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been on where our work would be deep inside the cave. We paused only briefly at the entrance to consolidate our gear, and within 15 minutes or so we were shuttling gear down the 3 entrance constrictions. Our gear was about 6 pieces in total, all of them quite heavy, and in most areas we had to pass things to each other. The work Ryan and Dave did on the last trip surely sped this process up. It took us about an hour to move through the first several hundred feet of the cave from the entrance to infeeder #4. Dave got right in and started working the constriction. Ryan waited in the room above, and seeing I had little to offer at this point, I pushed around a bit.

I entered a small passage at the south of the room, which would prove to be a portion of a small 3d maze surrounding the fairly spacious room above #4. After digging through a short constriction, I scooped about 50' of tight streamway. It could probably be pushed farther. This looks to be the current source of water entering the #4 complex. Back at the room, I found my way into some other routes out towards the east. This lead into some nicely sized rooms full of sandstone breakdown. At ceiling level some short passages lead off, developed entirely in savage dam member (by slumping into the cavities below). There were thick roots in this area, and I cannot imagine this area being far underground at all.

After these brief excursions, I went back down to the infeeder to see how it was going. To our despair, the rock was practically unbreakable. Instead of the passage being bottomed out on shale, it seems there is a horizon of extremely competent, silicious limestone making up the base of the DV member. I went down past Dave, to the other side of the constriction, to see if I could get a better angle. I couldn't. I got a couple critical knobs off the floor a little further down, but otherwise I was pretty useless. Back to the room above, Ryan and I relaxed while Dave gave the rock hell. Luckily, the rock broke more readily as he chipped deeper into it. Still, progress was much slower than we had hoped, and even though the length we had to enlarge wasn't much longer than a foot, we spent hours

taking turns hammering on the bull pins and drilling holes wherever we could. Dave took the brunt of the work. Finally, we were all able to pass, me in the front, Dave in the middle, and Ryan cleaning our mess up behind us (and farting periodically). Only 10 feet or so past this constriction is another, floored in the same invincible rock. I knew it would be very, very close on Dave. He gave it a try, and sure enough, it wouldn't let him pass. I could tell it would take ever so little enlargement to allow passage, so I drilled a few holes and was able to chip off just enough (it couldn't have been more than .5" of rock on the floor.) We were through! Around the corner, where the passage opens up, I noticed another passage a few feet off the floor, heading south. To my surprise, after 30 feet of comfortable crawling, the floor dropped and I was standing in another infeeder. Across it, along the strike, was a nice stream passage, with smooth sculpted walls: very nice traveling! Down this about 100', it reduced to a belly crawl with a clay floor. It was really moving air. I turned around, and went back to the new infeeder (#5) to explore a sinking suspicion I had...

The cave had played a joke on us. The upstream end of infeeder #5 tied right into the room above #4; because of the angle looking down on it from the room, I had thought the passage stopped. Ryan had mentioned that he saw this space ahead, and I had found passage in the same general area; assuming we had found the same space, and focused on the task at hand, we didn't verify with each other. All I had to do was move a few rocks, and suddenly there was a very spacious bypass to the route we had spent the last 5 hours or so fighting tooth and nail to enlarge. The bypass has been named "Irony Alley." One way or another, we were all in, and started plodding down the sometimes interesting but usually tedious stream passage. Within the hour we popped out in the first waterfall room. We really took the cave in, from this point on, appreciating the dreamlike canyon, with its beautiful sculpted and cross-bedded walls, many waterfalls, and fascinating speleothems. I blew through this part so fast on the last trip that I seem to have really compressed some cave in my head. There are a

number of hundreds of feet here. I noticed this time that there were vastly wide passages leading north out of the top of keyhole. Many of these were probably too low to traverse, but they evidence that the stream occupied a lot of passage perched on top of the Loyalhanna before finally punching through. The ceiling never leaves the DV, suggesting that all the passage in the Loyalhanna we've seen is a product of entrenchment, and always initiated in the DV.

Presently we came to the big waterfall, but I noticed something exciting to our right just before we got there: some small apertures leading into what appeared to be an enormous void. After peering down the waterfall, and cautioning each other not to fall, we went back to check these leads.

This is what made this trip so much more than it would have been: before us, on the other side of the short crawl, was a natural staircase dropping into a stunningly enormous chamber below, the same our waterfall was plunging into. Here we made good of our promise, and Dave took the lead to climb down into the massive space. As the three of us landed on the untouched floor, we could have been on the moon. I never imagined that I would see virgin passage of such a size in Maryland. The room is 50+ feet long, 15-20 feet wide, and 20-35' high. It is of a fairly regular shape, so the volume of the space really hits you. Two stream canyons, mostly dry, enter from the east and updip. Beyond the room: gaping canyon, the likes of which have never been seen before in the state.

