

# EVALUATION OF CAVES

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## INTRODUCTION

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All Forest caves will be evaluated using the following rating system. The system allows significance values to be assigned to various cave resources. The assigned values will be used to determine cave classification and will be used in determining cave significance under the implementation regulations of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1989.

CLASSIFICATION

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Caves have to be placed into one of the following classes based on management objectives consistent with identified cave resource values.

As new caves are discovered, they will be temporarily managed as Class 1 until an analysis of resource values is completed.

## EXPLANATION OF CLASSIFICATION

### Class 1 SENSITIVE CAVES.

Caves considered unsuitable for exploration by the general public either because of their pristine condition, unique resources, or extreme safety hazards. They may contain resources that would be impacted by low levels of visitation. These caves are not shown on maps or discussed in publications intended for general public use such as guides, brochures, and magazines.

### Class 2 DIRECTED ACCESS CAVES.

Caves with directed public access and developed for public use. These caves are shown on maps or have signs directing visitor access; frequently have guided tours and artificial lighting. Regardless of the level of development, public visitation is encouraged. The caves may have sensitive resources that are protected.

### Class 3 UNDEVELOPED CAVES.

Caves that are undeveloped or contain unmaintained or minimal developments that are suitable for exploration by persons who are properly prepared. In general, these caves contain resources that resist degradation by recreational use. However, public use will not be directed toward them.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

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BIOLOGICAL VALUE

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HYDROLOGIC VALUE

HERITAGE/  
HISTORIC VALUE

Value	Explanation of Value
0	Biological components lacking.
1	Biological components exist but of low apparent significance.
2	Biological components present and numerous, sensitivity low.
3	Biological components present, numerous and of moderate sensitivity.
4	Biological components numerous and sensitive to disturbance.
5	Biological components very numerous and highly sensitive to disturbance. Habitat is critical to species survival. The cave contains unique species, or ones found on State or Federal sensitive, threatened, or endangered species lists.

**HYDROLOGIC VALUE**

Value	Explanation of Value
0	Hydrologic components lacking.
1	Hydrologic components present but of low importance.
2	Hydrologic components present but of low sensitivity.
3	Hydrologic components present and of moderate sensitivity.
4	Hydrologic components important and very sensitive.
5	Hydrologic components complex and highly sensitive.

**HERITAGE/HISTORIC VALUE**

Value	Explanation of Value
0	Heritage resources lacking.
1	Potential for Heritage resources low.
2	Potential for Heritage resources moderate.
3	Heritage resources present or implicated by historic records. Site may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
4	Heritage resources present and sensitive to disturbance. Site eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
5	Heritage resources present and highly sensitive to disturbance. Site eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

## RECREATIONAL VALUE

RECREATIONAL VALUE		SIGNIFICANCE
Value	Explanation of Value	RECREATIONAL VALUE
0	Cave lacks recreational value.	
1	Recreational value low. Little or no scenic appeal.	GEOLOGIC/ MINERALOGIC/ PALEONTOLOGIC VALUE
2	Recreational value low but receiving some use. Scenic values low.	
3	Recreational values, scenic values, and use moderate.	
4	Recreational values, scenic values, and use high.	EDUCATIONAL/ SCIENTIFIC VALUE
5	Recreational values, scenic values, and use very high. A major cave of regional or national significance.	

## GEOLOGIC/MINERALOGIC/PALEONTOLOGIC VALUE

Value	Explanation of Value
0	Features of significance lacking.
1	Some interesting features present.
2	Features present and resistant to disturbance.
3	Features present and of moderate sensitivity to disturbance.
4	Features numerous and of high value. Features sensitive to disturbance.
5	Features rare, valuable, numerous, and/or of great sensitivity to disturbance.

## EDUCATIONAL OR SCIENTIFIC VALUE

Value	Explanation of Value
0	Caves lacking educational or scientific value.
1	Caves with low educational or scientific value.
2	Caves with features which can be used for educational or scientific study but are otherwise considered common to the area.
3	Caves which provide opportunity for educational or scientific study.
4	Caves providing unusual opportunity for educational scientific use.
5	Caves with unique opportunity for interpretation and public education or scientific study.



Timber Management enhances healthy forests and restores wildlife habitat.