



Russ Yoder and the Stufflebeams on the Double Hole Flow (1-24-15).

INSIDE – Tommy Tucker vandalized, Bats, and Lava cave maps.

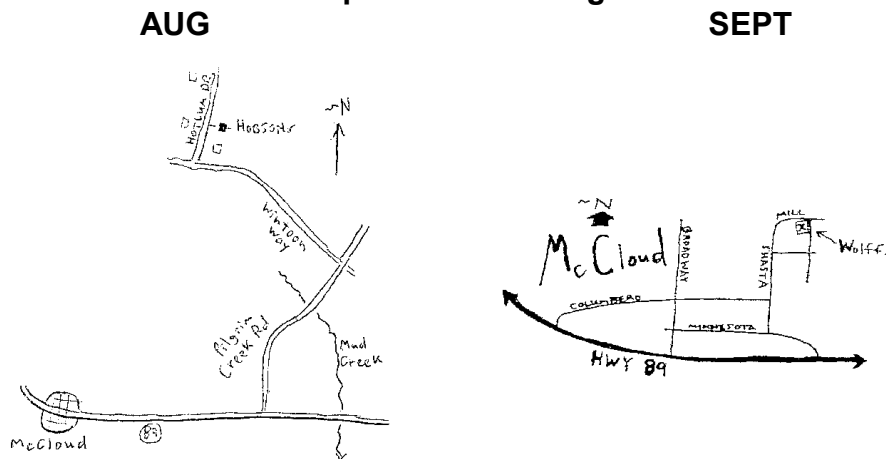
The SAG RAG is published by the Shasta Area Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Grotto meetings are held at different locations on the fourth Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations are announced in the SAG RAG. Membership dues are \$6 dollars per year and include newsletter subscription. 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 2016

Aug 26	SAG meeting at Steve Hobson's outside of McCloud
Aug 27	Survey of Coyote Cave, limestone cave below McC Reservoir, contact Steve
Sept 1-5	Mules to & from the Marbles, contact Steve
Sept 2-4	Lava Beds survey trips, contact Liz
Sept 23-25	Paul Gibson survey trip, limestone, backpack, contact Joel Despain
Sept 30	SAG meeting at Wolffs' in McCloud, prep for SAG/SAR cave rescue exercise
Oct 1	Work out rescue scenario, renew skills, etc, contact Steve
Oct 8	SAG/SAR cave rescue exercise, contact Steve or Melanie Jackson
Oct 21	SAG meeting at Melanie's
Oct 22	Cave trip TBD
Nov/Dec 2	SAG meeting at Broeckel's, nominate officers, cookie exchange
Dec 3	Cave trip TBD

You will notice that there is no Boy Scout trip to Shasta Lake in August, they canceled. Also, Bill Broeckel and Russ Yoder make mid-week trips out to caves, contact them if you might be interested in joining them.

Maps to the Meetings



SAG RAG SUMMARY

By Bighorn Broeckel

Well it's about past time for another SAG RAG. We have a full plate of trips, announcements, notices, and a report, with new lava cave maps. Sadly, Tommy Tucker Cave suffered a vandal attack, I would suspect to be the latest victim of too much public knowledge of cave location information. Bruce Rogers serves up good bat reminders, and Liz Wolff provides a report on the Memorial Weekend Lava Beds expedition. For the next issue, we still have a good report and cave map for the Indian Cave, a Lassen County lava tube. It is really good to see Indian Cave show up, as that one went missing for a few decades.

BB

April 22, 2016 Shasta Area Grotto Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:42 pm. at Carlon's in Redding.

Present were: Dallas Carlon, Bill Broeckel, Steve Hobson, Melanie Jackson, Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, and guests Anthony Coleman and Doug Smith.

Minutes: The minutes of the April 1 Meeting were accepted as read.

Treasurer's Report: We have a balance of \$797.

SAG RAG Report: Issue 35(1) is out, Bill needs articles for the next issue.

