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EXPLORATION GROUP

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Contemporary Cave Exploration in Canada

This presentation will give an overview of the ongoing exploration of the longest and deepest caves in Canada. Canada stands high amongst the karst bearing countries of the world, one of only four with greater than 1×10^6 km² of karst surface. Within this karst are world class cave resources. Highlights include the Bisaro Anima cave, confirmed as the deepest cave in Canada as part of a Royal Canadian Geographical Society expedition as recently as 2018. Nahanni National Park Reserve includes spectacular karst terrain, cave systems and hot springs, including Grotte Valerie, a significant example of cave climactic zonation and paleoclimate resources. Castleguard Cave has been known as the longest cave in Canada for over 50 years, a unique example which terminates underneath the Columbia Icefield as has recently been designated a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Raspberry Rising, which cuts through a narrow band of marble in the Columbia Mountains of B.C., has been explored, revealing a remarkable cave system in stripe karst. Lastly, an overview of glaciovolcanic caves; caves formed in glaciers on ice mantled volcanoes, where passages are eroded by volcanic gas and steam. Exploration of Canada's only known example at Mount Meager Volcanic Complex (Ówelqwelústen), British Columbia, revealed an extraordinary cave.