

sag rag

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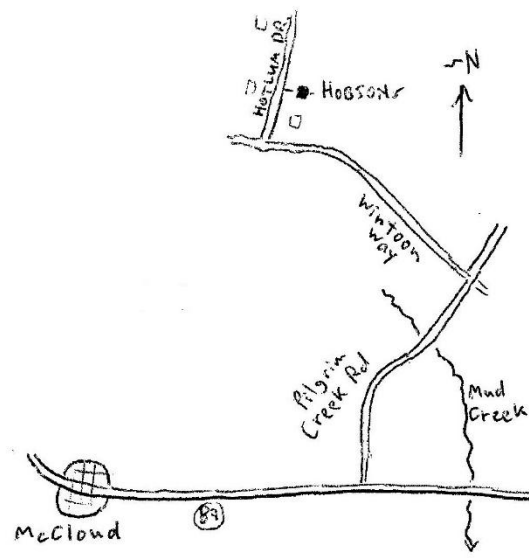
INSIDE – SPECIAL PAUL GIBSON ISSUE

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 \$5 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 2018

Feb 23 SAG meeting 7:30 pm at Steve's in McCloud, possible Subway cleanup to follow.

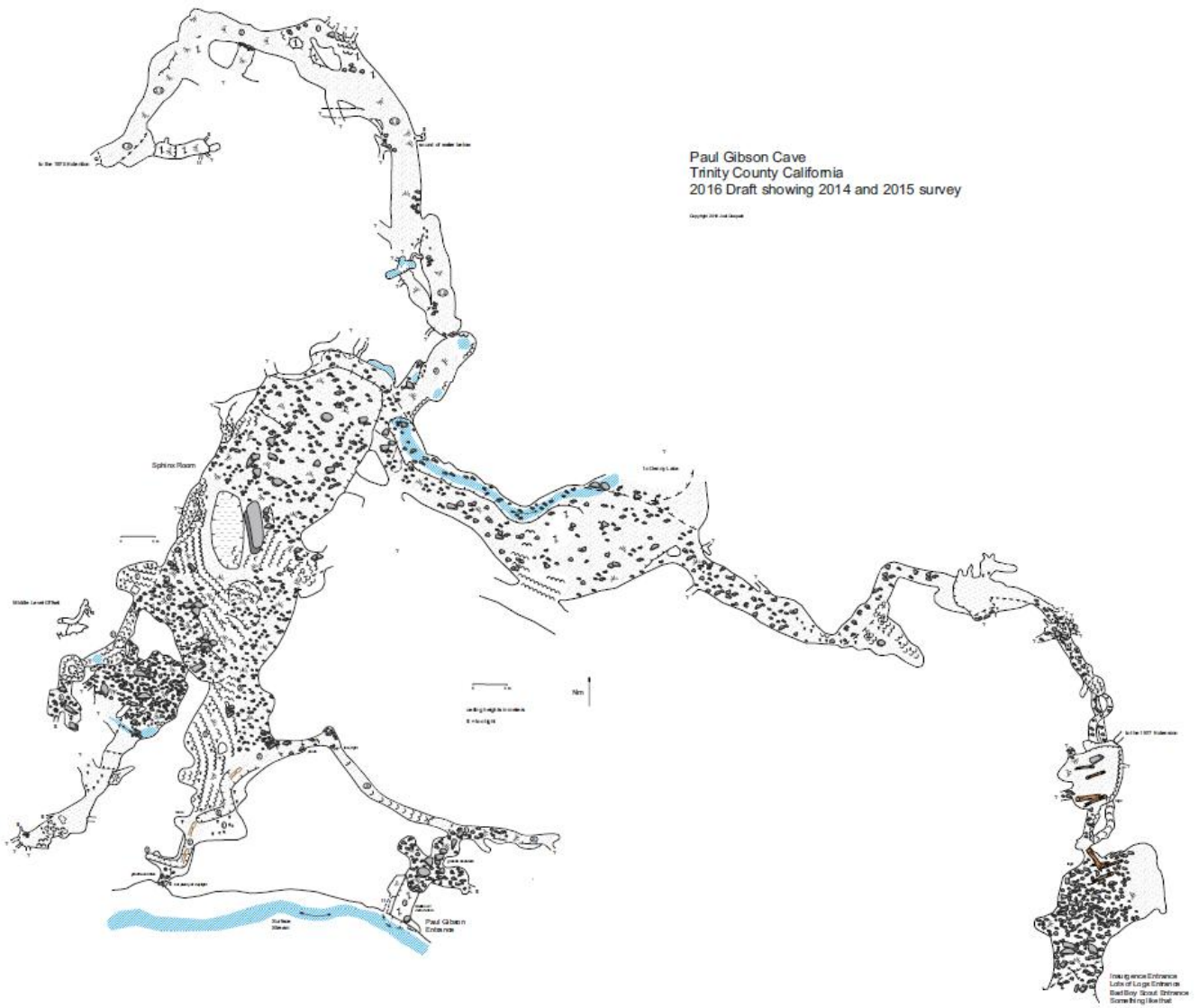
Map to February Meeting



SAG RAG SUMMARY By Bighorn Broeckel

Thanks to Joel Despain for an excellent summary of recent survey and further explorations in Paul Gibson Cave, including a new major area (Hall of the Mountain King). Da-da-da-da-da-da-da, da-da-da, da-da-da ... Joel and his crews have really kept at it on this remote cave with exciting and rewarding results. To celebrate, this SAG RAG will dispense with all the usual fluff stuff, and focus strictly on fitting in as much we can from the wealth of material that has been submitted for this cave. Consider this a progress report as there is still original discovery pending in Paul Gibson. Joel also submitted a completed report on another Northern California solution cave which should be coming out soon as we begin the 2018 Volume of the RAG. **BB**

COVER PHOTOS: Top — Spathites in the Second Left Side Passage from the '75 Extension. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-8-17. Bottom — Cave pearls in the '75 Extension Passage. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-8-17.



Paul Gibson Cave Update

Joel Despain

2016

Two trips went to the cave in 2016 greatly expanding the re-survey and mapping of Paul Gibson Cave. It is a hot hike in mid-summer, so early summer and fall have been our preference.

We started in late June with Kip Baumann (see Kip's article on this trip: "Lost Wedding Ring at Paul Gibson Cave"), Lynn Van Erden, Mark Fritzke and myself making the five or so mile trek to the cave. We camped in the dry creek bed near the entrances as usual. And as usual, the hike was a brushy affair with some steep off trail hiking to reach the cave. The wildflowers were a treat this time of the year. Hot pink fire weed and huge white lilies were thick in places.

Saturday June 11th (my birthday) our primary goal was to gain access to the '75 Extension passage through a tight and sandy low crawl. Since we had begun the re-survey of the cave, we had not been able to enter this area and none of newbies had even seen the passage. Mark led the way with Kip and Lynn's help and after a few hours forced his way through and up into a roomy trunk passage. I did a bit of solo survey nearby in the Pretzel Maze, but rejoined the team once they broke through. Soon all were cold and wet, and we routed to the exterior for lunch and to warm up.