Website and E-RAG: The E-RAG is out, we will add a WNS statement on the website when one is ready.

Correspondence:

Lots of WNS correspondence has come in. We have a WNS decontamination protocol from Peter Youngbaer, emphasizing avoiding hibernacula and not taking gear used in the eastern U.S. into caves here. Ray Miller and Doug Viner commented that we can't know how the infected bat in Washington State got where it was found, and we don't know its natural range. Bill Halliday cautioned about speculation on the source of the infection, and the need for better information on biographic conditions relevant to the disease.

Lava Beds is instituting mandatory decontamination of any cave gear brought in that has been used elsewhere. They will have some gear on hand for use there.

Steve and Liz are in contact with Fish and Wildlife and Forest Service personnel in this area.

Calendar

May 5 Linda Angerer will be meeting with the Forest Service.

Late May: possible Marbles trip.

May 28 SAG meeting at Lava Beds (Memorial Day Weekend).

June 10-12 there will be a Paul Gibson trip. Contact is Joel Despain.

June 24 SAG meeting will be at Eagle Lake.

July 1-4 CRF at Lava Beds.

July 1-4 Marbles trip.

July 17-23 Annual Meeting at Ely, SAG meeting will be held there.

Sept. 1-5 Marbles trip.

Sept. 23 there will be a Paul Gibson trip, Contact is Joel Despain.

Oct. 8 will be SAG – SAR training. Our plans will be similar to last year's, which was canceled because SAR was called away on a rescue.

Old Business:

The grotto membership is now 49 people, of whom 12 responded to the questionnaire on the grotto WNS statement.

We need to be ahead on gear decontamination if we are to avoid seeing cave closures. That means being conscientious: gear needs to be bleached, or soaked in water above 130 degrees for 20 minutes. (Boots can be cleaned, then put in watertight bags and weighted to keep them under water for the heat treatment.) A revised protocol for equipment cleaning will be released soon.

We are in contact with Fish and Wildlife and Forest Service personnel throughout the area.

For the Memorial Day Lava Beds trip we can stay at the Research Center. We need to bring food, towels, sleeping bags, etc. and should decontaminate all of our cave gear **before** arriving. Saturday will not be a travel day due to a bike race in the park that will close roads.

(continued)

New Business:

There has been a suggestion to protect bats from WNS by using chemicals to kill all fungi in selected caves. That concept has come under fierce attack within the NSS because of the harm it could pose to other cave life, much of which is not well known, and all needing protection as much as bats do.

Much more information is needed on ranges and life histories of northwestern US and western Canadian bats. At present, the various subspecies of little brown bats remain of most concern. It is thought that big browns and Townsend's bats are less at risk.

Trip Reports:

Dallas spotted and checked out a cave near the Klamath River below Happy Camp.

Steve and Brad Rust completed a rope class with Forest Service personnel 2 weeks ago. Last Tuesday Steve took Johanna Kovarik and a few others into one of the local caves.

Jim and Liz took Seth LaForge to Subway and Christmas Tree Caves.

Locally, Bill checked the entrances to Christmas Tree Cave. On his China trip he visited the Monk's Cave and another (30') cave below the Grand Buddha of Lishan Shrine.

Anthony Coleman was at Lava Beds two weeks ago with his dad, and visited some of the caves in the main cave group.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Dave Smith, SAG Secretary

DS

TOMMY TUCKER CAVE VANDALIZED

Bill, possibly something for the RAG from Dave Riggs:

From the July 14, 2016 Modoc County Record (Alturas, CA)

Reward Offered in Pictograph Damage

The Bureau of Land Management and the Susanville Indian Rancheria are offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for vandalizing prehistoric pictographs in a cave on the edge of the Honey Lake Valley east of Susanville.

Graffiti was scrawled over the paintings on the inside of Tommy Tucker Cave [Lassen County, CA] and additional markings were spray-painted on the opening to the cave that is considered sacred by local Native American tribes. BLM law enforcement officers are investigating the vandalism.

