

# Cave Permits & Permitting Systems



James R. Goodbar  
Senior Cave/Karst Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management  
December 3, 2007

## What are They & Why Have Them ?

- Cave Permits are Legal Documents that approve access into caves
- In this session you will learn:
  - Why & When they might be needed
  - How to Legally “Close” Caves
  - Permit Contents
  - Different Types of Permits
- What Permitting Systems are You Currently Using

## ??? Why ???

- Permits Can Help Control Access
- Help Protect Cave Resources
- Give Law Enforcement Legal Grounds
- Provide Accountability of the Visitor
- Provide Opportunity For Visitor Contact
- Supply Visitor Use Information
- Give Feedback on Cave Conditions

## When Permits May be Used

- To Prevent Uncontrolled Visitor Use
- To Protect Fragile or Sensitive Resources
  - Bats Colonies
  - Formations
  - Cultural Materials
- For Public Safety
- Other Situations ?

## Cave “Closures”

- Federal Register Notices Legally “Closes “
- BLM Solicitor says it is best to have a physical barrier to enforce “Closure”. This means a Gate
- Signs also inform the visitor that the cave is “closed” and may require a permit for entry.

## Federal Register Notice

(Example in Notebook)

- State Authority
- State what the lands are being closed from, Unauthorized Entry
- State which caves are being closed (no locations need to be given)
- State where permits and additional information may be obtained

## Types of Permit Systems

- **The General Permit-** The most common type of recreational permit issued.
- **Trip Leader Permit-** Requires that the trip leader (the person to whom the permit is issued) must have been to the cave a certain number of times to qualify.
- **Designated Trip Leader-** The agency designates specific people who are accepted as trip leaders for that particular cave. A list of approved leaders is kept in the caves' case file.
- **Guided Trips-** The agency leads the group to provide the visitor with specific management guidance in caves with highly sensitive resources or on trips where close supervision is necessary i.e. restoration trips, mock rescues, collection trips.

## Permit Contents

(Example in Notebook)

- Issuing Office
- Caves to be visited, Permit #, Date of Use
- Name of Authorized Trip Leader
- Who Authorized the Permit
- Signature of Visitors
- General Laws and Restrictions
- Post Trip Comments
- Emergency Information



**RISKS AND SPECIAL STIPULATION  
ENDLESS CAVE**

(Gate Lock\_\_\_\_\_)

**GENERAL RISKS:**

All undeveloped caves, by their very nature, contain some risks. Make your trip a safe and enjoyable one by being prepared and careful. General safety hints for exploring undeveloped caves are listed on the reverse side of this page.

Just about all caves contain some risks which are common to the underground environment, such as loose rocks, low ceilings, low tight passages, slippery surfaces, and unstable and uneven floors. Be prepared by wearing the proper cloths and carrying the proper equipment, following safety hints, staying within your groups capabilities, and using common sense.

Specific risks described below are those which are known by BLM, but additional risks due to natural causes could have occurred since the last time the cave was inspected.

**SPECIFIC RISKS:**

1. Maze cave; passages are especially confusing in the upper maze area.
2. The main trunk (entrance) passage has several ledges which must be traversed. Caution is advised as these ledges are several feet above the floor.

**SPECIAL STIPULATIONS:**

1. No renewable or nonrenewable resources--either plant, animal or mineral--shall be collected from this cave for personal use, sale, barter, or consumption unless specifically authorized in writing.
2. Avoid contact with bats; **DO NOT ANNOY OR DISTURB BATS AT ANY TIME.**
3. Maximum group size in this cave is limited to 6 people; special arrangements may be made for larger parties.

**DO NOT STRAY OFF TRAILS.**

## Automated Data Base Permitting

- Assigns Permit Numbers
- Generates Reports
- Attaches Risks and Stipulation
- Attaches Combinations

# Discussion

What Kind of Permits  
Are You Using ????