Lynn and I returned that afternoon and the next morning to re-survey the '75 passage. It was a treat. The passage is spacious with numerous side passages and floors of deep sand or bedrock. Several nice speleothem areas are found in the '75 Extension with pretty cave pearls, flowstone, crystal pools, and white soda straws and stalactites. This passage also has numerous "septums" where beds of serpentinized schist cross the passage. In these spots the cave passage constricts way down and small piles of schist breakdown litter the floor.

Mark and Kip pushed north from the Pretzel Maze that afternoon and the next morning in a maze of small, white tubes. Tight passages and white walls held them up.

In October 2016, we returned over Columbus Day. Along on the trip was Heather Veerkamp, Lynn Van Erden, Kip Baumann, Mark Fritzke and Dick LaForge.

On Saturday and Sunday morning, the 8th and 9th, Heather and I surveyed in the first of two major side passages on the left (south) from the '75 Extension. This passage was not surveyed back in the 70s. It turned out to be a complex part of the cave with several connections to the '75 Extension, nice formations in a few spots, more side passages and a collapse at the end where the passage intersects the Sphinx Room, but 15 feet below the current floor. At one time they must have connected, but now with a higher floor of rubble and sediment in the Sphinx Room, the First Left connection is buried.

Sunday afternoon we surveyed a few small side passages near the complex of intersections between the Sphinx Room and the Pretzel Maze.

On Saturday Mark, Kip and Lynn took on the '77 Extension at the south end of the cave. The passage starts near the Boy Scout Entrance. Late into the summer this entrance is an insurgence until the stream outside finally dries up. The '77 starts on multiple levels with smaller passages, gets a bit low and wet when the stream reappears downstream of the Denny Lake

continued



Rodent skull in Paul Gibson. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-8-17.



Soda straws in the '75 Extension. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-8-17

sump, but then finally opens into nice, large passages and side passages. They surveyed almost the entire area, which was a great accomplishment for the survey.

On Sunday the 9th Mark, Kip and Lynn surveyed outside and downstream from the entrances to a new cave that Mark had found (this may be the entrance the Mother Lode Grotto reported some years earlier) and opened up and also to the resurgence for Paul Gibson where several springs rise returning the stream to the surface creek bed.

