

Tolliver Hollow Cave Trip

by Spike Selig

I went down to Selig Cave December 1st and searched for possible sinkholes west of the Selig Cave entrance hoping to find another upstream in-feeder entrance to Selig Cave. From Selig Cave, I traveled west on 325 North, climbed over the divide out of Scott Hollow, then turned left, to the west. This road shortly turned south. As I turned to the left, I saw a sink on my left on the inside of the turn and stopped at a farmhouse next to the sinkhole. The owner took me down to the first sink and showed me a 6" hole uphill from the sink where warm air was pouring out. He said that he tied a washer onto a string and lowered it into the hole and it measured 25' deep. We dug open the 6" hole in a few minutes and found ourselves looking down into a new cave with just a couple of roots keeping us from going in. I told him I would come back down later, possibly next week, to cut the roots away and we would go in.

The owner pointed to another sink close by on his property and said there was a cave that went over a mile in it. He gave cavers permission to go into the cave several times but the last time they came, they left trash on the ground. The next time the cavers showed up, he denied them entry.

From our conversation, I realized that the mile long cave was Tolliver Hollow Cave. I explained that the cavers showing up on his property were actually heavily involved in mapping the Lost River Cave system and that they were actually mapping Tolliver Hollow Cave hoping it connected to the Lost River Cave.

It took the owner and I about 10 minutes to open the dirt choke of the sinkhole. We left the possible cave below for the next trip and spent the next 2 hours talking about world politics. At the end of our conversation, he said the survey and exploration crews we could resume the surveying of Tolliver Hollow Cave but that sink had flushed shut with debris and we would have to reopen it. I told him we would bring one car down and a minimum survey crew. I gave him my phone number and said if the survey crew left trash, I would come down and clean it up myself.

It is hard to say what the new cave in the closer sinkhole is going to turn out to be. The hole we opened had good air blowing out of it on a 50 degree outside temperature day. This possible new cave could relate to Tolliver Hollow Cave, or it could be new cave. My own hope is that it is the upstream termination of the passage in Selig that Dave Everton and crew and others are mapping. The cave's and Selig's entrances are about 2 mile apart as the crow flies with good sandstone cap over the line to help prevent passage collapse. If the cave or the two side by side caves connect to the Lost River Cave System, the addition of passage to the LRC will be significant and may allow us to get into the assumed LRC passages to the east and south of the Wesley Chapel Gulf blockage.