

New Passage in Grand Canyon Caverns

November 11-13, 2016

Ray Keeler – NSS 23245

Participants: Cameron Kopas, Sasha Poujlivaia, Spencer Giordano, Cecilia Baird-Berg, Kevin Lough, Paul Jorgenson, Brian Sullivan, Alec Harrell, Ahn Nguyen, Ray Keeler

The trip started with the highway being closed north of Prescott due to a fatal accident. Three of the cars were able to detour via Flagstaff and a fourth carload deciding to wait it out. Almost everyone arrived late to the bunkhouse and crashed.

The previous trip's status: In April 2016 and at the end of the day, Alec Harrell had been able to squeeze past the constriction, stand up, and see possible going passage. However, since he was the only one that could fit he was called back. The goal of November's trip was to continue this lead beyond Disappointment Dome.



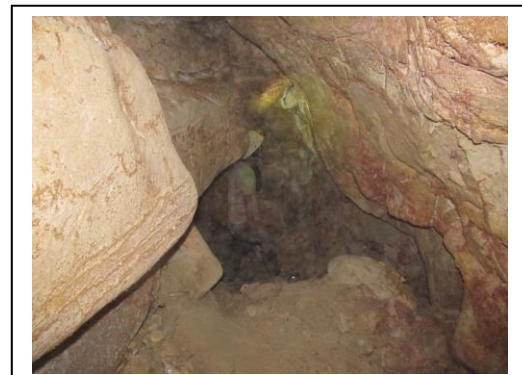
The group in Disappointment Dome
Cecilia B-B

On Saturday we ran into some problems with the electrical power and there multiple trips following the cable and confirming and repairing connections (Alec, Spencer, Cameron, Brian.) Additionally Ray left the charge packing material in his car but Paul was able to find it and send it in. Paul had brought some radios which helped immensely in coordinating repairs and getting needed equipment. Meanwhile Paul was doing some beacon testing to see how far away he could hear the signal.

Sooo ... New to CAG grotto members Ahn Nguyen and Cecilia Baird-Berg, being of small stature, were recruited to see what was beyond the tight spot at the end of the dig. Ahn and Cecilia went through, Ray gave them a minute or two and then shouted. They were out of earshot! Cameron was heading in when he heard them coming back. They had discovered some 60 feet of new passage with some of it walking.



The squeeze – Alec Harrell's foot.
Ray Keeler



Ahn in New passage
Alec Harrell

The passage was widened some, and later on Saturday

Alec and Ahn did an initial survey beyond the squeeze. This is pretty exciting because Alec and Ahn participated in a "cave surveying 101" class just three weeks before and were using the training for real in virgin cave! They had 61 feet beyond the squeeze and we needed another 25 feet to tie into the existing survey for a total of 86 feet. We will need to do some follow up survey but it was great initial bit of work. The passage trends southeast for the first 50

feet away from known cave, and then made a couple of sharp lefts and came back to the northwest. Paul also lowered a survey tape down the six inch drill shaft which came out to 78.3 feet.

As we were leaving Disappointment Dome Saturday there was a large volume of air coming in at the top of the upper rope. It was moving about 15 cm / second. After an immediate check of the tight spot it became obvious that the air is not all going into the new passage area. We've missed something and need to do some more looking.

Saturday evening John McEnulty fed everyone at the Caverns Restaurant (thank you very much) and several went back in for a "bring your own light" tourist trip.

On Sunday we had three things going:

- 1) We had discovered some problems with the gates and Paul went in to correct the issues. A return trip will be needed
- 2) When leaving Saturday we forgot to take the small sledge hammer out so Spencer and Brian went to retrieve it and
- 3) Ray, Sasha, Cameron and Cecilia started field checking the new digital map. The first thing they discovered was that a passage on the old map did not end immediately. There was an old ladder and an alcove with a possible climb.

Special thanks go to John McEnulty, owner of GCC for allowing us to explore and feeding us and housing us and basically just being a wonderful host and nice guy.



Ahn mapping

Alec Harrell



Ahn at end

Alec Harrell



Ladder in a passage that was supposed to end.
Cameron Kopus.