

# ISS News

Newsletter of the Illinois Speleological Survey



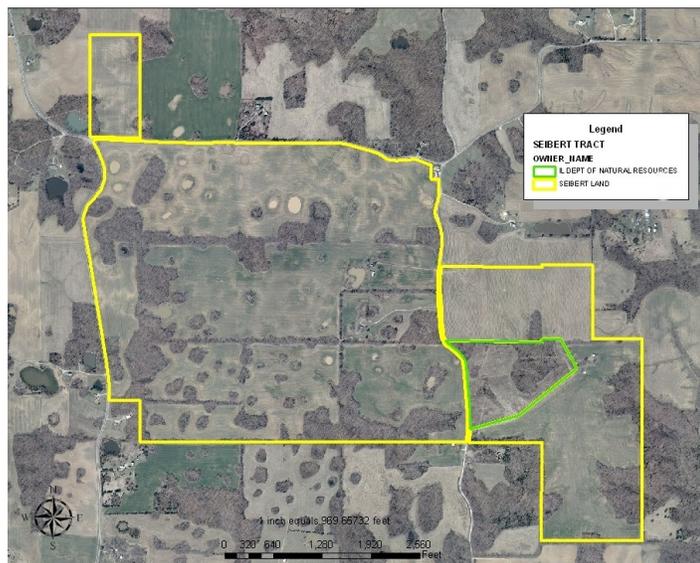
## 535 Acres in the Heart of Fogelpole Cave System Protected by Clifftop NFP

Clifftop is a grassroots NFP dedicated to promoting the conservation, preservation, and protection of the Mississippi River bluffs corridor in Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair Counties of southwestern Illinois. The group recently purchased the 535 acre Seibert farm which surrounds the IDNR owned Fogelpole Cave Nature Preserve (see parcel photo below). Clifftop received more than \$2 million in grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Fund and the Grand Victoria Foundation for the purchase, as well as raising \$50,000 in local funds. ISS, NSS and the Subterranean Ecology Institute contributing nearly \$4,000 to the project.

Most of the parcel is currently in row crop agriculture. Since the site contains over 300 sinkholes, land use here likely has significant impacts on the water quality inside of Fogelpole Cave.

The acquisition of the property was revealed to the public in a ceremony held in the Monroe County Annex Building on Saturday January 25, 2014. ISS directors Steve Taylor and Carl DauBach made presentations at the ceremony. Carl is Executive Director of Clifftop. Steve is the lead scientist on the team developing a research and management plan for the site.

Clifftop plans to restore the agricultural portions of the parcel to native vegetation and has ambitious plans for long term monitoring of the effects of restoration efforts on surface community biodiversity and groundwater quality. Public access for hiking will be part of future plans. Opportunities may arise for caver assistance in implementing specific aspects of a comprehensive management plan.



## Spring 2014 ISS Meeting; April 5th in Columbia

The spring 2014 meeting of the Illinois Speleological Survey will be held on Saturday April 5th at 7:00pm at the home of Bob and Nancy Weck

2016 Stemler Road  
Columbia IL 62236

Cave survey and surface work opportunities in the Columbia area will be available during the day on Saturday. The Wecks will provide a barbeque dinner on Saturday and space to camp on the property.

A newly elected board will convene, pending the outcome of the current election. For more details contact Bob at

caveandwoods@gmail.com.

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### Fogelpole Cave Facts:

- Illinois' largest cave
- 15 miles of known passage
- Illinois' most biodiverse cave
- Important bat hibernaculum
- Habitat for the Illinois Cave Amphipod



# Philip Moss Recognized for Significant Contributions to Illinois Speleology



Philip Moss.

At the Illinois Speleological Survey meeting on November 18, 2012 the ISS Board of Directors unanimously resolved to officially recognize the significant contributions of Philip Moss to Illinois speleology in particular and his contributions to karst science and exploration, more generally.

Philip's major contributions in Illinois include:

- Walked over 10,000 acres in Illinois looking for caves.
- Discovered and submitted locations of approximately 345 Illinois karst features.
- Drafted and submitted to the ISS cave database 28 Illinois cave maps, documenting over 11 miles of cave passage.
- Submitted to ISS about 38 miles of geo-referenced cave passage line plots.
- Completed 148 dye traces in Illinois.
- Delineated 21 cave or spring recharge areas in Illinois.

- Authored or coauthored numerous reports of karst investigations, including five that are posted on the ISS website.

- Found significant range extensions of 20 cave species, discovered two species new to science, and found four new populations of the endangered Illinois cave amphipod.

His advocacy for the responsible stewardship of karst resources and active engagement with cave surveys and scientific research have had a significant and lasting impact.

In late 2012 Philip retired from caving and geology in order to tour the western United States in his camper.

Good Luck Philip, and thanks for your many contributions to speleology.



ISS Director and Data Custodian, Mona Colburn takes a break during ridge walking in the Columbia Karst.

## Highlights of the 2013 ISS Meeting Weekend

The 2013 meeting of the ISS happened on Saturday April 6th at the home of Bob and Nancy Weck near Columbia, IL. The business meeting was preceded by a day of cave survey work and ridge walking in the Columbia Karst.

