

ROARING RIVER SPRING

M I S S O U R I S T A T E P A R K

Roaring River Exploration Highlights

1979: Roaring River Spring was first explored by divers Roger Miller and Frank Fogarty of Louisville, Kentucky to a depth of 215 feet

1990s: Additional exploration dives also failed to proceed past the restriction.

2020: The KISS Dive Team was granted a scientific permit by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Roaring River State Park. The goals of the project were to explore and map the depths of Roaring River Spring and to prepare a video for use by the Missouri State Park System.

May 8-10, 2021: The KISS Dive Team conducted their first dives at Roaring River. Despite heavy flow from heavy rain and flash flooding the week before, the team was able to begin mapping the upper section, place safety guidelines, and locate the restriction. Due to the heavy flow, no divers were able to pass through the restriction.

July 17, 2021: Mike Young successfully became the first diver to ever breach the restriction at Roaring River. He and cartographer Jon Lillestolen found a massive room beyond the restriction.

September 25, 2021: The deep team of Mike Young, Jon Lillestolen, and Randall Purdy reached a new maximum depth of 344 feet with no bottom in sight.

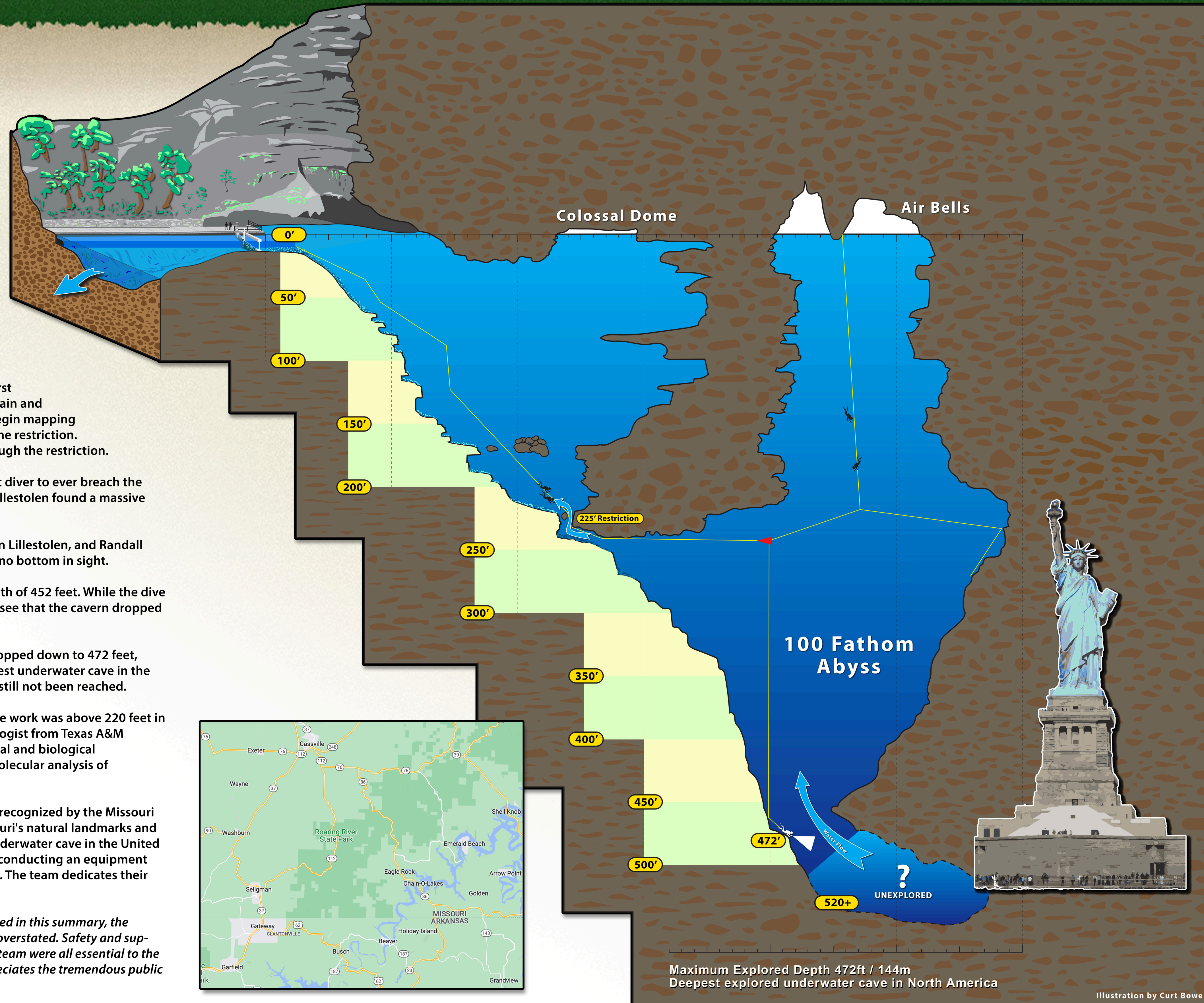
October 23, 2021: Mike Young dove to an amazing depth of 452 feet. While the dive plan did not allow for him to go deeper, he was able to see that the cavern dropped at least another dozen feet below.

November 13, 2021: Mike Young and Randall Purdy dropped down to 472 feet, officially establishing Roaring River Spring as the deepest underwater cave in the United States! And, even at this depth, the bottom has still not been reached.

January-September 2022: Due to high flow, most of the work was above 220 feet in 2022. Dr. Fernando Gutiérrez, an Underwater Cave Ecologist from Texas A&M University-San Antonio, led a project on the hydrological and biological characterization of Roaring River Spring, including a molecular analysis of invertebrates collected from the cave.

September 17, 2022: The KISS Dive team was formally recognized by the Missouri Senate for their contributions toward preserving Missouri's natural landmarks and for establishing Roaring River Spring as the deepest underwater cave in the United States. Tragically, diver Eric Lee Hahn lost his life while conducting an equipment setup dive at Roaring River Spring on October 14, 2022. The team dedicates their exploration project in his honor.

Please note that although only a few individuals are named in this summary, the contributions of all members of the dive team cannot be overstated. Safety and support divers, surface managers, and the video production team were all essential to the successful completion of this project. The team also appreciates the tremendous public interest and support for the exploration.



- Dive Team**
 Greg Abels
 Tim Bass
 Neil Brownlow
 Bob Dankert
 Fernando Gutierrez
 Eric Hahn
 Joseph Heinrichs
 Mike Henry
 Charles Jay
 Jon Lillestolen
 Gayle Orner
 Randall Purdy
 Ashley Sutherland
 Charles Walker
 Matthew Westpheling
 Mike Young
- Surface Support**
 Colonel (Ret) Tony Bryant
 Tom Creason
 Tana Henry
 Adam McDowell
- Moral Support**
 Jennifer Ables
 Angela Brownlow
 Paige Purdy
 Sheri Young
- Media Support**
 Curt Bowen
 Jennifer Bowen
 Sheila Harris

