

Digging Section Meeting/Session

Session Chair: Benjamin Brown

Thursday, June 16, 2022, 2:00 – 5:00pm

Location: Lions Building

The Digging Section meeting is open to anyone interested in finding new and expanding existing caves. Cave digging is a legitimate exploration technique when used in a responsible and appropriate manner. There will be a short business meeting and election of section officers followed by presentations on a variety of dig projects and techniques.

In addition to the scheduled presentations, time will be allocated for short pop-up presentations and an informal question and answer section at the end. Presentations on any topic regarding cave discovery and digging are welcome. Come learn about LIDAR for cave discovery, digging and hauling, shoring techniques, how to make rocks smaller, and much more.

Section/Session Schedule

Time	Speaker	Topic
2:00 – 2:30		Business Meeting / Election of Officers
2:30 – 2:50	Eric Sutterlin	Sandland Tunnels
2:50 - ??	Any Cave Digger	Walk-in presentations
After presentations	Ben Brown / Chris Pelczarski	Discussion of post-convention dig project

Abstracts

Sandland Tunnels

Digging a recreational tunnel maze custom-designed for visitors to enjoy exploring

Eric Sutterlin

Sandland is a maze of tunnels that friends and I are digging in the Jordan sandstone bedrock of western Wisconsin. Our purpose is to create something unique for visitors to enjoy exploring and discovering. This presentation will explain what Sandland is, how we're digging it, and why we're creating it.

I bought our deep ravine that passes through the Jordan sandstone specifically for the purpose 11 years ago. We now have about 800 feet of tunnels and counting. Visitors start by entering our three-dimensional spaghetti-bowl crawl maze featuring about 300 feet of tunnels. I designed the maze to optimize confusion. After finding their way through the maze, visitors enter the "Donut Room", with seven identical tunnels radiating from it. Some of those tunnels lead to the rooms and "Swiss Cheese" tunnels that we are presently digging.

Digging involves chiseling the poorly-cemented (soft) Jordan sandstone into sand with an electric chisel equipped with a wide blade. Sand is shoveled into buckets. Buckets are dumped into wagons. Wagons are dumped into train carts fabricated by our engineer. When the train is full, it's hauled up our ramp by a gas-powered winch. Outside, the three train carts are hoisted individually onto our zip line and released to sail across the ravine to our sand pile. We pay our local excavator to haul the sand up the hill with a loader and off the property. We haul our gear up and down the hill with an ATV or snowmobile. Everything involved in the process requires maintenance, most notably sharpening chisel blades. Balancing maintenance time and digging time is a challenge.

In a sense, Sandland is the inverse of a cave dig. In caves, nature designs and we dig to discover what nature has designed. At Sandland, we design and dig to realize our design.