

SIMMER INFORMATION

The following is general information regarding Project SIMMER which will answer many questions for Expedition members and prospective members alike. This information will be mailed to those who do not regularly receive THE POTOMAC CAVER and who have expressed their intention of joining the project.

As you know, a fee will be charged each participant to cover Expedition costs. Eighty per cent of this fee is for food. This fee has been set at \$10.00 per person, payable at the site in cash or check. No credit cards or stamps accepted. Additional information regarding feeding, etc. will be found below.

The Expedition is organized into a number of departments. The Operations Department is responsible to accomplish the purposes of the Expedition. The remaining departments exist to support operation. Most department managers have no second-in-command. All personnel permanently assigned to a department are of equal rank, and have equal responsibility to perform the function of their department. The Cave Camp Managers will, of obvious necessity for safety and other reasons, have absolute authority.

The planning and preparation has been extensive and (we hope) thorough, especially with regard to the time scheduling. The various department managers are charged with the responsibility of insuring that their part runs smoothly and on time. The managers are volunteers, and are in their respective positions because they were willing to do their best and took the time to so do. We recognize that others may have been able to produce a better plan or have good ideas and suggestions, but since we are committed to fixed operation plans and schedules, we hope no one will take umbrage if his pet idea is not adapted.

The point of most of this is that we will expect the utmost in cooperation with the managers and strict adherence to the rules by all participants.

The time constraints of this Expedition have necessitated very tight scheduling and detailed planning. The number of manhours expended on preparation and planning will exceed by more than 10 to 1 the manhours expended during the Expedition proper. We don't think that any serious caver will object to the abridgement of the democratic process, by the rules contained herein.

These rules are designed to insure the efficiency of the Expedition, eliminate confusion, maximize the use of available manpower, insure the safety of all participants, and provide a known, flexible, foundation from which to quickly operate in the event of an unforeseen contingency. We feel that the need for these rules is self evident, and no further explanation is needed.

In the following, all time is EDT (24-hour system). The cave is 1.6 miles from the village of Mingo, West Virginia, 32 miles south of Elkins, West Virginia, 18 miles south of Huttonsville, West Virginia and 32 north of Marlinton, West Virginia on U.S. 219. Direction signs to the Expedition site

will be placed several miles each side of Mingo. The quaternary road from Mingo to the site is one way. There will be a traffic control point at or near Mingo. Stop and follow the instruction you are given or those that are posted.

It is necessary that we know in advance when you plan to arrive at the site (see enclosure). Every effort should be made to arrive before 18:00 hours Friday. We can use both surface support and underground personnel who can arrive early (i.e. Friday AM) and/or in time to go caving Friday after 20:00 hours.

Supper will be served Friday evening, approximately 18:00 hours but only for those we know will be on hand. We will try to have something hot to eat on hand up to 24:00 hours Friday night.

Upon arrival at the site, report immediately to Personnel. At that time, your duty status will be confirmed or assigned. You will be assigned a permanent camp/parking space. Any fees due will be collected and other administrative matters settled. In so far as possible, you will be allowed to select your campsite, but only in the designated areas. This is because we don't wish to tear up any more of the owner's field than necessary; we don't want a vehicle traffic jam, and it is mandatory that we be able to find you quickly when necessary. The camp sites have deliberately been located some distance from the HQ area to cut down the disturbance to those who must sleep.

After clearing with Personnel, you will be given sufficient time to set up camp before going on duty. The camp sites are in a slightly sloping open area with no trees. Bring short, but substantial tent stakes. Cots are recommended for sleeping. If you can't bring a cot, it would be well to use two air mattresses or one air mattress with additional padding. During October, nights get quite chilly sometimes with frost, so bring adequate clothing and sleeping gear. At this time of year, a *tent or other shelter* is almost a necessity. Good meals will be provided. However, if you don't want to eat from disposable plates with plastic tools, bring your own mess gear. Something easy to clean and rugged, such as an army mess kit, is called for. No china or glass, please.

Because of the fire danger at this time of year, Forest Service permit requirements, the owner's wish, and the time required, individual fires or any form of food preparation will not be permitted. However, coffee and the "makings" for other beverages will be available 24 hours a day at the mess facility, and possibly snacks as well. A total of nine (9) meals will be served starting with supper Friday evening (18:00 hours) and ending with lunch Monday. Bring your own cold beverages and sufficient ice. There is none available within a reasonable distance.

