

## NATIONAL CAVE AND KARST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

### MONTHLY UPDATE FOR DECEMBER 2003

#### PROGRESS MADE BY THE INSTITUTE STAFF AND PARTNERS THIS MONTH:

The Institute had a busy month in December in spite of mandatory 2-week training for the Director and the impact of the holiday season. The following achievements occurred:

- *Abroad View* magazine featured a student working with Director Hose (LH) on her National Geographic sponsored Oman project & referenced the Institute.
- The Institute science team continued providing scientific advice to the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) on their sulfur cave documentary.
- LH completed her 1<sup>st</sup> full year as the Institute's Director.
- The headquarter-building architects, Studio D/Beryl Durham and Associates, provided a 2nd draft of the preliminary drawings addressing early comments. Institute & City staff met with the architects to review the revised building design.
- Institute staff and many of our partners worked on contributions for the 2003 Annual Report. The staff has also reviewed many model annual reports.
- LH met with State Representative John Heaton to update him on NCKRI progress.
- Larry Coalson of the New Mexico Small Business Development Center provided written comments and suggestions towards writing a business plan for the Institute.
- The Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center of New Mexico State University informed us near the end of the month that it will no longer be able to provide much of the administrative and infrastructure support we have enjoyed over the last year. The Institute staff has scrambled to find ways to accommodate this change by January 1, 2003.
- Roger Scott investigated specifications and costs on various pieces of office equipment.
- LH worked with the Association for Mexican Cave Studies editor Bill Mixon and geologist Jerry Atkinson on finalizing AMCS Bulletin 13, *The geology and hydrogeology of the Sistema Purificacion area, Villa Hidalgo, Tamaulipas, Mexico*. The publication of LH's dated but still useful Masters thesis is part of the AMCS's effort to make Mexico-related speleological material in the gray-literature more broadly available (<http://www.amcs-pubs.org/bulcat.html>).
- LH also completed her last issue as editor of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*. The EPA's Dr. Malcolm Field, a member of NCKRI's Federal Working Group, assumed the editorship on January 1, 2004.
- On the New Mexico Tech front, the new assistant Rosemary Baca has been hired and begins her duties in mid-January. Ms. Baca has a degree in Technical Communications and has extensive experience in scientific and technical editing, proposal assembly and coordination, and related fields. She will be assisting Dr. Penny Boston (PB) in administrative duties for both the NMT Cave and Karst Studies Program and interactions with NCKRI.
- The Science Coordinator position search is progressing and top candidates have been identified and interviews are being arranged by NMT.

- Two new PhD students are being admitted to the NMT Cave and Karst Studies Program for Fall 2004. Many student inquiries continue to come in regarding graduate studies at Tech in cave and karst related projects. We are developing a standard packet of information to be sent to inquiring students.
- A formal curriculum statement for the NMT Cave and Karst Studies Program is in the early stages of inception. This curriculum guide will be available to students to help them define what is necessary for particular degrees in the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department *vis a vis* cave and karst related study programs. This curriculum is very challenging to put together because it must be flexible enough to accommodate the extremely broad scientific sweep that is encompassed by speleology and its related sciences without being too vague to be useful. NMT hopes to have this document developed and in place by next fall (2004).
- PB & Lewis Land (LL) continue to plan for the New Mexico Geological Society 2006 Caves & Karst of Southeastern New Mexico Field Conference.
- LL & PB continued to work with other cave scientists on the scientific assessment of the Snowy River passage, a newly discovered passage in Fort Stanton Cave.
- LL led a field trip for NM Bureau of Geology's 2003 Decision Makers Field Conference, *Water Resources of the Lower Pecos Valley*, in October. This year's conference focused on water resources in the karstic San Andres artesian aquifer. Stops provided participants with opportunities to examine karst features contributing to groundwater circulation within the aquifer. Over 50 individuals attended the conference, including NM state legislators, representatives from the state Environment Department, Office of the State Engineer, Interstate Stream Commission, and the cabinet secretary for the Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources Department, and representatives from the offices of Governor Bill Richardson, Senators Pete Domenici & Jeff Bingaman, & Rep. Steve Pearce.
- This month, Fitzroy Dearborn distributed the *Encyclopedia of Caves and Karst Science*, edited by British speleologist, John Gunn. A prestigious, international effort, LH provided four entries and PB wrote one.  
<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/isbnInquiry.asp?userid=2V04CN5YPW&sourceid=00281113377116149277&bfdate=01%2D05%2D2004+15%3A52%3A01&isbn=1579583997&itm=2>

**PLANS:** Anticipated activities for the near future include:

- The architects will begin drafting blueprint plans for the headquarters in January.
- LL & PB plan to collect core samples from the extensive Snowy River pool deposit in Fort Stanton Cave for radiometric dating & stratigraphic investigation.
- The Institute hopes to complete writing a draft business/operations plan in January. This plan will include a proposal for how the Institute will be jointly administered and how the transition might be accomplished.
- The City & Institute Director will continue meetings with the architects.
- The Institute staff plans to complete a draft of the 2003 annual report.
- LH will continue to work with Malcolm Field and the National Speleological Society, publisher of the *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*, on an orderly transition of the editorship.

**NCKRI STAFF:**

LH – Louise Hose, National Park Service

RS – Roger Scott, National Park Service

LL – Lewis Land, New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources (NMBGMR)

PB – Penelope Boston, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology