

sag rag

31:1 Jan-Feb 2012



Kip Baumann at the entrance to Flush Cave (aka Spiral Staircase Cave) 9-4-11.

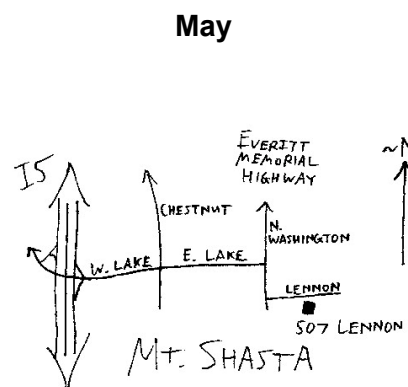
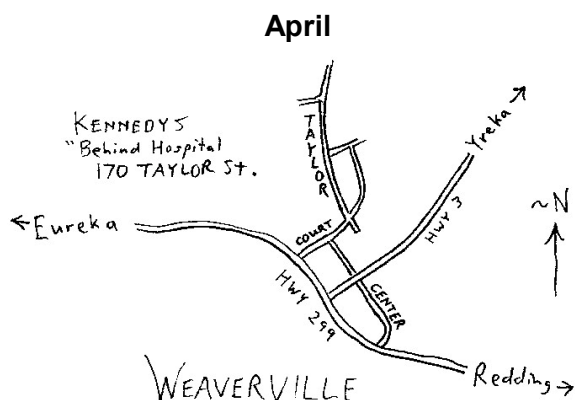
KMCTF ACTIVITY IN SISKIYOU COUNTY, CALIFORNIA – 2011

The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at different locations on the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG. Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. Original material not otherwise noted is copyright to the SAG RAG. Such material may be copied with credit given to the author and the SAG RAG. For use outside of the caving community, please seek the permission of the author or editor first. Send material for publication any time to Bighorn Broeckel, 2916 Deer Meadows Road, Yreka, CA 96097 or <caverbill@live.com>. For more on SAG, check the web site at <<http://www.caves.org/grotto/sag>>.

CAVER CALENDER 2012

- Apr 27 SAG meeting at Kennedys in Weaverville 530-739-0206
 Apr 28 Trinity area caving
 May 18 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Baxters in Mt. Shasta 530-925-9077
 May 19 Local cave trip
 May 18 Speleo-Ed in Bend, Oregon
 June 25 * * * NSS Convention in Greenbrier Valley, West Virginia

Maps to Meetings



SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

We just finished up 30 years of SAG RAGs. Volume 31 starts out with another Marbles report, which is a traditional feature in every volume of the newsletter. New cave maps are included. KMCTF Speleocamps have always been fun, popular and productive, and 2011 was no different. July was still snowbound, but Labor Day Speleocamp had most of the action. Only Mark Fritzke and Marsha Davenport braved the early storms of October. Read all about the 2011 KMCTF right here in this issue of the RAG. Many SAG members and subscribers have already renewed their dues and subscriptions. If you have not, please use the form on the back page, so you don't miss any exciting tales of cave exploration and discovery sure to show up on future pages.

BB

OUR VISIT TO THE KLAMATH MOUNTAINS By Daniel Landon

We had an amazing trip to the Klamath Mountains. We hiked in Monday August 1st (2011) to a camp spot near a cabin. There were 13 young women and 5 adults in our group. On Tuesday Bill Broeckel from the KMCTF met us and gave us a tour of the Skunk Hollow Cave. It was a real highlight in our trip. Bill and his wife Judy saw to it that we had the appropriate equipment and that we were able to safely experience the cave environment. I will never forget laying on the beach at the bottom of the cave and asking Bill questions about the cave. Wednesday we hiked to the summit of the mountain, so I guess you could say we saw these mountains from bottom to top! We spent Wednesday afternoon through Friday morning at another location. We saw a family of eagles on the cliff above our camp! So there is a brief overview of our trip. Thank you so much for referring me to the KMCTF for our cave experience. I hope to come back in the future and if there is someone available from the KMCTF, I would love to take our group underground.

From an e-mail to Klamath National Forest dated 8-8-11

DL

TRIP REPORT, LABOR DAY WEEKEND By Steve Knutson

The weather was great — sunny but cool at night. A number of folks took advantage of a horse train organized by Melanie Jackson, which went in on Friday morning. Louisa Hooven, Mark Harder and I worked on doing GPS of stuff on the upper karst. With GPS we located a number of big sinks and my intention is to have the upper karst mapped in detail, eventually — it's the only way to catalogue everything. We started at Snow Cone Pit and worked north, and then down the first major gulley, the one that is between RP 5 and 4. RP 2 was found to have been stripped of metal plaques, but identifiable by the nails. I suspect hikers as I have on occasion seen them. We mapped a climbable pit with several pits connected below the surface, right north of Snow Cone Pit ... I am calling it Fallen Arches.

