

Cave Management vs People Management: Cave and Karst Management and Protection via People Management

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Abstract

Many individuals with a deep interest in caves and/or cave resources have continued their passion by pursuing cave management either as their career or as their avocation. I submit that all who have become involved in cave management have done so as the result of a desire to preserve and protect this specific “non-renewable” resource.

It is timely for us to realize that we, as managers, do not so much manage a resource but find ourselves immersed in managing people and tenuous, more complex social values, particularly professionals employed by public agencies.

In 1995 James J. Kennedy and Jack Ward Thomas wrote:

“How many natural resource managers were attracted to their professions or education in college to understand and manage social value conflict? College students with the desire and temperament to deal with social conflict usually major in social work, labor management, or law. These students accept few values as intrinsic and are educated and role-modeled by their professors to identify, engage in, and resolve social value conflicts. In contrast, natural resources students are usually drawn to their profession by love of nature, a desire to manage or protect intrinsically valuable wildland or environmental resources, and an attraction to work away from the problems of public lands and waters. For all of us living who seek fulfillment of our social values, there are many, many more humans yet to live whose social values must be accommodated by the ecosystems they will inherit from us. They, too, are an important public for us professionals and public servants to serve.”

This session will explore managing natural resources as social value and, time allowing, investigate the subject of “Conflict Among User Groups.” Participation by all attendees is invited.