

Colorado Cave Survey
Cave Information System Committee
June 24th and September 16th 2008 meetings
Summary of Meetings

Location sensitivity matrix revisited

We discussed some changes to the cave location sensitivity risk matrix. The first was to specifically indicate that the location of a more sensitive cave nearby would be taken into account when assigning the sensitive classification of a cave. The reasoning is straightforward: You don't want to release the location of an insignificant shelter cave if it happens to be right next to a large and very delicate or very dangerous cave.

Also, we changed the 'risk to cave' category to have a A-E designation instead of a 1-5 designation. That should reduce confusion. Using the new scheme, Fulford would be a 2B. See the new matrix at the end of the report.

'Flow charts' for releasing data

We designed two flow charts related to decision making for releasing data. I (Carl) was initially opposed to making such a system 'too complicated'. However, I eventually became sold on these flow charts for two reasons. First, they add objectivity to the system and reduce subjectivity. That means the system relies less on people to have good judgment and make good decisions, and builds more of the decision process into the system. Second, it makes the system more transparent. These flow charts will be readily available to the caving community, before and after implementation of the system, and can show everyone how decisions will be made.

The purpose of the flow charts is not to make life complicated. The purpose of the flow charts is to show exactly how sensitive cave data will or will not be released.

The 'Release Form' flow chart

Some data will be released from the database very easily (see next section). For people wanting more data, or more sensitive data, a Release Form will have to be on file. The flow chart at the end of the report details how that process will work. The idea behind it is to ask two questions that should be asked of anyone wanting greater access to a database of cave locations. "Is this person known to the caving community?" "Is this a person that the caving community trusts with cave location data?"

Those are the same questions any caver asks himself or herself when a person comes along asking for directions to a cave. This flow chart and the release form simply formalize the process. Once a release form is on file, the caver has greater (but not unchecked) access to cave location data in the database.

References will be a big part of getting a release form accepted. References are essentially other cavers who will 'vouch' for the ethics of the individual submitting the form. Those references will be contacted, and their standing in the caving community will also be considered.

The 'Information Request' flow chart

This flowchart details the decision-making process for releasing data, specifically cave location data. It works in combination with the release form and its flow chart, as

well as the data sensitivity matrix. All of these documents are included at the end of this report and they are the heart of the system being designed. (*See report 5 for the latest versions of the flow charts*) Again, the idea is to guide the decision-maker through the decision-making process, and for anyone to be able to understand how the decisions are being made.

Two components are considered for each data release: the number of locations, and the sensitivity of the caves. All requests and data release will be logged, meaning that there will be records of who is requesting what and whether it was released. Checks are put in place to review whether an individual is submitting multiple requests that are excessive in combination. The CCS would have to vote to release data on the most sensitive requests. Rejected requests can be appealed to the voting membership of the CCS.

Just like the rest of the planning, these ideas will need to be tweaked along the way. The system will not be perfect, but with time, experience, and suggestions it can be improved.

Outline for completion of planning for the system

We identified four remaining broad topics to complete the planning process.

- 1) How do the state and regional coordinators get appointed?
- 2) How does data get reported and added to the database?
- 3) How will the electronic system be secured?
- 4) How will the data be managed, and what specific form will the database take?
- 5) What information will be collected on the release form?

We hope that each of these remaining topics, and further polishing of previous plans, can be done in four more meetings. That would put us on target to have a completed proposal for the CCS sometime in 2009.

A program to explain the planned system and gather feedback is being planned to take around to all of the grottos in the state. This kind of outreach is crucial to build understanding, from which we hope support will follow. A first talk of this type is planned for the Rocky Mtn. Speleoseminar happening on October 25th 2008.

As always, criticism, comments, and suggestions are very welcome. Our goal is to design a system that will be useful to, and supported by, the Colorado caving community.

Respectfully submitted,

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The Cave Classification Risk Matrix along with example caves:

**Colorado Cave Survey
Cave Classification Risk Matrix**

	E					
	D		La Sunder, Groaning, Breezeway, Wednesday Afternoon	Powerline, Fixin' To Die, Thursday Morning		
Risk to Cave >>>>	C		Huccacove	Moby's Alpine Twister, Fulton	Orient Mine	
	B		Fulford, Hubbard's, Pedro's, Swirling Mist	Corkscrew	Spring, Sinking River	
	A		COW, Glenwood Caverns, "Average shelter cave"	Beulah Shelter Caves		
		1	2	3	4	
		Risk to Human >>>>				

Definitions

Risk To Cave

- A Commercial Cave, or no easily damaged features, or already heavily damaged
- B Heavily used caves that still have some sensitive features, widely known caves
- C Susceptible to damage, but low risk, formations are not easily accessible
- D Easily accessible and/or delicate formations, sensitive cave biota
Delicate, non-obvious features, significant damage can occur without the caver's knowledge
- E (e.g. archeological features, endangered species)

Risk to Human

- 1 No difficult approach, shelter cave, commercial cave
- 2 Easy/Beginner Cave, basic caving skills necessary
- 3 Intermediate cave, moderate difficulty
- 4 Difficult - Ropework, advanced climbing skills, or passing extreme constrictions required
Extreme - Challenges in Level 4 plus remote location, or extreme environmental conditions,
- 5 etc.