That afternoon we returned to the end of the '75 Extension to finish up the survey of a looping passage in an area of lakes, schist septums and a tricky climb down. I opted for the water route past a schist septum that nearly filled the passage. I got a bit wet, but finished up the survey loop. In one corner was a lower, dry cave-lake basin. On the old map the lake is shown as full. I placed a survey station down in the dry lake bed and felt a breeze on my right. I moved right and laid on the floor of the passage to look into a small opening extending from the dry pool basin with air pouring out of it. It was another septum of schist, but this hole was small. Dick and I both tried to get through with no luck. We went off to find Kip, the smallest member of our team. We found Kip in another part of the cave and soon had him with us. He slid right through the "Deviated Septum" with a giggle of delight. Okay, Dick and I were motivated now. We fought and groaned and finally both got through the tight hole. A small pool of water lay just past the constriction, just enough to get everyone's stomach's wet.

On the far side we stood up into a small room and then climbed up out of the pool basin into a passage 10-feet wide and perhaps 6 feet tall. Awesome! Kip and Dick checked a lower level while I stayed high and explored the main passage. A couple of small pits on the left seemed to lead into a room below. Finally, I found a climb down, and down I went to emerge into a big, rocky room. It was 80 feet across with a 20-foot ceiling and a small stream in the floor. Double awesome! Many side passages exited the room. Kip and Dick soon joined me and explored up stream. To name the room we decided to stick with a classical theme since the other large room in Paul Gibson is named for the Egyptian Sphinx. Dick, being the musician that he is, thought of the classical piece, "Hall of the Mountain King," and the room was named. But the survey would have to wait. It was late and we would be hiking out first thing in the morning. Next year.

2017

June 2017 rolled around and found all of the regulars busy after a very wet spring and winter. As such we canceled the June trip to Paul Gibson in spite of the new discovery the year before.

Columbus Day 2017 saw me, my Forest Service intern Jake Tholen, Dick LaForge and Mark Fritzke once again at Paul Gibson Cave. First things first. Was the low sandy connection to the '75 Extension, numerous leads and the Hall of the Mountain King open after the very wet winter? It was nearly open. Jake and I worked our way through the low sandy crawl in less than an hour on Friday evening.

As such we started the survey in the second left side passage from the '75 Extension. This one was largely mapped in the 70s, but several leads remained. It is an unusual passage. It goes up and then down to deep phreatic lakes, and then back up again with a very nice speleothem area. We started the survey with a few shots and then called it a night. By the time we were out of the cave Dick and Mark had arrived. We settled in for the evening and got some rest before a Saturday of survey.

continued



Map: Paul Gibson Cave, 2016 Extension Area

On Saturday morning the 7th we headed for the new room and area of the cave at the end of the '75 Extension found a year earlier. Jake and I started the survey while Dick and Mark worked upstream. Once tied in, we all headed through the Deviated Septum, but just as the ceiling rose on the far side was that small pool of water again. We all frantically did a push up to avoid the pool, but alas beer bellies and loose shirts led to wet stomachs for some of the team. And so, Beer Belly Pool was named.

It was great survey in Hall of Mountain King. The floor was rubble and sand and it sloped upward upstream and to the west. The stream is significantly smaller than what we see downstream and so must be a tributary. A band of schist 10 feet wide made up the wall at the climbdown into the room, arched across the ceiling and also forms a pillar in the middle of the room. We worked our way around the Hall, briefly checking a number of small leads that remain unmapped and largely unexplored. Dick and Mark surveyed upstream following the creek into passage increasingly composed of breakdown and very large granite stream cobbles. They eventually hit a wall of rocks from which the stream bubbled forth. Perhaps the surface is not too far above? They also started the survey into the largest side passages from Hall of the Mountain King and left more to map there. On way out of the '75 passage we noticed a ceiling lead up above the low sandy passage that likes to fill up. There were footprints up there on some flowstone, but it would have been a very tough, exposed climb.

Mark had to hike out on Sunday afternoon for work on the next day. That morning he and Jake surveyed his new cave. It lies close to the resurgence on the surface and trends north toward the '77 Extension. It was a pleasant small cave to map, but the possible way onward from 2016 was solidly choked with flood debris this year.

Dick and I continued mapping in the Second Left side passage. One of the leads from the 70s proved to be too small very quickly. The second turned 180 degrees back to the north and led through a couple of rooms to another deep lake and sump. That afternoon Jake joined us, and we surveyed the third lead to the south. This was a very odd bit of cave. The passage was largely bedrock with multiple levels. There were essentially no floors as the "floor" was a series of shallow, climbable pits that led down to deep sand or water. It was mazy and tight and overall did not go too far before rubble chokes ended the passages.

