

sag rag

33:6 Nov-Dec 2014



Shiner #1 at Neil's Discovery, Freudian Complex 10-21-14.

**INSIDE - Talus caves, SAR training at Freud,
and bat massacre cleanup.**

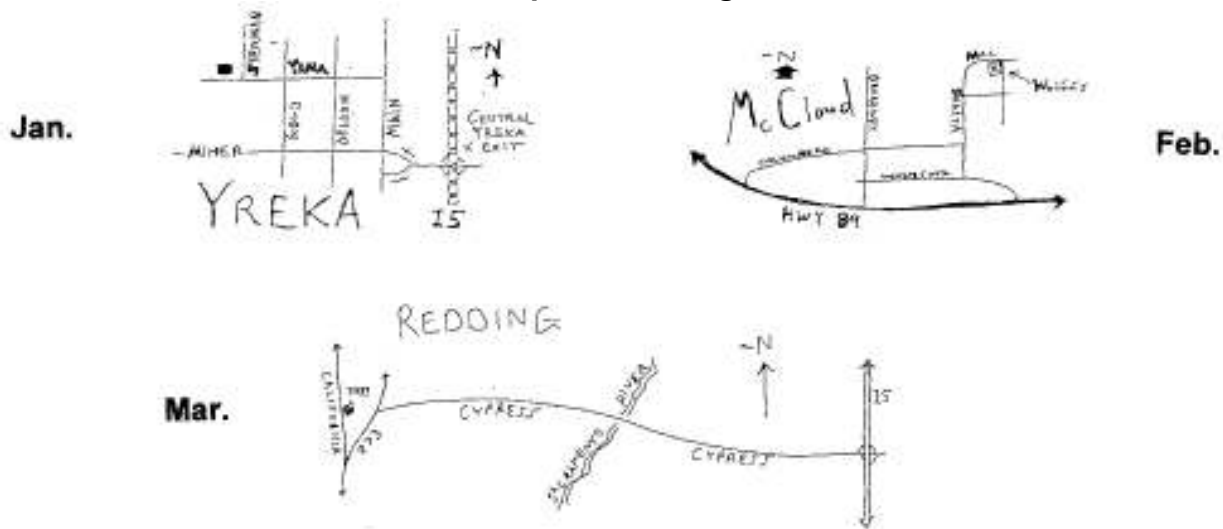
Warning: This newsletter contains some disturbing content.

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 CALENDAR 2015

Jan 23 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Melanie's home in Yreka (530) 842-9714.
 Feb 27 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Wolffs' home in McCloud (530) 964-3123.
 Mar 27 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Hobson's home in Redding (530) 242-8707.

Maps to Meetings



SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

Here is the last 2014 issue of the SAG RAG, before we go into 2015. Without much change in grotto leadership, I would expect a similar caving program as last year. That's not so bad, you know. Watch for restoration/mitigation trips in February (Shasta Valley) and June (Hat Creek). Also remember, every cave trip has elements of conservation and restoration opportunities to consider. Liz Wolff reviews our SAR training activity from last Fall. Thanks to Liz, Steve, and Mel, and all who take part in developing these training events. This issue also highlights another important article from Liz about a recent tragic bat massacre here in Shasta Valley. Filling out the issue is a tale of two talus caves with a couple sentences especially written for Bruce Rogers. See if you can guess which ones. Watch for crack caves coming soon. That would be caves formed in cracks. See you at the meetings. **BB**

WINDELER CLARIFICATION

From Ernie Coffman

Ernie comments in the Windeler discussion at the last (Dec.) SAG meeting -"Ron Davis is the caretaker of Windeler and SAG should contact him if they would like to see this cave." Ron is one of several trustees for the Windeler Cave Project, just like Dave Bunnell is. I would suggest contacting Kelly Prebil who is the leader of the Trustees, so that things are put in perspective as there are rules that the committee has come up with that should be adhered to. **EC**

SHASTA AREA GROTTO MEETING DECEMBER 5, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm at the Broeckels' home in Yreka.

