



CHILLAGOE CAVING CLUB

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MARCH NEWSLETTER

WWW.CHILLAGOECAVINGCLUB.ORG.AU

Well our first club weekend is just around the corner. It's shaping up to be pretty good with lots of new prospective members coming. Hopefully many of you current members can make it as well. We have another working bee planned to progress the clubhouse and of course the caving should be great. For those of you who haven't been out there in the last month or so, check out the photograph below. It's the main chamber of Macropaedes Waterhole/Link Up/Blue Sky. Nice swimming spot. We tried to make it out via Link Up but the whole passage was flooded.



CLUB MAINTENANCE

This weekend we are planning to clean and paint one of the upstairs rooms, and also to clean and prepare the shelter shed so that we can turn it back into a usable BBQ area. Bruce has hopefully organised a large gurney and a paint spray gun which will make the jobs much easier!

CLUB FIRST AID KIT

The club first aid kit was needed last weekend and it was wet and mouldy throughout. It will have to restocked and repacked and it is unavailable at present. If you use the first aid kit then PLEASE ensure that it is dry and clean when you return it to the tackle room.

PROPOSED SYDNEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY CAVING TRIP IN JUNE 08

SSS is proposing a caving trip from the 23rd of June 08 to the 28th of June 08 at Chillagoe. They will be bringing about 10 people. Anyone wishing to meet some new cavers or wanting to help out with guiding etc is more than welcome. If you're interested please let the Club President know. Hopefully if we get enough people with vehicles we may be able to save them having to hire a mini bus or car.

This is a great opportunity to get to know other cavers from another region and hopefully make some contacts for caving and canyoning in the Blue Mountains and Jenolan!

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME IN BAT POPULATIONS

The ASF has been asked to publicise a serious threat to bat populations by the NSW Karst Conservation Unit. The area affected is primarily centered on the North-east United States, but all cavers should be aware of decontamination procedures for gear and clothing.

White nose syndrome is caused by a mould/fungus which affects bats, causing white patches on their face and head. It is highly contagious among bat populations and is responsible for decimating bat populations in affected areas.

If you are caving overseas, particularly in the United States, it is imperative that you wash and clean all caving gear with a bleach or chlorine disinfectant. Ideally this should also be done when going from caving area to caving area.

A more detailed guideline about White Nose has been attached to the end of this newsletter.

CLUB FEES

Club fees are due and payable at any time including the upcoming Club weekend. The fee amount is unchanged from last year. If you are intending to direct debit into the Club account, please contact our Treasurer, Peter Bannink to let him know or for further details.

TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND

Chillagoe Caving Club is intending to do a fly away Club trip to New Zealand in January 2009. The region we will be visiting is the Nelson area of the South Island which has many large, vertical caves. Caves we are intending to visit include Nettlebed (889m) and Harwood's Hole (176 metre entrance pitch) & Starlight cave.

There are 7 spots left on the trip, so if you are interested you need to contact the trip leader, Paul Osborne, asap. Please be aware that due to the vertical nature of the caves a certain amount of SRT currency and fitness WILL be required and that prospective trip members will be assessed on these criteria. We will be running SRT training weekends through the year, so even if you don't have much experience there is opportunity for you to learn and come along.

AGM & ANNUAL REPORT

The Chillagoe Caving Club's Annual General Meeting will be held on the May Day long weekend. The AGM will be on the Saturday the 3rd of May 2008 commencing at 7:30pm. All members are invited to attend the meeting itself, and the pre meeting dinner at the Clubhouse starting at 6pm sharp.

The Annual Report is also due for the May Day long weekend. Could all Club office holders please complete their individual reports and forward them to the Secretary by 31st of March 2008.

ADVENTURE BOOK FOR TEENAGERS

It seems that someone has written an adventure book for teenagers featuring Chillagoe and some of the towers and caves there. It's written by an Australian author and is currently for sale at www.lulu.com/contents/1344097. Happy reading.