Geo and his brother Guy, went to Apogee and down to the Hall of the Ancients area in Bigfoot, in pursuit of critters. He has an impressive list of stuff seen so far. He gave me a ziplock of trap bottles, plastic jars that can be sunk in the floor of caves, flush with the surface, and a little antifreeze or limburger cheese added to kill or attract life. One got placed, by Kip as I recall, in Wahahshun. We can pick it up in Oct. on the Columbus Day trip. The bag of traps (plus cheese, antifreeze and labels) is in the top of my ammo box in the stash (clearly labeled with my name). Anyone wants to put a trap in, go for it. My notion now is to just use the antifreeze (enough to cover the bottom). You take off the lid, bury the little plastic jar so the top is flush with the surface, and put the lid nearby. I think there were a number of good cave trips (Upstairs Downstairs, Apogee, Bigfoot, Wahahshun, etc), a couple new small caves, and some work done. Thanks to all! — everyone there provides support to the rest. For me, it was great. **SK**

KMCTF LABOR DAY SPELEOCAMP – 2011 By Bighorn Broeckel

Welcome to another round of the Marble Mystery Tour, delving into the depths of the underworld with KMCTF at Speleocamp last year. The pattern continued where cavers arrived and left at different times, mostly in small self-contained groups, according to their individual requirements and schedules.

September 2 – While I was taking a day to hike in, others were already caving. Steve Hobson, Rudi Hendricks, Steven Johnson, and Gilly Elor slipped into an obscure Bigfoot entrance, and explored as far as a ribbon marked “MR3”, presumably along Monkey River. Rich and Forrest Sundquist managed to locate the entrance to Snow Canyon Cave in the daylight, more later on this. Passing hikers Kate Trauschel and Dee Randolph were intrigued by caves.

September 3 – This Saturday was a big day for cave trips. Off to an early start, Guy and Geo Graening did a bio trip to distant Apogee Cave. Rudi, Gilly, Judah Furtner, and Pete Tommaso bopped Upstairs-Downstairs and Wahahshun. Sagers, Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Wayne Cedidla, & Dave Smith kindly led Kate and Dee into Skunk Hollow. Later, Hobson took Mel, Wayne, and Jim Wolff back to that same Monkey River access to Bigfoot, and Steve and Mel went in. Meanwhile, Dave Smith hiked to Sky High. Midori and Walker Sundquist took their dog Marly on an expedition to Whiskey Camp and met a hiker named Ben from Humboldt. Mark Fritzke and Marsha Davenport were at Sisyphus and were camping at a distant location. Steven Johnson looked into Wahahshun and a hole near camp that Mark Harder entered before, in recent years. Bill Broeckel, Kip Baumann, Rich & Forrest Sundquist mapped Snow Canyon Cave (see more). Rich also dropped another Blind Pit, and showed me the West Portal entrance, which he had relocated. Ethan Donahue and Ben Turley squeezed Toothpaste Tube. Lindsay Donahue and Jake Risken joined Ethan and Ben to check Slipstream, and Blowhole. Mark Harder, Steve Knutson, and Louisa Hooven did surface stuff near Snowcone. Chuck Lee went to Feeling Low (not a cave, but a state of being).

September 4 – On Sunday, cave trips were still rolling along. Rudi and Gilly joined forces with the Graening brothers for another bio trip, this time to Bigfoot's Hall of the Ancients. Hobson, Mel, Wayne, Dave, Wolff, Johnson, and Lee (feeling better) toured Upstairs Downstairs, as did the entire Sundquist family. Ethan, Lindsay, Jake, and Ben teamed up with Fritzke and Marsha to push a Trail Junction passage representing a strategic bypass to the big in-cave pit. In theory, this would improve access to the bottom of Trail Junction, making it easier to push leads down there that could, potentially, connect to Bigfoot. Some progress was made, but not quite the whole desired outcome. They were the late party on Sunday night, and didn't really get after their secondary plans very much (Beartooth Cave, Bigfoot dome climbs, and picking thimbleberries), but strong work! Broeckel and Baumann surveyed a cave near RP5, while Knutson, Hooven, and Harder were at RP5 and RP4. That night, Louisa served up some surprise fresh watermelon.

(continued)



Entrance to Wild Onion Cave 9-6-11



Pack animals near cabin – Speleocamp 2011

September 5 — Things started to wind down Monday. Horse packers showed up. One of them was having chest pain. I found out later that he did OK. Many folks had their camp and cave gear hauled out by horses this year, and went home. Broeckel, Baumann, and Midori set a bug trap in Wahahshun for Geo, about 20-ft downstream from the bottom of the rope drop. Thanks go to Mark Fritzke for retrieving the trap later that Fall, with weather coming in (did we catch any critters?). Harder watched the camp while Broeckel, Baumann, Knutson, Fritzke, Marsha, and Sundquists hung out at Blowing Hole. Kip was eventually able to get about 2-ft deeper down the gullet, and very close to getting swallowed whole. It was pretty small, and blowing cold air. Later at the campfire, Kip made a perfect Jiffy-Pop over the open flames.

