

Misty cave has long been a favorite of mine and the Greater Cincinnati Grotto. It features many of the different types of terrains and obstacles that cavers of all experience levels love to negotiate. It includes rocky crawls, tube crawls, domes, climbs, water passages, chimneys, breakdown, and tight squeezes. However, we use discretion and never visit this cave during the winter months as it is a bat hibernaculum. For this reason this is A GUIDED TRIP ONLY, and directions will not be published.

This cave was found in 1987 by Jacques Ramey on one of his, now famous, ridgewalks. It was named Misty due to the large amount of cold air issuing from the entrance, in hot weather it can fill the entire entrance area with mist - up to 100 feet away from the cave! It was entered soon after, and several well traveled passages were explored with nothing new to add. Soon after, a breakthrough occurred when a group from Cincinnati dug through a boulder choke leading to cyalume crawl. Exploration pushed into the stream passage that was found and also higher levels. Soon the grotto started surveying.

While mopping up small survey leads a day after Christmas, we found a major passage near the entrance that linked into the other new sections, however a long rocky crawl had to be negotiated (Xmas Crawl). This section allowed to cave to be visited as a loop - a rarity in this part of the country.

Most trips start into the main cave section following the obvious passage, taking time out to visit some domes to either side. Bats abound in these domes. The going is straight forward until a what looks like a dead-end

crawl is reached. Contorting to stand up at the end of this crawl will reveal the dome beyond. Past this dome and to the left is the crawl and then the pinch that was dug open. This leads to Cyalume crawl (the cyalume is now long gone) and to the Flat Room. From here visit the stream crawl and make sure to check the stream canyon here.

Back at the Flat Room exit left through breakdown. Soon you will break into a large passage with a stream. Follow this, sometimes crouching, sometimes losing the water. Where a major passage opens to the left drop your packs. Continue down and regain the stream as it rushes through the terminal breakdown to the surface resurgence just on the other side. Alas, there is no way through. Return to your packs.

Follow the side passage to a room. From here there are two exits. The first is No-Risk canyon. This is a great exercise in chimneying and called No-Risk because it is 3 feet over 3 feet of water. It then passes through a 50 foot tall dome and into the Xmas Crawl Passage.

The other exit leads to a dome. The wall of this dome can be climbed and then a small tube crawl (the highest crawl off the side of the dome) can be followed. It rejoins the other path right before Xmas Crawl.

Xmas Crawl is only 300 ft long, but it goes forever. It bellies through rock and water and rejoins the rest of the cave near the entrance. Crawl to the entrance and exit. Congratulate yourself, you've done the Misty Cave loop.

To those visiting this cave, please respect the bat population and the pristine areas of the cave that were recently discovered.

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