

TRIP REPORT FORM

AGGIE SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DATE: December 3, 2022

CAVE: 0-9 Well

SPECIFIC AREA: entrance to sump & back

TEAM LEADER: Hudson Nobles & Caleb Crubaugh

TEAM MEMBERS: Jenna Crabtree, Jakob Denton, Luke Fuka, Patrick Quinn, John Piperato, Austin Vance, & Hannah Walker

TIME ENTERED: 10:30 AM

EXIT TIME: 5:00 PM

PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

Recreational trip to 0-9 Well to increase familiarization with rigging, wet caves, and vertical experience.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR TRIP AND ANY SPECIAL OBSERVATION

We arrived to the property late Friday night. We camped around 100 feet from the cave entrance/windmill. Hudson had already set up camp.

The group woke up between 8 and 9 am and began preparing for the day. By 9:30 the group had eaten breakfast, assembled vertical kits, had a safety and wellness check, and packed ropes/carabiners necessary for the descent. We planned to do a staggered entrance into the cave with group 2 entering 45 minutes later to give group 1 ample time to rig and descend. At 9:45am Hudson, Patrick, and Jenna begun to rig the first drop from the entrance with Hudson instructing on the best way to rig and mistakes to avoid. By 10am Hudson began his descent into the cave.

I descended after Hudson with Hannah following behind me. The first drop was tight and maneuvering between cracks in the rock was necessary. When I approached the first re-direct I unclipped the carabiner from below my micro-rack and attached it above the rack and continued my descent downwards. I landed softly at the bottom of the natural entrance in a shallow pool of water. Hudson and I waited for Hannah to descend and then begun our traverse lower into the cave. We were met with flowstone pools that we eased in and out of some of them being too deep to touch the bottom. The water wasn't particularly chilly and I was able to keep warm while moving. As we approached the second drop into the waterfall room Jakob came from the rear and informed us there was a Rattlesnake at the top of the entrance that was preventing John from joining the "first" descent group. Jakob went back to the entrance chamber to wait for John to descend after the surface group handled the snake.

Hudson talked me through rigging the second drop and how to maneuver from the flowstone pools to the edge where you descend the waterfall. This was done via a

handline bolted from the flowstone pools to the ledge. I clipped both of my cowstails into the handline and used the rope to hoist me onto a small ledge on the right side of the passage before transitioning to the left ledge where the descent takes place. The descent down the waterfall was peaceful for the first 5-10 feet. Around that time Jakob & John were coming from the entrance room and splashing through the flowstone pools to towards the waterfall edge. This caused multiple waves of water to violently come crashing over the edge of the waterfall and subsequently whack me. I was able to retain my whits about me and keep my safety hand on the rope and I continued to descent in amost a blind fashion until the last 30 feet or so of the repel. I gently landed in a pool and a room full of pools and breakdown came into view. Hudson waited for me on a semi-dry rock bank directly behind the landing place of the repel. We both waited for Hannah to descend and then resumed our trek towards the sump. We squeezed through a hole in the breakdown following the path of water.

Hudson rigged the third drop down another smaller flowstone waterfall. This descent was about as peaceful as the last, with Jakob & John splashing me with huge waves of water. I landed in another pool and this chamber was smaller in dimension but none the less breathtaking. I rigged the last drop down the flowstone pool with Hudson supervising me. I used a figure 8 on a bite to attach to the primary and secondary anchors with opposite and opposing carabiners. I went down first, as customary when you rig. The landed in a large pool and then had my first gaze into the mud room. I immediately spotted a "fresh" skull planted in the mud and had to investigate. I have no clue what animal it was but it was small. How peculiar that it ended all the way down here. Hudson guided me around to the back of the mud room where the sump is. After placing his headlamp in the water the sump was illuminated. It's crystal clear blue water was something of the likes I have never seen. Hudson talked about his ambitions to cave dive and I hope that I can be in 0-9 Well to witness his first dive in the sump. It's really wonderful hearing people's cave dreams and ambitions and even more wonderful to have the opportunity to support them. The mud room featured the slickest mud hill I've ever met and a few of us took some hair-raising slides down. The path to and from the sump featured soul-sucking mud and at multiple points covered our members torso and below. It is known now that the mudroom is not ideal for snack time. Snacks should be eaten in the chamber before to avoid covering all your food in mud. I had mud with a side of beef jerky.

I began the ascent out first and Hudson stuck behind to walk Patrick through the de-rigging process. The ascent was slow work. The flowstone was unbelievably slippery and water added many pounds to my usual light weight. The ascent up the ropes was the fastest part. After the waterfall room the large deep pools gave me issues when trying to climb out. In the future it might be a good idea to rig a handline to assist people in getting up and over the flowstone dams. I honestly might still be stuck in those pools today if it weren't for Jakob giving me an extra boost.

All in all it was a wonderful trip. The Aggie Grotto has not visited 0-9 Well in many years and it's great to bring this cave back into our rotation. This was my first wet cave and the experience I gained traversing the cave is invaluable. The vertical training we completed in the weeks and days leading up to the trip was extremely helpful. It allowed everyone to feel confident in their ability on rope. There were no accidents to report or any broken cave formations. During the trip Jakob lost his footloop somewhere between the second and first waterfall during the ascent. Additionally Caleb lost a small flashlight in a pool that was knocked loose from its secure attachment on his harness during his ascent. Neither items were found despite our best search efforts.

Everyone was out of the cave by roughly 5pm. We then began to gather used gear together in trashbags for decontamination at a later date. Half of the group members left for Amazing Maze while the remainder camped another night at 0-9 Well.



Front Row (left to right): Caleb Crubaugh, John Piperato, Patrick Quinn, Hannah Walker
Back Row (left to right): Austin Vance, Jakob Denton, Luke Fuka, Hudson Nobles, Jenna Crabtree
Aggie Grotto prior to entering 0-9 Well on the morning of December 3. Photo taken by Jenna's self-timer iPhone.



Jenna laying along the edge of the entrance into 0-9 Well. Just below the cover of darkness Hudson is the first to make the descent into the cave. Photo taken by Jenna Crabtree.



Hudson beginning his descent into 0-9 Well. Photo taken by Jenna Crabtree.



Jenna preparing to descend into 0-9 Well. She's securing the rope bag to her harness and securing her micro-rack to the rope.
Photo taken by Jenna Crabtree.



Patrick Quinn posing over the entrance to 0-9 Well. From here Patrick was able to instruct newer members from a birds eye view.
Selfie taken by Patrick Quinn.



Luke Fuka preparing to remove the Rattlesnake from the turquoise tube. Efforts were successful and safe. Photo taken by Patrick Quinn.



Luke Fuka threading his micro-rack before descending into 0-9 Well. John Piperato observing in the background. Photo taken by Patrick Quinn.

