

Sinks of the Roundstone Cave is the fourth longest cave in Rockcastle County and is a well known and frequently visited cave by locals, cavers, youth groups, and college students.

Sinks is also known as Mullins Station Cave, which is the railroad name for this area, and the name most of the locals know the cave by. There is plenty of evidence that the early railroad workers enjoyed the cave. The west entrance is right along the L&N tracks, and inside that entrance has been found a water barrel where the workers laying the track and building the tunnel rested and sipped the cool water. Several of their old kerosene lantern pots have been preserved at the entrance for visitors to see as part of the cave's early history. Details of any earlier discovery or usage of the cave are not known, although the cave has been well known for a long time. It is publicly owned with open access as a part of the Daniel Boone National Forest.

The Greater Cincinnati Grotto did a survey of the cave in 1978, but it is known that Jim Rebman mapped it earlier. The Bluegrass Grotto has done some survey work there as well. Most of the cave is large and easily accessible so there are no great discovery stories. A couple of new rooms and crawlways and passages have been opened recently, but for the most part, all sections of the cave have seen a lot of caver traffic.

The cave has an overall length of 13,576 feet surveyed. At the west end of the cave is the main entrance where a stream enters the cave. These waters are the same waters that flow through the larger Pine Hill Cave, resurge at Blue Hole, flow on the surface for a half mile, then go underground again at Sinks. The main entrance is really a cluster of 5 entrances, any one of which can be used to enter the cave. Most of the western half of the cave consists of very large spacious rooms. The cave can be very easy or difficult, depending on what you want. If you stick to the main large bore, it is the simplest cave you can find. But if you stray to the north or west, you can find some things to exercise the climbers. There are no places that require rigging unless you go out of your way to find

something. If you go into the southern passages, you will get wet as the water is frequently 20 feet deep there. This water route is subject to quick flooding during heavy rains, and we've seen the water come up 30 feet in a couple of hours. People have been trapped in this cave. It floods from two sources: the stream going into the cave entrance, and a tall waterfall in the middle of the cave. When the water level is extremely low, it is possible to come out the seldom used southeast entrance on Roundstone Creek. There are no formations to speak of. The cave has more than its share of litter and graffiti because a lot of locals use it as a party place.

The fourth railroad crossing from Highway Route 25 is a better place to park than the third crossing, because there have been some auto break-ins at the third crossing.

Most Visitors enter through the railroad entrance and exit through the main entrance. To locate the railroad entrance, continue on foot east along the railroad tracks. The grade will become steep along your left and you will come upon a railroad tunnel. Just before the tunnel you will clearly see the cave entrance on your right. Its about 3 feet high and 10 feet wide. There are several smaller entrances along the way; none of them connect to the Sinks of the Roundstone system. Jack Hissong

Cave Location:

Railroad Entrance

From the entrance gate go downhill (left) on Rt. 1004 .5 miles to Mullins Station Rd. Turn left and follow this gravel road for 4 miles to a double railroad crossing, park here. Follow the track south 300 ft. to a trail on the west side of the tracks. Just beyond is a railroad tunnel. Follow the trail or double back through the tunnel to an entrance along the spur track. This is the Railroad Entrance.

Scenic Entrance

Continue .5 miles farther to the next railroad crossing. Park along the side of the road at an old quarry site, cross tracks and follow road 150 feet to a trail on the left hand side. Follow this trail to Scenic or West entrance. If you make a through trip, follow the tracks back to your parking place.