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**Subject:** GWS News+Notes: Karst 2020 Virtual Workshop shares expertise globally  
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*Teaming up to deliver conservation solutions*

## **Karst 2020 Workshop shares global expertise on fragile ecosystems**





On August 18–20, a consortium of partners, including the George Wright Society, the UNESCO Mammoth Cave Biosphere Region, and Western Kentucky University (WKU), held an international meeting called *Conservation of Fragile Karst Resources: A Workshop on Sustainability and Community* in support of UNESCO science programs. Karst regions are those formed on especially soluble bedrock such as limestone in which caves, sinkholes, underground rivers, and large springs are common. With the dual surface and subsurface landscapes, these are often areas of high biodiversity, and groundwater there is highly vulnerable to contamination.

Originally planned as an in-person gathering at Kentucky's Mammoth Cave National Park, with the onset of the pandemic the meeting was switched to virtual mode and yet still was a great success, with 90 people attending from 18 countries. Virtual field trips were offered both above and below ground at Mammoth Cave (pictured above) and a variety of sessions and workshops were held on karst resources and how to care for them in way that recognizes the need for sustainable development in a world where people make up an critical component of the ecosystem.

Workshop topics ranged from the role of Citizen Science in research and community engagement to how Cultural Heritage can inform sustainable development in the modern world and included a meeting of CaveMAB ([cavemab.com](http://cavemab.com)), an informal, global network of cave and karst Biosphere Reserves. Also of special importance was the promotion and collaborative preparation for the upcoming International Year of Caves and Karst in 2021 hosted by the International Union of Speleology ([iyck2021.org](http://iyck2021.org))

Dr. Cate Webb, Director of WKU's Applied Research and Technology Program,

thanked the participants on behalf of WKU, the WKU Applied Research and Technology program, and the Crawford Hydrology Lab. “The passion each researcher showed was truly inspiring and highlights their personal dedication and hard work,” she said. “The results of that work shared throughout the workshop will help foster creative and innovative approaches to protecting karst resources in the future.”

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# TEAM UP 2020 GWS!

*Deadline is September 30*

## One week to go in GWS's double-your-donation campaign

Last month we shared news of an exciting opportunity: to build the capacity of our GWS team, some long-time supporters are matching every donation we receive by September 30, up to a total of \$10,000. To meet this opportunity, we've created the Team Up GWS 2020 campaign — and we'd like your help! **We're over 60% of the way to our goal with one week left ... can you help put us over the top?**

**DONATE TODAY!**

**Every dollar you donate is doubled, and goes toward creating programs like the Karst 2020 Workshop.** By donating today, you'll help build the knowledge base needed to protect the special places of natural and cultural heritage we all are

devoted to.

<https://www.georgewrightociety.org/teamup>

**Thanks for considering!**

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## **Announcements & opportunities**

**Former GWS Board member to lead California state park system.** Armando Quintero, who recently served on the GWS Board of Directors, has been appointed Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Quintero has been Executive Director of the Sierra Nevada Research Institute at the University of California, Merced since 2015. He was an independent Environmental Educator from 1998 to 2008. Quintero held multiple positions at the US National Park Service from 1977 to 1998, including Chief of the Special Park Uses Group and District Ranger at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Personnel Staffing Specialist for the National Park Service, Park Ranger and Supervisory Park Ranger at the Point Reyes National Seashore and Park Ranger at the Sequoia National Park and at the John Muir National Historic Site.

**Virtual memorial created for USNPS employees who died in line of duty.** Jeff Ohlfs, a retired Chief Ranger, has compiled an online honor roll of US National Park Service employees who died on duty or in the line of duty. The memorial can be viewed at <http://npshistory.com/employee-memorial/>. The site honors and remembers the 260 employees who gave their lives serving the agency's conservation mission. Ohlfs has spent over thirty years researching and honoring these individuals.

**America's Geoheritage webinar series.** The US National Committee for the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) is presenting the America's Geoheritage II: Identifying, Developing, and Preserving America's Natural Legacy Distinguished Speaker Webinar Series throughout fall 2020, many Tuesdays at 11:00 am EDT. These presentations will introduce the underlying rationale and concepts of the Geoheritage initiative, and the contributions that are being made by numerous stakeholders in the geoscience community. These events are free and open to everyone interested in using Geoheritage sites to promote research, education, public outreach, community planning, and geotourism. These

presentations will set the stage for the virtual writing part of the workshop that will be convened the week of January 10, 2021 to further explore opportunities to develop and promote Geoheritage sites across the United States.

For a complete list of webinar dates, topics, and speakers in the series and to register for each individual webinar, please see the flyer or visit <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/americas-geoheritage-ii-a-workshop>.

**Not a GWS member? Join us today!**



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