

# Everything You Want to Know BEFORE You Arrive at Convention

## In General

If you have any questions, give us a call at **SPELEOWEB1** (773-536-9321). One of us will pick up and try to answer your questions. OR you can email us at [2023convention@caves.org](mailto:2023convention@caves.org).

We've heard that **construction** is starting on June 19 along Corridor H (Route 219) on the Thomas side after the T intersection if you're heading to Elkins from northern Virginia. It's overpass work that could close the road completely for up to an hour at a time in Moore, which is about 8 to 10 minutes south of Parsons. We suggest if you're driving on Corridor H that you turn left to go through Davis. There are some good places to eat there. And you could stop by Blackwater Falls, which is right there too. It was suggested to drive on this stretch before 8 a.m. or after 4 p.m. or use Pheasant Mountain Road/Shavers Fork Road to bypass it.

There are loads of interesting sights and opportunities unique to the Allegheny Highlands of our region. There will be folks from the **tourism office** to help you find things to go / see / do. Elkins is a small community but most anything you may need or want can be found. Most local businesses are included in the [convention program](#).

**Weather is hard to predict** and can change unexpectedly. Temperatures could range from the upper 80s or more during the day to the lower 50s or less at night. Skies could be clear and sunny or overcast and cloudy. And there's always a chance of a rain shower. ALL IN THE SAME DAY. Remember to dress appropriately and adaptably. Comfortable walking shoes are highly encouraged as the D&E campus is a bit hilly. Summers in West Virginia also include ticks, chiggers, and humidity.

At least glance over the [convention program](#) before arriving; it has all the basics and more. Also read the **daily rag**, *Cowis Tales*, for the most up-to-date info on everything. Submit material to the *Cowis Tales* via emailing [DailyRag@caves.org](mailto:DailyRag@caves.org).

We will have **shuttle buses** from the campground to the college daily. Two trips per hour to and from. Catch the shuttle up near the Cave Booth building. Please use the shuttles because parking is limited on campus. The first shuttle to leave the campground on Monday will be early enough to get to the Opening Ceremony. The last shuttle to leave D&E will be around 5 p.m.

## Davis and Elkins College

Parking on campus is limited. Please use the shuttles! If you must driveò carpool!! Pick up a wayward caver and make a new friend.

D&E is a non-smoking, non-vaping campusò over its entirety. Everywhereò inside and outsideò no smoking, no vaping.

There is **recycling** on campus! And lots of potable water, so bring your reusable water bottle and help Mother Earth.

**Onsite Registration** will be open on Saturday, June 24 from noon to 9 p.m.; Sunday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon.

If you plan to arrive at late or odd hours and are camping at the convention campground, please check in with Security at the campground when you arrive. You'll get a wristband to allow you onsite until the next day when you officially check in at Registration at the college.

If you arrive after hours and are staying in a dorm, you will need to contact Beth Webb (301-704-8131) to make arrangements to pick up your dorm key. You don't really want to incur an unexpected hotel night because of bad planning, do you?

Everyone else who arrives after hours, just go to your hotel/cabin/B&B and come back to Registration in the morning.

If you arrive after Registration hours on Monday, go to the Howdy Party at the campground and check in with Security at the gate.

Also for dorm dwellers, we are sorry that the linen package we advertised is not available; you should have gotten an email regarding this. We will have a form for you to sign when you pick up your keys and you will get a refund for what the linen package would have cost.

But, on a happier note, the dorms DO have a laundry room and kitchen facility for you to use. But please clean up after yourselves and if you need to wash your muddy cave clothes, please do it at the decon station at the campground. There is also a game room.

If you have a camper or RV that would take up too much of the limited parking at D&E and want to drop it by the campground first, please contact the co-chairs at [2023convention@caves.org](mailto:2023convention@caves.org). Security will need to be told about this. You will be able to drop your large road whale at the site you hope to camp in, but you'd need to do it quickly and then drive to D&E to officially check in at Registration.

Please use the shuttles! Or **carpool!** Parking is limited at D&E. Parking is limited at the Phil Gainer Community Center where the banquet will be held.

Your convention experience begins at primary Registration at the [McDonnell Center](#). Registration opens at noon on Saturday, June 24. Woohoo! It will close that day at 9 p.m. It opens on Sunday, June 25 at 7 a.m. so those going on the Geology Field Trip have a chance to pick up their badges and packets. Any changes to daily hours for Registration will be posted in the daily rag, *Cowis Tales*.

Speaking of *Cowis Tales*, you can submit material by sending it to the editor at [DailyRag@caves.org](mailto:DailyRag@caves.org). The newsletter will be posted to the convention website daily, with only a few printed copies available at Registration, mostly for collectors.

## Campground

The folks in red t-shirts that say SECURITY are your friends; they are here to keep you safe and will help you if you need. Be sure to thank them for spending much of convention serving you.

We have **recycling** in the campground! Please put your cans and bottles in the big, white recycling trailer along the main road after you enter the campground.

Dogs and other pets are not allowed. However, genuine ADA service animals are allowed.

We will not be selling ice. Make sure you support our local businesses by buying ice from them. If you turn left onto Route 219 from Back Road 38, you will get to a friendly mom and pop shop on the left about a half mile south. There are plenty of chances to buy ice between D&E and campground too.

We will have coffee and muffins in the mornings. A suggested donation price will be posted. Any profits will go to the NSS.

