

TRIP REPORT FORM

AGGIE SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DATE: May 26, 2023

STATE: New Mexico

SPECIFIC AREA: through trip

TEAM LEADER: Jenna Crabtree

TEAM MEMBERS: Evan Bowen, Bobby Randolph, YuChen Yang

TIME ENTERED: 11:30 am

CAVE: Doc Brito

COUNTY: Eddy

EXIT TIME: 2:30 pm

PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

Recreational permit through the Carlsbad Bureau of Land Management office courtesy of Ellen T.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR TRIP AND ANY SPECIAL OBSERVATION

Evan and I arrived at the BLM office in Carlsbad on Friday soon after it opened to receive our permit. We dropped off one of our famous ASS green t-shirts for Ellen to say thanks for all her help. We headed back to our primitive campsite off of National Park Hwy to retrieve Bobby, Yang, and our gear.

We arrived at the parking spot for Doc Brito a little before 10 am. We put our knee pads and helmets on and hit the trail. I led the group down into the wash because that's how an earlier group of Aggies found it easiest in January. We arrived at the entrance after a short but beautiful hike, it was roughly 10:30 am. Unfortunately we forgot the paper in the car with the lock combination. As I was the trip leader I began my brisk jog back to the car. When I arrived at the car I found it locked. Shoot. I sat down to catch my breath and cursed the miles I was racking up before I ever even reached the inside of the cave. Bobby, Evan, and Yang soon appeared on the distant horizon, as I figured they knew the car was locked. We all had a good laugh, grabbed the paper, and headed back for the cave.

We entered the cave at roughly 11:30 after taking a pre-cave water and bathroom break. We snapped a few group pictures at the entrance courtesy of Yang and his handy tripod. The tricky chimney greeted me again much easier than the last time we met. I continued on past the first *fissure* into the first real chamber. I waited for signs of the others before continuing on to the first squeeze, making sure to give instructions about the locations of formations and how to pass best.

I took my first rest at what we nicknamed *the Beach*, which is really just the chamber where a stream clearly meanders through it during wet periods. The cave was warmer than I had remembered, but anything would be a reprieve for my warm-blooded nature from the cold January air. Evan joined me, and we waited for Bobby to enter the room before I continued through the squeeze.

This squeeze was my favorite of the cave. I think mostly because of my small nature, it makes squeezes something I easily excel at. While it would be nice to have the sprawl of Bobby while on rope, I appreciate cave hugs more than anything. We all gathered in the cave chamber and marveled at the formations. We joked about how Doc Brito would be the perfect replacement cave for Whirlpool. Although Bobby and Yang are arguably the mightiest minds ASS has, we still have no plan on how to relocate Doc Brito to College Station. After appreciating the stalactites and cave bacon, we continued on.

We reached what I call the A room due to the A-shaped rock you crawl below. I pointed out the pristine active stalactites hidden in the ceiling beyond the crawl-up that we squeezed below to make it to the last chamber. We each took a second to appreciate them before heading deeper into the cave.

The last chamber was welcoming with its cool air compared to the warmer air earlier in the cave. I had surprisingly worked up a sweat and was thankful to have some organic AC. I noticed a small cave pool in the middle of the chamber that was not there before. We each ate our snacks, and we had a small blackout. I personally have grown up with cave naps, and it feels almost criminal to leave a cave without turning out the lights just once.

Our group was fast-moving through the cave, and we soon returned to the chimney. I showed the group the small dome room to the right that is decorated with checkered white and red on its top to the right of the ascent. I was back in daylight before I knew it and already missed the damp familiarity of the last chamber.

After everyone was out, we closed the gate, shut the lock, and said toodles till next time. We walked towards the truck with full hearts and inspired minds. Doc Brito once again provided another trip for happy cavers.

It was an overcast day with little hope for sun. There was a small chance of rain throughout the day but not enough for any concern in regards to caving. The temperature was mild not exceeding 85 degrees. Ocotillos were in bloom and many songbirds were flitting about.



Evan B. posing with *the carrot*. It's a good day to be a caver and a bad day to be a vegetable.
Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



Bobby R. getting something out of his bag and Evan B. checking out the formations in the middle chamber. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



YuChen Y. taking a different approach to the second squeeze. Some might call it ASS style others might refer to this form as the reverse worm. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



Bobby R., Evan B., and YuChen Y. walking to the entrance of Doc Brito for the second time that morning. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



Bobby R., Evan B., Jenna C., and YuChen Y. take a selfie in the wash on the way to the entrance of Doc Brito. This is Jenna's new Grateful Dead buff and she is really excited because it is still white. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.