September 6 — Wild Onion was surveyed. At the Blowing Hole, folks managed to pop through, after 20+ years of looking at the thing and wondering what it did. I may get some details wrong here, but the idea was that they dropped about 80-ft down the pit and found going cave passage. One direction was twisty turny crawlway — a real mapping chore. The other direction went over blocks or slabs to reach the top of another pit. No rope was available for the second pit, which is expected to connect to Bigfoot. Hey, let's do it next summer! **BB**

SNOW CANYON CAVE TRIP REPORT, LABOR DAY WEEKEND

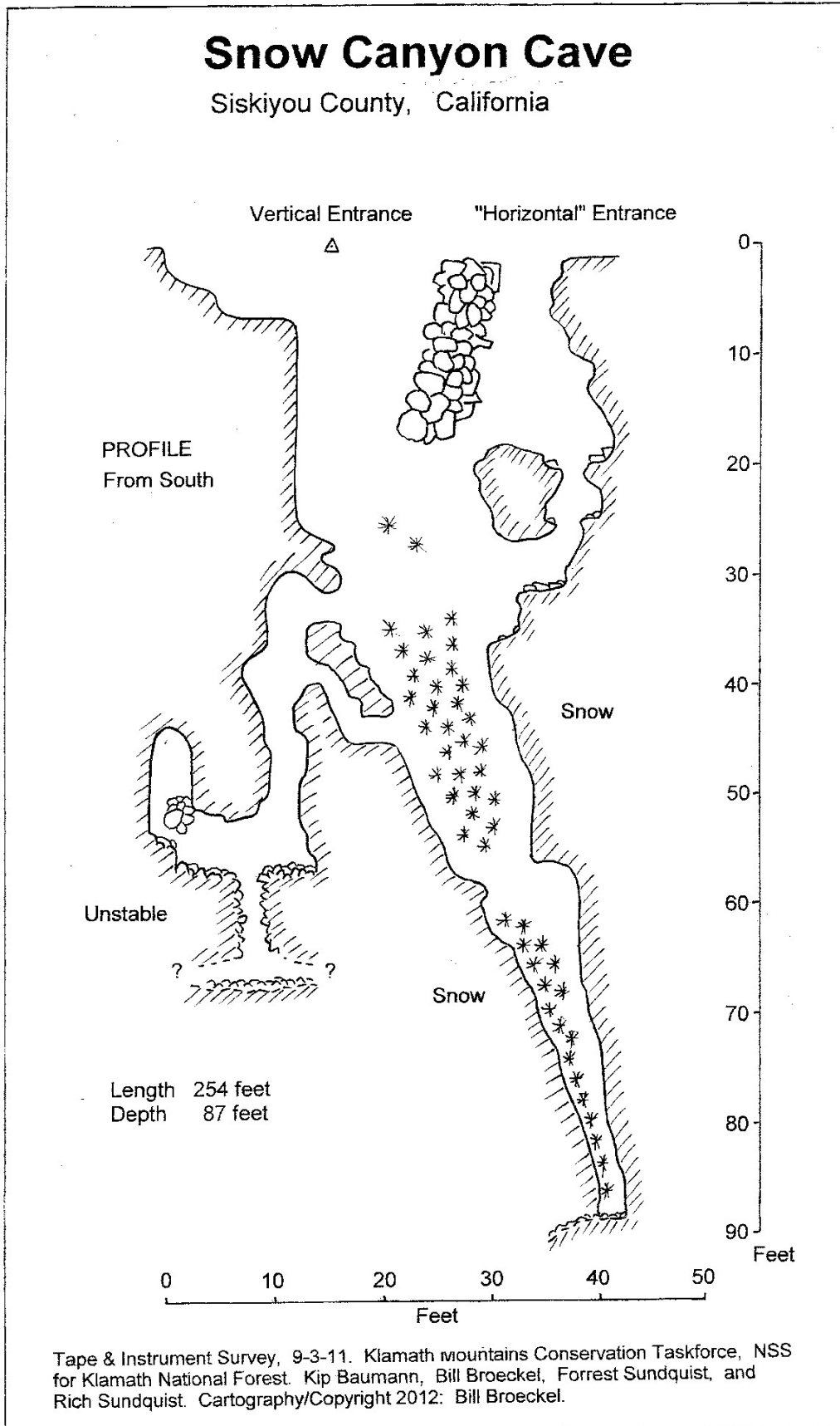
By Richard Sundquist

Late Friday (9-2-11) Forrest and I hiked over to the area along the south edge of the main karst ... to relocate a cave entrance discovered by Bill Broeckel, Forrest, and Ethan Donahue in the wee hours during 2010. Amazingly Forrest walked directly to the cave entrance seen on only one occasion in the middle of the night.