"Damaging this ancient cave, a sacred site, is no different than vandalizing a church," said officer Johnson, the tribal historic preservation officer for the Rancheria. "These ancient areas cannot be duplicated. We are appalled and heartbroken by these acts of vandalism."

Ken Collum, manager of the BLM Eagle Lake Field Office, said the agency shares the concerns voiced by Rancheria officials and has matched the Rancheria's \$2,500 reward offer to bring the reward total to \$5,000.

"We are working with restoration experts to determine how to remove the graffiti without damaging the pictographs," said Collum. "It will be time consuming and expensive to repair this damage."

Native American people used pigments derived from minerals to paint the pictographs onto the cave walls within the last 500 years. They are the only known pictographs in the region where petroglyphs, images pecked into rock surfaces, are the more common form of Native American rock art.

"In addition to their spiritual significance for native people, these drawings are important because they tell us of life prior to the arrival of European settlers," said BLM archaeologist Marilla Martin. "It is critical that we do everything possible to protect and preserve these invaluable windows into the past."

Anyone with information should contact BLM law enforcement at (916) 978-4450.

Springtime bat alert

Bruce Rogers

California Bat Study Group

It's springtime again and we all are starting to think about starting caving trips. This is also time for our little flying bat friends to start reappearing in California's caves. Spring is when many species of bats congregate to form maternity colonies.

The most commonly seen bat in California's caves is the Townsend's big-eared bat — *Corynorhinus townsendii*. These bats are very susceptible to human disturbance. If the female bats are disturbed early in their aggregations, they may abort their offspring. If disturbed after the baby pups are born, the mothers may abandon them. Both of these possibilities can be quite bad, since only one bat pup is born each year. We know that there has already been a nearly 65% decline in California's Townsend's bats since they were first studied in the early 1950's.

After a decades-long campaign finally legislated this January this species is now listed as a Federally Endangered species and is fully protected.

We ask you as cavers to take special precautions not to disturb these bats—or any other bats. Simply walking under or past these bats can cause a disturbance for them. There are several cave areas where they are known to congregate for maternity colonies. In the Mother Lode, Wool Hollow, Heater, Crystal Stanislaus, the Grapevine Gulch group of caves, and several other small and adjacent caves are known maternity colony sites. Townsend's big-eared bats are mostly cave dwellers although they may also be found in cliff alcoves or in buildings.

While many other bat species tend to secrete themselves in wall cracks or very small fissures, Townsend's big-eared bats in particular are fairly easy to spot. Females tend to cluster just inside the cave entrances in ceiling pockets where warm air collects. Males tend to hang on ceilings separately, usually towards the middle of the passages. Both are easily identifiable by the enormous ears that extend nearly their body length. If the bats are asleep (and they are very light sleepers), their ears may be rolled up similar to mountain sheep's curled horns. A "beef roll" nose is also characteristic of this species. A few other bat species in California have big ears, but none so long and obvious as the Townsend's.

Already small groups of Townsend's bats have been seen in several Mother Lode caves within the past week or two. These small groups are female bats starting to form maternity colonies.

If you enter any of these caves or others, please do not take flash photos of any bats. The best thing you as a caver can do is quietly turn around, tip-toe out of the cave, and go elsewhere. Don't just try to pass quietly below them—what is quiet for you may be very disturbing for them, and they may not show that they're bothered until after you've left.

If you do find bats in California caves, as you quickly leave please make note of any congregations of bats and email me with the date, cave name, approximate number of bats (one, few, many—do not linger to count numbers as this may disturb them) and whether they were sleeping or flying. If you are trained in bat identification, make note of the species; if not, just knowing where bat congregations are to be found IS important enough.

The maternity season usually runs from about middle to late May until early September. By then the young bats are fully developed and capable of taking care of themselves. We ask that you refrain from visiting any cave with obvious groups of bats.

