

MAUI CAVE PROJECT

Bob Richards¹, Bern Szukalski²

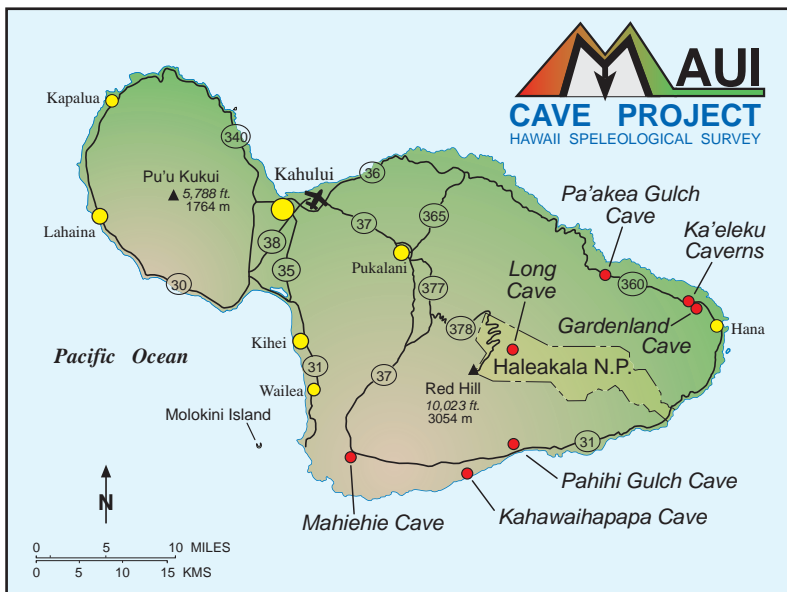
Hawaii Speleological Survey

¹11600 Road 28.3, Dolores, Colorado 81323 USA, bob@cavegraphics.com

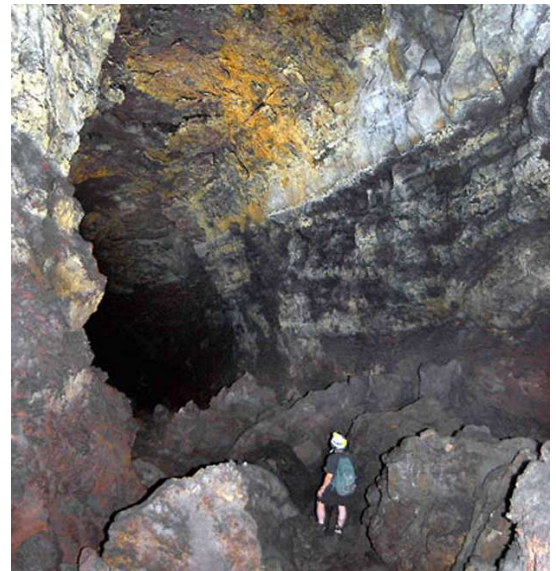
²1224 Mira Monte Dr., Redlands, California 92373 USA, bzukalski@esri.com

Abstract

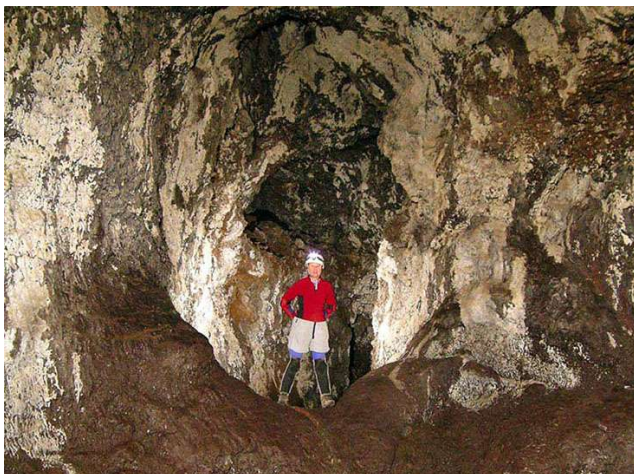
This presentation will highlight some of the cave discoveries on the island of Maui. Haleakala Volcano is home to several lava caves that the Maui Cave Project has been exploring since 1998. The last eruption is thought to have been in the 17th century along the SW rift zone down along the south coast. Haleakala is a massive shield volcano 3055 meters high known as "house of the sun". From the summit one looks down into a large crater some 12 km across, 3 km wide, and nearly 800 meters deep. Down on the floor of this crater project cavers mapped Long Cave a relative young cave in a 1000 year old flow. Near Hana along the East Rift zone is Ka'eieku Caverns that is found in a 1500 year old flow and is Maui longest cave at 3 kilometers. The oldest caves that have been mapped are located on the dry south slopes of Haleakala. Pahihi Gulch Cave is thought to be the oldest at 750,000 years, while Kahawaihapapa Cave down on this barren coast is in a 140,000 year old flow. Some of the largest cave passages found on the island is along SW rift zone as seen in Mahiehie Cave. These are just some of the discoveries that the Maui Cave Project have made. The goal of this project is to establish an island-wide cave survey to catalogue, inventory data, as well as to protect the resources for further exploration and research on the island of Maui.



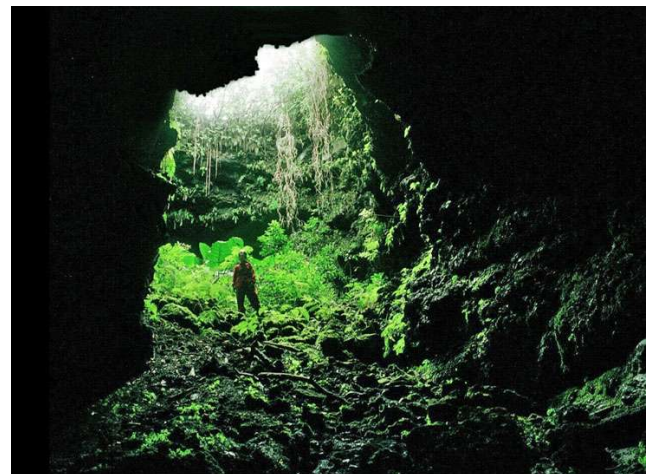
Index map of the surveyed caves on the island of Maui



Mahiehie Cave has some of the largest cave passages known on the island. Photo by R. Ratkowski.



Secondary mineral growth on the walls and ceiling in Long Cave on the crater floor of Haleakala. Photo by B. Szukalski



In the rain forest near Hana is the Ape' Entrance to Ka'eieku Caverns. Photo by D. Bunnell