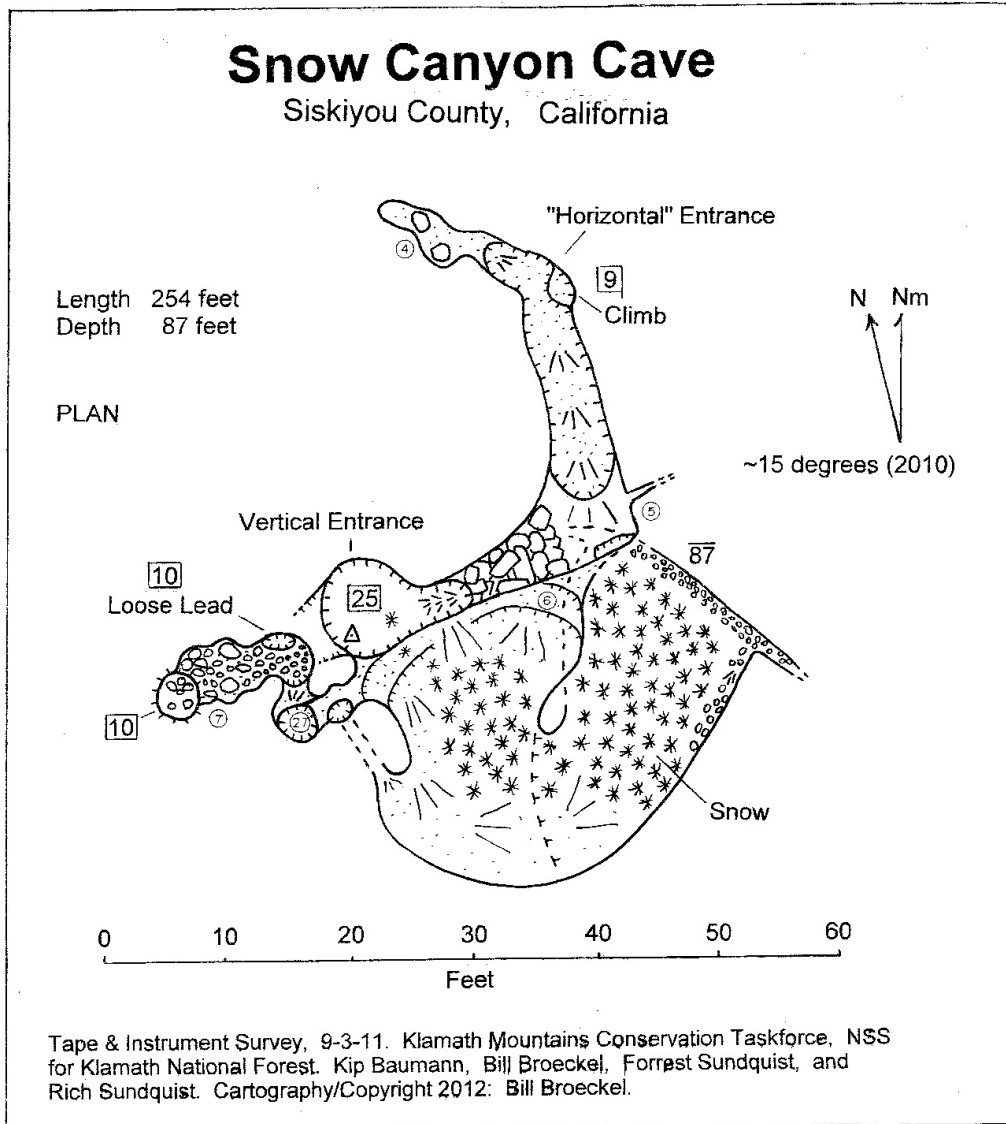
On Saturday (9-3-11) Forrest, Kip Baumann, Bill, and I surveyed the new cave, "Snow Canyon Cave" netting roughly 250'. The cave proved to be ~100' deep, the main part of which was a dome room about 30' in diameter and filled with a huge snow cone. Exploration was mainly on rope as we rappelled the 1'- 3' gap between snow cone and wall till a bottom was reached. The snow was wet and the cave was drippy and very cold. After surveying to the bottom all exited to warm up. Then Kip & Bill surveyed an alternative climb-down entrance. Finally Forrest, Bill and Kip pushed and surveyed a small side lead that led to an ~25' deep parallel pit. At the bottom they encountered breakdown with some air emanating ... and a continuing descending passage in loose blocks. They opted to leave further exploration for a future day.

While Forrest, Bill and Kip pushed and surveyed as mentioned above, I solo-surveyed a neighboring blind pit, 53' feet deep. I then took survey notes from 1991 to attempt to locate a lost cave, West Portal, which is the last cave discovered by Dave Cowan before he moved to W. Virginia. On two previous days I had failed to locate W. Portal, despite being the cave's sketcher. On this day, however, success! Once Bill exited Snow Canyon, he GPS'd West Portal.

RS



Map: Snow Canyon Cave



Map: Snow Canyon Cave

SNOW CANYON – WHAT COMES OF BLIND PITS

By Bighorn Broeckel

Coming back down from the Hanging Ledges survey in 2010, after midnight, you may recall Ethan Donahue and Forrest Sundquist continuing to look for entrances. They even got me to go into one particularly good possibility. We dropped down through a small passage, and ended up perched on a ledge in a bigger space, partly filled with snow. The space itself curved left, while another smaller passage went right. It looked like a cave all right, and in the middle of the night, took on dream-like qualities. We named it Snow Canyon.

Sept. 2, 2011, Rich and Forrest Sundquist tracked it down. It turns out that Snow Canyon Cave shows up on the old KMCTF data base as one of two "blind pits". This designation is more a description, or even a pejorative, rather than a name. So here we have a cave about 250-ft long, nearly 100-ft deep, denigrated as a

(continued)

“blind pit”. Maybe the snow has been melting out. Being full of snow and located right next door to the Bigfoot Cave Discovery Entrance doesn’t make for a popular cave, but I digress.