Please give our fellow cavers (the small flying ones) a chance at surviving the summer and holding their own.

BR

Memorial Weekend at Lava Beds National Monument 2016

After last year's highly successful and fun cave-filled weekend with the Oregon High Desert Grotto (OHDG) in the southern Medicine Lake Highlands, they wanted a repeat, perhaps in the same area. Due to the drought we were able to get into the high country very early last year, but this winter was more nearly normal. Snow pack was still well below normal, but there was snow and we couldn't get there yet, even for Memorial Weekend. Planning went on January through March and we all decided that Lava Beds (LBE) would be a good spot for the two grottos to meet, and that Memorial Weekend would be a good time to go there. Just when you think all will go well, the NW region planned their regional for the same time as the LBE trip. There weren't many attendees for LBE.

From SAG we had Dave Smith, Jim & Liz Wolff, Bill Devereaux, Dave Riggs, and guest Anthony Coleman. From OHDG were Beej Jorgenson, Rick Magnan, Geoff MacNaughton and his fiancée Josie. There were a couple of Cave Research Foundation cavers too: Matt Liessring and Heather McDonald.

A lot of work was accomplished in the two days that work was actually done. Beej, Matt, Heather, Jim and Anthony went out to the Valentine's lava flow to survey in Low Blow Cave. This cave is primarily crawling sized, with the exception of the slither portion, which is smaller. At the cave while preparing to enter, it was discovered that Anthony hadn't cleaned his gear from his last cave trip ten years ago, nor was it decontaminated which was a requirement also. It ended with Heather taking him down to the Visitor Center to borrow caving gear and returning to the cave. They had planned two groups, one to survey the "easy" part of the cave and a "hard" group for the slither. Beej led the "easy" group of Jim and Anthony into the crawl sized portion around the entrances, and most of their survey was completed. Grumbling was heard from one caver about surveying, having to crawl and not really knowing how to survey. It ticked off a couple of people. The "hard" crew decided not to do the really tight crawl that led off the more spacious entrance area.

The Cave Loop crew of Liz, Dave, Rick and Geoff did some minimal training for survey and began the work. First objective was Stealth Bridge. A side room/space was surveyed into but there was nothing that went far before being choked with breakdown. Next they entered Stealth Bridge itself: a large boulder floored tube with a skylight entrance into the Natural Bridge trench. Surveying out the skylight and overland to a small alcove cave, they headed for Ovis Bridge. A station was set at the beginning of the overhang leading to the bridge proper and a small breakdown floored side passage was found heading east in the overhang. Without some major rock moving no one will get into it; it does appear to "go". Ovis Bridge is short with all breakdown floors. There is a breakdown choked hole in the floor, with a prominent ledge located nine feet above the hole. The bridge is at a sharp bend in the flow; this is most likely where the Hercules' Leg-Juniper Cave branch diverged from the main lava flow. The overhang on the north end of the bridge continued some distance.

Ice level monitoring was the objective of the final crew led by Bill, who arrived late Saturday afternoon. Several went out Sunday to help him do the measurements in several caves that currently, or in the recent past, contained year-round ice floors. A long day was spent out far away from the cars. Monday Liz and Bill went into Merrill Cave to measure the ice in the downstream passage.