Bob Weck walked a sinkhole-dense parcel adjacent to Stemler Cave Woods. The land was purchased a few years ago by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and ISS volunteered to examine the parcel to document any significant caves or karst features present. No significant new cave entrances were located.

and Illinois Natural History Survey biologist, Steve Taylor. Some of the details and images can be found at:

[www.inhs.illinois.edu/research/bat-wns](http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/research/bat-wns)

Draft minutes of the meeting are posted on the ISS website;

[www.caves.org/iss](http://www.caves.org/iss)

On Sunday, Jack Wood and Phil Goldman explored a pit in the Weck's pasture. The pit has a very tight constriction but is large enough to merit survey and mapping.



Jack Wood navigating a tight spot in a pit.

Survey work continued in side passages of Stemler Cave. Crew members included Edmund Tucker, Jack Wood, Phil Goldman, Mihai Lefticariu and Gary Resch - 492.5 feet of new passage was surveyed.

Dan Lamping, Mona Colburn, Nancy Weck and

The business meeting was held in the loft of the Weck's barn. The evening began with a presentation on White Nose Syndrome in Illinois by ISS director

## National Great Rivers Research and Education Center

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) in Alton, IL is proving to be a valuable partner for researchers interested in the biology and hydrology of Illinois' caves and springs. NGRREC "aspires to be a leader in scholarly research, education, and outreach related to the interconnectedness of large rivers, their floodplains, watersheds, and their associated communities". Cave and spring watersheds and their associated biota fall squarely within this mission.

Since 2010, NGRREC has supported four research projects that focus on the sinkhole plain karst/Salem Plateau of southwestern Illinois. Three of the projects were conducted by interns through the NGRREC summer internship program, a competitive program that provides student

interns with a \$ 4,000 stipend. The faculty mentor for all three projects was current ISS president and Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) professor, Bob Weck (who was given a stipend of \$0; but had fun).

The internship projects included "Best Management Practices for Maintaining Sinkhole Ponds as Amphibian Habitat" in 2010, "Effects of Water Quality and Stream Anatomy on the Distribution and Population Density of the Enigmatic Cavesnail (*Fontigens antroecetes*) in Stemler Cave" in 2012. During the 2013 summer, NGRREC supported an intern to study biodiversity and water quality in Sparrow Spring and Sparrow Creek. Sparrow Spring, one of Illinois' largest, is the resurgence point of the Stemler Cave system. The ISS Sci-

ence Committee provided technical assistance and advice on the project. SWIC professor Mike Marlen was also a faculty mentor.

The research focused on changes in the invertebrate community, coliform bacteria levels and water chemistry from the spring and three downstream sites in the creek.

Most recently, NGRREC awarded a grant to a University of Illinois and the Prairie Research Institute team led by Steve Taylor. The project, entitled "Karst groundwater contaminants in western Illinois: comparison of current conditions with historical data" is a broad study of major cave drainage basins in the Salem Plateau. The ongoing study will compare current water quality conditions to similar records published in 2000.



*Hunter Swift presenting the results of his internship project on biodiversity in Sparrow Spring at the NGRREC student symposium in August 2013.*



*Bob Weck collecting a water sample for bacterial identification from in a spring in Monroe County, IL in December, 2013.*



*Wooded sinkhole pond in St. Clair county which was inhabited by several amphibian species in June 2010.*



*NGRREC intern, Nicole Whitsitt studying the enigmatic cavesnail in Stemler Cave in June, 2012..*



# ISS News

The Illinois Speleological Survey is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, conserving, locating, recording, exploring and studying caves and karst in Illinois.

### Officers

- Bob Weck      President
- Jack Wood     Vice-President
- John Lovaas    Treasurer

### Elected Directors

- Richard Raber   Steve Taylor    Dan Lamping
- Jack Wood       Gary Resch

### Organizational Directors

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources    Mona Colburn
- Cliffiop NFP    Carl Daubach

### Data Request Committee

Bob Weck, Mihai Lefticariu, John Lovaas

### Data Custodians

Mona Colburn, Frank Wilhelm

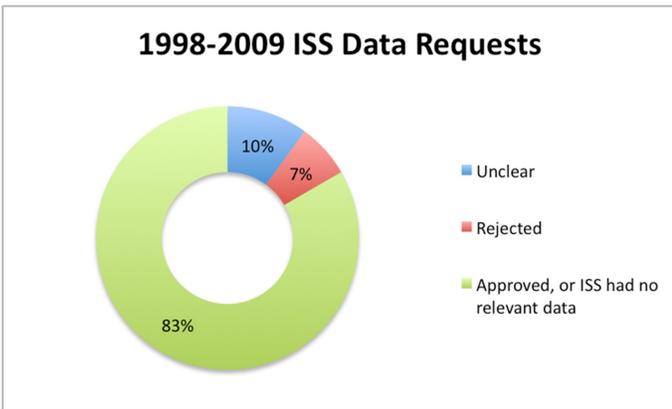
### Web Master

Jack Wood



Logo by Brian R. Bray

## Summary of ISS Data Requests for years 1998 to 2009



Contrary to the myth that ISS is where “data go to die”, these graphics testify to the positive contributions we make to cave research and exploration by granting valid data requests. The charts were prepared by Steve Taylor from records of data requests between 1998 and 2009.

