

Amazing Maze Cave Labor Day Weekend Survey Trip and Musical Extravaganza
September 3rd-6th, 2010
by Ellie Watson and Peter Sprouse



Over Labor Day Weekend a vivacious crew of cavers and scientists, led by Peter Sprouse, met in Pecos County, Texas to continue the resurvey of Amazing Maze Cave.

Celebrating the end of the summer heat, cavers from Houston, San Marcos, San Antonio, and Austin showed up with the sole purpose of resurveying Amazing Maze Cave. There were eight survey teams in all, and one team from Stephen F. Austin State University was there to study and document the minerology of Amazing Maze as thesis research. The survey teams focused on thoroughness rather than speed. Many teams found areas with excessive amounts of ticks and fleas excessively named passages after them, mainly in the south where there are a lot of small openings in the I-10 road cut for mammals to enter. A fox was even spotted outside on the road cut waiting for lunch.



David and Aimee surveying. Geoff Hoese photo

On the first survey day, Don Arburn and Ann Scott returned to the North Maze where they had surveyed the year before, joined by Lee Jay Graves

and Ron Rutherford. Their place names included “Lee Jay’s Crack” and “Death Rock Room”. Liza Colucci, Mike Colucci, and Corinne Wong headed out to the dreaded Fleaway area of the South Maze, and found that it lived up to its name. They bolted back to Austin after that. One passage in that area was a canyon that could not be downclimbed without a rope. Peter, Ellie, Caleb Mayeux, and Mallory Mayeux headed down to the Lower Level, where they mapped several loops. Ellie and Caleb dug open a lower crawl that had several low crawls going off of it, these are still going and need to be mapped on a future trip. Kevin Stafford, Bernie Thompson, John Thompson, and Josh Rubenstein worked on filling in a complex part of the East Maze. David Ochel, Aimee Beveridge, and Geoff Hoes mapped an area adjacent to them, but a bit farther east. They reported hearing cars on the freeway, but things got tight at the “Rat’s Hole”. Ben, Cori, and Zach Schwartz were joined by Rae and Walt Olenick, and busied themselves cleaning up leads in the Beaver Bypass area of the East Maze. Saj Zappitello, Matt Zappitello, Sofia Casini, and Scott Serur headed to the southern limit of the cave near the I-10 road cut. They mapped quite a bit of maze, including the “TICKler”. Sean Lewis, Jenn Knowles, and Cass Meyer headed out to the far North Maze and pushed the boundaries of that area in “Belch Boulevard”.

On survey day two, Don’s team returned to the North Maze, mapping “Lost Boyz” and “Deadfall Chamber”. Josh Rubenstein, Sofia Casini, and Sean Lewis dubbed themselves the “Annihilators” because they annihilated leads. Peter, Mallory, and Caleb tied up a number of loops in the East Maze, naming one passage Munchin Luncheon Junction. Saj’s team continued in the far South Maze, naming “Luna Tick Alley”, the “Eratick Bypass”, and the “Septick Room”. David’s crew returned to the zone they’d been in the day before and mapped through the “Big Sandy”. Cass Meyer, Jennifer Knowles, and Ellie Watson surveyed a section of the North Maze that was very close to the surface with loose dirt and roots overhead. Kevin’s team wrapped up some work from the previous day and headed out early for the long drive back to East Texas. David’s team continued mapping adjacent to them, dodging a gimpy skunk that seemed to be quite the caver.

No one needed to be told what to bring as most all had already paid a visit or two to this amazing cave. What Peter did announce before hand is that all attending the resurvey should bring their favorite musical instrument. And bring them they did! Mandolin, guitar, ukulele, and didgeridoo made an uncommon mix of instruments into a serious jam session that resonated over the desert plains. Desert critters came alive with the music and were not shy about coming to the circle of cavers to see what the party was about. Of course, all music would stop so everyone could admire the guests.

The mood for the weekend was very light and everyone was happy to be at Amazing Maze Cave. The campground was spread out so everyone had room for solitude while still allowing plenty of time for socializing and jamming. The team surveyed 1515 meters of passage, making the resurveyed length of Amazing Maze 6087 meters. There is plenty more to do.