LW

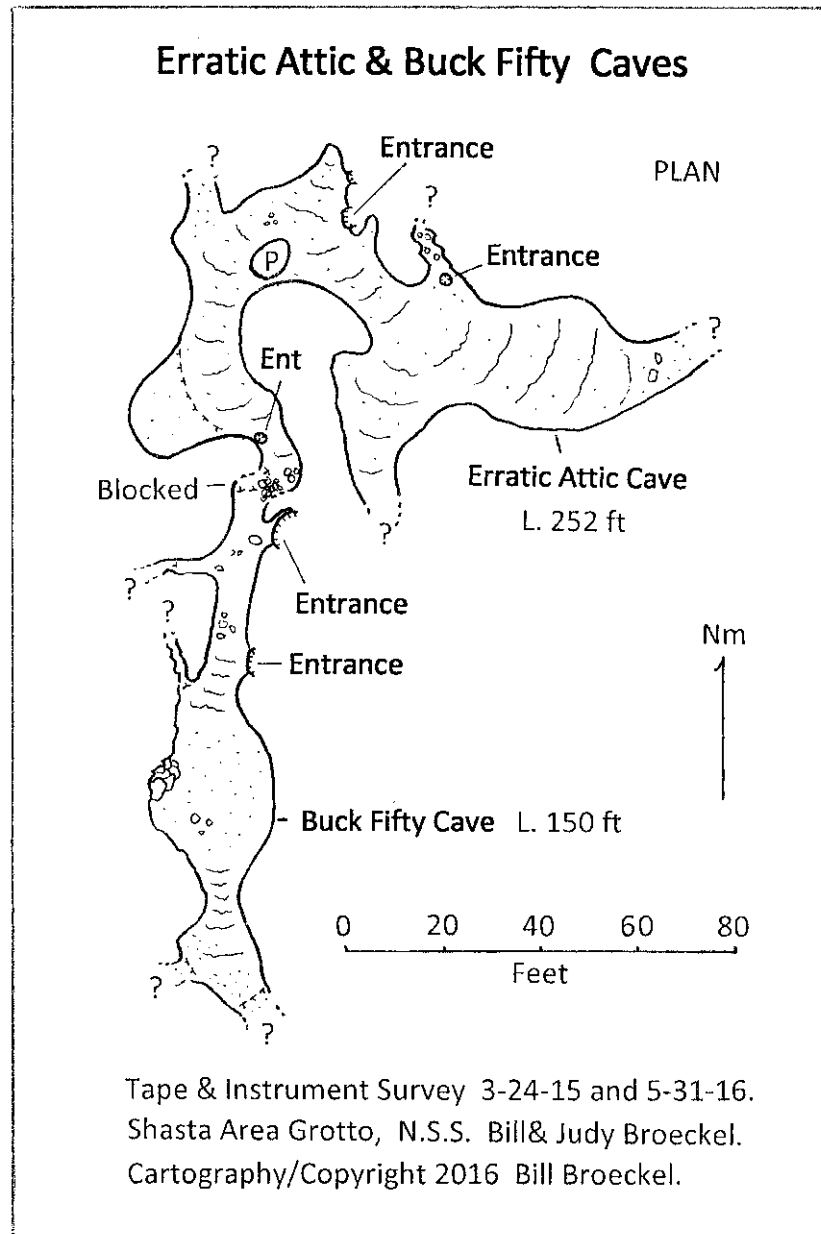
Buck Fifty & Erratic Attic

by Bighorn Broeckel

This latest installment of old cave map business has to do with two more little caves out on the Double Hole Lava Flow. Years ago the area was explored in detail by Russ Yoder, and also by members of the Stanislaus Grotto. In both cases, these entrances were most likely observed, possibly checked, and ultimately dismissed as doubtfully significant surface tubes, low, and limited in extent. That actually describes them pretty well. However, Yoder's "Deep Pit" is not far away...