Attendance: Ed & Virginia Bobrow, Steve Hobson, Jim & Liz Wolff, Dave Smith, Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson.

Minutes: accepted as corrected.

Treasurer's Report: Balance is \$914.00. October Balance was \$1106 with \$268 spent for food joint SAG/SAR cave rescue weekend. Steve bought back \$50 of the remaining food bringing the food expense to \$218. (Twenty-eight people were fed. More for Sat. dinner than Sun. breakfast.) Campground use was at \$0. \$888 plus dues received gives the current balance of \$914.

Website: all running well. E-RAG was sent out.

SAG RAG: Nov/Dec issue coming out soon.

Correspondence: Roger Mortimer of NCRC wants a list of cave rescue resource people in California. The following names were suggested with a listing of their training NCRC & levels, ORC, 1C or informal training with SAG or actual cave rescue experience. Steve Hobson, Jed Medin, Chris Kennedy, Mark Fritzsche, Doug & Tabitha Viner, Melanie Jackson, Bill Broeckel, Dick LaForge, Jim & Liz Wolff, Joel Despain, and Wayne Cedidla.

We received information on the Peruvian Cave Rescue and request for funds. The grotto approved a \$100.00 donation and Dave Smith gave a matching donation of \$100.00. \$200.00 will be donated per directions on the website to help the Spanish cavers with the cost of the rescue. Steve will see that it gets sent next week.

Calendar: 2015

- January 23 at Melanie Jackson's in Yreka.
- February 27 at the Wolffs' in McCloud.
- February 28 Pluto Cave Cleanup.
- March 27 at Steve Hobson's in Redding.
- March 28 Lake Level trip?
- April 24 at the Bobrows' in Dorris.
- April 25 at Lava Beds.
- May 29 at Viners' in Ashland.
- May 30 caving / railroad tunnels? TBA.
- June 26-28 Annual Hat Creek Camp-out Sat/Sun. Garbage Pit more cleanup?

Old Business: Review of SAG/SAR cave rescue and critique.

- Inability of some groups to find entrances with given GPS coordinates and one group went right to entrance.
- Communication with other groups needed to be better.
- Old map and maybe we could have triangulated with map and compass.
- SAR does not want to do vertical litter rescue/we may limit to general Descending (rappelling) & Ascending skills on a search.
- Two day search work No Haul Systems with minor rappelling & ascending. Will need vertically competent to search for people even if they don't do the haul out.
- Ask SAR if they prefer a one day or two day training.
- Possible future trainings at Adam's Homestead or Gaping Holes.

New Business: Officer Nominations Chairperson—Liz Wolff, Vice Chair—Dave Smith, Secretary—Melanie Jackson, Treasurer—Steve Hobson.

Trip Reports: Jim & Liz Wolff, Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson, Sam Cuenca (FS), & Debra Freeling (FS) went to Pluto's Cave and removed over 250 dead bats. Thanksgiving Weekend Jim & Liz Wolff were at LABES as were Bill and Peri Frantz. Caves worked on were Midden Cave and Cave A. Caves toured were South Labyrinth, Blue Grotto, and Golden Dome. Bill & Peri did photo monitoring in Merrill & Skull caves.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Melanie Jackson, SAG Secretary **MJ**

2014 SAG/SAR CAVE RESCUE EXERCISE By Liz Wolff

Only one person “died” (and resurrected just to be lost in a different area Sunday); no searchers were lost (a little turned around maybe) and everyone else was found, eventually. The exercise was set up to last two days. To start the weekend-long exercise, SAR was handed maps with very old GPS coordinates (taken when the satellite array had a built in error of up to 300 feet) and sent out to find the cave, and everyone lost in or around it. Sam, our first disoriented and stranded vic, uh subject, opened the training, being found by the “hasty team” early in the exercise in an upper level side passage. He gave information on the numbers “lost” in the cave and environs to the searchers, which gave them more of the info they needed for the weekend.

