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SINKHOLES AND THE ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF KARST

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Cover Photo:

A first look inside the National Corvette Museum sinkhole, which consumed eight rare Corvettes upon its collapse. The museum Skydome was built over a large cave passage which suffered a catastrophic roof collapse on the morning of February 12, 2015, causing more than \$3 million in damage (see paper by Polk et al., p. 477-482). Photos provided courtesy of Jason Polk and Western Kentucky University.

CONTENTS

Organizing CommitteeX-XI

Foreword XII

Invited Speaker

Hales Bar and the Pitfalls of Constructing Dams on Karst (abstract)
J. David RogersXIV

Upper Mississippi Valley Karst Aquifers

Karst Hydrogeologic Investigation of Trout Brook
Joel T. Groten and E. Calvin Alexander, Jr. 1-8

Human Impacts on Water Quality in Coldwater Spring, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Sophie M. Kasahara, Scott C. Alexander and E. Calvin Alexander, Jr.9-18

Hydrologic and Geochemical Dynamics of Vadose Zone Recharge in a Mantled Karst Aquifer: Results of Monitoring Drip Waters in Mystery Cave, Minnesota
Daniel H. Doctor, E. Calvin Alexander, Jr., Roy Jameson and Scott C. Alexander 19-30

Conduit Flow in the Cambrian Lone Rock Formation, Southeast Minnesota, USA
John D. Barry, Jeffrey A. Green and Julia R. Steenberg31-42

Using Nitrate, Chloride, Sodium, and Sulfate to Calculate Groundwater Age
Kimm Crawford and Terry Lee 43-52

Karst Spring Cutoffs, Cave Tiers, and Sinking Stream Basins Correlated to Fluvial Base Level Decline in South-Central Indiana
Garre A. Conner53-62

Driftless Area Karst of Northwestern Illinois and its Effects on Groundwater Quality
Samuel V. Panno and Walton R. Kelly63-74

Seeps and Springs at a Platteville “Observatory” on the River Bluffs (abstract)
BJ Bonin, Greg Brick and Julia Steenberg75-76

Karst Hydrology

Hydrogeological Dynamic Variability in the Lomme Karst System (Belgium) as Evidenced by Tracer Tests Results (KARAG project)

Amaël Poulain, Gaëtan Rochez and Vincent Hallet77-84

Recharge Area of Selected Large Springs in the Ozarks

James W. Duley, Cecil Boswell and Jerry Prewett85-92

Hydrological and Hydrogeological Characteristics of the Platform Karst (Zemo Imereti Plateau, Georgia)

Zaza Lezhava, Nana Bolashvili, Kukuri Tsikarishvili, Lasha Asanidze and Nino Chikhradze93-100

Tracer Studies Conducted Nearly Two Decades Apart Elucidate Groundwater Movement Through a Karst Aquifer in the Frederick Valley of Maryland

Keith A White, Thomas J. Aley, Michael K. Cobb, Ethan O. Weikel and Shiloh L. Beeman.....101-112

Dye Tracing Through the Vadose Zone Above Wind Cave, Custer County, South Dakota

James Nepstad.....113-126

A Comparative Study Between the Karst of Hoa Quang, Cao Bang Province, Vietnam and Tuscomb, Alabama, USA

Gheorghe M. Ponta, Nguyen Xuan Nam, Ferenc L Forray, Florentin Stoiciu, Viorel Badalita, Lenuta J. Enache and Ioan A. Tudor127-138

Hydrochemical Characteristics and Formation Mechanism of Groundwater in the Liulin Karst System, Northwestern China

Min Yang, Feng'e Zhang, Sheng Zhang, Miying Yin and Guoqing Wu139-146

Karst Geology

Karst Paleo-Collapses and Their Impacts on Mining and the Environment in Northern China