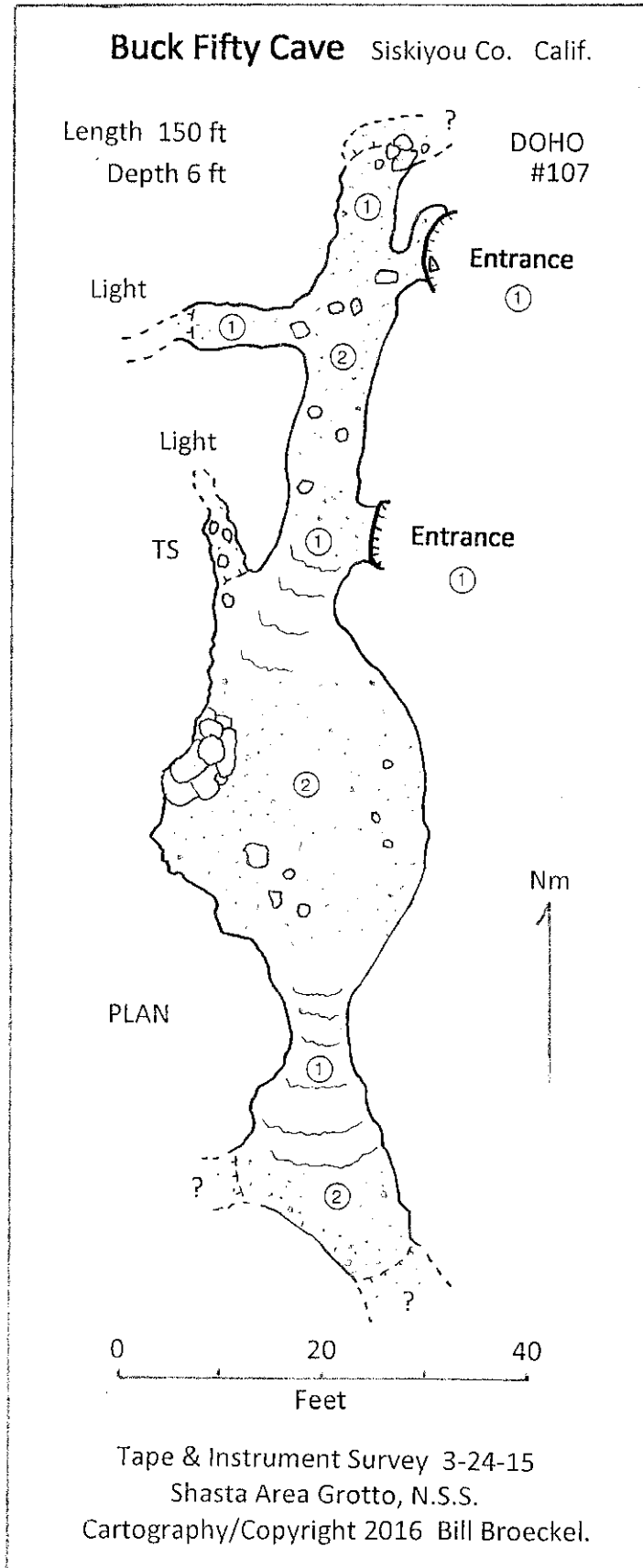


Lower, more southern entrance to Buck Fifty Cave (3-24-15).



Map: Erratic Attic and Buck Fifty Caves

Yoder showed these and a number of other caves to Broeckel and the Stufflebeams on a SAG Grotto trip. It was a sunny winter day on 1-24-15. Eventually I accumulated three separate lead pages, finding the same two caves over and over. Finally we committed to just getting them documented. Buck Fifty was first. There were two low entrances, almost not connected. From there it went down-flow a bit, big enough, but then bifurcated, with both sides getting too small. This crawler mapped out to 150 feet, hence Buck Fifty.



