

# Underwater Speleology

*Journal of the Cave Diving Section of the National Speleological Society*



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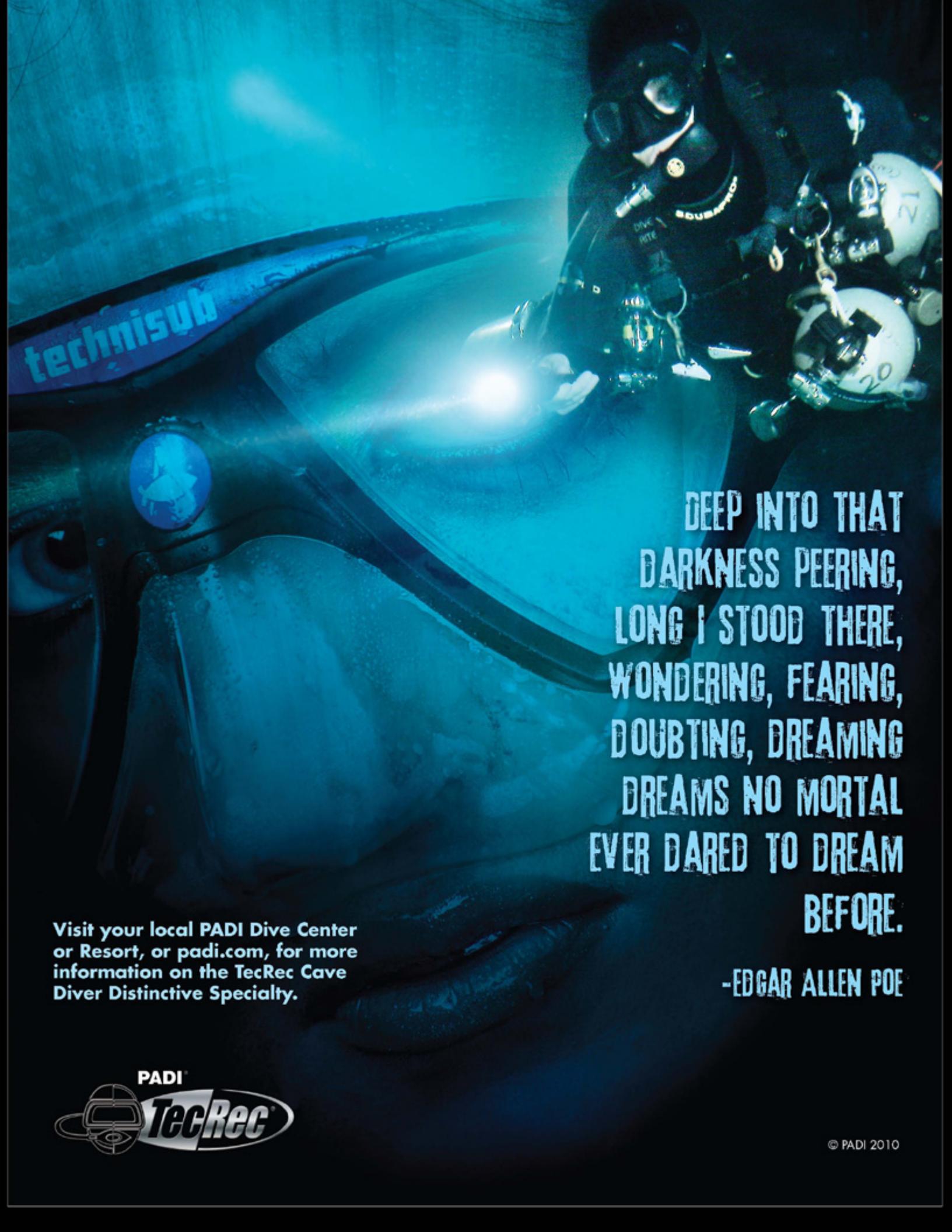
Diving The Dominican Republic

Visit With A Cave: Bozell Springs

NSS-CDS: 2011 Annual Workshop Review

NSS-CDS: 2011 Midwest Workshop

Volume 38 Number 3  
July/Aug/Sept 2011



DEEP INTO THAT  
DARKNESS PEERING,  
LONG I STOOD THERE,  
WONDERING, FEARING,  
DOUBTING, DREAMING  
DREAMS NO MORTAL  
EVER DARED TO DREAM  
BEFORE.

-EDGAR ALLEN POE

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COVER PHOTO: Jennifer Bryan at Ginnie Springs

Photographer: Gene Page

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# Editor's Notes

***"While we are reading, we are all Don Quixote."***  
~Mason Cooley~

So many caves, so little time. Some I will get to dive and some I will only get to read and dream about. This month there is a sampling from around the Americas, with caves from the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Florida weighing in. Thank you to all of our contributors.

We had a great workshop in May in Marianna, Florida and I enjoyed meeting everyone and all that the workshop offered. Please take a moment and thank Rob and Jen Neto for all their hard work putting this together; it was an outstanding job.

We also have all your information on the upcoming Midwest Workshop to be held in September near St. Louis, Missouri. Look on page 24.

And last, but not least, I want to welcome Joe Citelli, our new rebreather columnist, and thank him for taking on this column. Check out "The Loop" on pages 18 and 19.

Dive Safe,

Cheryl



# from the Chairman

gene melton

***"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."***  
- Albert Einstein

A thought to ponder when planning and during the dive.

The workshop in Marianna was outstanding. The Friday night social dedicated to Wes brought back memories to all who knew him. Terri Skiles was in attendance, which made the event even more special. The following YouTube link is to an excellent tribute to Wes. (If you don't want to type it in, just search "Wes Skiles Tribute Video" on YouTube.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLGD83x2nNU>

'Thank You' to the workshop chairman, Rob Neto, for making the workshop a success. 'Thank You' to Edd Sorensen and the Fire Department for furnishing the excellent food at the social and for helping coordinate with local businesses. A grateful 'Thank You' from the NSS-CDS to the attendees and vendors who supported the effort.

Looks like I get another year as your Chairman. Wayne Kinard resigned from the BoD due to increased business demands. Richard Blackburn was nominated and voted to complete Wayne's term. Thank you, Wayne, for your help as secretary over the last year. Otherwise, the BoD remains the same.

I need a volunteer to compile a history of the individuals who served on the NSS-CDS BoD over the years. Please contact me.

Bill Dunn needs a volunteer to help him complete a listing of all NSS-CDS instructors and their numbers. Please contact Bill to help.

The lawsuit has moved into the discovery process. If you have any information that may pertain to this issue please contact me and I'll put you in contact with our lawyer. Please do not discuss the lawsuit on the internet for obvious reasons.

The first ever cave vandalism prosecution has come to a conclusion. A grateful 'Thank You' from the NSS-CDS to the Suwannee County Sheriff's Office and State Prosecutor Third Judicial District as the organizations which made the outcome successful. I also want to thank Ken Hill for his assistance.