Gongyu Li and Wanfang Zhou147-156

The Sandstone Karst of Pine County, Minnesota

Beverly Lynn Shade, E. Calvin Alexander, Jr. and Scott C. Alexander157-166

A Proposed Hypogenic Origin of Iron Ore Deposits in Southeast Minnesota Karst

E. Calvin Alexander, Jr. and Betty J. Wheeler 167-176

Down the Rabbit Hole: Identifying Physical Causes of Sinkhole Formation in the UK

Tamsin Green 177-188

Relay Ramp Structures and Their Influence on Groundwater Flow in the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers, Hays and Travis Counties, Central Texas

Brian B. Hunt, Brian Smith, Alan Andrews, Douglas Wierman, Alex S. Broun, and Marcus O. Gary..... 189-200

Goliath's Cave, Minnesota: Epigenic Modification and Extension of Preexisting Hypogenic Conduits

E. Calvin Alexander, Jr., Scott C. Alexander, Kelton D.L. Barr, Andrew J. Luhmann, and Cale T. Anger201-210

GIS Databases and Mapping of Karst Regions

Creation of a Map of Paleozoic Bedrock Springsheds in Southeast Minnesota

Jeffrey A. Green and E. Calvin Alexander, Jr......211-222

Media, Sinkholes and the UK National Karst Database

Vanessa J. Banks, Helen J. Reeves, Emma K. Ward, Emma R. Raycraft, Hannah V. Gow, David J. R. Morgan and Donald G. Cameron223-230

Shallow Depressions in the Florida Coastal Plain: Karst and Pseudokarst

Sam B. Upchurch, Thomas M. Scott, Michael C. Alfieri and Thomas L. Dobecki231-240

Sinkhole Vulnerability Mapping: Results from a Pilot Study in North Central Florida

Clint Kromhout and Alan E. Baker241-254

A Semi-Automated Tool for Reducing the Creation of False Closed Depressions from a Filled LiDAR-Derived Digital Elevation Model

John Wall, Daniel H. Doctor and Silvia Terziotti255-262

History and Future of the Minnesota Karst Feature Database

Robert G. Tipping, Mathew Rantala, E. Calvin Alexander, Jr., Yongli Gao and Jeffrey A. Green.....263-270

Legacy Data in the Minnesota Spring Inventory

Gregory Brick.....271-276

Development of Cavity Probability Map For Abu Dhabi Municipality Using GIS and Decision Tree Modeling

Yongli Gao, Raghav Ramanathan, Bulent Hatigoplu, M. Melih Demirkan, Mazen Elias Adib, Juan J. Gutierrez, Hesham El Ganainy and Daniel Barton Jr.277-288

Evaluation of Cavity Distribution Using Point-Pattern Analysis

Raghav Ramanathan, Yongli Gao, M. Melih Demirkan, Bulent Hatipoglu, Mazen Elias Adib, Michael Rosenmeier, Juan J. Gutierrez, and Hesham El Ganainy289-298

A Method of Mapping Sinkhole Susceptibility Using a Geographic Information System: A Case Study for Interstates in the Karst Counties of Virginia

Alexandra L. Todd and Lindsay Ivey-Burden299-306

Finding Springs in the File Cabinet

Mason Johnson and Ashley Ignatius307-310

New Methodologies and Approaches for Mapping Forested Karst Landscapes, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada (abstract)

Tim Stokes, Paul Griffiths and Carol Ramsey311-312

Contamination of Karst Aquifers

Evaluation of Veterinary Pharmaceuticals and Iodine for Use as a Groundwater Tracer in Hydrologic Investigation of Contamination Related to Dairy Cattle Operations

Larry 'Boot' Pierce and Honglin Shi313-318

Karst Influence in the Creation of a PFC Megaplume

Virginia Yingling319-326

Tracking of Karst Contamination Using Alternative Monitoring Strategies: Hidden River Cave Kentucky

Caren Raedts and Christopher Smart327-336

Spatiotemporal Response of CVOC Contamination and Remedial Actions in Eogenetic Karst Aquifers

Ingrid Y. Padilla, Vilda L. Rivera and Celys Irizarry337-346

Determination of the Relationship of Nitrate to Discharge and Flow Systems in North Florida Springs

