

***FROM SUBTERRANEAN CRAWLWAYS TO SCIENTIFIC HALLWAYS:
RESEARCH ON OUR PUBLIC CAVE AND KARST LANDS
GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
2004 NATIONAL MEETING (NOVEMBER 7-10) TOPICAL SESSION #29
ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER 1***

DESCRIPTION: Public lands provide unique natural laboratories and have facilitated important advancements in our understanding of cave and karst systems. This session focuses on both fundamental and significant discoveries to applied research in publicly managed karst terrains worldwide. Submissions of papers discussing or representing “Science in the service of public land management” and “Public lands in the service of science” are equally encouraged.

FORMAT: There will be both an oral session and a poster session.

SPONSORED BY: National Cave and Karst Research Institute and the National Park Service

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HOW TO SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT: The due date for electronic abstracts is July 13. The electronic submission form will be available on GSA’s Web site (<http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/2004/>) April 1 through July 13. The text of electronic abstracts will be archived and remain completely searchable on GSA’s Web site for many years to come.

RATIONALE FOR SESSION: Public lands offer unique advantages over privately owned land as field sites for geoscientists. These attributes potentially include unusual geologic settings, relatively open access, consistent land management and usage policies, field site housing and other in-field support, professional staff and volunteers to provide assistance, security for monitoring equipment, and a degree of “institutional memory”. These amenities have enabled some of the most important discoveries and seminal research in cave and karst sciences. For example, much of our understanding of the importance of geomicrobiology in the karst systems comes from work in National Park Service-managed caves in New Mexico and a Bureau of Land Management cave in Wyoming. Discoveries in these caves have raised international attention within the diverse interests of the petroleum, pharmaceutical, environmental remediation, and mineral exploration communities.

Conversely, Science-in-the-Parks-type programs often emphasize applied research to address specific, local management issues. Public agencies benefit by expanding the scientific foundation for management decisions while the researcher benefits from many of the same attributes listed above. Many researchers originally drawn to a park or other public land unit to test fundamental scientific hypotheses become invested in the area and contribute applied research as well.

Both science-in-the-service-of-public-lands and public-lands-in-the-service-of-science benefit society and the sciences. This Technical Session will highlight the unique opportunities for advancing cave and karst geoscience research and assisting land managers. It is designed to highlight the value of cooperative ventures between academic and other researchers with public land managers.