

Recreational Caving (Spelunking)

Cave exploration can be fascinating, educational, and safe if undertaken wisely. Before visiting a cave, you must obtain permission and secure permits if necessary. Proper equipment and observation of the basic rules of caving are essential. Wear a hard hat and sturdy shoes, tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, never go caving alone, and always have three sources of light per person. Inside the cave, you should use good judgment and observe the cavers' motto: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."

Caves are commonly closed to the public for a variety of reasons, such as sensitive or endangered species, cultural resources and safety or liability issues. Caves with endangered bat species are only open during certain times of the year.



Always observe and heed signs posted.

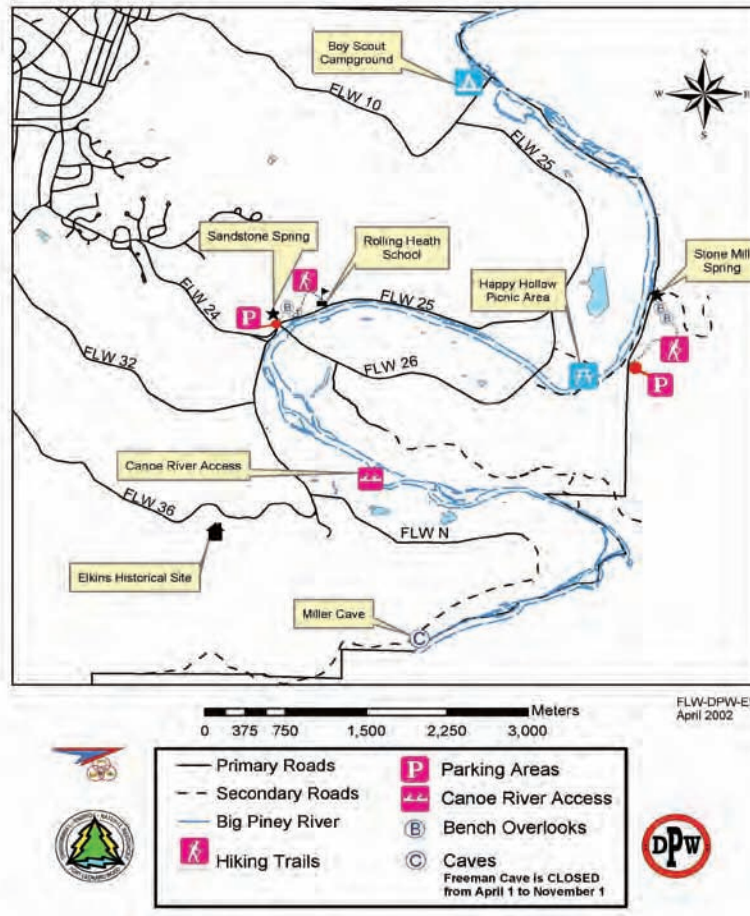


Signs are often posted to warn visitors of these issues and it is imperative that one obey the warnings that are in place. These signs are placed to protect the landowners, sensitive resources, and especially the caves themselves

At Fort Leonard Wood, Miller Cave is the only cave that is open to the public due to safety, cultural resource, and biological issues. To go caving in Missouri, we recommend visiting a commercial tour cave or joining a local spelunking organization such as the MSM Spelunkers Club. There are also some Missouri State Parks and commercial tour caves that offer 'wild' cave tours.

Missouri Speleological Survey: www.mospeleo.org
 Missouri Caves Association: www.missouricaves.com
 Missouri State Parks: www.dnr.mo.gov

BIG PINEY RIVER RECREATION AND INTERPRETIVE CORRIDOR



The Big Piney River is a clear and scenic river that winds through the northeast portion of the installation. The goal of the Big Piney River Interpretive Project (BPRIP) is to enhance natural and cultural areas within the river corridor that extends from Stone Mill Spring in the north to Miller Cave in the south. In addition to the Miller Cave area, the BPRIP also contains recreational areas such as the Piney Valley Golf Course, Stone Mill Spring trout fishing area, and various areas for river fishing, canoeing, hiking, camping, and picnicking. Three hiking trails have been constructed at Stone Mill Spring, Breeden Spring Pond, and Sandstone Spring/Rolling Heath School.

Fort Leonard Wood Caves



Miller Cave



Fort Leonard Wood
 Directorate of Public Works
 Environmental Division
 573-596-0882
www.wood.army.mil/dpwenv

Missouri and Fort Leonard Wood Caves

Caves are one of Missouri's most unique natural resources. They play key roles in groundwater movement, serve as habitats for threatened and endangered animal species, often have bones of prehistoric animals, and frequently contain prehistoric artifacts.