The Florida drought continues to affect us and the effects vary. The spring flow is down which means an easier swim, but the water table is dropping with no recharge. The visibility is excellent and seems to be improving. Many of the caves seem to be sporting algae growth and I am told that it is most likely caused by pollution from agriculture. We need the farms but we also need a better grasp of the detrimental side effects of the industry and ways to reduce those issues. A dairy farm with 5000 animals will use 60 million gallons of water annually. Dairy spray field effluent is finding its way into the aquifer.

Riana Treanor volunteered to become our Social Chair. Her plan is to have one social a quarter and I believe there is interest in including vertical training for anyone interested. Look for something in the August/September time frame. Details will be posted on the website.

To anyone finding a Luminox watch in Little River, please contact me. Velcro straps do not always hold.

Dive safely,  
Gene

# A Little River Surprise!

By Gene Melton

On April 10, 2011, Dr. Peri Blum, Donn Mount, Frank Ohidy and I arrived to make a morning dive at Little River. Three of us were on Neptune rebreathers and one on open circuit, but as Murphy would have it, Donn was to sit this dive out. Frank and I waited on the surface while Peri swam around familiarizing herself with modifications we had made to the placement of the manual controls on her Neptune and a newly designed bailout cylinder attach strap we both were using today. The attach strap connects to the crotch strap just below the harness and wraps around the hips with quick connect harness clips to the front side of the crotch strap just below the waist belt. This design allows the bottom bailout bottle attach point to be moved around to the side or front of the hips to streamline the swimming attitude of the cylinders.

After a few minutes, she signaled all was well and off we went; or so we thought. While still in the daylight zone her LED primary failed. Peri and I returned to the surface and checked to make sure the battery was still connected, which it was. Donn was passing the time swimming and we sent him to get the spare battery from her car. Not finding a battery he brought back his primary instead and the dive was a 'go' again.

Little River Spring is a spot near and dear to many of us. We were pleasantly surprised as the flow was down, and set an easy pace, finning left at the Merry Go Round. At 35 minutes we were well past the Florida Room. The magic of swimming Little River's serpentine solution passages has not diminished over time, and as I was enjoying the view, my HID primary quit. I switched to my LED primary and we turned the dive as Frank was near thirds. Left again at the Merry Go Round to complete the circuit and we were done. Our computers reported a bottom time of 58 minutes and only five minutes of deco.

The bailout harness strap has accomplished what I had wanted; the bottom of the aluminum cylinders were now traveling with our bodies instead of being up and behind, and an added plus was the lower attach connection, being on the side, was very easy to ac-

cess and operate.

Back on the surface, I noticed that the valve knob was missing (stem was fine) from my left bailout cylinder. A cave diver was resting her tanks on the wall while waiting for the rest of her team and she introduced herself as Spring; we exchanged pleasantries and I told her about the missing knob before clambering out up the steps.

When we started the dive, there were maybe twenty locals around the basin, now, I estimated the crowd to be 200+ and growing. And this is only mid-April! Arriving early had paid off because now there was no parking available. Back at my Jeep, I went to take my drysuit off and ... what no watch? My trusty Luminox of 4 years was gone! A quick jog back down the stairs and Spring was still there, now joined by another diver. I told them about losing my watch and asked if they found it to leave it with a local shop.

Peri still had her swim suit on and volunteered to look around the basin. She free dove for about 10 minutes looking, but no joy, although she did tell me she had found a man's gold wedding band. She had picked it up from the bottom, but one of the cave divers saw her and signaled for it. She had asked if it was his, and he had answered with a huge yes!!!! By this time she had needed to come up for air and as she headed up, he freaked out. He got on his knees, put both hands together and sat staring at her; thinking she was leaving, I guess. She went back down and gave him the ring.

Being in no particular hurry, we were a long time getting packed up and as Peri returned from the changing room, Spring stopped her. They talked animatedly for a few minutes; then there was a big hug and they laughed as they walked toward us. I thought Peri must have known her, but was soon to discover I was wrong.

"Now", as Paul Harvey would say, "the rest of the story". As it turned out, the couple had talked marriage

the week before. Spring told him that she's a simple girl and a plain ring would be fine. She told us after Peri swam down and gave him the ring; he put his hand over his heart, then her heart and signaled her to share air. She was confused, but as they breathed off each other's regulators, he kissed her hands and put the ring on her finger! An underwater kiss and the deal was sealed; they were engaged to be married. She was so excited now that a cave dive was completely out of the question for her, but her fiancé had gone on to finish the dive and she had come to find us.

Spring is a young pretty blonde, very slim, black wetsuit, cute blue shark beanie. The fiancé has dark hair and was in black-red drysuit, in case anyone runs into them. The events of my misfortune in loosing a watch had become someone else's good fortune. A poetic fit. (By the way, if someone finds my watch, please take it to one of the local fill stations and have them contact me, 904-669-9532.)

Our toast to the happy couple: May Spring and her fiancé have many years of happiness and great diving together.



Spring and Marty surfaced at the 2011 Workshop sitting right behind Gene.

Photographer: Riana Treanor

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# A Cave Diving Guide To The Dominican Republic

By Cristian Pittaro



*El Dudu chocolate stalactites and divers swimming through the halocline.*

*All photographs: Phillip Lehman*

*We are always looking for new caves to dive, different underground worlds to discover, new adventures, the excitement of seeing something new.*

*~ The Dominican Republic Speleological Society~*

The Dominican Republic lies in the Greater Antilles archipelago with the Atlantic Ocean to the north and Caribbean Sea to the south. Nestled beneath its mountains and lush tropical climate sit cave systems waiting to be explored. Some of the best and most beautiful of these caves are El Dudu, Cueva Taina, El Tildo, El Chicho, Padre Nuestro and La Jeringa.

The Dominican Republic Speleological Society (DRSS) has assembled a list of information for divers wishing to enjoy these cave systems.



*Padre Nuestro  
Photographer: Phillip Lehman*



**Cave Name:** El Chicho

**Area:** Bayahibe

**Location:** Padre Nuestro National Park

**Length:** 2000 feet

**Depth:** 50 feet maximum

**Access Fee:** RD\$300 ~US\$8 per diver/day paid at Medioambiente Office in Bayahibe

Padre Nuestro Park has approximately ten sinkholes, four with a cave attached, all apparently part of the same

underground river. El Chicho is the first system and located upstream.

There are two sections, Chicho 1 and Chicho 2. Chicho 2 is a kind of swamp cave, very unstable with only a very small amount of water and not really recommended. Line was never added here due to the small size and safety concerns.

El Chicho 1 is the main cave. Access is through a large horizontal crack that features many Taino Indian drawings. This crack leads to a very large and gently decorated cavern with a long man-made stairway leading to the big crystal clear entrance pool.

To the left of the pool is the entrance to the cave. This cave is nicely decorated in some sections and is absent of decorations in others, but still unique in the whole of its extension. It has several air domes; the first one has a long jump through a restriction on the right side, and the cave continues to the second air dome, where you have to swim half out of the water to get past it. Later is a little jump to a third air dome, and farther on the mainline a rocky bedding plain all the way to the end of the cave.