Sept. 3, 2011 Rich, Forrest, Kip Baumann and I set out to dignify Snow Canyon Cave with its very own survey. The snow enters through a vertical skylight entrance, which we suspected all along. In broad day we followed this route on rope. Rich and Forrest dinked around at the very bottom, and started to get cold. Next the “horizontal” entrance was done, and finally Forrest, Kip and I push-mapped the side passage to an unstable area with airflow. So the cave doesn’t reach base level, at least not until the snow melts out some more. It does have the cool side passage. Never-the-less Snow Canyon Cave is probably still doomed to obscurity because after all it is just a blind pit. **BB**

A ROYAL FLUSH By Bighorn Broeckel

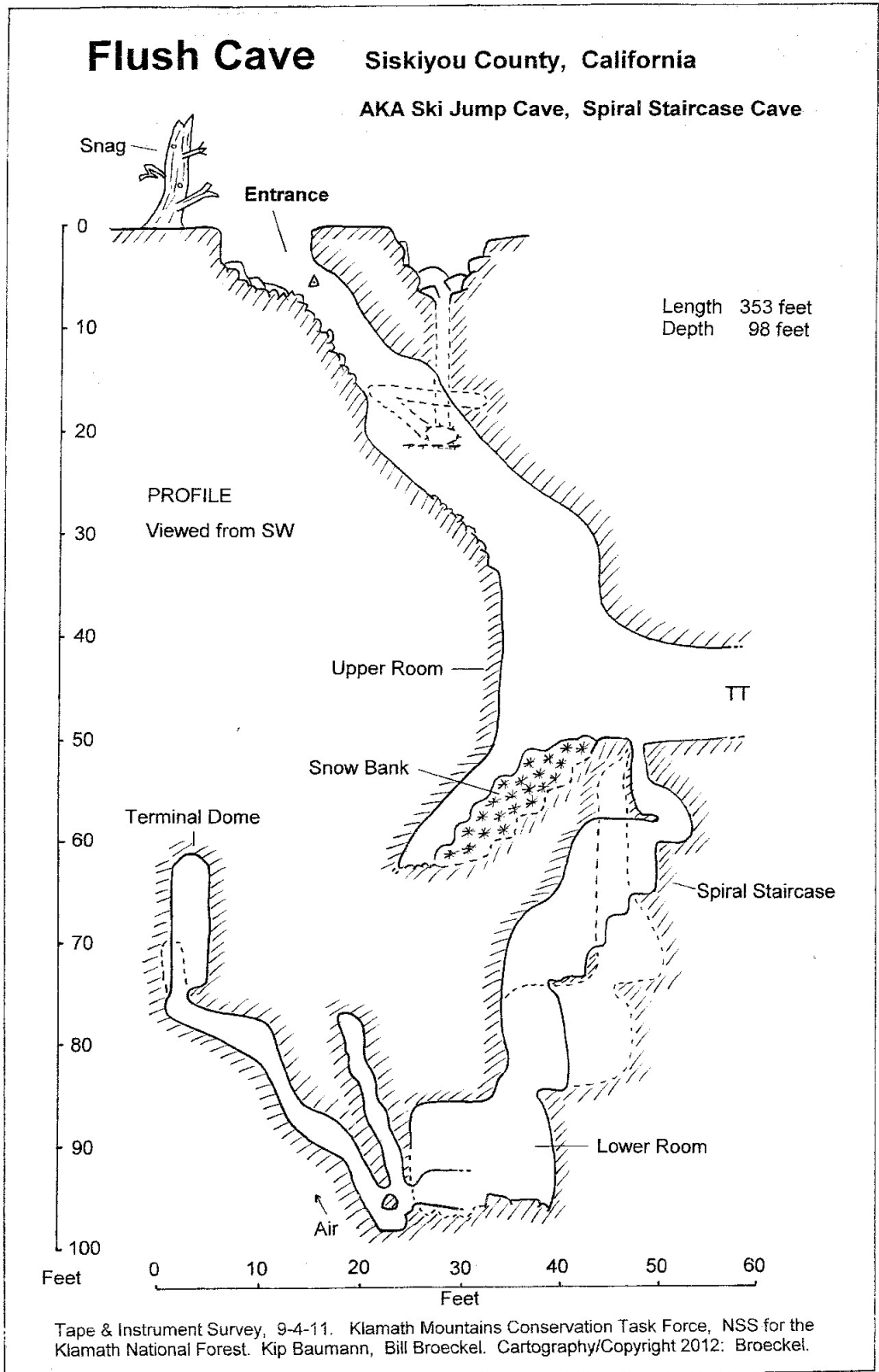
Rich Sundquist discovered Flush Cave on August 31, 1997. When cavers found that thieves had broken into the Grain Bin, Rich zipped upkarst to report the crime. He got phone reception up near RP5, and then, being riled up, opportunistic, and well-positioned, he determined to find a new cave. And so he did. Rich described the cave as containing “some of the worst rockfall hazard in all of Marble Valley.” Later on, Rich and Mark Fritzke surveyed 329-ft, named it Flush Cave, and left a couple difficult leads (1).

Flush Cave somehow managed to elude the main KMCTF data base, so when Roger Jones came across the entrance, he thought he was finding something new. In July 2001, Jones and Jim Wolff mapped 100-ft down into the Upper Room. A long steep snow slope flared up at the end, like a ski jump, so Jones called it Ski Jump Cave. On September 3, that same year, Jones returned with Fritzke and me. After roping down the snow, Fritzke looked around and recognized that this was Flush Cave, so we backed out and no further survey was done (2).

