

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S CAVE AND KARST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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Abstract

Considerable cave exploration, restoration, research, and other speleological activities are conducted within parks. Although the National Park Service occasionally can accomplish small projects with its own employees, most of the work is accomplished by individuals and groups interested in increasing scientific knowledge of cave and karst systems. Such groups and individuals contribute the majority of cave and karst research and projects. Currently the National Park Service has national level agreements with the Cave Research Foundation, the National Speleological Society, and Bat Conservation International. Speleological projects and research are also coordinated through individuals associated with these groups as well as the Geological Society of America, the American Geological Institute, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Karst Waters Institute. Without such partnerships, only a small fraction of projects and research conducted in caves and karst could be accomplished.

The various units administered by the National Park Service are a shared dream for all Americans and, by extrapolation, for all peoples of the world for all time. Without the continued involvement of volunteer groups we would not be able to implement a cave and karst program that will provide for the protection of natural processes in cave ecosystems; understand karst landscapes; conduct scientific studies about cave and karst resources; increase the Service's scientific knowledge and broaden the understanding of its cave resources; and provide accurate educational opportunities for a broad spectrum of park visitors to safely visit, study, and enjoy caves; and continue to ensure the sustainable use conservation, interpretation, and protection of cave and karst resources.