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**Cave Name:** Taina

**Area:** Santo Domingo Este

**Location:** about 15 minutes from Las Americas International Airport

**Length:** ~3500 feet

**Depth:** 140 foot maximum near the end of the system, average of 70 feet

**Access Fee:** US\$15 per diver/ US\$20 with snacks and sodas included

Taina is the most famous cave in the Dominican Republic, not only for the easy access and the strategical location, but also for its beauty and changing features.

This cave has only one entry/exit point with a 40-foot spiral stairway leading down to an inviting pool of water, which makes access very easy for everyone. Being located inside private property with security makes it safe to leave the cars unattended and enjoy a nice after-dive snack offered by the owners (with extra fee). The house employees will help you with your gear as well for a tip.

Taina is divided in two main branches. To the left lies the shallow part, with a maximum depth of about 70 feet. Approximately 300 feet long, plus a jump to the right to a nice looking bedding plane for another 200 feet, this travels to what used to be a second sinkhole which was destroyed by a restaurant owner to make a “natural” pool; this used to be a nice entry point and you can tell where it is by the pile of trash underwater.

This branch provided a nice surprise recently. During a research dive analyzing the water chemistry and looking for information about global weather change, our guest Brian Kakuk pointed out what looked to be a new lead; the DRSS later investigated and the lead pushed for an-

other 500 feet into what is now the nicest portion of the shallow section of Cueva Taina.

The second branch, to the right, goes into a very big tunnel about 30 feet deep and a large air dome, fully decorated with speleothem. Just at the beginning of the air dome is a jump to the left that leads us to the warning sign and the longest tunnel in the cave with about 2,500 feet penetration, an average depth of 60-70 feet and a maximum depth of about 140 feet at the farthest point. It starts in a big room, with a column in the center and a pronounced halocline; after the second half of the tunnel, if you notice the details, you will find in between the cracks on the rocks some weird crystal formations that look like miniature quartz crystals, about an inch tall.



**Cave Name:** El Dudu

**Area:** Cabrera (North Coast), about 2.5 hours from Santo Domingo

**Location:** “The Blue Lagoon”

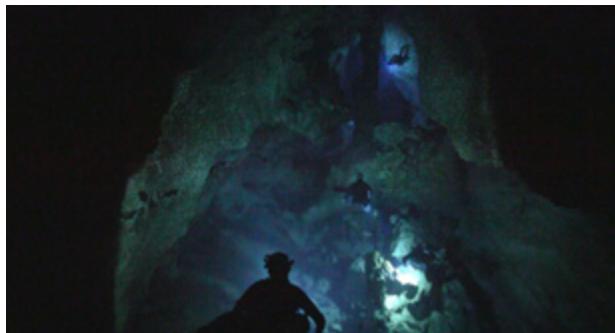
**Length:** ~2500 feet

**Depth:** 70 feet

**Access Fee:** RD\$350 ~US\$10

This system connects several entry points; the easiest one is located at the Blue Lagoon which has parking, steps and a concrete platform to assemble gear. There is also a restaurant (not bad by DR standards), bathrooms, a shaded area and gear tables and sherpas available.

The main sinkhole is a large classic cenote-style sinkhole about 300 feet in diameter with slightly tannic water. The local people enjoy swimming here. To the right, through a short cavern about 400 feet long, you can access a

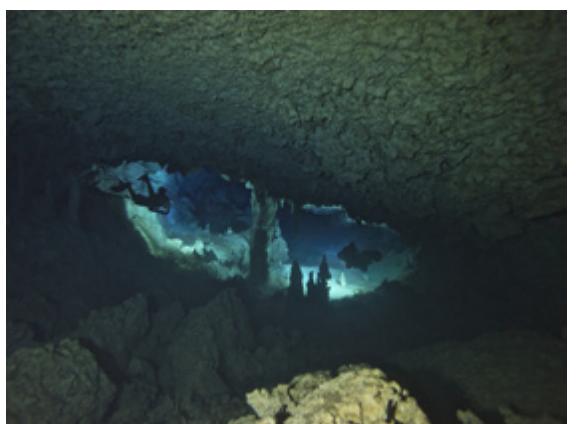


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El Dudu



Tiana



second sinkhole where the visibility is normally about 30 feet and you can see some very unique speleothems; 8-10 foot concrete like stalactites covered by mussels.

On the left side of the main sinkhole is the entrance to the main part of the system, a tunnel about 70 feet in diameter and 200 feet long with crystal clear water and an air dome located about halfway through. At the first air dome, you can jump to the right past the warning sign and through a restriction to access the actual cave. The first sight is an amazing dark brown column on the right wall that looks like it is made of chocolate.

Swimming through the main triangular shaped tunnel, along the halocline, you can see several chocolate speleothems coming out from the white and sometimes darker walls. It is really like swimming on another planet. Halfway into the tunnel, there is a little room with a mega chocolate column, about 30-40 feet tall and 3 feet in diameter, that will make you look twice to make sure you are not dreaming.

At the end of the tunnel, through a keyhole shaped passage, you access a big room with another air dome. To the right, past this room, is a restriction that goes

through the nicest passage in this cave, full of chocolate stalactites and stalagmites. To the left, there is a jump to a little circuit with a highly decorated lunar looking landscape.

At the end of the line there is another exit through a dry cave with easy access to the surface if need be, however, if you do exit here keep in mind that you will be about 1-2 miles away from the main parking lot.



**Cave Name:** El Tildo

**Area:** Santo Domingo Este

**Location:** about 10 min from Las Americas International Airport

**Length:** ~1500 feet

**Depth:** 50 feet maximum

**Access Fee:** Just tip the guys to carry your gear down and have a nice conversation with Antonia, the 90 year old landowner, who has many great stories about the cave's history and the ancient Taino Indian spirits who live there.

This is a great cave, recently almost doubled in size by the DRSS, with very unusual super sharp rock formations due to very pronounced dissolution. It has a shallow depth, several air domes after the entrance and you can find two additional sinkholes. The first is a very small hole where you can see the surface light and the second is located after making a long jump the end of the line. This sinkhole was almost destroyed by highway construction; the owner secured the ceiling with columns to prevent the collapse of the sinkhole and you can see the damage to the cave caused by the workers here.

On the right side of this sinkhole is the jump to the recently extended new section, a very low and amazing solution bedding plane with a pronounced halocline in the middle. Again the rock has been very aggressively dis-

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El Tildo



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La Jeringa



solved and is very unique looking. This tunnel leads to another small air dome and eventually back to the mainline at the first air dome of the cave. Although this new section can be done in back mount, contact will be inevitable and damage to the ceiling will occur; side mount is recommended to avoid damaging the cave.

About 100-150 feet from the entrance there is a jump to the right which continues to another air dome and some very nice passages and rooms; all at very shallow depths.