**Have fun caving and hope to see you at
a Club weekend soon!**

ATTENTION : ALL SPELEOS PLANNING TO CAVE IN NORTH AMERICA

NEW THREAT TO BAT POPULATIONS - WHITE NOSE SYNDROME

If caving in the United States, please follow these precautions.

If you are caving in North America and you observe a hibernating bat with a white muzzle or other odd white, fungus-like patches, follow the following guidelines:

- Do not touch any bats (living or dead), especially those with a white muzzle or nose.
- If you have a camera with you, please take a few photographs of the potentially affected bat(s).
- Exit the cave immediately, avoiding contact with other bats.
- Contain and decontaminate your clothing, footwear, and gear following the procedures below.
- Contact your state wildlife agency or the [nearest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office](#) to report your potential white–nose syndrome observations.
- Report any dead bats found outdoors or any unusual numbers of bats outside during cold weather, especially near a cave where bats hibernate.

You should not handle bats. If you come across live or dead bats with white– nose syndrome, contact the relevant US state wildlife agency or [a nearby U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office](#).

Take the following precautions to prevent the possible spread of white– nose syndrome ("cave" includes all caves, fissures, mines, portals, etc.):

- Observe all cave closures and advisories in all states. Some states have instituted closures and issued advisories beyond normal permanent and seasonal closures. New York has closed all infected sites. New York, Vermont and New Jersey have advised all individuals to stay out of all caves with bats. Other states have instituted, or are considering instituting, closures of caves with bats and/or advisories to stay out of caves with bats. On this Web page: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html updated information about state closures and advisories is provided. Just prior to caving, check this Web page for updated closures and advisories. If this Web page does not include closure information from a state in which you plan to go caving, contact that state's wildlife agency to obtain the latest information on cave access. Before caving in another country, check with the country's wildlife agency for information on cave access.
- Upon exiting a cave, whether inhabited by bats or not, in New York, Vermont, Massachusetts and adjacent states (New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), follow the containment and decontamination procedures below. Decontaminate all clothing, footwear, and gear prior to departing for a caving outing if you did not decontaminate these items after

last exiting a cave. In these states, we ask that you not take gear into a cave if that gear cannot be decontaminated or disposed of (e.g., if harnesses, ropes, or webbing cannot be decontaminated, we advise that you not enter caves or parts of caves requiring use of this gear and not take this gear into the cave).

- Because clothing, footwear, and gear used in accessing a cave in New York or Vermont within the past 2 years could pose a risk of spreading the syndrome, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service advises that these items (whether or not currently located in New York or Vermont) not be used when accessing caves anywhere and that these items not be transported out of New York or Vermont — until the cause of the syndrome is identified and the effectiveness of decontamination procedures can be evaluated. We advise that you decontaminate these items immediately (see decontamination procedures below) and store them away, and that you thoroughly wash and decontaminate any surfaces with which these items may have come into contact (e.g., car trunk).

White– Nose Syndrome Containment and Decontamination Procedures

The US Fish and Wildlife Service asks that cavers please follow these procedures for containment and decontamination in the circumstances identified above. Prior to each caving outing, please check the Web page: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html for updates to these procedures.

- When you exit the cave, scrape or brush off any dirt and mud from your clothes, boots, and gear. When you get to your vehicle, remove your clothing, boots, and gear, put them in a plastic/garbage bag, and seal the bag closed to prevent contamination of the vehicle's interior and trunk (and subsequent re-contamination of your gear). Remember to bring extra clothes for the drive home.
- Wash your caving clothes using hot water, detergent, and a normal bleach cycle. Dry the clothes thoroughly at hot temperatures.
- Wash your boots thoroughly with detergent and then soak them in a 10 percent bleach solution (1 part chlorine bleach: 9 parts water) — soak porous boots longer than nonporous boots.
- Wash your gear thoroughly with detergent and then soak in a 10 percent bleach solution.
- Dry items in sunlight if possible.

IDEALLY, IT WOULD BE BEST IF ANY CLOTHING OR OTHER GEAR WORN IN A CAVE IN NORTH AMERICA IS NOT BROUGHT BACK INTO AUSTRALIA.