

## **Bouverie Cave Restoration, Wombeyan Oct 2009**

Reported by Andrew Baker and Joe Sydney.

During any rescue, there is an element of risk of damage during a rescue due to the priority that the safety of the patient is paramount. The rescue of a trapped caver in Bouverie cave in 2008 was no different. During this rescue, rescuers in Bouverie cave, in necessity muddied clean sections of the cave. The Highland Caving Group (HCG) approached Wombeyan Caves management and the NSW Speleological Council (NSWSC) with the view of restoring a section of the cave to its former clean condition and assess the cave for any damage to speleothems. The project was supported by the Parks and Wildlife Service and the NSWSC.

The ASF Karst Conservation Fund provided funds for cleaning materials for this project. HCG coordinated the logistics and participants were drawn from NSW clubs. Parks Service personnel were closely involved in the whole project.

Owing to the sensitivity of the cave, Wombeyan management set a team limit of 6 entering the cave. 4 skilled and 1 novice applicant were sought from amongst cavers with a request showing cave cleaning experience. Denis, Rod and Andrew were selected as experienced cave cleaners with one space being allocated by ballot to a novice cave caver from amongst 10 novice applicants. The lucky caver was Eleanor Young of Hills Speleological Club. The aim of balloting one novice team position was to transfer cave cleaning skills and knowledge.

Our extreme thanks to Geoff Lang - Wombeyan Caves manager and David Smith - Guide for their approval, support and co-operation of this project. A thank you also to HSC for the use of extra cave cleaning gear.

Participants : Andrew Baker (NHVSS, UTSSS), Dave Smith (NPWS Wombeyan), Denis Marsh (OSS), Eleanor Young (HSC), Joe Sydney (HCG), Rod Burton (HSC)

Co-ordinator: Joe Sydney of Highland Caving Group

Trip leader: Andrew Baker



Boot mud, before and after cleaning Photos by Joe Sydney



Denis, Elanor & David helping with the Bouverie cave cleanup Photo by Rod Burton (HSC)