**Cave Name:** La Jeringa

**Area:** Bayahibe

**Location:** Padre Nuestro National Park

**Length:** 2200 feet

**Depth:** 49 feet maximum

**Access Fee:** RD\$300 ~US\$8 per diver/day paid at Medioambiente Office in Bayahibe

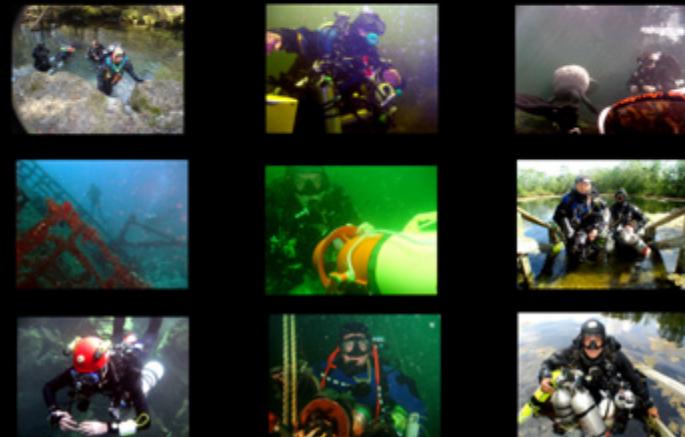
This is the most recently discovered cave in Padre Nuestro Park. A former pump station found in 2009 by DRSS members, this was a total surprise because it is such a well known area and so close to the main road.

This cave is considered an advanced cave dive. Due to the numerous major restrictions and very low ceiling heights it is also recommended to be dived only in side mount configuration.

The main line is located past the warning sign where the cave drops down through a restriction to a large tunnel and the line continues to the end of the tunnel and through another restriction down to another small section

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Padre Nuestro



El Chicho



Fifty feet after the first tie off in the cave, you can jump to the left and after a tight restriction you will find the permanent line that leads to the main part of the cave.

The junction room is an interesting place, much bigger and wider than the rest of the cave, several tunnels connect here; after this room, the hammer line is the most interesting part of the cave and then the air dome tunnel, the one with bigger proportions, which leads to the only little air dome in the cave.

This dive is all downstream after the jump, with a very light flow.



**Cave Name:** Padre Nuestro

**Area:** Bayahibe

**Location:** Padre Nuestro National Park

**Length:** ~700 feet

**Depth:** 40 feet max.

**Access Fee:** RD\$300 ~US\$8 per diver/day paid at Medioambiente Office in Bayahibe

Padre Nuestro is the most decorated underwater cave in the Dominican Republic with an abundance of beautiful Speleothem and crystal clear water.

The cave has an upstream section, with two really big rooms and a gigantic cavern zone and a short darker downstream section with a fair amount of decoration and light flow, but it is advised you side mount this section if you want to go to the end of this line.



### A call for safety and conservation

Since the Dominican Republic Speleological Society (DRSS) was formed, it has worked very hard to promote conservation and safety amongst people. See more at [www.dr-ss.com](http://www.dr-ss.com).

Conservation education is ongoing, as locals regularly use caves to dispose of their trash and others are destroyed to build hotels and houses.

Safety is a major concern. The DRSS has worked to install warning signs in every DR cave. Dive centers and instructors take open water divers on dives of well over 800 feet of penetration on a daily basis; all this with no training, using single tanks, a single light, etc., and some of these even make visual jumps and go through restrictions, violating all training agencies' rules and safety guidelines. Unsuspecting OW clients think these "guided" dives are safe.

The DRSS continues to recommend divers do not take these "guided dives" unless they have full cave training and specialized cave diving gear. Warning signs are placed at the end of the safe cavern zone, within view of the exit and daylight and the last chance for open water divers to turn around. The DRSS is concerned that untrained divers may not come out alive from these dives.

For more information contact:

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or visit the website:

[www.dr-ss.com](http://www.dr-ss.com)

# Conservation Corner

By: Kelly Jessop

## Exploration vs. Tourist Lines

You're traveling through a primary conduit of a popular cave system, and decide to take an obscure jump into a side passage. As you tie into this jump line, you've noticed you've gone from gold line to older knotted #24 line. On another trip you have been told about a river cave that has caught your attention. When locating the line in the entrance you see #18 twisted lines that have knots in 10-foot increments.

Cave divers depend heavily on guidelines to make safe exits, but guidelines serve another purpose. We use guidelines like a trail through the woods, and we tend to stick to this trail, which in effect keeps the traffic into a narrow area, and minimizes attrition to the cave. Normally when we see gold line, or newer white line, this line has been placed with the purpose of enjoying the "trail", but keeping us away from sensitive areas, like clay banks, formations etc. Encountering older survey line means this line has been laid for exploration, but line placement may not be optimally placed away from sensitive areas. So, as conservation minded cave divers, awareness may be a good idea when traversing older exploration line. We may need to be more attentive to the surrounding cave to avoid damaging these sensitive areas.

# The Loop

By Joe Citelli

## Cave Diving and CCR's: A Match Made in Heaven or A One Way Ticket to Hell

It is apparent that "CCR Cave" (Closed Circuit Rebreather cave diving) is the latest trend in cave diving. Courses are being taught, books are being written, and students are being recruited to use a highly advanced technology for which many do not have the background or experience. This also holds true for some who teach and/or write about it. The veracity of these statements becomes quite apparent when one observes the skills, planning logic and actions of some newer divers.

So how does a cave diver decide whether CCR cave diving is for him or her? There are numerous factors to consider. First and foremost is to realistically evaluate ones' personal abilities both in the water and in a cave. Where is your comfort zone? Has your cave diving ability evolved to the point that safe and proper navigation and maneuvering within a cave system comes naturally to you? Or are you still at a level which requires you to intensely focus solely on the cave? If placing a jump reel without making a huge silt cloud is a challenge, or if you have an ever increasing feeling of doom as you go deeper into a system perhaps CCR cave diving is an unwise choice for you.

### Help or Hindrance

Let's assume you are an experienced cave diver who is as comfortable 5000 feet back in a cave as you are in a swimming pool. Minimally, this is where you need to be at before considering CCR cave diving. At this level of experience you are ready to make the leap, but, is it a practical choice for you? Only after examining your personal style of diving and preferences can this decision be made rationally. Rebreathers are not the panacea they are often presented as and yet they can be wonderful tools when used for the right job. While they are less than optimal in shallow systems like Peacock Springs with its continuous depth changes wreaking havoc with buoyancy and ppO<sub>2</sub>, they are a godsend

in systems like Eagle's Nest where depths are in the 300 ffw range and CCR makes running out of gas a non issue. So, one must ask, will his or her style of diving be enhanced by adding a CCR to the toolbox?

### Consider the following:

Are deep, and/or remote caves a part of your usual diving? Can you perform the dives you wish to do effectively on open circuit? Are you confident in your ability to solve technical problems underwater while under duress?