July 2004, Kip Baumann peeked into Flush Cave, thinking it was a new find. In 2005, Kip showed it to Rolf Aalbu and me (3). This was only 4 years since I was in there with Jones and Fritzke, so you would think I would remember. But no, I didn’t remember. Kip and I went in and saw a steep slope with loose rocks going down to a drop-off, and the ceiling stretching out into the distance. The volume of snow was greatly reduced. We vowed to return on rope and on survey, and temporarily we began referring to it as “Kips Cave”. July 4, 2007 Kip & Rolf were back checking the cave, and with vertical gear. Kip went down into the Upper Room where he stopped in a pinch twixt rock and snow (4)(5).

More years under the earth went by, until September 4, 2011, when Kip and I were both at speleocamp ready to map booty. Steve Knutson and Louise Hooven were at the entrance to see us off. The snow had shrunk even more and we made it to the floor of the Upper Room, and were able to move around. The first drop beyond that, into the Spiral Staircase, is a little narrow. We threaded the end of the rope through and used it as a handline. The rest of the Staircase was a scramble, until the last two steps, about 10-ft each, where we were back on

(continued)



Map: Flush Cave



Kip Baumann squeezing in Flush Cave 9-4-11



Speoegen in Lower Room — Flush Cave 9-4-11



Top of snow bank in Flush Cave 9-4-11



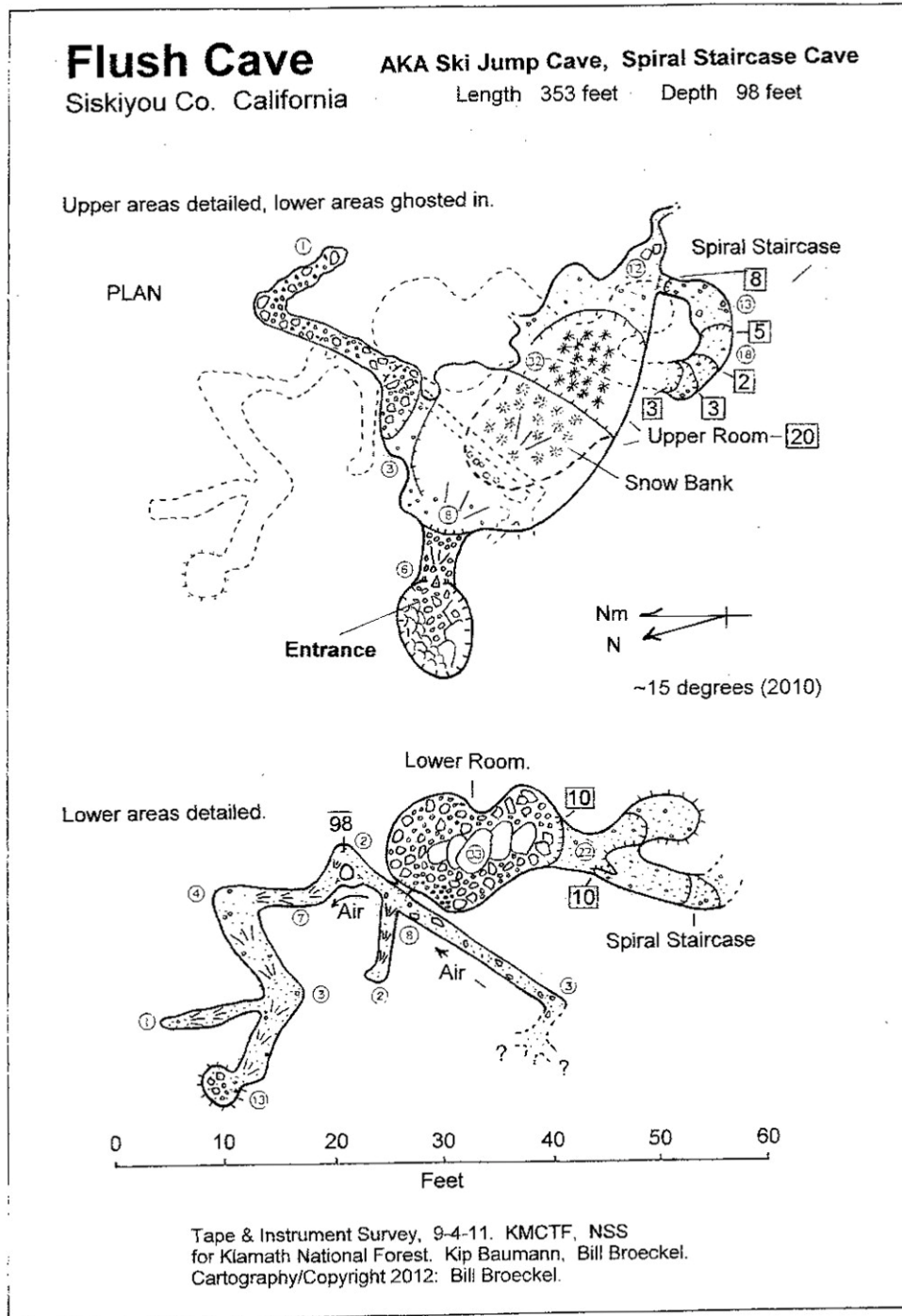
Kip Baumann climbs rope in Flush Cave 9-4-11



Kip Baumann on camera in Flush Cave 9-4-11



Coated wall in Flush Cave 9-4-11



Map: Flush Cave

rope. We used Steven Johnson's really nice and clean 165-ft rope, tied off to the snag near the entrance, and running all the way to the floor of the Lower Room with just a few feet to spare. Kip and I were absolutely hoot'n jazzed-down-south-to-New-Orleans with the whole situation (6).

