

TRIP REPORT FORM

AGGIE SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DATE: June 18, 2023

CAVE: Dogwood Spring

STATE: Kentucky

COUNTY: Barren

SPECIFIC AREA: the entire cave

TEAM LEADER: Chelsea Parada

TEAM MEMBERS: 2 graduate students from KU, Megan of the Explorers Club, & Jenna Crabtree

TIME ENTERED: 1:10 pm

EXIT TIME: 2:10 pm

PURPOSE OF THE TRIP

Recreational afternoon mosey through Dogwood Cave to visit the retreating waterfall at the end of the cave.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR TRIP AND ANY SPECIAL OBSERVATION

I arrived in Hamilton Valley on June 17 around 6 pm. I had just taken the Extended Historic Tour at Mammoth Cave and ran to Glasgow for dinner. To much surprise, Chelsea Parada rolled into Hamilton Valley around 8 pm. We spent the night catching up and swapping stories. I only see Chelsea in the summertime, so she has become my summer sweetheart.

On July 18, after a slow start, we all gathered on the back porch of the CRF lodge to discuss plans for the day. Dogwood Cave was snug in the forest not far away, so we decided to visit her. After a quick change into our caving gear and a short drive, we arrived at the cave entrance.

The group had visited the cave previously and informed me it was quite small. I, however, was wowed from the moment my head dipped below the opening. Small bird nests dotted the cave ceiling near the entrance, filled to the brim with eggs. The cavern sloped down and opened into what I consider as a Texas caver, a large chamber. I took my time taking photos and taking it all in. At the bottom of the slope, we noted a large shale layer in the rock; it gave a sickly green appearance.

The passage curved to the left, and the tall ceilings and wide walls continued further. Our goal was the end of the cave, where a waterfall poured out of the ceiling year-round. We quickly reached the slope to the end chamber and carefully maneuvered down one by one. Crickets dotted the domed ceiling, and water poured rapidly out of nowhere. There was a small crack above the shale layer that allowed the chilly water to pour out in such force. We

spent a while trying our hand at cave photography and then moved back toward the entrance.

On the way back, Chelsea stopped at the *concert room*, and we gathered below her. I cannot remember the name of the instrument she had with her, but she gave a beautiful serenade dedicated to me. After the personal concert and some lights-out time, we went toward the entrance again, periodically stopping for photo opportunities.

We exited the cave exactly one hour after we entered, happy and a little muddy. It's always great to cave with new people, and it was my first time caving in Kentucky. If it wasn't with Caleb Crubaugh, Chelsea Parada would be my only other choice.



Chelsea Parada looking at the nests in the entrance. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



Megan walking around the waterfall with Zach hiding in the bottom. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.



Zach looking at the waterfall in the back chamber. It's pouring out from above the shale layer. Photo by Jenna Crabtree.