



Cave Survey Synopsis

February 10, 2013

Team members:

Dan Austin (trip leader)

Rene Ohms

Chris Pelczarski

This trip's objective was to evaluate and survey vertical leads in the Counting House area, near Lithograph Canyon. The team's first lead was a 70-foot-deep pit that Herb and Jan Conn and Tom Kiesling had discovered in 1968. On a later trip that same year, Herb Conn, Dwight Deal, Bruce Gillies, and Don Davis had returned with a rope, and Don had rappelled into it. He reported that the pit was a dead end, and made a rough sketch of the passage at the bottom, but it was never surveyed.

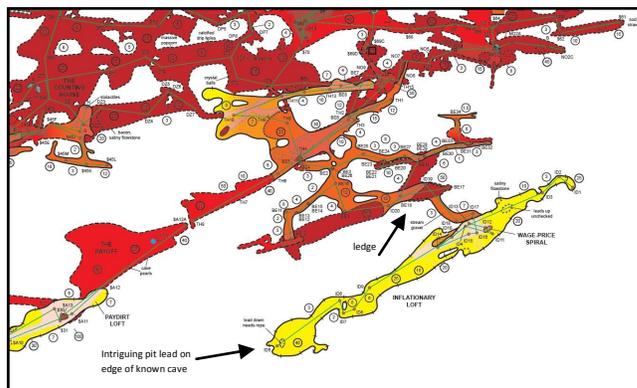


Chris Pelczarski ascends the 70-foot pit, near ID20. NPS Photo.

The 2013 team rappelled to the bottom, and were pleasantly surprised to find that although the passage did eventually end, there was more than 300 feet to survey. They also discovered multiple calcified drip holes in the mud floor of the passage.

After ascending the rope with SRT ("Single Rope Technique") systems, the team went to a nearby ledge that the Conns had crossed on one of their last trips to the area, in September 1968.

The Conns had done a technical aid climb to cross the ledge using ropes, pitons, and slings. On the far side, they found about 700 feet of cave, including a loft that they named the Inflationary Loft. At the end of the loft is a pit that requires rope, which the Conns never returned to explore. This pit is intriguing, because it is on the edge of the known cave and could lead to a large new section of unexplored passages.



A section of the Jewel Cave map. NPS Photo.

The team evaluated the ledge to see what gear would be required to negotiate it on a future trip, but didn't cross it this time. Instead, they surveyed some passages that had previously been sketched on the old map, then headed back out of the cave with 500.35 feet of new survey.

The current length of Jewel Cave is 164.86 miles.

New Jewel Cave Survey

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Elevator

— New Survey