Those of you who will be on cave duty should bring two *sets* of cave clothes. It may not be possible to dry one set due to rain or short time between trips. This cave is unusually hard on clothing.

It will be mandatory that each person entering the cave, irrespective of how long or how far, must wear a hard hat (preferably with chin strap) and carry not less than the following (carbide lights are assumed as electric lights are not suitable due to the times involved and gas lanterns are generally too clumsy):

1. Carbide and water for length of trip and 50% over, but not less than 12 hours.

2. A second light source such as a flashlight with a spare bulb or second carbide light complete.
3. Two (2) 4"x3/4" candles or equivalent.
4. Strike anywhere matches (in a waterproof container or equivalent).
5. Two (2) lamp tips and means to insert and remove.
6. Tip cleaner.
7. Two (2) felts.
8. One gasket.
9. Paper and pencil.

Parts of this cave are wet and muddy, but other parts are very rough. We recommend heavy shoes and gloves are almost a necessity. This has almost everything -- crawling, climbing, walking, etc. Shoulder strap bags which may be pushed, pulled, dragged, carried, or thrown are recommended rather than backpack, belts or pockets for personal gear. Cameras, instruments and the like be packed in padding in water-tight boxes, such as surplus ammo cans.

A strong box will be provided in which wallets, watches, rings and other valuables may be deposited by those not wishing to take such items underground. For any number of reasons, such as but not limited to, forest fire, cloud burst, unforeseen contingency, civil commotion and its must being in the way, it may be necessary to move your automobile. Therefore, automobile keys must be deposited with the Security Department by all persons going underground; or, we must be kept times informed at all times who, on the surface, has the keys.

Some children, infants and pets could affect the efficiency of the Expedition. It is essential that each member of the Expedition contribute, so each child will be expected, with supervision, to perform supportive work and not to interfere with any of the other aspects of the Expedition.

There will be no facility at the mess hall to permit individuals to prepare special food. Many persons will be sleeping at all times. Therefore, children will be kept quiet in the camping area. Because of the danger of serious accident, children must not be allowed to go unescorted. We will set aside an area well removed as a play area and provide a person to organize, plan, and supervise a child care center.

Out of deference to the owner's livestock and our more or less open kitchen, dogs absolutely must be kept tied. Because of the sleepers, they must be kept quiet. It should be remembered that in West Virginia, dogs annoying livestock may be shot without question or compensation to the dog's owner. The livestock's owner decides what constitutes annoyance, and can collect damages.

Motor bikes are not required for any planned operation. Most personnel will not have sufficient free time to do an appreciable amount of riding. It is, therefore, suggested that they be left at home.

Each Expedition member will be required to sign a waiver absolving the property owner, his ox, his ass, other Expedition members, Expedition managers, the PSC, NSS, Virginia Region, etc. from all liability.

The PSC intends to retain certain rights regarding photographs, and literary composition resulting from the Expedition, but not without compensation to author and/or photographer. Individual arrangements will be made on site to the satisfaction of the involved parties.

We must insist that no personnel leave the Expedition site without clearance from the Personnel Department and that Personnel be kept informed of your whereabouts, including sleeping location, at all times.

We will require that no one use illegal drugs at any time during the Expedition, are any alcoholic beverages to be consumed while on duty, or within eight (8) hours of going on active duty or four (4) hours of going on standby duty.

Duty assignments will be made well ahead of duty start time; therefore, we expect all personnel to report for duty properly equipped [sic], rested, fed, dressed, etc. We do not expect any person to knowingly overextend himself or take undue risks, regardless of orders, but we do expect any person to report at the earliest possible time if he feels he cannot perform or complete the duty assigned.

Some personnel may be working in other caves (Elk River) and logistics may dictate the desirability of their camping on Elk River. In this event, these instructions will apply there as well as at the Simmons site.

It should be noted that while we can use all the personnel we can get, we do not have facilities to handle visitors, nor can we allow anyone not an Expedition member in Simmons-Mingo Cave during the Expedition. Parking/camping space is somewhat limited so we cannot permit non-Expedition members to use the Expedition site. If visitors become a problem, we will prevent access to the site to all persons not intending to join the Expedition.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact either:
R. L. Lutz (General Manager) (703) 536 7213 or
Anne Lehto (Personnel) (703) 573-6866

Sincerely,

Robert L. Lutz
Expedition General Manager

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