If the answer to any of these is no, then CCR cave diving is not for you. Shallow (less than 100 foot), short (less than one hour) dives can be done very safely and effectively on open circuit scuba. CCR adds unnecessary complications and brings far more risk to the table than it mitigates. If you are incapable of performing a given dive on open circuit, you should not delude yourself that CCR is the solution. Remember, the safety net or bailout for CCR is open circuit. If you can't bail out to open circuit from maximum depth or penetration with confidence and **know** you can do that 5000 foot open circuit swim out of the cave, CCR cave diving is not the solution. If you are of the mindset that 30 seconds is **not** a lot of time to solve a problem or, if you question your ability to assess and solve technical problems at depth, full well knowing a mistake can and will kill you, CCR cave diving is not for you. If you are careless, overly confident or have the "it can't happen to me attitude", CCR cave diving is not for you.

So, for whom is CCR cave diving appropriate? In my opinion, anyone whose diving has evolved to the limits of open circuit and is pushing those limits often, as in most of their dives are very deep or very long (or both). CCR should also be considered when traveling to remote places where logistics are such that equipment

transport is arduous and consumable gasses are often difficult, if not impossible, to come by. Under these conditions a CCR is an invaluable tool for exploration. It is relatively small and lightweight and has extremely flexible operating parameters. With a CCR you can always have the correct gas mix for the dive, be it shallow or deep, even though there are minimal resources available.

## Decisions, Decisions

Ok, so you've decided, CCR cave diving is the path you wish to follow and you make a bold, but hopefully prudent, informed decision. So, how does one proceed?

The first step is to educate oneself. Study the individual units that interest you. Learn their strengths and weaknesses. Make an informed choice predicated on your own research and opinions. Read any literature available to you, being careful to scrutinize and question the content. Just because someone wrote a book doesn't mean they know what they are talking about. Validate things before you accept them as gospel. Once you choose a unit or field of units, discuss them with those more knowledgeable than yourself. Hear and evaluate what they have to say, both good and bad. Learn what they like and dislike about a particular unit and try to discern whether or not it will suit your needs. Once you have narrowed the field of units, the next step is to find an instructor and get training.

At this juncture some might ask, "why get training? I know how to Cave Dive and I know how to dive a rebreather, so why do I need training?" Well, perhaps you don't, but consider the consequence of an incorrect assessment of your personal abilities and skills. If nothing else a good instructor can reaffirm, validate and polish what you already know, teach you what you don't know and fix what you think you know but do not. He can pass on all of the subtleties and nuances he has picked up over the years and save you much of the trial and error that comes with any new skill set.

## What To Consider

To effectively teach CCR cave diving, an instructor must have a thorough understanding of the mechanics of a CCR and be able to communicate that understanding to his students. He must be an accomplished cave diver who actually participates in CCR cave diving outside the classroom. This is not to denigrate anyone but to emphasize the point that CCR cave diving is a very advanced form of cave diving, not because it is particularly difficult,

but rather, because it creates an unimaginable number of new and creative ways for a diver to kill himself. You want an instructor who has survived those mistakes and can pass on his knowledge, not someone who teaches CCR in order to preserve his market share of students.

Ask your potential instructor what kind of diving he does when he is not teaching. Ask his opinion on controversial topics such as solo diving and team bailout. If he answers in absolutes, run because that is an indicator of no real world experience or a narrow minded approach.

One of the most controversial topics for CCR cave diving is the concept of team bailout. If he **advocates** it as the only way to dive, run. If he thinks it's **insanity**, run even quicker. When I hear people carping about team bailout, it is quite apparent to me that they were not taught by someone who really does CCR cave diving, but rather, by someone whose forte is in academics and does not truly understand the purpose of CCRs in a cave and why cave divers evolve to use them. In short, while I agree divers should always be self sufficient and able to exit the cave on their own, an instructor must recognize that a CCR in a cave is primarily a tool for exploration and most exploration is not feasible without incorporating at least some team bailout into the plan. Students need to know how to effectively plan, manage and execute a team bailout scenario, even if they believe they will never do it.

Finally, evaluate your instructor candidate as a person. Does his lifestyle and point of view on life in general reflect attitudes and values similar to your own? Were you not associated through diving, would he be a friend? This is important because instructor – student relationships in higher forms of dive training should foster lifelong friendships. As the student evolves on his own, that instructor should be available to him as a friend and mentor.

Those who choose to make the leap into CCR cave diving should only do so after much careful thought and consideration of not only the pros, but also the cons of taking a CCR into a Cave. It is not a decision to be made with haste nor taken lightly. Hopefully this article will help some make that decision.

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and are not necessarily those of the CDS or any other training agency.*

# Visit With A Cave: Bozell Springs



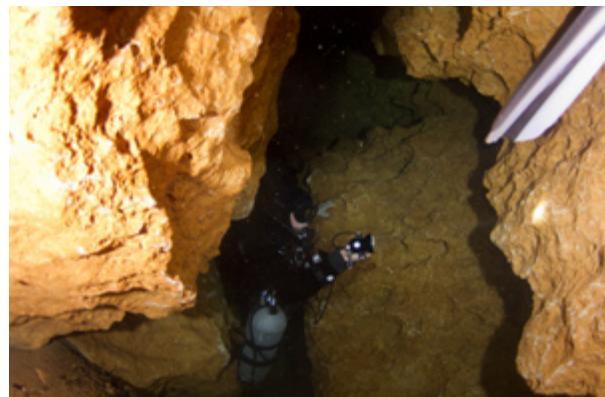
*Typical large bedding plane*

*Photographer: Ben Martinez*



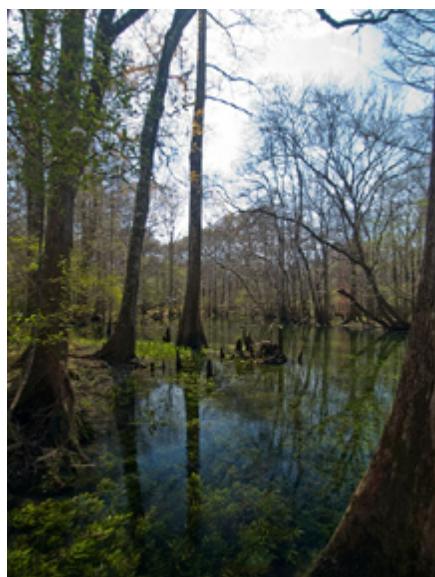
*Main spring basin*

*Photographer: Mat Bull*



*First vertical fissure restriction*

*Photographer: Ben Martinez*



*Spring run*

*Photographer: Mat Bull*

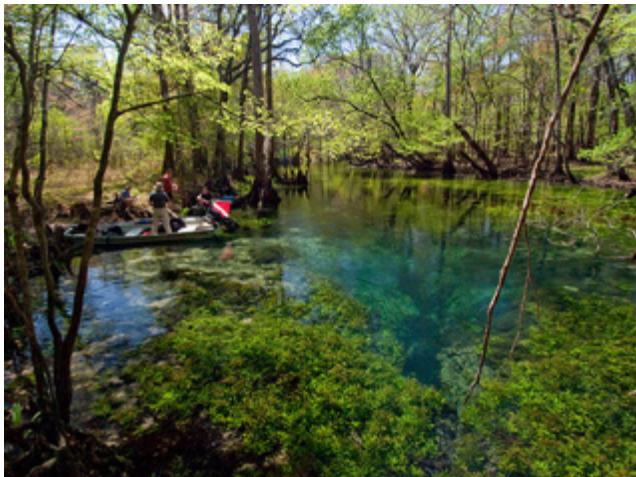


*Second basin*

*Photographer: Mat Bull*

# Bozell Springs

Photos by Ben Martinez and Mat Bull



*First spring basin*

Photographer: Mat Bull



*Entrance*

Photographer: Ben Martinez

## Bozell Springs, Florida

Bozell Springs is a group of springs and karst windows located on the Chipola River north of Florida Caverns State Park.

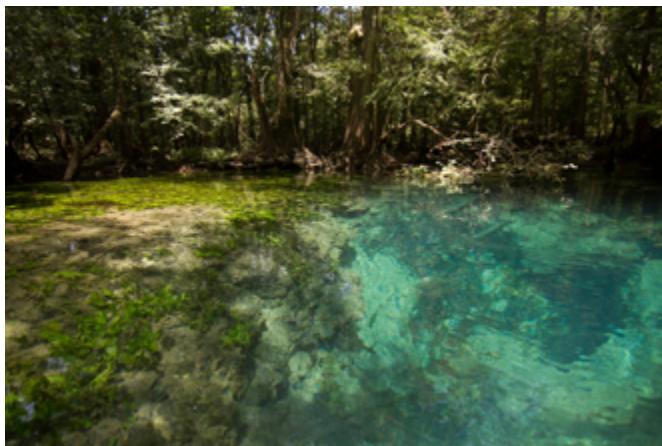
The park has a boat launch which makes for the best access point to this stretch of the river. The Chipola is a beautiful river with many springs (and caves) located on it and is an adventure for those who can enjoy the journey just as much as the dive. You can expect to see picturesque floodplains and lots of different types of wildlife including waterfowl and American Alligators.

Access to Bozell must be made by canoe or small boat and in times of low water egress, upriver can be slow and difficult. There are two main basins associated with Bozell Springs, so it's best to go with someone who is familiar with the system your first time to help you to make sense of the various vents and windows into the system. Land around the spring is privately owned, and shouldn't be trespassed.

There are several sections of the cave that best make it a sidemount dive. But once you are just a few hundred feet in, the passage opens up to very large (wide and lowish) bedding planes with huge rooms and very extensive fissure cracks and sections of breakdown. This lasts for better than 1000 feet before the next vertical fissure crack sidemount restriction.

The beginning tighter part of the cave is high flow and very rocky and sandy. Once into the large passage, the bottom is a mix of silt, clay, and sand.

Depths are in the moderate recreational level at about 120 feet on the line; you can get 10 to 15 feet deeper on the floor in places, so gas is best planned accordingly.



Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Ben martinez



Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Ben martinez



Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Ben martinez



Bozell

Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Mat Bull



Photgrpaher: Mat Bull



Photgrpaher: Mat Bull



Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Mat Bull



Bozell Springs Photgrpaher: Mat Bull



## Cave Archaeology Investigation & Research Network

The Cave Archaeology Investigation & Research Network (CAIRN) would like to invite NSS members to submit abstracts for two conference sessions on submerged cave archaeology. The first session will be held at the Society for Historical Archaeology conference in Baltimore, MD, next January, while the second will be at the Society for American Archaeology conference in Memphis, TN, in April. Interested individuals should send a short abstract to **pcampbell@cairninstl.org by July 9 for the SHA Conference or September 14 for the SAA Conference**. A terrestrial cave session will also be held, please send abstracts to **cwilliams@cairninstl.org**.

### ***Submerged Cave Archaeology: Methods, Theory, and Recent Findings***

Submerged caves present different challenges and opportunities than traditional underwater sites. Springs, flooded caverns, sinkholes, cave lakes, sumps, and siphons are significant not only as features in ancient landscapes, but also sheltered environments that protect cultural material from nature's dynamic forces. A relatively small number of submerged cave sites have been published; however, interest is on the rise as archaeologists realize the potential of these sites. Publications show that approaches differ widely based on the background and training of the archaeologist. This session acts as a discussion for this developing sub-discipline while examining methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks for interpreting cave sites, and recent findings.



### **First Annual Advanced Skills Workshop**

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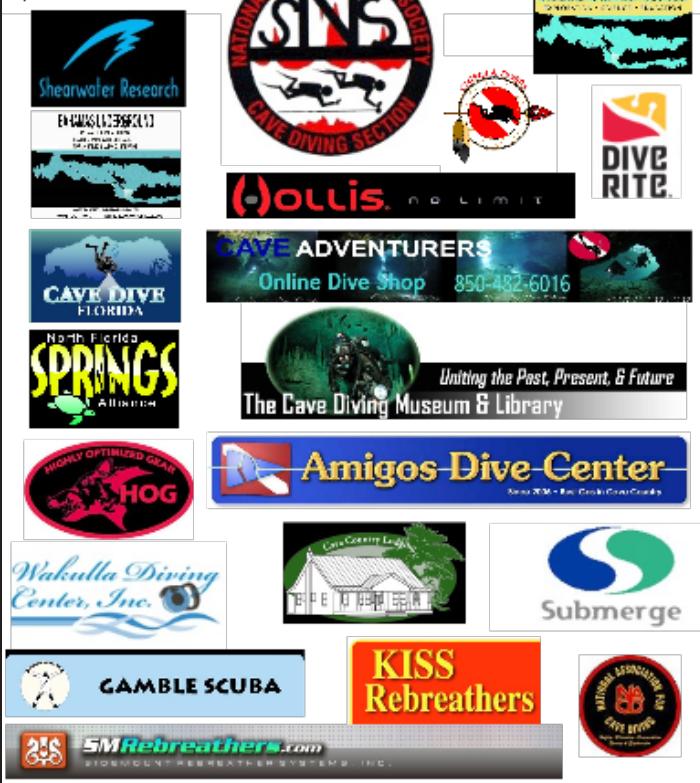
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# 2011 NSS-CDS Mid West Mini Workshop

## Mini Workshop Near St. Louis, MO.

September 17, 2011

8 AM - 3 PM

Sybergs

(Meeting Room)

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Maryland Heights, MO.



photo by Michael Angelo Gagliardi

*Blue Davidson Spring*

*Cannonball Cave*

### Speakers

**Cavern, The Door Step To the Caves - Bill Harrison**

**DPVs In Caves - Rob Neto**

**The History And Exploration of Roubidoux - OCDA**

**The History And Exploration Of Cannonball - Ed Pavey**

**Tennessee Cave Systems - Donald "Skip" Kendrick**

**Cozumel Exploration - Mark "Slim" Leonard**

**Caves Down Under - Forrest Wilson**

**\$30 Pre-Registration for NSS-CDS Members**

**\$40 At The Door**

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**To Register**

**<http://nsscdsmidwestworkshop.eventbrite.com>**

# 2011 NSS-CDS Workshop Review

## By Wendy Thurman



*Rob Neto welcomes workshop attendees.*

*Photographer: Wendy Thurman*

The 2011 Cave Diving Section Workshop, held in Marianna, Florida, focused on the exploration and conservation efforts of the cave diving community today. In addition to that focus, practical clinics were held, equipment manufacturers and organizations exhibited, and Jackson Blue Spring was opened by the Jackson County authorities to attendees for no-charge diving. The workshop was also a tribute to a tireless advocate of exploration and conservation, the late Wes Skiles, whose life and work will influence exploration and conservation efforts for decades to come.

