

# The Great Saltpetre Cave Management Plan

To Protect and Preserve Through Education

Changes made to the Management Plan up to and including November 20, 2000 appear in blue, underlined text.

## **CONSERVATION POLICY OF THE NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

The NSS encourages projects such as: establishing cave preserves; placing entrance gates where appropriate; opposing the sale of speleothems; supporting effective protective measures; cleaning and restoring over-used caves; cooperating with private cave owners by providing them knowledge about their cave and assisting them in protecting their cave and property from damage during cave visits; and encouraging commercial cave owners to make use of their opportunity to aid the public in understanding caves and the importance of their conservation.

It is the duty of every NSS member to take personal responsibility for spreading a consciousness of the cave conservation problem to each potential user of caves. Without this, the beauty and value of our caves will not long remain with us."

## **HISTORY OF THE CAVE**

Great Saltpetre Cave is located in eastern Rockcastle County, Kentucky. The cave is located in a spur of the Big Hill Range and runs directly through the mountain with Crooked Creek passing near both the north and south entrances of the cave.

The first written knowledge of the cave states that it was discovered in 1798 by John Baker and his family. The early years of our country's birth demonstrated the need for a domestic supply for gunpowder. Great Saltpetre Cave was found to contain vast quantities of calcium nitrate (saltpetre) the main ingredient in gunpowder. The War of 1812 saw the peak production in saltpetre mining at Great Saltpetre Cave. Employing 70 miners during this period made it the largest employer in eastern Kentucky. Although Mammoth Cave was better known as a saltpetre mining operation, it in no way compared to Great Saltpetre Cave. It is because of this mining that the first survey was made of the cave. The current survey has 3500 feet of passage.

After the War of 1812 the mining production slowed down and completely came to an end in 1865. John Lair of Renfro Valley fame was instrumental in the

commercialization of the cave with the radio broadcasting of the "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" from inside the cave.

In 1989 the Felburn Foundation purchased Great Saltpetre Cave and leased it and the surrounding property to the Greater Cincinnati Grotto, a chapter of the National Speleological Society.

## **THE GREAT SALTPETRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Great Saltpetre Cave Committee (GSPC) consists of four Greater Cincinnati Grotto members (GCG), two Dayton Underground members (DUG), and two Blue Grass Grotto members (BGG). Each year the chair of the GCG appoints the chairperson of GSPC who then chooses the three remaining GCG members. DUG and BGG will select their own delegates. Monthly meetings will be held at designated sites. All GSPC members will have full voting privileges. [The GSPC members who are present at each meeting will vote on all projects and expenditures.](#) All monies donated to GSP will be used specifically for The Great Saltpetre Cave Preserve. The GSPC will give their annual report to the GCG at the December meeting. The GSPC chairperson will give a monthly report to the GCG board concerning ongoing projects.

## **ACCESS TO THE GREAT SALTPETRE CAVE PRESERVE**

Because the GSPC is composed of three grottos (GCG, DUG, BGG), any member in good standing of those grottos may have access to the cave preserve and must abide by all rules and regulations. All other persons must be sponsored by one of the aforementioned grottos. Sponsorship is a serious matter. Each sponsor must be willing to do the following:

- Be in attendance at all times with their guest while on the property.
- Be responsible for all of their guests' actions.
- Be responsible for collecting camping fees and registering guests at the kiosk.
- Be responsible for keeping the front gate locked at all times.

## **SECURITY**

Keys will be given only to the GCG board members and the members of the GSPC. The front gate has a combination lock. The combination can be obtained by calling either a GCG board member or anyone from the GSPC. The

combination will only be given to a member of GCG, DUG, or BGG. Sponsors with guests are never to give out the front gate combination, or any keys to property structures, including the GSP cave itself. The front gate must be locked at all times. The chairperson of the GSPC will have the responsibility of changing the lock combination and all appropriate personnel notified. Remember the combination could change at any time. Call first to ensure that the one that you know is correct.

[The Kitchen will be open, upon request, whenever possible by a GSPC or GCG Board member.](#)

## **CAMPING AT THE GREAT SALTPETRE CAVE PRESERVE**

Camping and sleeping cabins are on a first-come first-serve basis. The first person occupying a cabin has sole discretion of allowing additional occupants. [Sleeping Cabins are not for use by Youth Organizations. Youth Groups must stay in the area reserved for them at the far end of the main camping field.](#) No pets are allowed in the sleeping cabins.

Showers will be opened whenever possible by a GSPC member.

Electric sites are available in the middle campground and the former "party camp" is now designated priority camping area for scouts. Please remember that your camping fees are used for the upkeep of the property.

## **CAMPGROUND RULES AND REGULATIONS**

All campers must register at the kiosk. Camping fees are \$2.00 per night per person. Electrical sites are \$4.00 per night at designated campsites, [and are restricted to members' use.](#) Camping fees are payable upon arrival.

The speed limit is 5 MPH. [Drive on designated roads and in campground area.](#)

All trash must be removed from the premises when leaving.

Use only designated fire rings. All fires must be extinguished before departure. No timber is to be cut on the premises.

Quiet hours are between 11:00 PM to 6:00 AM.

No discharging of firearms, fireworks, carbide cannons, or explosives on the preserve.

No hunting is permitted anywhere on GSP property.

Pets must be kept on a leash at all times, or otherwise restrained. All pets must have current inoculations for rabies as prescribed by the camper's state of residence. **(Kentucky Administrative Regulations 304 KAR 1:040)**

The shelter house is to be used as an eating area or gathering place only.

There is to be no camping or parking of vehicles under the shelter. All persons using the shelter house must clean it before leaving, even if it was found in poor condition.

[Motorized vehicles are prohibited for off-road use at GSP, with the exception of pre-approved GSP Maintenance Vehicles. Nuisance behavior with these vehicles is also prohibited.](#)

[Horses are prohibited at GSP.](#)

[Youth Groups must contact the Youth Group coordinator to visit GSP.](#)

## **V. POLICY FOR CAVE ACCESS**

Access to the Great Saltpetre Cave is a privilege. The officers of the GCG and the GSPC hold the keys to the cave. To obtain a key to the cave you must be a member of GCG, DUG, or BGG. Permission to visit the cave must be made in advance with the chairperson of the GSPC in order to obtain a key. While visiting the cave the gate must be locked at all times and should be unlocked and re-locked as you enter and leave. Key to cave must be returned as soon as possible. The GSPC discourages the use of the electricity in the cave.

## **THE GREAT SALTPETRE CAVE STATUTES**

No dogs are allowed in the cave.

No camping is allowed in the cave.

No vehicles or bikes are allowed in the cave.

No fires are allowed in the cave.

No rock climbing or rappelling from the cliffs above the cave.

No children permitted in cave without adult supervision.

No using cave as a restroom.

Both the NSS and the GCG actively promote the conservation of caves. All members pledge to protect the historical, geological and biological treasures found underground. The management committee stresses that nothing shall be done to deface or spoil the natural beauty and life forms found in the cave. Any exploration of Great Saltpetre Cave must be approved by the GSPC and a written report of any findings must be filed with the committee. The cave may be used for the teaching of conservation and safe caving techniques. Any groups proposing to use the cave for this purpose must be covered by insurance and individual release forms signed by a parent or guardian.

Because of the colorful history of the cave and its accessibility, the media may publicize it in magazines and newspapers with permission from the GSPC.

***Submitted this day the Fourth of December, 2000 by the Great Saltpetre Management Committee.***