Sam B. Upchurch347-354

Geophysical Exploration of Karst

The Million Dollar Question: Which Geophysical Methods Locate Caves Best Over the Edwards Aquifer? A Potpourri of Case Studies from San Antonio and Austin, Texas, USA

Mustafa Saribudak355-364

Rollalong Resistivity Surveys Reveal Karstic Paleotopography Developed on Near-Surface Gypsum Bedrock

Lewis Land and Lasha Asanidze365-370

Integration and Delivery of Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (InSAR) Data Into Stormwater Planning Within Karst Terranes

Brian Bruckno, Andrea Vaccari, Edward Hoppe, Scott T. Acton and Elizabeth Campbell371-380

Detection of Voids in Karst Terrain with Full Waveform Tomography

Khiem T. Tran, Michael McVay and Trung Dung Nguyen381-386

Characterization of Karst Terrain Using Geophysical Methods Based on Sinkhole Analysis: A Case Study of the Anina Karstic Region (Banat Mountains, Romania)

Laurentiu Artugyan, Adrian C. Ardelean and Petru Urdea387-398

Investigation of a Sinkhole in Ogle County, Northwestern Illinois, Using Near-Surface Geophysical Techniques

Philip J. Carpenter and Lauren M. Schroeder399-406

Study on Monitoring and Early Warning of Karst Collapse Based on BOTDR Technique

Zhende Guan, X. Z. Jiang, Y. B. Wu, Z. Y. Pang407-414

Pre-Event and Post-Formation Ground Movement Associated with the Bayou Corne Sinkhole

Cathleen E. Jones and Ronald G. Blom415-422

The Application of Passive Seismic Techniques to the Detection of Buried Hollows

Michael G. Raines, Vanessa J. Banks, Jonathan E. Chambers, Philip E. Collins, Peter F. Jones, Dave J. Morgan, James B. Riding and Katherine Royse423-430

Using Electrical Resistivity Imaging to Characterize Karst Hazards in Southeastern Minnesota Agricultural Settings (abstract)

Toby Dogwiler and Blake Lea431-432

Karst Management, Regulation, and Education

The Cost of Karst Subsidence and Sinkhole Collapse in the United States Compared with Other Natural Hazards

David J. Weary 433-446

Hazard of Sinkhole Flooding to a Cave Hominin Site and its Control Countermeasures in a Tower Karst Area, South China

Fang Guo, Guanghui Jiang, Kwong Fai Andrew Lo, Qingjia Tang, Yongli Guo and Shaohua Liu 447-454

Case Studies of Animal Feedlots on Karst in Olmsted County, Minnesota

Martin Larsen 455-464

Evaporite Geo-Hazard in the Sauris Area (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region - NE Italy)

Chiara Calligaris, Stefano Devoto, Luca Zini and Franco Cucchi 465-470

Building Codes to Minimize Cover-Collapses in Sinkhole-Prone Areas

George Veni, Connie Campbell Brashear and Andrew Glasbrenner 471-476

Cars and Karst: Investigating the National Corvette Museum Sinkhole

Jason S. Polk, Leslie A. North, Ric Federico, Brian Ham, Dan Nedvidek, Kegan McClanahan, Pat Kambesis, Michael J. Marasa and Hayward Baker 477-482

LEPT, A Simplified Approach for Assessing Karst Vulnerability in Regions by Sparse Data; A Case in Kermanshah Province, Iran

Kamal Taheri, Milad Taheri and Fathollah Mohsenipour 483-492

Modeling of Karst Systems

Numerical Simulation of Karst Soil Cave Evolution

Long Jia, Yan Meng, Zhen-de Guan and Li-peng Liu 493-500

Experimental and Numerical Investigation of Cover-Collapse Sinkhole Development and Collapse in Central Florida

Xiaohu Tao, Ming Ye, Dangliang Wang, Roger Pacheco Castro, Xiaoming Wang and Jian Zhao 501-506

