

UNDERGROUND OHIO



Ohio Cave Survey, Inc.

OCS Officers

President: Frank Vlcek

Vice President: Curt Harler

Secretary: Sarah Cayse

Treasurer: Wm. Gary Bush

Director: Dr. Hazel Barton

Director: Dennis Green

Director: Mike Hood

Director: Kevin Lorms

Mission Statement

The purposes of this organization shall be to maintain a collective and current survey database of caves within the state of Ohio, and to further the exploration, research, and conservation of our state's caves.



MOU WITH ODNR A DONE DEAL

Erin Hazleton, right, of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources; and Frank Vlcek, president of the Ohio Cave Survey, celebrate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two groups. The MOU outlines processes for cavers and ODNR to work together to collect scientific data on state caves, to share information about karst findings, and to protect landowner privacy throughout the process. The ceremonial signing took place during a recent meeting of the Cleveland Grotto. About two years in the making, the MOU clears the way for on-going cooperation between the state agency and the citizen scientists with an interest in karst and karst formations.



Dues Information

Membership is open to all persons and similar-minded organizations interested in speleology and caving.

Regular (18+): \$15/yr

Associate (18-): \$5/yr

Organization: \$30/yr

Dues are prorated (half price) if new and joining between July - November.

Paypal, credit card, or mailed check are accepted. Follow the link below to become a member today!

[Ohio Cave Survey Membership](#)

Meeting Minutes

Miss a meeting? The minutes are available here:

[OCS Minutes](#)

Links

[Central Ohio Grotto](#)

[Dayton Underground Grotto](#)

[Greater Cincinnati Grotto](#)

[Wittenburg University Speleological Society](#)

[Cleveland Grotto](#)

[National Speleological Society](#)

DID YOU HEAR?

Bierce Cave in Summit County's Gorge Metro Park has been gated! The cave is home to tricolored bats, which were listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in September 2022. Previously, the cave had been bricked up since 1968, but recent acts of vandalism and encroachment prompted Summit Metro Parks to custom-build a gate to keep bats and people safer.

[Read more about it here!](#)



Bierce Cave and its new gate, photo from Summit Metro Parks

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We are now into the fourth year of the resurrection of the Ohio Cave Survey. Much of the organizational groundwork is now in place. But there is still plenty of work ahead of us to make the OCS a smooth running repository and resource for cave information in Ohio. Certainly, one of the major accomplishments of the last few years is the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. I see this as a win, win for both entities. The responsible sharing of our information with each other furthers the goals of each of us. But, historically speaking, the greatest accomplishment was just the restart of something that almost died. Just a few cavers from different parts of the state put their heads together and said, "We need to do something about the cave information in Ohio." Most Ohio cavers knew Horton Hobbs III was the keeper of Ohio cave information but few knew what happened to that material after his retirement and subsequent passing away. And thus, from those few scattered Ohio cavers, the current Ohio Cave Survey was born. It's now our duty to pick up and improve where Dr Hobbs left off. It would be nice to see more active participation from cavers around the state. For those of you reading this, think about being a little more active in our fledgling organization. Your expertise may be something we need. When you tell someone you're a grotto or NSS member, don't forget to tell them you're a member of the Ohio Cave Survey. We need to let the public know we are out here and available, not just for us but for them too. Remember, an organization is only as good and strong as its members make it. That's all of its members.

- Frank Vlcek, OCS President

QUIZ: WHERE IN THE STATE IS THIS?



ANSWER: The Breakfast Caves, Adams County

PUSHING LOST CAP CAVE

BY CURT HARLER

The last weekend in February 2023 found Ohio Cave Survey members active in Highland County as well as in Pike and Ross Counties. The primary focus, however, was a newly (2021) opened sinkhole in Highland County that showed promise.

The landowners had contacted the Ohio Department of Natural Resources when they noticed the sudden sinkhole collapse on their land. ODNR, per the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding with OCS, contacted the Cave Survey and asked whether we were willing to do a field investigation. Were we!

As it turns out, there is more to the sinkhole than the 17-to-20-foot deep pit. There is going passage that trends straight North out of the sink which appears to be formed in dolomitic limestone. There might be passage to the South.

Shortly after the cave opened up, the landowner dropped an aluminum ladder into the opening and went down to investigate. The cave was more than he expected. After climbing back out, he discovered he had lost his cap at the bottom of the sinkhole...thus the cave's name.

