

BOOK REVIEW

Proceedings of the 1995 Cave Management Symposium. Edited by Tom Rea for the Indiana Karst Conservancy Inc., P. O. Box 2401, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2401, U.S.A. Reviewed by Elery Hamilton-Smith.

It is always difficult reviewing proceedings of a conference - something like conducting an orchestra which has musicians covering the whole spectrum of musical ability ! Cave Management symposiums have been conducted in the U.S. at more or less regular intervals since the first in 1975. As in Australasia, the quality of contribution has steadily improved, as has the editing and production of the proceedings.

The US symposia still focus very much on CAVE management, but it is clear that is changing, partly through the wider approach to management and partly through the work of the various Karst Conservancies. An excellent example of the first of these is a fine paper by Jim Baichtal and his colleagues from Alaska on 'An ecologically-based approach to karst and cave resource management'. This reminds one of the Tasmanian work of Kevin Kiernan and Rolan Eberhard with its global view of the karst and its rigour in thinking through the management issues. The work of the Karst Conservancies is highlighted by Dwight Weaver in describing the work of the Missouri conservancy ; Ernst Kastning on delineation of power transmission and highway corridors in Virginia and Keith, Bassett and Douglas in describing an inter-agency agreement to reduce the impacts of highway construction in Indiana.

The major difference between the Australasian and US meetings is probably the greater abundance of scientists at the US symposia. So, there are papers on such topics as bats, cave crayfish, archaeology, cave crickets and paleontology. However, most of

the scientific papers are very clearly directed towards greater understanding of management issues and problems. There are probably a similar number of scientists involved in management-oriented studies in this country - but they are less likely to arrive or to deliver papers at cave management conferences.

Then there are many papers on the detail of cave management - visitor impact mapping, track construction, 'wild' cave tour management, permit systems, volunteers, search and rescue, inventory development, legal liability, zinc in caves, laser survey devices, bat gates, radio, cave repair and restoration, photo monitoring and others.

So, the real question to ACKMA members is doubtless, 'Is it worth reading ?'. I can only say it is. In particular, and I have commented on this when reporting my own attendance at the Symposium, we desperately need to take a good look at the work of the Karst Conservancies and look at ways in which we can learn to do more about protection of karst outside of parks and other protected areas. Then, no matter what your interest, there is likely to be at least one good paper here which will be helpful to you.

The proceedings are available from the National Speleological Society, 2813 Cave Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35810-4431, U.S.A. Fax +1.205.851.9241 or e-mail: <nss@caves.org> Price is \$US10, plus postage. They accept Visa or Mastercard.