Jake and I also mapped downstream from the beautiful White Canyon where the main stream has cut a deep channel through blindingly white marble bedrock. The passage gets low and wide and leads to Denny Lake, a sump. It was easy going across endless cobbles. Down at the lake we found that the passage had filled a bit with those stream cobbles and we could not get quite as far as the survey in the '70s.

We finished up on Thursday with the survey of another passage in the Pretzel Maze. This one goes steeply upward and varies from tight to comfortable. Many small holes led downward as we surveyed along and there were a few formations. Finally the passage begun to slope back downward and led to a pit. Cool! Good lead, but we had no rope.

Back home I entered the data and realized that our pit was the ceiling lead above the low sandy passage. The footprints had not come from someone climbing up from below, but rather someone rappelling down from above.

continued



Various types of stalactites in the Second Left Passage. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Curtains in the '75 Extension. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.

Monday morning Dick and I finished up the long weekend with a surface survey upstream and past the current prominent insurgence. The three of us packed up and headed out of the canyon and back to the trailhead after another fine weekend at Paul Gibson Cave.

Right now the surveyed length of the Paul Gibson is 4,617 feet or 1,497 meters and we have at least 20 leads left. Most of these are not likely to go too far, but our hope of making the cave over a mile long seems like a real possibility. We will be back in 2018. **JD**

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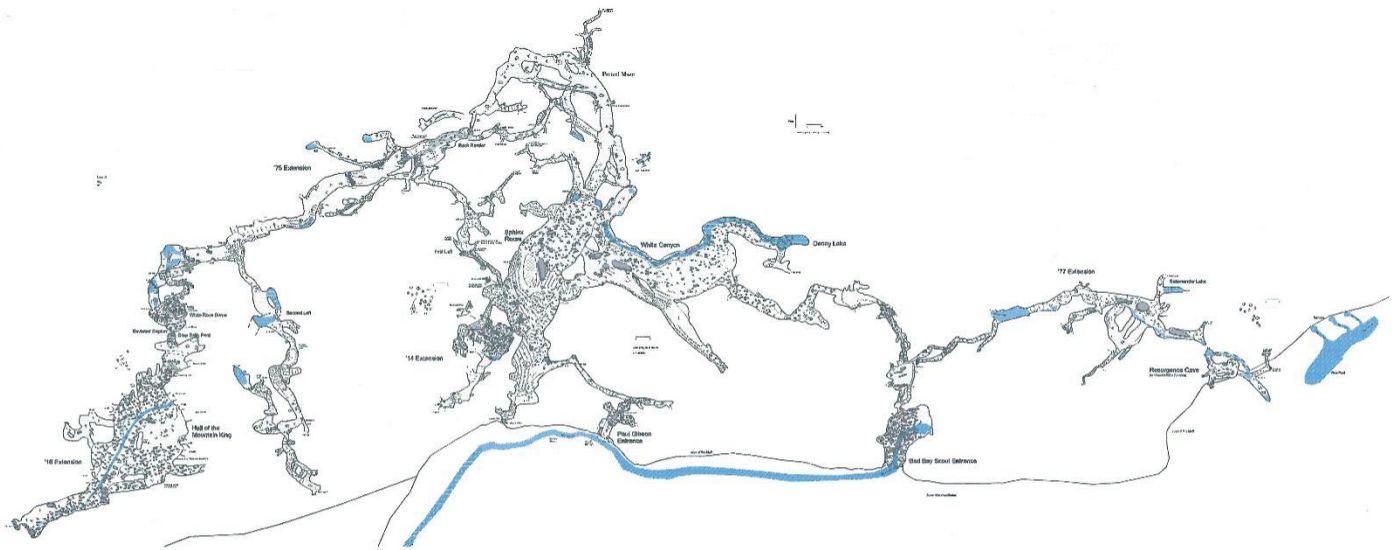
Stalactites in the '75 Extension. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Lynn Van Erden starting low sand crawl into the '75 Passage. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Mark Fritzke in leads north of Pretzel Maze. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Paul Gibson Cave

Trinity County, California
 Trinity Alps Wilderness
 Shasta-Trinity National Forest
 Fall 2017 Version
 © Joel Despain

Surveyed 2014 to 2017
 by Kip Baumann, Bill Broeckel, Joel Despain, Mark Fritzke, Chris Kennedy,
 Dick LaForge, Mike Stufflebeam, Jake Tholin, Lynn Van Erden and Heather Veerkamp