Missouri is home to over 6,400 caves - only Tennessee has more. Pulaski County has approximately 360 caves, making it fourth in the state for number of caves per county.

The caves owned by Fort Leonard Wood are managed by the DPW Environmental Division, Natural Resources Branch (NRB). The NRB was tasked with identifying caves suitable for military training, performing a biological and cultural resources survey, protecting significant biological systems and species and establishing a cave management plan. Some of the highlights of the caves of Fort Leonard Wood include:

- Seven caves now available for military training
- Five caves are potential Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) sites
- One cave is a Cold War site
- Four caves are considered biologically significant
- 72% of caves contain cultural resources
- Six caves contain endangered bat species

Miller Cave

Miller Cave is located off FLW N, in hunting area 7, south of Training Area 61. It is one of the largest caves on Fort Leonard Wood, and is the only cave open to the public. Before the installation was established in the 1940's, the cave was located on three land tracts with the majority on the Miller Family property, giving rise to the name Miller Cave.

Miller Cave has a total of four entrances. The primary entrance to Miller Cave is located in a bluff approximately 150 feet above the Big Piney River. Two more openings face the river and afford a spectacular view of the Big Piney River valley. The bluff below these openings is nearly vertical, making it a deadly drop-off.

The cave can be accessed by way of a narrow but well maintained trail that begins at FLW N and winds down the steep slope and into the cave. Just before reaching the Miller Cave entrance, there is a small opening in the bluff. This is another small cave called Jasper Cave. It does not connect to Miller Cave in spite of its proximity.

Sadies Cave

Sadies Cave is located approximately 185 feet southwest of Miller Cave on the same bluff that contains Miller and Jasper caves. A foot path exists between the caves. The entrance is a wide, low opening measuring 23 feet across and 3 feet tall, with the cave length not quite 100 feet long. After entering the cave, one must stoop for a short distance, but the passage becomes walkable as ceiling heights rise up to 16 feet.

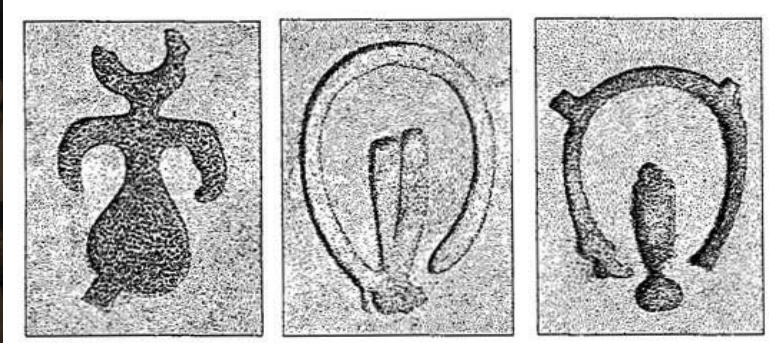
Archaeology of Miller and Sadies Caves

Miller and Sadies Caves are part of a pre-Columbian site complex composed of two caves, a bluff top base camp, a burial cairn, and one petroglyph site, all within 1200 feet of each other. In the 1920s, Gerald Fowke, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, conducted extensive excavations at Miller Cave. These excavations were part of a larger study of the cave and mound sites in the central Ozark region. Of the 80 caves that Fowke investigated, Miller Cave comprises the largest portion of the report. This report and additional investigations done in the 1990's reveal that Miller Cave was used as a Native American habitation site from 7000 BC to AD 1300. Fowke was able to uncover thousands of artifacts, including more than 40 human burials. Virtually the entire surface of the cave contained evidence of human occupation. Investigations at Sadies Cave yielded archaeological evidence dating from 8000 BC to AD 1400, making it the oldest burial ground at Fort Leonard Wood.



Cave gate at Sadies Cave protects human burials

The Miller Petroglyphs site is located in a shallow rock shelter near Miller Cave. Within the shelter are 12 large stone blocks, three of which have carvings on them. The petroglyphs are engraved into the flat upper faces of the blocks. Sadly, however, they have all been severely vandalized and weathered. A zoomorphic figure was present at one time, but it was reported to have already been destroyed by the 1940's and is no longer visible. The rest of the 25 carvings are rough ovals with openings bisected by straight lines. The symbolism of these oval shaped carvings is thought to be related to fertility.



Reproduction of Miller Petroglyphs. Motifs observed in 1920: (a) zoomorphic figure, (b) and (c) bisected ovals



Rice Lanceolate spear points, Miller Cave, 6500 BC