Abstract

Caves are natural museums housing ancient relics, unusual life forms, and amazing discoveries - wrapped in a shell of geologic history. Karst landscapes are spectacular, their aquifers provide hundreds of millions of people worldwide with drinking water, yet few have ever heard the word. The importance and fragility of these resources make them both exciting and challenging to interpret.

An exhibition focusing on cave and karst resources can effectively communicate the scientific, environmental and stewardship messages to non-technical audiences. As a world leader in understanding caves and karst, and the effect of their resources on our health, economy, and future, NCKRI is embracing the opportunity to increase awareness and inspire stewardship of these complex systems by developing a state of the art museum.

The museum will consist of a series of cave and karst-related exhibits that will realistically convey an experience with caves and karst that will help visitors create intellectual and emotional connections to these resources. The exhibits will contain interpretive signs and dioramas, an in-cave theater, and interactive displays like a cave crawl. If the Institute’s vision is successful, our visitors speleological knowledge will increase and they will be influenced to make responsible safety and ethical decisions in regards to cave and karst resources.