Map: Paul Gibson Cave, Fall 2017 Version

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

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Joel Despain sketching in the '75 Extension. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Looking out the Paul Gibson Entrance on a nice June day. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



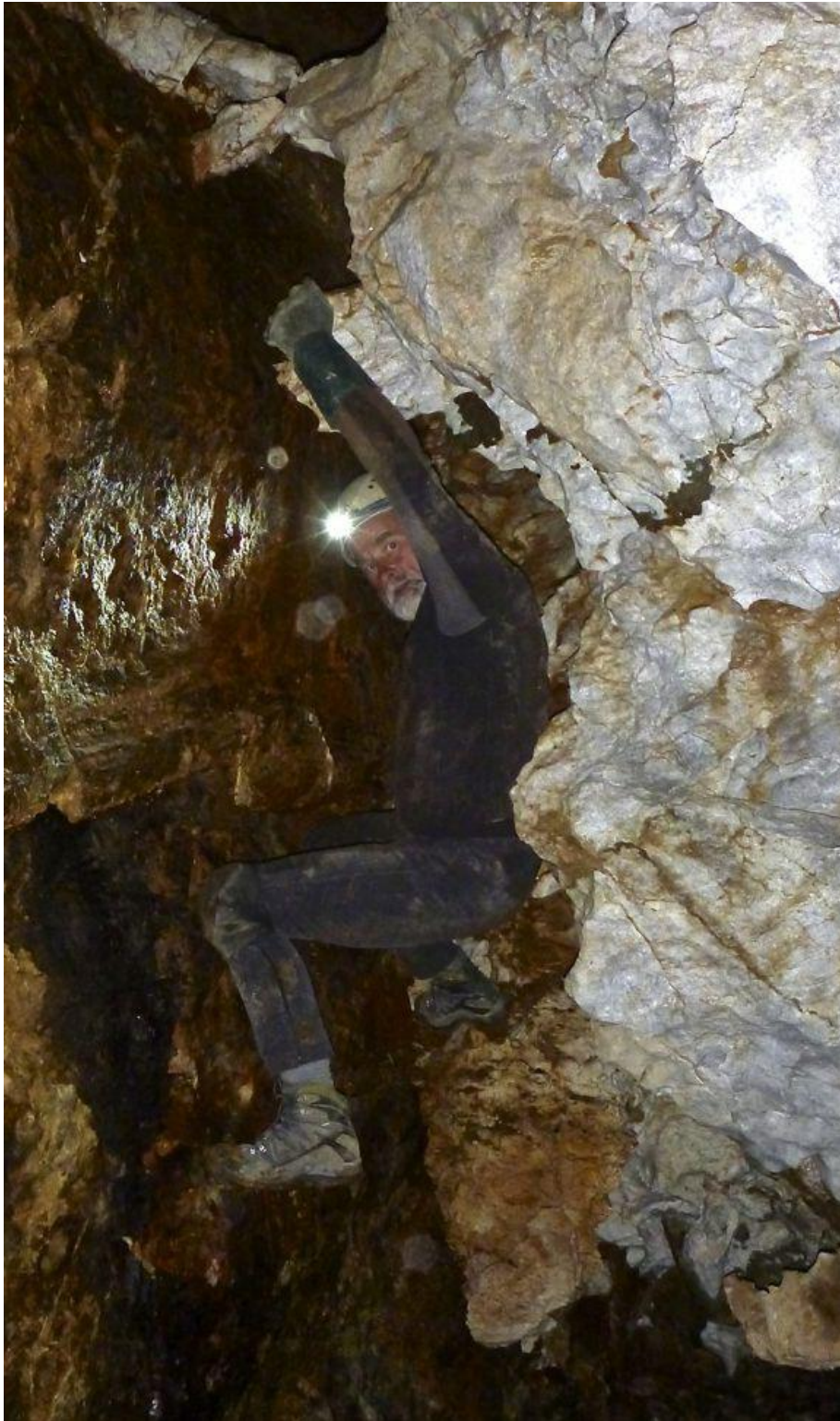
Speleothems in the Sphinx Room. Photo by Kip Baumann, 6-12-16.



Crystals in a dry pool in the '75 Extension. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-18-17.



Dry crystalline pool in the '75 Extension. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-18-17.



Mark Fritzke climbs down into the Hall of the Mountain King on the contact between the marble and a giant schist outcrop. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-18-17.



Spathites and soda straws in the Second Left side passage from the '75 Extension. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-18-17.



Joel Despain heads through the Deviated Septum, the tight connection into the new area and the Hall of the Mountain King. Photo by Dick LaForge, 10-18-17.