



## **Dave Field (NSS 22343), Pennsylvania**

I started caving in 1968 when I was 15 years old. A friend had checked out a book on caving from the school library. We had heard of a few small central Pennsylvania caves and started out to find them. My first cave was a small, near-vertical solution tube about 50 feet deep. This cave was destroyed later during freeway construction.

As luck would have it, an NSS member, Jack Speece, was a chemistry teacher the next year at my high school. Jack introduced us to the NSS, and got us involved with the caves of the Blair County (PA) Survey, along with Mike Cullinan and others. They also introduced us to West Virginia caving. This included numerous trips to Hellhole, Schoolhouse, Organ System, and many other caves during my high school and college years.

In 1970 and 1971 I joined the Philadelphia Grotto on expeditions to the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. We explored a region in the mountains south of the city of Orizaba. Numerous caves were explored, but the largest was Sotano Itamo. Sotano Itamo was a mostly vertical cave which was surveyed to a vertical depth of about 450 meters. We believed this was the first exploration and mapping of this cave.

My love of caving led to a degree in geology from Penn State and an almost 40 year career in that profession, much of that in the western United States. Unfortunately, that career also led to a dampening of my caving activities for about 20 years. Extensive travel and job commitments made it difficult to forge relationships with new cavers in the various areas I lived. As a result, most of my caving was limited to trips when I would return home to the Appalachians for vacation.

I returned to live in my hometown of Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, in 2003, and once again became actively involved in caving. I joined the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC) based in Blairsville, Pennsylvania, and became a board member, serving as the Chair for 2015-2016. The MAKC has an extensive cave and karst library located in a house they purchased in Blairsville. I volunteered for several building improvement projects. I also conducted fundraising projects including a crowd funding effort, and a grant writing that produced funds for cave preserve improvements.

Since retiring I have expanded my activities to volunteering at the Old Timers Reunion (OTR) work weekends and OTR set up/breakdown, and exploring remote sensing methods for detecting new or extending known caves. I have used Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) to identify areas of karst in Pennsylvania for ridgewalking. Unfortunately, West Virginia, and numerous other states, do not have the most accurate LiDAR in their karst regions. In 2015 the *Journal for Advances in Archeological Practice* requested that I peer review an article on the use of LiDAR for identifying possible karst related ritual sites in the Belize jungle. I have also been working on an inexpensive way of using ground electrical resistivity to detect voids (caves). It's not yet ready for prime time, but showing promise.

I am honored for the opportunity to run for an NSS director position. I see this as an opportunity to use my retirement time to expand new possibilities for the NSS. The issues of membership retention/expansion, cave acquisition and access, and the science of caves are the areas in which I have particular interest. I look forward to committing considerable time to assist the NSS in meeting the challenges in these areas.