NSS A/V Library Program S753

Lechuguilla Cave Slides

**Slide# Description**

1. Title Slide
2. The 80' entrance drop to Lechuguilla and the room below had been known since the early 1900s and were mined for guano.
3. A series of digs by Colorado cavers broke through in 1986. Entran9e is now through this culvert, where 60 mph winds have been recorded.
4. Deep secrets, in the Western Branch, was the first arm of the cave explored. These planar coralloids mark the entrance to Deep Sea camp.
5. Mammallaries or cave clouds are found in many parts of the cave, in old pool basins. These orange ones are above Lake Louise.
6. The ABCS Room marks the start of the Western Borehole, the largest, most continuous passage in the cave. It extends over a mile.
7. Gypsum floors much of the Western Borehole and "drilled" formations such as these are found along the trail. Note the tiny shield rock on each.
8. The Three Amigos are probably the largest gypsum "drill" formations in the Western Borehole.
9. Passage shot about halfway down the borehole. Note the Three Amigos in the distance.
10. The "Leaning Tower" is a raft cone covered with aragonite - perhaps the largest in the cave. It's found in an old pool basin.
11. "Raft Cone Land" is a portion of the Western Borehole floored entirely with layers of calcite rafts and numerous raft cones.
12. The Huapache Highway is one of the largest passages in the cave, just beyond Hard Daze Night Hall, a huge chamber.
13. After a mile of bone-dry passage, an active area is reached at the end of the Western Inside the Oasis Pool Room, near the top of the water line.
14. Inside the Oasis Room, near the top of the water line.
15. Little is left of the pool which once filled the Oasis Chamber, but it’s a welcome source of water for thirsty caver. Note orange mammillary crusts.
16. The Red Lake Passage is in the same vicinity as the Oasis. Note tl1e 5' long soda straw which extends directly into the pool.
17. South Winds, a complex of passage south of the Western Borehole, is noted for its impressive aragonite bushes.
18. The Northwest Passage leads from the Western Borehole to Hudson Bay. I call this area of the room the "Toasted Marshmallows".
19. These unusual mammillaries are found in the Northwest Passage.
20. Spar City is a portion of the Northwest Passage entirely covered with large spar crystals. Note the caver peering through the hole.
21. Beyond Spar City, a series of ascents on flowstone led to the well decorated “There Be Dragons section”.
22. The second arm of the cave discovered was accessed by Apricot Pit, over 300' of ropework down a sloping rift.
23. Below the rift are a series of decorated chambers known collectively as Nirvana. This is the Emperor's Chamber.
24. The Emperor formation.
25. Aragonite towers are strewn throughout the Great Beyond, a large chamber marking the end of Nirvana and beginning the Near East.
26. The Orange Bowl is a dry pool basin.
27. Not all the lakes in Nirvana are dry. This is the Lake of the Blue Giants, named for its large, submerged stalagmites, up to 12' tall.
28. Submerged stalagmites in Lake of the Blue Giants, shot at a depth of about 20'. Note the encrusted shelf-stone on the left, indicating former pool levels.
29. Diving in nearby Stud Lake turned up these unique subaqueous helictites, about ten feet below the water's surface.
30. After traveling through Nirvana and the Near East, a 200' ascent leads to the top of the Aragonitemare and the Far East.
31. The top of the Aragonitemare, like much of the Far East, is well decorated.
32. A major chamber in the Far East is the Land of Fire and Ice.
33. Beyond Fire and Ice, a major trunk passage called Glacier Way leads to Grand Guadalupe camp.
34. A side passage off Glacier Way leads to Bryce Canyon, where acidic waters have carved impressive rillenkarren.
35. One of the most impressive aragonite bushes is found in the Far East. The "plate" is remarkably two dimensional and almost 2' high.
36. Just beyond the Far East camp, a gypsum-lined passage leads into dry pool basins.
37. Donald Davis admires aragonite bushes on red shelfstone in the dry pool basins.