Accounting for Anomalous Hydraulic Responses During Constant-Rate Pumping Tests in the Prairie Du Chien-Jordan Aquifer System - Towards a More Accurate Assessment of Leakage

Justin L. Blum 507-520

Numerical Simulation of Spring Hydrograph Recession Curves for Evaluating Behavior of the East Yorkshire Chalk Aquifer

Nozad Hasan Azeez, Landis Jared West and Simon H. Bottrell521-530

Study on the Critical Velocity of Groundwater to Form Subsidence Sinkholes in Karst Area

Fuwei Jiang, Mingtang Lei and Dai Jian-ling531-536

Evaluation of First Order Error Induced by Conservative-Tracer Temperature Approximation for Mixing in Karstic Flow

Philippe Machetel and David A. Yuen537-548

Engineering and Geotechnical Investigations in Karst

Concepts for Geotechnical Investigation in Karst

Joseph A. Fischer and Joseph J. Fischer549-558

Sinkhole Physical Models to Simulate and Investigate Sinkhole Collapses

Mohamed Alrowaimi, Hae-Bum Yun and Manoj Chopra559-568

Monitoring the Threat of Sinkhole Formation Under a Portion of US 18 in Cerro Gordo County, Iowa Using TDR Measurements

Kevin M. O'Connor and Matthew Trainum569-578

Predicting Compaction Grout Quantities in Sinkhole Remediation

Edward D. Zisman579-586

Pre-Construction Rock Treatment and Soil Modification Program Using Low Mobility Grout to Mitigate Future Sinkhole Development in a 2,787.1 Square Meter (30,000 SF) Maintenance Facility

Steven W. Shifflett587-594

Successful Foundation Preparations in Karst Bedrock of the Masonry Section of Wolf Creek Dam

David M. Robison595-604

Hydrocompaction Considerations in Sinkhole Investigations

Edward D. Zisman and Stephen West605-611

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Fourteenth Multidisciplinary Conference on Sinkholes and the Engineering and Environmental Impacts of Karst in lovely Rochester, Minnesota! This venue is the farthest north that the Sinkhole Conference—as it is better known—has met since its inception in 1984. The setting will provide conference participants with a unique opportunity to view karst phenomena within the glaciated and driftless terrains of southeastern Minnesota, and a significant number of papers presented in this volume address the hydrological and geological characteristics of karst within the upper Mississippi Valley region.

The National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to pure and applied research on caves, karst phenomena, and karst hydrology. In 2011, NCKRI assumed a leadership role in organizing and hosting the Sinkhole Conference, and the 2013 Sinkhole Conference that was held at NCKRI headquarters in Carlsbad, New Mexico was an unqualified success.

This year, NCKRI is pleased to partner with the Minnesota Ground Water Association (MGWA) for hosting the Sinkhole Conference. The MGWA is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to the following primary objectives: 1) promotion and encouragement of the scientific and public policy aspects of ground water; 2) establishing a common forum for scientists, engineers, planners, educators, attorneys, and other persons concerned with ground water; 3) education of the general public regarding ground water resources; 4) dissemination of information on ground water through meetings of the membership. I can think of no better way to meet these objectives than through the excellent research and information presented at the conference and published within these Proceedings.

I am exceptionally pleased that the papers and abstracts within this volume aptly represent the current state of the science, as well as cover notable recent occurrences of sinkholes and other karst phenomena. At the time of this writing (August 19, 2015), news reports are circulating about yet another sinkhole in Florida, but not just any sinkhole: this particular sinkhole opened up in the town of Seffner, in the very same place where Jeffrey Bush tragically lost his life on the 28th of February, 2013 when the ground beneath the room where he lay caved in and swallowed him. That event captured the attention of the nation and was reported across the world, quickly elevating karst geohazards within the public eye. Once again, all sinkholes had become newsworthy, no matter how small, or whether they occurred in actual karst areas.