There were some smaller passages at the far end of the Lower Room. Kip pushed the tight crevice that was blowing air. He could tell others had been there

(continued)

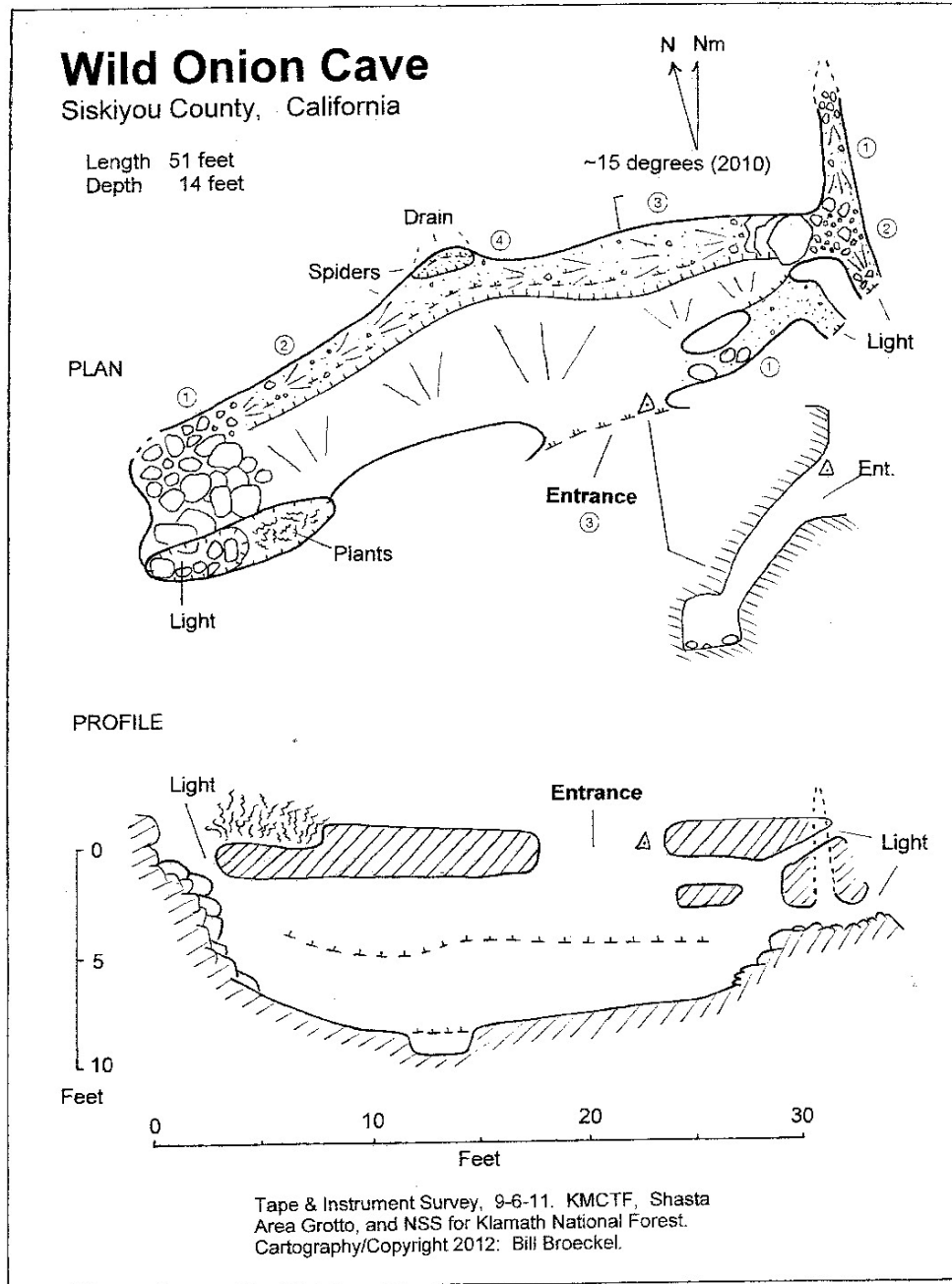
before, so at that point we began to realize the truth. Kip made it around a corner into more cave, with rooms and leads. I couldn't follow, but I know Kip would love to go back there with skinny surveyors and add more length to this already wonderful cave. Back at the campfire, Fritzke heard the story and said "It spin surveyed". Yep, Ski Jump, Kips, Spiral Staircase — it's all Flush Cave and it's all good. Kip and I had a great day in the marble, Kip got to personally push his cave, we came out with enough data and familiarity to put together some kind of preliminary map (see further), and the truth of the matter was well-served. Sounds like a royal flush to me. **BB**

SUNDQUIST FAMILY SUNDAY OUTING By Rich Sundquist

On Sunday (9-4-11) Midori, Walker, Forrest, and I hiked to Upstairs Downstairs from the NW. We located October Pit and an interesting sink nearby as well as cave 019. We entered Upstairs Downstairs about 4PM and checked many side leads along the main passage. Not long after entering we passed Jim Wolff and crew who were exiting. Walker was nervous about the ledge traverse just before the cliff entrance so Forrest attempted to find a bypass from the cliff side of the passage. Forrest's effort was successful and Walker and Midori took a lower less airy route. Exit was uneventful until Walker and I were 15' below the main entrance. One lens from my glasses popped out and disappeared into a hodag's pocket. An hour long search failed to locate the hodag so I hiked and caved the rest of the expedition in dark glasses. We began the hike down from Super Sink just after dark descended. On Wednesday we hiked out having had a very enjoyable trip. It is a highlight of our family's year to see our caver friends and Captain Speleo himself in the Valley. Thank-you one and all for the great times and memories. **RS**

COLUMBUS DAY TRIP REPORTS By Mark Fritzke

Last weekend I made good progress in Sisyphus, under the stream bed toward the dye resurgence point I discovered in 1982. The low rumble of a distant waterfall chamber keeps me motivated. Weather was variable clouds and breezy with a few showers Saturday evening. Marsha and I hiked into Sisyphus camp Saturday (10-8-11), encountering 2" of fresh snow from Wednesday night. I progressed under the stream bed, but the distantly audible 'rumbling waterfall' was silent and flooded. On Sunday we hiked up to the regular camp, tromping through 6" of snow. I grabbed a rope from the drippy stash cave and dropped into Wahahshun Cave to recover a bug trap for Geo Graening. This was my first trip to the cave, so I toured the pretties along the trunk passage and also checked out the lead at the bottom. I squeezed past a triangular block and pulled out a slab blocking the lead. The cave appears to continue under a step in the ceiling, but the majority of the airflow appears to exit elsewhere. We returned to camp as clouds gathered, and I worked in Sisyphus until 3AM Monday. As I exited, the light drizzle turned into a steady rain. By morning all the snow had melted, and I recovered my equipment just as Sisyphus began to flood. We packed up and boogied for the car, but fording the creek was dicey after the 'rain-on-snow' had pumped up the flows. **MF**



Map: Wild Onion Cave

STALKING THE WILD ONION By Bighorn Broeckel

Rogers Jones once showed me wild onions in Marble Valley, and that without digging out the bulb, the flowers could be eaten or added to cooking for fresh onion taste way out in the woods. But that's a whole nother story. This Wild Onion is a short cave harvested in 2011. The main interesting thing was that, though formed in Marble, it did not look like a solutional cave. An exfoliated block broke off the main marble mass, with the resulting void partially filled in with forest debris. A joint is intersected at the east end. This nuisance, for-the-record-only cave probably won't make the Marbles top one hundred, but someone might want to fight off the spiders and try out that drain hole. **BB**

Flush Cave References

1. Sundquist, Rich, 1997, Persisting in Marble Valley: Valley Caver, v. 21, no. 3, p. 21, Fall 1997.
2. Broeckel, Bill, 2002, Marbles 2001: SAG RAG, v.21, no. 2, p.8, Mar-Apr 2002.
3. Broeckel, Bill, 2005, KMCTF Activity in Siskiyou County – 2005: SAG RAG, v. 24, no. 5, p. 5, Sep-Oct 2005.
4. Baumann, Kip, 2007, Marble Mountain Caving in July 2007: Valley Caver, v.45, no. 3, pp. 1-2, Fa112007.
5. Broeckel, Bill, 2008, KMCTF 2007 Activity: SAG RAG, v.27, no. 1, pp. 4-5, Jan-Feb 2008.
6. Baumann, Kip, 2011, 144 Hours: Valley Caver, v. 49, no. 3, pp. 23-25, _Fall 2011.

IF YOU HAVE NOT RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION ALREADY, THIS WOULD BE A PERFECT TIME TO DO SO. ed.

NAME(S): _____

NSS#: _____ NSS# is current? _____

IS SAG YOUR PRIMARY GROTTO? _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL: _____

_____ SAG dues (includes RAG) \$6 per person or family (circle one).

_____ I want to subscribe to CAL CAVER too for another \$10.

_____ SAG RAG subscription only, without grotto membership. \$6.

_____ TOTAL. Make checks payable to "Shasta Area Grotto", (not "SAG") and send to Steve Hobson 2433 California St. Redding CA 96001

SAG RAG
2916 Deer Mdws. Rd.
Yreka CA 96097

STAMP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TO:

Page 1 Kip Baumann – Flush Cave entrance
Page 2 Calendar and Summary
Page 3 Skunk Hollow girl scouts – D. Landon
Page 3 Labor Day Report – Steve Knutson
Page 4 Labor Day Speleocamp – B. Broeckel
Page 5 Snow Canyon Cave – Rich Sundquist
Page 7 Snow Canyon Cave – B. Broeckel
Page 8 Flush Cave – Bighorn Broeckel
Page 11 Upstairs Downstairs – Rich Sundquist
Page 11 October Trip reports – Mark Fritzke