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Another great Ginger Sanders photo from the Freudian Complex grotto trip on 4-26-14.

Annually the Shasta Area Grotto (SAG) joins with Siskiyou Search and Rescue (SAR) for a training exercise. The purposes of the training are to get the cavers and rescuers used to working together, for SAR to learn the cave environment, read cave maps, how to systematically search any cave, and the special rescue techniques to use in the caves. In the past the focus has been on dealing with a foreign environment, cave hazards, entering tight spaces, litter handling in tight spaces, and patient packaging, most of which they need not worry about on the surface. And the one technique that caught them most in the beginning: not leaving things, like your pack with spare lights, behind somewhere.

Last year SAR located and successfully searched a known small but slightly complex cave and were ready for the challenge of a truly large and complex cave. This year's exercise was to learn that people can come out of an entrance and easily go the wrong way once on the surface, whether they have a map or not. Having a compass or GPS doesn't help if they don't know where they started or any idea where they are upon exiting the cave, and aren't used to being out in the wilder parts of the county. The cave system chosen was the Freudian Complex, nearly 19,000 feet of maze: dead ends, divergences and confluences, upper and lower passages, tight vs nice roomy passages, some disconnected passages, and a plethora of entrances. In this pristine and complex system, they were told about setting choke points where searchers could easily pass up roaming subjects; and the importance of checking in at every entrance to keep from adding to the exercise by becoming lost themselves. Note: This cave system is not likely to be found by anyone that won't go far from a road for fear of getting lost.

SAG's crew consisted of Sam Baxter, Bill Broeckel, Wayne Cedidla, Joel Despain, Mark Fritzke, Steve Hobson, Jed Medin, Dave Smith, Barbara & Mike Stufflebeam, Liz Wolff, and two guests Tiffany Koopal and Misha Rejkovicz who both helped with the exercise. Ed & Virginia Bobrow were camp hosts heroically cooking dinner and breakfast for all participants, SAG & SAR alike, with Jim Wolff as gofur. SAR's 11 participants included SAG's Melanie Jackson and Susan Hobson with search dog Kaia. The weather was almost balmy for mid-October, the camping free, and appreciated by all. SAG provided maps of the cave, the subjects for the search & their angels, and trainers to shepherd the searchers. Special thanks go to Siskiyou SAR for traveling almost two hours to the search area and campground; Modoc National Forest (MNF) for waiving the camping fee for participants; and finally Jim and Steve for coming out in spite of injuries that kept them out of the field. A pair of MNF Law Enforcement Officers joined us Saturday evening to see how things were going with the exercise. Saturday night Bill Broeckel led a recreational cave trip for anyone interested, and they surveyed a new cave. But that's another story.

Everyone involved agreed that it was a highly successful exercise, even if it was only a search.

LW

SHASTA VALLEY BAT MASSACRE By Liz Wolff

Bats, the farmers' friend, have been hit recently in the Shasta Valley. The feeding bats eat more than their body-weight each night in crop pests, reducing the need for chemical pesticides on fields. The first we heard of it was through an email:

Liz,

I wanted to share this information with you regarding a bat kill incident in Pluto [s] Cave about 3 weeks ago. I just found out about this event last Friday afternoon. Apparently, there was approx. 150-200 tadarida that were shot with shotguns in the left room entrance of the cave. This incident was reported to our law enforcement staff and the District Ranger. I did confirm the species. ...

Sorry to bring this bad news to you. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sam Cuenca (KNF Scott Valley RD, wildlife biologist) [enclosures]

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Melanie Jackson (L) and Liz Wolff (R) begin removing dead bats on 11-22-14.



Typical of the wounds found on the mortally injured bats during the 11-22-14 clean-up.

I have been aware of this night roost for some time. It contained several thousands (8000-10000) freetails I feel with the number of animals involved and the low body count the bats escaped lightly.