38. A rare form of "feathered" aragonite in the Far East.
39. Gypsum crystals in the Far East.
40. The Swinging Soda Straw Room in the Far East.
41. Shelfstone on a dry pool basin in Boundary Waters, Far East
42. The third and most spectacular arm of the cave, the F-survey, is reached by a series of drops ending at Lake Lebarge.
43. On the far side of Lake Lebarge is this aragonite-encrusted column.
44. Separated from Lake Lebarge by a huge boulder is a smaller lake, Chandelier. Here a caver dips drinking water from the lake.
45. The Yellow Brick Road is an orange flowstone cascade extending hundreds of feet.
46. The Lebarge Borehole is a gypsum-lined passage paralleling the Yellow Brick Road.
47. The Chandelier Ballroom is the first large chamber beyond the Borehole. Some of the chandeliers are over 15' long, ending in selenite crystals.
48. There are several clusters of chandeliers in the room. This cluster lacks the large sprays of selenite crystals at the tip.
49. This is another cluster of chandeliers which have formed columns.
50. A larger-scale view of the lower end of the Chandelier Ballroom, taken from high and to the right of the group in #47.Note the two cavers for scale.
51. A fifteen-minute trip from the Ballroom leads to the Pearlsian Gulf, with a blue-green lake and impressive columns.
52. A wide variety of pearls is found in the Pearlsian Gulf. Many are tiny, such as these.
53. Some of the larger, "toasted" pearls have been cemented in.
54. Some of the more unusual pearls at the Gulf look as though they have been cut from cylinders of calcite.
55. Above the Pearlsian Gulf is a heavily decorated region known as Yo Acres.
56. Yo Acres ascends steeply through forests of formations.
57. Another large chamber near the Ballroom is Hoodoo Hall, named for its aragonite-encrusted raft cones. Note the caver in the middle distance.
58. The F-survey boasts a variety of bizarre gypsum forms. These are the Dilithium Crystals, sub-aqueous selenite.
59. This gypsum formation is fondly known as the Easter Bunny
60. Here a gypsum rim is separating from a gypsum column.
61. These impressive gypsum drip formations are on the slope above the Chandelier Ballroom.
62. Between the camera and the caver is a 250' drop called Hotlanta Well, while this room is called Underground Atlanta.
63. Above Underground Atlanta is the most impressive dripstone area in the cave, Tower Place. This is the view heading in.
64. Large columns and stals in Tower Place.
65. This pretty pool contains the Breast of Venus and collects the drip water in the very active Tower Place.
66. Some of the more massive columns in Tower Place.
67. Another view of the columns in #65.
68. Tower place also contains some bizarrely eroded stals, sµch as thse alien twins.
69. Pretty patterns in an eroding stal in Tower Place. Note the drill-ho! on top.
70. Down a drop and back up another rope leads to the High Hopes area, beginning with a fine borehole in boneyard.
71. This is perhaps the most impressive display of subaqueous helictites anywhere and is about 3' ide.
72. The beautiful Lake Aqua Velva lies at the foot of a long flowstone slope known as Ultra Primo.
73. Just outside of Vesuvius is this aragonite-tipped straw we call "The Tickler".
74. Vesuvius is a chamber named for this eruption through its flowstone floor, caused by expansion of clay.
75. The rest of Vesuvius is a well decorated area. Access throughout is strictly "boots-off'.
76. Beyond Vesuvius is the Jungle Room, named for its forest of soda straws, war-club stals, and fat helictites.
77. A 1O' tall shield in the Jungle Room.
78. We end our tour of Lechuguilla with a visit to our favorite region, Lake Castrovalva, below the Chandelier Ballroom.
79. One must swim or raft across the 100' wide lake. On the far shore is a passage leading to a spectacular chamber.
80. Most of this chamber is floored with ankle deep water over shelfstone, with several "cut-outs" into 1O' deep water
81. One of the largest pieces of shelfstone anywhere on the planet is at the back of the chamber, which ends just beyond.
82. The End