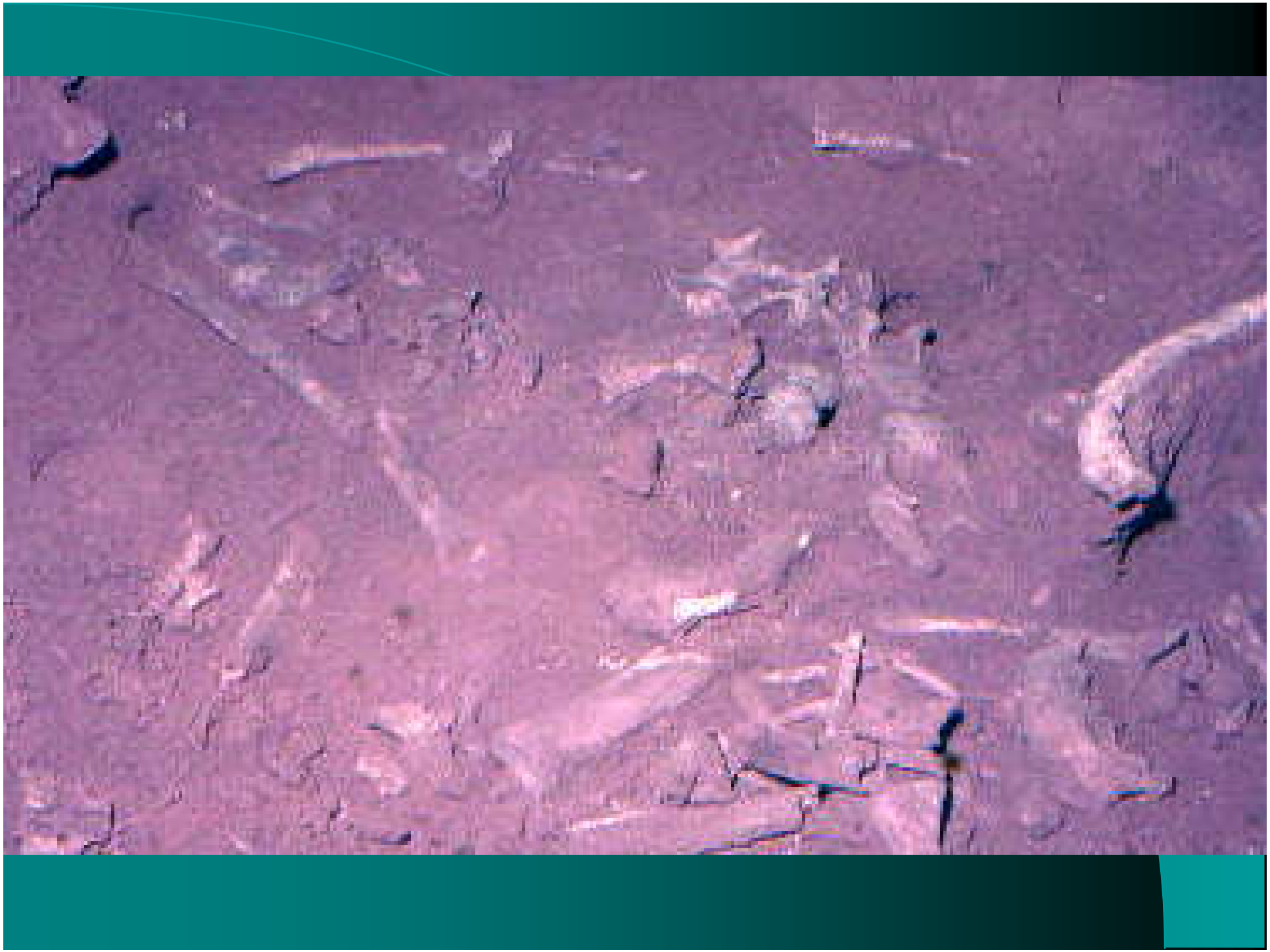
People are fascinated by them

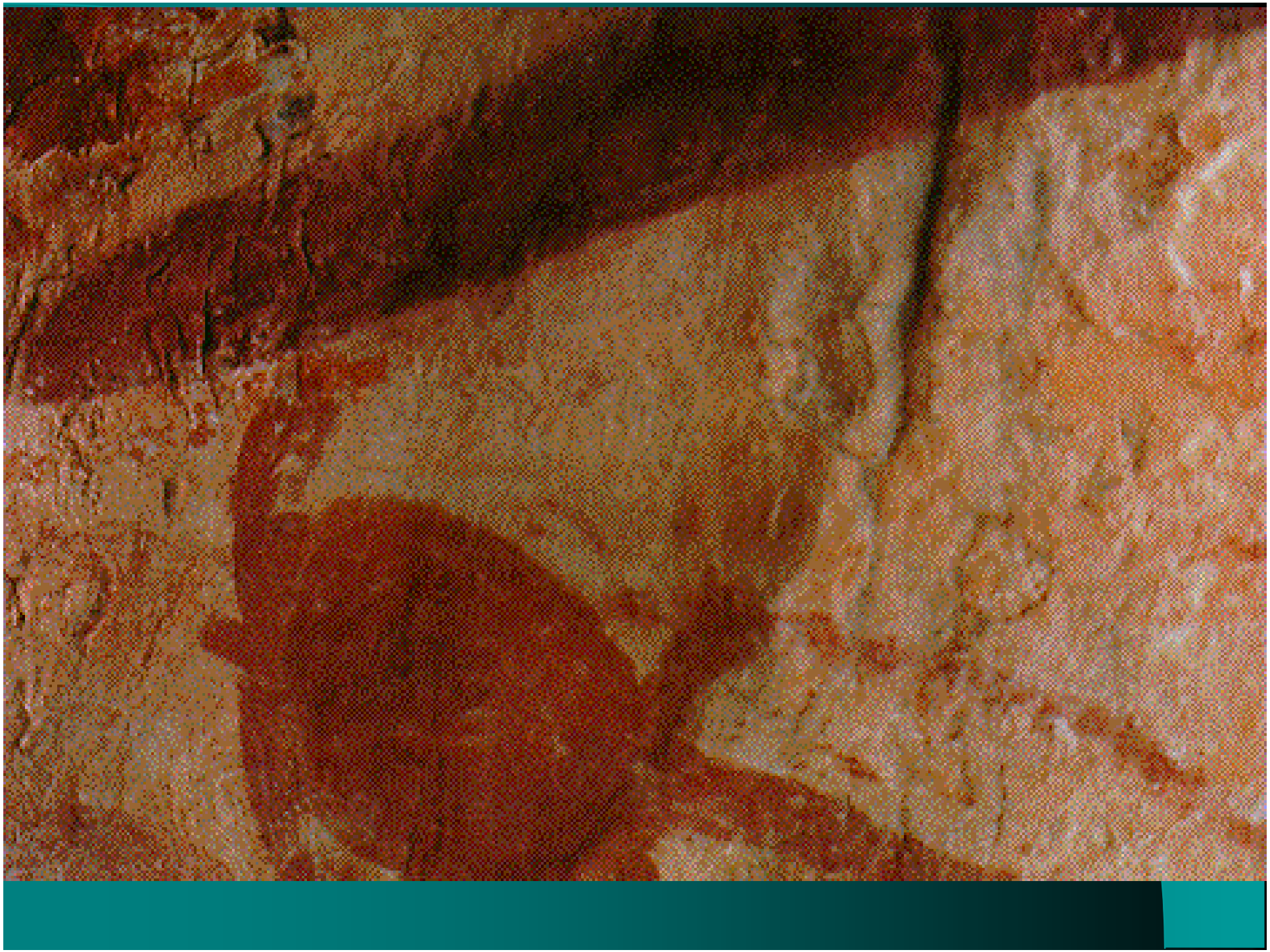


Scientific Value . . .

"Caves are the books in the Library of the History of the Earth"







Important economic qualities:

- Rich and productive soils
- Water Storage and supply
- Limestone
- Tourism

and specific products . . .

- Guano
- “White Gold” – swiftlet nests
- Other foods, e.g., mushroom farming

So, for human, scientific and economic reasons, karst and caves are of great value and must be conserved . . .

Quarries must be properly sited, operated and restored

Note the standards currently being developed by the Cement Industry

Dams must not be located on Karst

Caves should not be filled in or used for rubbish dumps

Avoid Pollution. . .

- Sewerage or other human wastes
- Industrial wastes
- Chemicals
- Microbial infections
- Sediment

Many human activities threaten karst and must be given special attention in planning. . .

- Agriculture, viticulture, forestry, military action, urban settlement, tourism

In conclusion, and so far as possible, the normal interaction of the karst system should be preserved

This demands management of the

TOTAL WATERSHED,

not just a cave, or a nature reserve, or even the karst only

Specifically in protected areas . . .

- Avoid soil erosion
- Avoid excessive paving or construction
- Observe minimum impact practices whenever relevant

Let us make sure that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the wonders of our caves and karst

Remember, what we have now is all we will ever have