

AN INTRODUCTION TO CAVES OF THE BEND AREA



Guidebook of the 1982 NSS Convention

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TO
CAVES OF THE BEND AREA**



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Huntsville, Alabama

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ALHPABETICAL INDEX OF CAVES

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Drawings:
Cover-Patty Silver; fig. 2.14-Jim Nieland

Photos
Fig. 2.7-Jim Nieland; fig. 2.30-Libby Nieland; the rest-Charlie & Jo Larson

about 1.8 miles west of the junction. There is ample parking space near the caves and there may or may not be signs and a litter barrel, depending on periodic assaults by vandals. One such sign reads "Ice Caves" and while some spectacular ice forms in the caves every winter, it is not known to remain year around.

These caves, being among the westernmost lavatubes in Oregon and relatively near several population centers, are heavily visited. They are advertised as tourist attractions in several widely circulated publications—for example, *Sunset* magazine—which in no small way contributes to their popularity. Cave No. 3 does not show the wear and tear evident in the others, despite the presence of a well worn trail leading in its direction. Perhaps this is due to the forbidding appearance of the entrance, an appearance which caused several unnecessary wooden ladders to be built, the rotting remains of which may be seen in the sinks.

SHERIDAN MOUNTAIN CAVE

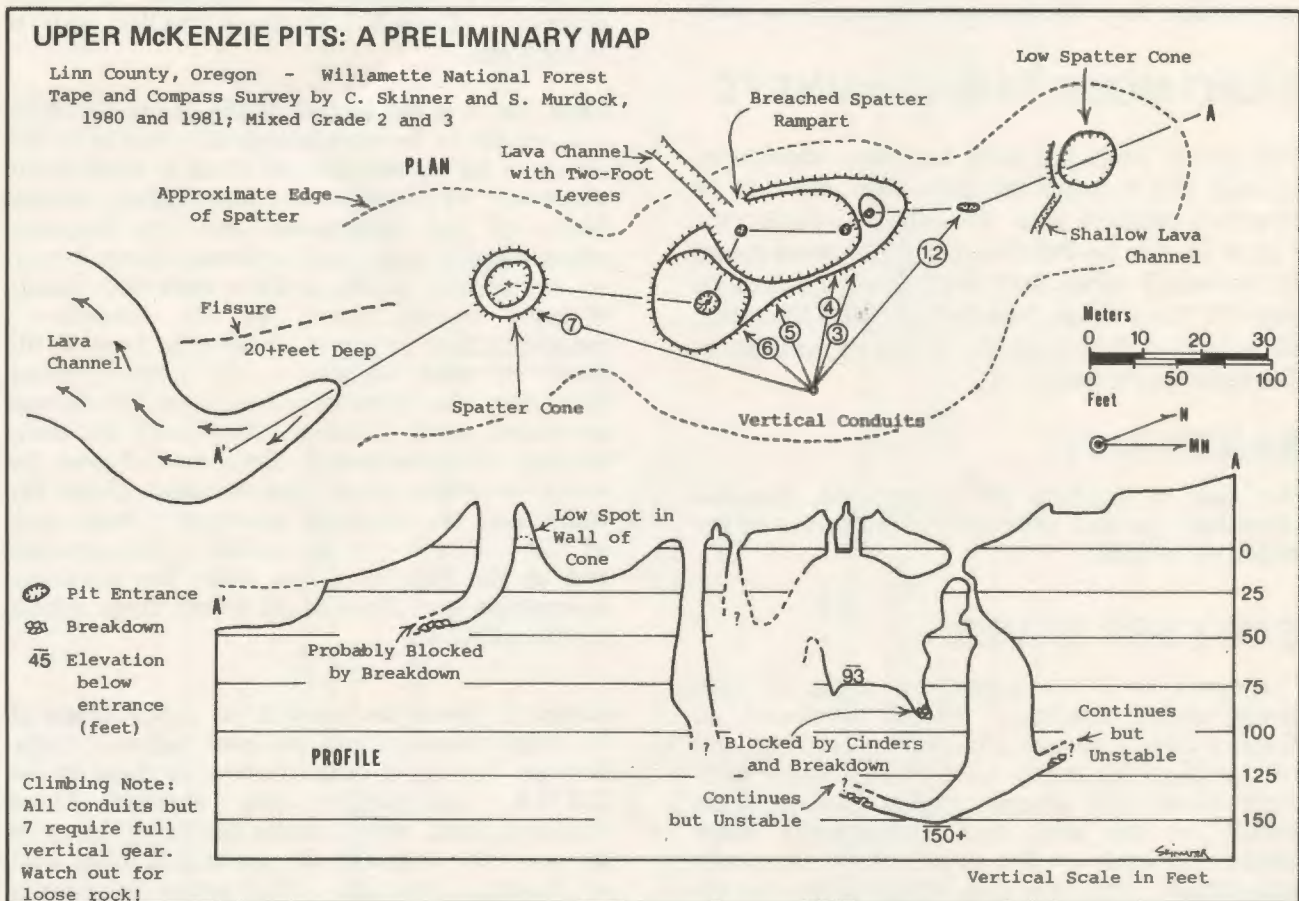
Sheridan Mountain Cave was discovered in early October, 1959, by a Forest Service crew.

Typically described as "...a huge cavern from which a strong wind blew..." it was shortly examined by Bend spelunkers Phil Coyner and Jim Anderson. The first recorded entrance of the cave was by an Oregon Speleological Survey group in June, 1961. OSS files contain a rough sketch map produced as a result of the visit. Since then, the relatively few recorded visits to the cave have been by groups from the Oregon Grotto. See map of the cave on page 73.

A note to visitors: The entrance drop could be negotiated by a skillful rock climber but vertical gear reaching at least 25 feet is *strongly recommended*.

UPPER McKENZIE PITS

The chimneys now known as Upper McKenzie Pits were first reported to OSS around 1975 but there was no further exploration reported until Skinner began research there in 1980. These pits contain a lot of loose rock and require full vertical gear. Detailed directions will be available at the registration desk.



LITTLE BELKNAP CRATER CAVES

MOUNT WASHINGTON WILDERNESS • LINN COUNTY, OREGON
 ELEVATION = 6270'
 AUGUST 9, 1979
 TOTAL PASSAGE LENGTH = #1 APPROXIMATELY 375'
 SURVEY BY SILVA COMPASS, TAPE, AND EDUCATED ESTIMATE
 USGS MAP = THREE-FINGERED JACK 15' (1959)