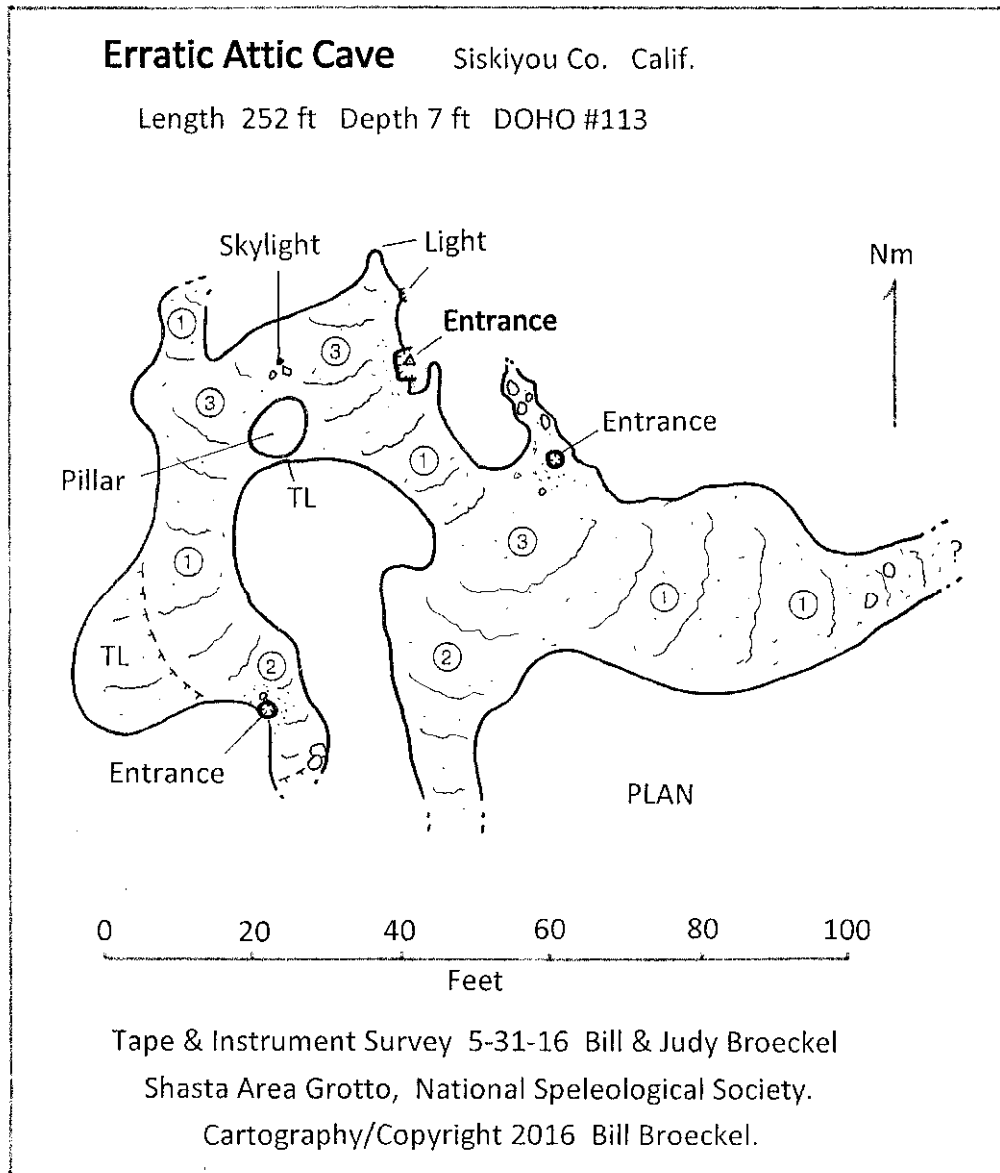
Map: Buck Fifty Cave



Nasty little, more eastern skylight entrance to Erratic Attic (5-31-16).



Nice surprise slide-right-in, more southwestern skylight entrance to Erratic Attic (5-31-16).



Map: Erratic Attic Cave

At the end of last May, Judy and I made it back out there to survey the longer cave, and also took a surface shot between the two caves. Back home, I put together a composite map showing how closely associated they were. Erratic Attic was crawly too, with 252 feet of surveyed passage. It surprised us with a third entrance near the potential connection point between the caves. The best lead for adding additional length was the one at the end of the unaccountable eastern extension.

Two more caves then, almost connected, with a total combined length of over 400 feet, and it all started with Yoder out in the yonder muttering something about an attic. **BB**



Big main entrance to Erratic Attic with Judy Broeckel, ready to survey (5-31-16).

Shasta Area Grotto is an Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society.

**SAG RAG
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