According to Doug Aden with ODNR's Geological Survey, in the Hillsboro area sinks are concentrated near breaks in slopes at the tops of hills. This conforms exactly to Lost Cap Cave. Aden investigated one situation with a shaft approximately 20 feet deep with an additional five-foot-deep fracture at bottom. While Lost Cap appears to offer much greater extension of passage, the feel one gets is nearly identical.

Upon climbing down into the pit, OCS members were delighted to find that northward trending passage. After a couple of feet, it became too low to navigate. But a Disto shot showed promise of at least 25 feet more of passage. A few pushes with short-handled shovels showed the dirt in the passage to be persuadable to muscle power.



Curt Harler, in pit, outlines strategy with the group. From left, landowner Carol Flaum, Adam Batson, Nolan Reed, Chris and Sanae Rogers, Gretchen Lendvay, Kati Semones, and Bill Lendvay. - Kai Getrost photo.

Meantime, at the bottom of the pit, diggable sand promised a lead in the opposite direction.

Truth be told, it was a relief to find the sinkhole open. Earlier in February, a heavy rainfall resulted in Lost Cap Cave flooding nearly to the top. The water, however, receded promptly (likely following the sand to the South). A future study might dye-trace the waterflow. Given the surface features, the water may come back to the surface about 250 yards south of the sink. That remains to be proven.

By day's end, the northward extension was passable to 45 feet from the sink with more dig-able passage visible beyond. The southward dig was hampered by a steady inflow of water which resulted in more movement of mud than soil.

It will take some on-site geological review to determine whether Lost Cap is in the Silurian Greenfield dolomitic limestone (which I suspect) or in the Peebles Dolomite. While digging, Kai Getrost encountered sand which might be indicative of the Greensboro Sandstone. The Peebles underlies both the Greenfield Dolomite and the Greensboro Sandstone. Dolomite is simply limestone (calcium carbonate) with magnesium mixed in and is a bit harder than limestone.

Among the Cave Survey members participating in the project were local cavers and members of the Cleveland Grotto.



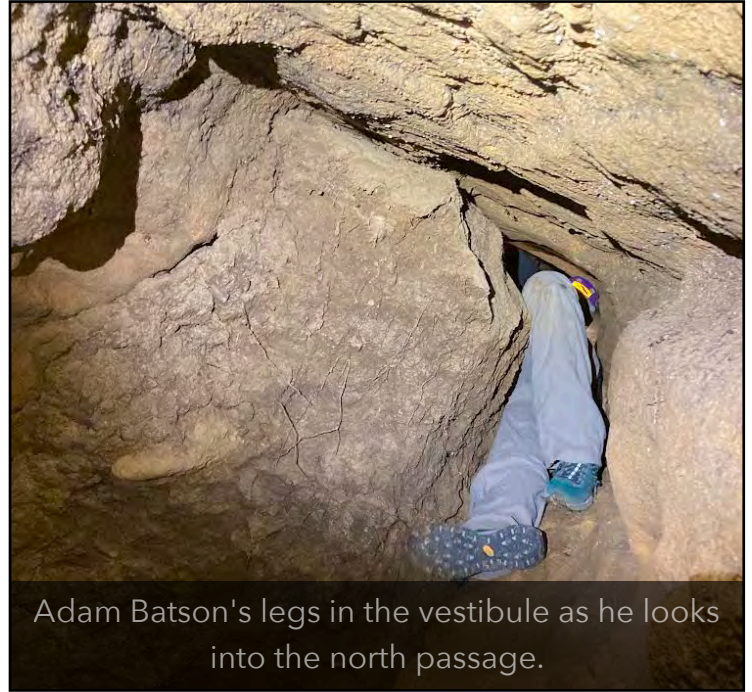
The Ohio Cave Survey group poses. Back row: Steve and Carol Flaum, Bill Lendvay, Chris Rogers, Gretchen Lendvay, Curt Harler; Front row: Adam Batson, Angie Rhodes, Sanae Rogers, Kati Semones, Kai Getrost, Nolan Reed.

A FURTHER LOOK AT LOST CAP CAVE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ADAM BATSON



Angela Rhodes with landowner, Steve Flaum



Adam Batson's legs in the vestibule as he looks into the north passage.



Angela Rhodes in the north passage



Big K soda, north passage