Friday evening's gathering consisted of an informal social with barbecue generously provided by the Chief of the Marianna Fire Department, Byron Bennett. Tom Morris chaired a small panel of long-time friends of Wes' and recounted stories about experiences shared with Wes over many years of diving. For those attendees who knew Wes only through his work, Tom's storytelling provided an interesting and intimate view of Wes Skiles, the friend and colleague.

Hosted by Walter Pickel, Saturday morning saw the workshop begin in earnest with a distinguished group of speakers heavily involved in the exploration and con-

servation efforts of underwater cave systems throughout the world. Activities in Florida, Bermuda, Bahamas, Mexico, and Puerto Rico were presented by the speakers that included Jerry Murphy, Dr. Tom Iliffe of Texas A&M University, Andy Pitkin, Cindy Butler and Alan Heck, Brian Kakuk, Mike Young, Edd Sorenson, and Dr. Joerg Hess. Discussions on the interconnectivity of known systems, environmental impact of development on cave systems and fauna, new system exploration efforts, and access to current systems were some of the subjects presented.

On the Florida exploration frontier: Jerry Murphy described efforts to connect the Rose Creek and McCormick Sink systems in the Ichetucknee Basin, while Andy Pitkin's talk focused on exploration and survey work ongoing in Alachua's Mill Creek system. Cindy Butler and Alan Heck presented their efforts in the Suwannee River State Park involving the discovery of new caves and "ridge-walking" techniques employed in these discoveries. Edd Sorenson's pushes in the Mill Pond systems were described in detail as well, and Dr. Hess discussed the ongoing work of the cave diving community to open Wakulla Springs for diving. These presentations



*Speaker Cindy Butler*  
*Photographer: Wendy Thurman*

illustrated clearly that Florida remains a hotbed of underwater cave exploration with thousands of feet of new passage remaining to be investigated and surveyed, new systems plumbed, and efforts developing the knowledge base of known systems continually proceeding.

Further afield, Dr. Iliiffe concentrated on discovery efforts using advanced sonar and imaging techniques along with conservation work currently taking place in Bermuda. Additionally, Dr. Iliiffe presented a fascinating introduction to cave fauna biology. It's also certainly worth mentioning that Dr. Iliiffe headed a group of Texas A&M students attending the workshop who became newly-minted cavern divers during their visit to Florida. Brian Kakuk, known for his work exploring Bahamian systems and working with Wes Skiles and Andrew Todhunter on last year's National Geographic Magazine cover story on these systems, discussed not only his exploratory and research work, but also his conservation work focusing on the protection of these very fragile systems. Mike Young, a member of the United States Deep Cave Team, described current work in the Yucatan and the complexities associated with landowner relations, and challenging exploration projects ongoing in Puerto Rico. Just as in Florida, new discovery opportunities are ongoing throughout the world.

It is clear that conservation efforts must continue and that these efforts are no less important than the exploration work currently being conducted. Through education, awareness, research, and "telling our story", the unique environment that is an underwater cave can and must be protected. Water is the stuff of life; without a clean, renewable source of water, life as we know it could not exist. Concluding with a moving tribute to Wes, that underscored his prescient understanding of the vital importance to everyone- not just cave divers- of the systems beneath our feet to our continued existence, the lecture portion of the 2011 NSS-CDS workshop was an unqualified success.

On Sunday, practical clinics were held in the areas of sidemount diving, rebreathers, regulator maintenance, scooters, and recovery techniques. Increasingly popular, the sidemount clinic presented by Rob Neto of Chipola Divers and Edd Sorenson of Cave Adventurers was a "sold-out" event. Greg Stanton of Wakulla Divers made several different rebreather models available for test drives and



*Speaker Brian Kakuk*  
*Photographer: Wendy Thurman*

Mark Leonard conducted a practical clinic on the KISS rebreather.

General diving, a perennial favorite, was also available at Jackson Blue Spring, a beautiful example of Florida's underwater world.

Thanks and appreciation to Rob Neto for organizing the workshop, Edd Sorenson for ensuring that logistical needs were met, Jackson County for their warm welcome and appreciation of the cave diving community, Chipola College for the venue, and to the equipment manufacturers, businesses, and organizations who contributed door prizes and invaluable support. Lastly, a very special thank you to Wes Skiles, whose spirit lives on in the cave diving community.

*Right: Diver gearing up for a sidemount dive at Jackson Blue*

*Photographer: Wendy Thurman*



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# 2011 Workshop Photos



Photo by: Rob Neto

## Friday Night Social

Registration, catching up with old friends and meeting new, some dinner and stories of Wes Skiles.



Photo by: Rob Neto



Photo by: Rob Neto



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Photo by: Jozef Koppelman



Photo by: Jozef Koppelman



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# 2011 Workshop Photos



Photos: Rob Neto



# 2011 Workshop Photos



Photos by: Jozef Koppelman



# 2011 Workshop Photos



Photo By: Tracy Baumer



Photo By: Michael Angelo Gagliardi



Photo By: Jim Wyatt



Photo By: Rob Neto



Photo By: Michael Angelo Gagliardi

# 2011 Workshop Photos

## Sunday Clinics and Diving

Clinics were well attended and some cave diving even took place.



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo



Photo By: Tracy Baumer



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo



Photo By: Tracy Baumer

# 2011 Workshop Photos



Photo By: Tracy Baumer



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo



Photo By: Lourdes del Olmo

# Cave Diving Milestones

By Shirley Kasser

In May, the NSS-CDS was pleased to present both a Sheck Exley and a Henry Nicholson Safety Award. Jason Richards was awarded the Sheck Exley Safety Award, marking one thousand safe cave dives. James Clark was awarded the Henry Nicholson award, representing five hundred safe cave dives beyond cave training. These are truly remarkable accomplishments. Please take a moment to congratulate these men for their dedication to our sport. Both are true assets to the cave community.

The first one hundred dives are often considered some of the most dangerous in a cave diver's career. The experience gained during these first dives is very valuable and represents a great deal of time, dedication, and pleasure!

