



Hi all!

Snowy River Exploration Trip

As most of you know, the planned Snowy River South exploration trip to occur during the fall expedition did not happen due to unforeseen circumstances. However this trip has been rescheduled for Thursday, October 20 and Friday, October 21. Jim Goodbar is leading the trip and the people scheduled to go along are Stan Allison, Aaron Stockton and Tim George.

Jim has provided these plans regarding the trip: “. . . we are planning to drive up to Ft. Stanton on the evening of Oct 19, enter the cave early on Oct 20, and exit before noon on Friday Oct. 21. . . .

We plan to: Make the observations requested by Donald Davis (*at Sandy River*), Collect the microbial samples for Dr. Diana Northup, Place the data loggers requested by Mike McGee, Assess the damage to the Egg Shell Passage and consider mitigations, Continue the survey of Snowy River south, and exit the cave safely.

We expect to have to replace the plastic sheeting that may have been washed out of place by the last flood event and plan to carry extra sheeting with us for any situations we may encounter up stream during our survey. We are all fully aware of clothing change and WNS decontamination procedures and will come prepared.” The *italics* are mine.

We are excited that the trip looks like its going to happen and we are supporting Jim in several ways. Some of us plan to be at the bunkhouse and/or cave on the 19th – 21st.

Board of Directors Actions

During the fall expedition the FSCSP board of directors had a business meeting and discussed several items of interest to all of you.

- 1) An amendment to the by-laws was proposed to reduce the number of regular board meetings from quarterly to bi-annually, to occur during the Spring and Fall expeditions. There were two reasons for this: first, now that the FSCSP is off the ground, there is less need for formal meetings, much of the business of the project is conducted via e-mail; and second, and perhaps of more interest to the participants, we are trying to make it easier for others to become part of the project leadership. The amendment was tabled to work on the language before adoption.
- 2) There was discussion of expanding the structure of the board of directors from 5 members to 7 members. Again, this is an effort to get more people into a leadership role.
- 3) After consulting with BLM about potential conflicts and coordinating with Debbie Buecher on the best times for bat observations, and considering the dates for the NSS convention, we adopted the following calendar for next year's expeditions:

- 1. Spring Expedition – April 21 – April 29**
- 2. Summer Expedition – July 7 – July 15**
- 3. Fall Expedition – October 6 – October 14.**

Short Non-Expedition Trips

One of the other things discussed during the expedition, both during the board meeting and at other times, was the possibility of having other trips through the year, outside of the three expeditions. In particular, it was noted that some of our activities, such as digging in Cactus Cave and/or Bear Cave, does not have to be restricted by the bat hibernation season. (In fact, as you may have noted in the executive summary of the Fall expedition, we sealed up the entrance of Cactus Cave with the wheelbarrow, rocks and branches to prevent bats from colonizing the cave.)

We agree that these sorts of trips are desirable. Many of the people who were digging at Cactus Cave expressed a desire to come back and dig on one of these short trips. I'm proposing that we do a short trip on the weekend of November 12 – 13. Friday, November 11 is a federal holiday, and many of us could come up Thursday evening and start digging on Friday. Let me know if you're interested in that trip. We need at least 8 people to make the trip successful.

Conservation Lands Foundation Award

The Fort Stanton Cave Study Project is affiliated with the Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF), an organization supporting “friends groups” that assist federally managed sites, like the Fort Stanton – Snowy River National Conservation Area, throughout the country. The CLF has an annual meeting, called the Rendezvous, that we were invited to attend. However the Rendezvous occurred during the same time as our fall expedition so that none of the FSCSP directors were there. Unbeknownst to us until afterwards, the CLF recognized the FSCSP with the 2011 Conservation Leadership Award during the Rendezvous, which we finally got last week from a representative of the Friends of the Organ Mountains, who did attend the Rendezvous and received the award on our behalf. At the right is a photo of the award taken by Wayne Walker. The text of the award reads:



**2011 Conservation Leadership Award
Presented to
Fort Stanton Cave Study Project**

Presented to an organization of the Friends Network that has shown outstanding leadership to advance the protection of the National Conservation Lands through visionary,

innovative and strategic projects.

We were blown away when we were notified of the award. We are indeed humbled and definitely appreciative of the CLF's recognition. Though we have expressed our thanks already, I will say again, "Thank you" to the Conservation Lands Foundation for the recognition, and "Thank you" to all of the participants whose work made this award possible!

Web Site Data Page

Our webmaster, Pete Lindsley, is working on a set of pages on our FSCSP website (<http://www.fscsp.org>) to archive a good bit of the data logging data that we have been collecting on Fort Stanton Cave and other small caves in the area. This will make the data files available to those who need the information for research purposes. This is a work in progress at the moment. The pages are password protected. Consult Pete for access information.

Photo Archiving via Adobe LightRoom

Several of the FSCSP directors and team members are planning to purchase copies of Adobe LightRoom 3, a photo management application for use in archiving, indexing and enhancing the tens of thousands of photos that have been accumulating. LightRoom is compatible with Photoshop for instances where additional detail image improvement is required. Managing these photos has become a tremendous chore, which is the reason that I've been asking photographers to submit photo descriptions so that the problem doesn't get even bigger. What we really need, beyond the software, is help from people willing to go through these photos, and apply keywords to the photos. Our goal is that anyone searching the archive for, lets say, pictures of Turtle Junction, can bring up all the photos taken at Turtle Junction. Interested parties should contact the directors.

Leadership Roles

As mentioned earlier, we're trying to make it easier for participants to move into leadership roles within the project. We would like to expand the board to seven members, but we need a couple more participants who are interested in being on the board. We are very much interested in a Science Coordinator – someone who can keep track of all the science projects going on in the cave, and make sure there is appropriate communication between the project and the scientists, and between the different scientists doing work in the cave. If you are interested in any of these roles, or in any other sort of role within the project, let me know.

Thanks again to all, for your support in the past, and for your continuing support in the future.

If you have any questions, let me know.

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