Dave took the lead, respectfully taking us ever deeper into the abyss ahead. We climbed up and down in the canyon, where heights of 30-40' were not uncommon. I would say the passage averaged 5 feet wide. The stream floored it, sometimes forming deep pools to chimney across. We progressed unimpeded for 500-1000', right down the dip, gaining tremendous depth. Finally, passage character changed, swinging northward along the strike, back up into the DV, lowering to crawlway, and widening to 20+ feet. We were nearing our limit. I went in for the final push. After 100' feet of belly crawl in deep mud, the passage again

breached at a short but difficult climb in a waterfall. A deep plunge pool was below. Past this feature was a nicely sized room, some more nice canyon, and another turn strike-ward into low passage 6-8"X ~20'. An upper level crawl diverged here, roaring air. I turned back, and we made a tiring but uneventful trip back to the surface. We must have exited at about 11PM, completing an exhausting 9 hour stay in tanglefoot.

The entrance was a sight to see. Frost was just forming on the ground, indicating an outdoor temperature of about 30 degrees. The jet of steam blowing out of the entrance was so powerful, we could hardly see. The leaves on trees yards away blew about in the humid fog. For as much as a hundred feet away from the entrance, I could still detect the cloud of steam blowing past, high above, with my headlamp. The bike ride, in our wet clothes, was icy.

#### Summary and Analysis:

Tanglefoot now lurches unofficially to the #1 position for length in the county, contending only with Crystal Grottoes caverns, (~3500') Darby, (1500-2500') and Crabtree (~4200') for the state. With its immense depth, it contends only with Twiggs for the title of Maryland's Deepest. It almost certainly contains the largest room, by volume, in the state.

My hopeful prediction of deep trunk passage in the Loyalhanna has not yet come true. We are nearing base level and gradients are lowering. As mentioned above, we have so far not found any passage entirely contained in the Loyalhanna: all of the passage we see has a ceiling in the base of the DV. This indicates that the Loyalhanna has not truly pirated the water into a lower hydrological system, but has just been exposed through entrenchment. This said, Dead Fly cave represents a true Loyalhanna cave with powerful air in the MSRQ system. That piece of the puzzle (how caves like dead fly formed, and how they relate to the large system we have entered now) remains to be solved. The stream volume seems to about match discharge at MSRQ spring, suggesting that if we are yet to

find big strike passage, it will likely contain only a small stream, or alternately discharge in the Loyahanna. Although the stream passage is relatively shallow near the entrance, the amount of water in the stream suggests very extensive passage upstream, and it is possible that this passage may be at times entrenched in the Loyahanna, and also possible that the system may gain as much as several hundred feet of relief in the upstream direction. Passage length adds up quickly in the complex, convoluted infeeder systems in tanglefoot, and jointing in the DV can make these passages spacious in some areas. I'm thinking that all that water has to be coming from somewhere, and probably adds up over a long distance with many infeeders. There could easily be thousands of feet of passage yet to be explored in the upstream direction.

I think chances of digging a connection into the quarry are bright, and the survey will inform that process once completed. I feel like we were approaching the elevation of the higher MSRQ caves, and strike passages were shooting off the top of the canyon everywhere. Any of them with air likely connect to the quarry in some way shape or form. What an amazing thru trip that would be! # 3 seems the best candidate to me, as it is obviously a large strike passage.

Tanglefoot is a new breed of MD cave, and Porter's has just the same potential. I have little doubt that Tanglefoot or Porter's will become Maryland's first cave to eclipse a mile in length.

Some fun numbers ( I guarantee none of them, of course:)

Estimated virgin passage explored this trip:

Infeeder complex: ~300'

Stream canyon: ~600-1200'

Total: ~900-1500'

Cave explored so far:

2000'-3000'

Estimated relief: 300'-400'

## Natural Bridge Caverns

On April 20 Mary and I went down to spend the night in Lexington and had Saturday night at Natural Bridge (NB) and Sunday as well.

We found out there was a commercial cave being offered as part of the package. I researched in old NSS bulletins, Caves of Virginia, asked the Socky's questions, and pulled up some other sources. I had done a fair amount of research on the cave before we even visited. We also found out, if one were to buy online, they offered a six dollar discount per ticket for the whole visit.

That makes a 28 dollar ticket just 22 bucks. So we sprung for the whole visit.

What we did over two days. Saturday evening we walked out to Lace Falls, under the bridge, past the saltpeter cave, Indian village and all. One of the highlights of this walk was we saw two turkeys, male and female. The male was showing off, spreading his tail feathers like a peacock. We actually got some good pictures of the affair. Later, we ate supper at the Pink Cadillac. In the evening we saw the light show on the side of the bridge.

Sunday we started the day with the butterfly garden, wax museum and finally:

THE?CAVE.