A number of truly spectacular sinkhole collapses followed the 2013 tragedy in Seffner, Florida, including the event at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky on the 12th of February, 2014 that destroyed a number of vintage automobiles (see the paper by Polk et al., p. 479-484), as well as the continued saga of salt dome collapse threatening an entire community within Bayou Corne, Louisiana (see the paper by Jones and Blom, p.415-422).

Sinkholes have also generated news outside of the United States in recent years. For example, periods of unusually heavy rainfall in the winter of 2013-2014 triggered numerous sinkholes in the United Kingdom, sparking a similar media frenzy of sinkhole coverage (see the paper by Banks et al., p. 223-230). Such events, and the public interest they have generated, demonstrate the current relevance of the study of karst and karst geohazards. I am confident that the information contained within these Proceedings will serve as a reference for many future studies.

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INVITED SPEAKER

HALES BAR AND THE PITFALLS OF CONSTRUCTING DAMS ON KARST

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Hales Bar Dam was built on the Tennessee River 33 miles downstream of Chattanooga by a private company to generate power in 1905-1913. The dam site was selected because it was the narrowest reach in the downstream end of the Walden Ridge Gorge. The site is underlain by Mississippian Bangor Limestone on the southeast flank of the Sequatchie Anticline.

Three different contracts failed to complete the dam because of difficult foundation conditions. From 1910-1913 diamond drill core holes were used to explore the site and a series of reinforced concrete caissons 40x45 ft on upstream side and 30x32 ft on the downstream side were installed. Excessive leakage soon appeared near the eastern abutment, and gradually increased. Soundings were made in 1914 to ascertain the areas of gross leakage. Shortly thereafter, rags were placed over suction holes on the river bed and concrete pumped over these. Once a leak was stemmed, leakage would resume at other, adjacent locations. The owners tried to stem the leaks by inserting hay bales, old mattresses, chicken wire, and even corsets! In 1919 the owners began drilling grout holes from the inspection gallery within the dam and pumping hot asphalt into the voids. This was followed by the injection of 78,324 cubic feet of hot asphalt grout into the dam foundation, using 6,266 lineal feet of boreholes with average hole depth of 92 ft. By 1922 the problem appeared solved, but leakage gradually resumed between 1922-1929, rising to the same level as had been observed previously.

In 1930-1931 a new program of exploration was undertaken, using dyes and oils to identify conduits under the dam. Leakage was found to vary between 100 and 1200 cubic feet per second (cfs). When the dam was acquired by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1939 they employed fluorescein dyes to track the underseepage. Dye tests revealed that the leakage varied between 1720 and 1650 cfs; about 10% of the river's normal flow. They also noted seepage boils forming in the gravel bars,

which increased each year. The TVA began constructing the most expensive cutoff wall ever built, drilling 750 18-inch diameter holes along the dam's centerline and backfilling this with concrete to a maximum depth of 163 feet, extending 25 to 103 feet below the river bed. In April 1963 the TVA announced it was abandoning Hales Bar Dam, due to increasing leakage.

Biography

Dr. J. David Rogers holds the Karl F. Hasselmann Chair in Geological Engineering at the Missouri University of Science & Technology in Rolla, Missouri. He is presently representing the geological and geotechnical engineering professions on the National Academies panel that has been charged with examining "Levees and the National Flood Insurance Program: Improving policies and practices," being funded by FEMA. Dr. Rogers has served as principal investigator for research funded by the NSF, U.S. Geological Survey, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Defense, and several state departments of transportation. He has served on numerous panels, including the Mississippi Delta Science & Engineering Special Team, the Coastal Louisiana Recovery Panel, the NSF Independent Levee Investigation Team and USGS Investigation Teams evaluating the impacts of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the NSF team evaluating the 2008 and 2011 Mississippi River floods, and the Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure Networks team funded by NSF to make a five year examination of the California Bay Delta flood protection systems.

Dr. Rogers received his B.S. degree in geology from California Polytechnic University at Pomona, his M.S. degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Ph.D. in geological and geotechnical engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. He served on the Berkeley faculty in civil engineering for seven years prior to accepting his current position in 2001.

