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Cavers' patience rewarded

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Fort Stanton project receives \$211,000

Efforts to explore and preserve Fort Stanton Cave will benefit from two monetary awards this year.

Last year, Fort Stanton Cave Study Project, a decades old organization of dedicated cavers and researchers, was honored nationally and locally for its leadership and research on the tenth anniversary of the discovery of the now famous Snowy River Passage within Fort Stanton Cave.

This year, the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project was awarded \$100,000 through the Bureau of Land Management Challenge Cost Share program that will allow the researchers and scientists to continue the valuable exploration and mapping of Fort Stanton Cave, according to project public outreach liaison, Lynda Sanchez.

The grant was given in part because the FSCSP volunteers provide more than \$100,000 worth of volunteer hours and work, sometimes adding up in excess of 12,000 hours annually.

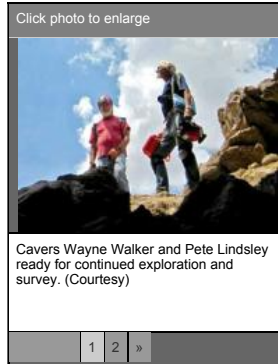
The volunteers include physicists, software and microwave engineers, educators, historians, micro and bat biologists, geologists, and hydrologists.

Their research assists BLM officials in the management of the cave and the karst region on the National Conservation Area known as the Fort Stanton Cave and Snowy River NCA, a designation similar to a National Park, Sanchez said.

After three years of being on a waiting list, networking and meetings, \$111,000 will be expended by the Government Services Division of the state of New Mexico to help upgrade, re-roof,

stabilize/repair or replace walls and windows, and insulate the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project headquarters and the BLM offices in use for the NCA, Sanchez said.

"It will be a major improvement and allow us to expand our operations throughout the winter and early spring. FSCSP fields three major expeditions a year to continue exploration, survey, DNA analyses, bat research, and assists students in these fields and provides detailed reports and data for the BLM," she said. "This partnership has been ongoing for many years and has progressed rapidly since the incredible discovery in 2001 of the famed Snowy River Passage, a calcite formation that is now more than ten miles long."



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