This year, we were pleased to present the Abe Davis safety award for one hundred dives beyond their cave training to these thirty four divers: Mike Bartlett, L. Allen Beard, Robert G. Beckner, Daniel Berkepile, Jon Berkepile, William Berkepile, Miguel A. Bermudez, Jonathan Pitt, Paul L. Clark, Roberts CulbertScheck, Larry Deweese, Kermit Erwin, Nicholas Galante, Brian M. Garby, Frederick P. Gray, Carl B. Griffing, Jr, Larry Hack, Shawn Holmes, Cristiana Jones, Kevin L. Jones, Jim Lesto, Adam McDowell, Hitoshi Miho, Kelly M. Oborn, Michael Pinault, John Henry Preston, Jr., Charles A. (Sandy) Robinson, Steve Schafer, Mark Schroder, Richard J. Shea, Adam Smith, David Soskin, Riana Treanor, and Pamela K. Wooten.

Congratulations to all of our safety award winners!

One of last year's Henry Nicholson awardees, John Ivanic, shared his 500th dive with us:

Thank you for the Henry Nicholson award. I am very pleased to have accomplished this many cave dives. I became fascinated with scuba diving at age eighteen. I took an open water course in 1972 and that was it. I have been actively diving since. In the early nineties I became interested in cave diving and I guess this was the start of the technical diving era. I owe many thanks to a good friend, John Reekie, who I relied on for information on this up and coming extreme sport. At that time there was no internet and chat forum groups like there are today. Since I started this sport I knew I was going to be in for the long haul. I was cave certified in 1994 in Florida. After completing the course I knew what my friend was talking about. For me, cave diving is an ongoing learning experience. The conservation and preservation of the caves is truly important.

"February 2009- NoHoch Nah Chich, Quintana Roo, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

"I dove with my wife, Maureen, and Steve Bogaerts. Steve and his exploration partner Robbie Schmittner made the connection between Sistema Sac Actun and NoHoch Na Chich in 2007 and were awarded the National Geographic Explorer of the Year for their efforts. This cave has been a passion of mine since 1991 when I first heard of Mike Madden's exploration. We have made yearly trips to the Yucatan since 2004 and have dove Nohoch more than twenty times. It is a highly decorated and extremely beautiful cave. The landowners, the Rodriguez family, are welcoming and hospitable people. On my 500th dive, we decided to do a double stage scooter dive on the main upstream line with several planned jumps to

explore the cave. The duration of the dive was 190 minutes and we travelled approximately 6,000ft into the cave. This cave is one of my favourite places in the world and I plan to do many more dives here in the future. It is truly a privilege to visit these sacred places."

Five hundred dives later, we have Argyris Argyriadis weighing in the view from beyond one thousand dives, and the experience he has gained in achieving this impressive goal. Read on as Argyris shares his 1000th dive and some lessons learned along the way to reaching this incredible milestone:

"My 1000th cave dive found me doing what I love best: Diving and Teaching. It was a very peaceful day that day in a fresh water spring in Peloponnesus, Greece, with my student and friend, John Kotsifas. John was at his late stages towards a full cave certification, and we had the luxury to make a 500+ meter traverse in Sintzi spring to a depth of 27 meters in a dive that was an hour long.

"Although 1000 cave dives seems to be a great achievement, I believe every cave dive, #1, #100, #500, etc, is significant and important to the cave diver. We are undertaking a sport in which complacency is our greater enemy. So, treat every cave dive with the same respect. Attitude keeps you alive, and this attitude brought me here to log this outstanding number of diving experiences, underwater and underground.

"My personal story begins almost 2 decades ago when, after almost 10 years of dry caving, I decide to continue cave exploration underwater. It was the water that stopped my previous explorations in the region. I remember cave diving in the late 80's - early 90's was difficult to find outside the US, especially in a small country like Greece, where I come from.

"I was very lucky that during this time, the evolution of technical diving as a trend was spreading its dark disease, and I had the privilege to acquire almost every style of cave techniques: The European with Lugi Casati and Jean Jacques Bolanz, and the English sump style with my lifetime mentor Rob Palmer, before full my NSS-CDS full cave certification with Steve Berman.

"To all those wonderful people mentioned above that influenced me during this subterranean journey is dedicated this award. As a cave instructor nowadays, I still continue the heritage and path to safety to newcomers in our beloved activity.

"Is cave diving dangerous? After 1000 cave dives I continue to believe that underwater speleology is challenging. It is the diver that enters risk in the equation. It is a really honor for me to be an owner of the Sheck Exley award. I invite every cave diver to participate in the program it is our legacy to the pioneers that laid guidelines before us and our heritage to the next generation of cave explores. Safe cave diving to everyone. "

Thank you both for taking the time to share your stories.

What's your story? Email your milestone stories and photographs to me at [abedavis@nsscds.org](mailto:abedavis@nsscds.org), or snail mail them to me at **2612 Grassy Point Dr, #110, Lake Mary, FL 32746**.

Shirley Kasser



## Safety Signs

A recent tragedy involving a USF student drowning after becoming disoriented in a Chassahowitzka River cavern was met with swift action by the local dive community.

One week after the incident, Walter Pickle and ADM Explorations placed Grim Reaper signs, donated by the CDS and NACD, blocking entrances to the caverns offshoots to warn divers of the danger.

"If we can help prevent one more death, then we've succeeded," said Walter Pickel of ADM.

Kudos on the swift action in response to this incident by all involved.

## CDS BoD Secretary

At the last meeting of the CDS Board of Directors, board secretary, Wayne Kinnard, resigned and Richard Blackburn, a past board member, was called upon to fill the position until the time of the next election.

The CDS thanks Wayne for his service and welcomes Richard to the board.

## Tank Racks at Little River

Thanks in part to the popularity of the tank racks built for Madison Blue Springs, the North Florida Springs Alliance has applied for and received permission to install identical tank racks at Little River.

Donations will cover costs of building and installing the racks; and if these tank racks are well received by park goers, additional racks may be built.

Please visit the NFSA website to donate:

<http://www.northfloridaspringsalliance.org/>

## CAIRN Conference Submissions

The Cave Archaeology Investigation & Research Network (CAIRN) is requesting submissions for their 2011 SHA and SAA Conferences.

For more information, please see their invitation on page 23.

## 2nd Annual Great Suwanee River Clean Up

Registration for the 2nd Annual Great Suwanee River Clean Up has begun.

Groups can register to clean up individual segments of the river by contacting Fritzi at 352-264-6827 or aar@currentproblems.org.

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

### July

9 - Submission date for the SHA Conference

### August

20 - NFSA Advanced Skills Workshop

### September

10 - 2nd Annual Great Suwanee River Clean Up Kick Off

14 - Submission date for the SAA Conference

17 - 2011 Mid West Mini-Workshop

September 1 Submission date for UWS Magazine Volume 38 No. 4

Send submissions to cccheryld@aol.com



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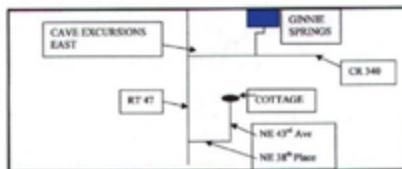
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