If you have an RV or camper, there aren't hookups. Not for your road whale anyhow. Hookups of other kinds, well, who knows. (Yes, that's a joke.)

The **OTR Museum** will be open during convention. Hours will be in *Cowis Tales*.

## Caving

The **Cave Booth** will be in the building to your right as you enter the campground. It will be manned by volunteers The Cave Booth is scheduled to be open:

- Saturday: noon to evening (TBD)
- Sunday: 8 a.m. to evening (TBD)
- Monday: 8–10 a.m. & 5–7 p.m.
- Tuesday: 8–10 a.m. & 5–7 p.m.
- Wednesday: 8–10 a.m. & 5–7 p.m.
- Thursday: 8–10 a.m. & 5–7 p.m.
- Friday: 8–10 a.m.

As for cave trips, so far we have 2 led trips planned—both on Sunday, June 25—one to Alpena Cave and one to Shoveleater (you have to be vetted by trip leader first).

If you want to lead a cave trip, please contact Nikki Fox immediately. We would love to have more led trips, but can't unless someone volunteers to lead them. Help out your fellow cavers!

The signup sheets will be put out each morning at the Cave Booth, as well as other cave info, which is available for people to lead their own trips. For vertical or technical caves, trip leaders will vet potential participants; these trips' signup sheets will be put out a day or two ahead of time so this can happen.

Remember to use the **Caver Alert Information Sheets (CAIS)**! Fill it in completely and leave it with someone who is responsible and not on your cave trip. There will be NO call-out people from the convention staff. YOU are responsible for your trip. NCRC promotes the use of the CAIS.

The decontamination (**decon**) station to prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome (WNS) is located behind the shower houses at the campground. Please follow the instructions there to properly decon your cave gear after each and every cave trip. West Virginia is located within the WNS Endemic Management Area; WNS is considered to be occurring regularly within this region. Any caving gear brought to convention from outside the Endemic Management Area and used caving should not be taken back to its point of origin regardless of having been deconned or not. We do not want the convention to be the supposed cause of any further WNS spread. Thank you for deconning!

We will have **some loaner gear** for you to use and decon, but bring your own headlamps. We suggest you bring old clothes you can discard instead of taking them home or buy such clothes at the local thrift shop in Elkins. This is mostly for cavers from the West (or non-WNS places) so you don't take any now-possibly contaminated cave gear home with you.

## Things to Know by Day

The following are the important highlights; full details are in the program and the daily rag, *Cowis Tales*.

**Saturday, 6/24:** Registration opens noon at the McDonnell Centerò the starting point for your convention experience. Release to fill and sign, pre-reg is sorted alphabetically by last name, dorm room table, local info table. Registration will be open until 9 p.m.

[Click for Directions to Parking & Registration](#)

[Click for Directions to Convention Camping at the OTR Campground](#)

**Sunday, 6/25:** Geology Field Trip 7:30 a.m. McDonnell Center parking lot. If you didn't check in at Registration on Saturdayò Registration opens at 7 a.m. Sunday. Your Registration package will be pulled aside to a separate spot to get you through quickly and onward to the geo trip.

**Monday, 6/26:** The Opening Ceremony will be in front of the Myles Center starting at 8:15 a.m. (inside in case of rain, and you know it's gonna rain at some point!) Howdy Party at the campground. Think of it as an upscale picnic. We won't have seating (conventional, improvised, or otherwise) for everyone. If you have a camp chair, please bring it over from your campsite. At some point to be determined by the rhythm and flow of the event, the tables and chairs closest to the music on stage will be taken away to make room for dancing.

**Tuesday, 6/27:** 7:30 p.m. Fellows and New Member Dessert Reception. Reminder that this is **not your dinner**. Reminder that this is for new members and Fellows only (no plus ones!). Yes, it's a bit shorter than traditionally, but that is to give us time to clean up and for everyone time to move over to the auditorium for the special presentation at 9 p.m. on the Thai cave rescue. Meanwhile, back at the campground, you can watch a really cool caver movie, *Subterranean*, at 7 p.m. before the Open Mic Night (if that happens).

**Wednesday, 6/28:** Campground Party. Reminder that this is not your dinner, though there will be light snacks. And frosty beverages. There will also be far less seating than Monday night. So again, if you have a camp chair, you might want to bring it. While Monday could be thought of as a picnic, this is definitely more of a party: music, dancing, milling about, socializing, etc.

ALSO, the Speleo-auction is at the auditorium at D&E.

**Thursday, 6/29:** The Photo Salon has an early (short!) show at 5:30 p.m. and the longer show at 7:30 p.m. Meanwhile back at the campground, there will be the fun Story Telling!

**Friday, 6/30:** Banquet. Phil Gainer Community Center. There will be shuttlesò please use them as parking is very limited. If you must driveò carpool!!! Pick up a wayward caver and make a new friend. This is the biggest room in town, so we will be seated rather tightly. We will have a separate vegetarian line that has mostly vegan food in it. Sorry about the non-vegan dessert.

There will be an after banquet gathering back in the campground. The Last Hurrah!! This is absolutely a party: music, dancing, last chance to see friends, etc.

**Saturday, 7/1:** All good things must come to an end. Take your garbage and recyclables to the dumpsters and recycling trailer on the main campground road. The campground closes to the public at noonò please do your best to be on your way by then so the staff can start the cleanup. We'll see you again in 2024 in Tennessee!