Ray Miller [SAG's own bat man]

* * * * *

And so goes part of the email trail between the KNF and SAG following the discovery of a mass bat killing in Pluto's Cave. The colony of Mexican Free-tail bats has long been known to inhabit the cave as a night roost, digesting their intake of bugs before feeding again and returning to their more secure day roosts somewhere in the Shasta Valley. During nights of bat counts with Drs. Dixie Pierson and Bill Rainey, we got estimates of the population and the time they were in the cave: around midnight to ? A date was set to do a carcass removal with the KNF.

Saturday Nov 22, 2014 at 10am Bill Broeckel, Melanie Jackson and Jim & Liz Wolff, met Klamath National Forest wildlife biologists Sam Cuenca from Scott River Ranger District and Debra Freiling from the Goosenest RD for a clean-up of bat carcasses. Donning masks, rubber & leather gloves and armed with bags to contain the evidence of the crime, we checked over the section of cave with the bodies and recovered over 200 of them. We found three more shotgun shells and lots of garlic skins on the sand floor around a fire pit. Was this a "ritual" killing of "vampire bats" around Halloween? Or something darker? Meanwhile, it appears that nothing can be done, law enforcement-wise, to catch the perpetrators. Maybe check the hospitals for persons with faces peppered by ricocheted buckshot or coming down with rabies from aerosol bat urine?

LW



Remains of over 250 bats murdered by shotgun in the 2014 Shasta Valley massacre.

TALE OF TWO CAVES By Bill Broeckel

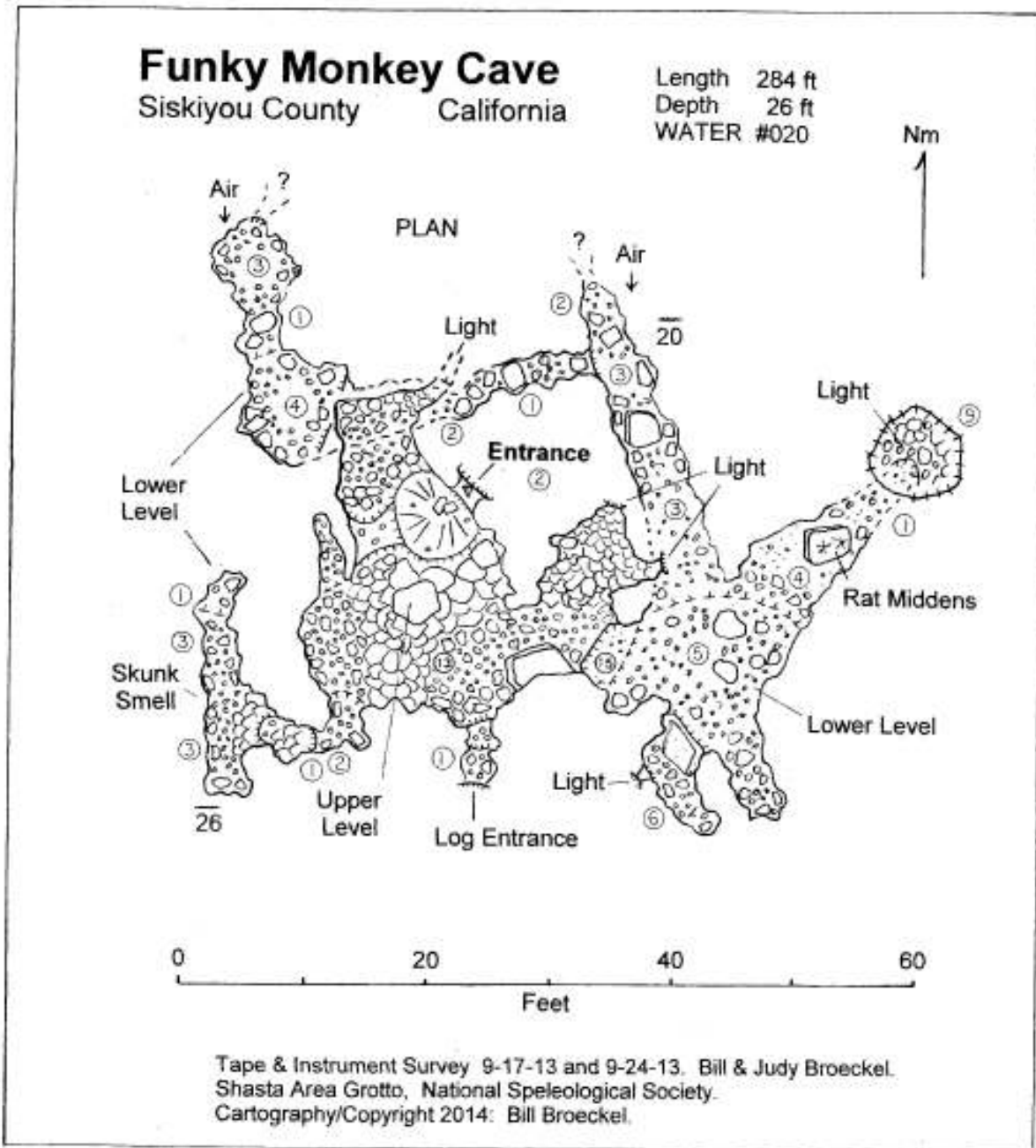
These two caves have some similarity, even though they occur in different rock types. Later events led to the similarities in a sort of "genetic convergence" process. Yes, I was a Biology major way-back-when. Both of these caves could be called talus caves. To be a talus cave, you need big rocks tumbling down into some sort of container feature. The container holds the rocks in position, and the spaces between the rocks become the caves. This process should be rather random, yet patterns seem to appear. What forces might control the passages?