Walking into the gift shop we saw a seasoned lady behind the counter, and a young man named Larry. The seasoned lady looked as if she had been around a while so I plied my knowledge on her. Walking up, I told her we were members of the NSS and had done some research on the cave before we visited. The cave used to be called Buck Hill Cave, and she nodded her head and smiled in agreement. So I went on. Discovered in the 1890's, explorers related how they heard the wailing of a woman deep in the cave. This being reported for more than 50 years? (How could the same woman cry for 50 years?) Superstitious people stayed away. Then in 1943, William Stephenson, president of the NSS visited Buck Hill Cave, and nearby Bottomless Pit. He

**DEAD DOG DISPATCH**

**V.#28**

**I.#4**

**MAY**

**2013**

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dispelled the notion of a wailing woman by explaining dripping water, wind and orifices. Later, H.B Long worked on an entrance tunnel in the mid-seventies, and in 1977 opened the cave to the public. Well, when we got done with our spiel, they treated us like royalty. I told them we didn't want to hear about quicksand and flooded passages :-)

Larry turned out to be a pretty good guide. He had been leading trips in the cave for three years. In some places he talked the party line, and when talking to me privately, I was able to explain VAR involvement with other commercial caves. He told me he was able to do off-trail exploring, and had seen most of the known (mapped) passages. He showed me pictures of the gated historic entrance, and the bars are vertical. I told him that on newer gates, the slats are going in horizontal. In a few places on the commercial route we noticed brick walkways, and brick steps, and noticed the handrails were quite solid, made of some pipe-like material. On the other hand, we noticed the algae on formations. We saw the current showing, noticed a closed stairway and were ushered back topside. Underground maybe 40 minutes, 8-9 minutes in the mine shaft alone.

In the gift shop, conversation turned to a more current map. I had seen the one in Caves of Virginia, but it was an older map (the book being published in 1964). In the office, the map they had was drafted in 1990 and the entrance tunnel was also shown. I noticed two familiar names to me, (Tom Spina and Miles Drake). Larry and the nice lady, talked about the possibility of framing a map for the gift shop, but don't know where to get a clean copy. Larry also told me the owner of the property wants to spend money on the development of the Natural Bridge side of the park, the trail and so on. They feel the cave is less attractive, drawing fewer visitors. I feel it is worth noting that on the 1990 map, I saw passage that was marked, "closed commercial route". That route is still closed, and the owners have not committed to restoring it. The two kept wanting us to make positive remarks about our visit which was hard to do. They did acknowledge

the algae was not a draw, and Larry told me there were helictites in other parts of the cave.

So if you get the online discount and take the whole package, the cave isn't such a bad deal, but only if you haven't seen it before. We are kind of in the mode to collect caves we haven't been in before, so we were destined to go at least once. Now we have been there and got the tee shirt.

After we did the cave we hiked back out to the Indian village, to see the displays. They were set up this time, and two attendants had a fire going and were cooking a meal over the fire. Pelts were lying out along with tools, bottles, and so on. A nice spring weekend.



Male turkey strutting

Jerry and family were in the McMahon's Mill area on Saturday April 20, 2013.

We snapped this picture of the entrance to Artz Cave while we were out on our jaunt.











# CAVIN CALENDAR

MAY 5TH - JUNE 15TH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>May 5</b> Spring MAR SINKHOLE de MAYO	<b>May 6</b>	<b>May 7</b>	<b>May 8</b>  Meeting 7pm	<b>May 9</b>	<b>May 10</b>	<b>May 11</b> HERITAGE DAY - ADAM STEPHEN DAY 9am
<b>May 12</b> MOTHER'S DAY	<b>May 13</b>	<b>May 14</b>	<b>May 15</b>	<b>May 16</b>	<b>May 17</b> Spring VAR, Buckskin Scout Camp, Pocahontas Co, WV	<b>May 18</b> Spring VAR, Buckskin Scout Camp, Pocahontas Co, WV  Appalachian Cave Conserv 35th Anniv Armed Forces Day
<b>May 19</b> Spring VAR, Buckskin Scout Camp, Pocahontas Co, WV	<b>May 20</b>	<b>May 21</b>	<b>May 22</b>	<b>May 23</b>	<b>May 24</b> KY Speleo fest	<b>May 25</b> KY Speleo fest
<b>May 26</b> KY Speleo fest	<b>May 27</b> KY Speleo fest  MEMORIAL DAY	<b>May 28</b>	<b>May 29</b>	<b>May 30</b>	<b>May 31</b>	<b>Jun 1</b>
<b>Jun 2</b> Bubble weekend - Nancy Hanks	<b>Jun 3</b>	<b>Jun 4</b>	<b>Jun 5</b>	<b>Jun 6</b>	<b>Jun 7</b> Bubble weekend - Nancy Hanks	<b>Jun 8</b> Bubble weekend - Nancy Hanks
<b>Jun 9</b> Bubble weekend - Nancy Hanks	<b>Jun 10</b>	<b>Jun 11</b>	<b>Jun 12</b>  Meeting 7pm	<b>Jun 13</b>	<b>Jun 14</b>  FLAG DAY	<b>Jun 15</b> Vertical work - see Tom Griffin

# DEAD DOG DISPATCH



BSA Camp Rock Enon, VA

## DEAD DOG DISPATCH

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