



Dark Wilderness

Defining the Elusive

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NSS 28650 FE

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1962 ORRRC Report Wilderness Hearings

- Caves were considered important potential wilderness resources.
- “It is apparent that special study is needed to develop suitable definitions for these recreation resources, which can be applied in survey and management efforts.”

The Wilderness Act of 1964

- A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.
- least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

What is Cave Wilderness?

Existing Cave Wilderness Definitions

Author	Year	Definition
Watson & S		Underground wilderness consists of cave systems that generally appear to have been substantially
Stitt & Bis		[Cave] Wilderness is an area that can
Gambl		Underground wilderness is that portion of a cave or karst area, lying below the surface of the earth, which meets the requirements of the Wilderness Act regarding value and impact on the observer.
Wood		beauty, empathy with wild nature, and remoteness from the ordinary works of man.
Millar	1994	Cave wilderness is a function of the difficulty of ingress/egress, travel within the cave and/or the feeling of remoteness from the surface.

What is Cave Wilderness?

- None of these definitions have gained wide acceptance. Difficulties lie in two areas.
 - Lack of a clearly defined intent for a cave wilderness designation,
 - Predication of the definition of cave wilderness on the 1964 Wilderness Act definition of wilderness.
- Among cavers does not have a clear meaning.

Defining Cave Wilderness Criteria

- Intent
- Visionary Impact
- Experiential Values
- Scientific Values
- Educational Component
- Resource Protection
- Access Issues

Defining Cave Wilderness Criteria

- In To protect and guarantee a wilderness experience.
- V
- E Elements of a cave wilderness experience
 - S Sense of isolation, as defined by solitude and remoteness
 - E Sense of self-sufficiency
- R It is important that people experience caves in a way that preserves them.
- A

Defining a Concept

- The definition of a concept results in the creation of a mental image, the concept “symbolizes ideas and meanings, and expresses an abstraction” (Watson, 1979).
- In defining the concept of cave wilderness, it is necessary to consider not only the physical conditions of the cave, but also two other components of wilderness – the feelings evoked when visiting the site and the stewardship goals and objectives.

Cave Wilderness Definition

Rational

- Recognizes the essential relationship between the cave, its resources, and the user.
- Recognizes that humans have a past, present, and future history with caves.
- Recognizes that scientific endeavor can be intertwined with a wilderness experience.
- An important component of this definition is the incorporation of the ideas of exploration and discovery.

Proposed Cave Wilderness Definition

Preamble

- It is recognized that caves are valuable, non-renewable resources; that wilderness caves and other significant wild caves exist and are protected to preserve their natural, scientific, recreational, educational, and cultural values, for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people.
- In recognition of the spirit of exploration and discovery, caves and cave systems shall be managed to preserve their natural, scientific, recreational, educational, and cultural values, for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people.
- It is recognized that caves are valuable, non-renewable resources; that wilderness caves and other significant wild caves exist and are protected to preserve their natural, scientific, recreational values, as well as scientific, educational, and cultural values, for the perpetual use, enjoyment, and benefit of all people.
- of humankind.
- used for education, resource protection and stewardship, and other additional beneficial purposes for all of humankind.

Cave Wilderness Defined

Proposed Definition

- Those cave and cave passages exhibiting exceptional scientific and cultural resources, and wilderness qualities. These sites display a high degree of wildness, in which the physical structure and ecological systems are largely unimpacted by humans and in which there is a sense of remoteness from the ordinary activities and works of humans.

Cave Wilderness Defined

Proposed Definition

- It is further defined to mean those caves & cave passages in which stewardship shall protect the cave resources, its wilderness values, and future discoveries; and
- 1) seeks to limit the impact of human visitation, including exploration, discovery and scientific research activities; and
- 2) seeks to protect the cave resources, its wilderness values, and future discoveries; and
- 3) seeks to protect the cave resources, its wilderness values, and future discoveries; and
- 4) seeks to protect the cave resources, its wilderness values, and future discoveries; and
- 5) surface activities shall be managed to protect the cave resources and wilderness qualities.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover is that
which was the beginning.

T. S. Eliot

