

“Homestead Cave!”

“No, Rainshelter Cave!!”

“I found it first so I named it Homestead!!!”

“We found it before you and we called it Rainshelter!!!!”

Well, this was the scene some years ago when Rainshelter cave was discovered and Jacques wanted to call it Homestead Cave. Jacques never lost affection for the name Homestead and with his nose for finding caves we knew someday there would be a Homestead Cave. The day of awakening came on February 12, 1989 when Jacques convinced Mark Rocklin and John Neack to explore a cave he had found ridge walking some weeks earlier. The first entrance looked at was the water entrance (not yet surveyed) and apprehensive to go through it, the group decided to look for another way in. Climbing up the ridge about 75 feet a beautiful pit was discovered. The pit is roughly 30 feet in diameter and 60-70 feet deep (surveyed at 65 feet). But without a rope, the group was forced to go through the water. Once inside the cave these three troopers began by going upstream. This stream passage starts with ankle deep water and continues to get deeper until one finds himself 700 feet later kissing the ceiling and gasping for air. From here they turned back and followed a going side lead. Currently this is the longest lead in the cave. This group went as far as the 15 foot drop and did not descend due to not having a cable ladder. The majority of formations in the cave are in the section prior to the drop.

The first survey trip was in March of 1989. A group of seven of us went, four to survey and three to explore (scoop) other leads and set up the cable ladder at the 15 foot drop. We surveyed from the pit entrance to about

125 feet past the drop. Surveyors set 44 stations for approximately 1500 feet. We had a slight mishap with the cable ladder rig and realized it wasn't actually needed to get down the drop. When we got back to the entrance pit the day had turned to sleeting rain. Three people climbed the rope and three left through the water passage (Ed. Note: That makes 6, you started with seven. Is he still there?)

The second survey trip was in April of the same year. Our goal was to push and survey as much as possible of the lead we were previously working. We set 17 more stations for another 380 feet. The passage still goes but is too narrow for any of us. The whole A-survey runs directly south through the ridge.

The last survey trip was over a year later in July of 1990. Four of us went on this trip to survey up the water passage and the other dry lead which goes in the same direction. This dry lead was surveyed until we could not (as a group) go any further. One of our group did push this lead another 60 feet. The water passage was not surveyed to termination but only until we got very uncomfortable from the cold. This passage is our best alternative to finding more cave. It will need to be pushed in the late summer when the water is low.

Homestead cave is a fun cave to go play in. As mentioned earlier the entrance pit is a nice drop and would do well in photo sessions. The walk to the cave is somewhat lengthy if you park at the paved road. We used to be able to drive (4x4) directly to the cave but at the time of the last survey trip the road was washed out. This would also be a good cave to take beginners or children due to it's lack of difficulty. We have been in the cave during the rain and the water level seems to go down during this wetness.

Ask at the registration desk for directions to this pristine cave!!

Jeff Streba