

# Hackney Cave

by Spike Selig

When Brian Killilngbeck moved out of town the ball was dropped on exploration and mapping Hackney Cave. At its westerly most point, where exploration and mapping stopped, Hackney was heading northwest toward the area west of the Stampers Creek Swallowhole. When I'm in the area, I check Hackney's large deep sinkhole entrance to see if the entrance is flooded. It frequently is. This would mean the known passage in the cave is also underwater, with no safe havens in flooding. Hackney has poor drainage somewhere downstream and floods easily, staying flooded for extended periods, resulting in silt and clay plugs and shelves. This results in a lot of silt chokes and mud banks.

Next to, and just to the northeast of Hackney, Stampers Creek Swallowhole drains a 7 square mile area. The roads nearby are frequently flood with 6 feet of water. Stampers Creek frequently overflows, the water flowing above ground, down a sinkhole infested valley that terminates in the Lost River near Hwy 37, the farthest south loop of the "lost" part of the Lost River's above ground streambed. Dyes put in the Stamper's Creek swallowhole at a dry, low water, no rain period traveled 14 miles to the west showing up at the true rise of the Lost River System. The dyes did not show up in the Lost River Cave (per Sam Freshour). Dyes dumped into Stampers Creek Swallowhole during a high water table, rainy, flooding period showed up in the Lost River drainage, a condition induced by the Stamper's Creek high water overflowing and going above ground to the northwest, some of the water pirating into sink holes dotting this flood plain, but most water going into the above ground Lost River streambed. These flood released dyes thus showed up in the Lost River Cave system.

I feel strongly that Hackney Cave must continue to the west beyond where the survey team left off. It must continue to the west where I feel it intersects Stamper's Creek's underground drainage and in so doing, takes on the responsibility of carrying that swallowhole's underground water to the true rise of the Lost River, resulting in a cave system sprawling under the 14 miles between intake and discharge. The straight line that runs between these two intake and discharge points runs under a ridge that starts it's uphill end at Hackney, runs across the north end of Paoli and continues across the north end of Tolliver hollow and finally tapers down and ends at the Lost River west of and downstream of Orangeville. The ridge's south slope drains south into Paoli, the ridge's north slope drains into the Lost River drainage basin.

The Lost River Drainage basin's northern border contains a massive spring that drains water from the area north of the basin, the spring being called the Orangeville Rise. Springs typically "pull" meandering streams over to the spring's side of the basin and the Orangeville Rise is no exception. The Orangeville Rise and the springs just upstream of it cause a large northerly meander of the Lost River's streambed. Inside of, and to the south of this northerly meander is a northerly projection of the east-west ridge crossing Paoli. This projection takes the form of a peninsula made up of a high hill. The hill sits in the middle of an area of great karst significance. The northwestern slope of this hill covers the 21 miles of the Lost River Cave System. The eastern slope terminates at the Lost River, at the Tolliver Swallowhole Cave. That swallowhole's waters travel underground to the Lost River Cave System. The water trying to get through this portion of the Lost River encounters a dam partially blocking its path.

The dam formed when a large area over the system collapsed, the collapse forming the Wesley Chapel Gulf. The north-south axis of the hill is eroded out by a steep sided valley that is the headwaters of Scott's Hollow. The water from this part of the hill flows southerly but is pirated by a swallowhole that has become Selig Cave. Selig Cave pirates the northern most water landing in Scott Hollow at the hollows headwaters. From what we have found so far in early exploration, Selig Cave appears to be diverting the water back north into the underground Lost River and Stamper's Creek drainage systems.

For over 10 years now, I have been looking for a swallowhole cave in the ridge that runs east-west across the north side of Salem, the ridge following the straight line between Hackney-Stamper's Creek and the true rise. If Selig and or Hackney get into the Stampers Creek drainage, the cave could be very significant. If the drainage later connects into the Lost River Cave system, the mileage would be added to the Lost River Cave mileage making a cave system that could rival the 54 miles of passage length that were thought to define the early Historic Mammoth Cave before the connections were made to the caves to the north.

In conclusion, I feel we should wait until deep freeze conditions shut off the threat of flooding in Hackney Cave, then go back and resume exploration in its downstream direction. At the same time, I hope survey and exploration stays at a high energy level. Add this to the incredible work Dave Everton and his crews have been doing increasing the known size of Binkley Cave and I can see Indiana's cave light shining very brightly.