FUNKY MONKEY CAVE: The first cave is formed in basalt. It started as a lava tube, but then the ceiling(s) collapsed and became a jumble of large fallen rocks. The floor and ceiling of the original lava tube now are the container for what I submit to you is in fact a talus cave. There may be a trace of old ceiling near the Log Entrance, but that's it. When you walk up, it looks like a long lava trench segment with a bunch of rocks piled up in the bottom. Is there a cave down in

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Judy Broeckel at the main entrance to Funky Monkey Cave 9-24-13.

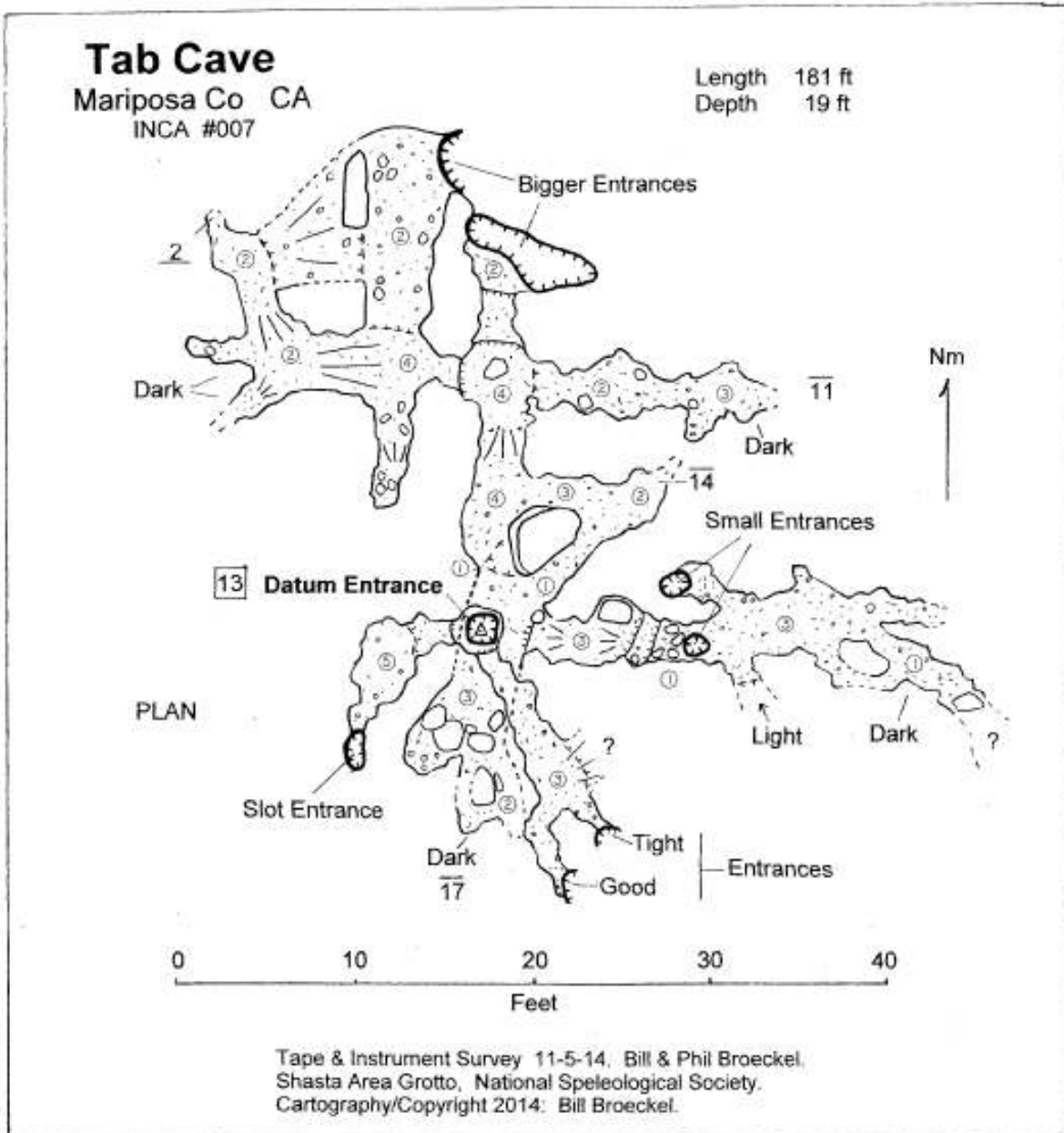


Map: Funky Monkey Cave

there? Yep, there is. Here in Siskiyou County we have plenty of open trench (collapsed lava tubes), so there may be a lot more funky monkeys out there waiting to be found. But be careful - these caves are less stable than the regular unbroken tubes.

Funky Monkey has two relatively small entrances, and lots of dark passage, especially in the lower level. With careful climbing, the entire cave can be explored without ropes. Watch for shifting rocks in the crawlways and drops. The cave moves air and there is a good possibility of additional passages to the north. Cave length is 284 feet, and depth 26 feet. Upflow trench is to the north. The cave was named for the crazy monkeys seen scrambling around inside.

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Map: Tab Cave

TAB CAVE: This one is formed in chunks of glaciated granodiorite broken off high cliffs of the uplifted Sierra Nevada batholith. Smaller rocks fell into a nest of larger boulders, and the cave is found among the smaller rocks inside the nest. There are at least eight entrances, all small except for the two at the north end. Dark zones can be found at the extremities of the cave, especially along floor level. The major source cliff is west of the cave. Cave length is 181 feet, and depth 19 feet. Tab Cave is a bit smaller than Funky Monkey, but both caves show interesting parallel passage patterns. Tab Cave was named for an old soda can found inside. Note: Coca-Cola first marketed Tab as a diet soft drink in 1963. Tab is also bat spelled backwards, but we saw no bats in this cave. **BB**



The log entrance to Funky Monkey Cave 9-17-13.

SAG RAG
2916 Deer Mdws Rd
Yreka CA 96097

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